2001

Stories of a war: narrative and the single photograph

Gregory Battye

University of Wollongong

Recommended Citation

NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.
STORIES OF A WAR: NARRATIVE AND THE SINGLE PHOTOGRAPH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Creative Arts

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Gregory Battye, Bachelor of Psychology (Hons) (WA), Dip. Lib (UNSW), Grad. Dip. Media (CCAE).

Faculty of Creative Arts

2001
CERTIFICATION

I, Gregory Battye, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Creative Arts, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Gregory Battye

Exhibition: 15 May - 3 July 2001 ADFA
3 - 29 August 2001 University of Wollongong

Documentation: 19 December 2001
**Table of Contents**

List of figures vi
Abstract viii
Acknowledgements xi
Introduction: 1

**Chapter 1: From Pre-Raphaelite to Photographic Light** 20
The picture-logic of paintings 20
Painting, photography and imagination 36

**Chapter 2: Analysis and Definition: Narrative and Theory** 49
Formal approaches 49
Psychoanalytic approaches 80

**Chapter 3: Origins and Antecedents 1: Some Words and Some Pictures** 93
Words for and against: previous analyses which address the issue of narrative 93
Arguing from images 113

**Chapter 4: Origins and Antecedents 2: The Constructed Photograph** 139
Montage, tableaux and history 139
Straight photography in the service of the constructed subject 146
Self-presentations 148
Narrative tableaux 154
Miniature stages 160

Chapter 5: All My Own Work 168
War photographs: imaging and imagining 168
Advertising: never mind the content, feel the style 182
More in the Directorial mode 187
Onward as to war 194
A meeting of the ways 200
Theory into practice into theory: building on foundations 202
Integrating the narrative modes: practice 207
Aesthetics and desire 223

Conclusion 227
Listing of photographs in exhibition 233
Reproductions of exhibited photographs 234
Footnotes 259
Authors cited in text 267

Appendix A: Original photographs referred to by the exhibited images.
Appendix B: Exhibition catalogue from ADFA, together with copies of documents from previous exhibitions referred to in main text.
Appendix C:
Catalogue essay, catalogue listing and copies of wall texts from Wollongong exhibition.

Appendix D:
CD containing work-in-progress images and unused images
LIST OF FIGURES

2. Roger Fenton: The Valley of the Shadow of Death 3
3. John Singleton Copley: Watson and the Shark 26
4. John Everett Millais: The Blind Girl 30
5. Robert Braithwaite Martineau: The Last Day in the Old Home 32
6. Oscar Rejlander: The Two Ways of Life 43
7. Henry Peach Robinson: Fading Away 46
8. Henri Cartier-Bresson: Beance, France, 1958 76
9. Marie-Paule Négre: (no title given) 96
10. Larry Clark: "Untitled", from the portfolio Tulsa 118
11. Robert Capa: Death of a Loyalist Soldier 121
15. Ralph Bartholemew Jr: Eastman Kodak 135
17. Eileen Cowin: Untitled (from the "Docudramas" series) 149
18. Eileen Cowin: Untitled 155
19. Nic Nicosia: Like Photojournalism 156
20. Nic Nicosia: Violence 158
21. Gregory Crewdson: Untitled (from the "Natural Wonder" series 161
22. David Levinthal, (no title given) from Hitler Moves East 164
23. Greg Battye: Bondi 171
24. Greg Battye: untitled television image 179
25. Greg Battye: The Dead Starling 181
26. Greg Battye: Woman in pool 184
27. Greg Battye: Graveside Visit 188
28. Greg Battye: untitled genre photograph 189
29. Greg Battye: Christine 196
30. Greg Battye: Eternal Barbie Triangle 199
31. Greg Battye: Remembering the War 203
ABSTRACT

Theoretical accounts of the communicative powers of photography characterise it, inter alia, as intrinsically a medium of the instant, depicting time only insofar as it depicts the moment of exposure. While a few special cases, such as time exposures or multiple exposures, are acknowledged as technical exceptions, the single unmanipulated photographic picture is generally held to exclude time. Since narrative, however defined or circumscribed, conveys information about the unfolding of sequential events over some period of time, it would initially seem that narrative and photography can have no common ground. This research seeks that common ground: a way of making photographs that use narrative and convey narrative information, and a theoretical framework that supports this activity. It seeks to answer the question: can a single photographic picture — a picture made by photographic means, whether by single exposure or through combination or manipulation — be a narrative?

Thematically, the project stemmed from a desire to address, through creative work, the author's childhood memories of stories which had 'attached' themselves to family snapshots taken in the 1940s and 1950s, depicting family events associated with his father's service in World War II. This notion of 'attached' narrative is specifically dealt with in both the creative work and the theoretical domain. Through a concentration on World War II as an important backdrop to the family snapshots, war photography gradually emerged as an area of particular, though not exclusive, interest, through which the theoretical and artistic concerns could be constructively integrated. The images made at the end of the project deal with the
photographic representation of war, a topic which integrates the creative, the theoretical and the personal.

The boundaries and concerns of the project are approached discursively at first through a historical comparison between selected narrative paintings and early non-realist photography. Particular attention is paid to some Pre-Raphaelite painters, for their use of photographic techniques their influence on photography itself, and to contemporary photographers such as Oscar Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson, who viewed their composite photographs as constructed pictures akin to painting. Both groups shared a concern with moral messages, often framed in narrative terms. This brief survey foregrounds ways in which, to the extent that paintings can be narrative, so too can photographs.

Some formalist and psychoanalytic modes of narrative potentially applicable to photography were distilled from their original applications to literature and film, and used as a background for an analysis of the few pre-existing direct applications of narrative theory to photography. This analysis encompasses critical writings by others about narrative in photography generally and about particular key examples, as well as original analyses undertaken by this author, of photographs with apparent narrative significance.

The course of this analysis increasingly focused on narrative tableaus as the most fruitful and appropriate style of work through which the photographic representation of war, rather than war itself, could be addressed. The latter part of this documentation follows the development process through which the author's final creative work was produced, in the form of narrative tableaus referring to, and mimicking, famous war
photographs. These pictures connect with their historical referents through several different forms of narrative device derived from the theoretical investigation. The exhibition, which includes new versions of the early family photomontages as well as the latter tableau photographs, is analysed as to its success in making narrative photographs, and a brief conclusion determines that while the individual photographs cannot be said to be narratives, they do in fact narrate.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff of the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong, all of whom have cheerfully given me assistance on many occasions.

Of my many supervisors over the years, I must single out a few for special thanks. Professor Sue Rowley made me feel that this project might be possible and maybe even worthwhile. Dr Fran Dyson located the wood in the sparse forests of early drafts. Jacky Redgate asked necessary and difficult questions about my photographs, and thus clarified what they were about — no easy task. Professor Sharon Bell pointed out both problems and potential in my writing in a manner which inspired me to try my hardest, but her most remarkable achievement was to actually get me to finish.

This project is dedicated in part to my late father, who would have loved to see it completed. In greatest measure though, it is dedicated to Georgia Tayler, my loyal partner, who held up more than half the sky for so long without complaint.
INTRODUCTION

A photograph by Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Place de l'Europe, Paris, 1932* (fig. 1) encapsulates a key aspect of his peculiar talent perhaps more than any other single image from his illustrious career. On a grey day, in a flooded urban yard enclosed by a high spiked metal fence, a bowler-hatted man leaps from the end of a ladder lying in a pool of shallow water and is caught by Cartier-Bresson's shutter a split second before the man's descending heel breaks the smooth surface of the water. No supplementary information is given, other than the title. Can we induce, with a satisfactory level of certainty, what has happened in the moments before the one depicted? Do we know what will happen next?

Another photograph, Roger Fenton's *The Valley of the Shadow of Death* (fig. 2), made in the Crimea in 1855, purports to depict the aftermath of the ill-fated 'Charge of the Light Brigade', when British cavalry disastrously charged entrenched Russian artillery on 25 October 1854. Even without the cue provided by the title, which evokes both the twenty-third Psalm and Tennyson's jingoistic 1854 poem named for the event, the photograph does indeed seem to convey something potent about an event which is not merely in the past, as is the case for anything represented via photography, but was in fact long in the past by the time the photograph was made, in the year following the actual event.
Fig. 1. Henri Cartier-Bresson: *Place de l'Europe, Paris, 1932*
Fig. 2. Roger Fenton: *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*
How does a photograph connect us to something which happened long before the photograph itself was made, something not in any sense directly represented in the image? The phenomenon is partly aesthetic:

The historical event, unlike the horrors surrounding it, is stylized into a picturesque composition. The eye of the photographer is thus able to document violence and, at the same time, hide the reality of war behind the cloak of pictorial composition — "artistic effect". Photography, as a pictorial epilogue, depicted the empty stage where the drama had taken place. (Amelunxen 141)

But the phenomenon also seems to have to do with a capacity of photographs to convey more about the extension and direction of time than should apparently be possible, in a medium seemingly limited to the depiction of time's smallest fragments. Thus arises the question of whether at least some photographs perhaps have the capacity to be narratives: a capacity which is occasionally and obliquely referred to in writings on photography, but which has been generally unrecognised, and on more than occasion explicitly denied.

The artistic work and the theoretical context and justification documented here are a response to the question posed above: can a single photographic picture be a narrative? There is a focus on war as a theme, both for personal historical reasons as outlined below, and because war photography and writings about war photography have always seemed particularly concerned to convey their import in narrative terms. "That is what we see in this book. A single image tells a story worth a volume" says the Introduction to Robert Fox's two-volume *Camera In Conflict* (1:11), but we seem to have heard the same claim in similar words elsewhere, and more
than once. The theoretical investigation expands on the nature of narrative in relation to photography in general, since photographs which are of narrative interest or significance are not limited to any particular subject matter. Conversely, war photography is homogeneous only with respect to its subject matter, and embraces as many forms and styles as photography itself. My creative work has focused on war photography both for the reasons outlined below, and to provide a thematically coherent and disciplined framework for exploration of the narrative issue. Accordingly I have sought to select, from the many possible technical, formal and stylistic approaches to such a theme, those which can best combine with a similarly circumscribed set of narrative models; these, in turn, are the ones thrown up by my theoretical exploration as being most applicable, at a practical level, in this unlikely medium.

Ever since it became possible to transport photographic apparatus out of the cloistered studio environment and into the field, photography and war have gone hand in hand, linked together less by necessity than by a kind of mutual infatuation. My investigation into the intersection between war and photography begins in the personal and extends into an interest in selected public representations of war, along a dimension which runs from family snapshots to individually celebrated and widely known images. These photographs are not confined to a period in history, and range over more than one hundred and thirty years, from the Boxer Rebellion to the first Gulf War of 1991. Toys have been employed in the photographs as a means of investigating or, in later works, encoding, both attitudes to armed conflict and attitudes to its representation.
My interest in the topic, and to some extent my approach to it, originated in childhood experiences and memories which are described in detail in the last chapter of this documentation. My practical interest in photography was sparked by looking at old family photographs, of which my parents seemed to have accumulated a very large number. Many of these showed or included my father around the time of enlisting for service in World War II; other showed him home on leave during the war, or in uniform again for various special occasions immediately after the war. The task of correctly assessing even the appropriate denotative meaning of such photographs, given scant external information, prompted repeated inspections and numerous comparisons between them. Somewhere at the back of my mind lay the suspicion that each photograph contained its very own wealth of information, if only the secret code could be found which would release it. And when, or if, information about a photograph was finally provided via ceaseless interrogation of parents, that information came in the form of a narrative — confirming, to a youthful mind, that the information 'contained' in the photograph was itself a narrative.

Years later I took a photograph at Bondi (fig. 23) which, I felt, hinted that a single photograph could convey information about a period of time extending both before and after the actual exposure time 'frozen' by the image. This image is also discussed in the final chapter. The same photograph also inspired other images, made in the course of this project, which have been, in a sense, a formal part of the investigation of narrative itself, and are thus linked more to the theoretical part of the investigation than to the creative part. On those grounds, some of these photographs are included and discussed here, because they represent an important aspect of
my deliberations on narrative photography. They are not thematically linked to the main body of creative work on war, and in fact the most difficult part of this project has been the process of reconciling and integrating the two issues I felt driven to work with: war and narrative photography. To a large extent the structure of both the creative work and its documentation reflects that process of integrating the two concerns, rather than just its resolution.

There are those who respond to the theoretical part of my research question — can a single photograph be a narrative? — with another: why would a photographic picture not be a narrative? In the domain of artistic practice, this returned question-in-response may seem a reasonable one, and perhaps even an adequate reply without further elaboration. From a theoretical standpoint however, and particularly from a theoretical standpoint outside photography, the broad lines of the answer to this second question are clear. Narrative, however defined, requires the depiction of time in some way, if not an actual unfolding of itself over time. Photography, by contrast with almost every other means of making pictures, and every other popular and widespread means of conveying information, is a medium of the instant: a medium which intrinsically resists extension over time. It is a medium whose very appeal and value generally lies in its presentation and preservation of a moment, a moment isolated as much from time’s flux as is the photograph itself from the space to which it also refers; a medium, consequently, from which time is apparently absent.

This latter view is by no means simply a matter of ignorance or thoughtlessness. It is unreasonable to simply assume that any photograph can potentially be a narrative; to assume, even, that certain particular photographs might straightforwardly meet the criteria by which we
determine *anything* to be a narrative. Roland Barthes, for instance, in
"Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives", boldly asserts that
narrative is "Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written,
fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these
substances" (79) and is furthermore "present in myth, legend, fable, tale,
ovella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of
Carpaccio's *Saint Ursula*), stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item,
conversation" (79). Does someone who has written so much about both
narrative and photography, an author so mesmerized by photography at the
levels of both academic writing and personal homage, leave it out (apart
from the backhand reference to "fixed images") of the latter list by accident?
Neither (since cinema, drama, novella and other obvious narrative
candidates are specifically included) can we presume that photography is
absent from Barthes' list only because its inclusion is implied without
question. If photographs can be narratives at all, they will be special cases of
narrative, and special cases of photography.

The following chapters document the creation of some sets of
photographic works which pursue the theme of representing war, or
perceptions of war, or memories of war. Within sets, photographs are related
to one another in terms of style, treatment and presentation, but there is a
conscious attempt to avoid turning sets into series, since the emphasis is on
the notion of the narrative contained in each single picture. The problem of
actually *preventing* a reading of a set as a series is a difficult one, and some
progress is made in this respect, from early to late works, in the body of work
presented here.
Narrative as a theoretical entity is discussed at some length in this documentation, and one principle which emerges from this complex question is the idea that narrative is as much a process as a thing. It is the process aspect which is emphasized in the creative work, particularly in the final images. Reader-oriented theories of photographic interpretation centrally include the notion that the viewer brings knowledge and memories of other photographs to the interpretation of any given photograph. My work seeks deliberately to engage this interpretive pathway, constructing a narrative process which connects the public to the personal, in different ways.

One set of pictures, based directly on family snapshots and the associated personal memories as mentioned above and described in the final chapter, refers to experiencing war at a distance, and at a remove: physically remote but nevertheless emotionally affecting. These photographs will hopefully evoke knowledge and memories of similar events for many viewers, by providing a space and a focus for a process of identification. A second set, consciously addressing and extending this notion of war as perceived not just at a distance, but through various filters of representation, re-presents some war photographs whose status has changed over time. Once graphic news illustrations playing a supporting role to a dominant text, now they are iconic mementoes of certain periods in history, engraved on our collective psyche in an emotional, and sometimes ideological, shorthand for the best and the worst moments in the bitter history of organised armed conflict.

My photographs are not so much about war itself as about perceptions and received understandings. As is appropriate and perhaps necessary for someone who has not directly experienced war, the emphasis is on indirect,
implied and, above all, mediated representations. As described above, the theme itself developed from a personal experience which was itself mediated — the family photographs. Just as narrative is, in contemporary literature on the subject, discussed in relation to media and art forms which might at first seem to lack some requirements for narrative — even while possibly meeting the requirement of depicting extension over time — it is contended that photography has strengths which can compensate for its apparent restriction to the depiction of instants.

I have phrased the theoretical aspect of this research in terms of a question — can a single photographic picture be a narrative? The terms used in that question are chosen so as to clarify aspects of the creative work: to limit the work to single photographs rather than series, to set some criteria according to which a photograph may be judged to be narrative or not, and to set parameters — in an age when technology has blurred the boundaries almost to extinction — between what is a photograph and what is not. For reasons which will hopefully be apparent from reading what follows, the terms are discussed in this order: photographic picture; narrative; single.

Firstly, the term "photographic picture". This documentation incorporates discussions of a broad variety of image types: paintings, conventional ("chemical" or "analogue") photographs, conventional photographs produced in hard copy form with digital enhancements or alterations, all-digital images, and images which combine several or even all approaches. The words "photograph", "image" and "picture" are used interchangeably so long as the context makes clear the physical and conceptual nature of the subject of discussion, and where no issues contested within this research are raised by the use of such a term. The key research
question, however, is stated in words which include all of, but only, the image types to which the research question applies, and the same term is used on any occasion where this combined sense of inclusion and limitation is required. "Photographic picture" has been chosen as that term, for three related though separate reasons. These are:

a) Photography is reaching the end of a conversion in the physical technology underlying the production of images, from chemical/analogue methods to the newer digital imaging techniques. As is discussed further below, the principal property which distinguishes photographic picture-making from any other means of constructing an image — that is, the "physical marking of surfaces through the agency of light and similar radiations" (Maynard 3) — is shared by both systems, and for that reason this research needs to encompass pictures made with both methods.

b) This change in production technology has brought about a corresponding change in the way photographic pictures are used and understood. For a considerable period in the recent history of their widespread use and production, photographic pictures produced via analogue methods were understood to possess a peculiar singularity and unity stemming directly from the physically deterministic nature of their production: from the degree to which it was held to be either impossible, difficult, and/or by convention undesirable, to intervene in the causal process which linked the physics of light to the nature of the finished image. This unity was widely held to be a property of conventional (analogue) photographic pictures which conferred upon them a particular degree of credibility and truthfulness, unique among images. This supposition has been comprehensively questioned, but to the extent that it retains
considerable popular strength, it contrasts with a current popular perception of digital photography as a boundlessly malleable process that leads to the production of pictures which appear intrinsically 'photographic' even though they lack the verisimilitude conventionally attributable to analogue images. "Photographic picture" is used in order to embrace these two modes without indicating a belief in the superiority of one over the other.

c) As a matter of a stylistic choice which evolved over the period during which this project was completed, the author moved for a time more and more toward working with composite images, and toward experimenting with different ways of making those composites, including both conventional and digital methods. Montage has become a default mode of production for many digital images in professional photography, and it seemed a good idea to allow the work to move with this change rather than to draw a line at using such methods when, on some grounds, such a decision might be seen as conceptually arbitrary. Theoretically, too, it has suited the overall purpose to investigate whether or not montaged or composite photographic pictures might have greater, lesser or different narrative possibilities than unmanipulated photographic pictures produced as a result of a single exposure.1 As it turns out, the latter works in this project have returned to a largely conventional mode of production, for reasons of both craft and theory, but since both conventional and composite images are contained in the body of creative work submitted, the term "photographic picture" is used where necessary to collectively include both approaches.

The second term to be defined is the issue of what is meant in this context by "narrative". The nature of narrative in general is an enormous question with a large and active current research literature, a question far too
large even to be sensibly summarized within the scope of this work. By its very nature it is also a fluid and evolving investigation, rather than a fixed and resolved issue. However, as the senses of narrative which turn out to be applicable to photographic pictures are of necessity both very limited and narrowly defined by comparison with, for instance, narratives in literature or film, it has nevertheless been necessary to canvass a wide range of approaches to narrative and to narrative analysis, in order to satisfactorily isolate and delineate all those approaches with some pragmatic value in application to photography. This central issue is discussed and referred to throughout this documentation, but is principally treated in Chapter 2.

To reduce the discussion of narrative possibilities to manageable proportions, while also including all approaches to the question which might turn out to be useful, the following strategies have been used:

a) In general, the literature on narrative as developed in both film theory and literary theory has supplied the models used here. Literary theory is itself the spring from which much of film theory, both in relation to narrative and other issues, has flowed, so there is no attempt here to draw demarcation lines between the two fields where to do so would simply impede the progress of the larger aims of this study.

b) Within that domain, the approach is both subject-centred and object-centred. Adapting, for this context, the definitions given by Branigan (xi) for the same terms in relation to film theory, "subject-centred" is used to mean: focused on "the actual methods employed by a human perceiver to view, understand, and remember" a photograph, while "object centred" means: focused on developing "methods by which to segment and analyze the parts of" a photograph. Since narrative in any medium involves a complex
interaction between the subject matter and the viewer, it is essential to examine the attributes of both the subject matter and the viewer. The emphasis overall, however, is on an object-centred approach, since it is photographs and photography which are the subject of the broad enquiry.

c) Studies on narrative have historically ranged across a very broad theoretical landscape, but may be grouped to some extent between two poles. On the one hand there has been the search for a strict "logic" of narrative which would both categorize narrative types, and separate narrative clearly from other ways of organizing information, an approach perhaps best exemplified by Todorov's studies of narrative "grammar." On the other hand are those who "perhaps impressed by the pervasiveness of narrative thinking in everyday life and despairing of the attempt to find a bright line between narrative and non-narrative, conclude that virtually everything is narrative" (Branigan 12).

Again, this author has taken a position between these two poles. While there is no attempt to in any way emulate the rigidly schematic approach of Todorov and similar authors, there certainly is an attempt to circumscribe narrative and its possible applications and manifestations in photography, and to characterize narrative images as a distinct, and fairly small, subset of photographs generally.

The third term to be defined is "single". What is a single picture and what is a number of separate pictures is not as clear as one might hope or expect, since any strategy involving collage clearly uses multiple images which might stand, or have stood, elsewhere on their own. Of particular interest in this context is the idea of pictures within pictures, where any contained images have a sense of unity and independence from the
containing picture, generally by being shaped, framed or otherwise visually distinguished from the rest of the containing picture by their overt status as pictures. In such cases, both the contained and the containing pictures may well merit separate as well as combined analysis. However, the purpose of the term "single", in the research question being addressed here, is to distinguish narratives ultimately embodied in a self-contained, unitary picture, from those constructed via a series of physically separate pictures. There is little mystery about how a series of photographic pictures might tell a story, and a few examples of such narratives will be referred to if only to clarify the distinction between them and the creative work which is the subject of this documentation.

This project can to some extent be appropriately framed as a historical one. Many approaches both to photographic practice and to its study and criticism have gradually developed in concert with one another over the past century and a half or so, and the properties of those photographic pictures which I believe to be narrative have become more common in recent photographic and artistic work. However, the issue of narrative in photography is too particular, too peculiar, to make history the dominant framework. I have therefore not sought, for instance, to locate the oldest apparent reference to a photograph being a narrative; any such reference is likely to be theoretically uninformed or at least theoretically unguarded, and of correspondingly little use. Where a historical approach is relevant to clarifying the development of an important area, such as the position of narrative in the links between the Pre-Raphaelite painters and contemporary photographers, greater emphasis is placed on the order and timing of particular events.
As was implied by the first rhetorical response to the posing of the theoretical research question at the beginning of this document, there are those who would not find any mystery in any non-moving picture being a narrative. However, since the problem of narrative's requirement for depiction of the passage of time applies to any non-moving image, logic dictates that we should look at least briefly at non-moving images as a whole class, a class which may or may not have narrative potential. Intuitively it would seem that if, for instance, paintings can be narrative, then the attributes which make them so might or might not be able to be shared by photographic pictures. To the degree that such attributes are not fully shared across all non-moving image types, then the attributes which make photographic pictures different, in that regard, shed light on the special narrative limitations or possibilities of photography. Since there are particular paintings which have over time repeatedly been deemed to be narratives, the early part of Chapter 1 contains a brief discussion of a few paintings so classified, with a view to adapting and employing any practical and/or theoretical approaches to pictorial narrative employed in those works, or in their critical treatment by others.

This is preceded, in the same chapter, by an introductory examination of the logic by which any still picture might be said to be narrative. Since this is the question on which this entire research turns, the approach at this early stage is confined to making sense of the issue for the purpose of the discussion which immediately follows it, by finding pictures which have already been formally labelled or classified as narrative. This becomes a point at which to start the investigation of the wider issue.
In this partly-historical examination, in Chapter 1, of paintings and photographs which share some common origins and some approaches to narrative possibilities, attention is paid to the particular nexus between narrative, painting and photography which characterises the Pre-Raphaelite group. The connection between Pre-Raphaelite paintings and painters and the composite photographs of the same period is particularly examined, because those paintings and photographs together seem to have established precepts on which many more recent composite photographs have been based. The World War I photomontages by Frank Hurley, for instance, seem to follow very much from this tradition, both for their tendency toward moral messages and for the process and structure which underlie them, and it is partly for that reason that two of Hurley's best known images have been drawn on for my own creative work.

Chapter 2, as already noted, briefly surveys narrative theory in relation to literature, art and film, with a view to finding models applicable to photography. In view of the limitations on the capacity of the photograph to depict the passage of time — something which is itself examined in the same chapter — some emphasis is placed on finding a minimalist model of narrative which makes up for this apparent shortcoming, and which utilises photography's particular visual strengths. As well as the formalist models of narrative, specific attention is also paid to the role of desire in subject-centred notions of narrative.

Chapter 3 looks at the few direct references to, or applications of, narrative theory to photography which have already been made in the literature. It also surveys some key photographs by others which either
directly illustrate aspects of the theory, or which otherwise raise narrative questions with possible application to my own creative work.

While some of these examples, both theoretical and photographic, refer to the war theme, they are not limited to that theme and include pictures from the whole broad field of photography and from a broad range of historical periods. Again, it needs to be emphasized that the domain of narrative photography, interpreted with the degree of rigour which is necessary to make the topic worthwhile, is a narrow and specialized one. Good examples can thus only be found by ranging freely across a variety of subject matter. Some photographs — the Cartier-Bresson ones, for example — have been chosen for specific reasons which connect the history or the technology of photography with the issue of narrative, but they have nothing to do with war. The power of many of the examples would likely be diminished if they were to be limited to any particular theme.

Chapter 4 is directly concerned with the description and discussion of my own creative work. It places that work in relation to photographic works by others discussed in earlier chapters, and in relation to the theoretical concerns also outlined in preceding chapters. Chapter 4 begins with a description of the origins of the topic, in a childhood preoccupation with some wartime family snapshots, and traces the development of a succession of photographic works completed throughout the life of this research project, as both the exact subject and the approach to it were gradually refined. The twin concerns of war imagery, and narrative possibility and structure, are traced through a number of interim and trial works, up to and including their integration in the works submitted as the final creative submission. These works are then selectively analyzed in terms of the connections
between them and the work — both theoretical and practical — of others as discussed in earlier chapters.

A brief conclusion assesses the overall contribution of the creative work and accompanying theoretical analysis to resolving the initial research question concerning the narrativity of single photographic pictures. Some distinctions are drawn as to the separate narrative capacities which have been shown to exist for single photographic pictures, and those capacities for which photographic pictures seem to be an inappropriate medium.
CHAPTER 1. FROM PRE-RAPHAELITE TO PHOTOGRAPHIC LIGHT.

This Chapter places photographic pictures, both historically and logically, in relation to pictorial representations in general, in order to determine in broad terms the sorts of expectations a photograph would have to meet in order to be generally received as narrative. Particular attention is paid to the works of the Pre-Raphaelites, a group of painters working at the time of photography's origins who made practical use of photographic techniques, and who also influenced both the subject matter to which photography could address itself, and the pictorial approach which might be taken.

THE PICTURE-LOGIC OF PAINTINGS

In the first quotation from Roland Barthes in the Introduction to this documentation (7, above), painting is listed as one of a number of narrative or potentially narrative media. Barthes gives us a parenthetical example: the Venetian Renaissance painter Vittore Carpaccio's *The Story of Saint Ursula*. Of all the media included in Barthes's list — an eclectic collection which, as previously observed, does not include photography — only painting is justified by quoting a particular work as an example.

This tells us two things: on the one hand, that some paintings (at least one) can, according to one authoritative opinion, be narratives — and on the other hand that this view is sufficiently contestable, or insufficiently widely established, to make it worthy of some reinforcement with an example. Since Barthes does not expand on the reasoning which led him to choose this
example, we are no further ahead in being able to reliably determine, for a
given picture, whether it might have narrative properties; nor do we even
have a basis for agreement on where to start a discussion about how to make
judgements about the possible narrative properties of pictures generally.

Photographic pictures are a subset of the larger category 'pictures', and
are produced in ways which give them certain special pictorial attributes
while at the same time depriving them of attributes shared, frequently or
generally, by pictorial forms in general. A logical first step in establishing the
possibility of photographic narratives (if we are to begin by being skeptical
about their existence) is therefore to first ask whether any picture lacking
verbal content can actually be a narrative. Since this thesis places some
emphasis on the constructed photographic picture and on the possibility of a
greater potential for narrativity in such pictures than is the case with
conventional single-exposure photographs, it seems reasonable to first ask if
the most common variety of constructed picture, the painting, can be a
narrative in any but the most flippant sense.

By appeal to popular authority, the answer to this is clearly in the
affirmative. Narrative painting has sufficient status, as a genre within the
wider field of painting, for it to be generally referred to in the literature of art
theory and criticism without a felt need to further explain the term
"narrative" within discussion of a given work. It is precisely the space of that
further degree of explanation about narrative pictures, however, which the
theoretical component of this research seek to occupy.

Since painting is not the principal subject of this research, it is neither
appropriate nor necessary to dwell on the topic of narrative painting at
length or in great detail. However, since both the logic of picture-making and
the meaning of pictures are indeed central to the present work, some
examination of a very limited sample of narrative paintings is likely to be
instructive in terms of what has been deemed to count as narrative in such
works.

Among relatively circumscribed art traditions, particularly those
confined to certain geographic areas or cultural groupings, there are a
number which are said to use pictorial notions of narrative: one fairly widely
known example would be the narrative tradition in some Japanese scroll
paintings and screens. There are, quite possibly, links between such
narrowly defined painting or drawing traditions and particular schools of
photography which spring from the same geographic or cultural groups;
following up such links is clearly beyond the scope of the present research,
however. For the current purpose, it would be logically helpful for even one
painting or one coherently defined set of works within western art traditions
(that is, within the same traditions as the photographs also to be examined)
to be widely acknowledged by competent critics to be a narrative. It would
be even more helpful to be able to readily decode the basis on which such a
classification had been made.

For the sake of brevity, and in order to focus the discussion on areas
with an obvious potential relationship to photography, this brief examination
will be limited to a small number of those paintings in the representational
realist traditions predominant in European and America for most of the
nineteenth century which have attracted the "narrative" label. The nineteenth
century itself has special significance here for the broad research topic, since
that century encompasses not only the birth and development of
photography as a mass picture-making system, but more particularly the
period over which photography effectively colonized a former prime duty of painting: that of representing significant public events to a wider audience, in both time and space. At least one author has implicitly observed a connection between photography, narrative and this special field of history painting:

Although highly esteemed, at least in principle, well into the nineteenth century, history painting has never received the modern scholarly and popular attention given other painting forms such as landscape, portrait, genre and still life. The reasons for this situation are many and complex, but include most certainly the rise of photography as the preeminent medium for recording contemporary history, the acceptance of the notion of art for art's sake, the hegemony of abstraction, and the subsequent diminished taste for ideal, obviously didactic narrative images.

(Thistlethwaite 7)

Thistlethwaite is not primarily concerned with narrative and discusses it only contingently, though he does make references to narrative as a specific attribute of history painting. Given such certainty about the role of pictorial narrative, it is then disappointing to find an earlier author making the following remarks when defining what he means by a Victorian [era] narrative painting:

We may begin by making some exclusions. It is not an imaginative picture of an historical event (a type of painting beloved by Victorian painters), a painting of a scene from the theatre, or a genre picture set in a period outside contemporary memory.

(Lister 9)
Lister goes on to state that "The type of picture with which we are concerned is that of a story, idea or anecdote..."(9), an explanation which hardly helps with the present inquiry. Just what a pictorial narrative is, then, seems to be largely unclear and generally unstated; certainly there is no single agreed source to which authors of works on narrative painting frequently refer for an authoritative statement on the question, despite what would seem to be its pivotal importance.

One author who does meet the challenge of bridging the conceptual gap, between the extension over time which intuitively seems a requirement for the occurrence of narrative, and the fixed singularity of a painting, is Stephen Sartin. Since his A Dictionary of British Narrative Painters specifically seeks to separate narrative from non-narrative painters, he must of necessity state the criteria which allow him to achieve this:

Strictly speaking a narrative painting is a contradiction in terms. Whilst a narrative consists of a succession of situations, a painting by its very nature is limited to one scene. A narrative painting therefore has to be composed in such a way that the viewer constructs the story, ranging from before to after the 'moment' of the painting, from details before him. It is this active participation of the viewer that effectively distinguishes narrative painting from all other genres, and it is the yardstick I have adopted in determining the eligibility of artists for inclusion in this dictionary.

(Preface)

His notion of "active participation of the viewer" is a useful one, and one to which we shall return in relation to photography, where there are some special problems in engaging active viewer participation of the sort
which a painting might engender. The many possible modes of such engagement also require some unravelling. However, the comment needs to be made immediately that such participation would seem to be a commodity essential to the success of many, if not most, works of art, whether narrative or not. If it were to be thought of as a sufficient condition for a visual work to be narrative, as Sartin actually seems to imply, this would lead to a large number of works being counted as having narrative properties. Perhaps this is partly what Sartin has done; though one might ordinarily suspect narrative painting to be a small subset of painting more generally, he lists some 770 artists in his Dictionary who have painted, according to his own criterion, at least one narrative work. His notion of the viewer as the one who actually constructs the story, however, is much closer to some theoretical viewpoints we will examine more closely in a later chapter specifically in connection with photography.

It will prove important to be able to refer back to a small number of particular narrative paintings for the purpose of establishing, in more concrete terms, the degree to which pictures of any sort, and by inclusion photographic pictures of various sorts, can take on narrative properties. As history paintings have been so firmly characterized by Thistlethwaite as likely to be narratives, we will firstly consider some aspects of one such work, John Singleton Copley’s Watson and the Shark (1778) (fig. 3). Since, on the other hand, history painting as a genre has been excluded from consideration by Lister, we will also then examine a small number of paintings outside that genre. Particular attention will be paid to some works from a school of painters widely agreed to have frequently worked in the
Fig.3. John Singleton Copley: *Watson and the Shark*
narrative mould, and known to have utilised photography as a tool: the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers.

Copley’s work is of interest here because it treats a factual event as fiction, and because, in this author’s opinion, it demonstrates "history painting’s concern with a narrative of significant human action, conveyed dramatically through facial expression, gesture, and posture" (Thistlethwaite 21) even more forcefully than the work to which that comment originally applied. The Copley painting depicts an actual event. Brooke Watson was a self-made man who triumphed over twin adversities: he was orphaned as a child, and at the age of fourteen in 1749, while swimming in Havana Harbor from a boat on which he was a crew member, he was attacked by a shark which so mauled his lower right leg that it had to be amputated below the knee. At the time this commissioned work was finished in 1778, he was "a man of consequence — an MP and a director of the Bank of England, who would later become Lord Mayor of London, chairman of Lloyds, and a baronet" (Hughes 91).

The content of the picture clearly demonstrates that the event was a significant one for Watson, but as part of the broad sweep of history it is completely trivial. What the painting must achieve is to make this personal trauma appear heroic, on the grounds that heroism is of more general public interest. Copley achieves this superbly by actual pictorial technique: he has foreshortened the arrangement of salient figures and objects in relation to the picture plane, thus creating a powerful sense of urgency, and he draws on "a virtual encyclopaedia of the history of art" (Thistlethwaite 16) to dramatically enrich their gestures and poses. The subject is thus rendered fictional; our knowledge of real space and the representation of space, together with the
implication through costume, gesture and figure placement that we should read both the substantive episode, and its heroic representation, as "an allegory of good against evil" (Thistlethwaite 17) encourage the viewer to speculate constructively about the sequence of events involved. That we are not told, within the picture, of Watson's actual fate only serves to increase suspense and thus to maintain viewer interest in the outcome.

The painting provides a view of the event which a photograph, even had it been technologically possible to make one, could not. The shark is supernaturally large — one of many oddities about its rendition, though the need for dramatic effect has in any case clearly trumped any obligation toward biological accuracy — and its great length is used to lead the eye from the harbour background to the centre of the action, where the heroic scenario of the risk to Watson's life is played out to the full. In the florid manner of the history paintings of this age, the picture is very large one (182.9 x 229.2 cm), and the time taken as the viewer's eye moves around it, guided by the arrangement of figures and events, seems to become part of the time over which the viewer constructs the story.

Since this thesis later makes certain observations about the connections between narrative paintings and constructed photographs, one more point about Copley's painting is worth making here for future reference: to a significant extent, it is a collage of works by others. Hughes describes in detail the origins of some of the figures:

The figure of Watson, pale in the turbid water, is a Roman sculpture whose form was widely circulated in prints, the Borghese Gladiator, turned on its back. The men in white shirts, lunging over the gunwale, are adapted from a print by Philippe
Tassaert after Rubens's *Johan Flung Into the Sea*. Copley also borrowed from Raphael's *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*, which he may have seen in the British royal collection (through the good offices of George III's favourite, Benjamin West) and which was, in any case, widely circulated in engravings. (92)

While *Watson and the Shark* is a narrative work insofar as it belongs firmly to a category of works (that is, history paintings) so described, and has the limited particular narrative properties discussed above, it is not so strongly narrative as many of the works included in Lister's Victorian collection. Millais' *The Blind Girl* (fig. 4) is confidently described by Lister as "his greatest work" and as "one of the two finest narrative pictures of the nineteenth century" (Lister 104). The picture has what now seems a mawkish sentimentality which was, no doubt, more to Victorian tastes, and incorporates certain visual puzzles which must be decoded if the viewer is to be as emotionally moved as Millais intended. However, nowhere is there a sense of either a sequence of events with an implied order, or even of the encoding or representation of time. The picture is narrative only to the extent that we are driven, by emotional involvement with the subject matter, to speculate about the antecedents of the blind girl's situation, and about her future.

Common to many such Pre-Raphaelite works, and contributing to the encoding of such narrative as is present, there is a strong moralizing element which we now read as part of the painting's sentimental aspect. In an age which offered, for a person without wealth, few compensations for the consequences of blindness or other infirmity, this would presumably have
Fig.4. John Everett Millais: *The Blind Girl*
constituted a loose form of argument for greater care to be taken of those in such a plight. That the blind girl is beautiful is part of this argument; it is clear from the Pre-Raphaelite works as a group that beauty, and most importantly female beauty, was itself held to have a moral dimension, and that a beautiful woman in peril posed by far the most anxiety-producing category of moral problem. The narrative dimension, in such cases, becomes one which stretches between two situations: the problematic one depicted, and the favourable resolution which the viewer might hope for. The eroticised romanticism of many Pre-Raphaelite works, including The Blind Girl, hints at the nature of the resolution which viewers are encouraged to imagine and identify with. Desire, as a driving force in pictorial narrative, will be further examined in subsequent chapters.

While this moral imperative is the strong driving force in many of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings, including those with a place in Lister's pantheon, some have an independent narrative structure much closer to what we might now expect to find in a picture said to be a narrative. One such is Robert Braithwaite Martineau's The Last Day in the Old Home (1861) (fig. 5). Martineau was a close friend and a pupil of William Holman Hunt, an original founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB), along with Dante Gabriel Rosetti and John Everett Millais. Christopher Wood describes The Last Day in the Old Home as "one of the most intensely novelistic of all Victorian pictures" which "combines the narrative methods of [William Powell] Frith with the moralistic approach of Holman Hunt" (Wood 71). Wood's description of the application of these "narrative methods" in the work is instructive:
Fig.5. Robert Braithwaite Martineau: *The Last Day in the Old Home*
This moral tale shows a feckless young aristocrat, who has gambled away everything on the horses, now drinking his last glass of champagne in the ancestral home. It is one of the outstanding examples of the Victorian narrative picture that can be read like a book, as well as looked at. Every object in the room has significance — the picture of horses, the auctioneer's lot numbers, the sale catalogue on the floor, the newspaper open at the word 'Apartments', the old mother paying the family retainer, who in turn gives her the keys — the observer becomes a detective assembling clues, solving the problem of who everyone is and what is happening. (72)

This, then, is as Sartin described in his preface, quoted above: "A narrative painting ... composed in such a way that the viewer constructs the story, ranging from before to after the 'moment' of the painting, from details before him". But here, by comparison with the other paintings so far examined, we see much more clearly the means by which this process of construction, this detective work, might operate. Beyond the clues mentioned by Wood, there are emotional cues as to the passage of time, its direction and its significance. The trees outside the window are yellow and thinning with autumn, signalling a change to a less favourable and less comfortable period, while the flow of interactions across the painting, from the grandmother at far left through the imploring mother in the centre to the as-yet-unrealising young son at far right, indicates how the young aristocrat's irresponsibility will not only erode his family's former comfortable circumstances, but will pass inexorably to his son. This sorry prediction is confirmed by the way in which the son mimics both the direction and the unseeing optimism of his
father's gaze, as they share a carefree toast to their jointly mistaken vision of the future. These elements are not incidental to the painting's meaning, but its central focus: if the viewer does not understand their significance, then the meaning of the work as a whole is lost. For Martineau there is a further link in the chain of significance, which is the moral understanding he hopes his intended audience will arrive at as a consequence of understanding the painting. For us, it is enough to see that narrative is the mechanism which leads to that understanding.

It is not difficult to imagine that a posed or constructed photograph could at least portray more or less exactly the same scene. Indeed, there is no logical problem in believing that a photographer, in the right place at the right time, appropriately equipped and with sufficient familiarity with those portrayed to not invite recognition of his or her presence as an ingredient in the photograph, could not capture a genuine candid scene of this sort. Whether or not such a photograph would or could mean the same as a painting of the equivalent event is not a simple question. There are special considerations in the interpretation of such a picture which would need to account for the very fact of its being a photograph rather than a painting, and these issues will be taken up in later chapters which deal specifically with a range of such works. For the moment, it is enough that we can see clearly demonstrated the possibility of using pictorial narrative principles in a single picture as part of the means by which a viewer is given to understand the global meaning of that picture.

Of the pictures examined here, The Blind Girl and The Last Day in the Old Home are the ones which come with the stamp of narrative firmly applied by Raymond Lister. Surprisingly, if in a narrative work we expect to
see the stretch of time somehow represented or indicated, he rates the former work above the latter, though narrative significance alone is not his main criterion. Both works also find a place in Sartin's Dictionary. Yet Watson and the Shark, which seems by initial inspection to have stronger claims to being a narrative than The Blind Girl, and which overtly displays attributes said by Thistlethwaite to make its generic category — that is, history painting — a narrative one, would be excluded by Lister by virtue of that very category membership.

Lister and Thistlethwaite cannot be said to be providing evidence of the same character or strength. Thistlethwaite's work is an academic one, while Lister's book is a popular compendium of a certain style and period of paintings, aimed at a broader and less critical readership. Nevertheless, the notion of narrative is an essential element of the rules by which Lister chooses to select the paintings included in his book, while it is one factor among many which Thistlethwaite takes into account. On this evidence, in addition to the much stronger evidence yielded from an examination of Martineau's The Last Day in the Old Home, we can resolve the question which began this chapter: we have determined that at least some paintings are held by competent critics to be narratives, and that some of those paintings can be seen to invoke or even require a narrative response from the viewer. But in view of the degree of disagreement about which works are narrative and which not, we must also conclude that further examining paintings and their critical literature may not be a fruitful approach to fully unravelling the conditions under which pictures can be narratives.
At the same time as the paintings discussed above were being done, photography was also burgeoning. Not surprisingly, many of the same questions of subject matter, meaning, style and method with which painting was dealing, fertilized approaches to the subject matter, meaning, style and method of the photography of the period.

While the majority of photographers up to, and indeed beyond, the middle of the nineteenth century were intent only on recording actuality with the greatest level of representational accuracy, a small but enthusiastic movement of British and European photographers who wanted to be, or to call themselves, artists, began at this time to distinguish themselves from what was by then a broad mass of industrious contemporaries. Two of the most significant, both in their own time and in relation to the notion of narrative photography, were Oscar Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson.

Rejlander's and Robinson's work emerged from a background of fortuitous contemporary developments by others, in photographic technology and in approaches to subject matter in both photography and painting. By no means all of the complex interrelationships between the photography and the painting of the period can be canvassed here, but a selection of some key influences which circulated between the two may help to show why and how it was that a strong leaning toward a narrative style in photography emerged at this time, and emerged principally from the school of painting discussed immediately above — the Pre-Raphaelites.

Julia Margaret Cameron, an English photographer closely connected with such scientists, artists and writers as Sir John Herschel, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, George Frederick Watts, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Thomas Carlyle,
was demonstrating that photography could be received as art under certain circumstances. She seems to have been the first photographer to take seriously the advice of Sir William Newton that lenses should be thrown slightly out of focus, and had lenses made especially to soften focus and reduce definition. Cameron took up photography as a very enthusiastic — though by all accounts technically naïve — amateur, in 1864. Setting her cap against the materialist grain of the age, and against the then-general trend of photographic naturalism, she made photographic portraits of her illustrious friends which attempted to remove them "from mundane actuality, and [to project them] into a spirit world of her own devising — a legendary place not unlike the heroic Arthurian world created by her friend and neighbour Lord Tennyson" (Jeffrey 40).

She was successful at least in showing that photography could be a medium of the imagination; that it could show "the greatness of the inner as well as the features of the outer man" (Cameron 137). Her work was not universally acclaimed at the time, and indeed treated with some hostility, mainly on the basis that she violated the tenets of photographic naturalism. These tenets remained largely in place at least until the 1970s and in the industrial/professional photographic domain, are still with us now. It was not until after her death that Dr Peter Emerson, the aspiring (but later disillusioned) art photographer of the 1880s, described her work as "just about the only worthwhile example of photography before his own" (Jeffrey 40). Cameron's work was undoubtedly uneven in quality; Beaumont Newhall describes her portraits as "Among the most noble and impressive yet produced by means of the camera; her genre pictures, on the other hand, drip
with sentimentality and lie within the stylistic idiom of the Pre-Raphaelite painters" (Newhall, *History* 64).

Sentimental or not, Oscar Rejlander was aware of her work and probably interested in it. Certainly Cameron was interested in Rejlander's work, and invited him to her house at Freshwater Bay on the Isle of Wight where she entertained and photographed her illustrious friends, to help her "with his great experience".

Newhall's comment about sentimentality is made with the benefit of hindsight and from a particular twentieth century viewpoint — that of a photography critic in the early 1970s with a strong preference for the "straight" aesthetic in photography. The term "straight" may be understood to mean "unmanipulated", whether during exposure or in printing, and is used in that fashion within this documentation. Although Newhall's comparison with the Pre-Raphaelites is intended as an insult, neither Cameron, Rejlander or Robinson would likely have construed such a comparison as anything but the highest compliment. Just as the Pre-Raphaelites, whose "artistic aims were inevitably rather confused" (Wood 9) were nevertheless "crusaders, with an earnest desire to produce a better art, and to paint pictures which would inspire and uplift the spectator" (Wood 10), so Cameron sought in her struggle with the technical aspects of her photography to "suggest a possible realm beyond the prosaic world", to show "the idea of the thing rather than the servile tracing of its outward appearance" (Jeffrey 40). Just as the Pre-Raphaelites wished to make moral points in their pictures, so Rejlander took cues as to the moralising core of his subject matter, and as to the the narrative-like way in which these morals were communicated pictorially, from the likes of William Holman Hunt and
Dante Gabriel Rosetti. And just as Pre-Raphaelites such as Hunt and Millais used an additive process of picture construction, so did Henry Peach Robinson, in direct imitation, conceive of his use of multiple negatives to assemble composite pictures, also with a moral message, and of using a narrative structure as a way of imparting such morals. The connection between the Pre-Raphaelites and photography, and the methods of assembling photographic pictures from separate negatives, was even consciously defended by artists, using as justification the original aims of the PRB itself. In 1889 the painter John Brett read a paper to the Camera Club in London arguing that "the basis of all good pictorial art consists of a reproduction of natural images or views...the painter's art is founded on correct representation of real things...[he should] exalt natural appearances" (Scharf 108). For Brett, it was photography which, as "an invaluable servant, and an invaluable teacher" could show painters how to achieve such representations and appearances. Brett was an enthusiastic photographer himself, and acknowledged the debt of painters to the movement photographs of Edweard Muybridge: Hunt, Millais and Ruskin, as well as many lesser Pre-Raphaelites, were among the first subscribers to Muybridge's work (Scharf 108). A photographer of the period, hearing Brett's comments out of context and not knowing the identity of their author, might well have interpreted them as a defence of photographic naturalism, which was about to enter the period of its fullest flowering, or as a statement in defence of assembling photographic composite pictures from separate negatives, each negative potentially being, in the view of photographic naturalism, "a correct representation of real things". And when Rejlander's famous composite picture The Two Ways of Life was under attack for being a
composite photograph, it was the *Art Journal* which came to his defence, in
terms which Scharf quotes: "The photographer does no more than the Royal
Academician does: he makes each figure an individual study, and then he
groups those separate 'negatives' together, to form a complete positive
picture" (109).

While neither the Pre-Raphaelite artists nor the British photographers
who modeled their work so closely on them sought principally to grapple
with the representation of time in their narrative works, nevertheless the
issue of time was there. Cameron had sought to associate her photographs
with painting by avoiding being tied only to depiction of the moment,
"wanting nothing to do with transience and immediacy" (Jeffrey 38). For
Rejlander and Robinson — at least for the works of theirs which were
deemed to be narrative in style — time was also represented as having
extension, though only really as a contingent aspect of their primary subject
matter. But in the same period on the continent, the representation of time in
photographs was being approached in a very different way — one which
also had implications for narrative possibilities in modern photography. In
Paris, photographic portraitist Gaspard-Félix Tournachon (known, after 1849,
as 'Nadar') was making outstanding portraits of his distinguished
contemporaries in life and letters: subjects such as Baudelaire, Berlioz, Corot,
Courbet, Daumier, Doré, Guys, Manet and Millet. Capitalizing on the fact
that by this time photography had developed exposure speeds sufficient to
catch and 'freeze' candid, real-time changes of expression and other facial
movements (this was particularly so for Nadar, who was one of the first to
experiment with the use of artificial light in portraiture), Nadar sought to
present the fleeting moods of his subjects, their impulsive momentary
expressions of feeling. The effect of this "was to add character to vivacity: Nadar's subjects invariably looked alert, but they also show themselves as creatures of mood, tetchy, sullen, genial, affable" (Jeffrey 43). In this, Nadar's work, and that of his close contemporary, Etienne Carjat, resembled the paintings of some of their own subjects; Manet and Degas were both, at this time, painting their own subjects as having made no effort to pose or present themselves, but rather as having been caught either unaware of, or uncaring about, the nature of their representations (Jeffrey 43). Although the subject matter was portraiture rather than 'action' photography —considerable further technical advances would have to take place before photographers could range freely outdoors — it may perhaps be argued that with Nadar's and Carjat's work, the stage was set for the prospect of 'critical moment' photography in the following century, where a moment sharply excised from the flow of time could come to be understood to stand for part of that flow rather than just for itself.

Though Cameron on the one hand, and Nadar and Carjat on the other (together with innumerable followers of these and closely related styles), were opposites to one another in how they sought to represent time, their work indicates that both were concerned to find a way of reconciling photography's own eternal opposites: on the one hand the fleeting moment of the actual exposure, and on the other, the need or desire of the photographer to make that fleeting moment stand for, or connect with, the sense of a much longer passage of time on the part of the viewer. The desire to bring photography under the rubric of art, while also connected for some practitioners with a more basic aspiration toward simple respectability, was also motivated at least partly by the desire for such a reconciliation.
All of this, then, was the background against which Oscar Rejlander began the narrative composite pictures for which he became both famous and infamous in his own time, and for which he and his followers have been remembered to this day.

Composite photography itself was already a physical necessity for photographers of the period, if they wished to portray a scene with the same light values as would be recorded by a painter. The collodion plate process widely used from its invention in 1851 was excessively sensitive to blue light; the exposure necessary to correctly render detail in a landscape resulted in a solid dark mass for the sky on the negative, and a correspondingly white and featureless sky in the print. The solution was to make two negatives, one for the main scene and one for the sky, and to combine them, masking each in turn, when making the final print. As photographers generally had to master this "combination printing" even to make a "normal" print, it was not a great conceptual leap to then use this process to construct a final picture from ingredients with mixed origins, whether of time or place.

This was exactly what Rejlander did with The Two Ways of Life (exhibited 1857) (fig. 6), the picture for which he is still best known. This "composition photograph", as he termed such pictures himself, was an allegory depicted as taking place on a vast 'set' such as would have needed an enormous studio and the simultaneous deployment of twenty or so models in order to be made on a single negative. He arranged, and separately photographed, single characters, small groups and even parts of the stage settings, on thirty or so negatives each scaled so as to represent the intended relative distance from the viewer of each figure in the finished picture. By doing this, Rejlander was able to render his complex tableau with much less
Fig. 6. Oscar Rejlander: The Two Ways of Life
difficulty, but with an apparent verisimilitude comparable to that which would have been produced by a single exposure of a real scene.

The Two Ways of Life is a narrative insofar as it requires an understanding of its main "characters" — the two youths in the centre of the picture, either side of an old man representing a sage who introduces them to life — as being projected through time toward two possible fates: virtue, charity and industry on the right, or alcohol, gambling and the pleasures of the flesh on the left. The moralizing sense of the tableau — its main purpose, for Rejlander — is clear without considering the time implications at any great level of detail, but the fact that the two possible life outcomes are portrayed as being the results of embarking on one of two processes means that a sense of time, a link between a present and two possible futures, is strongly implied. This is the more so if we understand the moral to have a subtext: that even having embarked on a given life course, one has the option, for some period, of changing one's mind before the consequences of the most recent choice become inescapable.

Rejlander's picture uses some of the pictorial strategies mentioned above in relation to Watson and the Shark and The Last Day in the Old Home. Since, like the former painting, Rejlander's photographic picture creates a fiction, it must create its own sense of a story space, and it is a space which deviates markedly from any ordinary sense of photographic naturalism or realism. The possible life events portrayed simply cannot all take place in the physical area depicted, as though the whole of two lives were somehow to be played out in the floor space of a large photographic studio. The picture is not to be understood as portraying the physical and spatial circumstances of the two possible lives, but as providing a
conceptual/temporal space into which viewers insert themselves via a process of identification. As with Martineau's work, there is a flow of movement and interaction between figures across the picture — in this case, from the sage in the centre outwards to the side in both directions — which cues us to understand that the 'events' furthest in space from the old man are also furthest in time from the youths' starting points in life.

The sense of time in **The Two Ways of Life** is a good deal less acute than in **The Last Day in the Old Home**. This is not because the picture is a photographic one, and not because it is a composite. **The Two Ways of Life** is not merely hypothetical; it does not, and does not intend to, represent a situation which could ever take place in the real world. **The Last Day in the Old Home** shows an "ideal" (in Max Weber's sense of the term) which can readily be understood to illustrate both the way some real people might behave, and to provide an ethical evaluation of, or comment on, such behaviour. By contrast, **The Two Ways of Life** is propositional: it is a statement of the form, 'if a, then as a very likely consequence b would follow; on the other hand, if p, then as a very likely consequence q would follow'. To the extent that no real world is represented, there is no necessity for an experientially conventional sense of time to be a part of the representation. Nonetheless, as described above, the picture's moral point cannot be made without we, the viewers, understanding that we experience time and its irreversibility in a certain manner. The picture deliberately and purposefully encodes a sense of time in one possible manner which is of importance in making a narrative.

Henry Peach Robinson's equally famous composite photograph, **Fading Away**, was made in 1858 using five negatives. It showed a dying young
Fig. 7. Henry Peach Robinson: Fading Away
woman attended by her parents and by a sister or young friend. (fig. 7). As was the case for the Rejlander picture, it attracted a variety of responses, many of them hostile, and few of them based on what we would now see as the overt purpose or value of the work. Probably the most relevant criticisms were that the lighting directions in the separate pictures which made up the whole were not internally consistent, and that the models employed for the picture seemed less than fully devoted to their task — even though, amazingly, Robinson claimed that the model for the dying young girl had had three years "practice in expression for photography" before the picture was made (qtd. in Newhall, History 60). No doubt there are or were many other potentially interesting stories to be told concerning the making of these pictures: stories which, if sufficiently widely known, would become a significant part of how we understood and interpreted the pictures. This process of 'attachment' of narratives to photographs is another matter which will be examined in a subsequent chapter.

Both Robinson and Rejlander became discouraged by the responses such works received, and both of them eventually changed to other styles of photography, but it is the two works discussed here for which they are best known, and which are treated in photographic history as major landmarks. Photo-montage as a professional practice largely retreated into an oblivion from which it was not to re-emerge until early in the twentieth century, and then under an aesthetic regimen which made inconsistencies in lighting direction, or details of models' expressions, relatively unimportant. But both of these photographic pictures are narrative in the same way, and to the same extent, that some Pre-Raphaelite painting was narrative, and the styles and modes of narrative used either came directly from such paintings or
developed from a desire to emulate their didactic values and principles. Art and photography were already, during this period, very heavily entwined, in many respects other than that of narrative structure. While connections between painting and photography have continued through to the present day, certainly one of the strongest symbiotic connections was between photographers and the Pre-Raphaelite painters, largely because of the heavy use of, and indeed dependence on, photography — by no means always acknowledged — by so many of the Pre-Raphaelites. For the present purpose, it is enough to show that the connections between these two modes of picture making are a major part of the influence which led some photographers down the path of trying to make narrative images: a path which could not have been expected to be a natural avenue of exploration for a medium so strongly tied to the fleeting moment of exposure.
CHAPTER 2. ANALYSIS AND DEFINITION: NARRATIVE AND THEORY

This Chapter has two aims: to clarify what it is we are referring to when we talk about narrative, and to derive what we can about the nature of narrative from two broad types of approach to it — formalist/structuralist ideas on the one hand, which tend to centre on attributes of the text under analysis, and psychoanalytic ideas on the other, which tend to centre more on the mental processes involved in interpreting and/or receiving a text as narrative. This discussion as a whole then becomes a background for the following two chapters, which examine concrete instances of narrative photography as expressed firstly in previous writings about narrative and photography, and secondly in a range of actual photographs which have been either created or received, if not both, as narratives.

FORMAL APPROACHES

It is sometimes difficult, in the area of narrativity, to combine necessary levels of rigour and exactitude with palpable levels of practical applicability. Nevertheless, this chapter does have that pragmatic purpose of providing a way of relating my own work both to the photographic work of others, and to a theoretical base which hopefully supports its conceptual integrity.

One of the many difficulties of the area is that there are few sharp boundaries. Even a broad bifurcation, such as that between formal and psychoanalytic approaches, belies a blurring which may easily be brought about through the applications to which such approaches might be put. The narrative propensities of a given text, for instance, might be "objective"
attributes of that text for the purposes of one discussion, but become signs of how we know it to be a narrative (and thus part of a "subjective" cognitive process) for the purposes of another. Thus, though the parts of this discussion are delineated as separate entities, this segmentation needs to be seen as a matter of placing emphasis on each set of issues in order to shed light on their particular significance, rather than as the revelation of an underlying clarity which does not, in fact, exist.

More space is devoted in this chapter to discussion of formal issues than to psychoanalytic approaches. This should not be taken as an indication that the formal approach is more important or more fundamental; rather it reflects the fact that this is the strand of recent narrative theory which has attempted to "designate the basic structures of story processes and to define the aesthetic languages unique to...narrative discourse" (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis 69). Just as the same authors suggest, in relation to film theory, that "Psychoanalytic film theory represents a development of — rather than a departure from — cine-semiotics" (123), so any discussion of desire and other psychoanalytic processes is to some extent always a development of the linguistic/structural approach, and the processes and language which have been sharpened in the formalist arena are also an essential aspect of discussing the other face of narrative: the roles of desire and drive.

Definition is a reasonable place to start with clarifying just what narrative is, and a start has already been made to this process via the discussion of narrative paintings in the previous chapter. A brief caveat about definition itself, however, is relevant before continuing.
As has been stated in the Introduction, the form of narrative we are looking for, in this medium which would not conventionally be thought of as capable of conveying narrative information, will of necessity be unusual: uncharacteristic of narrative in other contexts, limited in its scope and occurrence, and largely indicated and conveyed by cues other than those which, in places where narrative is conventionally found, most obviously distinguish it from other ways of organizing information. In such circumstances, reliance on a common lexical definition, for instance, might be as likely to limit subsequent investigation of potential cases of photographic narrative, as to allow us to recognize them where they arise.

In order to be helpful to this inquiry by promoting recognition of possible narrative modes, it has been useful to take account of definitions of narrative which have either the formal characteristics of a real definition or the less stringent requirements of a definition in use. These terms may be themselves defined respectively as follows:

*real definition:* specification of the metaphysically necessary and sufficient condition for being the kind of thing a noun (usually a common noun) designates: e.g., 'element with atomic number 79' for 'gold'." (Yagisawa 186),

and:

*definition in use:* specification of how an expression is used or what it is used to express: e.g., 'uttered to express astonishment' for 'my goodness'." (Yagisawa 185).

The analysis of narrative painting in Chapter 1, then, was the latter: a way of establishing an understanding of how the word "narrative" is used in relation to paintings, in order to better understand the attributes a
photograph would need to share with such paintings to in order to be
described in the same terms. In the present chapter, some useful real
definitions of narrative are discussed, and one overall aim here is to distil the
"essence" of narrative itself, in a more or less Platonic sense — "that which
distinguishes a thing from other types of objects...that which makes a thing
what it is, or that which all things called by the same name have in common"
(Titus and Smith 502). By accepting more than a single mode of definition
and perhaps a range of definitions within each mode, we can better allow for
the fact that narrative is, even in the clearest instances, an elusive and
chameleon concept which shifts and changes with context, and which will
manifest itself in different ways both within and between different pictorial
forms, and between pictures and text. We are interested in the core and
minimal requirements for narrative, but also in the psychological phenomena
involved in how and why people might perceive photographic pictures as
having narrative attributes. While it may not be possible, within the scope of
this research, to provide an overarching structure under which to organize all
of the findings which come from theory, from pragmatic critical analysis and
from photographic pictures themselves, the aim is to elucidate the formal
and psychological phenomena to the greatest possible degree, and in a way
which makes a range of practical approaches available to the thematic
aspects of my own creative work.

Formal aspects of narrative theory are discussed first, beginning with a
further bifurcation into diegetic and mimetic approaches, and progressing
through those issues which raise the most difficult, and the most relevant,
issues about the attributes a single-picture narrative might actually possess
or convey: causality, time and space. Desire, around which cluster those who
oppose the formalist approach, is discussed second. Its crucial links to photography are through the mental processes of perception and interpretation, and are examined here through the psychoanalytic structures of need and drive.

The following discussion is synthesized from a number of sources. It combines views which stem primarily from literary theory with views which come from film theory. Since film theory has been, to a large extent, built on the foundations of literary theory this should not be surprising, and there are good reasons for regarding the two as parts of a continuous whole rather than irrevocably separate.

Bordwell, drawing on Aristotle's original distinction between three modes of "imitation" (meaning, in this context, dramatic or poetic presentation of some aspect of human life), arrives at a basic distinction, in the process of narration, between telling and showing. While it might reasonably be expected that literary forms such as poetry and literature would correspond only to telling, and pictorial forms such as painting and photography only to showing, Bordwell makes explicit the degree to which there is, or may be, complete theoretical overlap:

Diegetic theories conceive of narration as consisting either literally or analogically of verbal activity: a telling. This telling may be either oral or written...Mimetic theories conceive of narration as the presentation of a spectacle: a showing. Note, incidentally, that since the difference applies only to "mode" of imitation, either theory may be applied to any medium. You can hold a mimetic theory of the novel if you believe the narrational methods of fiction to resemble those of drama, and you can hold a diegetic
theory of painting if you posit visual spectacle to be analogous to linguistic transition. (3)

Bordwell's inclusion, by implication, of painting as a still pictorial form which might possess narrative qualities is gratifying in view of the more limited views of narrative expressed by Seymour Chatman, further below. We should note also that even within a single medium — even a medium such as television in which both showing and telling are the obvious and universally employed modes of narration, and indeed even in real life — it may be nearly impossible to separate showing from telling, and that such confusion may become an integral part of a narrative mechanism.

A simple example drawn from contemporary culture illustrates this point. In an episode of the British police drama "The Bill", a policeman conveys (contrary to proper practice, and having been warned against such action) to two criminals the location of a third man against whom the first two have a grievance. He is hoping that the resulting internecine conflict will eliminate one or another of the parties, all of whom he perceives as undesirable and dispensable. The policeman achieves this by wordlessly placing a matchbook, on which is printed the address of the hotel in which the third criminal is resident, on a snooker table in view of the first two men. Is this showing or telling? Part of the narrative, in fact, hinges on just this issue: asked later if he told the two criminals the whereabouts of the third, the policeman denies that he did. Our negative views of this policeman (already established in previous episodes and earlier in the same story) are reinforced precisely by the fact that we know his answer is sophistry: in this case, showing and telling are exactly the same.
But first to narrative itself. There is no mystery about the idea of telling a story with (by means of) pictures, where they are multiple and separate. Even using only two pictures of the same subject clearly allows the specification of two situations, related via visual information so as to allow or encourage the viewer to understand them as a story: as before and after, as introduction and conclusion, or as a process of development. Almost of necessity, the use of more than one picture introduces the element of time, which we will see is part of the 'real definition' of narrative. Frequently, it introduces a sense of plural spaces also, which while not part of the real definition, can indirectly assist in the creation of a sense of time, and convey a notion of change between one picture and the other.

Further, it seems at least intuitively reasonable to suppose that the greater the number of images one is allowed to use to convey a given piece of information (which might or might not have a pre-existing equivalent in verbal form), the nearer one might come to being able to make sentences or propositions; to negate, qualify and so on, using only pictures. Even if no concrete examples exist of any series of pictures which actually move as far as this in the direction of imitating verbal language, it can be seen that the potential complexity in relationships between separate pictures makes the construction of narrative very much easier.

While the unit of account for this project is, by contrast, the single photographic picture, some special instances of multiple pictures will be discussed because in photography, the line between what is a single picture and what is a multiple picture is not always as clearly drawn as is the case with other sorts of image. In particular, photography has taken enthusiastically to the practice of incorporating pictures within pictures,
photographs within photographs, a practice sufficiently widespread to have attracted specific critical responses (for example, Max Kozloff's "Photos within Photographs"). My own works which form the major creative component of this thesis are also photographs within photographs, in two different senses, and in fact this is a crucial aspect of how two distinct time periods are encoded in those images.

It is possible to state a basic form of 'real' definition of narrative which is more or less agreed upon by a number of authors, each of whom tends to emphasize different aspects of the overall structure. Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis render a version of such a definition as "the recounting of two or more events (or a situation and an event) that are logically connected, occur over time, and are linked by a consistent subject into a whole" (69). Possibly one of the most widely quoted versions of this definition of a minimal narrative form is that developed by Gerald Prince in the Introduction to his Narratology. He begins by defining narrative "as the representation of real or fictive events and situations in a time sequence" (1), thus foregrounding time as a vital element from the very beginning, and he then proceeds to make some important qualifications with respect to the nature of the time sequence, and the independence from each other of the events or situations.

Firstly, with respect to time, he notes that although the telling of certain facts or representations will necessarily take place over time, this does not of itself produce narrative. The temporal dimension of narrative must be one which arranges the events represented in temporal relation to each other, within the telling. Equally, although a represented entity will almost inevitably unfold its representation over time and may involve a chain of
events, it may be represented as one event, so that the telling is, again, not a narrative. "With narrative... we speak of temporal sequence not only at the representational level but also at the represented one" (2).

Secondly, Prince points out that the events in a narrative may satisfy the time requirement, but if they are such that one event presupposes or entails all the others, the condition of plural "events" is not really met (3-4).

To deal with these problems he then elaborates on his initial position to reach the following: "narrative is the representation of at least two real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other" (4) (emphasis in original). This may be seen as one version of the general definition given in Stam et al, above. It is a version which is strict with respect to the independence from one another of the events or situations in a narrative, but which actually fails to clarify some important points in that general definition: specifically, that narrative involves a recounting (referred to specifically by others as narration), and that the subject of that recounting is such as to link the parts of the narrative into a whole. Prince's later Dictionary of Narratology has a definition of narrative which embraces the significance of recounting but not the importance of the subject:

The recounting (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more real or fictitious events communicated by one, two, or several (more or less overt) narrators to one, two or several (more or less overt) narratees.

(58) 

However, in the substantial discussion following this definition in the Dictionary, he acknowledges both the importance of the continuant subject,
and the integrity or wholeness of a narrative, in distinguishing a narrative from a random series of events.\textsuperscript{19}

Under the same heading in the \textit{Dictionary}, Prince also makes further fine distinctions about the nature of both events/situations, and recounting. Among the former is the potentially confusing comment that "a dramatic performance representing (many fascinating) events does not constitute a narrative...since these events, rather than being recounted, occur directly on stage" (58). In terms of the distinction made above, by Bordwell, between showing and telling, Prince's distinction here seems to provocatively favour telling to the complete exclusion of showing. To be sure, a dramatic performance is indeed not, itself, narrative; but it \textit{narrates}, and it narrates by showing. Narration may also — one might say "equally" — be done by telling, as in a written or spoken story. This confusion results from Prince's use in the \textit{Dictionary} of the term "recounting" as a synonym for both "narrative" and "narration": the definition for "narrative" begins with "The recounting..."(58), while the second of four meanings for "narration" gives "The production of a narrative; the recounting of a series of situations and events" (57). This should not be taken as a criticism of Prince, but rather as a warning sign that the substantive meanings of these terms vary so much, and in such subtle ways, with the contexts of their application, that exactitude beyond a certain point may be unobtainable.

Within this limitation Prince makes, also under the definition of "narrative", some invaluable broad observations about its function. Among the latter is a passage which beautifully renders the importance of narrative to humanity in general:
By definition, narrative always recounts one or more events; but, as etymology suggests (the term narrative is related to the Latin *gnarus*), it also represents a particular mode of knowledge. It does not simply mirror what happens; it explores and devises what can happen. It does not merely recount changes of state; it constitutes and interprets them as signifying wholes (situations, practices, persons, societies). Narrative can thus shed light on individual fate or group destiny, the unity of a self or the nature of a collectivity. Through showing that apparently heterogeneous situations and events can make up one signifying structure (or vice versa) and, more particularly, through providing its own brand of order and coherence to (a possible) reality, it furnishes examples for its transformation or redefinition and effects a mediation between the law of what is and the desire for what might be. Most crucially, perhaps, by marking off distinct moments in time and setting up relations among them, by discovering meaningful designs in temporal series, by establishing an end already partly contained in the beginning and a beginning already partly containing the end, by exhibiting the meaning of time and/or providing it with meaning, narrative deciphers time and indicates how to decipher it. In sum, narrative illuminates temporality and humans as temporal beings. (60)

Taken together with the possibility that a dramatic performance may narrate by showing, this latter passage is important because it appears to at least leave open the possibility that a photograph may narrate in a similar fashion. "Recounting changes of state, constitut(ing) and interpret(ing) them
as signifying wholes"... seeking "one signifying structure" in "heterogeneous situations" and "discovering meaningful designs in temporal series" are phrases well suited to invoke photography's unique concern with time, a concern with "exhibiting the meaning of time and/or providing it with meaning". As is discussed further below, photography's apparent preoccupation with selecting and excising a more or less instantaneous moment belies its real concern, in many instances, with the extension of time surrounding that moment. Prince's generous description of narrative's general function may be the door to understanding an application for photography in that role.

Since Prince's Dictionary is generally, despite the minor difficulties described above in respect to narration, an impartial and thorough source of information on a variety of positions about narrative, it is rewarding to consult it on some related issues. It is implicitly clear from the nature of the discussion and examples in the early pages of Narratology, and indeed from the discussions and examples provided by most authors who have struggled with this ineffable problem, that this exercise is not just about defining narrative in a universal way, but about defining the simplest essence of narrative, the lowest common denominator of narrative. Yet under "minimal narrative" in the Dictionary we find — without comment from Prince, who would appear from the above not to share these less strict positions — two possibilities which are of interest in the context of the present study. They are of interest because they appear to be much more inclusive of narrative possibilities in non-verbal media than the definitions already given:

A narrative representing only a single event: "She opened the door."
A narrative containing only a single temporal juncture (Labov):
"She ate then she slept." (53).

Again, it is not difficult to see how a photograph might convey such events, including the arrangement of events in the single temporal juncture in the correct order.

Such simple examples certainly provide an easier criterion of narrativity for pictures to meet, and will be of interest subsequently for that reason, even though this study is concerned with all the ways in which photographic pictures might invoke or convey narrative, not with merely meeting the most minimal requirement. However, the very simplicity of these examples appears to provoke questions about the nature of the distinction between story and narrative. Clearly these notions are intertwined, to the extent that in common parlance the words are mostly used as though they were interchangeable, and it seems that it becomes more difficult to draw a line between the two, the simpler the narratives (or stories) become. Why, for instance, is "she opened the door" not a story? As a first move it seems sensible to consult Prince's Dictionary under "story" where we find, inter alia, the following:

1. The content plane of narrative as opposed to its expression plane or discourse; the "what" of narrative as opposed to the "how"; the narrated as opposed to the narrating; the fiction as opposed to the narration (in Ricardou's sense of the terms); the existents and events represented in a narrative. (91)

This entry continues through five meanings of "story", each of which generally emphasizes an aspect judged by a particular author to be of distinct importance, and each of which generally takes on the role of distinguishing
between two main principles of organization, including story/discourse, fabula/sjuzet and chronology/causality.²⁰ Prince’s Dictionary definitions are mostly very clear, and very helpful to a reader who might be having difficulty with the original texts by any of the authors mentioned here, including Prince’s own Narratology, yet they cannot confer more clarity than actually exists. There is a need in a project such as the present one, where narrative is a concept to be applied rather than the primary area of study, to not multiply possible models of narrative beyond a certain useful threshold. For that reason, Gérard Genette’s assertion at the very beginning of Narrative Discourse Revisited, that his three-part division:

between story (the totality of the narrated events), narrative (the discourse, oral or written, that narrates them), and narrating (the real or fictive act that produces that discourse — in other words, the very fact of recounting)...gives a better account of the whole story of the narrative fact (13)

is hard to resist as a general proposition, because it seems to effect both simplicity and clarity without reducing the power to make useful distinctions about the texts to be observed.²¹ In the present context, it allows us to make the particularly useful distinction of singling out narrating as an area of particular interest, and again to see that for a minimal narrative form such as the photographic picture, it is possible that the process may be more valuable and rewarding than the end product. Since the story, as well as the narrative, will be minimal, our central interest should perhaps be in photographic pictures which narrate, as much as in the minimal story they do narrate. The degree to which notions of plot can really be relevant in this discussion, if story is so minimal, is also under question; this is discussed further, below.
To the extent that I wish to argue for a sense of at least a minimal story in my own work however, it is still of interest to further clarify just what constitutes a minimal story.

Prince's Dictionary gives us an entry for "minimal story":

A narrative recounting only two states and one event such that [1] one state precedes the event in time and the event precedes the other state in time (and causes it); [2] the second state constitutes the inverse (or the modification, including the zero modification) of the first. (53)

This actually seems rather strict for a minimal position, in terms of its insistence on internal causality and its prescriptive nomination of inversion as the only acceptable mode of closure. While closure is generally one of the more satisfying features of stories, it does not even seem to be a necessary attribute. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan gives the example of the Chekhov story 'Lady with Lapdog' in which "the chain of events does not display any obvious inversion or closed cycle: the state of affairs at the end is different from the initial one, but they are not symmetrically related (the characters are not 'happy' as opposed to 'unhappy' or vice versa" (19).

Even more interesting, in terms of narrative possibilities for photographic pictures, is Rimmon-Kenan's position on causality in the minimal story. In response to a similar, but earlier, version of Prince's definition of the minimal story, she argues "that temporal succession is sufficient as a minimal requirement for a group of events to form a story" (18). Her argument is based on what she sees as the "counter-intuitive nature of Prince's requirements" as well as on a notion, discussed by her earlier in the same work, that "causality can often (always?) be projected onto temporality"
In a sense (though I make this statement as a retrospective observation rather than as a description of my conscious planning), this is what I have hoped for, perhaps even traded on, for my own work.

Whether or not Prince's strictures are counter-intuitive is a perhaps a moot point, but the issue of causality goes to the heart of the issue of narrative. In the case of the Chekhov example already quoted, Rimmon-Kenan points out that although causal connections could be easily supplied in a paraphrasing of the story such as she has given,

not only can the story be recognized as a story without them, but the text goes a long way toward preventing such causal connections becoming obvious and presenting the conjunction of events as inevitable but not necessarily causal (19).

Not only, then, may a reader project causality onto temporality as Rimmon-Kenan suggests. They may well not actually distinguish between, on the one hand, genuine cases of causality, and on the other, instances of an event following, but not being caused by, a prior event. In philosophical terms this is known as the fallacy of false cause, sometimes called post hoc, ergo propter hoc ("after this, therefore because of this") and is "the error of arguing that because two events are correlated with one another, especially when they vary together, the one is the cause of the other" (Walton 374). It is this very "confusion between consecutiveness and consequence, chronology and causality, [which] constitutes perhaps the most powerful motor of narrativity" (Prince, Dictionary of Narratology 11) according to Roland Barthes:

Everything suggests, indeed, that the mainspring of narrative is precisely the confusion of consecution and consequence, what
comes after being read in narrative as what is caused by; in which case narrative would be a systematic application of the logical fallacy denounced by Scholasticism in the formula post hoc, ergo propter hoc — a good motto for Destiny, of which narrative all things considered is no more than the 'language' ("Structural Analysis of Narratives" 94).

Causality may be either explicit or implicit. If explicit it is presumably more likely to be part of an explanation than the seed of a narrative, since there will presumably be no "confusion" on which a potential story may capitalize. If implicit then, as Prince tells us in his Dictionary, it may be inferrable either on "logical, necessary grounds", much like a syllogism, or on "pragmatic, probabilistic grounds" where one event is taken to be caused by, or the cause of, another "unless the narrative itself specifies otherwise" (11). Since it is even difficult for a single photograph to present two separate events, let alone to order them in time, we may perhaps take from the above discussion that the very uncertainty about the temporal order of such depicted events in a photograph will be a positive stimulus toward interpretation of that photograph as a narrative. In a sense this also represents a way to think about the interface between subject-centred and object-centered approaches to narrative, since we can start to see how characteristics of the picture engender narrative processes and assumptions in the viewer.

It must be borne in mind that almost all of these definitions have been arrived at through the study of verbal, and usually written, texts. In trying to adapt such approaches to the world of pictures, it seems wise to be inclusive and open to new possibilities, rather than to throw matters of potential
interest out before they have had a chance to manifest themselves. Accordingly, rather than settle on one single definition as somehow more exacting than the others, the approach taken in this study is to hold up photographic pictures — my own, and works by others — against the various positions outlined here, which in any case largely revolve around an agreed common core, even as they disagree with each other. Where sparks of meaning result from the comparison, further analysis as appropriate can then be made.

All of the discussion above makes it clear that time is a vital ingredient in narrative. It should be equally clear, implicitly, that the representation of time is a problematic issue for photography, since ostensibly a single photographic exposure (as distinct from a montage or any other composite form) can do no more than to represent the very brief passage of time over which the exposure is made. For most practical purposes, this exposure time is conceptually treated as though it were an "instant", a segment of time without duration, or at least without meaningful duration by comparison with the periods of time we would expect to be depicted in a narrative in any of those media in which narrative is more conventionally found. A closer examination, however, shows that the representation of time in photographic pictures is more complex than such brevity might imply, and that aspects of time crucial for the existence of narrative may well play a role therein.

At least two senses of time are commonly referred to in discussions on narrative, albeit under terms differing between authors and with meanings which vary depending on context. They are of limited use in application to paintings or photographic pictures, but since there is a need to link my discussion of ways in which time is represented or referred to in such
pictures with some terminology standardized in references to narrative elsewhere, they will be briefly covered here.

Seymour Chatman outlines the principal distinction between the two senses of time, in a fashion which seems to exclude all still pictorial forms, whether photographic or otherwise, from narrative possibility:

A salient property of narrative is double time structuring. That is, all narratives, in whatever medium, combine the time sequence of plot events, the time of the *histoire*, ("story-time") with the time of the presentation of those events in the text, which we will call "discourse-time". What is fundamental to narrative, regardless of medium, is that these two time orders are independent...This independence of discourse-time is precisely and only possible because of the subsumed story time." ("What Novels Can Do That Film Can't" 122)

Chatman explicitly excludes painting from consideration as a narrative, and we can presume by implication that photographic pictures would fare similarly:

But the internal structures of these *non*-narrative texts are not temporal but logical, so that their discourse-time is irrelevant. We may spend half an hour in front of a Titian, but the aesthetic effect is as if we were taking in the whole painting at a glance. In narratives, on the other hand...("What Novels Can Do..." 122).

Chatman's task here is to compare literature with film, and his interpretation of what is meant by discourse-time, in particular, seems governed partly by the boundaries of that project. In film (and television), discourse time is to an unusual degree fixed and immovable; we are
presented with a plot from which we derive a story, and the plot will always be presented in precisely the same way with every viewing. Discussion of order, duration and frequency of events in the plot, and the relationship between the equivalent considerations in the story, thus makes sense. Since, according to Chatman, the double time structuring of narratives allows translatability of a narrative from one medium to another (film to written text or vice versa), we can sensibly continue to discuss discourse time in relation to written texts, but Chatman does not fully clarify the relationship, for such texts, between discourse time and reading time. Genette refers to this problem as the "pseudo-temporality of (written) narrative" (33), but without any implication that this difficulty renders all such texts non-narrative. It seems sensible, in the case of photographic pictures, to retain for the moment the possibility that viewing time for a photographic picture — the time it takes to apprehend or understand the meaning of such an image — may well relate in so structured a fashion to the time depicted or 'contained' by that image that any such relationship also bears upon any narrative significance the image might have.

I have not discussed plot at length, and one implication of the discussion of story and narrative above is that length, in the context of any still image, is exactly what plot cannot have. Any sense of the sequential unfolding of events over time must be provided by the work as a matter of implication, and taken up by the viewer as a process of controlled and directed speculation. These speculative hypotheses — about before and after, about events leading up to that which is explicitly depicted, about events yet to come — are controlled and directed by information in the picture, but not so completely controlled that every piece of information is absorbed, fully
and consistently resolved, at a glance. The process of hypothesis-making takes place over time. There is (mental) action and reaction, the testing of assumptions and the finding of some to be fruitful, others to be unrewarding. This process, it should be emphasized, cannot but take place over time.

Photographic pictures in which space is part of a narrative mechanism are discussed further in chapters below, and the use of space is frequently idiosyncratic. However, as background, I make here some general remarks about spatial considerations in narrative structures generally which, analogously to those outlined above with respect to time, may give rise to narrative modes in photographic pictures.

There is, firstly, a distinction to be made between the space of the narrated (the story space) and the space of the narrating (the space within which, and with which, the narrated is recounted). If space is to be an engine of narrative in the case of a photographic picture, that picture will need to make clear the relationship between each space and the other; in particular, while the physical area within the frame is an important aspect of the space of the narrating, it is not synonymous with it. If the injured survivor of an accident tells his or her tale of the event from a hospital bed, then the internal frame space of a photographic picture which conveys this information to a viewer will have to show us both the hospital bed and the scene of the accident, and the enunciation of both of these will take place in the two-dimensional space enclosed by the edges of the picture itself. (We can perhaps imagine a newspaper photograph which succeeds in doing this, though such a task is one for which a montage rather than a single "straight" photograph would probably be required). What we may then perhaps refer to as the "discourse space" will, in this case, include elements of both this
two-dimensional picture plane and the (real or fictitious) hospital room depicted on that plane. Prince's discussion of the physical aspects of discourse, which makes a rare implicit acknowledgement of still pictures as a potentially narrative form, is useful here:

Discourse has a substance (a medium of manifestation: oral or written language, still or moving pictures, gestures etc) and a form (it consists of a connected set of narrative statements that state the story and, more specifically, determine the order of presentation of situations and events, the point of view governing that presentation, the narrative speed, the kind of commentary, and so on). (Dictionary 21)

The most frequently used spatial strategy in the analysis of narrative pictures in general is to decode the arrangements of elements within the picture plane itself: — to answer questions such as: What is here? What is absent? What associations might these objects carry from other contexts? What do their positions and relative sizes within the image signify? A particularly thorough example of such an analysis, in relation to Gustave Moreau's painting The Apparition, is referred to below, and similar analyses in relation to other paintings have already been made earlier, in Chapter 1. I want here to briefly draw attention to several aspects of space which are uniquely important to photographs, as a picture type or group.

Much of the theoretical work on analysis of space in pictorial representations in general comes from film theory where, because the image is moving and changeable, there is a need to ensure that various landmarks within successive pictures (at the frame, shot and scene levels) so render the representation of story space as to make it continuously and consistently
intelligible. In the case of single pictures this is less of an issue, though film and still pictorial media share a common need to direct the viewer’s attention away from the physical picture plane to the depicted scene itself. Bordwell makes out a convincing case for Constructivist psychology’s account of how human perception works not only in interpreting pictorial representations, but in interpreting the real world itself:

What overcomes the incomplete and ambiguous cues that pictures offer is a process of schema-driven perception. In confronting a picture, we frame hypotheses about what the medium can represent and about how to interpret the cues we are given. In representational art, the principal spatial schemata are those which construe pictorial cues as representing a layout of objects within an environment. Constructivist psychology emphasizes the priority of object perception in our everyday world. (Bordwell 102)

Bordwell goes on to quote the perception psychologist R.L. Gregory in support of this view: "Perception involves betting on the most probable interpretation of sensory data, in terms of the world of objects. Perception involves a kind of inference from sensory data to object-reality." (qtd. in Bordwell: 102)

Perception is thus, according to this model, an inferential activity which, rather than being fully determined by the physical stimulus itself (the physical picture plane, in our case) "works upon cues supplied by the medium and by stylistic conventions" (Bordwell 101).

Chief among the "cues supplied by the medium" in the case of photographic pictures, are the ways in which lenses render the image of a scene, and the understanding we have of the significance of the photographic
frame. With respect to lenses, though comparisons between the eye and the lens abound in introductory textbooks on photography, a case can be made that such analogies are mistaken:

The notion that a photograph shows us "what we would have seen had we been there ourselves" has to be qualified to the point of absurdity. A photograph shows us "what we would have seen" at a certain moment in time, *from* a certain vantage point *if* we kept our head immobile *and* closed one eye *and* if we saw things with the equivalent of a 150-mm or 24-mm lens *and* if we saw things in Agfacolor or in Tri-X developed in D-76 and printed on Kodabromide #3 paper. By the time all the conditions are added up, the original position is reversed: instead of saying that the camera shows us what our eyes would see, we are now positing the rather unilluminating proposition that, if our eyes worked like photography, then we would see things the way a camera does. (Snyder and Allen 152)

The focal length of the lens is thus one vital aspect of how a viewer perceives the space depicted by a photograph. More importantly in relation to narrative possibilities, focal length also mediates the viewer's feeling of connectedness or involvement. A telephoto lens will imply that the viewer is a long way from the scene; unconnected with it, and a spectator rather than a player. Through its shortened depth of field, it will also call attention to the artifice of the representation and to the distortion of the depth of the visual field by comparison with a direct perceptual experience of the same scene. A wide angle lens may achieve something of the opposite: a viewer feels herself to be located in the middle of things, enfolded by the represented scene, and
since the depth of field may well be so great that nothing in the visual field is
out of focus, fewer reminders exist that the picture is a representation. The
eye and head movements necessary to scan the full wide-angle image,
particularly if the picture is a large one, will more closely replicate
movements which might be made in the actual subject environment.

If this argument about lens effects is valid, it might also be argued that a
viewer would be likely to spend more time looking at the wide-angle lens
picture through being able to more easily find a sense of involvement and
identification with it. Were such a picture to be a narrative one, on other than
spatial grounds, it is difficult to see why the increase in viewing time would
not, contrary to the view of Prince that "The temporal dimension must be one
which arranges the events represented in relation to each other, within the
telling" (emphasis added — see 56 above) be a contributing agency in the
construction and understanding of that narrative. Once again, this seems to
support the notion already canvassed (28 and 68 above) that for images
which work with or through narrative, it is within viewing time that the
narrative is constructed, and consequently that factors influencing viewing
time must have a bearing on the form and structure of that narrative.

The other vital aspect of how a viewer perceives the space depicted by a
photographic picture has to do with understanding the notions of on-screen
and off-screen, or in-frame and out-of-frame, space. This is generally
irrelevant for paintings or drawings, even of the most representational kind.
On the other hand it is an essential tool in film where, quite frequently, an
audience is either not shown something which is out of frame but of great
interest to those who are in the frame, or the audience is only shown the out-
of-frame object or person after their motivation to do so has been raised by
their frustration in not seeing it immediately. The intense desire of the audience to see the out-of-frame object, toward which a character or characters might be exhibiting fear, amazement, tenderness, mirth or whatever, becomes a powerful means of manipulating audience emotions.26

Photographs, particularly "straight" photographs, sit somewhere in between. Unlike the edges of a painting, which limit the edges of the depicted universe purposively rather than merely contingently, the borders of a photograph represent the extension of the represented world into a space which, though we cannot see it now, we know to have been a continuous part of the represented world at the time the picture was made. The frame lines are determined when a photographer makes a picture, but in detail they are always in a sense arbitrary; we know that had the camera moved slightly this way or that, we would now be able to see more of some aspect of that world which we cannot now see, and less of another part (the opposite side of the frame) than can now be seen.

Off-screen space has been dealt with quite systematically in relation to film by Noël Burch who, in Theory of Film Practice, divides off-screen space into six distinct segments:

The immediate confines of the first four of these areas are determined by the four borders of the frame, and correspond to the four faces of an imaginary truncated pyramid projected into the surrounding space, a description that is obviously something of a simplification. A fifth segment cannot be defined with the same geometric precision, yet no one will deny that there is an off-screen space "behind the camera" that is quite distinct from the four segments of space bordering each of the frame lines, although
the characters in the film generally reach this space by passing just to the left or right of the camera. There is a sixth segment, finally, encompassing the space existing behind the set or some object in it: A character reaches it by going out a door, going round a street corner, disappearing behind a pillar or behind another person, or performing some similar act. (17)27

Off-screen space has never been defined with quite this level of exactitude in relation to photographs, but the same model can be applied to photographs without conflict, even though areas such as the "sixth segment" are unlikely to be as important as is potentially the case in film. Henri Cartier-Bresson's photographs, for instance, frequently make significant use of out-of-frame space in a manner which contributes to their narrative significance. His Beance, France, 1958 (fig.8), to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, is one in which the central human subject actually links, via a handshake with someone defined only by an arm entering the picture from the side, with space outside this 'pyramid'. The space behind the camera, if not the camera itself, is frequently referred to through eyeline directions or by direct looking, as in the Arnold Newman photograph of Alfred Krupp (fig. 12) discussed in Chapter 3, and my own photographs of the woman in the pool (fig. 26), discussed in Chapter 5. The latter picture uses the appearance of the photographer's hands in the picture to imply both the physical existence of a relevant person outside the viewing space, and the existence of a process taking place over time and extending beyond the time which is immediately represented.

Didier Coste, in Narrative as Communication, provides a possible approach to integrating the narrative implications of time and space for
Fig. 8. Henri Cartier-Bresson: Beance, France, 1958
pictorial depictions in general, which is potentially fruitful in application to photographs. We will encounter very similar ideas in Chapter 3, in discussion of Manuel Alvarado's paper "Photographs and Narrativity", stated in slightly different form and stated in relation to particular photographs, which facilitates an understanding of how they relate to my own work. Coste makes broader theoretical points, using very simple line drawings as examples, which clarify the logic generally involved in the pictorial depiction of actions and events taking place in time and space.

He points out first that any "figuration" — any figurative representation of anything — necessarily sits in a certain time relationship to its referent:

a model and its imitation cannot just exist side by side; the model is (in) the past of its imitation, the imitation is (in) the future of the model, but also in the past of its vision and of other imitations. An imitation as such is the negative model of a real-to-come

...Figuration imposes spatiality on the verbal text and temporality on the plastic text. Narrativity is a special aspect of figuration, the figuration of movement or change, hence of 'time'. Figuration in general implies time, enunciative time through reference; narrativity signifies, thematizes time, enunciated time...Narrativity orders temporally within a single frame. (Coste 276) (emphasis in original)

Though Coste seems to rely more on assertion than on demonstration here, he makes a point which has been useful to my own strategy for involving a sense of the passage of time in the photographs which form the final creative work for this thesis. This is discussed again in relation to those photographs, in Chapter 5. Space is used in those works as a way of explicitly
drawing attention to time, and in this way becomes an aspect of "the figuration of movement or change, hence of 'time'" which "orders temporally within a single frame".

Coste provides a lengthy analysis of Gustave Moreau's watercolour *The Apparition* (*Narrative as Communication* 278-284) which, while certainly a thorough analysis of the manner in which space is divided, arranged and used in the painting, does not of itself provide a convincing argument that the work is a narrative, even though the watercolour refers to a pre-existing written narrative (the story of Salomé). However, in relation to some much simpler line drawings provided earlier in his book (277), Coste does usefully clarify three modes of pictorial narrative:

Firstly, he suggests that a picture (any picture) invokes a verbal "translation", a form of words which is somehow the equivalent of the pictorial meaning. This notion is insufficiently examined, and questionable at least as to its universality — one can easily think of pictures for which there would be no such "translation", and indeed the very point of most pictures is precisely to communicate in a way that words cannot. However, Coste's first pictorial narrative mode depends on what he calls "Narrative programs similar to those of verbal descriptemes" (277). In relation to his picture example, a simple drawing of a man digging in a garden, these are speculative questions possibly raised in verbal terms by the picture, such as "How long will he work in the garden?", "Is he planting or uprooting?" and so on (277).

The second narrative mode depends on "narrative figuration as the figuration of movement" (277); in other words, the fact that though it is a fixed entity in itself, the picture takes "a single simple state from a process"
The narrativity of even the simple line drawing is in such a case "the same as that of a photographic snapshot" (277). Coste thus assumes, as a given fact, one of the very matters that this research is investigating. His formulation does however assist in clarifying the notion, to be probed in more detail in Chapter 3 in respect of Manuel Alvarado's "Photographs and Narrativity", that the camera's more or less instant exposure is to be understood not simply as a moment isolated and extracted from the rest of time, but as a moment chosen from, and potentially rich in information about, a flow of time — that is, of events — extending either before it, after it, or both. The "figuration" of a moment may thus help us to narratively understand the period which surrounds it.

Coste's third mode of pictorial narrativity is in a sense teleological, relating partly to the functional purposes served by a "plastic" text taking on whatever form it eventually takes as it moves from idea to physically completed entity. He refers to it as "enunciative narrativity":

To the extent that any work is the trace of its own production, (re)presents somehow its own creation and the anticipation of its own reception, viewing a plastic text involves additional narrative programs that refer to its enunciation. Indeed, they are the only possible ones in "abstract," non-figurative art, where all movement inscribed is that of the artist, not of the model. (278)

The latter two modes seem to hold the greatest promise for making, and making sense of, narrativity in photographic pictures. In particular, the idea of enunciative narrativity may provide a way of unravelling the complex relationship between the intentional actions of the photographer and the
ineffable, ineffaceable, ineluctible physical phenomena — that is, the actions of light itself — to which every photograph also bears witness.

**PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES**

Formalism is not the only approach to narrative, whether in photographic pictures or elsewhere. If, as seems to be the case for reasons already outlined, we are searching for limited and unusual instances of narrativity in the domain of still photographic pictures, it is useful to have clarity in the language with which we discuss such fleeting phenomena, and as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, it is to a large extent the formal approach which gives us that useful language.

However, it would be unwise to neglect any other aspect of relevant theory likely to account for aspects of narrative which do not yield to a formalist approach. Mention was made in the analysis of the pre-Raphaelite painters, and again in discussing the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson, of desire as an agency in narrative formation and transmission, and the connections between desire and narrative have attracted considerable attention, mostly in literary theory, over the past two decades or so. Some of this attention is motivated by an almost emotional opposition to formalism, and by a belief that linguistic and structuralist accounts of narrative fail to account for it as a fundamental force in the human thinking, beyond — or perhaps prior to — logic and reasoning.

Jay Clayton, in a paper which constitutes a critical research review of the connections between desire and narrative, quotes Peter Brooks as acknowledging that his interest in desire "derives from my dissatisfaction with the various formalisms that have dominated critical thinking about
narrative" (qtd. in Clayton: 34) while Teresa de Lauretis "faults structuralist models for their inability to disclose the ways in which narrative operates, through the desires it excites and fulfills, to construct the social world as a system of sexual differences" (Clayton 34).²⁸

Clayton isolates two broad areas shared by those theorists who have an interest in both desire and narrative: on the one hand, the (rather mixed) feelings of dissatisfaction with formalist approaches to narrative, and on the other, a rather surprising apparent agreement that narrative and desire are linked through violence, and in particular that violence and eroticism are inextricably intertwined at the very heart of narrative. Apparent overall confluence of thought on this nexus between authors, however, masks significant disagreement between them about how it comes to be the case, and Clayton teases out the subtleties in their very different standpoints, unearthing along the way some alarming indulgence by at least one author in the very practices he ostensibly seeks to correctively expose to our view.²⁹

This connection between narrative and violence may even be seen as manifest in photographs to a particular degree. In an acute analysis of the representation of time in photographs, Thierry De Duve discusses a possible traumatic effect which may be produced by a photograph "not because of its content, but because of immanent features of its particular time and space" (De Duve 119). This paradox, seemingly unresolved and unresolvable in some cases, is that:

Either the photograph registers a singular event, or it makes the event form itself in the image. The problem with the first alternative is that reality is not made out of singular events; it is made out of the continuous happenings of things. In reality, the
event is carried on by time, it doesn't arise from or make a gestalt: the discus thrower releases the disc. In the second case, where the photograph freezes the event in the form of an image, the problem is that that is not where the event occurs. The surface of the image shows a gestalt indeed, emerging from its spatial surroundings, and disconnected from its temporal context: the discus thrower is caught forever in the graceful arc of his windup (115-16).

The force of this paradox is exemplified by De Duve in a later discussion of the famous press photograph by Eddie Adams, showing South Vietnamese Police Chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan summarily executing a Vietcong soldier in a Saigon street in 1968. Clearly this is a tragic and violent event, but for De Duve, the trauma lies not in the reality shown:

I'll always be too late, in real life, to witness the death of this poor man, let alone to prevent it; but by the same token, I'll always be too early to witness the uncoiling of the tragedy, which at the surface of the photograph, will of course never occur. Rather than the tragic content of the photograph, even enhanced by the knowledge that it has actually happened...it is the sudden vanishing of the present tense, splitting into the contradiction of being simultaneously too late and too early, that is properly unbearable. (121)

The explanation of the splitting of time here — superficially similar in many ways, it must be observed, to formalist analyses of how time is handled in other photographs — seems somehow too strange, too idiosyncratic (does he really believe this to be the wellspring of our emotional response to the photograph?) to form a base on which to stand a unified but
non-formalist way of looking at narrative. But Clayton points helpfully
toward a different way of relating desire to some particular attributes of
photographic imagery. The tendency for desire to have been perceived,
discussed and analyzed in psychoanalytic terms has led not only to a
multiplicity of views of desire within that framework, but also to a failure to
understand desire as historical; or, to put it another way, to a continuing
perception on the part of psychoanalysis that the form of desire is universal,
even if the details of its social manifestations change over time.

Again however we do not need to solve the puzzle of historicizing
desire in order to benefit from this insight, by taking a step backwards.
Clayton gives us the key:

We cannot know anything about desire independent of its
embodiment in social and historical forms. Need is a constant by
definition; it is instinctual and always possesses a somatic
component. Need is necessarily related to one of the biological
conditions for life... Desire, on the other hand, is what happens to
need when it enters history, language, culture, and society. Desire
names the way in which individuals transform their needs under
the pressure of the particular social conditions of their time and
place. (50)

This is enough, in practical terms, for us to be able to detect the
influence of desire in narrative. But better than that, we can also see why
photography, with its unique visual mimetic strengths, might have particular
abilities in the matter of representing, and manipulating, the needs of
viewers. Consider, for instance, psychologist A.H. Maslow's hierarchy of five
categories of needs:
For a particular need to guide the person, all the more basic needs must be satisfied first. The most basic needs are physiological; these must be met if we are to survive, and include oxygen, food, water, and sex (although it is not necessary to the survival of the individual, sex is necessary to the survival of the species)...Safety needs form the next category...Next come the needs for love and belongingness...Once the needs for love and belongingness are not pressing, then needs for esteem arise...when all the other needs are satisfied, the need for self-actualization becomes dominant. (Darley et al 322)

Certainly it is not hard to think of considerable bodies of photography, let alone individual photographs, which play on the existence and strength of basic needs, particularly sex and food, and one can also see some of the 'higher' needs, such as the need for esteem, reflected in both the subject matter and the approach of certain photographic imagery. This does not involve, either at the level of analysis or the level of practice, any attempt to conflate need and desire, but rather a careful — even cold-blooded — separation of the two. Almost the whole application of photography to advertising, for instance, is about capitalising on the relationship between need and desire. Advertising copy is frequently directed toward either arguing that a need exists, (in the case, for instance, of any particular consumer durable, which any given individual consumer could always actually do without) or with converting a general need (for food, say) into a particular perceived need (for, say, Lebanese takaway). Advertising photography, by contrast, is about an extension to this process: converting
perceived or actual need into desire, and about attaching that desire to a very particular object or service.

Advertising is by no means the only field of photography which works this way. The pictures of celebrities and media stars (those already famous for, and by, being frequently represented in photographs) which fill any number of magazines also play on a complex of needs for inclusion, acceptance and esteem, particularly in young women, and have been properly criticised for creating inappropriate and unsatisfiable desires in such audiences.30

Any photographs which play on need in this way, and thus engender desire, must find a mode of address which will engage particular intended viewers: aside from any assistance given by display contexts, captions and other subsidiary information, this engagement is ordinarily achieved by a process of identification. Perhaps we have, then, an operational definition of desire in relation to photography: it is the communicative manifestation of need, concretized in an image in such a way as to provoke identification on the part of an audience. Given that needs are postulated as universal and ahistorical, such an approach allows us to detect the influence of desire in an image so long as we can identify the need on which that desire plays.

Thierry De Duve provides a further psychoanalytic basis for engagement with photographs by postulating that

the paradoxical apprehension of time and space in photography is akin to the contradictory libidinal commitment that we make toward the photograph. On a presymbolic, unconscious level, it seems that our dealing with the photograph takes effect as an either/or process, resulting in an unresolved oscillation between
two opposite libidinal positions: the manic and the depressive (124).

Via "Szondi's typology of basic drives" (De Duve 124) a projective test which apparently uses photographic material, De Duve connects "the manic-depressive dimension appearing in human psychopathology and in human experience" (124) with his notion of "trauma", described above. The connection seems a little tenuous, but the implied connection between drive and photography seems in a general way to brace both the status of psychoanalytic concepts in my narrative schema, and the idea that need, and hence desire, may play a role in unravelling the particular relationship between narrative and photography.32

The problem now arises of how to integrate the notion of desire with the earlier formalist discussion. This discussion has a framework which is partly object-centred (centred on the attributes of the photographs) and partly phenomenological: that is, concerned to elucidate the intellectual processes and logical elements common to the making of narrative across different media and different viewers. These two facets can be linked via the linguistic concerns of structuralism, and I justify such mixture as there already is, in this framework, on the pragmatic grounds that my goal is to shed light on any aspects of narrativity which photographic pictures might throw up. On those same pragmatic grounds alone, the inclusion of desire, this refugee element from the psychoanalytic tradition, seems permissible. This is especially the case in view of the prima facie usefulness of desire as an analytical tool applied to a medium which is so comfortable with, and experienced in, manipulating desire in its audience.
There is however an even stronger justification for including desire in the analytical framework I propose, and it has to do with locating that which, in the context of still images, counts as the equivalent of plot. It is a justification which has a clear and relevant precedent in film theory. Dudley Andrew, in *Concepts in Film Theory*, describes why the structuralist approach benefits from such supplementation:

Plot is triggered by an action or perception that opens a gap, a "lack" in the initial state, causing it to fall away from its balance and devolve into a sequence of remedial actions, detours, and shifting character relations on the path to a re-established steady state.

Although structural methods create simulacra of these various aspects of narrative, they offer no motive for the existence of stories in general or of any particular story. The key term in their definition, the "lack" that propels the tale, bears an unmistakeable relation to another system of discourse, that of psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis proposes to explain tales, not just to describe them. It proposes to account for their power, for the value we place on them over and above their mere logic or intelligibility (138-39).

In film the unfolding of, and the consequences of, a triggering plot event can be clearly shown. In a narrative still image, and perhaps particularly in the case of narrative photographic pictures, something must provide that sense of "lack", the motive which propels the viewer away from regarding the image as merely reflecting a stable state, and which produces the engagement which initiates narrative interpretation. This can perhaps be understood as desire in action, "that impulse in psychoanalysis that discovers
and identifies the charged values" (Andrew 139) which drives our still-image equivalent of plot. Not all pictures which engender this engagement through desire will be narrative ones, but it does seem likely that all narrative still pictures work, inter alia, via such a process of engagement.

Further weight is added to the need for the inclusion of desire in my analytic framework via Roland Barthes’ *Camera Lucida*, a complex work which weaves an investigation of the nature of photography "in itself" (3) into an investigation of the status of photographs as autobiographical documents. The investigation becomes, at yet another level, a kind of autobiography. Barthes expresses dissatisfaction with being "torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical; and at the heart of this critical language, between several discourses, those of sociology, of semantics, and of psychoanalysis..." (8). He determines to work directly from "a few photographs, the ones I was sure existed for me...from a few personal impulses, I would try to formulate the fundamental feature, the universal without which there would be no Photography." (8-9) (emphasis in original). He is candid about inconsistencies built in to his approach:

In this investigation of Photography, I borrowed something from phenomenology’s project and something from its language. But it was a vague, casual, even cynical phenomenology, so readily did it agree to distort or to evade its principles according to the whim of my analysis. (20)

but his candour does not save him, even in the eyes of one of his most appreciative critics, Victor Burgin, from the accusation that this approach does bring about a genuine difficulty. Burgin points out that
although it is founded on the idea of subjective investment (here, 'intention') in the photograph, [Camera Lucida] may not draw upon psychoanalytic concepts for the simple reason that phenomenology does not recognize the unconscious (Re-Reading Camera Lucida 733).

As Burgin indicates in this same essay, this failure to recognize the unconscious is slightly disingenuous (my term, not Burgin's) in view of the fact that "Barthes uses Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory very extensively throughout his work" (733). But the specific failure to incorporate desire into Barthes's framework leads to an identifiably more serious difficulty:

Camera Lucida, then, for all its reference to Lacan, is based on a method of analysis — phenomenology — which rejects the concept of the unconscious. Such a rejection has severe consequences in that it denies photography theory a body of research which, I believe, is crucial to its development. Freud made it clear enough, in various parts of his work...and Lacan has since made it perfectly explicit in his introduction of the notion of the scopic drive, that unconscious desire operates in our looking and being looked at. (733)

Elsewhere in Camera Lucida, even Barthes himself seems to sail close to acknowledging a role for desire. Having emphasized that "a specific photograph is never distinguished from its referent (from what it represents)" (5), he goes on to place photography in:

that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both: the windowpane and the
landscape, and why not: Good and Evil, desire and its object: dualities we can conceive but not perceive (6).

If the referent of a photograph is an object for which we experience desire, then the photograph which cannot be distinguished from it will, too, will be a target for part of that desire.

Barthes multi-layered rhetorical technique in Camera Lucida, which at times embraces a critique of his other, 'sign-scientist' self, is very difficult to integrate even with his other works, let alone with works by others about photography. He is more than usually capricious, idiosyncratic, and relentlessly subversive even of his own personal criteria:

The effect of this rhetoric is to render Barthes's text almost useless as a semiological theory of photography, while making it indispensable to such a theory. By insisting on his own personal experiences of photographs, by accepting the naive, primitive "astonishment," "magic," and "madness" of photography, Barthes makes his own experience the raw material or experimental data for a theory — a data, however, that is filled with consciousness of a skepticism about the theories that will be brought to it. (W.J.T. Mitchell 303)

Whatever his position on the nature and involvement of desire, Barthes's notion of the punctum seems relevant here as part of the means by which a picture's "charged values" as Andrew speaks of them above, single themselves out from the studium, the "general, enthusiastic commitment ...without special acuity" (Camera Lucida 26). The punctum, the "element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me" (Camera Lucida 26) may be seen as the device by which the viewer is
engaged at the level of emotion — need or desire — rather than at the level of intellect. In *Camera Lucida* Barthes himself gives us an example, in his response to Charles Clifford’s photograph, *The Alhambra (Grenada)*:

An old house, a shadowy porch, tiles, a crumbling Arab decoration, a man sitting against the wall, a deserted street, a Mediterranean tree (Charles Clifford’s "Alhambra"): this old photograph (1854) touches me: it is quite simply there that I should like to live. This desire affects me at a depth... (Camera Lucida 38).

For my own part, it is temptingly easy to forgive Barthes for throwing the doors wide open to the fresh breezes of theory in this fashion, no matter how much it may ruffle the dark and heavy drapes of Burgin’s sombre Marxism. My own work documented here also springs from "a few photographs, the ones I was sure existed for me ... and "from a few personal impulses," but my quest is far less grand than Barthes’s search for the "universal without which there would be no Photography." My goal — how to make new narrative images from my own few impulses and photographs, and how to explain them, is more personal, yet Barthes’s capricious approach is helpful to my project because it seems to light up a path to the rapprochement between subject-centred and object centred approaches to narrative which I sought earlier in this chapter. Barthes almost seems to be speaking of another facet of the same phenomenon as that addressed by Prince in the long definition of narrative in his *Dictionary* (60) (already quoted at 58-59 above). What "pierces" Barthes about Clifford’s photograph is not just the piquancy, but the *impossibility* of his desire to live in Granada in the 19th century. How is impossible desire to be dealt with? For Prince, it is precisely narrative which "effects a mediation between the law of what is and
the desire for what might be." Much of Prince's Dictionary definition reads, in fact, as a list of key tasks to be accomplished by narrative photographs, and in keeping with the formalist approach from which it stems, it provides language with which to think and speak of those tasks. But if we can successfully combine that approach with the language of desire, it is possible to start to see how to put desire to use: to create, as Dudley Andrew puts it, "the 'lack' that propels the tale" (Andrew 139).
In the previous chapter I provided an outline of narrative theory as potentially applicable to photographs, as drawn from and expressed in terms of the original applications of that theory to both literature and film. I ended with a possible means of synthesizing the two broad approaches contained within that theoretical field.

Some few efforts have already been made to apply such theory to photography, either in writing or in practical photographic work, and in this chapter I wish to examine some of those direct applications. From this, together with the earlier theory from the previous chapter, I then attempt to draw together the implications for my own work, both in the content and manner of execution of that work, and in the analyses applied to it.

**Words for and against: previous analyses which address the issue of narrative**

The previous chapter ended with a reference to how a viewer might "make" a narrative, as distinct from finding or perceiving it within the work; as it were, "readymade". Use of the word "make" in this way is intended to be a reminder to readers that narrative is a phenomenon, a process, to which both the picture and the viewer contribute.

It is also timely to distinguish narrative in this context from mere fluent improvisation of ideas — the uncritical and projective association of responses to a given object. Certainly this phenomenon is a real one, notoriously in children but also in adults. Rosalind Krauss provides an
example from Agnès Varda's 1983 French TV experiment, Une minute pour une image, in which single photographs were projected on to the television screen for exactly a minute, during which time viewers heard a recorded reaction to the picture by one person. These respondents were collected from a wide range of people including photographers, critics and writers, though most were what "one could call the man-on-the-street: bakers, taxi drivers, workers in a pizza parlour, businessmen" (Krauss 15).

It is a businessman, in fact, who makes the following response to a photograph by Marie-Paule Négre (fig. 9) taken in the Luxembourg Gardens in 1979:

"It's the arrival of a train, it's the arrival of a train in a dream, a woman waits for someone and obviously makes a mistake about the person; the man she was waiting for obviously is...he isn't in the shot, he has aged, and she was waiting for someone much younger, more brilliant that the little fellow we see there...She dreams and in her dream she is also much younger, at the time when her feelings developed as she would have liked to recover them there, now. It's a dream that doesn't work out. (Krauss 17)"

What seems interesting about the businessman's remarks is that they undoubtedly are in the form of a narrative. This narrative more than meets, for example, Prince's definition from the previous chapter: "the representation of at least two real or fictive events or situations in a time sequence, neither of which presupposes or entails the other." Further, the key event on which it hinges seems to be one of desire — desire projected vicariously by the observer on behalf of the woman in the photograph, as though in the hope that he might have been its target. Even in the tenses used
Fig. 9. Marie-Paule Négre: *Untitled*
to describe this desire, there is the implication of time passing, between "She
dreams..." and "It's a dream that doesn't work out."

One vital condition for a truly narrative photographic picture, hitherto
perhaps not clearly stated but undoubtedly essential, is however not met by
the businessman's analysis: this is the requirement that the narrative must be
uniquely tied to the picture, in both directions. The narrative must be one
which, though it might (almost inevitably will) be described differently by all
who look at the picture, will nevertheless be, at base, the same thing being
described variably. Correspondingly, the narrative must be such that it is
conveyed only by this one picture, rather than being so generic as to be
associated with, or produced by, a range of significantly differing pictures.
The businessman's tale is a matter of free association: interesting, but by no
means the only such association possible or even likely for this photograph,
and by no means the only photograph which could lead to such a tale.

If we are to make out a good case for narrative, let alone for narrative of
any depth and complexity, in single photographic pictures, the case will need
to be made not merely in its own right, but against some notable resistance to
the idea. Susan Sontag's influential book On Photography not only takes a
firm, if implicit, stand against the possibility of narrative in still photography,
but portrays what she presumes to be photography's lack of narrative agency
as a major shortcoming for photography as a whole.

She positions competence at narrative to be a threshold requirement for
other competencies, and a threshold above which photography can never
rise:
In contrast to the amorous relation, which is based on how something looks, understanding is based on how it functions. And functioning takes place in time, and must be explained in time. Only that which narrates can make us understand. (23)

And again later:

A photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time its moorings come unstuck. It drifts away into a soft abstract pastness, open to any kind of reading (or matching to other photographs). (71)

Arguing — or rather, asserting — on the basis of very selective examples of documentary photography, while purporting to argue for, and about, photography as a whole, Sontag contradicts both the possibility that a photograph might be uniquely tied to any narrative, and the possibility of a photograph conveying any worthwhile information about extension and direction of time. She does not need to apply the final blow of simply denying the existence of single-picture narrative, presuming herself to have already starved the proposition of intellectual oxygen.

Just as Sontag has made her own position on this issue implicit and assumed, I would rather simply take up the contrary position as offered by others, and evaluate any implications for Sontag's position later. However, her views have been explicitly and effectively rebutted by Nigel Warburton, who identifies two senses of 'narrative' being used in Sontag's accusations, and in views similar to Sontag's as expressed by Neil Postman:34 "... the first concerned with representing change over time, the second with the characteristic features of prose comment rather than pictures" (Warburton 174). Warburton points out that strategies such as multiple exposure and
superimposition "put these effects (that is, change over time shown within a single frame) within photography's reach" (176), but his response to the other sense of narrative is probably of greater significance:

Sontag's ... conception of narrative does not take into account the fact that both descriptions and depictions of states of affairs at an instant almost always imply facts about what has gone before, and about what in all probability will ensue. When presented with a photograph of a family of emaciated Ethiopians, we can quite reliably infer from the photograph that the people pictured had not eaten for many days before the photograph was taken. Similarly, a photograph by Jaques Henri Lartigue of a woman in mid-air above some steps allows us to infer that she had jumped from the top step and was about to land on the ground ... There is an implied narrative in the single image of the South Vietnamese girl: the expression on her face is unambiguous — it is terror.35 Something had obviously terrified her just before the exposure was made. If we recognise the emotion as terror then we appreciate a fact about the girl's beliefs, since emotions have a certain cognitive element (Warburton 176-177).36

Warburton reminds us that it is not only through action (as with Lartigue, and as with the Cartier-Bresson example (fig. 1) with which my Introduction opens) that "a before and after" may be clearly implied by a photograph. If we understand the generalized notion of desire as potentially either positive or negative — as including the desire for things to be otherwise, for instance — then we may acknowledge that we actually possess, and frequently use, a much greater degree of understanding about
'implied narrative' than may ordinarily be apparent. As Warburton also points out, there is a cognitive element to emotion which allows us to comprehend something of the mental states of others, and something about what might produce them. Without this cognitive aspect, indeed, photographs would be considerably less engaging as an image type.

It is not surprising, then, that war photography presented itself as a rich field of potential starting points for narrative photographs for this research, even without the initial connection through my family wartime snapshots which is discussed in Chapter 5. War photography is not a genre; there are at least as many types and styles of war photograph as there are in any other major category of photographic subject matter. But there is a particular power to many war photographs, which Warburton's analysis, above, aptly captures. This is not so much to do with providing the ability to integrate, via the cognitive processes to which he refers, the formal and emotional aspects of a photograph, but more to do with being provided with a strong reason for doing so. War photographs frequently promote or demand strong emotional engagement with the subject matter, sometimes through an imaginative cognitive leap, and in this way we are moved to make, for ourselves, "a mediation between the law of what is and the desire for what might be." That action, that process, is narrative at work.

Photographs of bodies such as the American Civil War battle-aftermath images by O'Sullivan, Gardner, Brady and their nameless assistants, or Felice Beato's pictures of the overtaken fort at Taku during the Opium Wars in China, have such an obvious implication for circumstances prior to those depicted (that is, in general: not long before the making of this photograph, the bodies shown here were living people) that it is difficult to understand
why Sontag and Postman do not understand this to be an integral part of the documentary role they assume for all photography.

Neither is this mode of time implication necessarily simple or unidirectional. In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes reproduces (95) a photograph by Alexander Gardner of Lewis Payne, who had tried to assassinate U.S. Secretary of State W.H. Seward in 1865. Gardner had made the photograph in the cell where Payne waited to be hanged, and Barthes is struck forcefully by the "defeat of Time" (96) in it, and in historical photographs generally, as expressed most economically in the caption given by Barthes to the photograph of Payne: "He is dead and he is going to die":

I read at the same time: *this will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What *pricks* me is the discovery of this equivalence. (*Camera Lucida* 96)

Barthes draws attention to the fact that this effect, the forced contemplation of the effect of time, may be present even where no people, alive or dead, are represented:

At the limit, there is no need to represent a body in order for me to experience this vertigo of time defeated. In 1850, August Salzmann photographed, near Jerusalem, the road to Beith-Lehem (as it was spelled at the time): nothing but stony ground, olive trees; but three tenses dizzy my consciousness: my present, the time of Jesus, and that of the photographer, all this under the instance of "reality"... (96-97)
While there are hints and allusions concerning possible narrative properties for single photographs scattered sparsely throughout the literature, only one paper treats the issue head-on. In a marked contrast to the position assumed by Sontag, Manuel Alvarado's "Photographs and Narrativity" begins by noting that "work on the still image and, more specifically, on the single photograph has tended to leave out of account the question of narrativity" (5). Alvarado specifically excludes from consideration the multiple-mage sequences of those such as Duane Michals, though noting that they are unambiguously narrative. He exemplifies the sort of photograph which might lead us to consider narrativity by referring to the Cartier-Bresson image, Place de l'Europe, Paris, 1932 (Fig.1) mentioned in the first few lines of this documentation.

This masterful photograph is celebrated as one which embodies many of the concerns repeatedly reflected in one special subject area of Cartier-Bresson's oeuvre: French society, French manners, French behaviour. In Photography: A Concise History, discussing this same picture, Ian Jeffrey writes:

Cartier-Bresson's special subject is French society. Indeed, he is a prime originator of a modern image of the French as an idiosyncratic people. Their idiosyncrasies, however, are tempered by prudence, in which the photographer has an especial and continuing interest. His subjects habitually look out for themselves. Even when the game is up something might still be salvaged. (191)

Even without the cultural inference, and without the narrative interpretation to be discussed below, the photograph is aesthetically
spectacular. Though barely visible in some reproductions because the contrast is so low, a perceptive viewer can discern a ballet poster on a hoarding at the upper left, in which the figure of a dancer in silhouette against two white spaces (representing either large inverted commas or perhaps the number 99) mimics and reflects the man's own movement. As the leaping man moves to the right, so this silhouetted figure on the poster moves left; reinforcing, in another plane, the reflections in the pool of water which both figures hold in common — yet also, by the different directions of their movement, emphasizing a contrast between the two figures. The contrast is further sharpened by the presence of a third figure who separates the two and moves away from both 'leapers' with a dour, hands-in-pockets shuffle.

We are drawn to consider all this, however, because the picture undoubtedly represents one of Cartier-Bresson's most assuredly "decisive moments".37 Returning to Ian Jeffrey:

It is miraculous that he should catch just that moment before the mud sucks and the ripples spread, and remarkable that a dancer's supple image on a hoarding should, with Kertészian irony, mock the victim's stiff-legged lurch into the wet. But the picture is eloquent beyond virtuosity and irony; the sandspit and ladder pushed out into the flood tell of improvisation, of a last resort in the face of a hopeless situation. That is: the camera captures an instant, but it also gives a ground plan of a predicament against which the moment can be weighed and understood. (Jeffrey 191)

Cartier-Bresson has described the core of his approach to the "decisive moment" on several occasions, but in *The World of Cartier-Bresson*, a book
which includes this picture, he states it again in terms which mirror the last sentence in the above quote from Jeffrey — and which, together with Jeffrey's interpretation, give a clue to why Alvarado should see it as raising the issue of narrativity: "Of all forms of expression, photography is the only one which seizes the instant in its flight" (The World of Cartier-Bresson, Preface). Not just the instant, then, but the instant in its flight; the moment is what we understand first, but the moment is significant precisely because of the context, a context of which we only gain an understanding if (or so runs Cartier-Bresson's assertion) the moment chosen has been the "correct" one. And this context — or, in Jeffrey's words, "ground plan of a predicament" — includes time.

Here, as in the photograph of Lewis Payne discussed above by Barthes, we are again confronted with how the tenses of the photograph combine oddly. The photograph tells us something about a future, but a future which is itself now in the past. The 'present' of the photograph is uprooted from any real-world temporal context and despite its momentary and fleeting nature, of which the photograph also speaks so eloquently, suspended in eternity. It is the future into which our sense of the extension of time most clearly extends: what goes up must come down; the man must descend into the water, and the consequences of this for both the man — wet feet — and the scene — a major disruption to the smooth surface of the water which so visually defines the moment, and which so strongly characterizes the aesthetic appeal of the image — are unambiguous. The past is unavoidably implied, as it is in all photographs: if we are looking at a photograph, whatever it depicts must by now be in the past. The leaping man has
descended and departed, the poster has faded, the mysterious third man has long since shuffled into the mist.

It is not surprising therefore that this image has attracted Alvarado to draw out some implications of the particular relation to the concept of time [which] has ... been taken as definitive of photography. In this view the 'still' photograph is extracted from the flow of events; the photographer merely records an event by perceiving and 'capturing' the image of an essential moment (5).

For Alvarado, the significance of this conceptualization of photographic time is what it implies about the degree to which photographic pictures seem less "constructed" than, say, paintings or writing. He quotes Cartier-Bresson's comparison between photography and writing, and John Berger's comparison between photography and painting, the gist of which in each case is that making a finished work in either of the non-photographic media takes time, and that this formation over time — the process of construction — will somehow always be reflected in the finished work. Photographs, on the other hand, 'freeze' movement and thereby stop the flow of events. In effect, such views [as those of Cartier-Bresson and Berger] deny the narrative possibilities of photographs and so rule out the analysis of expectation, action, flow, outcome, resolution and non-resolution within them (Alvarado 6).

What is needed, says Alvarado, "is a mode of analysis which releases that frozen moment" (7). He notes that it is precisely our knowledge that a photograph represents only an instant which may sensitize us, at least in the
case of some photographs, to questions concerning the time preceding and the time following that instant. Perhaps surprisingly, given her views on time as quoted above, Susan Sontag’s discussion of how photographs can “actively promote nostalgia” (Sontag 15) is enlisted to encapsulate this point when Alvarado quotes the last line of the following:

A beautiful subject can be the object of rueful feelings, because it has aged or decayed or no longer exists. All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s (or thing’s) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time’s relentless melt. (Sontag 15)

The same picture has engendered consideration of the same issue — time and its representation — for other authors.

At the beginning of her essay The Eternal Moment, Estelle Jussim surveys a number of views on time itself — a notoriously difficult intellectual and definitional problem — and concludes that it may be reasonable to think of photography as allowing us to "see through time". "What", she asks, "if photography somehow makes time transparent?" (50). This partly relates—though Jussim does not identify this — to the issue of tense rather than time as such: we can only look at photographs now, and what we see when we look at them is also "now", but now-as-it-was-then. But there are certainly views of the nature of time which unsettle our conventional experience of it as a Newtonian absolute: Jussim points to the poet William Blake, the psychologist Joost Meerloo and to scientist/philosophers such as J.W Dunne, Albert Einstein and George Kubler (Jussim 51-52), all of whom emphasize the
possibility that, as in the quotation she gives from Dunne, "Past, present and future exist simultaneously" (51). Perhaps, Jussim writes, we have in photography a demonstration of the need to re-think our views on time itself:

> When we say that photography *stops time*, does that phrase represent a misconception about the nature of time? As Martin Heidegger insisted, we do not live *in* time; rather, we *live* time. How can time therefore be "stopped"? (52)

Jussim is thus exercised in mind about the appropriateness of Cartier-Bresson's, and others', descriptions of his "decisive moment", a sliver of time which has been variously "stopped" or "frozen". What interested the photographer more than the moment itself, she feels, "was the geometry of the moment" (52), the aesthetic and pictorial aspects such as those earlier referred to in respect of Cartier-Bresson's *Place de l'Europe, Paris, 1932*. But it is these factors which help convey to us the fact and the significance of the immediate past and the immediate future: "Past and future and present in the now" (52). Or, since the leaping man "can never move forward, is he not now in the now at all, but rather in what we call eternity?" (53).

Does this help? Jussim goes on to determine several distinct ways in which the passage of time may be reflected in photographs, and I will return to some of these below, since time is so clearly an inescapable aspect of narrative. However, it is Alvarado himself who goes further in answering his own call for a "mode of analysis which releases that frozen moment".

Firstly, Alvarado invokes Roland Barthes' approach from "The Rhetoric of the Image", in which Barthes analyzes a photographic advertisement for an Italian (or Italian-sounding) brand of pasta, "Panzani". Barthes identifies firstly a linguistic message, including the caption for the advertisement and
the labels on the various foods, a message which itself contains both
denotational and connotational elements; and, putting that aside, the image
itself:

This image straightaway provides a series of discontinuous signs.
First (the order is unimportant as these signs are not linear), the
idea that what we have in the scene represented is a return from
the market.

A signified which itself implies two euphoric values: that of the
freshness of the products and that of the essentially domestic
preparation for which they are destined. (34)

Alvarado (7-8) quotes from this section and, appropriately, draws
attention to its significance for narrative implications — an event preceding
the picture and an event following it. Alvarado combines this with the
revised conceptualisation of the relationship between denotation and
connotation which Barthes had undertaken by the time of writing S/Z, in
which
denotation is no longer seen as the trace of reality (appearance)
but rather as the final effect of all the connotations at play.
(Differences in individual readings, therefore, would relate not to
the more or less accurate apprehension of the reality denoted, but
to the range of ideologically determined connotations brought into
play by the viewer) (Alvarado 8).

to arrive at a reading of Barthes' position on photographs which does
indeed seem to position narrative as a primary element of meaning in at least
some images. Interestingly, Barthes has not himself made this position overt,
either in writing about photography or in writing about narrative, two of his most favoured topics:

This reappraisal [of the relationship between connotation and denotation] is crucial because it leads straight back to questions about the relationship of the still image to time. No longer can the photograph be simply a moment seized from events: its meaning is (in part) constructed by its implicit ordering of events 'before' and 'after' it. (Alvarado 8)

There is a need for caution here. While "Rhetoric of the Image" is concerned with photography — or, we should be clear, with a photograph, and a particular kind of photograph (advertising) at that — S/Z is exclusively (lovingly, in fact) about literary texts and the reading of such texts. The sequential effects discussed by Barthes in the passages in S/Z on which Alvarado draws to partly demonstrate "implicit ordering of events" make this textual basis very clear:

Analytically, connotation is determined by two spaces: a sequential space, a series of orders, a space subject to the successivity of sentences, in which meaning proliferates by layering; and an agglomerative space, certain areas of the text correlating with other meanings outside the material text and, with them, forming "nebulae" of signifieds. (S/Z 8)

Nevertheless, a sympathetic reading of this passage of S/Z, as a description of how connotation operates across texts generally, does indeed support Alvarado's argument, and permits us to understand the cognitive facet of narrative construction in the more familiar terms of connotative interpretation, without being reductionist.
It further, in my view, supports the argument I have already begun to frame in the previous chapter: that reading time and reading order need to be taken into account as valid aspects of narrative structure in the case of a picture. A piece of writing can only be read sequentially, and the order in which words and sentences are revealed to the reader is (with the exception of deliberately perverse reading procedures, which readers are of course always free to adopt) under the control of the writer and the text. The corresponding lack of prescribed reading/viewing order for a picture is frequently interpreted as indicating either that a picture is read in an instant, as it were in one gulp (or that we are somehow bound to conceptualize the process as if this were the case), or that the idiosyncratic variations in reading/viewing procedures between viewers means that we should throw up our hands and simply abandon the attempt to take pictorial reading/viewing into consideration. Differences in reading procedure will indeed result in variability in the details of the narrative as understood by different readers, and this is so for all texts, of all types; but so long as the core, the basic outline, of the narrative is the same for all readers because the text has constrained it to be so, there seems to be little problem in taking reading, and reading 'events', into account.

Again, S/Z seems not only to support this view, but to explain something of how the effect works:

Structurally, the existence of two supposedly different systems — denotation and connotation — enables the text to operate like a game, each system referring to the other according to the requirements of a certain illusion...denotation is not the first meaning, but pretends to be so; under this illusion, it is ultimately
no more than the last of the connotations (the one which seems both to establish and to close the reading), the superior myth by which the text pretends to return to the nature of language, to language as nature...(9).

One might equally well describe the relationship between denotative and connotative meaning in an image, and the process by which those meanings are read and arrived at, in exactly the same way. Such a view allows for Alvarado's point about connotations being "brought into play by the viewer" and, indeed, allows for variability between viewers in how that may be done. But the positioning of denotative meaning as the end of a sequence of connotations also constrains the denotative meaning by ultimately tying it to the substance of the text itself — thus meeting the condition discussed at the beginning of this Chapter that the narrative be uniquely tied to the image.

Alvarado presents an approach to the photograph's "frozen moment" which renders it as a strength rather than as a lack, via an analogy with film. Just as film analysis (and indeed film production, consciously, in the work of film makers such as Antonioni and Renoir) has for some time recognized the significance of off-screen space, so "the photograph takes on its significance precisely through its temporal exclusions" (Alvarado 10). Barthes' own related observation, to which Alvarado refers, contrasts the "illogical conjunction between the here-now and the there-then" ("Rhetoric of the Image" 44) of the photograph with the "more projective, more 'magical' fictional consciousness" ("Rhetoric of the Image" 45) of film:

For the spectator, then, the film appears to be 'present' and the photograph 'past'. This can be overcome, however, by shifting
attention from the narrative of the *signified* to the narrative of the *sign*, the photograph's modes of signification. Narrative analysis offers a way, not of reconstituting the 'real' excluded from the frozen moment, but of understanding why particular choices in the moment of taking the photograph should have certain effects and, by studying the history of the uses to which it has been put and the ways in which it has been seen, how it comes to have a certain 'currency' (Alvarado 11).

Two separate analytical strands thus begin to emerge in Alvarado's approach to narrative photographs, strands which might sometimes be independently applicable to the same entity:

The first would analyse the order of events implied by the photograph, whether 'fictional' or 'documentary'...the second would question the actual history of the production, circulation, and consumption of the photograph within particular institutions and under the regulation of technological, economic, legal and discursive relations and practices. ("Photographs and Narrativity" 8)

In the following pages, Alvarado goes on to characterize the advertising photograph as one which has specific and different narrative attributes, centred on the construction of a fictional world intended by the advertisers. This fictional world is enclosed, not only to screen out the questions raised above by shifting attention from the signified to the sign, but in fact to strongly imply, and partly answer, a fictional set of questions in the domain of the signified. He has therefore actually distinguished three, rather than
two, primary modes in which photographs either work to produce narratives, or are most appropriately analyzed as narratives:

1. The sense which applies to the 'found' picture, where the photograph is a window (rather than a frame)\(^39\), and the spectator is most concerned with what is depicted in the 'now' of the picture (the signified), and with what will happen next.

2. The notion of the currency of a given image, its history, the accumulated uses to which it has been/is being/will be put, and the accumulated meanings which thus attach to it (i.e. to the sign). Here the spectator's role will vary, and knowledge of these roles for any given viewer becomes part of the narrative attaching to the image.

3. The advertising image, in which a closed fictional world is created, such that the spectator is most concerned with questions raised within the fictional world. Not all such images are necessarily narrative by any means, but narrative questions and issues of time are frequently and deliberately a characteristic of these photographs.

Alvarado does not move beyond his very broad photographic categories — essentially binary divisions into documentary or fiction, advertising or non-advertising. In particular he does not venture into the notion of photography as art, an arena which would seem to allow for the paired or simultaneous operation of all the modes he describes. As is discussed below, art photography, and particularly art photography which has consciously played with narrative devices and possibilities, has made use of the characteristics of all of these categories.\(^40\) Nevertheless, Alvarado has made a major contribution to understanding narrative possibilities in photography by clarifying these three modes, and they are to some extent
mirrored, and thus reinforced, by the modes of pictorial narrative identified by Coste and described in the previous chapter.

Coste's first category depends on "narrative programs similar to verbal descriptemes" (277) and is the least easy to match to Alvarado's schema but since, as we shall see below, the advertising photographs which Alvarado includes in his purview are frequently those which create a closed fictional world which does in fact encapsulate a proposition earlier expressed in verbal terms (for example, by a client or an art director), perhaps we can link those two together. Certainly, Coste's second category, pictures which take "a single simple state from a process" (Coste 277) are clearly the same as those photographs which, for Alvarado, require that we "analyse the order of events implied by the photograph" (Alvarado 8), while Alvarado's questioning of "the actual history of the production, circulation and consumption of the photograph" (Alvarado 8) to some extent mirrors Coste's "enunciative narrativity", the extent to which "any work is the trace of its own production, (re)presents somehow its own creation and the anticipation of its own reception" (Coste 278). Since Alvarado refers specifically to photographs, where Coste is attempting to generalize for all image forms, I give preference to Alvarado's categories, and I make use of them here as headings under which to discuss works by others on which aspects of my own work have been based.

ARGUING FROM IMAGES

My interest in narrative possibilities in photography began with a 'found' picture of my own, but my work for this research has not, in the main, involved 'found' photographs. The reasons for this are partly pragmatic. Most of the genuinely 'found' images which make a strong
narrative showing are captured through sheer coincidence and good fortune, sometimes combined with professional necessity — images which Max Kozloff characterizes as:

- inadvertent "luck" photographs, produced out of sheer reflex:
  - Capa's of the dropping Spanish Republican soldier, Eddie
  - Adams's of the plaid-shirted Vietnamese being shot by the flak-jacketed ARVN officer ("Photographers at War" 212).

If narrative can survive, or be produced, in an image produced via an instantaneous exposure made in a reflex, unthinking 'snapshot', then it should certainly be possible in a more considered, constructed image made over time — in other words, made more as would be a narrative painting. The other reasons for my wanting not to work in this style myself are therefore to do with the other possibilities apparently offered by this more pre-mediated approach. However, the quick-reaction 'found' pictures are crucial to the conceptualisation of the narrative photographic picture simply because the lack of premeditation in such cases means that the narrative, where it exists, is in some fashion integral to the image itself.

We have already looked at one such photograph — Cartier-Bresson's Place de l'Europe, Paris, 1932. Since our context here is the quickly-seized snapshot, there is merit in the idea of examining another photograph by this master of the seized moment, but one which also provides a practical example of the use of another strand of narrative, discussed in the previous chapter: space, including "off-screen" space. In all the celebration of Cartier-Bresson's use of the "decisive moment", and of his undoubtedly singular gift for the arrangement of visual content within the space of the frame, perhaps
his sensitivity to, and sensitive use of, that space which lies outside the frame has been insufficiently appreciated.

One example will do, though there are many more throughout Cartier-Bresson’s work: Beance, France, 1958 (fig. 8), already briefly referred to in Chapter 2 (75). A rural worker extends his hand in greeting to another male person whose hand and arm enter the frame from the side, leaving the rest of his appearance and identity enigmatically undefined. The dark corduroy sleeve of the partly-depicted ‘stranger’ is a strong visual contrast to the other objects in the frame, which are mostly light in tone: chickens, hay bales, a horse and cart, stone buildings, wooden shutters and a door, and a straw-strewn cobblestone yard. This visual differentiation reinforces another level of apparent contrast, in sensibility and status, between the two people: the worker, humbly dressed and shorter, shows respect and positive regard for the taller, better-dressed person whose hand he is about to shake, strengthening both our desire (to know more of this person) and our predicament (the impossibility of ever satisfying the desire).

These two pictures serve at least to establish Cartier-Bresson as a person of interest in terms of the ways in which particular visual content appears to be used, and organized, to engage the viewer in a narrative interpretive mode. It is worth noting his significance at another level in this investigation — that is, at the level of style. Cartier-Bresson’s position in photography’s style pantheon is secure, probably for all time. In the words of an appreciative critic:

Just as Picasso’s name and work stands for painting, being known and praised the world over, even by those who do not know anything about painting, so does Cartier-Bresson’s name stand for
photography...Everybody has read about his theory of the
decisive moment, this miraculous psychological climax when
composition, emotion and meaning of a scene come together,
giving it life and eternity. Cartier has been for many years a kind
of living legend of photography (Seylan 75).

However, the reportage photography which has made him such a
legend is fast disappearing. Such pictures, or at least the commercial need for
them, has been replaced first by cinema newsreels, then by television, and
now by the internet; the audience for such pictures has itself been eroded by
the growth in personal "adventure" travel to parts of the world once
considered impossibly exotic. Now his work is revealed in a different light:

...in a time where photography becomes more and more aware of
its past and future as a medium, HCB's concern for life over and
above any concern for photography as a self-sufficient medium
makes him look almost as a wealthy amateur, whose work can be
enjoyed, but doesn't deserve to be studied in depth (Seylan 75).

Since Cartier-Bresson has spoken of himself as an amateur, this is by no
means as negative as it may sound. The significance, in this context, is that
photography has increasingly become a medium in which the most
significant practitioners have a very strong awareness of where photography
has been and where it is going. Examining the work of such artists as Cindy
Sherman, Les Krims and Eileen Cowin, we find photographic sensibilities
highly attuned to the work of their predecessors, and very aware of the
degree to which photography itself, and photography's own history (the
'story' of photography), is woven into their subject matter. Importantly for
the present study, it is exactly this inward-looking sensibility and this
conscious use of self-referential and cross-referential material which most strongly conjure the particular narrative concerns and possibilities which characterize the work of those artists. This is no bad thing, but perhaps the strong narrative component of Henri Cartier-Bresson's work is all the more significant because it is unforced, unacknowledged and uncultivated by its own creator.41

The 'found' photograph is not the main game here, but one more example will be enough to show how desire can combine with questions of time to irresistably evoke a narrative interpretation for what seems to be the simplest of photographs. A sad and disturbing photograph by Larry Clark ("Untitled", from the portfolio Tulsa, 198042) shows a pregnant young woman injecting herself with something, probably amphetamines, in a starkly bare room. She might, of course, be treating herself for a medical condition, but somehow the explanation of drug abuse always overtakes any provisional hopes we might have for a less ominous scenario. It is not sexual desire we feel in response, but a longing for things to be otherwise — a longing which combines poignantly with our knowledge that, as a photograph always represents the past, those consequences of the depicted situation which we so much want to avoid will by now have made themselves plainly felt.

This sense of what was then and what must be now is not accidental to the meaning of the picture, but absolutely central. One can discuss the formal properties of any representational form, photography certainly included, but the significance of this photograph, its very reason for existing, has simply not been grasped unless the viewer is seized by the centrality of this unfolding tragedy. Neither is the future (of the photograph) the only aspect of time we are moved to consider; both the pregancy and the drug habit have
Fig. 10. Larry Clark: Untitled, from the portfolio *Tulsa*
antecedents which, though unknown in detail, are generically familiar, and thus the photograph unavoidably implies a before and after through which we cycle, in several iterations, as we consider the sombre weight of the depicted moment, "the here-now and the there-then". It would be hard to find a better example of Alvarado's core point: "No longer can the photograph be simply a moment seized from events: its meaning is (in part) constructed by its implicit ordering of events 'before' and 'after' it" ("Photographs and Narrativity" 8).

The Larry Clark photograph provides an apposite way to move into consideration of Alvarado's second narrative category, which would question the actual history of the production, circulation and consumption of the photograph within particular institutions and under the regulation of technological, economic, legal and discursive relations and practices ("Photographs and Narrativity" 8).

Clark began working life in commercial door-to-door portraiture, in a business owned by his family in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He subsequently also studied photography formally, moved to New York City and was drafted into the army where he served for two years in Vietnam. In the late 1960s he returned to Tulsa, where he used his considerable photographic talents to portray life as he was then living it. By the early 1970s at least, this life seems to have been a vagabond existence of drugs and crime: some petty, some more serious. His subjects in this period, which yielded Tulsa, probably the best known of all his work, were his friends and their ordinary — if violent, tragic and destructive — lives.
Anecdotally at least, another Clark photograph from the Tulsa book/portfolio, "Tulsa: Funeral for a baby", (1971) is the funeral of the unborn baby in "Untitled", above. Even without any feeling that we are thus somehow obliged to see these pictures as part of a series (and whether the anecdote is true or not), we begin to feel that the terrible authenticity of Clark's photographs as a body of work somehow hangs over each one of them. These are not fiction, but neither are they documentary; they are cool images, made casually, almost accidentally, but made by an artist for whom the depicted events are so ordinary that they require no histrionics of representation, and cause no upset to his craft. Each picture from Tulsa speaks to us, strongly and directly, about the emotional tone of Clark's life and the life of his friends, and there is a seamless continuity between what comes to us as external knowledge, phrased in the form of narrative information about Clark (he did this and then he did that) and any narrative we derive directly from an image such as "Untitled". Once we know that Clark injected amphetamines every day for three years and maybe more ("once the needle goes in it never comes out") we can be more certain that the pregnant woman is not treating herself for a medical condition; having seen the photograph "Tulsa: (Funeral for a baby)," our desire for this woman's future to be other than what it probably has been, in reality, is dimmed, whether the baby in the latter picture was hers or not.

Questions surrounding "the actual history of the production, circulation and consumption" of some famous war photographs have led to notable cases of 'attached' narratives of this sort. Robert Capa's image (fig. 11) of the Spanish Loyalist soldier, caught allegedly at the instant of his death
Fig. 11. Robert Capa: Death of a Loyalist Soldier
from a bullet through the head, is still described in contemporary texts as though unquestioningly a documentary record:

The much more famous photograph taken by Capa two years earlier, showing a Loyalist soldier falling at the instant of his death, allowed the reader to come close to the most powerful unknown, the one uncrossable boundary, death, while remaining physically unscathed — even, perhaps, while drinking a coffee.

(Ritchin 594)

Yet for more than half a century, the same photograph has also been tainted by the accusation of fraud. Caroline Brothers, in War and Photography: A Cultural History has provided the most recent and most thorough of several investigations (see 178-183 in particular). It is the manner in which she phrases her conclusions about the photograph which is germane to my own creative work:

On the strength of the historical evidence it therefore appears that the Death of a Republican Soldier provides no documentary record of any moment of death; indeed its relationship with the truth in its most orthodox sense is at best heavily undermined. So what is the nature of the evidence, if any, it contains? As an archetypal symbol of death in war the image will retain a certain aura, even if its status is diminished, although as a touchstone for war photographers its power will fade. For the historian, however, its value as evidence is only enhanced. No longer the documentation of an individual death in a particular battle at a specific time and place, the photograph bears the traces of something broader, of the desired beliefs of a particular historical era ... what this image
argued was that death in war was heroic and tragic, and that the individual counted and that his death mattered. (Brothers 183)

One of Alexander Gardner's American Civil War photographs presents us with a similar, if less dramatic, example. One image made either during or after the Battle of Gettysburg, Slain Rebel Sharpshooter (1863) "was shown to have been staged: a dead body, which had earlier been photographed elsewhere as that of a 'Union Sharpshooter,' was dragged into the scene and arranged as in a still life" (William J. Mitchell 43). The difficult and dangerous working conditions in which the images of Brady, O'Sullivan, Gardner and their various unsung assistants were produced have led to their work being rightly revered as excellent examples of early documentary photography; in the present context however, those difficult and dangerous conditions also become an important part of any attached narrative.

This is the case for many war photographs. The American Civil War images betray a certain formality, not just in the manner in which the photographs are made, but in the activities depicted. There is in comparison to, say, photographs from World War II or Vietnam, a more leisurely approach to the arts of wholesale destruction and mass murder. Since the process of making photographs was to a corresponding degree more slow and cumbersome in the time of Gardner and his contemporaries, it is probably reasonable to assume that they were exposed to a proportionately equivalent level of risk, for their times, to the photographers of those later conflicts. Whatever the period, then, a war photograph frequently carries the implication that the photographer has been subject to the same dangers as those shown in the photograph. This intensifies any attached narrative which
stems from the production of that photograph rather than from, say, its circulation and later use.

As with the Capa photograph, the attached narrative of the moved body in Gardner's image does not detract from the broader point that death in war is, as Brothers puts it, "heroic and tragic". Indeed, in both cases, the attached narratives tells us that the photographers have gone to the length of making images which in their particulars are false, precisely in the hope that viewers will derive from them generalisations which are, roughly speaking, true. Not every picture tells a story — but these do.

External knowledge becomes part of an attached narrative (if there is one) in various ways, not all of which can be exemplified here, but the temptation to add the following example is irresistible. Just before Sontag tells us, in a passage quoted above, that "Only that which narrates can make us understand" (23), she refers to Brecht's oft-quoted assertion, brought to light by Walter Benjamin, that "a photograph of the Krupp works reveals virtually noting about that organization" (Sontag 23). The full quote from Benjamin is interesting, pointing directly as it does to the potentially more informative (and perhaps therefore more narratively powerful?) value of the constructed picture:

[Less] than at any other time does a simple reproduction of reality tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or GEC yields almost nothing about these institutions. Reality proper has slipped into the functional. The reification of human relationships, the factory, let's say, no longer reveals these relationships. Therefore something has actually to be constructed,
something artificial, something set up (qtd. in Burgin, "Photographic Practice" 39).45

Here, then (fig. 12) is a picture of the Krupp works and its then owner, Alfred Krupp, taken in 1963 by Arnold Newman. Newman was commissioned to take this portrait at the steel works which, under the original Alfred Krupp (1812-87) had pioneered the Bessemer steel process later used by the same factory to develop long-range artillery in World War 1.46 Under the later direction of this younger Krupp, the subject of Newman's portrait (who had been born Alfred Von Bolen but had adopted the Krupp name when he married into the family), the firm had directly supported Hitler's rise to power and, during World War 2, made extensive use of slave labourers who were successively shipped to extermination camps as they became too weak to stand up to a regime of forced overwork.

At the time of Newman's portrait, Krupp had only recently been released from imprisonment as a war criminal. Newman's challenge was to reflect Krupp's history and acts in his photograph, given that the Alfred Krupp he met appeared ordinary, even decent:

Now, you never see Satan on earth at all like he is in pictures. Very often, devils are very sweet, gentle people in appearance. The worst people in the world. Today's real villains are, as Hitchcock said, unrecognizable in broad daylight. Well, that's the way Krupp was. He looked like a nice, distinguished gentlemanly human being. (Diamonstein, 149).

As the photograph shows, Newman met the challenge admirably. Further anecdotal confirmation of his success is given by the story of Krupp's later attempts to have publication of the pictures stopped, which included
Fig. 12. Arnold Newman: *Alfred Krupp, 1963*
agents of the firm breaking into Newman's hotel room in Essen, after the shoot, to re-photograph his polaroids from the shooting session, and taking these to New York to prevaricate with the commissioning magazine's editors. Krupp also declared Newman persona non grata in Germany.\textsuperscript{47}

Not all of this story will be known to those who view the photograph, particularly forty-odd years after the event, but what seems unarguable is that this story, if known, would be given as a response to anyone else who wanted to know 'about' the photograph. As soon as we ask who is represented in the photograph, we are in effect asking to hear the story that attaches to it; this may be the story of the Krupp firm, or the story of the making of the photograph — or both, since they may be conceived as one.

This notion of "attachment" of narratives to pictures\textsuperscript{48} needs to be distinguished from what may seem to be a much more ordinary phenomenon. We may give supplementary information to a viewer about the most personal and idiosyncratic snapshot, and it is always likely that such information will be in narrative form. It is also, however, likely to be variable, both over time and between informers. But the situation with the Newman photograph and other genuine cases of attached narrative is that one strong, and relatively unchangeable, story will always be associated with the image, and will either be provided together with that image, perhaps as an extended caption, or so strongly sought by viewers as an explanation that they will eventually locate it.

The Krupp picture is so strong that other approaches to its analysis, at least some of which also offer up further narrative connections, must be referred to at least briefly. The issue of the currency of an image is taken up
specifically in a paper by John Tagg ("The Currency of the Photograph") in which he raises the issue of the relationship between realism, expression and ideology. Several authors quoted in that paper have things to say which bear directly on ways in which Newman's picture — a 'documentary' image at one level, but with a powerful and successful expressive purpose — might relate to language which surrounds it, and might convey a sense of narrative to a viewer even without that language.

Tagg tells us of the photographer Berenice Abbott's view that "photography has a strong affinity to writing" (Tagg 110). In an address in 1951, Abbott had positioned photography's important work as being akin to the American tradition of realist writing, importantly including the passion and sensibility in, as she saw it, the best of that realism:

Jack London in his powerful novel *Martin Eden* pleads not only for realism but impassioned realism, shot through with human aspirations and faith ... Is this not exactly what photography is meant to do with the sharp, realistic, image-forming lens? (qtd in "The Currency of the Photograph": 110).

Abbott's approach to realism was thus a complex one in which, as Tagg says, "what she calls the 'aesthetic factor' in photography was not at odds with its documentary or realist purpose" (Tagg 111). Such realism in representation, or its degree, is not to be evaluated by a simple comparison between the representation and some 'objective' reality existing outside of or prior to the representation: "It is, rather, the product of a complex process involving the motivated and selective employment of determinate means of representation" (Tagg 111-112) (emphasis in original). By way of elaborating just what this "complex process" might be, Tagg quotes persuasively from
Max Raphael's *The Demands of Art*⁴⁹ to argue that it is specifically *language* which

presses us, even against our will, to compare the finished work of art with its model in nature, and thus diverts us from the fundamental fact that the work of art has come about through a dialectical interaction between the creative forming spirit and a situation that is given to begin with. Therefore we must sharply distinguish between the given situation (nature), the methodical process (the mind), and the total configuration (the work of art).

(qtd in "The Currency of the Photograph": 112).

This asserted primacy of language's role, though arguable and even tenuous in relation to narrative images such as those in Alvarado's first mode, does seem to reinforce and inform the process by which narratives might become attached to some photographs. Tagg's discussion, via Berenice Abbott, of this particular mode of photographic realism seems clearly to apply to the realism of Newman's Krupp photograph, and some last words from Benjamin's "A Short History of Photography" further illuminate such realism by showing how two separate points in time — a requirement, as we have seen in the previous chapter, for narrative photographs — come to be represented in such an image:

However skillful the photographer, however carefully he poses his model, the spectator feels an irresistible compulsion to look for the tiny spark of chance, of the here and now, with which reality has, as it were, seared the character in the picture; to find that imperceptible point at which, in the immediacy of that long-past moment, the future so persuasively inserts itself that, looking
back, we may rediscover it. (qtd in "The Currency of the Photograph": 119).50

How well this seems to describe the change which occurred in that moment back in 1963 when Newman asked Alfred Krupp to lean forward slightly, into the light arranged to come from under his face: "He did, and my hair stood on end. There was the devil" (Diamonstein 149). The story continues: for viewers of the photograph to this very day, hairs are still raised in a standing ovation.

Advertising imagery is so diverse that it is either difficult or pointless to make sweeping generalisations about it, but Alvarado provides a distinguishing principle which clarifies those attributes of the advertising image which are relevant in the current context:

the narrative function of advertising photographs, I would suggest, is to confirm the self-enclosed representation of the 'world' depicted — they provide a closed, fictional discourse which excludes narrative questions raised by the second sense of the concept [in Alvarado's schema: see Alvarado 8.] — how did it happen that the product was made, for example? Who made it? Who financed it? For whom was it intended? (Alvarado 12).

Alvarado's own discussion of advertising images revolves largely round the notion of the linguistic messages of captions, but my interest is in the photograph without the assistance of words. Barthes, in "The Rhetoric of the Image", offered an analysis of the "Panzani" advertisement (33-35) which found it to communicate in a narrative fashion even without the caption, and he expanded this analysis to show how the image implied a past — "a return
from the market" — and a future — "the essentially domestic preparation for
which they [the products in the advertisement] are destined" ("The Rhetoric
of the Image" 34). This certainly fits Alvarado's notion of a closed fictional
world. But the other element of Alvarado's categorisation of the narrative
advertising photograph is that it "constructs the world that surrounds the
image in a way that was intended by the advertisers" (Alvarado 12) (emphasis in
original), and we can use this to discern some outstanding examples in one
outstanding body of advertising work: that of Ralph Bartholemew Jr., a
commercial photographer practising in the United States between the mid-
1930s and the mid-1950s. With singular skill and polish, and in numbers
which indicate an enormous work output, he made photographs in a style
which is familiar, now, as a model for much of the "retro" advertising
imagery which became popular in the 1990s. But Bartholemew's original
work is of particular interest in this context because

His strength lay in his ability to capture people in manufactured
situations that would economically describe or slyly imply
broader narratives. With each assignment Bartholemew, through
his staging, lighting, selection of models, mastery of process, and
creativity, was ever the consummate storyteller (Wride 10).

Some of Bartholemew's photographs use exactly the same narrative
principles as the Panzani advertisement discussed above: the advertisement
for Sunshine Biscuits (fig. 13), for instance, carries the same implications of a
return from a shopping mission in the immediate past, and promises of good
clean fun to be had in the near future with the party toys, soft drink — and
Hi Ho biscuits. What distinguishes his work as a whole, however, is an
enthusiasm for genre references, particularly to film scenes and styles. "A
Fig. 13. Ralph Bartholemew Jr: Sunshine Biscuits, 1953
Fig. 14. Ralph Bartholemew Jr: Eastman Kodak, 1953
Western showdown between gunslingers in front of a saloon bar is reminiscent of *High Noon* (Wride 21) (fig. 14) but it also uses the fictional world created to make points about the special abilities of Kodak film and equipment to capture a "critical moment": a moment which, as for Cartier-Bresson's "frozen" samples of unfolding events in the real world, speaks clearly about both the past and the future of the represented fiction. Another Kodak advertisement (fig. 15) showing an imminent shootout in a cheap restaurant "recalls such film-noir thrillers as *This Gun For Hire* (1942) and *The Big Sleep* (1946)" (Wride 21). Again, the genre reference is supplemented by other narrative codes, here primarily spatial ones. Our eyes are drawn first to the 'character' at the right of the picture who is pulling a gun from his jacket. His gaze leads us to the cause of his action — the man entering the door with a gun already drawn — and thereafter we read the image from left to right, assisted by expressions on the characters' faces which show increasing degrees of realisation of what is happening as we move our gaze across the picture. Desire plays no role here: nothing leads us to identify with one 'character' or another, and we have no emotional involvement in any particular resolution, but clearly we perceive both an initial situation and a fairly clear idea of events in the immediate future — undoubtedly at least a minimal narrative as discussed by Prince (see Chapter 2).

Perhaps the most thoroughgoing example in Bartholemew's work is the General Electric advertisement (fig. 16) showing a flooded basement apparently threatening a shiny new oil burner. In this case the picture was indeed at first conceptually encoded by language: the event depicted in the advertisement had actually happened, and the oil burner had been able to restart without harm.
Fig.15. Ralph Bartholemew Jr: Eastman Kodak Advertisement, 1954
Fig. 16. Ralph Barholemew Jr: **General Electric, 1939**
Again, the genre reference here is to film noir, with deep shadows, pervasive darkness, selective limited highlighting of key objects, and 'characters' with features and dress which generically resemble those in notable thrillers such as those mentioned above. But the key device in constructing the narrative here — the linking of the 'before' (presumed or implied catastrophic weather incident) the 'now' (consequent flooding) and the 'after' (survival of the burner) is achieved through almost Hitchcockian use of eyelines. As the woman gazes with horror at the scale of destruction — the submerged trunk, the floating furniture and the depth of the flooding itself — the man looks with appreciative amazement at the burner which, as the image suggests by means of the burner's state of cleanliness and the glowing shine on its controls, has remained miraculously unharmed. As with the latter Kodak advertisement, the gaze is in turn the key to the temporal arrangement of events in the picture; it is because of the gaze that the picture, in Prince's terms, "does not simply mirror what happens; it explores and devises what can happen" (Dictionary, 60).

Perhaps advertising photographs, at least of the sort discussed in this chapter, stand as the archetype for what Brecht meant when he referred, through Benjamin, to the idea that "something has actually to be constructed, something artificial, something set up" in order for a photograph to make us understand something about reality. As for Sontag, if "only that which narrates can make us understand", then perhaps advertising photography will have produced something far more theoretically rewarding than anything for which it has generally been held responsible. Moved and reapplied to such a foreign context, Prince's description of the significance of
narrative, from *A Dictionary of Narratology* (60), can be made to sound uncannily apposite:

...through providing its own brand of order and coherence to (a possible) reality, it furnishes examples for its transformation or redefinition and effects a mediation between the law of what is and the desire for what might be.
CHAPTER 4. ORIGINS AND ANTECEDENTS 2: THE CONSTRUCTED PHOTOGRAPH

In the previous chapter I discussed a range of writings on photographic narrative, and illustrated some points by reference to single photographs, some "found' and some 'set up', which seem to encapsulate or exemplify issues or principles raised in those writings. Some of these photographs will be further referred to in relation to my own work. Since that work has, over the course of this research, moved in the direction of both set up and constructed photographic pictures (that is, tableaux and photomontage) rather than 'found' images, this chapter provides some background on particular photographic works of those kinds, by other people, to which my own work owes something. For the purposes of a more focused discussion, I have tried to separate photomontage work from tableaux approaches, but many works — including, indeed, my own — involve aspects of both. Again, Alvarado's three categories of narrative image are also used, since they help to clarify why the pictures discussed are seen as narrative ones (whether those responsible for the pictures intended them to be or not).

MONTAGE, TABLEAUX AND HISTORY

Henry Peach Robinson's Fading Away (1853) and Oscar Rejlander's The Two Ways of Life (1857) have already been discussed in relation to the development of a narrative tradition of photography from narrative traditions in painting. 'Combination printing' of several separate negatives onto a single sheet of photographic paper, the process by which both these
pictures were made, had arisen at first as a matter of necessity because of the uneven sensitivity of contemporary photographic materials. Even an ordinary landscape needed such treatment to represent the sky and the land "naturally." As Robinson himself wrote:

> It is well known to all photographers that it is almost impossible to obtain a good and suitable sky to a landscape under ordinary circumstances...It rarely happens that a sky quite suitable to the landscape occurs in the right place at the time it is taken, and, if it did, the exposure necessary for the view would be sufficient to quite obliterate the sky... (Robinson 155).

Through this necessity, photographers gained the skills to make pictures from separate negatives even when the subject matter did not seem to impose such demands for technical reasons. The complexity and scale of Rejlander’s *The Two Ways of Life* make understandable the desire to build up a picture sequentially from separate parts, even though its indoor location had removed the problem of correctly exposing the sky. Robinson’s own account of the same process, used by him for much simpler pictures such as *Fading Away*, seems however like special pleading:

> The means by which these pictures could have been accomplished is Combination Printing, a method which enables the photographer to represent objects in different planes in proper focus, to keep the true atmospheric and linear relation of varying distances, and by which a picture can be divided into separate parts for execution, the parts to be afterwards printed together on one paper, thus enabling the operator to devote all his attention to a single figure or subgroup at a time, so that if any part be...
imperfect from any cause, it can be substituted by another without the loss of the whole picture, as would be the case if taken at one operation. (Robinson 156)

At the core of this notion of collage, then, was an ironic desire to somehow synthesise realism. It should not have been as surprising as it seems to have been, to the practitioners of this dubious craft, that it gained no respect from the art world even as it also fell foul of the photographic establishment for not being "real" photography. William J. Mitchell explains the flavour of early disillusionment with the practice:

A photograph shows what can be seen from a single, fixed viewpoint, but a collage can combine multiple viewpoints or aspects of quite different scenes in a single image. Furthermore, a photograph shows things as they were at the precise moment of exposure, but a collage can combine things that took place at different moments into a single event. Whereas a straightforward photograph, like a drama by Corneille, stringently preserves the unities, a collage plays fast and loose with them, like Shakespeare. (W.J. Mitchell 163)

For these reasons, photographic combination printing fell almost entirely out of favour. It survived into contemporary times among a small band of practitioners such as Jerry Uelsmann and was to some extent revived by the spillover of surrealism into photography earlier in the twentieth century, but only with the recent widespread availability of digital manipulation — supported by viewers and consumers whose interpretive understanding of photographic realism is now simultaneously more
educated, more sceptical and more accepting — has the same approach to 'synthetic' realism become widespread and popular.

The manifestation, in the 1920s and 1930s in Europe, of the practice strictly known as photomontage had its roots partly in combination printing, but probably to an even greater extent in domestic and vernacular approaches to collage in general. Long before the invention of photography, collage was used as a domestic craft approach to combining assorted pictorial fragments from various sources — reproductions of paintings, posters, postcards, badges and medals, news clippings, tickets and so on. Photographs were simply incorporated into this tradition as soon as they became cheap enough to cut them into pieces without concern that their physical integrity should be sacrosanct. Thus photomontage preserved "quirks, cultural influences, and strange photographic artifacts which still have their place in people's homes and which each country has adapted to its own traditions or religious beliefs" (Frizot, "Rituals and Customs" 747).

The actual term 'photomontage' "was not invented until just after the First World War, when the Berlin Dadaists needed a name to describe their new technique of introducing photographs into their works" (Ades 7). While it has become a standard term for the art of making pictures with new meanings out of fragments of photographs, many different terminologies and practices, sometimes differing in ways which are at least historically very significant, have been subsumed even under this one heading. John Heartfield, one of the best known practitioners of photomontage and famous for his early anti-Nazi propaganda montages, used "no fewer than five different names for his work which involved photography (Foto-Montage,

Early photomontage was very much characterised by a sense of generalised and anarchistic political opposition, stemming from the Dadaist reaction to World War 1, with its unprecedented and deeply shocking levels of destruction. This mutated to a more positive outlook, influenced by the growing modernist attachment to machines and to engineering as a role-model for artistic activity, and within a relatively short period, photomontage had been welcomed by the art world, with an enthusiasm every bit as strong as the rejection which had earlier been directed toward Rejlander and Robinson.55

As photomontage became more and more a part of 'constructivist' painting and, by adopting spot colour and textual elements, began "to find its public fulfilment in graphics and the art of communication" (Frizot "Metamorphoses of the Image" 435) so it also joined forces with advertising. Even in the United States, where photomontage did not find as much favour in the art world as did, eventually, the 'straight' photograph, "By the first decade of the twentieth century, photomontage imagery, albeit of a fairly primitive kind, could be found in advertisements in popular illustrated magazines like Colliers" (Phillips 26). The strengths of photomontage which allowed it to be co-opted for advertising were the same as those which gave it such pungency in its revolutionary political settings; photomontage was, according to German art historian Franz Roh in 1925:

a precarious synthesis of the two most important tendencies in modern visual culture, extreme fantasy and extreme sobriety — or, put another way, the pictorial techniques of modernist
abstraction and the realism of photographic fragment. (Qtd in Phillips: 26).56

Perhaps surprisingly, given the nature of photomontage imagery which seems overall to be primarily characterised by anything but realism, the explanation for its power continues to be provided in the same terms. Here is Robert Hughes explaining the "ferocity" of Heartfield’s political photomontages:

Here, photomontage develops a kind of truth of which painting is not capable. If Heartfield’s scenes of brute power and social chaos had been drawn, they would have seemed impossibly overwrought. Only the "realism" of the photograph, its ineluctably factual content, made his work credible and, to this day, unanswerable. (Hughes 73)

Further, while photomontage appears to lack the special temporal strengths of photography described in chapter 3, being composed of separate pieces with no particular temporal encoding or allegiance, it seems to gain a different sense of time by virtue of its spatial attributes:

Montage offers a kaleidoscopic expanded vision which, by collapsing many views into one, suggests an experience of unfolding time...when consumer objects, industrial images, and political leaders are enlarged in scale and placed in the foreground of a composition, for example, their importance in the pictorial narrative is underlined. The compositional device of dramatic foregrounding provokes the viewer to re-think the relations between objects, to re-establish a hierarchy of correspondences...In escaping the 'limits' of the straight photograph by dramatically
repositioning various figures and objects, montage suggests new paradigms of authority and influence. (Teitelbaum 8)

This points to the means by which a photomontage, whether physically cut and pasted or manufactured with computer software, may be a narrative. Such photographic pictures may not be advertisements, but they have the same characteristics as Alvarado outlined for advertising photographs: they "confirm the self-enclosed representation of the 'world' depicted" and "provide a closed, fictional discourse which excludes narrative questions raised by the second sense of the concept", that is, questions relating to the 'real' represented rather than to the fiction; at the same time they construct "the world that surrounds the image in a way that was intended by the advertisers" (Alvarado 12).

Photomontage has now completed a full circle, both technically and conceptually. While computers have allowed seamless photomontage for some years with software packages such as Adobe Photoshop, it is really only in the last five years or less that such software has enabled an artist/photographer to achieve the same level of synthesised realism in a photographic picture as that which was achieved by, for example, Oscar Rejlander with The Two Ways of Life in 1857. Conceptually, we are almost at a stage in photography where for many professional purposes at least, it is the norm to make a picture from ingredients collected separately. Henry Peach Robinson's explanation of why one might want to do this (140 above) now seems more reasonable.

Examples of recent photomontage in art abound, but from the viewpoint of a new millenium it is interesting to note that many such examples now seem somewhat dated, and in fact are largely confined to the
early period of development of digital photomanipulation software in, say, the late 1980s and early 1990s. The widespread availability of digital photomanipulation in amateur and domestic settings — in such dedicated applications as digital 'makeover' kits, for instance — together with its almost universal application in applied settings such as advertising, has largely removed it from consideration as an art practice in its own right. Montage in art may now be viewed as a part of the photographic artist's suite of tools, no different from any other aspect of photographic technology. The appropriate area of interest now is perhaps less in production and more in interpretation: a work using montage may either conceal the contribution made by such techniques, or foreground it, or indeed adopt a range of positions in between. Reading exactly which of these positions has been taken, and why, then becomes a vital part of understanding the significance of the work overall.

**Straight Photography in the Service of the Constructed Subject**

Of all the approaches to narration which have so far been treated in this thesis, perhaps nearly all come together in the narrative tableau, a structure which in various styles and forms has dominated much of art photography for some twenty years. The lifespan for this important art form also encompasses a period in which the basis for photography's status moved away from a presumed special relationship to 'truth' and away from an evaluative structure based on realism, toward the condition already understood for film, text and other media: a means of conveying information, the truth-value of which (should that be the main concern) is to be determined by examining the contents of the package in detail, not by merely
glancing at its wrapper. This change, particularly in the context of the move from analogue to digital methods and materials in photography, has been extensively discussed elsewhere\textsuperscript{58} and is significant in this context only to the extent that it seems also to allow greater play for narrative, and indeed for fiction, in a medium thought for so long to be a servant of the courtroom rather than of the stage.

The development of photography as a potential medium for fiction, for drama, and for play has also been assisted by some of the developments with which postmodernism is concerned: the assumption by all camera-based media of a role in creating a secondary reality, and the consequent blurring of the line between information and entertainment:

With the advent of hyperreality, therefore, simulations come to constitute reality itself. In the 1980s, TV programmes appeared in the USA which directly simulate real-life situations such as \textit{The People's Court} which re-enacts the trials and tribulations of the petty bourgeoisie, while TV evangelists simulated religion and Ronald Reagan simulated politics (Best and Kellner 120).

Not surprisingly then, photography joined in the game and began to experiment with the roles of authenticity and objectivity which had for so long been its lot. Because of those very roles, which were felt to be intrinsic to photography but had never constrained film or television, or indeed any other medium, in the same way, photography was in a strong position to surprise by doing something different. But it was artists, not photographers, who took the initiative, and unlike photographers, who were still concerned with a modernist approach to photography's formal properties, the artists were interested in photography for its content.
Michael Köhler describes five sections of an exhibition of "staged" or constructed photographs for which his essay forms part of the catalogue. The first three of these categories are relevant to this discussion, as they describe the sorts of photography in which narrative schemes have been played with to the greatest degree. They are:

**Self-Presentations:** The artist slips into a variety of roles, testing different identities.

**Narrative Tableaux:** Several human actors play out scenes from everyday life history, myth or the fantasy of the directing artist.

**Miniature Stages:** The tableaux reconstruct events as in 2, but in miniaturized format, using dolls and other toy objects (Köhler, "Arranged, Constructed and Staged", 34).

### Self-Presentations

In the first category, the names Eileen Cowin and Cindy Sherman spring to mind. Cowin's work is particularly multifaceted, now spanning video and multimedia as well as photography, but photography itself, and its representational ties to film and even to the novel, is a central subject which binds her work together across many stylistic developments and approaches. Cowin sees her own work as "straddling a line between reality and fiction" (qtd. in Freeman: 11), but others perceive a direct narrative goal, particularly in her "Docudrama" series (for example fig. 17), as well as a line which links her work with the very first attempts at photographic narrative pictures, such as H.P. Robinson's *Fading Away*.59

Cindy Sherman is probably still most widely known for her 1977-1980 series "Untitled Film Stills" which, in manner somewhat similar to Cowin,
Fig. 17. Eileen Cowin: Untitled, from the "Docudramas" series
play with a narrative which is referred to, but neither fully established nor resolved. These pictures are all, in a sense, self-portraits, since in all of them "the artist herself, bewigged, costumed, and heavily made up is the sole protagonist" (Grundberg 120), but none could be said to be a photograph of Cindy Sherman. There are many agendas at work here: deflation of "our image of the artist as a glamorized Nietschean superhero" (Grundberg 121); an ambiguous and complex statement about gender roles via a choice of stereotyped female 'characters' which manage to simultaneously invoke both glamorous film stars and vulnerable, depressed, lonely, 'ordinary' women; and, of course, a specific and generic reference to film stills themselves.

Barthes has acknowledged the special qualities of the 'real' film still:

...to a certain extent (the extent of our theoretical fumblings) the filmic, very paradoxically, cannot be grasped as the film 'in situation', 'in movement', 'in its natural state', but only in that major artefact, the still. For a long time, I have been intrigued by the phenomenon of being interested and even fascinated by photos from a film (outside a cinema, in the pages of Cahiers du Cinema) and of then losing everything of these photos (not just the captivation but the memory of the image) when once inside the viewing room...("The Third Meaning" 65-66)

and this fascination is the central hub around which Sherman's "Stills" revolve, never quite coming to rest. There is, of course, no film from which they are extracted: no point of reference either to an objective reality or, in a heightened take on postmodernism's foregrounding of already-mediated images, no point of reference to any actual representation of such reality. The style always props up our narrative expectations, and always dashes them.
Max Kozloff is as clear as one can probably be about the ultimate effect of both Sherman and Cowin's strategy in these images, although it is perhaps unfair to link them in the way he does, considering the diversity of work for which both artists are responsible:

In reviving narrative for serious photography, Cindy Sherman and Eileen Cowin have kept the still's priceless sense of appearing in the swim. But they have inverted that image's reason for being. Stills fulsomely push the immediacy of their effect. They ask us to believe that a static mock-up of a performance, which is in turn an interpretation of a script — in other words, an image at three representational removes from experience — is, in fact, absorbing ... A deliberately hollow overstatement is, of course, involved in a self-conflict because it simultaneously confesses to the exhaustedness of its forms and yet hopes for the renewal of meaning. Because of its near resemblance to the psychological conditions through which the media themselves are received (I take film stills and their like to be a sector of media), this is a dangerous game. ("Through the Narrative Portal" 132-133)

Sherman's "Film Stills" are a key body of work in the development of my own approaches to narrative in the single photograph. This is not because of the content, though my own interim experiments with genre in straight photographs (see Chapter 5) were in part inspired by her "Stills." It is rather because of the integrated combination of power and sensitivity with which she wields those few slender and fragile instruments of narrative which are open to use in the single straight photograph. The result is readily grasped at the intuitive level (consider the popularity and widespread
knowledge of these images, long after their active production has ceased) but
difficult to explain. Again, Kozloff, in a passage actually aimed at unravelling
the narrative impact of real film stills, sheds light on how Sherman's and
Cowin's related fictional images work:

Being spatial, the single image is perceived in the real time of the
spectator. The first concern of a narrative image is to superimpose
its temporal metaphors on the actual viewing duration, whatever
length the viewer gives it. As long as we look, or as briefly as we
look, we have the same allusive moment. It cannot be reduced or
extended, and certainly it can't be interrupted, since we have the
visual whole of it each time we engage with the image. The film
stillst naturally obey all this, and, just as naturally, they want to
contradict it. They counter as forcefully as they know how, the
idea that we have the whole of what was there to see, even as they
would give out what was most representative or fetching to see. ...
Since the entire tale is lodged in the medium that actually has the
time to store it, this spatial fragment must surely be aswim
somewhere in a finite, continuous narrative. This explains why, as
soon as I contact the image, it invariably gives me the impression
that it's already "started". ("Through the Narrative Portal" 131-132)

The Untitled Film Stills, produced between 1975 and 1980 and all in
black and white, had been a laboratory for the exploration of a range of
subjects and themes, and in subsequent decades Sherman has proceeded to
unpack many of the thematic issues — gender in representation, the nature
of the external signifiers of character and role, the status of sex and sexual
signifiers, and the vulnerability of flesh itself. Formal concerns are still very much in evidence:

Then, in 1981, a different signifier, put in place in a series triggered by a commission for a centrefold for Artforum magazine, emerged as the central concern. That signifier is point-of-view. And in this group of images that viewpoint, consistent through most of the series and stridently adopted by the camera, is from above, looking down. (Krauss, Cindy Sherman 89)

Many of these later works continue to make reference to other sign systems, particularly to movies and television, but they seem more concerned with the depiction of the psychological nature of moments extracted from the mainstream of purposeful and conventionally motivated life, and less concerned with use of narrative as a means of connecting the images to an external reality. By the time of her 1992-1993 "Sex Pictures", all trace of narrative has disappeared, as has any depiction of real bodies or real situations.

For my own project, then, it is Cowin who emerges as the more lastingly relevant of the two, since her work continues to bring narrative to the fore. As recently as 1997 she has made this explicit:

At the moment (February 1997) I am committed to a continuing investigation of the emotional, visceral, and intellectual resonance of narrative as a paradigm of photographic imagery. This is revealed in a body of work which includes photographs, video, text, and installations.60

While her own recent work has diverged into video installations and a variety of ways of combining images, there remains a strong preoccupation
with the ability of a single gestalt to communicate narratively. While many of her photographic works are made from multiple images combined into a set presented as one image (e.g., fig. 18), these depend on associative strategies other than the strictly sequential to arrive at their full narrative import, and are not presented to us with any implication about the expected order of reading. Eyelines and other devices direct our gaze internally from one member to another of the set in various directions, not in a fixed cartoon-panel order. Though Cowin on occasion does use accompanying text or captions, or pairs of images which render the issue of sequence less complex or open, her body of work may be distinguished in this way from other artists such as Duane Michals, Sophie Calle or Tracey Moffatt, for all of whom sequence and/or accompanying text are, in different degrees, a vital component of any narrative dimension.

**Narrative Tableaux**

Cowin's work, which spans several forms and styles, takes us neatly from "Self-Presentations" to the next category in Köhler's essay, "Arranged, Constructed and Staged," narrative tableaux. Of interest in terms of my own work, among those discussed by Köhler, are Nic Nicosia and Bernard Faucon. Although not represented in the exhibition which is Köhler's subject, Jeff Wall is also clearly a key figure in the extension of this tradition into the late 1990s and beyond. There are many others for whom one could make a case for inclusion in this discussion, but I limit the discussion here to those for whom I can reasonably claim an influence on my own work.

Nicosia's work sometimes has clear genre references but holds back from a full attempt at synthetic realism, thus maintaining a consciousness of
It isn't just about memory. It isn't just about desire or even sex in a long marriage and the way it is impossible to taste the same thing twice because you're never thinking the same thoughts when his hands, when his tongue, the same words on his lips, the pressure, the tear, the nightgown, the cleft, the promise, the pillow, the gift, the cotton nightgown he has wrapped and unwrapped and given to you over and over with the same words embroidered on the hem, the quilts, the same words that never taste the same way, twine falling from your lips.

Fig.18. Eileen Cowin: Untitled
Fig. 19. Nic Nicosia: Like Photojournalism
its reference to representation rather than to reality. In Like Photojournalism (fig. 19), there is a cleanliness about the location, and a simplicity and sense of melodrama in the colour and arrangement of people, which betrays its unreality but also foregrounds narrative as the appropriate tool for decoding the artist's intended meaning. Violence (fig. 20) is even more self-consciously melodramatic, with painted windows 'illuminating' painted light patches on the floor of an art gallery in which a static rendition of an improbable fist fight is being stiffly played out, even as the reality of the event is undermined by the reactions of those surrounding the combatants. Interestingly, in view of Clayton's identification, in an earlier chapter, of violence as a prime attribute of narrative, Nicosia's work frequently depicts violent incidents which, even as their overtly staged nature makes their fictional status clear, do provide an easy entry point to our understanding of character motivations within the image, while making their "truly Postmodern — half loving and half scornful — social satire on the American Way of Life" (Köhler, Constructed Realities 152).

Nicosia's work is technically of interest because of the tableau settings, but his use of human models in fictitious settings is also redolent of Eileen Cowin and Cindy Sherman. At one further remove from literal realism is the early work of Bernard Faucon, a series of scenes entitled Les grandes vacances ("The long vacation", or perhaps "The summer holidays") which reconstructed the experiences of a young boy in "a world without grown-ups" (Köhler, Constructed Realities 146). These are narratives, or have a narrative dimension, in Alvarado's third sense: the advertising photograph, in which a world "that is enclosed and without contradiction" (Alvarado 12) is created in the image. Hapkemeyer describes them explicitly as
Fig. 20. Nic Nicosia: *Violence*
narratives: "In these frozen scenes of enigmatic narrative there is a terrifyingly beautiful fusion of natural space and invention." (Hapkemeyer, "Bernard Faucon" 120)

Though referred to as a series in the sense that they were produced one by one over a period, the works are not claimed as a sequence in the strict sense that they cumulatively relate parts of the same story. Each is very much self-contained, to the extent that Faucon ensured that the physical staging required to make each photograph remained in existence only for the minimum time necessary to successfully record the image, it being then disassembled or destroyed. The photographs remain the sole resulting product.

Faucon has spoken of his staged works as having "the persuasive power of fiction and the genuineness of a real event" (qtd in Köhler: Constructed Realities 146) and it seems that just as these photographs sit between fiction and reality, so too they sit somewhere between the memory of an event and the event itself. Faucon does not claim them as representing memories in the sense that each photograph links to a concrete moment in his past, but the detail and the particularity of the tableaux, together with the fact that we cannot have whatever memory of Faucon's is being reinvested to make the photographs, impel us toward such an interpretation.

Faucon used life-size mannequins (combined, in some cases, with at least one real child) in the grandes vacances photographs, allowing the use of life-size locations and artefacts which heighten both the synthetic realism and the dream-like impossibility of every scenario. The sense of narrative, while minimal and unresolved, is similar to that described by Kozloff for (real) film stills: "They counter as forcefully as they know how, the idea that we have
the whole of what was there to see". We search for a narrative because there must be one: how can the intensity of this vision, the overheated detail of its realisation, not have narrative somewhere at its burning core?

**Miniature Stages**

Like Sherman, Faucon has moved on to new subjects and even, to a large extent, away from photography. Within photography, however, it is possible to move further from an attachment to literal realism and still retain narrative elements. Variants on mannequins, in the form of small dolls, have been used in this way by artists such as Tom Drahos, Henk Tas, Ellen Brooks and James Casebere. Though Köhler states that these miniature doll-house fantasies are "a specific form of staging that is specific to the 1980s" ("Arranged, Constructed and Staged" 41) one can see variants on the same practice, and on some of the same fictional themes, continued in work up to the present day. The remarkable miniature-scenario photographs of Gregory Crewdson (see Gregory Crewdson: Dream of Life), particularly those in the "Natural Wonder" series of 1992-1997 (eg fig. 21), may certainly be viewed as a continuation of this tradition even though they contain stuffed animals and miniature semi-rural environments rather than human characters or dolls. Of particular interest in the context of the present work is that Crewdson's photographs have been perceived as unambiguously narrative by critics, and indeed are claimed to be so by the artist himself, in terms which resonate positively with the more formal analysis of narrative possibilities outlined in earlier chapters:

**Bradford Morrow:** I'd like to address the narrativity of your photographs. If one thinks of them as image-stories, they are
Fig. 21. Gregory Crewdson: *Untitled*, from the "Natural Wonder" series
intriguingly transgressive insofar as you only deliver the final scene, and therefore compel the viewer to create the story that precedes it. What is your relationship to the notion of narrative or story?

Gregory Crewdson: I'm interested in the question of narrative, how photography is distinct from, but connected to other narrative forms like writing and film. This idea of creating a moment that's frozen and mute, that perhaps ultimately asks more questions than it answers, proposes an open-ended and ambiguous narrative, that allows the viewer to, in a sense, complete it. Ultimately, I'm interested in this ambiguous moment that draws the viewer in through photographic beauty, through repulsion, through some kind of tension (Crewdson, Dream of Life, 17).

No other body of photographs known to this author has so strongly and directly aroused speculation and dialogue about narrative though there are certainly other works, including many among those already mentioned above, which would seem to be operating in a similar arena. David Levinthal is another photographic artist who has continued to work with dolls and miniature staged scenarios, long after Köhler's declared end to such work at the end of the 1980s. His interest now is in the contribution made to the socialization of children by toys, and he has also long been interested in using photography and toys to investigate major nodes of social controversy — race, the holocaust, sado-masochism. The most relevant of Levinthal's work to the present project, however, is some of his oldest. In a collaboration with fellow Yale University School of Art graduate student Garry Trudeau,
later to be famous for the *Doonesbury* cartoon strip, Levinthal produced *Hitler Moves East: A Graphic Chronicle, 1941-43*, a meticulously researched "collage of military photographs, maps, archival illustrative material, and excerpts from diaries, public announcements and other written sources" (Coleman, "'Hitler Moves East' Turns Fourteen", 55) masquerading as a serious history of Hitler's campaign against the Soviet Union in World War II.

The book was not serious history in the sense that the non-photographic documents it contained, prepared by Trudeau, were either recycled from public sources or faked, while the photographs made by Levinthal were table-top dioramas 'peopled' with toy plastic soldiers (see fig. 22). Many viewers of these images will however be immediately reminded of the dioramas which are often a feature of war museums, and there are frequently real but unrecognised historical connections between such dioramas and documentary photographs. Frank Hurley's photographs of World War I, for instance, which are the starting point for a few of my own works (nos. 24 and 25 in the exhibition) were the basis for several of the dioramas in the Australian War Memorial.

What was very serious about this book, however, was its questioning of the nature of photographic evidence, of photography as evidence: "Over the past decade-plus, ironically, it has managed to become an authentic document of the period in which a major phase of the inquiry into the medium's veracity and credibility began" (Coleman 54). *Hitler Moves East* deals with the photographic codes of documentary authenticity itself, with the "very sign system that makes falsification and forgery possible" (Coleman 56).
Fig. 22. David Levinthal: untitled image from Hitler Moves East
In *Hitler Moves East* it is genre, rather than narrative, which is to the fore in shaping not just the style of the pictures in general, but the function and style of individual photographs. There is a concern with verifying the outward appearance, the envelope, of authenticity, a concern which frequently militates against fine-grained clarity and conventional aesthetic merit, just as real photographs taken in real wars may well have to compromise those same attributes in the interests of providing information which is visually more approximate, but contextually more relevant.

*Hitler Moves East* is a prescient work in terms of unravelling the role of the artist in relation to photographic imaging of war. The direct reporting of war through photographs has typically been a task for photojournalists rather than photographic artists, even though the most lasting of such works are eventually positioned, as Sontag has observed, "at the level of art" (21). Ian Walker suggests that the future of the photographic documentation of war) "may lie in...critical artistic intervention and not in the traditional genre of documentary photography and photo-reportage" (M. Lister 277). Writing about an installation in the Imperial War Museum in London in 1993 by French artist Sophie Ristelhueber, who made large photographs in the battlegrounds of Kuwait six months after "Desert Storm" (the first Gulf War), Walker points out that the stances of art photography and documentary photography have become oddly reversed:

> For it is curious that, through the 1970s and 1980s, as documentary, 'straight' photographers have strained to exploit the paradoxes of their medium by twisting it through ever more contortions, many 'artists' who use photography have done so in ways that emphasise its blunt, flat, evidential factuality, and
render that apparent directness ambiguous. Ristelhueber's artfulness finally, paradoxically, rests in the documentary "straightness' of her images. (Walker 245)

Hitler Moves East is a work of fiction, but it is nevertheless a "critical artistic intervention" and one which shares, for its own reasons, some of the same "blunt, flat, evidential factuality" about the war which is its subject. Clearly, there was also some potential for narrative in this work, had Levinthal wished to make use of it. Readers of Hitler Moves East made the connection between the book's images as a group and the 'real' photographs to which they referred, as a group, as well as the more complex representational connection to the 'real' times and places of Hitler's fateful campaign; but there was no one-to-one connection between each photograph and a single event, no ordering of separate events, no clearly implied 'before' or 'after' associated with each image. We may reasonably surmise from the total body of Levinthal's work and the nature of the critical attention it has received that there was never a narrative intention. Yet a comparison between Hitler Moves East and, say, Crewson's work is instructive. In the former case there was an opportunity, not taken up, to make connections between each constructed photograph and an actual event, connections which could well have been the basis of a narrative mode for the pictures. In Crewdson's lushly overdefined but still inexplicable photographs from the "Natural Wonder" series, there is not even an outside chance that any concrete event before or after the depicted one will ever be unambiguously associated with it, yet in both the artist's own musing about his work and in critical response to it, narrative is to the fore. Between these two there is a gap for other work to fill.
We may be certain that some of the most strongly narrative single photographic images are 'found' ones, such as Cartier-Bresson's *Place de l'Europe, Paris, 1932*, which can speak powerfully, but adventitiously, of brief moments in a real past. But there is a quieter and more insistent mode of narrative — significantly, a deliberate, premeditated mode — which may be bent to many purposes: illustration, anecdote, advertisement, instruction, sermon, warning ... and more. In an age which understands the photograph itself to be a constructed and manipulated entity, it is fitting that the subject matter of those photographs which set out from the start to tell us stories should also be, in Benjamin's prescient words, something "constructed, something artificial, something set up".
CHAPTER 5. ALL MY OWN WORK

Three categories of work are covered in this chapter. There is first a discussion of some of the photographs by myself and by others which stimulated my initial thoughts about the connections between photography and narrative. Secondly, consideration is given to photographs made over the whole period in which this creative work and its documentation have been completed. These works often explored or experimented with directions which were not finally pursued, but some of these directions are nevertheless discussed here because either the work, or the reason for not pursuing it further, contributed materially to the final creative process. The last segment treats the photographs of my own which constitute the creative Doctoral submission.

WAR PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAGING AND IMAGINING.

As a child, I spent some time looking at wartime snapshots taken by and of my father and his army friends and colleagues in New Guinea during World War II. I was trying to reconcile the manifest content of those photographs — depicting what mostly seemed to be cheerful-looking men engaged in peaceful, organised, bureaucratic, but nevertheless mysterious activity — with the stories my father would tell, though only with some urging, about his wartime experiences. Though my father had not been employed in a combat role — he worked in intelligence, deciphering enemy codes — he had seen enough of actual combat and its consequences to be able to describe events which certainly seemed at variance with the holiday-camp atmosphere which I thought was depicted in the photographs. Even more difficult was the task of reconciling the photographs with the much
more lurid impression of the war gained from my child contemporaries. I was puzzled about what sort of a thing the war really was, but the answer to this fundamental question receded further and became more rather than less confusing, with the accumulation of every new detail. Because of both my youth and the fact that the photographs were kept in an old suitcase together with other family photographs, some from before my birth, I also tended to link unrelated events and experiences in my immediate surroundings, and other aspects of family history, to my quest for closure and explanation about the war. My state of mind in relation to these photographs thus resembled, in some respects, the "confusion between consecutiveness and consequence, chronology and causality" to which Prince refers, as quoted in Chapter 2.

As I grew older, the same snapshots increasingly seemed to speak less of their primary reference to events in my father's life, and more about how I had felt as a very young child struggling to comprehend them. Looking at them again, with accumulated age, I could partly mimic the internal childhood world in which all of these partly-understood phenomena had linked up to make a strange, idiosyncratic sort of sense. Now, the experience of revisiting that image-world through the same photographs felt something like a story: a story which linked the actual origins of the photographs to my remembered childhood world, and thence to these continually evolving permutations and reinvestments of those same memories.

My early practical interest in photography was possibly sparked partly by looking at these old photographs, and certainly I began to make photographs of my own from about the age of six, with encouragement from other family members. While I cannot claim that it was at that early age I began to want to actually create something of my own which made use of the
photographs in the suitcase, certainly they stayed continuously in memory until years later. It was then that the idea of narrative photography had taken root in my mind for other reasons, and the means by which I might work through those memories to create images of my own began to take concrete form.

It was with one single photograph of my own, made many years later, that I began to see the first intuitive glimmerings of how a single photograph might work narratively. Fig. 23 shows that photograph, an opportunistic shot taken at Bondi in about 1984. Even at the time, I felt that the appeal of the image lay in something to do with an implied continuity of time outside the frame, beyond the depicted 'frozen' moment, and I wanted to make other photographs of this kind if I could. It was as though the photograph opened a portal to a world of continuing events of which I had been unaware at the moment of pressing the shutter button, even though I had chosen that moment with some care: running to get to a position at which the two obliviously conversing men would have to pass close by me, while arranging a view of the busy background beyond them. It was some time before I conceived of a story-telling function as part of the interest which the picture had for me, but others also found the photograph appealing, and the most generous of them even saw it as exemplifying the same 'critical moment' approach, to a swirling interaction between people in a certain environment, as that which Cartier-Bresson had advocated and so beautifully exemplified in his work.

This certainly pleased me since my photographic goals, at the time, were partly motivated by an admiration of Cartier-Bresson's work. In the period in which this photograph was made, I was most interested in making
Fig. 23. Greg Battye: Bondi
photographs which captured something of the way in which mood and behaviour became more relaxed and informal when people were close to the sea. I was attempting to encode these moods and behaviours through whatever visible manifestations I could observe: the positions and movements of people in relation to each other, as shown by their placement within my frame; their expressions and actions; and the activities in which they indulged, all under the favourable influence of the seaside.

It was in capturing the placement of people and the interactions between them that I felt the Bondi photograph to have succeeded, and at the time that was the extent of my analysis of it. In the service of tracking my progression towards a practical investigation of narrative photography however, some other observations, made retrospectively over the period of writing this annotation, are worth making.

As has been noted in the discussions above on the frame and off-screen space (Chapter 2), the frame of a photograph sets a visual limit to the information at the viewer's disposal for understanding all that is happening in the photograph, and tends to reinforce a presumption that the depicted events are an interrelated, and self-contained, set. In the case of the Bondi photograph, the contiguity, postures and arrangement of figures within the frame tended to be interpreted as interactions and communicative acts between all of the people represented, and as parts of one complex causally interconnected event, when in reality they were probably no such thing. The 'characters' — for such they seem to be — either look at each other in a manner apparently indicative of a continuing conversation, or they lead our gaze outside the frame, giving rise to the eternally unrequited hope that we will see what they see. Their positions and movements are actually arranged
in three separate planes parallel to the picture plane — the beach in the background, the far edge of the promenade, and the very near foreground where the two main figures are walking — but the inhabitants of those separate planes are integrated by, and within, the picture plane. The process by which that integrated understanding is arrived at is a confusion, a projection of causality onto spatiality — one which seems analogous to the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy. Just as Barthes suggests that that logical confusion may be the very engine of textual narrative, so here the enfolding of pictured events into one uncertain space seems to point to narrative as the means by which those events will be resolved and explained.

I thus began practical creative work on this project suspended between two poles of possible creative activity: the idea that it seemed to be possible to make narrative photographs in a documentary or 'straight' style, and the desire to somehow photographically re-work my fathers' wartime snapshots, a project which seemed by contrast to offer no chance of working in the documentary mode.

Reconciling these disparate possibilities was the first step in resolving not only what to work on, thematically, but how to work on any chosen theme stylistically, while still exploring the narrative theoretical framework. But even beyond the problem of deciding between two very different approaches, each approach seemed to have its own problems. Pursuing documentary narrative images was unlikely to lead reliably to a successful practical outcome, since the photographs — both my own and those made by others — which were strongly narrative almost always seemed to combine luck (in terms of the fortunate presence of the photographer at an unforeseeable event) with situational factors which pushed interpretation in a
narrative direction. While documentary war photography linked the two areas of interest, it was more in the domain of journalism than creative work (as observed at the end of the previous chapter in discussion of Hitler Moves East), and was in any case excluded for obvious practical reasons.

On the other hand, working with my father's wartime snapshots clearly involved a very different style of work — constructed photographs, probably montages of some sort. While my early reading had already directed me towards ways in which a 'straight' photograph such as the Bondi one might have narrative aspects, I had not yet determined a cognitive or aesthetic approach to making a narrative composite photographs based on other photographs.

I decided that the way through all this was a pragmatic one; to work on both possibilities at once and to find out where that took me. I would tackle some documentary photographs in a way which capitalised very consciously on what I was learning of narrative theory, and simultaneously I would work on what to do with my father's snapshots, and my memories of them, through a more intuitive aesthetic approach. My hope was that from these two forms of work, there would emerge a synthesis of approaches and subject matter which would allow me to move forward to other, related thematic content, combining aesthetic strength with a theoretically valid narrative approach. This synthesis was slower to make than I had hoped. The following pages present my circuitous progress toward that final goal.

Working out a way to use my father's photographs involved some detours through other ways of using previously-acquired imagery for a secondary purpose. I had been interested for some time in Barbara Kruger's
polemical photographs and particularly interested in the way she uses
captions with those photographs. A common view of the general effect of
captions has been that they serve to reduce the diversity of possible
interpretations for a photograph and to single out one particular meaning for
the picture which they accompany. Walter Benjamin suggests in his "A Short
History of Photography" that without the benefit of captions, "all
photographic construction must remain bound in coincidences", and strongly
asserts that captions will "become the essential component of all pictures"
(215). For Barthes the 'text' accompanying press photographs "loads the
image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination" ("The
Photographic Message" 26).

In contexts such as journalism, of course, that is precisely their intended
function:

Like the drama, the news, already a category by virtue of its being
reported — how much news do we have no news of? — comes to
us as interpretation, and often as an interpretation of an
interpretation, when the already implicitly interpreted is overlaid
by an explicit interpretation, the editorial voice of the caption,
intervening between the news and the reader, appropriating the
news and passing it on with gloss. (Scott 106)

In other areas of photography the dominance of words may be less
strident, but is still there:

We rarely see a photograph in use which is not accompanied by
writing: in newspapers the image is in most cases subordinate to
the text; in advertising and illustrated magazines there tends to be
a more or less equal distribution of text and images; in art and
amateur photography the image predominates, though a caption or title is generally added. But the influence of language goes beyond the fact of the physical presence of writing as a deliberate addition to the image. Even the uncaptioned photograph, framed and isolated on a gallery wall, is invaded by language when it is looked at: in memory, in association, snatches of words and images continually intermingle and exchange one for the other; what significant elements the subject recognises 'in' the photograph are inescapably supplemented from elsewhere (Burgin, Photograph, Phantasy, Function 192).

Kruger's genius, though, has been to add text to images in such a way as to actually enhance their open-endedness. Her brief polemical texts manage to give direction and bite to the photographs with which they are combined, and into which they are graphically integrated without sacrificing their semantic primacy. Rather than closing off interpretive options however, the texts conspire with the images to form a new visual trope which resists reduction or restatement in any other form, and allows the range of possible meanings — and audiences — to multiply unchecked. It is this sense of malleable, free-ranging meaning — particularly when combined with the sense of visual threat which her images present, via both their content and their harshly contrasting tones — which gives them a strength which springs from, but seems to also go beyond, aesthetics.

Kruger's images did not appeal to me as strongly narrative, though many of them do seem to involve a projection of temporality, particularly into the future, and to depend on either facts or assertions about the past. This was enough to encourage a perceived need on my part to experiment
with any narrative possibilities which might arise from adding text to photographs. Adding captions, with the likely consequence of reducing nuances of meaning, seemed inappropriate for my particular goals, so I sought to find ways of using words which occurred naturally within the photograph. This is not a new technique. Photographers have long incorporated both other images, and texts such as advertising messages, within photographs, generally to make didactic points which in some way connect the contained and the containing images. At least two generations of television program makers have made a fetish of incorporating re-videoed material within their own programs, for similar purposes. Exposure to both of these phenomena led me to search for television images which used captions or other textual material, but preferably where some loosening of the connection between image and text could be effected by photographically isolating a single frame.

Oprah Winfrey’s program provided as near to a perfect example as I could find. Particular shots were chosen by recording the programs on video and then selecting individual frames which seemed, by extraction of those frames from the explanatory context of the program as a whole, to allow for a more complex interpretive relationship between the superimposed caption and the person or event represented. Though it may be argued that this is simply re-using a piece of communication which is already sufficiently, or perhaps maximally, mediated, there can be little doubt that to take a single frame from a television sequence and expose it to extended scrutiny is to very significantly change the nature and viewing conditions of that information. Unlike film — because of the manner in which the successive perseverating rasters, even of a single frame, unceasingly overtake and
merge with one another — television images never actually pause for the
clear resolution of one picture. To force this stillness upon the frame via
photography is thus to make a new entity, rather than to merely select one
from among many essentially similar entities.

Perhaps it is precisely because a photograph is so often "traversed by
language when it is 'read' by a viewer" (Burgin, Looking at Photographs 144)
that the deliberate inclusion of words which are not merely and wholly
congruent with the image, and which are an integral part of the image, unlike
a caption, can contribute to the thickening of narrative possibilities where the
picture already seems either prone to narrative interpretation, or so lacking
in closure that narrative is called into play to resolve the uncertainty. Thus
the Oprah Winfrey photographs (eg fig. 24) contain words which are part of
the image, but which leave open the possibility of a wide range of
relationships with the rest of the image, including deception and negation.
Even accepting the words as "true" poses questions the answers to which
seem unavoidably narrative in form, no matter how speculative they also are.

The relationship of captions or other verbal content to the narrative
possibilities of still images is an area worthy of further artistic investigation,
and indeed further theoretical investigation, in its own right. My brief foray
into the area was enough to satisfy me that while this was the case, I wished
to put more of my energies into purely pictorial forms of narrative, since it
was in relation to pictorial understanding and interpretation that the issue
had arisen for me. Additionally, the likelihood is always that interpretive
possibilities, and with them narrative possibilities, will be reduced rather
than enhanced by captions, and since captioning was not unavoidably central
to my research question, I determined in fact to avoid captioning works at all
Fig. 24. Greg Battye: untitled television image
if possible, so as to be able to work with image content, unassisted and unconfounded by words in any form.

Various forms of documentary or 'found' photographs continued to interest me for their possible narrative significance. Thinking again about the Bondi photograph, I set out to make some other straight photographs which communicated facts about the world; that is, were not pictorial constructions (for example, were not montages, and did not involve the use of any manipulative software) and did not represent things or events fabricated solely for the purpose of making the picture.

The first such photograph I made was the image of the dead starling, trapped unnoticed in a combustion stove during summer by falling down the chimney (fig. 25). It meets the strict standard of narrative given, for example, by Prince in Chapter 2; it clearly involves at least two events, linked by a span of time which unambiguously moves in one direction, and it has an unusually clear feeling of resolution, of depicting an end rather than a beginning or a middle.

While the events depicted in the picture are true, the picture is fictional in its fine detail; the dead bird has been moved to make it more visible, and the use of a flash makes visible the otherwise dark stove interior while unfortunately partly masking a significant narrative detail: the pathetic footprints of the bird, left in the previous winter's ash on the stove floor. In this level of fictionality, the picture closely matches the actual nature of what we generally and uncritically take to be the most representative form of 'factual' documentary photography, the news photograph — which should again draw our attention to the potential for narrative meaning in many such photographs, as discussed in the previous chapter.
Fig. 25. Greg Battye: The Dead Starling
This photograph confirmed once more that waiting to accumulate a significant number of genuinely documentary photographs—that is, photographs made in 'found' rather than constructed settings, and not manipulated via any editing or montage process—was going to be a time-consuming and generally unsatisfactory approach to making a body of creative work which could meet my thematic, aesthetic and personal goals. It would lead, at best, to an unusually disparate set of images with widely different subject matter and styles. Given that fiction was likely to be closely entwined with narrative, I decided to experiment with separating the style of documentary photography from its content, and trying to incorporate that style into 'straight' but unmanipulated images.

At this stage, I should note, I had not yet completed the theoretical exploration which would later allow me to more effectively direct, select and evaluate my own work.

**Advertising: Never mind the content, Feel the Style**

Both Barthes ("Rhetoric of the Image") and Alvarado describe the advertising photograph as the apotheosis of a certain type of image with narrative properties, and I next set out to make images of this sort (that is, in such a style), though the venture was always somewhat flawed by the fact that my pictures were never going to be used in a real advertising campaign. At the time these pictures were made, advertising in those domains which typically employ photographic imagery intensely and expensively—fashion and other lifestyle consumer areas—was making extensive use of black and white photographs which often seemed only peripherally relevant, if at all, to
the actual item being advertised. My purpose in trying to make similar or
related photographs was to discover exactly what pictorial devices might or
might not be successful in conveying to a viewer the feeling of having
'arrived in the middle of something': that a drama was unfolding to which
the viewer was now privy, but that clues within the picture would have to be
used to try to unravel a whole, of which only a part had been revealed to
them in my image.

The image of the woman in the pool (fig. 26) is thus a fiction, except
insofar that, as with everything in an ordinary photograph, it also presents a
set of facts about an actual momentary past. The whole of which it purports
to be a part does not exist, though of course if it did, there would be little use
in spelling it out in words here, or anywhere else, for reasons discussed
above and in the previous chapter. It is, in the words of A.D. Coleman, a
"directorial" image (Coleman, "The Directorial Mode" 251). If it has any of the
narrative feel which I intended for it, it does so because it succeeds at
conveying a feeling that other events must have preceded and/or caused the
situation shown, and that the relationship between the gesticulating hands
and their owner, and the young woman in the pool, must be going to lead to
some further, different situation, or some form of meaningful change in the
depicted situation. Peter Brooks and other theorists who foreground
narrative as an operation performed on appropriate material rather than a
structure inherent in the material, have described narrative "middles" —
which this is intended to be, or at least to masquerade as — as generally
working by metonymy; metaphor, by contrast, governs both the shaping and
our understanding of "ends".63 This photograph, then, is metonymic: we read
it as resembling other photographs in which something really is known about
Fig. 26. Greg Battye: **Woman in Pool**
events prior and subsequent to the depicted situation, something known or at least presumed to be causally related to what is depicted. That the photograph masquerades as a middle with no 'ends' — no real before and no real after, as distinct from the documentary photographs discussed above — is not merely accidental; other artists who have inspired and informed work presented here, such as Cindy Sherman (see a brief discussion of her work in Chapter 4) have deliberately done the same, and it may be the very absence of actual ends which drives the desire to "perform" an operation of narrative understanding on what has thus been rendered "appropriate material".

A prior step in understanding the intended meaning of such a photograph is that we must be cued to interpret it as fiction in the first place: this is why the contextual issue of my picture not actually being a real advertisement may be important. This may be argued in either of two ways, depending on how one believes advertising to work, and how effective one believes it to be. If simple belief in advertising and what advertising images depict is emphasized, then it may be argued that an advertising photograph will be interpreted in the same way as a documentary photograph, and that it will be assumed to indeed represent the middle, or some part of a real situation. Such simple trust in advertising would be unusual, and it is more likely to be interpreted as a fabrication, a construction. With this possibility comes a new bifurcation: is the construction to be understood as something which does have an implied, if fictional, extension in time, a fictional 'before' and 'after' which we understand as being at least as 'real' as the content of a piece of fictional literature; or is the image marooned, rootless and futureless, a subject only of speculation so loosely and unpredictably structured that it cannot wear the title of narrative?
Since there will certainly be wide variance in interpretive reaction to the picture, perhaps we can say two things in response to these questions: one is that they have no concrete and simple answer, and the other is that they are, probably, the wrong questions. If our overall quest is to see if such photographs can 'work' narratively, then it is enough that they should be seen as "appropriate material" for invoking the "performance" of a narrative "operation". While the question of the degree of success of the woman-in-the-pool image is still open to discussion, I believe the picture is "appropriate material". There does not have to be watertight agreement about exactly what narrative is being presented in order for it to reasonably be said that the photograph works in a narrative fashion. The very fact of a viewer's uncertainty about whether he or she should be speculating about the actual mise en scène, or making hypotheses about the less specific and more complex world of represented fictions, may contribute to the likelihood that the narrative "operation" will be performed.

I felt these photographs to be successful, with some limitations, as a means of demonstrating narrative mechanisms in a straight photograph. As with the Oprah Winfrey pictures, I believed there was merit in pursuing more work along these lines, though perhaps in connection with consciously addressing the complex and rapidly evolving phenomenon of advertising photography than in the service of my present investigation. I felt less than satisfied that further pseudo-advertising photographs were going to meet the creative goals of my thesis, but I still had a need to explore more of the formal and theoretical possibilities of photographic narrative before I could settle on a fruitful creative approach to my real subject.
MORE IN THE DIRECTORIAL MODE

The placing of the advertising-style pictures in this theoretical context partly took place after the photographs were made — just as any viewer of the actual contemporary advertising images on which they were based might well have suspected that the adaptation of those images for advertising purposes came well after, and was independent of, the actual creation of the photographs. Having thus strayed from genuine straight or documentary photography, I wanted to go further in exploring other similar "directorial" modes, still based on separating the style of documentary photographs from genuine documentary content.

This led me to experiment with some images which were not dependent on a particular presumed viewing context (such as advertising). Here the intention was again to produce uncertainty by making photographs which were overdetermined in content, but which were deliberately cut off from external sources of explanation for their existence.

Two of these photographs are presented here (fig 27 and fig 28). The subjects were conceived of as an opportunity to play with some of the formal expressions of narrative structure discussed in previous chapters. So, for instance, the photograph showing the shadow falling over the gravestone deals with Prince's strict minimal narrative condition by depicting, or implying as unambiguously as possible, two events connected by an unambiguous time sequence, neither of which entails the other. One event, a death, is followed later by a visit to the graveside of the dead person by an unknown woman, shown here only by her shadow. While these events are implied by the photograph, other qualifying or explanatory information is suppressed as far as possible so as to provoke the narrative response to
Fig. 27. Greg Battye: *Graveside Visit*
Fig. 28. Greg Battye: untitled genre photograph
"appropriate material". Neither the dead person nor the visiting woman is identified, and the question of their status on the continuum between fact and fiction — or between documentary and directorial photographs — is not clarified by the photograph itself.

The photograph of the woman on the telephone in the motel room (Fig 28) uses genre, just as it is used in film or literature: to encode certain sets of narrative expectations. Here, one of the best known of all film genres, Film Noir, is used to invoke an association with the story types which historically characterized it. While the narrative content of those stories varied widely, they could broadly be described as "Part detective story, part gangster, part urban melodrama" (Monaco 253), told with a "peculiar blend of urban cynicism, downbeat subject matter, and dark shadows" (Monaco 249).

Dark shadows, though, are not the only cues used to strengthen the genre association and to hint at an underlying story. The woman is partly concealed, by darkness and by her sunglasses, provoking a desire to know more of her and her motivations. Her pose and expression indicate concern about something beyond the frame, in both time and space. There are clues that a significant event might have preceded the time represented in the picture, and that some consequence might follow. As information flows into the universe of the photograph and reactions flow out of it, it is desire, in various forms, which fuels the viewer's quest to solve a problem in the fictive world of the 'character'.

The work described above had met some theoretical goals, resulting in some interesting pictures and some progress toward a pragmatic understanding of how to invoke a narrative response in a viewer. However,
in general they did not excite me or meet any expressive need. I wanted to continue working within the documentary mode at some level, since there was a continuing strand of documentary meaning in my father's wartime photographs which needed to be appropriately preserved and treated in works based on those pictures. However, it was time to start working more imaginatively with the nexus between the war photographs, the stories associated with them, and my childhood memories of both.

The desire to do this was becoming stronger for another reason: my father's increasing infirmity as he advanced further into his eighties, and his decreasing capacity to remember anything about the photographs, or about family history, which might be useful to me for this project. My desire to work with his photographs was also a personal tribute to him: a way of noting, within the family, the hardship involved in leaving his family behind to go off to a war. I wanted to complete at least these photographs within his lifetime.

With the hope that the work already completed would 'spill over' into the process, I set out to work in a deliberately intuitive fashion, to evolve a way of incorporating and building on the original photographs which represented my memories as an overlay, identifiably separate from the originals but visually integrated with them into a new whole. I began with at least one theoretical imperative, which was to ensure that my pictures could clearly register two positions in time: the time of the original photographs, which would be encoded through their content and their lack of colour, and the contemporary period in which the new images had been constructed, which would be indicated by the use of colour and by the employment of digital rather than photographic printing. Strategies for combining and
integrating these time periods would be handled in terms of the arrangement of physical space shown in my (i.e. new) photographs. Objects associated with childhood, such as toys, would mingle with objects intended to retrospectively round out a representation of my father's army life. Within the physical space occupied by these objects, some of the old photographs themselves would also be situated so as to stand for two things: my father's reception and use of those images at the time of their original production, and my own later reception of the same photographs as my father showed them to me and told me stories about them.

I made a few sketches of some of these photographs before starting work on them, and through those sketches evolved the idea of a small cardboard "arena" as a space in which the "events" to be dealt with in each picture would be played out. I then made all of the photographs in this first set without further detailed planning. The actual production process involved several stages:

1. Copying the original photographs onto slide film for projection onto the cardboard "arena";
2. Collecting appropriate souvenirs, toys, documents, other photographs etc., for use as icons within each photograph;
3. Making the cardboard "stage" and arranging objects on and around it;
4. Positioning the projected image over the "stage" and test shooting for exposure;
5. Making the photographs on colour slide film, with several alternative shots of each separate arrangement to cater for
exposure variation between pictures, framing, and the visual salience of relevant objects/images;

6. Scanning the slides;

7. Muting the colours and evening out exposure variations within the frame, using Adobe Photoshop, and

8. Producing prints.

No layering, moving, editing or other internal reorganising of the photographs was done using Photoshop. Each picture is essentially "straight", but the close and harsh light of the projector produced a range of light intensities greater than the slide film could handle, and selectively exaggerated the colour saturation of some objects within the image. Since this latter effect rendered such objects apparently, but falsely, more meaningful than was intended, correction was necessary.

Nine prints selected from these became the first photographs to be completed and exhibited under the rubric of this project, being included in a University of Wollongong Faculty of Creative Arts Postgraduate Students group exhibition (with three other students) in March-April 1994. Printed digitally at a poster size (40x60 cm) on plain paper from a relatively small file, these pictures made up in size what they lacked in definition. While this was to intended to draw attention to their digital manufacture and thus to distance them from, and temporally order them in relation to, the original family photographs, it also gave them a slightly dull and coarse look.

Revisiting these photographs later when planning the shape of my final exhibition, I very much wanted to foreground them because of their developmental role in relation to the theoretical concerns already discussed in earlier chapters. With direct access, by now, to film scanners and to a
much later version of Photoshop, I was able to re-select from the original slides and choose images which had previously been technically problematic. This also meant being able to produce fine-grained scans and print them on photographic paper, making them consistent with the more domestic scale of the other photographs in that exhibition which reconstruct well-known war images. These revised versions are reprinted with the other final exhibition photographs at the end of this documentation. The integration of these two sets of photographs into one exhibition is discussed further below.

**Onward as to war**

Completion of these photographs was followed by another period of research and writing, further engaging with the problem of how to embody a narrative structure within single photographs. I had resolved to further pursue the war theme, since it was still personally significant, and seemed to hold out the potential to combine rich visual material with histories and memories which could give me a structure on which to base narratives. The constructed-photograph approach, combining existing photographs with newly created images into a narrative whole, had emerged as my preferred mode of working. I anticipated being able to capitalise on visual traditions and conventions applying to war-related imagery, though as much with a view to working across or against those traditions as to adhering to them.

The first few attempts at work in this vein were only partially successful. I firstly sought out surviving war veterans who might be interested in cooperating with me in to make photomontages which would combine portraits of them made by me with images of personal possessions,
souvenirs and mementos, including other photographs, which I would re-photograph.

Even the process of locating willing subjects was difficult, and only one photograph from this part of the project was completed (fig. 29). Though it met with some approval and interest both from its subject and from others who saw it, I found the result to be aesthetically and personally unsatisfying. Though there remains considerable residual material to be used for further imagery, a lot would need to be done to evolve a way of making better use of that material while retaining a style appropriate to the very personal investment made by its subjects.

Another potential subject for similar work was a former American Special Forces veteran who had served in Vietnam and was now dying of a brain tumour precipitated by his war experiences. Two meetings with this man at first hinted, and then unambiguously confirmed, that despite his predicament, his feelings toward wars generally were still so positive, and so emotionally unreconstructed, that we had very little in common on which to base the sort of cooperative project I had in mind. It was time to re-think.

I had used all of the New Guinea army photographs of my father's which were worth using in the first set of images described above, and there was nothing more in that same vein to be pursued. However, two new ideas had arisen from those pictures and I now wanted to follow them up.

The first of these was toys. I had had, for some years, a general interest in toys, their uses and what they stand for to their users, but the pictures based on my father's wartime snapshots were the first stimulus to thought, in anything approaching an academic vein, about how to use toys to stand for anything other than themselves. Though they were a minor part of those
Fig. 29. Greg Battye: Christine
photographs, I now began to consider other ways in which I might be able to make photographs foregrounding toys which could also take up my thematic and theoretical concerns in an aesthetically valuable and original way.

Toys and dolls are by no means a new theme or device in art, nor indeed in representation of war. I set out first to see if I could create a style and approach which would not be seen as merely imitative of some of the works I have described as partial inspirations. Barbie-type dolls seemed to offer the best possibility of creating something like actual characters: unlike the tiny, monochrome toy soldiers I had used in the earlier pictures, larger dolls with facial features and moveable limbs could be used to portray more complex emotions, capitalising on the otherwise incongruous counterpoint between their blank faces and the activities one might arrange for them to engage in. It might be possible to convey the idea of stories and characters wildly against the 'built-in' meta-narrative with which they are typecast: a Barbie who would take drugs, assault people, steal, have car accidents, indulging in wild orgies and so on.

Again, this is by no means an entirely new idea. Many 'unauthorized' Barbie websites have attracted attention, and frequently litigation, from Mattel, maker of the Barbie dolls, for depicting Barbie and her fellow travellers as participants in various forms of behaviour which are presumed to tarnish the whole brand by proxy. Perhaps because of this threat of the law, artists have sometimes adopted strategies to set depictions of the dolls themselves at one further remove from humanity. Paul McCarthy's X-rated installations, for instance, are human-scale, theme-park-like sets on which "life-sized, mechanized mannequins and cartoon characters beat off, butt-fuck and booze it up" (Hayt 83), but the life-sized mannequins are
constructed so as to mimic Barbie-type dolls rather than ordinary human beings.

At this stage however, the interest in using Barbie-type dolls lay in their reference to the notion of the family, which could perhaps link my next works to the first set of pictures based on family photographs and wartime snapshots. Barbie and her ilk are, by intention, a family of sorts, but one pre-cleansed of the sorts of dramatic events with which human families are often associated. Even Action Man almost calls to mind the significance of family by the very exclusion of family or any other intimate associations from his own militaristic/extreme sports meta-narrative. By combining all these dolls in an environment which militated against their "type-casting", I hoped that I could make visually engaging works with at least the potential for interesting narrative structure.

The key to visual originality for these works lay in my attempt to seamlessly integrate, using Photoshop, photographs of the dolls into photographs of real life-size physical environments, as though the dolls were in fact life-size. To further accentuate the removal of the dolls from their own meta-narrative worlds, they were photographed in the environments into which they would later be layered, using the same camera directions and the same light sources as were used to photograph the environments themselves.

Fig. 30 shows one such completed work; Barbie and Action Man disport themselves in bed while Ken, true to his rather wimpish status, peers through the flywire from outside. I made several such images, and now regard this work as something possibly worth completing outside the framework of this project, for other reasons and with other goals in mind. However, as will be made clear below, I had confirmed the desire to work
Fig. 30. Greg Battye: Eternal Barbie Triangle
with toys, and the belief that they could still play a role in the final work towards which I was moving.

A MEETING OF THE WAYS

My final working mode emerged from two last 'experiments' with separate subject matter and approaches. I had resolved that war would in some way be the primary thematic content but I was still drawn, by the oddly pleasant aesthetic effects it can produce, to the visual possibilities of selectively re-photographing television images. Almost all of our detailed knowledge about armed conflicts since the beginning of television has come from that very medium, and I felt that the effects I had tried with the Oprah Winfrey photographs might bear more fruit with more arresting raw video material from recorded war documentaries. Perhaps the viewer's attention would be able to re-visit the emotional significance of a single frame of a war scene, where television's relentless flow washes it away. Identifiably separate and ordered temporal events would be present in (implied by) such images — the original events, the recording of those events on film, the assembly of selected pieces of film into a videotaped program for broadcast on television, and my photographic re-recording of excerpted single frames from those programs — and thus each separate photograph of mine would hopefully stand not just for the original event, but for layers of historical and emotional response to, and interpretation of, the original event.

Once again, while some images were quite pleasing, the general effect was of insufficient mediation, insufficient artistic change. One folder of these images is contained on the CD at Appendix D. Retrospectively, it is clear that one fruitful avenue not pursued here (because I thought of it too late) would
have been to combine, and play off against each other, imagery from
documentary and fictional sources. This notion now joins the list of possible
future work. However, an invitation to submit a photograph to a group
exhibition at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in November
1999 provided the impetus to combine the documentary images with toys, in
such a way as would show the path forward to my final works for this
project.

For this photograph I knew that I wanted to use war-related toys
combined with pre-existing photographic war imagery as backgrounds or
environments into which to insert the toys. My first thought about the source
for this imagery was to use videotaped war documentary material, since that
was what I had just been experimenting with. From a documentary about
wars in the twentieth century I photographed a rather poignant close-up of a
dead or dying soldier's hands being arranged, by another pair of hands, over
a pistol belonging to the deceased. I then tried many arrangements of two
Action Man figures which could be positioned to hold a scaled toy pistol in a
similar orientation, with the intention of then superimposing or otherwise
combining the old and the new image into one composite image, but at first
there seemed little to meaningfully integrate the two images, no matter how
they were arranged or layered in relation to each other.

The addition of a child's hands to the photograph, arranging the gun in
Action Man's hands, provided the solution and in doing so also provided the
congruence of meaning and aesthetics which I had sought. Now I had life
doubly contrasted with death, between the original film/video footage and
my digital colour photograph: the physical action and shape of the original
war image was mimicked in my own constructed picture; and a new layer of
narrative, one with repetitive or even cyclic implications, linked a child’s colourful plaything with the bitter reality of war.

Fig. 31 shows the finished photographic montage, Remembering the War. I had found one satisfactory way of joining the world of toys to representations of war — one which I hoped to improve on, but I was at last making pictures of interest which seemed to have not only a technical/formal narrative structure, but a narrative structure with some significance. At last I felt myself to be on the right track.

**Theory into Practice into Theory: Building on Foundations**

The design of the final exhibition needed to be thought out in a manner which would encompass a re-presentation of some of the already-completed family/wartime montages. However, it also needed to move beyond the manner in which those photographs had attempted to cope with the narrative issue, without making them seem merely unimportant or inept.

Rather than depicting any actual physical or spatial circumstances, these pictures had provided a conceptual/temporal space into which viewers could insert themselves via a process of identification, in a similar fashion to that discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to Rejlander’s *The Two Ways of Life*. The repeated appearance across different images of one or more ‘characters’, however (my father, for instance) invoked a tendency to interpret the photographs as a series, whereas I had hoped to foreground the individual nature of each picture, and its individual narrative. These perceived narrative bonds between photographs had also tended to dominate the first prints of these photographs in the group student exhibition simply because the poster-sized prints rewarded a distant rather than a close-up view. A close viewing
Fig. 31. Greg Battye: *Remembering the War*
revealed the coarse texture of the digital printing process, something which was intended to make their contemporary status evident, but which also reduced the sensual appeal of the surface. A distant view masked the surface coarseness but at the same time, simply by bringing a greater number of images into the field of view, encouraged a perception of the images as a sequential set. I needed to re-think the presentation of these photographs before reprinting them, but for subsequent work I also needed a narrative mode which could capitalize on viewers' latent narrative urge, rather than be undone by it.

A further contributor to the perceived narrative links between these photographs was the relative weakness of the spatial 'principle' on which the internal, individual narratives depended. In Chapter 2, a distinction was made "between the space of the narrated (the story space) and the space of the narrating (the space within which, and with which, the narrated is recounted)" (69). Yet although there had been an explicit intention to make that very distinction in each photograph — in this case between the 'stage' as the space of the narrating, and the projected and physical photographs depicted on/in that stage as the space of the narrated — no rule was available by which to independently read and understand these spaces as an interpretive principle when looking at these particular photographs. In "Photos within Photographs", Max Kozloff makes the same point about such pictures generally, though with, finally, a more positive attitude to their narrative possibilities:

What makes developments along these lines in still photography very exciting, nevertheless, is that there is no tradition behind them. Nothing has been settled in the way we should interpret the
central insets in Edward Grazda's photographs of Latin American village scenes ... A photograph gives forth only one scene at a time, no matter how physically complex. By reason of these limitations, it cannot tell a story. Yet narrative pressure of the quietistic sort I am describing has encouraged a tendency to make photographic restrictions an intended content in its own right (99-100).

Ironically, a deliberate exclusion of any sense of off-screen space, intended at the time to separate each of these photographs from its companions and give emphasis to its internal content, actually achieved the opposite. My subsequent research into Bordwell's work on interpretive hypotheses and Burch's notions of off-screen space (see Chapter 2), and also the discussion of Cartier-Bresson's Beance, France, 1958 in Chapter 3) — and, indeed, some of my own subsequent photographs during the development of this project — seem to make it clear that efforts to understand events in off-screen space will turn the interpretive gaze inward, back into the frame: just the effect I had sought, but by the wrong means.

Despite their intuitive and pragmatic origins, the family/wartime montages did successfully demonstrate a number of narrative strengths and principles which can be linked, albeit retrospectively, to other aspects of the theoretical concerns examined in earlier chapters of this documentation. The physical process of re-presenting a new selection of the pictures on a smaller scale and with higher definition, for the final exhibition, has brought these narrative merits into stronger focus.

Resonating sympathetically with Kozloff's "narrative pressure of the quietistic sort," which comes from spatial issues, is a related influence linking
spatial and temporal issues. I have argued in several earlier chapters that viewing time may legitimately be taken into account as the time during which a pictorial narrative will be constructed. Barthes forced contemplation of the effect of time as he surveys the photograph of Lewis Payne (Camera Lucida 96) is itself something which takes place over time, just as any understanding of the relationship between the contained and the containing photographs in my family/wartime montages must be constructed over time. I would assert that this same "contemplation of the effect of time" is at least a contributor to a similar "narrative pressure of the quietistic sort" in my own work, and the arguments I have advanced in Chapter 4 (see 109-110 esp.) are relevant to this assertion.

The difficulty, perhaps, is in arguing for an even higher level of narrative status or complexity for these photographs without slipping into the much weaker argument that every photograph is a narrative. This is the risk posed by depending too much, for instance, on the assertion by Didier Coste (see Chapter 3) that any picture, photographic or not, takes "a simple state from a process", and by implication carries some information about the before and after of that process. If however we qualify that assertion with knowledge of the specific properties of the photograph — as Alvarado has done, surprisingly quoting Sontag for support — we have, in Alvarado's words, the "mode of analysis which releases that frozen moment" (7). What then takes the family/wartime montages one small step further toward narrative is that within each of these photographs, events which are clearly and necessarily in a before/after temporal relationship with each other are not merely implied, but directly represented. They are represented, it must be noted, partly by other photographs, which carry their own chains of
temporal implication. As Warburton (176) has argued, the strategy of superimposition is enough to "put these effects (that is, change over time shown within a single frame) within photography's grasp". If we also accept, as Rimmon-Kenan (18) has argued, that "temporal succession is sufficient as a minimal requirement for a group of events to form a story", then the "group of events" in my family/wartime montages form a story.

INTEGRATING THE NARRATIVE MODES: PRACTICE

By the time I had completed my contribution to the group exhibition at ADFA in late 1999, my research had ranged extensively over war imagery of many types and from many sources, and had drawn me away from family photographs into wider aspects of the representation of war. The extent to which attitudes to war were pre-embodied in action/war toys stood out all the more clearly for me now, against the body of real photographs made in the midst of real wars. I could start to see possibilities for integrating the fictional with the real, setting up a dialectic between the extreme-sports excitement of war seemingly promised by the toys, and the reality: boredom, terror, frustrated effort, futility, pain and death.

As is perhaps appropriate for research of this type, the last step in enabling me to move forward to practical creative works which could embody this integration was itself an act of integration. After surveying many war photographs over a considerable period, partly in the search for images mentioned early in this documentation such as the Fenton photograph (fig.2) described in the introduction, and partly in connection with making the photograph for the ADFA 1999 exhibition, I had determined which ones spoke clearly to me and which ones seemed to resonate with
some narrative force. I have discussed many of these in this documentation already, and those which were selected as starting points for my own work are reproduced in Appendix A. However, it still took some time to find a means of working with the selected images, an entry to them as a potential new creative object. After returning to my earlier examination of montages and constructed photographs however, it was suddenly clear that the key approach was one which itself integrated photographic traditions I had discussed in earlier chapters: photographic tableaux such as those made by Cindy Sherman, Eileen Cowin, Nic Nicosia, Bernard Faucon and Jeff Wall, and the use of miniature figures of various sorts in photographs by the likes of Tom Drahos, Henk Tas, Ellen Brooks and Gregory Crewdson. But rather than re-staging paintings, I would re-present some of the famous war photographs which had been distilled from my research process, images which have in many cases become icons either of particular wars or of war itself.

The process of choice for these photographs, to which mine would refer, involved a mixture of factors. I needed the images to be fairly well known ones, so that viewers might recognise the 'original' as the reference point for my work. So long as a few such works in the whole group of my photographs provoked such recognition, the point would be made that each of my pictures referred to a particular earlier work, and the other pictures could be understood to relate to an earlier 'original' in a similar fashion. Lack of immediate recognition of any particular progenitor might actually work in my favour, as one initial cognitive response for viewers would then be the cognitive effort of making the connection to that previous work, or to a war, or a period of history. This, I hoped and anticipated, would confirm an
understanding of each of my own photographs as an event in a sequence (a small sequence connecting my re-presentation with its referrent, and thus with the actual event) rather than a self-contained singularity.

Mainly however, I needed the chosen original works to resonate with some of the bases for narrativity which I have discussed here. Generically, the basic narrative requirements of temporal depiction and temporal order as discussed in Chapter 2 have been met in my own works by the chain of events involved in the making of each photograph. There is an original, historical situation; a photograph made of that event; the circulation of the photograph, sometimes widely enough for it to be recognized as standing for the event in collective memory (I am thinking of the Vietnam images in particular here); a contemporary reconstruction of the event; and lastly the making of my photograph of that reconstruction. It is this last photograph which is the work: the reconstruction itself, the photographed secondary 'event', has no continuing existence and survives only long enough to be photographed.

It is not hard to determine an elite group of war photographers, most of whom have produced more than one celebrated and repeatedly republished war image. Open any popular book on the subject of war photography and the same names, ranging across the whole of photographic history, will come tumbling out: Eddie Adams, Felice Beato, Matthew Brady, Larry Burrows, Robert Capa, Roger Fenton, Alexander Gardner, Don McCullin, Timothy O'Sullivan, Tim Page... the list is long and quite widely known, even among those for whom photography has not been a subject of special study or enthusiasm. But only a few individual images, from the many thousands produced just by those whose names I have mentioned, seemed to offer the
possibility of use in my project. In the end the selection process was largely intuitive, and undoubtedly influenced by the indiosyncrasies of personal history, before and beyond the boundaries of this project. To the extent that it was rational, I offer here some notes on the reasons for each selection.

Since the properties of the original images are necessarily intertwined with my corresponding paired re-presentations of those images, I have discussed them together. Appendix A contains reproductions of each of the selected original photographs, in the same order as that in which my own works were presented in the exhibition. My own pictures are referred to by their exhibition catalogue number and title from the exhibition, and are reproduced at the end of this Chapter.

The chosen original photographs have been published many times, and tend to be given different titles for each publication context. Few have titles which have stuck permanently. I have generally chosen, from these various possibilities, those titles which give the most information.

Clive Scott (38) cites the Vietnam War as an exemplification of how events are represented by photographs. Included, inevitably, in his short list of "priviledged images" which "come to the surface" when we think of that war are "Nguyen Kong Ut's photograph of a napalmed girl (1972)" and "Eddie Adams's picture of a Vietcong prisoner being summarily executed by the Saigon Chief of Police (1968)" (Scott 38). Scott confirms the significance of Alvarado's second category of narrative photograph (the "currency" of the photograph, its history, and the accumulated uses to which it has been put) when he says that "certain photographs are sifted out by time and the extent of their circulation, and achieve a representative status" (38).
The widespread belief that these two photographs were key elements in public disillusionment with the war in Vietnam, particularly in the U.S., would almost have merited their inclusion even without other reasons. Caroline Brothers concurs that "The power of witness subsumed in images like Adams' execution shot, and Nick Ut's photograph of children fleeing a napalm attack, seemed in retrospect ready-made for the burden of such interpretation" (205). She also, however, describes the way in which the Adams photograph changed its meaning flexibly over time from pro-war propaganda to anti-war icon. Particularly well made is the point that the image could not "have made its way into the public domain at all if there were not an audience already receptive to its message" (Brothers 204). Ut's photograph has shown greater resistance to multiple interpretation, but starting from General William Westmoreland's efforts to pass off the image as showing "the result of burns from a cooking stove" (Brothers 204), such attempts have certainly been made.

There are certainly also narrative reasons for including Adams's and Ut's photographs. Warburton (176-77) has specifically mentioned the "implied narrative" in Ut's photograph. Adams's image, by contrast, works in the same way as Cartier-Bresson's Place de l'Europe, Paris, 1932; the instant of the shutter's release is so extraordinarily chosen (or so 'luckily' caught) that it captures the moment after the victim has been shot but before the bullet has left his head. In general terms the immediately preceding event, firing the gun, and the presumably consequential death of the victim, are the obviously implied 'before' and 'after', but there has also been a level of metaphysical speculation about the image (for example the comments of Thierry De Duve in Chapter 4. In both cases, my own re-presentation of the photographs stand
not just for the images themselves, but for the history of our reception of those images.

I chose to add Larry Burrows's *Reaching Out, Battle of Hill 484, South Vietnam* to my own group of "privileged images" to be re-presented here (my image 17) because, like both Ut's and Adams's, it carries a powerful and specific sense of an immediate past and an immediate future, though differently encoded.

So long as a viewer understands that my image 17 refers to an earlier 'real' photograph, a photograph of a genuinely witnessed and otherwise unmediated reality, they will also understand the significance of Burrows's photograph. They will understand the reason it has become so signally representative of Burrows's work, and of the conditions in which much of the Vietnam war was fought. They will also understand something about U.S. race relations in the 1960s (why should it be of such photographic interest that a black man is rushing to the assistance of a white man, and why is he being held back?), and they will understand something of what has happened just before the referenced, 'original', image was made, and what might be about to happen in the referenced reality. All of this understanding, however, comes about because the photograph *narrates*.

The knowledge that my image refers to an earlier photograph, even if the viewer has not actually seen Burrows's original work, comes from outside the image itself, though hopefully from within the total set of my photographs if from nowhere else. However, the understanding of what is going on *within* the photograph — the hypotheses about events immediately preceding the depicted moment, and so on — may be derived totally within my image, and in more or less exactly the same way that one understands,
for instance, Martineau's *The Last Day in the Old Home*. We can see in image 17 that it is an 'action' photograph, that events are moving rapidly. We can see, from his bandaged knee, that the man on the ground at right has been injured previously, but his mud-covered state indicates a new, more recent and possibly fatal trauma. At left a black man, also injured and bandaged earlier, who clearly knows the prostrate man as an individual if not as a friend (comradeship across the racial divide and under the stress of battle was obviously the original principal subject and motivation for the photograph) moves to assist the man on the ground. The restraining movements of those who surround the black man seem to indicate to him that his efforts may be too late.

Exploration of attached narratives, as discussed earlier in several places in this documentation, motivated the selection of a number of the inclusions. Eddie Rosenthal's photograph from Iwo Jima, famously re-staged hours after the actual event, can still stand as an icon of heroic military triumph over adversity, particularly since a statue has been modelled on it. The sense of heroism is imparted rhetorically, similarly to the way in which the arrangement of image content in Copley's *Watson and the Shark* serves to make a universal spectacle from a particular set of circumstances which might have passed unnoticed by the world, were it not for an image being made of it. Since the flag-raising was repeated several times expressly in order to make the photograph, the finished image represents the culmination of a performance much more than the spontaneous documentation of an event. It thus has overtones of drama about it, overtones which are certainly added to by the postures of the soldiers. My own photograph (image 13), apart from referring to Rosenthal's image and its history, attempts to
deconstruct the means by which that rhetoric has been achieved by mimicking the dramatic postures against a background which de-emphasises any sense of substantive achievement.

Robert Capa's photograph of the death of the Spanish soldier, already discussed in Chapter 3, has been under suspicion for decades, and is now known with relative certainty to be staged; yet its value as an expression of the tragedy of war is not reduced. Even those who recognise the "speculation as to its authenticity" are prepared to continue to testify to Capa's image being the "single most famous photograph" of the Spanish Civil War (eg Wells 62), and the photograph continues to be published in that role, with little discussion of its quite widely-known fictional status. My own photograph, image 23, capitalises on its high level of recognition to reinvoke this attached narrative, while also mimicking the heroic/tragic posture of the figure as a reference to the presumed original intention of Capa's photograph.

The Capa photograph is also, of course, an earlier example of the critical-moment image, like Eddie Adams's, and shares with the latter the inevitability that viewers will contemplate the immediate before and after of that critical moment. Without such contemplation, indeed, the moment itself makes no sense. My own re-presentation of the photograph becomes part of the extended 'after' of Capa's photograph. As Coste says, "the model is (in) the past of its imitation, the imitation is (in) the future of the model, but also in the past of its vision and of other imitations" (276).

Photograph 18 in my exhibition has a more circuitous origin, but one still based on attached narratives. It incorporates possibly the most frequently shown single television image from the first Gulf war in 1991— a
satellite sequence showing a US 'smart bomb' hitting its target — into a new and fictional photograph-within-a-photograph, based on two actual news photographs of military press briefings. I have not been able to discover personal attributions for the two news images, but they are included in Appendix A. The result is a fiction which incorporates three truths while referring to a great lie: the alleged pinpoint accuracy with which the 'smart bombs' could be delivered. While the military controllers of information about the war went to unprecedented lengths to suggest "a squeaky clean battlefield in which smart bombs eased themselves down chimneys and benignly avoided spilling blood" (Baxter 211), the very falsity of such claims led to the repeated use of the same 'smart bomb' image, since little other visual evidence could be found to properly support this suggestion.

As a fiction, the very existence of my photograph (18) also refers loosely to a possible future for war photography, assuming that extreme restrictions such as those placed on press photographers in both Gulf Wars will continue in future conflicts. Ian Walker (qtd. in Wells: 277) suggests that the future of photographic imagery of war "may lie in such critical-artistic interventions and not in the traditional genre of documentary photography and photo-reportage."

The notion of attached narratives similarly led to the selection of the two Frank Hurley photographs on which my images 24 and 25 are based. Hurley's composite photographs of World War I, particularly the best known image of that group, Over the Top (my image 25) created an intensified version of reality through montaging of multiple unstaged, straight photographs. Hurley's fakery was not covert, being generally either visible or implied in the photograph itself, and was certainly stated overtly as a
deliberate *modus operandi* before the photographs themselves were made. His vehement argument for permission to make these pictures is noteworthy: it was "unfair to the Australian troops not to have the whole picture revealed" (Bickel 64). Only in fiction, in some cases, can the whole truth be told.

Of marginal interest perhaps is the fact that the process used in making my own images 24 and 25 followed that used in the Hurley images. My version of *Over the Top* is a composite made from nine separate images, and the other Hurley photograph, from the morning after the first battle of Passchendaele on October 12 1917, has a separate sky inserted, just as Hurley's has. The process of my own work indicated that neither picture could be made without such techniques. The traces of the construction process are about equally visible in my own images and Hurleys, and deliberately so; it is a deliberately intended (if remote) hope that anyone who notices the manner in which my own images have been made will take the effort to explore Hurley's more thoroughly. Thus is a possibly hidden but relevant story of production and process, and of a desire to tell all, brought to light.

Two of the American Civil War images, those based on works by Alexander Gardner (16 and 21 in the exhibition) are included partly because of the attached narrative of the moving of the depicted body, described by William J. Mitchell (43). There is also a small conceit involved. Since the initial showing of some of my wartime/family montage photographs led to their being perceived as a series, I decided to include in this latter group of re-presented photographs one pair of images which were in fact genuinely and meaningfully sequential, to further emphasise that the others are self-contained. The two photographs based on Gardner's original sequential pair constitute a traditionally narrative minimal sequence, against which the
singularity of every other photograph can hopefully be more clearly perceived.

The Damien Parer photograph referred to in my photograph no.15 is one of a pair of Australian icons of World War II. Parer's picture closely (self-consciously, in fact) resembles a George Silk photograph taken on Christmas day of 1942 in Buna, Papua, showing a wounded Australian Private with one bandaged eye being led to a field hospital by an indigenous Papuan. While the framing and the basic subject matter are very similar, Parer's is emblematic of a greater degree of cocky defiance which seems to communicate more strongly about a possible future. Both are included in Appendix A, but my photograph addresses only the Parer image.

Apart from its historical significance, the Parer photograph was also chosen as another variant of the critical-moment shot, though it is more similar to the Larry Burrows photograph than to Eddie Adams's summary execution picture. The Parer image is also clearly in the heroic mould, and is intended to convey a general feeling of stoical and determined survival in the future, in the face of injury and handicap from the past. While the antecedent events are clearly implied at least generically, the future is not merely open, but offers either survival on the one hand, or a surrender to injury on the other, as two distinct possibilities. The narrative work of the photograph, in a sense, is to incline us toward the view that all will be well. My photograph attempts that same narrative work by emulating the elements of posture and eyeline which seem to convey a positive future: the injured man's peep from under his bandage, his defiant cigarette, and the stolid strength of the shorter man on whom the injured one depends.
The Felice Beato photograph is another widely-reproduced one in collections of distinguished nineteenth century photographs, and thus quite recognisable, but it was included for other reasons as well. Beato seems to have made a particular habit of photographing the aftermath of quite hideous carnage, but to have done so for largely aesthetic reasons. Those of his photographs which do not show the victims of brutal death clearly indicate a sensitivity to lighting and design which would still be noteworthy today. So, indeed, do the ones which do show death and destruction, but with those, our attention is overwhelmingly drawn to the spectacle of carnage. His significance would thus seem to be that he is one of the earliest photographers to embark on what has turned out to be a major project of photography — the aestheticisation of death. Here is an eye-witness describing Beato's apparent pleasure as he inspected the Taku forts at Tientsin on August 21, 1860, after one of many bloody battles in Britain's campaign to force China to open its ports to trade in opium:

I walked round the ramparts on the West side. They were thickly strewn with dead — in the North-West angle thirteen were lying in one group round a gun. Signor Beato was there in great excitement, characterising the group as 'beautiful' and begging that it might not be interfered with until perpetuated by his photographic apparatus, which was done a few minutes afterwards. (D.F. Rennie, qtd. in Gernsheim: 100)

Photograph 19 in my final exhibition is, just possibly, that same photograph of Beato's, re-perpetuated in miniature; the literature does not connect the quotation to a particular image, but this is the most commonly reproduced of Beato's photographs of the Taku fort.
The Timothy O'Sullivan photograph, frequently known as A Harvest of Death and showing battlefield dead after the Battle of Gettysburg on July 4, 1863, is the inspiration for my own image no. 20. It was included partly because of a personal and historical mistake. This was the first photograph of the American Civil War I ever saw, as a child, and at that time I was also told that it represented the day on which the greatest number of American war casualties, before or since, were caused. I discovered in the course of research for the present project that this unfortunate distinction actually belongs to the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, when 20,000 were killed or wounded in one day. But in my own mind, it is O'Sullivan's photograph which still stands for that zenith of carnage. Certainly the same photograph has impressed others in a similar way; an etching was produced from it for Harper's Weekly (reproduced in Davenport xiv) and it remains one of the most frequently reproduced of O’Sullivan's photographs.

In my renditions of Beato's and O'Sullivan's photographs, the terrible spectacle of the piled bodies is replaced by the toys which act out a play-death pointing to the reality. This is an attempt to deal with a problem, to which Barthes has pointed, with 'straight' photographs of even the most horrific events:

Now, not one of these too skilful photographs reaches us. The thing is, as we confront them one after the other we are each time violently dispossessed of our own freedom to judge the fact:: another has groaned for us, thought for us, judged for us; the photographer has left us nothing — save only the right to intellectual aquiescence; between us and such pictures there is no bond except an interest in technique; loaded as they are by the
artist, with over-explicit instructions for reading, we cannot
discover our own response to this synthetic food, already
thoroughly pre-digested by its creator. ("The scandal of horror
photography" 32)

Brecht was right: "something has actually to be constructed, something
artificial, something set up." By doing just that, the intention is to pose a
question for the viewer about what is not shown, about the "real" story, about
the actual bodies and about the photographs which present them. In Coste's
words, "the model is (in) the past of its imitation, the imitation is (in) the
future of the model, but also in the past of its vision and of other imitations"
(276).

The Eugene Smith photograph on which my image 12 is based does not
quite fall into Barthes's "predigested" category. In this image, narrative acts in
one of the many roles Prince describes; it "effects a mediation between the
law of what is and the desire for what might be." The nature of this
mediation is similar to that already discussed above for Larry Clark's
"Untitled", from the Tulsa portfolio. As with the latter photograph, the full
emotional meaning of the picture is only felt if one thinks about events prior
and subsequent to the depicted moment. Unlike the few seconds before and
after the critical instant of, say, Eddie Adams's photograph, Smith's image
necessitates a more considered evaluation of an extended frame of reference
which certainly includes time. The baby is the punctum around which the
photograph pivots. Prior to the discovery of the child — or is it the body of a
child? — two soldiers are fighting in a war, thinking about their own safety,
about the enemy, perhaps about vengeance, strategy, hunger, fear ... and
suddenly they are confronted with the helpless tiny figure. It seems almost
palpable that both the soldiers and the viewer are thinking: what now? What the viewer feels for the baby is something very close to what Barthes felt looking at the photograph of Lewis Payne: "He is dead and he is going to die."

A few apparent absences from the list of the chosen — Roger Fenton, Don McCullin and Tim Page most noticeably, but others would argue for other names — serve to further clarify the nature of the selection process. I did in fact attempt a work based on Fenton's *The Valley of the Shadow of Death* (fig. 2), but it was not successful, probably because the total absence of human-like figures severely reduced the chances of associating my photograph with Fenton's which, as already discussed, is about something which happened before his photograph was actually made. The weakest link in a chain of photographic signifiers is a weak link indeed. As for McCullin and Page, the problem is that each has produced an enormous body of powerful work, yet neither has produced one single photograph which towers over all their others. Few would recognise a photograph by Eddie Adams other than the Viet Cong street execution, yet almost everyone recognises that single photograph, even if they do not know who made it. It is the recognisability, the establishment of trust that each of my photographs has a reference point which is 'real', that was essential to my project

The importance of attached narratives to my re-created versions of these photographs (my images 12 to 25) has been made clear in the discussion immediately above, but narrative also makes its presence felt in these pictures in several other ways. For every one of these photographs, the significance of, in Alvarado's words, "shifting attention from the narrative of the *signified* to the narrative of the *sign*, the photograph's modes of
signification" (Alvarado 11) is manifest. The pictures generally also constitute an unusually literal example of Coste's notion that any figurative representation necessarily sits in a certain time relationship to its referent, and to the notion espoused in slightly different terms by both Coste and Alvarado that a picture (for Alvarado, a photograph) will to some extent embody a representation of its own developmental process. As long as the model on which any one of my photographs is based is known to the reader/viewer, then the connection between my photograph and that original photograph will be perceived as both causal and temporal, with an unambiguous direction to the sense of time. Different photographs will prompt recognition of original referents for different viewers, but that negates neither the force nor the nature of the effect.

My image no. 18, which lacks a single well-known 'real' photograph as a referent even though it does refer to three real images, shares some of the narrative phenomena just discussed, but a different narrative effect is also at work. This is the idea which comes from Alvarado via Barthes’s "Rhetoric of the Image," the idea of a self-enclosed representation of the 'world'— a closed, fictional discourse such that the viewer is concerned with questions raised within the fictional world. Within that world, in this case, there is an obvious time sequence: the 'smart bomb' image is itself four images in a time sequence, and of course that four-part image as a whole is in the past of the surrounding photograph. Somewhat unusually too, image 18 straddles the real and the self-enclosed fictional worlds via the incorporation of one real image within a fictional one, thus perhaps presenting itself as metonymic, and as "appropriate material" for narrative interpretation.
Aesthetics and Desire

Clearly these formal relationships with time are important in establishing the possibilities, and the facts, of narrative images and narrative interpretations, but they are not the only engine of narrative. Desire, as has been discussed extensively in the previous chapter, is an agent of narrative formation and transmission, and I believe that photographs 12 to 25 show something of how and why war photographs entwine need and desire in a narrative pattern which can frequently be understood as an aestheticization of horror.

My photographs are, at once, investigations of other individual photographs, and explorations of a particular tradition within photography. They raise, and respond to, two questions always implicitly posed by the very images to which they refer. One is the nature of the imperative which leads anyone, at any time, to make photographs of events which might reasonably arouse simple repugnance and the desire to look away; the other is the related issue of our response to the representations of those events rather than the events themselves.

While the desire to make photographic representations of war may not have always been aesthetic in origin, it has often enough been exactly that, even in cases where one might not ordinarily think an aesthetic response to such events possible. I have already described Felice Beato's enthusiasm for photographing the aftermath of war and destruction; O'Sullivan's photographs from Gettysburg spring from the same deep and bloody well. Since O'Sullivan's and Beato's times, of course, the ante has been upped many times over in respect of the violence to which photography may be a witness, and as the degree of photographers' immersion in wars has
increased, so too it has become clear that photography is not merely a camp follower of war, but a fully complicit partner. It would seem that the logical end of that complicity is now being reached as imaging technologies move from being impassive recording devices to integral parts of weapons:

By the First World War, photography played a key part in reporting war and providing propaganda for the public at home. In 1991 the Gulf War revealed the scale and depth to which technologies of surveillance and so-called 'information' technologies had reached. The domestic television set became the mesmerising end of an electronic image chain which started with a digital camera travelling on the nose of a smart bomb. (Wells 276)

Thierry De Duve's analysis of the "trauma" produced by Eddie Adams's summary execution photograph, an analysis which is largely a re-statement of Barthes conundrum, "he is dead and he is going to die," is also a statement of a powerful desire for things to be otherwise — yet it is simultaneously a demonstration of a deep and fundamental magnetism exerted by that photograph. My own re-presentation of that photograph, it must be admitted, may be seen as yet another cycle of exactly the same fascination (or, as we might say, part of that continuing story): far from exempting my own pictures from these influences, I must see them as also complicit.

Before photography, of course, there is looking itself, and the link between photography and violence or death seems to go to the roots of both how and why we look (and perhaps perversely, want to look) at spectacles of horror. Soldiers have frequently spoken of the unbearable combination of elation and guilt which accompanies their survival of incidents in which
comrades in close proximity were killed. This experience may extend at least partly to the imagery of horrific events, to what John Taylor has described as "the aesthetic version of death". As he writes:

This hints at the excitement and exhilaration of survivors who survey images of corpses, a mixture of emotions arising from the recognition of death still held at a distance, and the continuing absorption in life. The distinction between those who remain alive and those who do not is absolute, but the living are unable to rid themselves of the dead. The desire for the representation of death expresses anxiety about it, and a desire for death as well. (Taylor 30)

Clayton has already told us that

Need is necessarily related to one of the biological conditions for life...Desire, on the other hand, is what happens to need when it enters history, language, culture, and society (Clayton 50).

Should there be any surprise, then, that we are so strongly, even if so apparently perversely, drawn to harshly realistic depictions of suffering in war? The photographic representation of death, in particular, implies the survival not only of the photographer, but of the viewer. It is the vicarious version (was there ever a more vicarious medium than photography?), the version at one further remove, of Taylor's "aesthetic version of death".

Other forms of imagery have displayed a fascination with death and destruction, but it is photography which has cemented the partnership in the firmest terms. This is attributable in part to the its perceived truth value, but also to the inherently distancing property which Sontag has so perceptively pinned.
As to how photographs of horrific spectacles are received by viewers, we can observe distancing as a characteristic of both the mode of looking adopted in the photographic gallery, and that used in avoiding the gaze of others while mingling at the scene of a tragedy. Zygmunt Bauman's description of this "art of mismeeting" — avoiding eye contact in order to avoid the possibility of obligation — is a perfect description of gallery behaviour, and almost a description of photography itself:

The point is to see while pretending that one is not looking. To look "inoffensively", provoking no response, neither inviting nor justifying reciprocation; to attend, while demonstrating disattention. What is required is scrutiny disguised as indifference. A reassuring gaze, informing that nothing will follow the perfunctory glance and no mutual rights or duties are presumed. (Bauman Qtd in Taylor, *Body Horror*: 40)72

These acts of self-distancing seem also to indicate something of the crumbling gap between fact and fiction into which photographs slide so comfortably, and which provides another foothold for narrative interpretation. In order to avoid the visceral response to photographed violence which might be less avoidable faced with the same event as immediate physical reality, there is an acknowledgement, perhaps, of the photograph as a special sort of fiction. Special, for example, in the way that Capa's photograph of the falling Spanish soldier is special: a fiction which somehow does not negate its perceived truth-value.
CONCLUSION

I began this project with a small number of photographs of personal significance which seemed to me to raise the possibility that single photographs might have narrative capacities, perhaps even strengths, which have generally been unrecognised. I set out to find theoretical bases according to which such a thing might be possible, and then to make some photographic pictures of my own, building thematically and procedurally from those which had sparked my initial interest, that would resonate positively with the theory.

This has been extraordinarily difficult and the topic now seems an enormous and multifaceted one, but some success has been achieved. I believe that the body of creative work for the project, and the theoretical investigations I have carried out, combine in such a way that both theory and practice have been tested and enlivened. There are a few clear signposts, too, for further creative research of this sort. The details of how practical creative work and theory have come together are discussed throughout this documentation, but in this conclusion I briefly summarise some of the main points.

Both groups of pictures in the final exhibition address some of the theoretical principles of narrative which were shown in chapters 2, 3 and 4 to have possible application to single photographic pictures. In different ways, the family montage photographs and the re-presented war photographs succeed, in Barthes words, in "shifting attention from the narrative of the signified to the narrative of the sign" ("Rhetoric of the Image" 45). In the case of the images containing family photographs, this allows us to attend to the
contained photographs as objects with a history and even as objects with a photographic 'now' within the frame of their re-presentation. In the case of the re-created war photographs, attention is shifted by a different means and with a different purpose. At one level these images represent groups of dolls in a spatial relationship implying action, while at another level the recognisable trope of their arrangement signifies a particular other, historical, photograph. Since my own photographs are clearly subsequent in time to those referred to, there is ample room for "the confusion of consecution and consequence" which Barthes, again, describes as precisely the "mainspring of narrative" (57 above). If Rimmon-Kenan's view "that temporal succession is sufficient as a minimal requirement for a group of events to form a story" is accepted, then my photographs meet my theoretical criteria even more easily.

Certainly the images in both groups meet two of Alvarado's three different possible narrative modes, though different sets and different individual photographs do so in different ways. None of my images here is a 'found' photograph in Alvarado's first sense, and indeed I specifically rejected the possibility of attempting to produce the body of my creative work in that fashion. Certainly however there are attached narratives (Alvarado's second sense), of different strengths, working with most of the images in the final exhibition. Certainly also, the second group of photographs (12 to 25) construct "closed fictional world(s)" (the special mode of photographic narrative discussed by Alvarado in relation to advertising) within which we can quite reasonably pose questions about a past and a future. The universe of suitable questions and answers, expressed in linguistic terms, is limited, but it has always been clear that this would be the
case. Images can succeed — and I believe and hope that mine do — in providing a richness of emotional tone which makes up for those limitations.

The above considerations apply to the whole set of photographs in my final exhibition, albeit in different measure, and in different ways to each of the two broad groups (that is, the family-photograph montages completed quite early in my research, and the re-presented war photographs completed in 2001). One hopes for a sense of development throughout a project such as this, and I believe it is identifiable in the approach taken with the latter images. I mentioned, in Chapter 3, Berenice Abbott's approach to realism in photography which, as described by John Tagg (111-112) was "the product of a complex process involving the motivated and selective employment of determinate means of representation." In other words, as Abbott also said, realism is not a simple matter of comparing the finished art work with some external independent reality; there is the important question of what it is that is represented.

For me, the thematic problem solved by the later works is not so much how to represent something, as what to represent. I am not referring here to the problem faced by all photographers ('what shall I take/make a picture of?'), though early in my research I had that problem as well. The trickier issue for me has been: what, in a chain of potentially narrative signifiers, shall I choose to represent (photograph) in order that the finished work shall signify, inter alia, narrative itself? It is for others to judge the degree of my success, but I believe my theme and approach meet a substantial part of the challenge.

I would have liked to arrive at a resolution of one issue raised on a few occasions in this documentation, but not satisfactorily answered: the question
of viewing time for a still image, and the degree to which we can reasonably relate this to something like Chatman's notion of "discourse time." I have probably been in error in raising the issue exclusively in terms of time, though it is certainly raised in that way in relation to film, where viewing time is fixed and other aspects of viewing are under strong controlling influences. The question is more one of patterns of viewing, systems of viewing; the extent to which the image itself can exert a measure of control or influence which affects all viewers in much the same fashion. There is room here for creative research, for the making of works which systematically probe this question.

At the beginning of the Introduction I posed my own research question in the form "can a single photographic picture be a narrative?" In the early stages of my research, I did not strongly distinguish between 'story' and 'narrative', and did not systematically consider any other possibilities. However, at 62 above, I noted that Gérard Genette's distinction between story, narrative and narrating is useful because

it allows us to make the particularly useful distinction of singling out narrating as an area of particular interest, and again to see that for a minimal narrative form such as the photographic picture, it is possible that the process may be more valuable and rewarding than the end product. Since the story, as well as the narrative, will be minimal, our central interest should perhaps be in photographic pictures which narrate, as much as in the minimal story they do narrate.

There are, I believe, minimal stories at work in various ways in all of the photographs in this exhibition, yet I do not feel myself, beyond a rather
casual use of the language, to have shown that a photographic picture, whether a single 'straight' exposure of a layered and multifaceted montage, can "tell a story". Somehow it is a sense of process, of transition, of picture-making as a means of thinking about something over a long period, which lingers as the real power of narrative which photographs may have.

Capa's photograph of the falling Spanish soldier retains its power precisely because we understand the significance of, and relationship between, a photographic process and a photographic product. Bordwell speaks of narration "as a process, the activity of selecting, arranging, and rendering story material in order to achieve specific time-bound effects on a perceiver" (Introduction xi). Perhaps that is what my photographs do, and perhaps that is enough; they may not be narratives, but they narrate. They show, straightforwardly, and they document what is before the lens; but they tell of things beyond what we see. In Taylor's words again:

Every aspect of documentary can be simulated in fiction — the look, the evidence and the argument. What distinguishes documentary from fiction is the way that viewers read the texts, what assumptions they make about them, and what they expect from them. These distinctions are notably sharp in photography, which always presents the fragile mortality of those in view.

(Taylor 37)

"Those in view" on this occasion are toys, layered with the assumptions and expectations brought from their normal roles, and playing instead the real people we have become familiar with over many years, in images which have come to stand for war itself. Just as a single moment photographically extracted from time can remind us of the extended duration which actually
surrounds it, so the replacement of real people with these replicas may, for a moment, remind us again of the real and fragile mortality of those so replaced. If fiction can bring us to this truth, then that is as it should be.
THE PHOTOGRAPHS:

(Note: The images are listed, and presented in the following pages, in the order in which they were hung in the Wollongong exhibition. This is slightly different from the hanging order at ADFA, described in the catalogue for that exhibition at Appendix B.)

1-11 Untitled

12 After W. Eugene Smith (Saipan, 1944)
13 After Joe Rosenthal (Iwo Jima, 1945)
14 After Eddie Adams (Saigon, 1968)
15 After Damien Parer (near Salamaua, New Guinea, 1943)
16 After Alexander Gardner (Gettysburg, 1863) (1)
17 After Larry Burrows (Hill 484, South Vietnam, 1966)
18 The Briefing. Based on a synthesis of two widely distributed news/TV images: a) General Norman Schwarzkopf briefing reporters in Riyadh in January 1991, and b) four reconnaissance images showing a laser-guided ‘smart’ bomb hitting its target. 73
19 After Felice A Beato (Taku, China, 1860)
20 After Timothy O’Sullivan (Gettysburg, 1863)
21 After Alexander Gardner (Gettysburg, 1863) (2)
22 After Hyunh Con (‘Nick’) Ut (South Vietnam, 1972)
23 After Robert Capa (Cordoba, Spain, 1936)
24 After Frank Hurley (near Zonnebeke, Flanders, 1917)
25 After Frank Hurley (Over the Top, also near Zonnebeke, Flanders, 1917)
1. Untitled
2. Untitled
3. **Untitled**
4. Untitled
5. Untitled
6. Untitled
7. Untitled
8. Untitled
9. Untitled
10. **Untitled**
11. Untitled
12. After Eugene Smith
13. *After Joe Rosenthal*
After Eddie Adams
15. After Damien Parer
16. *After Alexander Gardner (1)*
17. After Larry Burrows
18. The Briefing
19. After Felice A. Beato
20. *After Timothy O'Sullivan*
21. After Alexander Gardner (2)
22. After Hyunh Con ('Nick') Ut
23. After Robert Capa
24. After Frank Hurley
25. *After Frank Hurley* ("Over the Top")
It is not suggested here that montage is an invention of the digital age, and some works from the great flowering of photomontage early in the twentieth century, and from the mid-nineteenth century, will be examined for the way in which they largely set the parameters according to which photographic images could be meaningfully combined. These works have also indicated some of the directions in which narrative possibilities for photographic pictures might develop.

2 See for instance Tzvetan Todorov, *The Two Principles of Narrative*, Diacritics, vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall 1971). A clear summary of the sets and types of relationships which are fundamental to Todorov's schema is given by Branigan (4-5). Todorov introduced the term "narratology," which has become the formal term for narrative analysis generally, though this embraces study of the act of narrative comprehension, as well as of the narrative structures which were Todorov's particular concern.

3 The word "collage" is used here in the sense of its broad definition, "Internationally current French term for the sticking together of disparate elements to make a picture" ("Collage," The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, 1988 ed.). Since this thesis concerns photographs, convention will be followed in using the term "montage" to describe a collage made with photographs ("Montage," The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, 1988 ed.); where it becomes necessary to distinguish a collage constructed exclusively with photographic components from a collage which includes some non-photographic components, the terms "photomontage" and "montage" will be used, respectively.

4 Part of the purpose of this project is to examine the narrative potential of single pictures, unassisted by the presence of verbal material. Clearly stories can be told in words, so their exclusion in posing this question is significant if only because it eliminates certain trivial cases. A photographic picture of a short story, for instance, is both a picture and a story, but not in any sense which is helpful to this research. In fact, many pictures, photographic and otherwise, use words both for their graphic and semantic values, and some examples are discussed below. By seeking an answer to a strenuous case, we ensure that it is worth proceeding further.


7 For example, (in relation to Washington Allston's painting *The Dead Man Restored to Life by Touching the Bones of the Prophet Elisha*, 1811-14): "The work exemplifies history painting's concern with a narrative of significant human action, conveyed dramatically through facial expression, gesture, and posture" (21); and in another context, discussing generic boundaries: "Although very different enterprises, genre painting and history painting share the fundamental trait of being narrative modes in which success depends upon readability" (35).

8 That is, to *The Dead Man Restored to Life...*, the work mentioned in Note 4, above.

9 These include the bluebell which the blind girl touches, the butterfly on her cape, and the double rainbow, none of which she can see to enjoy. The small note fixed to her collar rather superfluously adjoins us to 'pity the blind', while her younger companion on her lap is pulling the blind girl's cape over her eyes, as if to experiment with the experience of blindness. That ravens, rather than the many colourful birds which could have been chosen to accentuate blindness in the same way as the butterfly, are present is presumably significant, but somewhat indeterminate; in Christian symbolism a raven may be "an
emblem of God’s Providence” (Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, based on the original book of Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, revised by Ivor H. Evans. Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd. 1994, 896.) but more generally it is “A bird of ill-omen; fabled to forbode death, and to bring infection and bad luck” (Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, 896). Lister discusses the flower, butterfly and rainbow, but curiously does not mention the ravens.

10 John Frederick William Herschel is remembered chiefly for his contributions to astronomy, along with his father William and his father’s sister Caroline, but he is also credited with the invention of sensitized photographic paper and the use of sodium thiosulphate as a fixer. Herschel corresponded with Cameron in her youth, at least partly about his scientific work in this area, and he seems to have been the inspiration for her to take up photography later; clearly it was the lure of applying this technology to her strongly creative purposes, rather than the scientific details of its operation, which fired her imagination. See Julia Margaret Cameron, “The Annals of My Glasshouse,” Photography: Essays and Images, Ed. Beaumont Newhall. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980, 134-139.

11 At the time of the inaugural meeting of the Photographic Society of London in 1853, Newton was “miniature painter to the court”; he “denied photography’s position as an independent art, and urged photographers who were taking studies to be used by painters to put the image slightly out of focus”. See Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography: from 1839 to the present day. Rev. and enl. ed. London: Secker and Warburg, 1972, 59. Newton’s paper is reprinted in Beaumont Newhall, ed., Photography: Essays and Images, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980) 79-90.

12 In his History of Photography: from 1839 to the present day, Newhall divides photography into four stylistic trends: straight photography, the formalistic, documentary, and “the equivalent”. The latter is a term adopted from Alfred Steiglitz and used to designate photographic metaphors — pictures in which “The subject is recognizable, but it is only the starting point, for it is charged with meaning by the vision of the photographer” (Newhall 197). Although Newhall describes straight photography as “classical” and exhibits a desire to exclude some examples of “the equivalent” from the domain of photography proper, he does spend much more space in this chapter discussing examples of “the equivalent” than he does in discussing any of his other three categories, and the discussion is generally positive toward such works. Newhall has been criticized comprehensively elsewhere (see for example Jonathon Green, American Photography: A Critical History, 1945 to the Present Day, New York: Abrahams, 1983) for favouring the straight approach to the significant detriment of other forms of photography in his History.

13 This quotation from Brett’s address to the London Camera Club is as given by Scharf (108); Scharf notes (n. 340) that Brett’s address was written up in the British Journal of Photography (5 April 1889, 235-237), and his quotation is presumably from that source.

14 The notion of “ideal types” as used by Max Weber in the context of his philosophical approaches to social science is described in “Ideal types,” The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, 1999 ed., in the following terms: “used by Max Weber to denote entities (including, e.g., types of ‘action’, society, or institution) as constructed ‘hypothetically’ by an investigator from component elements with a view to making comparisons and to developing theoretical explanations; the components out of which a ‘type’ is constructed being empirically observable or historically recognized” (405).

15 Rejlander’s The Two Ways of Life was attacked as being obscene, even though it was purchased by Queen Victoria, herself a keen photographer. Fading Away was attacked because it was felt that the scene was so painful that to depict it photographically constituted an affront or intrusion, even though the event depicted was fictional.
16 Episode 1340 of Series 15, entitled "Dog Eat Dog", broadcast by ABC-TV (Australia) on the evening of Tuesday 1 February 2000.

17 Bearing in mind the discussion of mimetic and diegetic theories at the beginning of this section, "telling" here may safely be read as either "telling" or "showing". As I am quoting Prince, I have not changed the terms he uses in his own discussion.

18 Entries in the Dictionary of Narratology indicate, using SMALL CAPITALS, cross-referenced terms which form headings elsewhere in the Dictionary. I have typed these without the capitalization, since out of context it has no meaning.

19 The entry under "narrative" in Prince's Dictionary is perhaps the most comprehensive and even-handed discussion of narrative, in all its possible manifestations (though generally centred on textual instances of narrative) to be found anywhere. Positions taken by different authors are helpfully grouped and attributed, and a list of key publications by those authors at the end of the entry allows the reader to locate key sources via the bibliography. It would be tempting to merely quote Prince's entry as is to resolve my own definition problems, but I am using my own discussion of what constitutes narrative in general partly in order to arrive at a description of narrative properties which suits, and can be applied to, photographic pictures as a special case of narrative media.

20 Story/discourse (histoire/discours) is the distinction made by Emile Benveniste to separate the information actually transmitted (histoire) from the enunciation of that information (discours) which also implies a receiver and a sender. The distinction can be difficult to make in practice even with text, and even more difficult with pictures. Seymour Chatman uses these same terms for the story/narrative distinction as already described in the Dictionary.

Fabula and sjuzet are Russian Formalist terms, both of which emphasize the notion of plot; fabula corresponds to story (the actual events which are arranged into the plot) while sjuzet is the pattern or organization of those events, the plot as abstracted from the events themselves. Bordwell's discussion of the distinction (Narration in the Fiction Film, esp. 49-57, 64-73) is particularly clear and thorough.

Chronology and causality are, respectively, the emphases which for Forster (1927) distinguish between two varieties of narrative, story and plot.

21 One cannot help but warm to Genette when he says in Narrative Discourse Revisited of the formalist opposition, story/plot, and particularly of its French translation fable/sujet, that the "terms are so inappropriate that I have just hesitated, again as always, over which is which" (13)

22 Rimmon-Kenan is responding to Prince's discussion of the notion of 'minimal story' in his A Grammar of Stories (The Hague: Mouton, 1973). She quotes the relevant passage on page 18 of her own work.

23 Discussion of order, duration and frequency at this juncture would seem to exceed the required level detail in this context, given the limited applicability the terms will have in relation to photographic pictures. Bordwell's discussion in Narration in the Fiction Film (77-88), which refers to Chatman's work, is a clear and thorough source of information on this formalist approach to time.

24 See the full discussion in Chatman "What Novels Can Do that film Can't," 122-123. Reproducing this discussion in my main text would be, again, excessive detail.


26 Though, in this chapter, I have separated the formal analysis of narrative from the analysis through psychological structures, here is a demonstration that they are in fact always part of the same continuum.

27 Burch does not clarify it in these terms, but presumably the pinnacle of the pyramid referred to as "projected into the surrounding space" terminates at the camera at the time of filming and, by extension, at the eye of the viewer of the finished film.

28 Clayton quotes extensively from the two sources already mentioned (Peter Brooks, Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative New York: Knopf, 1984, 47; Teresa de Lauretis, Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, 104) and from others, with sufficient detail to establish a clear outline of the ways desire has been treated theoretically in relation to narrative across a broad range of research. In view of this, and since I wish in any case to identify a slightly different approach to desire which is peculiar to its manifestations in relation to photographs and photography, I have not explored writings on desire greatly beyond Clayton's paper. Some useful comments on both Brooks and de Lauretis can be found in the notes to ch. 6 of Branigan, op.cit.

29 Leo Bersani, the author in question, appears to equate the highest peak of desire with explicitly sexual violence, and blames narrative and mimesis for being forms which cherish such content. Clayton makes clear his own view: "I would like to suggest instead that a hostility toward one kind of form provokes, stimulates, and authorizes Bersani's fascination with violence" (45).


31 No mention either of this projective test, or of its author, could be located.

32 'Drive' is in some contexts seen as a more respectable term for 'instinct,' but may be distinguished from it on the basis that instinct is postulated as a biological function connected to external stimuli. It is also distinguished from need on the basis that drive, at least according to Freud, is a constant force and involves internal stimuli; a need may however be satisfied.

33 Even at the heart of these "few photographs" there is a perversely attached narrative, in Alvarado's second sense (see Chapter 3). The photograph central to Barthes's text is a photograph of his mother, which he "cannot reproduce" because it "exists only for me" and would for the reader be "nothing but an indifferent picture" (Camera Lucida 73). In its place, or to stand for it in the reader's mind as we peruse his text, Barthes gives us (67) a photograph captioned Nadar: The Artist's Mother (or Wife). W.J.T. Mitchell, in a footnote (n. 20, Picture Theory 305) to his consideration of Camera Lucida, reports that Joel Snyder has informed him that this provenance is probably deliberately misquoted to attach "a confused 'legend' to this photo" (305). The photograph is, according to Snyder, one made by Paul Nadar, son of Gaspar-Felix Tournachon (known as Nadar) "and is of his mother, Nadar's wife. Given the use Barthes Makes of the photograph, the confusion of father and son, wife and mother, is hardly surprising" (W.J.T. Mitchell 305).

Warburton is referring to the photograph by Nick Ut which appeared first on the front page of the *New York Times*, 9 June 1972, showing South Vietnamese children fleeing Trangbang after a South Vietnamese plane had dropped napalm. The photograph has been reproduced numerous times since then, and is one of the images most frequently credited with changing U.S. public opinion about American involvement in the war. In recent years it has also increasingly been used to stand both for the Vietnam war and for the photographic imagery of that war.

Postman, in particular, asserts that a photograph "does not present to us an idea or concept about the world, except as we use language itself to convert the image to idea" and "cannot deal with the unseen, the remote, the internal, the abstract" (72).

This notion of the "decisive moment" was distilled by Cartier-Bresson himself in his first book, *Images a la Sauvette*, published in English as Henri Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment* (New York: Verve and Simon and Schuster, 1952. Excerpt rpt. in Goldberg, Vicki, ed. *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981). Cartier-Bresson's own rendition of the key requirement runs thus: "We work in unison with movement as though it were a presentiment of the way in which the elements in motion are in balance. Photography must seize upon this moment and hold immobile the equilibrium of it" (385).


This notion of "windows" and "frames" comes from John Szarkowski, *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1978), 18-19. He presents windows and frames as the two poles of a continuum: mirrors are aligned with romanticism and are expressive of the artist's ideas, while frames are aligned with the realist tradition and tell us about the world.

This is not the place to canvass the age-old question of the relationship between art and photography in general, but by the term 'art photography' I wish to distinguish photographic pictures which overtly begin life under the rubric of art from those which, as Sontag discusses, are eventually received as art after their original non-artistic purpose is forgotten (see esp. "Photographic Evangels" in Susan Sontag, *On Photography* 115-149).


This work has a complex publication history, described by Van Deren Coke (Van Deren Coke, *Photography: A Facet of Modernism*. San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986 (132, note 1)) as follows: "Tulsa" was published first as a book (New York: Lustrum Press, 1971) and later as a portfolio (New York: Lustrum Press, 1974) comprising ten photographs. A second portfolio (RFG Publishing, 1980) mirrors the original book in that all of its fifty images are identical in the selection and sequencing. In 1983 the book was republished by Larry Clark.

The apparent conflict between the dates (1980 and 1971) is at least explicable in terms of different provenance for the images mentioned here. The publication history in the note above makes clear that except for the 1974 selection, the set of photographs in the portfolio remains unchanged throughout its various published forms, and they all therfore date from
1971 or before. In the "untitled" case, the date reflects the publication of the RFG book in 1980, while "Funeral for a baby" was presumably made in 1971.

44 Quoted by Van Deren Coke, op. cit., from an interview with Clark in Village Voice, v. 25, no. 42 (October 15-21, 1980), 1.

45 Originally published as Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography." (Die Literarische Welt, 18 and 25 September and 2 October, 1931). Republished, trans. Stanley Mitchell (Screen 13.1, Spring 1972); republished, trans. Phil Patton (Artforum 15.6, 1977) 46-51. The latter version has been more widely reprinted (e.g. Alan Trachtenberg, ed., Classic Essays on Photography (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island books, 1980) 199-216) and is thus more easily accessible as a whole, but the particular meaning of the passage quoted is far more clear in the Mitchell translation given by Burgin. Oddly, where the Mitchell translation refers to GEC, the Patton translation refers to AEG, which seems far more likely to have been Benjamin's original target.


47 Information summarized from Diamonstein, Visions and Images.

48 The manner of attachment of narratives to pictures which is described here could include paintings, and the painting Watson and the Shark, described in Chapter 1, is just such an example.


50 As with the previously quoted segment from "A Short History of Photography", the idea is much more neatly encapsulated in the Screen translation by Mitchell. The corresponding passage in the Phil Patton translation in Alan Trachtenberg, ed., Classic Essays on Photography is at page 202.

51 In some advertisements Bartholemew actually used models to directly represent or refer to particular movie characters. In the General Electric ad the reference is to a generic style. This is discussed in Wride (21-22).


53 By "these pictures", Robinson is referring to photographs which failed as single exposures because of the shortcomings in contemporary materials as outlined above.


55 This discussion is necessarily highly compressed. Dawn Ades' Photomontage is a good single source of information on the historical and artistic complexities of photomontage.

56 Roh's book is in German and unavailable to this author. Phillips gives the original source as Franz Roh, Nachexpressionismus (Leipzig: Klinckardt und Biermann, 1925) 45-46.


This connection is mentioned in the catalogue entry for Eileen Cowin in the exhibition Masterpieces of Photography from the George Eastman House Collections (date unknown).

This comment appears in a brief statement by Eileen Cowin in the online program for the 1998 Fanny Knapp Allen Conference at Rochester College. As of 6 August 2000 the relevant page could be found at: http://www.rochester.edu/College/AAH/news/cowin.html

For an analysis of this use of photographs, see Max Kozloff, "Photos within Photographs," Photography and Fascination: Essays by Max Kozloff (Danbury, New Hampshire: Addison House, 1979) 91-100.

At the time I made these photographs, Oprah Winfrey's program format was more like Rikki Lake's is in 2001; groups of people entwined by some petty grievance would air their mutual antagonism while a studio audience barracked for one or the other party. Brief captions were superimposed over close-ups of each person to summarise their position in the dispute.

The distinction between a performed operation or an inherent structure is the same one as is also made in the previous chapter on theory, between narrative as a way of understanding how the world works, and narrative as a fundamental way in which the world actually does work. Brooks sees metaphor as the central process in narrative, explaining Todorov's five stages of narrative "transformation" — the same entity as Bordwell's "canonic story format", a sequence of events which changes from order, through disorder to renewed order — as the "reanimation" of an initial "collapsed" metaphor. See Peter Brooks, Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984) 27, 29.

One of my most personal goals was also realised when my father, visiting me in Canberra, was able to see the finished works.

At this stage I did not have direct access to a film scanner, and the only means at my disposal for moving files around was floppy disks. As is described later in the chapter, improvement in technology has also allowed significant aesthetic development.

Work with dolls or toys is far too prevalent to be able to give a comprehensive list. The work of David Levinthal, as described in the previous chapter, would be one example.

A useful source of information on every aspect of Barbie's complex history is Yona Zeldis McDonough (Ed), The Barbie Chronicles (New York: Touchstone; Sydney: Bantam, 1999).

See William J. Mitchell, The Reconfigured Eye, 43.


There is NO p. 266 in original document
Authors cited in text:


---. "What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa)." *Critical Inquiry* 7 (Autumn 1980): 121-140.


91-100.


W. Eugene Smith. Saipan 1944
Joe Rosenthal. Iwo Jima, February 23, 1945
Eddie Adams. *Execution in Saigon* 1968
Damien Parer. *Near Salamaua* New Guinea 1943
George Silk. Buna, Papua 1942
Alexander Gardner. *Slain Rebel Sharpshooter* 1863
Larry Burrows. *Reaching Out, Battle of Hill 484, South Vietnam*
Press photograph of Gulf War briefing (from Wells 276)
Press photograph of Gulf War briefing (from Freedman and Karsh, illustrations 9 and 10)
Felice A Beato. *Interior, Great North Fort, Taku 21 August 1860*
Timothy O'Sullivan. *Harvest of Death* Gettysburg July 1863
Alexander Gardner. *Fallen Sharpshooter* 1863
Hyunh Con ('Nick') Ut. South Vietnam 1972
Robert Capa. *Death of a Loyalist Soldier* Cordoba, Spain 1936
Frank Hurley. The morning after the first battle of Passchendaele

Flanders 1917
Frank Hurley. *Over the Top*. Near Zonnebecke, Flanders 1917
Catalogue from ADFA exhibition
WAR STORIES

An Exhibition of Photographs

By

Greg Battye

Curated by

Jeff Doyle

ACADEMY LIBRARY
ADFA
15 MAY - 3 JULY 2001
University College, Australian Defence Force Academy Publication
War Stories  Jeff Doyle,
School of Language Literature and Communication, ADFA.

This catalogue is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Enquiries should be made to the publisher. Printed by the University College Document Production Centre, Northcott Drive, Campbell ACT Australia.

Cataloguing in Publication Data
National Library of Australia

War Stories

ISBN:

1. Fine Art 2. War. 3. Pphotography
I. Battye, Greg II. Doyle, Jeff, 1952
III. Australian Defence Force Academy. IV. Title
There is no need in this small volume for a long-winded framing commentary from the curator. The less so when Greg Battye's work is accompanied by his own substantial and importantly intelligent essay, which follows over. Briefly then, photography has finally and perhaps more so in this digital age, emerged from one (perhaps more) of its aesthetic constraints – it need no longer be judged as merely something that 'looks like' its alleged subject. The usual reply “oh that’s a terrible photograph” – translated as ‘it doesn’t look like the me I want to see’ can be relegated once and for all to the bin of the family snap – the repository of a kind of never-to-be-fulfilled desire which would keep the post-Freudians of a Lacanian bent happy for decades.

Happily we have moved to accept that like almost all things created by some or other aspect of human intelligence, and always written largely in the still recognisable high arts (despite post-modernity’s attempts at squeezing the otherwise concatenated spectrum), photography too relies heavily on artifice, spectacle (not quite so obviously as we might think since I do not mean simply the spectacle of the subject or content) and performativity. Oh, but you say I always thought the arty photographers relied on illusions and the tricks of the dark room. True, but that is the very point; these early tricks of the illusion are a mere surface upon a more profound representational performance is played out. In its simplest manifestation it might be observed that many of these photographs look like images of other photographs.

In this way the archives or museums of both subject matter (what the image might be said to be about perhaps), and their technologies (the obvious one of how the image is made, and yet more, but with difficulty, how the image is made or seen
to be about its subject), are the new sub-stratum upon and with which the photographer performs.

Greg Battye’s images remake both personal narrative and family memory (in particular for this exhibition) of war and wartime and also the more public iconic (in for once an older and more appropriate sense than current fashion uses) referents and re-reads as he rewrites them – as he in effect makes them ‘artificial’ – no, a better word here is to say Battye makes them ‘artifice’. A game, you observe. Yes and No. Who says games aren’t serious and loaded with ethical concerns, in any case? But it is important to note that these performances aren’t the mere trappings and signs of post-modernity. No. As they deploy parody, irony, pastiche and collage – and all the other technologies of the torn and gappy post-modern artistic surface – Battye’s images self analyse. Nothing so twee as to say they de-construct themselves. This is passé. Rather they demonstrate before us how artificial images are re-constructed. Literally, almost, the images ex-hibit themselves. Of course as they do they explore if not explode the inhibitions, images, lore, narratives and memories of the individual maker, posed against and within in this case the larger national ‘museum’ of iconic images, narratives and lore of both Australian and international military experiences.

Battye writes below that an early childhood desire to find closure within the stories and images merged with his later practice and theoretical interest in photographic narrative. This exhibition is the result of a long process of working through that and other driving forces. That it comes together at this time, is a welcome point of convergence for all concerned. It is of course nothing like an ending of the process. We are however well rewarded by this stop along the way - this temporary pause in the narratives.

Jeff Doyle
June 2001
[Less] than at any other time does a simple reproduction of reality tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or GEC yields almost nothing about these institutions. Reality proper has slipped into the functional. The reification of human relationships, the factory, let’s say, no longer reveals these relationships. Therefore something has actually to be constructed, something artificial, something set up.

— Walter Benjamin (1931)

This exhibition represents work from both the beginning and the end of a long journey connecting memory, imagination, photography and war. It is a journey triggered by stories told to me in childhood, stories perplexingly thickened by looking at photographs from a lifetime before my own. It interweaves themes of personal significance with theoretical concerns that grow from those personal roots.

The most important of these connections between the personal and the theoretical has been a desire to make narrative photographs: single photographic images that, without support derived from membership of a sequence, or from captions, tell a story. Narrative has not been the only goal, but its central importance stems from the strong sense of story I always had as a child when looking through snapshots taken of, and sometimes by, my father during World War 2. In some of these he was in uniform, either in Australia or in New Guinea, and in some he was simply relaxing with his family. My effort to understand the significance of the New Guinea photographs, in particular, involved reconciling their manifest content (mostly cheerful-looking men engaged in an apparently peaceful, semi-organised, bureaucratic, but
mysterious activity) with the stories my father could sometimes be urged to tell about his wartime experiences. Though he had not been employed in a combat role, he had seen enough of actual combat and its consequences to be able to describe events at extreme variance with the uniformed holiday-camp atmosphere that seemed to emanate from the pictures.

I was puzzled about what sort of phenomenon 'the war' really was, and the answer to this fundamental question seemed to recede even further, to become more rather than less confusing, with the acquisition of every further detail and particularity. The task of reconciling the photographs with the much more lurid impressions of war gained from my child contemporaries was another source of confusion, and since the photographs were kept in an old suitcase together with other family photographs, some from before my birth and some taken long after the war, I also tended to link unrelated events in those other photographs to my quest for closure about the war. My state of mind in relation to the wartime photographs thus resembled, in some respects, the "confusion between consecutiveness and consequence, chronology and causality, [which] constitutes perhaps the most powerful motor of narrativity".1

As I grew older, the same snapshots increasingly seemed to speak to me reflexively — not of their primary reference to events in my family’s life, but of my own memories of how I felt as a young child struggling to comprehend them, and of the internal world I had then created in which all of these partly-understood phenomena joined with each other to make an idiosyncratic whole, a personal sort of sense. If anything this increased the feeling that the pictures were inhabited by, or connected to, something like a narrative.

Later brushes with pictorial narrative, in my own work and elsewhere, led me to an intense interest in the notion of the single photograph as a possible narrative form, and to a desire to experiment with ways in which such photographs could be deliberately made. The images which form the first
part of this exhibition are an attempt to create that indeterminate early sense of story.

Several threads emerging from these photographs provided an impetus to further work. Rather than any actual physical or spatial circumstances, the photographs provide a conceptual/temporal space into which viewers insert themselves via a process of identification. One strong source of identification was the persistent appearance of one or more ‘characters’ across several different images, invoking a tendency to interpret the photographs as a series, even though I had rather wished to foreground the individual nature of each picture, and particularly their individual narratives. Film theory has long made much of the significance of the frame, and the activities and connections of characters within, and in relation to, that frame. I had anticipated that the frame itself, acting as it ordinarily does in straight documentary-style photographs (and as in film) to reinforce a presumption that the events contained by it are a self-contained and interrelated set, would constrain interpretations to within each single photograph. But to assume this is, exactly, to reckon without the strength of the narrative urge; the will to make narrative connections where perhaps there are none, to tie together events with the thread of a story if one is to be found (or made). I needed a narrative mode which could capitalize on this narrative urge rather than be undone by it.

By now my research had drawn me from family photographs into wider aspects of the representation of war, photographic and otherwise. The use of toy soldiers and other war-related toys in the earlier images had focused my attention on the extent to which attitudes to war itself were pre-embodied in the toys, and this stood out all the more clearly against real photographs made in the midst of real wars. The latter group of photographs in this exhibition (12 to 25) is an attempt to set up a dialectic between the extreme-sports excitement of war seemingly promised by the toys, and the reality: boredom, terror, frustrated effort, futility, pain and
death, as depicted in the well-known images of war which are referred to in these reconstructions.

Narrative makes its presence felt in these pictures in several ways. One formal expression of narrative structure, emanating directly from literary theory, requires the depiction of identifiably separate events within a work, ordered and linked in time within the work itself independently of any need for external information. This requirement is met here by the chain of events involved in each photograph: the original situation; a photograph made of that event; the circulation of the photograph, sometimes widely enough for it to be recognized as standing for the event in collective memory; a contemporary reconstruction of the event; and the making of a new photograph of that reconstruction. It is the photograph which is the work: the reconstruction itself, the photographed secondary ‘event’, has no continuing existence and survives only long enough to be photographed.

Beyond this formal mode of narrative lie others, distributed variably among individual photographs. The historical photographs referred to by these works have gained currency to varying degrees and in various ways, and in that process, anecdotal information may adhere and become almost integral to the picture itself. Some stand for continuing situations, while others depict moments so sharply excised from the flow of time around them as to raise questions about, and thus perversely to confirm, the existence and nature of the ‘before’ and the ‘after’ which must have surrounded the ‘captured’ moment.

The aesthetic framework within which these personal and theoretical explorations take place also pursues two questions which emerge from the original historical images: one is the nature of the imperative which leads anyone, at any time, to make photographs of events which might reasonably arouse simple repugnance and the desire to look away; the other is the related issue of the response to representations of those events. While the desire to make photographic representations of war has certainly not always been aesthetic in origin, it has
often enough been exactly that, even in cases where one might not ordinarily think it possible. Here is an eye-witness describing Felice Beato’s apparent pleasure as he inspected the Taku forts at Tientsin on August 21, 1860, after one of many bloody battles in Britain’s campaign to force China to open its ports to trade in opium:

I walked round the ramparts on the West side. They were thickly strewn with dead — in the North-West angle thirteen were lying in one group round a gun. Signor Beato was there in great excitement, characterising the group as ‘beautiful’ and begging that it might not be interfered with until perpetuated by his photographic apparatus, which was done a few minutes afterwards.²

Since Beato’s time, of course, the ante has been upped many times over in respect of the violence to which photography may be a witness, and as the degree of photographers’ immersion in wars has increased, so too it has become clear that photography is not merely a camp follower of war, but a fully complicit partner. This is increasingly the case as some imaging technologies move from being impassive recording devices to integral parts of weapons, a development which is also reflected in this exhibition.

Yet the link between photography and violence or death seems to go to the roots of both how and why we look (and perhaps perversely, want to look) at spectacles of horror. Soldiers have frequently spoken of the unbearable combination of elation and guilt which accompanies their survival of incidents in which comrades in close proximity were killed. This experience may extend at least partly to the imagery of horrific events, to what John Taylor has described as “the aesthetic version of death”. As he writes:
This hints at the excitement and exhilaration of survivors who survey images of corpses, a mixture of emotions arising from the recognition of death still held at a distance, and the continuing absorption in life. The distinction between those who remain alive and those who do not is absolute, but the living are unable to rid themselves of the dead. The desire for the representation of death expresses anxiety about it, and a desire for death as well.

Other forms of imagery have displayed a fascination with death and destruction, but it is photography which has cemented the partnership in the firmest terms. This is attributable in part to its perceived truth value, but also to the inherently distancing property which Susan Sontag has so perceptively characterized as leading all photographs, whatever their original motives, back towards the aesthetic:

The particular qualities and intentions of photographs tend to be swallowed up in the generalised pathos of time past. Aesthetic distance seems built into the very experience of looking at photographs, if not right away, then certainly with the passage of time. Time eventually positions most photographs, even the most amateurish, at the level of art.

As to how photographs of horrific spectacles are received by viewers, we again observe distancing as a characteristic of both the mode of looking adopted in the photographic gallery, and that used in avoiding the gaze of others while mingling at the scene of a tragedy. Zygmunt Bauman’s description of this “art of mismeeting” — avoiding eye contact in order to avoid the possibility of obligation — is a perfect description of gallery behaviour, and almost a description of photography itself:
The point is to see while pretending that one is not looking. To look “inoffensively”, provoking no response, neither inviting nor justifying reciprocation; to attend, while demonstrating disattention. What is required is scrutiny disguised as indifference. A reassuring gaze, informing that nothing will follow the perfunctory glance and no mutual rights or duties are presumed.5

These acts of self-distancing seem also to indicate something of the crumbling gap between fact and fiction into which photographs slide so comfortably, and which provides another foothold for narrative interpretation. In order to avoid the visceral response to photographed violence which might be less avoidable faced with the same event as immediate physical reality, there is an acknowledgement, perhaps, of the photograph as a special sort of fiction: special, because it is a fiction which somehow does not negate its perceived truth-value. Robert Capa’s photograph of the falling Spanish soldier, under suspicion for decades, has now been shown with relative certainty to be staged,4 yet its value as a tale of tragedy in war is not reduced, and the photograph continues to be published in that role, without discussion of its widely-known fictional status. Frank Hurley’s composite photographs of World War 1, particularly the best known image of that set, Over the Top, overtly create an intensified version of reality through montaging of multiple unstaged, straight photographs. Hurley’s fakery was not covert, being generally either visible or implied in the photograph itself, and certainly stated overtly as a deliberate modus operandi before the photographs themselves were made. His vehement argument for permission to make these pictures is noteworthy: it was “unfair to the Australian troops not to have the whole picture revealed”.7 Only in fiction, in some cases, can the whole truth be told.

The photographs in the latter part of this exhibition (12 to 25) engage with this notion of fiction-as-truth and push it a
stage further. In Taylor's words again:

Every aspect of documentary can be simulated in fiction — the look, the evidence and the argument. What distinguishes documentary from fiction is the way that viewers read the texts, what assumptions they make about them, and what they expect from them. These distinctions are notably sharp in photography, which always presents the fragile mortality of those in view.8 (37)

"Those in view" on this occasion are toys, layered with all the assumptions and expectations brought from their normal roles, and playing instead the real people we have become familiar with over many years, in images which have become the icons of war itself. Just as a single moment photographically extracted from time can remind us of the extended duration which actually surrounds it, so the replacement of real people with these replicas may, for a moment, remind us again of the real and fragile mortality of those so replaced. If fiction can bring us to this truth, then that is as it should be.

---

7 Lennard Bickel, In Search of Frank Hurley, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1980, 64.
8 John Taylor, Body Horror, 37.
1. Untitled
2. Untitled
3. Untitled
4. Untitled
5. Untitled
6. Untitled
7. Untitled
8. Untitled
9. Untitled
10. Untitled
11. Untitled
12. After Eugene Smith (Saipan 1944)
13. After Joe Rosenthal (Iwo Jima 1945)
14. After Eddie Adams (Saigon 1968)
15. After Damien Parer (near Salamua, PNG, 1943)
16. After Alexander Gardner (a) (Gettysburg 1863)
17. After Larry Burrows (South Vietnam 1966)
18. "The Briefing".
   Based on a combination of two press images from the first Gulf War, 1991. a) General Norman Schwarzkopf briefing reporters in Riyadh; b) four reconnaissance images showing a 'smart' bomb hitting its target.
19. After Felice Beato (Taku, China, 1860)
20. After Timothy O’Sullivan (Gettysburg, 1863)
21. After Alexander Gardner (b) (Gettysburg 1863)
22. After Hyunh Con (“Nick”) Ut (South Vietnam 1972)
23. After Robert Capa (Cordoba, Spain 1936)
24. After Frank Hurley (near Zonnebeke, Flanders 1917)
25. After Frank Hurley (near Zonnebeke, Flanders 1917)
Gratitude for making this exhibition happen is fondly expressed to:

Professor Robert King, Rector, University College, UNSW, ADFA; Professor Paul Eggert, Head of School, School of Language Literature and Communication, University College, UNSW, ADFA; Sue Beattie and Jan Gordon, Academy Library, ADFA; and their Library staff; Nigel Pearson and the staff of CMR, ADFA; especially Hugh Donald for the colour catalogue work; and, Cindy White, Margaret McNally and Marilyn Anderson-Smith, School of Language Literature and Communication, University College, UNSW, ADFA.

Jeff Doyle
June 2001
PostGraduate
Students Exhibition

Marianne Hulsbosch
Neville Dawson
Greg Battye
Zhu Hui Lin

Long Gallery

Faculty of Creative Arts University of Wollongong
March 25-April 14 1994
My DCA thesis is about narrative and photography. These pictures deal with my Father's memories of his experiences during the Second World War in New Guinea, as told to me during childhood and as recalled on particular occasions during my adult life.

As a child, these tales of wartime created many puzzles for me, since I lacked an appropriate overall explanatory notion of what the War was. Whatever it was, it certainly made no sense in terms of my immediate experience, though I was able to sense its enormous significance for Mum and Dad, and for my older brother, born in 1939. In place of a 'rational' framework, I developed my own ideas about what had taken place, and in the process evolved memories which blended Dad's stories, my own responses at the time in conversation and in play, and what I gradually learned as formal history.

The structure of such memories either is, or becomes, narrative, and my pictures hopefully invoke narrative interpretations of events which, while particular and personal for me, have resonances in the lives of many people of both my Father's generation and my own.

Biography

Greg Battye was born in Perth in 1947 and moved to Canberra via Sydney in 1972. Since escaping the Public Service in 1983 he has taught photography while doing freelance work in architectural photography and audiovisuals. The thematic concerns of his own recent photographs have been the effect of landscape and location on human social behaviour, and the operation of narrative mechanisms in single photographs. He is currently a Lecturer in Media at the University of Canberra.
Appendix B

26th August - 10th October 1999
The Exhibition

Artists (in alphabetical order)
Dimensions where given are in centimetres, following the convention of vertical x horizontal

GREG BATTYE
Canberra
6 Not Remembering Vietnam
[work in progress] 1999
Digital photographic processes on paper
45 x 29 cm
Courtesy of the artist
Note: The image in the catalogue is a detail from the work in progress as it was 15 August 1999.

MEENA BLESING
Sydney
34 Large Shield 1999
White leather, rolled steel, ink, tulle veil, and synthetic flowers
95 x 64 cm
Courtesy of the artist
35 Prisoner 1998
Ink and watercolour on paper with photograph
75.5 x 100 cm
Courtesy of the artist
36 Wounded Heart Shield 1998
Red leather, ceramics and rolled steel
70 x 43 cm
Courtesy of the artist
37 Two small shields 1998
Ceramics, leather, feathers and rolled steel
Each 36.5 x 21 cm
Courtesy of the artist

GEORGE BOSTOCK
38 Untitled 1992
Acrylic on board with Australian Vietnam Service medals
34 x 67 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Bob Meehan

ELIZABETH BURTON
Sydney
39 Road to Recovery 1999
Six images
Acrylic on cloth, oil on canvas, plastic, paints on cardboard
Various dimensions
Courtesy of the artist

ROSALIE COGAN
Melbourne
Back Cover
Advance Australia Fair 1986
Machine embroidery on woven strips of calico, flag and ex-Army shirt
164 x 145 cm
Courtesy of the artist
15 Wreath 1986
Machine embroidery, acrylic on calico
145 x 164 cm
Courtesy of the artist
41 Values 1986
Machine embroidery on woven strips of calico and flag
131 x 131 cm
Courtesy of the artist
42 Clear Image 1986
Machine embroidery on woven strips of calico
138 x 119 cm
Courtesy of the artist
40 Remember 1986
Machine embroidery, hand stitching and acrylic on calico
115.5 x 211 cm
Courtesy of the artist
[Less] than at any other time does a simple reproduction of reality tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or GEC yields almost nothing about these institutions. Reality proper has slipped into the functional. The reification of human relationships, the factory, let's say, no longer reveals these relationships. Therefore something has actually to be constructed, something artificial, something set up.

— Walter Benjamin (1931)

This exhibition represents work from both the beginning and the end of a long journey connecting memory, imagination, photography and war. It is a journey triggered by stories told to me in childhood, stories perplexingly thickened by looking at photographs from a lifetime before my own. It interweaves themes of personal significance with theoretical concerns which grow from those personal roots.

The most important of these connections between the personal and the theoretical has been a desire to make narrative photographs: single photographic images which, without support derived from membership of a sequence, or from captions, tell a story. Narrative has not been the only goal, but its central importance stems from the strong sense of story I always had as a child when looking through snapshots taken of, and sometimes by, my father during World War 2. In some of these he was in uniform, either in Australia or in New Guinea, and in some he was simply relaxing with his family. My effort to understand the significance of the New Guinea photographs, in particular, involved reconciling their manifest content (mostly cheerful-looking men engaged in an apparently peaceful, semi-organised, bureaucratic, but mysterious activity) with the stories my father could sometimes be urged to tell about his wartime experiences. Though he had not been employed in a combat role, he had seen enough of actual combat and its consequences to be able to describe events at extreme variance with the uniformed holiday-camp atmosphere which seemed to emanate from the pictures.

I was puzzled about what sort of phenomenon 'the war' really was, and the answer to this fundamental question seemed to recede even further, to become more rather than less confusing, with the acquisition of every further detail and particularity. The task of reconciling the photographs with the much more lurid impressions of war gained from my child contemporaries was another source of confusion, and since the photographs were kept in an old suitcase together with other family photographs, some from before my birth and some taken long after the war, I also tended to link unrelated events in those other photographs to my quest for closure about the war. My state of mind in relation to the wartime photographs thus resembled, in some respects, the "confusion between consecutiveness and consequence, chronology and causality, [which] constitutes perhaps the most powerful motor of narrativity".1
As I grew older, the same snapshots increasingly seemed to speak to me reflexively — not of their primary reference to events in my family's life, but of my own memories of how I felt as a young child struggling to comprehend them, and of the internal world I had then created in which all of these partly-understood phenomena joined with each other to make an idiosyncratic whole, a personal sort of sense. If anything this increased the feeling that the pictures were inhabited by, or connected to, something like a narrative.

Later brushes with pictorial narrative, in my own work and elsewhere, led me to an intense interest in the notion of the single photograph as a possible narrative form, and to a desire to experiment with ways in which such photographs could be deliberately made. The images which form the first part of this exhibition are an attempt to create that indeterminate early sense of story.

Several threads emerging from these photographs provided an impetus to further work. Rather than any actual physical or spatial circumstances, the photographs provide a conceptual/temporal space into which viewers insert themselves via a process of identification. One strong source of identification was the persistent appearance of one or more 'characters' across several different images, invoking a tendency to interpret the photographs as a series, even though I had rather wished to foreground the individual nature of each picture, and particularly their individual narratives. Film theory has long made much of the significance of the frame, and the activities and connections of characters within, and in relation to, that frame. I had anticipated that the frame itself, acting as it ordinarily does in straight documentary-style photographs (and as in film) to reinforce a presumption that the events contained by it are a self-contained and interrelated set, would constrain interpretations to within each single photograph. But to assume this is, exactly, to reckon without the strength of the narrative urge; the will to make narrative connections where perhaps there are none, to tie together events with the thread of a story if one is to be found (or made). I needed a narrative mode which could capitalize on this narrative urge rather than be undone by it.

By now my research had drawn me from family photographs into wider aspects of the representation of war, photographic and otherwise. The use of toy soldiers and other war-related toys in the earlier images had focused my attention on the extent to which attitudes to war itself were pre-embodied in the toys, and this stood out all the more clearly against real photographs made in the midst of real wars. The latter group of photographs in this exhibition (12 to 25) is an attempt to set up a dialectic between the extreme-sports excitement of war seemingly promised by the toys, and the reality: boredom, terror, frustrated effort, futility, pain and death, as depicted in the well-known images of war which are referred to in these reconstructions.

Narrative makes its presence felt in these pictures in several ways. One formal expression of narrative structure, emanating directly from literary theory, requires the depiction of identifiably separate events within a work, ordered and linked in time within the work itself independently of any need for external information. This requirement is met here by the chain of events
involved in each photograph: the original situation; a photograph made of that event; the circulation of the photograph, sometimes widely enough for it to be recognized as standing for the event in collective memory; a contemporary reconstruction of the event; and the making of a new photograph of that reconstruction. It is the photograph which is the work: the reconstruction itself, the photographed secondary 'event', has no continuing existence and survives only long enough to be photographed.

Beyond this formal mode of narrative lie others, distributed variably among individual photographs. The historical photographs referred to by these works have gained currency to varying degrees and in various ways, and in that process, anecdotal information may adhere and become almost integral to the picture itself. Some stand for continuing situations, while others depict moments so sharply excised from the flow of time around them as to raise questions about, and thus perversely to confirm, the existence and nature of the 'before' and the 'after' which must have surrounded the 'captured' moment.

The aesthetic framework within which these personal and theoretical explorations take place also pursues two questions which emerge from the original historical images: one is the nature of the imperative which leads anyone, at any time, to make photographs of events which might reasonably arouse simple repugnance and the desire to look away; the other is the related issue of the response to representations of those events. While the desire to make photographic representations of war has certainly not always been aesthetic in origin, it has often enough been exactly that, even in cases where one might not ordinarily think it possible. Here is an eye-witness describing Felice Beato's apparent pleasure as he inspected the Taku forts at Tientsin on August 21, 1860, after one of many bloody battles in Britain's campaign to force China to open its ports to trade in opium:

I walked round the ramparts on the West side. They were thickly strewn with dead — in the North-West angle thirteen were lying in one group round a gun. Signor Beato was there in great excitement, characterising the group as 'beautiful' and begging that it might not be interfered with until perpetuated by his photographic apparatus, which was done a few minutes afterwards.²

Since Beato's time, of course, the ante has been upped many times over in respect of the violence to which photography may be a witness, and as the degree of photographers' immersion in wars has increased, so too it has become clear that photography is not merely a camp follower of war, but a fully complicit partner. This is increasingly the case as some imaging technologies move from being impassive recording devices to integral parts of weapons, a development which is also reflected in this exhibition.

Yet the link between photography and violence or death seems to go to the roots of both how and why we look (and perhaps perversely, want to look) at spectacles of horror. Soldiers have frequently spoken of the unbearable combination of elation and guilt which accompanies their survival of incidents in which comrades in close proximity were killed. This experience may extend at least partly to the imagery of horrific events, to
what John Taylor has described as "the aesthetic version of death". As he writes:

This hints at the excitement and exhilaration of survivors who survey images of corpses, a mixture of emotions arising from the recognition of death still held at a distance, and the continuing absorption in life. The distinction between those who remain alive and those who do not is absolute, but the living are unable to rid themselves of the dead. The desire for the representation of death expresses anxiety about it, and a desire for death as well.3

Other forms of imagery have displayed a fascination with death and destruction, but it is photography which has cemented the partnership in the firmest terms. This is attributable in part to the its perceived truth value, but also to the inherently distancing property which Susan Sontag has so perceptively characterized as leading all photographs, whatever their original motives, back towards the aesthetic:

The particular qualities and intentions of photographs tend to be swallowed up in the generalised pathos of time past. Aesthetic distance seems built into the very experience of looking at photographs, if not right away, then certainly with the passage of time. Time eventually positions most photographs, even the most amateurish, at the level of art.4

As to how photographs of horrific spectacles are received by viewers, we again observe distancing as a characteristic of both the mode of looking adopted in the photographic gallery, and that used in avoiding the gaze of others while mingling at the scene of a tragedy. Zygmunt Bauman’s description of this "art of mismeeting" — avoiding eye contact in order to avoid the possibility of obligation — is a perfect description of gallery behaviour, and almost a description of photography itself:

The point is to see while pretending that one is not looking. To look "inoffensively", provoking no response, neither inviting nor justifying reciprocation; to attend, while demonstrating disattention. What is required is scrutiny disguised as indifference. A reassuring gaze, informing that nothing will follow the perfunctory glance and no mutual rights or duties are presumed.5

These acts of self-distancing seem also to indicate something of the crumbling gap between fact and fiction into which photographs slide so comfortably, and which provides another foothold for narrative interpretation. In order to avoid the visceral response to photographed violence which might be less avoidable faced with the same event as immediate physical reality, there is an acknowledgement, perhaps, of the photograph as a special sort of fiction: special, because it is a fiction which somehow does not negate its perceived truth-value. Robert Capa’s photograph of the falling Spanish soldier, under suspicion for decades, has now been shown with relative certainty to be staged;6 yet its value as a tale of tragedy in war is not reduced, and the photograph continues to be published in that role, without discussion of its widely-known fictional status. Frank Hurley’s composite photographs of World War 1, particularly the best known image of that set, Over the Top, overtly create an intensified version of reality through montaging of multiple unstaged, straight photographs.
Hurley's fakery was not covert, being generally either visible or implied in the photograph itself, and certainly stated overtly as a deliberate *modus operandi* before the photographs themselves were made. His vehement argument for permission to make these pictures is noteworthy: it was "unfair to the Australian troops not to have the whole picture revealed". Only in fiction, in some cases, can the whole truth be told.

The photographs in the latter part of this exhibition (12 to 25) engage with this notion of fiction-as-truth and push it a stage further. In Taylor's words again:

> Every aspect of documentary can be simulated in fiction — the look, the evidence and the argument. What distinguishes documentary from fiction is the way that viewers read the texts, what assumptions they make about them, and what they expect from them. These distinctions are notably sharp in photography, which always presents the fragile mortality of those in view. (37)

"Those in view" on this occasion are toys, layered with all the assumptions and expectations brought from their normal roles, and playing instead the real people we have become familiar with over many years, in images which have become the icons of war itself. Just as a single moment photographically extracted from time can remind us of the extended duration which actually surrounds it, so the replacement of real people with these replicas may, for a moment, remind us again of the real and fragile mortality of those so replaced. If fiction can bring us to this truth, then that is as it should be.
**List of Works:**

1. Untitled
2. Untitled
3. Untitled
4. Untitled
5. Untitled
6. Untitled
7. Untitled
8. Untitled
9. Untitled
10. Untitled
11. Untitled
12. After W. Eugene Smith (Saipan, 1944)
13. After Joe Rosenthal (Iwo Jima, 1945)
14. After Eddie Adams (Saigon, 1968)
15. After Damien Parer (near Salamaua, New Guinea, 1943)
16. After Alexander Gardner (Gettysburg, 1863) (1)
17. After Larry Burrows (Hill 484, South Vietnam, 1966)
19. After Felice A Beato (Taku, China, 1860)
20. After Timothy O'Sullivan (Gettysburg, 1863)
21. After Alexander Gardner (Gettysburg, 1863) (2)
22. After Hyunh Con ('Nick') Ut (South Vietnam, 1972)
23. After Robert Capa (Cordoba, Spain, 1936)
24. After Frank Hurley (near Zonnebeke, Flanders, 1917)
25. After Frank Hurley (Over the Top, also near Zonnebeke, Flanders, 1917)
The war had thrust me, as a soldier, into the heart of a mechanical atmosphere. Here I discovered the beauty of the fragment. I sensed a new reality in the detail of a machine, in the common object. I tried to find the plastic value of these fragments of our modern life. I rediscovered them on the screen in the close-ups of objects which impressed and influenced me.

— Ferdinand Léger (1923)
Since long before the advent of digital photography, the special relationship between photography and the truth has been crumbling. The former gulf (never, in fact, as clean and sharp as has often been maintained) between fact and fiction has closed to a tiny gap in which storytelling, something for which photography has not generally been known, can gain a foothold.

The twenty-five photographs here represent work selected from a long journey connecting memory, imagination, photography and war. The first group (1-11) are narrative vignettes from that personal journey, and provide conceptual spaces through which viewers may perhaps identify aspects of their own experience.

The second group (12 to 25) engage directly with the notion of fiction-as-truth, and with the divergence between the attitudes to war as embodied in war toys, and the pictures of conflict brought to us through a tradition of war photography which stretches back over almost a century and a half.

Only through fiction, in some cases, can the truth be told. In making these narrative connections between the personal and the theoretical, something is revealed about the special partnership between photography and war itself.
CD containing work-in-progress images and unused images