

Photographing Landscape

A Theory of the Experience of Making

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November 2011

Birmingham Institute of Art and Design

Birmingham City University

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Philip Harris

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
Birmingham City University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Existing photographic theory prioritises the image over any account of making. To date there is no theory that engages with the making of photographs and photographic works. Where the critical theory of the late 1970s and early 1980s saw major developments towards more culturally inclusive accounts of photography, it did little to address and even avoided the conditions of how photographs and photographic works of art came into being. As a consequence making has been consistently overlooked in photographic theory, leaving the issue of making images and photographic works absent of any constructive theory that could be used to describe and account for the complex activities and thought processes that are involved. My research aims to address this and to work towards providing a theoretical approach that accounts for making, specifically within the context of making photographs of the landscape.

In an attempt to provide this I have turned to a late essay by Martin Heidegger - *The Question Concerning Technology* (1956) - as a philosophical model since he addresses many issues related to making in a culture defined by its reliance on technology. In this essay Heidegger provides a re-reading of Aristotle's theory of the causes of making (350 B.C.) to provide a rich potential for a constructive, though not unproblematic, account of how making takes place and is embedded in

culture. I adopt the model of four causes as a means to provide a hermeneutic description of the stages of making photographs and a completed work. I discuss at length my experiences of photographing, post-production and the construction of a book of photographs as a coherent work of art. In conclusion, I find that the theory of causation offers much potential in providing a means of theorising the drawing together of the things that have been photographed, the mode of their representation and presentation, the discourse that circumscribes making and the purpose of the work. A potential weakness is that in providing a model for excellence it does not fully account for failure, doubt and uncertainty, aspects that seem intrinsic risks when making art work. On the other hand it does seem to provide a method for navigating a way towards the construction of a work, albeit one framed within a particular genre, that accounts for the pre-existence of a greater world and history. In this way, it provides a promising theory for making in the absence of critical debate related to how photographers make work.

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Acknowledgements

The period of research in which I have written and prepared my thesis has been a tremendous learning experience for myself, even if it has perhaps taken me far too long to complete it. Neither has it been an experience without incident and risk of failure. There are several people I would like to thank for their support, guidance, tolerance and patience, without whom the thesis would not have reached its completion.

To Suzanne, my partner, who has expressed her continuous faith in my abilities even when my own doubt seemed insurmountable. She has been so very patient and supportive for many years for which I am deeply grateful.

To my director of studies, Professor Darren Newbury, without whose guidance, patience, understanding and clarity of mind this thesis would not have reached its culmination.

To my parents, Cyril and Sylvia Harris, who have been supportive and encouraging throughout.

To Matt Bunn, Tim George, Robert Tuckwood and Margaret Gosley for listening and providing encouragement.

To colleagues Sharon Townes and Bill Hindmarsh for tolerance and understanding.

To Henry Rogers, Gerald Cipriani and the late Michael Holland for setting me off on the journey many years ago.

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Photographing Landscape

A Theory of the Experience of Making

Volume 1: Thesis

Introduction

My research is centred upon the experiences of making a work of art in photography, specifically within the genre of landscape. My intended contribution to knowledge, in the form of this thesis, is a philosophical engagement of these experiences in order to present a theory of making. I do not intend to provide a theory that is all embracing across the many different practices and genres of photography. I do not assume that that this thesis will be relevant to practices of image making other than those related to landscape image making. Experiences related to other practices of making, (e.g. portraiture, commercial and fashion photography and reportage) may yield very different findings to those that I draw upon here.

Furthermore, the thesis is related to particular attitude to making photographs, this being photography as fine art. The term fine art is subject to a whole host of interpretations, assumptions and misuse. In order to lend some clarity, I refer to this particular attitude to image making as *critically informed practice*. The nature of such practice is that the work is made to self-imposed intentions and limits as opposed to commercial practices where the photographer (being nonetheless creative) might interpret a client brief.

However, theory, criticism and philosophies of photography rarely discuss the making of work, irrespective of the type or practice, genre or attitude. By this I do not only mean the act of photographing, since this is only a fragment of a greater whole, albeit a fundamental one. As well as photographing, making also includes activities of selection, post-production, editing and the presentation of photographs. The vast majority of photographic theory, criticism and philosophy attends to images in their final state of being, as made, and not the way they have come into being, i.e. making. It is the process of making in its fullest sense, largely neglected by photographic theory, within the genre of landscape and the attitude of a critically informed practice, that is the subject of my thesis, and for which I aim to provide a theoretical account.

This lack of engagement with making is an odd phenomenon given the influence of phenomenology and hermeneutics on photographic theory. Surely, since phenomenology is referred to as a philosophy of experience, it might lend itself to a philosophical engagement with making photographic work. This does not seem to have occurred; at least not in published form. What has occurred is a phenomenological engagement with the experiences of looking at photographs, the prime example being Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1980). Where Barthes' text presented great insight into his experience of images as artefacts, it did not, and could not, by Barthes' own admission of not being a photographer, approach an experience of photographing. There has been little attempt to do so since.

This concentration on the image and its significance remains a consistent theme of photographic theory where the photograph takes precedent over photographing. However, it is my understanding that whilst the significance of a photograph (either one that has been made or one that has yet to be made) is bound to be of great interest to a photographer, so too should the understanding of how the image comes into being. The latter has been suppressed or simply overlooked. There are perhaps good reasons for this. Influential texts such as Walter Benjamin's *The Author as Producer* (1934), Roland Barthes' *Death of the Author* (1968) and Michel Foucault's *What is an Author* (1969) challenged the sovereignty of authorship in a period where, for high-modernism, the maker was the credible centre of meaning of the work (see Clement Greenberg, 1965; Michael Fried, 1966).

It is my belief that the reception of these texts challenging authorship contributed to a negation of theoretical discussion on making since it was thought that to discuss making was to reinstate the authority of the maker. Whatever the reason, it is the case that making has not been a primary concern of theory. In support of my claim I would direct the reader to several important text books on photography where the writer/editor openly proclaims that the book does not concern itself with photographing but is, rather, concerned about the significance of photographs (Victor Burgin, 1982; Alan Trachtenberg, 1980; Liz Wells, 2005). I do not argue against the importance of the significance of images or the relevance of the critical theory that

promoted this focus. When a critical theory of photography was instigated by Victor Burgin, John Tagg, Allan Sekula, Elizabeth Krauss, John Berger, et al, in the 1970s, it spawned an incredibly rich and diverse field of research into types of photography to which the established histories of photography, centred as they were on an exclusively creative footing, never paid attention.¹ The response of the critical theorists was to explore previously uncharted histories (see Richard Bolton, 1993), to question the art-centred approach to history, and to account for how photographs signified within popular culture, e.g. advertising (see Burgin, 1982). Informed by the texts of Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes and Feminist theory, the new critical theory was focused upon the photograph as artefact – as a product and signifier of cultural exchange. A consequence of this is that photographic theory has come to be about photographs and not about photographing.

Whatever challenges and revisions were made to the established histories, whatever new ground was opened up to research and whatever photographs might signify, there is no denying that photographs are made. The reluctance of theorists to approach making suggests a fear that to do so would risk a return to the very position that it once opposed; that of an author centred theory of production. This need not be the case, as is proven by an ancient precedent in the form of Aristotle and a more recent one: Martin Heidegger. Aristotle's theory of the causes of making, as described in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book 2, 350 BC), describes the act of making as being rooted within the history of culture and not the personal expression of an autonomous individual. Aristotle's theory underpins Heidegger's methodology in his late essay *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954), where the need to make and consume is a result of the challenge placed upon humans by the condition of Being. For this reason, and others that shall become clear during the following chapters, Heidegger's essay forms the theoretical methodology of my research. The structure of the research is as follows:

¹ E.g. Beaumont Newhall (first published in 1937, re-editioned until 1985) and Helmut Gernsheim (1962, 1985). However, it should be not be forgotten that without the contribution of these two historians the history of photography would be considerably diminished.

In Chapter 1: *Photographic Theory and the Absence of Making*, I review existing theories on photography to find traces to making. I approach this in a chronological manner since certain sequences of events are, in themselves, highly significant to the early modernist theories on photography and the later critical theory that was established on the cusp of the 1980s.

In Chapter 2: *Conversations on Making*, following my findings in the first chapter, I discuss and analyse published conversations with selected image makers whose work is relevant to my field of practice, this being landscape photography. The aim of this chapter is to discover issues related to making photographs, or explanations of making, that I can refer to in during the course of the application of my methodology.

Chapter 3: *Concerning a Theory of Making: on Martin Heidegger's essay The Question Concerning Technology*, sees the introduction of my methodology, based on the philosophical methodology present in Martin Heidegger's late essay *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954). This essay provides a complex and demanding journey through a discussion of the essence of technology, its implications for human being and the role of art. Within this Heidegger introduces Aristotle's theory of the four causes of making, these being the materials (*hyle*) out of which the work is made; the aspect (*eidos*) the material takes in the making of the work; the discourse (*logos*) the maker draws upon to inform the work; and the purpose (*telos*) for which the work is made. Heidegger's interpretation of this theory provides both a constructive challenge to conventional ideas of making and authorship and in doing so provides a theory of making as a bringing-forth of truth. The later stages of the essay move into a dense theory of being, concealment and unconcealment where art is presented as a practice that has the potential to reveal the effects of human beings' use of technology as a setting-upon or using-up of the earth. Where the four causes seem to provide a sound methodology of making, I have doubts about the later stages discussed in the essay since I think it is unlikely that the claims that Heidegger makes for art can be made by the maker regarding their own work.

In Chapter 4: *Precedents to making images of an English landscape: an Eidos and Telos of Landscape*, I refer to an underpinning theme of the four causes in that they all predate the maker; the work is not made through the autonomous acts of a maker but rather it is in debt to the materials that are used, the aspect the material takes, the nature of the discourse that informs the making of the work and the purpose for which the work is made. The work that I have made during the course of my research is in the genre of landscape. My theme is how the English landscape has been transformed and is defined by road building and other structures made in relation to roads. It therefore makes some sense to introduce and discuss the pre-existing ideas about landscape that have informed my making before I enter a discussion on the experience of making. At first I discuss my own formative experiences of landscape. Secondly I discuss the wider cultural ideas that have informed my image making through my research for this thesis. The chapter concludes with a discussion the effect of road building upon the appearance of the English landscape.

In Chapter 5: *Thinking Photographing: Reflecting on the Causes Making*, I discuss the stages of making according to the four causes. The discussion is centred on a landscape project that I have been working on for several years that I have provisionally called the Roads Project. There are five parts to this chapter as follows:

- I. *History of the Roads Project*. In order to provide some background to the project, to describe its scope and scale, I briefly discuss how the project has developed, changes to working methods and approaches to image making.
- II. *Experiences of Photographing*. Here I discuss my experiences of photographing, drawing upon selected extracts from voice recordings that I made during the activity of photographing.
- III. *Reflecting on Photographing*. I reflective upon of the act of photographing and attempt to engage with and apply the four causes in relation to the stage of making where photographs are “taken.”

- IV. *Making after Taking*. In this section I provide an account of the further stages of making that take place after the photographs have been taken. These later stages, collectively termed post-production, are required to prepare the image for reproduction. In the case of my practice this includes scanning the negative to make a high-resolution digital image file, adjustments to the geometry of the image, colour correction and dust removal.
- V. *Building a Work*. Here I provide an account of the editing process whereby a number of images have been selected and sequenced for presentation in the form of a book. I end this section with a reflection upon the selection of images and its effectiveness or failure as a work that unconceals according to the four causes.

The chapter concludes with an evaluation of how the Four Causes, and other aspects of Heidegger's theory, contribute to a theory of making in photography specifically within the genre of landscape. I also discuss aspects of making that escape the scope of the Four Causes.

Chapter 6: *The Causes of Photographs*, is the concluding chapter of the thesis where I draw my research together and reflect upon the success of the four causes as a theoretical model for a description of making a work of photographic art. I end the thesis with a consideration for how the research has contributed to the knowledge of making photographic works of art within the genre of landscape.

Chapter 1

Photographic Theory and the Absence of Making

The aim of my research is to provide a theory of making works of photographic art, specifically within the genre of landscape. This might seem a very slight subject for prolonged research but it is a subject that has on the whole been overlooked by recent photographic theory and criticism. My intention is not simply to delineate the act of making a landscape photograph but to discover and describe what is involved in the formation of a body of work within the context of contemporary photographic art practice. By this I mean photography as a critically informed practice.

As I aim to demonstrate in this first chapter there has been very little theoretical discussion on the experiences of making – not just photographs in themselves, but the construction of a work of photographic art (i.e. a collection of images intended to make a coherent work). This will also include works of art made using photography, since it could be argued that they are not quite the same thing. The first signifies photography as a specialist activity. The second signifies making use of photography for non-specialist purposes. The difference may seem slight, but, as I aim to show, this notion of photography as a specialist medium has tended to foreground the medium over content thereby suggesting a focus upon the specificity of the medium. Medium-specificity, as will be discussed, was pivotal to certain modernist theorists (e.g. Clement Greenberg, Michael Fried, John Szarkowski) and makers (e.g. Alfred Stieglitz, Minor White). It was challenged by later postmodern theorists due to its narrow focus and concentration on form, self-expression and subsequent alienation from the concerns of society. In fact it was challenged almost as soon as the ink was dry by the practices of Conceptual art.

A pivotal point of interest to recent (i.e. since the early 1980s) and current practice of photography as art, and art as photography, seems by consensus to be the use of photography

by Conceptual artists in the mid-1960s to mid-1970s in Europe and North America.² As Victor Burgin stated in his introduction to *Thinking Photography* (1982), Conceptual art brought critical theory into the field of art practice, and so to photography and photographic representation. However, this idea of photography was not the idea of an independent creative practice as promoted by early twentieth century modernists such as Alfred Stieglitz and others after him. Photography, as discussed by Burgin and others, should, in the words of Walter Benjamin, be “inserted into the context of living social relations” (Benjamin 1934, p.17). Hence art photographs were related to other uses of photography such as advertising, journalism, glamour photography and social photography. The intention was to recognise photography as a practice woven into the wider social fabric of culture.

The problem, as I hope to demonstrate in this first chapter, is that the practices of making photographs as discussed by modernists incorporate frames of reference that are too narrow and self-contained, whereas discussions by postmodernists, that reflect more the conditions of practice today, have tended to overlook the practice and experience of how work is made. In the case of the latter it seems that discussion on the act of making risks a return to the problematic position of the authority of the maker, a position challenged so persuasively by Roland Barthes in *Death of the Author* (1967) and by Michel Foucault in *What is an Author* (1969). To risk oversimplification of Barthes’ short essay, a key tenet is that the meaning of a work does not originate in the author but in the wider culture. The maker appropriates the language of a work and is a conduit for the meaning. Therefore meaning does not originate from the author but from the reader. An effect of the influence and persuasive power of Barthes’ argument is that the relevance of a discussion of making on the part of the individual may seem irrelevant (or even embarrassing).³ The influence of Barthes’ text upon postmodern theory and art practice seems

² The word ‘use’ is particularly relevant since Ed Ruscha used photography as ‘a means to an end’ to make books rather than photography as an artform in its own right.

³ Embarrassing since the most excessive mode of modernist photographic self-expression took place supported by Equivalence, its founder being Alfred Stieglitz and its most influential exponent and

to me to be deep rooted (even if it is not directly referred to in favour of other texts), as does the writing of Walter Benjamin with both writers being coupled so frequently in writing on photography since the late 1970s. There is good reason for this: both writers argued for the wider social use of art/photography than that present in late modernism (particularly the North American variety⁴). The combination of Benjamin's call for the production of non-auratic art with Barthes' suppression of the author makes subsequent discussions on making deeply (but perhaps rightly) problematic. Further to this, the influence of Conceptual art on current and recent practice also contributes to a lack of discussion on the specifics of making. Conceptual artists adopted what they considered as an anti-aesthetic attitude towards making artwork intending to challenge previously held values of object-hood, connoisseurship and the market value of art works present in high-modernist theory. Conceptual artists also used photography in ways that completely overlooked photography as a specialist creative practice with a history and set of hard won creative credentials. Instead they favoured what they perceived as the ubiquity, cheapness and ephemeral quality of photographs (Roberts, 1997).

A consequence of this is that there is little critically informed discussion on how works of photographic art are made. Making is not the focus of informed critical thinking on photography. An example of this state is expressed by Liz Wells in the introduction to her very thorough theoretical primer *A Critical Introduction to Photography*. Wells emphatically states that:

This [book] is essentially about reading photographic images rather than about their making.

(Wells, 2004, p.4)

It is interesting that this book is intended to raise awareness of the uses and meanings of photography in the wider culture for undergraduates who may be in the process of coming to terms with making meaningful images with a medium that previously, in its ubiquity, may have

practitioner being Minor White. The foundation upon which Equivalence was based was largely discredited by later theorists.

⁴ It would be a mistake to brand modernism as a single entity. It would ignore the realisation of the heterogeneity of culture proposed by postmodernism.

been perceived as so self-evident, given, clear and unambiguous. It seems clear from this statement that critical theory as applied to photography is about the status of *the photograph* and, strangely, is not about photographing. The aim of my research is to address this lack and attempt to provide a theoretical discussion on the experiences of making photographic works of art that is relevant to contemporary practice.

The Structure of the chapter

In order to address what is absent I need at first to describe some of what is present. In this chapter I will discuss key texts and attitudes towards photography as an art form from modernism, through to the current period. The texts discussed have been selected due to their relationship to or influence on practice. As a result the selection will inevitably be selective.⁵ The structure of the chapter is organised under four headings as follows:

1. Modernism and Modernity

Since, as I argue, postmodern theory has resulted in making being overlooked I will reassess modernist theories that approach ideas of making. In order to provide something of a wider picture I will first provide a brief description of modernity, the cultural condition in which modernism sits, drawing on Jurgen Habermas, in order to describe the reasons for its demise. In light of this I will then discuss key texts by Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried to describe the then dominant attitude of high-modernist theory on painting of the mid-1960s. Clear parallels can be found between these texts and modernist attitudes towards photography of the same period and earlier.

⁵ The selection of texts will inevitably be selective. For example, neither Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1977) nor John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972) are discussed, not out of disrespect for these texts but because neither author presents a discussion on making. It could be argued however that these texts have influenced image making as demonstrated in Sontag's critique, in relation to the work of Diane Arbus, that all portraits are a violation of the person photographed. However for the aims of the research I have selected texts that explicitly discuss making or that best represent the modes of thought prevalent or significant for a given period

2. Modernism and Photography

In order to illustrate these parallels I will describe and provide a critique of Stieglitz's theory of the Equivalent and its wide adoption by North American photographers, in particular Minor White, who described it as the "perennial trend" (White, 1964) for all serious creative photographers. I will draw upon Allan Sekula's (1982) criticism of Equivalence in order to demonstrate its distance and difference from the thought that began to emerge in the late-1970s. This is followed by a discussion on John Szarkowski's seminal text *The Photographer's Eye* (1966). I hope to show that whilst Szarkowski's text discusses aspects that are fundamental to photographic making, his application of a narrow medium-specificity results in a formalist theory that risks alienating the practice of photographing from the wider cultural concerns.

3. The Critical Shift

During almost exactly the same period there emerged practices that deviated from and challenged the late modernist model, these being Pop art and Conceptual art. Furthermore there also emerged writers such as Roland Barthes' whose text *Death of the Author* (1968)⁶ challenged the hegemony of the author as originator of meaning in favour of meaning being a product of culture. I believe that Barthes' text is something of a catalyst for the challenging of a narrow medium-specific and self-expressive theory of art in favour of an engagement with wider social and cultural practices that became prevalent in art and photographic theory of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Three events occurred in the field of art photography in the late 1970s and early 1980s that I believe were pivotal indicators of a cultural and creative shift away from formalist modernism towards postmodernism in photography. This includes the exhibition *Three Perspectives on Photography* that took place at the Hayward Gallery, London, in June, 1979. A second event was the acquisition in 1980 of the privately owned and highly influential magazine *Creative Camera* through Arts Council funding and its subsequent change in direction. I discuss the

⁶ It should be noted that this text was not widely available in English until the publication of a collection of Barthes' essays titled *Image Music Text*, in 1977.

exhibition in some detail since it represents clear evidence of a challenge to modernist ideals and a shift towards photographic practice informed by critical theory.

The third event (or rather several) is the publication of three key anthologies that facilitated the wider dissemination of often previously unavailable historical and contemporary photographic texts. These anthologies were published between 1980 and 1982. They are *Classic Essays on Photography* edited by Alan Trachtenberg (1980), *Photography in Print* edited by Vicki Goldberg (1981) and *Thinking Photography* edited, with contributions, by Victor Burgin (1982). I will briefly discuss the anthologies edited by Trachtenberg and Goldberg. I will concentrate more heavily on the *Thinking Photography* since it continues to exert an influence on critical writing and practice today (see Campany, 2004). In particular I will concentrate on two texts therein that seem particularly relevant to contemporary practice, these being Walter Benjamin's *The Author as Producer* and Victor Burgin's *Photographic Practice and Art Theory*.

4. Other texts

Following this I very briefly discuss other anthologies that have been published following these three events. My findings are that the activity of photographing has been totally eclipsed by interest in the cultural and social significance of the image. This is understandable since this period saw an unprecedented opening up of strands of thought and research into practices (e.g. as evident in Richard Bolton's *The Contest of Meaning*, 1993) that received little attention in the established photographic histories written by Helmut Gernsheim (1962) and Beaumont Newhall (1964).

I then make a leap to one of the few texts that does approach the concerns of image making of the recent period. This being Stephen Shore's *The Nature of Photographs: A Primer* (first edition 1998, second edition referred to here 2007). Here Shore describes his model for the kinds of decisions related to making photographs. However, I find that he presents too many limitations since it is based upon a concentration on the formal qualities of the image and almost entirely overlooks the significance of content. Due to this (and I do not want to lose sight that the

book is a primer for undergraduates) I think Shore's account lacks relevance to the current fine art photography practice since it overlooks the influence of critical theory.

The last text I will discuss is the recently published *Photography Theory*, edited by James Elkins (2007). The format of the book is unique in that it presents a selection of texts that outline the current state of photography theory followed by a panel discussion that attempts to define the essential elements of photography theory. This is then followed by a number of responses predominantly by other theorists. I will concentrate on the panel discussion since it is the central feature of the book.

In the conclusion of this first chapter I will explain why I think that both modernist and postmodernist theory of photography is inadequate in relation to a theory of making work of art using photography.

1. Modernity and Modernism

In his essay *Modernity - An Incomplete Project* (1980), Jurgen Habermas presents the failure of modernity to sustain progress in society. This he sees as a greater failure of the Enlightenment to effectively communicate specialist knowledge to the wider public in order to direct the progress of that society. An aim of the Enlightenment was that highly specialised intellectual practices, in the form of academies, would filter their knowledge down to the populace with the aim of improving life. However, these practices became elite and exclusive and so became remote from the public they were meant to serve. For Habermas, the result was that the Enlightenment methodology of knowledge had folded in upon itself; it had become specialist and self-reflective to the point where it was no longer relevant to public life. It could no longer contribute in a meaningful way because the spheres of knowledge, governed by those within the academies, came to have no meaning beyond its own existence. As Habermas describes:

What accrues to culture through specialised treatment and reflection does not immediately and necessarily become the property of everyday praxis. With cultural realisation of this sort, the threat increases that the life-world, whose traditional substance has already been devalued, will become more and more impoverished.

(Habermas, 1985, p.9)

An inevitable collapse occurred. According to Habermas, postmodernism is not a new formation of knowledge, but a consequence of the collapse of the model of knowledge adopted in modernity.⁷

Evidence of the outcome of such an interiority, self-reflection and subsequent collapse occurred within the art world of North American high-modernism. The theories on painting of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried were so focused on a medium specificity that all notions of content (works that represented the outside world) became redundant in the face of a theory that sought to eliminate all that was superfluous from the *essential* qualities of painting. Drawing upon Kantian criticism and theories of judgement, Clement Greenberg sought to define the limits of the practice of painting. His essay *Modernist Painting* (1960, revised 1965 as used here) has come to define the essence of late modernism in the visual arts.⁸ Greenberg describes the historical precedents for modernist painting and defines the highly specialised path that it should follow in order to be true to itself. Accordingly, during the Enlightenment period, art was threatened with being subsumed into a form of entertainment and therefore each art had to demonstrate its own intrinsic value independent of other forms of cultural activity in order to justify its survival, not in the general terms of art, but in terms of each particular art. For

⁷ This definition of postmodernism has been argued against, but his description of the formation of modernism and the reasons for its demise is echoed by way of proof in the texts by Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried. Habermas's theory of modernism also has parallels with Jean Francois Lyotard's theory that postmodernism saw the end of grand narratives.

⁸ Sometimes referred to as high modernism, it would be false to claim that this was the only model of modernism. I think it should be considered North American as opposed to universal even though it was the dominant model in art at the time.

Greenberg, the irreducible qualities in painting were the physical qualities of the paint and the surface that supported the painting. Therefore, through its modernist evolution, painting took the limitations of the medium – the physical limits and flatness of the support and the properties of pigment. Thus the defining quality of painting for Greenberg was:

...the ineluctable flatness of the support that remained most fundamental in the processes by which pictorial art criticised and defined itself under Modernism.

(Greenberg, 1965, p.756)

According to Greenberg this did not represent a break with painting of the past but rather represented the recognition of a progression and the sustaining of excellence through the reduction of all that was extraneous to painting itself.⁹ Key to Greenberg's conception of the progression and achievement of excellence in painting was the attention to *medium specificity*. This rarefied theory of modern painting was further developed by another highly influential critic of the period, Michael Fried. Following on from Greenberg, Fried regards the removal of representational forms in favour of abstraction as an evolution and a purifying of painting from all that was extraneous to it:

Roughly speaking, the history of painting from Manet through Synthetic Cubism and Matisse may be characterised in terms of the gradual withdrawal of painting from the task of representing reality – or of reality from the power of painting to represent it – in favour of an increasing preoccupation with problems intrinsic to painting itself.

(Michael Fried, 1966, *Three American Painters*, p.770)

For Fried, the removal of representation from painting allowed the best painters (i.e. American abstract painters) to achieve the highest quality in their work due to the control of pure form

⁹ In a filmed interview with T. J .Clarke (shown on the Open University, History of Art), Greenberg renounced his theories on modern painting, stating that he did not really like abstract expressionism, preferring the flower paintings of Fantin Latour instead. Unfortunately I have no further details of the interview.

unhindered by the requirements of representation. It was the viewer's emotional experience of this form that was evidence of the quality of the work. Thus, modernist painting, released from representation, was able to immerse itself in what were properly and uniquely, painterly problems and need not concern itself with anything beyond its own identity, itself as its own specialist subject. The logical extension to this is that the artist was freed from any responsibility towards the concerns of the society in which he or she lived. As Fried stated:

In a sense, modernist art in this century finished what society in the nineteenth century had began: the alienation of the artist from the general preoccupations of the culture in which he is embedded, and the prizing loose of art itself from the concerns, aims and ideals of that culture. With the achievement of cubism in the first and second decade of this century, if not before, painting and sculpture became free to pursue concerns intrinsic to themselves.
(Ibid, p.772)

Justifying this reduction by drawing on Hegel's idea of historical progression, Fried claims that the artist's extraction from his [or her] culture now allows him to immerse himself in what is properly the aim of painting. The act is akin to some kind of sacrifice on the part of the painter to dedicate him or herself to the utterly intense and now properly specialised practice of painting, that now somehow the painter can know more about the essence of life by not being a part of it:

This means that while modernist painting has increasingly divorced itself from the concerns of society in which it precariously flourishes, the actual dialectic by which it is made has taken on more and more denseness, structure and complexity of moral experience – that is, of life itself, but lived as few would live it: in a state of continuous intellectual and moral alertness.
(Fried, *ibid*, p.773)

In these terms not only was painting massively reduced to very specific physical qualities, but the life of the painter in turn was reduced to a hermit-like state within the rarefied field of non-representational and culturally non-reflective painting.

2. Modernism and Photography

Medium specificity is also a key theme within photography. In some ways more so than painting, which was seen by modernist writers on photography as casting too much of a shadow upon the creative credentials of the much younger medium.

In the anthology, *Photographers on Photography* (ed. Nathan Lyons, 1966) the autonomy of photography as a creative medium is a consistent theme that ran from Peter Henry Emerson in the late nineteenth-century up until the time of the publication of the anthology. In the preface Lyons describes his collection as presenting “points of view which have contributed to the development of contemporary photographic expression”¹⁰ (Lyons, 1966, p.5). The main theme of his introduction is the development from early arguments concerning the problem of human agency in photography towards photography as a fully-fledged and independent creative practice. Though his account may be familiar today, being akin to the accounts presented in the established histories (e.g. Newhall, 1964, 1984; Gernsheim, 1962, 1986; Jeffrey, 1981), in 1966 it may well have been little known. Lyons states that the majority of photographic art that was made during the nineteenth century mimicked painting, and as such it was a perversion against essential qualities of photography. The photographer at the turn of the twentieth century was in a position to rediscover the medium. Lyons sums up a solution to this position with reference to Aaron Siskind:

As the language or vocabulary of photography has been extended, the emphasis of meaning has shifted – shifted from what the world looks like to what we feel about the world and what we want the world to mean

(Siskind, 1958, in Lyons, p.13)

¹⁰ My initial tendency was to describe photography as medium rather than process. However, it occurs to me that the word ‘medium’ in this context assumes creativity, placing photography in relation to art, whereas the word ‘process’ places photography in relation science.

This statement suggests a point of arrival and self-realisation: the progression of photography from a machine-based recording device, to an imitator of painting and eventually as an independent expressive medium. However, to my mind, Siskind's statement means rather more than Lyons admits. Not only does Siskind's statement suggest "a critical distinction which should resolve Emerson's dilemma by placing the authorship of the picture on the photographer and not the machine" (Lyons, p.13) it also suggests the way in which the photographer does not just respond to things in the world but also is able to dictate a transformation of the meaning of those things. This practice was referred to as *transcendence* and underpins many modernist, especially North American, approaches to photography (e.g. Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Weston, Paul Strand, Minor White). This attitude places the photographer at the pivotal point around which the image, and even the world as perceived, had meaning.

An extreme example of transcendence was expressed by Alfred Stieglitz in his account of how he made his photograph *The Steerage* (1907). This image and Steiglitz's description of the event of making the exposure has become part and parcel of photographic history (Newhall, 1964; Gernsheim, 1986; Ian Jeffrey, 1981; Graham Clarke, 1997). For modernists it was a pivotal statement attesting to the creative credentials of photography. For critical theorists, such as Allan Sekula (1982), Victor Burgin (1982) and Christopher Phillips (1993), it was the subject of much criticism.

Stieglitz advocated the application of "straight photography" which necessitated the pure use of photographic materials and equipment. The use of soft-focus lenses, retouching and hand marks adopted by pictorialists were intended to lend photography the status of art by mimicking painterly techniques. For Stieglitz, these were considered false values since they were not the proper characteristics of photography. The idea of straightness would seem to refer to an open attitude towards content – that the object photographed was represented in a clear and objective manner. However, for Stieglitz, in its medium purity, it provided a vehicle for poetic expression that provided a means to express the self rather than describe the things that were photographed.



Fig 1.1 Alfred Stieglitz, *The Steerage*, 1907

Stieglitz describes his discovery of this potential of photographic expression in terms of personal, spiritual revelation. The following edited quotation has been widely published, with slight variations (Newhall, 1964, 1984; Clarke, 1997):

A round straw hat, the funnel leaning left, the stairway leaning right, the white drawbridge made by circular chains, white suspenders crossing on the back of a man in the steerage below, round shapes of iron machinery, a mast cutting into the sky, making a triangular shape... I saw a picture of shapes, and underlying that the feeling I had about life.

(Stieglitz, in Clarke, 1997, p.169)

The notion of the revelatory powers of form lie in the shapes within the image rather than what is happening in the world. As Graham Clarke puts it:

The photographer does not record, he creates, and the material world is, effectively, no more than the outward manifestation of a spiritual other waiting to be discovered. The photographer is a

seer, with all that implies in relation to a romantic tradition based on the artist as inspired philosopher who transforms a dull literal reality into something ideal.

(Clarke, 1997, p.170)

However, in his essay *On The Invention of Photographic Meaning* (in Burgin, 1982), Allan Sekula provides a more complete quotation that offers a greater insight into Stieglitz's idea about his photography and communicates a little more of the sense of Stieglitz's revelation:

The whole scene fascinated me. I longed to escape from my surroundings and join these people... I saw shapes related to each other. I saw a picture of shapes and underlying that of the feeling I had about life. And as I was deciding, should I try to put down this seemingly new vision that held me – people, the common people, the feeling of the ship and the ocean and the sky and the feeling of release that I was away from the mob called the rich – Rembrandt came into my mind and I wondered would he have felt as I was feeling...

I had but one plate holder with one unexposed plate. Would I get what I saw, what I felt? Finally I released the shutter. My heart thumping, I had never heard my heart thump before. Had I gotten my picture? I knew if I had, another milestone in photography had been reached, related to the milestones of my 'Car Horses' made in 1892, and my 'Hand of Man' made in 1902, which had opened up a new era for photography, of seeing. In a sense it would go beyond them, for here would be a picture based on related shapes and on the deepest human feeling, a step in my own evolution, a spontaneous discovery.

I took my camera back to my stateroom and as I returned to my steamer chair my wife said. 'I had sent a steward to look for you.' I told her where I had been. She said, 'You speak as if you were far away in a distant world,' and I said I was. 'How you seem to hate these people in the first class.' No, I didn't hate them, but I merely felt completely out of place.

(Steiglitz in Sekula, 1982, p.99)

Stieglitz's description of his feelings about life are in no way sympathetic to the class divide that seems so evident in the image.¹¹ The forms and shapes in the picture are the vocabulary with

¹¹ Sekula compares the Stieglitz's *The Steerage* to the more socially motivated work of Lewis Hine of the same period.

which the image communicates feeling. Form is a conduit through which a kind of spiritual revelation and self-awakening occurs. The sense of alienation from his fellow first class travellers is clear. However, a greater alienation is apparent in terms of the experience being centered on form and abstraction – hence being in a “distant world.” Sekula describes this as “symbolist autobiography” (p.99), “fetishised products of the imagination” (p.100), and picks up on the theme of alienation where the content, or to be precise to Sekula, “the iconic level” (ibid), is denied in favour of meaning claimed through abstraction. Formalism occurs in the “distant world” (ibid) of the photographer’s imagination rather than within the social sphere that is used in this example, as the raw materials for the expression of “feelings about life.” The modern artist’s alienation from the concerns of society that Fried writes about in 1964 was in fact a central feature of much earlier creative photographic practice in the early twentieth century in North America.

Stieglitz later developed this approach into a practice he called “Equivalence.” His first pictures under this title were cloud pictures in which he attempted to communicate his emotional state by visually evoking the expressive qualities of music. To some the equivalent was the ideal of creative photography. In 1963 Minor White published an essay titled *Equivalence: The Perennial Trend* (this essay is the last text in Nathan Lyons’ anthology). Here, White describes Equivalence as “probably the most mature idea ever presented to picture making photography” (in Lyons, p.168) and states unequivocally; “the concept and discipline of Equivalence in practice is simply the backbone and core of photography as a medium of expression-creation “ (ibid, p.168). The fundamental idea is that any photograph can function as an equivalent if it causes a corresponding experience of self-realisation in the viewer. As White stated:

When the photographer shows us what he considers to be an Equivalent, he is showing us an example of a feeling, but this feeling is not the feeling he had for the object he photographed. What really happens is that he *recognised* an object or series of forms that, when photographed, would yield an image with specific suggestive powers that can direct the viewer into a specific and known feeling, state or place within himself.

(White, 1963, p.170)

For White (and for others such as Aaron Siskind) the image acts a mirror for both the photographer and also for the viewer. Equivalency is the ability to use the visual world as the plastic material for the photographer's expressive purposes and was presented as a spiritual and poetic process of revelation:

Not having an exact equivalent for the word "poetic" in photography we will suggest the word "vision," meaning not only sight but insight. The effect that seems to be associated with Equivalence may be worded thus: When both subject matter and manner of rendering are transcended, by whatever means, that which seems to be matter becomes what seems to be spirit.

(Ibid, p.171)



Fig 1.2 Minor White, *Sun and Rock*, 1948.

White advocates certain things that could be photographed in order to produce surfaces that yield expressive shapes, textures and tones. It is no surprise that natural form is often used as the raw material of equivalence. Synthetic objects that have been weathered such as peeling paint also appear.

Equivalence was a great influence upon the work of other North American photographers such as Aaron Siskind and Paul Caponigro, and it endured in the UK in the 1970s, especially within the pages of the magazine *Creative Camera* and for image makers and teachers Thomas Joshua Cooper, John Blakemore and Paul Hill, all of whom appeared in the pivotal exhibition *Three Perspectives* at The Haywood Gallery in 1979 (discussed later). Coinciding with this, Equivalence would come under attack from critical theorists such as Victor Burgin and Allan Sekula due to its severe interiority, self-indulgence, application of cod-psychoanalysis and (echoing Fried) its effect of alienating photography from the issues of a wider social environment. In this way the Equivalent relates to Fried's high-modernist theory of the negation of representation (i.e. of recognisable content). It also relates to his theory of the artist's necessary condition of social alienation. Therefore, I argue that Equivalence belongs to the kinds of rarefied practices and attitudes that Habermas described as being a symptom of the collapse of modernity.

This distancing of photography from engagement with the social world is also present in another highly influential text that characterises a material specific and formalist approach to photography: John Szarkowski's *The Photographer's Eye*. Though Szarkowski had very little time for the poetics of equivalence there is a common theme of medium specificity and self-expression.

John Szarkowski: *The Photographer's Eye*

John Szarkowski published his book to the exhibition 'The Photographer's Eye' in 1966. The date of publication of *The Photographer's Eye* is important as it coincides with the publication of the key texts on modernist painting by Greenberg and Fried and of Minor White's essay on Equivalence discussed above. The exhibition was held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1964. The exhibition, and the text that accompanied the publication, were a great influence on creative photographers in North America and later in Great Britain. It continued the debate initiated by Emerson in 1888, upheld by Stieglitz in the 1920s and others afterwards, on how photography can be regarded as an independent art.

Szarkowski's title is significant in being a key example of the essentialism of late-modernist theory. The title cites a single eye, not a plural eye that might suggest a collective – it signifies *the* essential eye of all photographers. The text and catalogue is divided into five categories that for Szarkowski define the characteristics of photography:

1. The Thing Itself
2. The Detail
3. The Frame
4. Time
5. Vantage

Szarkowski starts his introduction with the following statement:

This book is an investigation of what photographs look like, and of why they look that way. It is concerned with photographic style and with photographic tradition: with the sense of possibilities that a photographer today takes to his work.

(Szarkowski, 1966)

This statement seems unequivocal and the tone is authoritative: these are *the concerns* that photographers (should) have when they take photographs. Szarkowski's approach is based on the idea that photography offered a 'radically new picture making process' to that of painting based 'not on synthesis but on selection' (Ibid, p.6). In an attempt to break from the traditions of painting, the medium to which photography has always traditionally deferred, and echoing Stieglitz's much earlier promotion of photography as an independent art, Szarkowski states:

Paintings were *made* – constructed from a storehouse of traditional schemes and skills and attributes – but photographs, as the man on the street put it, were *taken*.

(Szarkowski, 1966, p.6)

The “old forms” of painting could not be used to justify the creative potential for this new “mechanical and mindless” process and required that its practitioners ‘abandoned their allegiance to traditional pictorial standards’ (ibid, p.6). He refers to Baudelaire’s declaration that “This industry, by invading the territories of art, has become art’s most mortal enemy” (ibid, p.6). Szarkowski states that photography does things in a different way to painting and these have been done by different men – by the thousands of artistically uneducated amateurs who practiced photography out of passing interest or solely for commerce. Photography, as opposed to Greenberg and Fried’s ideas of painting, was about as un-academic and ahistorical as it was possible to be – it seemed to have no precedent, it soon became applied to industry (the traditional nemesis of art) and its practitioners sought to use a process that replaced the artist’s hand with machine, chemicals and a minimal amount of training. Szarkowski states that these men would not be burdened by tradition because they had none to begin with. This is interesting as it assumes that visual traditions were somehow invisible to all but the artistically trained. In this way he makes a case for medium specificity but on opposite terms to that stated by Greenberg and Fried; Szarkowski’s photographers are amateurs and visually untrained and so unaffected by academic art requirements and the burden of history. Furthermore, due to the pragmatic quality of photography, the images produced are inescapably representational, or so it would seem.¹²

They have in fact little in common except their success, and a shared vocabulary: these pictures are unmistakably photographs. The vision they share belongs to no school or aesthetic theory but to photography itself.

(ibid, p. 7)

Such a statement places Szarkowski’s text in relation but also opposed to Greenberg and Fried. It is a statement for the independence and specificity of photography, but one that alienates photography and photographers from the prior history and tradition of visual art. In order to

¹² Later in the essay Szarkowski makes a claim for the formal qualities of photography, stating the primary importance of form over content. This is akin to Fried’s alienation of the artist from the concerns of society.

describe this specificity Szarkowski draws upon the five unique facets, as stated above, that make up the process of photographing. As he states:

It is hoped that they may contribute to the formulation of a vocabulary and a critical perspective more fully responsive to the unique phenomena of photography
(Ibid, p.8)

The Thing Itself

According to Szarkowski the photographer deals with the actual and has to come to terms with this, whilst at the same time realising that the photographic image will represent things as different to how they were perceived. The print, in its limited tonality and size, filtered out a great deal of reality and rearranged it so that some things seemed prominent against other things that receded and the camera mutilated the portrait subject to the point of a change of character. This difference, once considered problematic, was intrinsic to the modern photographer:

It was the photographer's problem to see not simply the reality before him but the still invisible picture, and to make choices in terms of the later.
(ibid, p.8)

Immediately after this statement he declares; "this is an artistic problem, not a scientific one" (p.8). His argument seems to have moved from photography as an unstudied social practice to one that is now specialised. In relation to this difference between subject and image he also makes the point that it is possible to regard the photographic image as more truthful whereas our perception is selective. Further to this, the image would survive the object and would "become the remembered reality" (p.8). To reinforce this theme Szarkowski draws on William M. Ivens Jr: "the accepted report of an event is of greater importance than the event" (p.8). Ivens is also quoted in order to refer to a change in the epistemological order of human understanding: "The nineteenth century began by believing that what was reasonable was true and it would end

up by believing that what it saw in a photograph was true” (Ivens, quoted p.8).¹³ The transformative power of the camera is an intrinsic property of photography. The role of the artistic photographer is to predict and control this transformation.¹⁴

The Detail

Under this category Szarkowski revisits the relationship of photography to actuality and fact, stating that it was the photographer’s “problem to force the facts to tell the truth” (p.8). He claims that whilst photography was incapable of presenting a coherent narrative the process by which the photographer isolated objects within the photograph imbued them with a significance that the objects may not have previously owned. Two important themes run through this section: the narrative incapacity of photography and the transformation of the trivial into the significant:

In the early days of the picture magazines the attempt was made to achieve narrative through photographic sequences, but the superficial coherence of these stories was generally achieved at the expense of photographic discovery. The heroic documentation of the American Civil War by the Brady group, and the incomparably larger photographic record of the Second World War, have this in common: neither explained, without extensive captioning, what was happening. The function of these pictures was not to make the story clear; it was to make it real.

(ibid, p.9)

¹³ A similar idea is also present, but more rigorously worked through, in Barthes *Mythologies* (1958), where the signifier replaces the signified as the primary reference, becoming what Barthes calls myth. An extension of this idea also underpins Jean Baudrillard’s ideas in *Simulations* (1983).

¹⁴ Szarkowski does not discuss or even mention the idea of the Equivalent even though it was practiced by several image makers who appear in his selection of images. There is no mention of, or even one image by, Alfred Stieglitz. What appears is a leaning towards realist and documentary photography rather than the more expressive and ‘artistic’ practice of equivalence. For example, images by Walker Evans appear twice, Henri Lartigue six times.

The implications of this statement contain several points of interest. Szarkowski seems to overlook the fact that many works of photography are not constituted by singular images but by a carefully edited sequence or series of images. Since many images belong to larger bodies of work the presentation of a single image results in a shift of context causing a reduction or loss of meaning due to the removal of this image from the greater whole of which it is part. This is apparent in many images selected by Szarkowski and is a reason for criticism by later writers who present a critically informed theoretical attitude (e.g. Allan Sekula, 1982; Douglas Crimp, 1993).

To an extent I think that Szarkowski overlooks the function of the detail in photographs. He avoids the way the camera describes things indiscriminately and how a photographer may choose to draw attention to certain elements of an image (e.g. by control of depth of field). The role of details in presenting a surfeit of information, though present in some much earlier accounts on photography, is overlooked in preference for the differentiation between narrative and fact.

The Frame

This section demonstrates an attitude towards imagery where form has priority over content – the primacy of the formal relationships within the image over the meaning of the relationships between the things represented. He opens this section with the statement:

Since the photographer's picture was not conceived but selected, his subject was never truly discrete, never wholly self-contained.

(ibid p.9)

Adding a little later:

If the photographer's frame surrounded two figures, isolating them from the crowd in which they stood, it created a relationship between those two figures that had not existed before.

(ibid, p.9)

This idea that photographic artwork evolves through selection with the absence of conception presents a rather limited idea of how a photographer takes, makes and collects photographs.

Though I understand that he is contrasting the process of painting to the act of photographing, it is too narrow to reflect the process by which images are made. Furthermore, there is no attention to the role played in editing where images that create hitherto unseen relationships are placed in relationship with other images, as indeed Szarkowski does in his book.

Having ruled out the validity of sequence, Szarkowski leaves us with the idea of the serendipity of the single image. Whereas the idea that a photographic image is never self-contained has a certain validity within the process of using the camera frame, the idea of selection seems to suggest that making work can be achieved by some kind of instantaneous response. The inference seems to be that conception equates with wholeness whereas selection equates with fragmentation. This is a difficult issue to discuss within the context of Szarkowski's selection of images since the images themselves have been plucked from their original context. Within his stated context of a busy and constantly moving crowd the primacy of selection over conception has a degree of sense in that the preconception of the movements of people cannot be controlled or prejudged. Though I can see his logic, I disagree, more because of the limits he places on what constitutes making photographs, or as he put it at the outset of his introduction, "with the sense of possibilities that a photographer today takes to his work" (p.6). In his defence Szarkowski is concentrating on a delimited photographic act – that of using the camera. However, photographing (the point of exposure of a single frame) is only a fragment of the processes that contribute to making a complete and coherent work; even the idea that a photographer thinks about possibilities constitutes pre-conception and a wider scope than a single image.

A further feature absent from Szarkowski's account, and key to both practice and theory since at least the early 1980s, is the way in which influence plays its part in informing approaches and ideas to image making. Though towards the end of the essay he describes how photography has influenced painting, the issue of any other cultural artefact influencing photographers

receives little thought. An informed critical practice in my own period of writing considers the maker embedded within society where the practice of making involves the appropriation of pre-existing forms and methods rather than the unmediated response to things in the world described by Szarkowski.¹⁵

Szarkowski states that using the frame is the “central act of photography, the act of choosing and eliminating” (ibid, p.9). This conception of photography falls into line with his idea that photography is a form of selection rather than synthesis and/or conception. It also conforms with his idea that photography deals with actuality rather than with narrative and invention. Even more than this though, his idea is that the selection is not based upon the meaning of the relationship between things in the frame but upon the formal values of the resulting image. The frame, he writes:

...forces a concentration on the picture edge – the line that separates in from out – and on the shapes that are created by it.

(ibid, p.9)

Whereas the notion of edge, to myself at least, suggests the point at which a world is implied beyond the frame, to Szarkowski’s theory the contents of the photograph, and so the symbolic significance of them, are subservient to their formal values. In so doing Szarkowski has moved the practice of photography towards the alienation of the artist described by Fried.

Time

Szarkowski makes the point that there is no such thing as an instantaneous photograph. All photographs have duration – what he calls ‘a discreet parcel of time’ (p.10) – and this duration, unique in the history of images is always in the present. Movement in early photographs was often a problem due to slow emulsions and lenses. Szarkowski’s attitude towards these

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that challenges to the modernist/romantic idea of the author (Barthes, 1968; Foucault, 1969) were written within a few years of Szarkowski’s text.

mistakes of blurring and superimposition are an extension of the hitherto unappreciated specifics of the medium. It is within the context of time, or more accurately the duration of exposure, in relation to limits of human perception that photography made a significant contribution to the knowledge of animal and human locomotion. According to Szarkowski, despite this fantastic revelation, it is not the realisation of the passage of physical motion that the human eye and mind was unable to perceive that was important to photographers, but the play of formal patterns that resulted from the minuscule fragmentation of time:

Immobilizing these thin slices of time has been a source of continuing fascination for the photographer. And while pursuing this experiment he discovered something else: he discovered that there was a beauty in the fragmentation of time that had little to do with what was happening. It had rather to do with seeing the momentary patterning of lines and shapes that had been previously concealed within the flux of movement.

(ibid, p.10)

Such a theory positions the photographer as oblivious to the significance of things and events represented in the image. The reduction of represented content in the world to the visual form of the image is parallel to Fried's assertion that in order to produce work that was formally excellent the artist needed to eradicate representation. Where Fried states that alienation from the needs of society is a necessary condition for the modernist painter, Szarkowski effectively extends this alienation to Cartier-Bresson's idea of the decisive moment, adding that the event is not a dramatic one (i.e. of relationships between people and things in the world), but a purely visual one: "The result is not a story but a picture" (ibid). This seems to contradict Szarkowski's earlier assertion that the photographer "dealt with the actual" (*The Thing Itself*, p.4) and that "it was his problem to force facts to tell the truth" (*The Detail*, p.4), since the actual would seem to imply content and telling would seem to imply narrative (though "forcing" would also imply the image-maker's authority over this content).

Both statements seem to have closer relation to representation rather than to form. However, this move towards the formal is a necessity of the period since emphasis on representational

content in photography would cause a slide into naturalism and therefore cause a loss of photography's credentials as a modernist art form (Burgin, *Ibid*, p.210).

Vantage Point

Along with the clarity of transcription photography also presented distortions to our normal position of viewing, especially through the use of the hand-held camera. The extreme viewpoint was a visual quality specific to photography in evidence since the early twentieth century (e.g. the photographs of Alvin Langdon Coburn). The ambiguous was as much a feature as the clear. With reference to Ivins (William M. Ivins, Jr, 1953, in Trachtenberg, 1980, p.219), the claim is made that what once seemed a distortion (i.e. photographic vision), now seems natural.

Szarkowski concludes his essay by drawing upon the painting of Francis Bacon, not to validate photography in relation to it, but to demonstrate how a painter had adopted the photographic as a way of challenging the traditions of painting, to "subvert the clarity of pose of figures in traditional painting" (Szarkowski, 1966, p.11). Thus Szarkowski turns the usual state of photography as being subservient to painting on its head. He also makes the point that not only other photographers, but also photography, "the great undifferentiated, homogeneous whole of it – has been teacher, library and laboratory for those who have consciously used the camera as artists" (*ibid*). The last sentence of the text includes the oft quoted line "...photography was born whole" (*ibid*, p.11).

There is a great deal of sense to some of this, but Szarkowski's account is only part of the story. I think Szarkowski is correct to cite the influence of photography on photographers and, more pointedly, on painters. However, to claim that photography brought with it a visual code unprecedented in the traditions of image making in Western art overlooks too much and makes too great a claim for originality and an autonomy that I do not think ever existed.

It is easy to criticise a text with hindsight. Szarkowski's text has been subject to criticism by several influential writers on photography (Burgin, Tagg, Phillips, *ibid*). I run the risk of writing it

off without making the attempt to recover something of value. I should also remember that this text, like any other, is a product of cultural context. However, I think that photographers take more into account than just these five categories. At least they do now, since I would argue that the significance of content and acknowledgement of culturally embedded modes of representation are at the fore of the concerns of image making and were characteristic concerns of the postmodern shift that occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁶

3. The Critical Shift

The timing of both Greenberg's, Fried's and Szarkowski's essays coincides with other forms of artistic activity that were much less beholden to medium specificity, formalism and high culture. Pop artists such as Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg and Roy Lichtenstein combined painting with the reproduction and incorporation of found objects and images.¹⁷ They did not so much use photography as appropriate photographic imagery from contemporary popular culture. Edward Ruscha, regarded by some as a precursor to Conceptual Art,¹⁸ used photography simply for its technical capacity to reproduce images. As far as he was concerned photography as a fine art was "dead as a fine art: its only place is in the commercial world, for technical or information purposes" (Ruscha, 1965). Such disdain for the creative credentials expressive potential and specific history of photography was also present in the way in which Conceptual artists used the medium.

¹⁶ I would argue that they always have done. I think it is significant that Szarkowski mostly presented single images, many of which were parts of larger bodies of work. Therefore the relationship between images is something that he overlooks, albeit well beyond the scope of what he intended to discuss.

¹⁷ This was by no means a unique practice. Picasso and Braque (synthetic cubism), Kurt Schwitters and other Dadaists, used found objects and elements in their work.

¹⁸ Not all conceptual artists held Ruscha in such high regard. Burgin described Ruscha as "some sort of Californian stand-up comedian" and that he did not take him seriously since his work "looked like entertainment." (Burgin, in John Roberts, 1997, p.93).

The Influence of Conceptual Art

The use of photography in conceptual art has been the subject of re-evaluation in recent years. According to several writers (David Campany, 2003, 2004; Susan Bright, 2005; Liz Wells, 2004; John Roberts, 1997) much recent current practice looks back towards the use of photography by conceptual artists during the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s.

It is important at this point to note that Conceptual artists did not concern themselves with an opposition to modernist photography, but with an opposition to late-modernist formalism as present in the work of abstract expressionism and the critical writings of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried (what Victor Burgin later termed “Romantic Modernism”). Conceptual artists did not study the history of photography or have any interest in the creative credentials of the medium as promoted by the photographic specialists of the time (here I am thinking of photographers like Ansel Adams, Harry Callahan and Minor White and the influence of Edward Weston and Alfred Steiglitz). Their adoption of photography was due to its very inappropriateness as an artistic medium thereby allowing an opposition to the monumental, high-modernist practices of painting and sculpture.

Works of Conceptual art were intended to problematise the traditional idea of the art work rather than deal with specific practices such as painting or sculpture. As such there was no call for a theory that required an argument for medium specificity. Photography, as adopted by Conceptual artists, was a vernacular and therefore a non-specialist art medium. Against paintings, photographs had little intrinsic value. Photographs could be reproduced cheaply and easily. Works were made around philosophical meaning (e.g. Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1965), on language and the definitions of art in general (as opposed to the specificity of the medium in formalism). Or they performed acts as art, recorded using photography (or film) that escaped the commodity value of the traditional art object, a prime example being Burgin’s *Photo Path* of 1969, where the floor of the gallery was photographed and prints were pasted to the floor in the form of a line. With the work being site specific the prints would often be discarded after exhibition. Keith Arnatt’s work, *Self Burial* (1969), took the form of a series of images that

illustrated a performance. Each image was broadcast on German television for two seconds, during peak viewing time, on consecutive days, interrupting whatever programme was being broadcast at the time. The viewer was given no warning or information concerning the image. Works such as the Land art and site-specific work of Dennis Oppenheim, Gordon Matta-Clark and Robert Smithson could not be transported into a conventional gallery space.¹⁹ In order to communicate such work, to disseminate or to exhibit it, photography was adopted to record the work, to provide tangible evidence of its happening. As a result the question of the location of the work was an issue, and has been since – is the work the absent act / object or the present photographic record?²⁰ The images produced incorporated a dead-pan, matter-of-fact quality and the suppression of methods that were too self-consciously artistic and expressive.²¹ Photography therefore presented the perfect means for this anti-aesthetic turn.



Fig 1.3 Victor Burgin. *Photo Path*. 1969

¹⁹ See Rosalind Krauss, *Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America*, 1977.

²⁰ See Krauss, *ibid*.

²¹ A further quality of conceptual art, one that has often been overlooked, is the sense of humour, apparent in Keith Arnatt's *Self Burial*, 1969.



Fig 1.4 Keith Arnatt, *Self Burial*, 1969. Tate Modern.



Fig 1.5 Gordon Matta-Clark. *Splitting*. 1974

Paradoxically, as noted by David Campany (2004), it was the conceptual artists' use of photography, not that of specialist creative photographers, that brought photography into the art gallery and into the art press in the 1970s.²²

Roland Barthes: the Question of Authorship

Coinciding with Conceptual art was the emergence of new ideas in linguistic theory. In particular, the essays of Roland Barthes are of pivotal importance to photographic theory.

Here, I briefly refer to *Rhetoric of the Image* (1977 [1964], pp.32-51) and *Death of the Author* (1977 [1968], pp.142-148). Both essays challenged many of the premises of modernist formalism, primarily the belief of the centrality of the maker to the meaning of the work. In so doing, Barthes essays have informed much of the critical theory that came to follow.²³

In *Rhetoric of the Image*, Barthes introduces the idea that images are read as a collection of signifiers. This idea of *reading* a photographic image, as a text, rather than looking at it as an object of beauty, has contributed to photographic theory ever since. This primacy of *reading* over *looking* stands against the theories of form, expression and connoisseurship of late-modernism (e.g. the 1960s). The idea that a work is *read* as a *text* foregrounds the act of interpretation where the active engagement of the reader is situated over and above that of the author. The short essay, *Death of the Author* (1968 [1977]) extended this further.²⁴

²² Due to the continuing influence of conceptual art on current and recent fine art practice, the 'original' ephemeral works of these conceptual artists now has considerable monetary value, as evidenced in the presence of conceptual art works in the archives of many large public and private collections of art (see Frizot, 1998, pp. 739-745).

²³ Though written in the same period of key texts by White (1963), Greenberg (1960,1965), Fried (1965) and Szarkowski (1966), many of Barthes' essay were not widely available in English until they appeared in the collection *Image Music Text*, published in 1977.

²⁴ I should also add that Michel Foucault's essay, *What is an Author* (1969), was a pivotal argument against the primacy of the author.

An underpinning idea in Barthes' *Death of the Author* is that language is used and appropriated by the author rather than created. In effect, the author becomes another reader. Further, a writer, in order to effectively tell a story, negates his or her own presence within the field of the narrative and should not draw attention to the act of writing or speaking itself. In other words the orator (or writer) should be unheard against the world of the narrative. Those who receive it carry the meaning with them. Hence Barthes claims:

Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations with dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.

(Barthes, 1968, p.148)

The essential element is that the means by which a work is made is by the instruments that exist within the wider culture. Hence, according to Barthes, the best writers are those that attempt to suppress their own personalities in their writing and give themselves over to the appearance of language. Rather than Barthes' theory on authorship seeming to negate the value of making, it does the opposite. It causes a realisation that making occurs within the wider culture and uses the instruments of that culture, with all the history and breadth of significance that is loaded into them. It follows that the notion of artistic creation described by Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, et al, is problematised since Barthes situates the act of making as fundamentally embedded within the concerns of society and the products of culture. Although written within the same decade, the formalist theories of North American late-modernism and the post-structuralist theory of Barthes (and Foucault), written in France, seem poles apart. Later, the former modernist ideals proposed by Greenberg (1960,1965) and Fried (1966) were discredited by a new wave of critical theorists, post-modernists and post-structuralists, who drew heavily upon Barthes. This is evidenced in three events that took place in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Conceptual art and post-structural theory of theorists such as Roland Barthes has had an enduring influence upon photographic practice since the early 1980s. This is apparent in the

shift from photography as a form of modernist self-expression towards photography as a theoretically informed, critical practice (see Victor Burgin 1982; Liz Wells 2003; Company 2004). Three events are key signifiers of this shift in Britain. The first is the exhibition *Three Perspectives: Recent British Photography*, funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain and held at the Hayward Gallery, London, 1979. This exhibition is highly significant and requires further discussion. A second is the change of direction of photographic magazine *Creative Camera*, after receiving Arts Council funding in 1980, from representing work that exemplified the modernist approach to work that was informed by feminist, Marxist and post-structuralist critical theory.²⁵ A third event was the publication of three anthologies that made a range of previously difficult to source historical texts and more recent texts available to English readers. These being Alan Trachtenberg's *Classic Essays on Photography* (1980), Vicki Goldberg's *Photography in Print* (1981) and most significantly Victor Burgin's *Thinking Photography* (1982). It is the later book that I will dedicate most time to.

Three Perspectives on Photography

The exhibition *Three Perspectives on Photography: Recent British Photography*, was only the third specialist photography exhibition to be funded by the Arts Council since it was founded in the 1950s. It was held at the Hayward Gallery in the Summer of 1979.²⁶ The exhibition, as the title suggests, is made up of three approaches to photography and photographic image making reflecting the selectors "perspectives on photography" (Joanna Drew, catalogue acknowledgements, 1979). The three sections are as follows:

1. Photographic Truth, Metaphor and Individual Expression, selected by Paul Hill. Including images by Hill himself, Thomas Cooper, Brian Griffin, Raymond Moore, Roger Palmer, Martin Parr, Graham Smith.²⁷

²⁵ David Brittain (1999, pp.1-27) provides a thorough account of this transition.

²⁶ The dates of the exhibition were 1st June to 8th July 1979.

²⁷ The term perspective would suggest that continuity between the image makers in each group, that a common set of concerns bonds them as image makers, but to present works of equivalence by Thomas

2. Feminism and Photography, selected by Angela Kelly. Including images by Aileen Friday, Christine Hobbeheydar, Yve Lomax, Sarah McCarthy, Jo Spence, Valerie Wilmer.
3. A Socialist Perspective on Photography, selected by John Tagg and included images by Victor Burgin, Robert Golden, The Hackney Flashers Collective, Alexis Hunter, Report/I.F.L.

In his introduction to the first perspective Paul Hill stresses the importance of metaphor in the service of expressive image making:

It is my contention that the metaphoric use of the camera to mirror the personal experiences and feelings of the photographer is its most exciting application. Of course, it could be proved that every photograph is a visual metaphor. In other words, a photograph of a tree, or even a person, becomes a symbol, not the tree or the person recorded on the emulsion of the film.

(Hill, 1979, p.11)

This is an interesting passage, as Hill, drawing on the capacity of the camera to mirror the experience of the photographer, refers to the influence of Equivalence demonstrating its sustained influence on expressive photography in Britain. What is also apparent in Hill's statement is the influence of semiotic theory on the interpretation of images. Hence linguistic theory was adopted by modernists as well postmodernist photographic practices but with very different concerns.

In Hill's text there is clear evidence of a rift between those like himself, the "self-expressionists", who value "the introspective approach" (ibid, p14) against the "propagandists" (ibid, p.13) "who wish to see social change" (ibid). It seems clear from the tone of Hill's text that there is an

Joshua Cooper and John Blakemore alongside corporate portraits by Brian Griffin stretches the idea of a single perspective beyond coherence.

ideological struggle for the creative territory of photography as made abundantly clear in the following:

Unfortunately, those photographers who subjectively explore the medium or use it as a vehicle for self-discovery are labelled “self indulgent”. But what is more “self indulgent” than transient polemics?

(ibid, p.14)

I assume by “propagandists” and “transient polemics” that Hill is referring to those photographers who represent the other two perspectives on photography presented in the exhibition and catalogue: the second perspective with an introduction by Angela Kelly (*Feminism and Photography*, pp.42-43) and the third perspective with an introduction by John Tagg (*A Socialist Perspective on Photography*, pp.70-71).²⁸

In his introduction to the Third Perspective, John Tagg questions the very premise of the museum and gallery institution, describing an exhibition as a map, and stating that far from gallery being a ‘natural’ space for exhibiting it is subject to ‘laws of projection’ that are underpinned and hidden by the institution and in which

In however mediated form – social representations are constructed whose privileged status is owed more to the power circulating in these institutions themselves than to the qualities inherent in the representations.

(Tagg, 1978, p.70)

²⁸ These two practices, though not identical, I refer to (maybe too hastily) as postmodern. Here I am using the description of Modernism in the sense referred to by Greenberg, Fried and Szarkowski, essentially encompassing a formalist approach to self-expression. The approach of the other two perspectives, in providing alternatives to introspection and placing photographic production in the wider social sphere, are, for want of a better term (there always was want of a better term) post-modern.

Never more so than in those exhibitions that are state funded, such as *Three Perspectives*. The tenet of Tagg's statement is that political intention lies behind exhibitions of art as it does every other act of institutional power. This theme runs through and informs much of Tagg's writing²⁹ and his aim is to raise awareness of the ideology that underpins the acts of institutions. He asserts that the people working in galleries and similar institutions have a role defined by the state whose

task is to confer value, not 'discover' it, and whose activities are invested with assumptions and policies in turn related to and dependant on those which govern the wider social, political and economic domains

(Ibid, p.70)

A key point of this situation is that some exhibitions remove artwork from their original social context "in which they had both currency and value" ³⁰

Substituting for concrete historical locations the fictive backdrops of an autonomous history of art on an unquestioned, and perhaps inexpressible, standard of 'aesthetic excellence'.

(Ibid, p.71)

The outcome of this approach renders the work "historically remote" (ibid) drawing on the scholarship of the "family tree and pedigree" (ibid). According to Tagg, what is required in place is a "massive" act of historical recovery in order "re-insert the 'dead' signs in the complex moments in which they [the works] once resonated with meaning" (Ibid). Contemporary photographers in particular risk their work being 'emptied of meaning' from the original means of circulation (e.g. photo-journalism). The thrust of Tagg's selection for the exhibition is work that is directed beyond the maker and towards other spheres of production in order to encourage the

²⁹ See Tagg's selection of essays *The Burden of Representation*, 1988.

³⁰ Tagg does not state an example but one which received his criticism for this reason was Szarkowski's *The Photographer's Eye* (1966). Douglas Crimp follows a similar argument in his essay *The Museum's Old / The Library's New Subject* (1993).

viewer to question the often concealed ideologies that underpin what is represented and the modes of representation.

These two positions, the self-expressive against the political, including feminist photographic practice represented in the second perspective, attest to a conflict and a subsequent shift in concerns of photographic art practice that took place at the end of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s in Britain. *Three Perspectives* represented not so much three types of contemporary photographic practice, but rather one type considered obsolete by the other two. It was first perspective that was represented by the privately owned journal *Creative Camera* prior to receiving Arts Council funding in 1980, then being supplanted by the makers and theorists represented in the second and third perspectives.³¹

Anthologies

Prior to 1980 (and also prior to Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1976) and John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972)), the earliest publication of a collection of historical texts that may be considered to contribute to the theory of photography was compiled by Nathan Lyons (1964). It was not until 1980 that Alan Trachtenberg published another collection of essays titled *Classic Essays on Photography*, and Vicky Goldberg published the much larger *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present* in 1981. There is a significant difference between the motivations of each editor and the contents therein that I will briefly discuss here.

Like Lyons, a central concern for Goldberg is also the issue of whether photography is an art form. This is coupled with the problem of a seemingly passive human agent that thereby places photography in a difficult relation to other arts. Though not expressed, the rather hidden issue is

³¹ Like *Three Perspectives* what happened to *Creative Camera* magazine at this juncture is an indicator for the sea change in photography and photographic theory that occurred at the start of the 1980s. David Brittain provides a comprehensive account of the history of the journal in his introduction to the anthology *Creative Camera: 30 Years of Writing* (1999).

that the validity of photography as an independent art form is accorded by the standards of the established arts of painting, drawing and sculpture. Goldberg makes no attempt to answer this, merely to pose the question to those who would study further. Further to this she also points out that due to its multiple purposes and applications, photography has no definition, referring to Lady Eastlake, in 1857, to state the ambiguousness and ontological slipperiness of the medium recognised even in its infancy:³²

Lady Eastlake offered a good starting point when she spoke of a “new form of communication between man and man – neither letter, message, not picture, which happily fills up the space between them.”

(Goldberg, 1981, p.21)

Goldberg intended her publication to contribute to the growing academic interest in photography in the face of an absence of tradition (p.22) and to contribute to the development of the study of photography as an artform. In the introduction to his collection, Alan Trachtenberg, like Goldberg, also states how photography

lacks a critical tradition, a tradition of serious writing. It is true...that we cannot name a single writer of significance who has devoted himself or herself to photographic criticism and theory.

(Trachtenberg, 1980, p.vii).

He further comments that historians of photography have tended follow the conventional models of connoisseurship and assume too readily the “unitary” character of the medium.³³ A further point noticed by Trachtenberg is that the historians tended to overlook the significance of the social landscape that appeared in early texts on photography:

³² It is interesting to note in contradiction that Szarkowski claimed that photography was born whole (Szarkowski, 1966, p.1)

³³ I think the main figures Trachtenberg had in mind were Beaumont Newhall and Helmut Gernsheim. Victor Burgin would no doubt add Ian Jeffrey to this list as his correspondence with Jeffrey in *Creative Camera* would signify. See Brittain (1999, pp.88-97).

Expanding cities and the incessant application of machinery to the production of goods are perhaps the most important historical events that impinge upon the earlier discussions of photography, for the medium represented to its earliest commentators both science and communication: a decidedly modern device, a sign and prophesy of changing times. In photography the earliest writers saw a testimony to the genuine radicalness of an age of railroads, the telegraph, and mass production – an age of wondrous science and technology (Ibid, p.ix)

Neither did the histories explore the communicative capacities (or limitations) of the medium. Trachtenberg's intention is therefore quite different to Lyon's before him and Goldberg's, to publish shortly after him.³⁴ His collection is not just born of a dissatisfaction with a lack of critical writing but dissatisfaction with the quality and scope of available histories of photography. His intention was to encourage a challenge to existing modes of thought on photography: away from connoisseurship (a criticism that isolates the object from its place in culture) and towards a criticism that takes into account the wider social uses and implications of photography. Towards the end of his introduction he states that a formal criticism has yet to emerge and that the canons of art history and of connoisseurship are unlikely to provide the required model. As alternatives he cites:

It is in the more venturesome and intellectually aggressive works of cultural critics like Walter Benjamin, William Ivins, and Roland Barthes that the beginning of a new seriousness of discussion, a synthesis of historical scholarship and aesthetic theory, might be found.

(Ibid, p.xiii)

A very interesting aspect of Trachtenberg's anthology, one that signifies his agenda, is the

³⁴ I assume that both writers were aware of each others publications. There seems to be evidence of some kind of negotiation between them as several writers are represented by different texts (e.g. Walter Benjamin). Further evidence is that Goldberg also included an essay by Trachtenberg (Lewis Hine: The World of His Art, pp.238-254) in her anthology leading to my assumption of prior communication between the two.

presence of European attitudes towards photography alongside North American. Where photographers such as Stieglitz were promoting photography as an independent art with its own identity and ideas of photographic self-expression, European photographers such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Franz Roh were discussing photography within a multidisciplinary context, even its role within education and the need for visual communication skills in schools. Walter Benjamin's essay 'A Short History of Photography' (1931) has been referred to by many later writers such as Rosalind Krauss (*Reinventing the Medium*, 1999) and Victor Burgin (*Thinking Photography*, 1982) as a way of rethinking a theory of photography that did not fall into the social exclusion and solipsism of late modernism. Both Barthes³⁵ and Benjamin have been drawn upon by Trachtenberg, Burgin, Krauss and others (e.g. Wells: 2003, 2004; Bate: 2009) in order to develop and support theories of art and photography that looked towards the social and the cultural significance of photography. Since then both writers have occupied a central role in photographic theory.

Far from being a "classic" collection, that is, "something of established excellence; something quintessentially typical or definitive" (Chambers Dictionary 1988, p.304) his anthology betrays an agenda that could be described as radical and revisionary. This is evidenced in absence as much as presence, for nowhere does Trachtenberg mention equivalence, the mode of practice once described by Minor White as "perennial" (as discussed, Lyons, 1968) and pivotal to several portfolios of the first category in *Three Perspectives*, notably John Blakemore, Thomas Joshua Cooper and Raymond Moore. Neither, unlike Lyons' much earlier anthology, is there a single essay that concentrates on making.³⁶ I therefore suggest that Trachtenberg intended a move towards a critical engagement of photography that was more rooted in the wider cultural significance of photography than theories of self-expression with the result that accounts of

³⁵ Though also championed by modernists who adopted his semiotic theories to develop ideas of the photographic metaphor. See Hill (1979).

³⁶ Neither does Trachtenberg make any reference to either Stieglitz or Szarkowski.

making became (understandably) overlooked.³⁷

Thinking Photography

The publication of Burgin's *Thinking Photography* (1982), together with the anthologies compiled by Trachtenberg and Goldberg, marks a sudden availability of historical and then recent photographic theory and criticism.³⁸ As discussed, Trachtenberg, and Burgin in particular, express dissatisfaction with the state of photographic theory and in particular point to an absence of a coherent theory of photography that concerns the wider culture.³⁹ A focus of Burgin's dissatisfaction is a photography practice, criticism and education system that follows late modernist modes of thought. This mode is clearly visible in the histories of Newhall (1964, 1984), Gernsheim (1962, 1986) and Ian Jeffrey (1981) (the latter responding with much bile in his review of *Thinking Photography* in the journal *Creative Camera*).⁴⁰ Burgin brought a very

³⁷ This might explain the presence of Trachtenberg's book on the cover of Victor Burgin's *Thinking Photography* (1982).

³⁸ Victor Burgin's *Thinking Photography* was published in 1982, shortly after both Trachtenberg's and Goldberg's anthologies. Ian Jeffrey's *A Concise History of Photography* was published in 1981. Beaumont Newhall's last edition of *The History of Photography* was published in 1985. Helmut Gernsheim's *A Concise History of Photography*, 3rd edition, was published in 1986.

³⁹ I am aware that I may be overstressing the importance of this book and I have no recourse to its impact at the time save the reviews, negative and positive, that appeared in *Creative Camera* (see Brittain, 1999). It is clear, however, that the influence of this title persists today (see Campany, 2004). It seems to have been a pivotal point, often referred to, when creative photography in the UK shifted from concerns informed by North American late modernism to ideas informed by a more socially aware European modernism.

⁴⁰ The reception of *Thinking Photography* sharply divided opinion. *Creative Camera* published two reviews in the December issue of 1982. One review in praise, by Stevie Bezencenet, and the other, a very critical even damning review was written by the historian Ian Jeffrey. Burgin's reply to Jeffrey was also published in the December issue. Where Bezencenet demonstrates an appreciation of a mode of thought that reinvests the social in photography, Jeffrey ridicules Burgin's saintliness for being so politically motivated and for his attempt to draw difficult linguistic and psychoanalytic theory into the interpretation of

different set of perspectives – ones more informed by the kind of critical thinking evident in Conceptual art.

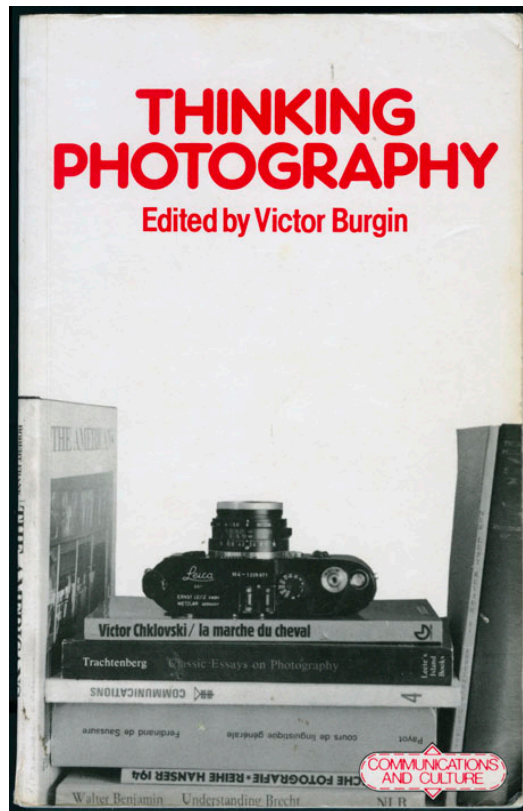


Fig 1.6 Front cover for Victor Burgin's *Thinking Photography*, 1982

The cover of Victor Burgin's book *Thinking Photography* is significant in itself, almost for what is excluded as much as included. Burgin's book was not published as a conventional art or photography book but as a publication specialising in cultural studies (it was published by Macmillan as part of the Communications and Culture series). It is a book that presented cultural and critical theory for a required reassessment of the study of photography. This field includes photography as a fine art, but unlike many other texts before it, the discussions do not assume that photography is exclusively and primarily an art form.

photographs. Indeed Jeffrey was so damning about the turn towards critical theory that he termed the preceding years at *Creative Camera* 'the creative years.' See David Brittain's (1999) introduction to the anthology *Creative Camera: 30 Years of Writing*.

In his introduction Burgin states boldly:

The essays in this book are contributions towards photography theory. I say 'towards' rather than 'to' as the theory does not yet exist; nevertheless, as these essays indicate, some of its components may already have been identified.

(Burgin, Introduction, p.1)

He adds to this that in the state of the current underdevelopment of photography theory an "homologous" (ibid) collection is required presenting a "materialist" (ibid) approach to the analysis of photography in sharp contrast to what he describes as the usual practice of biography and "ineffable" (ibid) personal comment. It further indicates a move away from the criticism that focuses on the personality and intentions of the artist that underpinned much late modernist ideas on the significance of art and photography. The essay he includes by Walter Benjamin, *The Author as Producer*, makes a clear an investment in the wider social sphere and challenges the centrality of the author/maker so pivotal to high-modernism.

In my analysis of this book I want to concentrate on two texts. The first being Walter Benjamin's essay *Author as Producer* (Chapter 1). The attitude presented by Benjamin appears time and again throughout the chapters in the book – that cultural artefacts are created according to ideology. The second text is the first of Burgin's own essays, *Photographic Practice and Art Theory* (Chapter 3). It is not that the other chapters are superfluous but that these two texts best represent a shift of concerns of the period in relation to the conditions under which photographs are made.

At the outset of his essay, *Author as Producer*, Benjamin raises the idea of the artist's place within society. He refers to Plato's decision to expel artists from the republic due to the powerful but potentially harmful effect of illusion and rhetoric. The work, in particular the literary work, in this form is of no use to Benjamin and "it must be inserted into the context of living social relations" (Benjamin, 1982 [1934], p.17) and with this he asks what is the position of the work

within the “social production relations” (ibid, p.17) of the time?⁴¹ In other words, what is the relationship between the work and the social conditions of the period? This he states, since the work *produces* meaning, is a question of literary technique.

A theme within the essay is to what extent a work contributes to capitalism through being made for the passive consumption of an audience or a work that is revolutionary by drawing the attention of the audience to the production of meaning. The idea that underpins Benjamin's theory of good practice is when the audience/reader/spectator is actively engaged in the production of meaning. The productive relationship between author and reader/spectator is one of collaboration rather than what he considers the capitalist model of consumption where the author is a privileged personality and stands apart from those receiving the work, a position that Benjamin describes as ‘myth’ and ‘fake’ (ibid, p.26).⁴² Benjamin refers to the theatrical productions of friend and ally Bertolt Brecht as an exemplar of good technique. The process employed by Brecht is montage, in particular songs that interrupt the dramatic flow. By interrupting the dramatic process, by causing a rift in the process of illusion, the spectator becomes aware of the production of drama and is involved within the production of meaning. In this way work

does not reproduce conditions: rather it discloses, it uncovers them.

(ibid, p.28)

The nub of Benjamin's idea is that the author/artist is not the authority or the source of meaning. Instead, meaning is produced through the active role of the spectator, or, within the context of the essay, the proletariat. The meaning of such a work resides in the wider social sphere.

⁴¹ It should be remembered that artists in the Romantic period remained set apart from mainstream society. They considered themselves as visionary. The artwork was considered a work of individual genius. This idea informs later ideas by Greenberg and Fried (as discussed). Hence Burgin's description of this attitude as Romantic formalism.

⁴² There is a close relationship here to the general tenet of Barthes' essay *Death of the Author*, 1967.

Benjamin's essay serves to contextualise Burgin's position against the concerns of North American late-modernism (and what he called Romantic Modernism, as practiced by Hill, et al). In place of medium specificity and self-expression, art was inserted into the social sphere and the authority of authorship was put in question.

Photographic Practice and Art Theory is the first of three essays by Burgin in this book. This text combines Benjamin's idea of meaning being produced in the wider social sphere with semiotic analysis presented by Umberto Eco (Chapter 2). Burgin also draws heavily on Roland Barthes's book *Mythologies* (1957, translated into English in 1972).

A point made by Burgin that seems particularly resonant to image making now is that images deemed works of art are subject to the same methods of production of meaning as others (e.g. advertising and fashion images). That is, the meaning, the significance of images (their message) is produced through the network of social relations. Though Burgin does not refer to Barthes' essay *Death of the Author* (1977 [1967]), the relevance seems striking since Barthes argues so coherently that the meaning of a text resides not with the author but with the reader.⁴³ Hence the similarities between an image of a woman in a nudist camp by Diane Arbus and glamour images of women found in the popular press (e.g. posture and facial expression). Contemporary images of the family presented in advertisements can be related to the pictorial conventions found in Renaissance paintings of the holy family. Burgin applies a method of semiotic analysis to art and (for better want of a word) commercial photographs that Roland Barthes so wittily applied in *Mythologies* (1989 [1957]) to artefacts of consumption – the graphic design on a box or detergent, hair cuts in Hollywood films, a patriotic image used on the cover of a magazine. His aim was to reveal the ideology at work, to demystify the message that is presented in ways that are taken for granted – as conventional and habitual. Barthes terms the appearance of such ideology as 'myth'. The term used by Burgin is 'natural' and within his

⁴³ "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture," Roland Barthes (1977, [1968], p.146)

critique he makes the point that the appearance of such naturalness is a deceit. He follows this by making a statement that to me seems so relevant to the practice of image making:

Objects present to the camera are already in use in the production of meanings, and photography has no choice but to operate upon such meanings. There is, then, a pre-photographic production of meaning that must be accounted for.

(Burgin, *ibid*, p.47)

Burgin follows this with a detailed analysis of structuralist and post-structuralist linguistic theory. His aim being to define the production of meaning in photographs within a system of signification that can be used to reveal cultural ideology as well as the subconscious thought processes and associations residing in the spectator. Essentially the one implies the other, as ideology can be regarded as a collective subconscious of a society and the subconscious is littered with beliefs born from the social sphere.

The title of the essay, *Photographic Practice and Art Theory*, may at first seem rather misleading. What Burgin has attempted is a study of language and how this can be applied to photographic representation. The notion of practice, in the conventional sense of the practicalities of making images – is replaced (in the spirit of Benjamin) by the theoretically informed practice of the production of meaning.⁴⁴

Burgin's book has left a legacy, this being the production of art (in particular photography as art) as a theoretically informed and socially embedded critical practice. However there is a danger

⁴⁴ My concern is how meaning and significance in photography becomes circumscribed by the theory of language. This move towards using linguistics as the model for other modes of meaning production is perhaps reflected in the Linguistic Turn, a move, influenced by the later work of Wittgenstein, in concentrating philosophical research upon the relationship between language and meaning. The notion that language is not a transparent medium for the communication of meaning was discussed at length by Charles Sanders Peirce (Ransdell, J., 2005) and Ferdinand de Saussure (*Course of General Linguistics*, published posthumously in 1916) and Jacques Derrida in *Différance* (Derrida, 2002) amongst others.

that such dependence on what is mainly literary theory overshadows the visual and inhibits the practice of making images. As he writes towards the close of the essay:

Simply because a message is, in substance, visual, it does not follow that all of its codes are visual. Visual and non-visual codes interpenetrate each other in very extensive and complex ways.

(Ibid, p52)

This is indicative of a constant train of thought through his essay, and arguably in photographic theory since, that the visual is subservient to the textual. This leaves the image making very much over shadowed by the literary. I would argue that a counter emphasis is also true: that simply because a message is textual it does not mean that its codes are textual since it should not be overlooked that imagery is constantly evoked in literature.

In view of my own interests Burgin presents some compelling ideas. But I find that his attention is too focused upon the signifying power of the image and that this signification is too subservient to literary theory. Furthermore, although I understand (and I am fully sympathetic with) the importance of Benjamin's call that all art "must be inserted into the context of living social relations" (Benjamin, 1982 [1934], p.17) and Burgin's statement that the practice of photography involves "a pre-photographic production of meaning" (Burgin, *ibid*, p.47) his account overlooks the experiences of making work. Furthermore, I would argue that at least partly due to the influence of *Thinking Photography* and the emphasis on the image the experience of making images has been consistently overlooked by subsequent photographic theory.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Neither is the book and the movement it presided over without its critics. In 1990, Jo Spence wrote: "...the 'working classes' have been theorised out of existence by photography's 'post-structuralist moment'" (Spence in Britain, 1999, p.184).

5. Other Texts

There were many other anthologies and texts that followed this that were of major importance to the theory of photography, notably: John Tagg's *The Burden of Representation* (1988), *The Contest of Meaning* edited by Richard Bolton (1989), *The Critical Image* edited by Carol Squires (1990), *PhotoVideo* edited by Paul Wombell (1991), to name but four. However, the focus of the texts in these publications is settled upon the significance of the photographic image within culture. This is even evident in the publication *Other Than Itself: Writing Photography*, edited by John X Berger and Olivier Richon (1989), where image making is a predominantly a practice of critique.

There is no doubt that the texts in these volumes have brought about a wider cultural understanding of photography than was hitherto available. What is highly significant in the postmodern turn, as indicated above, is how the practice of critique is a key part of the practice of image making. That is, in the terms meant by Benjamin and adopted by Burgin and others, the practice of signification *is* predominantly the process of making. As a result the theorists and image makers who have adopted this approach, have placed their concerns at a distance (discreet or otherwise) from the more practical concerns of image making. The debates and arguments that are put forward do not engage with the mundane experiences of using a camera, darkroom or computer equipment, or with fundamental issues such as composition, exposure, processing and image quality. These lowly aspects of making are overlooked as technical issues that theory has got beyond. Modernist photographers considered and often wrote about such things at length (e.g. Ansel Adams, 1995; Minor White, 1994; and more recently John Blakemore, 2005). Critically informed photographers and theorists have tended to avoid public engagement with these matters, perhaps since to do so would be to enter the field of practices adopted by those modernists (e.g. Stieglitz, Adams, White) to whom they set themselves apart.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ John Blakemore is an exception on this point, being highly critically aware but choosing to make images rooted in the late-modernist mode.

There is good reason for this. Immersion in the qualities of equipment and materials, the “craft” of photography, might cloud the activity of image making, becoming an assumed practice rather than a critically aware process of cultural signification. It might also indicate a return to self-conscious expression rather than description. As I look through the specialist photography journals, such as *Portfolio* and *Source*, there is much evidence of what Charlotte Cotton (2004, p.81) referred to as a “dead-pan” mode of image making, an attitude towards image making inherited from August Sander, Walker Evans (Evans/Katz, 1981 [1971], p.360), Edward Ruscha (Ruscha, 2003 [1965], p.223), Ernst and Hilla Becher (Becher, 2003 [1989], p. 230), Conceptual artists, and more lately practiced by influential photographers such as Thomas Ruff, Andreas Gursky, Thomas Ruff and Candida Höfer. Many of these image makers adopt extremely precise and technically controlled methods and techniques, using large format film cameras and commercial methods of print production. Even so, the practical methods employed to make these images are very rarely discussed in relation to significance. The intention, from Sander through to Höfer, is that the image will draw the viewers’ attention to the qualities of the things being photographed as opposed to pronouncing the personality of the photographer.

The same can be said for practices that adopt “vernacular” practices of image making (i.e. the snapshot, the “look” of the amateur image). That educated image makers might intentionally adopt the slipshod, as a form of studied incompetence, or under the guise of immediacy and an intuitive approach to image making, avoiding premeditated intention, is also an attempt to suppress the self by adopting methods that look uninformed and innocent of the conventions that rule traditional modes of composition and technique. The notion seems to be that by adopting vernacular styles of image making, a pre-educated photographic truth is achieved, where a cultural moment becomes visually apparent. To paraphrase Edmund Husserl, the vernacular could be regarded as an attempt to “go back to the ‘things themselves’” (Husserl, 2002, p.67) if only the vernacular was not, in fact, circumscribed by history as much as any other practice. The problem is that an informed vernacular practice sets itself up as a conceit (and a contradiction) rather than an authentic practice.

There resides, in both the wide adoption of the dead-pan and the vernacular practices of photography, a latent suspicion of self-expression. This was questioned so thoroughly by Barthes and Foucault. It is present in the work of the critical theorists that I discuss above and has yet to be fully resolved within practices of image making. I would also suggest that these practices have now been so widely adopted in the field of art photography and other fields such as fashion photography (e.g. in the work of Juergen Teller) that they risk becoming *assumed* methods of image making rather than practices explored and adopted out of a critical awareness. My concern is that these issues will remain unresolved until theory engages with making, which it has yet to do. Perhaps to re-visit a recent discussion of the visual language of photography will provide a means to resolve this. One such discussion is provided by the photographer Stephen Shore.

Stephen Shore: *The Nature of Photographs*

Texts that do discuss a serious approach to the practice of making photographic art are far and few between. An exception is *Stephen Shore's The Nature of Photographs: A Primer* (2007 [1998]). Shore is widely known as both an image maker and teacher of photography. As the sleeve notes state, this book was based on Shore's teaching and it is written as a primer, aimed at undergraduates studying the practice of photography, rather than an advanced academic text.

Unlike many books that discuss the significance of photography, the text is sparse and the images many. It is, as the subtitle states, "a primer" on the nature of photographs. Although Shore modeled the book on Szarkowski's *The Photographer's Eye* (1966), he draws upon more recent work as well as historical. As I aim to show the book is effective in pulling apart certain aspects of making and qualities of images, but it is too rooted in formalism, and like Szarkowski's text, almost entirely ignores content. Further to this, it seems that certain bodies of work, in particular Richard Prince's appropriation of the *Marlboro Cowboy* advertisement, are not presented in a way that relates to their original presentation.

Like Szarkowski, Shore's book is set out in five chapters:

The Nature of Photographs

The Physical Level

The Depictive Level

The Mental Level

Mental Modelling

The Nature of Photographs

In the first chapter Shore calls upon the reader to consider the relationship between image and "the actual scene". Referring to an image by Robert Frank he asks:

How much of this image is a product of lenses, shutters, and media? What are the characteristics of photography that establish how an image looks?

(Shore, 2007, p.7)

On the following page he states his intention to "Explore ways of understanding photography; that is, how photographs function" (Ibid, p.8), and that

All photographs have qualities in common. These qualities determine how the world in front of the camera is transformed into a photograph: they also form the visual grammar that elucidates the photograph's meaning.

(Ibid, p.8)

As stated, the book is not intended to be a comprehensive philosophical description, but a primer for undergraduates. However, I think, at the outset of the book, that this statement is contestable on two counts: the first on function and the second that all photographs have qualities in common.

Function assumes purpose. It follows that a photograph used for different purposes will serve different functions. However, what I think Shore means is how photographs function within the

context of aesthetic appreciation and within the context, not of practical use, such as witness, geographical survey, identity, but pictorially. It should also be noted that even though Shore states that his ideas apply to all photographs, his book does not include images made for commercial purposes (e.g. advertising, fashion, social photography), and that though the selection includes two photographs that at a push could be described as vernacular (Ibid, p.14 and p.27, both by unknown photographers), the majority belong or relate to art practice and an established canon of creative photographers.

Shore states that essentially, a photograph can be viewed on two levels. The first being the image as “an illusion of the window on to the world” (Ibid, p.10) and the second, as part of this illusion, is the formal organization of the image that, as he states, “gives ‘spin’ to what the image depicts” (Ibid, p.10). He goes on to say that his aim is not to discuss photographic content but to “explore the physical and formal attributes of a photographic print that form the tools a photographer uses to define and interpret that content” (Ibid, p.12). Here there is a strong similarity with Szarkowski’s approach. However, an important deviation made by Shore is that pictorial convention can be consciously adopted in order to evoke positions in relation to content and meaning.

The Physical Level

In this chapter Shore demonstrates the conscious adoption of convention with an image by Anne Turyn (Fig 1.7). Made in 1986, Turyn has appropriated the image colour and props from the 1970s in order to construct a social tableau. The choice of materials and processes is defined by the realisation that these things suggest as much meaning as the content itself since they are culturally bound to historical period (e.g. clothing, objects, the colour of the image). As an extension of this Shore also points out that “the context in which the photograph is seen affects the meanings a viewer draws from it” (Ibid, p.26). This view is consistent with much of the critical theory of the early 1980s. The images following this statement include an anonymous image of man dressed in a suit in farm scene, an untitled film still image by Cindy Sherman sits opposite a publicity shot of an actress off-set.



Fig. 1.7 Anne Turyn, 12.17.1960. From the *Flashbulb Memories*, 1986. In Shore, 2007, p.19

A now famous image by Timothy O'Sullivan (fig 1.8, also used by Szarkowski in *The Photographers Eye*) sits opposite an image from the U.S. Geographical Survey (fig 1.9). Like Szarkowski, Shore does not dwell a great deal on the fact that in presenting these images as aesthetic objects he removes them from their original context. Such images do, even if unintentionally, embody qualities that seem beautiful.

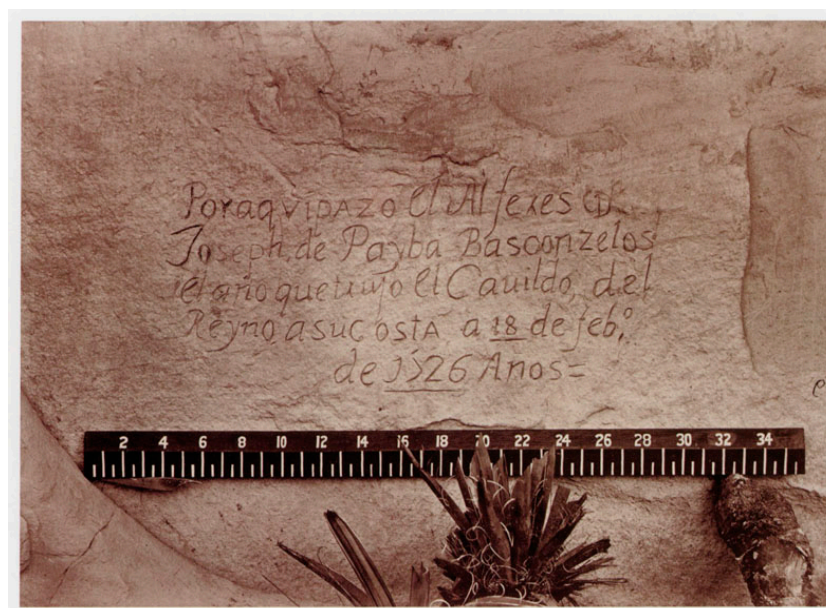


Fig 1.8 T. H. O. Sullivan. *Historic Spanish Record of the conquest, South Side of Inscription Rock, New Mexico. 1873.* In Shore, 2007, p.30

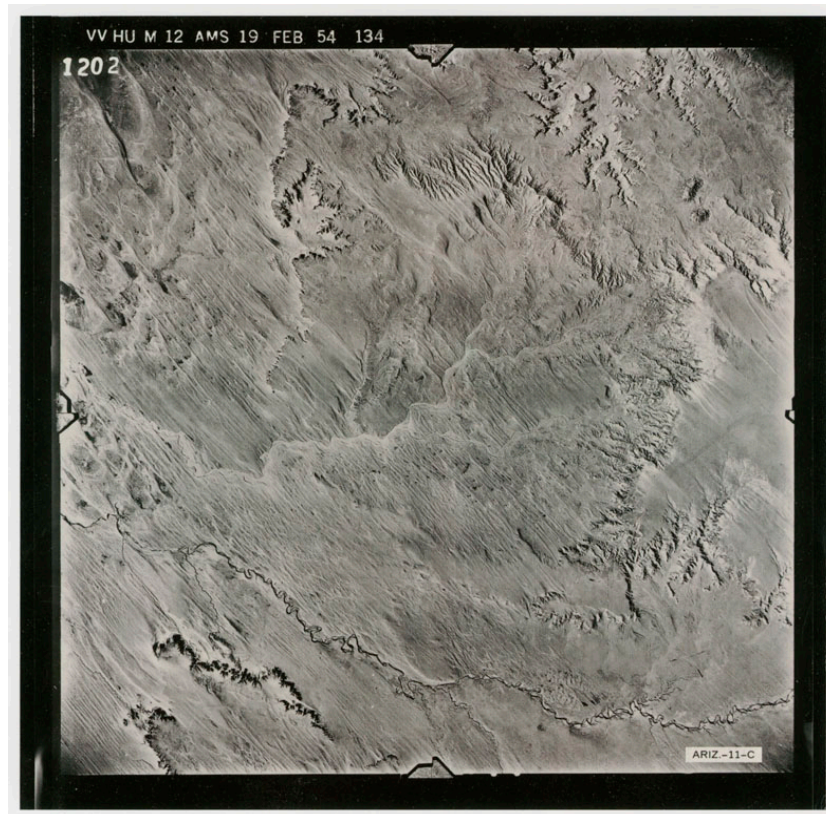


Fig 1.9 U.S. Geographical Survey. *Longitudinal, parabolic, and transverse dunes on Garces Mesa Coconino County, Arizona, Lat 35° 39' N; Long 110° 55' W. Photograph scale: 1:54,000, Feb. 19th, 1954.*
In Shore, 2007, p.31

Pivotaly, he does refer to the significance of the *adoption* rather the *assumption* of certain modes of practice with reference to Walker Evans:

By consciously adopting a visual style, a photographer can reference this context and bring these meanings to the reading of the image, as Walker Evans did when he made this photograph in, what he called, 'documentary style'.

(Ibid, p.34)

In the terms discussed by Evans, this is an ethical position in that his intention was to draw attention to the subject and try to eradicate his own subjectivity.⁴⁷ The issue in relation to photography as a critical practice is the visual style that is intentionally appropriated and the resulting critique that is formed.

⁴⁷ See Evans, 1981 [1971].

In the case of Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Still* (fig 1.10), that sits opposite a film studio publicity shot of actress Joan Fontaine (fig 1.11), this critique is centered on the representation of women in film and the male orientated gaze of the camera.



Fig 1.10 Cindy Sherman. *Untitled Film Still*, 1978. In Shore, 2007, p.28.



Fig 1.11 Anon. *Joan Fontaine*. 1954. In Shore, 2007, p.29

However, Michael Prince's images (fig 1.12) appear without any reference to origins (his appropriation of images from Marlboro cigarette advertisements) or intentions (as critique) but only in relation to Shore's essentially formalist theory of the camera frame. Maybe Shore assumed that the reader/viewer is aware of Prince's practice. Maybe they sit within the book to cause trouble. If not, then the photographs sit so out of context as to eradicate their position in then recent art practice as critique of male stereotypes and romantic images of the West that pervade North American post-war culture.



Fig 1.12 Richard Prince. *Untitled (Cowboy)*, 1980-89. In Shore, 2007, p.69.

The Depictive Level

At the outset of this chapter Shore describes photography as "...inherently an analytic discipline" (p.37) and makes the distinction between a painter who starts with a blank canvas, and a photographer who

starts with the messiness of the world and selects a picture. A photographer standing before houses and streets and people and trees and artifacts of culture imposes an order on the scene – simplifies the jumble by giving it structure. He or she imposes this order by choosing a vantage point, choosing a frame, choosing a moment of exposure, and selecting a plane of focus (Ibid, p.37)

This seems fundamental to the practice of taking a photograph. This statement also serves to provide a certain medium specificity. However, Shore does not discuss or point towards where this visual order originates. He then proceeds to outline four aspects of this ordering and transformation that are for him the qualities of the flatness of the print, the frame of the camera and the picture, the presence of time in an image and the effect of focus on how the image is read by the viewer. He states:

These four attributes define the picture's depictive content and structure. They form the basis of a photograph's visual grammar. They are responsible for a snapshot's "mistakes": a blur, a beheading, a jumble, an awkward moment. They are the means by which photographers express their sense of the world, give structure to their perceptions and articulation to their meanings
(Ibid, p. 38)

Shore defines flatness by contrasting the surface of the print to the illusion of depth in the image. The particular quality of the single lens allows objects to be drawn together that would escape stereoscopic human vision. In doing so this quality clearly separates the visual quality of photographs from human vision. He reduces this experience to the formal qualities of the photograph:

Just as monocular vision creates juxtapositions of lines and shapes within the image, edges create relationships between these lines and shapes and the frame. The relationships that the edges create are both visual and 'contentual'.
(Ibid, p.56)

He defines the action of the frame in two extreme positions: passive and active. In the passive model the frame suggests a world extending beyond the limits of the frame. In the active model the frame contains its contents to such a extent that it seems as though

The world of the photograph is contained within the frame. It is not a fragment of a larger world.
(Ibid, p.62)

If a viewer takes a purely formalist approach to viewing an image then I can imagine how such a conclusion can have been reached. However, such a view to making images seems out of step with current concerns and practices. Shore uses an image made by himself to illustrate this point (fig 1.13), but rather than confirm his theory it seems, at least to myself, to deny it. There are so many things that extend from within and beyond the frame and from beyond into the frame. To say this image is self-contained does not seem to make sense unless a purely formalist attitude is adopted.



Fig 1.13 Stephen shore, *El Paso Street, El Paso, Texas*, 1975. In Shore, 2007, p.63.

Likewise to reduce the image of a steer and his handler by Gary Winogrand (fig 1.14) to a moment of purely formal poise (a moment commensurate with Cartier-Bresson's idea of the Decisive Moment) seems again to overlook the significance of content, or rather where form meets and reinforces content (i.e. how the image suggests that the steer loves his handler). The rising points of tongue and hat seem erotic in a rather worrying and cheeky way – somewhat typical of Winogrand's humour. The idea that this moment gave order to the scene, and that once passed, the situation reverted back to disorder makes too many assumptions. I do not

mean to devalue form here, but rather to situate form as having a meaning in relation to content (i.e. the things in the image) and informing the way we read images.



Fig 1.14 Gary Winogrand. *Texas state fair, Dallas, 1964*. In Shore, 2007, p.71.

Shore refers to Szarkowski in describing the duration of exposure, as “a discrete parcel of time” (Shore, p.72). He describes how the passage of time is described in a photograph in the following way:

Two factors effect time in a photograph: the duration of the exposure and the staticness of the final image. Just as a three-dimensional world is transformed when it is projected on to a flat piece of film, so a fluid world is transformed when it is projected on to a static piece of film.

(Ibid, p.72)

There is a traceable confusion here between photographing and photograph. The first being an act. The second being the resulting visible image. There is a third factor and that is the period of reception. What seems so apparent now in the image below by Larry Fink (fig 1.15) is the passage of time since the photograph was taken, betrayed by the appearance of the figures in the image. I do not doubt that timing is important, but there is a very real difference between the moment in time at which the photograph was taken and the duration of exposure. The element

of timing, whether chance or not, that places the plated pony tail of the dancer in foreground over the raised hand of a woman in the background so that it appears that she is holding it up, has been captured due to the position of the photographer in relation to the figures and the time exposure caused by the duration of the flash. This moment could have taken place in this location during any summer evening in 1977. The exact point in time is not given, neither is it important. What matters is this brief duration in an extended period of time, epoch or era.



Fig 1.15 Larry Fink. *Studio 54, New York. 1977.* In Shore, 2007, p.73.

The following image by Linda Connor (fig 1.16) is even more visually intriguing. With its sepia tones, blurred figures, frayed carpet and ancient (looking) architecture, it looks like it was taken in the nineteenth century. It has the appearance of a photograph taken by a photographer on tour (e.g. an albumen print by Felice Beato). The crowd look as though they have gathered to look at the white man, huddled under a black cloth attending to a strange contraption mounted on three legs (and they may well have, though in this case the subject of fascination is a woman). It takes a few moments to take in the scene and decipher the visual (and cultural)

clues that lie there (of modern items of clothing - a button shirt, flip flops, jeans), that give away the modern era. Hence there is another facet of time at work here that remains unconsidered – the duration of reception.



Fig 1.16 Linda Connor. *Sleeping Baby, Kathmandu, Nepal, 1980*. In Shore, 2007, p.75.

With the image by Weston (Ibid, p.77) of a pepper laid in a white dish, it is not so much that the image represents “still time: the content is at rest and time is still” (ibid, p.76) as that the image represents a now historical practice.

Shore describes focus as essentially a facility to create hierarchy in an image. What is sharp will be the attention of the focus of viewer of the image. However, Shore’s examples, at least as I perceive them do not actually support this. An image by Judith Ross (fig 1.17) is used by Shore to reinforce his theory:

There is a gravitation of attention to the plane of focus. Attention to focus concentrates our attention.

(Ibid, p.90)



Fig 1.17 Judith Ross. *Untitled from Eastern Portraits*. 1989. In *Shore*, 2007, p.91.

However, my attention is drawn again and again from the three teenage girls to the out of focus teenage boy whose gaze seems to have settled on these girls. There are clues to this – he is bare-chested (having risen from the river below? like the wet costumes that cling to the bodies of the girls). He wears a hat. He leans over the railings, with the river behind him, to gain a better view. His attention, like most boys of that age, is directed towards the three girls. Due to him being out of focus I find the possibility of his attention intriguing; I wonder what passes his mind, what he thinks his chances are. In this image the focus is not just that of the camera. It is also that of the difference in attitude of the girls and the focus of attention of the boy, mirroring that of the camera. In this case the focus of attention is not restricted to that of the camera but is also attracted to the gaze of others in the image.

Shore presents an experience of reception in the way our focus seems to shift when we examine an image. He describes how, even though the image is flat, our focus shifts across the plane of the print. This occurs with images that have been made with deep focus. What occurs is that the image is not perceived as one element but as individual elements as they occur in the world. Shore relates this to what he describes as The Mental Level.

The Mental Level / Mental Modelling

Essentially Shore refers to the effect of perceived depth in the image. This act of perception Shore states is learnt rather than acquired from birth. In a similar way to learning to read I also learn to read an image. Just as when reading text I do not look at the words as visual images but as a pattern of marks that has meaning. The shift in attention when I look at an image - where my mental attention changes focus rather than the optics of my eyes - is what Shore refers to as the mental level. I understand this as being related to the figure and ground relationships as described in Gestalt theory of perception.

Shore states that the depictive level of a photograph is different from its mental level, though they can and often do coincide. His idea is that photographers can make use of this mental level in the construction of their images:

While the mental level is separate from the depictive level, it is honed by formal decisions on that level: choice of vantage point (where exactly to take the picture from), frame (what exactly to include), time (when exactly to release the shutter), and focus (what exactly to emphasise with the plane of focus).

(Ibid, p.98)

I find it puzzling that Shore, at the outset of the book should state that he does not intend to discuss content, for surely all these facets of attention to image making do not just rely on the formal arrangement of the image but with the inclusion of things that will mean something. Even the act of focusing on a particular object (as in selective focus) heightens our awareness of that

object. But this does not mean that things out of focus do not attract our attention as seems evident in Judith Ross' picture discussed above.

Further on, on the last page of text, he states:

The mental level's genesis is in the photographer's mental organization of the photograph. When photographers take pictures, they hold mental models in their minds; models that are the result of the proddings of insight, conditioning, and comprehension of the world.

(Ibid, p.117)

He goes on to state that in some instances the model is defined wholly by the "accumulation of conditioning" where, at one end of the scale the photographer only recognises subjects of a certain type (e.g. sunsets) or makes images that fit this conditioning (adopting a certain style of formal organization). At the other end of the scale "the model is supple and fluid, readily accommodating and adjusting to new perceptions" (p.117). He adds to this:

For most photographers, the model operates unconsciously. But, by making the model conscious, the photographer brings it and the mental level of the photograph under his or her control.

(ibid, p.117)

The very idea of a mental model for an image requires an experience of images made by others, a knowledge of the history and conventions of image making. That this originates in the photographer's mental organization seems to ignore the rich passage of images that Shore includes in his book. If not, there would be no need, no function, for these images. As such, within the context of Shore's book, the images presented act as models of good practice, examples to follow where great attention has been paid to the formal construction of the image. A crucial element that Shore seems to overlook (although he hints at it in conditioning, he says very little about appreciation) is that this practice does just take place in response to the stuff being photographed, it also (to invoke Barthes) takes place in response to the mass of images that pre-exist, as is proven by the need to present the images that he does.

If Burgin's anthology *Thinking Photography* and later collections such as Richard Bolton's *The Contest of Meaning* (1989) did anything for the perception of images (art or otherwise) it removed them from specialist concerns such as formalism and placed them within the wider culture. Though a massive simplification, this more than anything else, reflects the shift from modernism to post-modernism. Shore's account relies too much upon the formalism of modernism to have a meaningful relationship to this. A discussion on the nature of images that ignores the significance of content does not, I think, reflect the complex inter-relationships within the history of images and the production of meaning in culture that the critically informed image-maker has to negotiate. A reformulation of ideas and theories, that takes account of the historical situatedness of making, is required in order to make it properly relevant to making. The opportunity afforded by bringing together established academics (with the noted absence of photographers), to discuss the state of theory, as in the case of James Elkins' *Photography Theory* (2004), would and should have contributed to an effective re-assessment. Whether or not the discussion took making properly into account is the subject of the following section of this chapter.

James Elkins: *Photography Theory*

To now jump from a text that first appeared in 1998 (although revised, expanded and redesigned for publication in 2007) to one that was published in 2007 may seem to overlook too many other contributions to a theory of image making. However, in my defense, some of these texts, that are so far absent from my discussion, are discussed in this volume, thereby allowing me to address them.

Elkins' volume represents the most recent attempt to define and delineate a theory of photography that I will deal with in this chapter. As I have stated, the format of the book is unique in that it presents a selection of texts that outline the current state of photography theory followed by a panel discussion that attempts to define the essential elements of photography theory. This is then followed by a number of responses to the panel discussion, under the title "Assessments" predominantly by other theorists. The volume closes with an afterword titled

“The Trouble with Photography” by Anne McCauley. In my discussion here, I will concentrate on the panel discussion since it is the central feature of the book.

The panel consisted of nine members. It is chaired by James Elkins, editor of the volume.⁴⁸ Other members of the panel were: Jan Baetens (whose paper on the interdisciplinarity of photography theory also appeared in the book), Diarmuid Costello, Jonathon Friday, Margaret Iversen, Sabine Kriebel (author of the Introduction), Margaret Olin, Graham Smith and Joel Snyder. I think it is relevant to my research to point out that the panel consisted of theorists and historians and did not include an image maker (though several describe themselves in the course of the discussion as lapsed image makers).⁴⁹

Before the panel discussion a short text has been included by Rosalind Krauss where she rebuffs what she regards as the panel members’ lack of understanding of the idea of the index as a key concept to understanding the function of photographs. This somewhat primes the reader for the content and tone of the discussion that follows. It should be noted that the relevance of Krauss to a discussion on the index is due to her influential essay *Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America* (1977) where she cites the index as pivotal to the work of many artists who employed photographic imagery in their work of this period.⁵⁰

Elkins opens the discussion by stating that the task is to consider certain ways in which the theory of photography has been discussed in the past thirty years. He adds to this the question: why has photography remained so hard to conceptualise? He then introduces the idea of the photograph as index as the first point of discussion, which he states “has been a pervasive, if not preeminent, model for photography for over thirty years” (Elkins, 2007, p.130). He is careful

⁴⁸ Elkins is editor of *The Art Seminar* series of which this book is the second of seven each of which specialise in different fields of art. Essays by several members of the panel also appear in the book, prefacing the discussion.

⁴⁹ The panel only ever refer to imagined photographs rather than the specific examples.

⁵⁰ Krauss also refers to other forms of art production in the early to mid-1970s (i.e. dance).

to describe the index not as a discreet theory of signification but as a component part of a highly complex theory of signs by C. S. Peirce:

The familiar triad *icon*, *index*, *symbol*, is first of all just three of nine in Peirce's basic schema: *icon*, *index*, *symbol* are signs in relation to objects, as opposed to signs in relation to themselves (*qualisign*, *sinsign*, *legisign*), or signs in relation to the interpretant (which he calls *rhemes*, *proposition*, and *argument*). Now I mention this because one of the times the word "photography" appears in Peirce is in a list of ten further concepts. On that list, he names a kind of sign – the *dicent* (indexical) *sinsign* – for which he gives the double example "a weathercock or [a] photograph."

(Elkins, 2007, p.130)

He then states two opposing positions: the first, that the complexity of Peirce's system "is entirely unused and unnecessary when speaking of photography" (ibid, p.131), and the second, stating that to pick out the index as independent from the whole system is to misuse Peirce's theory of signs. Synder, who is deeply opposed to the index as a theory of photography, points out that it is generally the same lines from Peirce that are repeatedly used to support the idea of the index as a theory of the photograph: the lines that Elkins refers to in comparing weathercocks to photographs are those used by Rosalind Krauss in *Notes on the Index* (1977). Since this essay is an early and important reference to the index in relation to photography I refer to it directly:

C. S. Peirce distinguishes photographs from icons even though icons (signs which establish meaning through the effect of resemblance) form a class to which we would suppose the photograph to belong. "Photographs," Peirce says, "especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature. In that aspect, then, they belong to the second class of signs [indices], those by physical connection."

(Krauss, 1977, pt2, p.63)

This raises several issues. The first being that Peirce, in this rather narrow view of photography, did not intend a general definition of photography in this statement. The second issue is that neither did Krauss since she uses the index to describe the uses of photography and text in particular practices of land art and conceptual art as they appeared in one exhibition in North America in 1977. Neither writer set out to define photography in general in terms of the index.

A further issue that puts the authority of the discussion at risk is Snyder's erroneous claim that Peirce did not have a theory signs but only a list that provided a way of sorting signs and as such "was hardly a theory of signification" (ibid, p.132). He refers instead to Umberto Eco's embellishing of Peirce's theory to provide a list of signifying types.⁵¹ However, what Eco provided was a massive (and highly convenient) reduction from a dense philosophical system that Peirce revised many time in his life. Snyder's view rather denigrates the reputation of Peirce as a brilliant philosopher of logic (Atkins, 2006). It also raises the question whether Snyder and the rest of the panel were properly familiar with the theory that they attempted to engage with. Snyder then proceeds to challenge the centrality of the index by stating that what we see in photographs is not, either necessarily or even generally, what we would have seen in front of the camera when the picture was taken. In response Jonathon Friday makes the argument that the photograph is neither index nor icon but it is the "coincidence of the two. It is an index that points iconically," (p.135) and that:

Most photographs are straightforwardly interpretable indices: they point to something that was in front of the camera, and we can understand what that was because it is iconically presented to us.

(Ibid, p.136)

This signifies a problem with how the panel understand Peirce's system. Even though Elkins clearly describes the index as only a fragment of Peirce's system the panel continue to discuss the index with only brief reference to the icon and no reference to the symbol. If the index was

⁵¹ Eco's text appears in *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin, 1983

able to supply a general theory of photography then surely, for the sake of academic rigour, it should be considered within the context of the complete system.⁵² Martin Lefebvre clearly demonstrates this in his detailed description of Peirce's system in this very volume (Lefebvre, 2007, pp.220-244), the inclusion of which is very helpful. However, it also serves to discredit this part of the discussion since Lefebvre is insistent that the adoption of a fragment of a much larger theory cannot suffice as an adequate theory for such a complex signifying medium as photography. As Elkins admits, this part of the discussion makes little progress and ends in a lack of consensus over the success of the index as a theory of photographs.

The next stage of the panel discussion focuses on Barthes' idea of the *punctum*, introduced in *Camera Lucida* (1982). Elkins introduces it thus:

A second explanation of photography would be the *punctum*, Barthes word for the little prick or stab that I feel when I encounter a photograph. In most places in *Camera Lucida*, *punctum* is the opposite of *studium*, by which he means whatever knowledge about a photograph can be explained, systematized, taught or otherwise made public. He has little interest in *studium*, and yet – and this is a point I don't think the academic approaches to photography have quite taken on board – *studium* is by definition all that is done in classes on photography.

Nevertheless, the *punctum* is ubiquitous in texts on photography. So I would like to nominate it as the second model that we might find adequate.

(Elkins, 2007, pp.156-7)

Barthes account of the *punctum* is indeed powerful but there are limits to its usefulness outside of Barthes own text. One reason being that the *punctum* is not a shared response to images but is inherently private. Furthermore, Margaret Olin says in the discussion:

⁵² Peirce's system is very complex and was subject to several major revisions. The first version dated from around the 1860s. The first revision took place in 1903 and later revision took place from 1910 onwards.

The *punctum* itself is so private that it is not in the photograph at all... Barthes' *punctum* is a literary device to make us understand how he could feel his kind of pain. It is analogous to the smell and taste of [Proust's] Madeleine.

(Olin in Elkins, 2007, p.162)

This is borne out in Barthes' text. He clearly states, by his own admission, that he was specifically a spectator of photographs:

I could not join the troupe of those (the majority) who deal with Photography-according-to-the-Photographer. I possessed only two experiences: that of the observed and that of the observer.

(Barthes, 1993 [1980], p.10)

The position of Barthes as a non-photographer, but one who has arguably made the most significant contribution to photographic theory, represents a pivotal point in my argument for a theory of making. Although Barthes presents a thoroughly engaging phenomenological account of his experience of images, it also represents the apogee of photographic theory in relation to the practice that it is supposed to relate to. The *punctum* is the extreme measure of an account so distant from the experience of making as to totally discount it. That the *punctum* should be emphasised above *studium* in academic discourse further proves how distant, even irrelevant, are the issues of making photographs from the theory of photography. As such it marks out just how removed photographic theory is from providing a meaningful engagement with making photographs. Neither is it a theory that can be applied to the making of photographs since it is essentially a private experience that cannot be replicated for others to share. The *studium* on the other hand is public. As Barthes stated:

To recognize the *studium* is inevitably to encounter the photographer's intentions, to enter into harmony with them, to approve of them, but always to understand them, to argue them within myself, for culture (from which the *studium* derives) is a contract arrived at between creator and consumers.

(Ibid, p.27-28)

Though on one hand he seems to denigrate the *studium*, Barthes is careful to explain how photographs interest and teach him, providing him with an infra-knowledge (Ibid, p.30). He gives the examples of a cap worn by Russian youth present in an image by William Klein, the long finger nails of men in nineteenth century France present in the photographic portraits of Nadar. In fact Barthes dwells on the *studium* for many pages (pp. 25-42) in order to make a distinction between the “docile interests” (ibid, p. 26) that photographs serve and the immediate event of the *punctum*. There is a clear sense that the things he discusses in relation to *studium* are in sympathy with how the images would be widely received and intended by the photographer. Further, he also clearly states how

It is by *studium* that I am interested in so many photographs, whether I receive them as political testimony or enjoy them as good historical scenes: for it is culturally (this connotation is present in the *studium*) that I participate in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions.

(Ibid, p.26)

I know from my own experiences that the *punctum* is referred to erroneously. It is often used to refer to anything in an image that is intended to shock or illicit a sharp response. This is a misuse of the term for the effect is to cause a shared response, and since this occurs in culture it is part of the *studium*. All that is overtly present in the image, that is intended to share, to put out into culture, even if it shocks and alarms (especially if it shock and alarms many people), is *studium*. *Studium* is therefore tangible, identifiable. The *punctum* is neither present in the image, nor can it be shared with, or even be understood, by another. That such a response should be elicited from, or because of, a photograph is remarkable, but how it can contribute to a *theory* of photography I am not sure. Neither do the panel reach a meaningful conclusion.

A further point of discussion is titled by Elkins “Who speaks for photography”. Here, some very interesting issues are raised in relation to photographers, or rather, that the views and practices of photographers are often overlooked in favour of the literary work of theorists and art

historians who impose a way of thinking upon photographers. Jan Baetens puts it more strongly:

I would like to denounce, in a certain sense, the professionalization of the discourse on photography. By that I mean the appropriation of the discourse on photography by strictly scholarly academics. The discourse is no longer held by photographers themselves, who are excluded from the very discussions of theories on their own work.

(Jan Baetens, in Elkins, 2007, p.171)

This is born out by the fact that there is not one active photographer on the panel. The point is also made that Jeff Wall, though an image maker, conducts his discourse in distinctly art historical terms and so is not a helpful example to many other photographers who are not also specialist academics. This is true to a point and Wall's statement *Frames of Reference* (2003) bears out the importance of art history as opposed to a specific photographic history to his photographic practice. The further point is made how image makers such as Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth, Cindy Sherman and Thomas Demand) distance themselves from a photographic specific discourse.

I think there are good reasons for this. Since Conceptual artists introduced critical theory to the study and practice of photography and used photography in ways that referred to its non-specialist status, ubiquity and ephemerality, the issue of medium specificity faded in favour of wider issues of cultural representation. Therefore it should be no surprise that many contemporary image makers use the medium of photography in a way that does not make reference to photographic representation but to representation in general. The focus is not on (or not just on) the photographic but on representing the state of things in such a way as to provide a critique of representation (i.e. in the way Cindy Sherman's untitled film stills provided a critique of the representation of women in Hollywood film). Other examples would be artists using photography to reference representation in film (Gregory Crewdson), painting (Jeff Wall, Karen Knorr) and sculpture (Thomas Demand).

Baetens is not suggesting that academic discourse needs to be replaced by one provided by photographers, but that there needs to be a balance and a widening of the scope of references to include these image makers. Perhaps there needs to be greater investment in studium since at least this can be shared in the public realm.

Whilst this panel discussion should not be considered as the prime example of the state of photographic theory, it presents a host of issues in relation to its relevance to image makers, and in light of my research, in relation to how works of art using photography are made. None of the theories discussed above, at least in the terms discussed, make a relevant contribution to a theory of making photographs (or, it could be argued, to a theory of photography). The index is insufficient either for a theory of photography in terms of reception or making. The *punctum* is too private an experience to be relevant to making. I suspect that very few people actually experience what Barthes describes as *punctum*. It could also be argued that it is not a theory at all but is perhaps a symptom of grief, and one peculiar to Barthes' text, rather than a theory of photography.⁵³

The discussion on who speaks for photography raises issues of the narrowness of the bibliography, relevance to making and that lack of involvement of image makers. If this is a true representation of the state of photographic theory then in the terms of my research there is clearly a need for fresh thinking and a widening of the bibliography. This is for the simple reason that the theories discussed are all based on the reception of images with no engagement with image making.

⁵³ Barthes wrote *Camera Lucida* shortly after his mother's death and shortly before his own. The absence of his dead mother, and the discovery of her presence in a photograph, is a theme that underpins the beginning of the second part of the book (Barthes, 1981, pp.63-73).

Conclusion

Certain aspects discussed in the modernist theories above are pivotal to image making, such as the categories defined Szarkowski and Shore, since devices such as the frame, the description of time, of vantage are pivotal to the decisions made by photographers. However, as I have demonstrated, what they write falls short of the things that a photographer has to consider when making work. A pivotal issue is that the concerns of photographic image making are not confined to the photographic since, if Barthes, Benjamin and postmodern writers such as Burgin, Krauss, Crimp, et al, have taught us anything it is that making is part of a practice of signification and occurs within a much wider cultural space than that delimited by Greenberg, Fried and Szarkowski. These arguments for medium specificity are no longer current. This is not to say that medium specificity is not a concern, as Rosalind Krauss has demonstrated (1999, 2000), but the search for qualities that define a particular medium to the exclusion of all others, and only in terms of itself, as attempted by Szarkowski, is no longer desired nor is it considered true.

None of the modernist theories that discuss image making (Equivalence, Szarkowski or Shore) take into account the pivotal condition stated by Benjamin that work should be “inserted into the context of living social relations” (Benjamin 1934, p.17). This was summarised by Burgin (1982) as the practice of signification and the politics of representation. Where the influence of Marxist critical theory may have waned in the past ten or so years and making is less grounded in academic discourse (from which, as Jan Baetens suggests, many photographers feel alienated), it is still fully apparent that intelligent image making requires a degree of intellectual engagement with the signification of images in culture. This goes beyond the medium specificity and concentration on form proposed by the modernist theories I present here.

However, where a knowledge of signification is essential to informed practices of making (and neither would such practices not engage thoroughly with theories of the image) there is too little theoretical material in current theory that accounts for how signification contributes to, or works alongside, the processes and experiences of *making* work. Neither Barthes, Benjamin, Burgin

or those in Elkin's round table discussion can offer a discussion that properly engages with image making. As a result there is much work to do in this field. Perhaps a study of what photographers say and discuss in relation to the work that they make will reveal themes and ideas that might contribute to a theory of making.

Chapter 2

Conversations on Making

As I have described in Chapter 1, a discussion on making is not evident in existing photo theory. In this chapter I will discuss evidence of making as it appears in published conversations with photographers. The intention is to find out if evidence of making can be found and analysed in a selection of texts that represent the attitudes of photographers to making work. The texts have been selected on the basis that a discussion on making, rather than the theoretical significance of the image, needs to be evident. I have found that, like theoretical texts, even the majority of texts that present photographers attitudes through conversation still concentrate on significance of the image over and above issues related to making images.

I am not limiting making simply to the practice of using a camera and referring to the point of exposure. There are many different facets that are related to how work is made. Rather than enter into a discussion of these facets here I will instead discuss the issues related to making as I have found them in the conversation that I have selected. Neither is this selection exhaustive. Instead, from a limited number of conversations, I aim to provide an analysis of each in order to reveal attitudes towards making that can contribute to a theory of how works of photographic art are made. Furthermore, in keeping with the limited scope of my thesis, the selected conversations relate to landscape image making.

The rationale for selecting the interviews is based on the following two criteria:

1. That the image-maker should be significant to the practice of landscape/environment photography.
2. That the conversation engages with the process of making.

The selection and rationale is as follows:

1. Bernd and Hilla Becher in conversation with Jean Francios Chevrier, James Lingwood and Thomas Struth

(1989, in Campany, 2003, pp. 230-232)

The Bechers are highly influential, both as educators (Bernd Hilla taught at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf between 1976 to 1966) and as photographers. They taught many photographers who are significant in their own right (e.g. Andreas Gursky, Thomas Struth, Thomas Ruff, Thomas Demand, Candida Hofer). Their approach to photographing industrial buildings (initially in the Ruhr region of Germany in the 1960s and later in Europe and North America) involved a close study of the typology of industrial architecture. Their images, photographed in a consistent formal style, are presented in groups, either in a line or in a grid format. Consistency is an aspect of the Bechers' practice that is highly influential within the framework of the serial work of art. This character of their work, I think, has eclipsed their real concerns since both Hilla and Bernd Becher were initially motivated to describe the changes in industrialised landscapes and the consequences for the communities that relied on them. That their images have particular qualities that are reflected in much contemporary photography today testifies to the importance of certain methods of practice.

However, a consequence of the suppression of self in their work, also a characteristic of conceptual art to which their work has often been related, is the concentration on concept and idea to such an extent that the processes of making are overlooked. This is borne out by the many published conversations with conceptual artists where the experiences of making are very rarely discussed. However, in the conversation that I refer to here, both Hilla and Bernd Becher discuss making and the things that inform and effect making in ways that are valuable to my research.

2. Jeff Wall in conversation with Martine Schwander

(1994, in Campany, 2003, pp.270-271).

Wall produces large-scale colour images, often of environments, often populated by figures involved in the act of some kind of social interaction or situation. The images are staged and are

constructed from several if not many individual frames of film in order to produce an image with visual content and a coherence that one exposure would not provide. Wall often references old-master paintings to locate the situation within the stream of history. His exhibited images are printed as transparencies and are back-lit, employing industrial methods of presentation as used in advertisements in airport terminals.

Wall's working methods and underlying thoughts and ideas are thoroughly embedded within art-history and philosophy. As such, the work is a prime example of a critical practice.

This conversation includes aspects of this but also reveals perceptual decisions when making images and visually negotiating environments. The conversation also covers aspects that are highly relevant to the process of making images that are rarely discussed at this level elsewhere.

3. Victor Burgin in conversation with Naomi Salaman

(1998, in Campany, 2003, pp.280-281)

Influential as an educator, image maker and theorist, Burgin was at the forefront of photographic education in the 1970s and the formation of a critical theory of photography that occurred in the early 1980s. This critical theory was informed by post-structuralist, psychoanalytic, feminist and Marxist theory as opposed to an art historical approach to photography based on the expressive potential of the medium and the authority of the author. As he argued in *Thinking Photography* (1982), there was, at that time, no existing theory of photography. Burgin's position may be regarded as an antithesis to the aims of my research since the experience of making may seem concurrent with the idea of self-expression. This is not the case. My firm belief is that the process of making is circumscribed by the influence of culture with all the attendant conventions and the traditions that the image-maker has been exposed to (in so being, this applies to almost all other human practices and activities). Regarded in this way, works of art are signifiers of certain cultural states of being rather than singular expressions of an individual. Therefore, in order to understand the images I make, I need to understand the conventions and traditions that

I have inherited. This means that Burgin's concentration on cultural signification is highly relevant, as my brief discussion on his conversation will show.

4. Hiroshi Sugimoto in conversation with Thomas Kellein

(1995, in Campany, 2003, pp.285)

Sugimoto predominantly uses black and white photographic materials and a view camera. His images of movie-screens exposed for the duration of the projected film depart from human experience and demonstrate a practice of using long time exposures that is subject to close scrutiny and development in order that the image meets his prior expectations. Manipulation of materials is key to making successful images. However, Sugimoto suppresses the process of making, since for him the idea is primary.

5. Robert Adams in conversation with Constance Sullivan

(Adams, 2007, pp.13-21)

Robert Adams is something of paradox. He was one of the exhibitors (with the Bechers, et al) in *New Topographics*.⁵⁴ Since then this exhibition has been regarded as something of a turning point away from the expressive potential of photography towards the descriptive potential. There are precedents to this; Eugene Atget, Walker Evans and August Sander are all photographers that prioritised description of the thing over expression of self. This approach to photographing has been described as "cool," "detached," "objective" and has more recently been coined "deadpan."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* was curated by William Jenkins, held at the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House (Rochester, New York) in January 1975. The exhibition drew together the work of eight landscape photographers Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, John Schott, Stephen Shore, and Henry Wessel (Jr.). It has recently been subject to a major review in the form of a book titled *New Topographics*, author Britt Salveson, published in 2009 by Steidl and Partners.

⁵⁵ See Charlotte Cotton, 2004 (Chapter three, titled "Deadpan").

However, Adams seems to sit in an ambiguous position. His use of black and white photography, when many contemporary photographers now work in colour, places his work in an historical and traditional context that pulls back from the role of critique. In the conversation I refer to here, he draws upon photographers, painters and writers who are part of the modernist / formalist canon. This seems at odds with his association with practices that suppress expression in favour of description. Even so, there is much to discuss that challenges my own experiences on making and will serve to extend my outlook on what making requires and involves.

6. Edgar Martins in conversation with David Campany

(Martins, 2008, pp.115-122)

Martins' conversation with David Campany represents a drawing together of the poetic with the isolated position of the photographer in relation to the things that are photographed. Importantly in this discussion, Martins describes his images as combining the real, the poetic and the imagination. Elements of chance and uncertainty appear to be pivotal to his image making. This occurs, according to Martins, through photography's inadequacy to fully engage with the world. This conversation is possibly the most rewarding here since it is situated very much in the present whilst also carefully referencing the past. It throws up many problems as well as possible solutions to an account of making.

Following my analysis of the individual conversations, I will conclude this chapter by drawing together the various strands of thoughts, ideas and events that appear in them, and assess the contribution they can make towards an account of the process of making works of photographic art within the context of landscape image making.

Conversations

1. Bernd and Hilla Becher in conversation with Jean Francios Chevrier, James Lingwood and Thomas Struth

(in Campany, 1989, pp. 230-232).



Fig 2.1 Bernd and Hilla Becher. *Winding Towers*. 1966-97

At the beginning of the conversation the Bechers assert that their practice does not constitute an overall project but is on-going, where they have “completed certain things and left others open” (Bernd Becher, *ibid*, p.230). They describe how, at the outset of their work together, their concern was for the then disappearing industrial world of Europe in the late 1960s. Photography provided a way to preserve industrial objects in visual form and present them as “families of objects” (*ibid* p.230). Hilla reflects on their early experiences:

You start and then you go on and you don't have any idea, in the beginning, how far you will go. Then you get involved and you begin to learn the nature of the subject. Photography is all about subject; the subject determines the way you photograph it. So you have to learn about its nature, its function, the different landscapes and the way people think about them. There was also the idea that these industrial landscapes will not be there for eternity; even if they last for fifty years they change all the time. They are nomadic forms of architecture, they come and go almost like nature. This was interesting for us.

(Hilla Becher, 2003, p.231)

This presents me with a notion of how a project can start. It can be initiated through concern for something, and it proceeds in such a way that the future passage of the work is unknown or has not even been considered. Where each image that the Bechers' made was carefully planned, meticulously framed and followed a particular approach (e.g. a high vantage point, frontal aspect, use of a large format camera and lens shift, illuminated through a overcast sky), the beginnings of a work, this being a project, and also their conclusions, lie open and yet to be determined. In being "open," a word used by Hilla to describe projects that have yet to come to a conclusion, the work, consisting of several or many images, evolves in response to the state and conditions of the things that they want to photograph rather than the conditions of the work itself. Even so, since the mid 1970s, their work has been noted for its formal rigour and consistency and has been closely related to conceptual art. As such their original aims of social engagement have been eclipsed for the sake of the visual appearance of their images and their adopted serial modes of presentation.

Hilla Becher uses the word "subject" in a very different way to how it is used in philosophy where *subject* refers to the *perceiving subject*, the human being, who observes things (objects) in the world. In fact a counter argument can be made that the *perceiving subject* determines the way photographs are made (see Barthes, 1968), but this is counter to what the Bechers mean. According to what they say, the appearance in the environment and the historical significance of these things are the factors that determine the appearing of the work.

That the “subject” (in the sense that Hilla Becher uses the term, i.e. a thing) has a nature that has to be learnt, that it has a function in the world and that the view of other people impinge upon how images should be made, suggests how the significance of the “subject” (a thing) is rooted within the culture where it was found. These things were known and were familiar to the community of people who worked in/with them. This cultural knowledge, that extended beyond the perceptual experience of the Bechers, impinged upon and informed their attitude towards how they photographed these things.

In so being, the possibilities of photography, at least for Bernd and Hilla Becher, lie in the clear description of documentary practices applied to things that have historical significance. According to the Bechers, these qualities of photography, if applied properly, result in more than matter of fact representations of objects before the lens:

In the nineteenth century, you have both the object and the metaphor, and if you use them in the right way it becomes so fascinating that in the end you can really say: this is a certain object, it has a name and so on, but it also stands for a certain historical condition.

(Hilla Becher, *ibid*, p.231)

Hence, whilst their photographs are descriptive of things, the images also speak of something beyond how the objects appear and suggest narratives that are rooted within the culture where these objects are sited. To function in this way the images would also need to be understood in relation to historical conditions since any means of reproduction is never neutral or transparent, even if, as Hilla Becher claims, in response to Carl Andre’s published essay on their work (Andre, 2003 [1972]),

[people] accepted the fact that you can just photograph an object in a straight way, without any composition...

(Hilla Becher, *ibid*, p.231)

This then seems to be contradicted by Bernd's description that "our method of photographing objects from a high point of view made them look more rooted in the ground" (ibid). However, this rootedness is a metaphor itself:

This object is linked to a certain mechanism and to the landscape, to people working there and to a social network. You have to isolate the object, otherwise you surrender to chaos and confusion, but at the same time you have to show a part of its background, to show that this is not a moveable object like a cup of coffee.

(Bernd Becher, ibid, p. 231)

The prior statement by Hilla should be considered in the context of a conversation rather than a written text, though I assume the published version of this conversation has been subject to editing and revision. Even so, the idea of photographing in a "straight way, without any composition" (Hilla Becher, see above) is problematic since it seems to assume that an object can be photographed in such a way that the means of photographing does not intervene or reinterpret the appearance or even the significance of the object. This in turn would mean that the resulting image would be free from traces of ideology, of cultural signification and intention or bias on the part of the photographers. This never happens since all human beings are also cultural beings. The ideologies that inform our beliefs and actions are concealed within our being in that culture. At least with an historical distance between the work of the Bechers and my point in writing, there is a danger that this "straight" method of photographing now appears stylistic and even mannered. What I am aware of in these images (at least in reproduction) is an intentional approach to image making that falls on a particular side of practice, one where the self is suppressed in favour of a clear description of the qualities of the object. However, when I see an image by the Bechers, I am struck by the clarity of the image, the precise control of perspective, the centrality of the industrial motif that repeats throughout their work. The brief comments on the use of a high viewpoint to achieve a grounded quality in the objects at least leaves a trace of intention in relation to how the object in the image is related to an environment and a group of people. The idea that the object is both isolated from the clutter of the surrounding environment but also visually sited within it, speaks of a set of intentions and

compositional devices that are studied, considered and consistent in their work. This “straight” or “direct” method,⁵⁶ allegedly assumed free from composition, now appears as a style, as an assumed practice of objectification that embodies very deliberate decisions in the way of formal arrangement of the image.

I do not mean to claim that the Bechers’ work is as subjective as any other approach to photographing, but rather to assert that their images are neither objective nor free from composition, they only seem so due to their distance from photographic practices that are intended to speak more overtly of the image maker than of the thing photographed, a detachment that is entirely intentional and considered.

This raises problems with terms that are used too often and perhaps without the depth of consideration for meaning. I would like to assert at this point in my writing that both terms *subjective* and *objective* do not help. I claim this since, as Barthes has demonstrated (and similar ideas also appear in Benjamin and Heidegger), the origins of a work reside in the culture to which the maker belongs. This makes the idea of the author, as a subjective and creatively independent voice, problematic. It therefore follows that the notion of personal expression is also problematic, even mythic.

It in turn means that what is claimed as being objective by one group of people, in a certain culture and period of time, may appear as stylistic to another group or one from a later or different culture. Therefore objectivity is not bound within (an impossible) universal truth, but within the conditions of the time and culture in which those beliefs were stated. At most a statement or artefact can be true to its time, which in itself implies that truth is never a constant but can at least be related to historical period. Thus the meanings of the terms *objectivity* and *subjectivity* assume too much to be accurate and properly useful in discussions on the production of artefacts or of the artefacts themselves.

⁵⁶ “Directness” is a term Robert Adams uses to describe his approach to photographing, as discussed later.

At least this statement by Bernd Becher signifies a motivation that is secured by technique (i.e. shooting from a high vantage) and a desire to very selectively relate the object to an environment and so a class of worker and community. In terms of metaphor these images then serve to suggest how the lives of the people who work on these sites with these machines are rooted in them. Their livelihoods are dependent upon these industrial objects and the market for which they are used to supply the raw materials required by industry. As long as these objects have currency in industrial practices they are able to offer this metaphor of a social life. When the market desists and moves elsewhere, these images then resonate with a failed economic model and a community that has lost the source of its sustenance. They become markers for memory. In so being they act as metaphors for the failure of modernity. This metaphorical aspect of their work is often overlooked in favour of an attention to the typology of industrial forms achieved though the rigorous consistency of composition.

This idea of memory appears in the conversation. When asked how, referring to the work of Hollis Frampton, the image stands in place for the no longer existing object, Hilla remarks:

Yes, it is also very much about remembering things. This is one of the main functions of photography, to transfer things into the form of images, whilst always retaining the connection with the real object.

(Hilla Becher, *ibid*, p.231)

Remarking then on the importance of the work and attitude of August Sander for his “respect for his subjects” (Bernd Becher, *ibid*, p.231), the question of the social role of photography is asked. The following exchange is of particular relevance to making since it describes a motivation and attitude towards making that has its roots in uncertainty rather than the assumed confidence by which such an established practice seems to speak:

Chavrier You spoke about memory earlier. Does the social value of your photography reside in preserving the memory of things which are disappearing?

Hilla Becher It is one of the values. But it also has an egoistical value for us. We have a lot of fun doing this, learning about things, travelling and working on a subject which fascinates us and which was, to start with, very mysterious, very confusing and chaotic.

Struth Did you want to find some order?

Hilla Becher To find something out about something...

Struth Yes, but what can other people learn from looking at these objects, apart from seeing the different forms and varieties?

Hilla Becher When you learn how it is put together and how it looks, then you are able to understand it better...

(Ibid, p.231)

Hilla Becher's first reply includes something about the indeterminacy of making work, that at first, whilst the project is in its infancy, it has no direction or more so, the activity is not even identifiable as a project in the early stages. It has yet to become a project by being bestowed with an identity – a cause, concern or issue, and a practice that makes the individual images that contribute to the project cohere. This occurs, as Hilla Becher says through "learning about things," about the wider social and economic issues related to the objects they will photograph. Thus the practice of photographing is informed by this background knowledge that, in the case of the Bechers, exists as a metaphor, prompted by the appearing and the rootedness of the objects they make images of. There is then a distance, as there is in metaphors, between the practice of photographing industrial objects as typologies of form, and the social concerns that inform the project and that they want to give witness to. The practices of making work allow this gaining of knowledge to take place and show itself in the work. The sense of order that is apparent in the images is a reflection, an acknowledgement, of order as knowledge. As Bernd Becher states:

I would say that we want to complete the world of things. When you look, for instance, at objects which were made in mediaeval times, when you look at a church, you can read many things about the way people who constructed it thought. There is no comparable archaeology relating to the industrial era, yet you can still learn a lot about the way people in our century have lived and thought from looking at a steel factory or a gas refinery... I think that the idea underlying industrialism is Calvinism – a kind of ‘Calvinist baroque’, concerned with the idea of making money, doing thing fast, being efficient. There is no aesthetic behind that architecture, no idea of making it look beautiful. But the very idea of not wanting it to look beautiful creates a variety, a very independent aesthetic.

(Ibid, p.232)

Later, Bernd adds:

One might think that the functional design of a coal mine would produce a standard shaped structure. This is not true, we find an endless variety of possibilities...You see all these objects which are linked to industrialization are disappearing. As in the world of nature, they consume each other. The old type of blast furnace, for example, is superseded by the newer model...just as in things in nature die and then grow back again.

(Ibid, p.232)

Thus the non-aesthetic industrial structures that existed previously in a disparate state, in different places, geographically disassociated with one another, are brought together through the Bechers’ practice. With reference to the serial and minimal practices associated with art, these things that were built for function and economical effectiveness, appear, surprisingly, as having formal characteristics. Hence, through the presentation of typology, we see an aestheticising of non-aesthetic objects. This provides a twist to the work that, with its coolness and emotionally detached quality, seems to embody a sense of wit and irony achieved through presenting industrial objects as non-intentional sculptures, or as Bernd Becher puts it, “a Calvinist Baroque” (Ibid), a metaphor that refers to a pragmatic and efficient attitude to making things.

What is clear is that the Bechers' dialogue with art is not the only centre of interest. Interest also lies in the concern for the social significance of industrial objects and the communities that are attached and dependent upon them. However, it is this dialogue with art that has persisted in how the Bechers' work has been received and promoted by galleries and taught in art colleges. The social aspect of their work tends to be overlooked.

In terms of the serial nature of the work, and the idea that the things being photographed are not regarded as originating from aesthetic principles, the practice of photographing requires a standardisation of approach upon which a typology can be built. In this way the creative principle is not that of formalism or pictorialism, but of a quasi-scientific attempt to objectify the qualities of things. Hence the adoption of a descriptive principle of making photographs over any attempt at expression reappears towards the end of the discussion within the guise of a moral code:

Yes. First of all you cannot afford to judge what is good and what is not. There's a kind of morality that you have to put aside if you want to be democratic about it and not to judge before you have experienced it. You have to respect the object as it is, as it appears... Sometimes an object that which doesn't look interesting turns out in the photograph to be a very important metaphor... You have to force a kind of neutrality.

...the principle of the catalogue, in the natural science, is for us the artistic principle; Linnaeus [the eighteenth century botanist and taxonomist] is as much an artist as Einstein.

(Hilla Becher, *ibid*, p.232)

This idea of the catalogue relates very closely to the serial practice of the Bechers. The serial nature of their work requires the formulation of a standardised approach, as discussed above, that they are well known for. The sense in which they, as image makers, attempt to describe, in a disinterested and unimpassioned way, things that speak of situations that matter to them (i.e. the social conditions of industrialised communities) is an essential aspect of their practice. A democratic approach to image making also allows the work to avoid literal illustration of ideas and motives. The muteness of a photograph lends itself to the presentation of things without

appearing judgemental. Muteness was a quality described by Walter Benjamin (1992 [1936]) and Roland Barthes (1993 [1980]) as being a negative quality of photographs, that in so being photographs lack the ability to speak of themselves and so rely often too heavily on the caption. However, in the case of the Bechers, the mute aspect of photographs allows the image, with all its descriptive qualities, to remain essentially visual, since to give the work a voice would risk invoking judgement. This sense of coolness, of deadpan (that is at risk of becoming a cliché), of an apparent avoidance of emotional investment in the process of image making, is a required condition of the Bechers' process of making work. This is borne out by Hilla's remarks that close the conversation:

If you get very involved in something, you have to find a way to distance yourself. You have to be honest with your object and to make sure that you don't destroy it with your subjectivity, and yet remain involved at the same time... We should not judge now. All these objects still belong to our time, to our society. Although they may sometimes seem distant; therefore, many misjudgements are possible. All we can do now is describe them visually, and not yet verbally.

(Hilla Becher, *ibid*, p.232)

There are several facets of making that appear in the conversation that I value highly. The first is a sense of uncertainty in the process of making. The Bechers' work, with its rigorous processes and cool technical excellence, seems confident and authoritative. The idea that they set out unsure of what they were doing and where the project might lead them is an aspect of making that receives very little consideration. It reinforces the idea that making is a process of discovery where predetermined judgements need to be avoided for the sake of seeing the thing "as it appears" (*Ibid*, p.232) as Bernd Becher says. This can then be coupled with photography as a process of description, where judgement is suspended on the nature and importance of things. This attitude is clearly evident in other important image-makers, notably Walker Evans.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ See interview with Walker Evans by Leslie Katz as discussed in Chapter 1.

To add to this, the expectation might be that such images are simply matter of fact, that what I see is what I get. However, the role of metaphor takes my imaginary gaze beyond the frame of the image and into the social sphere of the world that these objects serve. That the images are much more than a play on the formal qualities of industrial objects takes the work beyond its too often allocated and rather isolated state of a dialogue with art and places it in the wider world of social relations. This sense in which an image can “speak” beyond its limits (its physical and temporal frame) is for me a key element of image making. It makes clear that the process of making images is so much more involved than mere technique and situates making within what Benjamin called the “context of living social relations” (Benjamin, 1982 [1934], p.17). The risk here is that this statement suggests that judgements on meaning are made within the process of making and so are predetermined for the viewer. However, an important distinction that Benjamin makes is that the production of meaning takes place with the audience, during the reception of the work, a process that is echoed in Barthes’ *Death of the Author*. At least in the sense revealed by the Bechers’ discussion, this meaning is an evolving process that takes place within the progression of industrialisation.

2. Jeff Wall in conversation with Martine Schwander

(1993, in Campany, 2003, p.270)

This conversation raises some interesting and relevant points about genre. It starts with Martine Schwander quoting Wall from an earlier interview where he refers to the philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin.⁵⁸

“The process of an experience of a work, whilst it must be open to the associations brought to it by different people, is still structured and regulated and contains determinations. I think it is controlled, above all by genre, by the generic character of the picture-types and types of subject.

⁵⁸ It is not clear where Schwander ceases to quote Wall in this passage.

[Mikhail] Bakhtin said that genre was the collective, accumulated meaning of things that has come through time and the mutations of social orders. It is the foundation of the guarantee of objectivity, the basis of the 'truth content' of representations.

(Schwander in Wall, 2003, p.270)



Fig 2.2 Jeff Wall. *Restoration*. 1993

In light of these comments Schwander asks Wall how genre applies to his image *Restoration* (fig 2.2). Wall describes how Bakhtin refers to genre as being a result of 'collective memory' and that it operates whether or not the artist is conscious of the qualities of genre. He adds:

You do not really have to be conscious of the generic structure of the work you're doing to do it, even to do it well. The work you do will have such a structure in any case. Genre is a fluid construct that operates regardless of the consciousness of the artist. It is fluid in that it isn't clear whether its 'constructs' can be very strictly defined, its borders easily located.

(Wall, 2003, p.270)

Wall's reference to Bakhtin presents me with a similar attitude to that of Barthes (*Death of the Author*, 1968) and Benjamin (*The Author as Producer*, 1934), as discussed in my first chapter – this being that the artist or maker is part of, or sits within, a wide web of traditions and practices that are often taken for granted, considered natural and so remain transparent or invisible to those that live inside the culture that has produced these genres. That it guarantees objectivity and forms the basis 'truth content' in the images produced in that culture also points to the idea that objectivity and truth are products of the history of culture; that truth has its conditions. However, Schwander, with reference to Bakhtin, deviates from Barthes' theory on authorship by

drawing upon the influence of genre that provides limits and boundaries to how a work is understood. This limiting effect of genre presents an important layer of meaning to how a work is experienced. However, it is unclear what he means in his first statement when he refers to “the process of an experience of a work.” At first I assume that he refers to the experience of a viewer of an image, but he could just as well be referring to the process of an experience of making a work. Wall’s reply has less ambiguity; genre offers a structure to making regardless of whether the image-maker is conscious of this or not. In this context, Wall presents genre as having a significant influence on how images are made, a point that is highly relevant to my research.

What is relevant to me most in Wall’s statement is how it is possible to work within a genre without knowing its limits, or even being conscious of the qualities of the genre at all. If I step back from this statement and consider the way I myself make images I can see how it might occur. I can make a landscape photograph without recourse to studying the qualities of landscape genre. The traditional requirements of a landscape image are so familiar to me that they seem unquestionable. I would recognise such an image if I saw one (even if some images or some image makers may resist such categorisation, e.g. Andreas Gursky), or adopt certain practices if I chose to make one. I immediately think of my camera viewfinder in a certain orientation. I would address foreground/background relationships in the composition. The visual scheme I will adopt is almost automatic. The process of making such an image seems so “natural” and “given” that there seems barely anything there to discuss let alone construct a theory on.

However, the fact that I struggle to make images that are ‘good enough,’ that the virtues of a good image seem so persistent but also vague and ill defined, and my own attempts often fall short of these expectations, is perhaps proof that the qualities of the landscape genre are so deeply ingrained in my mind and shared through the culture of which I am a part that they elude precise identification and limitation. Further to this, I will not argue that the conventions of landscape image making extend well beyond the remit of my own projects. So a way of thinking

about the images that I make is that I draw upon fragments of genre and do so, in part, unconsciously and consciously.

Wall briefly refers to how the “pictorial character” (ibid) of a work can dominate the “dramatic theme” (ibid). Though this theme is undeveloped in this conversation it leads to the idea of style (a way of doing things) and use of form (the components of pictorial organization) to providing similar visual schemes even though the theme of the works may differ. The idea of visual consistency is a feature of the work of many image-makers. For example, the Bechers’ consistent use of a high vantage point, extended tonal scale, photographing on over-cast days, a frontal point of view in relation to the object, are all intentional elements of their image making and production of a body of work. The selection of consistent film/camera types, of focal length and aperture, contrast and colour saturation are all integral to making a body of work that is coherent in the way Wall alludes to it above. But, like the ‘givenness’ of genre, these decisions, or rather the motivation and significance of these decisions, are rarely discussed in theory, even though they are clearly evident in the work of image-makers. Are these issues too prosaic and mundane for theory even though these decisions, at base, determine the visual qualities of the images and so provide a direction towards a certain significance?

Wall states another relevant point, this being how the “immediate theme” (Wall, p.270) of the image, in this case the restoration of a nineteenth century panorama painting, is secondary to what the image is actually about. For Wall, the theme of his image has little to do with the restoration of the painting itself. Rather, the “massiveness of the task the figures are undertaking” and the “futility of ever bringing the past into the ‘now’ ” (ibid) is, for Wall, the pivotal concern. Even so the “pictorial character” rises again in the conversation, punctuating the narrative or “dramatic theme” (ibid) this being the impossibility of representing a 360 degree picture on a flat plane, thus pointing to the “historical flaw” of the painted panorama, a genre that was soon replaced by cinema:

The interesting tension in the picture for me is that between the flatness of the photograph I'm making and the curved nature of the panorama's space. Because you see it curve away from you and disappear, I see it as a kind of making-explicit of the situation that exists with every picture which renders the illusion of volume and curved space on a flat plane...The idea that there is something in every picture, no matter how well-structured the picture is, that escapes being shown. I've always been interested in this.

(Wall, *ibid*, p.270)

This is something that is fundamental to photography – something always exists beyond the frame. The image can only ever be a representation of a fragment of the available space perceived by the photographer. Therefore the act of selecting what remains in the frame is a concentration upon a certain amount of space or of things to the exclusion of a greater space or more things. The fragments of things to the edge of the frame give witness to their exclusion in the image but in so doing point to the extension of the wider environment. The idea of absence, or at least referring to things that evade pictorial description, recurs through Wall's work. Speech being an example:

Speech is something that by definition cannot be adequately depicted in a photograph or a picture, and so to me it always seemed fascinating as that thing which was forever escaping, a sort of will-o-the-wisp, something that can never be located in the picture, but it is what the picture is all about, what is showing somehow...These things are subtle elements of mobility, of restlessness, of the fugitive. The stillness and stable composition of the picture, in general, intensify this fugitive sense.

(*ibid*, p.270)

Thus the possibility of representing things, events and situations that extend beyond the ability of an enframed, still and silent image, is a significant motivation in Wall's work. If I take these comments on their own I could almost present Wall as an image maker governed by formalist practices. However, these observations of the qualities and limits of the still image are entwined with the "dramatic theme." They are acknowledged as part of the process of photographic

representation and signification. He makes the point that all the figures involved in restoring the painting are women.

There is a paradox here that he describes in that the panoramic painting represents male soldiers in retreat being fed and watered (restored) by women. Thus the act of restoration of male activity (of male soldiers and of a painting by a man) by women is represented twice. This for Wall is poetic and political and it relates to how gesture, the body and human behaviour feature throughout his work:

I think that in the arts, crafts and professions people develop patterns of behaviour which function as social models. These women, these restorers, are acting-out a kind of conceptual model of what their idea of civilization is like, their idea of a certain valid way of life. I think one of the historical roles of pictorial art was to make images which in a way are models of behaviour, too...the characters are developing, and enacting, an intimate, meditative relation to a work of art through their practice, their work. This is a kind of statement.

(Ibid, p.271)



Fig 2.3 Jeff Wall. *Restoration* (detail)

These things – genre, the pictorial character of the work, gesture and social behaviour - are drawn together in a practice that at once relates to contemporary social life and draws upon art history for models or precedents of representation. It may seem paradoxical that Wall's images are made with modern technology but this allows a relationship with painting that an image made with a single exposure might not allow. Wall's images are constructed from several and often many exposures where facets of a scene, or the gestures of a figure can be edited in a way that is similar to the way a painter, working on different facets of the image, constructs a work over a period of time. What is more, for Wall, digitisation lends his images a "hand-made" (ibid, p.271) quality that deviates from "straight" photography (i.e. the image made from the whole of a single exposure as represented by Stieglitz, Strand, et al) and moves closer, through montage and assembly, towards painting:

It has curious resemblances to the older ways of painting in the way you can separate the parts of your work and treat them independently. A painter might be working on a large canvas and, one afternoon, might concentrate on a figure or object, or a small area. Part of the poetry of traditional painting is the way it created the illusion that painting depicted a single moment – the moment the shutter is released. Photography is based in that sense of instantaneousness. Painting, on the other hand, created a beautiful and complex illusion of instantaneousness. So past, present and future were simultaneous in it, and play with each other or clash. Things which could never co-exist in the world could easily do so in painting. That is something photography was never suited for, although cinema is... Computer montage has destroyed that barrier. In my computer pictures I can conjure something up by an assemblage of elements created with their pictorial unification in mind.

(Ibid, p.271)

Given this, the attention towards verisimilitude and visual coherence in Wall's images is intense. Digital montage of this caliber is no "quick fix" in the way that many amateurs and beginners use it to correct errors or remove unwanted artefacts. The notion that Wall conjures up an image by using digital methods of image making is an interesting point to make, since the images are created to appear singular rather than plural. The notion of conjuring suggests magic, trickery or

at least that the means of production are concealed in the end result. They appear spatially and temporally seamless and speak of a moment even though they have been constructed from exposures made over a period of time. A feature that is often lost in reproduction is the object quality of Wall's work. The production values are very high with commercial methods of reproduction. Large transparencies are mounted in deep metal frames to house lighting grids that illuminate the images from behind. In so doing the images have a cinematic quality. They emanate their own light rather than share the ambient light of the gallery with the viewer.

This conversation is useful to me because within it the intellectual and practical concerns of making collide in a way that is rare in texts in photography. Importantly, Wall's description of genre (though a little too brief here to provide full insight), his placement within it and understanding of elements such as gesture and human behaviours that are historically bound within culture, means that I can appreciate the confluence of the intellectual practices of making (the culturally bound theory that informs making) with the practical exercise of image making. I would go so far as to argue it is not appropriate to separate the two as distinct practices since the act of making work and the appreciation and application of history meld together. My concern is that only the latter tends to be the theme of discussion in photographic theory.

The attention to aspects of human behaviour that defy pictorial description (i.e. speech), are approached as is the problem of how to represent an object that spans 360 degrees. The issue of what lies beyond the frame is discussed. These are more than technical considerations. They are brought into the fold of pictorial significance but do so by reference to how an image is made.

Where many conversations, texts, essays, statements tend to concentrate on the significance of the image, Wall draws in the practices of making images - the decisions, the observations, the perceptions in a way seems often overlooked in other texts. At least in this discussion the practice of making images is entwined within history and the production of meaning.

3. Victor Burgin, Interview with Naomi Salaman

(1998, in Campany, 2003, pp.280-281)

Several texts by Burgin appear in Campany's selection. Where, on the whole, Burgin tends to allude to theoretical discussion and the significance of images, there are moments when Burgin speaks of more pragmatic concerns, such as the problem associated with how theory can contribute to how images are made.

There is a point in this conversation with Naomi Salaman that risks being over-quoted and referred to too often without appreciation for the responsibility an image maker has towards the production of meaning. What he says seems fundamental to photography as a fine art, or precisely, as a critically informed practice. It is underlined in motive (if not in content) with his approach in *Thinking Photography* to found a theory of photography and form a coherent account of how photographic images mean. Though there is an admission that the book and its contents have passed their relevance (though I would contest this, at least in part), the issue of the role of theory (and resistance to it) and how it should be implemented in relation to how work is made is one that concerns me.

Burgin raises a key point that illustrates the distinction between a practice that is informed and one that is not. He asks, placing himself in the position of an image maker,

Burgin Am I just working with what I've inherited, or do I want to look critically at what I've inherited?" So the people who used theory were really trying to recognize the basis from which they worked. But there is always a basis.

Salaman There is always a basis but becoming conscious of that basis in a sense is quite a desublimatory activity, and it's so crucial how that process takes place, so that you don't end up with shipwrecked people who can't work because the theory has negated them.

Burkin At the end of the second year I'd have students come into my office and they'd say, 'Don't get me wrong, it's not that I don't like my theory classes. I find them really interesting but I can't take a picture any more. Every time I raise the camera to my eye I think, is this politically OK? Is this...' etc, etc. The advice I always gave them was: 'Shoot first, ask questions later.' These are questions you ask later, and you answer theoretically perhaps. Go with the moment of sublimation, the moment of desire. The first rule of psychoanalysis and the couch is 'say the first thing that comes into your mind'. It sounds easy, but it's not. There are so many checks and balances on what we're able to say.

(Burkin, 2003 [1998], p.280-281)

On one hand the attitude of Burkin seems very distant from my search for accounts of making. It might even count as its antithesis since, it could be argued, the influence of critical theory (including Burkin's *Thinking Photography*, 1982), has contributed to the dominance of image signification over image making in theory. On the other hand, his description of how photographers might manage theory with image making seems to make a great deal of sense and provides a very practical method of situating ones self within the history of images. Even so, I also take into consideration the warning given by Salaman that the sheer demands of such a historicizing approach to image making could be counter-productive and might cause photographers to cease to see a way beyond theory that challenged them at every step. A significant criticism that Burkin refers to is the danger of how a critically informed practice, that put theory before image making, might simply result in the illustration of theory. These are valid warnings, but they should not be a deterrent from informing oneself. It is more a question of how theory is approached and handled. Theory and philosophy need to offer constructive ways of thinking, even if they challenge older, more established habits. In so doing, theory is bound to interrupt and cause a postponement of making, but that is part of the process of making informed work.

At least according to my view of photography as a fine art – as a critical practice – a theory of making that did not account for the underpinning history, traditions and conventions would not suffice. It would be only half the story, but then so would a theory that only looked at

signification. Despite the fact that Burgin infrequently discusses the practices of making, his statement presents a model for realising one's own place in the history of images and how normative practices can be revealed with the insight that thinking critically can offer. In this way, the *art* of image making becomes authentically *fine*.

4. Hiroshi Sugimoto, interview with Thomas Kellein

(1995, in Campany, 2003, p. 285)



Fig 2.4 Hiroshi Sugimoto. *Tri City Drive-In*. 1993

In an interview with Thomas Kellein, Hiroshi Sugimoto reveals something about his working practices. As he says in this text, he starts out with an idea rather than searching for images:

My method is quite different from the one that most photographers use. I do not go around and shoot. I am not a hunter.

(Sugimoto, 2003 [1995], p.285)

This statement by Sugimoto raises several issues and assumptions. Sugimoto assumes that the practice of making images adopted by “most photographers” leans heavily on serendipity and the chance occurrence of finding something arresting or interesting. Though there are many photographers who undoubtedly do work like this, there are very many who do not. The work of street and documentary photographers may well rely on finding images, or *hunting* for images. The work of Henri Cartier-Bresson, and his theory of the decisive image, is probably the exemplar of the image hunter. Andre Kertesz, the French Humanists, Walker Evans, Robert Frank, Gary Winogrand and Lee Friedlander could all be described as image hunters. Interestingly this practice of hunting for images was criticised by Burgin in his introduction to *Thinking Photography*. The fact that Burgin raises this kind of practice as a point of criticism testifies to the fact that the revision of thinking about photography that occurred in the early nineteen-eighties also gave rise to highly intentional and premeditated approaches to the construction of images with the realisation that all images to a certain degree are constructs of culture. Wall’s words on genre (above) suggest the same, further to which Wall’s practice of image making relies highly on construction and assembly. My point here is that even if images are hunted down, there lies within this hunting a desire to capture certain types of images. There is then an inescapable degree of pre-meditation and pre-judgement involved in “going around and shooting” since the image, for it to be regarded as “good,” needs to conform to certain pre-established pictorial values.

There is also the inference in Sugimoto’s words that such an image is something of a trophy – an emblem of truth captured and laid bare - since hunting implies that images lie out there in the world like wild animals. This wildness equates with a vision free from the taming of tradition and theory. This is a myth that was raised by Burgin and others (i.e. Allan Sekula, John Tagg, even earlier by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*). There is a risk that the recent interest in street photography relies too heavily on this myth and runs the risk of regressing to the narrow concerns and formalism of late modernism (see my description in Chapter 1).

Sugimoto continues:

I usually have a specific vision, just by myself. One night I thought of taking a photographic exposure of a film at a movie theatre while the movie being projected. I imagined how it could be possible to shoot an entire movie with my camera. Then I had the very clear vision that the movie screen would show up on the picture as a white rectangle. I thought it could look like a very brilliant white rectangle coming out from the screen, shining through the whole theatre. It might seem very interesting and mysterious, even in some way religious. So the next step was to make that happen. If I already have a vision, my work is almost done. The rest is a technical problem. It is a very difficult process, though, because you have to keep trying. My work becomes a trial-and-error process. The results have to coincide with my vision. With the *Theatres*, the first test was actually quite successful. It was basically easy but I still had to refine the quality a lot. It took about one year to get the quality I wanted. Since then I have kept going on and on.

(Ibid, p.285)

This reveals a very particular attitude to making. The idea that Sugimoto has a “specific vision” by himself suggests that he thinks of an idea without any reference to any other source of image making. This could be pulled apart and criticized for its interiority, however in the context of the conversation what I think he means is that the idea occurred to him through a process of contemplation, through a remembered experience of a cinema screen and the duration of spectating, as opposed to responding intuitively to an occurrence. What he says suggests a sequence of actions:

1. The idea for a work is raised through contemplation of a remembered experience.
2. The pre-visualised quality of the work arises through careful consideration of the circumstances and qualities of the thing to be photographed.
3. The technical practice of making images is undertaken with the aim to make the resulting images meet the pre-visualised vision.

What Sugimoto seems to want to avoid is an intuitive response to image making where the image maker responds openly to a situation. For Sugimoto expectations are established in his

mind's eye and the resulting image needs to live up to this. There seems to be, in this process, no room for surprises or the unplanned. Everything is predetermined and controlled.

However I think there are some issues with what Sugimoto says. To claim "If I already have a vision, my work is almost done" seems to contradict his later statement that the technical process is difficult and takes some time to refine. What I think he means here is that the cerebral process of refining the work is the most significant. The technical processes and the required refinement of practical image making seems little more than a burden. Given that this conversation was conducted after this project was established I also find it problematic that Sugimoto can claim that he imagined before hand all the visual qualities that his images required and that the photographs he took were merely a technical exercise in a subsequent matching of this vision. He states:

I thought it could look like a very brilliant white rectangle coming out from the screen, shining through the whole theatre.

(Ibid, p.285)

Would he really have known this without experiencing the visual quality of an image? I do think that this can be predicted, but I do not believe that his initial vision could account for all the visual qualities that would occur in the images. Does he really mean that subsequent images did not add and modify his vision and expectations for the work? I find it hard to comprehend that Sugimoto experienced no sense of discovery during the period through which the work was made. Furthermore, reflection after the image has been made can never fully account for the thought processes prior to its making or for the experiences of making itself.

These criticisms asides what Sugimoto's statement reveals is how the process of image making requires a constant refinement to equal the initial vision of the work, that is, to equal the pre-established expectations of the work and the desire for the work to have a certain qualities and

appearance. Edward Weston called this pre-visualisation. There is certainly value in this and I can identify with this process to a degree.

However, the manipulation of materials raises another issue – that of the appearance of the image in relationship to the experience of the event. Sugimoto suggests therefore that the photographs need to have visual qualities that match his experience, imagined or not, of the cinema screens and the theatres. The images, being long exposures, have a much more extensive temporal relationship (i.e. ninety minutes to two hours or more) with the thing photographed than conventional practices (i.e. fractions of a second). In doing so Sugimoto is extending the ability of the film to record shadow and highlight detail in ways beyond the film manufacturers expectations. I am familiar with the technical decisions he would have to make in these circumstances (i.e. an extended exposure time coupled considerable reduction in development time), but I think he plays down the event of discovery in the process of making his images. I take his point that the images he made had to “coincide with [his] vision.” However, I fail to believe that the process of image making, and the results themselves, did not, at least subconsciously, affect his vision of his images in some way.

5. Robert Adams in Conversation with Constance Sullivan

(Along Some Rivers: Photographs and Conversations, Aperture, 2006)

Asked about his motivation for photographing, Robert Adams recalls an early experience:

I'd been making pictures of rural areas, in the manner of Ansel Adams, but the conference organizers asked me to make documentary pictures of the city of Colorado Springs, which was growing rapidly. I did so, and was surprised. The scenes were frightening, but one or two had about them an unexpected beauty. I couldn't account for it. From that point on I felt as though I had some exploring to do.

(Adams, 2006, p.14)



Fig 2.5 Robert Adams. *New Housing, Longmont, Colorado*. 1973

The notion of beauty is something that is very rarely approached and discussed in contemporary thinking and writing about photography. It is regarded as historically situated in nineteenth century and the more romantic of modernist practices. In the context of artistic practices that are informed by conceptual art, beauty is an antiquated idea that does not relate to culturally informed practices unless the aim is to provide a critique of the standards, conventions and traditions of beauty.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, what this statement reveals is an attraction towards certain appearances or qualities or images that seem at odds with the state of the things that were photographed. The statement marks an important distinction: that though the scene, the situation that Adams found himself in, was frightening (and this is not the same as repulsive or ugly, since I am attracted to what I find beautiful but also compelled by what I find disturbing) the resulting images of these scenes incorporated unexpected formal qualities perceived by Adams that he describes as beautiful and independent of the thing/scene that was photographed. This needs to be

⁵⁹ See the work of Karen Knorr.

unrevealed, and though it is not entirely clear, I suggest the following: that the scene itself elicited particular perceptual qualities (i.e. of fright). I should not forget that an image is absent of noise, smell and touch (and in Adams case, the presence of whatever he found frightening), and that the viewer cannot see beyond the frame of the image, even though this can be very powerfully suggested within the frame. For Adams, some of his images were absent of the qualities that were perceived by him on site. Whatever was frightening, was replaced by an “unexpected beauty” (Ibid, p.14). This suggests that the practice of photographing, producing purely visual (and in Adams case, tonal) images, results in a highly attenuated visual translation of the situation, the things and circumstances *as experienced*. That this results in beauty is far from resolved. This implies that these qualities were not experienced on site, when photographing. Or perhaps, since beauty is a visual condition associated with calm and safety, whatever was frightening distracted Adams from perceiving beauty in the scene.⁶⁰ Furthermore, that these qualities of beauty were registered in the images, and not in his experience of the site, suggests that beauty occurs through a fragmentation and visual displacement of the world via the visual rectangles called photographs. Adams only registered this beauty after viewing the images but was unable to identify why or to articulate the qualities that made them so. There is then, in Adam’s comments, a schism between the thing and the image.

A further distinction should also be made: Adams, by his own admission, did not continue to photograph frightening suburban environments because they themselves were beautiful, but did so because he found occasional photographic images of these places beautiful. So the attraction has two possible elements:

1. The possibility of making beauty out of something that is not.
2. The problem of how or why this occurs – that the perceived qualities of the image are distinct from those of the thing or place photographed.

⁶⁰ See Burke (1998 [1757]) on a theory of the sublime. Also see Gilpin (1792) on his distinction between beauty and the sublime.

A discussion on the argument of what constitutes beauty (and also taste) is not the aim of this chapter (or strictly of my research), though it is enough to say that beauty is a contentious and much discussed issue present in arguments throughout the history of philosophy (McMahon, 2005). What is more relevant to me is that this difference was a motivating function for Adams.

The interviewer continues:

Constance Sullivan: “Are your photographs concerned with environmental issues, or are they primarily about your aesthetic vision?”

Robert Adams: “Content and aesthetics are inseparable...”

(Ibid)

This question is interesting in itself since it seems to assume that images that are concerned with world issues (as opposed to art world issues) are somehow absent of aesthetic qualities in themselves, or that the aesthetic qualities have been relinquished for the sake of description, of describing things. It belies a trace of the dichotomy that presents expression on the side of form on one side (the belief aesthetics belong to the image maker), and the description of a thing where the aesthetics reside in the state of things and their relationship to one another (i.e. of the world). Sullivan’s question assumes that the two situations are mutually exclusive, though some image makers would indeed suggest that this is so (e.g. Minor White).

CS: How do you try to reach these goals?

RA: By refusing to cull evidence away from our abuse of the land and of each other. And then by refusing to turn away from what artists have traditionally celebrated in life – beauty. By which I mean form.

(Ibid, p.15)

Adams' statement presents something of a contradiction. It seems intentional. The evidence of our abuse would (or perhaps should) surely appear ugly and unsettling, whereas beauty suggests a state of affairs that gives succour, affirms our faith in, and concern for, the state of the natural environment.⁶¹ There is however, a slight but essential difference at work here. Adams equates beauty with form. In doing so he refers to the pictorial values of the image rather than of the thing photographed. This is so since it is form, as a set of pictorial values, that are applied by Adams when he makes a photograph of things or a place. Form belongs to the image rather than the thing(s) photographed. This is not that things do not have formal values in themselves (such as the water towers photographed by the Bechers) but that the aesthetic decisions made on the part of photographer are based on how a thing appears in the frame of the camera. There is a separation here that I am not content with; surely the form of a thing will determine the formal values of the image? If so, then a situation that is ugly, distressing or challenging will deviate from traditional values of beauty. It is not that simple. Adams' statement testifies to this. It is problematic and difficult to reconcile. How do I equate beauty with abuse?

I could at this point proceed to pull apart the categories of presentation (the qualities of appearing) associated with beauty. These qualities are the picturesque (see Gilpin, 1792) and the sublime (see Burke, 1998 [1757] and Crawford on Kant 2005). That would be to depart too far from this interview. However, since Adams gives little more insight into his use of such terms as beauty and form, I think this is appropriate to a later stage of my research (Chapter 4 and 5) since it is a motivating factor in the process of image making. Maybe I should know the difference, but I find that this ill-fit between beauty and form stands unresolved. What this indicates instead is an assumed understanding, a shallow reading, of these terms when in fact they are much more involved and more complex than is often assumed. Given Adams' literary background, I assume that he understands this complexity even if this is not fully articulated here. It is an instance where one reads this text in a casual way and assumes knowledge of

⁶¹ The issue of nature is far from simple. Like beauty, to which it is often related, it has been subject to debate throughout the history of Western thought. See Carlson (2005), Jackson (1984) and Parsons (2008).

these terms, glossing over the full implications in a vague understanding of what beauty is and how form works. On a slower reading, these terms stand out as problematic and their relationship to making unresolved.

Whatever the case may be I think that Adams is seeking to apply this seeming contradiction between beauty and abuse as a challenge to how environment appears as a result of the mismanagement and abuse of it. Beauty is not a way of concealing abuse, rather, in the formal values of image making, it is a way of making it apparent by the ill-fit between the two; the inappropriate, contradictory and irreconcilable appearing of the two. In so doing, and this seems to become more apparent in what he says a little later, the intention of photographing is to ask questions rather than make visual statements – to arrest the viewer through the contradiction of beauty and abuse.

There is also, by making images that are beautiful, that attend to form, always the risk that the concern for the thing photographed (in Adams' case the abuse of the environment and other people), becomes overlooked by both photographer and also the viewer for the sake of the visual qualities of the image. For the photographer this would occur when the formal values of the image supersede the importance of the thing that has been photographed. There is, I feel, always a risk that in framing the image the photographer runs the risk of plucking the thing out of the context where it sits in the world and disassociating it, both visually and in terms of significance, from the concerns that at first the photographer was concerned with. Since the frame of the camera inevitably excludes more than it includes, perhaps this is inevitable. Where the formalist might be more than happy with the shapes and patterns that result (see Szarkowski), the contemporary image maker, more concerned with cultural significance, might seek to reassert the context of the image and to position his or her practice in relation to histories, traditions and states of things that lies outside the frame. However, since a photographer makes images, is it not also the case that a photographer would not want to attend to the qualities of the image as a thing in itself?

Adams is asked if his approach to photographing has changed during the thirty years he has been photographing. He replies:

I continue to try, as I have done from the start, to be as direct as possible, and in that sense I think there has been a continuity of style...

(Ibid, p.15)

This idea of directness reminds me of Walker Evans attempt to remove his subjectivity from his images as much as possible in an effort to produce objective visual descriptions (Evans, 1981 [1971]). However, considered more closely, this idea of directness seems rather vague: direct to what? What are the terms of this directness?

To be direct means that one's attention is focused upon something without deviation. It also suggests an immediacy, an honesty and intensity of gaze. A direct approach to photographing implies a no-frills, matter-of-fact methodology and a purity of means and method. To an extent this directness inherits something of the "straight" photographic approach promoted by modernist photographers (e.g. Steiglitz, Strand, Weston, Evans) and historians (e.g. Newhall) but also absent of the romanticist tendencies of some of these.⁶² What remains common with the "straight" photographic approach is a precise control of an economy of means (i.e. a consistent focal length, film stock and camera type, full-frame printing, a planned and slow approach to composition, rectilinear organisation of the camera frame, careful exposure of film and development to ensure a extended tonal range), camera view points that represented a human point of view (i.e. non of the angularity that was present in the "Ostrananie" of Rodechenko or the Subjective School as mentioned by the Bechers, 2003 [1989]).

⁶² It should also be noted that although the likes of Stieglitz and Evans shared a practice regarded as "straight," – that is, a certain purity to means and production - Evans was opposed to Stieglitz's romanticist poeticising of the photographic image. Evans was not an exponent of Equivalence. See Chapter 1 for a description and critique of Equivalence. In other words, the means of production did not necessarily reflect a sympathy of ideology.

At least in the practices of Evans, the late work of Paul Strand, and the Bechers, there is an attempt to produce images that employ a naturalistic quality that attempts to draw attention to the qualities of the thing rather than the qualities of the image. Even so, this naturalism is never complete. It is never completely on the side of the thing that is photographed since the decisions of the photographer always, to some degree, register themselves within the image. Furthermore, the practices of photography are ingrained within those ancient practices of painting, so much so that these practices seem “normal.”⁶³ In short, the conditions of naturalism always adhere to a code.

Looking at Adams’ method of image making is consistent with aspects “straight” approach. With this careful, measured and cool approach to image making, Adams’ images have, like that of the Bechers and Evans (although Adams would probably distance himself from the later), a matter of fact or dead-pan quality. With this is an attempt to suppress evidence of self and an attention towards the thing that has been photographed. They have an “artless” quality (by this I mean a quality that distances itself from expression) that is, paradoxically, only achieved through the very careful and considered control of equipment and materials. The idea that such images remove themselves from formal considerations, that somehow the deadpan approach is an antidote to the excess of expression and overt formal construction that is evident in high modernist work, is a fallacy. The production of images that seem emotionally detached requires a great deal of attention to the formal considerations of the image and to the processes of image making, but they do so in such a way that they become a matter of procedure rather than be employed as a vehicle for the passion of the maker, as evident in the attitudes of Stieglitz and White. Where Adams feels very strongly about the environmental mismanagement of the American West, I would argue that this emotion is suppressed in the formal values of his images. Instead, a process of image making is employed to present the state of things with a visual clarity and formal organisation that, even though the form is highly considered, results in images that seem mute of judgement or demonstration of attitude. There is an attitude in his

⁶³ Hubert Damisch (1980 [1963]) provides a brief but excellent description of the embeddedness of photography in ancient traditions of painting.

images that seems to say: “here it is,” rather than: “look at what they’ve done!” This becomes apparent later in the conversation when Sullivan, in recognition of Adams’ concern for environment, comments: “Your picture, nonetheless, seem quiet,” to which Adams replies “I hope so” (p.19).

The conversation touches on how Adams works on projects:

RA: Projects evolve in response to countless discoveries about the way light falls on particular houses or streets or people or cars or mesas... the discoveries are most likely made, I think, when I feel at home. Lewis Baltz said to me once that he believed that he took sucker shots when he visited a place for the first time. That’s been my experience too.

CS: But why do you feel that you have to familiar with a place in order to do your best work there?

RA: Because what I’m after are characteristic views, and I can’t know if something is characteristic until I’ve seen a place again and again, through all kinds of hours and seasons.

(Ibid, pp.15-16)

This reveals several things about the process of making a body of work and in making images that seek to reveal something about the place being photographed. There is not a great deal to go on here, but there are traces that I think are relevant to my research.

The first statement seems to contradict what I have said before about Adams’ direct approach to image making. His attraction to light suggests that the place/thing photographed requires certain pre-requisites to make it worthy of photographing. It requires certain visual standards of beauty that are not just present in the thing but are caused by the way light described that thing. So, given that he states that his images are direct, which suggests a certain emotional detachment from the thing, the idea that the thing requires certain environmental conditions to make it worth photographing suggests that the thing itself is not the recipient of the directness that Adams claims. In other words there are conditions to directness.

The idea that familiarity with a place, a developed intimacy, is a requirement for photographing suggests a further depth to the processes by which a “direct” (Ibid, p.15) approach to image making can be applied. To produce views that are characteristic suggests two opposing attitudes. On one hand, it can mean that the character of the place only becomes apparent to the Adams through an intimacy with it, whereby certain features that underlie the character of that place can only be revealed with familiarity. On the other hand, a characteristic view might also imply an image that draws upon the conventions and traditions of image making.

To put it another way, perhaps what occurs with being new to a place is that it is too little known for the visual methods of image making to be successfully applied. There are elements of evidence for this in what Adams referred to in the unaccountable beauty of certain photographs of unbeautiful things, how light is required to play on things, Baltz’s “sucker shots” and the idea of views that are “characteristic” (Adams, *ibid*). It is the case, I am sure, that what Adams means by this is the essential character of place, but unless the qualities of this character take on, become recognizable and finally conformable to the process of image making, they will not satisfy the desires and aims of the image maker who seeks for such views. It is perhaps less that the place becomes known in its own terms and for its own features, but that it becomes known in terms of image making.

6. Edgar Martins in conversation with David Company

(Edgar Martins, *Topologies*, 2008, Aperture)

Edgar Martins makes large scale, high-resolution images of architectural objects and environments. His work can be loosely described as landscape. The conversation with David Company that I refer to here reveals a multiple number of concerns related to image making, some of these noted by Company as well as by Martins.



Fig 2.6 Edgar Martins, from the series *Accidental Theorist*. 2005

On reflecting on an earlier published set of photographs, Martins admits to trying to deal with too much. His concerns about this early work inform those of his more recent work:

I was interested in very simple polarities, in places primed with a sense of purpose yet marginal, fragmented and dispersed. But I think I was trying to deal with too much, too soon. Since then I have tried to strip down the visual language of my images. For me that's become the challenge, to make images that are engaging but also universal.

(Martins, 2008, p.115)

This suggests several things. The first being that a stripping down of visual language implies a simplification of descriptive practices and a reduction of content. In so doing Martins suggests that this reduction can result in images that communicate more successfully.⁶⁴

The second aspect, of making images that are universal, suggests that an excess of content, a visually complicated presentation of things, runs the risk, from a viewer's point of view, of eluding whatever qualities are required to engage the viewer. Too much content can result in

⁶⁴ In writing this I note that I am equating visual language with content.

alienating the viewer from the intentions of the image maker. This claim that I make here is supported by Martins' adoption of the universal; that somehow a reduction allows the image to be accessible, understandable and relevant to a wider audience, across cultures (or at least those of the Western World). The idea that images should also challenge the viewer suggests that whatever (universal) beliefs are held by the viewer these can effectively be challenged by presenting less content rather than more. In this way there are clear parallels with the Bechers' method of image making in their aim to reduce the confusion of the world but also to situate the object within it.

I am a little uncomfortable with my equation of visual language with content. It is not so straightforward. Martins also photographs objects, spaces and places with what Robert Adams referred to, in his own practice, as a "direct" approach. Martins' positions his camera to produce images that allow a rectilinear presentation of things, especially architecture. In several bodies of work he presents singular types of objects within an environment.

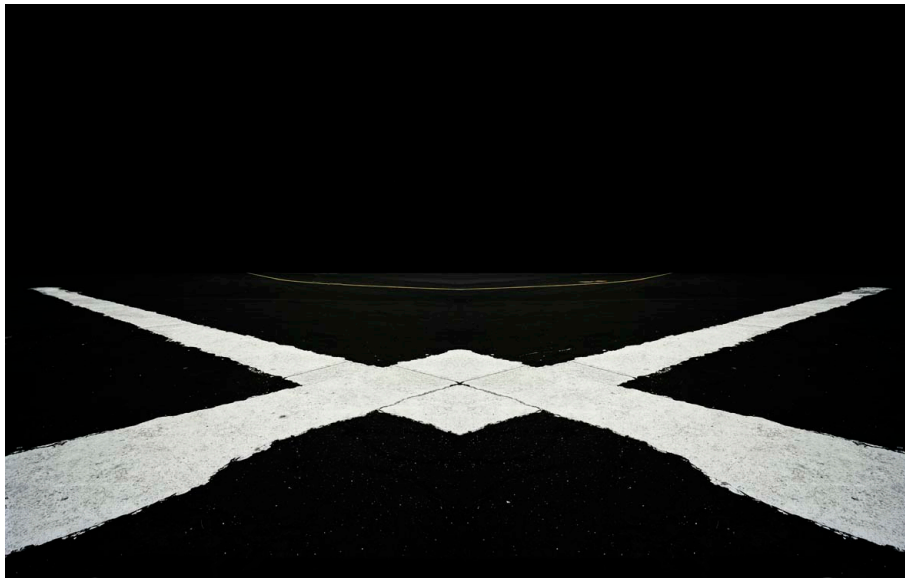


Fig 2.7 Edgar Martins, from the series *Where Light Casts no Shadow*. 2009

The point of view presented by the height of his camera implies that of a human viewer of the scene. This means that although Martins' images have a strangeness about them, they place

the viewer within an embodied relation to the place photographed, even if, in some images, the location of the point of view seems so unlikely (i.e. on an aircraft runway, fig 2.7).

Campany follows this statement by Martins with a highly perceptive comment that I find sympathetic to my own experiences of image making and looking at photographs. The following exchange raises several further issues. Noting the sense of isolation in Martins' images, Campany comments:

Campany: I sense that you are soaked in the world's processes but also at a certain remove from them. Photographers often are. The camera joins them to the world but separates them too, and the viewer of photographs feels this. You seem to make a virtue of this rather than trying to overcome it. For example, you've made pictures of roads and airports, but you photograph them as if their meanings were far from obvious, far from functional.

Martins: I am interested in a space between reality and imagination

Campany: And the more apparently simple the reality, the more space for the imagination

Martins: Exactly, and it is valid as both

Campany: The minimal also come into the work with the absence of specific temporal reference.

(Ibid, p.115)

The theme of reduction and minimal means is a theme throughout this exchange. The stripping down referred to earlier is coupled with a setting apart from the apparent embodied presence of the viewer/photographer implied in the point of view. Though Martins employs methods used to achieve a high degree of naturalism (using a large format view camera to produce images that of high definition and formal precision), the images pull away from realism and take on a quality of otherness. Here lies a paradox – the images seem to represent an embodied point of view

but what is represented has a dream-like quality that allows Martins to claim that they occupy this “space between reality and imagination” (ibid).

Campany notes this when he speaks of “a certain remove” (ibid). The notion that the photographer is separated from the world when photographing has validity in the process of making a photograph. When using the camera - in arranging the composition, considering content in relation to intended ideas, the practical considerations of lightmeter reading and camera settings - a photographer has a partially disembodied relationship to the thing being photographed. The photographer is not observing the thing in a way that a non-photographing person would perceive (i.e. as giving oneself over to the visual experience of something). This is further exacerbated with Martins’ use of a view camera (like several photographers discussed here) since the photographer views the image with a cloth over his or her head. All peripheral vision is gone since the view is limited to the rectangle of the frame surrounded by darkness. Attention is paid to the appearance of things on the screen of the camera rather than an embodied experience of those things. To a degree the experience of photographing partially shuts the photographer out from other experiences – aurally as well as visually (e.g. exterior sounds are muffled). Concentration is centered on the spatial organization of this image, which on the screen of a view camera is reversed and inverted, meaning that the practice of photographing is further removed from the visual experience of looking at the thing in itself.

There is a paradox here that Martins makes use of. This being that the practice of using such a camera, in delineating things with great precision and providing an image of very high resolution, is conventionally used to produce a high degree of naturalism and a fidelity to the thing photographed. Martins’ intention seems to be to make images that question the perceived realism that arises from these qualities and to place the image between certain states of being. Further to this, his aim to produce images that occupy a space between reality and imagination, if worked through, could attest to this difference between the embodied perception of something, the embodied experience of photographing this thing and the perceptual experience of the photographic image.

With Martins' practice there is another aspect that causes this separation from the thing and provides further potential to create "a space between reality and imagination" (Martins, *ibid*):

I deal in long exposures because I seem to be drawn to places that are incredibly badly lit. (The unphotographable...) So I often don't know for certain what I am going to get. I may be aware of the kind of image or idea I want to convey, but I am not necessarily aware of how it will pan out.

(*Ibid*, p.115)

That Martins makes images using long exposures in spaces with very low levels of ambient light points to the issue that an image resulting from long exposure will appear in very different pictorial terms to the way in which that space, and the things in it, was perceived by Martins, or anyone else present. Martins' aim to photograph "the unphotographable" (*ibid*) sets apart the camera image from embodied perception of that thing since the conventional expectation is that pictorial photographs are made of what can be seen.⁶⁵

A further quality of Martins' photographs that contribute to this difference is that the period of exposure cannot often be clearly defined. As noted by Campany, Martins' images are often "absent of specific temporal reference" (*ibid*). This could be traced by things moving in the wind, the presence and movement of people would signify fractions of a second or slightly longer. With the absence also of natural forms in some series of works there is even an absence of evidence of season or time of year.

⁶⁵ My assumption is based upon the expectation that pictorial photographs are required to have a relation to the perceptual experience of a thing or scene. I admit that this is a massive assumption. I also admit that photographs often present what is not visible to embodied perception. Well known examples of this are the animal and human locomotion images by Eadweard Muybridge and Etienne-Jules Marey, optical processes that transcribe parts of the non-visible wavelengths of light (e.g. X-rays). However, I would argue that these are not conventionally pictorial.

In presenting an image that is the result of an extended period of exposure time and of making visible something that would have been concealed (or at least visually different) through the lack of ambient light, there seems to be an intention to position the visually descriptive abilities of a photograph to bodily perception in such a way that although the image alludes to naturalism (as an image that aims to replicate human perception), it is anything but naturalistic.

Martins' images employ the visual codes of naturalistic representation embodied in the tradition of landscape image making – clarity, faithful reproduction of colour, a human vantage point, classical modes of composition, use of ambient light. In being so they are related to culturally established modes of image making that evident are in images by the canon of picturesque landscape artists such as Constable, Claude Lorraine, William Gilpin and Turner.⁶⁶

In so doing, Martins' images upset the assumed inter-relationship between the visual information that seems present in a clear and detailed photographic image and the informative experience of bodily visual perception. To put this in more vernacular terms – the intention is to produce photographs that make things look like they should not or could not. There is a sense in which his images could be regarded as being *trompe l'oeil*, but placed within the context of a cultural as well as a perceptual phenomenon. This in itself is nothing new. Others have intended and achieved this before (e.g. Andreas Gursky, Thomas Demand). What I think this signifies is a tendency, that appears throughout recent and current practices of photography, to play with the codes and conventions of representation and the naturalistic properties of photography.

The use of long exposure times adds another important aspect to Martins' methods of making. Due to using extended exposure times there is a sense of uncertainty and risk of failure built into the process of image making that Martins attests to:

I often don't know for certain what I am going to get. I may be aware of the kind of image or idea I want to convey, but I am not necessarily aware of how it will pan out.

(ibid, p.115)

⁶⁶ I omit Poussin from this list since although his images are prime examples of the picturesque they often deviate from an embodied point of view through his use of an elevated, and so imaginary, point of view.

This idea of uncertainty of the visual characteristics of the image - how things will be described and how visible they will be - is countered by the technical grasp of materials and equipment and how to manipulate these to ensure some kind of image. Martins' use of film (identified in the introductory text by John Beardsley) extends beyond the "standard" capacity of the materials (i.e. designed and recommended by the manufacturer) to behave in such ways. These practical aspects of making are barely alluded to. Accounts of technique are never of great interest to critics and are often considered private property of photographers. In passing over these things both critic and photographer preserve the mystique, and therefore "the space between reality and imagination" (ibid, p.116), provided by this manipulation of materials.

However, what is important to me in the process of making is that a sense of uncertainty of what I am looking at that I experience when I look at one of Martins' images is echoed in the experience of uncertainty that Martins undergoes when making his images. Not knowing how they will come out or if the image will meet his expectations means that photographic images are latent in more ways than one.⁶⁷ Further to this, and possibly contradicting what he says earlier, Martins admits that photography is a medium that is

highly inadequate for communicating ideas. I don't think it can ever engage with the world adequately.

(ibid, pp.115-116).

Given that photographers attempt some kind of visual engagement with what is present before them, Martins' comment suggests that something other than the communication of an idea, or a transcription of a thing, is provided by a photograph. Therefore whatever ideas a photographer

⁶⁷ What I mean here is that an image is latent in the terms of silver based materials but also latent since the image has not been fully formed in the mind of the image maker. This is more so in Martins' practice of photographing in low light since the scene as perceived might be very different from the image described by film.

has and whatever image they make of things in the world, the resulting photograph refers inadequately to both. If photographs cannot provide adequate descriptions of the world (which is also a problem for any other art form), then whatever they can provide lies elsewhere.

The qualities of photography are discussed further with Martins suggesting that it is possible to “push the boundaries [of photography] here and there” (ibid, p.116). He adds:

Ultimately it's a specific medium with specific parameters. In my work I try to reference the parameters that have traditionally defined photography.

(Ibid, p.116)

The context in which more conventional image making (i.e. image making that is not intended to “push the boundaries” of the medium, ibid) takes place is not just in relation to what is being photographed but is also situated within the tacit safety and comfort of the traditions and conventions of the photographic image and the conventions of image making in the wider historical sense. For a critically informed image maker, the safety and familiarity offered by convention and tradition needs to be challenged in order to place the images at what Martins refers to as the “boundaries.”

However, as Campany points out: “defining what the parameters of photography actually are is a tricky question” (ibid). Therefore there are two aspects of uncertainty evident in Martins’ image making of spaces in very low light. The first is the more apparent risk that the image will not be properly exposed due to the ambient light being below the threshold for which the film has been designed. This means that the image-maker needs to develop an awareness of materials and equipment, an intimate sympathy for them, that extends beyond “normal” use. Even then there is still a danger that the image may not turn out as desired. The second aspect of uncertainty lies in how an image can reference the boundaries of photographic image making especially since they are not clearly definable. This is more of a conceptual matter. Within the field of photographic theory the first is widely regarded as a purely technical obstacle and therefore

somewhat mundane. The second is widely regarded as a theoretical and intellectual problem and of a higher order than the first. In so being the second is considered the proper subject of photographic criticism and theory.⁶⁸

I maintain that the two, both characterised by uncertainty (and so both with their inherent dangers) are more closely intertwined than is commonly thought for the simple reason that the visual qualities of an image are bound to contribute to its significance. These qualities, though manipulated by the photographer, are partly owned by the thing photographed and partly owned by the particular use and manipulation of materials and equipment. As a result of prioritising the theoretical, the relationship between making and the significance of the image remains neglected.

Campany asserts that the parameters of photography depend on who is asked and when they are asked. He then identifies the practices employed by Martins as adhering “to the frontal, generally rectilinear, tripod-mounted use of the highly descriptive large format camera” (ibid, p.116). These practices he comments are adhered to as a “self-imposed restriction or challenge” (ibid), and further:

Those are conventions that make the most of photography’s capacity to describe the static, or near static, surface of the world. It’s an approach that was exploited early in the medium’s history, when there was a positivist faith in the idea that the meaning of the world was carried on its surface. Here in twenty-first century, art photography in particular uses this mode to explore and exploit the realisation that meaning is far from visible.

(Ibid, p.116)

As Campany points out in a discussion on the record landscape photographs of Timothy H. O’Sullivan (fig 2.8) and Carlton E. Watkins (fig 2.9), the functional aspect of a landscape photograph as record is never disassociated from the ideology of landscape imagery in general:

⁶⁸ As I hope I have made evident in Chapter 1.

When asked to photograph land in an instrumental way, we cannot help but see it and represent it through the conventions of “landscape.”
(Ibid, p.117).



Fig 2.8 Timothy O. Sullivan. *Black Cañon, Colorado River, From Camp 8, Looking Above*. 1871



Fig 2.9 Carlton E. Watkins. *Yosemite Valley, California*. 1865.

Therefore, photographs, through the combined conventions of the apparatus/materials used and the education of the photographer, inescapably refer, like a mirror, to the wider culture in which the medium has been formed. In this way, no matter how a photographer might try to challenge convention and tradition, photographs are always bound within culture. Thus the process of image making is affected not just by what is perceived, but also by the knowledge, perhaps tacit, of conventions of image making. However, a characteristic of a critically informed image-maker, such as Martins, is that the practice of making is carried out in the clear knowledge and understanding of this. This reveals an intentional paradox of Martins' practices that informs the conceptual premise of his work. This being that the photographic methods once used to reveal the world in great detail, and to thereby allude to truth and fact, are knowingly employed by Martins in an attempt to create images that embrace the un-visible qualities of the imagination and the metaphorical.

Thus there are two separate aspects of practice that come together in Martins' image making: the experience of photographing things and the experience of perceiving things. The two are intertwined by the attendant theories, conventions, propositions and intentions that inform image making. This is evident in the following statement by Martins:

Photography is appealing [to me] because of its language and structure. It provides a very basic tool to move between registers – real, imaginary, metaphorical – without having to give up any one of them...Photography allows you to start with basic structures – photographic structures and structures of the world. I like the realism inherent in the medium and its deceptive qualities.

(ibid, p.116)

This is an interesting statement in that Martins set out a polarity between the process of photographing and the appearance of the part of the world that is photographed in order to produce images that challenge or question the descriptive role of photography. However, there are problems with what he says. I fail to understand that there is anything basic about the language, structure or descriptive abilities of photography or the structures of the perceived world. These structures, like the "specific parameters:" (ibid, p.116) that he speaks of, remain

vague, unidentified and unspecific. Neither do I agree that there is anything basic in a practice that can at once convince (through realism) and deceive.⁶⁹

Even so, what is perhaps more important in Martins' work is that the element of chance and uncertainty appear to be fundamental and combine with the methods of representation. This is evident in his description of how he came to photograph images for a body of work titled *The Accidental Theorist*:

Returning from a shoot, late at night, I came across a nearby beach and was struck by an arrangement of poles in the sand. I didn't know how I wanted to photograph them or what they meant, but I liked the idea that my perception of that space, at that time, seemed to enter a different register. In that place where sea meets land and where both dissipate into nothingness, it felt as though I were having a glimpse of the edge of the universe. I am drawn to spaces that prioritise poetic memory over concrete topographies. This is often how I find the subject of my images

(Ibid, p.117)

This description hints at an intuitive approach to image making where the unexpected and the uncertain are as much a constitutive element as the planned and the conceptual. The idea of register, that somehow the terms of perception are shifted, further points to particular attitudes when making work. This perception of poles on a beach is part the process. That Martins was

⁶⁹ Photographic structures can be considered in a number of ways. They could refer to the structures provided by the apparatus: the frame, the lens, depth of field and focus. Or they could refer to the theoretical structures that refer to truth-value of the photographic image. In terms of the structures of the world, again there are different ways of regarding this. It could refer to the physicality and qualities of space and terrain in terms of distance, substance, light and the placement of things within the environment. But a key criticism of this point of this is that these are things perceived by an observer. Another way of understanding structures of the world are the beliefs and ideologies that inform the perception of the world and the way people behave and conduct themselves within it. It might be better to change the word 'basic' with 'assumed.'

uncertain how to photograph them signifies that the experience of this scene shifted from one of embodied observer to one of photographic analysis, that is, imagining or pre-visualising how the visible can be translated into the terms of a photographic image. Martins' uncertainty of how to photograph signifies how the primary perception, that is, the initial perception of the scene as an embodied, corporeal experience (but also possibly a spiritual one) is different to the one adopted when in the process of photographing.

The distinction is this: when I experience something I am letting this something act upon me, I give myself over or invest myself into that experience. This is what is meant by an embodied experience. An embodied experience can be regarded as a primary experience. As soon as I start to analyse that something, I bring intention and judgement into effect. As soon as this occurs I cease to allow that something to act upon me. I now start to act upon it. It ceases to be what it was in-itself for me. It now starts to be what I make it. This is a secondary experience of something.⁷⁰

Therefore even thinking about photographing the thing is a secondary experience since it is a move away from giving myself over to the thing and implies judgement and an intention to an imagined rendering or transcription of the thing into the pictorial conventions of an image.

The process of making a photograph is a further removal since attention is paid to the appearance of the thing on the screen of the camera rather than the scene itself.

⁷⁰ At the beginning of his unfinished essay, 'The Intertwinning – The Chiasm' (1968) Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote:

If it is true that as soon as philosophy declares itself to be reflection or coincidence it prejudges what it will find, then once again it must recommence everything, reject the instruments reflection and intuition had provided themselves, and install itself in a locus where they have not yet been distinguished, in experiences that have not yet been "worked over," that offer us pell-mell, both "subject" and "object," both existence and essence, and hence give philosophy resources to refine them.

(Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.130)

The experience of photographing shifts from observing the thing in itself (the primary embodied experience), to imagining how it could look when photographed (secondary experience), to the more isolated process of producing an image of it (further secondary experience). When making a photograph, judgement and intention are put to work in isolation from the thing. The photographer is shut off from the thing itself due to concentrating on the screen of the camera (as discussed above). The image will be relative to, but always distanced from, the primary embodied experience. The image may prompt memory or draw up related ideas and themes. What the image will never do is satisfy the requirements of the real.

The attention to what Martins calls the qualities of “poetic memory” (ibid) also means that the scene is the site of transformation from what was ostensibly perceivable in his primary embodied experience to an interpretation that contains certain “real” qualities. Through the processes of making Martins takes advantage of the chance occurrence and manipulates the scene by the means of the camera and film with the intention of drawing the poetic out of it. The presence of uncertainty is an inevitable condition of making over which an image-maker has little choice: a condition determined by the fact that things in the world exist despite the photographer (especially for the landscape photographer). In other words, the poetic already lies in the world.

With the attendant and interwoven risks in the conceptual and practical aspect of image making, the presence of uncertainty allows a photographer such as Martins to find the image in a tri-part relation to the real, imaginary and metaphor. In so doing chance allows the poetic in photography to exist.⁷¹ Without risk the poetic would not occur.

⁷¹ What I mean by poetry is the uncooked reflection of an experience not yet formed into a rational statement. It involves uncertainty, the indefinite and meaning that is not concrete but elusive, not yet set into objectivity. In his essay *What is Writing*, Jean-Paul Sartre (Sartre, 2000 [1947]) described the use of language in poetry as wild and opaque as opposed to the tamed and transparent use of language in prose.

Conclusion

These conversations reveal several aspects that are valuable contributions to understanding the practices and experiences of making work. Chief amongst the discussions is the cultural significance of traditions and conventions that circumscribe particular attitudes towards making. For Bernd and Hilla Becher, the descriptive capacity of photography, exemplified by the use of photography in nineteenth century topographical surveys and architectural records, underpins their methodology for making works since it allows a clear and democratic presentation of industrial architectural objects. Even so, the appearance of metaphor is highly valued, if unpredicted, in order that it suggests something of the social economic conditions to which the industrial object belongs.

Jeff Wall cites genre as defining the process of experiencing the making (and viewing) of work. He states, "Genre is a fluid construct and operates regardless of the consciousness of the artist" (Wall, p.270) and that the limits of genre are not easily identifiable. This makes sense given that genre originates (and contributes to) a culture that is always a bigger source of information, conventions and traditions than the understanding of any one individual is able to encompass. Genre, as an accumulation of meaning in culture, is what underpins the guarantee of objectivity and is the "basis of truth content in representations" (Schwander in Wall, p.270).

There are close associations with Wall's discussion on genre with other statements by the photographers I have discussed here. Notably, Victor Burgin's assertion that image-makers inherit traditions that inform how images are often made in a "sublimatory" condition is related to Wall's reference to genre. Burgin asserts that whatever is at first subliminal then needs to be made clear (de-subliminal) through a careful process of research into historical traditions and conventions that the image maker inescapably inherits.

The significance of culture is perhaps less overtly evident in Sugimoto's attitude to image making, but I think that there are traces of the visual traditions and conventions of image making that make up genre in his discussion that operate subliminally. Evidence of this is present in

Sugimoto's claim that he "already has a vision" (Sugimoto, p.285) for a body of work. This vision has its origins somewhere other than in Sugimoto's mind.

For Robert Adams, that fact that "content and aesthetics are inseparable" (ibid) confirms that aesthetics is a construction of visual codes and practices formed prior to the images made by Adams. That Adams can refer to aesthetics at all means that the field of image making to which he attaches himself, that informs him and also challenges him, is pre-formed. This is further borne out in his statement that when photographing somewhere new, he searches for "characteristic views" (Adams, 2006, p.16). The characteristics of which lie not just in the place being photographed but also in the aesthetics that inform his methods of image making.

It could be argued that I am confusing tradition with genre with aesthetics. However, any understanding of how to make images (and also how to look at them) must draw upon prior examples. I would argue that tradition, genres and aesthetics are interwoven. Genre draws upon sets of aesthetic values and in so doing, when that genre is employed, contributes to these aesthetic values. Tradition sustains and informs these values, even if the traditions are challenged. Aesthetics (which, since Nietzsche, is much more than the theory of beauty in art) is a positioning of the image, or other artefact, within a complex relationship to experience, artefact and history. It involves the experience of the thing being photographed; the experience of making an image of that thing; the experience of the image itself, as an artefact; and the experience, or understanding, of the genre to which it belongs. If an image maker is conscious of genre and of the practices and artefacts that make up this genre, then the history of making (tradition) and aesthetics form the fabric of genre. Regarded in this way, I can see how Wall describes genre as fluid and also pivotal to the practice of image making.

Where Martins speaks of "pushing the boundaries of photography here and there" (Martins, 2008, p.116), he implies a testing of the limits of genre as well as the ability of photography to describe aspects of the world within genre (i.e. landscape). Where his images are best described as landscape, he draws upon both the characteristics and limitations of photography

in relation to landscape as genre. Thereby his images of environments such as airports, roads, beaches, abandoned houses and forest fires are made within an understanding of historic practices, with reference to the physical characteristics of contemporary environments and a sense of human alienation from them (i.e. of the sublime).

What is consistent in these attitudes is that an understanding of culture, tradition, convention and genre is a key element to making critically informed images.

Another aspect, that at first seems strikingly different to the influence of genre and inherited tradition, is the aspect of indeterminacy involved in making works. It appears almost consistently throughout these discussions (with the exception of Sugimoto who seeks to suppress chance). Bernd and Hilla Becher discuss their uncertainty with regards to the direction of their work at the outset of a project. Further, their ethical practice of suspending judgement with regards to the objects they photograph means that the visual qualities of images, and importantly the role of metaphor, cannot be entirely predicted. It is not until a print has been made of the negative that it can be viewed in its image form.

Robert Adams testifies to this when he describes how certain images have an “unexpected beauty” (Adams, 2006, p.14) that was not perceived in the thing/scene when it was photographed. Edgar Martins describes how, because he often photographs in very low light using long exposures, he is “not necessarily aware of how it will pan out” (Martins, p. 115).

Further to this, he describes how a project was initiated by a chance observation of poles stuck in the sand on a beach at night. Martins was neither certain how he would go about photographing this scene or what it meant. The process of image making was itself a process of exploration and clarification.

Since the perceptual experiences of image making vary greatly to the perceptual experiences of the images, it follows that image makers will be uncertain as to the visual qualities of the images they make. This does not become apparent until the image is made (i.e. printed, edited and

presented within a body of work), and even then the significance of the image is far from fixed and stable (and perhaps remains so).

Other aspects are discussed that are more specific to particular conversations but which may nevertheless be apparent in the wider experiences of image making.

Jeff Wall describes the tension between pictorial character and dramatic character of an image, where one appears as more or less dominant than the other depending on how the image is perceived. He describes pictorial character as the tension between the flatness of a photograph and the wider three-dimensional space of the scene, a “making explicit of the situation that exists with every picture that renders the illusion of volume and curved space on a flat plane” (Wall, p.270). There is always something that extends beyond the frame of the image or escapes being described photographically. Speech being one such factor. Rather than acknowledge this as a failing of photography, Wall makes use of the implication of speech through figures that appear in dialogue within the mute space of the image; the viewer will never know the words that are being spoken.

Wall's images are unlike the images by other photographers represented in these conversations. Where the Bechers, Adams, Sugimoto and Martins employ practices that pertain to a certain faith to the appearance of things in the image, Wall employs digital montage techniques that relate more to the selective processes of painters. Even so, throughout all these conversations there is very little discussion on how images are made and fundamentally the kinds of decisions made when the camera is used. The Bechers briefly allude to the use of a high vantage that roots the object in the ground and a crop that avoids the chaotic appearance of the surrounding environment. Adams fleetingly describes his method of camera use as “direct,” which is one of those terms that I assume an understanding of. On more careful consideration, I realise this description is rather vague and, without further qualification, means very little. I assume that what he means is a descriptive approach consistent or at least similar with the methods employed by the Bechers and also present in the work of Sugimoto and

Martins. David Company, describing the camera method employed by Martins, further defines this approach as

adhering to the frontal, generally rectilinear, tripod mounted use of the highly descriptive large format camera.

(Martins, 2008, p.116)

This description characterises the approach of all the photographers I have discussed here, but it is far from a sufficient description of making. With the Bechers' brief description of high vantage and selection, Wall's discussion on pictorial and dramatic character, this is as much detail as is ever offered in these conversations with regards to specific practices of using a camera. The contents of these interviews offer great insight into the importance and significance of the images that are made, but they do not serve to provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of making work. This has yet to be achieved. In light of this, the next step of my thesis will be to explore a philosophical method that will provide a way of negotiating and, hopefully, identifying these experiences and their significance to making photographic work.

Chapter 3

Concerning a Theory of Making: on Martin Heidegger's essay *The Question Concerning Technology*

According to Roland Barthes, a photograph is proof that something had been before the camera. He called this the *noeme* of the photograph (Barthes, 1980, p.77). Where Barthes concentrated on the experience of reception and never discussed the practices of making, his theory of *noeme* requires that a photograph *is made*. It therefore follows that a photograph requires the presence of the photographer in some kind of spatial or environmental relation to the thing being photographed.⁷² Furthermore, photographing is an act that requires the use of equipment.

Barthes' *noeme* refers to a conventional act of photographing where the thing in the image is required to be in front of the camera and the photographer is present behind the camera and therefore not usually (conventionally) visible in the image. Occasionally a photographer may reinforce his or her own presence by placing their shadow or reflection in the image. In family photographs this trace of the presence of the photographer appears as a mistake. In photographs made in the context of art, the presence is intentional (as in certain images by Lee Friedlander). However, this creative application of photography steps to one side of conventional family, journalistic and commercial images that Barthes values most (he had little time for art photography). In such images the presence of the photographer would signify an accident, lack of competence or an oversight on the part of the photographer.

Where Szarkowski celebrated the accidental *presence* of objects in the vernacular practices of photography (see Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye*, 1966), Barthes immersed himself in

⁷² This may exclude surveillance techniques where a high degree of automation and bodily absence is required.

the accidental *significance* of things that penetrated himself. He called this the *punctum* (Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 1981). Since then, the *punctum* has been ubiquitous in theoretical texts on photography (Elkins, 2007, pp.156-7). *Studium*, Barthes' term for the area of general interest of the photographer, where the intentions of the photographer might lie, is very rarely discussed. That is, the processes of photographic image making within the context of art are rarely discussed, and are little more than assumed as a set of necessary requirements in order that the image should be able to appear. The outcome of this is that (at least in relation to critical theory of photography as opposed to art criticism) the cultural significance of a photograph, the significance to the reader/viewer, is considered more important than the ideas and intentions, methods and means of production, of the image maker.

To a great extent I think that this is correct. I do not argue with it. Barthes' argument in *Death of the Author* (1977 [1968]) compels me to agree. A similar argument appears in Walter Benjamin's *The Author as Producer* (1982 [1933]) where what is valued most is the process of the production of meaning in an involved audience. This view is consistent in photographic critical theory since the early 1980s, as I hope I have made clear in my first chapter.

Given that photographers, like poets, painters, film makes, and so on, are cultural beings then the argument holds that the significance of the image lies in the history of that culture. But this does not give us a theory of how works of art using photography are made. What remains is that art work *is* made: work is done to make art. It is not just read.⁷³ A critical account of the significance of the image does not suffice as an account of the process of making. By making I do not mean simply the control of equipment and materials (though this is an important facet of making), but how a photographer responds to and draws together the strands of culture and history and then acts to produce a body of work. These acts are the focus of my research.

As demonstrated in my first chapter, the perceptual experiences of the photographer and the activities undergone to make not just a photograph, but a work of photography (i.e. a collection

⁷³ Though for makers I would suggest that reading his or her own work is a key facet of making.

of images that make a work) have rarely been discussed at a theoretical or philosophical level. For some the practice of using a camera to take a photograph is devoid of anything worthy of philosophical discussion. Witness Roger Scruton's description of the photographic process of taking a photograph:

I mark out a certain spot from which a particular view of the street may be obtained. I then place a frame before that spot. I move the frame, so that, from the chosen spot, only certain parts of the street are visible, others are cut off. I do this with all the skill available to me, so that what is seen in the frame is as pleasing as it might be: buildings within the frame seem to harmonize, the ugly tower that dominates the street is cut off from view, the centre of the composition is the little lane between two classical facades, which might have otherwise gone unnoticed, and so on. There I have described an activity which is circumscribed by aesthetic intentions as anything within the experience of the normal photographer.

(Scruton, 1983, p370)

On one hand Scruton's account does bear relevance to some of the decisions I make when I am in the process of photographing. As a complete account of the aesthetic decisions of image making it is thin and vapid since it ignores the experience of a photographer coming to terms with the significance of image making within a wider culture and a history of image making. It is insufficient but for the immediate experience of framing and composition as if the things in the frame only had significance in themselves and could not speak of anything beyond the frame of the image.

Contrary to Scruton's account, the making of work involves so much more than his abstract, disembodied account can ever hope to encapsulate. At least in my own experience, the making of a photographic work involves the thinking through of making images, selecting, editing, imagining, projecting, modifying. Further to this, since an image of something is only ever a fragment of the wider environment, whatever is visible within the frame suggests something beyond it. To take this further, the visible contents of a photograph have the possibility of acting as metaphor. These activities involved in making work, whether mental or physical, take place

when using the camera to take photographs and also away from it: when preparing, planning, selecting, scanning modifying and thinking about the progress of the work as a whole. As is the case with many photographers, the series is a method of making a work. This implies that relationships are built between images and that the work is made up of a number of parts that contribute towards a whole.

For example, the mental preparation that I undergo before I set out to make photographs involves a thinking through of the sites I intend to visit, imagining the images I intend to make, thinking about the possible historical references both in terms of style of image and the things I will photograph, the meaning and significance of images I have made already and those that I want to make. I very rarely think about a photograph as a singular image. Rather, I think about the images I make in relation to one another and how, presented in a particular sequence, they might inform the viewer, suggest relationships, describe a set of circumstances and, possibly, challenge conventional thinking (if I am ever capable of doing so).

I experience, in turns, doubt, confidence, frustration and pleasure when taking photographs or working on the project as a whole. When I am taking photographs I am aware of much more than what is visible in the camera viewfinder. I am aware of the world around me that will not be evident in the image and of sense experiences that do not translate to the visual. I experience things that are exclusive to myself such as the roar of traffic, the sound of wind, birds singing, my own breath, the feel of the ground at my feet, the smell of the environment, the heat or the cold and that I am visible to others, an experience that sometimes produces a sense of unease in myself. When I am photographing I do think, at least in part, along the lines prescribed by Scruton, but to state that this is all that occurs in the mind of a photographer taking a photograph is a reduction that falls very short of my own experiences. To what extent these experiences contribute to a theory of image making will be explored later in the thesis.

For Scruton, the experience of photographing is so void of these experiences that photographing is an insufficient subject for philosophical discussion. Since there is a striking

lack of discussion on photographing, perhaps this is a view that is widely held. However, since both Edmund Husserl (*Ideen II*, see Don Welton, 1999, pp.45) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (*The Visible and the Invisible*, 1997 [1948], pp.130-155) based philosophical discussion upon the seemingly simple perceptual experiences of touching objects with their hands, then surely the multiple facets of the experiences of making photographs offers much more for philosophical discussion than Scruton gives credit.

In order for me to progress, a philosophical method is required to allow an adequate revealing of these experiences and a description of the activities of making work. Since a key aspect of my research is experience, a method that takes experience as its central concern would be best suited.

There are certain issues that need to be considered in order for my research to remain faithful to experience:

1. The philosophical method should affect the practice of photographing as little as possible. It should not be employed as a theory of photographing. That is, I do not make photographs employing the philosophical method.⁷⁴

2. The method should allow me to describe my experiences in such a way that does not disfigure them, that is, the experiences remain as they were, as much as possible. They do not become experiences of philosophy, but remain experiences to which philosophy is applied.

The experiences of photographing (the records and accounts that I use as evidence and for reflection) should remain in the 'natural attitude.' This is, the pre-philosophical attitude of living and doing.

⁷⁴ This will be problematic since any careful study of philosophy is bound to affect how I make photographic work.

To add to this, since the research is focused on my own experiences of making which I neither assume as common among other makers, or as the best example, a third issue is added:

3. That the outcome is not a set of rules of practices that others should follow. It is not an exercise in objectifying making, since to do so would be to impose limits on the experiences that contribute to making work both for myself and for others. Without wishing to appear solipsistic, the research is an attempt to reflect on making for how it appears to me, since I am my own closest thinking and reflecting being. Furthermore, the research is limited to the experience of photographing landscape and is not an attempt to form an all-embracing theory of making that can be applied to all practices and genres.

Since photography involves the use of equipment in the form of cameras, lenses, films, computers, scanners, and so on, a method is required that allows me to reveal the significances of these things to the experiences of making. The philosophical method will therefore be required to describe three key facets that relate to making works of art using photography:

1. Using equipment and technology.
2. Making works of art.
3. Describing experience, i.e. translating experience into language.

Given that, in the spirit of Barthes' *Death of the Author* (1977 [1968]), I am a cultural being, what is required is a method that allows for the potential of openness to the fullness of events in order that experiences overlooked and taken for granted in the natural attitude can be revealed and made apparent through philosophical description. Phenomenology and its close ally hermeneutics are such methods.

According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty the intention of phenomenology was to reveal what he called *primal* contact with the world, that is, a world before conscious thought. The frame of mind required to achieve this was a state of unprejudiced reflection. The mode of writing where this reflection is made manifest is through description. Traditional methods of analysis, of

objectifying things or events in the world with the intention of imposing an order, prevent this primal contact being made since they impose limits to our understanding and seek to fix the world inside the limits of human understanding. For phenomenologists the world exists prior to any concept that we have of it. Therefore, a primal contact, where we recognise the world acting upon us, is required in order to reveal some kind of essence of being here. Description is a way of letting reflection occur without attempting to form judgements of it or how it has occurred.

The danger lies in that the phenomenologist risks reforming and so mutating the original experience through the exigencies of language. As Merleau-Ponty stated, once we start to reflect we start to reform the experience:

If it is true that as soon as philosophy declares itself to be reflection or coincidence it prejudices what it will find, then once again it must recommence everything, reject the instruments reflection and intuition had provided themselves, and install itself in a locus where they have not yet been distinguished, in experiences that have not yet been “worked over,” that offer us at once, pell-mell, both “subject” and “object,” both existence and essence, and hence give philosophy resources to redefine them.

(Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1997 [1948], p.130)

Merleau-Ponty’s method aimed towards a pure description of something as it was experienced. He intended a pre-conscious way of writing, before consciousness had taken over and re-written the event. His major work *The Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty, 2003 [1945]) prepared the ground for this approach. It was put into effect in his last and unfinished text *The Visible and the Invisible* in the chapter “The Intertwining – The Chiasm” (Merleau-Ponty, 1997 [1948], pp.130-155), the opening lines of which are quoted above. The aim of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology was to attempt to reveal aspects of our existence that remain obscure and hidden within our *natural attitude*, this being the condition in which a human being negotiates everyday life. My problem here is that it is such a subtle and skillful work that to assimilate Merleau-Ponty’s method and apply it to the experience of photographing would require skills beyond my own ability.

Hans Georg Gadamer (2000 [1977]) wrote that the practice of the phenomenological reduction was to effect a revealing of all prejudices that inform the perceptions and judgements that a human being makes when negotiating the *life-world* (*lebenswelt*) – this being the totality of experiences and understanding owned by a human being and collectively shared with others, described by Gadamer as a horizon of knowledge. This is a necessity since to try to negotiate the *life-world* in a permanent state of phenomenological reduction would be impossible. Further to this, if philosophers attempted to remove themselves permanently from the *natural attitude* then they themselves would have no authentic experience of the *life-world* to reflect upon. The reduction is best regarded as a hiatus from the natural attitude that can be sustained for relatively short periods.

Husserl's phrase "to return to the things themselves" (Husserl, 2002(a), p.65) underpins the phenomenological approach, and by extension, that of hermeneutics to which it is closely related. This requires an adjustment from the *natural attitude* to one where these facets of the life-world (laws, conventions, beliefs, ethics, etc) are regarded as products of culture and can be brought into question through phenomenological description. This is not without its problems since it is inevitable that a state of pure phenomenological reduction can never be fully achieved. However, it presents a radical departure from methods of thought that limit experience to sets of laws (that attempt to objectify and fix the world within human understanding) and moves towards an attitude that attempts to reveal the origins of thought and the nature of being.

A text stands out that both tackles the significance of technology in culture and making art. This is Martin Heidegger's essay *The Question Concerning Technology*, (1977 [1954]). It offers a way of regarding the role of photography as both an application of technology and as art form in relation to history and culture. In the following I will attempt to outline the Heidegger's hermeneutic method and its relevance and effectiveness for my research.

A reading of Martin Heidegger's essay *The Question Concerning Technology*

To read Heidegger is set out on a journey, or to follow a way. The journey that Heidegger takes the reader on, in this essay and others, is a complex and often perplexing interweaving of ideas and language. The sense of journey is a key component of his methodology. It is not complex and perplexing for the sake of it. This methodology is reflected in the meaning of his writing. Hence what occurs through reading is an eventual coming to presence of meaning whilst he weaves his way through a philosophy of coming to presence. Therefore, to be true to this I will attempt to describe his text as an event of reading, as an experiencing of and coming to terms with a challenging meaning. I will relate the text to photography where it seems appropriate and meaningful and also, to be true to the experience, where I have done so as through the experience of reading and coming to terms with the significance of the text.

Since Heidegger pushes the limits of the German language to mean inside itself, it follows that translation into a second language such as English (with the possible exception of Ancient Greek) has provided problems of accuracy in translation. Therefore I will also refer to the notes on translation provided by William Lovitt since these are essential to understanding Heidegger's regular and idiosyncratic evocations of the wider and less obvious meaning of German.

As Lovitt describes in his introduction to the collection of essays *The Question Concerning Technology* (Lovitt, 1977, p.xiii), "To read Heidegger is to set out on an adventure." This sense of adventure into unfamiliar territories is borne out in that Heidegger's method that is based upon a sequences of challenges to the natural attitude. His texts are an antithesis to whatever is common in language, thought and in certain key aspects of Western culture (i.e. technology, art and science). This is why, especially during the first few readings, Heidegger's writing seems full of challenges and contradictions that seem opaque to conventional thought. This is key to

his method, that being a hermeneutic reduction.⁷⁵ Instead of describing what the hermeneutic reduction is in theory, Heidegger applies it in practice by presenting me with a series of statements that seem perplexing and contradictory. He therefore challenges me, taking me through a process that draws me out of my natural attitude towards a critical position where I am hopefully able to openly reflect on the previously hidden conventions of the culture to which I belong.

The point of my choosing Heidegger as a basis for examining what it is to make works of photographic art is because he provides a way of describing what is given, what is overlooked and what, as a consequence, remains concealed in key facets of Western culture (i.e. the essence of technology). In turn he then provides a way towards a possibility of revealing what lies concealed within cultural convention, habit and tradition.

Since Heidegger's philosophical method is centered upon the unconcealment of the essence of technology as something essential to modern culture, it therefore seems a method that has much potential for revealing the experiences of photographing, the essence of photographing. The essay is in three parts. In my discussion I will address the main point for each part, providing a break between each in order to retain a quality of the progression of his argument.⁷⁶

Part 1

Heidegger opens the essay requiring that I have a "free relationship" (p.3) to the question of what the essence of technology is. He then immediately challenges and confuses me by adding that the essence of technology is nothing technological. Such a statement seems to confound common sense and here Heidegger sets up his first challenge to the reader. However, if I

⁷⁵ I say hermeneutic reduction as opposed to phenomenological since by this time Heidegger had distanced himself from phenomenology, barely mentioning it in his later work.

⁷⁶ In the edition provided by Lovitt (Heidegger, 1977), part 1 of the essay proceeds from page 3 and ends on page 12. Part 2 proceeds from page 12 and ends on page 23. Part 3 proceeds from page 23 and concludes the essay on page 35.

remember his first instruction for a “free relationship” to the question then I realise that what he means is that all preconceptions should be put to one side. The search for the essence of technology requires a leap of faith away from normal thinking born of habit and inculcation, the “natural attitude,” towards a radical re-engagement with both language and our perception of things.

Even within the first few lines I come across issues of translation from German to English. The first example is “essence,” translated from the German verb *Wesen*. Heidegger uses it here as a noun to suggest a “coming to presence” and enduring. Thus “essence,” in the meaning normally given in English, does not have the active quality that Heidegger lends to his use of the German term. Further to this, as the translator of the essay William Lovitt points out, the root of *wesen* lies in dwelling and “provides one integral component in the meaning of the verb *sein* (to be)” (Lovitt, ft.1, p4). From this I realise that “essence” (*wesen*) is not passive but is active in that something essences and is capable of moving towards a certain state (i.e. of concealedness or revealing).⁷⁷ Perhaps *essencing* would be a more accurate translation. Given this, I am now presented with two ideas that challenge my normal attitude towards things:

1. The essence of technology is not to be found in that technology.
2. The essence of technology is not a passive or neutral quality that we can simply lay our hands on. It is an occurring.

Heidegger continues by examining the normal conception of technology, stating that all the machines that are used and the tools used to make them belong to “what technology is” (p.5). He names the whole complex of technology a “contrivance, or, in Latin, an *instrumentum*” (p.5). Roughly speaking the conventional idea of technology is that it consists of instruments that are used to produce things, that these instruments are used to provide a means to an end, whether they are tools, aircraft or a hydroelectric plant. In the case of photography I can include

⁷⁷ This is a recurring theme in his work. Heidegger describes this more forcefully later in the essay in his description of “destining.”

cameras, lenses, film, sensors, computers and scanners. The instrumental definition of technology is an arrangement of things that allow other things to be made or for things to occur. This is a potential problem since the idea that technology as a means to an end

conditions every attempt to bring man into the right relation to technology. Everything depends on our manipulating technology in the proper manner as a means. We will, as we say, “get” technology “spiritually in hand.” We will master it. The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control.

(Heidegger, 1977 [1954], p.5)

Where the instrumental definition may be correct in its own terms (within the terms of technology being an arrangement that allows a means to an end) it does not reveal the essence, what Heidegger calls “a coming to pass,” of technology. The instrumental definition of technology is correct in that it “fixes upon something pertinent,” but it is not true since in being fixed it does not lead to the uncovering of the essence of technology. In terms of photography this means that the essence of photographing does not lie in the things used to make photographs. This seems fair enough. However, in terms of his first statement, this means that the essence of photography has nothing to do with photography. This seems more of a challenge to negotiate.

At this point in the essay Heidegger first introduces the theme of uncovering (this is later described as revealing and unconcealment. There are inadequacies in the translation that I will come to later). This is the first instance of the distinction between ideas of what truth is: essence or objective correctness. The former is fluid; “it comes to pass.” The later is fixed as a law. For Heidegger, as is made clear in the following pages, essence cannot be allocated to a thing made by men and women. It is a quality, concealed by human action, that is only apparent through a shift towards an openness, rather than an objectifying gaze, towards the thing that is in question.

Given that a means is used to produce an end the instrumental definition of technology involves an effect on something that will change it, transform it into an end artefact or product. Therefore,

integral to the meaning of the instrumental is the idea that something has caused this transformation. In order to describe causation (and to root the meaning of this to ancient and therefore sound origins, a practice that is a key feature of Heidegger's philosophy), Heidegger refers to the traditional (i.e. Latin) interpretation of Aristotle's description of cause in *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 BC):

For centuries philosophy has taught that there are four causes: (1) the *causa materialis*, the material out of which, for example, a silver chalice is made; (2) the *causa formalis*, the form, the shape into which the material enters; (3) the *causa finalis*, the end, for example, the sacrificial rite in relation to which the chalice required is determined as to its form and matter; (4) the *causa efficiens*, which brings about the effect that is the finished, actual chalice, in this instance, the silversmith. What technology is, when represented as a means, discloses itself when we trace instrumentality back to fourfold causality.

(Ibid, p.6)

This is understandable in the sense that:

1. A photographer uses equipment and materials.
2. The material is transformed from one state to another – in the case of photography, an image is formed on a substrate where before there was not one.
3. The image will be suitable for its purpose, or a landscape photograph will conform to the conventions of landscape images.
4. Photographs are made by photographers.

But for Heidegger this is an insufficient description of how an object comes into being.

It is significant that Heidegger uses the example of a chalice rather than a domestic cup to which the four causes could have been equally applied. Where before he wrote of industrial objects, suggesting mass production and consumption, he now writes of a singular, crafted object that is imbued with spiritual significance. In doing so, I am aware that Heidegger is manipulating the meaning of his text towards a more inclusive idea of technology than that which is merely instrumental and is more in keeping with his idea that art, in particular poetry, is

key to the human understanding of truth, more precisely stated as the unconcealment of essence. In relation to my research this shift from the industrial to the sacred, hand crafted artefact, presents possible ways of relating technology to art, even if it seems in Heidegger's text to show an inconsistency in what is being discussed.

What he has done in introducing the example of the chalice however is to position the question concerning technology within the context of the symbolic (i.e. of art and the poetic). For example, the use of a chalice allows me to substitute myself as photographer and my photographic work in place of silversmith and chalice in a way that the production of a utility object, a photograph used for utility purposes (i.e. a pack shot) may not. The shift from utility to sacred rite is commensurate, at least to some degree, with the assumed specialness of an object allocated with the status of work of art and exhibited in the hallowed halls of a cathedral, a museum or art gallery.⁷⁸

Heidegger is not content that the conventional (Latin) translation of Aristotle's description really reveals causality in the sense in which it was meant in the Ancient Greek. He states that the four causes are a doctrine that western culture has come to accept and never to question. In then asking why there are only four causes his intention is to unseat the idea that the essence of technology can be found simply in means. He proceeds to rework the theory of causation by re-evaluating the original meaning of the Ancient Greek words used by Aristotle as opposed to the traditional Latin translation.

He starts by stating that the original meaning of "cause," lost since through Latin translation, is rooted in the Greek word *aition*, meaning "to which something else is indebted" (Ibid, p.7). In other words, the chalice is indebted to the silver out of which it is made. This is the first example in this text of an ontological shift of the *Question* effected through revealing the origins of

⁷⁸ The shift of status of a lowly utility object to its elevation as art object through its selection and presentation in a museum or art gallery is a theme explored by Jacques Maquet, *Introduction to Aesthetic Anthropology*, 1979.

meaning in language, which for Heidegger lies in Ancient Greek philosophy (in particular with Aristotle and Plato). In this way is he is able to confirm that “the four causes are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something else” (Ibid, p.7) as opposed to being a set of discreet events on the Latin version.⁷⁹ Something else then is present, but concealed, in Aristotle’s description. Heidegger provides a re-reading, recovering the significance of Ancient Greek terms. The first cause starts off clearly enough:

Silver is that out of which the silver chalice is made. As this matter (*hyle*), it is co-responsible for the chalice. The chalice is indebted to, i.e. owes thanks to, the silver for that out of which it consists.

(Ibid, p.7)

There is a difference here from the traditional cause where the material is used up. In Heidegger’s first cause, matter (*hyle*), the emphasis upon the material is different. In the sense that the chalice owes a debt to the silver, the silver-ness of the silver is a clear quality of the chalice; the material, which owns its own properties (i.e. these properties are not owned by the silversmith), is pronounced in the chalice by the silver itself.⁸⁰ I think another way of thinking about this is that the chalice pays respect to the silver:

But the sacrificial vessel is indebted not only to the silver. As a chalice, that which is indebted to the silver appears in the aspect of a chalice and not in that of a brooch or a ring. Thus the sacrificial vessel is at the same time indebted to the aspect (*eidos*) of chaliceness. Both the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.

(Ibid, p.7)

⁷⁹ It should also be borne in mind, as Lovitt makes clear (ft. 5, p.7), that through the German word *Verschulden*, which is only roughly translated into English as indebted, Heidegger intended to evoke meanings that include “to owe, to be guilty, to be responsible for or to, to cause.” (ibid).

⁸⁰ The Ancient Greeks did not have a word for general matter. Aristotle used word *hyle*, that meant timber.

That is, the aspect (*eidos* - what Plato referred as the immutable and original nature of a thing) of the chalice, the chaliceness of the chalice, pre-exists all actual chalices. This is fundamental to Heidegger in that a thing made by a man or a woman, however skillfully, is never the most complete embodiment of the qualities of the thing. Rather *eidos* is the pre-existing standard, the ideal, a kind of substrate of quality (of goodness) of chaliceness. The term 'aspect' is used here to draw attention to the outward appearing of chaliceness.⁸¹ *Eidos* sits beneath the surface of the word/idea (the logos) and forms the bedrock for its qualities. Like all ideals it informs but is also concealed in the perceived qualities of an artefact.⁸²

Thus Heidegger writes about a chalice made by a craftsperson. The fact that he writes about a hand crafted religious artefact rather than a mass-produced product produces an image in my mind that I relate to examples I have seen in churches, museums, illustrated in books and on television. In Heidegger's text I am not given a further clue to its outward appearance other than it is made from silver and that it is handcrafted (two things I associate with a chalice as a vessel as opposed to a coffee mug). I apply what I know in the word to an appearance of the vessel that is underpinned by a collective quality that transcends other more utilitarian vessels, even though they may embody similar features (i.e. handles, a stem, a foot, a bowl). If I follow Heidegger's train of thought then *eidos* is at work just as it is when I cite the example of other objects (e.g. a type of photograph or other artwork). *Eidos* refers to the origins of a thing, its ideal. The word "aspect" is not quite up to the task of this, but at least it draws me towards the appearance of something in relation to its original and ideal type. But aspect seems to suggest something fixed and I do not think that this is what Heidegger means.

⁸¹ The use of aspect runs the risk of limiting *eidos* to what is visible. There is much more to *eidos* than this. It is closer to the qualities of an ideal form of the things.

⁸² I can see how Heidegger has been informed by Plato's metaphor of the cave in *The Republic*, where we, as humans, look upon mere shadows as real things. The origins of these shadows, the original beings, lie outside of the cave, beyond the safety (and bondage) of social structure, not yet visible and accessible to human being (Being).

Heidegger's reading of the third cause is how the chalice becomes what it is, what it was intended for. For Heidegger this is more than the aim or the purpose of the object. It is also what gives the object its bounds in the process of being brought forth into being (i.e. being made). It is in the combining of the qualities of the silver (*hyle*), and the form that the chalice will (*eidos*) that completes the meaning of the chalice:

But there remains yet a third that is above all responsible for the sacrificial vessel. It is that which in advance confines the chalice within the realm of consecration and bestowal. Through this the chalice is circumscribed as sacrificial vessel. Circumscribing gives bounds to a thing. Within the bounds the thing does not stop; rather from out of them it begins to be what, after production, it will be. That which gives bounds, that which completes, in this sense is called in Greek *telos*, which is all too often translated as "aim" or "purpose," and so misinterpreted. The *telos* is responsible for what as matter and for what as aspect are together co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.

(Ibid, p.8)

Note that here Heidegger does not use the word chalice since the *telos* circumscribes this object as a sacrificial vessel, this being where the vessel rests in meaning, its intended direction of being.

A point of difference between defining instrumentality represented as means and of *telos* is that the chalice is still what it is even if it is never used, even if it is only exhibited as an example of its type (as work of design or fashion are often exhibited), not for use but as approaching an ideal type of its kind (i.e. the chalice as art work). An object that is teleologically circumscribed as a chalice, a table, a dress or an image, need not be *used* in the instrumental sense. It is still, however, regarded as an example of its type. In this way some objects, for example those bestowed with the status of art, are recognised as, and teleologically brought into the fold of, types that are used as means (i.e. as akin to utility objects), as instruments. For example, a chalice and a cup are both vessels made to hold fluid, but the functional purpose of a cup does

not make it a good chalice. This is not to say that a cup does not have symbolic function. It does. But the cup-ness of a cup relates primarily to its functional, utilitarian purpose as a drinking vessel containing liquid for sustenance or refreshment whereas the chalice-ness of a chalice relates to its symbolic purpose as a vessel that contains liquid imbued with spiritual significance for religious ceremony. A landscape painting and a map are both representations of a landscape, but the functional purpose of the map does not make it a better landscape image. Both the chalice and the landscape painting seem to do something other than conforming to object types. They extend beyond the purposes of the utilitarian types to which they are attached and (supposedly) relate to deeper cultural significances.

There is an important point to make in terms of the language used to translate Heidegger's meaning. To say that *eidos* means aspect suggests that the physical or visual qualities of that object are imposed upon it by the maker or beholder. To say that *telos* means purpose puts the emphasis on how the object will be used by someone. This means that the object will be judged against its use value, its ergonomics and functionality. It becomes an object type. This is not what Heidegger (nor what Aristotle) means. These meanings are too static and so do not reflect the active, occurring quality of *wesen* (essencing). They are too related to *veritas*. A more precise reading of both *eidos* and *telos* needs to be provided that accounts for the active quality of meaning.

Maybe a more faithful reading of Heidegger's meaning is that *eidos* means aspecting. It refers to the aspecting that arises from out of the object as it is brought into being. The chalice does not take on an aspect that originates in the silversmith. The aspect of chalice-ness is much too ancient for that to occur. The aspecting of the chalice owes itself to how the silver will take on the form of chalice-ness during the process of making. The aspecting of the chalice comes from within the aspect of chalice-ness.

Telos means purposing. It refers to the purposing of the object being made. For example, the silversmith's chalice will not be judged on how well it functions as a cup. Instead, *telos* refers to

the way chalice-ness comes out of the chalice in the process of making. The telos of the chalice owes itself to, and draws upon, the lending of matter (*hyle*) to the aspecting (*eidos*). The purposing of the chalice comes from within purpose of chalice-ness.

Heidegger's account of the silversmith as cause is a further challenge to convention. Here we start to approach key themes and see the momentum of Heidegger's thesis. Heidegger writes that the silversmith is not a *causa efficiens*, that, at least in the traditional definition of cause as a means, the silversmith does not bring about the finished chalice. This statement is at first perplexing since it seems absurd to say that the silversmith does not make the chalice, so I have to work my way through what Heidegger means. He continues:

The silversmith considers carefully and gathers together the three aforementioned ways of being responsible and indebted. To consider carefully [*überlegen*] is in Greek *legein*, *logos*. *Legein* is rooted in *apophainesthai*, to bring forward into appearance. The silversmith is co-responsible as that from whence the sacrificial vessel's bringing forth and resting-in-itself take and retain their first departure. The three previously mentioned ways of being responsible owe thanks to the pondering of the silversmith for the "that" and the "how" of their coming into appearance and into play for the production of the sacrificial vessel.

(Ibid, p.8)

I notice several themes in this passage that contribute to the overall passage of Heidegger's thought. For instance the idea of *bringing forward* implies movement, that appearing happens and continues in a momentum. This reinforces Heidegger's philosophical method as "being a way" and never coming to concrete conclusions or finalities. Another theme is his use of language, often turning to ancient Greek to provide an origin of meaning predating empirical attempts to concretise perceptual experience into objective facts.

For example, he only once mentions the dichotomy of subjective and objective and then only in relation to other methods of thought. Both terms, though used by Husserl (at least as translated), are inappropriate to use in relation to Heidegger (as they are in the writing of

Merleau-Ponty) as they both describe fixed and static positions; one of a static state of consciousness, the other as an attempt to fix the world into an understandable and stable state of affairs. Instead, Heidegger's method of thought presents a moving through towards a meaning. His choice of terms such as *revealing* and *unconcealment* presents an idea of truth that is active, and fundamentally, does not originate from human understanding. Both *eidos* and *telos* are not aspects of tradition or convention that are fixed and static, rather they both *act upon* the making of things.⁸³ *Eidos* as *aspecting* and *telos* as *purposing* come out of the object rather than being imposed upon it by aspect and purpose. This is a challenge to my conventional ways of thinking. Many of the ways I assumed I understood things and did things are overturned by this way of thinking. Thought of in this way, the following statement, that once seemed so opaque, makes sense:

“But the unconcealment itself, within which ordering unfolds, is never a human handiwork, any more than is the realm through which man is already passing every time he as a subject relates to an object.”

(Ibid, p.18)

The responsibility for the creation of the chalice moves from the silversmith to incorporate the *aspecting* of chaliceness (ideal), its *eidos*, and to its *purposing*, its *telos*. The silversmith does not have the autonomy to produce as he or she does in the conventional reading of the four causes. The way Heidegger describes the chalice as “coming into appearance,” as an ordering which unfolds, places the silversmith as a conduit for the event of the chalice coming into being rather than the master of its appearance.⁸⁴ Heidegger has moved from a chalice made by a

⁸³ What Heidegger later describes as *destining*.

⁸⁴ A similar theme also appears in Roland Barthes' text, *Death of Author* (1968). Though Barthes does not attempt a historical exegesis of meaning like Heidegger a similarity of ideas about the maker of a work is present:

Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations with dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is

maker (in the sense of an author), to one that is now *brought forth*, that comes into presence by the combined effects of the three causes that predate the silversmith. This event he refers to as an *occasioning*, again referring to the ancient Greek to imbue his use of words with a sense of original authority. Heidegger describes the outcome of this event as a “bringing forth [Her-vor-bringen],” the nuances of which, as described by Lovitt, are “to bring forth, to generate, to beget, to utter, to elicit” (Ibid, footnote 9, p.10):

Accordingly, they are unifiedly ruled over by a bringing that brings what presences into appearance. Plato tells us what this bringing is in a sentence from the *Symposium* (205b)... “Every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poêsis*, is bringing-forth [Her-vor-bringen],”
(Ibid, p.10)

This is a key statement since it introduces a theme that runs through the essay, that being what becomes present first has its origins in non-presence. This process, *poêsis*, has momentum and energy.⁸⁵ Heidegger relates a special type of *poêsis* to the bursting open of a blossom into bloom, *physis* (Ibid, p.10). *Poêsis* is also related to manufacturing and to art where the four causes are at play in the bringing-forth of the work in the maker (as opposed to nature in *physis*):

Bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment forth into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [das Entbergen]. The Greeks have the word *alêtheia* for revealing. The Romans translate this with *veritas*. We say “truth” and usually understand it as the correctness of an idea.
(Heidegger, Ibid, p.12)

one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.

(Barthes, 1977 [1968], p.148)

⁸⁵ Echoed by the momentum of the essay itself in the gradual coming to presence of meaning.

Thus, Heidegger's idea of truth is one that departs from convention. He introduces an idea of truth as something that occurs and acts rather than something that is static and can be found in a fixed place and to which human beings can claim responsibility.

This is the end of the first part of the essay. Though it brings me no closer to the essence of technology it does however present new challenges to how I think about making a photograph and how a work comes about. That is, a photograph takes on its appearance despite the photographer. The appearance of the materials is determined before the photographer is able to act upon them. This makes sense since film, paper and inks are mass-produced to pre-established standards that I have no influence over (i.e. the qualities of film or of a digital sensor produce images according to the standards inherited by equipment manufacturers). Both the optics of the lens and the construction of the camera are made to pre-established visual conventions as Hubert Damisch describes:

The principles of the photographic camera – and of the camera obscura before it – were tied to a notion of space and of objectivity whose development preceded the invention of photography, and to which the great majority of photographers only conformed. The lens itself, which has been corrected for “distortions” and adjusted for “errors,” is scarcely as objective as it seems. In its structure and in the ordered image of the world it achieves, it complies with an especially familiar though very old and dilapidated system of spatial construction, to which photography belatedly brought about an unexpected revival of current interest.

(Hubert Damisch, 1980 [1963], p.289)

Thus, Damisch make a case for the *eidos* (aspecting) of the photographic image that draws upon the conventions adopted several centuries earlier in painting and drawing.⁸⁶ To refer to Damisch, photographers “conformed” to the models presented to them by these more ancient practices. A difference in Heidegger's model of the four causes is that this conforming is inevitable through the makers necessary association and belonging to a past. To be kinder to

⁸⁶ I assume that Damisch is referring here to perspective

photographers than perhaps Damisch allows, it might be more appropriate to say that this attention to prior conventions is a process of informing. It then follows that the practices of genres in photography, landscape for example, are required to draw directly from those more ancient practices in order that the images produced have relevance to the culture in which they are produced and received.

I am aware that the conventions of landscape imagery, like other visual genres, are deeply ingrained in the culture in which I live. They have appeared throughout my life from childhood onwards (as I will describe in chapter 4). I live in a wider world and greater history than is circumscribed by my own sense of history, or the history of photography, and consciously or unconsciously I draw upon these conventions together to allow a work to appear. So in these terms, all the material, conceptual and historical things that contribute to photography can be traceable (unconcealed) in a work if I, as a photographer (and viewer), prepare myself according to the method that Heidegger describes further in the essay.

However, there are aspects of the language that Heidegger uses that need to be looked at since, again, the limits of translation prevent the full depth of meaning from being realised. *Revealing* is only an approximate translation of *Entbergung*. As Lovitt describes, this term is obscure even in German and it is another example where Heidegger refers to ancient etymology, uses combinations of words or words hyphenated to evoke further meanings than are present in conventional use. The full meaning of *Bergen* does not just refer to the visible appearing of a thing. It also means “to rescue, to recover, to secure to harbour, to conceal” (Ibid, footnote 10, p.11). *Ent* is used to denote a change of state or situation: “It can mean ‘forth’ or ‘out’ or can connote a change that is negating a formed condition” (ibid). Adopting something close to Heidegger’s own terminology (at least as translated) Lovitt describes that “Entbergung connotes an opening out from protective concealing, a harboring forth” (Lovitt, ibid). Lovitt warns the English reader to bear in mind the intended extended meanings of this term that are not present in *revealing*. This is typical of Heidegger in that he builds threads of meaning throughout his work that at first seem unconnected and obscure. It is not until the reader works through the

essay and re-explores these threads that the full inter-woven quality of the text becomes apparent. Hence, the aim of the essay, of a movement towards a revealing, is mirrored in the structure of the essay as a meaning becomes clear. Therefore, the sense in which *Entbergung* suggests protection from danger is not apparent at this point of the essay and only appears later as the threads of meaning are gradually drawn together. Neither is the relevance of the full meaning of revealing as *Entbergung* apparent to me at this point in the text.

Part 2

I am then faced with another perplexing statement. That revealing, *alétheia*, has everything to do with the essence of technology. Here, Heidegger applies his argument by drawing together revealing with technology allowing him to argue that technology is not just a means:

For every bringing forth is grounded in revealing. Bringing forth, indeed, gathers within itself the four modes of occasioning – causality – and rules them throughout. Within its domain belong end and means, belongs instrumentality. Instrumentality is considered to be the fundamental characteristic of technology. If we enquire step by step, into what technology, represented as means, actually is, then we shall arrive at revealing. The possibility of all productive manufacturing lies in revealing... Technology...is the realm of revealing, i.e. of truth [*wahr-heit*] (Ibid, p.12)

This is another instance where Heidegger hyphenates a German word to extend its meaning. As Lovitt describes (ft.12, p.12), the stem *wahr* relates elsewhere in the German language to mean to watch over and keep safe. By doing so Heidegger is building a relation between revealing (*Entbergung*), as protective concealing, and truth (*Wahr-heit*), to produce a meaning, that passes like a current through the text, of safe-keeping, watchfulness and protected concealment throughout his interpretation of truth. This emerges later in the essay as a pivotal condition of human being.

Having reached this stage I am now challenged again by this idea that “technology...is the realm of revealing” (Ibid, p.12). I can work out how Heidegger got me to this point, but only after

re-reading and very carefully attending to his use of language (and the required compensation applied to translation). Since he has taken me through a close argument of what technology as means is, he now uses this argument to prove that technology is more than just a means to an end as it appears in the conventional reading of the four causes. This, he states, should strike me as strange and cause in me an urgent need to question what technology means. Again Heidegger turns to the ancient Greek and defines the root of technology as “*technikon* which means to belong to *techné*” (ibid, p.12). This serves to extend our traditional idea of what is encompassed by technology. There are two aspects to this. The first is that *techné* refers to craft skills and also to the fine arts and “the arts of the mind” (ibid). Fundamentally *techné* belongs to bringing forth, to *poiesis*. The other point is that since Plato, *techné* was linked with *episteme*, a kind of knowledge that is related to theory. Both words refer to knowing “in the widest sense...

...to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening up. Such knowing provides a revealing.

(Ibid, p.13)

According to Aristotle *techné* has particular qualities that for Heidegger are key:

Techné is a mode of *aletheuein*. It reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us, whatever can look and turn out now one way and now another.

(Ibid, p.13)

This is then a truth (*aletheia*) that is yet to reveal itself, one that is present but for which the perceiver needs to be in particular frame of mind than that usually associated with objective knowledge.

Heidegger describes how *techné* is related to making:

Whoever builds a house or a ship or forges a sacrificial chalice reveals what is to be brought forth, according to the perspectives of the four modes of occasioning. This revealing gathers together in advance the aspect [*eidos*] and the matter of ship or house, with a view to the finished thing envisioned as completed, and from this gathering determines the manner of its construction. Thus what is decisive in *techné* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *techné* is a bringing forth.

(Ibid, p.13)

I need to remember the full meaning of revealing as *Entbergung*, as an opening out from protective concealing. Without this the meaning of Heidegger's statement loses its force and becomes distant from its relation to other ideas and terms that Heidegger employs, i.e. *poiésis*. The idea is that the manipulation of materials does not occur through the maker taking control and that the maker is not uniquely responsible for the results. What is brought-forth is the result of the maker gathering together and considering his indebtedness to the other three causes: the material (*hyle*) which gives of itself, the way of appearing of the thing (aspect or *eidos*) and the historical bounds or limits of the thing being made (*telos*). In terms of making a photographic work I need to consider how to think this through, how this way of thinking can be applied to revealing making. I will attempt to do this in the fourth chapter. I might also note how Heidegger's statement above seems to relate closely to Sugimoto's approach to image making, that I discuss in Chapter 2, where he claims that the visual qualities of his work, are entirely preconceived in a "vision" (Sugimoto, 2003 [1995], p.285). The actual practices of making are technical procedures applied to meeting this vision of the work. I am not entirely comfortable with this approach since it seems so distant from my own experiences of image making and those of others that I have discussed (e.g. Bechers, Burgin, Adams, Martins). I suggest, therefore, that the revealing that takes place need not be an immediate mental act, but one that takes place over a period time. This extended temporal duration of making work is implied by Heidegger's use of the term "gathering" (Heidegger, Ibid) where the aspect (*eidos*) of the work takes shape through experiencing both the aspect (*eidos*) of others' images that function as historical precedents for the makers practice (i.e. as genre), and that of the work as it evolves

through the experiences of making. Sugimoto's approach seems to place the purpose (*telos*) of the work before any gathering together of the aspect (*eidos*) has taken place. Furthermore, since Heidegger's text is also the outcome of a making, it is also a gathering. In this sense making is an "adventure" (Lovitt, 1977, p.xiii), where meaning, hitherto unknown, is explored over the temporal period that it takes to read, study and come to terms with the challenges presented in the text. My interpretation of the temporal dimension of Heidegger's use of "gathering" relates more closely to my own experiences of making, and also seems evidence in the experiences of the other image makers that I discuss in Chapter 2 (ibid).

To return to the text, Heidegger states that:

Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *alétheia*, truth, happens.

(ibid, p.13)

However, the revealing caused by the industrial application of modern technology is of a very different kind than the bringing-forth of *poiésis* where the possibility of *alétheia* may occur.

The application of modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*] of Earth's natural resources "which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored" (ibid, p.14). Modern technology is applied to natural resources in ways that previous generations were never able to. It makes demands on natural resources that traditional methods never made. Where peasant farming used the soil in a way that did not use it up, but rather sought to maintain and cherish it for future use, modern methods of extracting minerals challenge the landscape in a way that forever alters it – often by removing it. This use of the earth, that results in a complete and massive alteration, is a "setting-upon" [*stellen*] (p.15). Before, where the farmer may have carefully cultivated and managed the field, it is now opened up as a coal mine. This extraction does not occur for its own sake but for another purpose. This unlocking of the earth's resources, and the transformation through technology of what once was

Earth, is a revealing. Whatever can be extracted, stockpiled and transformed for other purposes (i.e. burning coal to produce the energy to power a factory), is a challenging forth:

The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. That challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is in turn distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew.

(Ibid, p.16)

Within an industrial economy the continual extraction and securing of natural resources are, for Heidegger, “the chief characteristics of the challenging revealing” (ibid, p.16). What is revealed is a shift of attitude towards objects in the world from something that presents itself as an object in its own terms as a natural force (i.e. the Rhine as a river), to an object that is presented as having material that modern industry can use (i.e. the Rhine as a source of energy where the energy of the flowing water is at the command of industry). Heidegger allocates a particular quality to the stuff of nature that is used, regulated and put into service. He refers to things regarded in this way as Standing-Reserve (*Bestand*), a term that stresses the orderability of things rather than their permanence. This contrasts with *Gegenstand*, an object that “stands over against” (Lovitt, ft.16, p.17), that stands in its own terms (i.e. the *riverness* of the Rhine). When the Rhine is ordered about as Standing-Reserve it loses its characteristic of a river and becomes a source of energy. There is then a transformation in how a thing is regarded as an object that stands over against me to how the same object can be regarded as a thing to be used, subject to regulation and standing by. Seen as Standing-Reserve things can never be seen for what they are in themselves, they are objectified by human beings in a way that makes the things subservient only to human use.

This is not just limited to natural things. Heidegger makes the case that technological things such as an airliner can take two different states as object. It can appear as an object standing before me (*Gegenstand*) or as an object ordered in to use for transport: “for this it must be in its whole structure and in every one of its component parts, on call for duty, i.e. ready for takeoff” (ibid, p.17), as standing-reserve (*Bestand*).

I think how I can use this in terms of photography. There are two ways that immediately strike me. The first is the equipment I use, particularly the camera. The second is the attitude towards things that are photographed.

When I look at a camera I want to use, I pick it up to feel its weight, to see how it fits into my hands. I admire its design (or not). I see how it works and how well it is made (or not). Here the camera is an object in itself, it is *Gegenstand*. It is an object I can appreciate for its form. When I use the camera to make photographs I use the camera as equipment. My attention shifts towards the thing I want to photograph and how it appears in the viewfinder or on the screen of the camera. I cease to appreciate the camera in itself. It becomes a tool that is applied to a task of making images. When I am engrossed in the process of image making the camera ceases to become an object in its own right, a whole thing, and becomes a collection of functioning parts – aperture, shutter, lens, body, wind-on lever, view finder, and so on.

Can standing reserve be applied to photographing? In his essay *The Photographer's Eye*, John Szarkowski (1966) commented that by the end of the nineteenth century an “army of photographers” (Szarkowski, 1966, p.6) were busy producing a “deluge” (ibid) of photographs. He refers to an un-named English writer who comments on the indiscriminate practices of photographers, making photographs of anything, “without ever pausing to ask themselves, is this or that artistic?” (ibid, p.8). The once essential aspect of art that required a human being to manipulate plastic materials with skill and dexterity to produce a likeness of something did not seem to apply to photography. Where painting was arduous, time consuming and expensive,

Photography was easy, cheap and ubiquitous, and it recorded anything: shop windows and sod houses and family pets and steam engines and unimportant people. And once made objective and permanent, immortalized in a picture, these things took on importance”

(Szarkowski, 1966, p.7)

He also draws upon an observation made by William M. Ivens Jr:

“The nineteenth century began by believing what was reasonable was true and it would end up by believing that what it saw a photograph of was true.”

(ibid, p.8)

Thus a paradigm shift of the means of the presentation and perception of “truth” occurred. This theme has been consistent in accounts and theories of photography ever since its inception into mainstream culture (circa 1850). On the first page of *On Photography* (1977) Susan Sontag relates Plato’s metaphor of the cave in *The Republic* to photographs as “mere images of truth” (Sontag, 1978, p.3), observing tendencies and beliefs that predate our current digitally dominated era by thirty years. Sontag refers to Godard’s film *Le Carabinier* where two brigands, Michel-Ange and Ullyse, return from their travels with a suitcase of treasure. Their booty turns out to be a mass of photographs of all the places they have been rather than the gold and jewels that their wives were expecting. Sontag’s observation is that photographs replace both perceptual experience and the original object:

To collect photographs is to collect the world... Photographs are perhaps the most mysterious of all the objects that make up, and thicken, the environment we recognize as modern... To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge - and, therefore, like power.... Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire.

(Sontag, 1978, pp.3-4)

Photographs are a way of gaining knowledge and, as Sontag writes, of appropriating the thing that has been photographed, however distant in physical terms. Where Godard’s joke rested on the fact that the brigands’ photographs of precious things and exotic places were in themselves worthless, it can clearly be argued that photographs do have economic value. No more so than now where images are an economy in themselves and where also the value of the rights to those images, as happens with any other form of currency, is repeatedly abused and contested. Digital photography, digital communications and social networking have allowed for the

massive, global circulation of and instant access to photographic imagery. Picture libraries such as Getty, Alamy and iStock store millions of images for clients to pay by use.

In terms of things themselves, whole environments and cultures exist for photo tourists as extended photographic subjects (e.g. Prague, Paris, New York, The Lake District) where photographs are made for the sole reason of making photographs that look like other photographs, the conventions of which are governed by consumer magazines and equipment manufacturers, rather than with a sense of enquiry for the environment itself and the people who inhabit it. If the observations of Szarkowski and Sontag are true, it could be argued that our whole environment and culture, other peoples', and other people themselves, are *standing-reserve* for the activity of photographing.

This, for me, presents a problem. I ask myself, to what extent is photography a process of Standing-Reserve? Also, can photography as art can be differentiated from this mass activity, or is it simply a part of it? Does art partake of the Standing-Reserve? Szarkowski's nineteenth century photographers may have failed to ask themselves "is this or that artistic?" (Szarkowski, 1966, p.8), but can photography as art avoid ordering things as Standing-Reserve?

Both Szarkowski and Sontag side-step the practices of making photographs, or at least making is elided into viewing, as if they are the same thing. There is more to it than this. There is more to be owned than the thing photographed. The act of photographing is also an attempt to make a good picture, that is, a picture that stands up to certain standards of image making. Thus the act of photographing, in some way, has nothing to do with what or who is being photographed, but is proof of a degree of competence of image making. To risk an oversimplification, this is as true of the amateur photographer, where a good photograph is one that looks like another published in a consumer photo magazine, as it is the professional, where competence depends on the display of certain technical characteristics of the image, as it is for the critically informed photographer (i.e. photography as fine art) where image making is a practice of historical and cultural critique. All three practices rely on pre-established codes and conventions even if the

images produced are intended to be used for different ends (i.e. personal gratification, financial income, critical acclaim). This indicates that photographs are circumscribed in advance. This accords with Heidegger's theory of the third cause, *telos*. The major difference here is that where this circumscription is not accounted for, neither noticed nor nurtured, through careful consideration of the characteristics of matter (*hyle*) and aspect (*eidos*), the process of revealing when making photographs is not in the order of a bringing-forth [Her-vor-bringen] of *poiesis*. It remains a setting-upon.

This presents a possibility that not only are things in the world part of a massive *standing reserve* for the activity of photographing, but also the traditions of image making itself, and the examples therein, are also a standing-reserve to be raided, drawn upon or referenced, consciously or not, depending on the attitude of the image maker.

I hesitate to push this forward as it seems arrogant to suggest that a critically informed approach to image making is somehow superior to that practiced as a popular and informal activity. It begs the question: how is making photographs as art different? Does my supposed informed practice submit the world to a setting-upon and describe it as standing reserve as much as someone who practices photography in a more uninformed way? I would like to think that my practice is somehow different and removed from the popular practice of photography; that my images somehow step to one side of the mass production of photographic imagery. On the other hand, even though I am informed by different sources, they could just be a part of it. However, if my work is made in a way that follows Heidegger's four causes, then this setting-upon has the possibility of being a setting-forth, an example of *poiesis*.

So what am I attempting to reveal? Or more accurately, what am I revealing in my photographing? Am I showing my indebtedness to the four causes that Heidegger describes to provide *poiesis*, a bringing forth, rather than the challenging forth that subsumes visual things to the standing-reserve, to things photographed for the sole reason of the consumption of images? My aim in photographing environments is to raise awareness of places and things that are

overlooked or screened off from view. I intend that the relationships I make in images provide some kind of critique of landscape image making and of the use of landscape itself. Therefore I am involving myself in what I think is a revealing of relationships that tend to get overlooked, that have been concealed. Whether I am doing so with the rigour that Heidegger sets out is another thing. Further to this, within the context of research, I am reading Heidegger in order to find ways of describing the experiences of making work. I think at this stage I need to read on in order to follow the course of the journey since I can see here already how the philosophy of Heidegger is influencing the making itself.

Heidegger refers to a jet airliner to illustrate standing reserve (p.17). Seen as an airliner it is an object. As something applied to transport it is used up, in all its component parts, as standing reserve. Heidegger also refers, as discussed above, to the transformation of farmland, where the land is an object, to a coal field, where the land is laid open for its contents to be extracted, ordered and used up, that is, as standing-reserve. Furthermore, Heidegger makes another direct and powerful reference to landscape by referring to The Rhine being damned for the production of hydroelectric power. At this point I should make clear that Heidegger's essay is not an argument against technology although here a criticism of the advance of technology is clear,

What the river is now, namely, a water supplier, derives from out of the essence of the power station. In order that we even remotely consider the monstrousness that reigns here, let us ponder a moment the contrast that out of the two titles, "The Rhine" as damned up into the *power* works, and "The Rhine" as uttered out of the *art* work, Holderlin's hymn by that name. But, will it be replied, the Rhine is still a river in the landscape, is it not? Perhaps. But how? In no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry.

(Heidegger, Ibid, p.16)

There is more than one sense in which The Rhine has been transformed into standing-reserve, since it is not only used up as a source of power but is also something to be consumed through tourism, collected and acquired through the photographs that those tourists make, as described

above by Sontag and Szarkowski. I think that Heidegger feels shame on the part of The Rhine for the way in which technology has treated such a national emblem of pride and power, referring to Holderlin's evocation describing the once great river: "It was the voice of the noblest of rivers, the freeborn Rhine" (Holderlin, *The Rhine*, 1996, p.48). The river, when taken over by industry, becomes a tamed shadow of its former self. Though there are only brief passages in the essay that elude to environmental features, they point to a yet un-worked theme of a possible visual consumption of environment and landscape that relates to art as much as it does to mass consumption. The issue here is how does art separate its self from, or stand to one side of, the mass consumption of images that transform the environment to standing-reserve? This might be too great a question for the moment but it remains that if artists are unable to arrest, at least for themselves, the process that submits the things to standing-reserve, art remains undifferentiated from the industrial transformation and mass consumption of natural resources.

Here I need to reflect on how I go about photographing landscape. When I experience an environment, when I stop to appreciate it, I am aware that I stand within it. I am aware that I am in it and that it surrounds me. When I then photograph it my attitude changes. I can only select and arrange parts of it to make an image since that is what the viewfinder/screen does. I compose to make the environment confirm to a visual scheme. It then could be argued that I consume the environment, that I subject it to an ordering and storing, as much as any other prosaic practice of photographing (i.e. that of a tourist). Since I cannot argue that I do anything other than take and acquire images of places and things, how do I set myself apart from the mass of image making?

When I photograph I intend to make relationships between the things within it to form some kind of meaning about the environment that extends beyond the formal qualities of the image. In the image below I am drawing relationships between the pools, pylons, cars and anglers in order to make some kind of point, to raise an awareness, of the uses, abuses and transformations of

landscape. What I do not intend is to make photographs of a landscape for the sake of making a landscape photograph, to prove a level of competence or a stylistic achievement.

In the instance of this image below, I have excluded the dual carriageway (the A50) to my right and behind me, the fields to my left and the road sign, behind me to my left. I make use of the trees and bushes to frame the bottom and right side of the image in a conscious effort to achieve a picturesque style by way of critique of an environment that includes non-picturesque things such as pylons, cars, a reconstructed fishing pool. The things that are present in the image do not only refer to themselves (as denoted) but to themes and ideas beyond the frame (connoted) such as issues related to ecology in the re-naturalisation of industrial land, the production and distribution of energy and ways in which landscape is used for recreation. I intend to achieve (even if I fail) a critique of landscape by representing a place that is consumed and transformed both physically (building, quarrying, re-naturalisation, recreation) against the traditions of historical representation.⁸⁷ I also drew upon the pictorial conventions present in the paintings of Nicolas Poussin (see below) in order to situate but also to contradict traditional pictorial values of composition against industrial manipulation of the environment. It can be argued that this presence of tradition is already apparent, whether or not the image maker acknowledges the history of the genre, since for an image to be recognised as intentionally landscape (or any other genre) it should fulfill certain pre-ordained criteria for that genre of image making, or at least have some recognisable relationship to them. A requirement when making images with the context of art (i.e. as a critically informed practice) is that these traditions, modes and conventions are carefully understood and active within the practice of image making. This aspect at least sets photography as art separate, but by no means more valuable than other practices of photographing.

Since I am a human being within culture, these traditions never leave me, whether I refer to them consciously or not. There will always be traces of the history of image making within

⁸⁷ A more detailed discussion on practice will take place in Chapter 5.

current practices of image making, irrespective of whether an image maker is aware of or even cares to observe the origins of traditions, visual codes and conventions.⁸⁸



Fig 3.1 Philip Harris. *Pools, Car and Cables, A50*. Sept 2010



Fig 3.2 Nicolas Poussin. *Landscape with Calm*. 1650-51. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

⁸⁸ The frame of the camera owes itself to a much older history than that belonging to photography. See Damishe (1980 [1963]).

The intention of a critical practice, at least as I see it, is to raise self-awareness of the precedents of image making in the hope that they will be evident to the informed viewer. Something akin to this is expressed by Heidegger in his description of the four causes and also reappears later in the essay.

It is important at this point to note that for Heidegger the unconcealment that arises through the setting-upon (*stellen*) of the standing-reserve does not have its origins in human being and that human beings are unable to effect this unconcealment by will or by force. He writes:

Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this ordering revealing happen.

(Heidegger, Ibid, p.18)

He states that human beings are not themselves standing reserve “Since man drives technology forward, he takes part in the ordering as a way of revealing” (ibid, p.18). He then makes a perplexing statement that again challenges the reader:

But the unconcealment itself, within which ordering unfolds, is never a human handiwork, any more than is the realm through which man is already passing every time he as a subject relates to an object.

(Ibid, p.18)

He adds:

Where and how does this revealing happen if it is no mere handiwork of man? We need not look far. We need only apprehend in an unbiased way That which has already claimed man and has done so, so decisively that he can only be man at any given time as the one so claimed.

(Ibid, p.18)

Heidegger's use of the word *That* carries a particular meaning.⁸⁹ He prefaces the word with a capital letter here in the same way as he when he writes *Being*. Both uses are distinct from *that* and *being*. *That*, like *Being*, carries a meaning of the primordial existence within which people exist, or be. In distinction, *being* refers to the existence of individual things and people. It relates to *Dasein*, the Being of being, that he discusses at great length in his major work *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 2004 [1927]). Without recognising the relevance of his use of *That*, the meaning of this statement is not fully apparent. I almost glossed over this sentence as I found it too hard to comprehend. However, it now seems pivotal to Heidegger's thinking as a whole. It refers to a required acknowledgement of the greater sense of Being over and above the immediate time and environment that I find myself in: my being. This means that the next statement makes a great deal more sense that it had done previously. He continues, making reference to the attitude required of the silversmith in the four causes discussed earlier in the essay:

Wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart, and gives himself over to meditating and striving, shaping and working, entreating and thanking, he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed.

(Ibid, p.18-19)

The silversmith takes on this attitude when, in *techné*, he or she draws together the four causes within which he or she is implied as central but also subservient to the scope of causation. In other words, the silversmith is a means by which the causes come together but is never the origin of the causes. In *techné* the silversmith acknowledges the properties of silver (*hyle*), acknowledges the history of the form (*eidos*) that a chalice should take and acknowledges the purposing (*telos*) that circumscribes the appearing of a chalice. In doing so the silversmith draws these properties together through dialogue (*logos*) with *hyle*, *eidos* and *telos* in making, in

⁸⁹ Heidegger intentionally writes "That" with a capital T to mark it out as the primordial Being of "Thatness." Likewise, he employs a similar method to distinguish "Being," as the primordial condition of existence, from "being," as the being of individual objects and people.

bringing forth, the chalice. This mode of bringing forth is in the order of *poiesis* as opposed to a *setting-upon* that results from attempting to dominate matter, form and the coming into being of artefacts. In this way the silversmith is not the origin, the *causa efficiens* of the chalice. He or she is a conduit for the four causes that is evident in the artefact that has been brought forth.

All these causes pre-exist the silversmith. They contribute to and guide the way the silversmith works to bringing the chalice into being. The approach of this making is not one that is typical in the industrial application of technology. As Heidegger writes:

When man, in his way, from within unconcealment reveals that which presences, he merely responds to the call of unconcealment even when he contradicts it. Thus when man, investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectlessness of standing-reserve.

(Ibid, p.19)

Each time I make a photograph I am challenged to exploit the resources of nature. I need to also realise that this challenging was not instigated by myself. Everything I use to make a photograph has been made through industrial means. That is, all the materials that have gone into the production of these items have, in Heidegger's terms, been transformed from their original object quality into a standing reserve that has allowed the mass production of these items (the trees that have been used up to make my books, the earth that was mined and quarried to produce the iron, aluminium and silver that has been used up to make my camera and film, and the sea bed that was drilled to find the oil that I have used up to fuel my car). Most of the time I do not think about these origins. I use these items with little thought for the origins of their materials. Heidegger's point here is that human beings are constantly challenged into ordering these natural resources as standing reserve. This challenging therefore does not have its origins in humankind, which is a statement that requires some clarification. Where Heidegger echoes this challenge of Being to humankind by challenging the reader, Lovitt offers some help in making things a little clearer and also refers to how the relationship between science,

technology and human being is conventionally understood, a conventional understanding which Heidegger challenges in his text.⁹⁰

Man's arrogation to himself of the role of subject in philosophy: his objectifying of nature, life, and history and in dealing with them in the sciences: and all his calculating and cataloguing and disposing of all manner of things through machine technology – all these alike are expressions of that essence and of that revealing. Technology, so understood, is in no sense an instrument of man's making or in his control. It is rather that phenomenon, ruled from out of Being itself, that is centrally determining all of Western history.

(Lovitt, 1977, p.xxix)

Having established that “Modern technology as ordering revealing is, then, no merely human doing” (ibid, p.19), Heidegger moves towards a pivotal point of his essay where he describes this particular type of revealing as *Ge-stell* (Enframing). He prefaces this with the following:

Therefore we must take that challenging that sets upon man to order the real as standing-reserve in accordance with the way in which it shows itself. That challenging gathers man into ordering. This gathering concentrates man upon ordering the real as standing-reserve.

He then proceeds to evoke a description of *Ge-stell* with the following, the meaning of which is subtle and easily overlooked.

⁹⁰ I think that the reader has to very careful how much he or she relies upon supporting texts to gain an understanding of Heidegger. Part of the point of the reading is to be and to work through the challenging that Heidegger sets for his reader. By referring to other texts the experience of reading and understanding is in danger of being diluted and so the journey towards meaning is made possibly a little too easy. In other words, to appreciate Heidegger the journey, with all its attendant frustrations, is a key element of his writing. If the reader shortcuts this by deviating to another text for help then the reader risks not being able to appreciate the way in which the challenging revealing of the essence of technology is run in tandem with a gradual revealing of the meaning in the text itself.

That which primordially unfolds the mountains into mountain ranges and courses through them in their folded togetherness is the gathering that we call “*Gebirg*” [mountain chain].

That gathering from which unfold the ways in which we have feelings of one kind or another we name “*Gemüt* [disposition]. We now name that challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve: “*Ge-stell*” [Enframing].

(Ibid, p.19)

The association of *Ge-Stell* with something of ancient origin (a mountain range) and part of involuntary human character (disposition) is carefully calculated. Both serve as metaphors for the quality of *Ge-stell* to allocate a meaning to things that exist prior and outside our sphere of influence. Therefore *Ge-stell* is introduced as something both ancient and beyond our influence. For Heidegger it serves to characterise the essence of modern technology but it requires further clarification since his use of the word does not conform to conventional usage. As Lovitt states in the accompanying footnote (Ibid, p.19) the term *Ge-stell*, translated as Enframing, should not be simply read as a framework but as a “calling forth” (Ibid). It is something active, suggested by *Ge-* prefacing the verb *Stell*. The translation, Enframing, is a close substitute as long as the reader remembers its particular usage. Here Lovitt describes Heidegger’s use of *Ge-stell*.⁹¹

It is a “challenging claim,” a demanding summons, that “gathers” so as to reveal. This claim *enframes* in that it assembles and orders. It puts into a framework or configuration everything that it summons forth, through an ordering for use that it is forever restructuring anew.

(Lovitt, footnote 17, p.19)

Even Heidegger admits that this phrase is open to misinterpretation and he proceeds to describe what this means in a phrase a great denseness in meaning that he repeats like a mantra, with slight variations, throughout the next few pages:

⁹¹ Conventionally *stellen* translates as to make. *Gestell* translates as frame. The difference is that Heidegger splits the word to form an extended meaning that relates more to the activity of making. From here on in, the English translation Enframing shall be used in place of *Ge-stell* since it is the English word that is used in the text.

Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e. challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing reserve. Enframing means that way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological

(Heidegger, *ibid*, p.20)

I have read this phrase many times. Its meaning in its sheer denseness has often escaped me. It arrests me in a state where I am challenged by the sheer strangeness of the use of language and terms. I am left hanging in the air of incomprehension whilst Heidegger proceeds to unpick this statement that, like others he uses, has challenged my understanding.

He continues, writing that machines, with their components parts, are a response to Enframing but they never comprise Enframing or cause it to happen. This echoes the statement at the outset of the essay that the essence of technology is itself nothing technological. He then tells us that the meaning of *stellen* in the name *Ge-stell* is not only to challenge since there are other uses of *stellen*: *herstellen* translates as producing or manufacturing. *Darstellen* translates as showing or presenting. This relation to producing and presenting is related to his earlier discussion on unconcealment in terms of *poiesis*: that which “lets what presences come forth into unconcealment” (*ibid*, p.21). Though the bringing forth, such as “the erecting of a statue in the temple precinct” (*ibid*),⁹² and the challenging of Enframing are quite different events, they are for Heidegger, related in their essence since they are both forms of revealing, of *alétheia*. *Poiésis* is the process of revealing that occurs in the making of an artwork that follows the four causes. Like *Physis* it is a “bringing-forth” (p.25). *Physis* is the revealing of natural things (e.g. the opening of a blossom). The revealing of Enframing comes about through the daily and normative (i.e. unquestioned and generally accepted) application of technology to submit natural resources to wholesale extraction, quantification and application to the production of energy and industrial production of things (e.g. gas, electricity and oil). Enframing acts upon human being

⁹² An example that appears in an earlier essay *The Origin of The Work of Art*.

to reveal the energy of nature as *standing-reserve* and so conceals nature from revealing itself as *Physis*.

Part 3

Heidegger summarises the position so far. He aims to bring to light the essence of technology and our relationship to it. He has described how the essence of technology does not lie in technology itself. Instead, the essence lies in Enframing which is “the way in which the real reveals itself as standing-reserve” (ibid, p.23). He adds that though revealing happens within the things that humans do, it neither occurs “exclusively *in* man, or decisively *through* man” (ibid). He repeats again his definition of Enframing like a mantra that runs like a current through the text, as if by repetition, this strange and challenging idea will begin to strike home amid the stages of his argument:

Enframing is the gathering together that belongs to that setting-upon which sets upon man and puts him in position to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve.

(ibid, p.24)

The repetition of this statement is then used to build subsequent developments as the text progresses. He adds:

As the one who is challenged forth in this way, man stands within the essential realm of Enframing.

(ibid, p.24)

This idea that Enframing is an “essential realm” is a new addition to the statement, meaning that human beings are irrevocably, through the progression of Western culture, situated in this condition he calls Enframing. The necessity for Heidegger is that human beings need to recognise this as such rather than continue, without question, on the same historical trajectory of technological development. He continues, stating that human beings “can never take up a

relationship to it [Enframing] only subsequently” (ibid) and that since we are in it, it is too late to prevent it since it is a characteristic of Western industrialised culture. Pivotal for Heidegger this question of technology is always open to be addressed:

Thus the question as to how we are to arrive at a relationship to the essence of technology, asked in this way, always come too late. But never too late comes the question as to whether we actually experience ourselves as the ones whose activities everywhere, public and private, are challenged forth by Enframing. Above all, never too late comes the question as to whether and how we actually admit ourselves into that wherein Enframing itself comes to presence.

(ibid, p.24)

Here I can see the possibility of a practical engagement with the condition of Enframing, and so the possibility of addressing the essence of something that conditions our daily lives. In terms of photography and photographing it appears that I am asked to question the very fundamental practices of image making, even the desire to make images in the first place, that is, to make marks that project some kind of significant meaning, either to myself or to others. That I am using technology to make photographs does not place photography in an exclusive relationship to Enframing compared to the more ancient practices of painting and drawing, since, as Heidegger is careful to point out, the essence of technology does not lie in technology. Therefore it follows that the essence of photography does not lie in photography but in the primal condition of Enframing. In terms of photography, if I adopt Heidegger’s ways of thinking and terminology, I can say that there is a “gathering together” of a “setting upon” that causes me to regard the world around me as visual “standing-reserve” for the purposes of photographing. Therefore, if Heidegger’s ideas have validity, the condition of Enframing is as relevant to me as a photographer, as it is to a painter, a poet, film-maker or an engineer. It seems though, for Heidegger, that there are instances where certain examples of practice, irrespective of their medium (since even language is *techné*), at least embody the potential to step to one side (if not outside) of Enframing. The poetry of Hölderlin is one such example to which Heidegger refers throughout his work.

From here on the theme of the trajectory of human being is more prominently suggested as a journeying in the text. Heidegger writes that Enframing starts human beings on a way towards a revealing through which the real becomes standing-reserve. This sending, or more precisely “a sending-that-gathers” (ibid, p.24) he calls *destining* [*Geschick*], from out of which “the essence of all history [*Geschichte*] is determined” (ibid). History, commonly understood as recorded chronicle, is the objectification of the outcome of this destining and a further effect of Enframing that gathers together and sets upon human beings to provide accounts of history as static and past events. Pivotaly, Enframing, and so other forms of revealing such as *poiesis* (and *physis*) are the ordaining of destining. The problem here is that human beings are wrapped up in an Enframing that remains on the whole concealed to them since they are so focused upon ordering the standing-reserve to survive and achieve. This condition “holds sway” (ibid) over human being. Here Heidegger also introduces two further term that challenge my comprehension – that of *freedom* and the *open*. He states:

For man becomes truly free only insofar as he belongs to the realm of destining and so becomes one who listens and hears [*Hörender*], and not one who is simply constrained to obey [*Höriger*].

(ibid, p.25)

This means that freedom has the potential to occur when a human being becomes aware and open to the process of Enframing. The idea of listening and hearing is carefully judged since Heidegger prevents a move towards the quantification and ordering of Enframing via analysis that would simply result in a deafness to it and so the further concealment of Enframing from human being. What follows is a remarkable passage that invokes a series of visual metaphors where a sense of being in a landscape is used to express the experience of revealing:

Freedom governs the open in the sense of the cleared and lighted up, i.e. of the revealed. It is to the happening of the revealing, i.e. of truth, that freedom stands in the closest and most intimate kinship. All the revealing belongs within a harbouring and a concealing.

(ibid, p.25)

The open does not refer to the openness of human being to events. It refers to the perception or realisation of an open, a place where revealing occurs through a free state of being. The idea of the *open* sits in contrast to the scientific (and normative) practice of objectifying things and thereby becoming closed off from Enframing since to objectify is to fix the limits of something within the capacity of technical human being.

Coming to a clear understanding of these terms (freedom and open) is a challenge not aided by issues of translation. Lovitt adds a footnote that helps to maintain the play of meaning in Heidegger's use of German language. As Lovitt states, *the open* translates as *das Freie* and is related to freedom, *Freiheit*. Though this is not evident in English, the relationship seems, considering Heidegger's appreciation of the roots of language, utterly intentional. Therefore the idea of an opening, an open space surround by an enclosed space, is a metaphor that I think relates to landscape.⁹³ What is more, when it is enclosed, the open is protected, as is evident with his use of the term "harbouring." Even the idea of harbouring, an enclosing and protecting

⁹³ I am not sure how thoroughly the relationship of landscape with Heidegger's philosophy has been studied. However, in an earlier essay "The Origin of the Work of Art" (2000 [1934]). Heidegger wrote more directly of *the open* in terms of a forest clearing. Heidegger also wrote many of his works in a hut in the region of the Black Mountains in Germany where his walks through the dense forest would have provided opportunities for the development of metaphor that seems relate to a forest landscape. Furthermore, in terms of references to landscape, Heidegger also gave a series of lectures in 1942 based on Friedrich Holderlin's hymn *Der Ister*, this being the ancient Greek name for the river Danube. Holderlin's poem formed the basis for extensive meditations on the essence and origins of technology, national identity and the origins of culture. The recent film by Barison and Ross, *The Ister* (2004), presents a renegotiation of Heidegger's philosophy. The film incorporates commentary by three philosophers, Bernard Stiegler, Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, who discuss but also extend Heidegger's thought in detail as the film passes through a journeying from the mouth of The Ister in Romania to its source as The Danube in Germany. If the relevance of landscape to Heidegger's philosophy has not yet been discussed elsewhere, it remains a area of research with much potential for both studies in landscape and Heidegger's philosophy.

of something, also relates to a physical environment. This becomes even more pertinent with the statement that follows, even if I find its meaning highly elusive:

All the revealing comes out of the open, goes into the open, and brings into the open. The freedom of the open consists neither in unfettered arbitrariness nor in the constraint of mere laws. Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing upon its way.

(ibid, p. 25)

The vision of a forest clearing, as an opening to daylight amongst the trees of a dense forest, seems so strong to me in this statement. I am aware that Heidegger wrote much of his philosophy in a hut on the edge of a forest in the Black Mountain region in Germany. I imagine Heidegger walking on a path through the forest under a weak light due to the dense trees, and coming upon a clearing where the light of day freely falls upon the ground thereby lighting the space up (i.e. the open). The same light, if he walked into the clearing, would also fall upon Heidegger. This clearing, nor the revealing light, would be any of his doing, neither might he have intended to make his way there. When he steps out into the clearing the light is revealed upon him, not just to him – he is a part of the process of the revealing. Hence Heidegger's description of the clearing is a metaphor that invokes the "sending-that-gathers" (ibid, p.24) that he describes as *destining* via the activity of walking, exploring an unknown landscape and wandering (I use this word to retain the idea of destining being outside of human intention and control) into a forest clearing.⁹⁴

In trying to negotiate the meaning of this statement I will follow this metaphor of the forest clearing. The dense trees that make up the forest surround and conceal the clearing. It is not

⁹⁴ With the reference to light and the enclosure of the forest is there a possible relationship to Plato's metaphor of the cave? Heidegger's "open" that is "cleared and lighted up" being.

the clearing that gives itself form but the trees of the forest that surround it, the absence of which leave an area, the clearing, in which light can enter. Therefore the clearing does not occur in itself but is formed by the trees that also conceal it. Therefore unconcealing occurs only through that which conceals it. However, I find the meaning of the veil elusive. I read it and re-read it to pick apart its components to discover what it means. This in itself is a “sending-that-gathers” (ibid, p.24) and a challenging forth that Heidegger effects in the course of the text. The nature of his writing is such that I may not be able to come to terms with this statement until I have travelled further along the passage of the text. I will have to come back to this in the hope that I reach some kind of understanding.

I realise that I have overlooked what may be a key sentence between the two statements above. After the first and before the second he writes something that I have over-looked as it seemed too opaque to give any meaning to. I went past it in the hope that it was not needed:

But that which frees – the mystery – is concealed and always concealing itself.

(Ibid, p.25)

Recovered and put in its place the idea of the veil now seems to take on some kind of sense. Since the clearing is an opening this would mean that freedom lies in the trees of the forest that conceal. Now it starts to take shape. Freedom is the “sending-that-gathers” - destining. This equates to the journey through the forest since what conceals also reveals. In this way revealing arises out of concealing. The mystery of whatever does this freeing is concealed by the veil. Whatever is in the open remains a mystery, the veil being my realisation of the mystery, since realising is the unconcealment of something previously concealed.

How does this relate to the question of the essence of technology? Heidegger writes that when “we consider the essence of technology we experience Enframing as a destining of revealing” and therefore “we are already sojourning within the open space of destining” (p.25). This neither requires that we put up with the progression of technology nor react against it, but rather,

When we once open ourselves expressly to the *essence* of technology then we will find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim.⁹⁵

(Ibid, p.26)

What prevents this is the tendency of human beings to do the opposite: to continue to push forward with the ordering of the standing reserve brought about through the setting upon of human beings by Enframing. Here I come to another key theme: the destining of Enframing is the supreme danger to human beings ever coming to an openness to the essence of technology and so ever being free.

The danger shows itself in two ways. The first is that human beings, following the rule of Enframing, will think of themselves as the orderers of all of the earth's natural resources and eventually regard themselves as standing-reserve.⁹⁶ The second reason that follows from the first is that human beings, threatened in this way, will then regards themselves as Lords of the

⁹⁵ This is a return to the first few lines of the essay that in preparation we should approach the question in a "free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens out human existence to the essence of technology" (p.3). Lovitt's footnotes take on a new relevance at this stage of the essay since he explains that essence, in the sense meant by Heidegger's unconventional use of the German word *Wesen*, (or *Wahren*) is not what something is, but is rather

the way in which something pursues its course, the way in which it remains through time as what it is... Heidegger writes elsewhere... "enduring as presence" (*das Wahren als Gegenwart*).
(Lovitt, footnote 1, p.3)

⁹⁶ Though Heidegger states that this has not occurred it is arguable that since his period of writing it perhaps has and is a characteristic condition of contemporary society. However, I also think there are precedents to this that Heidegger does not attend. I think of the soldiers in the First World War who were considered cannon fodder for trench warfare, the treatment of Jews in the Holocaust and later, after he wrote this text, of large swathes of the population in the Chinese Cultural Revolution who were put to use and disposed of by and for the benefit of the state. There are personal reasons why Heidegger would not want to admit this due to his involvement with the Nazis in the 1930s.

earth, thereby closing down human being to any possibility of openness to a primal Being. As a result human beings will not understand Enframing as a challenging forth and a revealing. Instead human beings will be banished into the holding sway of ordering which thereby rules out any other possibility of revealing. Most importantly Enframing renders human beings blind to the revealing of poiesis which “lets what presences come forth into appearance” (p.27) without which even the revealing as Enframing cannot come forth into presence. As a result what arises is the greatest danger to human beings in that the unconcealment of truth cannot come to pass.

Thus Heidegger is able to state that the “destining that sends into ordering is consequently the extreme danger” (Ibid, p.28). It is not that technology itself is the danger,

but rather there is the mystery of its essence. The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger.

(Ibid, p.28)

In terms of photography I wonder how the danger lies. The answer, given the challenges to conventional thinking caused in Heidegger's text, is not far away. Photography, since its inception in the 19th century, has been used to overcome the limitations of human perception. Photographs have been assumed, within certain conventions, to provide evidence of truth where human perception failed. Therefore, it can be argued, at least in relation to Heidegger's text, that photography is an instrument used to impose an order upon the natural world rather than to allow the natural world to reveal itself to us. Photography has therefore been implicit as an Enframing technology as much as any other. But to repeat Heidegger, this has nothing to do with photography. It has to do with the condition imposed by the challenging of Enframing: the destining of photography sends it into an ordering. That the essence of photography is still undecided by critics and historians points to the fact its essence, like all other technology, is still a mystery. Therefore, to paraphrase Heidegger, it is not photography itself that is a danger to other modes of revealing: *there is the mystery of photography's essence. The essence of photography, as a destining of revealing, is the danger.*

This threat predates any technology since technology is a response to this threat, that is, a response to Enframing as a challenging that sets upon human being. Technology is a consequence of the holding sway of Enframing. The key point is that,

Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth.

Thus where Enframing reigns, there is the danger in the highest sense.

(Ibid, p.28)

At this point Heidegger offers some much needed hope of the possibility of redemption by returning to Holderlin. He quotes the following lines from the poet:

But where the danger is, grows

The saving power also.

(Ibid, p.28)

The return to poetry is an interesting move. In doing so Heidegger takes me back into the possibility of *poiesis* as practiced by the silversmith in the early stages of the essay and offers art as a way of recovering the revealing of *poiesis* from out of the holding-sway of Enframing.

It seems tenuous that Heidegger refers to two simple lines from Holderlin to provide an antidote to the massive and ancient holding sway of Enframing. However, these lines of poetry *have been* written and are therefore witness to a condition of life dominated by what Heidegger describes as Enframing. If this is so, revealing process described in Heidegger's essay presents a possible methodology for making in the mode of *poiesis*. It embodies a potential to reveal three things:

1. That art as a practice following the four causes can be a revealing in the mode of *poiesis* and has the potential to step to one side of the holding sway of Enframing, however briefly.

2. In so doing it is possible that the attentive artist can reveal Enframing as a mode of unconcealing things as standing reserve.

3. That by adopting these two methods there is the further possibility that an artist can produce a work whereby the growing of the saving power can be observed within Enframing.

That these stages can be achieved is a tall order. That they outline the aims of making is more realistic. At least to myself, the first two seem to represent something close to fundamental requirements for making art: that the process of making requires an adjustment from the normative attitude towards things and events in the world, to a condition that aims to reveal the underlying condition of things and how they are perceived. However, I think that the third is something that an artist cannot claim for the work. It has to be acknowledged by another viewer, as Heidegger has done with Holderlin. There is a danger that otherwise this would lead to false and fanciful claims for the work produced.

To return to the lines of Holderlin, Heidegger writes that saving normally means to seize hold of something to protect it from ruin, but he asks me to consider a more involved meaning:

To save is to fetch something home into its essence, in order to bring the essence for the first time into its genuine appearing.

(ibid, p.28)

This suggests several things. Firstly it suggests that whatever needs saving has departed from or lost its essential identity, that is, lost contact with its essence. It follows that the act of saving is able to reposition the saved into its correct essence, its original, primal state of appearing. The problem here is that what is at stake is not just the essence of some thing or other, but the essence of human being itself. This is so since the danger discussed, the holding sway of Enframing, is, as Heidegger has discussed, the supreme danger to human being. He states:

Enframing blocks the shining-forth and holding sway of truth.

(Ibid, p.28)

The saving power is that which will save human being from Enframing and allow that other form of revealing to come to light, this being *poiesis*. So where Enframing is true in that it describes the condition of human beings in relentlessly regarding all things as standing reserve, it prevents human beings from recognising the world for what it is. This will remain inaccessible as long as human being is underpinned by the need to objectify the world and order it as standing reserve. But all is not in vain. As Heidegger points out: if the words of the poet have any truth then Enframing cannot totally block this shining forth. Furthermore, the way that Heidegger has constructed his argument means that this truth is not lit up from outside but, since this saving is described as a power, the saving is a lighting up from inside itself. It exists independently of human being.

If I return to what Enframing does, that it challenges human beings to order, control and use up resources, then there is the possibility that what potentially seems far-fetched (and possibly romantic) in Heidegger's philosophy can be rooted back into something more grounded. The natural resources that human beings use up originally had within them the capacity to reveal energy in their own natural way (i.e. by growth). This is suppressed in the process of ordering so that the unconcealing that may have occurred naturally is replaced by the technological process of extracting energy and using it up in a way that is unreplenishable. I should also recall the meaning of *standing-reserve* in that things lose their qualities for what they are in themselves and become subject to the requirements of the demand for energy. Even so, there is the possibility that the energy that comes to light through *physis* (in the way that natural energy reveals itself in its own terms), as opposed to the natural energy used up by human beings, can still come to light in the revealing process of *poiesis*.

There is the possibility, if I change my register of view, that the gradual process of the growing of the saving power as a revealing of truth can be witnessed. To do so I therefore need to

recognise the process of Enframing as a revealing that I myself, as a human being, am a part of the challenging forth of destining. I need to adjust the way I perceive technology in order to leave myself open to revealing as *poiesis*. That I do this within Enframing is a requirement since it is an essential quality of human being. It is a requirement because the saving power can only be witnessed within or as a consequence of Enframing. In this way Heidegger provides me with an escape route, though a challenging one to negotiate, from the fateful outcome of Enframing. Enframing then, is both the condition of human being and the supreme danger, but it also contains the source of the escape from the danger.

This sounds rather far fetched and as if Heidegger hopes for too much. However, if I follow his theory, since all human beings are a part of the challenging destining and so exist within Enframing, it would not be possible for a human being to step to one side of Enframing until at first the condition of Enframing was acknowledged and that an alternative was available (of shifting away from human domination over things and a move towards letting a revealing of things to occur in themselves - *poiesis*). Enframing can only be acknowledged from within since human being does not exist outside of it. Therefore if there is ever a chance of being saved from the challenging destining of Enframing it only makes sense that the source of this saving grows within it. This, in Heidegger's terms, is the only source of hope.

At this point Heidegger returns to examine the meaning of essence since a proper description has not yet been presented. Whilst its conventional meaning refers to the invariable quality of a thing, he takes a different view, turning to the qualities of technology. As refers to the example of a house, the essence of which endures though it is never found in its fullness in one actual house. Actual houses are built, used, fall into disrepair and disappear. Even so the essence of house remains. It not only precedes all actual houses but also extends beyond their physical, temporary presence. Therefore the essence of house endures, precedes and exceeds the lives of all actual houses. Heidegger's point is that essence is not a static fixed quality of a class of things but it acts upon it from its ancient origins. Just as in the way Heidegger refers to destining rather than destiny, so essence essences from the ancient origins of its first appearing. The

essence of house holds sway over all houses – it essences upon all houses. It follows that the essence of technology is not found in actual examples of technologies but precedes them, defining them from the origins of their essence and carries on essencing after their demise and as new houses replace the old ones.

In the context of photography several things arise as problematic, or at least they contribute to my idea of the essencing of photography that holds sway over my idea of photography. The essence of photography can be related to the first appearing of a photograph – that of Niecephore Niepce in 1827, followed by the work of Louise-Jacques-Mandé Dageurre, and simultaneously, that of William Henry Fox Talbot in England, both of whom publicised their methods in 1839. This is standard photographic history, accounts of which appear in all the history books in varying detail and scope (e.g. Newhall, 1964-1984; Gernsheim, 1986; Jeffrey, 1981, et al). However, it is arguable that the *idea* of photography appeared much earlier. The camera obscura (the dark room) was utilised by artists and scientists since the Renaissance. Similar *dark rooms* were utilised by the Moors to observe solar activity. Newhall quotes Giovanni Battista della Porta observing the use of a lens in a darkroom to produce images in 1558 (Newhall, 1964, p.11). Michel Frizot (1998) reflects on the antecedents to the established practices of Dageurre and Talbot, stating,

Before an inventive imagination can be set working on the gestation of a technical process it must first take into account: a fund of empirical knowledge acquired over centuries, sometimes by chance, which permits the construction of a technical hypothesis, and, little by little, makes possible the concept and its realization.

(Frizot, 1998, p.15)

He adds:

From the extant sources it would seem that before 1839 only Nicéphore Niépce had any wish to be an inventor in the field of the mechanical image, to be the creator of a new industry.

(Ibid, p.15)

Within the context of photography in relation to the industry and the market this may very well be the case, but there is no good reason to limit precedents to commercial concerns.⁹⁷ If I look towards the field of philosophy there exists a passage by the English empirical philosopher, John Locke (1689), that provides clear evidence that the wish to fix the images of the *dark room* has a much earlier precedent than Frizot will admit to, even if the *idea* is used as a metaphor for gaining an understanding of the workings of the human mind:

I pretend not to teach, but to enquire; and therefore cannot confess here again, The external and internal Sensation, are the only passages that I can find, of Knowledge, to the *Understanding*. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the Windows by which light is let into this *dark room*. For, methinks, the Understanding is not much unlike a Closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible Resemblances, or *Ideas* of things without; would the Pictures coming into such a dark Room but stay there, and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion, it would very much resemble the Understanding of man, in reference to all Objects of sight, and the *Ideas* of them.

(Locke, 1979 [1689], pp.162-163)

Why this passage has received so little attention from photography historians is beyond me. It also baffles me that in his re-assessment of the founding of photography Geoffrey Batchen (1999) never admits to the existence of this passage, in what is regarded as Locke's most significant work, even though he refers to the philosopher five times throughout his text. I therefore suggest that it is arguable that the idea, the practice, and even the desire to render the images of the *dark room* permanent, pre-dates the first photograph by more than a century and does so in terms that relate the photograph to human understanding and perception. In terms of Heidegger's idea of essence, the guiding principles that informed and inspired Niepce, Talbot and Daguerre to develop a fixed image significantly predates the production of their experiments and successful achievements. The origin of the *essence* of the photographic image can be

⁹⁷ See Arago's *Report* (1982, pp.15-36) to the French Assembly in 1839 on the potential uses of the Daguerreotype. He considers the benefits to human beings in the advancement of knowledge, not of the commercial potential of the process.

traced, potentially, many hundreds of years prior to the appearing of the first photograph. That is, the challenging destining of Enframing that acted upon human beings to produce a method of image making that could be used to catalogue and record things in the world has its origins in those of ancient *techné*.⁹⁸ The desire to capture and preserve is also consistent with other arts such as literature, poetry, music and architecture. If Heidegger's philosophy has any validity then photography, like any other art, and also like any other application of technology, is governed by the challenging destining of Enframing. This, he writes, "holds sway" over human being.

Heidegger then makes a turn that is once again challenging. He introduces the idea that Enframing, the essencing of technology, both endures and grants:

The way in which technology essences lets itself be seen only from out of that permanent enduring in which Enframing comes to pass as a destining of revealing. Goethe once uses the mysterious word *fortgewähren* [to grant permanently] in place of *fortwähren* [to endure permanently]. He hears *währen* [to endure] and *gewähren* [to grant] here in one unarticulated accord.

(Heidegger, *ibid*, p.31)

Once again there are issues with translation. The way in which Heidegger builds up relationships between words and so creates an association of meaning is lost in translation to English. Lovitt attempts to recover as much as possible in his footnotes, without which many particular uses of language through the text would lose their meaning. He explains further that *gewähren* is both allied to *währen* but also to *wahren* "to watch over, to keep safe, to preserve" thereby sustaining a thread of safe keeping through the essay that appears in Heidegger's use of *entbergen* (to reveal), *entbergung* (revealing) [see Lovitt, ft.10, p.11], and in *Wahrheit*, translated as truth (see page 12). Lovitt states that German words with the stem *wahr* have

⁹⁸ An ancient example of image making as record is that told by Pliny the Elder (23 – 79 AD) in the story of the Maid of Corinth who drew the silhouette of her sleeping lover on a wall before he departed.

connotations of “attentive watchfulness and guarding” that Heidegger finds in the Greek origins of these words. This is further emphasised by his hyphenation of *wahr-heit*.

Hyphenating Wahrheit [truth] draws it into this circle of meaning. It points to the fact that in truth, which is unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*), a safekeeping carries itself out. *Wahrheit* thus offers here a very close parallel to its companion noun *Entbergung* (revealing: literally, harbouring forth), built upon *Bergen* (to rescue, to harbour, to conceal).

(Lovitt, *ibid*, footnote 12, p.12)

The theme of truth in relation to safeguarding, harbouring and unconcealing is constant throughout Heidegger’s text. With this in mind (and with a greater appreciation of the meaning of German) the idea that a saving power might conceal itself within Enframing becomes more understandable. However, the discussion moves on and I am faced with another challenge when, after referring to Goethe’s conflation of enduring and granting, Heidegger states the following:

Only what is granted endures. That which endures primally out of the earliest beginning is what grants.

(Heidegger, *ibid*, p.31)

So I am now faced with the idea that Enframing holds sway over human being in the sense of an enduring that occurs through an ancient granting that offers to keep safe. How can I regard Enframing, the extreme danger, as also granting a safeguarding? It can be regarded as such, according to Heidegger, since the challenging forth that sets upon human being to order things as standing reserve is a destining. This destining is the starting of a way towards a revealing. Since it is a starting of a way, it is a granting as long as within it the saving power grows. The destining of revealing is the state of Enframing as the essence of technology that holds sway on human being. Enframing remains concealed to human beings who intend to master technology and steadfastly reduce the world to Standing-Reserve. It will only become visible when human beings “pay heed to the coming to presence of technology” (p.32) by way of a granting. In this

way there are two characteristics to Enframing. As a challenging it fuels the relentless ordering of this as standing reserve. The other is more enigmatic and, since Enframing in the first instance holds sway, more difficult to comprehend:

Enframing comes to pass for its part in the granting that lets man endure – as yet unexperienced, but perhaps more experienced in the future – that he may be the one who is needed and used for the safekeeping of the coming to presence of truth. Thus does the arising of the saving power appear.

(Ibid, p.33)

Enframing as the extreme danger is required since it is into this that I need to look so that I might perceive the growth of the saving power. It is looking into this extreme danger, by giving myself over to it rather than setting myself upon, that may increase the growth of the saving power. Heidegger puts this so much more elegantly and poetically thereby retaining the ambiguity of the essence of technology:

When we look into the ambiguous essence of technology, we behold the constellation, the stellar course of the mystery. The question concerning technology is the question concerning the constellation in which revealing and concealing, in which the coming to presence of truth, comes to pass. But what help is it to us to look into the constellation of truth? We look into the danger and see the growth of the saving power.

(Ibid, p.33)

Therefore human activity can never overcome Enframing since it is an integral quality of human being. Even so, human beings can at least come to terms with Enframing through witnessing what Heidegger calls the saving power, regarding it as being of a higher essence (though also related) to that which is endangered. To put it in more frank terms – there is more to Being than what our ordering activities are capable of telling us and more to it than we are capable of controlling. Human being will never dominate Being. All attempts to do so revert human being to

a blindness to the holding sway of Enframing and the truth of this will remain concealed. At this point Heidegger presents art as embodying an alternative to the setting upon of science:

Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it. Such a realm is art. But certainly only if reflection on art, for its part, does not shut its eyes to the constellation of truth after which we are *questioning*.

(Ibid, p.35)

For Heidegger the period of the ancient Greeks was a time when art, under the name of techné, had the potential to reveal truth through a bringing forth, *poiesis*. It is also clear that for Heidegger the poetry of Holderlin also has the capacity to confront Enframing. This is especially so since Holderlin writes of the danger and the saving power and, as Heidegger shows me, he also says:

Poetically dwells man upon this earth.

(Ibid, p.35)

Meaning that human beings have in them the capacity to reveal to themselves the holding sway of Enframing, and in so doing, move towards that other mode of revealing, *poiesis*, that allows truth, *aletheia*, to unconceal itself.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ The word dwelling is particularly important to Heidegger as it has a relation to essence, as Lovitt explains:

The old verbal forms from which *wesen* stems meant to tarry or dwell. Heidegger repeatedly identifies *wesen* as “the same as *wahren* [to last or to endure].”

(Lovitt, footnote 1, p.3)

In the early stages of the essay Lovitt translates *wesen* with essence. At the closing stages essence is replaced by “coming to presence,” the idea of dwelling is fundamental to Heidegger’s conception of *essencing* as something that lasts and endures.

For Heidegger, Holderlin's line refers to looking into the danger which can only be visible if at first the holding sway Enframing is unconcealed. Poetics, and by association, Art, provide a means to bring forth this unconcealing. The silversmith, in employing knowledge as *techné*, produces a revealing of the chalice by drawing attentively upon the four causes. The chalice is brought forth as *poiesis*. The modern word *poetry* originates from *poiesis*, hence Heidegger's drawing together of the poetic attitude towards making in relation to experience of the world. This means that a way of making that uses the four causes, as Heidegger describes, is a poetic method of bringing forth the truth of being, as *poiesis*. If, as Heidegger says, it is carried out in pious and respectful way it has a potential to lead to an unconcealing of the setting upon of Enframing as the essence of technology. Towards the conclusion of the essay Heidegger reflects upon this and presents a set of circumstances where art is brought to an idealised quality of practice and purpose:

Could it be that the fine arts are called to poetic revealing? Could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most primarily, so that they for their part may expressly foster the growth of the saving power, may awaken and found anew our look into that which grants and our trust in it?

(Ibid, p.35)

This makes great claims for the role of art and of the artist. For me to state that this is the role of my research would be a mistake.

Conclusion

The conclusion of Heidegger's essay and the requirements he places on art far exceed the remit of my research. I do not claim to make work that achieves these heights of purpose or expect anyone else to see them in my work. So maybe I should just have concentrated on the four causes and ended there. But that would have provided only part of Heidegger's methodology and rationale for the arts. At the least Heidegger presents art as a challenging of

what is conventional and set in the holding sway of Enframing and that art has the capacity to interrupt, however briefly, this destining of being. If I can scale back the expectations and requirements made of art and the stages of revealing, maybe I can provide at least a partial version of this method that is a relevant and realistic approach to an account of making. The images I have been making for the last ten years or so have been based on the landscape. Whilst I am cautious as to the extent of Heidegger's methodology and purpose of art, I also acknowledge that I do intend to make images that present the visual appearance of the landscape in a way that questions the uses to which it has been put and the traditions and conventions that have conditioned the perception and management of landscape. This sense of an intended and a desired revealing is, for myself, a pivotal aspect of making art. In the least I regard my work as a questioning and, even if faintly so, a challenging to how I and others perceive the English landscape.

Before I can contemplate moving into the later stages of Heidegger's discourse I first need to think how I can apply the four causes to making photographs. This, since it relates directly to making, presents a method that is pivotal for my discussion on making.

To begin with I will make a great, and possible incorrect, assumption – that making photographs occurs in the natural attitude. In other words, my mental state when making a photograph I (discussed in depth in Chapter 5) is different from the philosophical attitude that I adopt here. It is a state where I am full with all the cultural and traditional preconceptions that inform image making and almost all other daily acts. I do not photograph in the phenomenological or hermeneutic attitude. To do so, I think, would be impossible since every act and decision in the state of reduction would require description.

My argument for this is as follows: When I am photographing to make images I am immersed in a process of image making. If I am photographing in the state of reduction then I would be describing my immersion in the state of photographing. This is not the same thing. The act of describing means that I am not in the act, purely, of photographing. This does not mean that I

do not consider the significance of things that I am photographing since I will be thinking about how my images can mean and signify, but this is for the sake of the work rather than a philosophy on the work. The two need to be kept separate. If work becomes about the philosophy of image making then I run the risk that it becomes distant from the concerns of the things that I am photographing.

The experiences of photographing and other processes that contribute to making work, such as post-production, evaluation of the resulting photographs and selection, are the things that I will reflect on philosophically after the act.

In order to achieve this I need to first adjust my outlook, or my register, from the natural attitude (where I overlook my habits, prejudices and preconceptions) to the phenomenological attitude, where I reflect upon the experiences (often after a delay in time), in order to reveal what occurs in the natural attitude (i.e. when I am making work). This reflection is itself part of the making since it provides a key opportunity for evaluation and a realisation of the significances of the images that would and could not have been fully realised when photographing. Heidegger's essay presents a process of such a reduction but applied for the revealing of meaning rather than an experience of something in the world. It could be argued that I should be referring to phenomenology rather than hermeneutics, but since reading is an experience itself, I am hoping that what I learn of the process of reduction, and of an attitude to using, can be applied to the experience of making a work of photography.

If I can assume that making is in the natural attitude then the gathering together of the four causes also takes place in the natural attitude. The reflection upon this occurs afterwards, even if only by a few seconds. In this way the maker is wrapped within a process where pivotally he or she is not the sole activist since things that predate the maker work upon and play their part in circumscribing the outcome of the work. These are the matter out of which the work is made

(*hyle*), the aspecting (*eidos*), the purposing (*telos*) and the discourse (*logos*) that belongs and contributes to the field of practice.¹⁰⁰

If I reflect for a moment upon my own gathering together I realise that since the image will appear according to the materials and equipment I use, I am not the origin of the mode of appearing of the image. Neither am I the origin of the form that the images will take, the *eidos*, since the precedents for images predate me by hundreds if not thousands of years. The fact that I am able to state that I am making landscape images means that this mode of image making pre-exists my own examples – something that I am very aware of - from which I draw, often without awareness, like the air that I breathe. My landscape photographs are indebted to the materials that make up the images and the aspect (*eidos*) of landscape, and since I intend for them to be landscape photographs, the *telos* is this intention that at some stage they will be presented within the context of art – they will become landscape photographs in the context of photography as a fine art practice. The presence of the context of art governs the whole of my practice. It is not something I have control over. It is something that I need to respect and have humility for since its ancient being circumscribes the whole of my activity. It is the measure against which I weigh up the images that I make.

To define the exact nature of the causes that I draw upon here defeats the object of the research. I need to find this out in due course through the descriptions of my making. To do this I will draw upon the workflow offered by Heidegger's description of the four causes in the next chapter of my research.

¹⁰⁰ This is perhaps akin to Barthes' idea, in *Death of the Author*, that the maker is a conduit acted upon by the culture of which he or she is a part.

Chapter 4

Precedents to making images of an English landscape:

an Eidos and Telos of Landscape

The genre of images that I make is landscape, specifically of the English landscape in close proximity to roads and other industrial developments. The issues that have informed the work are based around the representation of the English landscape, the meaning of the term landscape and how the landscape is managed and used particularly in relation to the effect of major roads. My understanding of the practices of making art is that it should be informed by the theories, ideas and prior examples of representation that have contributed to the wider cultural and specialist understanding of whatever the maker of the work addresses him or herself to. It should also be supported by an understanding of how to select and use appropriate equipment and materials. This is a view that is born of my education in art, through teaching, reading and this research. It is in itself one born of convention and expectation. The role of this chapter is to understand how the aspecting (*eidos*) of landscape imagery occurs in relation to my own understanding, that is, an understanding of the historical precedents of landscape and how the precedents appear in the construction, management and use of the landscape environment today.

This chapter is presented in three parts:

A Personal Appearing of Landscape

Here I describe my formative experiences of landscape and present them as a personal *eidos* and *telos* of landscape.

The Causes of an English Landscape

This part has two sections. In the first, titled *landscape as Nature and Property*, I provide an account of ideas, concepts and representations of landscape that have contributed to how landscape is conventionally perceived and understood and the challenges made to these beliefs. In the second, titled *A Critique of the Picturesque*, I provide a critique of the picturesque as a dominant and enduring mode of landscape representation.

Roads and Enframing

This part completes this background research section with a study of the significance and management of roads in light of the picturesque. This will contribute to setting the precedents of making that inform the aspecting (*eidos*), and in turn the purposing (*telos*), of my landscape project.

A Personal Appearing of Landscape

I make landscape photographs. In attaching my work to a familiar genre I assume that the values and ideas held by myself are at least to some degree shared by others and that they are deeply seated in the culture in which I am a part. In order to consider how these values are seated within myself I will draw upon and describe my experiences of landscape from childhood.

Many of my earliest childhood memories are situated in landscape environments. I have a very distant memory of my father holding my hand whilst walking me through the shallow water of the sea on a family holiday. I even remember the jumper I was wearing. It was my favourite: it was a pattern of black and white diamonds on a red ground. I remember the cliffs towering above me at the edge of the sands topped with green grass. This might have been Wales, Devon or Yorkshire, I cannot recall. It was definitely the United Kingdom since my parents never travelled abroad for family holidays. I remember the garden of the family home, a landscape in itself, planted with flowerbeds, hedges on each side, a vegetable garden at the top. Beyond the garden was the village graveyard. On the threshold of this were two huge lime trees that

provided a playground from my early school years to my middle teens. The local woods were a place to explore, build dens and ford streams. Only occasionally did I experience the Other, a stranger who was unknown to my friends or family. Even then this was part of the experience: the underlying excitement that I might encounter somewhere, something or someone unknown was a source of fear and a motivation to explore. As I write this, I recall images in my mind of the paths through the woods that I came to know so well; the streams, the tunnels, trees, rope swings and the secretive activities that I relished as a young boy. Since I grew up in a rural area, my experiences of these places have provided me with a deep-seated association with the countryside that someone who grew up in a more urban environment might not possess.

If I consider other sources that informed my formative outlook on environment, I think of children's books by authors such as Beatrix Potter (*Peter Rabbit*), Alison Uttley (*Little Grey Rabbit*), Enid Blyton (*Noddy and Big Ears*) and William Murray (*Peter and Jane*) that my parents read to me as a very young child.



Fig 4.1 Illustration by Margaret Tempest for the *Little Grey Rabbit* series of children's books by author Alison Uttley, c1930.



Fig 4.2 Beatrix Potter. Illustration for *Peter Rabbit*, c1902.

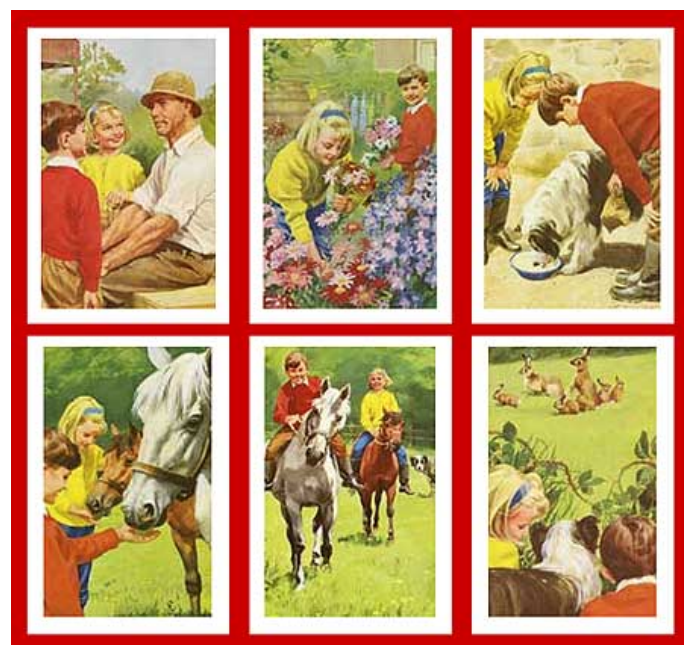


Fig 4.3 Illustration for *Peter and Jane Series*, Ladybird, 1964 onwards.
William Murray, author. Illustration not credited

The anthropomorphic characters who populated the fantasy countryside environments of these tales lived in a perpetual state of harmony and well-being, in stark contrast to the short and brutal life of real wild animals. The idea of landscape as a perfect Eden-like place was established in my infancy and must have played some part in conditioning my outlook on landscape as an adult. When I see an illustration from one of these books I associate it immediately with my childhood in a country village.

As I think back, the encroachment of the built environment upon this rural environment in which I grew up was a constant theme that I recall from an early age. I remember, perhaps six years old, walking over fields with my father, looking for fossils in the newly ploughed fields. In what seemed like no time these open fields were replaced with what was to become Oakwood Housing Estate, one of the largest housing estates in Europe at the time. More open fields and woodlands were taken up with the extension of the A38 dual carriage way in 1977 that cut a great swathe through the countryside to the west of the village. The presence and effect of major highways was a prominent part of my childhood.

I think now of other sources that accompanied my childhood and further established my idea of landscape. Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows*, Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*, Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* were all sources of an image of landscape that featured in my childhood. These works of children's fiction represented the countryside as idyll. These sources represented the rural landscape as benign spaces that were safe for children to explore with only the rare threat of an outsider and a distant theme of an expanding urban environment that had not yet made its impact.

I remember with some clarity the reproductions of paintings that my parents hung on the walls of the family home. Those that I remember include Constable's *The Haywain* (1821), Monet's *Poppies* (1873), Breugel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1558) with an unfeasibly small plot being ploughed by a framer in the foreground, Breugel's *Harvesters* (1565) and Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (1888). All these images represent an idealised view of landscape and the people

who inhabit it. They have inhabited my memory since a young child. As a result they are familiar markers of the ideals that I associate with representations of landscape. At a later age, I was surprised to see that the real painting, *The Haywain*, was not a mere foot and a half or so in width, but was 6 feet across (Bruegel's painting is a similar scale).



Fig 4.4 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Harvesters*, 1565
118.1 x 160.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

My childhood experiences are now perhaps alien to young children today since their parents are so concerned for their safety. That my parents allowed me to disappear for a whole day some parents regard as irresponsible. Then it was normal. Roaming through woods and fields was free and presented a democracy between myself and my peers. It dissolved the differences that I sometimes felt because my parents could not afford to furnish myself and my younger brother with the expensive belongings that my peers received from their parents (or which my parents thought were an indulgent waste of money). Since my parents appreciated the countryside, family holidays were spent camping in Devon, Wales or Yorkshire. Weekends were spent fishing with my father and younger brother, or on a family walk in Derbyshire. Membership of the Cubs and Boy Scouts extended the rural experience to rock climbing, orienteering and "roughing it" in canvas tents in high Derbyshire. Spending considerable time in the countryside was normal. I grew up not knowing any different.

Even as I write this I imagine the significant sites of my childhood that I could revisit: the buildings, trees and terrain might no longer remain. Even so, when I search for the family home on Google Maps I find the same mock half-timbered house with the same sycamore tree in the front garden and the huge limes in the graveyard behind.



Fig 4.5 Google Street View image of my childhood home. Breadsall Village, Derbyshire. May 2011

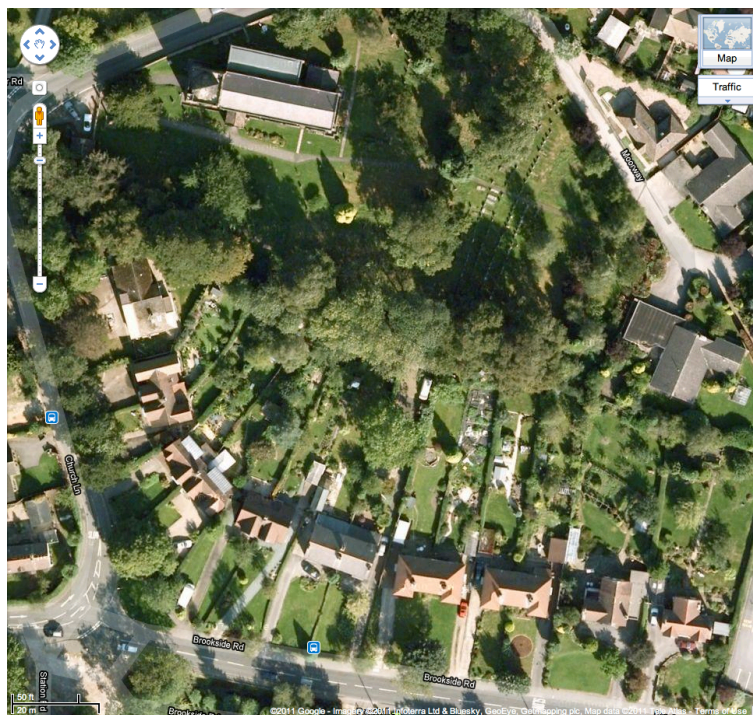


Fig 4.6 Google satellite image of my childhood home. Google Maps. May 2011

It is a place that is built upon fond memories but also later experiences that were the source of discontent and exclusion. I left in my late teens because I no longer fitted into the social milieu of my peers and I wanted to live in a city with all the attendant attractions that it held for someone growing up.

To summarise, direct experience of the rural landscape played a highly significant role in my childhood. This was informed further by extensive exposure to literary and cultural references, so prevalent in the period of my childhood, that drew upon a Romantic vision of the landscape as Arcadia. The pastoral, the bucolic and the picturesque, though meaningless at the time as terms and concepts, were normative. They were works that meant something or referred to ideas through habit, just as the environment in which I grew up in was taken for granted. Then events occurred that challenged this outlook. The Oakwood estate was built. The extension to the A38 was built. Within a few years (around the late 1970s), the village seemed threatened with being swallowed into the urban mass of nearby Derby. Landscape began to move in meaning from something, that in the innocence of my childhood seemed open and free (and here I include farmland, both pasture and crop), to something that was under threat of transformation and exclusion.

It is only through this process of reflection that the significance of the presence of landscape and my exposure from an early age to the cultural traditions and conventions of its representation become apparent. That I now make images that play upon this theme within the contemporary context of economic growth is grounded, at least partly, upon my early experiences of the rural environment. The ideology of a benign landscape was ingrained into my world outlook from my childhood, as with so many other children in England, through the stories my parents read to me as a young child and the books I later read myself (as stated above). The images of Bruegel, Constable and Monet are more established examples of landscape imagery. They are representative symbols that contribute to European cultural conceptions of landscape. Therefore, the texts and images that informed my idea of landscape were themselves informed by texts that pre-dated my own childhood, in some cases by hundreds of

years. I do not assume that Monet's painting signifies to me in the same way that it did to the viewers of his image in late nineteenth century, urban Paris, but rather these images have been bestowed with an ideological consistency, that have, at least for myself, sustained a certain myth of landscape.

At this point I want to explore what these deeper-seated influences are. Therefore I will now move from a personal *eidos* and *telos* of landscape to encompass a wider history and culture.

2. The Causes of an English Landscape

Landscape as Nature and Property

It is a point of agreement, even among writers who are seemingly opposed to one another (Ernst Gombrich, 1978; Kenneth Clark 1976 [1949]; against John Berger, 1972; Edward S. Casey, 2002; W. T. J. Mitchell, 1997 and 2002; et al) that the representation of landscape appeared as a specialist practice in Western art as late as the sixteenth century. This, for me, is a point of surprise. Landscape seems so ingrained in my idea of art that it seems improbable that the visual representing of land is not consistent throughout the history of art. It is, however, a relatively recent phenomenon.

A definition of what constitutes landscape needs clarification. "A landscape" was a title John Constable bestowed on many of his paintings with little further explanation. This raises a pertinent issue since landscape is a word that can be used to refer to both an environment in itself (and it can also be used as a metaphor to describe social environments such as the *political landscape*) as well as a visual and literary representation of an environment. Kenneth Clark's elaborates on the conventional European idea of landscape in his introduction to *Landscape into Art* (1949, re-edition 1976):

We are surrounded with things which we have not made and which have a life and structure different from our own: trees, flowers, grasses, rivers, hills, clouds. For centuries they have inspired us with curiosity and awe. They have been objects of delight. We have created them in our imaginations to reflect our moods. And we have come to think of them as contributing to an idea which we have called nature. Landscape painting marks the stages in our conception of nature. Its rise and development since the middle ages is part of a cycle in which the human spirit attempted once more to make harmony with its environment.

(Clark, 1979, p.1)

This statement presents a romanticised idea of landscape in its relation to both human being and to nature. For Clark, landscape art expresses the wonder of difference between the lives of human beings and that of natural objects. The emphasis on the object quality of natural forms indicates a concentration upon the formal qualities of their representation. The social sphere of landscape and the implications of its representation remain undisclosed in Clark's art historical account.

An example of this concentration on nature can be found in Clark's discussion on the medieval illuminations of the *Tres Riches Heurs du Duc de Berry*, painted by the Limbourg Brothers (1409-1415). Here he presents a paradox that it is through hunting and killing animals that men became intimate with nature (women's relationship to nature is not discussed). He adds to this:

Hunting is traditionally the occupation, often the sole occupation, of the aristocracy, and the style of painting which made hunting one of its chief subjects was the aristocratic style.

(Ibid, p.22)

Here Clark overlooks an extension of this paradox that is present in the above statement: that since aristocrats owned the land on which they hunted, and commoners were not permitted to hunt (there being punitive laws for poaching), a knowledge of nature, and the pleasure taken in it, was only accessible to those who owned the land.

In representing the months of the year the *Tres Riches Heures* illustrated the activities of the estate, its owners and their subjects. For Clark, these images are “crucial in the history of landscape painting because it stands half-way between symbol and fact” and supposedly represent “everyday life” (ibid, p.22) including several that represent hunting.

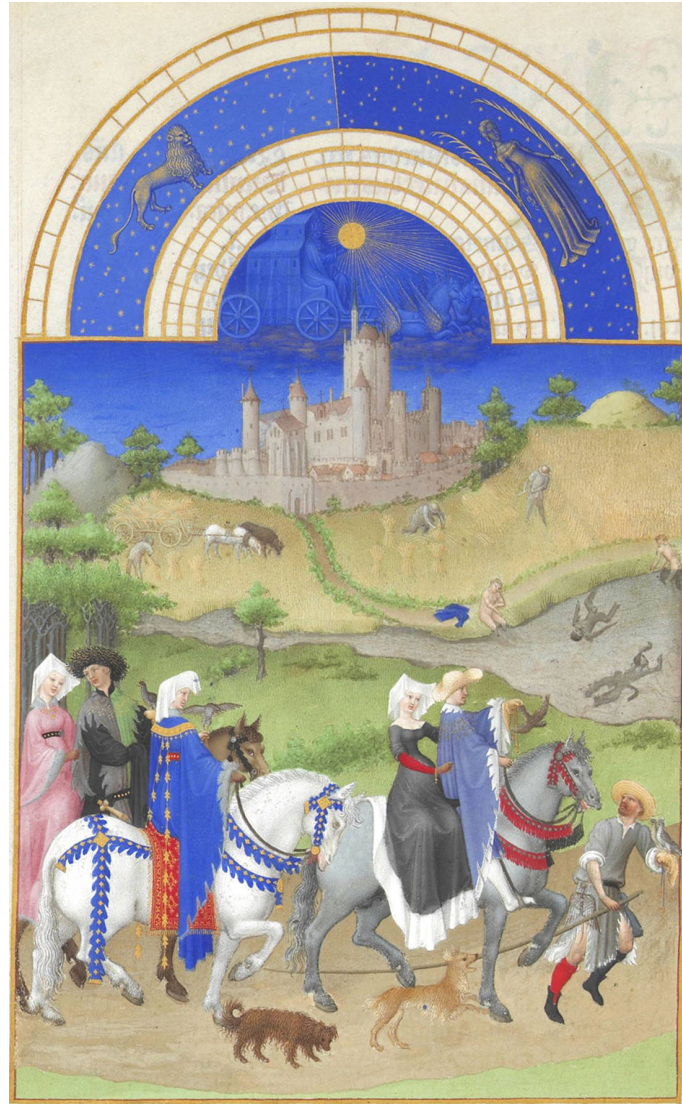


Fig 4.7 Limbourg Brothers. Illumination representing the month of August, from
Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry. 1409-1415

He points out that the Limbourg Brothers, like all other artists of the period who painted in this style, “came from the bourgeois Low Countries, from a land of work and fact” (Ibid, p. 22). If I follow my thread of argument that only aristocrats were allowed to hunt and that an intimacy of nature was achieved through the pleasure of hunting, it follows that artists, since they were

working people, were excluded from an intimacy with the very nature that they were commissioned to represent. A further example of this exclusion is that Clark refers to this style of painting as the “aristocratic style” (ibid), effectively granting authorship to the aristocrat who commissioned the works more than the painters themselves.

Therefore, to say that intimacy with nature occurred through hunting excludes those who actually made the landscape artefacts. This means that the only meaningful intimacy with nature occurred within the aristocratic classes. The undoubted intimacy that working people had with crops, soil and estate maintenance is passed over since the representation of labour in cultivated environments does not conform to the idea of landscape as the differentiated (i.e. wild) nature that Clark had in mind. The social divide in these images is clearly evident (see image for August above). However, issues of ownership, exclusion, power and repression are never addressed. Regarded in this way, Clark’s use of the universal “we” associates his readership exclusively with the aristocracy and wealthy landowners, not the artists who made the works, and certainly not with those represented as working on the land. Such association serves to conceal issues of social order from the concerns of art history.¹⁰¹

In his essay *Imperial Landscapes* (2002), W. T. J. Mitchell describes the rise of landscape art in Britain as parallel with the rise of the British Empire and the colonialism that ensued. His critique contributes to a reconfiguring of the significance of landscape in the context of social order rather than one based on appreciation and connoisseurship. This politicised approach challenges the premises of the traditional art historical accounts on landscape and its consistent passing over of social relations and implications of ownership and power. In this essay Mitchell provides an alternative reading of Clark’s introduction:

¹⁰¹ The logic of this is that Clark’s universal “we” excludes far many more people that he would assume it to include. It not only excludes the land workers represented, it also excludes the working artists. Since, I assume, the majority of the readers of his text are not aristocrats, it excludes them, myself, and possibly even Clark himself.

Clark's opening paragraph, for instance, may be read as *still true* if only its key terms are understood in an ironic sense: the "different structure" of nature is read as a symptom of alienation from the land; "reflective" and imaginary projection of moods into landscape is read as the dreamwork of ideology; the "rise and development" of landscape is read as a symptom of the rise and development of capitalism; the "harmony" sought in landscape is read as a compensation for and screening off of the actual violence perpetrated there.

(Mitchell, 2002, p.7)

In writing this Mitchell radically re-positions landscape away from Clark's belief in nature and places it in relation to ideology, capitalism and control of both the environment and the work force. The intention of Mitchell's critique, to peel back the mystification of art appreciation is sympathetic with Heidegger's attitudes towards Enframing and the landscape as *standing-reserve*. Mitchell, like Heidegger, intends to unconceal: in this case to unconceal the social implications of the representation of landscape within the practices of art history.

An issue with the representation of landscape is that to English eyes its representation seems so familiar. There is a danger that images of the English landscape, represented in the conventional mode (Constable, Gainsborough, Turner, Gilpin, et al), are thought of in terms of the self-expression of the artist and a desire for a return to somewhere quintessentially English; somewhere quiet where the viewer can contemplate and immerse themselves in the appearance of "nature." "Spirit of place" is a term often used to describe the mode of being of these representations. The mode of representation that has contributed to this convention is the picturesque. When I look at landscape images that I took maybe fifteen to twenty years ago for pleasure more than critique, the presence of the picturesque is a prominent influence (see fig 4.8). This did not occur through my knowledge of the theory picturesque since I had not then researched into its origins. It occurred due to the picturesque being a pervading influence on the representation of landscape in my upbringing.

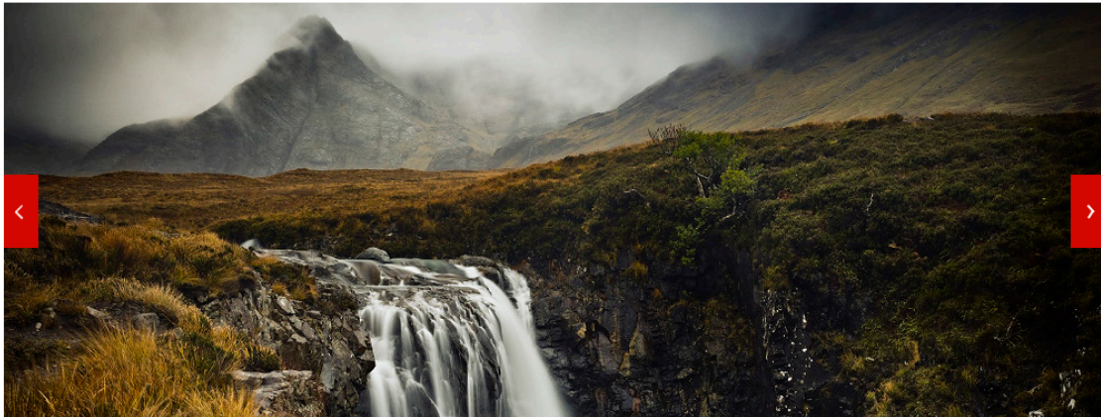


Fig 4.8 Philip Harris. *Waterfall near Malham Cove, Yorkshire*. 1996

A Critique of the Picturesque

The picturesque mode of landscape representation has persisted ever since its introduction into the English language in the middle of the 18th century, and is widely present in popular representations of the English landscape. To refer to Heidegger, it *endures*. As such it forms the conventional practices of landscape representation. It can be seen in the British Tourist Board, and countless other websites that promote visits to the countryside in the United Kingdom.¹⁰² It is present in the artworks sold in provincial art galleries situated in picturesque locations such as the Peak District and the Lake District. It is present in consumer photography magazines and to promote even the highest quality photographic equipment (fig 4.9 and 5.10).

¹⁰² *Picturesque* is a term used frequently by the British Tourist Board to describe tourist locations in the UK. Also see: *Pictures of England.com*, "Exploring the most Picturesque & Historic parts of England," that includes the older towns and villages of rural England.



Julian Calverley
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→ CONTINUE

Fig 4.9 Julian Crawey. 2011. Image used to promote Alpa cameras.



Fig 4.10 Martin Evening. Image used to promote workshop in digital workflow for Hasselblad.
2nd August 2011

The term *picturesque* is generally applied to any view of the countryside that looks remotely pleasant or conforms, however vaguely, to an historical aspect of how the English countryside should look. That Hoskins refers to the skies above the English landscape as those of

Gainsborough and Constable is testament to the enduring legacy of the picturesque.¹⁰³

Research into the genesis of the picturesque shows a more specific meaning that does not accord with popular usage. It was introduced to English aesthetic debate in the mid to late nineteenth century. Its chief exponent was the Reverend William Gilpin, author of *Observations on the River Wye and several parts of South Wales, etc. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770* (London 1782), and of *Three Essays; on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Picturesque Painting* (1792). Gilpin draws upon Edmund Burke's theory of beauty as expounded in *A philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757). For Burke, the sublime was related to terror, pain, darkness and obscurity, ugliness and the threat to life by a dangerous environment. His conception of beauty followed the classical line of smoothness, regularity, clarity and its positive contribution to the improvement to health and the mind. However, in his essay *On Picturesque Beauty* (1792),¹⁰⁴ Gilpin makes a distinction between the aesthetic experience of beauty as observed in nature, and beauty as it appears in a picture.

Disputes about beauty might perhaps be involved in less confusion, if distinction were established, which certainly exists, between such objects as are *beautiful*, and such as are *picturesque* – between those, which please the eye in their *natural state*; and those, which please from some quality, capable of being *illustrated in painting*.

(Gilpin, 1792, p.2)

He argues that the qualities of beauty observed by a viewer in the former do not transfer to the

¹⁰³ Constable was opposed to the invention and fantasy evident in picturesque works of art. Described as a Naturalist, he was, however, unable to entirely remove himself away from the influence of the picturesque. See Gombrich, 1988 [1959], p.267.

¹⁰⁴ This text is of particular significance to my project. It provided a way thinking about the roughness of road architecture and the surrounding landscape of roads that could provide an ironic interpretation of the picturesque. I read the essay in the Summer of 2008. I refer to the picturesque, in the terms described by Gilpin, in my accounts of making from then on.

qualities of beauty presented to the viewer in the later. In order to flesh out his argument he refers to Burke directly:

Enumerating the properties of beauty, [Burke] considers smoothness as the most essential. "A very considerable part of the effect of beauty" says he, "is owing to this quality: indeed the most considerable: for take any beautiful object, and give it a broken, and rugged surface, and however well-formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer. Whereas, let it want ever so many of the other constituents, if it want not this, it becomes more pleasing, than almost all the others without it." ...Thus then, we suppose, the matter stands with regard to beautiful objects in general. But in picturesque representation it seems somewhat odd, yet we shall perhaps find it equally true, that the reverse of this is the case; and that the ideas of neat and smooth, instead of being picturesque, in fact disqualify the object, in which they reside, from any pretensions to picturesque beauty – Nay farther, we do not scruple to assert, that roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful, and the picturesque; as it seems to be that particular quality, which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting.

(Gilpin, *ibid*, pp.5-6)

Gilpin maintains that his argument extends to genres such as portraiture and still life as well as landscape. It presents an important distinction between the bodily perception of an object, person or environment, and the requirements for making an artwork intended to excite the senses, or, as Gilpin puts it, to "amuse" the viewer. He provides an example where a work of Palladian architecture, observed in the landscape in its pristine physical state, is regarded as beautiful. However, when included in a painting it becomes merely a "formal object and ceases to please" (p.7). The method of transforming the architecture from its "natural" to picturesque beauty requires a hastened effect of the passage of time in the form of physical abuse:

Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chisel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a smooth building we must turn it into a rough ruin. No painter, who had the choice of the two objects, would hesitate a moment.

(Gilpin, *ibid*, p.7-8)

Perhaps indicating more than temporal influence, the presentation of classical architecture in the picturesque manner is also meant to refer to the ending of a previous civilization and its subsequent neglect by those that followed. Only then would it be cherished in its state of decay by the likes Gilpin who found aesthetic value in the appearing of these things according to the effects of “nature” and so almost to become works of nature:

But among all the objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of castles and abbeys. These are the richest legacies of art. They are consecrated by time; and almost deserve the veneration we pay to nature itself.

(Gilpin, 1792, p.46)

This roughness of appearance and the presence of the sublime in painting is predated by the landscape paintings of Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Claude Lorraine (1621-1682) and Salvator Rosa (1615 –1673) whose works informed the ideas that contributed to the picturesque.



Fig 4.11 Nicolas Poussin. *Landscape with Calm*. 1650-51. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig 4.12 Claude Lorrain. *Landscape with Country Dance*, a drawing. 1640-41 (Italy)

This is evident in the works of Gainsborough (1727-1788) and the then contemporary works by Cozens (1752-1797), Thomas Girtin (1775-1802), the drawings of Gilpin himself, and later, the naturalist paintings of Constable (1776-1837), where the presence of mythical narrative and the sublime had all but disappeared to appear later in the effusive works of J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851).



Fig 4.13 John Robert Cozens. *Lake scene with a mountainous distance; and trees on each side; a shepherd driving sheep down a roadway*. Watercolour. 1779



Fig 4.14 Thomas Girtin. *Interior of Lindisfarne Priory*. Watercolour. 1797



Fig 4.15 John Constable. *Dedham Vale*. Oil on canvas. 1803

As well as its influence on painting (and on the new trend for picturesque tourism following the publication of Gilpin's *River Wye* essay, *ibid*), the picturesque attitude also extended to garden design and estate management. The large scale projects of Lancelot *Capability* Brown, whose designs required the wholesale manipulation and manicuring of the grounds of country estates to produce controlled environments of neatness and order, was antithetical to picturesque garden design. This is clearly demonstrated in the following argument by Gilpin:

Again, why does an elegant piece of garden ground make not figure on canvas? The shape is pleasing; the combination of the objects, harmonious; and the winding of the walk in the very line of beauty. All this is true; but the *smoothness* of the whole, tho right, and as it should be in nature, offends in the picture. Turn the lawn into a piece of broken ground: plant rugged oaks instead of flowering shrubs: breake the edges of the walk: give it the rudeness of a road: mark it with wheel-tracks; and scatter around a few stones, and brushwood; in a word, instead of making thee whole *smooth*, make it *rough*; and you make it also *picturesque*. All the other ingredients of beauty it already possessed.

(Gilpin, 1792, p.8)

But there was more to the picturesque than the evoking of the passage of time and the unconstrained workings of nature. Ann Bermingham (2002) describes the role of the picturesque as political metaphor in her discussion on the attitude towards garden design of the Tory Whig and landowner, Richard Payne Knight. Bermingham presents two illustrations that accompanied Knight's lengthy poem *The Landscape* (1775).

The first illustration represented a garden in the Brownian mode that Knight disdained and regretted employing on his own estate, having dug up and destroyed his father's established picturesque scheme. The second illustration represents the garden in the picturesque mode that Knight intended to re-establish.

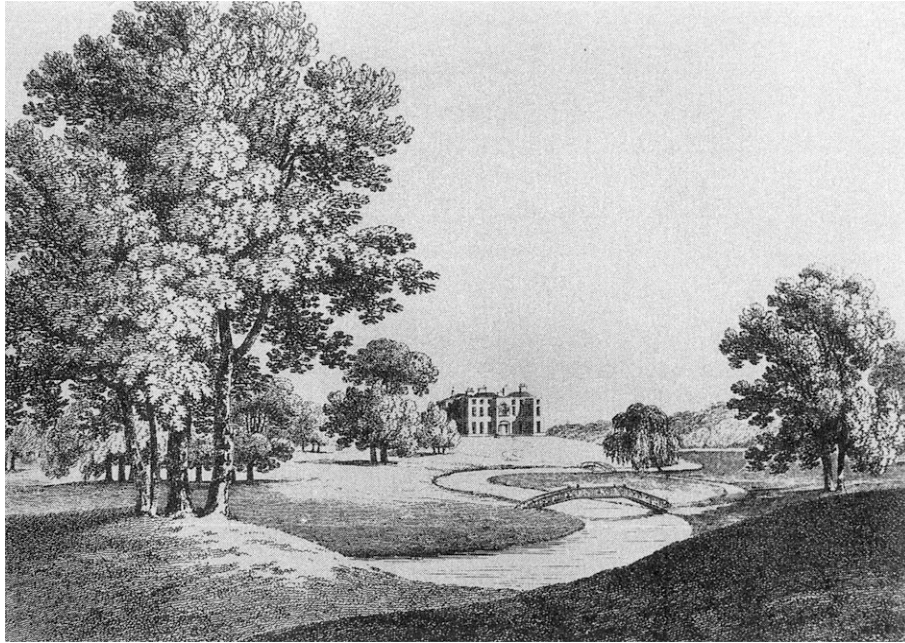


Fig 4.16 Thomas Hearn. *A Brownian Landscape Garden*, from Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape*. (London, 1975). Soft ground etching.



Fig 4.17 Thomas Hearn. *A Picturesque Landscape Garden*, from Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape*. (London, 1975). Soft ground etching.

Where the first landscape design follows the neat, flowing lines, the containment of water and precise placement of trees, shrubs and decorative features of Brown's landscape method, the second displays the picturesque method where natural forms are encouraged to grow freely, seemingly untamed by human intervention. The small and decorative Chinese style bridge in the image representing the Brownian mode has been replaced by a rustic wooden construction in the image representing the picturesque mode where an estate worker pauses to look upon the master's house. Even the house, of neo-classical design in the former, has been replaced in the later in a neo-gothic style, thus suggesting a very different ideology. Bermingham draws upon Knight's own words to explain the political significance of the shift in landscape aesthetics of the time:

Price's disgust with the revolution in taste exemplified by the Brownian garden's "leveling of all distinctions" must be seen as overdetermined by political events in France. Key to reforming the revolution in taste, if not politics, would be a new landscape aesthetic, one that in encoding liberty would now valorize age, custom, individuality, variety and rank. "A good landscape," Price claimed, "is that in which all the parts are free and unconstrained, but in which, though some are prominent and highly illuminated, and others in shade and retirement, some rough, and others more smooth and polished, yet they are all necessary to the beauty, energy, effect, and harmony on the whole. I do not see how good government can be more exactly defined." Against the leveling tendencies of the French Revolution, individual variety in landscape came to stand for British Liberty, a freedom presumably for the rich to be rich and the poor to be poor. (Bermingham, 2002, p.85)

Thus, since the picturesque landscape, like any other mode of design, is subject to intent (even if an intent to neglect), the gardens themselves are a representation of a social order, no more so than in the concealing of this design under the guise of "nature." Far from being related purely to aesthetic theory, the significance of the picturesque represents a means of representing property that is anti-republican (perhaps being an antithesis to Jacques-Louis David's neo-classicism) and inherently conservative.

A description of landscape representing social rather than natural order is described by the cultural geographer John Brinckerhoff Jackson. He presents an argument where landscape is “a synthetic space, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land” (Jackson, 1984, p.8). The characteristics of this superimposition are a signifier of the dominant attitudes of the time in which the landscape was created. Therefore, it would seem that landscape always has the potential for the unconcealing of its signification related to social structure and cultural beliefs.

In order to place the term *landscape* in its precise historical meaning, Jackson provides an etymology that reveals landscape as a place already under modification as opposed to occurring through natural evolution, thereby challenging Clark’s conflation of landscape with differentiated nature. The etymology begins with the Latin equivalent for land, *pagus*, meaning “a defined rural district” (p.5). The word *Land*, in English language

signified earth and soil...but a much earlier Gothic meaning was *plowed field*. Grimms monumental dictionary of the German language says that “land originally signified the plot of ground or the furrows of a field that were annually rotated” or redistributed...A small farm plot was land, and so was a sovereign territory like England or Scotland; any area with recognized boundaries was a land. Despite almost two thousand years of reinterpretation by geographers and poets and ecologists, land in American law remains stubbornly true to that ancient meaning: “any definite site regarded as a portion of the earth’s surface, and extending in both vertical directions as defined by law.”

(Jackson, 1984, p.6)

He continues by providing a discussion on the origins of the word *scape*, this being “essentially the same as *shape*, except that it once meant a composition of similar objects, as when we speak of fellowship or a membership” (Jackson, *ibid*, p.7), or in the Old English word “*sheaf*, a bundle or collection of similar stalks or plants” (*ibid*). Furthermore he states that other Old English and Anglo Saxon compounds also contained *scape*: *housescape* translates to what we now refer to as household. The use of the term *waterscape* in a tenth century English document

did not mean lake or pond but referred to “a system of pipes and drain and aqueducts serving residence and a mill” (ibid, p.6). These origins, he points out, have little to do with the aesthetic and emotional meanings bestowed upon it by art historians. Jackson’s research thus provides a very different meaning of the word *landscape* to that used by Clark. It also stands at odds to the picturesque tradition demonstrated in the texts of eighteenth century writers Richard Payne Knight (1794, 1805), Uvedale Price (1794), and William Gilpin, et al, who imposed the visual qualities of the picturesque as a representational theory upon the physical properties of actual environments.¹⁰⁵ Where Clark conflates landscape with nature, Jackson defines landscape as a product of human manipulation, ownership and national identity. His etymology arrives at the meaning of landscape as “a composition of man-made spaces on the land” (p.7). This is in stark contrast to Clark’s romanticist and idealised attitude towards landscape that contains natural things that “we” are differentiated from and entertained by. Far from being “surrounded with things which we have not made and which have a life and structure different from our own” (Clark, K., ibid, p.1), Jackson’s research suggests that many of these “natural” things are very much part of the life of human beings and which human beings control, manipulate and put to use. Where Clark states that these naturally occurring objects “have been objects of delight. We have created them in our imaginations to reflect our moods. And we have come to think of them as contributing to an idea which we have called nature” (Clark, K., ibid, p.1), they are, in Jackson’s scheme, related to work and manual labour, used to provide food and preserve life. It starts to become clear in these different attitudes that the social group related to Clark’s view of landscape is of a different order to that referred to in Jackson’s. As a result of his research he provides a statement that re-writes Clark’s assumption of how landscape is related to nature:

Landscape is not a natural feature of the environment but a synthetic space, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land, functioning and evolving not according to natural laws but to serve a community – for the collective character of the landscape is one thing that all generations and all points of view have agreed upon. A landscape is thus a space deliberately

¹⁰⁵ See William Gilpin, *Wye Valley and three essays*, 1794.

created to speed up or slow down the process of nature. As [Mircea] Eliade expresses it, it represents man taking upon himself the role of time.

(Jackson, 1984, p.8)

Jackson's statement challenges the idea that "We" are far from differentiated from the natural things that surround "us." Where "for centuries they have inspired us with curiosity and awe" (Clark, *ibid*), natural things have subsequently been subject to a progressive program of control, manipulation and consumption, accumulating during the latter half of the twentieth century (and currently) in a wholesale and aggressive using up of natural resources. It is to this type of event that Heidegger refers when he describes natural resources as Standing-Reserve and the scale of consumption that results from Enframing.¹⁰⁶ An example of a product that conforms to this degree of controlling and consumption of the standing-reserve is the road highway system.

3. Roads and Enframing

I have dedicated a portion of this research to roads and their appearance and effect on the landscape because this is a focus of my image making. That roads have a prominent presence in the landscape is nothing new. The roads laid by the Romans throughout Europe were statements of power and instruments of military strategy. As such they were highly visible elements in the environments in which they were built. Highways of a similar scale and purpose were built in ancient Persia, in South America by the pre-Columbian Incas and in seventeenth century France where the monarchy built "Royal" roads for use by the armed forces and the governing elite. All these examples of highways were prominent statements of the economic, political and military intentions of the ruling societies. The visibility of these highways was paramount to the communication of this message. Similar structures now pervade every

¹⁰⁶ However, a distinction that Heidegger makes is that Enframing occurs through the wholesale stripping away of natural resources by industry whereas the smaller peasant model of farming has not yet resulted in such a massive scale of using up.

modernised and modernising country, although the intention has shifted from a military strategy to a commercial one.

Jackson makes the observation that there are three characteristics that are common throughout all highways, irrespective of period and age:

These are, first, a vastness of scale, second, a disregard of local landscape features, topographical as well as man-made, and last, a persistent emphasis on military and commercial functions.

(Jackson, Ibid, p.23)

At least in the modern period the tendency to be more sympathetic to ecology and the existing environment is a much more recent attitude, more recent perhaps than Jackson was fully able to acknowledge at the time of writing his texts. As Jackson describes, the tendency to ride roughshod over the existing landscape (and its inhabitants), and to eradicate any features that stand in the way of progress is nothing new: it does not originate in the modern period as might be thought. Jackson shows how this attitude has a much older existence. He quotes Tertullian, writing in Italy in the third Century A.D., towards the end of the Roman Empire:

“All places are now accessible, all are well known, all open to commerce; most pleasant farms have obliterated all traces of what were once dreary and dangerous wastes; cultivated fields have subdued forests; flocks and herds have expelled wild beasts; sandy deserts are sown; rocks are planted; marshes drained; and where once were hardly solitary cottages, there are now large cities. No longer are [savage] islands dreaded, nor their rocky shores feared; everywhere are houses, and inhabitants, and settled government, and civilised life.”

(Jackson, Ibid, p.39)

Tertullian describes, with complete contentment (and much hubris), the eradication of the very objects that are now under protection or that are valued as part of the landscape. This passage emphasises the threat of nature to successful government and the need to control it, make

protection from it, or destroy it, but most of all to modify, manipulate and make use of it. The landscape features destroyed in Tertullian's statement are those that make up the familiar components of the picturesque landscape (with the exception of the desert) and Burke's theory of the sublime. It goes some way to proving a consistent human need to control land and eradicate elements from it that do not serve the ends of progress and establishment of a civilised way of life.

What is more, the meaning of the word *civilised* has implications for landscape. The word *civil* has its roots in the Latin word *civis*, meaning townsman. The meaning of civilisation is therefore centered upon urban living, the city, not the landscape or countryside. The word political has its roots in ancient Greek word *polis*, meaning state. The codes and practices of a just and good life were not written in the countryside but in the greater collection of people found in the city as is apparent in Plato's quip in the *Phaedrus* that "landscapes and trees have nothing to teach me, only people do" (Plato, 230d). Hence, when Jackson writes that human beings are political animals he does so meaning that human beings require the company of others and a structure to ways of living provided by the formal organisation of people in the form of a state. Highways were and are part of this structure and were/are built to allow rapid transport to significant centres of human dwelling since these were also the sites of government and commerce.¹⁰⁷ Their primary function is to link cities together. The fact that they pass through the spaces in between and allow access to smaller settlements that lie there is a by-product. That they allow access to the countryside is a consequence of our interest in it, and also recognition of its financial value to the tourist industry. The effect of this passing is that a highway dissects the landscape, dividing one space into two. The repetition of highway building further divides space into ever more numerous and smaller particles thereby defining the characteristic of the landscape as long as the highway remains in good service and is physically/visually significant. Hence to speak of the way a road "cuts through" the countryside is a fitting metaphor.

¹⁰⁷ They were also built to give quick access to the extremities of the realm.

Highway systems are clear indicators of human beings' control and domination over the environment. As such they are excellent examples of Enframing since they are a distinct *setting-upon* the landscape (there is nothing poetic about a modern dual carriageway or motorway). Along with other objects of excessive industrialisation they have been the subject of criticism due to their permanent, dominant and detrimental effect on landscape. Writing in the 1950s, exactly the same period that Heidegger wrote *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954), W. G. Hoskins makes the following damning comments of the excesses and brutality of an industrial abuse of landscape that bore no sense of responsibility for appearance, nature or history:

What else had happened in the immemorial landscape of the English countryside? Airfields have flayed it bare wherever there are level, well-drained stretches of land, above all in eastern England. Poor devastated Lincoln and Suffolk! And those long gentle lines of the dip-slope of the Cotswolds, those misty uplands of the sheep-grey oolite, how they have lent themselves to the villainous requirements of the new age! Over them drones, day after day, the obscene shape of the atom-bomber, laying a trail like a filthy slug upon Constable's and Gainsborough's sky. England of the Nissen hut, the 'pre-fab,' and the electric fence, of the high barbed wire around some unmentionable devilment; of England of the arterial by-pass, treeless and stinking of diesel oil, murderous with lorries...let us turn away and contemplate the past before all is lost to the vandals

(Hoskins, 1955, pp.253-4)

Hoskins did not bemoan the loss of a natural landscape, but rather he cherished the remains of past civilisations that could be traced within it, since, with careful observation and research, they told a story of the past. The problem with the arterial by-pass and other "unmentionable devilments" (Hoskins, *Ibid*), is that their presence in the landscape did not compliment and add to this history but erased all sign of whatever had remained from before. There is a parallel here between Heidegger's description of the peasant farmer, who tills his fields with care and respect for the soil, against the wholesale extraction of the earth that takes place in modern mining and

quarrying, or more pertinently, due its cost to the poetic significance of the landscape, the damming of the Rhine (see *The Question concerning Technology*, p.16).

In recent years the environmental management of roads and other significant building projects (e.g. industrial estates, housing estates, shopping centres, power stations, reservoirs) have been subject to revision. The surrounding environments of these structures now include trees and natural features in an attempt to soften the impact of these structures. An example of this is evident in the approach to environmental management of the Highways Agency (UK).

In 2004 the Highways Agency (UK) produced the Landscape Management Handbook (HA 108/04) for the design of roads and bridges. It states how:

Landscape management can be defined as a process that uses horticultural, forestry, arboricultural and ecological techniques to achieve certain planned outcomes for the wide range of features that make up our natural and man made landscape. Management of the roadside landscape can have a variety of aims: visual, safety and biodiversity; all underpinned by the principal of sustainability.

(Highways Agency, 2004, 2/1)

Use of the word “natural” here assumes rather a lot since the majority of the landscape in this country has been modified to a greater or lesser extent by human activity, the national road network playing a significant part in this. However, the handbook aims to provide ways of promoting “good practice” for the management of highway landscapes “that are highly visible” (ibid, 2/1). It concedes that the management of this landscape, what is referred as the highway “soft estate,” is a “relatively new area of expertise” (ibid, 2/1). In a passage titled *Landscape Integration and Regional Landscape Character*, the handbook states:

If not set out in any Landscape Route Strategies or Landscape Management Plans the landscape manager should usually try to ensure an overall function is integration is with local regional or subregional landscape types. These can cover urban as well as rural areas, and can involve

replicating species, or vegetation structure, eg, pollarded willows across Cambridgeshire Fens.

(Ibid, 3/2)

These ideas of sustainability and integration are key to this document. The use of these terms signifies that this process is more than simply a dressing up of the embankments and roundabouts with indiscriminate selections of shrubs, trees and flowers. The handbook stresses sustainability and integration in environmental, ecological and aesthetic terms. The selection of plants and materials should be carefully considered to allow a blending-in with the existing environment. It describes how local stone should be used for walls and the cladding of concrete structure, fences and barriers should be erected that have a pleasant appearance and good lines, existing species of trees and bushes should be selected to integrate with those that are already present (hence the pollarded willows). It identifies issues and “best practice” related to protected species of plants and animals. The handbook is indicative of the Government’s recent (if rather late) improvement in attitudes towards environmental responsibility. The intention of this new approach towards road landscape management is to “soften the appearance of the road and related structures” (ibid, 5/37) by blending the road into the surrounding area as if it belongs in it, to conceal the environmental, visual and auditory impact of the road as much as possible.

Furthermore, although the Highways Agency acknowledge the conflict between modern highways and the environments in which they are built, the agency also makes the highly significant observation that “for many people their main experience of the wider landscape of this country is from a moving vehicle” (Highways Agency, 2011), a claim that Hoskins would have shuddered at. To further facilitate this experience the Highways Agency advises that this can be achieved by maintaining the

position of scattered trees to allow glimpsed and framed views across to the wider landscapes and to link landscapes where scattered trees exist.

(Highways Agency, 2004, 5/31)

This method of the glimpsed and framed view between trees is a device employed in picturesque landscape art described here by Donald Crawford:

The picturesque essentially involves a scene, a locality or expanse that can be seen at one time (from one perspective) by a viewer – a view. This may constitute the viewer's entire visual field or it may be only a portion of the visual field isolated or framed for perceptual attention. A vista, for example, is a special type of scene – a distant view seen through a framing device, such as narrow trees, an opening in a hedgeway, an archway.

(Crawford, 1995, p.187)

The image below by Gilpin (fig 4.18) is a typical example of the picturesque organisation of space where the distant view of an idealised and invented landscape is framed between trees.



Fig 4.18 William Gilpin. *Landscape study*. No date given

The following photograph (fig 4.19) made by myself was taken from the side of the A50 dual carriageway. It represents what was once a gravel pit, and before that farm land, but has now been converted to fishing pools for the entertainment and leisure of the public.

The image is an attempt to replicate the method of spatial organisation and incorporation of traditional elements of the picturesque alongside the inclusion of modern objects that jar against it (e.g. the parked cars, power lines and pylons, the precise delineation of the pools and close cut grass). It also illustrates the measures taken by the Highways Agency to manage the “soft estate” in order to recreate what is essentially a picturesque convention of framing, glimpsing and view making.



Fig 4.19 Philip Harris. *Tree, Cables and Pools, A50*. 6th June 2008

The Highways Agency’s adoption of the picturesque aesthetic is a means to provide visual entertainment for road users. This implies that a road is not just a means of getting from A to B, it is also a gallery for a passive experience of landscape, as though the travelling viewer is static and the landscape moves by, passing the windows of the vehicles like an endless panorama. In contrast, Hoskins (1956) stated that for a landscape to be known it must be traversed on foot, through the paths, fields and villages that are present within it. The walker passes through the landscape, slowly, as opposed to passing by quickly in a road vehicle. The walker is *in* the landscape, and stands within it, with a full set of sensory experiences. The passing glimpse afforded from the seat of a moving vehicle is rather too linear, narrow and remote an experience

to provide any meaningful “experience of the wider landscape” (Highways Agency, 2011). But then the pace of Hoskins is too slow for many. The requirement to move and keep moving is a constant theme of Enframing. Reflecting upon this need for faster and more immediate means of leaving one place and arriving at another, Tim Ingold (2011) describes how modern metropolitan societies have

created transport systems that span the globe in a vast network of destination-to-destination connections. And they have converted travel from an experience of movement in which action and perception are intimately coupled into one of enforced immobility and sensory deprivation. The passenger, strapped in his seat, no longer has the ‘all around’ perception of a land that stretches without interruption from the ground beneath his feet to the horizon. It rather appears as so much scenery projected onto vertical screens, more or less distant, that seem to slide past one another due to the operation of parallax.

(Ingold, 2011, p.152)

The effect of travelling at speed inside a vehicle is to decouple the traveller from the landscape where both road and landscape merge into a purely visual, but otherwise sensorially deprived and static experience. The experience of landscape is merely entertainment during the period in which travel takes place. The travelling that Hoskins describes in walking is of a different order: it is primarily the means by which a landscape is experienced over a prolonged period of time, travelling at a much slower rate and where leaving from and arriving at a destination are secondary to *being in* the landscape.

In the terms described in Heidegger’s method, the blending of the road into the existing environment is a form of concealment. That the Highways Agency is making the environments around roads more palatable is surely progress. However, this practice belies the real problem of how the road system consumes the landscape in the first place. It covers up the issue that a road is a massive consuming of natural resources. A major road does this twice: first, in the large volume of material that is dug up from the earth for the construction of the road: second, in the land a road inhabits and the pre-existing landscape that it subdivides. A road, both in its

“hard” and the “soft estate,” is an object that sets-upon the landscape in the mode of Enframing. Since within this concealment lies the potential to unconceal, a road contains the potential to reveal the conditions of its being. By photographing landscape sites that are defined by the presence of roads and related industrial objects (e.g. gravel pits, industrial estates, bridges, underpasses) I aim to unconceal the modes of appearing that shape the English landscape.

Chapter 5

Thinking Photographing: Reflecting on the Causes Making

Following my discussion on methodology and on the precedents for the representation of landscape I now need to present and discuss the experiences and practices of photography with the aim of applying Martin Heidegger's description of Aristotle's Four Causes in his late essay *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954). As I have explained in Chapter 3, on philosophical methodology, Heidegger's theory extends far beyond a theory of making and addresses the wider implications of an unchecked technology for the future of human being. The culmination of Heidegger's essay is his suggestion that art may be able to save human being from the fall from grace brought upon by the challenging of Enframing. These later stages make enormous demands on the capacity of art and the ability of artists. The ability of an art work to unconceal Enframing, to lead the viewer to freedom, the open, to witness the danger and the saving power therein are claims that an artist cannot make for his or her own work. This can only occur through the reception of the work by an audience in the same way that Heidegger claims for the poetry of Holderlin. Furthermore, it is a topic that extends beyond my remit for this thesis. What I will focus upon is Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's Four Causes of Making since I believe that this presents a fundamental and graspable theoretical structure that I will use here as the basis of a theory for making photographs and a photographic body of work.

The focus of my discussion on making is placed upon a landscape project that I have provisionally titled *Roads*. I have been working on this project throughout the period of research. As such it provides an example of making from conception and development through to the production of images and the construction of a work, this being in the form of a book of images. I have set this chapter into six parts:

I. History of the Roads Project

In order to demonstrate the progression, scope and scale of the project I provide some background from its initial stages through to the changes and development of working methods and an established approach to image making. This sets the scene for the more recent experiences of image making that form the greater focus of the thesis.

II. Experiences of Photographing

Here I discuss my experiences of photographing, drawing upon selected extracts from voice recordings that I made during the activity of photographing. These recordings provide evidence of the activities and thought processes that I undergo when photographing. A finding of this discussion is that the voice recordings demonstrate a very narrow set of concerns rather than the depths of experience of image making that I expected them to present.

III. Reflecting on Photographing

Following my findings in the above section I need to find a way to flesh out the significance of making in a more productive way. To do this I provide a reflective interpretation of the act of photographing where I attempt to engage with and apply the four causes in relation to the stage of making where photographs are “taken.” My intention is to draw out the significance of this defining part of the making process. Surprisingly I find that my spoken accounts that I recorded and annotated do not yield the information that I was expecting that they would. Instead of an account of an engaged experience of the environment the records show an intense concentration with the technical and practical concerns that contribute to the decision to take a photograph. What this seems to demonstrate is that photographing does not draw upon an embedded experience of the environment, but stands remote to it. Where I find myself disappointed by my findings I also need to come to terms with them and assess them in terms of the methodology of the four causes and how such a practice can result in unconcealment in the mode of *poéisis*.

IV. Making after Taking

In this section I provide an account of the further stages of making that take place after the photographs have been taken. These later stages, collectively termed post-production, are required to prepare the image for reproduction. In the case of my practice this includes scanning the negative to make a high-resolution image file, adjustments to the geometry of the image, colour correction and dust removal. I also discuss the precedents set by the work of other image makers, in relation to the *aspecting* (*eidos*) of work, that act as standards that I aspire to and inform how I prepare my own images. I argue that the purpose of post-production is to retrieve the optical integrity of the image. The processes themselves should remain invisible.

V. Building a Work

Here I provide an account of the editing process whereby a number of images have been selected and sequenced for presentation. I discuss the books of other image makers as examples of good practice and making of works that are coherent in their presentation and meaning. I provide accounts of my own attempts to select and present images, and the construction of a work in the form of a book. Here I initially encounter failure and work towards negotiating an eventual effectiveness in producing a work that I think has potential to unconceal the Enframing of a landscape.

The chapter concludes with an evaluation of how the Four Causes, and other aspects of Heidegger's theory, contribute to a theory of making and if any aspects of making escape its scope. An apparent aspect that escapes the theory is the perceived risk of failure to produce a work that seems coherent or significant. This sense of doubt and uncertainty regarding the making of work appears in the interviews and conversations with photographers that I discuss in Chapter 2. I provide a reassessment of the work, how the maker is sometimes too familiar with the work to make effective judgements, and a discussion of how this relates to the four causes and unconcealment in the mode of *poiésis*. I conclude the thesis with a reflection upon how my application of Heidegger's philosophical methods in *The Question Concerning Technology* has contributed to a new theory of making photographic art works.

I. History of the *Roads* Project

The photographic project that I am basing my thesis upon belongs to the genre of landscape. I have conceived of it as a project based on how landscape is defined by roads. It is the culmination of around 7 years of exploring the environment where South Derbyshire meets Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire, concentrating on a stretch of the A50 dual carriageway where it meets Junction 24a of the M1 motorway. It was not the sole project that I undertook during the period of research. Other projects were initiated but remain uncompleted and unresolved. One project (late 2009) involved the documentation of the homes of two elder neighbours whose old pre-fabricated houses were due for demolition to be replaced by new houses. The destruction of an intimate domestic space and displacement to another space, requiring attempts to create new domestic intimacy, interested me, and still does. This project occupied me for around 3 months but remains incomplete. I may yet return to it. Another project involves photographing a landscape from one position at different times of the year. I have since lost interest in this project and I do not know if I will return to it or not. I have made images in Prague (2007) and Paris (2008) with a view to making works in the form of books, but these also remain uncompleted. These projects will not contribute to the thesis because my aim is to provide a coherent account of the development and resolution of one body of work, this being the *Roads* project I discuss in detail in this chapter. My point in noting these other projects is that my experience of making during the research has not consisted of a neat and singular creative passage. Not have I made images solely within the genre of landscape. There are plenty of loose threads, blind alleys and half-baked ideas amongst all the boxes and files of negatives, digital image files and prints that constitute my work as a photographer. The projects I refer to above might well have been the focus of this thesis if it were not for whatever circumstances prevented or discouraged the further development of them.

Furthermore, without some explanation of how the *Roads* project has evolved, the reader might assume that the thesis is based upon a project that consists of only a handful of shoots. This is not the case. Whilst the appendix to the thesis includes records of shoots from 2008 onwards, a

brief outline of the history of the landscape project, prior to 2008, might help to indicate scale, scope, directions and development of the project.

I started what has evolved into the Roads project in 2004. During the early period of the project my interest was drawn towards the areas of land that lay between roads, farmland and residential areas in the area where South Derbyshire meets Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. I thought of these spaces as non-scapes; spaces that existed in between other places, that seem to be present in the landscape to be passed through rather than having a particular identity, location or purpose. I also became aware of how much of this area where these three counties meet was in the process of being transformed from arable farmland and pasture to open quarries where the ground was dug up for gravel extraction (see Fig 5. 5, 5.6 and 5.10). Most of the gravel extracted from these sites is used for the construction of roads. After being exhausted of the required resources the holes are filled with water and undergo an assisted return to a “natural” state. Several have been extensively re-landscaped to make fishing pools or nature reserves (see Fig 5.13, 5.19). This theme of extraction, transformation and re-presentation of the landscape is a consistent theme throughout the project.

The early images (2004-2007), as I look at them now, lack a coherent visual method. They show evidence of experimentation but also an unresolved and somewhat scattered approach to describing landscape. They show how I was feeling my way around methods of description and signification, but without achieving adequate coherence between images. For example Fig 5.1 makes use of lowering the lens on a large format view camera to present the foreground but also keeping vertical features parallel. It also employs use of deep focus. The three-frame work below it (Fig 5.2) demonstrates use of a shallow depth to provide a staggered and selective photographic gaze that moves through an environment. I think that this approach has potential for further exploration (see Fig 5.3 and 5.4), but it does not fall within the intended scope of the current body of work. The presence of structures that frame the landscape has also appeared throughout the project, emphasising the imposition of synthetic structures on the environment that allow us passage through it. This is evident in Fig 5.6 and Fig 5.7.



Fig 5.1 Philip Harris. *Gravel pits near the A50 (Junction1), Leicestershire. March 2004*



Fig 5.2 Philip Harris. *Embankment near the A50 (Junction1), Leicestershire. March 2004*



Fig 5.3 Philip Harris. *The Edge of a Field, Shardlow, South Derbyshire*. Summer 2004



Fig 5.4 Philip Harris. *A Gap in the Wall: Gravel Pits by the Trent-Mersey Canal, South Derbyshire*.
22nd February 2005.



Fig 5.5 Philip Harris. *Gravel Pits by the Trent-Mersey Canal, South Derbyshire*. 22nd February 2005



Fig 5.6 Philip Harris. *White frame, near the A50, Junction 1, Leicestershire.* 5th April 2005.



Fig 5.7 Philip Harris. *Under the A50, Leicestershire.* 6th April 2005.

At this point a note needs to be made on the use of media. Where images made from 2004 to 2006 were made using colour negative and tonal film media alternately, from 2007 to 2009 I used tonal media extensively since I thought that the hands-on aspect of darkroom practice could be an important component of a theory of making. This was re-assessed during the Summer of 2009. My problem was that it seemed to belong, too much, to practices that Victor Burgin referred to as “Romantic Modernism” (1982). I was also aware that I was using tonal media out of comfort and familiarity rather than making a judgement based on critical awareness. Examples are several images taken on the A38 dual carriageway, near the Toyota plant (see fig 5.8 and fig 5.9).



Fig 5.8 Philip Harris. *Hidden House, A38/A50 roundabout*. Derbyshire. 21st July 2008



Fig 5.9 Philip Harris. *Lorries and House, A38, near Derby*. 21st July 2008

Even though I think they are successful images in that they present circumstances between objects that seem to sit in conflict with each other, being tonal they will not contribute to the project unless I reshoot them.

I knew that a decision to use either colour or tonal media needed to be made if the project was going to progress and a coherence between images was to be achieved. For some shoots I used both colour and tonal media in order to make an assessment (see fig 5.10 and fig 5.11). I also used digital SLR camera, which did not achieve the quality of film media, even if the digital workflow was far more time efficient than using film. Colour now seemed too significant in relation to the things I was photographing. Following this I made the decision to use colour negative film exclusively for the project. Furthermore, it seemed to make no sense to keep working in tone when the majority of contemporary image makers, whose work was an influence on my own, made colour images (e.g. Andreas Gursky, Thomas Ruff, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Edgar Martins, Simon Roberts). I look back on these tonal images that I made during this period and wish that I had made this decision sooner.



Fig 5.10 *Trees and Chimneys (first image) near Derby Commercial Park, Derby. 24th May 2009*



Fig 5.11 *Trees and Chimneys (second image), near Derby Commercial Park, Derby. 24th May 2009*

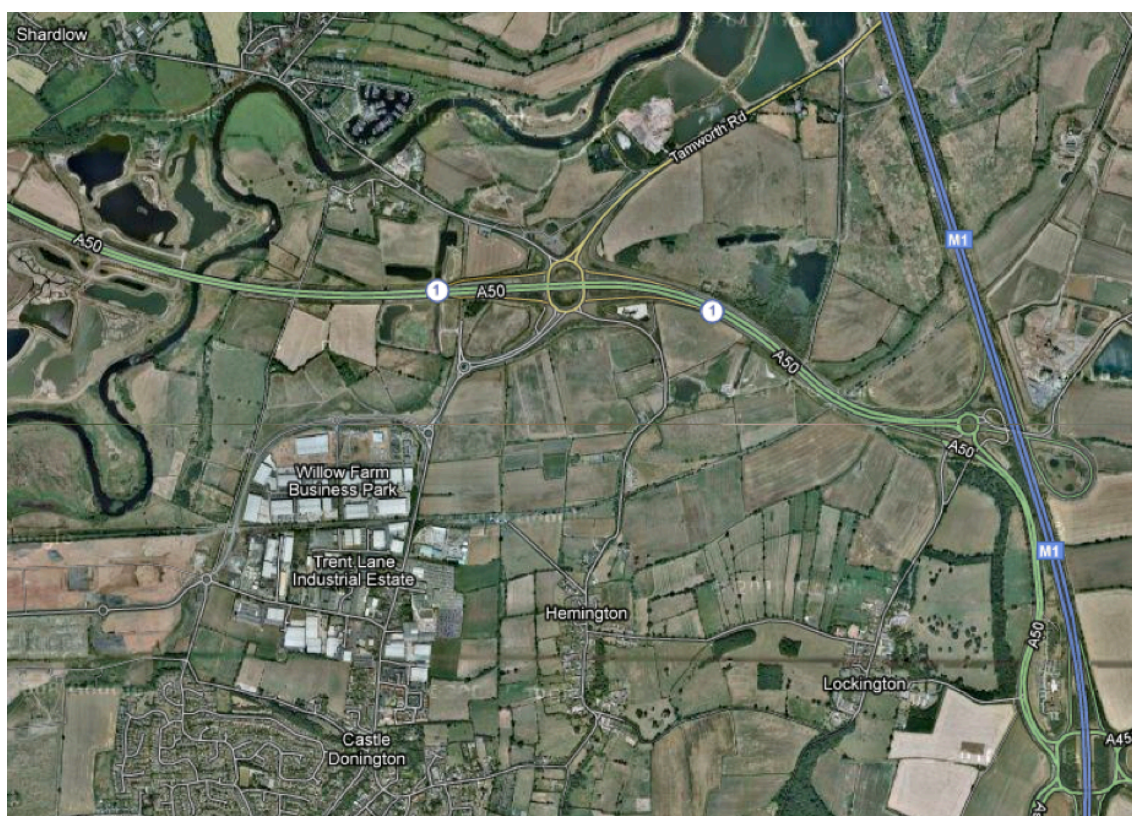


Fig 5.12 Map of the area around the A50 / M1 Junction 24. Google Maps, 2011.

During mid-2009 I decided to limit the scope of the project to the environment around the A50, near junction 24 of the M1 (see fig 5.12) since it was an area that combined the presence of the picturesque, the rural, wasteland, the commercial and brutal concrete architecture. In order to present a detailed and coherent account of making I have limited my following discussion on making to a few selected examples of photographing that fall within this geographical area. However, the images that I discuss here are but a fragment of the total number images that I have taken for this project since then. The appendix that accompanies the thesis goes some way to presenting a more extensive range but it excludes images that were not taken in this area even though they were significant experiences in the development of my approach to photographing landscape.

Experiences of Photographing

I will start with two images that I made on the 6th June 2008 (fig 5.13 and 5.14). I regard these images, especially the image of the two pools with the two cars, as contributing to a more clearly defined set of ideas for my project. They have been catalysts for the way I approached subsequent image making. There is no voice recording for these two images. They were made on the way home from work where I took advantage of the moment to make them. The first image of the pools (fig 5.13) had been in my mind for some time and was the reason why I stopped to photograph. I had driven past this site many times and had often thought how it presented a conflict between the picturesque idea of landscape and an environment that was synthetic, managed and punctuated by pylons and power lines. The second image (fig 5.14) was made speculatively and intuitively in response to the first image. It repeats the presence of trees and in addition includes a fragment of a pylon and the rear of a road sign at close quarters. It is almost as if the camera had been turned by ninety degrees anti-clockwise from the first image.



Fig 5.13 Philip Harris. *Pools, Cars and Cables, A50*. 6th June 2008



Fig 5.14 Philip Harris, *Sign, Trees and Pylon, A50*. 6th June 2008

Below is a reflective response that I wrote after taking these images. It establishes the theme of the project and my interpretation of this environment:

These two images touch on themes that I am in the process of working through, or fumbling through, themes such as the synthetic use of natural form and the process of 're-naturalising' the landscape after quarrying and road building: the idea of an invented landscape, one that is re-formed around industrial activities, to mask and screen the actions and structures that offend the eye and sensibility of the passing public [including myself]. The image of the fishing pools shows a place that has been created over pits dug for gravel extraction, making a new environment based on leisure rather than returning the environment to its previous state [for cereal farming]. This environment has not been re-naturalised (to the exclusion of people) but is a site that has been newly allocated for leisure, by way of an apology for carving up and disturbing a place that previously would have had the appearance of tranquility, of a pastoral environment. In fact all this land is flood land, used for farming (cereals and livestock). The imposition of large areas of water under the guise of some kind of repair exercise and public exhibition of corporate responsibility could cause problems when heavy rain falls and has nowhere to drain into. This is part of the politics of environment. The visual masking of industrial activity in the rural environment is something that underpins my work. It contradicts the idea of the pastoral and the picturesque. It jars against it.

(Reflective Account for 30th June 2008, Appendix 1.2, pp.372)

The statement above includes aspects that run through the project – masking and concealing, things that jar against each other or ideas, the politics of landscape (i.e. ownership, access and management), and modes of its representation (i.e. the pastoral and picturesque), that conflict with appearance of that landscape. For me these two images point towards the use and presentation of landscape as a practice of concealment where, in the case of the image of the pools, the effect of quarrying on the landscape is masked by building the pools for leisure activity.

These two images informed my approach for the next shoot that took place on the 30th June 2008 in the same area. This particular shoot is important to the project because I spent several

hours there, wandering and wondering, weighing up the environment and trying out views and combinations of objects and positions. During this shoot I made ten exposures on film using a large format camera. I will concentrate on the first two images that I made on the 30th June since these images, with the relevant voice recordings, present a range of issues related to image making that tends to be repeated in other images.

Before I start to make photographs I will often make a pre-shoot voice recording where I briefly discuss my plans for the shoot. The following is an annotation of the pre-shoot recording for 30th June 2008:

I'm going to do some photographing, 30th June, beautiful, bright summers day, 5.00pm.

I'm going to photograph the underpass at [junction] 24. There's loads of graffiti on the walls and I just want to play around with the idea of the landscape and the brutality of the architecture and the freeform of the...the human expression of the graffiti. I've been there before, photographed on black and white before, with the 67 camera, playing around with framing. I might do a similar thing but we'll see. The other thing I want to do is photograph a view down towards Donington, quite a picturesque view, again, but with electric cables and pylons going across. And also possibly, a couple of pools as well, caused by the quarrying.

(30th June 2008, A50/M1 J24, Appendix 1.1, p.368)

This pre-shoot statement indicates a setting up, in advance of photographing, of the themes, ideas, methods and objects that are related to the project up to this point. That I want to “play around with the idea of landscape” indicates an as yet unresolved drawing together of elements in this environment and my conception of landscape. It reflects the “working through, or fumbling through” that I describe in relation to the image of the pools. From what I say in the above recording, my idea of a landscape ideal – that I describe variously as the bucolic, the pastoral and the picturesque - is challenged by the presence of what I describe as the “brutal” structures of road architecture and the urban marks of graffiti, both of which are out of place in ideal representations of countryside landscape. In the context of the images that I intend to make, the sense of these personal and unsanctioned, urban marks by (predominantly) young men, is set

against the impersonal, monumental concrete structures of the road that are the official products of government.

This notion that I “play” with combinations of objects and methods of representation that appear to “jar against,” or oppose each other, appears throughout the project. The pre-shoot recording is a setting up that clarifies, for myself, the location, ideas and themes for photographing. It also suggests that many of the decisions related to image making, such as objects, ideas and theme, are established prior to photographing. However, to “play around” also signifies that I leave myself open to opportunities that were not expected or preconceived. However, play does not mean the willful invention and adoption of anything that comes to mind since play, as in “playing a game,” requires parameters, conventions and rules. Play occurs within limits and these limits need to be understood to play well. My parameters refer to the representation of landscape and the challenges to these conventions that industry and commerce place upon it. The first image of this shoot is such an example (fig 5.15). The following account is a reflection upon this image written after it was taken:



Fig 5.15 Philip Harris. *Pylon, Trees and Road, A50*. 30th June 2008

There is no real discussion about this in the voice recordings but in some notes that I wrote shortly after taking this photograph I wrote “to my right is a view that makes me stop”...There was something in the scene that arrested me, that presented a set of relationships between things that struck me as relevant, somehow, to this evolving and as yet unformed theme of roads and landscape. This image is key to this work. It has something about it that seems fundamental to my outlook on the work.

(ibid)

It signifies an experience where, for whatever reason, certain objects are observed suddenly and unexpectedly, in certain relationships, that appear, strikingly, as intriguing and engaging in relation to the theme. This image contains none of the features that I refer to in my pre-shoot statement, but it does include objects that oppose one another and that appeared in previous images of 6th June 2008 (e.g. road signs, pylons and trees). In being arrested by this view, my perception of the environment as a bodily experience appears as a fundamental part of image making that cannot be fully accounted for in advance. The voice recording that I made at the close of making this image is as follows:

I've just photographed this big pylon which is foregrounded by this fenced off copse of trees, that acts as a screen against the road, and behind that you've got the road with various signs. I started off putting the pylon right bang in the middle, slightly raising the height to get a really nice loop of the cable at the top...but then I moved it. I used a bit of shift on the back because I didn't like the way it [the frame of the camera] was cutting out one of the signs on the road, so, I kind of think that makes a better image really, because instead of having this big satanic thing in the middle, its shifted to one side...not quite by a third but definitely off-bias, and it kind of got me thinking about the way I'm going to photograph the rest of this stuff.

(ibid)

Here, I describe the process of organising the image in relation to the collection of objects in view, but nowhere in my account do I discuss what these objects signify. I describe how I have moved the back of the camera to ensure that both road signs appear to either side of the image. In order to signify *sign* in the image I only need one, not two. Therefore there must be other

reasons for arranging the image other than the process of including an object that signifies. There is something in the visual scheme of the image, rather than in the objects themselves, that is significant. I talk about displacing the pylon from the middle of the frame to an off centre position – I call this an “off bias” position. I think I use the phrase “off bias” inaccurately, or at least vaguely.¹⁰⁸ What I mean is that the position of the pylon is biased to one side rather than in the dead centre of the frame. Bias means to hold a personal belief that colours unprejudiced judgement. It also means to weight on one side or where something is out of line or slanting. The fact that I originally placed the pylon in the middle suggests an initial bias towards the pylon as the dominant feature of the image. In the process of organising the image I move the pylon from this central position to the side to reduce its dominance. Instead, the central position of the image lies between the two trees that rise up in front of the pylon, partly obscuring it. The aim then is to organise an image that reflects the intentional, institutional arrangement of “brutal” industrial objects (i.e. the pylon and power lines, road signs, street lamps, the horizontal line of a road barrier), to stress the ordering of road architecture that dominates this environment. I use the central position of the image in a metaphorical way, to re-centre the natural, loose and fluid forms of trees over the synthetic and brute structure of the road and pylon.¹⁰⁹ I also note that I state how the pylon is off centre “not quite by a third.” Here I refer to a convention of image making known as the “rule of thirds” (a simplistic alternative to the Golden Rule). I do not want to apply it. I do not want this image to incorporate that simplistic mode of placement that loosely refers to classical methods of composition. I notice when I look at this image how the grass and the shape of the trees and bushes form a vaguely oval shape that stands against the rectilinear structures of road architecture. The appearance of the trees contrasts with the rigid structure of the pylon and the ordering of the road, and so loosely refer to pastoral and picturesque styles of

¹⁰⁸ My voice recordings are full of linguistic mistakes and vernacular language. I hope the reader will be sympathetic to my attempts at interpreting the meanings of these mistakes. This is inevitable since I am trying to talk freely about the process of making. What is also inevitable, unfortunately, is that this talking interrupts and interferes with making.

¹⁰⁹ Even if these trees have been intentionally planted by the Highways Agency as part of their practices of integration of the “soft estate” into the wider landscape.

painting, even if the composition is not of the pastoral or picturesque type, (i.e. the view is not framed by trees at each side of the image and the line of the road). In this image the trees are the central point of the image that are set against by the pylon, power lines and road. As I indicate at the end of this voice recording, this image contributes to the setting-up of how I conceived of the further images I made on this day. Therefore, the experience of making an image, and how I think this image signifies, informs the way I will describe the landscape in subsequent images.

However, these reflections present a problem. The comments that I have made above, when I reflect upon photographing, are not in evidence in the voice recordings that I made when I was photographing. I draw out the significance of my decisions and my inclusion and placement of these objects in the process of reflection (the process I am involved in as I write this) when both the image and the annotation of the voice recording are before me. I do not reflect on this when I am photographing since the image is not yet visible to me. But to what extent does this reflection relate to the actual experience of making? Are these reflections authentic to the experience of photographing? My pre-shoot statement sets out a range of themes and objects that I will attend to. This image is only partly related to this. I deviate from the plan in the first shot of the day. As is evident in my voice recording taken at the close of making the image I only discuss the spatial organisation of the image through the camera frame. I do not discuss the significance of these objects and the relationship that I find between them (since my attention was arrested *by* this view it is not so much that the relationship between these objects was much found by me but that it was given to me). The recording shows that I am engaged with formal concerns related to the selection and arrangement of these objects within the image frame of the camera. Nevertheless in arranging the image there are traces where I seem to be aware of how these objects signify; why else would I move the pylon from the centre to the side? But this does not come to the surface in my voice recording. It is as though the conceptual themes related to image making are suppressed during the experience of photographing. This is illustrated in more detail in the voice recording for the second image of the day (fig 5.16):

I've come down the lane a little bit, the cycle path, and I'm again I'm photographing these willows, and they're moving in the breeze, which is really really nice, and its beautiful sunlight with...these lovely cornfields and old oaks and that kind of stuff, and these bloody great big pylons... I'm just looking down the road, and the way you've got these very picturesque trees, arching over with this brutal architecture in the background...I'm looking at this view now, which is a very, very simple view of these pylons obscured by these trees. It would be the simplest thing to put the pylon right in the middle of the frame, but I don't think I want to do that. I want to kind of obscure it a little bit so its there but its also partly hidden. It might be a little bit too obscure but I don't think so. I think this could be quite an interesting image.

(ibid)



Fig 5.16 Philip Harris. *Willows and Pylon, below the A50*. 30th June 2008

This provides evidence of how the arrangement of the first image has influenced the second image. The representational mode of the picturesque is present with the framing of a glimpsed view between trees in the foreground. The obscuring of a pylon by these trees, its setting against the picturesque and its setting to one side, is carried over from the previous image (pylons also featured in both images of 6th June 2008). The recording continues:

[I'm] raising the lens to push the horizon to the bottom third. I might even start using the 210. I'm just thinking maybe the 150 is encompassing quite a lot which might make the pylon a bit too small in the frame. On the other hand that might be quite nice, it might be quite a good thing to do. I also thought about using the slightly wide 135 as well, I'm not sure about that, the image [of the pylon] is going to be smaller rather than larger. The quality of light is great, I'm shooting very slightly into the light and I'm shaded by trees, but there's a fair bit of side light and some excellent shadow, and lovely light coming through the trees themselves, it really does lend itself to that picturesque landscape beauty. I just hope that it's understood through what I'm doing. So now what I'll do is start measuring things up a bit, and then I might actually put the 210 [mm lens] on, just see what I can see, and also, the thing about the 210 is that you have very little depth and I think I might be struggling, I think I might be throwing things out that I actually want in [focus], though I can stop down to f45, so we might be ok, I'm not sure though because these trees are probably no more than five meters away, even on f45 I might be struggling a little bit....f45?...we'll see...I think I might stick with the 150 because I'm a little more familiar with it and it represents a really nice field of view. I've got some really nice arching of the trees coming across the frame into the diagonals [the corners of the frame?]. Very picturesque, very Gainsborough, or even maybe, erm, Claude. I'm just playing around with those ideas, those conceptions, and if I look at the background, I've even got the spire of a church between the pylons which again adds to that picturesque quality.¹¹⁰

(ibid)

Here I am pulling together a selection of objects within the frame of the camera. My recording demonstrates how I want these qualities of visual pleasure to be present in the image. I want them to be a dominant feature of the image that, upon close inspection, is set against¹¹¹ by the

¹¹⁰ Again I think I am making a mistake with terminology. Where I refer to picturesque it would be more appropriate to refer to the pastoral. At this stage of the project I assumed the meaning of picturesque in its more common usage. It was not until a month or so after this shoot that I read Gilpin's essay *On Picturesque Beauty* (1792), thereby learning of a more precise meaning of the word.

¹¹¹ I use "setting against" I could use Heidegger's "setting-upon" in terms of the use landscape as something that is subject to Enframing, but I am reluctant as this stage to pluck such a term out of his text without further qualification. However, in using the term "setting against" I have intended to set one group of objects against another, or, to conceal one group of objects with others, with a view to what I can only

presence of a pylon, an object that opposes the idea of beauty bestowed upon natural objects. Following the method of the previous image I place the pylon to one side to “partly hide” it. Amongst this discussion I consider what I think is the best equipment to use (i.e. lens) to achieve the visual qualities that I talk about. The lens is part of the means by which I describe these objects (with camera, film and tripod). It provides a specific field of view. It can be used to provide seamless clarity throughout the image (hyper focus using a small aperture) or to pick out objects as sharp at a certain distance (selective focus using a wide aperture) and throw other objects out of focus. Equipment leaves its own signature on the work, just as for Heidegger’s silversmith, certain tools will provide certain finishes to the silver or will be used to form the silver into certain shapes. In the aspecting (*eidōs*) of the chalice where prior examples of chalices, and the ideal of chalice, predate any making of a chalice, so do the tools used and methods employed by the silversmith have their precedents. These tools are selected within an understanding acquired through specialist training and an intimate understanding of the properties of silver. Although Heidegger does not discuss equipment in any depth in his essay and neither does Aristotle in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, I will make the assertion that where the raw material out of which the chalice is made predates the silversmith, so too does the equipment and the methods of making.¹¹² This is inevitable since the history of silversmithing necessarily predates the actual practice of silversmithing. Therefore, the type of artefact that is made is entwined within the practices (equipment and methods) that produces the type of artefact. Since, following Heidegger’s account of the four causes, the aspecting (*eidōs*) or appearing of the artefact is in debt to the materials it is made out of, it will also be in debt to the equipment and methods it is made with.

describe as a gradual concealing, where the partly concealed object pokes through. Even here I am evoking aspects of Heidegger’s thoughts that appear his essay *On The Origin of Art* (1934) where the earth juts through the world of the art work. It seems that I cannot apply philosophical method discreetly to making without it also influencing my attitudes towards the things I photograph and how I conceive of those things and their significance in cultural.

¹¹² See Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, 1934

This difference between the appearance of materials and equipment might be indicated in language. Where I might say that something has been made *of* something, I refer to the materials. Where I say it has been made *with* something, I refer to the equipment used to make it. Both infer use even if the debt is of a different order. I do not say that I make a photograph *of* the camera or *of* film, even if the qualities of the camera and film are evident. I will say that I have made a photograph with a camera and with film. I will say that I have made a photograph of something and (some of) the visual qualities of that something will be present in the image just as the qualities of silver are present in the aspect of the chalice. This is borne out in my voice recordings where I note the objects that have particular significance to me and I describe how I use the camera to represent these things to make a photograph. I make photographs of things with a camera. In the terms that I describe it here, the materials of a photograph are not the physical support of the film that the things are transcribed onto by the lens of the camera, or the paper that an image is printed onto (or even the pixels of a digital camera), since these things are equipment. Therefore, I will make a tentative claim that the matter (*hyle*) out which I make my photographs are the things in the world that lend themselves to their representation in the image.

This represents a step towards understanding how the four causes can be applied to photographing. However, my voice recordings represent an intense concentration on the practice of photographing to the exclusion of almost all other concerns. I make reference to the things that signify, but I do not engage in a discussion on how they signify or reflect in detail on this significance. I seem to set aside all other thought processes apart from decisions on the inclusion of things, their placement and controlling the camera and lens. To use a vernacular term, I am in “the zone” of the photographic experience where I approach photographing with an almost blinkered view to the themes, ideas and influences that inform the project, and also to other perceptual stimuli beyond those of the arranging the image on the screen of the camera. In the first few pages of Chapter 3, on the philosophical method, I write about the photographic experience in terms of awareness of the wider environment and other sensory perceptions. I think now that this is not quite the case. I have assumed this in advance of my enquiry into

making. When I am photographing I am so intensely concentrating on drawing together the objects in the image and on the method of photographing that all these additional noises, smells and tactile feelings are pushed back in my mind. The practice of photographing becomes dominant as the activity to which I dedicate my intended perceptual field. I hear the traffic behind me as I feel the ground beneath my feet but they are not the centre of my attention. I do not enquire into them in the way that I enquire into the appearing of the things that I photograph. I am, to use another vernacular phrase, “in a world of my own.” The themes and ideas that inform photographing are present during the act of photographing but they have a passive presence in the act of photographing, as if I have placed them to one side or shut them away in a drawer. Hence, when I photograph, my voice recordings provide a record of technical decisions, of the visibility of the things that I am including in the image, their placement and formal relationship to one another. Rarely do I discuss the significance of these objects in any detail. Where the act of photographing is a drawing together of things, I see a possibility for it being an *aspecting* (*eidos*) of making, but it can only be a partial *aspecting* since, according to my reflection above, it seems incomplete; the act of photographing, as a drawing together of objects into the visual field of an image does not provide a proper comprehending of the significance of either these objects or the mode of their representation. This seems apparent in other voice recordings I have made when photographing.

The following refers to an image (fig 5.17) made on the 10th October 2010, within close proximity to the other images discussed here:

[I'm] Photographing just off the A50, half a mile from J24. Photographing near where I've shot the pylons several times and I'm photographing off the road that leads to Kegworth and Lockington. I'm photographing a view that I've been meaning to come back to for a long time that I photographed about a year ago in summer. It's of a beaten up ash tree with a pylon behind it, the road itself, some bollards and a long metal safety barrier. So here I'm playing off the industrial appearance of the street lights, the road, the metal barrier, and the pylon of course, the pylon is a recurrent theme, against the appearance of this knackered old, wizened old ash and also the

picturesque quality of the Autumn leaves. I want to retain that hardened edge of the industry [industrial]. I don't want it looking to cute. It's not a bad shot. It's ok.

(10th October 2010, A50, near J24. Appendix 1.10, p.415)



Fig 5.17 Philip Harris. *Road, Barrier and Trees*, A50. 10th October 2010

Here I list the objects that I regard as having particular significance to the image. They are the things that I draw together, within the organisation of the image, that I describe again as a “playing off.” However, I do not discuss the theme in detail or the significance of the objects that I draw together in the image:

I've moved the camera to the right a bit because I wasn't very happy with how the tree overlapped with the pylon in the background. And I'm trying to get the road completely level, completely parallel with the side of the frame...The ash tree, because I want the road, I'm going to crop the top off. I'm not using rise and fall, but what I will do is raise the tripod up because I don't need as much road here as I've got. So I've got it [the camera] around four-and-a-half foot [high] and I'm going to raise it to eye level. So I've now got a slightly higher elevation so that I can see the path that goes down by the trees a little bit more clearly.

(ibid)

This listing of things and their collecting together in a photograph persists without any meaningful reflection, as seems apparent in the voice recording for a later image (fig 5.18):



Fig 5.18 Philip Harris. *Gravel Pit in Progress, Lockington Quarry*. 15th June 2011

I'm looking across here and I've got the power station to my left. I'm looking straight up, underneath the power lines, keeping it nice and symmetrical. I've got shapes, marks caused by lorry wheels on the earth and I'm picking out the edges of some of the mounds from the earthworks that they are building. So, I might do a couple of shots here where I pan across the image. I might make a three-shot image out of this and then even come back to it later on and do the same thing. The shot on the 58 is all right but I haven't got the 58 with me. It's kind of a shame, but I know that the 90 is going to be more consistent with what I'm doing and it will show up the detail more.¹¹³ I've got two Cat trucks to the left hand side of the image. It's quite a soft light because there's a lot of cloud. The cloud is quite broken so there's good detail, there will be good detail in the sky. I've got a fence that's just creeping into the bottom of the picture that is slightly irritating but I can't do much about that really.

¹¹³ The camera format I have used for these images is 67 medium format. 90mm lens is a standard focal length. 58mm is a wide-angle lens.

Here I describe what I see through the viewfinder of the camera for a shot I have arranged. I refer to my positioning of the camera. I briefly refer to my equipment and consider the consistency of these images in relationship to others I have taken. I also think ahead to other photographs I will take. I note things that appear in the viewfinder. However, I do not reflect upon the significance of these things and their relationship to each other.

I find this strange and somewhat disappointing. I was expecting my voice recordings to yield much more. I am surprised at how repetitive and limited they are. I was expecting that my records of photographing would reveal hidden depths to the experience of photographing. Instead they seem to show how photographing is a reduced and limited engagement with themes, ideas and significance rather than one that is fully engaged. Perhaps the method of making these records, of talking through the experience of photographing, is not an effective method, that the requirements of talking at the same time as photographing inhibits the full content of the experience. On the other hand, maybe they hold a truth with regards to photographing that I will need to come to terms with and that a full articulation of making might become apparent through the further stages (e.g. post-production, selection, etc).

If I am going to apply Heidegger's method to my making of photographs as art, as a bringing-forth in the mode of *poiesis*, then I need to think through making in the same terms that Heidegger describes the bringing-forth of the chalice. I have presented an argument for what I consider to be the materials out of which I make a photograph and I have described the processes by which I use my equipment to draw gather these things together when photographing. Therefore I have identified these things as matter (*hyle*) out of which photographs are made and I have identified how equipment plays its role in how the images appear, as in the *aspecting* (*eidos*) of images. But the equipment only plays a part in *aspecting* (*eidos*) since, as my research demonstrates, *aspecting* (*eidos*) draws upon historical precedents for making that, like equipment (and perhaps in tandem) originate, like all *techné*, in ancient

history. However, this historical component of *aspecting* (*eidōs*) does not take place when photographing. It might take place before, when I set-up and prepare myself and clarify my theme and it might take place at a later date when I sit down in my room and look at the images, spatially and temporally separated from the things I photographed. It seems to remain that a thorough appreciation and accounting for the historical precedents and the significance of the image does not seem to take place when I photograph.

Even so, the themes of the project seem to be present somewhere and somehow when I photograph; I refer the picturesque (even if incorrectly); I describe how I place a pylon to one side or obscure it behind trees; I make decisions regarding things and their placement that seem to bear some relation to previous my images and the images and texts that have informed the project. So somewhere within the experience of photographing there is evidence that *aspecting* (*eidōs*), *purposing* (*telos*) and *discourse* (*logos*) are playing a part in how I photograph the landscape, even if they have been suppressed.

Reflections on Photographing

In an attempt to reveal the *aspecting* (*eidōs*), *purposing* (*telos*) and *discourse* (*logos*) that is suppressed during the activity of photographing I will provide a reflective interpretation of making where I work through the stages of photographing and consider the significance of things that are represented in an image, the mode of representation and the relevance of the four causes to making.

Following the making of the tonal photographs (up to 30th June 2008, see Volume 2: Appendix 1.1, p.368) further research informed my approach to image making. Gilpin's *Essay On Picturesque Beauty* (1792), John Brinckerhoff Jackson's *The Vernacular Landscape* (1984) and the Highways Agency *Landscape Management Handbook Summary* (2004) contributed to developing and refining further ideas with regards to my project. Studying Heidegger's essay *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954) as the basis for my philosophical method on

image making has also contributed to how I regard landscape in a way that I did not predict. His description of natural resources as standing-reserve and the idea that the landscape is set-upon through the challenging to being of Enframing has provided me with a way of regarding the management and transformation of landscape that I refer to throughout this chapter.¹¹⁴ His use of landscape metaphors such as “the clearing” in *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1934); reference to landscape features such as the Rhine and its damming for the production of electricity (Ibid, 1934, p.16) have made his theory all the more relevant to my project. All this has contributed to a broader and deeper appreciation of both the representation of landscape and the landscape itself as a representation of social order. This effectively contributes to a more appreciative understanding of the aspecting (*eidōs*) of landscape when I make photographs.

Aspecting (*eidōs*) also draws upon the precedents of making that act as influences, guides, standards and ideals that the images I make refer to. The recent colour work of Edgar Martins, Simon Roberts, Rut Blees Luxemburg and Alec Soth, have become the standards for my own image making. This made me question why I was using black-and-white materials, especially since I was also drawing upon landscape paintings by Poussin, Gainsborough and Constable.¹¹⁵ As a result of this change of medium I re-visited the sites of several images that I had photographed with black-and-white film, one site being the view of the fishing pools from the A50 road that I photographed in tone on the 5th June 2008 (fig 5.13) and revisited on the 10th October 2010 to photograph it using colour negative film (fig 5.19).

A reason why I considered this older tonal image (fig 5.13) to be successful was due to its picturesque appearance of a place that has been subject to transformation through gravel extraction. The fishing pools that lie there cover up the transformation. They conceal the

¹¹⁴ I realise that I run the risk that my methodology for my account on making becomes confused with the theme of the project itself. I raised at the outset of Chapter 1 and I will reflect upon this later.

¹¹⁵ I also started to use roll film on an old medium format camera rather than expensive sheet film.

Setting-Upon that had been imposed upon it a few years earlier when the farm fields were dug up for gravel extraction.

Soon after taking this first image I realised that I needed a more informed understanding of the picturesque. Where Gilpin's *Essay on Picturesque Beauty* (1792) provided me with an historical account of the theory of this mode of representation, a reproduction of a landscape painting by Poussin, *Landscape with Calm*, provided me with a pastoral ideal of landscape that informed the picturesque mode. This painting struck me as embodying the mode of representation of landscape that related to this image of the pools that I made. Two years after the first image of the pools I revisited the site again with the intention of making an image that referred more directly to Poussin's painting in order that the aspecting (*eidos*) of the picturesque was more apparent in my image. The original position that I used for the first image could no longer be used since the trees had grown so high that the view of the pools was now obscured. This is evident in the sixth and seventh frame on the second film (fig 5.21), where the tripod was lifted up to over seven feet to allow the camera to "look" over the trees.



Fig 5.19 Philip Harris. Film 2, frame 6, A50, 10th October 2010

I needed a new point of view. I walked along the pavement (to the left of this image) and eventually found a place that I thought provided a Poussin-type view of the pools and the surrounding landscape (fig 5.22).



Fig 5.20 *Pools, Cars and Cables, A50*. 10th October 2010

Frame 9, taken with 58mm wide angle lens

Frame 10, taken with 90mm standard lens

As my contact print shows (fig 5.22), I used two different lenses – a wide-angle and a standard. Though the presence of the pylon is effective in the image taken on the wide-angle lens, it has rendered the pools and the surrounding landscape too small in the frame and the foreground too dominant. The standard lens describes the relationship between the foreground, middle-ground and far-ground more successfully since it describes the pool in a less diminished size.

My image does not replicate the Poussin entirely, nor does it need to. It is more a case where certain modes and characteristics are carried over from Poussin's image, as an origin of the conventions of landscape painting, to my method of composition and formal arrangement. The high viewpoint, as in Poussin's image, is from the position of a road. Poussin, however, makes his road visible at the foot of the painting thereby suggesting the point of view of a traveller. The road is not visible in my image but is implied by the presence of cars positioned around the pools and the embankment at the foot of the image. The use of trees to frame the image (even if only on the one side with my image) relates to the glimpse of a distant landscape between

nearby trees that became a convention of pastoral and later picturesque landscape painting. It is also a practice adopted by the Highways Agency, as I have discussed in the research that has informed the project (see Chapter 4).



Fig 5.21 Philip Harris. *Pools, Cars and Cables, A50*. 10th October 2010



Fig 5.22 Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Calm*, 1650-51, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The presence of the shepherd sharing the scene with the viewer of the painting; the middle ground position of the calm pool; cowherds and livestock that appear in Poussin's image is carried over in my image with people at leisure, fishing, with their cars scattered around the pools. The civic architecture in Poussin's image, signifying good government, is replaced with pylons and power lines that signify the organising of the distribution of energy. Certain other factors carry over such as the direction of sunlight from beyond the left side of the image with its warm glow lighting the view and the central position of the horizon line. The cloud formation, though less dramatic in my image than Poussin's, is nevertheless present in my image in its Summer quality (I accept that my image lacks a mountain range, but there are limits in South Derbyshire). I think that there is enough in my image to draw it towards Poussin's mode of image making, both in the things present (*hyle*) and their aspecting (*eidos*).

A possible (and brief) critique lies in the following: Poussin's image is a construction aimed at presenting the ideals of both landscape environment and civic government; my image borrows these themes and methods of representation to represent a real landscape, that is itself a synthetic construction, where the ideals of landscape representation (i.e. the constructed pools,

the trees and bushes, the people at leisure) have been employed to conceal the Setting-Upon of this environment brought about by the demand for the raw materials of stone used for road building, for transport, energy, and more lately for the pursuit of leisure. If I think of this in terms of Heidegger's theory of making, the material of the images are those objects that are present in the environments I represent. Since weather can also be considered a thing, the weather conditions and season in which the image taken are also materials. The presence of these things, from this point of view, enables me to make use of them in their relationship to one another. The means by which I draw this material together are the lens of a camera that draws the image onto film within the limits of the frame and the conventions of the visual mode representation that I adopt. The mode in which the materials lend themselves to the image are present in the conventions of the pastoral and the picturesque. Aspecting (*eidos*) is roughly equivalent to the look of the image, its appearance, but it involves more than this as I have discussed earlier, through the discourse (*logos*) of making. My landscape image owes itself to pre-existing images of the landscape and the methods of their representation. Any image I make will owe itself in this way, and will occur with or without my awareness. The responsibility of a maker, who seeks to bring-forth a work in the mode of *poiesis*, is to become aware of the this debt as much as possible. The research that I present in Chapter 4 is an account of the history of ideas and practices that constitute the aspecting (*eidos*) of my images that contribute towards this awareness and also the embeddedness of these conventions and traditions of perception, and subsequently, of image making.

The embeddedness of the aspecting (*eidos*) has far reaching consequences for image making. My images take on the appearance due to the descriptive qualities of my equipment - camera, lens and film - and the way I make use of and explore, but also assume these qualities. However, the qualities of equipment do not just make themselves felt between the relationship of matter (*hyle*) and aspect (*eidos*) since the way the things that are photographed, as matter (*hyle*), are drawn out into the aspecting (*eidos*) of the work also directs the destining of the work towards a purposing (*telos*). The purposing (*telos*) of my making is to provide a collection of images that can reveal the use of landscape: that is, that the image, as a bringing-forth in the

mode of *poiesis*, can unconceal the Setting-Upon of landscape due to the challenging of Enframing (i.e. road building, gravel extraction). In this way, the unconcealment of the normative uses of landscape (e.g. roads, leisure, commerce, travel) and its appearing through the presentation of the objects that lie in the landscape (e.g. roads, trees, pylons, barriers, fences, street furniture), in a consideration of the mode of their appearing and representation, is the purposing (*telos*) of the work. Another more familiar description for this practice of making is critique. All this takes place within the discourse (*logos*) that is the making: the ponderings, movements and acts of the maker that draws the three other causes together in the work. As I have demonstrated, the experience of photographing takes place in a limited perceptual field that is focused upon the job at hand. The full significance of an image is not fleshed out during photographing but during reflection, after the films have been processed, the negatives scanned, and the image files pored over, compared to each and weighed up in relation to theme.

Making after Taking

The act of photographing is but one of the stages of making photographs. Further stages of making are required to transform the image on film (or as digital data) into a vehicle that can be used to reproduce a final image. These stages are referred to as post-production.

In the case of my own practice, post-production involves scanning the negatives to produce digital image files; digitally adjusting the image files to correct the colour of the image, cropping out the film mask, corrections to the geometry of the image file to ensure verticals and horizontal are correct, and to remove dust and blemishes that occur in the process of scanning the negatives. These procedures can take some time and it can be very tedious. However, as I will show during the course of the following account and reflection, post-production also serves an evaluative purpose, since it allows for a very close assessment of the qualities of the image – the sharpness of description, the quality of colour, the appearance of objects that I might have

overlooked when photographing. This process is also the first time I will look at the image in close detail.

The following account has been written during the activity of negative scanning and the post-production of the image files that were produced. I concentrate on one film and one negative only. It provides an immediate response to both the stages of the process and its significance to a theory on the experience of making.

An Account of Post-Production

The process of scanning my negatives allows the first view I have of them in positive form. It allows me to assess the qualities of the images I have made and to make judgements on their significance and relevance to the project. For this part of the research I will describe my process of working, the kinds of decisions I will make and what these decisions are based upon. The first image file I will make is a collection of all the images on a film. This is traditionally called a contact print. Since I am making digital image files, I will refer to this as a contact image file. For the purpose of the research I will overlook making the contact image file and concentrate on the making an image file from a single negative.

When I scan my negatives I go through a preliminary process of setting up. I clear the area where I am working. I organise my table and put things to one side so that I have a clear area to work on. The computer is on front of me. The film scanner is to my left. I wipe dust off the edges of the scanner. I open up the image file of the contact print for this film. I select the seventh frame from the second film, where I have the huge industrial building in the background with two newly planted trees and the orange edge of a hoarding that I have framed to include *.com* in the bottom left corner.

I gently wipe the platter of the film scanner to remove dust. I inspect it to see if any is left: there one or two spots, there are bound to be. Rather than keep wiping the platter I leave it as it is since further wiping will produce static and attract yet more dust (dust is the enemy of

photography). I hold the negatives in the negative bag up to the light of a window to find the strip of negatives that contains this frame. I carefully pull it out of the negative bag, holding it by the very edges of the film so as not to get any finger marks on the image area. I handle this film like a fragile relic where the slightest finger mark can damage the artefact. I gently wipe it between the folds of a soft anti-static cloth. I pick up the film holder, hold it away from the table and brush it down with a special brush (one that is only ever used for film) to remove as much dust as I can. I place a sheet of clean paper on the table and lay the holder on this. I open it up and gently lay the film in place. I close the holder, hold it up against my eye to check for dust and hairs. I see some, so I pick up my brush and lightly brush the negative, pushing the dust away from the frame I want to scan. There are still one or two particles, but further brushing will only make matters worse. So I resign myself to the fact that I will have to spend time removing dust marks in post-production. I open the lid of the scanner and check for dust again. I lightly brush away new specs that have had the nerve to land on the platter. I place the film holder in place and close the lid of the scanner. Now I am ready to start.

I turn to my computer and open the scanning application. This is where it starts to get complicated and technical. I start up the application for negative scanning. I select the film type and contrast curve that I used before in an attempt to achieve natural and realistic description of colour. I press the preview button. The scanner whirs and grunts and proceeds to scan the film to provide a preview that will provide an initial representation of the image on the computer screen. A legend appears on the screen telling me that the lamp is warming up. I wait as the preview appears on the screen. I am disappointed – it is too dark. The settings need to be revised. I position the box that indicates the scan area over the selected frame (frame number 3, see fig 5.23) and adjust it to show the edge of black outline of the film.



Fig 5.23 Preview of negatives viewed in negative scanning application

I rotate the preview so that my image is the correct orientation and press a button to magnify the preview. I need to adjust the settings to achieve a more accurate and reliable image. I can make alterations to the image file in post-production but for the sake of consistency and image quality I prefer to achieve an optimum image at the stage of scanning. I make further adjustments to the contrast and make another preview image.

I inspect the preview image in detail (fig 5.24). I look at shadows areas under the trees to make sure there are traces of shadow detail. I look at the grey panels on the building, the strength of the orange on the hoarding, the quality of blue, grey and white in the sky. I look to see if I can detect any variations of colour and tone that I will object to, that appear false or unnatural. What I am looking for is a quality of colour that possesses a neutral indifference, that avoids a bias of warmth or coolness, where my perception of the image falls into place with my recollection of the experience of that place.

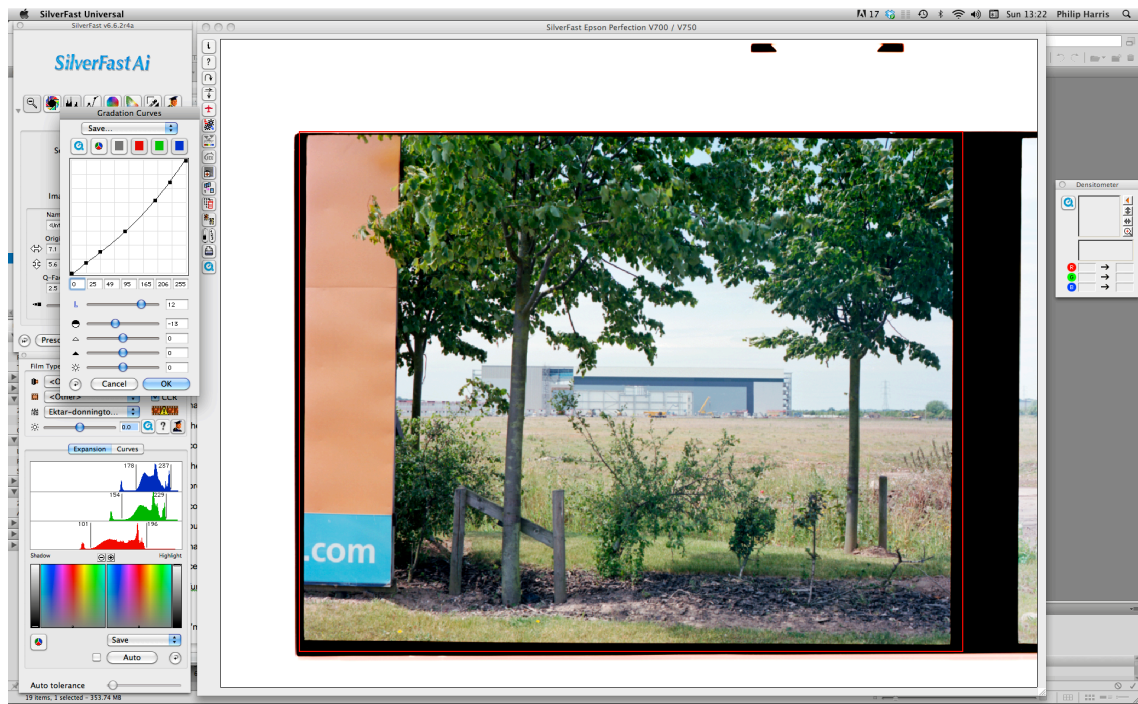


Fig 5.24 Preview of frame 3 with alterations viewed in negative scanning application

Since I have a representation of the image in front of me I drift into a reflective mode and evaluative the image in terms of the significance of the things in the image and the relationships between them. I think of how the “.com” legend on the hoarding relates to the building and to commerce, how the trees, that in Poussin would frame the view of the building, stand too far inside the image and where one obscures the view of the building. I think about how these trees have been planted to soften the view of this huge building that dominates the landscape. I think through the image at this point because since I am investing time in this image I want to make sure that it is time well spent, that this image will contribute in some way to the project.

I set the resolution for a medium size scan to check the image quality. The scanner whirs and grunts, and passes across the film. I wait as a thumbnail of the image appears on the screen and a blue line tells me the progress of the scan.

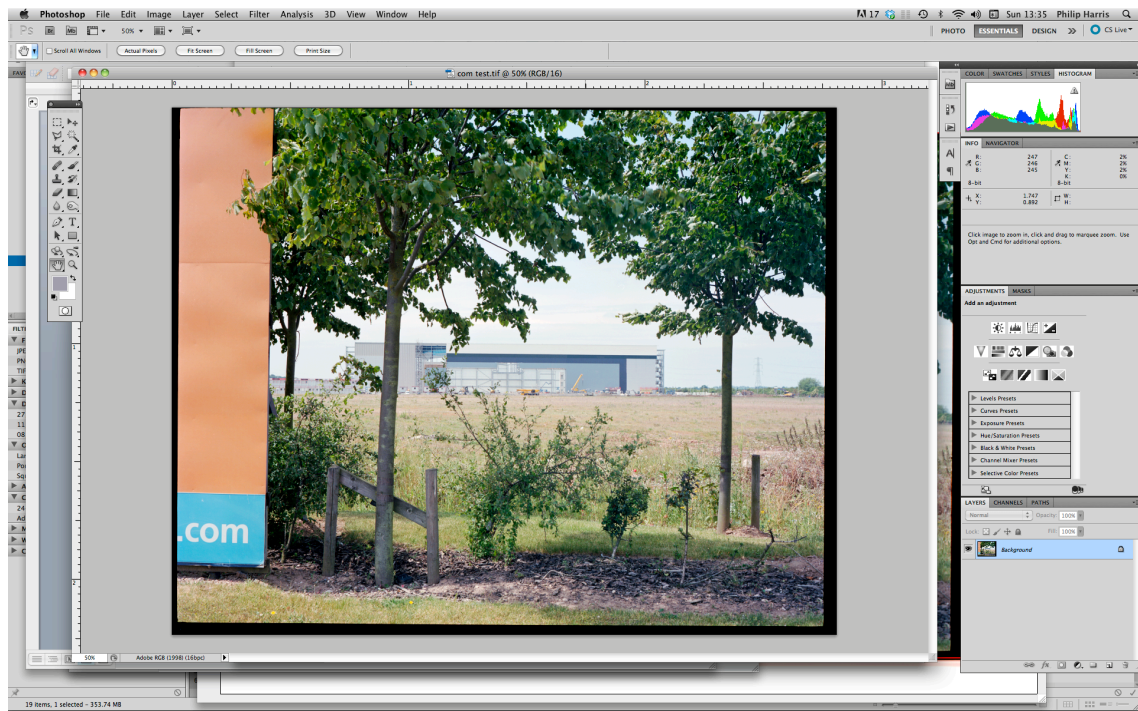


Fig 5.25 First test scan for frame 3 viewed as an image file in Adobe Photoshop

The image is not far off (fig 5.25). The highlights are a little too bright. The wasteland area looks a little too “nice” – there is a bit too much warmth in this area. I take some of the red out of the highlights on the image. I also adjust the highlights so that they are not so bright throughout the spectrum of the image. I look at the colour of the earth and assess its brown-ness, the trunks of trees to assess the greens and browns of the bark. I look at the shadow areas to check that I have good shadow detail. I check the base of film to make sure that it is black. This is all good, though I am not convinced that I am getting the colour that I want. I hold the cursor over a patch of cloud just above the building. There is a slight green cast to the sky in the second scan. I go back and assess the scan settings. I take a different tack and alter the shadow areas so that they are less intense whilst keeping the base of the film black. I then use a curve to intensify the mid tones.

I question myself as why I need to make these adjustments; to make the images that look just so. In terms of my own practice, post-production is an attempt to interpret the information on the negative to produce an image with certain characteristics. I am unhappy with the visual quality of some of the scans because they look too pleasant, too attractive, or there are unaccountable

colour casts that I do not seem to have the perceptual and technical skills to remove. I want to be able to produce an image that has a disinterested quality but that still can suggest a relation to painting. I am aware that the image I discuss here may stretch this intended relation. Although this intention may remain a private one, it is an intention that drives the process nevertheless.

I go through several more tests until I am happy with the way the scanner and the software produce an image of the negative. The resulting image is quite flat (fig 5.26).

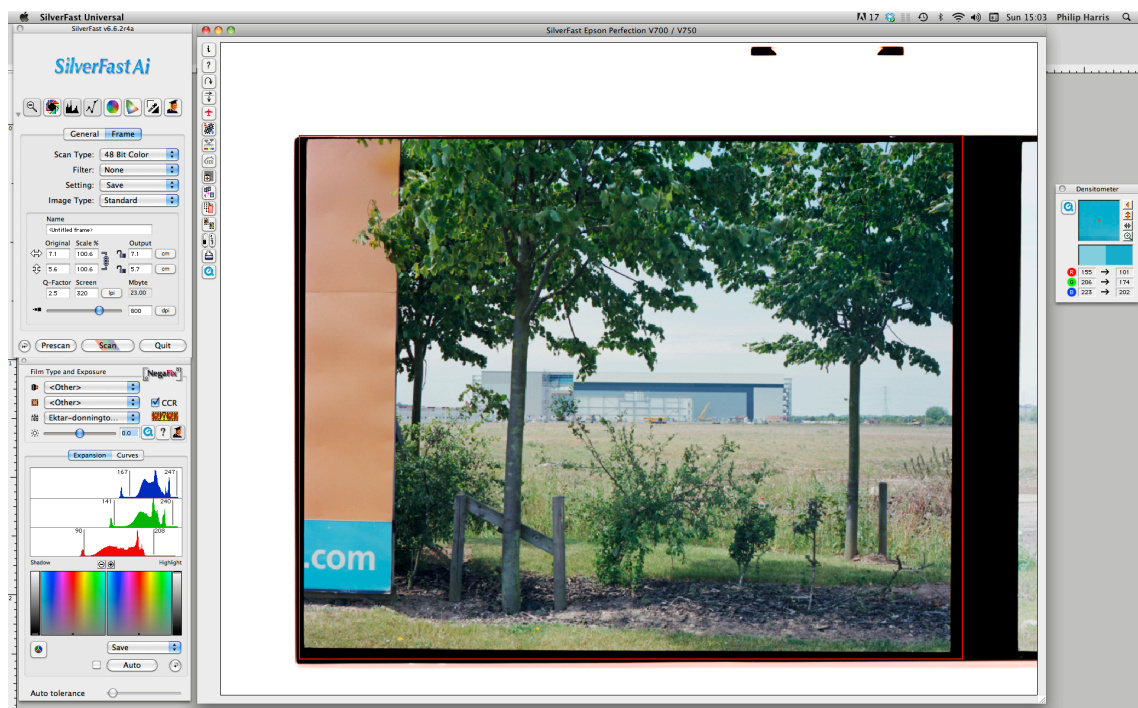


Fig 5.26 Second test preview for frame 3 viewed in negative scanning application

It has good shadow detail, the base of the film is not quite black but each channel (i.e. red, green and blue) is even, highlights have good texture and are now even in colour. The scanner is now producing a reliable rendering of colour and tone that I can depend upon and modify according to the output (e.g. as print).

I go back to the scanning software and save these settings under the name of this image (.com) so that I can use them again. I select a high resolution. The scanner is now set-up to produce a high-resolution image. I increase resolution of the image and press the *scan* button.

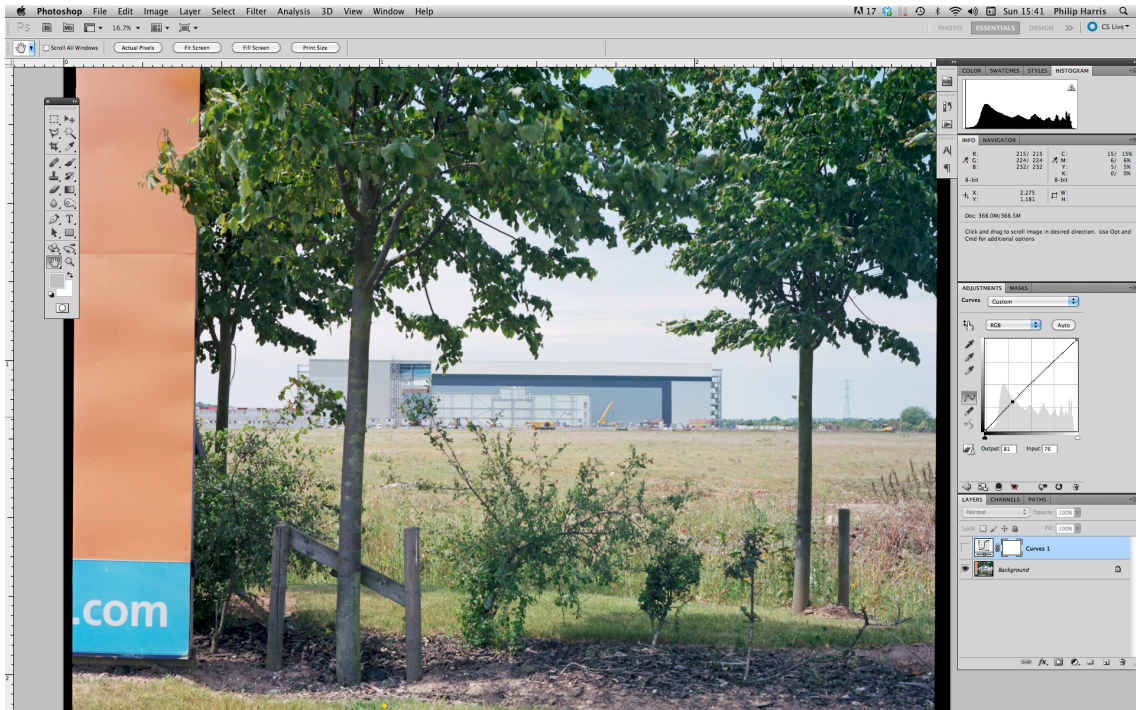


Fig 5.27 High resolution scan for frame 3 viewed as an image file in Adobe Photoshop

This image is now one that I can use. It meets my criteria. A further adjustment I need to make is to rotate the image until it is exactly level and then crop the image to remove the black edges of the film mask (see fig 5.27). The images have been made with a camera that has been prepared using a spirit level in both horizontal and vertical axes. Vertical and horizontal features such as architecture and horizon lines are therefore rendered consistent in the image with the placement and appearing of the object in the environment. This maintains an integrity with the appearing of these objects in the landscape (see fig 5.28).



Fig 5.28 Frame 3 after rotation and cropping of film mask (Adobe Photoshop)

I then methodically pore over the image from one end to other removing dust marks. However, through this time consuming and laboursome process I obtain a very clear idea of the objects that appear in the image. The image is assessed for further tonal adjustments. The final process of post-production is to apply a sharpening layer to make the details of the image crisp. This needs to be conducted with care since over-sharpened images look over-digitised and lose the quality of an authentic image produced by a lens. This authenticity is what I call optical integrity.



Fig 5.29 Frame 3; left: before sharpening; right: after sharpening

The appearing of the image through the process of scanning is an attempt to draw out the qualities of objects and their relationships to one another without the interruption of visual anomalies (i.e. dust, colour casts, camera shake, soft lens focus, wayward geometry, excessive sharpening). The way the building above has been planted on the ground within the landscape needs to be described in its rectilinear flatness and regularity. Anything that is leaning in an image does so because the object leans. Any thing that is marked in an image is so because that thing is marked.

The practices of post-production are an attempt to draw the image as close as possible to how I perceived the objects during the experience of photographing them and how the lens of the camera has described them. In effect what I am trying to achieve is an invisibility of the post-production processes with the aim of providing as pure an optical description of the objects as possible. I remove dust marks without leaving visible traces of them having been there. I apply tonal adjustments in an attempt to produce an authentic representation of the colour and intensity of light. I correct the geometry of the image to replicate the precision with which it has been taken. My intention in post-production is that the image describes a clear presence and relationship between the perceived objects without the obvious intervention of post-production techniques.

Even as I write this I question these beliefs since I also intend to make images that approach the standards of image making that I see in the work of other image makers. This has nothing to do with the objects that I photograph but everything to do with making images. At various points the two meet, overlap or collide within my discourse on the aspecting of making. This dual quality of the appearing of the image is present in Heidegger's account of the four causes:

Silver is that out of which the silver chalice is made. As this matter (*hyle*), it is co-responsible for the chalice. The chalice is indebted to, i.e. owes thanks to, the silver for that out of which it consists. But the sacrificial vessel is indebted not only to the silver. As a chalice, that which is indebted to the silver appears as in the aspect of a chalice and not in that of a brooch or ring. Thus the sacrificial vessel is at the same time indebted to the aspect (*eidos*) of chaliceness. Both

the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect into in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.

(Heidegger, 1954, p.7)

In photographic terms, according to my argument, silver can be replaced with the things that I photograph. To progress much further into a comparative statement I need to be more specific. Heidegger points out that the aspect that the silver takes is of a chalice and not two other objects that can be made out of silver. Therefore, rather than refer to my image in its generic aspect of a photograph I need to be specific with its image type since this is what the precedents of *aspecting* (*eidos*) will refer to. The image is therefore landscape and not portrait or still life. To follow Heidegger's description, the landscape photograph is indebted to the things in the landscape that appear in the photograph. It is also indebted to the aspect of landscape images (including paintings). Thus the *aspecting* (*eidos*) of the landscape photograph draws upon both the things in the landscape that it represents and the precedents that inform the representation of landscape images. Hilla Becher once said something that relates to this (see Chapter 2) in the belief that the best application of photography was in its capacity to describe objects:

Photography is all about subject; the subject determines the way you photograph it. So you have to learn about its nature, its function, the different landscapes and the way people think about them.

(Hilla Becher, 2003 [1989], p.231)

This descriptive approach to photographing (and its embedded debt to literature) was described by Walker Evans in the following terms:

Flaubert's method I think I incorporated almost unconsciously, but anyway used in two ways: his realism and naturalism both, and his objectivity of treatment; the non-appearance of author, the non-subjectivity. This is literally applicable to the way I want to use a camera and do.

(Evans & Katz, 1981 [1971], pp.360-1)

The terms objective and subjective do not sit well within hermeneutic phenomenology, but even so, Evans' reference to literature is a useful one, since it allows for a comparison of practices. Just as a mistake in a written text¹¹⁶ (e.g. poor grammar) makes the appearance of language in a text so apparent, so good writing allows language to disappear into description.¹¹⁷ In so being the text has a tangible integrity in relation to the language the author has used but it is not interrupted by the jolt that is caused by a fault. This can also be applied to the processes used in the making of photographs and the role of equipment in describing things. A comparative term that I have used is "optical integrity;" that the image produced (i.e. the image file, the print) is as faithful as possible to the way the lens of the camera has drawn the things that lie in front of it. I use the scanner, computer and software to maintain this optical integrity as much as my abilities allow me to. I admit that all stages of production will re-interpret the image, but what I aim to retain in post-production is an appearance of the image, irrespective of whatever is represented, that is unalloyed by stray artefacts and traces of prominent digitisation that interrupt the experience of viewing the objects represented in the photograph.¹¹⁸ This aim for a lack of a visible footprint of post-production on the image is not just a question of the equipment but is also a question of competence and careful judgement; of gaining an understanding of how I control the scanner and software in order that it facilitates the appearing of the objects (*hyle*) in the photograph in the manner by which the lens, camera and film have described them. All the adjustments I make to colour and contrast, the slight rotation to restore the rectilinear

¹¹⁶ The same might not be said if I apply this idea to poetry. See Sartre (2000 [1947]).

¹¹⁷ There is a potential argument against this. In *The Author as Producer*, Benjamin (1982 [1933]) writes how meaning in theatre is produced with the engagement of the audience through the use of devices, such as song, that interrupt the narrative flow and jolt the audience member to realise his or her involvement in the production of meaning.

¹¹⁸ The trace of film in the form of silver oxide grain can appear as an intrinsic quality of a film image. It seems to suggest an integrity of the materiality of the film. The same cannot always be said for digital images where the appearance of noise in a digital image is visually offensive unless taken to extreme as in the case of images made with low resolution capture devices (i.e. mobile phone camera image). Digital sharpening is a case in point. I have seen many digital images that have been over sharpened and consequently lose contact with the optical integrity that the image might have possessed.

appearance of the image, the removing of dust, the application of a sharpening layer are governed by the appearance, the aspecting (*eidos*), of the precedents that I draw upon from landscape photography. Where the lens, camera and film may leave a visible footprint on the image, the use of scanning equipment, software and methods applied during post-production, like good writing, should disappear within the transparency of description.

Understood in this way, competence is not simply a technical issue since the appearing of an image is related to the historical precedents of image making that inform the design and manufacture of equipment and how it is used. Technique does not exist as an a-historical set of procedures, even if it is perceived as such. It is indebted to the history of the appearing of images since all images (like any other artefact) refer to precedents of making that set standards for the appearing of the image. I am not only applying post-production processes to draw my image close to the appearing of objects as I perceived them, but I also do so in an attempt to draw my work close to the work of other image makers whose work represents the ideal standards I aim to achieve (e.g. Carlton Watkins, Edgar Martins, Alec Soth, Edward Burtynsky, Rut Blees Luxemburg). In short, photographs do not only represent things, they also resemble and represent other photographs.

Therefore I partly agree with Hilla Becher. However, what she overlooks (and what I hope I am making clear in the course of my thesis) is that making has its own precedents and standards that are independent of the thing (i.e. the subject). Therefore, the thing ("subject")¹¹⁹ is not the only thing that determines the way it is photographed. Photographs also look like photographs. The aspecting (*eidos*) of my landscape photograph draws upon the appearing of what I regard

¹¹⁹ The different uses of the word subject can cause problems with meaning. In her statement Hilla Becher refers to things as subjects, as they are referred to in most common speech (i.e. the subject of my work is landscape). However, in philosophy the word subject refers to the perceiving human being, which means that Hilla Becher's subject becomes object. I think it is better to adopt Heidegger's use of the word thing since this also avoids problematic issues related to subject and object with regards to truth and experience.

as exemplar landscape images. The purpose of post-production is to lend the image this dual quality in as pure a way as possible, thereby rendering its presence invisible.

My account of post-production has interesting consequences with regards to the four causes. In the process of post-production the material (*hylē*) of photographing still lies in the things that are photographed since it is to these things that the appearing of the photograph owes a debt. However, post-production moves the experience of making into a further territory with regards to the appearing (*eidos*) of the image and purposing (*telos*), that I have already described as critique. The stages of post-production are separated from the experiences of photographing by both temporal and spatial dimensions, but in post-production I still draw upon both my experience of the things that I photograph and the standards of image making with the aim of achieving a transparency of its processes. The scanning of my negatives and the close working I apply to them during colour correction, dust removal, adjusting the geometry and sharpening of the image means that I spend a lot of time examining the images that I initially select.

In photographing I direct my attention to the arrangement of objects and tend to set the themes and concepts that inform the work to one side. With post-production, something similar occurs since the qualities that I aim towards are those of the optical integrity of the image, that has as much to do with the photograph as it has the things that are photographed. However, since the relation between the photographic quality and the things represented are so closely bound and visible to me as I pore over the image, inspect it and remove any aberrations that have occurred outside the process of representation, I am also able to reflect upon the significance of the image since, unlike the visual thing I see in the viewfinder or screen of the camera that is not yet an image, the static and limited thing that I scan, store and work on, is for the first time, an image.

Where aspecting (*eidos*) takes place in post-production, it does so in a slow and considered reflection of the significance of the qualities of the photograph, the things it represents and the precedents of image making. To follow Heidegger's terminology, it is where I account for the

debt that the image owes to these things. It is where I start to gather all these aspects together to make sense of the image. From the beginning of this process of reflection and consideration, images are selected and the shape of the work as a collection of related images can be considered. Consequently, the purposing (*telos*) of the individual work, the critique that I think lies within it, that I draw out through the combining of objects and aspecting (*eidos*), in turn can start to contribute to the shape of the work as a whole. This becomes more developed when the images are selected and edited to form a meaningful arrangement for presentation.

Building a Work

The form of a final artefact for the purposes of this research will take the form of a book. This will involve an edited selection of images that I hope will provide a coherent presentation of my theme and the presence of my intended critique of the representation of landscape. The critique concerns me most since I consider it as the embodiment of the purposing of the work. I recognise the presence of critique in individual images, until these images are edited and placed in some kind of meaningful order I am not sure how successful this will be with regards to the work as an artefact.¹²⁰

The book has an important place in photography. Since the inception of photography, books have provided a means of presenting a body of work in a manageable and meaningful format. Henry Fox Talbot's series of books, titled *The Pencil of Nature*, published in London between 1844 and 1846, set a precedent for all further books by photographers. He published six volumes describing each as *fascicles*, a word that derives from the Latin *facisculus*, meaning "little bundle" (Jones, nd).

¹²⁰ The selection of images will be those that I have made using colour film. This discounts the older tonal images, even those that have been pivotal to the development of the project (as discussed in earlier in this chapter).

A distinction between the books made by photographers today and Talbot's is that his did not follow a theme of enquiry or a certain subject matter that tends to characterise the book as a work. They are a collection of disparate images that, if there is a theme that binds them, represent the descriptive capacity of his technique and method of production, the Calotype. Images of urban views are followed by collections of porcelain and glass are followed by images of statuary. The images are presented alongside his statements where the properties of his invention are described in philosophical terms that allude to the possession of the things that are photographed, the veracity of the appearance of these things, and the medium as a reflection of the nature that it represents (hence the title).

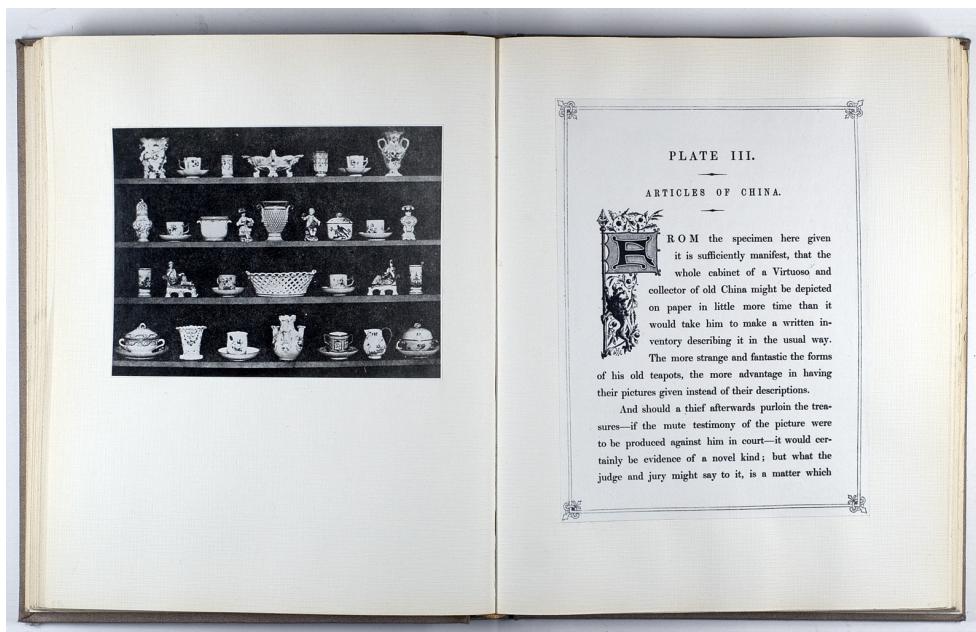


Fig 5.30 William Henry Fox Talbot. 1844-46 (from a reprint, 1969, New York). *The Pencil of Nature*.

Two images makers that have informed my own image making are Alec Soth and John Davies. Apart from making images that I regard as standards for my own practice (that have contributed to the aspecting of my work) the books published by each photographer also provide a lesson in editing and presentation.

Alec Soth's *Dog Days, Bogota* (Steidl, 2007) includes a short preface that presents the original, private intention for the body of work. The images proceed from here without any accompanying

text. The image on the left page is related to the image on the right by the colour or shape of an object; the patterns of a wall; landscape or architectural feature; by the gazes of women, men and children; and the dogs that punctuate the sequence. For example, in the two images below the image of Father Christmas, serendipitously positioned as if running up the shadow of a telegraph pole, refers, through the red of his garb, to the jacket of the young father, embracing his partner. The blue sky refers to the blue wall.



Fig 5.31 Alec Soth. *Dog Days, Bogota*. 2007. Images 2 and 3.

In the following images, the soft toys and tilt of the head of the young girl in the first image refer to the puppy in the next image:

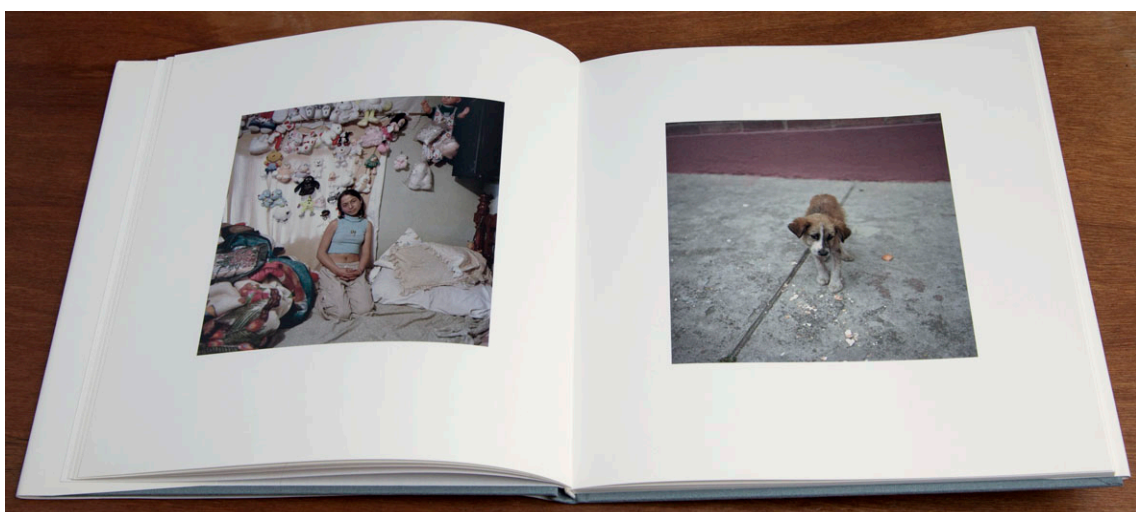


Fig 5.32 Alec Soth. *Dog Days, Bogota*. 2007. Images 4 and 5.

These kinds of relationships bind the images together and present a narrative sequence that flows through the work. Where the sequence starts with a lone dog in situated on a high viewpoint over looking the city, it also ends with a small dog looking across to an image of the city at night.



Fig 5.33 Alec Soth. *Dog Days, Bogota*. 2007. Image 1.



Fig 5.34 Alec Soth. *Dog Days, Bogota*. 2007. Final Images

John Davies' *Cross Currents* (1992) is a study of European national identity through landscape. The book is prefaced with an essay by Ian Walker (the text is presented in both English and French) where the theme of the work is discussed as preparation for the images that follow. The

images alternate in their locations: an image of an English landscape sits opposite one in Holland. There seems to be a question present in the juxtaposition of these images: which of these landscapes is synthetic? Are they both?

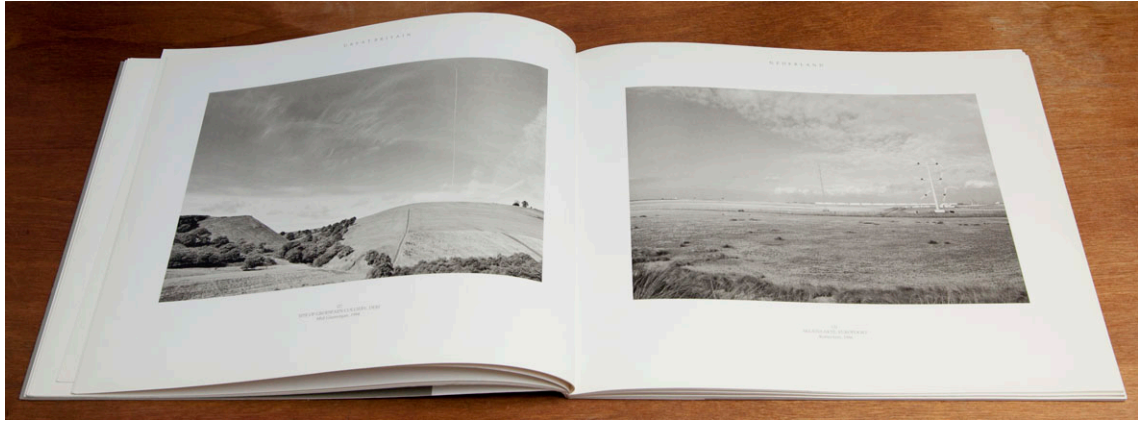


Fig 5.35 John Davies. *Cross Currents*. 1992

Left: England, (2) *Site of Groesdaen Colliery, Deri*, Mid Glamorgan, 1984.

Right: Holland, (3) *Maasvlakte, Europoort*, Rotterdam, 1986.

The images progress throughout the book with environments that relate to one another, suggesting a commonality between nations, but also contradict, suggesting difference between them.

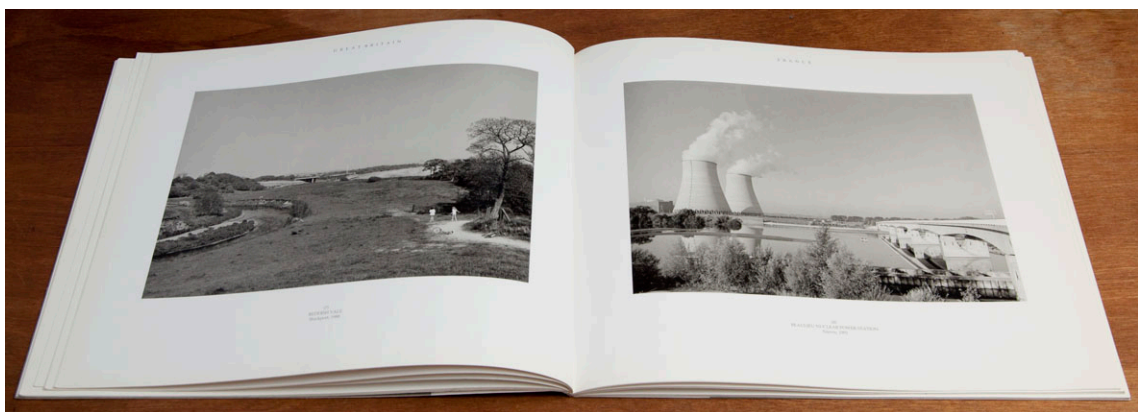


Fig 5.36 John Davies. 1992. *Cross Currents*.

Left: England (7) *Reddish Vale*, Stockport, 1988

Right: France (8) *Beaulieu Nuclear Power Station*, Nievre 1991

Both books represent different strategies for editing and sequencing the images. Soth's sequence of images is built upon a personal reflection of a place and the people (and the dogs) that inhabit it. Relationships between images of disparate scenes, portraits or objects are built through similarities of details, surfaces, clothing, toys and the direction of a gaze. Davies's sequence is built upon the differences and similarities of places that often seem familiar or unremarkable, but in being presented in relation to other images, raise issues of national identity through the characteristics of landscape. Through the sequence of images, relationships are built that both inform and challenge my understanding and perception of things and of photographs. Due to what I understand of their perceptual and creative abilities, the work of both image-makers acts as precedents that inform my own image making. They contribute to the aspecting of the images that I make, and the work I want to make.

Editing and Selecting

Throughout the project I have gradually built up a set of images that I can draw upon to form a work. An issue that affects selection is my intended start and finish of the sequence of images. I have in my mind a sequence of images that starts with the image of the fishing pools and ends with an image of a new gravel pit. This presents a reverse cycle of the process of the use of landscape and re-integration where the sequence of images starts with a synthetic landscape that has been created after gravel extraction and ends with an image of a landscape at the former stages of transformation. All the images for this project have been taken by the side or in close proximity to the A50, near where it joins the M1 motorway at Junction 24. This consistency of place will, I hope, run throughout the images and help to provide a thematic relationship that will link the images in a meaningful sequence.

Amongst all the images I have made for the project, there are two images (figs 5.37 and 5.38) that I regard as pivotal since they appear to me to sum up my idea of landscape. These two images inform the selection of other images for the work:



Fig 5.37 Philip Harris. *Pools, Cars and Cable, A50*. 10th October 2010



Fig 5.38 Philip Harris. *Road, Barrier and Trees, A50*, 25th October 2010

I have made a selection of images from the contact image files and through my familiarity with the films and prior selections. I have selected thirty-four images from a total of fourteen films that I shot since 2010. Viewing this many images on a computer screen is not a viable proposition and at some point I need to be editing from physical prints that I collect together, lay out, move around and view together. The book will be a maquette: a test piece for the purpose of the thesis. Furthermore I have chosen to make it by pasting the images by hand into a hard backed sketch book as opposed to making a book using a web service (i.e. blurb) since for the purposes of the research I want the process of making the book to be as tangible as possible. What I will learn from making this maquette will contribute to how I go about making further developments and refinements to produce a more accomplished version or make further images that address any short comings of the one currently produced. My key concern in this process is how I draw together individual images to form a collection that becomes a work. I envisage a final selection of between fifteen to twenty images.

The following discussion on is based on a reflective account that was written up during and after the editing process, hence the use of the present tense. It has been subject to editing but I have sought to retain the decisions and thought processes that occurred throughout the making of the sequence.

Building the sequence

For this first edit of this group of thirty-four images I lay the images out on the floor of my living room (fig 5.39). At first I set out the images according to the films that each derives from, to get an idea of the scope of the selection and where images fitted into a chronology of making. I have a preconceived idea that I will start with the images of the pools. I think I will also use this image for the cover since it sets up the theme of a synthetic landscape within a picturesque mode of representation. I place this image to the far left. The road is not visible in this image, it is only implied by the viewpoint and the presence of vehicles in this image. To suggest my proximity to a road I choose an image of the A50 from the same shoot. This image has both

differences to the first image but also similarities that are drawn together in a relationship through similarities (see fig 5.40).



Fig 5.39 First edit of images for the book



Fig 5.40 First edit for the book. Images 1 and 2

Both images identical weather and light conditions (as they would, being shot with a few minutes of each other) and the trees are turning from green to brown; the blue of the sky is a very similar hue altered in intensity due to change in angle to the sun. There are relationships between objects such as where the presence of electricity is present with pylons in the first and street lights in the second, the cars in the first image are related to the road in the second. There are also similarities in practice that draw these images together; the central horizon line of the first image is consistent with the line of the barrier in the second (the central position of the

horizon line appears throughout many of the images to lend consistency and to ensure that vertical features remain parallel). By placing these two images in sequence, the similarities between the two images, that seem to represent two different landscapes, provide a visual suggestion of the same environment from two different points of view.

I have two images of truck wheels/tyres that I want to place in the sequence (fig 5.41). Since one is clear and visible and the other covered in brambles they suggest the concealing process of the landscape:



5.41 First edit for the book. Images 3 and 4

I can place them in relation to other images in the sequence but I want to suggest this motif of concealment early on in the sequence and in relation to the first two images. The placement of the truck wheel on grass implies the near presence of a road and so is related to the previous image (fig 5.40). The wheel is represented in clear detail – it is clear to see. The greyness of the road follows through to the greyness of the wheel. The colour of tress follows through to the grass. The central and exactly horizontal line of the safety barrier suggests the ordering presence of the road on the wider landscape present in the differentiated forms of the trees. Following the central position of the barrier, the rim of the wheel is also positioned in the centre of the image. These similar qualities of the objects (colour) and their positioning in the frame of the camera (centrality) and the relationship between their use (travel) allow a possible

relationship to be present between these two images. Furthermore the relationship between these two images seems to relate to the perceptual experience of being in the landscape: it is as though after I took the image of the road, I turned around and looked down to see this wheel on the grass verge.



Fig 5.42 First edit for the book. Images 1 to 5

The fifth image represents a standmans' store where fair ground rides are stored to hibernate when out of season. The rides, when in use, produce noise, light and rapid movements. Here, in storage, covered up and closed down on their trailers, they are mute and still. A rather obvious link from the previous images are the truck tyres, but a more subtle relationship is the way that these stands are also covered up and concealed like the concealed tyre. The tyre marks on the earth indicate the recent movements made to park the vehicles and imply the presence of a nearby road.



Fig 5.43 First edit for the book. Images 6 to 9

The sixth image includes some kind of utility building nestled between an earth bank that is covered in weeds and the trees in the background. The building is fenced off. A pylon, an object that appears time and again throughout the project, rises above it. What is key to this image, and what makes it flow from the previous image onto the next, is the graffiti on the wall of this building with the legend PRICE accompanied by an illustration of a traditional gypsy caravan. I take this to be a marking of territory by travellers. The presence of concrete and graffiti then relate it to the next image in which the concrete aperture of an underpass frames a view of trees that appear in the picturesque style. I have photographed this view several times with the intention of playing-off the utility architecture of the road against this view of the trees. This is the most successful version to date since the quality of light and the trees in full leaf lend the image a pastoral quality that is contradicted by the presence of the hard concrete structure and the urban markings of (predominantly) young men. The presence of these impersonal concrete structures in these images, defaced and made personal by graffiti (another nearby underpass is almost like an art gallery where the works change on a regular basis) combined with elements of the picturesque and the pastoral, is intended as an ironic appropriation of Gilpin's theory of the appearance of ancient architecture in picturesque paintings:

Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chisel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a smooth building we must turn it into a rough ruin. No painter, who had the choice of the two objects, would hesitate a moment.

(Gilpin, 1792, p.7-8)

The theme of a graffitied, concrete picturesque is carried into the next image, made within the same structure of the underpass, with a set of steps that leads out to an unseen environment. Power lines stretch across the patch of blue sky as a reminder of the omnipresence of pylons. I am concerned that this image does not contribute enough to the sequence but I see this image as a companion to the former. Like the images of the wheels, I might place these images opposite one another. The theme of concrete structure continues with an image of a tagged concrete block, again a mark of urban identity, set against the bank of a road set with bushes

and a wooden fence. Street furniture establishes the presence of a road. This image was part of an incomplete sequence of images of blocks that were placed on either side of a path to prevent travellers from setting up camp. This block sits opposite the concrete building in the sixth image. I was drawn to the preventative function, incongruous presence and also to the unintended sculptural qualities of these objects that lie there in sheer ugliness in this unkempt fragment of landscape enclosed by both the A50 and the M1.



Fig 5.44 First edit for the book. Possible images: 10 to 14 with other options

My description of this sequencing represents my method and train of thought. I am drawing together both the appearance of objects in the images and the mode of their representation in an attempt to make meaning between them. Groups of images are switched around. Images are replaced with others. Some images are removed altogether. This eventually culminates in the following selection as indicated by the top line of prints (and includes the image of the hidden tyre below the tyre on grass). Though I recognise that there are some inconsistencies with colour, the sequence below represents a decision based on related objects and their meanings.

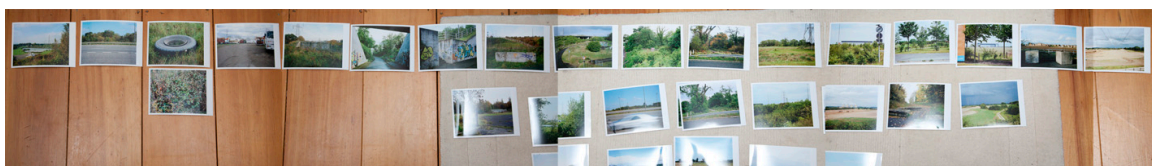


Fig 5.45 First edit for the book. Complete sequence

Re-editing

A day after establishing this sequence I realise that I am not content with it. I leaf through these images and lay them out again. The exercise has been useful in that it has allowed me to discuss significance and relationships, but I am not convinced that what I had achieved was the best sequence for these images. Colours and tones of some do not flow well into others since the seasons and weather conditions seem out of sync. Images such as that of the covered tyre next to the standmans' store are not convincing. I feel a crisis at this point since I begin to think that the images I have made over two years will not lend themselves to coherent meaning. They do not fit together. They seem too disparate. The relationships I have tried to make between them seems forced and I now doubt the meanings I bestowed upon them. I also feel that the sequence is somehow unfaithful to the way the images have been made in the first place since they sit out of their original relationships with one another. I need to revisit the sequencing. I take the selected images and lay them out according to the chronological sequence in which they were photographed (fig 5.46). I also include an image from the shoot of 10th October 2010 that I had overlooked (6th image from the left in the top row).



Fig 5.46 Re-edit 1

This layout presents the work in blocks of images that keep the qualities of the images in a more consistent relationship. However, I am not convinced that the three earliest images (3rd May 2010) are the best place to start. They do not set up the theme of the project in the way that the image of the pools followed by the roads seems to. Furthermore, the image of the two concrete blocks with houses in the background, though I think it has meaning, does not fit the theme that

is present throughout the other images since it is the only image that refers to domesticity. I decide to remove this image altogether. I also then replace the three earliest images with the three images made shortly after: the pools, the open road and the image with the grey lamp, trees and pylon. The placement of the image of the pools retains my original idea for the sequence (fig 5.47).



Fig 5.47 Re-edit 2

I am still not content with this sequence. The first two images work well for reasons already discussed. The addition of the third image includes its own narrative between the three objects and other objects that are implied but not visible. The lamp that appears in the bottom right corner of frame is directed towards something outside the image. Light makes things visible to perception, but what ever this lamp illuminates is concealed beyond the frame of the image. The line of trees obscure the view to whatever landscape lies there. They also stand in between the pylon that is used to deliver electricity that the lamp that will consume. To what extent a viewer will be able to piece together my narrative I am not sure. Perhaps it will remain a private narrative. However, it reinforces the theme of concealment in the landscape that is also present in the previous image with a similar use of trees that provide a screen between the road and the landscape beyond it.

I also switch the fourth and fifth images since I am not happy that the third image leads into the image of the underpass in a way that can suggest a realistic narrative (fig 5.48).



Fig 5.48 Re-edit 3

The fourth to seventh images were all shot on the same day (3rd May 2010) though I shuffle their original order around (fig 5.49).



Fig 5.49 Re-edit. Images 4 to 7

Image 4 presents a view of a non-place that only serves a purpose in being a corridor between other things (i.e. the M1 and the A50). It is in the same location as two images of the underpass (which is below my feet during this shot) and others such as the concrete block and the building with PRICE painted on its walls. Many other such images have been made within a few meters of this site. This space is punctuated with signs and marks that give instructions and concrete blocks and fences that prohibit access and gates and tracks that allow it. It represents an ordering of a landscape that is fragmented from the wider environment by the roads that define it. This sense of an ordered landscape that is dominated by built objects now leads into the two images of the underpass. The significance of these two images has been discussed. The lead from the second underpass image relates to the stored fair ground rides through the relationship between the graffiti and the illustrations and legends that cover the trucks and trailers. The progression from this image to the image of the discarded wheel and the image of the hidden

tyre works by association with the trucks. There is also a sense in which the discarded wheel and tyre lie to one side, out of use, in way that these rides and vehicles are also out of use, stored and put to one side, for now, covered up and concealed from view.

The autumnal appearance of the brambles in the image of the concealed tyre allows a link to follow through to the next image of the road, barrier, bollards and trees. This image, along with image of the pools, is one that I consider key to the project. It sums up key themes of my approach to the project in my adoption of the picturesque used to describe a landscape that is defined by the presence of roads. The significance of this image, in both my method and the objects that are visible, is apparent in the voice recording taken during the making of this photograph:

So here I'm playing off the industrial appearance of the streetlights, the road, the metal barrier, and the pylon of course, the pylon is a recurrent theme, against the appearance of this knackered old ash and also the picturesque quality of the Autumn leaves. I want to retain that hardened edge of the industry [industrial].

(21st October, 2010)

This idea of “playing off” one thing against the other implies that I perceive that there are two different or even opposing classes of thing represented in the image. I have discussed the idea of play in my account on photographing. It means that I am using the camera to describe relationships between objects that are at odds with one another. This image presents two classes of thing; the natural and the industrial. The appearing of the natural objects relate to the conventions of picturesque landscape and in being so they are associated with art and history. In contrast to these objects, the synthetic objects: the road, the barrier, the bollards, the streetlights, relate to industry, commerce and the present or recent past. There is nothing dignified about the appearing of the things, they serve purely functional purposes and demonstrate little aesthetic intention. In the ordering that these objects impose on the landscape they are set against an arrangement of trees that would not look out of place in a painting by Constable or Gainsborough. For me, through the adoption of picturesque/pastoral modes of

representation, it has presented a critique of the setting-upon of the landscape that has informed the whole project. Due to this it has been a benchmark by which I have measured other images.

As I look at the relationship between this image and the next one, of a concrete cube set upon grass against a path, trees, road and pylon, I realise that this image is out of sync. It does not belong to this shoot. It was taken at the same time as *Pink Box*, 25th May 2011. It will serve a much better function before *Pink Box* as it extends the theme of concrete in the previous images and, in with the cube shape and the colour of the image, it will be consistent with this image. I'm not sure if I need to keep it at all since I think other images contribute similar meanings more effectively (i.e. permission, access, energy). I keep it for now.

This means that the sequence of these images is as follows (fig 5.50):



Fig 5.50 Re-edit 3. Images 10 to 14

Image 14 shows a pink graffitied mouth that has been painted on a telecommunication inspection box. This strange pink box (originally a dull to blend in with the surroundings) stands against the picturesque appearance of the trees. The presence of the path and the streetlights to the left of the frame indicates (maybe too subtly) the presence of a road in the frame and the point of view. The appearing of the trees in this image stands against those in the next image. Likewise the presence of this small, odd, pink box stands against the huge, impersonal, box-like industrial building in the next image (image 14, fig 5.51). There is no sympathy between these images in terms visual qualities. The things that relate between them are the trees and the box-like objects in each (as well as the strip of road to the left of the first image against the dominant orange strip in the next image), but they do so in opposition rather than accord. Where the trees

in the Pink Box image take on the naturally occurring quality promoted in picturesque garden design, the trees in the *.com* image take on a regimented appearing that is closer to Capability Brown (see figs 4.16 and 4.17).

As I have discussed in my discussion on post-production, the three images that appear at this stage of the sequence have a pre-conceived order. It is as if they are a sub-work in the overall work, not unlike the discarded wheel/tyre images.



Fig 5.51 Re-edit 3. Images 14 to 16

The “.com” image has particular significance and sets the location for the next two images that are associated with it. It incorporates meaning that contributes further to the aims of the project. The legend “.com” signifies a commercial environment and relates to the virtual market place. I have framed the building so that it is exactly central across the image (fine tuned in post-production). I have placed the horizon on the centre line of the image to lend consistency with the other images but also to present a matter-of-fact quality to the presence of this object, to present the position of this thing as central in the image, central as in position and also as the object of attention. The left tree cuts across the left side of the building, being pushed out of its position in its role of a framing device by the edge of orange hoarding. As opposed to Poussin’s use of trees to frame the view of a distant landscape or building these trees are intended to conceal the view of the building and mark the threshold between public space and private property. They have none of the characteristics of Poussin’s willowy saplings or the grace of his ancient specimens (see fig 5.20). They are industry regulation trees that been bought off the shelf for immediate effect. The gulf that separates the foreground to the building is a waste of open, unused land as opposed to Poussin’s calm lake. The proud civic building that stands over

this landscape is here replaced by a windowless monolith that speaks of mass-production in its unitised construction. As in other images I have made, Poussin's painting *Landscape with Calm* (1650-51), has informed this image, but it has so in opposition, as a playing-off or setting against, rather than in sympathy. This painting has remained an influence, a precedent to making (an *eidos*), throughout the whole project.

The two following images in this sub-sequence extend this difference from the picturesque and the pastoral: the earth bank, the placement of weeds on top that look like feeble versions of Poussin's majestic trees, the area of waste land beyond. These things stand against a distant silver fence, two pylons and fully formed trees in that indicate an inaccessible, more fertile landscape. In the next image the modular-type trees screen rather than frame the scene, the road sign warning road users of horse riders replaces the presence of travellers and livestock that often appear in the picturesque and pastoral representations of landscape.

The next three images close the sequence of the work (fig 5.52):



Fig 5.52 Re-edit. Images 17 to 19

Images 17 and 18 are placed in close location with each other, both sites being a few hundred meters from the previous images, hence their position in the sequence since they were made during the same shoot. The image with the industrial building presents young bushes that have been planted to re-naturalise the area surrounding this site of industry. I have placed the building in the frame so that it is exactly horizontal and evenly spaced on either side of the frame emphasising the ordering of the industrial environment. This plays off the more random

appearing of the bushes and trees that have been planted to mask the changes to this environment. The sign-post, part of the ordering of this landscape, seems to be sinking into the random forms of this new growth. The pylon in the distance continues its presence through the sequence of the work. This is an environment that is in the early stages of softening and concealing the ordering that has been set upon it.

The penultimate image of the sequence plays (image 18) off the appearing of the natural against the industrial. I have positioned the line of mature trees through the centre of the image, with the tallest tree, what looks like an old oak, dead centre. These trees and the open expanse of wetland in the foreground appear to be occurring more naturally than the rather forced vegetation of the previous image but I am ambivalent about their appearing. I am not sure to what extent I can call any of this natural. These trees predate the pylon that stands against them, and where I emphasise this flat wet area, and the trees, I have placed the pylon to one side, as if it is pushing itself into the frame. Without the pylon, this image has the appearance of the Norfolk fens rather than South Derbyshire. With the pylon this pastoral appearing is placed in relation to an omnipresent industry, commerce and the consumption of energy. Even to one side, and truncated, this visible fragment of the pylon dominates the meaning of this image. It anticipates the severe flattening and ordering of the final image of the sequence. Fig 5.53 (overleaf) represents the complete sequence.

I relate the final image of the sequence to the first. The environment in the first image has already been through the massive extraction of earth and stone that this environment is about to go through. The landscape is not under a Constable sky or a warm glow of sunlight, but under more of a brooding and darker layer of cloud and flat light. References to the pastoral, such as the trees to the right and the fields in the distance are pushed to the margins of the frame. The ordering and treatment of the land is emphasised by the symmetry of the pylon and the power lines. The presence of the tyre tracks, the trucks, the built up banks to either side, the discarded barrel to the left of the frame, the fence at the foot of the image, the wide flat area of naked earth underneath the power lines and the regular shape of the mound of earth to right of the

pylon, all signify a landscape that is in the process of being reduced, by a process of ordering, to a product rather than a place.

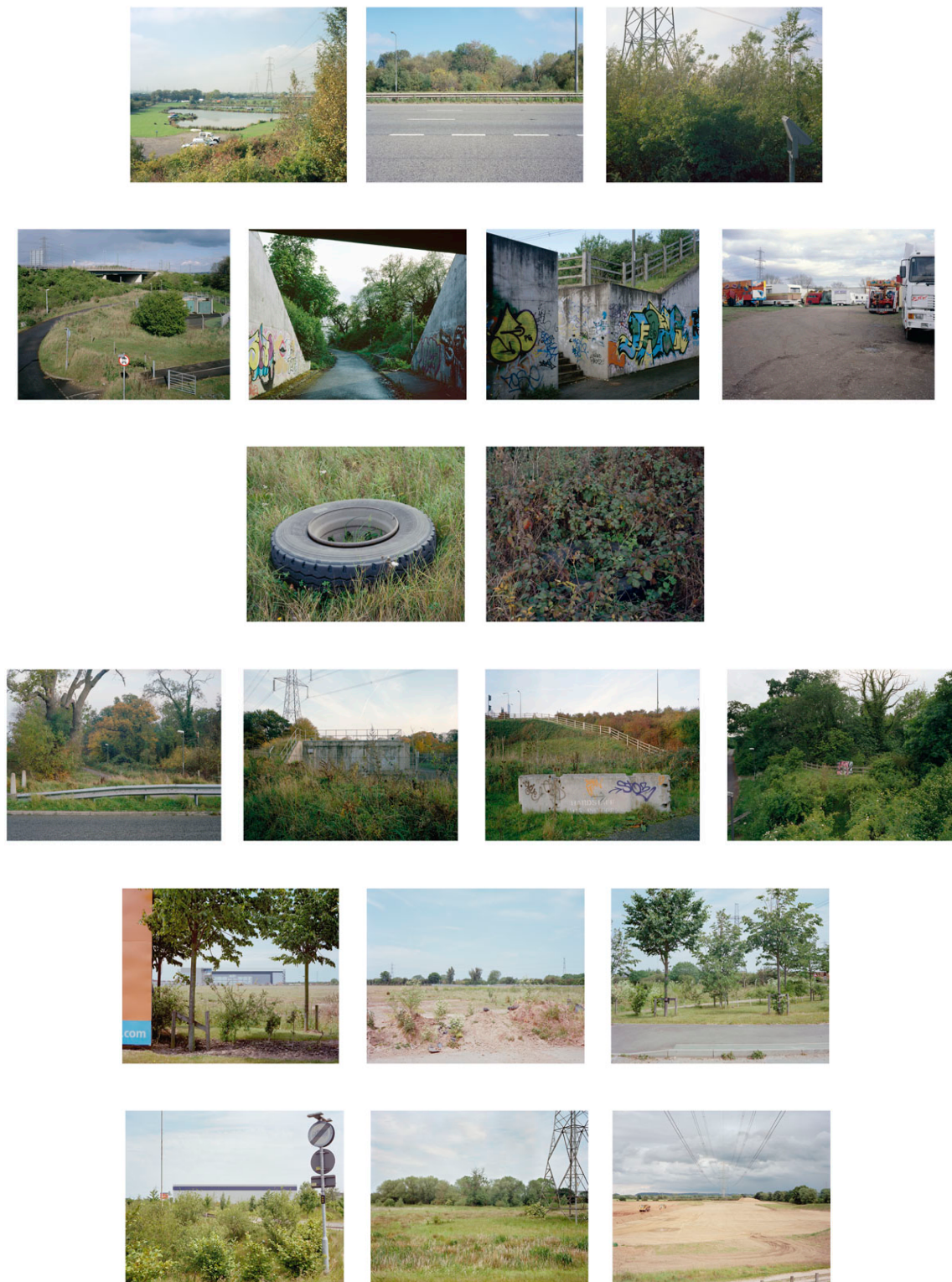


Fig 5.53 Re-edit 3. The complete sequence.

Since the method of presentation is a book, these images will be viewed one by one. They will not be visible all at once in this manner.

Even as I write this I am drawn into thinking about this landscape, and others, according to Heidegger's description of natural resources as standing-reserve. Both first and last images in the sequence represent the setting-upon and using up of natural resources that Heidegger referred to in his description of Enframing where the earth is regarded as standing-reserve to be extracted, stored and consumed. I realise in writing this that I am in danger of imposing my theory of making (i.e. that presented by Heidegger) with the theme of the work itself. However, where I refer to Heidegger's theory above, I do so in relation to what making as a bringing-forth is opposed to; that making as *poiesis* is the unconcealing of the setting-upon of Enframing.

Making the Book

I start to work on making the book. I lay a print on a page to assess its position. I measure it up. I make a template so that all the images sit in the same place on each page. I assemble the prints and check the sequence. Even now I question the significance of the images and their sequence. I decide to remove one after all: the image of the square concrete block. I don't think this image signifies what I want it to or what I read into it when I discussed the meaning of these images and the rationale for their sequencing. I double-check the order of images. I work through the book, reviewing my images as I go and carefully placing and sticking them in position. The last image I fix in position is the cover image. When I have completed pasting the images into the book I put it to one side under stack of books to let the glue dry.

A little later I take a look through the book. I think how the images read and what they mean. I am so familiar with these images that the sequence holds no surprises for me. I am still not entirely confident about some relationships between them. I am not content with the image of the pink box – its relationship to the previous image and the image that follows it. The characteristics of the image are too different without having enough qualities that allow it to

relate to these other images. I am concerned that the image of the wheel and the image of the hidden tyre are inconsistent in the sequence since all the other images represent a ground to sky relationship. I feel a great sense of doubt about the work, as individual images and as a collection, as though it does not add up to the significance that I intended it to have. I want to make new photographs that overcome the shortcomings of these images and their presence as a work. I am not sure that Heidegger's account of the four causes takes account of doubt about one's work. Is it a theory that only applies to good work? Even so, as an exercise of making what has making this book provided me?

About four weeks have passed since I last looked at the book in detail. I open it now and read through this chapter to see what I have said. I describe the book as a failure, which seems a deeply unsatisfactory way to end. I need to find some way of resolving the project. I look again at the books by Soth and Davies. I note and revel in the relationships between the images that face one another. I look again at the spread of images in fig 5.53. I read the comments I made when selecting and editing the images. The continuous sequence in which I have arranged the images in the book, where each image, being pasted onto the overlying page, is blind to the previous image and the one that proceeds it. When I was selecting and editing the images I paid a great deal of attention to how each image related to the one that came before and the one after. As fig 5.53 shows, I eventually conceived of the work as a collection of images in 6 groups, of between 2 and four images per group. I think now that the main inadequacy is in this presentation, as it does not present the images in a way that is at all sympathetic to the decisions I was making when editing. Images do not face each other as they do in Soth's and Davies' books, thereby allowing relationships between images that are visible at once to be established by the viewer. I think that this is where the most significant failure of the work may lie: that in sitting in isolation from one another, the relationships between the images that I have discussed cannot be formed.

In order to identify where the book as a work failed, and how, if at all, I can provide a remedy, I need to consider how this relates to the methods of making described in the four causes. Each

individual image is a component of matter out of which the work is made. Along with the physical qualities of the book, the prints are the stuff the work is made out of. But they have a significance that goes beyond the qualities of the book since they are images that a viewer will both look at and look into. A photograph, being an image, is more than the physical sum of its parts. It is a representation of something much greater than what, in itself, it is. Its quality as matter (*hyle*) lies both in its qualities as an object but also as an image of something; it borrows this from the thing(s) it represents. The photograph is a representation of something once present but most likely absent. This is what Barthes (1980), in *Camera Lucida*, called the *noeme* of photography.

This book is not just a collection of things called photographs; it is also a collection of landscapes. Whilst each of these images has its own quality of form (*eidos*), each also contributes to the work as a particle of matter (*hyle*). In other words, it is the manner of the collection and arrangement (i.e. the drawing together) of the images as matter that gives the work its overall aspecting or nature (*eidos*). The intended purposing (*telos*) of the book is as an art work that presents a critique on the representation of landscape (in the sense of both the visual representation of landscape and the landscape as a physically constructed representation). If the work is at all effective, these narratives tell of how the landscape is defined by the presence of roads. If these narratives are present to myself and other viewers then the work is effective in drawing upon the discourses (*logos*) attached to art and the construction and management of the physical landscape. If all these causes are satisfied then the work can be said to unconceal some condition of the landscape in the mode of *poiésis*. I make no great claims for the work, but if it can move towards the slightest unconcealment of the representation and condition of landscape, then the work has achieved a degree of success.

The discourse (*logos*) of the book is related to the wider history of the representation of landscape that defines the overall practice of image making. This also provides me with a way of describing the problem with the first presentation of images in book form: this being that the drawing together of the images was not sensitive enough to their qualities (as *hyle*), as material

out of which the sequence was constructed, nor to the form of the book (as *eidos*). As it was, it did not seem to me to provide a narrative of the concerns of landscape unconcealment, or draw effectively on the discourse of art and environment.

Presented in groups, as edited (see fig 5.53), the collection now stands a chance at providing narratives on landscape, these narratives being related to the theme of roads and how they define the landscape through their immediate visual presence in the image, or how their influence is implied by the presence of other related things, such as an embankment, vehicles, barriers, signs, architecture and the quarries that supply the raw materials used in road building.

I do not mean to claim that these images are perfect, neither the editing, but it seems that I have overlooked the means of presentation, this being key to the *aspecting* (*eidos*) of the work. This is *eidos* in the true sense since it does not refer to a static appearance of a thing but describes the way in which the appearing occurs in a temporal manner. It can apply to the presentation of this work both temporally, as I imagine how a viewer would negotiate his or her way through the images, and poetically as the images dwell in the mind of the viewer and where the viewer builds relationships between them. Out of this event. I imagine how meaning may occur, that is, an unconcealing might take place, even if only gently and ever so slightly.

I gaze at the six groups of images. I look through the book again. I question the relationships between the images in the six groups. Each of the six groups incorporate images that were taken on the same day apart from the image of the pink box, the end image of the 4th group. This stands out in this group due to an obvious inconsistency with season. The first three images are all Autumnal, as is evident in the colours of the foliage. I placed this image at the end of this sequence due to the image of the graffitied concrete block that came before it. I like this image of the pink box: it looks incongruous, like a wild beast fenced in and unable to escape back into the wild. The urban quality of the graffiti stands against the lush greenery that surrounds it. There are threads which relate it to the other images of this group: it includes a fence or barrier, it includes a hand marked box-like object that sits against natural forms that

surround it. But it doesn't fit this group. It was taken at a different time of year to the other images and it shows. It is inconsistent and distracts from whatever thread lies between the remaining three images of this group. Therefore, no matter that I think the image has meaning on its own and relates constructively to the theme of the project, it has aspects to it interrupt rather than contributes to the group. I will remove it from the edit.

The selection now consists of 18 images in 6 defined groups. The book will need to be remade in a way that will emphasise the nature of the groups of images. The images will need to be presented so that all the images in one group can be viewed at once. This needs to be done physically in order to properly realise how the edit should have been presented and how, in the manner of Soth and Davies, the images can be viewed in relation to each other.

I take a knife to the book and start to carefully trim the pages after the first image of each group. Then I cut and fold thin pieces of the paper to form hinges for each image. I then paste the hinges and pages together so that each image from each group is attached together. I do this in stages so that the glue can set. I close the book and place some more books on top of it to help the glue bond the pages as it dries. After half an hour I start again and complete the re-presentation of the images. I let the glue dry for a while before I open the book to assess it. Each time I mentally re-assess the book and try to weigh up its presentation. It now looks in poor shape, clearly subjected to modification, but it makes me realise that I need to address the presentation in a more considered way. A standard A4 size sketchbook will not suffice; the size and proportions of the pages do not lend themselves to a satisfying positioning of the images on each page. The singular presentation of each image in sequence does not lend itself to the building up of relationships between images. As a maquette it has served a purpose. As a work, it lacks refinement. In other words, it lacks the drawing together of the images in a format that is adequate to the work in the mode of a book. In order to satisfy the requirements of this drawing together I need to make a bespoke book and reassess how the images will be grouped and presented.

Third attempt – a bespoke solution

I decide to make a book out of watercolour paper, cut and folded to precise proportions depending upon how an image sits on a page. I layout my images again and consider how I want them to appear. As a result of this I also reassess the inclusion of one image that I edited out of the sequence and also reassess the position of some other images. I work towards resolving a modification of the sequence (see fig 5.54). The image of the pink box surrounded by trees, now appears as the image 4 in the sequence, replacing what I have now made the image 7. This image, the view over an area between the A50 and the M1, with a cycle track, gates, fences and signs, now precedes the image of the trucks. The images of the discarded wheel and hidden tyre now follows this, keeping the theme of haulage and industrial road use and the landscape as a dumping ground for broken equipment. These images now form three sequences as laid out above. The first sequence includes the first two images of the previous sequence but now also includes the image of a screen of trees with a pylon and lamp.



Fig 5.54 Image groups 1, 2 and 3 (bottom four images)

These images were taken on the same day. For me, they hold a theme based on the transformation of the landscape, this is consistent with my discussion above with the addition of image 3 that presents an image of trees that screen the road from the surrounding landscape. The image of the pink box is now placed after this image since there is an association with the presence of electric lights in both and the presence of trees that provide a sense of the “country” or a fragment of a pastoral landscape. I have discussed the significance of this image above. It now sits before the image of a framed view through an underpass that runs under the A50. The pink box, out of frame in this image, is situated to the right of this image. There are clues to the geographic relationship between these images that is present in the street lamps and the road. The next image shows a set of steps that lead out of this graffiti covered concrete structure. This leads me out of the underpass and to the position of the next image. I might ask too much from a viewer to make these relationships, but I now have a sequence that, at least according to my own experience of this place, presents a set of relationships and a narrative that makes sense to me. I build this narrative upon the relationship between objects that repeat and relate from one image to another (e.g. lights, trees, roads, tyres, trucks, buildings, gravel pits).

Another change in the sequence is in the images that make up the fourth sequence:



Fig 5.55 Sequences 4, 5 and 6

I have kept the image of the road, barrier and trees in this position but have swapped the second and third image (see fig 5.55). This is because the concrete block in the second image is placed on a similar horizontal position to the grey steel barrier in the previous image. Both objects are barriers of some kind. The first being related to road safety, the second being related to property and prohibiting travelers from setting up camp. The street furniture indicates the presence of a road in the upper parts of the image. The third image of this sequence shows a low concrete building with a hand rail atop. Trees and a pylon stand behind. Street lights indicate the presence of yet another road. Between the building and the point of view lie overgrown weeds and a metal fence that surrounds the building. On the wall of the building graffiti has been applied that reads "PRICE" and includes an illustration of a traditional gypsy caravan (see fig 5.56 for detail). This image now leads into the first image of the fifth sequence. This image has also been discussed above. However, the link between these two images is the presence of utility architecture surrounded by natural forms, albeit in very different states. A more subtle relationship is that of the graffitied word "PRICE" against the presence ".com" at the foot of the hoarding this next image. This might elude the attention of many viewers, but for myself it suggests a theme of commerce and consumption of the landscape that is consistent throughout the project.



Fig 5.56 Image group 4, image 4.3, detail

The new order of images comprising of 5 sequences is represented below (fig 5.57):



Fig 5.57 Revised sequence

A New Book

I experimented with methods of presentation and eventually decided on a book that could be opened out, presenting the whole sequence in its entirety or where the images could be looked at in their sequences. Each image lightly is marked in pencil indicating the sequence and image order. The page sizes were planned according to the space surrounding each image on the page and the space between each image. Further additions are a title page, a short introduction at the start of the book and at the rear I have included a list of illustrations with brief details, a map showing the location of each image and a map showing the general location of photographing. The following images represent the appearance of the book and how the construction allows the images to be viewed in groups (also see Appendix 2, p.460 onwards).



Fig 5.58 Book cover

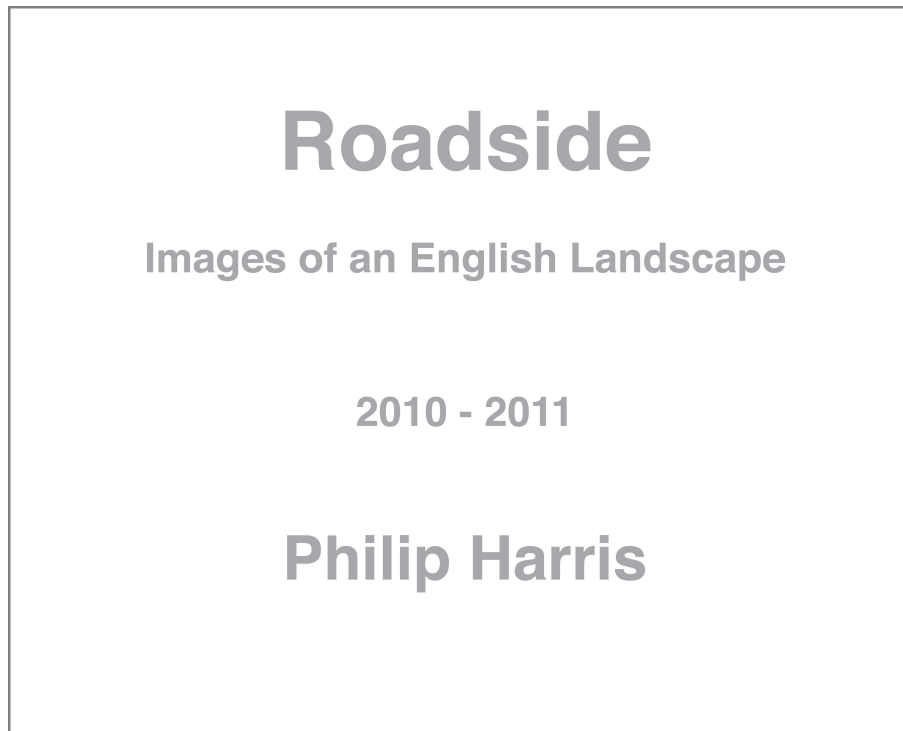


Fig 5.59 Title page

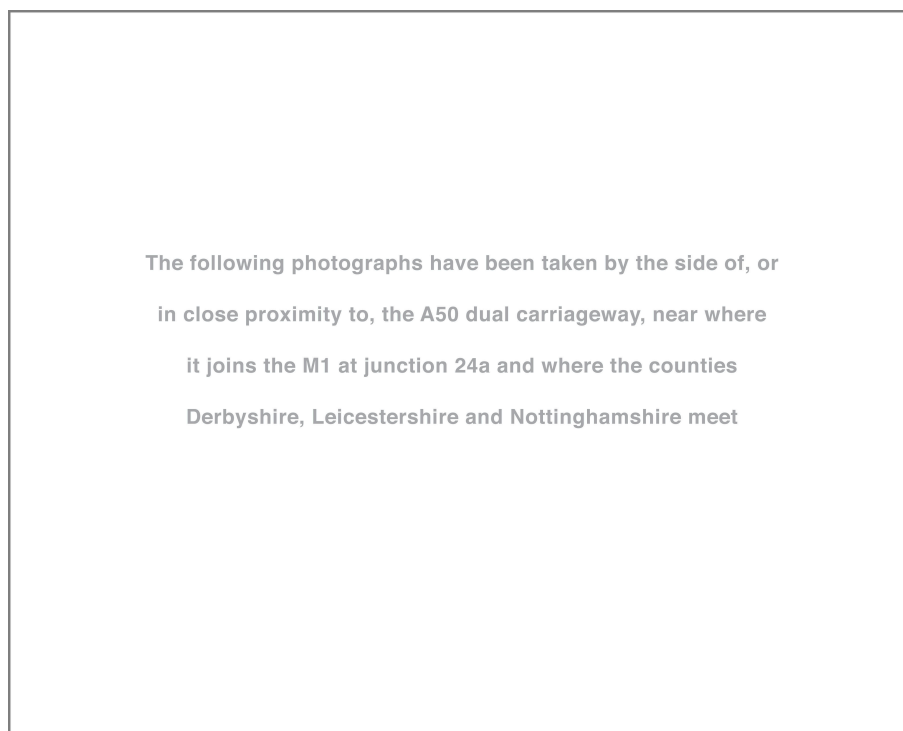


Fig 5.60 Short statement prefacing the images



Fig 5.61 Title page with short statement



Fig 5.62 Image group 1



Fig 5.63 Image group 2



Fig 5.64 Image group 3



Fig 5.65 Image group 4



Fig 5.66 Image group 5



Fig 5.67 Image group 6

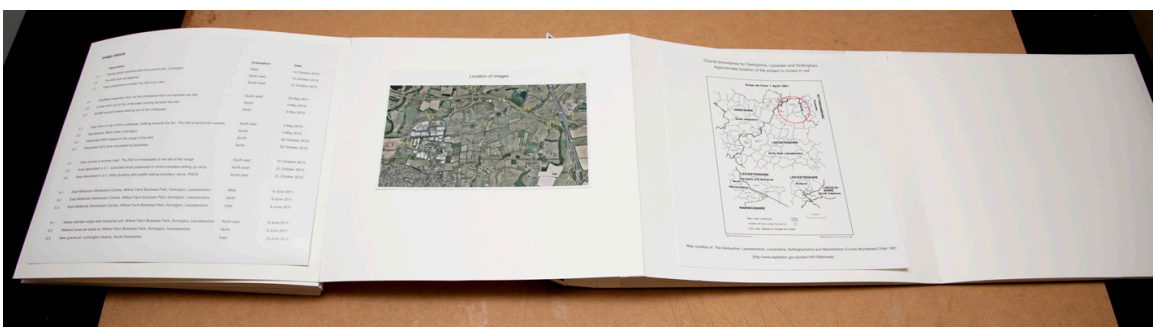


Fig 5.68 End pages: image details and maps



Fig 5.69 Structure of the book

This hand made book now represents an outcome that seems to be a far more convincing presentation of the project. It represents a more convincing drawing together of images, materials and aspect of the work. In so doing it seems to show, at least to myself, a sense in which a discourse upon the representation of landscape makes itself present. It is not perfect. There are mistakes such as the alignment of pages not being exact. I also made mistakes along the way to making book such as gluing the leaves in the wrong way to reveal the hinge towards the front of the page instead of hiding behind. But the object that I have now made has a work-like quality that has achieved due to a more keenly observed drawing together of matter (*hyle*), aspecting (*eidos*), purposing (*telos*) and discourse (*logos*).

The stages of making this work has involved frustration and eventually a degree of satisfaction that a purposeful and adequate outcome had been finally been achieved. The process of making involved repeated re-evaluation of the images and their sequencing. This required that I considered the relationship between images in a more formal way than I had done when I reflected upon single images or when I reflected on the images as they appeared within the context of shooting on the contact image files. The process of thinking through, finding and making relationships between images, required that I draw out possible meanings of objects,

their relationships to other objects and the mode of their representation to a depth that I had not attempted before. It required that I work towards the significance of the images, to draw out the meaning of objects that appeared in the images, and the mode of their appearing, through discourse, relating the images to pre-existing works of art and methods of representation. The first attempt at selection and sequencing resulted in what seemed like a failure to me. It did not offer, as a work, a critique of an unconcealing of the setting-upon of landscape that I had desired. The second attempt, where the book was cut up and re-assessembled produced a much more coherent and cohesive work. The presentation of images, the *eidos* of the whole work, was now in the manner intended through the decisions made in editing and selecting. It has the appearance of a work that has been achieved through a more sensitive perception of the qualities (*eidos*) of the images, the things represented (*hyle*) and the meaning (*logos*) between the images, the groups and within the whole sequence.

The first book, that only allowed a single image to be viewed at a time, was insufficient because images could not be seen in relationship to one another. The final book, where the whole structure, dimensions and appearance of the book have been considered, has resulted in an object that has the *telic* finality of a work. The images seem to have meaningful relationships to one another provided by the ability to view them singularly, in groups and as a complete sequence. In doing so, at least to my eyes, it reveals the mixed up, multitudinous uses, misuses and appearances of a fragment of an English landscape. In doing so, even if slightly, the work works to unconceal these qualities of the landscape. In its present form the work moves towards a potential for unconcealment, in the mode of *poiésis*, of *alétheia*. This is not to say that the work, the individual images or the groups, are perfect or correct in a way that is certain or concrete, but that the work has achieved coherence according to the Four Causes. The failure of the work has been averted due to a more careful, sensitive and considered drawing together, or navigation, of the causes. To what extent the work reveals the danger or the saving power, I do not think, as the maker, I am in a position to judge. This would be too great a claim for me to make for the work. Benjamin wrote that for an artwork to have meaning it “must be inserted into

the context of living social relations” (Benjamin, 1982 [1934], p.17). I suggest therefore that such a claim for any work has to be made by its audience.¹²¹

Conclusion

The research for this chapter has thrown up some unexpected outcomes. The first surprise was presented by the activity of photographing itself since my accounts did not provide evidence of the depth of experiences of making that I assumed that they would carry. However, in terms of the methodology of the four causes even this failure presents relevant evidence, and perhaps makes this evidence the more pertinent because of it. Heidegger’s description of the theory of the four causes and the example he gives of the silversmith seems to assume utter competence and consummate craftsmanship. Neither does his description seem to account for the doubt and uncertainty that I have experienced. This is not particular to me since uncertainty appears many times in the conversations by image-makers I discuss in Chapter Two. When asked about his working practices Walker Evans replied:

As I said, by instinct, like a bird, entirely by instinct. Like a squirrel too, burying and hiding, and diving where the nuts are. I’ve been doing this all the time. But I find it inhibiting to discuss this. It suggests speculation, and doubt, doubt of my own sure instinct.

(Evans & Katz, 1981 [1971], p.365)

Not only does Evans raise the issue of doubt, he does so in a way that implies that discourse can cause doubt in an otherwise instinctual process. The statement also seems to validate the limitations that I found with my records of image making. Evans’ instinctual process of photographing implies an activity of photographing that does not halt for reflection or to question the image in relation to theme or significance. This would imply that doubt and uncertainty are a characteristic of discourse (logos). This remains unclear in the Four Causes.

¹²¹ This theme is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is, however, the next logical step for further research.

Chapter 6

Conclusion: Causing Photographs

In my account of making I have provided a description of the activities that contribute to the making of a work of photography. Throughout the accounts I have discussed my experience of making in relation to Heidegger's account of the four causes of making. I have argued that the material (*hyle*) of which photographs are made are the things that I photograph as much as the materials and equipment used to make photographs. I refer here to photographing as "taking" since images are indeed taken away from the things to which they owe themselves. I realise that I risk belittling the practice of photographing by referring to it as taking. It suggests a form of consumption of the landscape where nothing is given back in return. On the other hand, as I demonstrate in chapter 5, the process of making photographs involves much more than the act of photographing. It involves the drawing together of materials (*hyle*) in the form of an aspect (*eidos*), governed by discourse (*logos*) with the aim of producing a coherent body of work, that is, an artwork (*telos*). To avoid Enframing, the art in the work indeed needs to work. Like Heidegger's silversmith, the practice of making as an unconcealing, as opposed to Enframing, remains in debt to the material that has been used to make the work. Regarded in this way, my book of photographs remains in debt to the appearing of the things (as material, *hyle*) that I photographed and the condition by which this appearing has come about (i.e. road building, gravel extraction, construction of industrial estates and management of the soft estate to conceal and soften these things). Until the work is made, nothing is yet given back to the things (*hyle*) from which the images have been taken. What can be given back, or contributed by the work, is a presentation that at least attempts to unconceal the conditions of landscape. This attitude towards material (*hyle*) in the four causes presents a method whereby this sense of debt to the things that have been taken comes to the surface of making. It also strikes an accord with other theories of making (e.g. Barthes *Death of the Author*, 1977 [1968]; Benjamin's *Author as Producer*, 1982 [1933]) where the maker is not regarded as the sole originator of the work,

but is a conduit through which the work allows the pre-existing qualities of objects (as the material, (*hyle*) out of which the images are made) to become apparent to the viewer via careful consideration of their properties and the method of their presentation. The presentation, in the four causes, takes place in the aspecting (*eidos*) of the work.

Since aspecting (*eidos*) involves origins and precedents it also involves the significance of these things, just as the silversmith considers the original or ideal chalice as the model that his or her chalice will refer to. Aspecting (*eidos*) therefore is not just a drawing together of all the objects that appear for appearances sake, but it also requires a drawing together of the significance of these objects and the precedents of their previous appearing. In the case of my project the precedents of appearing are those that appeared in my formative years and the historical representations of landscape images and the ideas that inform the meaning of landscape. Without this the images are in no position to offer anything other than representation as a form of consumption. In the case of my photographic project I have drawn upon the tradition of the picturesque as a representational mode that endures in the representation of landscape. It appears in popular representations of landscape and in the way landscape is perceived and managed. It therefore provided a foil to set the real appearing of the landscape against. A related precedent of landscape is the conception of nature, hence my critique of Clark's idea of a differentiated nature that I align, not with universal aesthetic appreciation, but with social order and landscape as property. In this view, landscape is dependent upon the ordering and uses that human beings impose upon it. The anthropology of Jackson presents a well-informed argument for how this has occurred and the way in which it is made manifest in the landscape. A further example of aspecting (*eidos*) is how the landscape in and around the highways of this country have been managed according to the principles of the picturesque, as I demonstrate in my discussion on landscape management of the Highway Agency. Therefore, where the material (*hyle*) of my photographs has drawn upon a very narrow location, the process of aspecting (*eidos*) has drawn from many sources that provide a complex view of landscape and its representations. In this way, the work may speak of the English landscape in general rather than a particular fragment of it.

These aspects (*eidōs*) are drawn together within the discourse (*logos*) on landscape. This represents the research that contributes to the aspecting (*eidōs*) of the things (*hylē*) that I photograph. The aim of this drawing together, the purposing of the work (*telos*), is to make a body of work that presents a critique of the use and management of the appearing of landscape. Critique might suggest too great an emphasis on judgement and finality to be properly sympathetic with Heidegger's philosophy. However, since the four causes challenge the sovereignty of authorship with the key requirement that making gives thanks to, and remains in debt to, precedents to making, it in turn signifies that critique never has the last word but remains in debt to the greater history of ideas and work in the manner of each other cause. This critique is selected and formed within the discourse (*logos*) of landscape as theory, concept and physical space and its representation. Within the context of my work, the critique of landscape that I adopt and draw upon, that circumscribes the work, owes itself to, and is a fragment of the greater discourse (*logos*) that defines the wider cultural understanding of landscape and its representation.

My aim in using the word critique is to suggest the purposing (*telos*) of my work as an intended (if not always achieved) unconcealing of a setting-upon of a landscape environment. I have avoided adopting the word *unconcealing* in my descriptions of making since it would have provided a confused methodology and I was aware that practice needed to be kept at arm's length from the methodology that was used to study it. Even so, the repeated use of landscape metaphors, and direct references to landscape that Heidegger uses indicated that his philosophy was not only relevant to making, it was also relevant to landscape.

I should also note that discourse (*logos*) does not just occur at the end of making. It is the discussion, questioning, argument and drawing together of ideas and the practices of making that appear throughout the whole experience. This is an important feature of Heidegger's recovery of Aristotle's theory that differs somewhat from its Latin interpretation. For Aristotle all the aspects of causation are active throughout making and continue to be present in the work

after it has been made. Since images continue to signify in ways that cannot be fixed by the maker, since significance is always greater than any one person can account for, the causes continue to be active in the work in the fluidity of the significances that other viewers will bring to the work. Where it seems to be suppressed during the activity of photographing, it appears very much before; during the research and reflection on landscape and its representation; and after, when I reflect upon the images I have made. It appears fully formed during the evaluation of images and the constructing of the images as a work where the material (*hyle*) of the images, the different strands of aspecting (*eidōs*) and the purposing (*telos*) of the work in its final presentation are drawn together. Its presence when photographing seems more silent, but it is there in the decisions I make regarding the drawing together of objects. Since discourse (*logos*) runs throughout making, and even when making per-se is not occurring (e.g. when I am driving to a shoot or when I am arrested by a view that has some kind of significance to me), it indicates a further key feature of making in that aspecting (*eidōs*) and purposing (*telos*) take place before any image is taken, or before any image is intended, since without discourse there would be no such thing as art in the first place. Critique is a name that I can put to the fragments of discourse that I make active within the formation of the work; it is a selective and fragmentary *logos* that nevertheless is picked upon, worked through and applied to gain and present some kind of understanding of what it is I am making a work about.

However, it could be argued that the four causes do not seem quite a complete theory since it does not seem to account for issues of doubt and failure. It seems that the four causes only apply to good work, where the work is made with consummate skill in a successful drawing together of matter (*hyle*), aspect (*eidōs*) and purpose (*telos*) through effective acknowledgement of the relevant discourse (*logos*). Issues of doubt, uncertainty and failure do not appear in Heidegger's account. But given that I regard my first book as a failure, even when I can effectively account for the appearing and transformation of matter into the form of photographs, and that I can discuss the presence of critique as the final purpose of the work, where did it fail? Where, in the sequence of events of making do I find doubt and uncertainty? How is it manifest in this theory of making?

Doubt, uncertainty and chance seem pivotal to making work. This is apparent in the conversations of many photographers that I discuss in Chapter 2. An exception is Hiroshi Sugimoto who stands out perhaps as a prime example of the efficacy of the four causes. But I find his account of making somewhat ingenuous. His account of making seems too tidy, too conclusive and seems to lack the activity of searching and finding and considering things as they appear in the world. His account lacks the sense of uncertainty that is apparent in others' accounts that I discuss (e.g. the Bechers, Wall, Burgin, Adams and Martins).

Uncertainty does not contribute to the theory of the four causes. They are related to excellence, what Aristotle also calls virtue. Therefore, if excellence is achieved in the work it follows that causation has been properly attended to throughout each stage (e.g. the proper materials have been used in the appropriate way; the aspecting of the work was carefully considered; the purposing of the work properly understood). This consideration and understanding is the discourse that appears throughout the process, as Heidegger wrote:

The silversmith considers carefully and gathers together the three aforementioned ways of being responsible and indebted.

(Heidegger, 1956, p.8)

In *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle wrote that “art [*techné*] requires a true source of reasoning.”

This reasoning is coupled with excellence:

Every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well: e.g. the excellence of the eye make both the eye and the work good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well.

(Aristotle, a: 350 BC, Book 6, Chapter 4).

So it would follow that if my work was not excellent, there was some lack of reasoning in my considering and gathering of the four causes; my eye is not as excellent as I was hoping it

would be, as is evident in the work. In *Metaphysics* (350 BC), Aristotle admits to this, suggesting that it is through the absence of effective attention to causation that the work fails:

Again, the same thing is the cause of contraries; for that which when present causes a particular thing, we sometimes charge, when absent, with the contrary, e.g. we impute the shipwreck to the absence of the steersman, whose presence was the cause of safety; and both - the presence and the privation - are causes as sources of movement.

(Aristotle, b: 350 BC, Book 5, 2)

It might be a little dramatic to describe passages of my making as shipwrecks, but Aristotle's metaphor raises the useful issue of navigation. The problem here is that making is often (and perhaps should always be) a journey into waters with charts that do not always seem clear, that do not show the way clearly. That making is a navigation into unfamiliar territory might seem to negate the four causes. On the other hand, my rebuilding of the book proved that careful attention to methods of presentation allowed me to produce an artefact that seems to me to be much more effective. The new book was subject to a revision of presentation. As a result, images can now be viewed together in relationship to one another. A sense of narrative seems to be in place afforded by the physical structure of the book, whereas before, these relationships did not seem to occur in a way that provided the quality of a coherent work. The new book involves a greater sense of occasion where the viewer negotiates its folds and can spread the pages to view images as single images, in groups or in the complete sequence. The final book has a work-like quality to it. The presentation of images, the drawing together of the individual images as fragments of matter (*hyle*), allows a narrative to be experienced between the images and a greater possibility of the building of meaning. My intended relationship between the first image as a restructured landscape post-quarrying, and the last image, in the process of being quarried, now stands a chance of being more readily available to a viewer (fig 6.1).



Fig 6.1 First and last images of the book

The four causes do not in themselves provide a means to avoid failure, relieve doubt or eradicate uncertainty. These are things that come with making art as much as they do any other activity where making something, bringing something out of concealment into unconcealment, is bound to produce uncertainty and be a source doubt. Until unconcealment has been achieved the aspect of the work will not be realised, it cannot be put to purpose or brought to bear against discourse. This finding is consistent with the conversations that I discuss in Chapter 2.

However, what the four causes provide that I think is especially valuable is a way towards making. To borrow Aristotle's examples of the risk of shipwreck (ibid), they provide a means of navigating the practices that contribute to the making of work. In *Nichomachean Ethics* (ibid), Aristotle provides the example of how a doctor will be more able to bring his patient back to health the more he or she knows about the human body and treatment, that is, the more he or she is indebted to the existing knowledge of human physiology and medicine the better he or she will be at practicing their craft and producing good health in their patients. Likewise, the more aware I am of the precedents of image making and of the ideas that inform my theme, the more I should be able to apply clear reasoning to my gathering of materials, the appearing of my images and so the ability for the work to unconceal the qualities of the landscape that I attend to. I am not aware of another theoretical model that provides this fusion between matter (*hyle*), aspecting (*eidos*), discourse (*logos*) and the destined purpose (*telos*) of the work.

I am aware that this leaves the further stages of Heidegger's essay open for consideration. However, I step away from any claims that my work can provide a way towards the *open*, the revealing of the *danger* or provision of the *saving power*. Whilst I aspire to make work that, in the Aristotelian sense, has virtue and that has significance and reveals meaning, to make such a claim is out of keeping with the humble sense in which Heidegger requires me, as a maker, to regard the world in which I live. I do not think that any maker is in any position to make such claims. These claims are for others to make, should they see fit. This might seem to place the maker in a permanent position of self-doubt. On the other hand, since, as Heidegger stresses in his essay, what can be unconcealed must at first be concealed, then what can be believed must arise out of an absence of belief, of non-belief, or doubt. Hence doubt remains central to making something that has yet to come into being.

The Contribution to Knowledge

As I have stated in the introduction to this thesis, my research has concerned the experiences of making a work of art in photography, specifically within the genre of landscape. My contribution to knowledge is a philosophical engagement of these experiences in order to present a theory of making. It is more accurate to state that I have adopted an already existing theory of making, an ancient one at that, and applied it to the experience of making a work of art in photography. This theory is Aristotle's description of the four causes of making (*Nichomachean Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, 340 BC), as interpreted by Martin Heidegger in his essay *The Question Concerning Technology* (1977 [1954]). The application of this theory, and its proven validity, is the point of my thesis. To conclude, I will summarise the main points of my research and evaluate the effectiveness of the theory in order to clearly set out my contribution to knowledge.

In the introduction, I described how existing photographic theory has concentrated upon the significance of the image to the exclusion of an engagement with the processes of making that brought about the image. Within my argument I take a particular attitude to image making that I want to make clear.

As presented in chapter 1, making has been discussed at length by photographers who employed photography primarily as a means of self-expression. Photographers such as Alfred Steiglitz (Sekula, 1982, p.99) and Minor White (1966 [1963]) expounded with great enthusiasm upon the creative potential of photography as a means of expressing the self through the representation of the external world. The issue (within the context of a critical practice), is that in dwelling too greatly upon the self, the maker isolates him or herself from the concerns of society. The critic Michael Fried (Fried, 1996 [1965]) described this isolation as a necessary condition of being an artist, in particular a painter, so that he or she could properly immerse him or herself within the specialist concerns of the practice without distraction. Such an attitude sets up making as an end-game that is unable to look beyond itself and engage with the world in a meaningful way. It therefore makes no constructive contribution to society or within the culture that art attests to contribute to. It is also incompatible with the theory of the four causes since the theory assumes the position of the maker as embedded with the social world and culture to which he or she belongs. This socially inclusive attitude does not just appear in Aristotle and in Heidegger, it also appears repeatedly in the critical theory associated with photography. Three statements stand out as prominent proponents of this view and have influenced my thinking throughout the thesis. The first is by Walter Benjamin, who stated that work

must be inserted into the context of living social relations.

(Benjamin, 1982 [1934], p.17).

This stands in opposition to Fried's theory. Benjamin places the event of meaning within the wider social sphere. The second statement, by Roland Barthes, describes how a work or a text is not a product of an individual author but of a culture where the maker acts as a conduit for pre-existing meaning:

Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations with dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is

one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.

(Barthes, 1977 [1968], p.148)

Hence, for Barthes, the production of meaning, like Benjamin, takes place with the active involvement of a reader/audience as opposed to being set and determined by the author/maker.

A statement made by Victor Burgin also resonates throughout the thesis:

Objects present to the camera are already in use in the production of meanings, and photography has no choice but to operate upon such meanings. There is, then, a pre-photographic production of meaning that must be accounted for.

(Burgin, 1982, p.47)

This statement provides a clear description of *aspecting* (*eidōs*) in that it describes precedents that contribute to the nature of photographic images. The meanings of things (*hyle*) have significance *before* they are photographed, not *because* they are photographed, and, as Burgin states, these meanings should inform the work. This is the function of chapter 4 of my thesis where I explore the cultural embeddedness of my own understanding of landscape and the wider history of the representation of landscape. This chapter is a drawing together of an *eidōs* and *telos* of landscape that informs chapter 5, where I describe my experiences of making.

All three statements by these theorists partially coincide with the theory of the four causes. What all three theorists do not engage with is the making of art works. Nor did they seek to, since their intentions lay in challenging established conventions of thought with regards the function of a work, i.e. the meaning of a work. This is the nub of my thesis: that where critical theorists have provided templates for the attitudes and responsibilities of the maker towards meaning, a theory of how making can take place within the context of these modes of thought has not been worked through in a significant way.

Although these statements set out a useful template for the *aspecting* (*eidos*) and *purposing* (*telos*) of work, they also present a potential problem with my thesis since they place the event of the production of meaning, not in the making (i.e. by the author), but in reception of the work (i.e. reading, viewing, spectating). A question that can be asked of my thesis is “why have I not discussed reception?” since this seems a pivotal aspect to the above statements. My defence here is that work has to be made in order for it to be received. Where reception has been subject to relatively thorough research (by these three writers and others), making has not, and as a result has remained theoretically insignificant. Furthermore, and by definition of the four causes, the image maker is required to partake in reception in a way that provides an intimate and rigorous understanding of these precedents. These precedents support and focus the maker’s contribution upon the production of meaning, this being the *purposing* (*telos*) of the work and is also present in the associated discourse (*logos*). Such research, where the maker ensures that he or she is informed of the precedents to the thing they will make, is essential to a coherent drawing together of the four causes in the process of making (a failure of which I suffered due to lack of attention to the appearing of images in the first version of my book).

In light of this, I would question the absence of a discussion on reception. As a maker, I have undertaken research into the *aspecting* (*eidos*) of landscape in both a personal and wider cultural context and the *purposing* (*telos*) of landscapes, both as images and environments (as particularly evident in chapter 4). Since research, as an appreciation and acknowledgement of precedents, is a pivotal component of making, I have, through the course of my thesis, received others works and ideas. In other words, makers are also an audience of others work by definition of the drawing together of the four causes.

The statements I have selected by Benjamin, Barthes and Burgin set up my frame of mind with regards the role of research and the contribution that a considered outcome should be able to make, but they do not account for the events that take place between researching and presenting. It is in this void that I aimed to provide substance and meaning for the practices of making. I acknowledge that reception by others is a key facet for making work, but there are

limits that need to be imposed in order to provide a coherent thesis. Reception will therefore be the focus of further research. For this thesis, a concentration on pre-receptive practices of making has proven to be productive and has resulted in a valid description of a theory for making.

There are limitations to the application of this theory as I have applied it here. My own making, that I have used to test the theory, has taken place within the genre of landscape. I do not assume therefore that my particular application of the four causes could be applied to other photographic practices and genres (e.g. portraiture, commercial, fashion photography). This would require further research. Furthermore, the thesis is firmly seated in photography as a fine art, by this I mean a critically informed practice. This further limits the theory from being applied to vernacular, commercial and functional applications. A key aspect of the theory, and one that I believe my thesis has achieved, is that making a work of photographic art requires a particular attitude for the validity of its purpose, i.e. unconcealing. This is present and active in the four causes in that making is presented as an unconcealing of truth, as *aletheia* (truth as an unfolding event, a truthing) in the mode of *poiesis*, this being an attitude of openness to what appears. This is in contrast to the Latin term for truth, *veritas*, that signifies “correctness of an idea,” (Heidegger, 1977 [1954], p.12) implying the imposition of human being upon whatever is observed. The outcome of this imposition upon the world is what Heidegger called Enframing.

According to Heidegger, art produced according to the principle of *Aletheia* had the potential to unconceal the primordial condition of Enframing that human being was born into. This is too great a claim for a maker to make of his or her work. It is for another to make such claims, as Heidegger did with the poetry of Holderlin. This thereby reconfirms the necessity of reception with regards to making, since work tends to be made with intention of being received by others. For the maker, it is beyond the capacity of the experience of making to entirely pre-empt this.

The event of the unconcealing of truth is set out in Heidegger’s essay in detail. It is echoed, at least in part, in the statements above made by Benjamin, Barthes and Burgin. In the models

that they present, the meaning of work occurs as an event over time and is neither static nor limited by the authority of the maker. It takes place and arises through the reception of others who view the work. This is the context in which I have described making work, but it remains the case that theorists have not engaged with the making work of photographic art with the same degree of perception and awareness.

Making occurs as an embodied experience (as presented in this thesis), and unfolds through the maker's careful perception and drawing together of the four causes. Therefore, a theory of making requires reflection upon the embodied experience of making, which is what I have attempted to supply. This is why neither Szarkowski (1966) nor Shore (2009) provide an adequate theory of making: they apply their theories to existing images; they do not reflect upon the *experiences* of making images. Where the significance of the work is perceived and made during the reception of a viewing audience, it is the application of the theory of the four causes to the initial occurring of the work, and the significance of the unfolding of its appearing to the maker, in respect of which I claim a contribution to knowledge.

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Edward Burtynsky: Manufactured Landscapes, 2008 [DVD] **Jennifer Baichwal**, Canada:

British Film Institute

The Ister, 2004 [DVD], **David Barison & Daniel Ross**, Australia

Photographing Landscape

A Theory of the Experience of Making

Volume 2: Appendices

Appendix 1: Records of Making

1.1 30th June 2008. A50 / M1, J24

Pre-shoot, whilst travelling to the site

I'm going to do some photographing, 30th June, beautiful, bright summers day, 5.00pm

I'm going to photographing the underpass at [junction] 24. There's loads of graffiti on the walls and I just want to play around with the idea of the landscape and the brutality of the architecture and the freeform of the human expression of the graffiti. I've been there before, photographed on black and white before with the 67 camera, playing around with framing. I might do a similar thing but we'll see. The other thing I want to do is photograph a view down towards Donnington, quite a picturesque view, again, but with electric cables and pylons going across. And also possibly, a couple of pools as well, caused by the quarrying

1. *Pylon, Trees and Road, leading into Willows and Pylon*

I've been photographing round by [junction] 24 near the Hilton [Hotel] roundabout, on the road that goes down the back of Harrington, and I'm photographing the field, I've just photographed this big pylon which is foregrounded by this kind of fenced-off copse of trees that acts as a screen against the road, and behind that you've got the road with various signs. I started off putting the pylon right bang in the middle, slightly raising the height to get a really nice loop of the cable at the top, erm, but then I moved it. I used a bit of shift on the back because I didn't like the way it was cutting out one of the signs on the road, so, I kind of think that makes a better image really, because instead of having this big satanic thing in the middle, its shifted to one side, on the screen its the right side but of course on the screen being upside down it's going to shift to the left. Not quite by a third but definitely off-bias, and it kind of got me thinking about the way I'm going to photograph the rest of this stuff...



Pylon, Trees and Road



Willows and Pylon

I've come down the lane a little bit, the cycle path, and again I'm photographing these willows,

and they're moving in the breeze, which is really, really nice, and its beautiful sunlight with kind of rolling... erm, with these lovely cornfields and old oaks and that kind of stuff, and these bloody great big pylons... I'm just looking down the road, and the way you've got these very picturesque trees, arching over, with this brutal architecture in the background, with the lights and the rails and the banks and the concrete and what have you. I'm looking at this view now, which is a very, very simple view of these pylons obscured by these trees. It would be the simplest thing to put the pylon right in the middle of the frame, but I don't think I want to do that. I want to kind of obscure it a little bit so its there but its also partly hidden. It might be a little bit too obscure but I don't think so. I think this could be quite an interesting image. Raising the lens to push the horizon to the bottom third. I might even start using the 210. I'm just thinking maybe the 150 is encompassing quite a lot which might make the pylon a bit too small in the frame. On the other hand that might be quite nice, it might be quite a good thing to do. I also thought about using the slightly wide 135 as well, I'm not sure about that, the image is going to be smaller rather than larger. The quality of light is great, I'm shooting very slightly into the light and I'm shaded by trees, but there's a fair bit of side light and some excellent shadow, and lovely light coming through the trees themselves, it really does lend itself to that picturesque landscape beauty. I just hope that it's understood through what I'm doing. So now what I'll do is start measuring things up a bit, and then I might actually put the 210 on, just see what I can see, and also, the thing about the 210 is that you have very little depth and I think I might be struggling, I think I might be throwing things out that I actually want in, though I can stop down to f45, so we might be ok, I'm not sure though because these trees are probably no more than five meters away, even on f45 I might be struggling a little bit....f45?...we'll see...I think I might stick with the 150 because I'm a little more familiar with it and it represents a really nice field of view. I've got some really nice arching of the trees coming across the frame into the diagonals [the corners of the frame?]. ...very picturesque, very Gainsborough, or even maybe, erm, Claude. I'm just playing around with those ideas, those conceptions, and if I look at the background, I've even got the spire of a church between the pylons which again adds to that picturesque quality.

2. Willows and Pylon

I've just put the 210 on and the effect is very interesting but it gives a real flattening, and by closing down by a few [?] degrees you're very much looking through rather than at [with the 150] because it heightens the framing device of the trees... and actually I might take one on the 150 and one on the 210 just to make a point. I'm even thinking about shooting quite wide open [aperture] to maybe highlight the trees, maybe I'll have it [as] democratic vision again, just to actually stop down and show the whole thing. I do quite like the idea of the tree, the church in the background, so what I think I need to do is drop the camera by about 4 cm, just so it [the church] gets slightly below these branches, so that church is definitely there, adding this picturesque, adding this ye olde English quality with these brutal mon... [monoliths?] with these brutal things there [the pylons]. I'm beginning to like this 210 actually, I like the effect of it, I might even come back a little bit as well, to give a bit more room on the trees...but the effect of looking through rather than at is really quite striking, its a, erm, definite difference, I need to come down a bit. I'm going to put the phone down now.

I've raised the lens up quite a lot as well, so I get a bit of the hedge in the foreground, and I also raised the camera up, so with a higher perspective I also got the field in, but I realise I've pretty much lost the church...somewhat irritating, I'm going to have to move the camera across. It might come out because the branches are moving and I'm shooting on quite a slow shutter speed I might be able to get them [it, the church] in. I'll have to see...

Ok, I've put the 150 back on. The shot with 210 is going to be interesting but because I've got a wider field of view I'm not looking *at* so much, no, I'm am looking *at*, that was looking through, this is looking at. I need to adjust things a bit. I want a really nice curve going into the top corner. I've got closer as well because I think the 150 has taken me a little bit far away, so I'm moving the shift and the back just to sort my corners out. I want something going in each corner. I don't want a big lump of tree in the way or anything like that... sorry, I want a really nice blend of foliage and that kind of stuff growing. I'm just going to lift it a bit as well, its a little bit low [the lens], so I'm going to raise the lens a bit.... I want the church in [muffled and mumbling]... The

last exposure was N-2 at least. I want the trees in shadow on zone 3, which I'm getting, but it's a very, very broad tonal range, even on minus 2 [muffled and mumbling]... I'm not sure about this shot. I'm not sure if its going to be any good or not... I'm going to be shooting on a really small aperture as well, I want some good depth... [mumbling something about the picturesque again]... I'm not sure about this... I suppose doubt, in that book I'm reading, doubt comes through really not being sure what you are trying to achieve... make sure everything is level as well... and erm, that's not bad, its a bit out. I'm going to have to straighten this up a bit. I find the control of verticals, really, really important, because if you don't have them in them I just think the image is all a bit of a compromise, if you're not careful, and you want your horizon lines to be good, and you want you verticals to be right. You don't notice on the viewfinder, but you do notice it on the print I can say for certain,,,I'm just tapping the camera about...these ball heads are alright but they can be quite careful to get right, they can be really irritating actually, I just hope this spirit level is accurate... c'mon you fucker... a fraction of a degree out but not just enough to throw it out. I'm not looking through the viewfinder when I do this, I'm just looking at the levels. It's more important to get the levels right. Checking the lens... I'm going to double check it... I'm going to be shooting on a really slow shutter speed. I'm shooting on f45, probably on 1/4 second. It's going to give quite a nice disturbance [of the branches due to the breeze], focusing on about 8m, that should do it I think... Reasonable composition, nice shapes of the trees... I think it's too central. Yes, I think it's too central. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to trash the whole thing and start from scratch. Well, wouldn't you know it.

Alright, so I've moved it a bit, I've moved to my left a bit, so now the church is framed by some kind of bough effect. I'm wondering whether to go a bit higher actually, get a bit more of the field in. I've got a fair bit of rise on it [the lens] I don't want to put too much more on, I quite like the foreground. I have a feeling this is going to be the best shot actually. So...er, the suns come out again, a fair bit of wind, same exposure, f45 on a 1/4. I'm going to have to drop it a bit as I can't see the church properly. I'm just concerned that the whole thing's a bit too central, a little too obvious. That's what I'm worried about. I might actually move over, obscure the pylon a bit more, or go for the 210 shot, a bit of compare and contrast.

3. *Dog Rose and Pylon*

I'm just not digging this on the 150. I don't know why, I can't explain it. I'm just not convinced that there's enough going on. There's too much foliage and not enough pylon, so I've come across far to my right because I've got a lamp post as well as picturesque trees and stuff, so I'm going to try this. In a way I there's too much pylon...no, I don't think this is going to work either...erm...moving back into the trees a bit, don't know if this is better, might come across a bit a bit too obvious really...might be a case of just taking the shot and seeing really. If I come over any further I'm going to get right in the middle of sunlight...I quite like idea of the er, pylons here, but...[exasperation]... I'm really not convinced by this. I'm moving the camera to the left, I think there's going to be too much in shadow, I really do... cables are quite nice, I'm going to move ??? up a bit.



Dog Rose and Pylon

What am I looking for? What *am* I looking for? Is it a case of something being right? Is it a case of the 'good view'? The perfect view? Well I'm playing around with those kind of ideas, I'm playing around with those find of conceptions, and trying to play around with something that's

picturesque and painterly but at the same time kind of...kind of vulgar...and the idea of using elements to frame something.

I've got the 210 on again... [technical discussion – struggling with depth]...I might wait...what I've got, looking upside down, well looking straight at it, I've got a hawthorne tree with, what do call it, oh god, white flowers, oh for fucks sake! A hawthorne tree and whatever is that stuff on the right hand side.... [a cyclist sounds his bell and passes by. We hail each other]... I've erm got a pylon...well looking at the camera 'cos its upside down. Hawthorne to the right, pylon slightly to the left with willow and that kind of stuff to the far left. A fair bit of rise and fall on it [meaning the lens has been raised], pylon cables coming right across it, I'm just going to try it. Importantly I've got the church in the background as well, that's nice and visible. I don't need any more rise on it, I've got enough rise on it. I'm going to let the sun come out again and see what happens.

4. *Path, Willows and Road*



Path, Willows and Road

Looking down the cycle path, the suns come out a bit, really, really nice quality of light. Again it's

going to be N-2, erm, it's going to give me really good quality of tone, quite good cloud detail as well... kind of over arching willows again and what have you, but then you've got the er... road in the background. If I'm lucky I might do it with an artic going past or something like that, or I might not do it with an artic going past, I might keep the traffic fairly minimal, because I think it could just look really crude. I quite like the idea of it being not populated by traffic actually... yeah...[indistinct]

5. Graffiti and Grass



Graffiti and Grass

Right, so, photographing under the tunnel where the graffiti is. Two shots: one looking from inside, slightly on the edge of the tunnel, outside with the edge of the path in, with a pylon in the background. Not too sure about that one. Working with the juxtaposition of a fragment of the architecture with this expression, against the not natural, but growing stuff, that's all I can say about it really. Then I'm going to take another shot here, looking straight across the link fencing, across the tracks to the outside, with clouds in the background, trees again and cables.

6. *Link fence*

I really like the link fencing actually just in focus, it looks really interesting, because you've got the... the graffiti in the background, just tell where some of the cables are, not sure if I've got enough...erh... stuff in the back ground, green stuff.



Link Fence

1.2 Post shoot Reflection for 30th June 2008 (written July 2008)

This [link fence] was the last recording of the day. I carried on photographing but stopped the voice recording as it was a hindrance to photographing – it got in the way, not just practically, but also in the way that my thought processes worked. I think the phone recordings a something of a false record. I tend to address the practical issues of photographing, but the fact that I need to speak into the phone means I have to find something to say, so the recordings reflect this need. During the shoot I was using the phone camera sporadically – less so at the start of the day but more so later on, when I started to photograph the tunnel. There are no recordings on how I use this camera but it used much quicker and more intuitively.

When I am photographing I am thinking of wider concerns. When I look through the screen of the camera (5x4) or at the screen of the camera phone, I am pre-visualising the image, imagining how it will look on a wall, relating it to other images I have made and to other images in art and photo history. This may seem that I am over-elaborating, but when I am arranging an image on the 5x4 camera, the decisions I am making, and the frustrations I am feeling, are due to how I think the image will measure up to other images I am thinking of, and how it will relate to the ideas that I am trying to approach. What this annotation tells me is how *unformed* my ideas are. I mention ideas of the picturesque, and I'm thinking of Constable, Poussin, Lorraine.

However, I didn't come across Gilpin's text on the picturesque until *after* this shoot. My ideas of the picturesque were rather uninformed. I was aware of the image quality, the formal devices. My ideas about how the elements of the environment sat together, and conflicted, were in the process of being formed. In the pre-shoot recording I state an interest in photographing under the A50, with the graffiti, and my plans to shoot near Donnington. As I write this now (some six months later) I still recall the image I intended to make. It has been logged in my mind as a possible image that encompasses some of the visual ideas I was and am interested in. I imagine the road, leading from the A50 towards Donnington, approaching the bridge that crosses the railway with industrial buildings to my right and open fields with a pylon to my left. I imagine two images: one of the industrial buildings with cables crossing the sky, the second is this view across the fields with the pylon being prominent. I see these images from the point of view of driving my car. I don't know if I can find a position to photograph these scenes, or if they will live up to my expectations.

What happened during this shoot is that I deviated from my plans. The first images up until shooting under the tunnel were not part of the plan – or vision of the images I wanted to make. So how did I arrive at deciding to make these images? There is no real discussion about this in the voice recordings but in some notes that I wrote shortly after taking this photograph I wrote "To my right is a view that makes me stop." I continue to describe the scene much as is present in the voice recordings. There was something in the scene that arrested me, that presented a

set of relationships between things that struck me as relevant, somehow, to this evolving and as yet unformed theme of roads and landscape. This image is key to this work. It has something about it that seems fundamental to my outlook on the work. Two other images, taken on an earlier shoot (6th June, on the way home from work) also stand out [see p.12].

These two images touch on themes that I am in the process of working through, or fumbling through, themes such as the synthetic use of natural form and the process of 're-naturalising' the landscape after quarrying and road building. The idea of an invented landscape, one that is reformed around industrial activities, to mask and screen the actions and structures that offend the eye and sensibility of the passing public. The image of the fishing pools shows a place that has been created over pits dug for gravel extraction, making a new environment based on leisure rather than returning the environment to its previous state [for cereal farming]. This environment has not been re-naturalised (to the exclusion of people) but is a site that has been newly allocated for leisure, by way of an apology for carving up and disturbing a place previously would have had the appearance of tranquility, of a pastoral environment. In fact all this land is flood land, used for farming (cereals and livestock). The imposition of large areas of water under the guise of some kind of repair exercise and public exhibition of corporate responsibility could cause problems when heavy rain falls and has nowhere to drain into. This is part of the politics of environment. The visual masking of industrial activity in the rural environment is something that underpins my work. It contradicts the idea of the pastoral and the picturesque. It jars against it. Gilpin's essays on the Picturesque has great relevance for me in relation to this project. However, I didn't come across his work until after I had taken these photographs.



Cars, Trees and Cables. A50, 6th June 2008



Sign, Trees and Pylon. A50, 6th June 2008

After reading Gilpin's text I had a much clearer idea about the role of the architecture in the environment and the 'natural' elements. The images I had taken, these three in particular, seemed stronger, more convincing, in relation to Gilpin's ideas on the Picturesque. The roughness that he writes about is transferred (by me) to the brutal qualities of the road architecture and furniture (signs, lamps) and pylons. These things have a quality that I couldn't describe as beautiful, but are striking, bold, 'good' in some ways, but at the same time ugly and brutal (a word I use early on in my voice recordings). The traces of how the building of such industrial forms, and the effect they have on the landscape

1.3 21st July 2008. A38 Willington Roundabout / Celia's House

1. Hidden House



Hidden House

It's Monday, 21 July. I'm on the A38/A50 roundabout taking at some photographs. I'm looking at this house; it's got a union jack flag up, on the opposite side of the road of the new services development. I find it very interesting that it in the middle of nowhere, really. For some reason,

someone has refused to shift when they built the road. The union jack flag is a sign of defiance, a sense of nationalism as well, that is kind of worrying. And I'm photographing though these hedges that are masking it from the road and I've got a little bit of a sign. It's a really bright summers day...quite a lot of wind around, a bit of cloud in the sky. I'm setting up the camera. And what I've done, I've got some of the sign post [the road sign], the post with the sign in, a little bit of the sign, but I don't want to give away too much about the road and that kind of stuff. So I've got one of the arrows in and I've kept off Birmingham and Burton so the location isn't particularly overt, but slightly hidden, slightly out of the way, so still no one knows about it [the house]. So, we'll see how this goes.

2. New Service Station



New Service Station

Second shot and I'm come down the road to the new services development. I'm photographing from the path and I'm looking at this new pub that they are building....what I've been fiddling about with is trying to see sign on the roundabout underneath the two pillar (of a sign), so you can see that there is a road there....get these two pillars in, but having one frame the edge of the frame, which would be the left hand frame, or the right as I'm looking at it as I'm looking at it

upside down. So that is occupying, as I'm looking at it, the bottom right of the frame. I've got these two very formal structures and they are working up through the frame. I've also dropped the lens so they are rising out of the grass, so it is quite a hard crop. What I've been trying to do is organise the camera so that I've got this crop with these pillar here and a work light to the left of the frame, thereby framing that edge of the frame. I've got a digger cutting through that as well and I've got a back of grass to the top, cut through by a fence then this building then these structures in the foreground. If anything it's too structured and it's very contrasty.

3. *Original A38*



Original A38 (taken with phone camera)

(this refers to a couple of shots taken on the phone camera – the intention being to provide a visual record for an image for further consideration for film. The phone camera is a way of framing an image before dedicating it to film. This is due to the time and financial investment in each image when using 5x4 film).

I realize why I want the sign in now – I want it as an interruption whereas the road is obviously a massive interruption, the way that things interfere by coming into your life. That's why the sign is there – interfering with the picture. It kind of shouldn't be there, it's like a mistake.

4. *Celia's House 1*

There's another potentially interesting shot on the corner of where these roses are next to this gorse bush and this concrete and brick barrier. I'm trying to ????? with it with frame these white posts. I'm going to explore that. I've shot the photograph on digital. It's all at very close quarter, there's no way I'm going to get everything I want with the 150 and I don't want to use anything wider than that, it needs to be quite narrow. So I think I might be photographing [focusing] on the butterflies on the wall, so I might use quite a low viewpoint. These rails cut through the windows, cut through the thing that allows visibility...just in shot, because the pillars that holding the rails up are all off-kilter, one of them especially. So I've just got the spirit level out to make sure that its all nice and correct, kind of pointless really. Maybe I need to shoot a little bit more haphazardly because this all looks a bit over-intentional. So I'm going to take another look... Yeah, it's an interesting shot...nice and level and it does have...I'm going to move the thing [the camera] anyway. It's [the camera] probably off kilter now, but that's ok I don't mind too much. I think I'm being too precious wit the way I'm doing it, I really do...too controlling...I think that's an interesting shot; both posts are on either side of the frame, out of focus, I've got concrete in the middle, a band of concrete then a band of grass...I think that's going to be quite interesting.



Celia's House 1

5. Celia's House 2



Celia's House 2

6. Celia's House 3



Celia's House 3

I've just asked Celia for permission to photograph her house which she's agreed to which is great. I wish I brought the 210 lens but I've only got the 150 which is really irritating. The house is not as big on the frame as I would have liked. But on the other hand it's framed quite nicely between the two trees we've got here. I don't want to go back too far because I don't want to get the house too small in the frame. What I want to do is take a photograph and then spin around and take a photograph of the road with some of the big lorries going by. So you got an opposition in the photograph. The other thing I've done is to adjust the rise and fall. I've done so to just get the foot of the front door step in. So I've lowered it a bit so the hedge actually obscures the step of the front door. So I want a bit of a barrier there. The Hedge is a barrier, it's a screen and I want the idea that it won't allow you to the threshold [of the house], it won't allow you to step over. I might be talking rubbish but I like that block there, that... erm... incredibly slight signature of not allowing you in.



Opposite Celia's House

7. *Bungalow*



Bungalow 3



Bungalow 1, 2 and 3

I've taken two down by the road-side looking up at the house. I've come up on the old A38 again and I'm looking across the carriageway, across both lanes, across [to] this low lying bungalow. I'm looking over the gorse...the question here if how much focus do I give it. Do I focus on that...I think I'm going to stop messing about and put a deep focus on. If the gorse in the foreground is slightly out I don't really mind too much. It might be quite effective to tell you the truth. Instead of f45 I might choose to shoot on...f16, 22, so it throws the foreground out so it looks more intentional. It's not a bad shot actually. I'll raise the front a little bit. I've got to get it all leveled out.

Good cloud detail. The suns very high to my right so the front of the bungalow is in shadow which is quite nice it being on the shadow of the A38. So I think that's quite appropriate really... I quite like the idea of doing two shots, one with a truck obscuring it [the bungalow] and one with the actual bungalow. So there is traffic and then there's no traffic. I might do that actually.

As it happens I shot three images from this position intended to be read in sequence. The first with a lorry in the near lane occupying the view, the second with a lorry in the second land and the third with no traffic where the bungalow is revealed. The effect, at least to me, is of a successive unconcealing of the field of view to show the close proximity of the road to where people live. It goes some way to demonstrating how the road (built in the late nineteen seventies) effected the environment where people live.

The old A38, from where I am taking the photographs was a major but single carriageway A road. I cannot recall the landscape before the dual carriageway was built (though I know that photographer Oded Shimshon photographed the building of the A38 when he studied photography at Derby), but what I hope it demonstrates is how the road dramatically (even violently) bisects the landscape and re-defines it. There is a partial attempt at integration between the road and the existing environment for the admittedly few residents of this area as can be seen with he planting of trees and gorse. But since these residents need access to roads and to plant trees on the side of north bound carriageway would cats a shadow over the houses and gardens of the premises of these residents, the effect is to leave Celia's house very prominent. At least the road has been submerged into a cutting that soaks up some of the noise and obscures it, partially, from view.

There are two more images for this shoot though it seems I did not make voice recordings. The two images are of the derelict filling station a few hundred yards toward Derby (illustrated below).



Petrol Station 1 and 2

1.4 Reflective Account written for 21st July (written March 2011)

I don't have voice recordings for these two photographs. I don't know why. But I clearly remember making these two images. Whenever I look at an image I have taken, especially on film (since there are always less to remember than the greater number of digital images), I can place myself in the situation of taking the photograph. They were made in an ironic attitude as if for an architectural archive of uninteresting buildings. I remember for the image with the hand dryer taking time to compose the image to ensure the appearance of the top of the timber frame against the sky against the concrete curb at the bottom of the frame, of balancing the gap between the metal post the right of the frame against the hand dryer of the left, of placing the gap showing a fragment of the haulage yard opposite between the line of the broken brick wall and the trees. How much I remember and how much I read into the image I am not sure. However I know how fussy I am about the formal arrangement of the objects in front of me and how they appear on the screen of the camera. I only shot one frame for this image (and all the other images) because I am using sheet film. This is because it is expensive but also because I can precisely control exposure and customize development for each sheet of film. This gives me a great deal of control over the tonal range and helps to provide the images with visual consistency.

Part of this requires precise set up of the camera to provide adequate depth of field and making precise light meter readings. For this image I required complete sharpness from near ground to background. Aperture is determined by this requirement so f45 was selected (as it often is for image with great depth). This is set. Exposure time can then be set against this. To determine my exposure value I make light meter readings by measuring the darkest shadow areas where I want good detail (in this image it is the breeze blocks under the roof of the kiosk). I work out the exposure of the film by placing the exposure value at two stops above this. For instance, the breeze blocks in shadow read f45 on a shutter speed of 1/8. Therefore I set my exposure time to 1/30. I then turn my attention to the brightest parts of the image. This has nothing to do with exposure. I will control the density of the highlights by altering the development time of the film. The light conditions on this day produces a lot on contrast. I know from experience that I will need to reduce the development time by 40% to ensure that the highlights fall into place. Since both images are under the same light conditions I do not need to alter the exposure values unless clouds pass in front of the sun.

This is my standards practice with this type of image in these light conditions when I am using black and white film. It is a working method established by Ansel Adams called the Zone System. It allows me to predict the visual quality of my images (if not the full significance of its content) and produce images that are full of detail and will reproduce reliably. It further demonstrates the slow and ever so intentional method of using a large format camera (which is not always good thing as it does not lend itself to intuitive image making).

What these images will tell subsequent generations I do not know. The significance they have for me is flippant the waste of once valued resources. The first image was framed to emphasise the canopy and echo the derelict structure of the kiosk to the newer and functioning carriageway sign as seen from behind. The presence of this sign on the right with the lamp post to the left signifies the presence of the road. The low trees show how natural features are used to obscure the sight of this building (these trees are cherry trees, and at the time of photographing were covered in ripe, though probably polluted, cherries). The kiosk building has been pulled apart.

Building materials lie around. It has been marked with graffiti. It looks unsafe and a potential hazard to anyone venturing near it. It has been in this condition for several years. Every time I have driven past I have reminded myself that I should photograph it, though I am not always sure as to why it appeals. This sense of appeal is something that concerns me. It feels like a giving in to photographing for pleasure

Buildings in this state are an eye sore. They are ugly, dangerous to people and, with it being an old filling station, hazardous to the environment. They are not in themselves attractive. So why make photographs of this?

There are several reasons. One is that this building is an indicator of a tendency of contemporary society to construct buildings, especially those used for industrial and commercial purposes, that have a limited life span and so, in the process, are knowingly a waste of resources. This is not an ancient structure. This is, in the scheme of things, a few years old (maybe twenty). It has intentionally been left in this state by its owners since someone owns this land and is responsible for it (I think it might be owned by the Haulage company on the opposite side of the road who took over the site of another filling station some years ago). With the remains of this filling station being left here to rot and fall apart it could be regarded as a folly, though in different terms to those created for stately homes in the eighteenth century. There is also something attractive, in a clichéd way, about a building in this state. It leans upon the stereotype of old buildings and waste lands that appear in the images of amateur photographers who are in the process of making the transition from novice through to a higher level of technical competence. What tends to occur is that the cultural significance of images and an awareness of the traditions and conventions that inform them are left well alone. These aspects are the inheritance that Burgin talks about in his interview with Naomi Salaman:

Burgin ...“Am I just working with what I’ve inherited, or do I want to look critically at what I’ve inherited?” So the people who used theory were really trying to recognize the basis from which they worked. But there is always a basis.

(Burgin, p.280-281)

An indicator of how difficult, even threatening, are the practices of critical evaluation, is expressed by Salaman when she responds to this statement:

Salaman There is always a basis but becoming conscious of that basis in a sense is quite a desublimatory activity, and it's so crucial how that process takes place, so that you don't end up with shipwrecked people who can't work because the theory has negated them.

(Ibid)

I would not question that Salaman has good reason to raise this concern, however it suggests quite an important situation since where the practices of image making are a valuable popular and specialist activity, and where competence in image making can be widely achieved, the practice of coming to a realisation of one's cultural inheritance is not even a specialist photographic activity. It remains a distinctly specialist academic activity.

The image of a derelict building is a cliché. It signifies a romantic attachment to history and the social condition.

Images of derelict buildings appear regularly in my students' work, in degree shows, camera club exhibitions and the popular photography press. They appear often. I am aware of this cliché and I normally stay clear of it, so I regard these two images with ambivalence. They subscribe to what can be called an industrial picturesque. To explain what I mean I can return to William Gilpin's (1792) discussion on the difference between natural beauty and beauty in art. Here Gilpin states that what may seem appropriate, beautiful or inoffensive to the eye in nature (what I will call bodily perception, i.e. the experience of being there in the presence of the object) is an inadequate subject for painting. He explains, drawing upon Burke's thesis on beauty, that beauty perceived in nature is characterized by smoothness and regularity. For painters, however, the object is required to be roughened, disheveled and broken down:

Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chisel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a smooth building we must turn it into a rough ruin. No painter, who had the choice of the two objects, would hesitate a moment.

(Gilpin, 1792, p.7-8)

Therefore the production of images of scenes and objects that are derelict, hazardous, ugly and otherwise a challenge in their presence to life, is nothing new. It did not arise out of twentieth century aesthetics or out of a late nineteenth century Romanticist reaction to mass production and urbanisation. It arose from Gilpin's theory of the picturesque.¹²² Gilpin's theory of the picturesque was not based on experiences of foreign lands during the Grand Tour (though it might have a nationalistic reaction) but was centered on his experiences of the English countryside, particularly the Wye Valley. The widespread appeal of Gilpin's text contributed greatly to travel, exploration and appreciation of the English countryside by the same merchant classes that instigated the industrial revolution.

What the picturesque denotes is a particular view of past-civilisation in light of a condition of the present. The disfunctional buildings in both eighteenth century paintings and twentieth/twenty-first century photography act as momento-mori for the present or future generations. They attempt to displace the viewer from his or her current state in history and culture and place him or her in a relationship to a past age. In the case of Gilpin's broken castle, the period is a past and utopian ancient Greek or medieval civilization. For the more current practice of photographing disused industrial buildings, hospitals and houses (e.g. the disused and derelict Kings Newton army base is a recurring subject), the age is one of a failed modernism or an

¹²² Gilpin's seminal text *Observations on the River Wye and Several parts of South Wales, &c., Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, made in the summer of the year 1770*, is regarded as the first instance the term picturesque contributed to cultural debate in England. It was published in 1782. He later expounded on the picturesque with three essays published in the same volume in 1792 (*Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, Blamire, 1792).

inability to sustain the global of workshop of the world or a representation of a post-apocalyptic dystopia.¹²³ By nature of representing these buildings as ruins these images naively warn us of the future by representing the past. I think, however, that the message of these images tends to remain subliminal. From evidence of his argument on the picturesque, this also applies to Gilpin.

I note then that this consciousness is present in myself. But since I attempt to make images in an informed process and a critical understanding of the significance of images, I try to stay clear of making images that approach cliché, or at to demonstrate an awareness of my own immersion in tradition. Gilpin's texts are guides to making picturesque or locating the best picturesque views for the appreciation of natural beauty. Like any other observer from any other

¹²³ There are a host of websites that support illegal visits to the sites of closed, disused and derelict buildings. Some sites are locally based, e.g. UK only. Some are global, e.g. www.opacity.us, www.forbidden-places.net/. Many state that their aims are historical and that members should cause no damage to the buildings. However, it seems clear that the places are visited for the thrill of being somewhere off-limits and as photo-opportunities for producing images that resemble the post-apocalyptic dystopia of films such as *Bladerunner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), *Mad Max* (George Miller, 1979, 1981), *Twelve Monkeys* (Terry Gilliam, 1995), *Day of the Dead* (George A. Romero, 1985) and maybe even *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927). The tone of one site, www.28dayslater.co.uk, takes its name from the film of the same title (dir. Danny Boyle, 2002). Disused hospitals and asylums are favourite sites. The heading of Derelict Places (www.derelictplaces.co.uk/), with the subheading "documenting decay," adopts a more historical role. Their aims are stated as follows:

Derelict Places is a forum for people with an interest in the history and documentation of derelict and abandoned buildings to come together and share their explorations, photography and historical findings:

Our military, industrial and historical heritage is fast disappearing under the pressure of regeneration, the need for new housing, and often through simple neglect. Our aim is to document these places before they disappear entirely, taking nothing but photos, and leaving nothing but footprints.

age, his appreciation was selective and was informed by judgements that were based on the aesthetics of the time. According to these standards, only occasionally did nature meet the standards required for picturesque representation. Views were hunted like quarry:

The first source of amusement to the picturesque traveller, is the pursuit of his object – the expectation of new scenes continually opening, and airing to his view. We suppose that the country to have been unexplored. Under this circumstance the mind is kept constantly in an agreeable suspense.

(p.46, Essay II on Picturesque Travel)

My intention is to reveal certain things about the state of landscape. Often the things and environments that are overlooked as ordinary, commonplace or unpicturesque are the sites that I look for. However, it is telling that I am not immune to convention or to tradition and finding myself wrapped up within it. This is related to Heidegger's theory of Enframing where things are used up without consideration for their material or cultural origins. According to this theory, and since I exist within Enframing like any other member of contemporary society, it is inevitable that fall into the conventions, traditions and habits of being (this includes making images) that characterize an *Enframing* society. According to Heidegger's theory it is not possible to escape or avoid this. What is more, being with enframing is a necessary condition of calling it into question and attempting to unconceal it.

A process of this unconcealment is at partly attempted above where I have questioned my (and others) tendency to be attracted to ruins for the purpose of making images. The problem here, and I hope the difference I can effect, is that the ruins remain within enframing in the casual practices of photography. A critical practice should attempt to unconceal these tendencies and to work past the impulse of making "good" photographs for the sake of it.

There is something here related to what Victor Burgin says with regards to inheritance and image making. I discuss this in Chapter 2 (see Victor Burgin, Interview with Naomi Salaman) but I would like to revisit it here. I suggest that what Burgin asks for related if not identical to

Heidegger's demand that Enframing is unconcealed. I think there is also a similar attitude to image making expressed in David Company's questioning of Edgar Martins:

Company: I sense that you are soaked in the world's processes but also at a certain remove from them. Photographers often are. The camera joins them to the world but separates them too, and the viewer of photographs feels this. You seem to make a virtue of this rather than trying to overcome it. For example, you've made pictures of roads and airports, but you photograph them as if their meanings were far from obvious, far from functional.

(Company in Martins, 2008, p.115)

I suggest that what Company means by the world's processes is, again, similar to Heidegger's description of Enframing. Furthermore, Martin's practice of imbuing synthetic environments with a strangeness that questions their purpose is questioning of these processes. Note that Company suggests that Martins works (and exists) within these processes.

Therefore, the theme that daily life progresses very much blind to its effect on the world, and that poetry or art is a stepping to one side, a temporary succession of this continuing movement has been expressed

If I follow Heidegger's theory, if I buy into it, it is no surprise that making art is expressed in the terms used by Company and Burgin and the practices used by Martins (and many others).

I need to be aware of making grand claims for my own image making. Though I write about these themes here, and they at least seem present in the images to myself, I need to be careful in assuming too much from a viewer who is not privy to my research and the themes that have informed the images I have made. However, any claims I make are made more for my intentions than they are for the resulting images. Given this I will accede, at the very least, to the attempt to make images that unconceal two interrelated practices:

1. The traditions and conventions of landscape image making

2. The practices of landscape management

Sometimes the images seem to remain too attached to what Campany describes as the “world’s processes,” (ibid) and too comfortably imbedded within convention and tradition, that provide ground for discussion and realization of the conditions of how I make images.

1.5 **12th October 2008. A38, Willington Roundabout / Toyota factory**

Pre-shoot

I’m going out on Sunday 12 October. Its blistering sunshine, an absolutely stunning day. Probably too good for what I want really. There’s not a lot of cloud in the sky so its going to be tone (?), which is a bit of shame really. So I’m going to go back to the A50. I want to photograph the Toyota factory across the pond they’ve got [and] get back on the A50 towards the tunnels where I’ve been photographing the graffiti. Because I think round there there’s some really interesting combinations of road architecture with things like pylons and the picturesque quality of the landscape, especially this time of year with the trees going over [in to Autumn].

1. A38, Toyota - Pools 1

I’ve stopped [the car]. The sun is still very high, it’s very good actually. I’m looking across at this farmhouse with a fence and some really nice looking trees. So I’m going to see if I can get a view of that, maybe keep it very, very rectilinear, maybe at a slight angle. I’m also going to go back a hundred yards or so to photograph the Toyota factory with the pool in front of it. I’ve got five sheets of film so I might not be here for long. See how we get on.

Right, I’ve got the camera set up. I’m using the 210 lens because the 150 had too much scope. I’m at the Toyota factory and what I’ve done I’ve found a position just off the cycle path. I can’t quite see the whole of the Toyota logo on the side of the wall, its just obscured by the trees. I

had quite a nice composition with the logo in the middle [of the frame], a nice balance, a formal balance with the rest of the building, but I want to make the whole Toyota thing a little bit more obscure to show this lush background, sorry, foreground with all these trees and this pond and natural life, and then you have Toyota tucked away in the background a little bit, screened by all these trees, because that's what it's about, it's about screening it out so everyone knows its there but its not such an eyesore; its hidden, its concealed. So this idea of concealment is what informs the brief, my own private brief for myself.



A38, Toyota - Pools 1

So I've shot it on the 210 lens and I might change position and take another couple of shots as well, on the other hand I don't know if I need to. But there's some quite interesting images to be made around here, probably not too many, probably about three or four, and it might be worth be getting permission to get on the land if they like what I'm doing. But back to theme of the brief. I've got the Toyota factory right through the middle section of the horizontal bias (axis), but its moved towards, and I'm looking at the frame [upside down], the right hand side of the frame which is going to be the left hand side of the picture. And I've got a bunch of trees that are

turning for Autumn on the left hand side of the frame. There's very little cloud detail, its very blue, and its quite bright where I'm looking at so its probably going to be an N-2 shot.

I thought of photographing the road from here as well with the trees on the other side but it's not really working. I think the whole thing is a little too obvious: "so what." I don't really think I need to spend much time on to tell you the truth. It might work better with a long lens. Ok so that's another shot. But too my mind the Toyota brand is too significant. I don't mind a bit of it being in but I do mind a lot of it being in. I don't want it to be about Toyota as such. It just happens to be Toyota. I want elements of the pond in the foreground so I'm going to move across so I obscure the Toyota logo a little it more. I don't mind seeing a bit of it and what is important is the building, but I don't want a great deal of the brand in so I'm going to move across to my left a bit.

2. A38, Toyota – Pools 2



A38, Toyota - Pools 2

I'm going to move over even more because I'm not happy with it, but I do move over more there's not enough width to the composition. There's too much that is too central. I'm really.....design wise, it's just poor. So I think there's a better shot further up where I've got a

tree in the middle and I can put one of the lifeguards [the life ring) to the right and Toyota to the left, and that might actually give me a better comp while giving me the opportunity to obscure the Toyota logo a bit.

3. A38, Toyota - farmhouse

Another shot a little further up the road and I'm photographing the farmhouse on the other side of the A38. I've been shuffling the camera backwards and forwards to play off the trees against the foreground, but most importantly the farmhouse against one of the cooling towers [Willington], though unused is still quite a landmark. I think its an important thing to have in the background because it relates the foreground to that background and the idea of energy and power and consumption, with all these cars going past. I'm not sure whether to have a car in the shot or not. I might leave it until the carriage way is completely clear, to keep it nice and sterile and no funny photographic tricks. I've also tilted the lens forward a little bit because I've got the curb in the foreground and I know that even of f45 I'm going to struggling for focus...that will pretty much ensure me clarity.



A38, Toyota - farmhouse

Ok, I think they are three reasonably interesting photographs as long as I didn't fog the film by leaving it [the film holder] out in the bright sunlight....I might have buggered up a couple actually. But I'll get cracking. I've got two more frames to make then I'll go home.

4. A38, Toyota - gate

I'm going to have one more image round here, from the path that leads down to from the cycle path to Toyota factory. So I'm going to have lots of greenery in the foreground and the metal fence and traces of the factory in the background which could be quite nice from a lowish point of view. Don't know – big shadows, we'll see.



A38, Toyota - gate

I've taken five shots and I think I've buggered up one by leaving the shutter open. The first shot was the Toyota plant from the side of the road towards the bottom of the feeder lane. The second shot was again of the Toyota plant, walking up to the side of the feeder lane. Third shot was of the farm on the other side [of the A38], which won't be a bad shot, I'm just wondering of it will all be a bit too rectilinear. Then the fourth and fifth were with path leading into Toyota, which is partially kind of hidden, and what I did with that was leave the lens open on 5.6 so all the

foreground was out of focus and what is in focus was the fragment of the plant that was in the frame.

A Very bright day today, very contrasting, so most of the development is going to be N -1, the last two are going to be N -2. But the farmhouse, well I think that's N -1 actually, although its in shadow its not in that deep shadow. We'll have to fiddle about with that, it depends on how I want the sky to appear. Not a bad days work.

1.6 29th May 2009. Raynesway

Pre-shoot

I'm in the woods by the new earthworks, the new development near Raynesway. In the background you can probably hear the construction. So I'm in the woods now and what I'm looking for is a contrast between this wonderful idyl, this wonderful natural place, with, it should be said, there is litter around, and the noise and also the work that is going on ahead of me on this construction site. There are two sides, I'm in the conifer wood at the moment and on the other is the deciduous wood. So I'm going to wander round her for a moment. I don't want to be too long as I've got to be elsewhere, but it's a good start and I think it might be a good idea for a project. I'm shooting on the digital SLR with a 35mm prime. I've also got 4 sheets of 5x4 NPS colour film and some black and white film, so I'm going to see what I can do and what I can see and the contrasts and contradictions that I can come up with. So, here goes.

End of shoot

The last two shots I've doubled up. I've got 4 sheets of colour and 8 black and white. The last two frames I think will be quite interesting that I've taken in the woods and I was looking through [the trees] to a crane, you can probably only just see it and I couldn't get a lot closer to it. It's a crane on building site. So I focused on f5.6 and shot wide open on both the colour and the black and white, and then I think, on one black and white, shot on the 210, I stopped down to f32. The idea of trying to draw attention to something that you wouldn't expect is a lovely picturesque

view of the woods, and you've got something intruding into it, something that doesn't belong there, something that isn't part of that picturesque picture making. And similar with the [image of] Cortaulds with the chimneys in the background. I would have like to have doubled up on that one and I only had one sheet of colour left. Again that was shot on f8 focusing on the chimneys. Interesting to see how they turn out, I'm not really sure about them. But the place is still here, its not going to go away. So I can come back and try it [again].



Earth moving



Chimneys 1



Cranes



Cranes, detail



Chimneys 2



Chimneys 2, detail

1.7 3rd May 2010. A50 (on transparency film)

Pre-shoot

For this shoot I intended to start at a particular place. I wanted to take a photograph of a pool that had been dug out as a consequence of the road works on the A50. Since this road has been built in 1997 the area has become re-naturalised, a process where shrubs and trees are planted to recover a natural habitat for wildlife and to eventually provide a screen for the road. What I have noticed for some time is how this pool always includes a layer of scum that gets blown from one side of the pool to the other depending on the direction of the wind. It has a toxic appearance. It doesn't look like a healthy substance for wildlife. My aim was to make a photograph that presented the greenery of the trees and shrubs whilst also including fragments of the road and street lights and possibly other signs of industrialisation and economy such as Kingston on Soar power-station and power-lines. This would all be set under an English sky. Given the right conditions, the sky would evoke those painted by Constable; that is, the sky would be of the English picturesque type that is so associated with English landscape. The image below was only partially successful. I do not feel that the point of view was sufficient to present the pool and make the scum a clear enough factor. The sky does not have the broken cumulus structure as present in Constable's paintings and it is over-exposed, a consequence of too great a tonal range for transparency film to record. It is therefore not an image that I will consider as having potential for my project. Furthermore, unless I can find a vantage that gives me a better view of the pool in relation to other things that interrupt the picturesque, I will look elsewhere for images.

This often happens. I set out to photograph with a group of preconceived images and plans. I often start the way I intended, but more often than not I drift from this plan as I find other views, objects and relationships that grab my attention and provide potential for image making. Often an preconceived image does not translate in sufficient terms to the actual environment and the image on the screen of the camera, in other words the actual does not meet the expectations of the imagined.

This image of the pool is such an example. I have a faint memory of photographing this pool several years before or at least I remember observing it. The presence of the scum on its surface has remained in my mind since. It left its mark.



Scummy pool, 31st December 2004

It is a place where I have wanted to make an image, that presented itself as having potential for an image that included aspects and values of traditional landscape – water, reeds, trees, blue sky and cloud – but also aspects that jarred against these – road signs, street lamps, piles of stone, cooling towers, litter and the scum on the surface of the water that repulsed me but also intrigued me. The annotation of my voice recording recalls my frustration with finding a position to make an image that met my preconceived vision. This is a common event when photographing. The shape, state and condition of the physical world does not always live up to the visual scheme that I build up in advance of the process of framing and positioning the camera to make an image. It does not meet the requirements of the traditions of image making that inform the images I want to make, whether I am conscious of these traditions or not. In one sense this surprises me as I write this, since part of my intention is to make images that challenge these conventions. It perhaps demonstrates how deep seated the ideals of these

traditions lie in my mind. In another sense, in order to challenge convention I also have to adopt these visual traditions, at least in part, in order to make them a visible part of an image.

1. *Scummy Pool*



Scummy Pool

I'm out near the A50 again. I'm going to photograph a pool near Hemmington, just on the edge of the A50 that I've been meaning to photograph, again like everything else, for a good couple of years. The weather's very, very variable. A lot of rain cloud, heavy rain cloud broken by sunshine. Quite dramatic skies. I'm shooting on transparency on the 5x4. I hope it's worth it. So I'm going to try to get five or six shots done today. I'm not bracketing at all. I'm just getting it done. I'm looking for picturesque views from quite a high, elevated view-point from this pool. I've walked up the road towards the roundabout, which has given me a nice point of view where I've got the pool and the stagnant marsh area to the edge, which looks pretty disgusting. The road in the background and also the Kingston on Soar power-station as well. I'll probably shoot on the 210: quite a narrow field of view. I might be getting too much in this shot. Maybe I don't need all of it. Maybe I don't need all the power-station. I'm going to set the camera up and we'll see. I'm a little bit too cautious about too many things re-occurring.

[**Note:** These comments demonstrate how certain places stick in the mind. They have qualities that stand out for some reason; in this case, this pool with a permanent layer of scum that gets blown from one end to the other according to the direction of the wind. The rain (and hail), broken skies with intermittent sunshine produce skies like those Constable painted where he rolled a range of weather conditions into one painting (see *Hay Wain*). This pool, under the edge of the A50 was produced through gravel extraction. The pool looks like is a product of the Highways Agency's policy on integration]

I'm photographing about 2 o'clock. The sun's quite high. On this shot it's behind me, which is good, kind of behind me anyway. I think further up the road provides...because there's almost too much going on, a weakening of the composition. There's almost...I'm illustrating too much and you miss the stagnant quality of the pool. So I might go further down to where the first shot was. All you see, you don't really see the road much. You see the road sign and the road-lamps which makes you drawn towards the road itself. You've got the stagnant pool there but, I don't know, because you've got a line of hay-bales as well. I just think it's quite an interesting shot. The only thing to do is to set the camera up and have a quick look, see what I've got. I just don't like... I want to avoid too many things that are obvious...Yeah...tricky one this, tricky one.

I don't know if the erm...It all makes it a little site specific and I like the idea of obscurity where you're not entirely sure where this thing is. There are too many landmarks situated in there, [it situates] a particular geographic space a little too strongly. I'll give this some thought.

I'll set the camera up anyway. I've come down the road and I've still got stuff in the background. I've still got lorries and that stuff going in the background. You can still pick things like that up. And I'm slightly worried that...there's either going to be too much going on or not got enough on. If I come round a little bit... I want the stagnant quality of the pool you see. I want all that scum in the shot... I could hang around here for ages trying to get that particular shot. This is a waste

of time now... Got it. Moving up again. I think I'm probably going to plumb for the power-station in the background. See how that goes. I'm going to set up the camera now.

Right, shot number one taken. As before, I was looking at this rather scruffy looking pool with lots of brown scum on it. A road sign will be to the right of the frame. A power-station to the left of the frame. Wrong way round, It's mirrored. Road sign to the left of the frame. Power-station in the distance will be to the right of the frame. You've got the A50 in view. It's just absolutely pissed it down and I'm wet. And you've got the pool in with some foliage to the foreground. Whether the pool is really visible enough or not, I don't know, but we'll have to see about that. I think it will be an ok kind of shot, more of an establishing shot. I see it in a series as informing other images of the area. And I think it ties into the picturesque a little bit. I dropped the lens slightly by about 10 or 12mm to make a little bit more of the foreground, to show a little but less of the sky because there's enough cloud going off in the sky. I might bear that in mind for future images: to take it down to that line on the viewfinder, on the ground glass. The quality of light is quite nice, quite rich, quite saturated. I've shot on f32 and 1/2 on 1/8 of a second which gave the sky as +2 and the highlights at +3 which will probably bleach out a little bit. And the ground was slightly minus but that's ok. I might ask Mick to give it slightly more development to tone down the sky a bit.

2. *Trees and Pylon*

I'm in my favourite place off the A50 where I taken quite a few of my images that have seemed key to me. At least to me anyway. I'm recreating some of the images I've shot in black and white because I think the colour is too important. So I've come to pylon again that I shot some time ago, er, a couple of years ago now, where the fence is in the foreground, you've got the foliage, all the trees that have been planted and stuff and the A50 in the background, and then you've got the pylon towering above and the cables across as well. So I'm going to recreate that shot here because I want it in colour, on transparency. I'm going to try and keep the decisions the same: fence to the foreground, right at the bottom of the frame, balancing out the signs on the road as well and the pylons and what have you.



Trees and Pylon



Trees and Pylon, 29th June 2008

I was freezing my nuts off taking that last shot. I waited for ages, probably an hour to get the light right. I couldn't take a photograph, well I could have, but the sky would have over-exposed compared to the ground so I had to wait for a burst [of sun light] in the sky to get a decent exposure. It's gone very cold. It's taken me a long time to take two photographs today. It's not been particularly productive at all, and I want a hot drink. I'm going under the underpass at [junction] 24. I'll take two more shots. Hopefully I won't get pissed on again. I'm going to take one of the Hardstaff road, concrete barrier blocks they put there to stop the gypsies from camping out. And one more from the side of the A50 over-looking where the gypsy camp was. So I'm looking to do those. They are the kind of images I've had on mind to do for a long time. I just hope they live up to expectations. Cloud patterns today aren't bad at all, they're quite interesting. It's just that there was a very dense patch of cloud that wasn't going anywhere. But I think I'm getting somewhere now.

3. Underpass 1



Underpass 1

I've deviated from one of the plans. I've taken some photographs of somewhere where I photographed ages ago [in the underpass] where it used to say "Icon." It doesn't anymore, it's

all been graffed over. A slightly different point of view here, I'm not sure if for better or worse but I've got the steps going up and its quite ambiguous, which I like. So I'm going to go along with that. 22 and-a-half on an eighth. And I'm going to get a move on with this because I'm fed up of hanging about now. I've got a fair bit of rise on this one. Yes, all done. Go. Job done. Thank God, because I'm cold.

Other images (no further voice recordings made)



4. Underpass 2



Underpass, 5th April 2005

1.8 Reflective Account for 3rd May 2010

As illustrated above, I have taken an image with a near-identical point of view some years ago. The intention of the image is consistent with my theme of playing off the picturesque against the brutal concrete architecture of the underpass. The mouth of the underpass works as a framing device for the view outside. I'm also very interested in the graffiti in that this impersonal and functional architecture is marked by someone thereby creating a personalised space, leaving trace of human presence. The presence of graffiti signifies a certain gender and age group (late teens to early twenties and predominantly male, a mixture of race but often predominantly white). It also borrows from North American black urban culture in a way that further points to a crossing over cultural influences. North American culture of the nineteenth century inherited the picturesque traditions that were established in Britain in the later part of the 18th Century. The graffiti and tagging is a reciprocal influence. In the instance of this environment the social standing of the people who made these marks are in contrast to the aristocracy and wealthy middle class landowners such as Mr Andrews and his wife, as painted by Thomas Gainsborough.



Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, c.1750, Oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm

National Gallery (UK)

This painting is symbolic of the picturesque, the bucolic and the pastoral ideals that contribute to traditional values of landscape image making. It was painted a few years before Capability Brown began his career as a park and garden landscape design. But it also has social significance. It also marks a period of social change in Britain, just prior to the Industrial Revolution, with a rising middle class that accrued wealth through trade rather than the hereditary lineage of the aristocracy. It shows members of the English middle class with their landscape representing wealth and ownership of estate (see John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 1972).



5. *Cycle path*

The image above [5. Cycle Path] was one that was intended today. I wanted an image that included the signs, lamps, fences, blocks, buildings, the road, pylons and the power-lines that shape the environment. The high viewpoint allows a mapping out of this space. The circular sign in the lower foreground was positioned in the middle of the horizontal axis of the frame to stand out as a marker against the green and to emphasise the presence of instructions and controls of a space defined by other structures, i.e. fences, path markings, signs and the nearby

major roads (J24: A50 flyover and the M1 below). Like nearly all of my images, there are few indicators of location since I tend not to include road signs that give place names. This is because I am interested in the images representing the general condition of landscape in this country rather than being recognised as somewhere specific and unique. The idea of a non-space, a space that eludes specific identity, one that exists between other spaces, is a theme that has been well explored in recent landscape photographic work. As such I run the risk of my work appearing clichéd.

The camera lens [210] was lowered considerably to make the ground visible but still retain parallel verticals. The fairly narrow field of view of the 210 lens provide a forward looking composition. It allows background objects to be brought forward in relation to objects closer to the camera. A wide lens would render the background as less significant. It is a site that I have returned to several times over the years since it seems so out of joint in between the major roads that surround it.



6. Standsman's Store

The 6th image of the Standsman's Store (above) was an image that was not intended as part of the shoot. On driving down the road between the A50 and Lockington I could see through the hawthorn hedge a group of trucks and other vehicles. I stopped the car, turned around to go back and parked up at the gated entrance to the field. The gate had a sign that read *Standsmans Store* [sic].

This site is where fair rides go into storage. It is tucked away near the village of Lockington. The rides are visible from the A50 but actually finding the road that leads to them is not so simple.

This is an image of things that are hidden from view when not in use. All the noise of a fair ground is absent and is only suggested by the gaudy illustrations and colours of signs, trailers and toy vehicles folded up and put away. The lens of the camera was lowered by around 15mm to emphasise the ground. I remember working quickly to take this shot since I felt un-easy. I didn't want to get walk further in since I was trespassing. I didn't know if anyone was present or not and I didn't want to get challenged. Hence the open space in the foreground since I set the camera was set up close to the gate. However, this serves to suggest an absence that seems to me to be very fitting of the things present in the image. The prominent tyre mark in the bottom left of the frame, and others throughout the open space, signifies movement and positioning of the stands. I don't associate the noise of the fair rides with this image but the noise of diesel trucks and men shouting and calling as the rides are positioned and put away for the winter. They seem out of place and incongruous: noisy things made quiet.

1.9 1st September 2010. Kegworth to Lockington Quarry

Long Lane/Warren Lane, from Kegworth to Lockington Quarry (A50).

Re-visiting images recently shot on phone camera in July 2010.

Film 1



5x4 camera with RFH – shooting on 120 (Fuji NPS).

1st shot – just over A50, looking over fields, with pylon and power station cooling towers in the background. Shot using the 54 with 67 roll film back. 75mm lens.



Film 1, frame 2

F22, 1/15 – about ½ stop over-exposed for this film



Reccy phone camera image – July 2010.

The film image taken today was in the same environment as this image above but further to the left, over the bridge, away from Kegworth. The road in the film image is hinted at rather than so prominent. The reason for selecting this vantage was to include remnants of a brick building, black wrapped hay bales (sillage), frazing animals with pylon and cooling towers. As with this image the horizon is placed in the centre of the frame in order to prevent an overly picturesque composition and achieve a more dead-pan image quality. In the film image the pylon is placed in the middle of the frame with the intention that it bisects the image and (possibly) has a jarring presence that contrasts the picturesque element like the old brick building, trees, green fields and grazing livestock. In other the words the brutality of the industrial structure of the pylon is at odds with the tradition of landscape image making.

Frames 3, 4 and 5: Same position but looking right towards the road. Only trees, pylons and sky visible. However, the tops of passing lorries is just visible. Three shots – last one with a lorry stacked high hay bales. Same exposure settings as above. This image was observed today and has not been shot before.

The idea of the images is to mix the picturesque, bucolic quality of the environment with elements of industry, or farming as industry.



Film 1, frames 3,4 and 5

Film 2



Film 2 Konica 67 range finder, film: Kodak Ektar 100



Film 2, frame 2



Reccy phone camera image, July 2010

More shots were taken on the 67 Koni (see above) including several where I turned around and shot into the sun, a view over the gravel works (Lockington Quarry), sometimes moving the camera, one frame shot on 5.6, 1/125, focused on infinity.

Using both cameras makes me realise how deliberate the 54 is, how non-intuitive is the process of image making. I could use it handheld but I would guess the view – which could be an interesting activity in itself, producing images where I am partly blind to what the camera records and the way it records (i.e. the effect of the frame, duration, depth). The 67 allows me to make a multiple number of decisions – both slow, planned and highly deliberate, and on the other hand quick, impulsive and intuitive.

I am aware of needing to reach a decision in terms of equipment used to aid consistency. However, I could make several works (i.e. books) with different approaches and equipment.

I want to establish the difference between the image qualities of both cameras and lenses. I want to see how good the much older Koni (early 1970s) is against the much newer (and probably sharper and more contrasty) Nikkor 75mm (mid 1990s). So the idea of combining images from each I think is a no go – the differences will be apparent. So might the method of image making due to the way the cameras work. In other words, the method itself is visible (or at least a difference between methods is visible). However each may lend itself to a different mode of work.

I need to guard here from being too camera technical, allowing the equipment to govern the work. However, it could be argued that this is inevitable. What therefore is required is the visibility of the qualities of working and behaviour. In Heidegger's terms, an unconcealment of how the technology effects, governs, controls the quality of the images. It needs to relate (I think) more to how I respond, how my body works, with each camera.

Amongst this I have overlooked the use of the smaller 35mm point-and-shoot camera (Olympus XA). I have used this camera in place of the phone camera to record the images made on the

other cameras. However some images have been made in their own right; that is, using this camera in itself, for itself (according to its own qualities rather than mimicking the images shot on 54 – I often held the XA above the 54 in order to produce a reference image. Since the film is much smaller this camera is more related to the phone camera, but is still different – the quality of the film should be more apparent – maybe I should use much faster film for a more pronounced visibility of grain (I used Fuji ProS 160 – so there will be some discrepancy between image quality besides that produced by the difference between lenses). Unlike the 54 this camera provides a very average view of the scene through its viewfinder. It requires more of an imagining (and a hoping) of what is photographed. It is not accurate in the way the 54 is. Since the 54 gives a direct if inverted view, very precise judgements can be made in terms of composition, exposure and focus. This little rangefinder does not lend itself to precise image making. And like the 67 it does not allow for perspective correction. These things in themselves are its qualities. I look forward to seeing how apparent these are in comparison to the larger cameras.

I am aware that today was possibly a test shoot to compare materials and equipment – to find a way of working and to set a standard to then rely on and keep as a constant. This has come about for several reasons but mainly due to change in film stock. I am also aware of a niggle, a form of embarrassment, an issue that is too bound up in camera specifics.

I need to relate these different practices of photographing to my body – that the 54 mounted on a tripod is rather disembodied. That the 67 hand held, moving, open aperture, may represent my body in the place. That the smaller XA camera will lend a roughness to the images (grain, vignetting, softness) that is more closely related to the glance rather than the studied gaze. These bits of equipment can be related to my presence and modes of perception, that being not the natural attitude of perception (i.e. mimicking perception, without camera), but the body with an image making device and the differences, the languages, that arise from each.

1.10 10th October 2010. A50, near J24

The following account was written after the event of photographing. No voice recording was made.

My main intention for this brief shoot was to revisit the fishing pools off the A50 (between M1, J24 and the A50 Castle Donnington/Shardlow junction) that I photographed two years ago in black and white (May 2008). Before this I visited a different site that is related to other photographs.

(note: throughout this project I have avoided signs that indicate location)



Film 1



Film 2

Coming off the M1 at J24A onto the A50 I pulled off at the first roundabout and pulled into a track off the road. Here I am situated in front of the pylon I have photographed several times put from the cycle path to my left on the other side of the road. There is a long two-part gate in front of me that has been cut. At the foot of it some domestic rubbish has been dumped including a red child's chair.

I take two photographs (1A, 2A) on a slow shutter speed, one of the rubbish, another of the view, f32, 1/8, moving the camera to cause a blur. I then realise that my focus is set wrong and repeat the shots (3A, 4A). The first slow shot is a view with the child's chair at the foot of the frame and the gate traversing the frame. The pylon is in the background with the road. Light quality is overcast with occasional open sunlight. Exp is f22 on 1/15 (I think), (5A).

The next shot is closer to the pylon. I set the camera up several times but I'm not happy with the shot. I want a shot that shows the road as a deadend but the comp isn't right somehow, or its too obvious. I take a shot of the tarmac, (6A) covered in moss meets the grass, waiting for cloud to cover the sun to diffuse the shadow of the camera. I then move towards the pylon and try several arrangements with a base section of the pylon, its shadow over a wall with graffiti, the back of a large road sign and the front of a green road sign with three arrows pointing up. I want this sign to be clear but its obscured by the tree so I line the shot up and the raise the camera on the tripod as far as it will go (7A)

I'm dissatisfied by other shots so I go back to the car and move on to shoot the fishing pools.

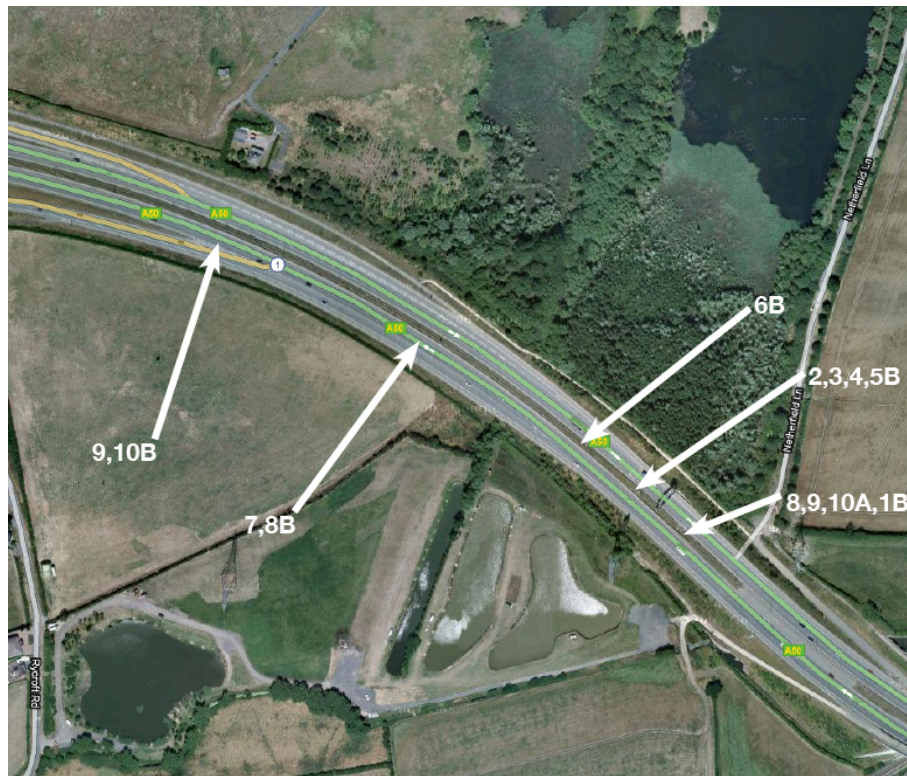
I pull over onto the path and walk up towards where I think I photographed two years ago. I'm surprised by the growth of the trees and bushes - the view is very much obscured. I can't quite find where I photographed from two years ago (late May 2008). I walk further up the road until the trees that act as a screen from the road thin out. This position gives me a different but effective view of several pools and a new parking space in the foreground.

I set up the camera with a tree framing the right side of the frame. Behind this is a pylon that rises high up. I shoot on both the 90mm and the 58mm since I am concerned that the wide angle will dilute the details in the frame. The 90mm gives a harder crop and should draw attention to the pools and should provide good detail. Since the sun is now out I shoot under bright sun light on f22, 1/15. I might get some wind movement in the trees. Since the sun is behind me (slightly to my left) I will have good sky detail. I feel confident about this shot.

I have been wanting to re-photograph these pools in the morning for a while since in the afternoon I am looking into the sun. I also wanted to shoot at a time when the pools were well populated with anglers, emphasising the transformation and reconstruction of the land from industrial gravel pit to leisure area.

I take four shots here to make sure that I have two for each focal length. This overlaps onto a

second film (8A, 9A, 10A, 1B).



I walk towards the car and stop at a road sign. I am struck by the gaps between the rectangular sections that make up the sign. I take four photographs here. Two of the sign where frame the shot with a line indicating the road to the top left of the frame and the trees and barrier behind to the right of the frame. I shot this on the 90mm so the road itself will not be visible. Two shots, one where I didn't correct properly for focus (I am using the 67 rangefinder) and one where I did. Very bright sunlight. f22, 1/30 (2B, 3B).

Two more shot were taken looking towards the sun with the lamp fitting that illuminates the sign to bottom right, tree and bushes cutting across the frame and a pylon in the background to the left, cropped. Two shots were made, a stop difference to account for the bright light. f22 on 1/30 and 1/60 (4B, 5B). My aim with this shot is to draw attention to the way these apparatus sit amongst the trees. The light fitting sitting diagonally to the pylon. The trees acting as a screen to pools beyond (invisible in this shot). I am hoping that the trees will have a regimented look at they cut horizontally across the frame - that their planting will look intentional and managed.

I then continue to walk towards the car. I realise by now that the photograph I took two years ago was further this way since the image looked between two pools. I find what I think is the same site, now with much higher growth of plants that now obscures the view - interesting in its own right. I set the camera up, 90mm only since the wide angle will only reduce the size of the cars and anglers round the pools. I raise the camera up above head height in an attempt to look over the growth but not to exclude. The height of the camera is around 7ft. f22 for hyperfocal. (6B)

Another shot is taken across the road showing the two carriageways with trees in the background. I time the exposure so that the road is empty. I want to emphasise the structure of the road, the architecture, the road surface and lines that organise traffic against the line of trees. Two shots are taken from head height, one with 58mm another with 90mm. Deep focus, f22, again to give hyperfocus (7B, 8B)

The last shots are also ones that I have been looking at taking for while (over a year). On the opposite side of the road is a house hidden from the road by trees. All that is visible is a tv ariel and the very top of the roof. I photographed this from the opposite side of the road from the cycle path on the 54 using bw film. I used shallow focus to emphasise the roof but the image was not successful. It didn't look right. The composition was poor and I couldn't find a vantage that allowed me to situate the house in relation to the road. I have intended for some time to see what this hidden house looked like from across the road. I have thought of photographing it using a longer lens than I have used here draw in more closely to the house in a relation to the road. The problem I have from this position is that the top of the house is barely visible above the trees. I set the camera up on the tripod and raise the camera to the highest point my tripod will allow (around 7ft). Again I am using small apertures for depth. This point of view could be interesting at will stress the architecture of the road with its lines, central reservation and road lights. My concern is whether the TV ariel or the top of the roof of the house will be at all visible or apparent to the viewer. The extra few feet of camera height may help here. Another concern

is that an elevated view-point will not correspond to an embodied view point of the photographer/viewer, i.e. the pavement/surface of the ground. The word 'grounded' is significant here since an elevated view point may suggest an imagined point of view. This could be interesting in itself since Poussin employed a high, distant and subsequently imaginary point of view in his paintings of Arcadia.



Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Calm*, 1650-51, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

As far as I know this image, unlike others Poussin painted, did not involve a narrative. It is a view of an invented landscape. Notice the shepherd in the foreground who seems to be looking at the same view as the viewer of the painting. This image has particular resonance for me for my project. It employs the conventions of picturesque composition (though it should be noted that it pre-dates picturesque landscape theory by a hundred years). It has a relationship to two of my images, see below.



Pools, Cars and Cables, A50, 10th October 2010



Pools, Cars and Cables, A50, 8th July 2008

Both Poussin's landscape and the one I photograph are inventions. Both include people at rest and enjoying the landscape. Both are scenes of leisure in the landscape with aspects of human

structures – Poussin’s town/pylons. Both Poussin’s landscape and the one I have photographed here are synthetic and both borrow natural forms to place in strategic positions. Both exhibit certain tendencies towards the design of the environment. This is especially true of Poussin’s paintings since they contributed so greatly to garden landscape design in the eighteenth century (see Capability Brown). I was not aware of this image when I took the black and white image in 2008, but in coming across it later, it informed my intention to photograph this place again in a way that referenced Poussin’s style and image content.

1.11 25th October 2010. A50/Junction 24



Film 1



Film 2

Film 1, frames 1 - 3

Photographing just off the A50, half a mile from J24. Photographing near where I've shot the pylons several times and I'm photographing off the road that leads to Kegworth and Lockington. I'm photographing a view that I've been meaning to come back to for a long time that I photographed about a year ago in summer. It's of a beaten up ash tree with a pylon behind it, the road itself, some bollards and a long metal safety barrier. So here I'm playing off the industrial appearance of the street lights, the road, the metal barrier, and the pylon of course, the pylon is a recurrent theme, against the appearance of this knackered old, wizened old ash and also the picturesque quality of the Autumn leaves. I want to retain that hardened edge of the industry [industrial]. I don't want it looking to cute. It's not a bad shot. It's ok. Then I'm going to go down to the underpass again and I'm going to take some photographs of concrete blocks, which is another project I'm thinking of doing. There's one here to the back of me that I'll photograph. I like the idea of the blocks because they are something that stops you from going

somewhere, these strange, quite eerie sculptural forms that look arcane and odd because they've been scratched and pot marked. They're minimalist with them being so blockish and squarish, being cast concrete. So I'm interested in those kinds of things. I'm linking these various picturesque, traditional landscape elements with the modernist idea of the cube, and also playing off the picturesque against the industrial as well, the quaint and the beautiful, the traditionally beautiful against the hardness of concrete and steel.

I've moved the camera to the right a bit because I wasn't very happy with how the tree overlapped with the pylon in the background. And I'm trying to get the road completely level, completely parallel with the side of the frame which funnily enough isn't particularly easy to do, probably because I've got a bit of curvature through the finder I'm using. So...erm...yeah...that's not good really. I think I'm going to have to go with it and stop fucking about, otherwise it's going to take me hours. The ash tree, because I want the road, I'm going to crop the top off. I'm not using rise and fall, but what I will do is raise the tripod up because I don't need as much road here as I've got. So I've got it round 4 and a half foot and I'm going to raise it to eye level. So I've now got a slightly higher elevation so that I can see the path that goes down by the trees a little bit more clearly.

I'm on the 58 [mm lens] as well which is wide. I'm pushing the pylon right to the edge of the frame, trying to get it as level as possible. That's not too bad that. That's pretty close. I quite like the idea of the pylon being right at the edge of the frame. I'm slightly worried that I've got a ???-free to the edge [01:55] that isn't really in shot because I quite like it. I'm also worried that the right hand side of the frame is slightly weak. The left side of the frame where I got the ash rising through it is ok, it's fine. There's another old gnarled tree further down as well.

I'm going to shoot one on the 58 and then I'm going to shoot one on the 90 which is going to have a lot less in it. And I might need to...I don't know, with the 58 [I mean the 90] I'm not sure whether I'm going to keep the pylon in at all. Mmm, tricky one that. I think it's a case of suck it and see. I've got to balance between various things.

I've made a bit of a cock up with this shot on the 90 because I thought I was looking through the 58 through the finder and it wasn't at all. Actually I had the 90 on. So I'm just re-jigging the shot here because I want to actually... so I've shot from the same position with the 90 and the 58, but I want here to actually... I think I want a bit of the pylon in so I'm moving things across a bit.

Film 1, frame 4

I'm photographing the block and unless I photograph really low, which I really don't want, I'm going to have to look down, so I'll lose my verticals if I shoot on the 90. So these, this series, needs to shot with the 58 which is fine because the last shot I took [of a block] was down Warren Lane was with the 58, so this is ok. So I'm going to have to stick with this [the 58] for these shots. It's all going to be the 58 so I don't get confused. So here what I've got is the cube with one edge facing towards me. I've got a gate on the right hand side. I need to make sure that my car doesn't enter the shot. I've got the pylon rising above with the cables cutting across and the road above me with give way signs, grass in front with a little bit of Autumnal detail to one side. Quite a nice, elegant shot actually. Some good cloud detail – a bit of blue, a bit of gray, a bit of white. Not a bad looking shot with lovely flat light so it's looking quite objective.

Film 1, frames 5 and 6

Ok, two more photographs of blocks: one leading up to the path, which is slightly tricky to photograph, though I don't think visually it works very well, and further on round, before the underpass, there's a whole row of blocks that I've photographed. And I've photographed from, erm, looking straight on, so the block is central even though there's another set of blocks to the left. And I've got the lamp-post to the right, rosebay willow herbs and a sycamore rising out of the top and I've power cables to the right again [again?]. I'm just making sure [that] I capture the bottom of the block where it meets the tarmac, so I've got some greenery and stuff round there where it all is. Hopefully that will communicate what I'm trying to get at, whatever that is. Suns coming out a little bit more. It's dropping down all the time. And there's quite a big tonal difference between the sky [and the ground where this block is situated] so what I've done is

I've shot one on 22 on a half a second which exposed for the blocks and I've shot one on 32 just so I've got some sky detail that I can chuck in if I need to. I don't want to be doing too many of the same thing. I need to be making a move and getting on with stuff really. I'm walking through the underpass now. I've photographed this so many times. I'm tempted to take a photograph here as well just of the architecture and the environment.

Film 1, frame 9 and 10

Ok, another block passed the underpass. Back on program now. It's got a really nice bit of orange and then a bit of purple graffiti on it. It's got "hardstaff" and then an arrow pointing to the left which I think is quite witty really. Centered it on the bottom again. I've got the landscape rising above it. So I'm going to follow this pattern if making these things really, really - although they are quite skew-wiff in the environment - taking some photographs where they are very set in the environment, so they are very rectilinear. On the other-hand that might not be right. Maybe I need to have them off-set so that they're kind of...they're presented skew-wiff so I present them skew-wiff. I'm going to have to think that through. I'm going to have to get on as well.

Film 2

That's two films shot off on several blocks. One shot of the underpass. One thing that concerns me is if the width of the blocks are too variable. On the other-hand the other thing is that some of the blocks are placed at different distances from the road. The other thing that bothers me is where some of the blocks are in shadow. I'm either going to be over-exposing the sky or they are going to be under-exposed on the blocks. So a couple of them, or one in particular, are bracketed across three different stops. One to the sky reads about +3, the block reads minus 2. Up from there an incident reading on the block is zero. The first ones, I think, might be the weakest where there are a group of three on the floor. I'll have to see how they look. I'm slightly worried that now, at just about 4 o'clock, the light is dropping a lot. So I've got a lot of very warm light. It might be too warm. Also, when I first started shooting I had very flat light and then it got very sunny, a little bit too sunny for my liking. A little bit too warm maybe. Also, a very variable

exposure. I do think it would work better if the blocks were shot under much more neutral lighting. So where the first block is probably the best one, maybe the best one, near the car, with the pylon in the background, the best one for lighting. It might not be the most interesting image, interesting subject. So I need to see how they look really, see how they go together.

1.12 30th October 2010. A50 Junction 1



Film 1

Film 1, frames 1 to 7

I'm taking some photographs on the way back from Nottingham, on the A50 again, and looking at the hidden house, which I shot probably two weeks ago now in very bright sunlight. Today, it's hazy sunlight through thin cloud. I've taken a couple of photographs of that. I've also taken some near Gotham as well near the break in the trees [an unfinished project]; three there. And

I've taken a few here and finished up the film. I've shot on [f] 22 throughout to give good depth, hyperfocus throughout, and also shot wide open as well, to throw the foreground out, hopefully to focus on the house.

Film 1, frames 8 to 10

I've turned around, gone further up, and done a slightly similar thing, where I looking across a hedge here with fields with green bales in. I've got the conning tower of Donington airport and the church in the background and pylons. And I've done the same thing there – I've shot to give hyperfocal and I've shot wide open on f4, pretty much the same exposure as I'm shooting into the light, I might be slightly under-exposing for the shadows, but never mind because the sky is going to be pretty bleached out due to me shooting into the sun. So I'm hoping to build up a relationship here between what is in the foreground and what is in the background. We shall see how they turn out

Film 2, frames 1 to 6

Similar thing, but here I moved down a bit to include pylons again, a telegraph pole to the right, pylons to the left, but also a For Sale sign that has caught in the light. I need to be quite careful how I expose this. Again, I'm shooting into the light, and quite a bleached-out sky I think. I'm using the 90 [mm lens] because for one it's sharper than the 58, and also the 58 shows too much, there's too much width to the shot which means you don't really concentrate on anything. And especially with things in the background, with things at a distance like this conning tower from Donington, on the 58 you're just not going to notice it. It's not going to be drawn into the perceptual field of the viewer at all. That's the way I'm projecting.



Film 2

So I'm thinking immediately how this [image] is going to look on the wall. I'm thinking about how this is going to look as an image, almost coming off the printer...I'm thinking about it being a couple of feet wide, I'm thinking it needs some detail, some good shadow details, some lovely shadow detail in the sky. So I'm probably going to expose it a couple of times, one on f22 on 1/8th, one on f22 on a quarter, so I've got a sky I can use or I can drop it in, effectively doing my own HDR. I also might raise the camera as well. I'm going to try at eye level on those two settings and then also raise it.

Film 2, frame 7

I've also got a photograph of an old truck tyre [wheel]. I find that kind of incongruous – how has that lorry got home. And I've also been taking photographs with the camera phone of detritus and stuff, like a glove and a piece of newspaper, a piece of plastic that looks like a river, bits of

mud-guard, that kind of stuff, that relate to the detritus of stuff left by the side of the road. There's a towel here that I'll take a photograph of.

Film 2, frame 8 to 10

I've just pulled into that area where the cycle path goes down underneath the road that goes to Sawley. Here I've found another couple of tyres, deep in the undergrowth. I'll take a couple of photographs of those, maybe on the 90 again. I find it quite interesting that these things are here. I want to photograph this wall of graffiti as well, that's surrounded by these concrete pipe type structures. So I'm going to get that done because I've got to get back.

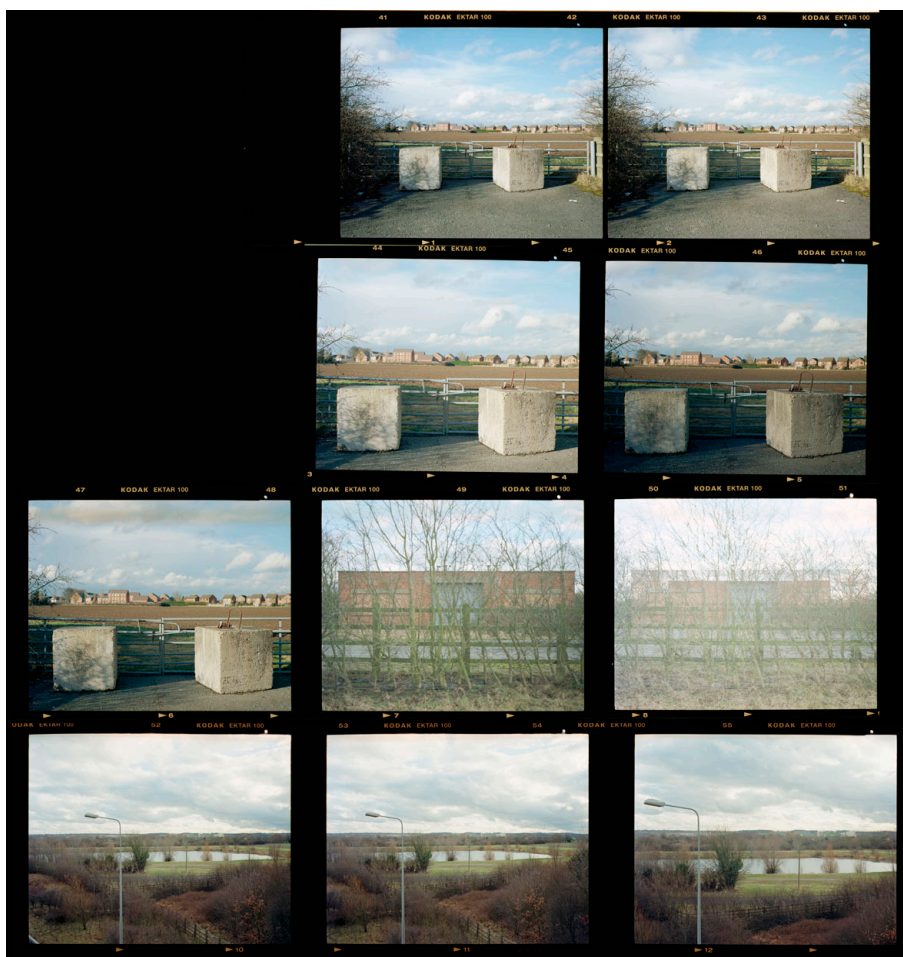
Last photograph is of the wall, trying to adopt that picturesque composition again, keeping a Claude Lorraine style tree to the left side of the frame. It's autumnal and the trees are turning golden, and the scuzzy area of a wall, a meaningless wall with graffiti on it, so... End of the shoot.

1.13 14th February 2011. A50 flyover, Shardlow to Aston on Trent

I'm going out to take some photographs of the road that goes between Aston-on-Trent and Shardlow. I want to take photographs of the pool with the quarry in the background. There's quite an interesting building I've never seen before here. It's quite a low building, I'm going to take a shot of that on the 35mm (Mju): it's red brick, I just find it quite interesting, its protected by a fence. So I'm going to take a shot of that I think on the 90 [90mm, standard lens for 67 format]. I'm going to keep it quite wide [the aperture] so I'm looking through the fence.

I'm walking up to the flyover. I'm looking through the trees now. I might even take a photograph through the trees actually. I just like the idea of the concealment [of the pool being concealed by the trees]. I'm going to go to the top [of the flyover] first of all. There's a cormorant flying in the sky at the moment. I might take one of the road [A50] with the petrol station on one side and

then the pool on the other side, and maybe even the laboratory on the other, which is maybe quite sinister. So I could even do four sides to it [the view from the flyover], but I'll see how I feel about it, see what the image looks like really. Make a judgement after I looked through the viewfinder. I don't know whether that theme of the four corners is going to work. It might do. It means spending more time than I wanted to spend on it today. So much for five minutes taking a shot or two. I can see that it's taking over a bit. Also I think that a 90mm [standard focal length for 67] might be a little bit too narrow. So I'm going to start with the key image that's looking over the pool. See how I get on with that.



Film 1

Frames 1-5 were taken on the 12th Feb. No voice recording was made for these images.



Film 2

A couple of films shot on the bridge over the A50 on Valentines Day, 14th February [Monday]. Shot from four angles, four quarters, four corners over the fishing pool then looking over towards Shardlow and the powerstation, then looking over towards both petrol stations. One of them, of course, looking over towards the animal testing lab. Whether, how clear that will be I don't know. I shot quite a few shots using the 58mm, which is a wide, equivalent to 90 on a 54, and the 90 on each. Really because I'm being indecisive about how much I want to see and the scope, if you like. I'm kind of aware that a wider lens gives a wider field of view, well obviously it gives you a wider field of view, but with that it also makes things relatively smaller. It depends how the details pick out. I've also been putting road architecture in the way. Occasionally bits of the bridge, the hand-rail on the bridge will appear, and also the street lights as well will appear in the photographs. So lets see how they turn out. The last photograph wasn't planned at all. There was a woman walking across the bridge and I just turned round and shot the final [picture

of] the bridge with her walking across on the wide angle. Again, I just think possibly a bit too wide for her to pick up [out?]. I'm getting cold, I want to go back home. I've been shooting a few with the 35mm, the little Olympus, I've shot a few on the camera phone, the weather's closing in. I probably got the best light when I took the first shots of this building...

1.14 25th May 2011. A50 / pink box

Using the 5x4 camera with 120 roll film, 75mm lens (f32 throughout)



Frames 1 to 6 (old ash and road)

I'm combining picturesque elements of the old gnarled twisted tree with the road architecture, with the road lamps, with the markings... So you have this kind of contrast - which is a theme through the whole work - this contrast and contradiction between the industrial and the picturesque, the bucolic look to the landscape that is inherently managed and manipulated to serve our ends.

I'm using the 75 [mm lens]. The field of view is wider than the 90mm. So I've got a pylon to the left-hand side and the old ash to the middle left. I've got two lamps on the cycle path, and old trees covered in ivy to the right, bollards...and length of road in the foreground, and the contextualise that I'm including the white line of the road to the bottom of the frame. I don't need that much height, I don't need to see the whole sky and that kind of stuff.

I'm just moving the camera, slightly just rotating it clock wise, because I want the paving [I mean the kerb) exactly parallel, it won't be exactly because its very slightly sloping down form left to right, hence that's not going to be entirely parallel with the frame, and I don't know remember being like that in the last shot (the best one on 67), but it looks true in the camera so it looks to be the case. So I've got the branches of the old gnarled ash again, I think [to the right of the frame] and the top right of the frame I've got the electricity pylon to the far left of the frame, and the ash in the middle, and the road...and the barrier cutting through. It's not quite as satisfying a composition [as the other shot on 67 - Konica], I'm not even sure if its [the camera] is in quite the right place, so I might move things again in a bit. Well I'm going to go with this, I'm going to take this shot and then I make actually take one more shot moving down towards my right a little bit where I'll get a little bit more of the path, and i'll move over and get a little bit more tree in, and I could actually try obscuring the pylon behind the tree so its partially visible. On the shot with the 90 its not very visible at all, I'm shooting slightly wider than I have been. Erm, when I've done that i'm going to take a few more shots. I going to take one of a big concrete block that they [transport] use to block the gate to travellers. I'm going to take one of that with the pylon on the background. And then i'm going to round and photograph a bit of the graffiti with the

picturesque content of the trees.

I've taken some more here. I've moved down a bit so that I'm obscuring the pylon a bit which, is ok, but I think I might be obscuring it too much actually. It almost looks a little bit ??????? [cluttered]. I might need to move over ???????. Lets move it a bit - to get a bit more of it in so that it doesn't look too much like a bit of a mistake. It's [the camera] pretty much level... a tiny bit out... just arrange things a little bit. i'm just going to move the back because I quite like the tree to the far left of the frame, and I move it over so the bollards are pretty much on the edge of the frame, because that gnarled old tree is rather nice, I just want to get the side of the branch in. I think that's about it. I've got the bollards and the concrete bit that goes off... I think that;s one to go really.... So I've only moved it [the camera back] off the centre axis by about 5mm [side ways shift], but its just enough to control what's on the edge of the frame and what isn't, and I've got white lines (road centre markings) pretty close to the bottom of the frame, the camera can go up [front shift] so that the lines are really nice and close to the bottom of the frame. ...That's ok. I'm going to take one shot like this and then another where I'm going to include a slither of the road because I think I might be including a little bit too much of it, thinking of the big print I made of the Konica, there is any white line of the road. I just think the white lines add something to it, I just think they do. So, erm, probably f32 again and half a second. I've focused on the barrier so I've got good depth...everything is going to be really nice and crisp.

Frames 7 and 8

I'm photographing this block again, near where the cars parked. The car in the background, the edge of the gate and the path in front of me. Again of f32 about half a second. A nice overcast sky. Probably have a bit of cloud detail. Wind's not too bad which is good. The top of the block is in the horizontal axis of the frame and the middle of the block is in the vertical axis of the frame. Dead central with tufts of grass at the bottom. It's very precisely positioned. I'm focusing just on the back edge of the corner of the block so I should have a fair bit of depth on f32. I don't have to worry about that too much. I haven't got the details with me but it should do the job [depth of field at this distance]. Just hold on a minute... one, two, three, four, five, oh six metres,

no problem. I've also put the lens hood on as well because I'm slightly worried about getting any flair. I probably don't need to but it's on anyway. I really like, well, don't know if I really like, but I find this quite interesting because of the way its marked. I'm waiting for some buggers to paint it actually [graffiti-ists]. I'm going to go over to the road-side now. i'm going to photograph across where's there's an electrical cabinet that's been painted really beautifully with a massive pink mouth over it. I happen to really like that, it's good.



Frame 8

Frames 9 and 10 – Pink Box

Alright. This one's slightly tricky. I've got all these trees and that kind of stuff. I got this green box that;s been painted pink with a mouth on it. And I've got to find the right place. It depends on how much of the blocks and that [those] kinds of things I want in the shot. It depends on point of view. I'll have a quick look through the camera, see what I've got. I'll photograph about head height. I'll see what I can see through the view finder on 75mm. Lets have a look - open the lens... That's not too bad actually. I've got the trees in and I've got the path in. I'm going to go for this one. I can always come back and shoot it again.



Frame 9, *Pink Box*

Ok. I've arranged this shot. I've got the pink box slightly lower than the centre of the frame, the horizon line, but bang on the middle of the vertical part of the frame. I've got trees just quite close to the top of the frame. So we're approaching rule of thirds here so this kind of pink thing is stuck in the middle of nowhere which is kind of quite good really, surrounding by this beautiful pastoral... I've got a street lamp to the far left of the frame.. so that's quite nice. I like that. I'm going to go for that.

1.15 6th June 2011. A50 / Old ash

[Note: I'm a bit concerned about the recording for this shoot as I talk about a lot of things related to the project. This is uncommon. So it might seem uncharacteristic. However, since I did not have the right film equipment with me. I was shooting on 120 film on the 5x4 and I only had the 150mm lens with me. Ideally I needed a 90mm lens. I took some images with the 5x4 but gave up. I couldn't make the photographs that I wanted to. Therefore I had more time to reflect on the environment and its features. This might account for the extended content of the voice

recording. It also shows how using a small 35mm compact or a phone camera is not such an intense photographic activity as using either the 5x4 or the 67 rangefinder.]

I've come down to where the old trees are by the A50 again. I keep on coming back here. I'm kind of drawn to it. The reason being I'm not convinced about the last shots I've taken. I've taken a photograph of the block again because I didn't like the other one I've taken [see shoot, end of May, pink box, etc]. And I'm thinking about using a longer focal length, so I have the barriers in the foreground as well as the barriers in the background. I think the barriers are going to be too big a feature and although they are an important feature, to repeat them is unnecessary. I don't need to repeat them. The lamps, the street lamps, they're fine and I don't mind repeating the trees, or having more than one tree in, but I don't know if that's going to work very well with the barriers, they're just a little bit too dominant. So I'm looking to find the picture. I'm just going to make a few photographs on the 35mm...

I'm just exploring different ways of photographing this scene with the tree [the old ash] and the path and the barriers and the pylon and that kind of stuff. Throughout all the work I've tried to avoid obvious signs of location. So for example, there's a sign here that goes to Kegworth, and I'm trying to not provide locations for the work. I'm not sure why? I think the reason why I'm doing this is because I want to try and achieve images that have a particular universal quality of this clash between picturesque and all this industrial architecture, between two cultures of what we perceive and what we think. What we assume as being a beautiful environment and those elements within it and also the human elements that often appeared in the picturesque: images by Constable with the farmyard, stuff knocking about, the old thatched cottage, the blasted oak [though that is not a human element], cart horses... and what I'm doing is throwing something a bit more contemporary in there. Essentially saying, I suppose I'm saying, there's no such thing as these ideals [of picturesque beauty], the ideals are... the traces of these ideas [I use idea here rather than ideal. I do this intentionally, I register an intentional slight shift of emphasis, but I'm not clear why I did so] the objects that sit in these ideas, these ideals [I return to ideal here] that we have, control circumvented... I'm trying to find the words... circumscribe maybe, by what

we build, what has been built, what has been built for our safety, for our convenience, economy, safe passage...the barriers, the [road] markings, the lights, all those kinds of things...and I think we often look beyond them when we look at a landscape because we are so used to seeing them and what photography does is draw our attention to them being very, very evident and being there, because you see in a photograph what you see, it draws attention to things that perceptually, in the experience of the event of being there, you might overlook, you might miss, you might beyond or towards...erm...more attractive aspects of the place where you are in. So these images really are looking at the economy, the economic drive, to [make it] possible to get by, to allow people to go to work, to have leisure, all those kinds of things. Amongst pockets of beauty, of naturalness, that allow, promote a certain degree of well being. No-one would like all this green stuff to go, but all this black stuff [tarmac] and grey stuff [posts, signs] and metals stuff, and all these lights and signs punctuate the landscape quite, at least visually, quite violently. And all these cables that striate across the landscape mark it pretty thoroughly. So that's what I'm trying to get at by involving this aesthetics, this Claude Lorraine, Poussin-esque quality of the composition, but also, as I've written the day before, the control of elements in the frame, I'm shooting a but too wide on the 75 on 67, I don't like it very much. It's too wide a field of view. I need to borrow a 90 because this 75 makes...the foreground elements too large compared to the background elements, which I'm trying to bring forward, I'm trying to make noticeable, to make visual, to make visible rather, to make pertinent as a comment, as a drawing together of all these things that are here so we can home and cook at night, and watch TV, and turn lights on, all those kinds of things. Amongst all this we just trying desperately think how to preserve this planet, but amongst all this we're just taking all these things for granted. What if these things weren't here? What if we couldn't do this anymore, what if we had a power-ration, which may happen, as it happens in parts of America. Anyway, I'll carry on photographing, but I've taken a few photographs with my camera phone and replicated them on the 35mm, the little Mju as well, which is a little pocket camera, just playing round with point of view, foreground elements – all this natural stuff that's coming up – daisies and those kinds of things. I am just slightly aware that they might be saying the wrong thing. They might be a little too pretty, a little too beautiful and they might be getting in the way of the order of the system [the

formal order of the photographs I make], but occasionally what you have to do when you're taking photographs is disrupt that order.

I've just stepped to my left and I'm looking at the thistles, flowers, weeds really, on top of this pile of spoil, and there's a lamp post to my left and to the far left of that there's a gate that's locked with an Abus lock and chain. I'm looking at how I can possibly use these thistles and flowers on top of this lump of crap. It's all covered in grass now. As a foreground element it disrupts the foreground element. It stands in its way. It prevents me from seeing the stuff from behind. Whether I should shoot this on a wide aperture and focus on the flowers to throw the back out, to deny it, to draw attention to this natural stuff that will grow anywhere. Despite us, it will just happen, it will just grow it will just be there against all the stuff that we as a culture place there so we can get by and live. On this recording, when I listen back, I'll hear all the traffic passing, and it's what we need to do. It's what we need to do to get by, to live, to lead the lives that we have been born into, and that we are constantly work and strive so we get better: more comfortable, more secure... Sometimes I think that's a fallacy and I think I'm probably right. So I'm going to take a few more photographs now foregrounding this [natural] stuff in the middle. I've just noticed there's also a ladybird on one of the thistles as well. And its not the kind of image I've been taking. I haven't taken an image like this for a very long time [I'm not quite sure what I mean here]. I've looking for the slightly wider but quite dense and formally rigid, not rigid, from a controlled view, paying very close attention to things in the corners of the frame. I'm going to just try this on the camera frame to see what it looks like.

The last photograph I shot on the 'phone (see below). I quite liked because it's like a pyramid effect with the lamp-post in the middle and the walking/cycle sign to the left and the bollards to the right of it. So it has a pyramid that travels through the frame. There's almost a pyramid effect with the plants in the front me. They have a high middle and they drop to the sides a little bit, and formally I think that's quite an interesting frame. Now, what does form mean? What is this pyramid important? It strikes me as important, this idea of light, the idea of being to see where

the hell we are going and the need for electricity and power to get by in life. This artificial stuff that we spread around the world so we can do things.



I probably started photographing, or talking anyway at about twenty past six. It's now quarter to seven. Brilliant sunshine, a bit of a breeze, very, very blue sky. Not a lot of cloud detail, I wouldn't mind a bit more but that's just the way it goes. Whether these are the weather conditions I want is another thing and maybe that's going to be a problem with the consistency, so I might just take two photographs here. There are other photographs I like as well. There's this old knackered oak tree with this drainage stuff to its side with lots of rails, and that looks like an interesting image because it's a blasted old oak with new bits growing out of it and again the industrial stuff is going to be present and there's going to be another ash tree in the background and maybe a lamp post and possibly power-lines and the road as well, it depends on the point of view. It depends on how much I want to look at.

So, I've got the tripod quite high. I'm getting the camera out... I'd like to use the 67 camera because its easy but I think I might need the rise on this [image] anyway...I've got the tripod quite high as I think I need the height. [at this point I'm complaining about having to get

everything out of the back to find things – I also forgot to pack the 75mm lens. I fit the 150mm]. I'd like to shoot this on 54, but what I'm doing, this is all like prep, I think, at this stage, because I don't think I'm really ready to photograph this [on 54]. So it's all me just getting used to it, doing visual research maybe. I'm sorting the levels out because it's got to be: all the verticals and horizontals need to be bang on. There needs to be no room for error there. That's what helps to make the images tidy...ok that's good, check the lens...I think I'm going to have to go back on this [image] anyway. I don't think I'm going to be able to get the view here, to be honest. Open the lens, take the back off, make sure the bellows are nice and wide, secure everything... It's really out of focus...there's an image by Mark Power where everything is out of focus, and it's a really good looking image, of a church, and it suggests memory... and I find this [the image on my camera screen] quite interesting. It's purely by chance, it might be a load of shit, I'm just going to take one like this where everything is out [of focus]... 5.6...bearing in mind I'm using Ektar on 64...like a lot of images that are entirely speculative...it might be a waste of time, it could lead to something. I'm moving it [the camera], I've got the lamp-post bang in the middle. I don't want to move it too much as I want the bollards in. I've got the lamp-post just on the edge [of the middle?] and the centre line of the screen is cutting through the gap between the sign-post to Kegworth and the lamp-post. I want to check that I've got enough detail. I'll lock everything down so it can't move. Ok, that's it... close the lens. 500 and 5.6... I don't need to take two of that. I'm not going to be needing depth of field or anything depth, I want it really, really soft anyway. So, yeah, speculative again. I'm going to another look and I might take another photograph with it all in focus. So I might completely rearrange things as well. So let's see what it looks like in focus. So I've got the lamp-post in focus and I've got the barrier in the foreground with all the natural stuff... It would be much better full frame. I'd get what I want full frame... I don't particularly like this on 67. It's not doing a great deal for me. Alright, I'm going to take another shot. I'm going to take a shot with the grey card in as well to get the colour right... the light is getting very warm...so it's 22 on a 30th. That will give me more focus. Take a shot for the grey card. Take another shot... I'm going to put it on 250 on f8...now I'm going to put it on 45...I'm not convinced by this. I'm not going to waste another shot on it. What I'm going to do is

step back...I going to see what kind of composition I get. This might be the best idea, I don't know. I'm going to get a shot on the camera phone as well.

I've come a long way back, behind the block. I'm not getting a great deal. The 150 is just... Alright, this is not good at all. I'm not getting enough width. The 150 is just too narrow a field of view. It's not giving me what I want. I'm just going to go to the right side to see whether there's not a shot there. It's a different shot, a very different shot. I'm going to have to come back to this. It's a shot I quite like. It might be quite good... I haven't got the angle on the block right. There's not enough field of view. So I'm going to pack up. But I'm going to come back because its quite an interesting space. Frustrating...I'm going to take a shot on the Mju.



Ok, that's interesting. What I've got here is the block in the foreground... that's interesting, that could be a good little shot, and I wouldn't have found this...Yeah, I quite like that... What I've got here is the block I've been photographing to the left, I've got the tree, the ash centre right. Right above the block I've got a lamp-post. On the far right I've got another lamp-post. In the background I've got a pylon and I've got a tree, the old oak. I need to come back just a little bit more, a few more feet...alright. That...I don't know, obviously I've got a different state of

relationships here; I've got the concrete block in, I've got the very edge of the gate in, depending where you put things of course, I've got the barrier, you've got the road [I shift emphasis from "I" to "you" here], I've got all the scrub here with dog-rose and all that kind of stuff, you get the sign to Kegworth. You see the path so clearly. I think I need to weight it up. I need to see the pictures to weight it up. I'm going to take some photographs with the camera-phone. I'm also going to take one with the grey card as well. I'm just going to rest this on the block somewhere...

1.16 11th June 2011. Post production

This account refers to post-production for images taken on 6th June 2011, East Midlands Distribution Centre, Donington, Leicestershire. Contact prints of these films are included below.



Film 1



Film 2



Film 3

I've been working on some of the contact prints and looking at the image quality from a shoot in Donington on the 6th June, and...the original contact prints as scanned, this is one of the frustrations of making the work, were too saturated and too warm. I've been looking through them quite closely, looking at the detail, looking at the quality of the colours. I've added a grey correction layer where I've really taken a lot of the warmth out which I'm really glad about. I've just used a curve on one of the images because I've got a grey card that I shot at the car part at the Coop [nearby] but it wasn't giving me the correction that I wanted which is weird because a grey card should do it.

I'm looking for an image style which is quite deadpan, but also taps into the picturesque. These images are shot handheld on the 67 camera. I just wanted to have some kind of visual schemes of the kind of things I could use as they were or that I could refine. It's a continual refining process. Maybe I shouldn't use it, maybe I should just go and shoot and do it properly. But I just wanted to take some photographs of this place. I've shot it on the mobile phone. I wanted to see how they transferred to film. What I've realised, just though looking at these, and I don't think I was at all aware of it then, was there's all sorts of pairs. So this is the second contact print [from 6th June 2011] and frames three and four; I'm looking at two trees, fairly young trees, that have been planted on this area near this new building on this industrial estate, and there's a pair of trees, pretty much equidistant to the edge of the frame, towards the edge of the grass, then at the bottom you've got a path and then you've got the curb and then you've got some weeds, then you've got the road. Behind that, quite intentionally, is a pylon with the power lines cutting across. You've got details of street lamps in the background, a road sign. You've got a sign warning of horse riders and in the background behind that you've got all these pallets that are stacked up in this yard. I find this a quite interesting image. I'm trying to work out why I find it interesting, why it might contribute.

I think the way the trees are laid out, are planted intentionally to make the landscape softer, naturalistic, possibly to increase the amount of wildlife that inhabits these places, and also to soften all the industrial stuff that's going off. It's almost like an excuse for all the economic

activities that are happening in these places that need to happen on these places if we are going to have employment in this country and survive with all the industry and manufacturing from the Far East.



Film 2, frame 4

So this is something that has come up in a couple other conversations that I've recorded; it's this idea of the economy, or the impact of the economy and commerce on the environment, the landscape. Whether anyone else can see this [in the images] or not, I don't know. But these have been planted here and you've got traces of industry in the background, and you've got traces of power as well, the need for energy, in these monolithic things that straddle the countryside with the pylons and the power cables. And you've got the scruffy-ness of the weeds in the foreground that just grow there, that just exist there, that will take over in the tiniest bit of soil and dirt. Then you've got this pair of trees.

Frame five, I'm just looking at this mound of mud [clay soil] and dirt, and then you've got these weeds again. Standing up on one is a tall weed, standing up on another is a tall weed, and in the background you've got these pylons. Both taller weeds are just inside these pylons. So

you've got this pairing up again: pylons sticking up against the weeds sticking up. But the other thing I've done here, also its shot on a very sunny day so I could shoot handheld on 64 ISO and I seem to be quite good at hitting the horizon line.



Film 2, frame 5

But when I've scanned them the frustrating thing is they've just been too warm, even though I've tried very hard to get the colour right in the scanner, and they've been too saturated. So I put in an adjustment layer to correct the grey, to take some of the warmth out, to throw a little bit more green in, and also to de-saturate as well because its [the colour] strong. So I'm getting something a little bit less warm, a little bit cooler now and almost...standoff-ish almost, just in the colour. Maybe I'm taking too much colour out. On here [my monitor] it looks ok, the next thing is to see how these images print. The saturation doesn't look out of place at all, it looks ok.

...The orange of this sign [film 2, frame 6 and 7] looks a little bit flattened off too much. I just don't want them to look too joyous, to look too pleasant. I want them to have, even though its sunny and they've got these big vast open spaces, a quality of coolness. There's colour there,

there's blues there, there's green there's, but with leaving the saturation in everything looks a little bit too strong, a little bit too positive. My exposures are probably out in these frames by about half a stop and all that's recoverable. They're pretty consistent which is pretty useful for me. There's one or two dust specs... There's a couple of photographs inside the car as well [I'm in the process of viewing the contacts whilst I am speaking – this is what I'm responding to in this text].



Film 2, frame 7

This idea of pairing is also in frames 6 and 7, a pair of trees appear [above]. I've moved back when I've shot this to get the edge of the orange sign in, so you can't see any branding, all you see is ".com" right at the end in blue at the bottom. There's three trees in the foreground but there are two which are quite prominent, and then you've got this new building in the background, this new huge industrial building that being built. So in these photographs there's a getting closer to this building. In some [one?] of the photographs I've shot, I put this heap of spoil in and all these plants growing on the spoil. Then I've turned round and in this space to photograph, again, two other trees...this spoil with all these weeds and herbs, this concrete

surface here, and a pylon to the left hand side of the frame with the cable spanning across. And again in the background you've got the sign for horses and the pallets appearing as well.

This might be slightly blurry. I might have to do a detailed scan of that to see how it looks. I'm not sure how this fits into the overall scheme of the project. It's a little too far away from the A50. However, it's pretty much within shouting distance of that road. It might be a reinterpretation of, a take on [Louis] Baltz's industrial parks. Which to a certain extent is a little...to make work like that is a little bit hackneyed, hence my use of colour. There's a couple of shots inside the car because you've got the mirror there as well. That might be worth exploring a little bit more.

I'm just looking at this contact print. I'm happy with some of the images. What do I mean by that? There's a kind of contentment. There's the idea that certain ideas of order against randomness appear in the image[s], that as an image maker I seek to find some kind of order, some kind of visual order inside the frame, to impose on this environment. Hence the pavement with the kerb and the weeds at the bottom, the two trees, the pylon in the background [film 2, frame 4]. By juxtaposing these elements – the path where people walk, the weeds where nature recovers itself, the two trees with the staves and the supports, obviously signifying that they've been intentionally planted rather than naturally occurring there – it's this kind of constructed landscape where various elements seem at odds with it. So this pile of stuff with the two weeds on, with the pylons on the background, trees in the middle [film 2, frame 5], there's a kind of ordering to all this. A sense of...but its ordering with a sense of irony, and it's irony that comes through, I think, in the Bechers' work as well. An irony of the sculptural quality of the buildings they photographed that weren't made with any sculptural intention but nevertheless have this quirky, strange, odd formal quality that is...I wouldn't say enchanting, engaging certainly. Very beautiful in its rough, hard, modernist way. A utilitarian way kind of way, a functional kind of way. As Bernd Becher said, a Calvinists approach to architecture.

I'm not looking for something that's completely pleasant. I'm looking for images that present some kind of juxtaposition that includes some kind of contradiction of the visual terms within the image. What I mean by that is the presence of things like pylons, which are not attractive. They

punctuate the landscape. Things like road signs. Piles of dirt and mud and whatever. Really this earth has been put here, in [film 2] frame five, to prevent travellers parking up here and staying, reasonably successfully it would seem. Then you've got this new construction building, a very expensive building in the middle of all this dirty scrub. This multi-million pound thing in the area that is under construction and under re-naturalisation. I look at one of the other films in a minute.



East Midlands Distribution Centre. Film 2, frame 8

Going back to image quality, I think cooling it [the images] down, de-saturating things a little bit – its far too warm without – correcting the grey, getting some of the pink out of the grey and taking some of the overall colour out, is no bad thing at all. I can change that, its no big deal. I've just opened the other files up for the Donington shoot, for the shoot on the 6th, and I'm in the process of applying the adjustment layers. The point of this is that it's controlling the images quality that I want, because I don't want a richness, I want a neutral, controlled, extended pallet. I don't want things to be too over-saturated. I want these images to have a matter of fact quality where the detail speaks in a descriptive way, where there's no warmth to the images, there's no Romantic undertone of sepia, no traditional value of beauty in itself. I'm trying to make the

image lend itself, in descriptive terms, to the things that have been photographed and the scene that's been photographed.

Using Camera Raw has allowed me to correct these image, although I think they are still a bit to rosy. That gives me a basis to edit further. What bothers me is that I'm not getting quite the colour I want from the scanner, quite the sense of truth to the subject. When I'm looking at these images I'm thinking how, where I was actually in the shot, where I was positioned, what I was looking at. I can remember now, on the ninth frame of the third film [as below], it getting colder, it being a lot windier, the cloud coming over, and the light being cooler because of that. I can remember having to sit down to take the shot because I knew from standing up it was going to be too shaky, there was going to be a risk of camera shake. In half an hour the conditions change quite a lot therefore the colours can change. But I'm relating the image I see on screen, in sometimes a frustrating way, to the experience I remember of photographing. I think I need to talk through that. I think I need to talk through this shoot and relate that. I didn't make any recordings when I shot this, but I need to work through what I remember.



Film 3, frame 9

...I'm getting good, believable contrast in the mid-tones so the images are beginning to look like they resemble the experience of being there. They're looking convincing in terms of detail in the sky, textures and details in the ground and the relationship between all these things. They look like something that relates to experience rather than something that is short of it. Of course you don't ever get close to that until you print these things up, but at least on screen I want to get close to this.

I'm quite drawn to this image [Donington, pylon and trees]; this old tree in the background, bang in the middle of the frame with all this wilderness with rushes and stuff in the foreground. And you can see where there's water passing through it because of all the rushes. And then you've got this fragment of part of a pylon [to the right side]... I don't think it's a bad image, I think it looks ok. I quite like what I've done with the composition where I've got this patch of trees almost equidistant to the side of the frame, I have this thin oval of trees bang in the middle of the frame. Like in a lot of work I'm the habit of putting the horizon line in the middle of the frame, bang in the middle of the frame, give to take a tiny little bit, so that there's no bias between foreground and background, sorry [I correct myself here], between the earth and the sky. But also to correct verticals as well so that I'm not getting any weird distortion.

The third scan's coming off now where I'm just tweaking the levels for the third time. And I'm hoping that, since I've been consistent with my exposure, I'm fairly accurate with getting the colour right. I can start making this profile to use with certain images. It does vary a bit with print film in a way that it doesn't vary with transparency film, but what I want from print film is the broad tonal range and the slight forgiveness with detail in the highlight and the shadow that print film offers as opposed to the rather limited range offered by transparency film even though it is stunning stuff. So it's just rotating the image now and I'll see how it comes out. Then I'll scan two more images, one with the factory and another of the pile of rubble with the weeds on top and bit of pipe and plastic coming out.

Ok, its not bad. The blacks are black anyway, the base of the film is black, there's nothing there, which is good. The greens aren't looking over-saturated now and I've got good tone... There's a shadow under the tree inside the pylon and that was going just black and now I'm getting some good tone in there. There's some nice differentiation in the shadows. So you can see dark leaves inside that shadow whereas before [previous scan] the levels were just too coarse, too heavy, and this isn't bad at all actually, and there's some nice detail in the sky which I can probably make a little bit more of. Maybe the whole thing needs a bit more exposure actually... [I'm looking at the screen, comparing the scans of this image] So that's the other one which is a little bit more contrasty, and the first one... is too pastey, there just not enough happening there. It's quite nice with the levels in though, or a curve layer. So lets look at what I've got. Having said that if I can get this right without having to do curves I think I'm getting a purer colour and a better file. The colour's good. The colours pretty much bang on. The second one with high levels is just too crude. It's just too black. In shadow areas there's no differentiation, it's just heavy, which isn't what I want. I want some good tone all the way through, it's just too contrasty. The third one I think is probably the best one. I just seeing if there's enough detail in the sky. As long as I've got enough differentiation of tone in the sky I'll be happy. I'll just check the one with the curves... You see the ones with the curves the sky does look good but at least I know I can add that. There's not a great deal of difference... yes, there's a slight strength to the blue. Definitely a strength to the blue. But I'm very, very close [with the image only scanned without an added curve layer]. So if I added curves to that now, so I'll take the top curve down [the highlight end of the curve], If I take it down toward the top [highlight] and then push it up towards the bottom [to reduce contrast] because I've got enough low contrast... before and after... I've lost some of the brilliance there, it's flattened it off a bit. I think it's flattened it off a bit too much, but I could just erase that [erase part of the curve adjustment layer] ...as long as I don't see the effect [of erasing – a trace of erasing the layer]...on the trees and elsewhere. In fact it's quite nice on the trees. So, yeah, I might layer this a bit. Alright, that's very close. I just don't like the fact that I'm having to work on curves in order to recover it, I just want it right out of the scanner. Let's have a fourth go on the scanner...



1. Frames 1 and 2

I'm by the Lockington quarry...and I'm underneath the power lines, looking out over this near area where they are going to build [dig] gravel pits. I'm right underneath the power lines and they are making...I can feel the tripod vibrate.... I'm looking across here and I've got the power station to my left. I'm looking straight up, underneath the power lines, keeping it nice and symmetrical. I've got shapes, marks caused by lorry wheels on the earth and I'm picking the edge of some of the mounds from the earthworks that they are building. So, I might do a couple of shots here where I pan across the image. I might make a three shot image out of this and then even come back to it later on and do the same thing. The shot on the 58 is alright but I haven't got the 58 with me. It's kind of a shame, but I know that the 90 is going to be more consistent with what I doing and it will show up the detail more. I've got two Cat trucks to the left

hand side of the image. It's quite a soft light because there's a lot of cloud. The clouds quite broken so there's good detail, there will be good detail in the sky. I've got a fence that's just creeping into the bottom of the picture that is slightly irritating but I can't do much about that really.



Frame 1

I'm not sure of the camera is really at the right angle so I'm just going to check...I'm just going to change the angle of that a minute...I've lowered the camera so it's about 4 foot because the fence is very slightly in so by doing that I've got it a bit more definitely in. Not brilliant. I'm going to be shooting on about 11 or 16 [aperture] because I don't need a lot of depth. I reckon focus just after 30 feet on f16 and that will be nice and sharp. I've arranged the frame so its bank in the middle of the pylons. Very symmetrical, emphasizing the order of these earthworks. So are going to do a great deal to tell you the truth. I think this is the one image that is going to do the trick. So, just rearranging the frame, that's fine, all locked off... the change to this environment is amazing. I've got a few frames on the Mju of this, but that's just about all. I wish I'd taken a few

other shots because the field that's being developed just had weeds all over it about a year ago. There's this huge mound of earth as well just down the path. I'd like to get a shot of that...It's an interesting space.

2. Frame 3



Frame 3

I've moved up the road a tiny little but because I took a shot here in the morning, a few mornings ago, where the footpath, it looks like the farmer uses it as well, peels off in a different direction to the shape of the earthwork, so you get this, erm, almost like two Cs that come together, or this opposing curvature almost, of the path and earthwork. I was attracted to those two shapes. It's an interesting quality of light, the sky is really dark so it looks like it's chucking it down in the far distance, so I better get a move on and take these photographs. I tend to want to use a much wider angle lens, but I know what will happen, it will just dilute the detail and I'll get more detail using the 90. I'm just trying to sort out my position. I wonder if I need to be another couple of feet up the hill. The angle of the...that's quite critical I think. I'm going to take two shots on the camera phone so I can refer to them later.



Frames 5, 6 and 7

Note: No voice recording is available for frames 5 to 8 due to user error with voice recorder

3. Frame 9



Frame 9

I've come down towards Lafarge a bit more near to where I'm parked. I'm taking a couple more photographs at an angle overlooking the earthworks and I want to take a photograph of the pine that looks really forlorn and on its own, that's actually inside the works. It's got everything built round it, there's a little clutch of trees there...it looks so bare with all the branches missing on the lower part. I'm shooting on the 90 and I'm slightly raised up above the plant. I've a road sign here that warns of the narrowing lane and I've got that sticking out into the right hand side [of the frame], just on the edge. I'm not sure if that is going to look intentional or any good, I just like

the idea of that intruding in the way that all this other stuff intrudes. So I'm going to shoot two shots of this; one I'm going to shoot on...erm...oh I don't know...I might just shoot it on hyper-focus because everything else I've shot on hyper-focus so I might just keep it nice and consistent which means the sign is going to be completely out [of focus] but that's not necessarily a bad thing, not completely out of focus, it's going to be drifting out of focus because it's too close... I'm not sure about the shot. I like the idea and I quite like the sentiment, I'm not sure if I like the shot. I'm under the power lines so I'm getting a right buzz out of everything. The other thing I don't like here is the branding; there's quite a lot of branding for Lafarge and Hanson. I've managed to avoid a lot of that stuff so far. I think I've got to have a look at this and give it a shot. It might be one of those images where I come back re-evaluate it, take another look at it. Or maybe I just get close, walk down the road a bit. In fact, I will. No. I'm going to go with it. I'm going to go with what I've got with this sign in the way, so the sign intrudes into the image. It's quite a nice metaphor. Then I might take the last shot walking towards the plant a little bit.

Note: I didn't. I took a completely different shot (see frame 10 on the contact sheet)

Appendix 2: Page sequence for the final book

Book cover



Roadside

Images of an English Landscape

2010 - 2011

Philip Harris

Statement

The following photographs have been taken by the side of, or in close proximity to, the A50 dual carriageway, near where it joins the M1 at junction 24a and where the counties Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire meet

Image 1



1.1

Image 2



1.2

Image 3



1.3

Image 4



2.1

Image 5



2.2

Image 6



2.3

Image 7



3.1

Image 8



3.2

Image 9



3.3

Image 10



3.4

Image 11



4.1

Image 12



4.2

Image 13



4.3

Image 14



5.1

Image 16



5.2

Image 17



5.3

Image 18



6.1

Image 18



6.2

Image 19



6.3

Image details

Image details

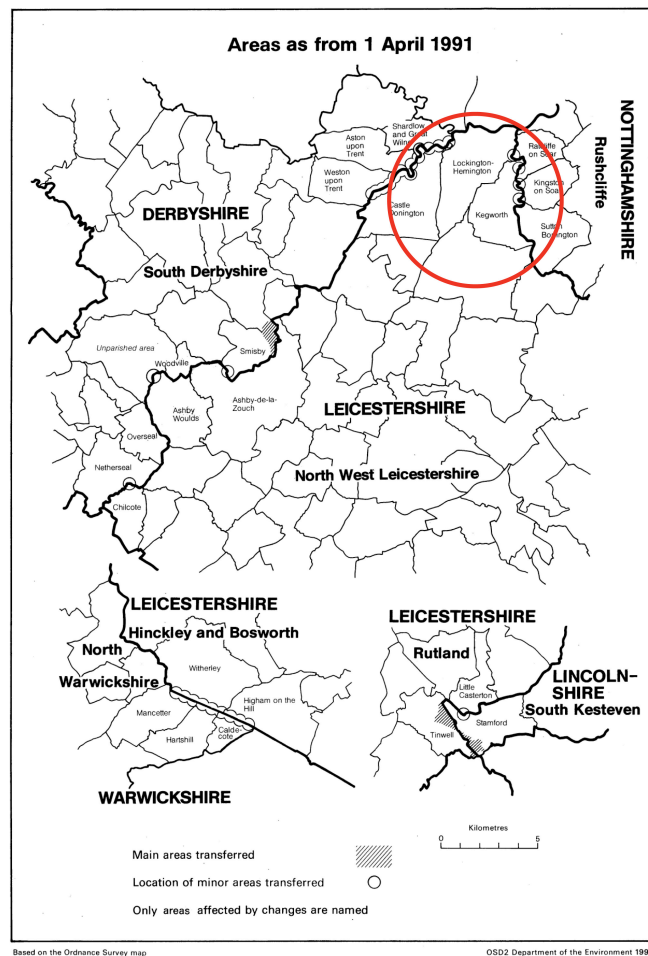
	Description	Orientation	Date
1.1	Fishing pools reconstructed from gravel pits, Lockington	West	10 October 2010
1.2	The A50 dual carriageway	North east	10 October 2010
1.3	Trees positioned to screen the A50 from view	South west	10 October 2010
2.1	Graffitied inspection box, by the underpass that runs beneath the A50	South west	25 May 2011
2.2	A view from out of the underpass running beneath the A50	South	3 May 2010
2.3	Graffiti and and steps leading out of the underpass	North	3 May 2010
3.1	View from on top of the underpass, looking towards the M1. The A50 is behind the camera	North east	3 May 2010
3.2	Standmans' Store near Lockington	South	3 May 2010
3.3	Discarded HGV wheel on the verge of the A50.	South	30 October 2010
3.4	Discarded HGV tyre concealed by brambles	North	30 October 2010
4.1	View across a country road. The A50 is immediately to the left of this image	South east	21 October 2010
4.2	Area described in 3.1. Concrete block positioned to inhibit travellers setting up camp	North west	21 October 2010
4.3	Area described in 3.1. Utility building with graffiti stating travellers' name, PRICE	South east	21 October 2010
5.1	East Midlands Distribution Centre, Willow Farm Business Park, Donington, Leicestershire.	West	6 June 2011
5.2	East Midlands Distribution Centre, Willow Farm Business Park, Donington, Leicestershire.	North	6 June 2011
5.3	East Midlands Distribution Centre, Willow Farm Business Park, Donington, Leicestershire.	East	6 June 2011
6.1	Newly planted verge with industrial unit. Willow Farm Business Park, Donington, Leicestershire.	North east	6 June 2011
6.2	Wetland area set aside by Willow Farm Business Park, Donington, Leicestershire.	North	6 June 2011
6.3	New gravel pit. Lockington Quarry, South Derbyshire	East	15 June 2011

Location of images



Map 2

County boundaries for Derbyshire, Leicester and Nottingham
Approximate location of the project is circled in red



Map courtesy of: *The Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Warwickshire (County Boundaries) Order 1991*

[<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1991/309/made>]