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PHOTOGRAPHY AND NARRATIVE:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF SERIAL IMAGERY  
(VOLUME I)

(for the degree of Ph.D. in The History and Theory of Art)

University of Kent, March 1986

## Abstract

The history of photographic serial imagery cannot be taken in isolation. It shares many features with various ancient and medieval visual serial texts and later painted series. Nor can the conditions for its creation be divorced from the theatre, the magic lantern and film. From its inception photography exploited serial texts, mainly in reportage, advertising, the photo-roman, and art practice.

There are various problems in the characterisation of narrative. An examination of traditional problematic areas shows that 'visual narrative' depends ultimately on the signification of a state change through the use of a transformational matrix.

Narrative, however, works on three levels. The 'text' can be defined according to the traditional features of visual signs which motivate the imaginative construction of the object through the image. Serial narrative texts also require basic signifying conditions which establish relevant differentiations and cohesions, for which the interstice is to be considered as the point of narrative montage.

The narrative work also involves organisational features on the level of 'discourse'. Following a Genettian analysis of discourse and story relations indicates where the static visual narrative's strengths and weaknesses lie and where the analysis needs to be extended or reduced. This applies to temporal relations as well as focalisation and modality.

The incorporation of the verbal text also needs to be considered. The accompanying verbal can be formally divided into title or text, but functionally it will depend on the strengths and weaknesses of the visual's textual and discursive capabilities. Text and image can only be seen in symbiotic relation.

Ultimately, however, a consideration of the role of the reader and the sign as read is vital. One would have to consider other pragmatic and ideological factors which are involved in this activity.

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis grew from an interest in visual serial texts, and especially those serial works with a strong narrative base. There is a lack of work dealing with the use of serial imagery in general, and a lack of work dealing with the establishment and operation of non-animated serial visual narrative texts, but for present purposes it was necessary to reduce this vast field into one of more manageable proportions. An interest in photographic theory and practice, and especially in those photographers using serial imagery, led to the present proposal, to consider the question of how the static photographic narrative series could be most successfully defined and described.

The object of study can be situated in a number of ways. As a visual serial text it takes its place historically within a long tradition of non-animated visual narratives with which it might still be expected to have much in common. Describing this history, however, still begs the question of whether a series of images necessarily constitutes a narrative. In traditional art historical works, for instance, there is widespread use of the term 'narrative' with little agreement about its meaning, especially in relation to type of text. Thus we would also have to analyse the minimal requirements for the establishment of narrativity in a visual serial text, and the operation of this particular type of narrative discourse, considering, along the way, its closeness

to the filmic text (which is the only other visual narrative text widely discussed). We would also have to be aware of the operation of a narrative text resulting from visual/verbal combinations, another area which has been little considered hitherto. This type of analysis might finally lead to the possible consideration of the viewing subject which this kind of text requires.

The object can also be situated according to the method of analysis which is to be used. But, analogous, almost, to the way in which the object of study lies between various categories of text (animated and non-animated, single and serial), it can be placed in the middle ground between various already existent types of analysis. Thus, we would have to consider both film studies (which has done much to define and describe a particular kind of photographic narrative which is close to our own object) and narrative theory (which has done much to define and describe the operation of narrative itself, but mainly in application to the literary). Both these fields claim wider application -- but only an analysis which is closely allied to textual considerations, which the present work proposes to be, will be able to test this applicability.

We are also faced with a choice of analytical method, based on either a strictly semiotic approach or one more in line with traditional aesthetics. The answer to the above 'dichotomies', however, is that it is better to glean from film studies and narrative theory, semiotics and aesthetics, those aspects of the respective theories which contribute most to the illumination of the object of study. Occasionally this might suggest



an uneasy marriage of the practical and the analytical, the terminologically rigorous and the conceptually vague, but such an approach does at least help us to be able to outline those areas which have already been successfully dealt with (e.g. narrative structure and plot typology) while spending more time on those which are in need of more detailed analysis (e.g. minimal narrativity and narrative frontiers). The shortcomings and strengths of already existing works will be outlined in individual chapters. The intention is not to provide the definitive analysis, but rather to suggest areas of study and methods of analysis, even if there is not space within the present <sup>at</sup> limits to carry out the analyses with the fullness they deserve.

It was hoped to keep the corpus of examples to a minimum, for reasons of spatial economy. The examples referred to most often are taken from a small corpus which should represent in part the variety of photographic narrative works at our disposal, and there is also a supplementary corpus of works included in the visual appendix. For practical considerations the references to these illustrated 'figures' in the visual appendix are placed in the right hand margin as near as possible to the title reference in the main text. Authors' works are referred to both by surname and date in the main text, but more specific references, including page references, are also given in the notes.

## 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Introduction

An attempt to outline the historical background to a system of communication can be faced from the outset with a series of problems. Not least of these is related to the idea of history itself as a process of narration. The historical overview is often locked into a strict chronological framework which dominates the selection and organisation of events. The research itself becomes submerged in the task of dating, allied to the necessity of presenting the material in a causal compaction.

Histories of photographic communication have been particularly dominated by work concerning two main fields: the history of photography and the history of cinematography, both of which have largely been grounded in the technical. Traditional concern with technological development (e.g. the history of 'cinematography' not 'cinema') has involved research into the discovery, invention, patenting and exhibiting of apparatus (often tinged with a nationalist sentiment) such that the process of conceptualisation itself has remained largely submerged. If we were to regard this process as in some way paradigmatic in the Kuhnian sense,<sup>1</sup> then describing it would point out the need to cast the net wider in terms of the background from which a particular type of communication develops.

As attempts to outline the wider cultural back-

ground to the development of types of photographic communication systems, the works of Gisèle Freund (Photographie et société, Editions du seuil, Paris, 1974) and John L. Fell (Film and the Narrative Tradition, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1974) remain exceptional, especially in their attempts to deal in the one case with the historical and societal background and, in the other, with the historical and cultural background pertaining to the development of particular communicative acts. Reliance on a strict linearity will tell us little more than the order of the appearance of any particular form in its official guise and it will tend to coningle certain separate developments; for this reason the present study will attempt to contextualise the photographic narrative within a variety of 'histories', retaining a vague chronology and division corresponding to apparatuses and their development; photographic narrative will be seen as a confluence of various historical strands.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the object of study itself, the process of historicising usually necessitates a coherent vision of a central protagonist. At this point, however, we are operating without an a priori notion of 'narrative', although the study itself attempts to follow through a path relating to the development of serial imagery, accepting from the outset the link between narrative and serialism in the visual arts (this connection is justified in Chapter Two). In the sense that the development of a particular type of communicative act represents the tacit agreement in practice of senders and receivers of the message, the rise of a particular form is the

result of absences as well as presences: it is defined by what it is as well as what it is not, in this case the abandonment of single image texts without the use of extensive animation, in particular that incorporating the persistence of vision. Photographic narrative thus takes its place among a number of histories of the use of non-animated serial imagery, the development and use of photographic processes and the public and private production and consumption of narratives of various types. For present purposes, working with a notion of serial imagery will mean that the object of study consists mainly of those texts conceived within the dialectic of repetition and transformation, the 'series' thus retaining some kind of similarity while positing some kind of distinction between at least two consecutive images. It will not be possible at this stage to isolate the images from the verbal texts with which they are combined.

#### The Non-Photographic Heritage

The term 'narrative' has been traditionally used, as it still is, in studies of the arts to mean single images with strong diegetic content (e.g. active scenes, vignettes and so on as opposed to more static representations). This usage, which is common, has more to do with the actual image content than with the process of communication, but it has only rarely been challenged by serious analysts of 'narration' in the arts attempting to refine the terminological apparatus. Such an attempt was made in 1955 at the 57th Annual General Meeting of



the Archaeological Institute of America which, despite the general conclusion that narrative could be defined as: 'that form of representational art in which the artist advances from the rendering of the typical and the casual to the specific and the noteworthy'<sup>3</sup> witnessed a confluence of studies around serial imagery, before such a general conclusion could be reached. What Groenewegen—Frankfort<sup>4</sup> and others realised was that serial imagery had been in use from at least the Old Kingdom of Egypt onwards for the expression of what they regarded as primarily monumental and stereotypical, later more personal and specific 'histories'. The first thing that can be said of photographic narrative is that it utilises a basic technique with a long history.

The use of serial imagery for narrative purposes is a form of representation which has appeared in most societies known to the West, and while it would not be appropriate to trace the history of this form as though it represented some kind of inter—societal link, one could perhaps draw general conclusions from earlier examples of its use. For instance, most of the early examples of the use of serial imagery appear in a public domain, often within a monumental context.<sup>5</sup> The tomb provided the artist with a context of encomium in Han Dynasty China as much as in Mesopotamia or Old and New Kingdom Egypt, such that the images 'narrated' by means of the cohesion and development of a selection of ideal or salient moments from the past life. The impetus of typification and commemoration underlined the notion of visual 'quintessence'—a basic narrative concept. It is true

that the development can be traced, especially in the Old and New Kingdom friezes in Egypt, from the outlining of exemplary qualities in typical noteworthy acts (of domestic and/or public life) to the outlining of the exemplary qualities of more individual noteworthy acts, but the process of narration remains very much the same: the monumental series represents the nodal points of the respected life.

For temporally more condensed narratives we have to look to battle scenes of the late New Kingdom in Egypt or of the palace reliefs of Assurnasipal (885-860 B.C.). Here, the condensation of an actual event lessens the effect of typification, and in the latter there is an effect of suspense which Groenewegen-Frankfort maintains is a result of the lack of narrative signifiers of outcome. Already, at Amarna, the narrative had developed alongside a sense of spatial textuality such that different stages of an event could find an allocation on a certain tract of wall, the narrative itself having been broken into separate strands.<sup>6</sup> One is reminded of the polarities at work in the medieval tympanum or stained glass.

Although Groenewegen — Frankfort and others constantly connect the increase in narrative sophistication and individualisation of content with the process of secularisation, we have to be wary of applying such conclusions cross-culturally. The medieval period in Europe, which has been noted as another seminal period in the development of visual narrative art, saw the rise of a sophisticated narrative form in a private as well as public domain within a profoundly religious context. As Otto Pächt notes (in The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth Century England, Clarendon, Oxford, 1962),

such an ideological background had a direct effect on narrative content and style, and he postulates parallel religious and secular traditions.<sup>7</sup> In both religious and secular visual narration of the period, e.g. the Bayeux 'Tapestry', ideological significance, one might even say connotation, is visually extracted by the use of nondiegetic gesture, extraneous commentary or direct address. In medieval saints' lives, whether narrated in manuscript or more public forms, gestures and figure movements act as a sort of narrative thread, weaving the diegesis across very abrupt changes (often miraculous), (Fig.1) which signify by their very extremity the sacred mystery of divine intervention.<sup>8</sup>

According to Pächt complete pictorial stories of the medieval period grew largely from the concept of extended illustration and are closely tied to the book form, and they mark a sharp break with the past.<sup>9</sup> The novelty attendant on illustrating an unknown life can perhaps be contrasted with the more monumental tradition of biblical illustration which developed in the more public cathedral arts and became very much a method of signalling the known story to the illiterate, or utilising the single images as some form of distillation and mnemonic (c.f. for instance the Stations of the Cross) of highly ritualised texts.

The dichotomy of public and private narrative space, a theme which runs throughout the history of visual narration, is important for the understanding of the development of different narrative forms. A culture in which private space might be said to have been more vital, that of Japan, produced at the same time the more



sophisticated form of the 'Emaki' or picture scroll.<sup>10</sup> Even this style, however, which was eventually replaced by the picture book, has some similarities to the Bayeux 'Tapestry'. Common to both, for instance, is an incorporation of stylistic alternatives into the organisation of the picture space. The Emaki used both alternating verbal/visual narrations as well as continuous pictorial styles, and signified temporality within separate spatial articulations and within the same space, as did medieval images. The latter technique, of placing the same character more than once (but at perceived temporal remove) within (Fig.1) the same scene is a characteristic of many images of the period, and represents an attitude to pictorial space which disappeared with the development of the perspective system and its reliance on the single viewpoint and the fixed frame.

Indeed The Bayeux 'Tapestry' seems to have incorporated techniques of visual narration which can no longer be read with the same ease, tied as we are now to obsessively linear unidirectionality. Such extreme vectors find their greatest contrast in the vertical cross cutting of the romanesque tympanum or the stained glass text, but even the 'Tapestry' shares with the Emaki the visual punctuation of the landscape features which divide the narrative space with uncertainty for us. And although, as Wormald suggests, its style was learnt from book illustration,<sup>11</sup> it nevertheless incorporates the strongly visual parallel text-- a kind of commentary which runs parallel to the main body of the story, where the images rebound from one another. At one point this sophisticated

narrative seems to defy our notions of consecutive temporality and concretize the narrative space for the sake of flashback, although this is a point of argument.<sup>12</sup>

If the Bayeux 'Tapestry' represents one of the most sophisticated developments in narrative form one need only mention the incorporation of speech into the pictorial space in fourteenth-century woodcuts to approach visual narrative forms not greatly removed from today's comic strip. The graphic freedoms at work in the latter, however, tend to bracket this form along with the medieval texts and their fluidity of perspective. Although the addition of speech texts doubtless imbued the pictorial stories of late medieval picture books with an added immediacy, it was the adoption of the perspective system which had a refining effect on visual narrative texts. With the dominance of visual arts in the West by the perspective system, the ideology of realistic representation through the two dimensional reproduction of the retinal image had begun to take hold. The dominance of the perspective system represents a hegemony which envelops all forms from now on, leading in a direct path to the use of the camera obscura and eventually to the registering of light rays on photographic plates.<sup>13</sup>

Photography itself was developed at a time when the enthusiasm for realistic representation was at its height, and both public and private imagery reflected this. The use of photographic narrative texts, however, is related to the rise of various types of 'spectacular' entertainments, as well as the development of private visual texts. Photographic narrative in both domains,

however, is related to the satisfaction of optical demands, a fact which underlies both public and private manifestations.

In the public sphere, one of the most dramatic developments was the rise of the theatre. This historical thread leads us from the medieval picture story to the later forms of theatrical entertainment. What is relevant here, however, is the rise of the 'spectacle', particularly throughout the eighteenth century, and the more private forms of entertainment which satisfied ocular sensations.<sup>14</sup> When discussing theatrical, as well as other public forms, it is vital to bear in mind the parallel developments in a more 'private' or at least domestic setting. As regards the use of serial imagery, the same themes appear constantly in the theatre (which had derived ultimately from church ritual) and the peepshows of itinerant showmen in miniature form, for instance. Here, the miniature theatrics could be provided for individual spectators, or small groups. Such reduced parallels could incorporate sophisticated changes of scenery, lighting effects and indeed animated characters if necessary. Similar themes were also reproduced in puppet shows and various kinds of clockwork entertainments, some satisfying a desire for trompe l'oeil, some hoping to reproduce or rival theatrical performance, where the initially religious content could satisfy the more pious. Developments in public visual narrative form are constantly mirrored in more intimate experiences.

In the eighteenth century the desire for trompe l'oeil or fascination with illusion was manifested in the popularity of automata and waxwork figures. At this



time the use of the mechanical model represents in itself the two different strands of optical satisfaction which have been noted by Altick (1978, p.64). The first followed the tradition of the 'animated picture'—a scaled down reproductive process which relied on perspective to 'represent'; in this context the peepshow, marionette theatre and other miniature forms are noteworthy. The second activated a different kind of spectating space, hoping to present an illusion of vitality, usually through the employment of life-size models. In this context automata and waxwork figures lie largely outside the quest for types of serial imagery, even though the latter were often presented in 'animated tableau' form. When making this type of distinction, however, it must be noted that the incorporation of varying effects into a multi-layered text is common. Even fundamentally two-dimensional texts like the later diorama and panorama are known to have involved life-size props placed against the image.

The impulse towards faithful representation and the desire for visual spectacle informed the development of theatrical design, and the history of the theatrical backdrop reflects the dichotomy between the ocular and the intellectual. Hassan El Nouty in his investigation of 'pre-cinema'<sup>15</sup> places great emphasis on the rise of optical spectacle, the development of stage machinery and the mastery of illusion, in which he sees the germ of cinematic expression. He, however, differentiates between 'spectacles d'optique' and 'spectacles oculaires', distinguishing the attempt at the illusion of authenticity from the attempt at authentic representation.<sup>16</sup> Regarding

the development of the theatre backdrop and its succession of scenes-- a central influence on the development of the technique of visual narration, particularly of a public kind--this distinction is hard to maintain. The desire for some kind of illusionistic representation and the satisfaction of ocular desire is similar no matter how the viewer is situated.

Various techniques associated with the increased sophistication of theatrical design were felicitously transferred to other forms of narration, especially as the theatrical backdrop became more and more ingenious. With the growth and improvement of projection apparatus, exploiting lighting effects in a darkened spectator space, opportunity arose to create intricate public projected narratives. The interest in such narratives in turn stimulated the production of new and mixed genres. In 1759, for instance, Garrick had introduced moving shadows at the end of his popular pantomime Harlequin's Invasion and the 'Chinese Shadows' (although originally of Turkish origin, with a long history) were wholeheartedly introduced at the end of the eighteenth century as an independent narrative form. Incorporated into the characteristically varied programme, the shadows reproduced stories which had earlier been seen in the domestic circle in projected magic lantern images, or in public animated tableaux. Although shadow shows could not approach the realism of a projected painted (later to be photographic) image, they were not ousted by the development of more complex visual narrative forms; indeed there was a resurgence of interest in shadow shows at the end of the nineteenth century, which in Paris lasted until the First World

War (albeit in a bohemian milieu).<sup>17</sup>

The use of successive scenes in the public theatrical setting had its counterpart in the more 'private' mode of illustration. Both modes, developed as visual narrative, underline the increased independence of the visual strand. Thus the painted and engraved series of Hogarth show the narrative idea again arising from the prominence of the visual when extracted from a more complex (Fig.2 text. Hogarth is said to have drawn his inspiration both from the theatre and from illustration to literary works, and precedents usually cited are series of painted illustrations (e.g. Francis Le Piper (1640-98): Hudibras illustrations; John Vanderbank (1694-1739): illustrations to Don Quixote):<sup>18</sup> Hogarth, however, pioneered the use of the visual series in constructing an original narrative. Although he was aware of the theatrical basis of his characterisations, and prefaced his serial work with a set of illustrations to Hudibras (1725-26),<sup>19</sup> Hogarth must also be linked to a longer tradition of painted cycles (Bindman, 1981 cites Rubens' History of Marie de Medicis<sup>20</sup> but the tradition must at least go back to medieval narrative cycles and illustrations, through the seventeenth-century examples of Italian cycles of popular engravings on moral subjects). Hogarth, and the numerous artists who followed his lead in serial art, apart from pointing to the advance in narrative technique which derived from his sophisticated use of gesture, suspense, lay out and organisation, also points out for us the importance of the visual at the time, when the published illustration straddled the line



between the public and private spheres.<sup>21</sup>

The development of strong illuminants for projecting apparatus (particularly limelight and later the oxy-acetylene hydrogen lamp) made possible larger audiences and also enabled projectionists to develop narratives exploiting light change and mobility. In 1797 Robertson created a sensation in Paris with the 'Phantasmagorie', a spectacle which utilised a moving magic lantern to increase and decrease the size and luminosity of macabre spectres (many of them dead political figures). Apart from the topicality of the subject matter, the sensation was increased by the setting,<sup>22</sup> and the possibility of suggesting movement. It is interesting to note that the popularity of Robertson's spectacle suffered greatly once the secret of his technique was known, but it was not long before the 'phantasmagoria' became part of variety shows, and the magic lantern was introduced into the regular theatre under this name.

Along with these individual developments and techniques satisfying the sense of illusion came texts incorporating a variety of signifying systems. It must be said that, just as Robertson had achieved his effects by the combination of spoken texts, sound effects, music, projected images and props, so the purely visual text is rare, especially where projected images were involved. Towards the end of the eighteenth century public narrative spectacles appeared, outside the traditional theatre, which combined a variety of techniques in the quest for realistic simulation. Philip de Louthembourg's 'Eidophusikon', which opened in 1781, exhibited a storm at sea by combining transparent screens, lighting effects,

clockwork models, chinese shadows, music and sound effects. Later, the same entrepreneur produced an animated vision of Milton's Pandemonium, with great success.

At this time too other large scale representations were developed which were to prove enormously popular -- a public counterpart to the profusion of optical toys which exploited ocular sensation in a domestic setting. Principal among these was the Panorama introduced by Baker in 1787, a circular painting on a grand scale encompassing 360° and completely surrounding the spectator, thus relying to a certain extent on visual disorientation for its effect. Completely enveloped and in a situation of semidarkness, the viewer had no means of comparison through which to orient his or her position. Although the wide panoramic vista had been used before, the use of a circular space succeeded in increasing the illusion. The circular panorama became one of the most popular of eighteenth-century spectacles, as did the panorama which moved across the spectator's field of vision, the latter a common item in the variety programme. Although the extensive view of the panoramic image does not superficially adhere to the idea of serial imagery, it seems that a number of panoramas were created under some kind of narrative impulse, often stimulated by the nature of the subject matter. Most moving panoramas, in which the image or images were drawn across the spectator's field of vision, narrated a voyage and its vistas, and although many stationary panoramas represented a seemingly static view (e.g. Baker's panorama of 'The Environs of Windsor'), many responded to the demand for topical reconst-



ruction of recent events. (The Berlin Panorama became well known for its up to date news items.) Panorama programmes themselves reveal, in connection with the latter kind of subject matter, an unmistakable sense of consecutiveness, allied to following the given 'plan' of the spectacle, which was organised on a vaguely temporal/topographical basis. Examples of this kind of nascent narrativity across the single framed space remind one of the medieval visual recounting of events within the same rectangle.

Throughout the nineteenth century the Panorama became increasingly allied to the notion of scientific and topical knowledge (this notion survived especially in Paris), and it is not surprising, given this kind of ideological background, that attempts were made in the later nineteenth century to apply the photographic image to the Panorama. Nor is it surprising that Monet, working in a different medium, should produce panoramic (and serial) imagery at the same time.<sup>23</sup>

Operating within the ideology of instruction probably caused the Panorama to be perceived as less and less an occasion for satisfying ocular sensation. In July 1822, however, Daguerre, who had been apprenticed to Prévost the stage designer, exhibited enormous translucent paintings under changing light conditions, thus reproducing the striking lighting effects which had been exploited in the theatre. This spectacle, The Diorama, maintained the idea of performance in the viewing situation. By exploiting the notion of image change within the same space, Daguerre came closer to signifying the notion of temporal progression, thus imbuing the exhibited

images with a stronger narrative intent. The Diorama, too, provides a closer parallel to those optical toys of the time which rely on surprising transformations: lithophanes (semi-transparent porcelain), thaumatropes (images which combine when spun), anamorphic images (revealed through corrected perspective) and so on. The transformational matrix, which provides the basic condition of narrativity, has a long history in optical toys, and an even older counterpart in magic lantern transformation slides.

Although there are examples of Panorama pictures which show the same scene under temporal change (Canterbury Cathedral Library contains a guide to the exhibition of summer and winter views of the polar region, for example),<sup>24</sup> their simultaneous exhibition encourages the use of a comparative matrix, whereas the Diorama's success depended on the emphasis of the notion of succession and surprise, achieved by replacing one image with the other, and control of spectator freedom (in early Dioramas the spectators were revolved). Later, when more sophisticated Dioramas were developed, for example the 'Diorama à double effet' incorporating front and back lighting, screens, opaque and transparent images, it was possible to narrate a complete seasonal progression, or any development in several stages, although most Diorama artists confined themselves to topical subject matter.

Attempting to increase the illusionistic and the sensational while trying to cater for a more and more sophisticated viewing public led to more complex texts: Langlois added props to his panoramic views, later combining photographic with painted images; Daguerre



introduced props and music into his Paris Diorama, but it was not a success. Perhaps these metteurs en scène were battling a more knowledgeable viewing public (one remembers Robertson's experience) or overloading their spectacles; whatever the reasons, the panoramas and dioramas lost ground against more popular forms of visual spectacle, as representation itself became more sophisticated.

### The Development of Photography

Daguerre's own interest in light and its representation resulted in his investigations, following Niépce, into the photographic registration of images, and his announcement of the technique of Photography in 1839. From the beginning the public exhibition of photographs was not confined to the single image, and it is interesting to see Daguerre himself exhibiting more than one view of the same group of houses, and Nadar later exhibiting eight heads of a pierrot at the 1855 Paris exposition (the first exhibition to allow meaningful space to the photograph).<sup>25</sup> Serialism can, of course, provide a variety of links between images, and we are not suggesting that all examples of a series represent narrative form, but it must be said that photography appeared at a time of capitalist consolidation, almost exactly contemporaneous with the serial novel, and multiple commodity production. In this sense it is not surprising to see the multiple nature of a number of photographic products at the time, an impulse which must have increased with the development of the negative-positive process and faster operating

times.

Early photography occupied a public site in some part defined by documentary and scientific impulses. It occupied a space which had satisfied the desire for verisimilitude and the public documentation of newsworthy events, along with the accumulation of knowledge (particularly, in travel documentation, knowledge of distant countries accumulated with the acquisitions of the Empire). In these spheres the photographic series played an important role, one which had largely been the reserve of the Panorama; before the advent of film and television, the photographic series provided the fuller visual documentation of events of public interest. Hill and Adamson used the calotype to follow the various phases in the erection of the Scott Memorial in 1844. In 1848 Alois Löcherer made a series of six images of the transfer of the great statue of Bavaria from the foundry to its position in front of the Hall of Fame in Munich. The funeral of the Duke of Wellington in 1852, the visit of Napoleon III to England in 1855 were both subject to photographic 'cover' by the series. In the latter two cases this kind of serial document is made difficult by the lengthy operating times the process required at the time. Temporally more extended architectural feats were easier to document: Delamotte, for instance, published a total of 160 photographs of the rebuilding of the enlarged Crystal Palace in 1855.<sup>26</sup> A similar serial/documentary notion probably influenced the use of photography to cover the events of various military campaigns and foreign expeditions.

In various spheres photographs came to replace those images (particularly those which lent themselves



to mass production: newspaper, book and magazine illustrations) where 'realistic' documentation was required. This is true especially of travel literature, where non photographic illustration probably tended to reinforce a personal vision, and photography operated under a more 'objective' ideology. As illustrations, photographs became privileged significations of knowledge in scientific and topographical literature. In the more abundantly illustrated works of travel documentation the ubiquitous use of photographic imagery overlays them with an unavoidable sense of serial progression, which in turn reflects their status as dominant signifiers of event. If one looks, for example, at Thomson's China and Its People (2 volumes, 1873)<sup>27</sup> the narrative, which moves largely through the photographic images, explained as they are in following texts, relies on a visual series describing the photographic act as the basis of the cumulative power of the artist's vision; it is strikingly contrasted to the small section of written narrative in Volume 2. In this example the photographs can thus be read as the traces of an event, rather than mere illustration to a main text. This notion still sustains first person travel documentations (the works of Hamish Fulton or Richard Long for instance).<sup>28</sup>

Photography fulfilled the role of illustration in any book requiring visual punctuation, especially where the subject matter was scientific or documentary. Artists, too, attempted the use of photographic illustration in more fictional or non-scientific texts. As early as 1843 John Edwin Mayall produced, in Philadelphia, a set of daguerreotype illustrations to the Lord's Prayer, and in 1848 six plates based on the poem A Soldier's Dream

by Thomas Campbell, showing the survival of the separate illustrative series from the Hogarthian works of the eighteenth century. F. Holland Day, an exponent of aestheticism, posed himself as Christ in his series The Seven Last Words of 1889. This kind of photographic illustration of literary, particularly religious works seems to have been more prevalent, or at least more popular, in England, probably because of its relation to the expressive tableau: a manifestation of the English taste for this sentimental genre. The French critic Louis Figuier, noting that the content of certain photographs exhibited in the English section at the 1859 Paris exposition was related to the parlour game of 'Tableaux' popular in England at the time, commented: 'faire poser sept à huit personnes dont les physiognomies expriment chacune un sentiment, c'est une entreprise puérile et d'un succès impossible'.<sup>29</sup> However, the photographic illustration of literary or non-scientific texts became exceedingly popular throughout France and the rest of Europe with the advent of the postcard and the illustrated song.

There are a number of fields in which photography was substituted for other images in the early period, and later incorporated a sense of serialism. In the field of portraiture, for instance, the photograph came to occupy a major role. Even before the development of simpler and cheaper processes, the photographic image had come to usurp the painted portrait and its role as a token of social success and self esteem. With the further development of shorter exposure times and image multiplication the photographic portrait was endowed with a currency it had not known hitherto. Freund points



out (Freund 1974, p.12) that the photographic portrait provided for the rising bourgeoisie an expression of the cult of personality, occupying the space already filled by the miniature portrait (many portraitists made the transition from one métier to the other), silhouette and physionotrace. She fails to mention, however, the effect that the development of the carte de visite had on the photographic image itself. Although the introduction of the ambrotype in the mid 1850s did much to encourage the dissemination of cheap portraiture, any copies made from from collodion (wet plate) negatives were extremely expensive. The photograph was a unique record, and it was only after Disdéri devised and patented his process for taking many portraits on one plate in 1854 that the photograph can be said to have achieved a real currency, and the image in multiplication permeated social intercourse. Miniaturisation and multiplication had the effect of deindividualising the portrait, of increasing for all classes the typification of pose and background, and it also had the effect of demystifying the single image. However much the stylisation of pose, the differentiation between images allied to the temporal lapse became more apparent in combination. The portrait became no longer a single image of a single event, and serial portraits can be found which exploited this chronological differentiation.<sup>30</sup> (Fig.3)

Fall in price, dissemination and popularisation of the photograph provided the best conditions for image collection, and ushered in the photographic album. With the availability of photographic apparatus and the dissemination of cartes de visite it became possible for

households to record acquaintances and major domestic events. The album offered a narrative of family life which often centred on the social existence of one individual, a marriageable daughter, for instance. Thomas (1978) discusses an example presenting the life of Emma Mary Hoyle, a Yorkshire landowner's daughter, in which the climaxes and tensions of her life become apparent through the collected images of herself and others.<sup>31</sup> Even where coherence is not provided by a central protagonist, the family album remains a chronological series narrating the climaxes of domestic life.

The mania for collecting which had been made possible by the easier copying and dissemination of the photograph, applied to two other photographic products which played an important role in the development of serial imagery: stereoscopy and the postcard. Neither of these two developments can be readily identified with a space already occupied by non-photographic imagery, and both of them promoted the use of serialism more than any other contemporary development.

Although Brewster had experimented with the stereoscopic view and photography in 1849 and introduced his lenticular stereoscope in 1851, stereoscopy did not become fashionable for the first time until the 1860s. It satisfied at once the desire for verisimilitude and optical fascination, and it quickly progressed from single views (mostly landscape sets) to simply structured chronologies which recounted trips and explorations. The subject matter was further extended, as a parallel to family album material, to simple narratives of domestic life, leading finally to invented stories of a more private

nature. Many of the posed sequences produced at the height of the stereoscope's popularity (it became extremely popular for the second time at the end of the nineteenth century) duplicated the events of the bourgeois family (the wedding and the party are common subjects of the stereoscopic series), while the 'genre' sets narrated both innocent and more risqué situations (the latter more so in France) often without captions.

Le Curé et le majeur, a stereo set which appeared during (Fig.4) the second period of the stereoscope's popularity, shows how the stereoscopic narrative exploited the private viewing situation both in its slightly risqué subject-matter and its use of direct address: very common in genre sets of this type. Elsewhere stereo sets duplicated general photographic subject matter,<sup>32</sup> but the more intimate or domestic narratives are very much to be associated with this type of imagery.

In this sense stereoscopy can be contrasted to the more public forms of photographic dissemination: particularly the postcard and the related magic lantern set. Ever since the introduction of the halfpenny post in England in 1870 the postcard exploited the possibilities of photographic transmission. It responded to the need for advertising processes attendant on the increase in commerce and the consolidation of capitalism, and it duplicated the already prevalent photographic imagery of the stereo set, magic lantern slide and carte de visite. More than the latter, perhaps, (photographic images had not yet come to dominate newspaper illustration) the photographic postcard played a leading role in the establishment of a kind of currency of the image. The



postcard format, moreover, responded particularly well to the photographic series, especially allied to the mania for image collection. Its heyday, in the twenty or thirty years preceding the First World War, coincided with that of the magic lantern set and the second upsurge of interest in stereoscopy-- a period which nurtured the public expression of sentiment. From 1902 onwards, when the Post Office first allowed a message to be written on the back of the card, the postcard responded simultaneously to communication and collecting needs, and it did so through the need for public expression. Single cards might duplicate newsworthy images or portraits of the famous, but the popularity of the postcard at that time probably relates more to the use of the serial illustrations to songs and verses, particularly those of a propagandistic nature, leading up to the First World War. Such imagery represents the transference of the domestic scene to the public domain for the public expression of nationalist sentiments; one thinks particularly of the ubiquitous sets featuring the archetypal soldier (Tommy in England, Poilu in France), or the sets of popular song illustrations which duplicated the emotive (Fig.5) force of the magic lantern shows.<sup>33</sup> Many producers of postcard sets were involved in the magic lantern slide business, and could produce the same images on slide or card, from the same negative; in this way the postcards became sentimental mnemonics as well as souvenirs linking public and private expression. The use of the postal service tended to exploit the narrative's suspense and ambiguity (postcard sets usually consisted of fewer images than lantern slide sets). Such duplication of magic lantern

narratives (sets derived from theatre were also common, as in stereo sets) went so far as to incorporate dialogue and caption, and they point to the popularity of public narrative genres more than any other non-projected form.

### The Magic Lantern

The magic lantern has a long history as an apparatus for projecting narratives. The first full description appears in Athanasius Kirchner's Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae of 1650, but its use has been documented in Paris in 1515.<sup>34</sup> Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the magic lantern spectacle took its place alongside peepshows and other forms of optical entertainment for the satisfaction of small groups of spectators. The apparatus itself, usually provided by practising opticians, tended to be introduced into the household by itinerant lanternists (called 'gallantee men' in England),<sup>35</sup> where it was distinguished as a spectacle by its ability to entertain by projection an audience in a darkened room. Although the earliest subjects of these hand painted narratives are thought to have been religious (the earliest images sharing many of the qualities of stained glass), by the time that Pepys reports seeing a magic lantern show<sup>36</sup> the subject matter was largely becoming secularised, in common with those of other visual spectacles. Indeed, when discussing visual narratives in a public or private setting, the degree of duplication of subject matter is striking; this can be found throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in all optical toys and public shows, including



pantomime, féerie, and most public and private visual narrative forms up to early film and beyond. It must be borne in mind that many of the narratives which were produced in the heyday of projected entertainment had actually been around in different forms for centuries.

Throughout the early period of its history the magic lantern was limited to the domestic circle by the weakness of its illuminant. Although Robertson had achieved a notable success with his 'Phantasmagorie' in 1797, it was not until around 1830 that oxygen and hydrogen applied to the incandescence of lime (limelight) began to be used in the magic lantern as well as in the theatre. The possibility of larger public spectacles on an organised basis soon saw the demise of the itinerant showman. From this point on the popularity of the magic lantern increased and was consolidated by the introduction of commercial production of lanterns for home use in 1843. Improvements in slide making and an increase in interest provoked the introduction of photographic slides after 1848, and the later introduction of chromolithography further popularised the apparatus towards the end of the century. Such transitions and improvements did not, however, flow smoothly and inexorably towards the photographic; even at the end of the century, and early in the twentieth, hand-painted slides were still being produced, as well as slides combining painted and photographic images. The Bibliothèque Nationale contains an 1856 set of 'reportage' slides of the Crimean War which were hand-painted,<sup>37</sup> just as later Bamforth (the most prolific photographic slide manufacturer) was using combined painted and photographic images.<sup>38</sup>

The introduction of photographic slides did, however, have a dramatic effect on both the style and content of the magic lantern narrative. Not long after Mayall's photographic illustrations to the Lord's Prayer (1846) the Langenheim brothers of Philadelphia successfully produced photographic slides which they exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851.<sup>39</sup> At first the subject matter was limited to what was generally felt as the acceptable domain of photographic illustration: the topographical and the scientific; later the photographic slide extended its illustrative power along with the postcard, becoming a major visual accompaniment to the use of popular songs, hymns and, increasingly, the moral verse and moralistic tales of the Victorian period.<sup>40</sup> Olive Cook (Cook 1963) suggests that the introduction of the photograph to the magic lantern slide endowed the projected image with a wider emotional range,<sup>41</sup> but it seems more likely that it was the ideology surrounding the photographic image which made it somehow more 'suitable' for certain types of narrative than others.<sup>42</sup> In fact the melodramatic sentimentality and didacticism of the moralistic tale -- a type of narrative with which the photographic image became firmly linked -- tended, if anything, to stylise the emotional expression rather than extend its range; it may be that the ideology of documentation and the notion of 'realism' were thought to lend more credibility to these morally emphatic stories.

Whatever the reason for this application, the photographic slide narrative constituted, by the end of the nineteenth century, one of the most popular and sophisticated forms of public entertainment and



instruction. For this reason alone it deserves closer attention. Nor did its popularity decline suddenly with the advent of film, as is sometimes suggested by traditional cinema histories. Throughout the 1890s (and, significantly, before 1895) correspondents to the Optical Magic Lantern Journal (which had only been inaugurated in 1889)<sup>43</sup> showed a tendency to bemoan the decline in interest in magic lantern entertainments, but the early years of the twentieth century actually saw a steady increase in the types and varieties of entertainments produced. It was not until the First World War that these traditional entertainment patterns were challenged and there was a dramatic end to the era of sentiment.

The career of James Bamforth of Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, makes an interesting case study, and reveals the inadvisability of attempting neat historical compartments relating to the different forms of photographic narrative of the time. Eventually the most prolific producer of photographic slides, Bamforth began to make lantern slides at an unknown date after 1870, when he started a photography business. From 1897 to 1900 he produced films with Riley Brothers of Bradford, and in 1902 or 1903 he launched a successful postcard trade while carrying on an ordinary commercial and portrait photography business at the same time. Both the lantern slide and the postcard business grew at an enormous rate. By 1901 Bamforth was the self proclaimed largest slide producer in the world, and his slide catalogue alone contained 234 pages. In 1902 his stock was said to amount to one and a half million slides in sets, plus hundreds of thousands of individual

images. In 1905 and 1906 he claimed to have increased his stock to two million slides in sets alone and by 1914 and 1915 the catalogue had expanded to 600 pages. For a period of approximately forty years the projected photographic magic lantern entertainment held its own as the most widely and popularly used public spectacle, as this individual history attests.

Not all in the magic lantern lecture was new by any means. By the time that the photographic slide entertainment had reached such popularity the magic lantern show had a long tradition of sophisticated techniques of representation. Robertson's 'Phantasmagorie' (and the early lanterns to which it gave its name) had exploited certain techniques to achieve its effects: yet even these techniques, of fade, zoom, superimposition, dissolve and simple animation (produced by the use of articulated slides) had been derived from earlier slide shows. The earliest known hand-painted slides were composed of not single but multiple images; they were designed to be pulled slowly across the source of illumination so as (Fig.6) to produce an effect of consecution. While slides containing separate scenes could be held individually on screen, certain slides containing animated activity (usually a chase) would be pulled across the illuminating source more quickly and steadily as if representing movement. Other panoramic view slides, operated in the same way, simulated the movement of the eyes across the scene. Gradually, with the development of the slide carrier, even more sophisticated devices were used to simulate movement usually by working a lever, or rack and pinion (and there are even examples of random movement slides



involving air and water streams).<sup>44</sup> Such slides, which were enormously popular, were used either in isolation, or integrated into the wider narrative context.

In 1837 the projectionist Henry Langdon Childe introduced a method of montage which had a profound effect on narrative content: the dissolve.<sup>45</sup> His 'dissolving views' entailed the 'melting' of one image into another (the french term is 'vue fondante') such that a metamorphosis appeared to take place. This device, which involved a simple veiling/unveiling process with at least two lenses, stimulated the production of slides exploiting the transformational effect. The use of triunial (three lens) lanterns and a large number of slides enabled the production of this effect in a lengthy sequence of images, resulting in sequences of great complexity. Combined with animated slide effects, some sequences approached a sophistication normally associated with the film. The lanternist C. Goodwin Norton was well known for his dissolve sequences, of which the following is an example: The houses of Parliament are reflected in daylight and the scene gradually dissolves into night. The moon rises and the lights in the building are lit. Clouds pass over the moon for a while, but the moon reappears, to be reflected in the rippling water of the Thames.<sup>46</sup> The photographic image did not lend itself too easily to either animated scenes or dissolving views, the sharpness of detail probably counteracting the indistinctness required for the effects, but the enormous popularity of the moving sequences produced in this way meant that some kind of remarkable transitional effect was incorporated into most large public shows, whether the main narrative was



photographic or not. The ubiquity of the dissolve (it came to be used as the standard cut between any kind of slide) resulted in the term 'dissolving views' becoming synonymous with magic lantern shows.

The content of the evening's lantern entertainment involved more than simply the projection of a series of images. In common with most popular spectacles of the time the images in the show form only part of a greater combined text. Lantern narratives were invariably accompanied by verbal commentary, music and sound effects. Both Robertson and Louthembourg had incorporated music and sound effects, but the use of commentary came to be particularly associated with the lantern, such that all forms of lantern entertainment went under the general name of 'lantern lecture'. The introduction of photographic slides, coupled with the ideological weight of their scientific and educational background, probably did much to consolidate this practice. Even early cinematographic projections still used verbal and musical accompaniments to guide the spectator through the spectacle. Nor were magic lantern shows as a whole limited to the projection of one type of narrative; it was commoner practice to interweave a variety of sequences, moralistic and comic, photographic and painted (and later chromolithographic), static, animated and transformational, into a varied programme.

For an entertainment attempting to rival the music hall variety acts, such mixture of content is not surprising; the mixture of tone which must have accompanied it is revealed in an interesting contribution to the Optical Magic Lantern Journal (Vol.6, No.75, August 1895,

p.132) where the writer attempted to blame the decline in popularity of the lantern show on the public's inability to distinguish between i) a lantern lecture, ii) a lecture illustrated by lantern views, iii) a variety entertainment 'turn', iv) an exhibition of diapositives at a photographic society, v) a mission or other service using a lantern and vi) a show provided for Band of Hope children. Although in France the use of the magic lantern maintained a steadier connection with the purely 'instructive' or 'scientific', the usurpation of the medium by religious, particularly missionary, societies in England led to the increased confluence of instruction and entertainment, doubtless to the advantage of the Church. This domination in turn affected subject matter: travel tales, sentimental songs, exemplary tales became heavily moralistic in tone, even though, as has been noted, the combinations of types of sequences guaranteed variety. There was still, however, space for the traditional hand-painted stories (Bluebeard, Cinderella, Puss in Boots, 'Diableries'), in these varied programmes.

Although this variety extended to the wholly photographic sequences (Bamforth was noted for his 'comics') the photographic slide came to be used almost exclusively for the 'life model series' which narrated a heavily moral tale. The output of producers of these types of stories was prolific, and the narratives themselves had attained a remarkable narrative sophistication before the advent of cinematography and for a number of years beyond.<sup>47</sup> Projection skills improved alongside the inventiveness of content, and the complete shows became grander. C. Goodwin Norton is reputed to have reached a projection

speed of 30 slides per minute,<sup>48</sup> and the power of the illuminants enabled audiences of 1500 to attend at the Regent Street Polytechnic or the Crystal Palace. Even the life model sets, which were largely to be found in smaller gatherings outside the capital, often combined upwards of 50 images with an extensive interspersed text in shows lasting over two hours. A typical Bamforth narrative Jack the Conqueror, presented as a service, contains (Fig.7) 26 slides against an average of 250 words per slide, interspersed with 16 songs.

In America, where the content of these projected photo-narratives was not so dominated by the religious moral, the sophistication of narrative technique reached a pinnacle in the work of Alexander Black. Black's work shows the development of the fictional narrative from the 'lecture'; he had started as a lecturer with a sequence Ourselves as Others See Us, but noted an increasing development of the narrative strand: 'After outlining a combination of fiction and photography, each devised with a regard for the demands and limitations of the other, it began to be quite clear that the pictures must do more than illustrate'.<sup>49</sup> The increased importance of the visual layer led him to develop lengthy fictions with complex plots constructed with large casts and varied locations, which he showed with great success to large and appreciative audiences. His first fictional narrative Miss Jenny,<sup>50</sup> which he called a 'picture play', appeared in 1894. Like Bamforth, Black used a shooting script, but, unlike the Bamforth sequence, the visual text was accompanied by both verbal narration and dialogue spoken from the stage. The images were projected every 15 seconds and the 480



images were each allied to approximately 50 words; the feature thus lasted about 2 hours. It was also accompanied by an elaborate musical score.

Black conceived his entertainment as a theatrical experience--a picture of the cast completed the 'performance'-- but he was also aware of the particular power of the image and the difficulties involved in static image representation. His own writings reveal a care and intelligence regarding the art form equal to Bamforth's; he was aware, for instance of the need to signify an event by its preceding and succeeding states, and he was aware of the difficulties in attempting to balance visual and spoken texts. What Black's writings reveal most, however, is his consciousness of the potential of the photographic image, especially in relation to contemporary developments in animated texts. Black believed that he produced the same effect as that produced in the Edison Kinetoscope, limited though it was to single views and short, cyclical representations, but he believed he produced this kind of effect in a fuller narration; he probably saw his work as a transition towards cinematography.<sup>51</sup>

It would be true to say that Black had already perfected certain techniques of representation later adopted by film. He made extensive use of the dissolve for the easy transition between images, had mastered the narrative directionality of screen space, close up, mood lighting, emotional symbolism, narrative mise en scène in general, along with expressive montage and camera work; he is also noted for his use of location shooting. If one compares the work of Black and Bamforth with contemp-

orary animated photographic narratives (i.e. films), these non-filmic texts are in fact distinguished by the fullness and complexity of their narrative content and technique. Given the later rise and dominance of the filmic text, the question which now arises is whether such photographic narrative forms were transitional, immediately usurped by the introduction of animated texts. Certainly in the case of Black, there is no direct development or transfer to the animated photographic: the complexity of content in spectacles which lasted two hours could never be equalled by a text limited to much shorter viewing times. It seems that it was not for a few decades that this content was equalled in the film, and film established its own mode of narrative representation.

#### The Introduction of Film

Traditional film histories (histories of cinematography) have attempted to see the development of the cinematic medium as the culmination of the refinement of a series of technical apparatuses developed throughout the nineteenth century. Such viewpoints have subsumed the history of photography as contributory to the development, thus denying the wider, particularly social, aspects of photographic practice in order to consume it at the level of technique. These histories, which often betray their nationalist motivations, posit film as the ultimate coherence of the narrative they propose: the natural culmination of a series of inventions. Thus El Nouty (1978), for example, draws the conclusion that one cannot fail to recognise the project of cinema in the series

of technical inventions from the daguerreotype to the Lumières, and that the same ambition underlies the development of the various optical spectacles.<sup>52</sup> In common with many other historians he assumes a kind of cinematic vision in existence before the possibility of film was known, despite the fact that many of the contributors to its 'discovery' were uninterested in the idea of moving picture projection. It would be true to say that a number of individuals throughout the nineteenth century, and earlier and later, were interested in various types of visual representation and communication, which interest was further stimulated by the advent of the animated photographic image. It would not be true to say, however, that the result of the ability to project photographically restituted movement can necessarily be connected to the development of a particular type of public narrative spectacle from its inception. Cinematography as a technical fact must be separated from cinema as a social experience; there is a substantial temporal lapse between the appearance of cinematography as a 'successor' to devices mobilising the persistence of vision and the phi phenomenon, and cinema as a 'successor' to various public narrative spectacles.<sup>53</sup>

The differentiation of two spheres can be seen more adequately, perhaps, in comparing the work of two well known 'forerunners' of cinematic art: Muybridge<sup>54</sup> and Reynaud.<sup>55</sup> The simple reconstitution of the constituent parts of motion was carried out photographically by Muybridge as a matter of expediency; it was introduced as a technical adjunct in the educational domain. Reynaud, on the other hand, had already devised a successful public,



animated narrative spectacle with complex plots, into which he was later to incorporate photographic images somewhat against his will. He had been operating within a public narrative domain.

In some ways the various public narrative spectacles which were in use at the end of the nineteenth century had surpassed what the film, at its inception, was capable of.<sup>56</sup> Certainly the magic lantern spectacle had reached a degree of technical and narrative complexity by this time. The use of multiple slide carriers and multiple lenses already enabled the projection of rapid sequences, not forgetting the usual interspersal of animated slides themselves into the programme. In fact, Friese-Greene's early proposal stating that cinematography should involve the projection of about 5 images per second<sup>57</sup> had already been achieved by certain lanternists, or was well within their power. The type of narrative used did not necessarily require what cinematography had to offer, and the method of introduction of cinematography shows how the magic lantern presented the paradigmatic basis of the conceptualisation in these early days. Early projection apparatus was directly modelled on the magic lantern with the addition of a reel. The 'achievement' of cinematography consisted of the projection of an extended text incorporating the persistence of vision and the phi phenomenon.<sup>58</sup>

This achievement had enormous implications, of course, but in the early period it provided a basis for wonderment in itself. Early film narrative content is much more limited than many other contemporary visual narrative texts by its display of the mere effect of

animation. A number of the early pieces, like those of the Lumières or the Mutoscope, which incorporated no titling, display a ritualised form of repetition akin to that in other animation devices like the earlier Phenakistiscope and Zoetrope, and the cyclical nature of the spectacle tends to emphasise the novelty of reconstructed motion itself. Early subject matter also betrays this emphasis on technical achievement. Documentations like the Lumières' L'Arrivée d'un train en gare and La Sortie des usines Lumière show little in terms of a developed narrative content: simplistic plot structure with no opening and closing transitions. The subservience of early subject matter can be seen too in Edison's direct transference of vaudeville acts and other public spectacles like boxing matches.

Even when film did bring a form of narrative construction before the public the subject matter was often transferred from other media. Méliès owes much to the world of conjuring and theatrical machination, Bamforth 'fleshed out' many of the shorter series which already appeared as post card or lantern slide sets, particularly the comic ones. Even the 1903 Lumière catalogue is remarkably similar to contemporary catalogues of lantern slide and post card manufacturers. In the first place, the strict limitation of film to the length of the reel allied it more to the shorter comic vignette -- the Lumières brothers' L'Arroseur arrosé was advertised by a card designed as a long lantern slide.<sup>59</sup> The early comic and documentary sketches are a long way from the breadth of narrative one finds in Black's and Bamforth's slide sequences. Fell (1974) has shown how early film content

was derived from various already existent narrative forms.

This kind of transference was not confined to subject matter. Even narrative techniques were adopted from other media in the early period. As a practitioner in a number of fields of visual narration Bamforth used similar production methods for sets of slides (from which the postcard sets were made) and for films, so much that some narratives appear in all forms of the continuum of visual narrativity, with similar degrees of narrative distillation and reduction. Méliès (who had earlier worked with silhouettes) adapted much of his trucage (as well as his subject matter) from the techniques of the theatre, particularly the féeries.<sup>60</sup> He may also have been influenced by the tricks used in the magic lantern effect slides and dissolves,<sup>61</sup> and he made particular use of the arret in his tableauesque sequences. A kind of 'tableauesque' thinking is revealed in Méliès' pre-film drawings, and it is also to be allied to the melodramatic 'freeze'.

It took a long time for film to develop its own narrative method, such that it would be hard to establish what exactly constitutes filmic narrativity in the early period as opposed to what was derived from already existent methods. The first practitioners of filmic narrative had to cope with an acting style which was already (de)formed by stage convention,<sup>62</sup> and the heavily mimetic physiognomic expressions of melodrama were probably more successfully applied in static image representations. In lantern slides this limited codification of expression has a long history, going back, as it does, to the eighteenth century projected 'physiognomies'. The fact that later photographic lantern sequences contain less



of this stylisation is probably an indication of the fact that the increased narrative sophistication led away from the need for stylised expression. There are other examples of early film's lack of developed narrative technique; as Fell points out (1974, p.92), many films display a lack of freedom in dealing with the space around the subject, giving them the appearance of single animated frames in series: their generally paratactic style has been defined by Gunning (1979) as 'non—continuous'. 'Characteristic' devices such as direct address, abrupt ellipsis, repetitive montage, freeze—frame, incorporation of caption, mimetic acting style, lack of camera movement, use of dissolve, musical and verbal accompaniments and general fragmentation tend to suggest that film owes more to the magic lantern than has hitherto been acknowledged. Certainly, as the only other major projected narrative form the magic lantern merits more attention and research than it has received up to now.

It is not uncommon for some cinema historians to attribute a climactic effect to the introduction of film, as though it was acknowledged from the start to represent the perfection of photographic narrative technique. The idea that public entertainment was transformed in or shortly after 1895, however, is probably an exaggeration. There is even evidence to suggest that film was not conceived of as a necessarily distinct narrative form at this time.<sup>63</sup> To begin with the limitations on the length of the reel probably encouraged many to see it as a sort of extension of the animated effect slide with which they were familiar, and it did indeed occupy a similar place in many programmes. Primarily, it could

be added to a vaudeville programme as a light interlude, or it could follow a serious lantern slide programme as light relief. (The famous lanternist Goodwin Norton began to follow his slide shows with these 'animated pictures' after 1896.) Such was the novelty value of these short sequences that they were also entrusted to the fairground or the music hall milieu. Far from supplanting the extensive narrative spectacle, there is also evidence of film being incorporated merely as a particular kind of effect into longer projected narratives. One such example has recently come to light in Australia<sup>64</sup>-- this is Soldiers of the Cross: a long moral narrative constructed as a combination of photographic lantern slide and filmed sequence. This example also serves to point out the acceptable incorporation of different techniques into one overall narrative structure-- a kind of textual mixture under a narrative bracket which is now uncommon.

Even though many magic lantern practitioners also became film projectionists and film in the twentieth century came to supplant other major forms of public visual narrative spectacle apart from theatre, it would be too glib to conclude that the arrival of film signalled the decline of the magic lantern. It has already been noted that a decline in lantern popularity had already been discussed in the Optical Magic Lantern Journal (correspondence on this subject begins in August 1894) well before film became established (the first advertisements for cinematographic apparatus appeared in this journal in September 1896). Contrary to this perceived decline in standards outlined by the bulk of

the correspondence, magic lantern lectures actually improved over the next ten years. Cinematographic projection was not necessarily seen as the pinnacle of the art of public narrative spectacle, especially by those involved in the manufacture of slides, although it might have been an interesting option. The growth of magic lantern businesses during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries bears witness to this. Bamforth's business has already been described. In France the firm of La Pierre, who had introduced the first commercial domestic lantern in 1843, produced a domestic lantern for the projection of still photographs three months after the patent of the Lumière cinematographe; the La Pierre cinematographic apparatus, an application of the Phenakistiscope to the projecting machine, was sold only as a toy. In businesses which did produce viable commercial cinematographic apparatus and films, it took a long time before the establishment of cinema as a norm of narrative communication and entertainment. Bamforth's, significantly, ceased film production from 1900 to 1914 while continuing their highly successful lantern slide and postcard business. Riley (a former Bamforth employee who established a rival firm with which Bamforth's collaborated in making films) is reputed to have said (Mellor 1971, p.90) that the First World War effectively killed their film business, whereas lantern slide demand fell away later.

The firm establishment of cinema as the dominating form of public entertainment and visual narrative is tied to both the change in established patterns of entertainment and the establishment in filmic form of what Burch (1981b) has called the 'institutionalised mode



of representation'. The rise of this mode is beyond the scope of the present work, but its lack in the early years can be seen as testament to the dominance of other static narrative forms, especially photographic ones like the magic lantern show, which up to now have received less attention than they merit. While the film was still coping with the lack of a satisfactory notion of narrative conclusion (which according to Burch took over ten years to develop), and the presence of the accompanying lecturer (who did not finally disappear from cinematography until around the beginning of the First World War), non-animated forms had reached a remarkable state of sophistication. The point is worth emphasising because it contradicts what is often felt about the arrival of film in public narrative space, and, by implication, what is felt about the non-animated forms which were contemporary. In many senses we must conclude that the established visual narrative spectacles had more to offer; the contrast, for instance, between the colour (most photographic images were tinted) and vibrant complexity of the magic lantern show and the early monochrome short piece of film possibly explains in part why The Times after having reported the Lumière show of 1895 gave no significant mention to film for another eight years, or why a figure such as Gorky should see film as 'silencieux, sans couleurs...' with the additional comment: 'Ce n'est pas la vie, mais son ombre, ce n'est pas le mouvement, mais son spectre.'<sup>65</sup>

Gorky, however, finally came to realise the film's potential; the wonder of animation and the confidence placed in the ideology of realism finally establishing cinema as the dominant form of photographic narrative

spectacle. This is not to say, however, that the non-  
 animated series was totally supplanted once film had  
 established its own narrativity. On the contrary, static  
 visual narratives survived, even if they now occupied  
 a space within different fields of communication. Some  
 of these spaces retain already existent patterns of usage,  
 some develop into new forms. It is true to say, however,  
 that once film established a particular 'institutionalised  
 mode of representation', and occupied a particular social  
 milieu, filmic form itself began to exert an influence  
 on other visual narratives. Visual narratives after the  
 First World War must be regarded against this background.

### Reportage

One milieu which stimulated the use of photograph-  
 ic serialism antecedent to film imagery is that of the  
 communication of newsworthy events. From the time of  
 the 'Phantasmagorie' and Panorama, and earlier, the  
 reconstruction of an event had satisfied the public desire  
 for topicality in the image. Such reproduction (as the  
 Panorama attests) often involved image making on a grand  
 scale, and often the magnitude of an event (or the nature  
 of the desired reconstruction) encouraged the use of  
 serial imagery. This applies right across the spectrum  
 from the Panorama to the academic painting, and attempts  
 at combination. There are numerous examples, for instance,  
 of the use of serial imagery for the topical in the  
 nineteenth century. A moving Panorama, Mark Lonsdale's  
 'Aegyptiana', exhibited a series of three pictures of  
 George IV's coronation in 1823, which was succeeded in

Spring 1824 by a 12 view survey of the Battles of Ligny, Les Quatre B<sup>â</sup>s and Waterloo, and in December 1824 by a life of Napoleon (with spoken commentary).<sup>66</sup> A step had already been taken from the nascent narrativity of the Panorama towards the expressed sequentiality of the series. The Diorama, which could incorporate the succession of at least two scenes, was felt to be particularly suited, in reproducing the topical, to the illustration of great fires; moving Panoramas were used commonly for documenting journeys. A show based on the 'Eidophusikon' (or at least retaining the name) reconstructed the heroic story of Grace Darling in 1839. Indeed the topical and newsworthy retained its privileged place as a stimulant to the development of serial imagery.

With the arrival of photography, ideas of documentation and topicality were dominant, excluded as the photograph was from matters of purely artistic expression, especially in the early years. The documentary impulse led the Commission des monuments historiques in France to authorise five of the more noted French photographers to document both architecture and typical daily scenes of France as early as 1851. It was inevitable, then, that the implications of fuller documentation through the photographic series should be applied to major events (the first examples of this application have been noted), and especially to the wars which the great imperial powers of the time were involved in. Photography probably played a major role in colonial pursuits themselves as propaganda and cultural accumulation.

The idea of a 'fuller' vision of the subject provided by the series also underlies the multi-portraits (Fig.3)



of this period, but it was mainly through newspapers and periodicals that the idea of 'coverage' stimulated the use of photographic serialism. This depended on a number of significant developments in image reproduction. Although the photographic image had been used as the basis for pictures of news events throughout the nineteenth century -- Fenton's Crimean War pictures were reproduced by hand transcription in the Illustrated London News and Brady's Civil War pictures in Harper's Weekly -- it was not until 1880 that a satisfactory photo-engraving appeared in the New York Daily Graphic using the half-tone block process. It was only after a few decades, however, that this process, which enabled picture and type to be produced in the same operation, was generally adopted. Other factors doubtless influenced this. General accessibility to the photographic image increased greatly during the years preceding and following the turn of the century, a period which saw the increased dissemination of news event photographic images through the use and collection of picture postcards, as well as the growth of the lantern slide industry.

The news industry itself was remarkably slow to exploit the possibilities of photographic reproduction, and even where images were first used they were generally limited to the single picture. Some notable exceptions in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century reveal, if anything, that photography was still endowed with public novelty value. In 1886 Le Journal illustré published an article 'L'Art de vivre cent ans: trois entretiens (Fig.8) avec Monsieur Chevreul (photographiés à la veille de sa cent et unième année)'<sup>67</sup> which was illustrated by 13

photographic prints, 12 of them captioned by part of the dialogue between Chevreul and Nadar (Félix Tournachon), whose son Paul had taken the photographs. What is notable about this article and illustrative series, apart from its being an exception to the general practice of the use of engravings, is that Nadar (père) felt the need to use the series not so much (as in his later serial works) to document the event, but more to record a rounded portrait-- a collection of physiognomies as much as the record of an experience: 'M. P. Nadar a reproduit instantanément toutes les attitudes et, pour ainsi dire, toutes les physiognomies de l'illustre savant, tandis que, selon les questions par lui traitées, son visage se transformait, son allure se métamorphosait.'<sup>68</sup> Two years later Le Figaro published another Nadar interview, with General Boulanger, with 20 photographs of the General spread over three pages, again in half-tone reproduction.

These portraits cannot be said to have established the use of photographic serialism in news items; the photographic image itself was not widely used in periodical literature at the time. When photography did become established as news illustration, however, it established a strong link with the use of the series. This is possibly because, despite the notion of 'coverage', the advance in photo-reproduction technology coincided with advances in photographic equipment enabling the rapid registration of sequences. In the 1890s the Illustrated American had pioneered the use of groups of photographs on single subjects, but abandoned the practice because of unreliabilities in the supply of images. Despite the appearance of the Daily Mirror (the first newspaper to be exclusively



illustrated by photographs) in 1904 and The Illustrated Daily News of New York in 1919 which took up the practice, it was not until the introduction of the Ermanox and Leica cameras in 1924 and 1925 respectively that the photographic series was exploited and the concept of 'photo-journalism' took hold. With the advent of this kind of pictorial coverage event postcards, which had flourished in the first two decades of the century, lost their appeal. The introduction of this technology (witness the vogue of 'detective cameras') had an effect on image content, leading to the use of 'unposed' and 'candid' shots. Salomon, noted for this kind of photography, has indeed been called one of the fathers of modern photo-journalism. For his part he is said to have been stimulated by his dissatisfaction with the posed pictures of the Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, one of the magazines which instigated the notion of photographic coverage along with other German periodicals, especially Die Dame and those belonging to the Ullstein group, and the Münchener Illustrierte Presse. Such magazines, which had inaugurated the idea of building the story from the sequence of images (cf. Felix Man's 1929 series of photographs on night time wanderers in Berlin) consolidated the use of candid images in the 1930s.

At the same time, photography itself had undergone a process of democratisation: a result of lighter and speedier cameras and accessible development processes. The period also saw the establishment of the photographic agency -- testimony to the increased dissemination of the photographic image. As a result, work on the image was extensive, witness the use of photomontage, the develop-



ment of surrealism and the formation of Workers' photography movements in Europe and America in the 1920s and '30s, all of which contributed to the breakdown of established photographic form. The result of these practices was the freer use of experimental, juxtaposed and sequential images, especially in the press. The Dephot agency, which was set up in Germany in 1929, concentrated on picture sequences.

Despite these advances, the history of the 'photo-essay' remains obscure, mainly because of the unclear definition of photo-journalistic practice in relation to the series. Wilson Hicks, who became picture editor of Life magazine in 1937, not surprisingly credits the first issue of Life in 1936 as the birthplace of true photo-journalistic form (Hicks 1952, p.38), by which he means the true 'photo-essay' as suggested but not successfully created by Time in its editions of 1934 and 1935. In common with most commentators on the history of photo-journalism, however, he confuses various types of series without adequately defining them. As Edey (1978) points out, the photo-essay, in as much as it requires only a good set of pictures, could have been in existence since the inception of photography itself.<sup>69</sup> However, various other developments were required before the extensive use of serial 'coverage', for example the technical apparatuses mentioned above, but most importantly the growth in the importance afforded to the image in visual/verbal combinations allied to the consolidation of the ideology of photographic 'veracity' and 'documentation', which the news media have consistently exploited, and the concurrent increase in aesthetic

realism.

Whatever the aetiology of photo—journalistic serialism, the use of the sequence of images and the written text became a standard, especially in weekly news magazines like Time, Life and The Illustrated London News. A typical Life essay would extend over eight to ten pages, the end result of a complex collaborative process involving the photographer, departmental editor, picture editor, designer, researcher, writer, managing editor and others. It is difficult, however, to pinpoint what exactly separates this 'essay' from a collection of images. For Edey (1978), the essence of a photo—essay is contained in the primary motivation of the piece having come from the picture content. For Edey, essays with a 'story line' are to be separated from essays displaying only thematic coherence ('mood essays').<sup>70</sup> Thus 'essay' seems to include both narrative and non-narrative sequences, bearing in mind the difficulty of establishing a non—sequential series (see Chapter 2). Both Edey and Hicks discuss an earlier period before the 1920s (for example The Illustrated London News armistice edition of 1918) where the use of groups of photographs did not constitute the photo—essay because 'the form of the layout was not dictated by the content of the pictures' (Edey 1978, p.3) or because 'the "picture story" was a grouped miscellany rather than an ordered and photographic narration' (Hicks, 1952, p.34). Morgan (1974, p.14) employs a similar basic distinction between the sequential and the thematically linked essay, but follows W. Eugene Smith (who is credited with coining the term 'photo—essay') in dividing the latter into shots reinforcing



an overall point and those linked by subject matter only. Although there is not space in the present chapter to discuss these theoretical distinctions, suffice it to say that the result of the development of all types of photo-essay was an increase in the importance afforded the visual in such combined texts, allied to a strengthening of semantic coherence and a use of multiple perspectives which underlined the idea of a fuller 'coverage'.

Later, the evolution of television as the main disseminator of the photographic series in reportage had an effect on the content and style of the photo essay. Technical advances in the 1950s, especially the increased portability of camera equipment and better sound synchronisation, allowed the television feature to go closer to the subject in movement. This encouraged the photo-essay magazines to go for more 'in depth' stories and articles, exploiting the tendency of the static image collection to add a meditative, or contemplative, quality to the text, something which film transmitted on the television screen could not immediately provide. The photo-essay magazines tended, too, to emphasise their sophisticated colour reproduction, the aesthetic qualities of their images, the particular vision of the photographer and discriminations more associated with stylistic features. This tended to push the photo-essay away from the immediacy of the instant news item, and it was not long before television was felt to usurp most of the photo-essay's functions, with the result that many periodicals ceased publication. Life responded by increasing the 'in depth' or 'investigative' feature, but the result was a decrease in the emphasis on the image, and increased concentration



on the written text. This signalled, according to Edey, a return to the illustrated article,<sup>72</sup> and the heyday of the photo-essay was felt by many to be over.

### Advertising

Television has also become one of the main sites of photographic advertising, which before its advent had been limited to printed material. Although the photograph still plays a central role in the idealisation of the commodity in capitalist society, the use of the extensive series is rare, except as a collection of object representations. However, the underlying transformational matrix which the promise of consumerism exploits is also one which is basic to the establishment of visual narrativity, and a certain type of revealed transformational series has always been a popular type of reduced series in advertising.

Until the 1954 Television Act set up the Independent Television Authority and ushered in commercial television, the press was the leading advertising medium, as it had been for at least a century. Illustrated advertising had been known from the early nineteenth century, but it was forced out (especially from the metropolitan newspapers) by the introduction of stamp duty, and it did not really get going again until the last decade of the century, at a time when other major disseminations of (photographic) imagery were achieving notable success. A remarkable feature of the photographic advertising images of this early period is the cross-contamination of domains which are now regarded as quite separate; the use of identical

images in different discourses is common, and there is much duplication. The intentional construction of 'advertising imagery' is a practice which developed gradually.

Thus the same imagery often played a variety of roles in the early period. The illustrated song series, for instance, which coupled the projected photographic sequence and the singer, shows the use of an established form for the promotion of new material. The reproduction of such series in post card form doubtless helped in maintaining the popularity of the product. Similarly, Dr. Barnardo, who instigated the use of the minimal pair (Fig.9) as a newspaper advertisement, made use of a practice already in use for documentation in his children's homes. The latter kind of series, which exploits the transformation between 'before' and 'after' shots, has a long history (witness the miraculous transformations thus signified in medieval imagery), and the use of such photographic pairs had already been established in the medical profession (in 1852 Dr. Behrendt, a Berlin orthopaedic surgeon, had begun photographing all his cases before and after surgery).<sup>73</sup>

The action of Barnardo, however, had serious repercussions which involved him in a lengthy legal battle. In 1877 an attempt was made to prosecute Barnardo for 'artistic fictions' in using specially constructed images for advertising. The images Barnardo used, which were meant to reveal the transformational power of his work, were in fact specially made for promotional purposes, although Barnardo insisted they were merely 'typical' images.<sup>74</sup> The Prosecution (which was motivated by wider



political issues) further maintained that the charge of 'fictions' could also be applied to claims concerning conditions at the homes. Despite this latter charge, there is no doubt that the use of specially constructed images for advertising purposes deeply offended a public sense of photographic propriety relating to the 'veracity' of the image, and the offence was strengthened by the use of the transformational pair. Nowadays such practices are accepted in advertising discourse. The case shows Barnardo as something of a pioneer at a time, preceding the growth of the advertising industry, when promotional and documentary spheres were negotiating the same perceptual space.

Present-day cinema advertising occupies a space first established by the static images of the magic lantern. 1891 saw what was probably the first projected photographic sequence advertising a commercial establishment, the use of single slides being already well established. The novelty of this sequence is accredited by its being reported in the Optical Magic Lantern Journal (Vol.2, No.2, March 1891, p.89): 'A Yankee chimney sweep is said to do a thriving business by advertising with a magic lantern. On a screen he projects a picture of room and fireplace (labelled, before sweeping); smoke and flame issue from the fire. After a while the same view, with a comfortable fire burning, is projected (labelled, after being swept by ---).' What is interesting here is the closeness of the content to the Diorama and effect slides of much earlier. It shows how the transformational effect underlies the construction of the visual narrative sequence in a variety of discourses. Even now the minimal pair



is a common advertising practice intended to reveal the desired transformation that the commodity will produce, particularly prevalent in the advertising of slimming products (primarily aimed at women) and body building devices (primarily aimed at men). Its popularity testifies to the promise of transfiguration which forms the basis of the consumerist myth.

### Photoroman

With the establishment of cinema and television as the main photo-narrative forms, the moving image may be said to have ousted the static photographic series in a number of spheres. This is true both of major public visual narrative spectacles and more private consumption in the home. The effect of the growth of these industries has been first to peripheralise the photographic series, or at least to bring about its containment within certain types of discourse, and to influence the content of the images themselves. Apart from news journalism and advertising the remaining major post-filmic sphere incorporating the use of photographic sequences is that of the Fine Arts. This sphere represents one of the most extensive domains of photo-narrative practice. Apart from these major discourses, however, there are still survivals of more mainstream and traditional forms of photographic narration in popular culture. One of the most notable of such forms is the photoroman.

Developed mainly on the continent in the 1950s (and still surviving), the photoroman represents the resurgence of traditional narrative techniques under the influence

of film and television drama. This form-- a photographic story of magazine or book length (sometimes serialised in a weekly periodical or similar) using captions and speech balloons-- doubtless has its historical equivalents, as a full and complex photographic narrative text, in the extensive picture plays of Alexander Black and the life model magic lantern series. As a printed text for personal consumption, however, it bears a strong relation to the stereoscopic series from the 1860s onwards and the sets of postcards, where a similar relation of visual and verbal texts is found. Zeyons (1976) who has made a study of the latter during the First World War, calls these sets 'Le Roman-photo de la Grande Guerre'. Both the stereo- and post card sets show, in their use of balloons and captions, their employment of actors and actresses specialising in character types (rather than the amateur models of the lantern slide) and their emotional and often propagandist content, that the later photoroman was not a strictly new form. Yet equally, the general layout, use of a large number of images and expressive style of the photoromans owes much to film drama and the comic strip. This is particularly likely in view of the photoroman's popularity during the heyday of the Hollywood studio system, when cinema was established as the most popular public visual narrative form. The continental photoromans from this period (in England the photoroman was not as popular, although English copies were made) betray a strong Hollywood 'style', particularly in characterisation, the organisation of the image, the use of dramatic lighting and gesture and so on. Hollywood practice also affected the subject matter and working



method, with the use of locations, shooting scripts, and the employment of famous actors and actresses. The first issue of the English magazine Photo Romance which was printed in Italy and appeared in November 1956, contains the story The Merchant of Love, 'complete in more than 360 dramatic photographs' and 'featuring Gina Lollobrigida'. It contains preliminary and final credits, cast list and establishing shots, and owes its general style to the type of film this actress normally appeared in. In fact, the practitioners of the art of photoroman, from director and cameraman to main actor and extra, mostly regarded the art as a direct equivalent of the film.<sup>75</sup>

The photo-roman in magazine or book form has remained popular on the continent, although its popularity has probably been rivalled by that of the adult comic book. In England, where the photo-roman was never as popular, it has recently made an appearance in periodicals aimed at the teenage girl. The serialised photoroman probably owes much to the general style of the cartoon narratives they have replaced in teenage magazines, but there are also numerous short complete photoromans which continue this tradition from the 1950s and '60s. The (Fig.10) main producer of these texts is the notorious D.C.Thomson empire,<sup>76</sup> and it is not surprising that the content of these stories is more parochial and heavily moralistic, closer to the Victorian life model lantern slide series than to the heyday of the photoroman.

### The Art World

In the sphere of established Fine Art practices



photographic serialism has a long history. It is allied both to serial works in general and to the documentary impulse within other types of art work. The duality underlying these two aspects has shadowed photography from its inception. At first struggling to establish itself as an artistic practice, photography was simultaneously used within creative work as a documentary tool. This ambivalent position has persisted, such that photography is seen on the one hand as a valid aesthetic object in its own right as well as a useful documentary tool within conceptual or non-tangible practices.

It has already been noted that there are long and well established traditions of the use of serial imagery in the Fine Arts, particularly in painting. Whether the series was developed as a set of illustrations, recounted a life story, traditional tale or consisted of thematically linked images, with or without a verbal text, these traditions have survived. Many artists still employ the series, and even the polyptych (connected most strongly with medieval and renaissance church imagery) has been revived (notably by Bacon and Beckmann). Thematic linkage, whether through the repetition of the same scene at different times (as in Monet's paintings of haystacks, Rouen Cathedral etc.), preparatory sketches, repetitions of the same subject (Dubuffet's 'Women', Matisse's portrait series etc.), or multiple imagery (Warhol, 'multiples' and the like) remains a significant validation in itself of the need for the set. Although many of these series are formed on a comparative matrix, narrativity is evident in sets which display any kind of chronological and/or progressive aspect, the latter often under the influence

of filmic form.<sup>77</sup> The response to popular forms of communication is a significant trend which, along with the development of conceptual and self-referential art practices, has done much to encourage the use of the photographic series.

One area which has exploited the use of serialism from its inception and still continues to do so is the exploration of abstraction. The work of Kandinsky, who connected serialism to the unfolding exploration in musical form, shows the importance of the concept of linearity in the reading. Various of Kandinsky's works show the use of the progressive line and the fragmented series, where the gradual nature of the reading temporality makes the series at once an effective analytic and expressive tool. Some of his works (eg. Succession, 1935 and Seven,<sup>(Fig.11)</sup> 1943) show how the idea of progression is central to the unfolding of the 'conglomerate' and particularly to the mobilisations of certain figurations. The actions of the artist present an almost literally successive actantial model within the picture frame and increase the anthropomorphic nature of the image.

The possible increase of anthropomorphic tendencies which arises from the use of succession and mobilisation can be seen clearly in the famous abstract narrative work of El Lissitzky A Tale of Two Squares (1920, published in Berlin 1922), which Lissitzky himself compared to film. Here, the symbolic is allied to the directly representational (eg. circle=world) in such a way that the main protagonists in the narrative hover on the edge of abstraction. The story unfolds conventionally, Lissitzky making use of 'filmic' movements (especially movement



towards the subject and the close-up). This kind of fluidity also stimulated a number of abstract artists, notably Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling. The latter progressed towards abstract film by means of earlier researches into succession and abstraction, notably by means of the unfolding scroll.

Abstract serialism enabled many artists to articulate imagery in particularly analytical ways, gradually allowing the more investigative 'reading' of form relations, rhythmic effects, linear contrasts and temporally expressed harmonies in a way not possible within the single static work. Serial linearity (whether visually 'pieced out' or not) allows for direction and movement to signify transformations in progress in a way similar to music. The result was often felt to be more contemplative, or analytical. It was as a response to this kind of desire that Richter and Eggeling actually instigated the use of the scroll (in 1919 to '25, and again in 1943 to '46). These works, made with and without interstices, often betrayed a more directly representational thrust similar to El Lissitzky. For Richter, who saw the use of scrolls as a prelude to the use of film, the scrolls were particularly useful as analytical works; he concluded that they made the beholder experience process not fact,<sup>78</sup> finally realising the inevitability of narrative in works which involved the use of succession, either because the isomorphic basis of abstract expression tends to narrativise because of the humanised actants, or because the form itself stimulates a narrativised reading as an awareness of expressed transformations.

A number of artists in the early twentieth



century reveal an interest in succession and fragmentation. This can be seen even in the static cubist images of Picasso and Braque, which show the articulation of different viewpoints. Many artists, however, particularly Futurists, Surrealists and abstract artists turned to filmic form as the expression of this interest. As early as 1908/9 Kandinsky and Schoenberg began work on Der Gelbe Klang, and film sequences formed part of the Bauhaus experiments. The most notable practitioner of the use of non-filmic abstract serial form, though, was Kurt Kranz, who has continued to produce the abstract sequences he began producing in 1927. These sequences are, again, usually described in terms of anthropomorphic actions,<sup>79</sup> although the themes are officially formal. Unlike Richter, however, Kranz had no difficulty in adopting photographic images for his sequences, even directly representational images as in the Profiles and the Self Portrait in Defensive Postures of 1930/31, although Leger had pioneered the use of photographic representations as plastic form in his film Ballet Mécanique of 1924. Leger insisted that his film was 'objective, realistic and in no way abstract' although it emphasised formal relations, and was billed as 'The first film without scenario'.<sup>80</sup>

Many uses of serial form in the arts tended towards the comparative rather than the transformational matrix. This is true especially of the work of the Surrealists and Dadaists who exploited the incongruity of juxtapositions. Although it is possible to see, as does Ades, close parallels between photomontage and dynamic film montage, particularly of the early Soviet cinema,<sup>81</sup> the

photomontage of the Surrealists, like the word "montage" which the Dadaists produced, seems rather to have been motivated by the notion of surprising or significant incongruity or confrontation, in keeping with Lautréamont's famous image.<sup>82</sup> Photomontage, furthermore, is more a product of combination, rather than an investigation of serial progression. Only Moholy-Nagy seems to have successfully combined the series with photomontage techniques, as in The Law of the Series, or The Shooting Gallery, minimising, by means of repetition, the particularity of the single artefact. His emphasis on repetition as a formal device betrays a different emphasis from that of photomontagists like Heartfield.<sup>83</sup>

In painting, the use of the series is both varied and long standing, and there is room in the present work only to outline a few general tendencies. More recent uses of serialism still appear to be dominated by abstract and minimal form, and still appear to be following the Richterian notion of the analysis of process. A recent example, Derek Hirst's Kyoto series (1972 to '73) shows (Fig.12) the image undergoing some kind of linear transformation, while simultaneously maintaining the notion of thematic variation. On the other hand, Gassiot-Talabot claims an explosion in the use of serial imagery in the 1960s, which he explains by a widespread rejection of the limitations of filmic form.<sup>84</sup> The artists he champions, like Fahlström, seem to me to betray more of a direct response to popular narrative forms like comic strip, in line with the general tendency to adopt popular imagery which was taking place at the time (cf. Lichtenstein)

Throughout the present century photography



has played a traditional role within art practices; and it has been established more recently in more conceptual categories. The use of photography within the Fine Arts seems to relate to two general tendencies: i) the tendency to use the photographs as documentation of another artistic event or process and ii) the tendency to offer the photograph itself as art object. There are numerous examples of combinations of the above. The first category could be said to be motivated by the need to document a creative event which does not produce directly marketable artefacts. In such works, for example Christo's projects, documentations of land art, body art, performance art and other practices involving non-tangible art objects, the photograph not only takes its place as prefiguration alongside preliminary plans, drawings, models etc., it also is used to provide a serial narration of the artistic event itself, and it is offered as a product on the market.<sup>85</sup> With some artists, however, the taking of the photographs becomes part of a more constant and integrated documentation, and the photographs produced during the event become signs of the act as object. In this respect the works of Hamish Fulton and Richard Long point to (Figs. 13-19) the fluidity of the categories. If the act of walking, for instance, is the art activity, then the photographs can play a traditional post-event documentary role. However, since the photographs are taken on the walk and not of it they become intrinsic to the creative act. In the exhibitions and printed texts presented by these artists, the manner of presentation, the size, design and force of the images serve to sacralise the act of seeing itself, and the photographic images become tokens of this act,



while simultaneously documenting the context in which the act took place.<sup>86</sup> Both Fulton and Long show their concern to sanctify their vision, rather than simply to document in the traditional sense, by their use of minimal and/or cryptic texts - in Fulton this is particularly apparent in the use of either one or two images with a minimally informative or evocative caption; in Long it is apparent in the concern for imagistic transfer onto objects created for the gallery. A work such as Fulton's Grims Ditch, (Fig.13) for instance, presents us primarily with a narrative relating to the act of transformation which the photographer has witnessed, but Fulton's concern to 'enigmatise' is revealed in the minimum narrative signficatory power of the text as a whole, coupled with the artist's fondness for traces, tracks, ripples and so on. Furthermore, while Long is possibly more interested in the use of photography as post-event artefact alongside other tokens of intervention in the natural world (piles of stone, plans, maps etc.), his use of minimal texts of various types serves to point out both the possibility of narrative signfication across a few coherent signs, as well as the possibility of cryptic and evocative messages created at the frontier of serial narrativity.

Fulton and Long are distinguished by their use of photography to represent the fragmented texts of their own vision within the event, and frequently the photographic is reduced to single images, alongside other artefacts. With other photographers, however, the use of the photographic series has formed part of a more developed photographic expression. Related to both vision and documentation, these works seem to fall into three

broad categories depending on the use made of the photographic series. In some works, the series signifies successively (such succession being of necessity temporal); in others, the relation between the images in the series is not felt to be successive, although there is some other (generally thematic) linkage; a third category must be reserved for those works which appear to operate self-analytically vis à vis the photograph. It is only those series which appear to operate successively (i.e. according to a transformational matrix) which present any straightforward narrativity; the other categories operating comparatively and analytically respectively. At a recent exhibition devoted to the use of the photographic series (only the second<sup>87</sup> this century), Jacques Py and Bernard Xavier Vailhen formulated a similar distinction between the 'suite', the 'série' and the 'séquence': in the 'suite' spatial factors are paramount, and the fragments form a composite image, in the 'série' the images form a comparative collection, and in the 'séquence' the series is temporally progressive. Although one might question the appropriateness of the terminology, these distinctions at least serve to point out a second type of non-successive series which could be added to the preliminary list, where the works form a composite whole as the separate parts are viewed as one. Yet such is the variety of present day photographic practice, that one would also have to make further distinctions among temporally successive series between those which tend toward the greater interstice and those which are more temporally contiguous; only in this way can one distinguish the work of Michals from that of Muybridge: works of quite different character.

Before going on to discuss examples of the use of serial imagery in photography, the works can be categorised in the following manner:

i) successive, a) contiguous, b) interstitial

ii) non-successive, a) composite, b) thematic

iii) analytic

all categories relating to the type of linkage between the images, except the third which indicates a different type of practice. Such distinctions are not at this stage concerned with the incorporation of the verbal text, but serve merely to point out the variety of visual serial significations.

As far as 'contiguous' or condensed time lapse pieces are concerned, Muybridge will remain the earliest and most notable example, although many photographers have used similar forms since, particularly, in the art world, in the past two decades, where the use of the photographic series has been stimulated by the interest in photographic signifying practice in general. In this context, the works range from Dieter Appelt's straightforward photographing of simple acts, to Alexis Hunter's condensed temporal sequences embodying highly political symbolism. Such series narrate minimally, in a way which recalls the earliest short film fragments, like Edison's film of his assistant's sneeze,<sup>88</sup> or the short cyclical narratives of the Mutoscope parlour.

More extensive narrative successions require, perhaps ironically, 'fuller' interstices incorporating more complex transformations (and in the latter case there is more likelihood of the use of accompanying verbal text). The most notable exponent of photonarrative who



can most justifiably be said to be continuing a tradition relating to Black and Bamforth, is Duane Michals. According (Figs. 20-22, 40-42) to Nuridsany, Michals created a small photographic revolution when he introduced his photographic series in 1966, and his originality has been attested by numerous commentators.<sup>89</sup> What Michals did was ally the tradition of photoroman with vaguely surrealist imagery, exploiting the evocative power of the interstice in a way which often reminds one of the 'trucages' of Méliès. His serial works range from short time-lapse portraits (Portrait of Sydie and Garritt Lansing, 1976)<sup>90</sup> through simple 'supernatural' acts (in which he exploits traditional 'photographic codes', blur for movement, light intensity for the supernatural, transparency for spiritual existence etc.) to more complex narratives exploiting the temporal anachronies of the successive interstice (Private Acts, 1973). All his sequences (Fig. 21) even if temporally circular in their return to the initial image, revolve around disturbing transformations. His work also shows the necessity of verbal incorporation in order to supply a logic of connection across the larger interstice; in 1974 he began writing his own captions in long hand: 'Not that the writing actually describes what you're looking at, but to actually talk about what you can't see.'<sup>91</sup> The incorporation of written texts has encouraged the exploitation of more 'literary' modes, with freer and wider interstitial connections, as opposed to the tight organisations needed in constructing the predominantly visual text (as in photoroman).

In composite types of non-successive images we are faced with a kind of montage process where the single text is constructed from the fragmented series.

Jan Dibbets has produced a number of works of this type. His Panorama Dutch Horizon, for example, is constructed (Fig.23) from a non-interstitial series of pictures of the sea line, and the particular effect of the work comes from the composite/serial interplay. Gilbert and George and Hockney have recently shown an interest in the creation of composite images from a number of non-successive fragments, but Hockney's recent photomontages follow more closely a cubist aesthetic in which the fragments of the composition reveal similar images photographed within temporal progressions, as a way, possibly, of exposing the false notion of the unitary representative whole. (Fig.24)

Hilliard might also be said to have explored thematic linkages in works such as Black Depths White Expanse Grey Extent,<sup>92</sup> where the differentiations within the work can depend on a comparative matrix. 'Comparative' series more usually entail the photographing of the same object under different conditions (as in Tom Phillips' 20 Sites n Years)<sup>93</sup> or a collection of similar objects. The latter type of series can be seen in works like the collected photographs of Bernd and Hilla Becher<sup>94</sup> and a number of collections of images of similar objects. These thematically linked series form the basis of a number of photographic books; even here, however, the differentiations can be provided according to a temporal interstice (the Phillips work, above, for instance, as well as Fulton's minimal transformational pairs, works by Shigeru Tamura,<sup>95</sup> Huebler<sup>96</sup> and so on), in which case they might be better placed under the category of successive images. They are distinguished, here, in their depiction of objects rather than actants. S/



An increase in interest in photography and signifying practice has stimulated the production of works which attempt to analyse or to reveal the processes of signification at work within photographically based texts. Victor Burgin, for example, has used the photographic series accompanied by the printed verbal text to show how the semantic operation of the message depends on a particular ideological confluence. His Lei Feng work<sup>97</sup> juxtaposes a repeated Western image (particularly evocative of the status quo) with a communist Chinese parable and an essay on the semiotics of the image. The text thus 'reveals itself' through the resulting ideological tensions in juxtaposition. More recently, Sarah McCarthy has been exploring similar tensions; her The Milliner and the Student,<sup>98</sup> a series of 88 photographs and captions, attempts to reveal the ideological basis of the signification through the provision of 'alternative' (i.e. non-automatic) readings in the photographs, of the accompanying verbal text. In that her text is particularly concerned with women's experience, she could be said to represent a trend within feminist art practice at the present time. Indeed, Lucy Lippard has suggested that feminist artists turn to long narrative sequences or performance art 'as if to express personal reality we have to incorporate the notion of cyclical time, as if women need to express their life as a sequence of instances rather than as moments caught in a single image'.<sup>99</sup> This is certainly true of the serial photographic works of Alexis Hunter, who uses her short time-lapse sequences as didactic models of women's experience, bringing out their political symbolism in her use of captions and



titles.<sup>100</sup>

### Conclusion

Art world practices, while they present the photographic series in the public domain, do so within the limited confines of a milieu which occupies a strictly defined socio-cultural space within commodity capitalism. Yet the photographic series still survives in semi-public or private spheres. The great age of the public projected photo-narrative is now past, its place taken by film, and nowadays the projected slide sequence is not seen as particularly suited to extended and complex narrative. But the 'slide . show' still survives in a traditional educational context, whether it be in school, college, business or parochial meeting. Even though the development of colour processing and the inaccessibility of film equipment has encouraged the use of the slide narrative in the home (such a form, which still has its enthusiasts, has been christened 'diaporama' in France), it is fighting for viewing space predominantly occupied by television and video. The paradigm of static visual narratives within which film was developed has now been upturned. A work which is formed of still photographic images, like Chris Marker's La Jetée (1962) will now be seen within the context of cinema, as it was indeed made 'as' a film, and projected within a cinematic context, even though it exploits the suggestibility, temporal vagueness and frozen concentration of the non-animated form, and even though Marker himself is quoted as saying; 'Il existe aucune commune mesure entre la photographie et le cinéma.'

Il n'existe entre ces deux moyens d'expression également complets la même différence qu'entre le continu et le discontinu.<sup>101</sup>

While the individual will doubtless continue to construct private photo-narratives in the photograph album and slide show, and consume photo-serial works in advertising, the photoroman and the illustrated periodical, it cannot be denied that most areas of the public photo-narrative have now been usurped by the animated. Television, video and cinema represent such dominant forms of visual narrative expression that the use of the static photographic series has largely been pushed to the periphery. Yet the history of photographic serialism and allied expressions shows that this subjugation is a comparatively recent phenomenon, and that any historical overview has a wealth of examples to take into account, many of them, like the magic lantern, having received less attention than they merit. The historical survey undertaken here has hopefully, by outlining the wealth and variety of related forms, revealed a substantial corpus, and provided a rich background for the analysis of narrativity and its operation. Subsequent chapters will attempt to analyse just exactly what this operation entails.

Notes

1. Historical Background

1. See Kuhn 1962.

2. Although it would not be advisable to see it as inevitable.

3. Archaeology vol.9 1956, p.63.

4. Ibid., and see also Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951.

5. This is not specific to serial imagery, but it is an important context.

6. See Groenewegen-Frankfort 1951, pp.101-105, 171-174.

7. See Pächt op.cit., pp.10,11.

8. The Simone Martini illustration shows the effective (Fig.1) use of abrupt change coupled with divine intervention within a homogeneous space. This is one of the many miraculous incidents in the life of Saint Agostino Novello illustrated by Martini.

9. Pächt 1962, p.21. According to Francastel (1969, orig. pub. 1967, p.29) a transition in manuscript illustration can be seen around the sixth century (in the Ashburnham Pentateuch in particular) 'from the antique style of miniature painting to the more narrative forms of the Western Middle Ages' where 'the style is no longer based on the reduction of a monumentally conceived composition into a miniature but, instead, on the exploitation of the line itself'. By the time of which Pächt is writing such a style would have been fully developed.

10. See Okudaira 1973 orig. pub. 1966.

11. See Wormald 1957, pp.28-29.

12. See the discussion of this point in Chapter 4, and the articles by Stenton and Digby. See also Visual Appendix Figs.33 & 34.

13. However false one may see the ideology of 'realistic' portrayal.



14. See especially Altick 1978 and El Nouty 1978.

15. See El Nouty 1978.

16. Ibid., pp.107-108.

17. Narrative shadow shows were popular around the turn of the century in a number of Paris nightclubs, particularly the Chat noir in Montmartre where Rudolphe Salis instigated shadow shows with both spoken and written accompaniments. Altick (1978, p.118) sees the shadow show as a hybrid derived from the puppet show and the magic lantern principle, but the long history of the use of shadows in a private milieu, along with their distinctive simulative characteristics, tends to distance the shadows from these two forms.

18. Bindman 1981, p.24.

19. Ibid., p.27.

20. Ibid., p.55.

21. In the sense that many illustrative series were sold by public subscription, including engraved copies of paintings.

22. Robertson (real name Etienne Gaspard Robert) first presented his show at the Pavilion de L'Echiquier in Paris, and later in the chapel of the old Couvent des Capucines near the place Vendôme. In the latter setting the images were projected onto smoke as well as screens. (See Coe 1981, pp.13-14).

23. See especially the 'Gare S. Lazare' series (1876-77), the 'Haystacks' series (1890-92) the 'Rouen Cathedral' series (1892-95) and so on. Hamilton (1960, p.28) makes the point that after the Rouen Cathedral series Monet was never again content with the single picture. The comment by Issacson (1978, p.40) that 'Monet's aim in the series paintings, taken as a whole, was to develop specific records of a chosen site, which would convey the changes of the seasons, weather, atmosphere, and the passage of light, its varied colour, warmth and direction during the course of a single day' is suggestive of a strong affinity with diorama cycles.

24. See also bibliography 'Canterbury Cathedral Library collection of programmes for Panoramas etc.'

25. See Périer 1855.

26. See Gernsheim and Gernsheim 1965, pp.94, 111.

27. For a full reference see bibliography 'Thomson 1873/4'. Volumes 1&2 and 3&4 were later bound together in a total of two volumes to which the references in the text refer.

28. But only where photographically based, i.e. where we tend to rely on a series of images which are subsequently explained, as opposed to the more usual use of images for sporadic illustration. In this sense an 'extracted' illustrative series can possibly be distinguished from an 'embedded' illustrative series, resulting in more prominence for the separated visual text.

29. Figuiet 1860, p.30.

30. This must have had a liberating effect on both photographer and subject, who were no longer tied to the quintessential uniqueness of the formal portrait. This multiplicative power must also have divorced the photograph from the milieu of portrait painting, based as it had been on one image resulting from a lengthy sitting. It introduced the notion of a portrait as a fractional portrayal of appearance and personality.

31. Thomas op.cit., pp.43-64.

32. In other words landscape and topographical views, portrait series etc.. Stereosets were also used widely for the documentation of theatrical events (similar in a way to the film-still sets of today). See also the discussion of postcard and magic lantern slide sets.

33. Figure 5, the 'Bluebell' series, is a sentimental song set more probably relating to the Boer War.

34. In Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris sous François Ier. See Remise, Remise and Van de Walle 1979, p.22.

35. See Cook 1963, p.81.

36. Pepys mentions a magic lantern show in his diary for 19 August 1666. See Barnes 1985, p.3.

37. Which is surprising considering the subject matter. Barnes (1985, p.6) makes the point, however, that for the first thirty years or so after their introduction (which he gives as 1849) photographic slides made very little impact on the conventional market. Two events



towards the end of the 1870s, he suggests, rapidly changed the situation: (i) the successful introduction of the gelatine dry plate process in photography and (ii) the introduction of the new 'sciopticon' lantern fitted with a double combination objective, designed for an entirely new lamp fuelled by paraffin or kerosene. This latter had the advantage over the old achromatic objective lens lanterns of being able to reveal the fine detail of the photographic image in projection.

38. Bamforth retained the use of painted images (which must be distinguished from the ubiquitous painted on or tinted photographic images) mainly for the representation of visions of non-human figures (angels etc.).

39. See Great Exhibition...of 1851...catalogue vol.3, p.1487.

40. Especially the verse of George R. Sims.

41. See Cook op.cit., p.103.

42. More traditional tales were still hand painted or chromolithographic.

43. And ran until 1902.

44. See especially Barnes 1985.

45. There is much disagreement concerning the date of the instigation of the dissolve. Altick (1978, p.219) suggests the period 1807-1818 as the time of intervention and perfection of dissolving views, but correspondence in The Optical Magic Lantern Journal towards the end of the century points to the later date 1836/7 (with one correspondent in vol.3 no.34, 1 March 1892, p.29 proposing their introduction in 1846 after 5 years of experiment). Barnes (1970) concurs with the later date, as does Gill (1971).

46. See Gordon 1980, p.21.

47. The date at which the first life model series were produced has yet to be discovered. As Barnes (1985, p.7) notes, it is certain that the genre was fully developed by 1878, when W.J.Chadwick's The Magic Lantern Journal describes York's Gabriel Grub set.

48. See Barnes 1970, p.53.



49. Black 1895, p.348.

50. In the light of note 47 above the claim in Ramsaye (1926 vol.1 chapter 7) that Black's Miss Jenny was the first life model picture play has to be discounted. S

51. Whereas Bamforth did not, probably regarding the life model series as a parallel form to both postcard sets and short films (in which forms the same stories were produced).

52. El Nouty op.cit., p.105.

53. Brewster (1982, p.5) makes the point that 'the movie house as the apparent centre of moving picture-related activity only emerges in the decade after 1905; only then is there a hierarchization of the experience of moving pictures into the cinematic (primary) and the non-cinematic (peripheral)'. For Burch (1982, p.20) 1895 and 1927 are to be seen as 'the confines of a period of gestation which saw the emergence...of the system of narrative ending' in film.

54. See especially Ceram 1965, p.81.

55. See especially Coissac 1925, pp.152-155.

56. Burch (1982, p.21) also makes the point that the viewer's experience of magic lantern shows (and even of the Diorama or 'Phantasmagorie') cannot be excluded from the 'historical space' of film.

57. See Chanan 1980, p.90. Friese-Greene was considering what he thought would constitute the adequate realistic portrayal of a moving physiognomy.

58. Even then this is only a technical achievement.

59. I am grateful to Ms Michelle Snapes for drawing my attention to such a card in the collection of the British Film Institute.

60. See especially Winter 1962 and Kovács 1976.

61. The influence of magic lantern sequences on Méliès has not, as far as I am aware, been detailed. It is interesting to note, as Salt (1983, pp.46-48, 52-54) does, that in Cendrillon (1899) Méliès joined all his scenes by dissolves and persisted in this practice until 1906.

English film makers, who had also taken up the use of the dissolve as the general form of transition, abandoned the practice after 1903/4, replacing it with the use of simple cuts (the dissolve finally codified as the transition to a dream sequence). The earliest important example of the later codified practice is, interestingly, Bamforth's The Kiss in the Tunnel of 1900.

62. Burch (1982, p.24) notes that French film actors were still using asides as late as 1915. This might indicate that the use of direct address (see the discussion of direct address in Le Curé et le majeur in Chapter 4) in stereographic and other photographic narratives was also more prevalent in France. See also, regarding the alliance of film acting and physiognomic expression, Kress (n.d.).

63. See note 53 above.

64. See Main 1981.

65. Nizhegorodskiy Listok 4 July 1896, quoted in a French translation in Deslandes 1966, p.278.

66. See Altick 1978, pp.199-203.

67. No.36, 5 Sept 1886, pp.281-288.

68. Ibid., p.282. See the discussion of this piece in Chapter 5, where it is indicated that this proposal was, generally speaking, carried out.

69. Edey op.cit., p.1.

70. Ibid., pp.12,16.

71. But only some of its former functions, given the effect that the introduction of television coverage actually had on the photo-essay.

72. Edey 1978, pp.18-19.

73. See McGrath 1984, p.16.

74. Reported in detail, along with Barnardo's defence, in Night and Day 1 Nov 1877, pp.124-126, 143-144. Barnardo had begun commissioning such 'before' and 'after' shots in 1870; despite the court ruling more than 80 such sets were published as pamphlets or sold as cards. See Tagg 1980, p.44.

75. I am indebted to Miss Elaine Skelton, former photoroman star, for this information. Many of the workers on photoroman had connections with the film industry, and the day to day practice of photoroman shooting was based to a great extent on film making.

76. 'Notorious' for its stern morality, virulent anti-union stance and strict editorial control.

77. A number of artists have explored both filmic and static forms, especially Richter, Michael Snow and Chris Marker.

78. Richter 1971, p.114.

79. See Hofman 1975, pp.26-43.

80. See Lawder 1975, p.65.

81. Ades 1976, p.16.

82. 'Beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine with an umbrella on an operating table.' Quoted in Haftman (1968 orig. pub. 1961, p.267).

83. See Moholy-Nagy 1956, p.208: 'There is no more surprising, yet in its naturalness and organic sequence, simpler form than the photographic series...Here the single picture loses its separate identity and becomes part of the assembly.'

84. Gassiot-Talabot 1971, p.275.

85. In Christo's case, as with his latest project to wrap the Pont neuf in Paris, the project is actually financed by pre-event sales of such items (plans, drawings etc.); the photographic material is obviously restricted to post-event documentation and sale.

86. As Long (1980, p.3) says: 'My photographs are facts which bring the right accessibility to remote, lonely or otherwise unrecognisable works.'

87. 'Suite, série, séquence' at the Centre culturel Graslin, Nantes, 2 Oct-15 Nov 1981. This had been preceded by 'photo<sup>1</sup>, photo<sup>2</sup>...photo<sup>n</sup>' at the University of Maryland Gallery of Fine Arts, 1978.

88. One of Edison's early film strip experiments.



89. Nuridsany 1981, p.13.

90. Michals 1976, pp.141-143.

91. From an interview with Marco Livingstone, Sept 1984 (transcribed in Michals 1984, pp.88-96), p.91.

92. Robert Self: London 1976. Hilliard could be said to be motivated by a comparative/compositional matrix, for which the term 'series' might be inappropriate.

93. A set of postcards of photographs of the same sites taken at the same time of day and within the same week each year.

94. The Bechers systematically photograph industrial buildings and installations throughout Europe and America, often showing series of the same structures or functions. All the photographs in one series use a uniform method.

95. See Shigeru 1974.

96. See for example 'Duration Piece No.14' in Kahmen 1974, pp.220-221.

97. See Burgin 1977a(i), pp.23-39.

98. See McCarthy 1979.

99. Lippard 1981, p.3.

100. See Hunter c1981.

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101. Marker 1965, p.2.

## 2. NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE

Introduction

Studies of narrative are generally concerned with the problems of both how to define the text as a narrative text and how best to carry out a detailed analysis of it. In order to situate the photographic text as narrative, and therefore the object of study, the same considerations apply, but there are many ways in which the definition and description of narrative texts feed from one another. In most analyses the description of the text contributes to its definition as 'narrative', while the consideration of a text's 'narrativity' (defined by Bal as 'la manière dont le texte se laisse décoder comme narratif'<sup>1</sup>) entails the groundwork of the description. When it comes to analysing the operation of a narrative text, then, one is faced with the problem of a\_\_priori and a\_\_posteriori definitions -- such a problem was hinted at in Chapter 1 -- whereby the object of study is of necessity intuitively established before it has been properly characterised. However, since a detailed description of narrative in operation is usually undertaken on the way to defining the limits of narrativity, the present chapter will proceed according to generally recognised 'descriptive' and by extension 'defining' categories.

The categories in use in the present chapter mainly constitute those areas of narrative analysis and description where particular problems have arisen with implications for the definition of narrative itself.



They are especially concerned with what appears to constitute a genuine narrative text in operation, and the frontier on which this operation takes place. These areas: the levels on which the narrative seems to operate, and the narrative/non-narrative boundary, throw into focus all areas through which commentators have traditionally sought to characterise 'narrative'.

### Narrative Levels

Throughout the vast literature dealing with the description and definition of narrative texts there has been a recurring terminological problem. The word 'narrative' has been in use for a long time, but has always subsumed a number of different meanings, often confluent with the word 'narration'. The O.E.D.<sup>2</sup> offers a convenient gloss of the main categories, as follows: i) an account or narration; a history, tale, story, recital (of facts, etc.); ii) the practice or act of narrating and iii) something to narrate. Thus the word has traditionally conflated three quite distinct notions pertaining to the text itself, its production and its subject. In Art History the term 'narrative' has been generally applied to works which are felt to have some connection with story, incident or activity as subject matter, quite independently of the operation of the text itself (i.e. in terms of visual texts, whether the texts are constructed of single or multiple images). Recent works dealing with narrative theory and/or analysis (particularly Genette)<sup>3</sup> have attempted to cope with the semantic fluidity of the term by restricting the traditional

terms 'narrative', 'narration' and other related items in the lexis to specific definitions, but, unfortunately, there has been little agreement on terminology.

There are now traditions of narrative analysis in a number of European countries as well as the United States, mostly encouraged, if not instigated, by the publication of Propp's Morphology of the Folktale,<sup>4</sup> although the detailed development of a 'narrative theory' as such is a comparatively recent event. As Culler (1981) points out, it would be difficult to contain the differences in emphasis presented in this mass of work, but it would be enlightening to be able to outline points of agreement. In relation to the latter, Culler suggests that the area which constitutes the greatest agreement between the older American and Russian formalist schools, the French structuralists, the German and Dutch text grammarians, and the comparatively new Israeli semioticians, is an awareness that the text can be approached according to different 'levels'.<sup>5</sup> In that the text, as a collection of signs, represents the constitution or transference of something other, then the operation of the narrative as a whole can be seen as presenting the 'story' through the 'discourse'.

Tzvetan Todorov (in 'Les Catégories du récit littéraire', Communications 8, 1966, pp.125-151 -- a pivotal text in the development of narrative theory) outlines how this distinction between 'histoire' and 'discours', originally formulated by Benvéniste in relation to the aspectual systems of the French verb,<sup>6</sup> can be applied to the literary narrative text. While the 'histoire' concerns what is actually related: an ideal chronology

of events constituting an autonomous layer of the signification, the 'discours' concerns more the method of its relation: the transformations undergone by means of the text, and the relation it sets up between the narrator and the reader. In that this kind of distinction does represent a basic agreement among narrative theorists it also corresponds to an analytical core in the attempts made to set up a 'narrative grammar' on the lines of grammars of the spoken language. Thus Prince (1973), while following closely an early Chomskian version of the theory of transformational-generative grammar, also underlines the independence of the story from its textual rendition. His analysis of deep structure (and the mobilisation of rewrite rules) can thus be seen not only to continue the work of Propp and the story level abstraction<sup>b</sup> of 'functions' and their combinations, it can also be seen to relate to the early work of Barthes and Todorov<sup>7</sup> in emphasising the basic 'units' of the story as constituting some kind of basic, underlying structural pattern. Indeed the formulation of narrative grammars, with particular emphasis on the categorisation of 'histoire' seems to have been a particular concern of French theorists, notably Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov and Greimas.<sup>8</sup>

In attempting to apply such an analysis to the visual text, however, we are faced with fundamental problems, and this despite widespread claims of the general applicability of such abstract theories. In fact the reliance on transformational-generative rewrite rules and the deep→surface structure dichotomy makes Prince and others particularly reliant on the verbal text, and especially on the sentence as the most 'meaningful'



analytical unit. Greimas, too, while maintaining as a 'primary observation' that 'narrative structures are translinguistic' as well as 'distinct from linguistic structures',<sup>9</sup> proceeds according to the deep→surface structure dichotomy to produce a generative grammar based on a sentence-derived actantial model. The fact that transformational-generative theories are generally posited in relation to the sentence leads one to question claims of varied semiotic applicability.

There is not space here to go into the objections to the bases for transformational-generative theory, which has come in for a lot of criticism in linguistics for its universal accountability, its lack of explanatory power, its self-reference and the conflation of deep structure with meaning; what is interesting in terms of narrative theory is the correspondence between deep and surface structure and the levels of story and discourse, which can be identified as a valid starting point for the analysis of visual as well as written texts. Even narrative theories which display more of a bias towards the discursive level, like the later analyses of Barthes (especially S/Z), Genette and Chatman (mostly derived from Genette)<sup>10</sup> make similar claims of general semiotic applicability based on the division of the text into different levels of operation. However, it is also in analyses which deal more with the complexities of discourse that the fundamental distinction into two levels seems to have broken down. Barthes, for instance, in his seminal 'Introduction to the Structural analysis of Narratives'<sup>11</sup> more or less divided the discursive into 'actions' and 'narration', by which he sought to provide for Greimas'

actantial model and Tzvetan Todorov's discourse. The result of this division was in fact a separation of discourse itself into two parts (as Tzvetan Todorov had done) attempting to deal with character alongside other discursive operations. By positing 'a mode of progressive integration'<sup>12</sup> as a binding of levels, however, Barthes appears to have been one of the first to grapple with the notion of an integrated operation, cutting across the horizontality of generative grammars, with their simple text→meaning, surface structure→deep structure correlations.

Attempts to constitute more than two levels in the analytical categories of operation thus appear to be based on a realisation that the discursive involves more than the mere 'situating' of the story. In a number of analyses this notion is derived from the idea that the discourse is itself 'situated' in terms of the fictional universe constructed through the text as relation of sender and receiver; it is to be seen as an act of production. Thus Genette (1980)<sup>13</sup> introduces a tripartite distinction which he attempts to relate to the three areas of meaning connected to traditional usage of the term 'narrative'. He maintains the traditional notion of 'histoire' as 'the signified or narrative content'; the term 'narrative' is reserved for the signifier (the 'discourse') or the narrative text itself; and he introduces the third term 'narration' as pertaining to the 'producing narrative action and the whole of the real or fictional situation in which the action takes place'.<sup>14</sup> The problems with this third term (in which Genette is somewhat in agreement with Barthes) arise, though, from the difficulty experienced in attempting to separate it from the second

aspect of the operation: in Genette's terms the 'discourse' or 'narrative text itself'. It is hard to see how a level of 'narration' can be conceived separately from the continuous operation of a discourse which is actually the continuous producer of the action and fictional situation. Genette's analysis, furthermore, appears to conflate the two terms; and Chatman (1978b), in his attempt to apply Genette's analysis to the filmic text, actually dispenses in practice with this tripartite distinction, collapsing 'narration' into 'discourse'. Similarly Rimmon-Kenan proposes a third level of 'narration' (as opposed to 'story', which designates the 'narrated events', and 'text', which is 'a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling'<sup>15</sup>) which she identifies as the point of focalisation (traditionally 'point of view') and speech representation. Yet it is again difficult to see why this cannot be identified as part of a discourse in operation, since the 'production' of a narrative is undertaken according to and by means of the discourse which, in Rimmon-Kenan's words 'undertakes [its] telling'. In all these attempts to outline the basic levels of operation (a task which poses the fundamental problem in narrative analysis) the aspects of 'discourse' and 'narration' are themselves constructs according to the narrative text itself; in this sense they cannot successfully be separated in real semiotic terms since they exist on the same level of semiosis. The problems which have arisen according to these tripartite analyses stem mainly from an unwillingness to engage the material text as signifier: it is this which has led to false claims of wide semiotic applicability.<sup>16</sup>



The story is generally agreed to represent an ideal construct of logically reconstituted chronology, established according to the indications in the discourse. In some theories this becomes a post-positing account, in others (notably transformational-generative theory) it is almost pre-positing in identity with deep structure propositions.<sup>17</sup> According to the latter perspective the discourse is taken to refer to an operation which 'transforms'<sup>18</sup> the story layer (cf. Tzvetan Todorov) and situates it in a text. Yet the discourse can also be seen in a valid sense as the construct, or rather 'signified', of a text. This is an important point, and seems to me to represent the most useful way of incorporating the text as signifier into the analysis. If the story is seen as an ideal elaboration, it is not directly that of the narrative 'text' (which can be seen simply as the 'mise en mots', 'mise en images' etc.) it is an elaboration of the discourse: the whole situation and establishment of character, action, diegetic world according to the parameters established between sender and receiver, which can only be perceived as the signified of the text. Thus, if the discourse only exists by means of the text, and it is through the discourse that the story is established then the discourse appears to constitute an intermediate stage between the (actual) text and the (ideal) story. This kind of analysis, which appears closer to the actuality of narrative semiotic operation, is closer to the tripartite model proposed by Bal (1977), where she identifies the intermediate layer as the 'récit' ('le signifié d'un texte narratif') and the 'narration' as the narrative text itself;<sup>19</sup> it is close, too, to the model proposed

by Fowler (1977), where 'text' represents the surface structure of the narrative signification, whose content ('story') is the narrative proposition as mediated by the 'discourse', which represents the 'modality' of the work.<sup>20</sup> Such a theory, which proposes the term 'discourse' be applied to an intermediate level between 'story' and 'text', presents us with a model which involves the material text, the narrative proposition and the diegetic parameters, describing the semiotic operation as follows:

STORY:		SIGNIFIED
DISCOURSE:	SIGNIFIED	SIGNIFIER
TEXT:	SIGNIFIER	

thus establishing 'narrative' as a double semiotic operation.

This model provides for the discourse as the central operation which ties the text to the story at every point; it allows us to see the story, although an idealised reconstitution, as established by means of the discourse; and it allows us to consider the actual narrative text as the establisher of the discourse. This in turn allows for an analysis more closely allied to the specific characteristics of the actual signifiers. This kind of tripartite distinction also brings into play the traditional (Genettian) analyses according to the relation between the story and the discourse, and it introduces the relation between text and discourse as a valid area of concern. The latter would involve any kind of differentiation between textual and discursive operation (for example the discrepancy between discourse time and reading time in visual narratives)<sup>21</sup> and involve the semiotic capabilities of any specific medium (this

point is analysed in more detail in the next chapter); it is an area which has been little considered in narrative analyses undertaken at one remove from the material situation of the text. Tying the discourse to the text at least allows one to see what is established as allied to the materiality of the signifiers in the work. Theories claiming wide semiotic applicability have tended more towards the analysis of discourse/story relations despite the fact that the semiotic specificity of the medium can have a direct influence on the operation of the discourse. This in its turn explains why attempts to apply analyses grounded in the literary break down at a number of points, or why certain aspects of the analysis (e.g. the discussion of temporal modalities in relation to visual texts) are applicable only in part.

The tripartite model outlined above, while it usefully outlines various areas of operation, still poses problems. On the surface it appears to establish direct relations of signification between one layer and the next; and it apparently proposes one layer as antecedent to another. This is not necessarily the case. While the receiver of the message is primarily confronted by a material text: a set of signs through which certain signifieds are established, and it is from this layer that conclusions about the story itself are drawn, this operation takes place according to certain parameters (Fowler's 'modalities': perspectives, limits even) which are actually part of the text. Aspects of semiotic operation which are part of this discursive layer need not necessarily be seen as postcedents of text, but rather as parts of text, and parts of textual signification. It must be



borne in mind that such a model posits categories of operation on the line of Barthes' 'descriptive levels' rather than strict semiotic categories. As such, they might similarly 'enable us to locate and group together the different problems'<sup>23</sup> rather than immediately propose the solution.

### Event

In outlining the areas of operation with which an analysis of narrative ought to be concerned, we have again been proceeding without having defined what is meant by a 'narrative text'. There are numerous types and methods of 'definition' of narrative throughout the vast literature which deals with narrative texts, and it will be the task of the rest of this chapter to discuss the validity of these definitions. The definitions of narrative generally formulated are carried out according to a number of different parameters, and 'a narrative' has been identified as a distinct type of text, an identifiable type of discourse, a type of communicative act, a grouping of particular types of signs, an effect of reading and so on. However, these numerous areas of discussion do tend to fall into certain general categories which are felt to be important.

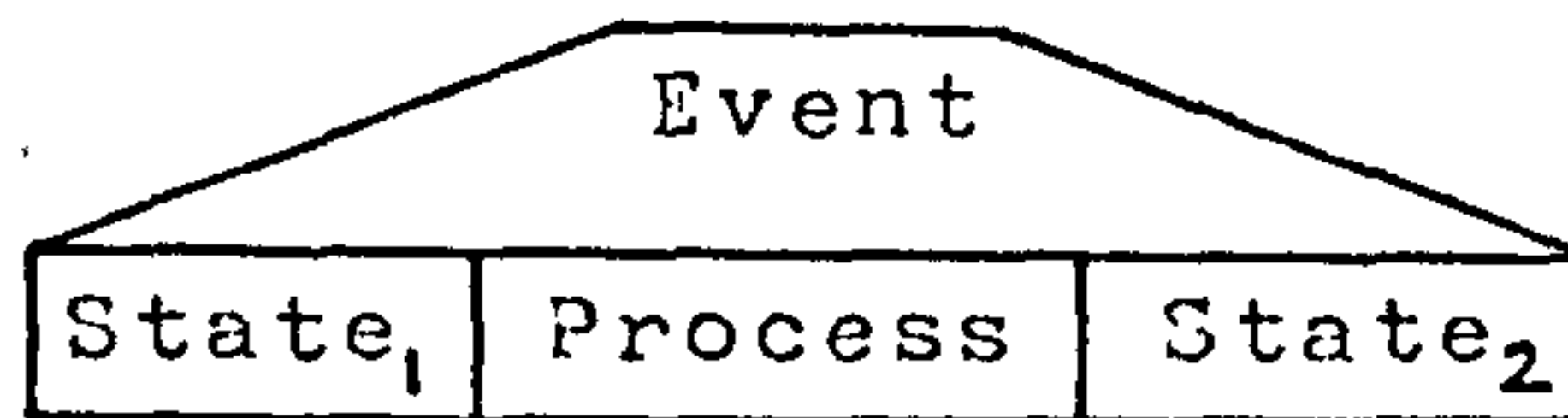
Gertrude Stein declared that: 'Narrative is what anybody has to say in any way about anything that can happen has happened will happen in any way.'<sup>24</sup> Her pronouncement does establish a kind of common ground of definition: certain premises which are generally agreed upon. Her statement, firstly, indicates that narrative

is a communicative act, not necessarily tied to a certain medium, which tells of an event. Thus a visual narrative will be defined as a visual text (all texts are of necessity communicative) which signifies an event. It is the latter term of this definition which needs amplification.

Firstly, we must decide at what level 'event' can be defined. Many early studies of narrative restricted their analyses to story or content level. The notion of story as an autonomous layer led Propp for instance to arrange his classification of content according to 'functions'. His lead was followed by many other narrative analysts, further abstracting towards a set of patterns underlying all narratives, or all narratives of a certain genre. Thus Bremond (1966) refined Propp's underlying sequences of functions by separating the variables and invariables in the sequences to produce primary groupings of three functions leading to the achievement or non-achievement of amelioration or degradation. In such analyses the event is felt to be a story level constituent, a particular grouping of functions. This is similar to Prince, who represents strict transformational-generative theory, and who concludes that 'no sentence expressing an event and only one can ever represent a story',<sup>25</sup> a story being constituted by three events in one (deep structure) sentence. In such analyses there is a lack of discussion of the relations between 'function' and 'event', coupled, in Prince, with a confusion of text and story level constituents.

If an 'event' can be seen as 'anything that can happen', then it must, on the level of story, consist of some kind of change.<sup>26</sup> If something remains constant

then no event can be said to have taken place. Thus, at its most basic, an event is a change from one state to another, by means of a process of transformation:



which immediately introduces the problem of levels: is 'narrative' confluent with the notion of 'event' only, or does it consist in the whole operation? Champigny (1972), who defines narrative as one of the many modes of meaning, a way of using verbal language which is allied to the process of thinking and thought organisation, conceives of narrative itself as designating events, states of affairs and processes; a text which did not designate such aspects would not be defined by him as a narrative text. If we are defining 'event' as the product of a combination of initial and subsequent states through a process of transformation, however, then we are already distinguishing what is signified in the discourse from what it signifies in the story. Let us take, for example, a visual text which appears to signify a state change through 'before' and 'after' shots: Fulton's A Public Footpath on Nackington Farm, Canterbury, where, (Fig.14) while neither of the photographs directly signifies the event, nor does either photograph signify anything other than a state, their juxtaposition (particularly since temporalised by caption) indicates that an event has taken place. 'Event' is thus a story level constituent, which can be signified by means of a text which can only present states and not processes, the process of transformation consisting merely in the relation between two states. Therefore an event, which is an expressed



transformation, is constituted by a text which offers two states in juxtaposition. Any text which can signify a change of states (it need not make explicit the process which is in fact the establishment of causal relations) can signify an event. A narrative will consist in the signification of at least one event.

### Actants

The kind of analysis undertaken here posits the minimum conditions of narrativity through the analysis of narrative frontiers. Most analyses (apart from Genette 1966) usually involve themselves with complex narratives wherein the processes, instruments and outcomes of state changes are made explicit in the text. Since such texts usually involve human characters, many of the resulting definitions and characterisations of narrative have been based on the concept of 'action'. Thus Genette (1966) has characters, actions and setting as all constituents of 'event',<sup>27</sup> and indeed the idea of event as transformation proposed here itself implies some kind of activity. Yet how central is the concept of 'action' to the definition of a narrative text, considering that a narrative text is the expression of an event? It is, in fact, generally acknowledged that an event cannot be signified without the incorporation of actants. Thus Greimas' theory of narrative grammar is based on the actantial model of elementary narrative units (narrative énoncés) as well as a syntax of expansions.<sup>28</sup> For Greimas, narrative énoncés are themselves defined by expressions of action, and are to be distinguished from the 'stative' énoncés of

the text. A text is thus made up of both narrative and qualificative énoncés, 'narrative' becoming equivalent to 'actantial'. This model (based on sentential models of deep structure transformation) was extended from Barthes (1977)<sup>29</sup>, whereby actions, as primary narrative constituents, came to dominate the expression of character -- a subordination of character as agent already present in Propp and, as Barthes notes, in Aristotle. The problem, if actions are to be proposed as fundamental content units of the narrative (and therefore defining characteristics) is related again to the confusion of operative levels. On the surface it seems easy to collapse the notions of 'action' and 'event' into one; an action can be seen as an instigated and motivated change of state involving one or more actants and/or an object. This is fine as the definition of a certain type of content (story level) unit, but it doesn't necessarily explain the narrative as presented in text. If we look again at the Fulton (Fig.14) text, we see that the transformation undergone could indeed have been instigated by a human actant, but this action need not necessarily be expressed in the text. I would suggest that 'action' is more likely a constituent of 'event' involving human actants; as such it is a useful category of content analysis, but it is not necessarily a defining characteristic which relates a narrative content to a narrative expression.

What, then, is implied by the presence or absence of character in the expression of the event? In terms of the signification of event very little. An event may usually involve human actants, take place over a certain length of time and within a certain space, but these

are constituents of the event (and do not combine with it as Bal suggests),<sup>30</sup> they are not the absolute limits of the narrativity, which requires only that a change of state be signified. This would imply that it is possible to have narrative without human actants. In 'La Logique des possibles narratifs' Bremond was led to the conclusion that where there is no implication of human interest one cannot have a narrative, since 'c'est seulement par rapport à un projet humain que les événements prennent sens et s'organisent en une série temporelle structurée'.<sup>31</sup> Since he was involved in the analysis of complex story types according to human motivations and achievements this conclusion is not surprising. In such analyses 'event' becomes more or less synonymous with action carried out according to human interest. Even in the Fulton text (Fig.14) the character, although not expressed, can be said to instigate the narrative event, thus entering the narrative at story level. Yet there are narratives which seem to involve no human actants even at this level, which support the proposal that it is not a defining feature.

Various artists (as noted in Chapter 1) have since the beginning of this century utilised a temporally iterative medium in order to analyse and/or express changes in visual form. Some were aware of the protofilmic nature of the work (Richter and Eggeling), some unconcerned with their work's relation to the filmic (Kranz). Some works involved a continuous (non-interstitial) space, some spatially separated units, but all have involved the successive signification of transformations, thereby fulfilling our primary definition of narrative. Since such texts are not generally characterised as narrative,



the question of whether graphic transformations are enough to constitute a narrative text has not been posed. In terms of transformation, the change between one state and another is adequately provided by the succession of two instances even though the actual temporality of the work is unspecified. The idea of transformation is thus indicated without reference to human actants. Our question now concerns the anthropomorphic nature of abstract imagery and the possibility or impossibility of non-human concepts of motivation. In El Lissitzky's A Tale of Two Squares<sup>32</sup> for instance, the narrative appears to involve a series of transformations without human actants. Even here, however, the transformations and 'actions' expressed are conceived with metaphorical reference to the human, and our own perception of form and action is itself the product of existence within an anthropocentric universe. Since the story can be adequately expressed without direct representation of human actants, however, it does not alter our basic proposal that a narrative needs only the expression of a transformation, however the transformation is explained or perpetrated.<sup>33</sup>

### Description

The expression of action in the narrative text has been seen as central to the definition of narrative, however, in that expressions of action have been seen as 'narrative expressions' and expressions of states have been seen as 'descriptive expressions'; the opposition of 'description' to 'narration' is one of the fundamental

areas of debate in the discussion of narrativity. This throws into relief the problem of whether a narrative can be expressed by 'non-narrative' (i.e. descriptive) statements, which poses particular problems in the analysis of visual texts. Some theorists have approached the problem by distinguishing narrative and non-narrative units with reference to the underlying differentiation of verbs of action and stative verbs. This kind of argument forms the basis of the Prince, Greimas and early Barthes theories concerning deep structure transformations, but it also underlies a fundamental distinction in the 'discourse oriented' theories of Genette and Chatman. The latter, for instance, divides the story into 'events' and 'exist-<sup>34</sup>ents' (characters' and settings) which have their equivalents in Greimas' reference to the underlying verbs 'faire' and 'être'<sup>35</sup> as fundamental deep structure constituents. The basic conclusion seems to be that if a narrative is constituted by the signification of at least one event, then those parts of the narrative which do not signify a state change will have to be considered outside the function of narration, and will be descriptive as opposed to narrative propositions.

In a verbal text the visual aspects of the story have to be signified in a linear structure involving conventional signs (an 'indirect' medium); in visual texts the appearance of objects and settings is immediately signified, it does not require successive communication. This in turn affects the operation of the discourse and has implications for story analysis. In the verbal text narrative is itself felt to be suspended while description is undertaken, which has led a number of analysts to

subordinate signs of description to a secondary role in the narrative discourse, almost as narrative textual ornament. Since the event takes place in time, description is felt to involve an interruption of temporal flow, and finally an interruption of the events which constitute story; thus description itself comes to have no place at story level merely representing, according to Chatman, a difference between 'stasis' as opposed to 'process' statements in the discourse.<sup>36</sup> According to Chatman 'a text that consisted entirely of stasis statements could only imply a narrative'.<sup>37</sup> Yet an examination of the minimal narrative discussed above raises immediate objections (Fig.14) to this conclusion. On the one hand we have already seen that an event can be signified in static visual narrative by the outer parameters of the transformation (i.e. its 'before' and 'after' states), which would lead us to conclude that the signification of narrative is not entirely dependent on type of statement. On the other hand the construction of a narrative text (or any text for that matter) by its nature depends on 'implications', depending, as it does, on the imaginative elaboration of textual lacunae and ellipses; implication thus forms part of the process of signification itself. The discourse is a result of this selection among what to directly express and what to imply.

Any text presents us with a conglomerate of signs. In the discourse such signs can be 'mediated' in terms of focalisation and diegetic universe, but the discourse can not be free of its text. Even if such conglomerates are felt at story level to decode as relating to 'events' or 'existents', such analyses do not relate



directly to the type of sign. As Genette has noted,<sup>38</sup> where description itself, in the most traditional of narratives, becomes a major element of the exposition, and can only be distinguished from narrative on the level of story, then it is not, semiotically speaking, significant. In visual texts, on the other hand, where signs cannot but describe in the sense of making visual information directly available, how can the descriptive and narrative be separated? A photograph, even when presenting the likeness of an actant, simultaneously presents the receiver with static aspects of the environment, and process and stasis elements are impossible to separate in terms of type of proposition. Even in verbal texts, the minimal deictic properties of the statement relate simultaneously to both descriptive and actantial statement.<sup>39</sup>

It has been said that description suspends the temporal flow of the narrative. Such a notion is based more on literary narration, but only in terms of the strict chronology of story time. But since story time is an ideal construct established in the face of discursive anachronies constituted in combinations of signs in the text, this 'suspension' seems more a result of spatially as opposed to temporally emphatic propositions. In visual texts, of course, this spatialisation is more manifest, particularly in photographic narratives, and it is necessarily manifest. Film, in particular, shows how the distinction of description and narration as deliberate and separate types of statement is difficult. Chatman himself noted how in film the feeling of arrest in story time is actually difficult, if not impossible, to convey.<sup>40</sup> Since the compulsions of the text mean that

story time does not stop, then basing the definition of description on the arrest of story time would here imply that films cannot describe; this is obviously untrue.

The confusions and complexities attendant on this issue again indicate that we need to take a closer look at the types and capabilities of the texts we are dealing with. Analyses on this level have traditionally been concerned with the distinctions of mimesis and diegesis, but the present discussion would indicate that a more meaningful analysis might be proposed in relation to the actual relation of the text and the discourse. Lotman, one of the few to localise the discussion of visual narrativity in relation to the capabilities of the textual statement,<sup>41</sup> proposed that, for iconic texts which cannot be easily divided into discrete units 'the narrative is constructed as the combination of an initial stable state with a subsequent movement'.<sup>42</sup> Yet even this conclusion is operating under the notion of distinct types of statement -- static and dynamic. Since we are working from the proposition that the actual textual statements need not be dynamic in order for a transformation to be signified, the conclusion is again difficult to apply. Even where a photograph actually signifies a transformation (i.e. a motion) in action, can the static statement ever be said to be dynamic?<sup>43</sup>

On the one hand we are faced with the problem concerning the mimetic properties of the text itself, and on the other with the actual content of the information given. In some traditional rhetorical theories narrative is itself defined according to the mimetic or diegetic properties of the work. Thus Scholes and Kellogg,



who define narrative as 'all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a story-teller',<sup>44</sup> exclude drama from narrative categories, as also does Tzvetan Todorov, refusing to accept drama (direct representation) as a narrative mode.<sup>45</sup> Such theories follow Plato and Aristotle in separating the narrative from the imitative in literature on the basis of the relation of text, presentation and presenter. Thus Plato distinguishes narrative poetry 'in which the poet speaks in his own person narrating events past, present and to come' from imitative poetry 'in which the poet tries to make us believe that it is not he but a character in the story who is speaking',<sup>46</sup> while Aristotle distinguishes narration (here as a type of imitation) 'whether the narrator speaks at times in an assumed role... or always in his own person without change' from a directly presentational mode 'in which all the characters are presented as functioning and in action'.<sup>47</sup> This kind of distinction, which separates the mimetic from the non-mimetic (narrative) attempts to typify the whole work, but is not necessarily a useful path towards defining the descriptive and narrative qualities within the operation of the text; it appears to confuse the semiotic operation of the text itself with the whole constitution of the discourse. Literary verbal texts, for instance, which are constituted of linear word signs, are already non-imitative in respect to anything except words, especially non-mimetic in relation to speech, and cannot be described as mimetic although they produce an effect of mimesis in direct speech. As Genette (1966) has concluded, there is no such thing as perfect imitation in any literary



text, since 'mimesis' would constitute the direct presentation of the same thing.<sup>48</sup> To begin with, every text operates by selection and is a re-presentation; even apparently mimetic texts consisting of iconic signs re-present by means of a set of coded analogons (schemata). This reiterates the point that distinguishing according to mimesis and diegesis will not take us nearer defining the narrative in the text.

How can it be, then, that certain aspects of the signification appear to contribute less directly to the transformational matrix which underlies the narrative text, and thus appear less directly concerned with the establishment of the event? In his analysis of narrativity in the film image, particularly in 'Remarques pour une phénoménologie du narratif'<sup>49</sup> Metz approaches the problem of description in the text from the viewpoint of textual temporality. He distinguishes 'le récit', which converts ('monnaie') time into time, from 'la description' which converts space into time, and 'l'image' which converts space into space.<sup>50</sup> Thus he distinguishes narration from description, and narration and description (which both have temporalised signifiers) from the image. One could, here, repeat Chatman's objection that non-temporalised signification is actually not possible with signs which are temporally constituted, which would lead to the conclusion that when talking of 'space into space' Metz is actually forced to consider the immobilised content of one image. Here, he appears also to ignore the effect of montage, which is vital in the encouragement of narrativity, where the transformational effect is produced by an effective relation between signs. As Heath (1978 )

has noted, space in filmic narrative texts is necessarily mobilised as narrative space. The exact differentiations which Metz has made according to semiotic conversions, actually relate to story level descriptions of content and are difficult to maintain.

The conclusion drawn from this somewhat involved discussion of traditional definitions of narration in opposition to description and mimesis is that it is not possible to range between the different levels of the narrative as a whole nor consider narrative as either a property of story level, or textual type only. It is my contention that any text, having fulfilled certain basic conditions, is capable of narrative, and that the discourse established by this text can consist of complex signs, which are emphatic propositions relating in their own way to the event and its actants. The separation of underlying emphases (i.e. descriptive or narrative 'units') can only be useful in terms of a traditional plot typology, or analysis confined to the story.<sup>51</sup> This is especially true in terms of the 'hiatus' usually associated with description; plots can be narrated by iconic signs in either a series of total 'arrest' (static visual narratives) or a series with no 'arrests' (film). Actually, recent discussions of the problem of description in the narrative text tend to define description as an integrated sign in the narrative syntagm (Bal 1977),<sup>52</sup> or integrated functions of the narrative statement (Hamon 1982).

#### Differentiation

When we talk of an event on the story level

depending on a state change expressed in the discourse, we are of necessity dealing only with texts which are able to signify some kind of transformation. In narratives consisting of static visual signs the minimal matrix of transformation rests on the capacity of the text to differentiate. In serial images this transformation is to be seen horizontally: a function of montage tying one image to the next. Yet the notion of 'transformation' has also been applied to the operation of the sign itself: any text depending on a certain correspondence through the signifier, whereby the schemata of the image correspond, by means of a codified reading, to the signified. The latter transformation (conceived as vertical) is also useful in describing the operation of the narrative text, since every image brings into play a metonymy, being an agitation of schematised relata according to what Eco (1976) has called a 'law of similitude'.<sup>53</sup> Thus the image represents a transformation from an aesthetic object (to use Ingarden's term)<sup>54</sup> into a sign, in turn reconstituted by the receiver. In the narrative text, then, the concept of transformation can be applied both horizontally and vertically, and montage can in turn be conceived as operating, as the site of liaison and correspondence, according to both axes. Not only does the image operate on the basis of a codified correspondence between the schemata and the aesthetic object (e.g. in the photograph the two-dimensional is read as three-dimensional), the image also utilises its metonymy in relation to the selected fragment of time and space, and it is the latter (along with the nomination of the participant) which plays a fundamental role in relation to horizontal differentia-



tion and liaison. If there is no change between consecutive images in terms of any one of these categories<sup>55</sup> then no transformation can be established as having taken place, and there is no narrative. On the other hand, if there is change in too many constituents then the transformation does not necessarily retain the minimal correspondence required for narrativity; the transformational matrix which underlies narrativity is established according to the differentiations and cohesions presented by the text.

In Fulton's Grim's Ditch/ Ancient Pathway/ (Fig.13) Hertfordshire the repetition of certain schemata allows us to establish a coherent 'subject' for the transformation, and enough schemata are different so that the change can be expressed. In terms of narrative the latter allows for the establishment of spatial resemblance, and the difference between schemata is established as a temporally constituted change (this is helped by the accompanying written text, which underlines the resemblance). Other works of Fulton, however, seem to play with the boundaries of differentiation and cohesion. In the Langa Western Iceland/ Churchill River Northern Manitoba (Fig.15) juxtaposition, for instance, the differentiation appears to involve all the schemata, but the lack of identity is counterbalanced by a trick of resemblance. Without the establishment of identity, however, the juxtaposition is forced to operate according to a comparative matrix, and is thus non-narrative. Thus the cohesive 'sphere' of the text must not be too wide: it must constitute the acceptable diegetic universe within which, and as part of which, the narrative takes form. The result of

the need for these defining parameters is a kind of semiotic tension, as Tzvetan Todorov has noted: 'Le récit se constitue dans la tension de deux catégories formelles, la différence et la ressemblance.'<sup>56</sup>

The tension of which Tzvetan Todorov speaks is a particular feature of visual narratives, especially those constructed of still images, which rely on the immediate presence of schemata for the establishment of the narrativity. Still image narratives relay the transformation by means of visual discontinuities. Such immediacy, especially in relation to the establishment of temporality, has disturbed a number of commentators, not least of which Laffay, who in his 1947 article maintained that the way in which cinema 'presents' time means that the activity of narration is alien to it. It was felt that because photography translates only the present (through the presence of objects) it cannot accommodate the necessary temporal attitude of narrative which is based on antecedence: all narrative being produced according to a view a\_\_posteriori-- a certain temporal remove from the story which is adequately provided by the second order semiosis of verbal language. Unfortunately, Laffay seems to have confused first of all the different levels of the narrative's operation, conflating temporal remove with a kind of 'semiotic remove' displayed by certain types of text. He thus failed to distinguish between the different temporalities at work, probably because in film the reading time (text) is often confluent with the time of the characters and the diegesis (discourse),<sup>57</sup> but, more significantly perhaps, he also failed to take account of the operation of montage, which

is intrinsic to the operation of the discourse, and which provides for the differences between discourse time and story time by incorporating the role of the constructive reader, a function emphasised by Berger: 'In story telling it is an agreement about discontinuities which allows the listener to "enter the narration" and become part of its reflecting subject.'<sup>58</sup> This emphasises the fact that the temporality of the discourse (and the discrepancies between discourse and story time which can be subsequently established) is actually dependent on the reading of the continuities and discontinuities in the text.<sup>59</sup>

We can now further refine our diagram of minimal narrativity as follows:

STORY:	EVENT		
DISCOURSE:	STATE <sub>1</sub>	(PROCESS)	STATE <sub>2</sub>
TEXT:	IMAGE <sub>1</sub>		IMAGE <sub>2</sub>

in the light of the fact that the text offers merely the immediate site of differentiation and cohesion.<sup>60</sup> A narrative can thus be defined as an event on the story level which is expressed by a particular transformation in the discourse represented by a discontinuity within cohesive parameters in the text. In the Fulton text A Public Footpath on Nackington Farm, Canterbury, the (Fig.14) text is formed of two images which indicate a number of differences and resemblances between schemata, allowing us to establish on the level of discourse that this is the same place in two different states, temporally separated by one year (here the discourse establishes state<sub>2</sub> followed by state<sub>1</sub>: a transformation which the verbal text indicates in reverse chronology) which has undergone a process of transformation. The resulting event (which is 'restored'



at story level) is seen to have taken place over one year. All levels of the narrative are allied in such a way that the simple significations in the text (the differentiations and cohesions offered) signify in the discourse a certain transformation, but this in turn signifies a chronology at the level of story. Such an analysis helps to show how narrative depends on this interplay, how any text which is capable of relevant consecutive differentiations can narrate,<sup>61</sup> and how the story level represents an ideal signification in relation to the vagaries of the discourse.

### Units

One reason the discussion of narrative particles becomes complex in relation to visual texts, especially in considering temporality, is that the textual 'unit' is difficult to decompose and has to be treated as a complex whole, and there is often a coincidence between text and discourse units. Indeed it makes the analysis of written discourse much easier, when dealing with the constituents of narrative propositions, if constituents can be readily separated through the meaningful particles of verbal language down to the morpheme. On the other hand, the identification and description of narrative propositions is easier where the montage elements (as textual lacunae) can be identified as the locus of visual differentiation. This is particularly true of visual texts like photo-series and films where the distinctions between single images (or shots) appear to coincide with the distinctions between minimal units of the narrativ-

ity. This kind of confluence, however, makes it all the more difficult to retain an awareness of the different levels of narrative operation.

In his A Grammar of Stories Prince assumed that the basic units of any story were the units of content: events. As regards analyses on this level, it is easy to see the convenience of the sentence as a kind of final paraphrase of what is expressed in the discourse. But Prince himself noted <sup>62</sup> that it is when relations between these structural units and their representations (particularly textualisations) are attempted that difficulties arise, possibly because discussions of verbal language tend to conflate discursive and linguistic representations in direct relation to story level. Prince makes a characteristic assumption, for instance, that a priori and a posteriori propositions, expressions, and meaning summaries can all be expressed by the sentence: "event" in the story is any part of that story which can be expressed by a sentence', <sup>63</sup> thereby encouraging the confusion of expression and semiotic transformation. Having already defined event through sentence equivalence, he goes on to say that a minimal story must consist of three events which can be expressed in a single sentence in the text, <sup>64</sup> and that causal relations must be made manifest through expressed conjunction in the sentence. This kind of analysis reveals, if anything, the problems of metalanguage, whereby sentences are finally characterised by paraphrase in sentences. If events can be expressed as sentence particles in conjunctive relation, it is hard to see how the sentence can simultaneously be used as the basic unit of content which itself amounts to an event paraphrase. The use

of sentence as complex narrative expression tends to indicate that it is too complex a unit to apply on all levels.

In his (1971) discussion of visual narrativity Metz proposed the phrase, or some aspect of an expressive hierarchy equivalent to the phrase, as the 'unité proprement narrative', since phrases and film images share a number of fundamental characteristics: i) they are infinite in number, ii) they are in principle the inventions of the one who speaks, iii) they deliver an indefinite quantity of information to the receiver, iv) they are actualised units and v) they take their sense in weak measure by paradigmatic opposition with other images.<sup>65</sup>

Here, the unit of narrative analysis, and by implication narrative expression, is what is being discussed, away from the units of content. A fundamental problem again arises from the fact that a narrative operates in a particular semiotic way which involves different levels of operation. In answer to this, Metz himself noted that discourse is itself transphrastic, not necessarily tied to a unit of expression, nor to a unit of content, although in visual texts the discourse and the text (as noted above) tend to attain a unique kind of confluence. What the text seems to do is to establish the ground for a discursive proposition, which in turn can be used to establish units of content. In visual narrative the textual unit appears to coincide as a complete enunciation with the discursive unit. The problem which this poses can perhaps best be outlined in reference to the diagram introduced above; in this kind of breakdown the textual level offers merely an image, which tends to signify



a discursive proposition. Since the image is capable of emphasising either a process or a moment of stasis (which has nothing to do with the mobility of the schemata) the units on the level of discourse will thus tend to be either process or stasis emphatic and no more. These propositions in turn lead to the signification of the event on the level of story. In the example taken from Fulton (Grims Ditch/ Ancient Pathway/ Hertfordshire) (Fig.13)

the following analysis could apply:

STORY:	EVENT	
DISCOURSE:	STASIS EMPHATIC PROPOSITION <sub>1</sub>	STASIS EMPHATIC PROPOSITION <sub>2</sub>
TEXT:	IMAGE <sub>1</sub>	IMAGE <sub>2</sub>

where the textual units have to be seen as providing for complete propositions which in turn provide for the constitution of the event. Here, however, the conjunction of textual and discourse units is apparent in the use of minimal narrative parameters. The question now arises whether the discursive proposition can be established by more than one image, which is the necessarily given textual unity; i.e. do text units (images) and discourse units (propositions) necessarily coincide?

In the photographic series by Hugo Denizart (Fig.25) a simple narrative seems to be signified in four images in the relation  $1\ 2\ 3 \neq 4$ , where the greater differentiation is contained within the interstice  $3 \neq 4$ . As opposed to narratives which distinguish between each consecutive image ( $1 \neq 2 \neq 3 \neq 4$ ) and thereby neatly divide into units, this narrative reiterates the stasis emphatic discourse proposition by means of three images in the text. Images which are divided into units in the text

by means of a spatial interstice are not meaningfully divided in the discourse, appearing at this level to emphasise the stasis proposition. On story level the unit is constituted by reference to the two meaningfully differentiated discursive propositions, and is equivalent to an event. Thus we might say with this example that a text consisting of four units situates a two unit discourse which constitutes a single analytical unit in the story. The question of analytical units is thus one which must be referred to the different levels of operation of the narrativity.

At this point we return to the problem of process and stasis propositions. Since such categories are felt to relate to the discourse, how are they distinguished in relation to the text? In a static visual narrative each image appears to be static, whether it is an image of an object at rest or in motion, but unlike film, where the rapid projection at a fixed speed of a series of static images actually produces an effect of animation, the images of the photographic narrative remain static and visually differentiated. This point leads us to consider how small the differentiation between images needs to be in order for them to combine as one unit.<sup>66</sup> In the case of the Denizart series the first three images are undifferentiated and can easily be seen as constituting a stasis emphatic proposition, but in cases where we are presented with a series of minimally differentiated static images taken from moments of animation a problem arises. Considering, for example, the Muybridge example (Fig.26) of a woman pouring water we are faced with a choice of regarding the series as a single unit (process emphatic

proposition) on discourse level consisting of a series of twelve units (separate images) on text level (in which case no story level unit (event) will arise), or regarding the series as twelve process emphatic propositions on discourse level consisting of twelve units on text level which would constitute at least one unit (event) on story level. The latter, of course, must be true, and this because each image is differentiated from the next; however small the interstice it will always represent in static visual narrative the site of transformation, and transformation is, as has already been reiterated, the conceptual ground for establishing the event. Any kind of differentiation, which introduces the point of imaginative reconstitution of a void, can provide for an event, whether the images relate points in a series at rest, or points in a series in movement; the distinction between all textually static images is a question of emphasis of content which only becomes meaningful in the discourse.<sup>67</sup>

More often than not the narrative engagement of the interstice means that text and discourse units will coincide in the visual narrative series. Previous analysts of narrative have often made their analyses sentence dependent, possibly through a similar conceptualisation of the unity of the sentence entailing a textual/discursive confluence. Although this is convenient it is not always the case, and indeed Barthes has already noted<sup>68</sup> that narrative units are independent of linguistic units with regard to substance. The usefulness of the sentence as a summary of propositions and events on the story level, coupled with a kind of metalinguistic constr-



aint, has, however, imbued the sentence with an explanatory power exploited by many analysts, in particular, of course, transformational-generative grammarians. In regard to the analysis of visual texts, though, it has been suggested (by Lotman, Metz and others)<sup>69</sup> that the iconic text cannot be divided into discrete units, and the difficulty encountered in attempting to find visual equivalents of the morphemic components of verbal language leads directly to the conclusion that the image as a whole has to be taken as the most meaningful unit on the textual level. In this respect the analysis of the visual series is inexorably tied to the visual interstice as the point of differentiation into units, and the point of the operation of montage between units. This montage must operate within parameters of both constancy and transformation (resemblance and difference) in order to be meaningful in a narrative, and the units of the discourse will normally be constituted in textual equivalences which grip the void, or embrace or frame the interstice. In a narrative visual text composed of non-animated images the interstice is spatially established, and units are formed on either side of it.<sup>70</sup>

It was said above that the interstice in a visual narrative text becomes the site of differentiation on the textual level; while the smallest of differentiations can be enough to distinguish the units of the narrative, the other aspect of the montage dichotomy -- cohesion -- needs to be considered. In other words, is it enough to say that the differentiation must not be too small or too large in the construction of a narrative text? In the Muybridge text the differentiations, though small,

actually pertain to the objects (animate and inanimate) and their respective positions. There are also examples of texts which portray identical images under different light conditions (cf., for example, Monet), and here again the differentiation will be enough to constitute the conditions for a transformation. If two photographs of identical scenes with different light (tone, shading) conditions are placed side by side it is likely that the difference will be read on one level as a difference in light, but will be explained by a difference in time. The fact is that with this spatio-temporal medium visual/spatial change is always related to the temporal; so any kind of visual differentiation between two consecutive images can be temporally justified. This applies also to more widely differentiated texts, where the logic of cohesion can be supplied 'outside' the text. Such is the capacity of the receiver to 'narrativise' that a narrative logic can be maintained among consecutive images even in the sense that they are moments of a photographic act.

The differentiations and cohesions of the narrative text operate, furthermore, on a number of analytical levels apart from the tripartite model of narrativity. Units constituted by one image can be allied with others into units on a higher level according to the analysis of the text as a whole, thus longer sequences can also be distinguished according to their differentiations and cohesions over wider parameters, similar to the way that film images can be separated into frames, shots, sequences and so on.<sup>71</sup> In considering the question of units, therefore, one can lay down certain



characteristics which define the basic or minimal type of unit at each level of operation, but an extended analysis of the whole text would lead to the introduction of larger categories, even though the definition of units depends ultimately on the differentiations and cohesions in the text.

### Chronology

Given the capacity of the reader to provide a narrative logic for texts consisting of 'widely' differentiated images, it would seem that a narrative 'text sui generis' would be difficult to define. If any kind of perceptible transformation between images provides the necessary conditions for narrative, then how is it possible to differentiate between different types of visually differentiated serial texts? Is narrativity a necessary or optional mode of operation in communicative discourse?

As we have noted, the signification of change is enough to provide basic conditions for establishing a narrative. In this respect the differentiations constituted across the interstice seem to take on more importance than the cohesions (which for narrative purposes can possibly be provided elsewhere in the work, e.g. in the written text). Yet if differentiation is enough to provide for narrative meaningful change, then the interstice must provide for a transformation which can be logically explained. This logic in visual texts becomes the succession (chrono-logic) of the images; the narrative juxtaposition of two images chronologises their relationship, and it



imbues the images with 'before' and 'after' status in respect of each other. Thus the temporality of the narrative is a relative temporality -- it implies that one image follows another, as the images are read consecutively according to a left→right or top→bottom vector.

The single image alone is particularly limited in the expression of specific temporal modalities, such that the idea of succession, or rather successive conjunction (which can be expressed in written texts by the use of 'then', 'afterwards', 'later' and so on as well as succession within the text) has to be signified by the mere fact of succession. In other words, the fact that one image follows another is taken as an index of the chronology of the discourse. But is succession itself enough to provide narrative transformations? How can one account for 'successive' series of photographic images which appear to incorporate succinct differentiations and cohesions but are not felt to 'be narrative? For one thing the differentiations and cohesions need to be identified in relation to a particular diegesis. In a series of thematically linked photographs (of which there are many examples, like, for instance, Kertész's On Reading,<sup>72</sup> Bernhard and Hilla Becher's series of photographs of gas storage tanks and pithead winding towers etc.) there is both visual differentiation and thematic cohesion between the images, which are presented consecutively, but where there is resemblance there is no diegetic identity and where there is succession it is not temporally significant, or at least the reader is not encouraged to read it as such. In such series the reading is thus carried out according to a comparative, rather than a transforma-

tional, matrix.

Given that differentiation, diegetic cohesion, and temporal succession are basic textual conditions which underly visual narrativity, it is important to note that the kind of logical coherence which such conditions supply can also be supplied by an accompanying verbal text, even if they are not apparent in the visual text alone. Identical images can be differentiated by the accompanying text (as in Jack the Conqueror images (Fig.7) 1 and 5, which represent the repetition of similar acts at different points in the diegesis), diegetic cohesion can be supplied (in Fulton's Ten Views of Brockman's Mount<sup>74</sup> each picture is identified as of the same subject) and temporal succession can be identified with exact reference (the dates, for instance, which accompany the images of A Public Footpath on Nackington Farm, Canterbury). (Fig.14) Such parameters have to be supplied somewhere in the text as a whole in order for a narrative discourse to be established.

The above would tend to suggest that once a text has presented an adequate basis for the mobilisation of a narrative discourse, then the degree to which the text is read as narrative will be to some extent a contract entered into by the sender and the receiver of the message. Here, however, given the distance of the actual instigator from the semiotic context of the reading, and his/her presence as implied only through the vagaries of the discourse, it would seem more to be a result of the reader's choice. In this respect it might be useful to follow the lead offered by Barthes in S/Z where, recognising that the goal of a literary work (of literature as work)



is to make the reader no longer a consumer but a producer of the text, he analyses the narrative in terms of the codes which guide the reader through the production. Or we might follow the lead of Jakobson, speech act theorists and pragmatists in seeing narrative as a mode of communication in which an agreement is reached between the sender and receiver in order that the message can be properly structured. Given the kind of minimal visual series discussed here, it might be that the same text could operate as narrative in some contexts and not in others, as though narrativity were an effect of emphasis in the reading. This would mean that it were necessary to indicate why, having fulfilled basic textual conditions for the constitution of narrativity, some texts are felt to be more narrative than others, as a question of degree. Fleischer, in his introduction to the Suite, Série, Séquence catalogue, having offered his own differentiation between types of sequence, admits such a possibility, and the instability of categories, by noting: 'Tout cela, bien sûr, peut encore être subverti, remplacé.'

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#### Narrative Satisfaction

How is it then that some texts are felt to be more narrative than others, and this seemingly despite the attitude of the reader? Up to now we have been primarily concerned with the fulfilment by the text of conditions of minimal narrativity, and have identified the chrono-logic of the text as one of these conditions. But as Silverstone (1981) notes,<sup>76</sup> there is a difference between chrono-logic and logic in more complex narrative texts. Both Greimas



and Lévi-Strauss have noted that systemic logic is independent of a particular chronology in the work such that the chrono-logic and the logic of the work can operate on different levels.<sup>77</sup> Thus certain narrative texts display a certain teleological force which others do not, and this has led a number of analysts to suggest that there are certain characteristics relating to the logical 'satisfaction' of the work, which have to be considered as defining characteristics of narrative. The satisfaction displayed would usually be related to the display of logical coherence and types of closure in the text.

White (1974, 1980) has taken the teleological force of the narrative to be paramount in separating narrative from more simply chronological texts. Thus he has attempted to distinguish chronicle, annals and narrative among texts which fulfil certain minimal conditions but which do not offer the feeling of 'satisfaction' or narrative 'ease' to the same degree. Starting from the premise that 'no given set of casually recorded historical events in themselves constitute a story, the most that they offer to the historian are story elements',<sup>78</sup> White maintains that such 'chronicles' are only made into stories (true narratives) by means of an emplotment, which is the employment of a story-type or mythos serving as an icon of the structure of events. Here, the series of events becomes both chronologically and syntactically structured, whereas a simple series of events is no more than a collection of annals, or a chronicle without teleological force. Such force is provided by a plot which itself requires the incorporation of questions, answers, movements towards closure and so on. Such a thesis is

shared by a number of analysts as the determining factor in a kind of 'full' narrativity, or even as a defining characteristic of narrative itself. Thus Scholes and Kellogg define plot as 'the dynamic sequential element in narrative literature'<sup>79</sup>, and it is interesting to note their emphasis on sequentiality in the text. The idea of plot has also been used as an equivalent to event summary in typological analyses following Propp. For White, however, 'emplotment' entails more than this -- it represents the primary selection and organisation of the narrative object (cf. aesthetic object), and includes characterisation, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternate descriptive strategies and so on. Such ingredients should separate narrative texts from mere chronicles.

White, of course, is working with examples of rather complex narrative texts. If one attempts to separate elements of plot as optional overlays of the simpler visual text then problems arise. As Chatman has noted, pure chronicle is in fact difficult to achieve, since one is for a large part dealing simply with the explicitness of causal links, and other aspects of narrative signification which are difficult if not impossible to extract from the text as a whole.<sup>80</sup> Taking a simple series of images -- the Muybridge series of twelve images of one woman giving another a drink from a water flask -- (Fig.26) certain aspects of narrative (and discourse) organisation are necessarily present. To begin with, the use of the photographic image already provides highlighting, focussing, centring of the subject, flattening of the dimensionality, a choice of beginning and ending of the series, a choice

of enough relevant 'moments' to make the discourse intelligible as narrative, the repetition of selected schemata (possibly equivalent to deictic characterisation in written texts), a selected point of view and tonal appreciation, which already work paradigmatically and syntagmatically within the discourse, and all of which could be different with a different choice of schemata. In other words, the way a simple photographic series works semiotically already involves elements of a narrativity in order that the sequence can be intelligibly read. Even more, this simple series provides a sense of chronology and completion, which comes from ending the series with the fruition of the act. Yet where, if plot is to be seen as a separate structuration providing the teleological relations of the text, is the logic of this series? Since causal links are not specified except by the relation of one image following another, then causality actually stems from the logic of succession -- the logic of the woman's kneeling, her shaking her hands, the movements of the water carrier, all depend on what precedes and succeeds every image, and the imaginative contribution of the reader in relation to the successive interstices. The logic of a simple narrative series is thus closely tied to the chrono-logic: the successive juxtapositions within a temporal framework. Even two images, as in the Barnardo's (Fig.9) pair, imbued by their juxtaposition in a temporal relation, activate, by means of the identity and differentiation of schemata in the text, a logic of transformation. At the other end of the scale from the schematically 'tight' Muybridge images, a disparate series can be imbued with a necessary logic if the reader is given indications



within the text as a whole (often through the use of accompanying verbal text). This would enable disparate collections of signs (like the use of photographs, maps, artworks of Richard Long exhibits) to be read as narrative within an indicated chrono-logic. In fact there is so much power in the reader's ability to 'chronologise', that it is difficult not to see this power as equivalent to that of providing a narrative logic.

The satisfaction resulting from textual closure, too, seems almost an inevitable outcome of the simplest of successive configurations. In the Muybridge series (Fig.26) the closure coincides with the fruition of an act; in the Denizart series cited above the four photographs provide (Fig.25) a rhythmic sense of logic in which, reading horizontally left to right (an operation inevitable in this culture), a sense of closure results from the unmasking of the character: the juxtaposition of three similar images followed by a fourth which portrays greater movement and reveals the figure which was hitherto masked in the enigma of the narrative. Reading such series always seems to surprise in the power of closure which results from the sense of original enigma, and this is true even of texts consisting of two images. It might be that enigma is also inevitable in texts which are based on temporal succession. In such texts the teleological structure appears to be constructed by the reader as a concomitant of a successful narrative reading. In written texts enigma, causality and closure tend to be more definitely expressed in the text. In more sophisticated and complex texts the text probably does more to provide for specific types of teleology, animated by set cultural patterns,

but any discourse requires a certain amount of teleological force in order to be read. All readings involve the filling in of gaps according to what is offered elsewhere, and in the visual narrative text these lacunae are simply more apparent as the field of the logic of montage. In photographic series it appears that a chronological text is already more than a mere chronicle.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that among photographic narrative texts there are series which display different teleological force. I would suggest that this force is related both to the type (or degree) of lacuna and the degree of the mobilisation of enigma in the text. In many Muybridge texts, for example the series showing the woman climbing steps while waving a handkerchief, (Fig.27) there is little differentiation between images, and although there is a distinct logic of progression there is little sense of satisfaction resulting from closure, in contrast to the shorter Denizart series, where the final image (Fig.25) 'answers' the enigma of the first three images. In the Muybridge text there is little sense of enigma resulting from the opening images and the relative 'size' of the interstices, or rather, any enigma is answered easily by the text in progress. On the one hand, easily filled interstices provide fewer possibilities for enigma (or, one might say, following Barthes in S/Z, result in a weaker mobilisation of the hermeneutic code), and a weaker enigmatic structure provides less of a feeling of closure as the satisfactory balance of the enigma established by the text. At another extreme from the 'tight' narrative of Muybridge, a sense of unease seems to arise from reading a number of Fulton texts, which introduce the trace as



the site of enigma in the text, and then fail to answer it fully. The fact that the The 'Yark' River Maine series (Fig.16) presents an initial shot of ripples on the lake which is not explained in the text appears to constitute such an unanswered question, but it does not necessarily indicate that the text is not narrative, since the text, in presenting two images of an identical place across a temporal divide, fulfils the basic conditions of narrative suggested above. The logic of the montage, which is necessarily read as successive, situates the series within a matrix of transformation which can be 'explained' by appearance → disappearance. The 'why?' of the ripples need not be the question demanded according to the narrativity, although it seems to be a question that Fulton encourages the reader to ask. Not all aspects of the hermeneutic working relate directly to the sense of narrative satisfaction, which can be satisfied on a more purely semiotic basis. In terms of their narrative semiotic structure a number of visual texts propose only to narrate an event (or a series of events); many mutoscope films, or the early films of the Lumières, for instance, do not mobilise the hermeneutic code to the same extent, and the ending of the event in L'Arrivée d'un train en gare is enough to provide for closure in its own terms. Such minimal narratives help us to see that any narrative text, having fulfilled the basic conditions for narrative, necessarily provides enigma, progression and closure within its narrativity; the presence of more sophisticated and complex types of enigma and closure are testimonies to a more sophisticated or complex kind of narrative, and not defining characteristics of narrative itself.



## Focalisation

It was noted above that every visual narrative already contains a selected point of view. The incorporation of the 'viewpoint' through which the instigator's presence in the text is signalled is also felt to be a defining characteristic of discourse, and, by many, of narrative discourse. Thus, to return to their already cited definition of narrative 'by narrative we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a story teller',<sup>82</sup> Scholes and Kellogg accept from the outset that some kind of textual 'focalisation' (the name by which the instigator's viewpoint is signalled) in the text indicates the presence of a story teller, which in turn defines the text as narrative. Yet what exactly does focalisation entail, and how can it be applied in photographic narrative texts? Is focalisation equivalent to the signalling of authorial presence and is it a necessary characteristic of narrative?

As Genette and many others have noted 'point of view' in a text can refer to a number of different things, defined variously as pertaining to the visual standpoint, world view and vantage of the instigator, narrator and character in the work. The idea of the indication of authorial presence has similarly been confused in the sense that the filtration and/or presentation of events through the author, narrator or character is not necessarily coincident with 'viewpoint'. Discussions of focalisation in the past have traditionally confounded 'who sees' with 'who tells', along with the representation of the protagonist 'who acts'. In photographic narratives

the distinction between such presences in the text is particularly difficult to dissect because the intra-semiotic relations operating in the work are all filtered through the same visual statements.

How then can these different characteristics be extracted? We can begin at least by saying that the signification of 'who tells' seems to pertain more to the representation of speech through verbal language, whereas in the visual text, even when a sequence is embedded as a particular character's vision, it is only the 'who sees' which can be distinguished. The subtle tense distinctions which underly the signalling of direct and indirect discourse are beyond the capabilities of the photographic image, which is limited in terms of tense differentiations, as is the signification of actual speech.

The dominance of the visual in the photographic narrative also leads to a confluence of the perceptions of the implied author and the narrator, however fundamental the distinction might at first appear. Tzvetan Todorov maintains that discourse is actually constituted by the fact that there is a narrator who relates the histoire and there is facing the narrator a reader perceiving it.<sup>83</sup> But each text would also necessarily set up an implied author and an implied reader as the site of the construction of the text's meaning. However, it is not necessary that the narrator actually needs to be separately indicated in the text, and cannot then be offered as a defining characteristic of a narrative text. In photographic texts of the kind we are dealing with the 'implied photographer' would often be difficult to separate successfully from the narrator.

For Bal the levels of narration, focalisation and action are directly related to the three levels of narrativity. Here, the focalisations are related to the level of discourse, the text operating only according to the first person. But again, the photographic narrative operates according to a confluence, and furthermore, the metonymy of the image is the only available ground for distinguishing any kind of focalisation. This would tend to indicate that, while focalisation becomes important for the analysis of discourse, it is not a valid distinction of narrative from other works; the distinctions between implied author, narrator, implied reader and narratee tend to converge in the actual semiosis of the image (this point is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4).

Distinguishing the narrator and the character as the two main agents whose perception constitutes the orientation of the situation poses similar problems. To separate the perceptions of narrator and viewer in the single image would require a classification of reductions which the photograph is unable to accommodate within its overspecification. All the photograph can do is relate the fullness of the image to a particular viewer, be it the photographer or some other character in the narrative, but this will have to be achieved by the montage of looks (e.g. 'off screen' views, close identification through partial representation (shoulder, head) as in classic film technique), it is not something which can be achieved within the individual visual statement. This leads to the conclusion that the focalisation is already part of the single image, and that identifications will have to be achieved by relations across the interstice;



each individual image is already discursive, but is only part of a narrative discourse by reason of the nature of the juxtapositions; the identifications offered do not make a non-narrative into a narrative text, which is a result of a reading in succession.<sup>84</sup>

### Fiction

It is sometimes suggested that narrative is more a property of texts which can relate a succession of fictionalised events, rather than of texts which are felt to be more directly representational, or more directly mimetic (like film and drama). This proposal returns to the distinction of texts according to the nature of their signs. But what matters in defining the capacity of the text for narration is not the nature of the individual sign units, but the relations between them. If, however, we were to consider Eco's proposition that signification is fundamentally equivalent to the capacity to lie,<sup>85</sup> then it could be said that texts which are more involved in the direct presentation of 'reality' cannot narrate in the same way as texts which involve continuous fabrication.

In answer to the above it can be repeated that pure mimesis (as Genette noted)<sup>86</sup> does not exist. Secondly, 'realism' is an ideology underlying any texts which are felt to engage in the representation of reality, whether they operate with traditionally termed 'conventional signs' or not. The distinction between factual and fictional is not one which can be made simply according to the nature of the signs, nor, probably, their subject matter: it is an epistemological problem. The distinction is

one which requires an awareness on the part of the reader of the operation of signification itself and of the verifiable aspects of the object.

It is particularly difficult to step aside from the ideology of realism in the analysis of photographic texts, but if one begins to examine the verification of the image, the distinction between fact and fiction becomes meaningless. The fact that a photograph requires the presence of an object in front of the lens has led to photography being regarded as a particularly 'realistic', in the sense of directly presentational, medium, but in narrative texts the objects also take their place in a fictionalised discourse. The picture plays of Alexander Black present, in this respect, an interesting case. It is known that Black used both real locations and real characters in his fictions, but as such they were embedded into a fictional story, whereas, on the other hand, the fictional places and characters could be said to have been 'really' present in order to be registered by the camera. In terms of the text as a whole, though, all images operate on the same ontological level, which is part of a fiction, even if the objects are felt to be directly represented. Even direct representation, furthermore, involves enough conventional transferences as almost to become indirect (see below).

Champigny (1972) has suggested that 'narrative' refers to a 'mode of meaning' which can be distinguished from the analytic, the gestural, and the poetic. Such categories seem to apply to the text as a whole according, once again, to the nature of the signification. The 'gestural', in particular can be singled out as defined according

to the properties of the signifier, and not distinguished as regards the establishment of a narrativity which has been suggested in this chapter. The last of the four modes, the 'poetic' can also, possibly, be defined according to particular types of signs in combination, or possibly types and degrees of 'semantic' montage as suggested by Levin (1962). In neither case does the signification preclude narrativity (both gestural and poetic narratives are common). Yet the remaining modal categories, the narrative and the analytic, go beyond the level which defines the other two, and here Champigny is making a valid distinction according to the method of exposition. What distinguishes them, however, has already been dealt with above in dividing texts according to the underlying matrix (transformational or comparative), based on the mobilisation of temporal succession underlying the logic of montage. Champigny, however, goes further, in that he divides narrative texts into the 'engaged' (history) and the 'disengaged' (fiction), but here returns to the epistemological problem of the reader's awareness of, and verification of, the object's ontological status. Having come full circle, we are left with the conclusion that narrative texts must, to repeat, be defined according to their capacity to signify transformations, which will depend on the capacity of the reader to engage correctly with the text, and particularly the textual lacunae.

88

### Reading

The above conclusion leads us again to emphasise the role of the reader in the construction of meaning.



It is a necessary truism that without the reader's engagement the text is incapable of functioning. An increasing awareness of this fact has led to a number of recent advances in reader oriented narrative theory, in which the reader is recognised not only as the main site of the construction of meaning, but also the main instigator of the narrativity. Already Eco, Iser and Ruthrof have tended in this direction,<sup>89</sup> but the starting point for their analyses is fundamental: it is based on the notion that the conditions required for the establishment of narrative consist in the text's ability to signify temporal transformation, and are thus relatively simple, with the onus, especially in texts displaying 'disparate' sequences, falling on the reader's ability to correctly establish the discourse. In fact, it seems to be the reader who establishes the teleology of the work, given the most minimum of guidelines, and the idea that the guidelines which point to the causal structure of the work can often be provided elsewhere (by title, caption, or other coherent 'overlay'), indicates the possibility of narrativity being instigated 'externally'.

In simple or complex narratives of all types the power of the reader is constantly exploited for the establishment of the discourse and the story. This means that the reader utilises the text to establish not only the story but also the process of its presentation; thus the tripartite model outlined above. Ruthrof, who proposes a similar basis to the reader establishment of the narrativity, maintains that the surface text actually codes two ontologically different sets of signifieds: presentational process and presented world (which seem equivalent to

discourse and story) at the same time.<sup>90</sup> Ruthrof's analysis has a certain value in that his 'presentational process' includes aspects of style and tone traditionally absent from structuralist analyses which emphasise action sequences as equivalent to story. But it is hard to see how the text presents the reader with two parallel sets of simultaneous signifieds, when the 'presented world' is only something which can be established by means of a 'presentational process'; the signifieds of the one must in fact be established by the signifiers of the other, even if an analysis makes them simultaneously apparent; we would have to return to the three level analysis above. Nevertheless, Ruthrof usefully underlines the narrative operation as consisting in the reader's engagement first and foremost with the text.

Given that the surface text represents the site of primary engagement in narratives, it is surprising that analyses of narrative have hitherto been biased towards the story and its relation with discourse. This might explain why even discussions based on multilevel operations (Rimmon-Kenan, Genette) talk of narration as a production by the author rather than the reader. It might also be that not enough attention has been paid to the use of textual lacunae which are vital in the reader's engagement with the text. In his later works Barthes (particularly in La Chambre claire)<sup>91</sup> tended towards a consideration of communication from a reader viewpoint, or an emphasis on the importance of considering the reader as subject in the construction of meaning, recognising that the reader is a presence actually confronted by the text much more than the author whose absence from

the communicative act is actually marked by his ontological status within the text (as implied author). This kind of imbalance again places increased emphasis on the role of the reader, but Ruthrof would maintain that the reader's role is not concretised, since the text equally necessitates an ideal reader position (implied reader) for its making sense: 'the only kind of identification possible between actual reader and work is his construction of the implied reader, adequate, or inadequate, and not between reader and fictive personae.'<sup>92</sup> This would mean that, whatever the subjective responses (cf. in particular Barthes' discussion of the 'punctum')<sup>93</sup> the meaning of any work can only be constructed by the reader established by the text.

This kind of double bind: where the reader is required to construct meanings, but only within the confines of a reader position already established in the text, implies that the actual engagement of the reader as instigating the narrativity would be minimal. This can be illustrated, in visual narratives, by the use of homogeneous perspective, which requires a fixed spectator position as the focal point of geometric projection and framing. On the other hand, texts are never a complete given, or complete transference of the aesthetic object; all texts rely on the use of selected schemata and metonymy, which require the reader to engage in the creative process. Although it is possible to emphasise the confines of codification in reading the dimensionality and tonality of the photograph, for instance, the metonymic operation, especially in narrative texts (although guided by the exigencies of linear construction, narrative expectations



and feasibilities etc.) actually requires the reader's imaginative projection for constructing the narrative aesthetic object. The question concerning reader oriented narrative theories, and one which has particularly concerned Iser, involves the extent of reader freedom in such guided constructions.

According to Iser (1978, p.17) the shape of the aesthetic object to be produced is prestructured by the internal network of references organised by the 'text strategies'. This is not to say that a text forces one reading simply by its mobilisation of the reading codes; in order to engage the reader a text must exploit its metonymy, what Iser calls 'the selective elements of the repertoire'. Not only, in photographic narratives, does this constructive engagement take place with each image, but the narrativity operates according to implied relations. If the minimal narrative text needs two propositions, then these propositions actually require an interstice in order to 'frame' a relation which the reader is to construct. In photographic narratives the main narrative lacunae are manifested as gaps; it might be said that one reason narrative analyses have failed to take account of reader engagement with the text is the failure to take account of the role of such absences, or significant moments of non-representation, as seminal in the operation of the work. Implication, as was noted above, cannot be separated from signification. For Metz and Chatman to maintain that in some conditions a narrative is only implied, shows a lack of consideration of the operation of a surface text. As Dällenbach says: 'The moral of the tale is that only a perforated text

lends itself to reading.'<sup>94</sup>

The task, therefore, of a reader based theory would be very much concerned with considering the types of schematic and successive gaps in the photographic narrative text (paradigmatic and syntagmatic lacunae, horizontal and vertical montages). On both axes the reading of the 'un-expressed' is subject to certain limits. Such limits generally concern the range of possibilities for 'working out' the schemata and the montage logic. In visual narrative series it is the latter operation which concerns us most. Where the gap is 'small', as in the Muybridge series, the expressed correspondence is large, and the reader is engaged within a tight framework of possibilities. Where the gap is 'large' and the expressed correspondence is small, as in many Fulton texts, the reader is called upon to provide a meaningful correspondence within a broader range of possibilities. The question which we must now ask is how extensive is the range of construction for the reader, and does such freedom actually go so far as to incorporate the application and non-application of narrativity?

Not only does a text establish its own norms, expectations and possibilities, but it is also seen within a limited field of cultural conventions and expectations, which can limit the possibilities of reading. As regards the literary narrative, Iser has proposed two main systems on which the text draws: i) the system of its historical situation and social norms, and ii) the system of previous literatures and literary norms.<sup>95</sup> For photographic narratives we might expect a similar situation, except that static photographic narrative is a much less well established



cultural norm. In fact, many systems of norms and expectations could influence the possibility of a narrative reading, since the actual conditions which underlie this possibility are minimal. Given these conditions, the tendency to narrativise is mostly encouraged. There are also ways, however, in which the pragmatics of the reading situation itself can influence the narrative reading. This is to say that some reading contexts might be inclined to encourage a narrative reading, whereas others might not. Thus the use of public or private arenas outlined in the previous chapter becomes an important influence on the reading. For example, placing a text in an art gallery not only encourages a longer reading time, it also encourages the mobilisation of a comparative matrix and a freedom regarding the traditional norm of vectoriality, all of which work against a fluent narrativity. If the text displays disparate lacunae, then the establishment of a straightforward narrativity becomes even more difficult. Thus the text which displays the minimum conditions for the establishment of narrativity still relies on the reader's consent to carry out the reading. Narrative, although it can not be defined as simply a reader decision, requires firstly the presence of certain basic parameters in the text, and then the consent of the reader in reading these parameters according to a certain matrix. On the other hand, texts which are constructed according to a distinctly transformational matrix tend to require a narrative reading.

### Conclusion



The present chapter has emphasised the minimum conditions for narrativity and the reader's engagement with them because it is here that the text can be seen as the site of a fundamental confrontation which is narrative: the engagement of a subject with a set of signs. This represents the fundamental ground of the definition of narrative. Many other traditional areas of concern: focalisation, human actants, fiction, description and so on, although they have been useful for the analysis of characteristics of particular types of narrative texts, or the plot typologies which concern the narrative story, do not seem to get to grips with the lowest common denominator of narrative signification, which provides an answer to the question 'What is narrative?'. .

Narrative, then, is a particular engagement of a reader with a text; for a text to be read as narrative it must fulfil certain minimum conditions; a narrative text can be any text which signifies an event; an event will be defined as a state change; a state change will be equivalent to a transformation; a transformation will be signified by at least two propositions (either stasis or process emphatic); the propositions will be in successive relation; the reading will then be carried out according to a transformational matrix; from such a reading the narrative discourse will be constructed; the discourse will relate to an ideal plot reconstitution which is story.

Having reached this terminus a quo of abstract definition, it now remains to be seen just what a photo-

graphic narrative in operation entails, and, more especially, if the tripartite distinction can be applied to the photographic narrative text. Such will be the task of the succeeding chapters.

Notes2. Narrative

1. Bal 1977, p.5.
2. Vol.11, p.23.
3. See in particular Genette 1966.
4. See Propp 1968 orig.pub.1928.
5. Culler 1981, p.169.
6. Benvéniste 1971 orig.pub.1966.
7. See in particular Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1966 and Todorov, Tzvetan 1966.
8. See Barthes and Todorov, Tzvetan opp.cit. and Greimas 1971.
9. Greimas 1971, p.793.
10. See Barthes op.cit., Genette 1980 and Chatman 1978b.
11. In Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1966.
12. Ibid., p.88.
13. 1980 orig.pub.1972.
14. Ibid., p.27.
15. Rimmon-Kenan 1983, p.3.
16. Nevertheless a tripartite distinction remains the strongest conceptual basis for a number of important analyses, with the main confusion apparently relating to the area 'beyond' the established discourse and the story. Barthes (1977 orig.pub.1966), Genette (1980 orig.pub.1972), Fowler (1977), Bal (1977), Chatman (1978b), Scholes (1980), Ruthrof (1981) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983) all propose three main areas of concern.



17. Todorov, Christo (1972, p.126) makes the observation: 'The composition and summary of narrative are two aspects of the same operation.' This statement, which indicates a quintessential relation between narrative levels, ties in with the proposal in Chapter 4 that static visual narratives are necessarily summative.
18. Todorov, Tzvetan 1971. See also the discussion of Lotman's formulaic principle of isomorphism in Chapter 3.
19. See Bal op.cit., p.4.
20. See Fowler op.cit., pp.45-46.
21. Although the 'temporality' of a static visual narrative work is problematic (see Chapter 4).
22. Genette (1980 orig.pub.1972) also uses the term 'modality'.
23. Barthes 1975 orig.pub.1966, p.88.
24. Stein 1935, p.31.
25. Prince 1973, p.19.
26. As Bal (1977, p.4) states: 'Un événement est le passage d'un état à un autre. Tout changement, aussi minime qu'il soit, constitue un événement.'
27. See Genette 1966, p.158. A conclusion which follows from the impossibility of the semiotic separation of description and narration.
28. See Greimas 1971, p.800.
29. Orig.pub.1966.
30. Bal (1977, p.5) proposes that events, actors, places and durations are all elements constitutive of the story.
31. Bremond 1966, p.62.
32. See bibliography 'Lissitzky 1922'.

33. Thus the constitution in the text of the minimum conditions of narrativity does not ultimately concern the problem in aesthetics of the absolutes of figurative or abstract art.

34. See Chatman 1978b, pp.43-145.

35. See Greimas 1971, p.800.

36. Which correspond to deep-structure narrative predicates in the mode of existence or action -- again categories which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. See Chatman 1978b, p.146.

37. Ibid., p.32.

38. Genette 1966, pp.157-158.

39. This is true particularly in cases where actantial nominalisations are used for nomenclature.

40. See Chatman 1978b, p.74.

41. See especially Lotman 1975a and 1976 orig.pub.1973.

42. Lotman 1975a, p.336.

43. In that it will always be signified as arrested motion, it cannot be a 'dynamic' statement, although it can emphasise dynamism. Verbal statements, too, can be seen as complex units containing static and dynamic aspects. In a so-called 'process statement' of the type 'the man hit the dog' the nouns themselves serve both actantial and deictic functions, the deixis increased by the use of names, qualifiers etc.; deixis is itself felt by some theorists (notably Hamon 1982) to form the basis of descriptive operation, and also, in anaphoric and cataphoric reference, of literary narrative montage (see Lonzi 1970).

44. Scholes and Kellog 1966, p.4.

45. Todorov, Tzvetan 1966, p.125ff.. This interpretation might seem unfair to Todorov who, actually, posits 'representation' (drama) and 'narration' (chronicle) as the two principal modes of narrative ('modes du récit', p.144). However, it is difficult to see, according to this terminology, and following the general argument that the 'discours' requires a certain relation to the 'histoire' of events and the presence of narrator and narratee, how a 'mode' which entails non-narration can be taken as constituent of 'récit'.

46. Plato (trans. Jowett 1970), p.43.

47. Aristotle (trans. Hutton 1982), p.47.

48. Genette 1966, pp.152-156.

49. Metz 1971, pp.25-35.

50. Ibid., p.27.

51. Since the narratives we are considering here are wholly 'static' in terms of the text. Actually, the question of emphasis seems to relate both to the depiction of objects in rest or in motion, and to the depiction of the actant. It is possible, then, that process and stasis can be equally suggested in the same statement.

52. Bal op.cit., pp.89-198.

53. See Eco op.cit., pp.192-200.

54. In Ingarden 1972 orig.pub.1931.

55. Categories of schemata relevant to the textual strategies of differentiation and cohesion (see Chapter 3).

56. Todorov, Tzvetan 1971, p.132.

57. See especially the discussion of discourse time in Chapter 4.

58. Berger and Mohr 1982, p.286.

59. Although this is not the place to introduce a detailed discussion of temporal discrepancy and the function of montage, for which see Chapter 4.

60. An immediate site not necessarily limited to two images, of course.

61. Even if, as in the case of the medieval saint's life painting (see Fig.1) and Japanese scrolls, for instance, the differentiations are constituted within a homogeneous (non-differentiated) space.



62. Prince 1973, p.16.
63. Ibid., p.17.
64. Ibid., p.19.
65. Metz 1971, p.33.
66. This point is considered in more detail in Chapter 3.
67. Thus a static series does not need to portray an act as it occurs. As we have already noted, an event can be successfully portrayed by its 'before' and 'after' states.
68. See Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1966, p.91.
69. See especially Lotman 1975 and Metz 1974a, p.69 where Metz calls the film image a 'hapax'.
70. But see note 61 above.
71. There would thus be a difference between basic narrative units and other, larger narrative units introduced for the sake of a more detailed analysis. Here we are more concerned with the former.
72. See bibliography 'Kertész 1971'; an example of a common visual/thematic link through subject matter in photographic compilations.
73. See Chapter 1 note 94.
74. See bibliography 'Fulton 1973'.
75. See Fleischer 1981, p.8.
76. Silverstone 1981, p.8.
77. Noted in Silverstone 1981, p.8.
78. White 1974, p.281.
79. Scholes and Kellog 1966, p.207.

80. Chatman 1978b, p.45.
81. Again guaranteed by the use of the interstitial as the site of the reader's imaginative intervention.
82. Scholes and Kellogg 1966, p.4.
83. See Todorov, Tzvetan 1966, p.126.
84. Focalisation, which relates more to the necessary parameters of signification or the operation of discourse, is not here considered vital in the constitution of narrativity. It is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4.
85. See Eco 1976, p.7.
86. Genette 1966, pp.152-156.
87. This is not to mention the inapplicability of the ideological position 'realism' to the photograph itself (see Chapter 3).
88. An even broader cultural perspective could be said to underly Wienold's (1972) discussion of narrative from the point of view of discourse analysis, which he claims as the way towards an analytical procedure for the transference of the story into the text. He dispenses with the notion of specific levels, collapsing his analysis into general formulation rules applied to 'primitives'. Such 'primitives' appear, however, to derive from NP and VP structures like those underlying transformational-generative grammar, and the analysis works towards rules which define their relations of embedding or conjunction in a way which is not far from the Chomskian analysis of Prince. What is valuable, however, is that the analysis is not limited to the sentence-unit, but reaches a level of abstraction which enables an application over greater portions of text, literary and non-literary. Ultimately, however, it is based on a similar awareness of minimal matrixes (or montage relations) as described in the present work.
89. See Eco 1979, Iser 1971, 1978a&b and Ruthrof 1981.
90. See Ruthrof 1981, pp.5-35.
91. Barthes 1980.
92. Ruthrof 1981, p.xi.

93. In Barthes 1980, pp.47-49, 71-95.

94. Dällenbach 1980, p.44.

95. Iser 1978b, p.7.



### 3. TEXT

TEXTIntroduction

Among the numerous works dealing with narrative theory, the majority form conclusions about plot typology or narrative operation with regard to the literary text on which they are based. Yet the use of the literary model has not prevented theorists from postulating similar operations for all types of narrative texts, whether literary or not. On the other hand, one area of visual narrative has received a good deal of analysis in its own right: this is film. Thus the analyst of visual non-filmic narrative is faced with the task of uniting literary based narrative theories and film studies.

A number of writers of narrative theories which tend towards the story level have been concerned to underline the broad applicability of plot stereotypes and narrative transformations between autonomous layers in the signification on the understanding that the text represents merely the material situation of the narrative schema, and can thus be isolated from the operation of the narrativity. What film studies has at least told us, however, is that the narrative signification cannot simply be taken independently from the text through which it is constituted. In fact, the capabilities of the text vis à vis the establishment of the narrativity will have a direct effect on the type of narrative operation which takes place. Any analysis which is concerned with narrative 'consumption' (the desirability of which was suggested

at the end of the previous chapter) will need to take account of this primary level of narrativity.

Fowler (1977) has offered one of the most succinct definitions of the text in a tripartite analysis closest to the one suggested above. For him 'text' represents the surface structure of the narrative, while its content (story) is the narrative proposition as mediated by the 'discourse', which constitutes the 'modality' of the work. His definition of 'textual surface structure' as 'the most perceptible "visible" dimension of a work'<sup>1</sup> has particular relevance for the analysis of visual texts; even if 'discourse' is taken as simultaneous rather than ante- or postcedent, such a definition points to the need for an awareness of the work as 'situated' or 'anchored' at its most readily accessible point. Here too, away from the more abstracted level of story, the difference between types of narrative text would seem most tangible, and it is here that the specificities of narrative significations in different media are more apparent.

An awareness that the lack of a proper engagement with the specificities of the text can lead to erroneous conclusions has been expressed. Herr<sup>n</sup>stein Smith (1980) has outlined numerous differences in filmic and written versions of the same story to point to inadequacies in Chatman's theory, for example.<sup>2</sup> Here, the idea that narrativity is itself autonomous with regard to the text, and thus transformations between the story and the narrative discourse tout court can be used to constitute the whole narrative operation, is seen to be misguided. The tripartite analysis above also helps to indicate that the discussion



of narrativity independently of the medium is idealistic. Narratives operate differently according to the medium in which they are constructed.

### The Sign

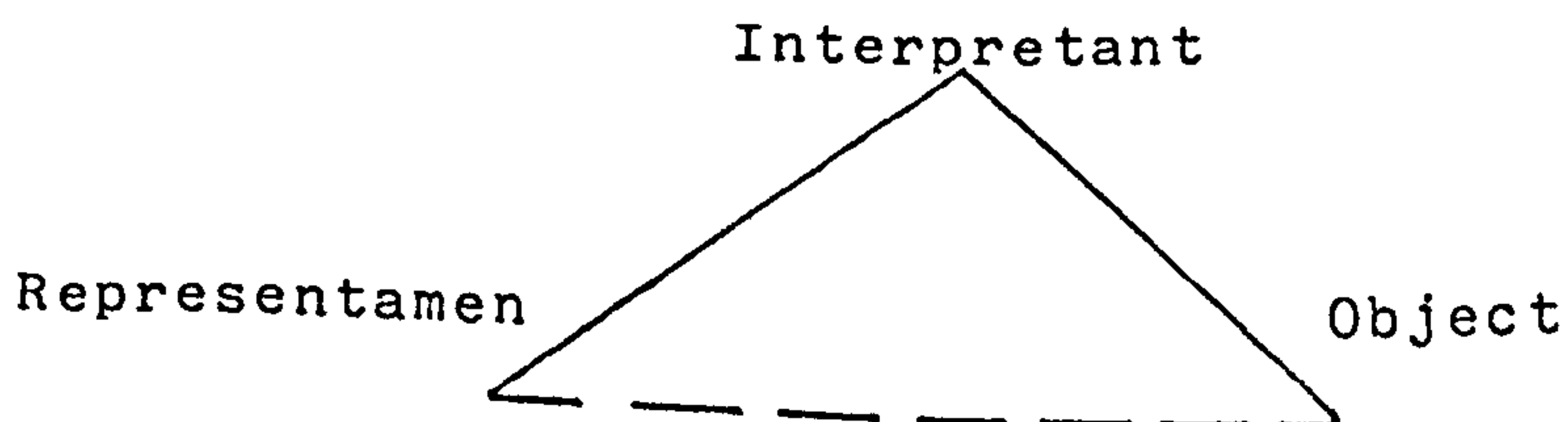
If we are to begin to discuss what distinguishes narratives according to their textual properties, then we must begin by considering what is distinctive about the individual signs through which the text is constructed. Since a narrative sign is first and foremost a sign, then problems concerning the analysis of visual narrative texts will be primarily related to problems encountered in visual semiotic analysis. Calabrese (1980) refined the problems of visual semiotics as falling into five major areas: i) material production, ii) strategies of reference, iii) 'pictorial activity', iv) construction of genres and v) narrative structures.<sup>3</sup> The areas which concern us here will be mostly related to the first three categories, since the typological and general structural problems suggested by iv) and v) would be dealt with elsewhere; the first three categories are more directly related to the message, and the semiotic characteristics of the text.<sup>4</sup> In the analysis of the photographic text the first three categories are particularly closely related, if not usually confused, in considering the problem of exactly how the signs operate.

Before we can analyse the 'narrativised' photograph (bearing in mind the minimal conditions for narrativity outlined in Chapter 2) we will therefore have to be able to characterise the photograph as a sign. That a single

photograph can be taken as a sign, fulfilling the definition proposed by Eco that 'a sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else',<sup>5</sup> is not disputable. Beyond this, in reference to exactly what type of sign a photograph is, and how its operation can be characterised, there does not appear to be general agreement. If a photograph falls into the general category of 'sign' as 'any object used by a sender to evoke a thought by the receiver about an object other than itself', then what <sup>other</sup> category of signs does the photograph fall into?

The latter definition already presents problems: 'thoughts about objects' implies both a sign as a depiction, and a sign overlaying (or combining) the depiction with certain 'attitudes'. Signs, accordingly, can be seen to have simultaneous mimetic and expressive functions which are difficult to separate, the schemata of one being identical to the schemata of the other. Thus 'strategies of reference' and 'pictorial activity' already combines different and simultaneous modes of signification outlined by Barthes as the 'denotative' and 'connotative'.<sup>6</sup>

A 'sign' is usually taken to be the alliance of an 'expression' with its 'content' (Jakobson),<sup>7</sup> or a 'signifier' with a 'signified' (Saussure),<sup>8</sup> whereby the representation (or sign object) signifies a concept which has reference to a corresponding 'object' in the real world, existential or not. It is classically defined in semiotics by means of a triangular model, e.g. (Peirce):<sup>9</sup>



but, as Eco has pointed out, the 'object' term in this model does not affect the basic conditions of semiosis, where the sign can be used in order to lie about the ontology of the referent.<sup>10</sup> Thus in order to characterise the sign we need only discuss the relation of the signifier to its 'content' (a cultural unit).

Concerning ourselves with the 'text' might suggest that the analysis should involve the basic properties of the signifier. This has been taken to mean not only the basic schemata, but also the material properties of the sign itself, and it is true to say, in reference to the latter, that signs can indeed be characterised according to their physical composition. Such an area is certainly suggested by referring to the text as the 'mise en images' or even 'mise en mots' of the narrative. But the physical properties of the text do not indicate the specifics of the relation between a signifier and a signified, even though these properties can influence the text's semiotic potential and become meaningful in their own right. In other words, the fact that the photograph, for example, is constructed from the fixed deposit of silver salts on resin-coated or fibre-based papers, with a matt, pearly or glossy surface limits the potential type of signification and can also be 'meaningful' in the way it 'overlays' the message as a whole with meaning (similar, possibly, to the way that a leatherbound hardback overlays its text with significations differently from a ragged paperback), but it will not indicate what characterises the signs in the message. Thus materiality, in that it concerns only the physical situation of the work, will not be taken as equivalent to the text, which involves



the signs as situated.

If a sign is taken as a relation between the cultural unit it signifies and certain signifying (not necessarily material) properties of the signifier, then the distinction of types of sign, and of narratives constructed of different types of sign, will depend on analysing the relationship established between the terms of the operation. On this, most fundamental, level a number of uncertainties and disagreements have arisen. How can this relation be characterised for the photograph? In attempting to describe the fundamental operation for visual signs Lotman proposed the formula, as the principle of isomorphism between the object and the text:<sup>11</sup>

Function P = Transformation rules of Object (O) into  
Image (I)

Here, he underlines a basic conception in visual semiotic analysis: that the aesthetic object is transformed into an image which bears a direct isomorphic relation to it; and this also serves to point out a certain erroneous determinism which underlies much of the discussion of visual signification. If the isomorphism can be characterised as  $P=O \rightarrow I$ , then this implies that the signifiers are motivated by the object. Yet we have already noticed that the object is in fact motivated by the signifiers (the object, indeed, bearing questionable ontological status), and the transformation rules which govern the principle of isomorphic correspondence could equally be described as  $P=I \rightarrow O$ . This problem, of confusing the signifier as motivated by or motivator of the aesthetic object, which is dealt with in more detail below, is fundamental in the discussion of the photographic sign

where the schemata are felt to be the result of a direct transference of the real.

### Verbal and Visual Signs

The kinds of signs of which the text is composed are usually divided, in the first place, into the verbal and the visual. This kind of differentiation is based on a conceptual model like that proposed by Lotman. It is formed according to the idea of 'motivation'. In this sense visual signs are felt to be motivated, verbal not motivated, by the object itself. This leads to the conclusion that visual signs display some kind of existential connection between signifier and signified, whereas verbal signs do not. If, however, one is to carry out an analysis with more emphasis on sign consumption than sign production, then the distinction is not quite so clear cut, especially when one also follows the proposal that the 'object' aspect of the classical triangular model need not concern the fundamental operation in semiosis. The idea of 'motivation' is one commonly used to characterise the photographic sign. It can be said, for instance, that a tree need not actually exist in order that a verbal signifier representing this signified can be produced, whereas it might be said that a tree would have to be placed before the camera in order that a photograph of a tree, or something resembling it (for we are dealing with the signified, not the actual referent) could be made. This is a classic way of distinguishing signs according to reference and motivation, and even here it does not necessarily divide verbal from visual

texts of all types. A painting, drawing, etching etc. can be made of a tree quite independently of the existence of such an object. Consideration of the representation of a unicorn makes the point more forcibly. Thus we are left to conclude that pursuing the distinction of signs according to either the existence of the referent, the production of the sign, or the transformation  $O \rightarrow I$  will not distinguish verbal from visual signification. The analytical problem posed by the photograph arises from this tendency to presume that visual signs are 'naturally' codified to resemble; discussions of photography have often assumed this innate connection for all visual signs, based on Lotman's reversal of semiotic procedure.

Not only will consideration of the sign as motivated, which emphasises sign production, not adequately distinguish between verbal and visual signification, it will not tell us about the actual operation of signification itself, which requires more an awareness of sign consumption. There is obviously a correspondence between the signifier and the signified, but how is this correspondence established, and how does it operate?

There is generally felt to be a difference between texts which operate in terms of some kind of visual (i.e. visually recognisable) 'resemblance' and those which do not. However established, a picture of a tree is felt to be more directly, because visually, related to its aesthetic object than a verbal description of a tree, which is presented in linear word-signs which do not activate a similar semiotic notion of 'resemblance'. In this sense, the relation of signifier and signified in visual texts is felt to be more 'direct' than it is



in verbal texts. This is the conceptual basis, influenced by considerations of motivation and referent mentioned above, of the verbal/visual distinction.

Before considering this distinction, it must be said that, from certain points of view, verbal and visual texts have a number of points in common. Since a sign is an object which evokes a thought by the receiver about an object other than itself, both verbal and visual signs are dependent on the thought formation processes in any given society. Thus different 'kinds' of signification involve similar processes, and are ultimately cross-contaminated. It is doubtful, for instance, whether any visual sign can be meaningfully separated from the verbal processes involved in thinking, and similarly, as Arnheim has suggested,<sup>12</sup> thinking itself might be impossible without recourse to perceptual 'images'. Metz (1974a), bearing in mind the domination of conceptualisation and communication by verbal language, concluded that nothing is gained by opposing 'verbal' and 'visual' as two large blocks each of which is homogeneous, massive, regular and maintain purely external logical relations with each other since the visual message is invaded from within by language.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, there are ways in which verbal and visual texts as a whole can be classically distinguished according to their semiotic operation. For a start, visual signs are said to be more reliant on replica than invention. In other words, when a visual sign is used certain aspects of the image are said to replicate similar aspects of the signified object. Images are thus said to resemble on a direct basis, whereas word signs signify not in

terms of direct resemblance (although the four letters in 'tree' cannot, within the terms of the English language, be taken as signifying anything other than the object 'tree') but in terms of a particular combination of units which can be read according to a further 'layer' in the signification which 'codes' the semiotic relation; visual and verbal signs are distinguished according to non-coded and coded resemblance respectively, which has even led to claims that visual signs are somehow more 'natural'.

The combination of units in order to signify the object is in part the product of the double articulation of language. This depends on the division of the verbal textual statement into phonemes and morphemes, guarantors of the arbitrariness of the verbal sign. It has been suggested that images do not share this capacity for double articulation, and this in turn denies the notion of a visual 'language'. This double articulation, said to be a defining characteristic of verbal language, actually depends on the ability to reduce the sign into certain constituent parts operative in terms of a language system. In verbal language, the fact that divisions into phoneme and morpheme can be made actually underlines the 'non-motivated' operation of the verbal sign. Similar units would have to be postulated in order to find the visual equivalent for such strongly coded expressions. In fact the variety of visual signs and the complexity of their contents is so vast (even verbal glosses of the visual sign range from simple nominalisations through phrases and sentences to greater units of discourse) that problems arise when one wishes to a) dictate a stable verbal equivalent for the visual sign and b) analyse the visual sign

in terms of smaller features with a general oppositional value. As was noted above, a visual sign is capable of containing different propositions; it is a complex unit. A visual sign with human actants will, for instance, necessarily involve propositions concerning actantial roles, situational and descriptive factors, and even a photograph of a tree will propose a hierarchy of object relations and similar situational and descriptive factors; visual signs are, as we have already concluded, an amalgam of differently emphatic propositions.

It might be said that the simple oppositional values underlying the phonemic structure of verbal discourse find an equivalent in the discrete oppositions light/dark, line/space or other graphic conventions which contribute to the construction of the image. Yet even if the same components go into the construction of schemata, as a finite number of phonetic components goes into the production of phonemic units in any given language system, this does not indicate that the actual relation of signifier to signified operates by means of a coded relation between schemata and object. Peters (1981) attempted to overcome this problem by postulating a triple articulation for visual (here visual narrative) texts. He proposed i) the selection of the moment, ii) the camera eye and iii) the combination of shots into syntagmas as the three articulations.<sup>14</sup> But here he refers to points in the production of the sign and the construction of the narrative text rather than to articulations which underly the system of the signification itself. We must conclude that the phonemic and morphemic structure of verbal language cannot be equalled by components of the visual text. But the



definition of a sign in such negative terms will not help in defining the particular nature of the sign itself. To say that the visual is not similar in operation to the verbal, while a valid starting point, will not characterise the visual. Characterising the photographic narrative text will actually involve comparing photographic and other visual signs, and comparing the photographic narrative with other visual narrative texts.

### The Visual Sign

Peirce's division of signs into the 'iconic',  
<sup>15</sup>  
the 'indexical' and the 'symbolic' has been widely used as a basis for the discussion of semiotic/textual characteristics, so much so that it is not uncommon for signs which signify according to a notion of resemblance to be generally referred to as 'iconic signs'. According to Peirce's preliminary definitions: 'An Icon is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own...', 'An Index is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by the Object...' and 'A Symbol is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law...which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object...' Yet these fundamental divisions which form Peirce's second  
<sup>16</sup>  
trichotomy of semiosis are themselves subject to cross-contaminations and confusions. An icon is said to signify in terms of shared characteristics, but in as much as an index has to have 'some Quality in common  
<sup>17</sup>  
with the Object' in respect of which it refers to that

object it also (as Peirce himself noted) involves an iconic relation. Similarly a symbol, although functioning generally as a 'legisign', 'has its being in the instances which it will determine'<sup>18</sup> and thus functions according to an indexical relation. Even the icon can be seen in some senses as 'affected' by the object it resembles (especially in the case of the photograph) and is thus indexical, while it is read according to certain conventions (how else would the initially unrecognisable be taken to mean) approaching the symbolic.

Apart from the fact that Peirce himself made a point of commenting on the semiotic cross-contaminations at work in these definitions, thus revealing the impropriety of taking the classifications as distinct and separate, there are a number of objections to the use of these terms in definitive capacity. To begin with, the definitions seem to fall into the trap of confusing the sign's motivation with its semiotic potential; as Burks (1949) has pointed out,<sup>19</sup> the notion of 'icon' in Peirce is both general and particular; it confuses relations of cause and effect; it also implies that a sign cannot be iconic unless the receiver of the message recognises it as such. In order for the latter to take place some symbolic means is needed to communicate the relation, i.e. it needs also to operate as a legisign so that the 'conventions' of such a reading capacity can be indicated. Furthermore, as we have already suggested, both the icon and the index signify through 'existential' connection to the object. Thus the operation of the sign which relies on established convention in order that its reading can be established as one of resemblance cannot be pure: there is no pure iconic. And the

operation of the sign which needs a notion of existential connection to the object (or rather object-as-sign) can never be pure: there is no pure indexical.

We are left, then, with the idea that visual signs may be distinguished only in respect of existential connection as a necessary establisher of the reading; we might also propose, following Eco (1976), that visual signs are to be distinguished according to a 'similitudinous' operation.<sup>20</sup> This seems the only valid starting point, and goes some way towards distinguishing signs according to their schematic material, but it is inadequate for defining the photographic sign itself. Although the photograph falls into this general group of signs, we must now consider how the photographic is distinguished from other visual signs.

### The Photographic Sign

We can begin by noting that, although the materiality of the signifier does not necessarily distinguish it as a type of sign, in the case of visual signification certain material properties of the signifier, since they can enter in a more 'meaningful' way into the message, may serve to distinguish different types of visual expression. This would mean that there is a layer of materiality which can be distinguished from the mere physical situation of the text as a whole. In the case of a painting, for example, the texture of the medium can serve to express certain properties of the object signified in a way which can be read as codified. In the case of a photograph it is possible, similarly, that the size of the silver



crystals (particularly in the case of an enlargement from fast film) can be transferred to the reading of the object in such a way that they become significant aspects of the schemata; here they will not be read as physical properties but properties of the schematic material. We must thus make the distinction, in discussing materiality, between 'physical' and 'schematic' materiality: the latter being largely denied to written texts (except, possibly, in the case of concrete poetry, which makes an effort to 'concretise' the schemata). But other aspects of the materiality, for example the use of glossy, matt or pearly surfaces and different types of paper could become meaningful 'independently' of the schemata, and in a way which does not seem to be possible with the non-visual, and, in this case, is not possible with other visual signs. Glossy or matt, for instance, can imbue the message as a whole with properties derived from the cultural reverberations of 'glossiness' or 'dullness' as semantic clusters (consider a 'glossy' magazine). Thus material properties are to be considered in as much as they are felt to 'affect' the schemata. The photograph displays a potential for signifying materiality which is not specifically 'photographic', but able to be successfully brought into play as a specific aspect of photographic signification.<sup>21</sup>

In terms of the photograph and the signification of its object, however, we are faced with the need to establish specific aspects of the relation between the schemata and the signified. It is commonly felt, and indeed viewpoints on the photograph are often dominated by the notion, that the photograph depicts in a way which

activates a complete and natural resemblance between the image and its object, in such a way that the form and substance of the photograph are fused in the activity of passive resemblance. A photograph, after all, is a trace of its object reactivated to restate the object itself through the schemata that have already been determined in the act of photographing; it is usually read in terms of a strict identity. If the logic of this argument were carried to its conclusion, it would imply that the photograph can be distinguished from other visual signs by the fact that the signifiers at work in the photograph are always masked, or at best constantly evanescent in the reading, and that no particular code or convention were operative in its decipherment. On the other hand, if it could be shown that this strict identity between object and image can be denied, then the photograph can be defined in opposition to other visual signs by virtue of its own specific operation.

Firstly, it can be stated that the photograph does not register its object, but registers light emanating from the object and its general surroundings. Light is itself neither a stable, nor uni-dimensional and uni-directional medium. Thus, in certain situations, different light readings are possible for the same object (or rather 'subject' before the lens), and different apparatuses can register different types of light; light encroaches on the adjacent edges of darker forms and penetrates photographic emulsion itself by refraction (halation); both over- and under-exposures are valid registrations. All this constitutes a preliminary wedge in opening up discrepancies between the photographic 'object' and the

photographic 'subject'. (Many confusions in photographic theory might be avoided by distinguishing these two notions of subject-before-the-lens and object-as-sign.)

Further differences arise in viewing the photograph and viewing the subject itself.<sup>22</sup> In many senses the photograph represents a reduction, rather than a transference, of the real. The eye, for instance, is capable of registering approximately 8000 nuances of tone, whereas the photographic negative's scale of tonal values ranges from 1 to 30. In black and white photography colour variations are transformed into tonal variations. Similarly, the three-dimensional subject is transformed into a two-dimensional image -- a transference also contaminated by the perspective system and viewing position. Added to this are numerous methods by which the photographer intervenes in the process of registration (not to mention development and printing) of the image. Here, we have not only the control of depth of field by aperture size and the control of exposure length, but also the control of the perspectival field through the use of a variety of lenses which can 'denaturalise' the relative value scale in the image; while the wide-angle lens, for instance, increases' apparent depth by emphasising diminution, the telephoto lens apparently draws the background closer where size appears to diminish more slowly. At a later stage the photographer intervenes in image construction by controlling developing conditions, and in the act of printing, which is after all a process of re-registration, opportunities arise for controlling shape, size, focus and tonal variation, along with possibilities of enhancement and masking, the use of texture



screens, different framings and so on, all of which can be followed at a later stage by tinting and other work on the completed image. Such activities serve at least to point out that the idea of simple and identical registration is erroneous.

If all such examples tend to destabilise the notion of strict resemblance and deny the naturalness of the photographic image, then they follow an argument which is still closely allied to the field of 'motivation' (which is only one side of the dichotomy outlined above), and they cannot be taken as characteristics which reveal the site of the constitution of the photographic object in the reading convention, although a number of commentators have made this presumption. In order to analyse what actually distinguishes a photographic sign from other visual signs we would need to be much more concerned with how the result of such processes -- the sign -- is read by the receiver of the message, despite the fact that the photograph will be read within an ideology which emphasises strict resemblance resulting from a causal determination which can be shown to be false. The fact remains that the photograph as read, along with other visual images, is perceived by means of an activity of isomorphism, and it is in relation to this activity that it needs to be distinguished from other visual signs.

It is not enough, for example, to demonstrate the dimensional reduction which takes place as a result of registration without mentioning that the photograph, along with other visual signs, depends on the reading of a two-dimensional sign as signifying a three-dimensional object. Eco has also noted that the viewing of an object

and the visual sign of the object are quite different activities,<sup>23</sup> and that the reading of the sign depends on a notion of coded relation which presumes that the perceptual results are the same. Such a presumed resemblance is, furthermore, dependent on a notion of 'similitude' rather than 'similarity', 'similitude' being defined as a property shared by two figures that have equal angles and sides that are proportionally equivalent, based on precise rules selecting relevant parameters.<sup>24</sup> It is this selection of parameters which forms the basis of a text's isomorphism, and it is on this basis that visual signs seem to be most meaningfully distinguished in operation. This isomorphism is a kind of transformation on the lines of Lotman's formula, but the point to be made about it is, as Eco notes, that 'a transformation does not suggest the idea of natural correspondence; it is rather the consequence of rules and artifice'.<sup>25</sup> It is thus the 'rules and artifice' involved in viewing the photograph which need to be discussed.

If the reading of a visual sign depends upon a competence in the viewer to activate the correspondences between signifier and signified in the message, then this competence implies knowledge of a certain 'code'. Any non-natural sign (which we must take the photograph to be) operates in terms of a 'coded' relationship, and if this code involved in reading a photograph can be taken as specific to the reading of photographic signs then it can be called a 'photographic code'. This latter term has in fact been generously applied to aspects of codification thought to be specific to photographic signs,<sup>26</sup> based on the idea that if a reader needs a certain



competence in order to know how to decipher the vertical transformations operative between the photographic image and its object, then photographic codes can be said to be involved. Thus many claims have already been made about specific codifications in the photographic image, but we would need to be aware, before entering this dangerous field of analysis, of the limits of the definition set out above. Maintaining an awareness of the dichotomy outlined at the beginning of the chapter, it is necessary, first of all, to state that codes are primarily systems which operate vis à vis the consumption of the image and not its construction. This means that certain technical properties of the apparatus utilised in the registration of light and the construction of the image will not necessarily lead to the codification of the reading. Secondly, codes involved in the reading seem to operate on two levels: a) codes which enable the receiver to construct the object from the schemata on offer and b) codes which enable a reading of the object already constructed. These areas (which, after all, ultimately depend on the same schemata) are easy to confuse.

Bergala (c1978) is not the only analyst to suggest that purely photographic codes are inscribed in the technology of the camera; he cites the scale of the shot, framing and depth of field as cases in point.<sup>27</sup> Similarly Burch (1973), when discussing the photographic parameters in the operation of film, extends the list to include focus, contrast, tone/brilliance and colour.<sup>28</sup> But the main objection to establishing this kind of link between the technological capabilities of the apparatus used and the image produced is not just that it confuses



the production with the consumption of the image, but that it deals with a level beyond the simply isomorphic. In 'Le Message photographique'<sup>29</sup> Barthes more or less dismissed the transformation I-→O as a coded operation, by viewing the photographic image as the perfect analogon of its object;<sup>30</sup> he proposed codification in the photograph as taking place at a second level of signification, that of 'connotation'; it is here, he said, that 'a coding of the photographic analogue' takes place. While it would not be possible, for reasons outlined above, to agree with the proposal that the photograph represents a perfect analogon, and thus is not, as Barthes would have it, 'a message without a code',<sup>31</sup> this kind of analysis does seem useful in distinguishing between a level of meaning which deals simply with the designative (in the present analysis 'isomorphic', sometimes referred to as 'mimetic' or 'sigmatic') and that which in some way deals with the meaning of the object-as-presented at a level beyond the mere constitution of the object itself. Whether we refer to this preliminary level as designative, denotative, mimetic, sigmatic, isomorphic or schematic, it is the level at which an analysis of distinctive textual properties will have to begin. As Eco says, similitude itself has to be learned;<sup>32</sup> the transformation of I-→O requires first and foremost this preliminary 'consumption' of the image, which will be subject to codification.

The isomorphic code should deal with those aspects of the visual sign which allow the receiver to consume the object, yet the receiver can only do so as constructor of the object from the text presented. The way in which different texts allow this process will

be a pointer to their textual differentiation. In the case of the photograph it would be necessary to analyse the absolute basis of the isomorphic code in order to get to the distinctive features of the photographic text. Since the photograph is a visual sign which can stand alone (at least on the level of isomorphism) this code will be based on <sup>the</sup> lowest common denominators of a graphic kind. It remains to be seen whether these parameters are ultimately different from the basic parameters of other visual signs.

At first glance, most visual images can be seen as constructed from lines and dots, and areas of tonal differentiation. A drawing such as Klee's Forgetful (Fig.28) Angel (1939), or an etching, shows how the isomorphic capacity of the image is constructed mainly from the use of line and an area of uniform tone, or a combination of line, point and areas of tonal variation. It might, then, be possible to see the line, point and their absences, and areas of tonal variation as fundamental constituents of the isomorphism of the photograph. In the case of the latter, however, the line itself appears to become less fundamental in constructing a meaningful object. A photograph such as Alvin Langdon Coburn's The White Cloud (Fig.29) (c1910) shows this point clearly: here, the image can be read as 'cloud, sky, tree' merely from the areas of tonal variation in the photograph which result from the remaining deposits of silver crystals on the paper. If these tonal variations can be enough to constitute, in opposition, a meaningful object, then it might be, then, that the line and point have to be seen as the results of extreme and limited tonal contrast, especially in



the photograph. This conclusion would also underline the fact that the photograph is initially constructed according to the registration of light (as noted above, a diffuse medium) upon the negative according to the restrictions of the apparatus and the film. The importance of tonal contrast in the isomorphic code would be emphasised by the initial transformation of colour into tone in the case of black and white images. And even in the case of coloured images the process is similar, in that it is variations and densities of colour which enable the message to be read and the object to be constructed. In the case of the colour photograph, then, the three layers of light-sensitive halides and linked dyes record the subject in such a way that the object can be constructed with reference to areas of variation and opposition, with intensities in the image being read as brightnesses. If the fundamental constituent of the isomorphic code can, therefore, be seen as the simple opposition of tone and colour, then this is fundamental to all visual images, and it does not, unfortunately, distinguish the photograph according to its isomorphism. Indeed, if we were to start out from the premise that the isomorphic nature of the photographic image required specific photographic codes, then it would be difficult to explain the capacity of the first (Western) viewers to decipher the first photographic images.

Is it enough, however, to characterise isomorphism in this way? Discussing the distribution of silver salts and the resulting tonal variation in the image might lead us towards establishing the basic signifying properties of the image, but does it elucidate the process of simili-



tude through which the object is constructed? In fact, we are dealing with different stages in the analysis of the text's isomorphic capacity, for the transformation  $I \rightarrow O$  is enabled only according to the receiver's ability to decode the tonal distributions as already established in the text. This ability depends, after all, on the selection and distribution of relevant parameters of similitude; the code which underlies similitude would, again, be shared with other visual images, for the operation of similitude will depend, ultimately, on a geometrical correspondence (even if established as the point of tonal variation), and the transformational processes can be deciphered according to codes inscribed, as Eco notes,<sup>33</sup> in the culture.. Isomorphic codes, then, involve the establishment of minimal correspondence between image and object, no matter how the image is ultimately determined; in photography the codes used to establish the isomorphism are graphic codes shared with other visual images. Although they can be seen as ultimately formed by tonal variations in extreme (line, point) or gradual (area) contrast, these are in turn merely the basis of the pertinent content features for the operation of similitude, which vary between cultures.

Beyond this, any graphic code which deals with the meaning of the way the image is organised, or the degree of tonal variation in the image, will belong to a different code. This level of analysis, which appears to correspond more to our definition of the discourse (in that it seems to refer to the choices made in presenting the object which relate to the author's 'rhetorical stance') can possibly be referred to as the 'connotative', 'semantic'

or 'interpretative' level of the work (although it is probable that more analytical and operative levels are involved in these terms).<sup>34</sup> In the case of the photographic image we would firstly cite the frame of the image as a preliminary motivator of the image shape (diagonal, square, round etc.) and field, and then other aspects of the organisation which are 'overlaid' on the designatum. Photography shares with other visual images many formal aspects which organise the picture field. The frame as a 'finding and focussing device' organises the picture surface into vertical and horizontal parallels, dividing the picture into upper and lower, left and right fields against which certain discrepancies, like diagonals, exercise 'meaningful' characteristics, and within which devices such as centring and so on are made possible. That such devices are coded is highlighted by the fact that they depend on notions of norm and variation whose validity differs between cultures. In our culture, for instance, the **square** or rectangular frame has become established as a norm for photographs and visual images in general, the square or upended rectangle the norm for portraits; these are norms shared with other non-photographic images. To the same level of codification belong a number of other variations within images -- thickness and thinness of lines, sharp focus and its lack, extent and depth of field, contrast of shapes etc. Here also belong variations in tone and colour whose use is read as meaningful in certain ways within our culture (dark, as Burgin has pointed out,<sup>35</sup> becomes overlaid with cultural, linguistically contaminated meanings of darkness; yellow is classically coded as a colour of



optimism, red as hot and passionate, blue as cold and pessimistic and so on). All other devices which seem to overlay certain meanings onto the field of vision -- distance, height, angle of viewpoint, perspective, lighting, relative size -- all share certain 'cultural values' with other visual signs.

What of organisations which are thought to be the result of particular photographic practices -- does this make them 'photographic codes'? For a start, there is little which the photographic image does not share with other visual signs in this respect. Even if at certain times other artists were stimulated by photographic practices (like, as Scharf points out,<sup>36</sup> Degas and other artists of his time) which were thought to be particular characteristics of the photograph -- unusual angles of vision, unusual clippings of the subject -- the fact that such 'characteristics' can be found in artistic practices uncontaminated by the photographic (in this case especially Chinese and Japanese images)<sup>37</sup> points out that these are aspects of a visual code which photographs exploited, but are not limited to the photographic. The case of the particular use of focus and blur is especially interesting in this respect.<sup>38</sup> Since it was realised that a subject in motion produces a blurred image on the photographic negative and the resulting print, the use of blur in the photographic image has been taken to mean an object in motion (in this sense blur can be read as part of the designative code), and since blur has been taken as equivalent to lack of focus, then the non-focussed image can be taken to show a figure in movement. Yet the use of non-focus need not necessarily



mean the same in all images (witness a number of 'impressionistic' paintings, and the idiosyncratic codification of blur in the photographs of Duane Michals),<sup>39</sup> nor is the use of blur necessary for the perception of motion in the image and the construction of the moving object. Although the initial stimulus for the alliance of blur with movement may have been photographic registration (and one might here cite the work of Francis Bacon, who has acknowledged a debt to Muybridge in some works, whereas the latter's repeated figures were all sharply focussed) are we then justified in calling a widely used codified reading a 'photographic' code? To say that because certain codifications were first used, in the West, by photography, or mainly exploited by photography, then such codes are to be referred to as purely 'photographic', would be to exercise a kind of codic determinism which is not applied to other arts. It would probably be more useful to conclude that purely photographic codes do not exist at either the 'isomorphic' or 'interpretative' level, but that the photographic text must be seen as the site of a particular interplay of visual codifications it shares with other visual signs, grounded in a particular materiality. As regards the so called 'expressive codes' (which deal with certain ramifications beyond the organisation of the image) they are really connotations derived from cultural (or rather 'cultural-aesthetic') readings of visual signs in general.

Furthermore, it seems that there are a number of different codifications involved in the reading of the visual sign, even beyond the isomorphic, the organisational, the expressive and so on. Any visual image, the

photograph included, is also read as a sign-object, and the objects themselves activate certain codifications within society, such that the objects in the text will be taken as operative in a way similar (if not identical) to those objects themselves. What distinguishes the photograph here is the ideology of identification which infects the reading of the image more strongly than with other visual signs, but as a result the photograph is distinguished more by the strength of the ideology within which it is read rather than the operation of the codes within the sign itself. This level of codification, which should really be termed 'object code' is particularly relevant to the photograph since the photograph is felt (mostly as a result of the intense application of the ideology of realism) to 'objectify' its content. This tendency is particularly exploited in advertising discourses (cf. the common use of sharply focussed images), where the objects are to be readily connected along a semantic chain derived from their cultural value systems (e.g. cigarettes -- expensive furnishings -- stylish fittings -- social gatherings -- affluence -- sociability -- relaxation -- 'chic' etc.) Like other images, photographic signs are conglomerates of codifications derived from other texts and readings. <sup>40</sup>

Regarding the photograph in this way will not, however, specify what is distinctive about the semiotic operation of the photographic text. Yet there are other aspects of this signification which have often been regarded as 'particular to' or 'particularly prevalent in' the photograph. One such area, where codification appears to enter into the photograph's particular structuration



of analogy, is the operation of metonymy. In the sense of 'substituting for the name of a thing the name of an attribute of it or of something closely related'<sup>41</sup> this kind of operation seems to belong to the level of the symbolic. In the sense that a photograph can imply the whole by the part signified (through the imaginative constitution of out-of-frame) it actually operates more by a process of synecdochē; even here, the exercise of implication is shared with any other visual image which is capable of exploiting the in/out of frame dichotomy. Claims concerning 'metonymic' operation, which are probably stimulated by the particular exploitation of certain angles of vision or the increased tendency to 'objectivise' in more 'realistic' portrayals, do not distinguish the capabilities of the photographic text, but the implication of extensions beyond the frame is an important notion in the analysis of visual narrative texts in which photography plays a dominant role (see below).

Other claims regarding 'characteristic' tendencies in the operation of the photographic text have been made by a number of commentators on the photographic image; one such concerns the photograph's particular relation to time. Again, such suggestions about the particular features of photographic signification tend to sink beneath the weight of the myth of 'transference of the real'; as a visual sign, it is hard to propose that the photograph signifies in ways which are denied to other images, but as a sign which operates under the weight of an ideology which actually denies the process of isomorphic transformation (especially in the sense propounded by Eco, above), the photograph lends itself to claims of



particularity, especially in relation to the temporal. In discussing the photograph's relation to the temporal, however, a distinction must be made initially between direct signification and implication. In that it represents an extraction from the temporal flow, a still image will always be temporally synecdochic. In this respect a photograph can not be said to be a temporal medium like film. As an extraction it will always imply (since it does not directly signify) its 'before' and 'after'. Even in cases where the depth of field can seem to contain a temporal progression within it, it will be still tied to a particular moment. For example, a shot of a road travelled or to be travelled (which type of shot Hamish Fulton in particular, and, to some extent, Richard Long, display a fondness for), although it might contain the temporal space of the 'before' or 'after' within it, will still be tied to a particular moment of vision, proffering a narrative only by implication. And even in the case of medieval images which contain within the one frame undifferentiated portions of time, what is implied only becomes signified by virtue of the repetition of the actant, which in fact differentiates the 'contaminated' spaces around the protagonist. As Hagen has said, 'a photo cannot provide a direct recreation of anything which changes in time',<sup>42</sup> and for this reason a single photograph can never narrate (as I have argued elsewhere).<sup>43</sup> Analytical problems attendant on the discussion of the photograph's relation to time arise from the fact that the photograph commonly operates within discourses which exploit the knowledge of the creation of the sign, and the resulting claims that the photograph 'contains'

the temporality of its creation are based on a kind of epistemological tautology: that a photograph 'creates' knowledge of a temporality which is already known.

A photograph, as an extraction from a temporal flow, is always limited to a particular moment, but there has also been disagreement on the temporal nature of this moment. For Berger (1982) 'all photos are of the past'<sup>44</sup>: they are necessarily delimited by knowledge of the past registration; for Lotman (1976) the photograph, like other arts employing depictive signs, knows only the present tense:<sup>45</sup> it represents something which is immediate. Barthes (1980) however, investing his faith in the photograph's power to authenticate the object, proposed that the the photograph represents an illogical conjunction of both the here and the then,<sup>46</sup> which Berger calls the abyss between the moment recorded and the moment of looking. It seems to me that the epistemological problem involved in the discrepancy between the moment of recording and the moment of reading represents a similar problem to utilising knowledge of sign production for an analysis of sign consumption, where the former is not necessarily vital in an analysis of the latter.<sup>47</sup> Whether the photograph can ever escape this awareness in its reading, i.e. whether the inability to divorce oneself from the knowledge of sign production necessarily affects the temporality (Barthes, following Husserl, terms the 'ça-a-été' the 'noema' of the photograph)<sup>48</sup> is possibly open to question, but it must be said that the temporality of the photographic image is also open to influence by the discourse in which it is embedded. In narrative texts it is likely that the photographs will be inscribed in the past of the



narrative discourse as a whole, though the present can be exploited (just as in verbal narratives pitched in the present). In this sense it might be truer to say that the photograph has a timelessness which epistemologically excludes the future (although this too can be seen as a kind of pregnancy it will have to be drawn out by the enveloping discourse). This leaning towards the present converted into past, and inability to project into the future is particularly relevant to photonarrative texts, and has led Cowley (1983), in his analysis of Hogarth's Marriage A-la-mode, to conclude that 'the rhythm of (Fig.2) life-like picture narratives...emphasises causes rather than effects',<sup>49</sup> by encouraging the viewer to adopt a meditative, retrospective approach.

Nevertheless, different photographic 'moments' display different lengths of extraction. One might contrast, for example, a night-time shot of a road containing the lengthy traces of vehicle lights, with a split-second photo-finish. What the former reveals, however, is that the photograph, ultimately, has the ability to transform temporality into space, and that there are different aspects to the discussion of photographic temporality. In this sense, the temporality of production is not necessarily the temporality of the signification, since the signification is more closely allied to the sign as read. No matter how long the exposure time the single photograph will be read as of a particular moment, incapable of the signification of temporal progression, which can only be achieved by repetition in the text: to follow one moment by another is to signify chronology, and the signification of chronology is fundamental to



the ability to narrate. This can be achieved by any number of images in succession; the problems of single image temporality are thus problems the photograph shares with other visual signs. Although the frequent clarity of the photographic image and the emphasis on realistic transference in the production of the photographic sign have infected the way the sign is analysed, they do not necessarily distinguish the way in which the photographic text operates per se.

### The sign as read

The point has been reiterated a number of times above that many discussions of photographic signification, and the arguments used within them, have suffered from an overemphasis on the method of production of the sign, to the detriment of discussing signification as a process of 'reading'. It is interesting in this respect to note that both Mukařovský and Barthes, who are among the foremost and most prolific writers on visual signification, moved towards an increased consideration of reader activity (or rather spectator activity) in their works. A general tendency to consider the 'reading' of the text ('consumption' being, in this case, possibly inappropriate as the term for an activity which involves the participation of the receiver in constructing the text) can also be seen in the number of recent works dealing with this aspect of signification. <sup>50</sup> Such works have thrown up a number of points of contention which must now be considered, with particular relevance to the analysis of the photograph, and especially the photographic narrative text.

The first point affects textual temporality. The reading of an image can be said to be a temporal act even if we might characterise the static visual sign as non-temporalised. The length of this reading is limited at one end by the minimum time required for construction of the object, and at the other by a maximum constrained by desire, interest, the semiotic compulsions of the work and even public behaviour.<sup>51</sup> Actually, it is a commonplace of art textbooks that the artist, in his/her construction of the image, attempts to persuade the viewer to read in a desired sequence, consider certain points at the expense of others and so on. If the act of viewing can, as temporal, be considered as sequential, then the reading of the visual sign can even be seen as linear, sharing, as a result, a number of points with verbal signs. For instance, as propositions, visual signs can be seen as emphatic in a way similar to sentences. Both types of signification show how the way in which the reader is 'pulled' into the emphatic role is independent of any initial vectoriality (the use of subordination and inversion in verbal constructions shows how the emphatic particles of the sentence, for example, are not tied to this strict left→right linearity). Thus in photographic images (particularly the classically constructed images in the photoroman) the main object can be emphasised by centring, lighting or other graphic highlights, and these graphic codifications seem to have their equivalents in verbal texts in sentence position, nominalisation, active v. passive constructions etc. These are a result of 'privileging' in the signification of both verbal and visual texts, and this is something which all the



graphic codes which work beyond the level of isomorphism appear capable of.<sup>52</sup> The use of graphic codes on this level organises the picture space in order to lead the eye along the privileged parameters in the image; they might more usefully be termed 'organisational codes'.

Such a conclusion denies firstly that the eye is 'free' before the static image, even though it is not tied to the projection time or the viewpoint of the mobile camera, and secondly that the visual sign can be fundamentally distinguished from the verbal by reason of a 'simultaneity' in its signification. Both these points are particularly important in the analysis of visual narrative texts. The conclusion also underlines the inadvisability of failing to take account of the reading as the point of the reader's true engagement with a text whose production might display different characteristics (e.g. instantaneous registration in the case of the photograph). If the isomorphic codes operate to construct a basic correspondence between the image and its object, the organisational codes work to organise and overlay the basic correspondence with emphases particularly relevant to the text as a whole; the same graphic details can, of course, be used for both. When the image is placed in series such emphases become parts of the wider textual structuration.<sup>53</sup>

To discuss the reading of the single image in temporal terms also underlines a further discrepancy in viewing the subject and viewing the object of the photograph; it has been pointed out by Gregory (1966) that when searching the eyes move in a series of small, rapid jerks ('saccades'), but when following they move



smoothly <sup>54</sup> -- it is possible, then, that following the graphic organisational code in the image involves a non-saccadic activity. However, even if the eye still jumps over the picture surface from one emphatic particle to the next (Barthes (1980) called a particle which attracts the 'punctum', although it was not for him a detail emphasised by graphic codification), the reading of the image is still a sequential activity. How, then, can it be possible to talk, as Chatman (1978b) <sup>55</sup> and many other commentators have done, of the immediate synthesis of visual communication, or the simultaneous presentation of visual signification? Although the visual sign can be distinguished from the verbal in the way it offers all aspects at once (this would not be true of serial images) there is no way that all details of the visual sign can be simultaneously assimilated. <sup>56</sup> Indeed, the image is already guaranteed the sequentiality of its reading even in the constraints of vectoriality which 'prioritises' certain areas (left, top) before others (right, bottom). Given the above, we would need to be aware, in analysing the reading of the image, of a process of meaning construction similar to what Mukařovský, in his analysis of written texts, has called 'semantic contexture' -- whereby the perception and/or creation of meaning is to be seen as a process of accumulation, during which each point in the construction is distinct from all those which precede and succeed it. <sup>57</sup>

If the reading of the image is formed by a selection of certain aspects at the expense of others, then it is the organisational codes which are crucial in attempting to guide that selection. The actual awareness

of the reader of such codes, and the possibility of such an awareness, is an interesting point in comparing the static photographic with other texts. Since the same graphic features can be seen to play a role in the isomorphic, the organisational, and what we might call the expressive codifications of the image, then the awareness of one is probably achieved at the expense of the other. Yet what the reader is aware of in reading the image is not the codification, but the result of his/her following it; concomitants of the isomorphic code, and of the others, have come to seem so 'natural' as to be masked.

In his discussion of the perception of the film image Burch (1973) argued that the viewer, while following the path laid out by the image, can be simultaneously aware of the content features and the compositional whole. He thus proposed that the differences between viewing the subject and viewing the object of the image are apparent in the viewing process. But, as Burch also points out in a footnote, this is not borne out by experience: 'the film-goer often tends to see filmed images very much as he sees life'<sup>58</sup>. The possibility of the viewer's awareness is something which will depend not only on the ideology of viewing, but on the opportunities offered within the text itself, and it is on this point that the still photographic can be distinguished from the animated photographic image of the film. Here, the temporality of the text is crucial; a remark like Heath's, that 'the ideological force of the photograph' is to ignore the scanning movement of the eyes, presenting 'a coherent image of vision'<sup>59</sup> can only successfully be applied to a medium in which the scanning is controlled within the



text, in this case (film) the viewing time allied to projection. With a still image, which is not contained in this way, more freedom in scanning is allowed across the picture surface, which, leading to an increased opportunity for contemplation of the organisation of the image, could work against the codifications of the image by unmasking them. But in a photographic narrative text which depends on the serialism of still images, the gaze will be drawn more towards the point of ellipsis and linear flow, in a way which would place limitations on viewing time, to the advantage of the smooth operation of the code.

If the image can be seen as a fragmented surface read sequentially (though the exact order is difficult to enforce) then it is possible that a certain dynamism results from the particular types of internal montage, which are similar to the types of montage operating between successive frames. Eisenstein, the most renowned advocate of the primacy of montage in the construction and analysis of visual arts, proposed that just such a notion could be applied to the construction of the sequentiality of the perception of the visual sign. Having noted that 'the motionless whole of a picture and its parts do not enter the perception simultaneously', he goes on: 'The art of plastic composition consists in leading the spectator's attention through the exact path and with the exact sequence prescribed by the author of the composition.'<sup>60</sup> Thus Eisenstein attempted to apply the concept of montage to relations within the frame as well as to relations between frames. However, there are a number of differences in juxtapositions within the image and juxtapositions



of images; to begin with, the juxtapositions within the frame are a result of graphic organisations, but the order of the reading cannot be enforced: even if seen as sequentially perceived they must be analysed as simultaneous in juxtaposition;<sup>61</sup> further, the juxtapositions within the frame (which could probably better be termed 'collage') allow possibilities of extreme contrast and variation, whereas the montage of images in series must retain some kind of coherence dictated by their position in an overall text; finally, the juxtaposition of aspects of the single image is really simply the juxtaposition of aesthetic objects, whereas that of successive images involves the whole field.

In fact, internal 'collage' is not concerned with the space outside the frame, whereas the out-of-field is crucial in the construction of the serial text fulfilling the basic conditions of narrativity outlined in Chapter 2. A single image, by concentrating organisation on the field contained within the frame, uses the lack of out-of-field to increase the homogeneity of the image. However, the single photographic image is not devoid of external references and extensions, and thus it presents a disequilibrium between what it contains and what it lacks, selects and projects, signifies and implies; it is always a point of tension in that it is whole and synecdochic at once. In narrative texts this tension is at once soothed and exploited, in that the out-of-frame as the point of lack is exploited by the succession, but the implications are contained and satisfied within the textual compulsion. Thus the still image in series contains a tension which the film, with the constant

possibility of flow into the point of lack, seems, possibly, to avoid. The image in series can be subject to different constraints and possibilities, overlaid by different temporal and spatial structures, and different organisational systems; it is to the image in series which we need to turn in order to carry out a fuller analysis of the photographic narrative text.

### The serial sign

Most of the theoretical work carried out in relation to visual narrative has concerned itself with film. Up to this point, the various traditional categories of distinction between verbal and visual signs, and the use of codes, have gone only a little way towards characterising the photographic narrative text. Since film itself constitutes the most widespread and widely analysed of photographic narrative texts, then a comparison of the still and the animated photographic series might throw light on the particularities of the texts we are dealing with. Indeed, film has already been 'distinguished' as a particularly efficacious visual narrative text, by a number of claims.

The film is primarily distinguished, as Gregory (1966) has noted, by two features: the persistence of vision and the phi phenomenon.<sup>62</sup> The first (which motivated a number of nineteenth-century 'pre-cinematic' experiments such as the phenakistiscope and zoetrope) depends on the eye's tendency to fuse a series of still pictures occupying a stable space before the viewer, into a whole -- it is in fact dependent upon an inability to distinguish



rapidly changing intensities. The second (which is related more to experiments in decomposition like those of Muybridge and other experimenters with serial texts) involves the tendency to establish a pattern of apparent movement between consecutive images not necessarily occupying the same space (but containing some parameters of identity (e.g. repeated figures)). As the main distinguishing features of 'cinematic effect' these are not too distant from features of other visual narrative texts; the question remains whether they are enough to distinguish still from animated photographic texts.

We may, perhaps, begin by noting that the persistence of vision which underlies film is itself the result of the projection of still images onto a unified space. It might be possible, then, that certain lanternists who achieved particularly rapid projection speeds created texts which approached the filmic; and this could also be true of other kinds of superimpositions onto unified space like, for example, the chronophotographs of Marey. Hayter (1965), for one, has suggested that any linear figuration like Marey's depends on the persistence of vision for a correct reading.<sup>63</sup> In fact, what really distinguishes the filmic is not the fact of but the rapidity of succession (an act which negates the receiver's freedom to constitute the interstice), allied to the phenomenon of replacement (a phenomenon it shares with other projected narratives). The phi phenomenon, which stimulates the neurological processes of 'retention' does not itself depend on replacement within the uniform space, but rather activates a process of toleration; as Gregory puts it, the image/retina system 'tolerates gaps to maintain



continuity'.<sup>64</sup> Even with a group of still images placed in sequence, such as p.3 (the opening sequence) of Going to Heaven, it is not difficult to see that the (Fig.30) reader's ability to postulate the movement of the arrow into the tree is not far removed from this process, which is common to visual narrative sequences. It was exactly this process, after all, which originally encouraged Richter's and Eggeling's experimental work with the scroll; scroll painting expresses a particular sensation -- 'the stimulus which the remembering eye receives by carrying its attention from one detail to another, indefinitely, so that a phase-sequence is built up'.<sup>65</sup> What really distinguishes film is again the speed of projection, which reduces the possibilities of caesura (or even annihilates them).

The film image is further distinguished, however, as being the product of a moving apparatus, the result of which lends a fluidity to the text. The film camera exploits its mobility of viewpoint -- a feature it is said to share with the eye but not with the still image. It has also been suggested (notably by Mukařovský (1978)<sup>66</sup> and Bonitzer (1977)) that this creates a particular kind of illusory space which leads to increased identification. In that the mobility of the camera eye as inscribed in the film image is thought to be a characteristic, the resultant types of shot have not uncommonly been referred to as aspects of a 'cinematic codification'. As Eidsveik (1978) puts it: 'We expect moving pictures to move. A film image is always dynamic, with figure and context in a continually changing relationship. The cameraman can dolly, zoom, pan, tilt, and change focus;

people can move within the composition. Within single shots, the whole image can shift in content, internal graphic composition, and meaning. The entire composition is alive, not just the people or animals within it.<sup>67</sup> This kind of dynamism does, on the surface, seem to be derived from resources particular to film, unlike in- and out-of-frame relations, the parameters of fixed viewpoint and so on, which do not.<sup>68</sup>

To say that such characteristics are 'filmic' however, would imply that their effects are limited to filmic narrative texts; yet it is possible that the resources which the film draws on produce effects which have their equivalents in visual texts constructed differently. Interesting, in this respect, is the 'pan' -- a term actually derived from 'panorama', which, as a visual text per se, predates it. A fixed panorama, as has been intimated above, depends first of all on the mobility of the eye which follows the established vectoriality. A film pan of a fixed scene seems, on face value, to involve a procedure similar to viewing a painted or photographic panorama (where it is not possible to view the whole image in one fixed gaze) -- it is differentiated in the filmic text by increased control of viewing and the fixed position of the image rectangle:<sup>69</sup> the control of vectoriality, of viewing time, and the delimitation of image space. In the fixed image series the equivalent of a pan involves the use of a series of images which fragment the unified space (although the interstices do not denote spatial ellipses), such a series resulting from the dissection of the panorama into constituent parts. This has the result of introducing framings into



the separate parts, with increased montage possibilities resulting from the introduction of an awareness of separated internal graphic organisations. Where, in film, movement across is inscribed by the camera in the image, in the series the movement across is equally enforced according to the vectorial compulsion.

We might be able to suggest that other aspects of the film image which result from mobile camera technique can be duplicated in the still photographic series. Such a comparison would at least highlight the proposed emphasis on regarding text as a resultant reading rather than a technique of composition. A 'tilt', for example, would appear to result from any progressive horizontal rotation relayed through the fragmented form of the series (something like this occurs in a number of works by Dibbets). (Fig.23) Similarly, the 'travelling' (or 'dolly') shot could be equalled by a series in which the viewpoint appears to move in relation to a fixed object (Ten Views of Brockmans Mount<sup>70</sup> is a particularly distended example, even without strong continuity), including the kind of 'zoom' as on p.93 of Going to Heaven, where the camera (Fig.30) appears to move forward towards the actants. Such examples show that the film image is not in fact distinguished by the camera's ability to change viewpoint, but the tendency of the image to display changes in viewpoint without hiatus; the still photographic series is distinguished mainly by its lack of temporal continuity and the resultant mobilisation of spatial ellipses between images. One could also find examples of gradual change of focus (lanternists, in particular, exploited such a device in 'dissolving' one view into another). Yet




none of these techniques, when seen from the point of view of image perception, are necessarily limited to the photographic or the filmic; they tend to distinguish between the general categories of still or animated image series.

At first view, then, it is possible to see certain results of the mobile camera matched by equivalents in the still series. But one aspect of filmic fluidity, namely that even with a fixed camera the objects can be portrayed in movement, constitutes a fundamental difference. The importance of mobilisation in the image can be seen on a basic level when one attempts to work out an equivalent for 'zoom' in the still series. Even in film images it is often difficult to distinguish a forward tracking shot and a zoom-in (and the reverse) except by the gradual flattening of dimensionality which results from the use of the zoom, contrasted to the tendency in forward tracking shots to make the objects appear to pass each other at different rates. With the still image series this kind of distinction is impossible, since non-mobilised images do not display a rate of change. In film, such changing form tends to imbue the objects with dynamic qualities; this is a dynamism not possible in the still image series, where fragmentation and especially increased 'contemplation' on the part of the viewer tend, as Peters (1981) suggests, to highlight the form as intermediary between the viewer and the object.<sup>71</sup> In film, where the viewing is under firm control, it is possible that the separate parts of the series do not become 'privileged instants' of the text, as they are in the still series.

Thus the film is not only distinguished by the mobility of the registering apparatus (which could be said to produce effects equalled by the still series) but also by the ability of the still camera to register objects in motion, which can be thus projected. The still image narrative, however, is incapable of actually showing objects in movement, (though it can imply them -- the arrow into the tree for example). It was on this point that Richter finally came to realise that film is the only way 'to express dynamic energies as kinetic motion'.<sup>72</sup>

To begin with, figures in motion give rise to what has been called the 'stereokinetic effect', whereby the two-dimensional figure 'acquires' a plasticity and solidity related to an increase in spatial depth;<sup>73</sup> by contrast the still image appears more flattened. A possible result of this is an increase in 'verisimilitude', but the effect is not limited to the filmic text; chinese shadows, which predate film by centuries, also achieve a similar three-dimensional plasticity resulting from non-fixed localisation in space. By contrast, the still image is not capable of this effect, nor, seemingly, can it exploit a related 'causality effect' equal to that possible when the object is portrayed in movement. This is not to say, however, that it does not even approach it; like the equivalents of various kinds of filmic 'shots', the still image series manages to distil the essence of movements in its own fragmented structure. Talking of 'causality effect' for instance, Michotte (1954) managed to show that far from being reliant on the portrayal of an object in motion, this effect is in fact dependent on the mere fact of succession and concomitant spatial relations.



Two successive images , allied with vectorial requirements can form the basis of an implied causality, subject to certain temporal controls (the two other main factors required in causality signification are rapidity of succession and common speed). Thus the difference in this respect between the filmic and the non-animated photographic series again lies in the temporal control of viewing, which can possibly be proposed as the point of differentiation between signification and implication.<sup>74</sup>

Although the latter is a major distinction, it again points to the most important area of difference as lying in the control of the viewing situation and the successive effacements which derive from the superimposition of projected images, along with the portrayal of moving objects. The major differences between the still photographic and the filmic series cannot thus be inferred from the analysis of camera movement or filmic 'effects'. As the major points of differentiation, these areas show too that the distinction between these texts is not based on 'cinematic' or 'photographic' codes, but rather on the differences between projected and non-projected images (for effacement and temporal control) and the use of animated and non-animated signs (for the signification of movement). Both film and photograph constitute the sites of coexistence of a number of features and codifications to achieve their respective effects; film is only distinguished among the variety of visual narrative systems, as a particular combination of significations. While the film as a sum of its codes has unmistakable power, this results from a surrender in the viewing to increased control. Film, as any typology



of photographic narrative systems would show, is a particular sum of uses in combination. It illustrates Eikhenbaum's premise that 'the specificity of art is expressed not in the elements that go to make up a work, but in the special way they are used'.<sup>75</sup>

### The interstice

Given the above, we would expect the still photonarrative to share with film (animated photonarrative) a number of features. Although it would be misguided to evaluate film as the supreme combination, we must, from a theoretical point of view, approach the analysis of the still photonarrative through an awareness of film analysis, film being the most widely analysed photonarrative form up to now. This theoretical dependence will become particularly apparent as we go on to pay special attention to the image in series.

When a single image is placed in a successive series various aspects of the organisation of the picture become meaningful in a greater context -- that of the narrative compulsion. Although each individual image makes use of a kind of 'synecdochic' relation in terms of what is expressed in the image and what is implied, temporally in terms of what precedes and succeeds, spatially in terms of what lies immediately out of frame, the serialised image becomes prey to a method of 'containment' for the implications, which results from the specificities of the succession and the concomitant relations between successive images. These relations, which define and construct the diegesis, are constructed across the inter-

stice which divides them.

It was noted in Chapter 2 that a narrative transformation as signified by a series of two or more images depends on the simultaneous establishment of differentiation and resemblance. Such criteria (which would ultimately form the basis of the successful constitution of a visual narrative; see below) relate fundamentally to the construction of the text, and are established across the interstice, which is at once the point across which the relations of continuity are established and also the point of fragmentation at which relations of discontinuity are constituted. In a non-projected photonarrative, where the text unveils without re-masking, these fundamental textual capacities can remain apparent, even as points of tension. The itinerary of the text, which will always be guided by textual presences and absences, will ultimately depend on the text's capacity to differentiate and cohere.

As the point where the relationship between one shot and the next is established, this interstice as it manifests itself in the projected narrative of film has traditionally been analysed in terms of montage. Bergala (c1978) maintains in his analysis of non-projected narrative that montage is itself based on the principles of identity and opposition.<sup>76</sup> Eisenstein, who was committed to the importance of montage as representing the site of juxtapositions (describing the shot itself, with its own internal conflicts, as a 'montage cell') tended to an 'oppositional' theory, whereby the montage cell could be placed in a relation of opposition metrically, rhythmically, tonally, overtonally to the shot which

followed it.<sup>77</sup> But to see montage as a term covering the connection between one shot and the next as units is to see it already at a level beyond the narrative denotative. For an analysis of the relations already established in the text montage is useful, but the text is actually constructed of oppositions and cohesions established by a series of shots divided one from the other by a cut. The 'cut' is a preferable concept at this level because it emphasises the activity of differentiation which provides the textual lacunae, whereas 'montage', as Aumont says, is 'l'activité syntagmatique réglant l'économie de tout discours'.<sup>78</sup>

It might be possible, given certain points in common, that the cuts established in non-projected, non-animated visual narratives can be analysed in the same way as those in film have been. Yet there are fundamental differences between projected and non-projected photo-narrative texts which affect the operation of differentiation, and particularly its perception. In film the text's hiatus, the interstice, is manifested through the replacement of one image with the next -- it is perceived by means of the 'jump' in the text, and results in the viewer's establishing that the image has already changed; the viewer's establishment of degree and type of differentiation and cohesion is made retrospectively. In the non-projected text, however, the hiatus is visually constituted by a space in the text -- it becomes a constituent feature of the text itself, a presence, not simply an absence; the viewer's establishment of degree and type of differentiation and cohesion is made comparatively. Thus the non-projected text actually exhibits



its own lacunae whereas the film attempts to mask them. The reader of the non-projected photonarrative probably does not experience the satisfaction of the desire for the out-of-field becoming field which is further enabled by the mobility in the film image, and which mollifies by the concealment of what has gone before. In this sense the idea of interstitial discontinuity will have a different meaning in film, where the 'juxtapositions' are non-simultaneous (Eisenstein, on the other hand, has argued, I think erroneously, that there is a simultaneity which results from superimposition). This possibly explains, in part, why classic rules for discontinuity (i.e. editing) in film require a greater minimum differentiation threshold to avoid spectatorial unease (a satisfying differentiation is said to require, for example, a minimum 30° change in camera angle). In non-projected photonarratives, where the interstice has to compensate for the lack of mobility in the image, as well as provide for a repertoire of wider cuts between images, the minimum differentiation threshold can be much smaller, even minuscule, since the fact of differentiation is always apparent.

It is interesting to note, in this respect, that it is only when the relentless pull of mobility and replacement in the film is slowed down, i.e. in a long shot, where the projection of a single shot allows a viewing duration approaching that of the more contemplative conditions attendant on non-projected texts, that the way the shot cuts to the next becomes more important, because more notable.<sup>80</sup> Yet there are other points where the method of cutting is made apparent in the film. These methods of signalling the point of

differentiation at the point of replacement are specific to projected texts, although they are not, as has been suggested, specific to the filmic. Such manifestations fall generally into the categories fade, dissolve, wipe, iris etc., but if one were to trace them back to the magic lantern (on which early film technique possibly drew directly in this respect) they can be seen as variations on 'dissolving'.<sup>81</sup> Prissette (1968), in his manual for slide-show construction, gives this kind of manifested hiatus and its result the name 'transitions heureuses',<sup>82</sup> and, certainly, they are to be distinguished from more brutal transitions implied in the term 'cut', distinguished, especially, from the 'clean cut' itself. They are best subsumed under the category of 'manifestations of gradual replacement' between one shot and the next -- except, possibly, for progress to white/black, where the actual interstice is manifested. All such types of transition, as well as instantaneous replacement, were used by lanternists, the difference being that they were achieved in the act of projecting, as opposed to the act of film editing (sometimes, in fact, called 'editing in the camera').

As film developed, of course, further differences arose between animated and non-animated projected forms. The use of manifested shot transitions in particular came to be much more sparing in film. Although this could also be said of some lantern shows which used a majority of clean cuts, the manifested transition never came to be significantly distinguished in the way it did in film,<sup>83</sup> although it is possible that certain types of manifested transition were used to differentiate larger and smaller

narrative syntactic units in both types of text. This is possible because projected narratives are able to codify their repertoire of cut manifestations to signify transitions of different types between larger textual units, whereas such differentiation through manifested transitions is denied to the non-projected photonarrative, tied, as it is, to the standard interstice. This difference is particularly apparent with regard to the transition between different diegetic levels. e.g. the dream, or imagined sequence. In the projected narrative operating by classic codification the transition can be signalled by blur, sometimes with oscillation, in the signified transition; in the non-projected photographic text such a shift will require that the whole passage is 'contained' within the signified differentiation: by the use of a series out of focus, with blurred frame, or incorporating the sequence inside the imaginative context. The latter technique, which is common in Bamforth postcard and lantern slide sequences, shows how the transitional shift is replaced, in static sequences, by the need for constant 'contextualisation';<sup>84</sup> it also points to the fact that the static series relies more on a 'continuous' rather than 'retrospective' reading.

At this point the analysis of photonarrative sequences working towards a typology of interstices encounters a problem similar to that involved in the discussion of narrative units in Chapter 2. In film, shots are generally divided by immediate replacement resulting from the cut, and static photonarratives also generally utilise identical interstices; but the film narrative is also divided into shot-units which in static



photonarratives are sometimes contained within sequences of images separated by an identical interstice, and furthermore, given the absence in such narratives of a coded repertoire of manifested transitions, the photonarrative employs the same interstices to divide larger 'contained' units of the narrative. This might indicate that the analysis of interstice types in the photonarrative needs to be more extensive, and varied, than the analysis of shot articulations in film, but, given that shots are commonly divided by immediate on-screen replacement, and that the articulation between images, as well as shots, is something undertaken with reference to individual image content, it would be useful to approach the problem from a point of view of 'image relation' similar to the notion of 'shot relation' in the analysis of film articulations.

### Differentiation

Given that the same cut or interstice can be the point of different articulations between consecutive images, we must begin by emphasising the similarity (for analytical purposes) between the image and the shot. In film a shot is defined as the product of 'each uninterrupted inscription of an image on the film by the camera'<sup>85</sup> which the viewer perceives as 'an uninterrupted segment of screen time, space, or graphic configurations'.<sup>86</sup> Thus the cut or the interstice between shots or between images can be seen as the point which differentiates according to temporal, spatial or graphic criteria. Since differentiation is a basic requirement for the establishment

of a transformational matrix between two images, which underlies the capacity of the text to narrate (see Chapter 2), the capacity of any visual sequence to differentiate between consecutive images constitutes a fundamental characteristic of the static visual narrative text.

Accepting for the moment Bordwell and Thompson's proposal that the image differentiation operates according to temporal, spatial and graphic criteria, but bearing in mind that graphic criteria at the level of text analysis must be seen not as units of content, but general constitutive factors in the image, we might be justified in following Burch's (1973) division of shot articulations into the temporal and the spatial.<sup>87</sup> In the latter, however, the term 'articulation' includes aspects of the cut which provide both continuity and ellipsis, yet a cut is not always elliptical. While the actual meaning of the elliptical conjunction will be analysed in terms of the discourse (see next chapter), on the level of text it will be analysed as a type of differentiation, and while the meaning of the ellipsis involves the relation of discourse and story, the cut can only be seen on this level as the manifestation (or not) of ellipsis in the text.

The visual narrative text might, then, be analysed firstly according to the types of cut it discloses. The film is able to make use of both manifested and non-manifested cuts (see the discussion of dissolves etc. above); the magic lantern narrative tends to make use of manifested (although largely non-codified) cuts -- even cuts resulting in total replacement are more 'revealed' as transitions than in film; most types of non-projected visual narrative

make use of the manifested cut (interstice), except certain medieval narrative images with no visual caesurae, or images placed together with no spatial interstice (e.g. Fulton's Grim's Ditch, where there is a temptation to (Fig.13) view the images as composite parts).<sup>88</sup>

However the cuts themselves are presented, they can now be analysed according to the way the differentiation between two consecutive images is invoked. It was said above that the interstice can represent the point of elliptical differentiation, but it need not. At the other end of the scale is the possibility of presenting two successive images which are undifferentiated in some way, and between these two extremes the interstice can constitute the site of a differentiation which is not complete. Thus any visual text which narrates must be capable of articulating image differentiations in any of four ways:

- i) undifferentiated
- ii) partially differentiated
- iii) contiguously differentiated
- iv) elliptically differentiated

and these four parameters can be applied to the relevant criteria of differentiation in the image.

Of the criteria of narrative cohesion suggested by Bordwell and Thompson (which must of necessity be directly, if inversely, related to the criteria of differentiation) the most recognisable in the context of static image narratives is the spatial. We are dealing, after all, with a text which converts even temporality into spatial terms. At first sight the spatial aspect seems to involve the whole context of the narrative or scene



of the narrative as presented in the image. Let us take for example three non-projected non-animated texts: Grim's Ditch (a pair of images by Fulton), (Fig.13) Le Curé et le majeur (a stereoscopic series of six images) (Fig.4) and Going to Heaven (an extensive photonarrative). The (Fig.30) two images of Grim's Ditch are spatially undifferentiated (the scenes are identical). In Le Curé et le majeur the first two images are spatially undifferentiated, the third and fourth partially differentiated (various parts, but not all, of the previous scene are contained within the images), and there is a change of viewpoint between images 4 and 5 to a view of the same site from reverse angle: this will entail contiguous differentiation, since the space is felt to be 'adjacent' to that already presented; images 5 and 6 are again spatially undifferentiated. Contiguous differentiation, then, extends in frame to out of frame but also includes what is felt to be in front of the scene and behind it. Page 5 of Going to Heaven represents four images in partial spatial differentiation, since contiguous differentiation is provided only by some kind of complete adjacent space; in this case, parts of the same scene are again repeated (therefore the scene cannot be totally differentiated) and the viewpoints are not identical (therefore the scene must be differentiated in some way). The latter example shows that partial differentiation can be additive (in which case extra space is introduced) or subtractive (in which case fewer parts of the space are included). Elliptical spatial differentiation is shown by a complete change of scene, as that between pp.31 and 33 of Going to Heaven -- it is a feature of this text that

the 'claustrophobic' atmosphere of the narrative is heightened by the extensive use of either partial or contiguous spatial differentiation, whereby the images seem to 'grow' from the space of those preceding.<sup>89</sup>

So far, we have used the schemata representing the narrative situation in order to itemise the types of spatial differentiation which can be achieved in the static visual narrative text. In fact, we have been dealing mainly with the narrative background to the statically represented 'action'. In many cases where the spatial schemata can be analysed as undifferentiated, other factors of differentiation come into play. It is not the case, for instance, that narrative actants or objects not tied to the background are fixed to the spatial differentiations which the text achieves. For this reason we would need to introduce an 'object' criterion into our analysis, for two successive images are capable of showing object (animate or inanimate) mobility in a fixed space. This is the case between images 1 and 2 of Le Curé et le majeur, (Fig.4) where attention is focussed on the differentiated objects (actants) at the expense of the undifferentiated scene; object differentiation continues throughout this series. In Going to Heaven p.63 the foreground object is (Fig.30) undifferentiated, but other objects (actants, since animate) are partially differentiated. Of our four categories, the one which will give most trouble in this context is contiguous differentiation, since the notion of 'object contiguity' is difficult to imagine. It might, however, apply to the images on p.69 of Going to Heaven, where between the first and second images an object (the body) is brought into view which we know to be adjacent to



the other objects presented in the photograph; the horse, on the other hand, is partially differentiated, since the schemata used to represent it change, but result in representing some aspect which has already been represented in previous images. The term 'object' can, in this context, be applied to any criteria which, for textual purposes, are thought (or proved) to be not directly tied to the setting. The extensive use of partial object differentiation is also a feature of the textual construction of Going to Heaven.

As regards criteria of temporal differentiation the situation is more complex. To begin with we are dealing in static photonarrative with the transference of the temporal into the spatial, and will have to rely on spatial and object criteria to establish the temporality of the text. In this sense it might be more exact to regard narrative temporality in the static text as an aspect of the discourse; we might here also consider the discussion above concerning distinguishing temporal features in the photograph, which concludes that temporality<sup>90</sup> is non-existent, or at best non-exact in a non-animated text. Furthermore, any differentiation between two images will tend to be taken as temporally ellipted, such ellipsis being normally established with regard to either spatial or object differentiation. However, there is a similar variety in the temporal differentiation as constructed by the text, such that a similar analysis might be pursued. If, for example, images 4 and 5 of Le Curé et le majeur (Fig.4) were to show the same narrative point from two different viewpoints, then the relation of differentiation could be said to be spatially contiguously differentiated but



temporally undifferentiated. Any two consecutive images which are seen to repeat a part of the temporality of one image in the next could be said to be temporally partially differentiated; such differentiation could be the case between the second, third and fourth images on p.13 of Going to Heaven where there could be a kind (Fig.30) of temporal 'containment' at work, the portrayed thought process having been fragmented into three images, each possibly repeating a temporal portion of the preceding image, while extending it. (It is to be noted here, how such a discussion is more in line with the discussion of temporality in the discourse, below.) However, both partial and non-differentiation are difficult to postulate in static visual texts where the narrativity depends on one image succeeding another. As in film, the establishment of temporal simultaneity (non-differentiation, or identity) will depend either on external markers (accompanying text), or will be attempted by the alternation of images, which has the result of intercalating two simultaneous successions. On the other hand, and related to this point, non-elliptical temporal differentiation is difficult to conceive in narratives which require a temporal compulsion through selected successive moments. Contiguous temporal differentiation, where the second image is felt to represent a temporally adjacent moment, can be seen in static texts (bearing in mind their fluid, or non-exact durational quality) only as a kind of minimal ellipsis, but it still depends on our reading of the degree of object and spatial differentiation. It is rare that a non-elliptical temporal gap can be imagined. The first four images of Going to Heaven show how even if

adjacent the images are temporally elliptically differentiated (an ellipsis which is represented by the time taken for the arrow to move between one image and the next). At the other end of this scale, the two images of Fulton's Grims Ditch have been said to be spatially (Fig.13) undifferentiated but are temporally elliptically differentiated, since the latter would represent the only explanation of how the change between the images could have taken place. In this sense, temporality will always be seen as a conceived explanation of image relation.

The latter example, however, points to a lack in our criteria of differentiation. Since the images are spatially non-differentiated, and contain no relevant objects, then how can any reading of change take place? As was noted above, the spatial is limited to the narrative scene (in some cases simply the background) contained in the image. We would therefore have to consider another category of differentiation which deals with change in schemata but retains identity or cohesion. Here, we return to Bordwell and Thompson's third aspect -- the graphic.

In the operation of a static photonarrative text graphic criteria are rarely taken independently of the schemata. Examining graphic differentiations will thus be largely equivalent to examining spatial or object criteria. However, it is possible that the graphic, in the sense of the construction of aspects of image organisation, can increase the differentiation, or lack of it, between two successive images. In the Fulton pair Langa Western Iceland / Churchill River Northern Manitoba (Fig.15) for instance, the two images are spatially elliptically (and widely) differentiated, but the images betray enough

graphic non-differentiation (similarity) to encourage a spatially non-differentiated reading. Such a reading, however, exists only at the level of temptation, and the two do not constitute a narrative pair. This shows how the graphic (here organisational) criteria are optional to the parameters of differentiation, and can either work for or against the necessary identification, but are not capable of signalling complete identity or its denial. On the other hand, the differentiation in Grims Ditch, which is neither spatial nor objectual, (Fig.13) can be decoded as temporal, but if we were to follow the argument that temporality is to be regarded as an aspect of the discourse since it constitutes a construction by the text on a separate epistemological level, then the differentiation must be explained by the incorporation of graphic (here schematic) criteria. Thus, on a more fundamental level, the differentiation can be achieved by graphic shift alone, where there is a strong recourse to identity, and in particular a non-differentiation of factors of similitude. This might seem unusual, but it explains the gradual differentiations in a number of scenes which change temporally or seasonally (especially the many effects of the diorama). Such changes, while achieved by graphic criteria, can only be explained by seasonal or other temporal change.

Whether temporal, schematic and organisational criteria are to be regarded as additional to the basic spatial and object criteria or equally fundamental, we are still left with a core of types of differentiation achieved by the text, which applies to all. It is the fact of differentiation, after all, which underlies the



operation of narrativity in the static visual serial text.

### Cohesion

Is the achievement of differentiation enough to characterise the construction of a text's narrativity? Despite the reader's tendency to tolerate the widest of differentiations, a successful narrative text also needs to build up a core of narrative textual cohesion. We return, here, to Tzvetan Todorov's proposal that 'Le récit se constitue dans la tension de deux catégories formelles, la différence et la ressemblance.'<sup>91</sup>

In the first place, the cohesion of a visual narrative text is maintained by the control of differentiation. In classic film editing, the differentiations are controlled in order to counteract the potentially disunifying force of the cut -- rules to this end are channelled towards the avoidance of too much, or too great an, elliptical differentiation (e.g. the 180° rule, the establishment of contiguity, the repetition of direction of contiguity, eyeline match etc.) and indeed the first three categories of differentiation themselves provide for a basic degree of cohesion. In non-animated, non-projected narrative, however, greater degrees of ellipsis are tolerated, as long as some identity is maintained. Even in visual series which are formed according to spatial (and temporal) ellipses, for example Hogarth's Marriage A-la-mode, connections are maintained despite the discontinuities manifested by textual ellipsis. Often this will be achieved by the

(Fig.2)

device of repetition, a repetition which must be relevant in terms of the narrative as a whole. The non-elliptical (i.e. non-total) differentiation of objects here becomes the guarantor of cohesion, either allied to spatial cohesion (as in the first four images of Going to Heaven, where the arrow establishes cohesion against a non-elliptically differentiated space) or divorced from it (as in the interstice between pp.31 and 33 Of Going to Heaven, where the objects guarantee narrative cohesion against an elliptically differentiated space). (Fig.30)

On the surface narrative textual cohesion can be regarded as the inverse of differentiation, but it stems ultimately from devices of repetition. This repetition can be retained over a narrative context wider than two adjacent images, and thus operates according to acceptable levels of attention span and memory retention. As a minimal factor of cohesion, repetition in the text can differ in degree -- in a Muybridge text the differentiations (Figs.26, 27) are small and the cohesion extensive; in a Fulton text such as Mud Lake Banff Park Alberta the cohesive factor (Fig.17) is minimal (the protruding object suggests identity, in this case allied to general spatial factors) but enough cohesion to constitute identity is established. This indicates that the isomorphic constituents used to establish object cohesion (non-differentiation) must establish more than a similarity; they must function according to a model of similitude which results in a construction of the same object.

Again, the identification of objects and/or spaces will be the focal point of textual strategies of cohesion, as well as differentiation, and again there

are other features of the text which can either support or work against these strategies. This leads us again to a consideration of the graphic. In classic film cohesion, graphic similarities are often required in order to disallow the disjunctive tendencies of the cut. A shot in one ground or tone will not, then, be followed by a shot in a markedly dissimilar ground or tone. Such features, which can contribute to the establishment of a homogeneity, are not actually vital for narrative cohesion, which is concerned more with identity. The same applies to other graphic 'organisational' factors: actions involving one character, for instance, can be signified in bright or dull conditions, in close-up or at a distance, but the similitude of the isomorphism must not be affected. For this reason, the repeated necessary minimum identificational schemata act as features of a kind of textual deixis similar to deictic categories in the verbal text.

Cohesion can also be supported by narrative cataphora -- in which the homogeneity of the narrative is enhanced by preparation, or contributions to the narrative flow. The latter is particularly the result of privileged vectors in the image in series: the portrayal of gestures, acts of hearing, looks, signifiers of movement direction and so on. Yet while these vectors provide for narrative expectation (and contribute to the work of the deixis) they are not vital to the formation of cohesion in the sense that non-differentiated objects and/or spaces are. A gesture, or look towards the 'off-screen' need not necessarily be followed by an image which makes meaningful cohesive sense, which depends on the construction of relevant non-differentiated objects.



The factors which contribute to the identification of relevant objects and spaces, while they are established individually in each image, must also take account of the narrative succession. For this reason, certain features of the schematic construction which enhance the identification can add to this identification, but are not vital to it. Such criteria as sharp focus, centring, or other privileging features of the individual image can be almost at variance in the series, without subtracting to any significant extent from the cohesive factors. For instance, an object which is privileged, because highlighted, in the single image can be visually subordinate in successive images, but it will still be privileged in terms of the narrative signification. Although the alliance of object as privileged within the image and object as privileged within the narrative succession (for example the repeated highlighting of the main protagonist (relevant narrative object) in centre focus -- a feature of the classic 'filmic' signification of the photogram) will greatly increase the homogeneity, it is the simple establishment of identity through the repeated isomorphic parameters which guarantees the continuity.

The analysis of types of cohesion within the static visual narrative text, then, will be more detailed than the simple typology of differentiations. This reflects the importance of a text's capacity to signal cohesion in guaranteeing the narrative continuity. Although the strategies of narrative cohesion share a number of criteria with the features of differentiation, they include a greater number of optional techniques. The most important types of cohesion (to which we are limited in the present

work) can be summarised as follows:

- i) spatial cohesion
- ii) object cohesion
- iii) graphic cohesion
- iv) animate vectors
- v) inanimate vectors

to which we might add (bearing in mind the reservations expressed in reference to the establishment of temporal differentiations) temporal cohesion. Of these, the first two are primary factors in the establishment of narrative continuity, and the last three are optional additional features (graphic cohesion divided into subcategories of features which pertain to the organisation of the image as a whole, and features relating to the presentation of the object itself). Classic film seems to rely more on the final three categories in that the forward compulsion of the animated text allows for a more sophisticated use of cataphora. 'Animate vectors' will involve the portrayal of movements, entrances, exits, looks, hearing, gestures to 'off-screen' and so on; 'inanimate vectors' involve the use of doorways, mirrors, masked and unmasked spaces etc. which relate back more to spatial cohesions in that they concern the establishment of a cohesive 'ground' for the narrative. Any visual serial text which can mobilise the features of differentiation and cohesion outlined above between successive images will then be capable of narration. These represent the textual basis for the establishment of narrativity.

### Conclusion

We have finally reached a point where the minimal conditions of narrative can be established in any visual text which displays particular capabilities. Such textual features concern the text's capacity for expounding the underlying transformational matrix according to the establishment of differentiation, difference or dissimilarity, while at the same time providing relevant cohesion. A complete consideration of the photonarrative text will, as has been shown in the present chapter, firstly attempt to characterise the sign used, and the general nature of signification as being based, in the first instance, on a semiotic transformation between an image and its aesthetic object. For present purposes, the importance of the reader in constructing the narrative work indicates that the transformation can best be characterised as that by which the object is constructed according to the reader's engagement with the textual strategies of isomorphism. As a particular sign, the photographic can be seen to be related in general terms to a number of types of signification, most importantly the visual. Visual signs themselves can most readily be distinguished from the verbal; and among visual signs the most relevant categories seem to divide projected from non-projected, and animated from non-animated texts. As a non-projected, non-animated text, the photonarrative is constructed of signs which constitute the site of a particular confluence of visual codes, although it is doubtful whether any of them can be usefully termed 'photographic'. Certain other features involved in the sign-as-read need to be taken into account, namely vectoriality, non-simultaneity and the operation of semantic contexture. We need to



be aware, in addition to the above, of the particular features of signs when placed in series, and here the most important area of concern, particularly in narrative texts, will be the interstitial 'gap' between successive photographs. This interstice represents the point of relations established in the text, and if such relations enable the successful construction of textual differentiation and cohesion, then the text can be defined as a narrative text.

Beyond this, which is the basic level of the narrative text's construction, there is the layer in the work which reveals the fictional events of the narrative 'de façon à en dire quelque chose' as Bergala would have it,<sup>92</sup> where the diegetic whole as constructed by the text can be seen as a fictional universe which is 'formed' according to certain parameters: the relations of reader, author, narratee, and their respective stances, the relation of the diegesis and the story it presents. This, the level of discourse, will be the subject of the next chapter.

Notes3. Text

1. Fowler op.cit., p.45.
2. In particular the way Chatman confuses the various differences between film and written story in terms of technical properties, semiotic conventions, narrative traditions, genres, personal and idiosyncratic styles and techniques, individual reader expectations and assumptions.
3. Calabrese op.cit., p.14. Here Calabrese is in fact referring to the establishment of a semiotic theory of pictorial texts which describes painting as a productive work.
4. See Eco 1976, p.57: 'Metz has advanced the hypothesis that in every case of communication...we are not dealing with a message but with a text.'
5. Eco 1976, p.7. Lotman (1975a) disputes this, however, arguing that we can only talk of visual 'texts' not 'signs', since the iconic text cannot be successfully divided into discrete units.
6. See especially Barthes 1967 orig.pub.1964.
7. See Jakobson 1970, p.573. Equally 'signans' and 'signatum'. A code is correspondingly defined as an agreed one to one transformation.
8. See Saussure 1974 orig.pub.1916.
9. Peirce 1932 vol.2, p.141.
10. See Eco 1976, pp.7,58.
11. Lotman 1975a, p.334.
12. See Arnheim 1980.
13. Metz op.cit., pp.34-35.
14. Peters op.cit., pp.60-61.

15. See Peirce 1932 vol.2, pp.143-149.
16. Ibid., p.143. It is important to note, here, that this is Peirce's second trichotomy. The first (op.cit., p.142) which distinguishes 'qualisign', 'sinsign' and 'legisign' might have more relevance to the distinction between visual and verbal in that the photograph which signifies, singularly, as 'an actual existant' could be classified as a 'sinsign', while the verbal, which represents via a language system, would be a 'legisign'.
17. Ibid., p.143.
18. Ibid., p.144.
19. Burks op.cit., p.675. Peirce's definition of 'icon' implies both that its object is a general quality, and it is a particular thing or group of things.
20. Eco op.cit., pp.195-200. Following the argument based on 'similitude' allows us to 'assert that [iconic signs] are culturally coded without saying they are totally arbitrary'.
21. Thus material properties which might 'attach' to the photograph can be read as culturally, not photographically, coded.
22. On this point see especially Gregory 1966.
23. Eco is not the only commentator to make this point; it is vigorously stated in Gregory and has been reiterated in many works of film and photography theory.
24. See Eco 1976, p.196.
25. Ibid., p.200.
26. In relation to both the camera apparatus and the various parameters of the image.
27. Bergala op.cit., p.12.
28. Burch op.cit. orig.pub.1969, pp.53-56.
29. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961.



30. If by 'analogon' Barthes is in some sense indicating that the image and the object are perfectly analogous. I would maintain that although the operation of isomorphism allows for an 'analogous' relation, it can by no means be said to be perfect. Nevertheless, in isolating this level of isomorphic operation Barthes is making a valid distinction, although I would not agree that this operation is uncoded.

31. Barthes op.cit., p.20.

32. Eco 1976, p.200.

33. Ibid., p.200: 'The continuous line tracing the profile of a horse may be considered the constitution of a relation of similitude by a transformed correspondence... The image is motivated by the abstract representation of a horse, but it is nevertheless the effect of a cultural decision...'

34. Especially in relation to the ideology of cultural value.

35. See Burgin 1977b, p.18.

36. Scharf 1968, p.190.

37. See also, regarding pre-photographic Western art, medieval perspective and Dutch interiors.

38. Burgin (1977b, p.18) regards these as codes 'peculiar to photography' at least in the first analysis.

39. Especially in The Journey of the Spirit after Death which itemises certain codifications relating to lack of focus and overexposure (Michals 1976, pp.50-51).

40. See, in relation to referent systems, Williamson 1978 part 2, and in particular the analysis of the cigarette advertisement on pp.150-151.

41. OED vol.11, p.398.

42. Hagen 1980, p.6.

43. Halliwell 1981.

44. Berger and Mohr 1982, p.86.

45. Lotman 1976 orig.pub.1973, p.10.
46. Berger's terms. In Barthes (1980) the photograph represents a conjunction of 'la réalité' and 'le passé', a signification which says 'ça a été'.
47. And this point is inextricably linked to arguments in Aesthetics concerning intentionality, on which point see Mukařovský 1978, pp.89-128 'On Intentionality and Unintentionality in Art'.
48. Barthes 1980, p.121.
49. Cowley op.cit., p.2.
50. See in particular Eco 1979, Iser 1971, 1978a&b and Ruthrof 1981.
51. See Chapter 5.
52. In the sense that all are capable of contributing towards it.
53. Although, in this case, privileged aspects of the single image and the serialised image are not necessarily the same (see Chapter 4).
54. Gregory op.cit., p.56.
55. See Chatman op.cit., p.106.
56. Simultaneous assimilation would constitute another argument, which emphasises preliminary sign production at the expense of the reading process.
57. See in particular Mukařovský 1977, pp.1-64 'On Poetic Language' and pp.70-81 'The Concept of the Whole in the Theory of Art'. See also Veltruský 1976 and Perry 1979.
58. Burch op.cit. orig.pub.1969, pp.34, 35 and 47 note 2.
59. Heath 1976, p.78.
60. Eisenstein 1968a orig.pub.1943, p.148.

61. Unless the perceptive sequence can be shown to be inevitable, immutable.
62. Gregory op.cit., p.111.
63. Hayter op.cit., p.76.
64. Gregory 1966, p.113.
65. Richter 1965, p.146.
66. Mukařovský op.cit., pp.178-190 'A Note on the Aesthetics of Film'.
67. Eidsveik op.cit., p.49.
68. Bearing in mind that a fixed film camera viewpoint can still register images in movement.
69. Similar effects were produced by moving panoramas, however.
70. Fulton 1973.
71. See Peters op.cit., p.17.
72. Richter 1965, p.144.
73. As Peters (1981, p.18) notes, certain formal qualities of moving pictures always attach themselves to the objects depicted.
74. Allied, of course, to the use of the visual (and temporal) interstice (see below).
75. Quoted in Silverstone 1981, p.83.
76. Bergala op.cit., p.40.
77. See in particular Eisenstein 1949, pp.72-83 'Methods of Montage', and Eisenstein 1968b.
78. Aumont 1969, p.46.



79. See Eisenstein 1968a orig.pub.1943, p.14.

80. As noted by Burch 1973 orig.pub.1969, p.89 note 3.

81. Said to have been introduced in the 1830s but possibly in use before that (see Chapter 1 note 45).

82. Prissette op.cit., p.230. Prissette recommends such 'non-brutal' transitions as vital for a kind of signifying anaesthetic: 'Il faut exiger du spectateur un minimum d'effort, lui éviter toute possibilité d'évasion personnelle, en un mot, le mener par la main, comme un enfant, sans qu'il s'en aperçoive.'

83. For a fuller investigation of the development of codified shot replacement see Salt 1983.

84. This technique is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

85. Bordwell and Thompson 1979, p.13.

86. Ibid., p.152.

87. Burch op.cit. orig.pub.1969, pp.3-16.

88. Although this would probably remain a temptation, given the expressed transformations. Such an example, however, shows how even the transformational matrix can be overlaid (but not dominated) by the comparative.

89. Which 'containment', and the atmosphere of claustrophobia it produces, contributes to the unease which is central to the diegesis itself. It also, of course compensates in part for the lack of verbal ligature.

90. Meaning specified temporality, especially durational.

91. Todorov, Tzvetan 1971, p.132.

92. Bergala c1978, p.51.

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#### 4. DISCOURSE



DISCOURSEIntroduction

In Chapter 2 it was suggested that a tripartite model of analysis could constitute the most useful approach to the operation of a narrative work as a whole, particularly a visual one. This entails an awareness not only of the text as narrative situation (its semiotic specificity, successful strategies of narrative signification and so on), but also of another layer of operation, the discourse, which could be seen as intermediary between the text and the story: in one sense the organiser of the textual strategies, in another the organiser of the ideal level of the story components. Bearing in mind the widespread use of identical analytical terms, support for a tripartite model can be found in a number of theoretical texts. The proposition of such an intermediary analytical category is testament to the fact that between the narrative text as a conglomerate of possibilities of signification and the story as an idealised chronology and plot distillation, much more is involved in the operation of a narrative work, whether visual, verbal, or combined.

Various definitions have been offered in regard to this intermediary analytical layer. Fowler (1977), who employs the term 'discourse', sees a distinct category containing all the aspects of authorial shaping of the work already provided by the written text<sup>1</sup> (with its ordering and guiding, pace and rhythm, notionally similar to those

aspects provided by the visual textual strategies outlined above). This 'shaping' relates mainly to positions adopted by the author in relation to the work, and his or her presentation of it; it relates directly, then, to perspectives and viewpoints offered, and to authorial and narrative voices. As a layer which 'organises' or 'shapes' the textual substance it can also be identified with Bal's 'récit' as 'la phase d'élaboration hypothétique de l'histoire ordonnée',<sup>2</sup> for although it is to be perceived within the narrative text, it bears, simultaneously, a transformational relation to the story, which it structures in a certain way.

If 'discourse' can be taken to mean the organisational capacities of the work based on the structure of differentiations and cohesions offered in the narrative text, then in the visual text, particularly the static non-projected text, the focal point of the organisation will again be the individual images as combined across a point of caesura, the textual gap or interstice. As it relates to the textual gaps, discourse can be seen as the 'shaping' of the textual ellipses; for this reason the analysis of discourse will be seen to be greatly involved in the temporal dimension of the work. As it relates to the individual images in sequence, discourse concerns itself with the presentation of image perspective and point of view, focalisations and relations between the sender and reader of the text (both real and constructed). From the outset, then, the static photonarrative text presents itself as a constructed string of ellipses, as well as an itinerary of related images.



## Discourse Relations

As a notionally intermediate level, discourse relates both to the text which situates it, and the story which it situates; it would be reasonable to presume, then, that discourse can be analysed in terms of two types of relation: text/discourse relations and discourse/story relations. The first area will involve the analysis of cuts and the meaning of the interstice, along with the establishment of viewpoints and the image 'organisations' as presented by the text;<sup>3</sup> the second area will involve certain orderings and organisations of the text actually related to the story as an ideal chronology, as well as the author/character/reader relations established vis à vis the story as a whole.

These two relational aspects, I would suggest, do in fact correspond to general categories of analysis already undertaken by narrative theorists. Film theorists in particular, especially Metz, Burch and Wyborny<sup>4</sup> have undertaken the classification of cuts and shot relations around the manifestation of ellipses in the text; but there appears to have been some confusion of analytical levels, here. Burch (1973), for instance, divided his categories into temporal and spatial articulations established by 'découpage' in the text; his categories of temporal articulation: (i) absolutely continuous, (ii) temporal ellipsis, (iii) indefinite ellipsis, (iv) time reversal and (v) flashback,<sup>5</sup> already seem to confuse textual possibility (category (i)) with discourse decodifications (categories (ii) to (v), of which categories (iii) to (v) could be subsumed under category (ii)), thus confusing



text/discourse relations with discourse/story relations which presume some knowledge of story as ideal chronology. Again, his categories of spatial articulation: (i) preservation of spatial contiguity, (ii) discontinuity in close proximity, (iii) complete and radical spatial discontinuity,<sup>6</sup> could all, particularly in dealing with the present type of narrative, be subsumed under possibilities of textual differentiation and cohesion as outlined above. Such a restriction to text level, although this is not what is professed, and a seeming lack of distinction between the textual establishment of discontinuities and continuities and the 'shaping' possibilities of discourse leads Burch to propose organisations within the image (shot size and angle, direct speed and duration) as simply 'other variations'.<sup>7</sup> Wyborny (1981), although he sees the classification of cuts as stemming mainly from types of temporal ellipsis, at least goes further in his analysis of 'spatial and temporal constructions' in that he deals also with wider articulations and allows for insertions within sequences, but he fails to account for textual possibilities of cohesion in that he proposes as 'return cuts' articulations which are not ellipted in the same sense as 'disjunctions'<sup>8</sup> (and which could probably be regarded as contiguous, even if non-consecutive). Neither of these analyses deals successfully with the problem of spatial representation as constituting background as opposed to object differentiations and cohesions.<sup>9</sup>

It is Metz<sup>10</sup> who takes the analysis of relations across the cut significantly closer to discourse and its relations with both text and story. Indeed, the concept

of a normal logic of diegesis is vital as a background to his analysis of 'syntagmas'. It is significant, too, that he takes as his unit of articulation not the single shot which ties the discourse inexorably to the text, but the 'syntagma': 'a series of several shots' which can be delineated only by paradigmatic comparison. Thus his 'paradigm of syntagmas' is defined as 'an enumeration of the principal models of sequential organisation between which film has a choice'.<sup>11</sup> Metz's analysis of cuts also deals mainly with chronological rather than spatial relations: some of the categories (in particular (vi) linear narrative syntagmas (discourse time = story time), (iv) descriptive syntagma (screen consecutiveness does not correspond to diegetic consecutiveness) and (i)a) sequence shot (one shot = one scene)) are to be analysed according to an awareness of discourse/story relations and result in classifications which could be applied to autonomous shots and syntagmas. But the other categories also betray a notion of temporal discrepancy in the discourse vis à vis the story, or a temporal correspondence between the two layers (in the latter category one would place the various types of non-chronological syntagma).

Here, Metz's analysis is tied to narrative analyses which relate the discourse to the story in terms of temporality, and which see this field of relation as the most significant approach to discourse. Foremost among analysts starting from this position is Genette (1980, originally published 1972), who deals with discourse/story relations in the written text, followed by Bal (1977), Chatman (1978b) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983), who all acknowledge a debt to Genette's pioneering work.



Starting from the premise that narrative discourse could be seen as the development given to a verbal form (itself a deep structural transformation of 'event') in the grammatical sense of the term, and thus the expansion of a verb, Genette proposed three main areas of discourse as organisation: (i) tense: the temporal relation between narrative (or, in the present analysis 'discourse') and story; (ii) mood: the modalities of narrative representation and (iii) voice: the relation of the subject of the enunciating.<sup>12</sup> These three areas account for the organisation of the text which discourse gives rise to and deal with temporal discrepancy, perspective and point of view, and narrative posture and voice. Metz's analysis, while it may have dealt successfully with syntagmatic manifestations of the first category, does not provide for the other manifestations of organisation in the text which are represented neither by the text nor the story and which are provided in Genette's second and third areas of concern. Thus Genette's analysis (as has been acknowledged by the various narrative theorists who followed him) represents the fullest classification of discourse/story relations up to this point since it deals not only with temporal discrepancy but also with all relations between the narrating instance and the object narrated. This analysis will be taken as the basis of our discussion of discourse because it provides for an analysis of temporal discrepancies and codified relations across the interstice and also for the focalisations and positions which further 'situate' the text.

As a basis for the working of his theory Genette chose the written text (mainly Proust), but the conclusions



reach a level of sufficient abstraction in the operation of narrative signification such that they should also be applicable to any narrative text which contains dialectical structures allowing for interactions and contrasts between shots and sequences, or which operates according to features of ordering and selection. It should, then, be applicable to any type of visual narrative text which displays the features of differentiation and cohesion *ik* outlined in the previous chapter; yet its detailed application to non-animated, non-projected visual narratives presents a number of problems which will become apparent as the guidelines for analysis laid down by Genette are followed.

#### Discourse Units

To begin with we are faced with the particular, and recurrent, problem of the unit of analysis, for which we need to consider the defining characteristics of the text itself. The text we are dealing with is constructed of a combination of images and interstices, and is immediately distinguished from film by the fact that each and every image in the text is distinguished by a cut (visual break, lacuna); it appears from the outset as if ellipsis represents a terminus a quo of the discourse. In film the absence of temporal lacunae contributes to the defining characteristics of the shot, whereas the ubiquitous perforation of the static text is such that the relation of one image to the next can never be said to be 'uninterrupted'. If a narrative text must progress according to a

matrix of transformation, it seems that the concept of temporal contiguity will of necessity be denied to it. Two consecutive images which are never allowed the fluidity of movement one into the other will mean that however small, the visual differentiation (as, for example, in a Muybridge text), even if partial, is rare from a temporal viewpoint. In fact anything other than total repetition would imply some kind of differentiation, which, on the level of discourse temporality, will more often than not be seen as ellipted. In addition to this, the non-animated, non-projected narrative shares with film the relentless flow of temporality (which in the case of the former is inexorably tied to the vectoriality of the textual reading) which encourages an a priori chronological reading of any two consecutive images.

If the interstice usually indicates temporal ellipsis (even if contiguous) in the discourse, how, then, can different types of discourse unit be analysed? Actually, despite the superficial facility of the definition of 'shot', film shares a similar problem; it is fundamental to Metz's analysis of syntagmatic categories and, at the same time, a justification for them. 'The only way to enumerate the diverse subtypes of sequences' he suggests, 'is to rely on their mutual differences';<sup>13</sup> it is impossible to delineate except by means of paradigmatic comparison of the principal models of sequential organisation between which a choice can be made. In this sense the analysis of units must involve, on the level of discourse, not simply the organisations of differentiations (which relates directly to the textual) but also other 'choices' which lie at the centre of the 'shaping' of the work -- this



will involve analysis of established viewpoints and narrative positions as situated within the text.

It is difficult to limit the discussion of units to one distinct level of analysis. We might begin, then, by considering the distinction of units which can be maintained according to the textual strategies of differentiation and cohesion. Images in sequence which maintain overall spatial contiguity are obviously in closer relation to each other than images which do not. This point necessarily involves a consideration of cohesions of viewpoint in non-animated visual narratives since every change in angle of view is immediately registered as a point of differentiation (there are no smooth transitions). The first sixteen images of Going to Heaven, for instance, (Fig.30) fall neatly into four groups of four spatially related images (1-4 non-differentiated, 5-8 contiguous, 9-12 contiguous, 13-16 contiguous), but they are in turn related as groups according to the type of differentiation between them (4 and 5 contiguous, but with greater spatial differentiation, 8 and 9 the same etc.). Attempting to consider larger units in this way leads to questions of degree,<sup>14</sup> and the same applies to the temporal differentiations they entail (in all, the temporal relations are contiguous, but there seems to be a greater temporal ellipsis between 8 and 9). While this division into larger units could be significant, we are always left, with the static visual narrative, to consider degrees of temporal ellipsis according to knowledge derived as it were externally: again the problem is an epistemological one.

The notion of 'choice' involved in the establishment of the text implies that the discourse is directly



related to the paradigmatic systems operative in the text. The idea of the paradigm as founded on the site of differentiation can be directly related to the textual unit, since the artist has already exercised a selection of units to guarantee textual lacunae (without selection there would be complete continuity and no ellipsis), but selection also underlies the synecdochic operation of the text itself. On the other hand, it might be suggested that the selection of narrative 'instance' is what ultimately guarantees the number and type of images. We would have to regard the latter as equivalent to the 'kernels' which can be extracted on the level of story as distillations of plot, which is in fact what Chatman proposes.<sup>15</sup> This idea, however, poses a number of problems with static visual narrative texts. To begin with we cannot directly identify particular images or series of images with kernels since, as opposed to more 'open' or 'revelatory' texts, the still visual narratives can make great use of ellipsis, implying a 'before' and 'after' at the level of text to signify a process at discourse level (see Chapter 2) which can only later be analysed as a 'kernel' at story level. Even if one were to propose that the choice of number of images involved in the signification of one event were a symptom of the relation of text and discourse, one would still be relying on the establishment of significant breaks in the discourse in order to identify the string of events themselves, which can only be achieved in a posteriori story level analysis. If one is forced to rely on the somewhat nebulous concept of 'event' at discourse level,<sup>16</sup> different syntagms could only be delineated with recourse to the types of textual differentiations

outlined above. Although one could be left with images and larger groupings of series of images, one would be thrown back onto the constant ellipsis which actually forms part of the static visual narrative text's construction.

It might be, however, that an awareness of the relation of kernel to the method of representation through (represented) discourse would actually provide for an analysis of choices at work in the text. Here, the choice of the number and type of images at use in signifying the event is analogous to the amount of information contained in the single image in relation to the object portrayed. In fact the use of detail in the image is probably provided for in Genette's analysis under the modal categories of discourse since it can be seen as an aspect of focalisation, and it is provided for in the discussion of temporal discrepancy to the extent that the codification of ellipsis can be seen as directly (inversely?) related to the restriction or amplification of detail through the amount of cohesion or lack of differentiation. It would seem, then, that following Genette's analysis might itself provide an adequate basis for the analysis of choices involved in organising the discourse, or at least throw up the relevant points for consideration.

### Discourse Time

Despite the aforementioned compulsion of chronological succession, any picture strip, as, indeed, any narrative, is capable of manifesting a number of discourse/-story time discrepancies. Yet before these types of dis-



crepancy are discussed a valid definition of 'discourse time' must be worked out. In visual narratives of the type we are dealing with here the notion of time is complex and works on different levels. According to Chatman (1978b) discourse time in film is in fact reading time: 'the time it takes to peruse the discourse', and story time is plot time: 'the duration of the purported events of the narrative'.<sup>17</sup> Before accepting this as a basis for all visual texts, however, we must remember that film represents a particular type of narrative situation, where the time of the reading is already dictated by the projection, and usually corresponds to the duration of the images at normal speed; the reading time in film is controlled and measurable. Other narrative works do not operate such temporal coincidence between the reading and the text itself. Indeed, without projection it is actually impossible to exert an exact control over the reading time, which will vary from reader to reader (or viewer); this is true of written as well as non-projected visual narratives. Yet there is still a constant beyond the differences in reading time, and this constant is provided by the text itself (different reading times result from the same text, after all).

The problem, here, seems to stem from the tendency to confuse actual and constructed temporalities. In his analysis of the operation of filmic narrative, Hernadi identifies, in disagreement with Chatman, a difference between 'discourse time' and 'performance time' in this way, 'discourse time' for him representing a sequential order of presentation with no genuine temporal quality.<sup>18</sup> In fact the only 'real' temporality belongs to the text



and its reading, both discourse and story time being constructs. This kind of difference has been noted by a number of commentators (see, for instance Vanoye (1979): time of story, time of narration, time of reading),<sup>19</sup> but it would be more useful to identify it with our tripartite model as constituting that between text time, discourse time and story time, where we can identify text time as time of the text-as-read, and discourse time as a proportional allotment of images relevant to the notion of the time of the story as constructed in relation. It is difficult to consider discourse time as other than a constructed proportionate correspondence to a purported temporality. In the present type of narrative, which relies to a great extent on the transformation of temporal into spatial relations, the 'discourse time' can only be seen as a property of spatial organisation of the story (often simply a case of the number of images allotted to a certain 'event' itself in relation to the quantity of differentiation).

This lack of definable concrete temporality at the level of discourse may have encouraged Genette's remark that although the temporal duality which is a result of the difference between story time and discourse time is a typical characteristic of cinematic and oral narrative, 'it is less relevant, perhaps, in other forms of narrative expression, such as, the roman-photo or comic strip',<sup>20</sup> a conclusion drawn from the reader's capacity in the latter types of narrative to adopt a synchronic (i.e. non-chronological or reverse chronological) look. There are a number of objections to this statement. To begin with, this 'temporal duality' is a property of

discourse/story relations and is thus to be analysed independently of the textual strategies of narrativity, but even if the textual strategies of differentiation and cohesion are taken into account they can be defined as operating quite independently of the vagaries of the individual reading, and indeed have to be so analysed: they are in fact constructed in succession, constrained by linearity just as are written texts (something which, in this statement, Genette denies). Furthermore, the problem of the 'abstract' temporality of the discourse, which is a property shared by all narrative texts (the concrete nature of film temporality being in fact an illusion resulting from a particular text reading/discourse correspondence), led Genette himself to propose relational categories which need not be, and are not, 'measurable' in any concrete sense.

#### Temporal Relations: Order

Up to this point, the discussion of discourse time has dealt mainly with the durational qualities of the narrative, but when we come to analyse the temporal discrepancies and correspondences between the discourse and the story there are, according to Genette, three types of relation. It now remains to be seen how these are applicable to our particular text, and in what way they can throw light on the description of discourse. The first type of relation consists in 'connections between the temporal order of succession of the events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of arrangement in the narrative'. In other words, does the order of events

in the discourse correspond to the same order of events in the story? If there is a direct chronological correspondence, as in many of our simpler texts, Le Curé et le majeur (Fig.4) for example, then the relation is strictly correspondent; if there is not a direct chronological correspondence, then the relation is said to be discordant, and analysable in terms of anachrony.

The first type of anachrony is prolepsis, a flashforward: 'narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later'.<sup>22</sup> This simple definition (apart from the difficulty of distinguishing 'evocation' and 'narration' in visual narratives) presents us with immediate conceptual problems, especially in texts which are more often than not successively temporally ellipted between each successive image and group of images, and which could, on the face of it, be said to be constantly proleptical. But since prolepsis is to be taken as a symptom of discourse/story anachrony, it concerns the comparison of order of events already established by the text. Actually, prolepsis can, it seems, only be distinguished if it is followed by a return to an earlier part of the narrative of events, otherwise it will merely indicate a highly elliptical temporal break. If we take, for example, the alphabetical succession ABCD as indicative of ideal event chronology on story level, this sequence can be offered as ACBD in the discourse (bearing in mind the fact that a discourse event can be indicated by different numbers of images in the text), then the proleptical relation of AC will be determined by the immediately following presence of B, which distinguishes the event sequence as a whole from the lengthened elliptical



sequence ACD. For this reason film analyses which involve syntagmatic 'insert' and 'return cut' can be most usefully applied at this level of analysis. If we were to attempt to relate back the instance of prolepsis to our particular textual type: visual narrative with a heavy reliance on ellipsis and succession, however, both text and discourse might be seen as reliant on a kind of proleptical compulsion, and differences in order between discourse and text are better signalled by the presence of analepsis, or backward reference. This would mean that the difference in order as indicated in the discourse as ACBD is in fact defined by the relation CB, which is analeptical, rather than AC, which, in isolation, could be part of the highly elliptical discourse ACD. As Chatman points out: 'Flashforwards can only be recognised retrospectively.'<sup>23</sup>

In the simple discourse succession ACBD, which relates to the ideal story succession ABCD, the crucial problems relating to proleptical and analeptical displacement are apparent; both displacements depend on the recognition of restored continuity. Thus flashforward in visual texts becomes none other than a comparatively distant succession, itself succeeded by a temporally closer ellipsis, or, as Metz proposes, immediate succession in the text 'as the signifier for distant succession',<sup>24</sup> succeeded by restorative analepsis. If one adds to this the observation that analepsis itself requires restoration of continuity, then the two terms of the correspondence cannot easily be seen in isolation; in the discourse sequence ACBD, both B and D are successive 'restorations', and just as the prolepsis AC requires the succeeding analepsis CB, so the analepsis CB requires the succeeding prolepsis

BD. Thus prolepsis and analepsis are two sides of the same coin, and it might be more important to see them as types of displacement in a successive diegesis: i.e. it might be more useful to follow a Metzian or Wybornian analysis of cuts in linear sequences, which would take account both of successive relation between two consecutive events, and also their overall placement in the longer, 'restored' sequence. As displacements, we would have to say that one cannot have one without the other. The reliance of non-projected, non-animated visual narrative on excessively linear and elliptical texts makes the absolute distinction of prolepsis and analepsis difficult to apply.<sup>25</sup>

Genette points out that all types of anachronological discourse/story relation can be further refined according to whether they refer to events (antecedent or postcedent) within or without the limits of the basic diegesis: there can be both external and internal prolepses and analepses. In this sense, the above discussion concerns only displacements within a diegesis which is temporally defined according to the outer parameters A and D. Events external to the diegesis, since they do not 'displace' the chronology of the diegesis itself, would be better termed insertions. Such insertions can themselves be temporally close or distant antecedents to the diegesis. In the case of distant postcedents, these can only be assumed according to the final point of the diegetic 'now' of the text as a whole. In visual narratives we are often reliant, in such cases, on degrees of shift, and outer diegetic parameters indicated by 'external' knowledge not actually contained by the images themselves.

In the photoroman Love's Dying Flame, for instance, the (Fig.31) analeptical insertion contained within the first four images on page 6 refers back to a time anterior to the first image of the text, and the group of images which contain it are distinguished from the diegetic whole by the textual signal of the blurred edge of the images. Thus an analysis of proleptical and analeptical displacements and insertions must entail an awareness of the diegesis as a whole between outer parameters and a chronology which consists of points of a constantly shifting 'now'; this 'now' being, as Genette says, the moment in the story when the narrative was interrupted to make room for the anachrony.

If we are attempting to distinguish displacement from insertion in terms of the internal or external nature of the anachrony, then what of overlapping anachronies, which can begin externally and end internally, or begin internally and end externally? The forward compulsion of texts which are built on image following image again poses particular problems. Firstly, as has become apparent in the above discussion, prolepsis and analepsis can be regarded as points relating a whole event signifying sequence to the place of that event in the ideal chronology of the story, and also can be seen in regard to the point of 'rejoining' the diegesis. In this sense combined internal and external anachronies are difficult to conceptualise. An analeptical sequence which begins externally and ends internally can be seen as an insert followed by a displacement, but a displacement of a certain type which repeats a temporal portion of the diegesis; a prolepsis which begins externally can only end externally, and a prolepsis



which begins internally must either be followed by an analepsis (in which case it will remain internal) or will extend the narration and merely become part of the narrative's forward compulsion. The compulsive forward movement based on the exigency of succession in narratives constructed of sequences of still images thus leads us to the conclusion that analepsis and prolepsis are not symmetrical -- there is in fact in texts of this type an asymmetry of back and forward reference in which the retrospective view dominates and in which the possibilities of back reference are probably greater. For this reason (and many others relating to the retrospective impulse) Genette's 'recalling analepsis' (story: ABCD, discourse ABCBD) is likely to be more common than the equivalent 'repeating prolepsis' (story: ABCD, discourse: ACBCD). These two can also be distinguished by the fact that in the first the repeated event first occurs in chronological correspondence, and in the second the first occurrence is displaced. Occurring internally within the outer parameters of the whole diegesis, they might be better called repetitive displacements. Genette also mentions paralipsis, which can be better described as a kind of parallel insert. Image sequences operating this kind of anachrony exhibit parallel consecutive sequences but exhibit no temporal ellipses between the diegeses, although proleptical and analeptical inserts which refer to points back or forward ellipted can be used (although they rarely are).

When considering the application of Genettian categories of anachrony regarding relations of order between discourse and story we are thus left with the

conclusion that most major types of such relation are possible in the static photographic narrative sequence. The details of this relation can perhaps best be indicated by the following outline of possibilities:

1) Chronological

2) Anachronic

i) Displacements: a) proleptical; b) analeptical;  
c) repetitive

ii) Inserts: a) proleptical; b) analeptical; c) parallel

3) Reversed

Texts under consideration here, especially if one remembers the variety of visual narrative types as indicated in Chapter 1, are prone to greater exploitation of graphic possibilities and a concomitant reduction of control of reading vectoriality. A further category of relation, that of reversed order, must thus be considered as a possibility. Although it could be argued that a discourse in complete reversal DCBA is no more than a series of analeptical displacements, the existence of complete narratives constructed in this way indicates that this can also be seen as an overall aspect of ordering, containing a new discourse/story relation. Here we might place those long lantern slides which narrate a chase sequence showing the last character in the series followed by the characters which in the story precede;<sup>26</sup> Fulton's A Public Footpath on Nackington Farm Canterbury is a (Fig.14) particularly minimal example of a narrative in reversed order. Within larger narrative sequences reversed order (or a series of analeptical displacements) is also rare, although there are two interesting examples in the Bayeux 'Tapestry': the first where Duke William's messengers'

arrival at Count Guy's is seemingly related before their journey, which in turn precedes their departure; the (Fig.32) second where Edward the Confessor's burial seemingly precedes his death and illness. These examples, which (Fig.33) have afforded commentators much difficulty, are, within the contemporary conventions of spatial non-fragmentation, guarantors of the preservation of spatial unity over the vectorial compulsions of spatio-temporal succession. Other examples can be found in a number of comic strips, and are similarly said to indicate the dominance of spatial (or graphic) over temporal parameters. In fact, this kind of reversed chronological sequence could also be seen as the equivalent of a string of clauses of temporal subordination (of the type 'who had...'). This kind of spatial and graphic freedom is something which the static image sequence in particular is able to exploit.

#### Temporal Relations: Duration

Genette's second category of temporal discrepancy, duration, presents particular problems for the analysis of static visual texts, some of which have already been touched upon in the discussion of discourse time. Nevertheless, despite the difficulty of establishing 'the time taken to read out the narrative' with a text which (unlike cinema, and possibly unlike the literary text) provides no fixed or 'normal' reading time, we may attempt to follow a Genettian analysis while bearing in mind that the relations between discourse and story time are proportional, and are, as Genette proposes, to be measured according to 'steadiness of speed' in the discourse as



against the duration of purported story event.

According to this proposal the most rigorous correspondence between discourse and story would occur where the length of the discourse and the story duration remain steady. In this case the discourse would be expected to exhibit a regularity of temporal ellipsis. In a number of simple and strictly delineated photographic narratives like Muybridge's series representing the woman drinking (Fig.26) from the water jug, steadiness of speed does seem to be measurable according to our knowledge of the proportionate ellipses. The same would be true if this narrative were constructed from every other image in the sequence. But dealing with such minimal narratives does entail a number of problems: Genette has asserted that it is not possible to have a narrative admitting no variation in speed,<sup>28</sup> but according to our definition of basic narrativity steadiness of speed (which we have to take as proportional to constancy of temporal ellipsis) is not a defining characteristic. The question again goes back to the conceptual problems in relating the story level event on the one hand to the manifestation of a complete event in the text. It would seem, in fact, that steadiness of speed in a Genettian sense is more a property of the text than the discourse, and it would be hard to see how it could be measurable in texts which allow variable reading times. Our problems concerning this category thus derive from the notion of event, the lack of definable reading time, and also from the fact that the inability of a static image to signal duration directly tends to make the sometimes extremely reduced photographic narrative texts dependent on external (usually

accompanying verbal) indications. In Michals' The Fallen (Fig.20) Angel (1968), for example, we know neither the 'duration' of each image nor the length of time that each interstice purports to cover. For steadiness of speed we are forced to rely on other indications (not necessarily exact) of duration or interstitial gap (i.e. 'external' knowledge of events, extra-textual indications), in a text which has no directly durational quality. Thus the problem underlying the assessment of relations of duration can become an epistemological one: it depends on internal and external knowledge enabling the reader to construct a quality which is not directly expressed.<sup>29</sup>

The problems involved in analysing durational discourse/story discrepancies become more apparent when we attempt to apply Genette's categories of narrative movement. Taking discourse time as DT and story time as ST, Genette proposes the following categories: i) ellipsis:  $DT=0, ST=n \therefore DT \ll ST$  (discourse time is nil, story time is infinite, therefore story time is infinitely greater than discourse time); ii) pause:  $DT=n, ST=0 \therefore DT \gg ST$  (discourse time is infinite, story time is nil, therefore discourse time is infinitely greater than story time); iii) scene:  $DT=ST$  (discourse time is equal to story time) and iv) summary:  $DT < ST$  (discourse time is less than story time);<sup>30</sup> Chatman suggests the inclusion of a fifth possibility: v) stretch:  $DT > ST$  (discourse time is greater than story time).<sup>31</sup>

In his analysis of the category 'ellipsis' Chatman is careful to point out that temporal ellipsis need not be identified with every cut in film between one shot and the next; he goes on to say that all types

of cut are in the repertoire of cinematic manifestation,<sup>32</sup> thus denying the application of ellipsis as a discourse/story discrepancy. Chatman is surely correct to limit his discussion of the application of Genette's categories, but in our case we must also, as has been already noted, regard ellipsis as one of the inevitable strategies of textual differentiation: this is even more apparent with texts which are fabricated from non-durational signs; even texts which are felt to narrate according to temporally contiguous images will, if non-animated, tempt us towards the constitution of temporal ellipses (and this is something denied to temporally contiguous film images where the temporality is felt to be contained within the image, as opposed to the interstice). This again underlines the greater reliance on the interstice in static photonarratives. In such cases temporal ellipsis can only be seen as inevitable, and the ellipses distinguished according to lengths which are not usually exactly measurable. We have therefore to begin with the conclusion that ellipsis, as inevitable, is inescapable in our texts, and if the ellipsis is not exactly measurable, then steadiness of speed can not be exactly deduced.

On the other hand, non-animated photographic narrative texts are capable of a great range of temporal significations, however exactly deduced, and since we are dealing with proportionate relations, we might expect examples of the other categories of durational discrepancy and agreement. When a series of images is used to narrate an event which we feel (forced, here, to resort to intangible external factors) to warrant, according to the overall regularity of the discourse, no temporal progression,



it is possible that we are dealing with a type of pause. The images on p.13 of Going to Heaven are illustrative (Fig.30) of such a case. The previous four images had narrated with a regularity of ellipsis invoking sizeable temporal gaps as inferred from the degree of differentiation of image content; the images on p.13 represent a difference in pace in terms of movements depicted, in that they display a corresponding cohesion which comes from reduced partial differentiation, coupled with lack of movement (itself deduced from object non-differentiation). However, such is the nature of this type of text that, in common with film, story time does not appear to stop. Chatman draws from this the conclusion that description per se is generally impossible in narrative films,<sup>33</sup> but, for present purposes, it suffices to say that the inevitability of ellipsis as a measure of differentiation, and the onward compulsion resulting from the constant interstices, indicate that temporal pause is not possible as a category of durational discourse/story relation. Even in texts which reduce the partial to non-differentiation, like the first three images of the series by Denizart for (Fig.25) instance, the resulting spatial and object identity would indicate a position held by an object for a certain length of time, and would never indicate that story time is nil.

Ellipsis and pause represent, therefore, two categories which are inevitable concomitants of textual construction, and thus denied to discourse as optional categories of relation to the story; both nil discourse time (which is basic to the category 'ellipsis') and nil story time (which is basic to the category 'pause')

are impossible. But the remaining categories of proportional relation might be applicable, bearing in mind the fact that textual characteristics also deny the possibility of measuring steadiness of speed exactly. There must, then, be occasions when the time of the discourse is felt to be proportionally more or less than the time of the story, in other words when the reader feels that the number of images allotted to a certain event seems greater or less than the number which would 'naturally signify' the 'normal time' taken for the event to take place. The difficulties involved in this kind of analysis are emphasised, here, in order to point out that the application of Genette's categories to visual narratives involves problems which are, in the end, conceptual: we are constantly attempting to relate a 'norm' of discourse temporality, according to a text which has no measurable duration, to a 'norm' of story time which has to be deduced from the external knowledge or even world-view of the reader. With static photo-narratives the problem is compounded by the fact that the viewer has a tendency to adjust the reading temporality to the temporality of the diegesis. It is more likely, for example, that a series of images like a Muybridge series of a galloping horse will be read with a quicker eye-scan than a series which indicates a number of more 'time consuming' events in a similar number of images. This is inevitable given that a smaller temporal ellipsis between images will usually of necessity be provided by less visual differentiation, whereas a greater temporal ellipsis will usually result in greater visual differentiation, which in turn takes longer to read. It must be borne in mind, when

attempting this kind of analysis, that one can only talk of proportional relations themselves related to reading tendencies.

Bearing in mind the impossibility of exact measurement, the impossibility of nil discourse and story time, and the reservations noted above, we are able, as regards feasible types of durational discourse/story relation, to consider only tendencies of relation. Yet even the discussion of certain tendencies will have to have recourse to a reading norm and a norm of the event, together with a notion, in our case, of 'normal' numerical correspondence. For instance, in a series which tends toward the stretch the number of images will be felt to be 'out of proportion' to the event in terms of expansion in the discourse. Were one to lay the static images which constitute the film strip of L'Arrivée d'un train en gare end to end, the 'length' of the discourse (measured in this case according to the number of images and the 'normal' time taken to read them) would appear to be greater than that of the story (measured by our 'knowledge' of the normal length of time the depicted event would require). Similarly, or rather inversely, a 'short' series depicting a 'long' event would seem to constitute a summary, where the discourse tends towards contraction vis à vis the story. The latter, since every summary depends on ellipsis, can be found in numerous photographic narrative texts, and is in fact the norm. Such examples serve to point out that an assessment of such relations will always be conjectural because it depends ultimately on two durations which are non-measurable: duration of the text-as-read, and duration of the story event. For this



reason the scene is not a possibility.

Throughout his application of Genette's categories to the filmic text Chatman indicates the difficulties involved in dealing with proportional measurement and non-measurable characteristics. It seems to me that the visual narratives we are dealing with here do not lend themselves successfully to this type of analysis, or do so only in the sense that they always fall into two general categories relating to summary (which entails ellipsis), which is more usual, and stretch, which is unusual.<sup>34</sup> Texts which are generally summative can only be measured in terms of degree of ellipsis. In the way that static photographic narrative discourse relates to the story we can say only that it will show a tendency to be reductive, or, rarely, expansive.

#### Temporal Relations: Frequency

It is questionable, too, whether the third type of temporal discourse/story relation, frequency, can be successfully applied to the non-animated photographic narrative text. Frequency, according to Genette, concerns 'the relations of repetition between the narrative and the diegesis',<sup>35</sup> or, more specifically: whether the discourse (i) relates once what happened once, (ii) relates a number of times what happened the same number of times, (iii) relates more than once what happened once, or (iv) relates once what happened more than once (categories (i) and (ii) representing two types of the same one to one relation). In considering our text according to the categories above, we are, from the outset, limited by

attempting to apply the analysis to a purely visual discourse. Iterative parts of speech, which are vital frequency signals in written discourse, are denied to the purely visual, tied to the signification of the singular occurrence. The capacity to relate once what happened more than once cannot be found in purely visual image series, and the fourth category of relation is available to photonarrative texts only by recourse to verbal signs; while the event itself can easily be contained within the visual, the frequency of its occurrence, is, in this case, signalled by verbal markers. Since visual narration is tied to its singular event, however, the photo-narrative series is capable of the first two categories of relation, with their direct correspondence, and it is also capable of repetition while maintaining identity (even with change of viewpoint) thereby fulfilling the conditions, too, for category (iii). The two Muybridge strips which show the woman climbing the stairs, for instance, were they (Fig.27) to be read separately and consecutively, would narrate the same event from two different viewpoints, once it had been established (through parameters relating to textual cohesion as outlined above) that the two events were in fact one and the same. Such exactitude is usually difficult without recourse to accompanying verbal signs. Here, again, we are faced with the problem of the relentless flow of temporality resulting from consecutiveness, which would normally indicate in a visual narrative that the same event was simply repeated. It is interesting, here, to compare the use of identical images at different points in the discourse (examples can be found in the second and fourth images on p.37 of Going to Heaven and images (Fig.30)

1 and 5 of Jack the Conqueror, although the latter are (Fig.7) distinguished by a change in framing). Rather than constituting examples of category (iv), these represent repetitions of similar events at different points in the narrative, since their diegetic situation (discourse) is a result of their relation in the series in combination with the preceding and succeeding images (text).

The relations of frequency thus remain another category which is only partially applicable in Genettian terms. The categories introduced by Genette are useful indicators of general tendencies and general areas of relation, but not all detailed aspects are applicable. The most successful category, in this sense, is that of relations of order, since the text which we are ultimately relying on is one which entails easily definable successions. Duration, as applied to a static (and thus ultimately non-durational) text presents particular problems in terms of conception and measurement. Frequency, in a text which itself contains no capacity of projected iteration, and operates according to a strict one to one correspondence, is only partially applicable as regards the types of relation which Genette proposes.<sup>36</sup> All in all, the fact that we are dealing with a text which relies ultimately on visual (or rather spatial) transference, means that spatial aspects are more readily definable; we might expect this to apply also to discourse/story relations.

### Spatial Relations

In defining space as 'the dimension of story



existence', as opposed to time as 'the dimension of story events',<sup>37</sup> Chatman suggests the possibility of distinguishing story space and discourse space. This proposal (and the consequent possibility of defining spatial discourse/story relations) entails a number of problems when applied to the text in hand. In a text which is already constructed of the transference of temporal into spatial (and, concomitantly, in which the discourse temporality is ultimately based on the spatial relations of images in the text), it is possible to say that space becomes the 'dimension of story events' as well as the 'dimension of story existence'. In Chatman, the fact that the discourse event is constructed from the information provided by a text is ignored, and the discourse and textual levels ultimately collapsed into each other. For this reason, when it comes to defining exactly what spatial discourse/story relations entail, Chatman confuses the space within which the narrative is ultimately played out with the most basic questions involving the construction of objects from the text: the most basic question of semiotic relation. Thus his list of discourse/story spatial relations: (i) scale or size, (ii) contour, texture and density, (iii) position, (iv) degree, kind and area of reflected illumination, and (v) clarity or degree of optical resolution,<sup>38</sup> seems to me to confuse transferences and organisations operating on and between different levels.

To begin with, our text, which has no strictly definable temporality as such, represents the spatialisation of events which take place within a constructed temporality (discourse) related to an ideal (story); spatial and temporal aspects of static visual narratives are ultimately

disproportionate. Discourse and story relations, which will deal primarily with the narration of events, will depend largely on temporal relations; the text, which is the static, visual basis, will mostly be concerned with the spatial. In the previous chapter the semiotic relation of sign to object, which would involve Chatman's categories, has already been discussed; certain discrepancies of signification are inevitable. However, there are certain areas where a 'motivated' intervention is to be noted. Does this constitute an intervention at the level of discourse? The most important difference is that in the latter case we are relating a visual representation not of a single object, but of an event, to an 'ideal'; thus the visual aspects of discourse/story relation will involve visual organisations of the image around a certain 'aspect' (in the literal sense) or 'modality'; the differences simply between image and object belong at the level of text.

This is a difficult point. Both construction of the text and the narrative discourse involve 'organisations' which regulate the information given. The distinction lies between regulating textual information (which involves individual discrepancies between the image and its object) and regulating narrative information (which involves considerations of the diegetic context). 'Regulation of narrative information' is in fact the phrase used by Genette to introduce the major 'modalities' of the discourse by which the narrative information is regulated, which come under the category 'mood'.<sup>39</sup> Since this latter, 'mood', is already a traditional category of regulation, and in fact distinguished in Genette from two other major

areas, it would probably be better to regard the question of 'narrative regulation' as falling into three areas: (i) the modality of the statement itself, which is normally indicative, (ii) the 'distance' which the narrative keeps from what it tells by means of the inclusion or lack of detail and the use of direct or indirect statement, and (iii) the 'perspective' adopted towards the narrative, which entails the regulation of information according to the capacity of knowledge of a participant in the story (or not): in fact the means by which the narrative is 'focalised'.<sup>40</sup> In making use of visual metaphors such as 'distance' and 'perspective' Genette already hints at the possibility of direct application to static visual narrative texts; in fact the application is much more difficult than might at first appear.

### Modality

The initial parameter involved in the regulation of narrative information which discourse gives rise to, concerns the capacity of the discourse to overlay the text according to a certain modality. This capacity has already been discussed with reference to the differences between verbal and visual signification (see Chapter 3) where it was noted that verbal languages have a capacity to refer according to a system of mood which indicates whether the statement is a predication, a command, a wish and so on. Such a system of regulation is commonly held to be denied to purely visual texts. Thus Lotman (1976, p.78) states that 'visually perceived action is possible in only one mode -- the real'. Even though a



character in a visual text can be seen to be expressing a desire, wish, thought or command, what we witness in the visual statement is not the character's expression but the character in the act of expressing, and a related image which can be identified as optative, conditional etc. only through association and not in and of itself; in visual texts of this type the mood is a result of contextualisation. Such containments will usually be prepared or indicated 'externally' by the use of the representation of gesture within accompanying images, the use of verbal indicators, or the use of a particular semiotic of framing, for example the cloud shape for speculative statements and so on. In such cases the optative is bracketed, and the bracketing signals are not internal to the images themselves.

Discussing modalities of the discourse as types of organisations in the text might lead us to conclude that the static visual series is capable of emphases within the discourse analogous to the use of active and passive voice in a verbal text. Such a possibility has been definitely suggested by Peters (1981), who maintains that active and passive propositions are achieved by centring on the main subject of the event (thus focussing on the one who is acted upon or the one who acts)<sup>41</sup>. It is doubtful, however, whether the use of centring or other focussing is enough to change the nature of a whole proposition. The simultaneous presentation of both subject and object in the same space of necessity presents both terms of the proposal, even if there is a tendency to highlight one of the actants. The signification of one participant, whether the active or passive partner, cannot

be distinguished from the act itself, and it is this active or passive state which is emphasised; it is not the proposition itself which is active or passive in construction as it is with verbal language. The situation is similar to the distinction of static and dynamic propositions, where one is forced to conclude that the proposition itself, which is always static, tends to be stasis or process emphatic and no more.<sup>42</sup> Most importantly, any emphatic tendencies within a single image can be counteracted by its placement in series and/or combination with other visual signs. As a kind of regulation, the use of active and passive voice is not equalled by the visual series, nor are other traditional verbal modal forms.<sup>43</sup>

### Distance

Yet there are ways, of course, in which the information of the narrative is regulated by the author (or constructor), and this at a level beyond the exigencies of differentiation and cohesion provided by the text. As Genette notes: 'Narrative information has its degrees. The narrative can furnish the reader with more or fewer details, and in a more or less direct way.'<sup>44</sup> Certain of the methods by which this is achieved are available to the static visual text, whose discourse can display a certain 'distance' from the story.

In the sense that the regulation is noted by degree, we would have to begin by going back to the operation of the text-signs themselves. Some types of sign (as has already been noted in Chapter 3) are said to have a more direct relation to the signified object;



such a criterion usually applies to the traditional distinction between verbal and visual signs themselves. Visual signs are thus traditionally thought to be more mimetic because more motivated (although there are problems here; see above). Such a distinction will not necessarily show how the amount of information is regulated.

However, verbal signs also have the capacity to signify thought processes, character perceptions and speech. They are thus capable of more direct/indirect distinctions, especially in the case of speech or speech related thought processes, according to the use of direct and indirect speech and the use of a middle category erlebte rede, which constitute a minimal gradation of positions vis à vis the recounting of what is spoken or thought. Visual texts, which are incapable alone of signifying speech, are not capable of this kind of distinction. They are more reliant on the use of gesture, which even here would normally become only an accompaniment to the speech act signified verbally. Even individual, meaningful gestures can only be signified directly; indirect signification would again rely on the kind of bracketing described above which entails the signalling of shifts in narrating levels (see below).

To talk about the regulation of narrative information in terms of the discourse we must begin by attempting to describe the organisations within the images which take place beyond the simplest differentiations and cohesions -- how, apart from the simplest repetitive strategies and signifiers of identity, the images can be seen as products of an act of intervention which further distinguishes them. To take a simple example: although we recog-



nise that the character portrayed on pp.16 and 17 of the photoroman Night of Evil is the same character, (Fig.10) the information concerning her can be said to be regulated in a number of ways, introducing variations beyond the simplest parameters which guarantee the simplest identification, and thus operating at a level beyond that which guarantees the signification of narrative event. On this level, aspects of image construction seem to operate in two ways: regulating either the quality or the quantity of the information in the image.

Those aspects which involve the quantity of information (and many are concerned with both types of regulation) can be directly connected to the device of framing, which is the primary containment of detail within the image.<sup>45</sup> In reference to the frame, we may note the size of the image, the position of objects relative to the frame, the juxtaposition of objects within the frame, the use of close or long shots, depth of field within the frame and so on: all the manifestation of choices which result in the quantitative regulation of information. Other devices which bear a direct relation to the number of details relate to framings both around and within the image, which will include special uses of lighting and focussings. In the present example the object (girl) shifts, on p.16, to centre frame while on p.17 the constructor of the series has decided to double frame size while showing the head and shoulders of the girl in three-quarter profile; in the images on p.16 the girl is shown with the phone, on p.17 without; at other times (e.g. p.42) she might be portrayed at greater distance. All these devices have a direct relation to the quantity of

information which is available to the viewer, and the analysis of the use of such devices, which could be undertaken comparatively, belongs at a level beyond the simple identifications in the text, and beyond the idealised positionings which would be implied by the story. Devices of framing, focussing, lighting and such like can all be used in combination to vary the quantity of information between images.

It must be remembered, here, that such devices, and in particular distance from the object and angle of vision, can, as positions, be allied with particular viewpoints in the narrative, but they need not always be strictly identified. Visual narratives in particular are forced to bring into the narration a particular viewpoint, which will tend to be mostly identified as 'neutral' (in fact the viewpoint of the narrator and the narratee).<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, distance from the object, angle of vision, focussings and framings can also be exploited through the tendency to identify the viewpoints in some way, as regulators of the quality of the information. Although on pp.42 and 43 of Night of Evil the quantity of information (Fig.10) is affected by distance from the subject, angle of vision, lighting and focussing (more and different information on the girl is provided on p.43 where she is in a double size frame, frontally placed, front lit etc., information about the boy is centred and focussed on his face on p.42) these same devices regulate the quality of the information (the quality of the portrait being affected by the angle of vision in the top image on p.42, increasing the emotional tension by oblique lighting and the use of diagonals, the emotional quality of the portrayal



of the boy increased by focussing on the face, lit from above in the bottom image of p.42, both contrasted to the placid quality of the portrayal on p.43 with its 'regular' focussing, positioning, framing and lighting). In photoromans in general the use of low viewing positions and lighting from below is very common in threatening characterisations, high viewing positions and lighting from above being commonly allied to vulnerable characterisations.

### Perspective

There are various parameters (and doubtless many to be added to the above) through which the constructor of the static visual discourse regulates the information provided for the viewer,<sup>47</sup> qualitatively or quantitatively. This information will be contained within an image which itself allows for the establishment of a particular viewing position, which will mean that the information can itself be epistemologically identified as presented through a specific viewpoint on the narrative itself. This brings us to the third aspect of Genette's regulative procedures: the 'perspective' adopted within a text, and often discussed by other narrative analysts (as well as Genette) as 'focalisation', or more usually 'point of view'. As a number of these commentators (in particular Chatman, Rimmon-Kenan and Fowler) point out,<sup>48</sup> the term 'point of view' generally engages three areas: visual, conceptual and emotional, and is a term especially weighted towards the ideological.<sup>49</sup> The adoption of 'focalisation' as a general term is intended to include all aspects by which



the text is focussed according to an identified viewer, and to de-emphasise the visual aspect (normally underlined, as in Genette, by the use of visual metaphor).

Genette is careful to point out that the focalisation of a text reveals the facet whereby 'the narrative can...choose to regulate the information it delivers... according to the capacities of knowledge of one or other participants in the story' (my emphasis),<sup>50</sup> and although discussions of focalisation have tended to be weighted towards the visual, the horizons pertaining to focalisation are rather epistemological ones (hence the simplistic equation with ideological 'vision' which is in fact containment).<sup>51</sup> In order that what is related through the narrative is tied to the 'perspective' of a certain character it is important that nothing outside his or her knowledge will obtrude. In verbal texts the conceptual distinction between visual and epistemological perspectives is important, and, as Genette notes, there has been much confusion in past discussions between 'who sees' and 'who speaks'. Verbalised narration often presents more than mere focalised description, contained as it is within a conceptual framework which can be identified (or not) with a certain character.

In visual narratives, particularly those not reliant on accompanying verbal narration, it is necessary to transfer conceptual frameworks and visual perspectives (i.e. all focalisations) into the visual. It would seem, then, that 'what a character knows' and 'what a character sees' are both the result of identifying a certain image content with a particular character 'perspective' (regardless of who is speaking, or sets him or herself up as

the narrator). When an image content is not identified as corresponding to the perspective of a particular character, it is as if the narrator is utilising knowledge 'beyond' that contained in an identified image, since the non-character identified focalisation is always external to the diegesis (it shows the diegesis from a point 'outside') and always involves a superior narrator position, in that the focalisation derives from a position denied to the character depicted. Thus Genette's classification of focalisation, depending as it does on the relation of the narrator's 'knowledge' and that identified as pertaining to a character, should be directly and simply applicable to a narrative which flows according to strictly correspondent images and angles of vision, such that points of view operate by a process of total replacement, with no intermingling.

Genette's classification is divided into three possibilities: (i) narrator > character (the narrator says more than the character knows): non-focalised narrative; (ii) narrator = character (the narrator says only what a given character knows): internally focalised narrative; (iii) narrator < character (the narrator says less than the character knows): externally focalised narrative.<sup>52</sup> Bergala (c1978) draws up a similar list of relations in his discussion of focalisation in visual narrative texts, to which he adds only the following: (iv) doubtful positions.<sup>53</sup> Problems arise in attempting to apply Genette's terms of classification because where he is able to distinguish expressions of knowledge, narrations, descriptions, we are forced to transfer not only what the narrator says and how he or she says it into a complete



visual statement, but also the content of the knowledge (what the character knows) into the same complete image. Since we are dependent on vision for knowledge, we can deal from the outset only with two terms: whether the image is character identified or not;<sup>54</sup> this makes both the first and third terms of Genette's classification difficult to apply. For a narrator to say more than a character knows would seem to apply to all instances which are not identified with a particular character viewpoint, and it is difficult to conceive of the distinction in visual narrative texts between non-focalised and externally focalised narration, where the representation of a character becomes the sign of non-character identified perspective. Where knowledge is both communicable and perceivable only visually, it would seem that we are faced with the simple question of whether the focalisation is situated within or without the diegesis, in other words, whether the viewpoint (as identified according to angle of vision) can be identified with a character or not: is the focalisation diegetically internal or external?<sup>55</sup>

Taking as an example the photoroman Night of Evil, (Fig.10) we can see that the changes in viewpoint can indeed be primarily classified according to whether they can be identified with a character in the diegesis or not. The two images on p.21, for instance, shift from the external to the internal, as the viewpoint of the bottom image is forcibly and explicitly (verbally) identified with the girl. Similarly, the bottom image of p.23 identifies the viewpoint outside the door with that of the threatening caller (even though he is as yet 'unidentified' in the



discourse). Even this simple analysis, however, presumes an idea of what the term 'identification' actually means, forced here to represent 'identification' as equivalent to 'identified viewpoint'. But what do 'identification' and 'knowing' actually mean when applied to a purely visual text? It is possible to 'identify' with certain aspects of a character even though he or she is part of the 'vision' offered by the text; in Le Curé (Fig.4) et le majeur, for instance, we undoubtedly 'identify' with the major to some extent: the narrative unmasking occurs simultaneously for us and for him; therefore we do not 'know' more than he does according to what is seen as central to the itinerary of the narrative; on the other hand the narrator (and, by implication, viewer) always 'knows' more in the end, even when (which is rare in photographic narratives) indicating less.<sup>56</sup>

Bearing all this in mind, we will, nevertheless have to proceed by distinguishing focalisations according to whether the viewpoints of the image can be identified with those of certain characters in the diegesis. Initially, then, this kind of focalisation is based on a notion of camera position -- we identify the position adopted by the camera as equivalent to that which a character would have to adopt in order to see what is represented in the image. Such a situation would normally, in film studies, be referred to as 'subjective camera', the film camera in a certain sense substituting for the eyes of the character. But is this enough? To begin with we might note that such an identification begs the question concerning the fundamental differences between human and camera vision, and the kind of transformation that this implies

(see Chapter 3). Furthermore, there is much more to visual signification than the use of camera position and framing, such that all variables of textual schemata might be mobilised as 'subjective' variants -- in fact all the variants which it was suggested above could be exploited in terms of the discourse.

This would mean that we would have to account for subjective focus, subjective framing, subjective angle, subjective lighting, subjective position and so on. While some of these organisational aspects of the discourse will extend from position, others might not, focus and brightness seeming more optional in establishing subjective viewing. This applies particularly to instances where the vision of the eye would normally be affected (reduced even) in certain circumstances, e.g. intoxication, bad light, physical and optical sensations relating to a moving position etc.. Here, the photographer will normally demonstrate, through the 'non-subjective' use of sharp focus, more legible light conditions or general stability and precision in the image, ~~so~~ that although we might be able to identify a certain position as equivalent to that of a character in the diegesis, this is not to say that 'position' is directly equivalent to 'seeing'.

There are other ways in which character focalisations actually represent a tacit agreement concerning the discourse which ignores the vagaries of the signifying text itself. The idea of an identified viewing equivalence proposes that, apart from the transference of image quality, the quantity of details can be identified as equivalent to those witnessed by the character. However, what is seen and what is presented in the image can, as already



noted, differ in a number of ways. The shape of the image can, for instance, enable, along with qualitative features, an expansion as well as a reduction in the view available to the eye; it is not impossible that a strictly correspondent 'view' of a character can include detail not available otherwise. With photography this might indeed be so common as to be generally the case; what has been described as the 'overspecification' of the photographic image tends towards expansion in detail. Both framing and focussing devices are important in this respect. A number of photographs which we identify as character focalisations consist of images in much sharper focus (and thus more detailed) than is likely according to the character's actual perception or indeed than the human eye is capable of; similarly the shape of the frame allows peripheral details which do not correspond to the norms of human perception. This means at least that even within the confines of a character identified focalisation the space for intervention on the part of the constructor or narrator is great; this also applies to the kind of prioritisation in the image which can be undertaken with disregard to the character identified psychology of vision, and this can also work the other way. In the two examples of character identified views from Night of Evil cited above, (Fig.10) the first, on p.21, offers a viewpoint we are meant to associate with that of the girl as she goes into the kitchen; the accompanying verbal text reads: 'But suddenly she found herself staring into two, huge bright eyes!' In the photograph the perspective point of the picture does not correspond exactly to the viewing position of the girl; the eyes of the cat, directed off-centre, are



not bright; the girl's viewing position (as indicated in the following image) is actually higher than that corresponding to the photograph and, presumably, further away. The close up used reduces the number of details, but, although the girl would have been capable of seeing more, the image actually corresponds to the psychology of seeing which would indicate that she would have 'seen' little more than the cat's eyes; if the image is visually reduced then it is 'psychologically expanded'. The example on p.23 also identifies (albeit retrospectively: the character not actually being introduced into the narrative space until the next image) a viewing position which we are unable to verify as being in strict correspondence to that actually taken by the character himself (it is likely he would have been further away). In this example too it is probable that the wide possibility of vision is 'psychologically' centred on the girl (which is highlighted by her being centred in the image). In both these cases the correspondence we accept is very much idealised -- the differences of actual human and photographic registration, the psychology of seeing, non-subjective and subjective focussings, legible organisations and so on all pointing to the fact that the equation of knowledge with the details of the image throws into question the relevant and exclusive views of the narrator and character.<sup>57</sup> Trying to relate the image to the 'actual' view of the character shows how any kind of expansion of detail indicates narrator > character, any kind of reduction in detail indicates narrator < character, but these are not necessarily related to viewing positions as such, most images representing some kind

of intermingling of focalisations.

Although we might feel capable, therefore, of distinguishing between a character and narrator (or rather non-character) identified viewpoint corresponding to internal and external focalisations, these represent merely poles of focalisation relating mainly to constructed viewing position. The actual details of the focalisation when related to the variables of discourse organisation show how the focalisations can vary not just between one image and the next but also within the same image; thus the complexity of dealing with 'identification'. The type of inexact focalising involved in the bottom image on p.21 of Night of Evil, simple though it appears (Fig.10) on the surface, can be seen as containing aspects of focalisation related to character (the girl, not in the shot, is definitely meant to be identified as focaliser) and the narrator (identified through the discrepancies between character and non-character viewpoints) such that the image could even be said to be internal and external to the diegesis at the same time. The difficulty of exact correspondence to character view in visual texts suggests that this kind of mixed focalising might represent the norm, and the whole question of relation in fact becomes a question of degree (even though some organisational aspects, especially angle of vision, become more important than others as focalisation indicators). To this we might add that angle of vision is itself a strongly connotative parameter of the image, such that even a primarily non-character identified focalisation can contain particular 'attitudinal colourings' pertaining to a character's conceptual viewpoint. The top image

on p.57 of Night of Evil, for example, is non-character (Fig.10) identified in that both characters are clearly represented within the image, but the camera angle and the lighting serve to overlay the depiction of the man with a character associated view. Even though camera position becomes the dominant indicator of viewpoint, each image can contain both character and narrator associations. There is, then, in visual narratives, a certain amount of fluidity and this also pertains to the establishment of viewpoint through purported position; even a position which can not be strictly identified as that of a character is usually tacitly accepted as such within certain limits -- this can apply to those positions which are near to that proposed for the character, and also to the classic filmic associated viewpoint where the character or part of the character is actually incorporated in the image (usually the head or shoulders or somewhere near the level of the eyes). The top image of p.57 of Night of Evil is an example of such an associated viewpoint.

It is thus possible that character identified viewpoints and those not so identified represent merely the two outer axes of strict focalisation, within which there is a certain fluidity, with the option of incorporated focalisations in the image. In a text which transfers strictly into the visual this visualisation can only be seen as a complex conglomerate of perspectives and associations.<sup>58</sup>

In photographic narratives focalisation signalling is carried out in a number of ways, and since a non-character identified viewpoint<sup>59</sup> usually forms the 'neutral' basis of a text, variations from this norm are signalled.



In the photoroman the identification of a viewpoint is generally achieved through the accompanying verbal text, e.g. as in the above 'But suddenly she found herself staring into two, huge, bright eyes!'; this is the major type of focalisation signalling to be found in combined visual/verbal texts. The identification can also be signalled cataphorically by the use of off-screen look followed by what the look achieves, which is common in purely visual texts (and especially in film: the eyeline match). It can also be signalled, as mentioned above, by the incorporation of part of the body within the viewing space. Shift in focalisation can also be unsignalled but deduced from narrative expectation, anaphoric or cataphoric reference and so on (the bottom image on p.23 of Night of Evil is likely to be that of the threatening (Fig.10) caller although only directly identified as such later). Occasionally a change in focalisation is signalled by a change in image frame. This latter is common in photoromans because, as a number of commentators have pointed out, particularly in reference to film, the visual tends to neutralise the identified aspect after a long sequence (or long shot), and the identification needs to be maintained. In film the classic answer to this problem is the alternation of shots fixing the character's position and shots from this position, although an obvious character associated position will not need this. In photographic narratives, where the identification is not underlined by the accompanying verbal text, the association of viewpoint can be left to context, but will often be maintained by the retention of viewpoint associated devices (e.g. binocular shapes, blurred vision

and so on). In the photoroman Threat from the Grave the (Fig.34) fact that the character is seeing herself in a hypnotic vision has to be maintained by the shape of the frame, thus clarifying an otherwise ambiguous sequence.

Here we are discussing character identified signalling, but change in viewpoint is a common feature of most visual narratives, contiguous or not according to the textual strategies and the exigencies of the discourse. A change in viewpoint itself does not signal a change in identified focalisation (see, for instance Le Curé et le majeur, where the viewpoint changes radically (Fig.4) but remains external). Up to now we have discussed non-character identified positions as narrator identified, but we might be more correct in talking about non-focalised images, indicating that an image which is not necessarily identified remains neutral and can not be regarded as focalised. The answer to this is of course that every image must be focalised in some way, but whether this focalisation can be identified with a character or not is another question. Often the narrator will seem to obtrude (particularly in the way the image is organised) but really we are talking about a position which is not that of a participant in the story, and are limited in static photographic narratives, without accompanying verbal text, to the polarities of focalisation either internal or external to the diegesis. Even in combined visual/verbal narratives, although a number of focalisations might be signalled by the verbal text, the visual alone is limited to this simple division.

Vanoye (1979) in discussing non-character identified viewpoints in film accords categories of focalis-

ation according to the relation of camera movement and image content. He proposes a 'zero focalisation' for all those images which show more than the characters (general shots, big shots), 'external focalisation' when the camera actually follows characters and registers their words and 'internal focalisation' for those shots which actually focus on the character followed.<sup>60</sup> Although possibly useful in providing for the relation of camera movement and position, these categories involve parameters not available to static visual discourse. However, relating focalisation to breadth of detail leads to dangerous questions of numerical evaluation, and focalisation is an abstract position (even shots which focus on characters and shots which follow characters always show more than the characters). Whether the character is central to or dominates the image does not necessarily affect the basic focalisation, which is more a question of narrator and character relation, or image and overall viewpoint. In our narrative Vanoye's 'zero-focalised', 'externally focalised' and 'internally focalised' images adopt a position outside the diegesis, and can thus only be contrasted ultimately with focalisations which adopt a position inside the diegesis.<sup>61</sup>

External or non-character identified focalisations can now be divided into 'existent' focalisations (on the 'real' objects contained within the constructed diegetic space) and 'ideational' or 'conceptual' focalisations (which involve speculations, memories, visions, or other orders of reality outside the diegesis, but focalised from within it). The latter seems to fall in between internal and external focalisations, though,



in that it involves a character identified view, but a view from outside the immediate diegetic situation. The use of this kind of focalisation can lead to complex combined images, particularly favoured by the makers of Victorian lantern slide sequences.<sup>62</sup> Such complex images can produce embedded focalisations, where the character is depicted in the main image in the act of 'seeing' him or herself depicted in a smaller framed area within the main image. In the hypnotic vision cited above the distance of the 'conceptual' from the 'real' narrative space is signalled by the frame. In the postcard set Down Home in Tennessee the shift to visionary focalisation (Fig.35) is indicated only by the verbal text -- the images themselves remaining, on their own, ambiguous -- and there also appears to be a discrepancy of focalisation between the visual and verbal: the visual adopting throughout an external focalisation, the verbal an internal one. This is in fact common with photoromans and other combined narrative texts of a similar kind.

### Person

The traditional conflation of 'who sees' and 'who speaks' in the analysis of written narrative becomes especially relevant to a discussion of visual texts where 'speaking' and 'seeing' are of necessity transferred onto the image. This also leads to a confusion of separate positions adopted towards the story on the part of the discourse which in verbal texts can be separated as focalisation and person. On the surface it appears that the verbal categories of person, first or third, in the

narrative apply directly to the internal and external focalisations mentioned above. External focalisation, where a position is adopted outside the diegesis, appears to correspond directly to third person narration; internal focalisation, from a position within the diegesis, would then correspond to first person narration.

However, when we come to look at first person narration in more detail the situation in visual narratives is not so clear cut. For instance, it could be said that every image is the vision of the I of the text, even if, with shifts in focalisation, these are different Is, for either the image represents another, or it represents another's view of one's self: no character can see themselves at any distance. Bal would agree with this view of the narrating instance: 'there is only one narrative person -- the first person',<sup>63</sup> and Genette expands on similar lines: 'in so far as the narrator can at any instant intervene as\_such in the narrative, every narrating is, by definition, to all intents and purposes presented in the first person'.<sup>64</sup> In visual narratives it is difficult to get beyond this, every image constituting a narrative vision whether coincident with that of a character or not.

Yet if our conception of person depends on the possible presence of the 'other' represented by the figure of the narrator, then what does this imply for visual narratives where the obtrusive intervention of the narrator is rare? In fact all narratives set up a number of positions and levels within which the narrative is played out, and a number of theorists have pointed out a long string of embedded relationships which intersect

it. Apart from real author (photographer, image constructor) and reader (spectator, viewer), the discourse can construct levels of relation pertaining to the implied author and reader, narrator and narratee, focaliser and implied addressee of focalisation, actors and acted upon. In visual texts the possibilities are reduced, and the narrating levels tend to coincide; this is particularly true of the narrator and the focaliser. In visual narratives it is rare, then, for the narrator to intervene as a presence in the narrative (which would anyway require the use of verbal text, or the use of a final or interspersed image of the narrator). It is also rare for the narrative to be contained within another, but where this happens the narrating levels have to be constantly kept intact by the use of visual containment (as in the temporal and visionary framing devices mentioned above).

Nevertheless, every narrator's status is, as Genette points out, a combination of narrative level (whether extra- or intra-diegetic: narrative in the first degree, or contained within another) and the relationship to the story (hetero- or homodiegetic: telling the story of another or one's own story).<sup>65</sup> The combination of these possibilities offers four categories of operation. The first (the extradiegetic/heterodiegetic paradigm) does not present particular problems for the visual narrative, nor does the third (extradiegetic/heterodiegetic) bearing in mind the visual problems of containment, and is indeed common as a series of images telling another's story directly. The second category (the extradiegetic/homodiegetic paradigm) and the fourth (intradiegetic/homodiegetic) however, present visual



narrative analysis with problems, mainly relating to the concept of homodiegetic narration itself. For a narrative to be homodiegetic the narrator will be telling a story he or she is active in either as hero (autodiegetic) or secondary character. Since visual narration per se confuses the seeing and the telling, telling the story of another could easily be represented by the image of a character with no particular narrator presence. Homodiegetic narration, however, would require an image representing the I as main or secondary protagonist. But considering that there is only one person of narration which is the I of the 'visualiser', it is not possible in visual narratives to identify the I (eye) of the one who sees with the I (eye) of the one seen. To take a simple example: Fulton's On the Way to Aldbury Hertfordshire, indicates (Fig.18) (through contextualisation of the work, general habit and working method of the photographer and the meaning of the title) that the two photographs form a record of two instances from a walk. They are thus examples of homodiegetic (autodiegetic) narration: the author telling his own story as hero. But the first image of the pair represents a walking figure we are tempted to identify as the narrator. A problem arises with this text which does not normally arise with Fulton's usual practice of presenting images as records of moments of the narrator/photographer's vision. In this example we tend, as usual in static photographic narrative texts, to identify the photographer (visualiser) as narrator in the first person, which also underlies the classification of focalisations into internal and external. Is it possible, though, that this image can be taken as a narrator telling

his own story in the third person? In contrast to the conclusion of Bal and Genette presented above, we would have to say that in purely visual narratives of this kind there is normally only one narrating person: the third person, since the visualisation involved depends on the witnessing of an event concerning another character.<sup>66</sup> Actually, it is Fulton's usual practice to present a series of photographs as the record of an event as 'visions' which do in fact constitute a first person narrative, and this is true of most single images in photographic collections.

The conflation of focalisation and narration in visual discourse thus means that we are faced with two norms relating to person -- the norm for single images representing a personal vision (first person) and the norm in narrative sequences representing a vision of someone else (third person). This now leads us to consider those intermediary stages: self portraits and the like, associative camera position coupled with a part of the body and combined external and internal focalisations as belonging to a Bergala-like category 'doubtful positions'. Such a conclusion can only be drawn from the difficulty in applying the exactitude in Genette's classification to texts where certain distinctions and subtleties of person are denied.

### Looks

Up to now focalisation has been discussed as concerning a look either internal or external to the diegesis. A visual discourse, however, is capable of



exploiting the look of the represented actant towards both the inside and the outside of the diegetic space. Thus we have to consider the implications of intra- and extradiegetic looks from within. Apart from the looks which tie in the focalised space and contribute to textual cohesion, the visual text is also capable of throwing the look outward, directly to the reader as it were. We must begin by saying that this is not equivalent to a focalisation of the discourse, which depends on the positioning of the view and the constitution of the image-as-seen, it is rather (i) a look from within to another character in a position which coincides with that of the viewer or (ii) a look directed at the spectator. In certain texts the distinction of the addressee (which is vital in establishing the operation of narrative levels) is not so clear cut. In Night of Evil, for instance, (Fig.10) the authoritarian stance of the police officer on p.61 is increased by the use of full page and a centred gaze directed at the reader, which can also be identified as a character focalisation since the girl is identified with camera position. In a later image (p.63) the boyfriend directs his look outwards, but this time towards the position of narrating. The latter, which bypasses character directed looks (intradiegetic) literally cuts across the diegetic space, and its use in narrative is often disturbing, representing as it does a kind of 'infringement' of narrative levels normally based on symmetrical relations (character to character; narrator to narratee). Diegetic equilibrium in the discourse depends on communication on the same level. This is a technique of infringement which is rarely found in verbal narratives. It is not



common in visual narratives, but Le Curé et le majeur (Fig.4) contains two examples of direct address in six images. The facility with which the infringement takes place here shows the efficacy of its use for reasons of empathy, or audience identification, but it is carried out in such a direct and simple way that it probably bears a close relation to the 'aside' in the theatre, which is similarly rare in more subtle texts.

### Tense

There is one remaining type of positioning, according to Genette, which the discourse adopts in relation to the story, which is the tense used in the narrative. This is not to be confused with temporal discrepancies between the discourse and the story outlined at the beginning of this chapter; it concerns rather a stance taken towards the story as a whole. According to Genette, although the narrating can only be undertaken subsequently to what it relates, the discourse can still adopt certain positions corresponding to the use of past, present or future tense in the verb, continuous or interpolated. We have already noted (see Chapter 3) that the photograph is itself lacking in such strictly defined temporality, limited as it is to a particular moment, a constant present, or at most a present falling into past. Tense thus constitutes another of those complexes of strict categories (along with focalisation and person) of which the visual text alone is incapable,<sup>67</sup> but for the mobilisation of which it will often be reliant on the subtleties of the accompanying verbal text. Even

a future 'projected' vision will need constant temporal containment and verbal support, which will in fact 'remove' the temporal sequence from the temporality of the narrative instance.

### Conclusion

It will be seen from the above that the analysis of discourse applied to a visual narrative is necessarily reduced -- different operations are conflated, and some are unavailable, in the compulsion to 'visualise'. For this reason a purely visual extensive narrative is rare, although when it is achieved there are many aspects of the way the text is organised which become apparent when the work is regarded on a level of discourse; there are definite temporal discrepancies between discourse and story, organisations of space and detail, identified viewing positions and so on. In attempting to limit the discussion to purely or primarily visual capacities, however, a certain type of operation which results from the successful combination of visual and verbal texts is not considered. An overall typology of visual narratives as indicated in all examples mentioned in Chapter 1 would reveal, though, that combined texts are certainly more common. The operation of narratives which utilise both visual and verbal texts will be the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

4. Discourse

1. See Fowler 1977, pp.71-122.
2. Bal 1977, p.8.
3. Although the analysis will be concerned more with discourse operation than a series of relations.
4. See especially Metz 1974a, pp.108-145, Burch 1973 orig.pub.1969, pp.3-16 and Wyborny 1981.
5. Burch op.cit. orig.pub.1969, pp.5-8.
6. Ibid., pp.8-15.
7. Ibid., p.51.
8. See Wyborny 1981, pp.130-131.
9. Although this kind of differentiation, between characters and settings, is emphasised by Chatman and other theorists dealing with discourse/story relations.
10. See Metz 1974a and Metz 1974b.
11. Metz 1974b, p.170.
12. Genette 1980 orig.pub.1972, p.31.
13. Metz 1974b, p.170.
14. Although a fuller investigation of a particular narrative could consider the division of the discourse into larger and smaller units. Here, as elsewhere in the chapter, we are concerned more with minimal constituents.
15. See Chatman 1978b, pp.53-54.
16. Although easily defined at story level (see Chapter 2).



17. Chatman op.cit., p.62.
18. See Hernadi 1980, pp.201-203.
19. Vanoye 1979, p.25.
20. Genette 1980 orig.pub.1972, p.34.
21. Ibid., p.35.
22. Ibid., p.40.
23. Chatman 1978b, p.64.
24. Metz 1974a, p.216.
25. A text such as Michals' Private Acts (Fig.21) is based on the play of analepsis and restoration.
26. This is, of course, a result of the way in which the slide is pulled across the source of illumination (lantern slides were invariably pulled through by hand, especially in the days before the invention of the slide carrier) not a direct result of the sequence of images on the slide itself. A sequence of slide characters 1→6 could be, and often was designed to be, projected 6→1. This introduces the possibility of 'active' and 'passive' focus, particularly in chase sequences, emphasising the character(s) chased before the character(s) doing the chasing or vice versa.
27. See Genette 1980 orig.pub.1972, pp.86-87.
28. Ibid., p.93. Presumably because this would imply a lack of caesurae. However, this would mean that any filmic sequence consisting of one long shot (of which Warhol, for one, was fond) or indeed of equally long shots and equally long ellipses, would not be narrative.
29. This also applies, of course, to the literary text.
30. Genette op.cit., p.95.
31. Chatman 1978b, p.68.
32. Ibid., pp.71ff.

33. Ibid., p.74.
34. 'Stretch' would also involve ellipsis, which is, as has been noted, more or less inevitable.
35. Genette op.cit., p.113.
36. It might be illuminating to consider, here, relating the capacity of the visual series to the aspectual system of Russian verbs. One might thus conclude that the image series is capable only of 'perfective' narrative signification, since it is incapable, or limited, in respect of process, duration and repetition, which are the domain of the imperfective aspect.
37. Chatman 1978b, p.96.
38. Ibid., pp.97-98.
39. See Genette op.cit., pp.161-164.
40. These categories more or less correspond to the major areas of consideration outlined by Genette.
41. Peters op.cit., p.90.
42. See Chapter 2.
43. One would have to include here limitations in distinction between indicative and subjunctive mood, as well as in tense and aspect (see also note 36 above).
44. Genette op.cit., p.162.
45. Uspensky (1972, p.16) proposes the frame as the primary containment of position, and the provider of symbolic meaning in the artistic text, since it is the point which identifies the position concomitant with 'point of view' and underlies the structure of the text. In visual texts this frame is literal.
46. If applicable (i.e. established as valid textual positions) otherwise the viewpoint of sender and receiver, and also implied constructor and implied reader.
47. Which can be allied to all aspects of image 'organisation'.

48. See in particular Chatman 1978b, Rimmon-Kenan 1983 and Fowler 1977.

49. In common usage, although its literal meaning is directly related to the visual.

50. Genette op.cit., p.163.

51. In relation to the usage of 'point of view' as indicated in note 49 above. Ideology is more than a mere 'vision', it can be seen rather as a limitation of signifying possibilities (see Chapter 6).

52. Genette op.cit., p.189.

53. Bergala op.cit., p.54.

54. Although this is again ignoring the possibility of a separate narrator identified position; in visual texts the narrating persona is difficult to establish and maintain separately.

55. It is possible, however, that a further distinction could be made among external focalisations between those focalisations which are strictly diegetic and those which are not, i.e. those which directly involve characters and/or immediate diegetic space and those whose 'content' is extraneous to it. The interpolated image of the 'mad' face of the culprit (who is at this point absent from the immediate diegetic space) on p.64 of Night of Evil (Fig.10) is a possible example of the latter. This is, however, a distinction according to content not viewpoint, and it does not affect the primary relation of looks upon which focalisation is based. Furthermore, even though not present in the immediate diegetic situation, the character is in fact part of the diegesis, which the narrator can never be.

56. Since the information has to be provided visually.

57. 'Narrator' here, as above and below, applying to the implied constructor of the image sequence, not to a separate narrator position.

58. A number of combined or multi-focalised images are also possible with separate framings within the same image. The possibilities are increased when one considers the use of mirrors, reflecting surfaces and the like. This indicates, again, focalisation's epistemological dependence on looking.



59. And a viewpoint not strictly allied to a separately established narrator position.

60. Vanoye op.cit., pp.151-152.

61. Although the external focalisations could be divided into 'close' and 'distant' positions, bearing in mind that the space between them could be graduated. The opening of Going to Heaven is a good example of 'movement' into the diegetic space (compare the opening of Citizen Kane, and the related classic film technique which probably influenced this photographic series) wherein the position initially taken by the camera is relatively distant from the later diegetic space of the inside of the house. However, it also represents a viewpoint close to the narrative space connected to the arrow, and is thus, in this sense, distant and close to different but chronologically related parts of the overall narrative space at the same time. Such assessments are difficult to undertake in static visual narrative texts since they deal with questions of degree, distance and immediate and projected spaces. (Fig.30)

62. And their off-shoots, especially postcard sets. Such embedded visions lent themselves particularly well to the illustrated song set, where the images often provided a complete visual context picturing both singer and the result of his or her imaginings at the same time.

63. Bal 1977, p.34.

64. Genette 1980 orig.pub.1972, p.247.

65. Ibid., p.248.

66. This would only apply to those narratives where a character is visualised.

67. Or in which respect the visual text is weak.

5. COMBINED TEXTS

COMBINED TEXTSIntroduction

Up to this point the discussion of narrative, its constitution, and the operation of text and discourse has concentrated on the visual. Such an emphasis is not uncommon in discussing works with a potent visual layer (this is especially true of film studies), but it must be said that the photographic image, even in series, is rarely found in isolation. It is in fact a commonplace that the visual image in our society is not often found alone, and is usually to be found in combination with verbal texts. Although many analysts concentrate on the visual layer, the ubiquity of combination and the need for further study has not escaped the attention of some commentators; thus Barthes, whose work on the combination of visual and verbal still stands out in the field, made the following comment: 'From the moment of the appearance of the book the linking of text and image is frequent, though it seems to have been little studied from a structural point of view.'<sup>1</sup>

This comment, written in 1964, applies particularly well, and still applies, to photographic texts. It is in fact unusual to encounter any single image without at least an accompanying caption, but the study of textual combination has made little headway since Barthes' remark was made. Even work which has been undertaken on combined texts still tends to regard the visual layer as separate, and often primary in terms



of the analysis. This is especially surprising in film studies, where the combination involves the interaction of visual, written, gestural, musical, auditory and object systems. It is not surprising, however, when one considers the complexity of the issue. Apart from the fact that texts are constructed from a number of different sign systems in cross-contamination, the purely visual text is contaminated by the verbal in its reading. This is a point made above<sup>2</sup> which has been put most succinctly by Burgin, who notes that 'the putatively autonomous language of photography is never free from the determinations of language itself'<sup>3</sup> and 'even a photograph with no actual writing on or around it is traversed by language when it is read'.<sup>4</sup> This would indicate that the major sign systems can not be seen as 'unique' in the way they operate even when separate, and the result of combined texts would be layer upon layer of semiotic contamination.<sup>5</sup> This might be part of the reason why the analysis of combined texts attempts a kind of 'taking apart' of different facets, shying away from the analysis of the resulting combination. However, it is only through analysing the particular roles played by different systems that the resulting text can be decoded successfully.

Despite the lack of analyses concerning the specifics of semiotic cooperation, various writers on photography have drawn general conclusions about the combination of verbal and visual, pronouncements usually made from the conviction that the verbal is somehow more 'important'. Thus Berger makes the assumption that 'in the relation between a photograph and words, the photograph begs for an interpretation, and the words usually supply

it. The photograph, irrefutable as evidence but weak in meaning, is given a meaning by the words.<sup>6</sup> Even if this is felt to be true of single image/verbal text combinations it is hard to reconcile with the tendency to concentrate on the visual in the analysis of serial works (notably film). One might also begin by questioning a number of aspects of this didactic statement, namely the denial of the single photograph's valid and independent ability to create meaning, based on a glib distinction between 'evidence' and 'meaning'. A true assessment of priorities in combined texts will only come from a detailed analysis of the different roles the different sign systems have to play in their combined effort to create a single meaningful unit.

### Types of Sign

The analysis of different roles will have to start from a consideration of the nature of the textual signs which combine to construct the text as a whole. One would expect the different sign systems to operate according to their own capabilities and efficacies, and to rely, in combination, on the cooperating system to compensate for weakness or inadequacy. In other words, one would expect, in combined visual and verbal texts, that what the verbal text achieves will be directly and adversely related to what the visual is incapable of achieving, or achieves only weakly, and vice versa.

The achievement of a combined visual and verbal text will thus be seen, in the first place, as related to the nature of the signs; it will represent the combi-

nation of 'motivated' and 'conventional' signification.<sup>7</sup> One would thus expect visual signs to represent the visual (or one might say 'descriptive') more efficaciously and directly than the verbal -- object appearances being presented in a direct and succinct way which the verbal is not capable of -- and, concomitantly, one would expect the verbal to represent more directly and succinctly the spoken and auditory aspect of the textual object. Chatman notes, too, that verbal signs cope better with time, and visual signs with space.<sup>8</sup> Here, however, he is talking of tendencies resulting from the exigencies of the text rather than the actual capabilities of the signs; verbal signs are, of course, capable of the signification of 'space, and visual of time', according to their own semiotic characteristics.<sup>9</sup> Really, one would have to be aware of the exigencies of the particular text taken as a signifying unity built upon semiotic cooperation.

These conclusions represent the most obvious poles of systems within a shared signification, but between them lies a vast area of cooperation which is harder to pin down, resulting as it does from the exigencies of a combined text which demands certain roles in the signification be played by the more efficacious or direct signifiers. These can vary at each point in the text depending on what the text is attempting to achieve, and the emphases of the analysis.

It is probably best for present purposes, then, to proceed according to procedures and categories already suggested; the analysis of textual combination can thus be carried out on various levels. Beyond the materiality



of the sign and general questions of semiotic capability which have been dealt with above (see Chapter 3) one must distinguish according to formal features, single from serial images and combinations, contributions to the establishment of the narrative text, the operation of the discourse and so on. Only then can questions of visual or verbal primacy be considered.

### Types of Verbal Text

It is apparent that single photographic images and images in series are combined with a great variety of types of verbal text. In considering what these entail, and how the different types of formal combinations might affect the operation of the text as combined, we are faced, from the outset, with a set of pre-existent categories in use: notably 'title', 'caption' and 'text' -- widely used terms which are rarely if ever properly defined. Among works which purport to deal with visual and verbal combination only Newhall (1952) has attempted to formally distinguish one from the other, although the different types of accompanying verbal text are treated by both Vanoye (1979) and Porcher (1976) in passing. The fact that these lexical items are in common use and applied to different types of verbal text would tend to indicate that some kind of differentiation is possible.

In Les Mots dans la peinture (Skira/Les Sentiers de la création; Geneva 1969) a work which deals mainly with verbal texts embedded in the visual, Butor claims that any literary work can be divided into two basic texts: the body of the work and its title: 'toute oeuvre

littéraire peut être considérée comme formée de deux textes associés: le corps (essai, roman, drame, sonnet) et son titre, pôles entre lesquels circule une électricité de sens, l'un bref l'autre long...'<sup>10</sup> Such an idea would also apply to any work which uses a title as a single unit as opposed to a main body whether single or serial, and it would seem that 'title' can be regarded as the preliminary verbal textual type which can be easily distinguished. It can only be primarily distinguished, however, by its detachment from the main body and is thus to be formally defined first of all by its position. A title is commonly distinguished by placement in relation to the body of the work: centred, capitalised, detached, or otherwise visually (spatially and/or typographically) distinguished from the work itself, whether this work contains purely visual, combined visual and verbal or purely verbal signs.

A title, however, must also be distinguishable from other types of verbal text by its function in relation to the work. From this point of view a title would tend to remain more 'detached' from the body of the work and not as integrated into the content of the work as would a caption, possibly, or extensive verbal text. Newhall states that a title (here, the title of a single photograph) is 'an identification stating of whom or what, where and when a photograph was made'<sup>11</sup> but giving us little that is specific, the latter being a function commonly carried out by a 'caption' or a 'text'. Unfortunately, it does not seem possible that title is the only kind of accompanying verbal text which provides this kind of information; there is no reason why it cannot be provided

in what is usually thought of as a caption or a more extensive accompanying verbal text. Such a classification according to the content noted in a limited corpus will not therefore lead us to a title's distinguishing features.

In his analysis of filmic texts Vanoye goes further and attempts to identify and describe titles according to Jakobsonian type function: connative, referential, aesthetic, along with the relations the title enjoys with the reader, the narrative text as a whole, other titles and itself.<sup>12</sup> These criteria, although helpful in outlining the kind of role a title can play in the text, still do not indicate exactly why a title can be called such. Furthermore, the kind of functions which Vanoye describes are, again, not limited to the title of a work, and the same functional and relational categories could be applied to other types of accompanying verbal text. We are left, again, with the fact of visual position as the most tangible of defining characteristics.

Such a consideration is not as limiting as it might at first appear. Vanoye points to visual position as an important factor in his postulation that it is one of the main functions of title (and not of any other accompanying verbal statement) to 'programme' the reading of a narrative (and also non-narrative) work. The title must thus occupy such space in the text as distinguishes it as initial and overall statement. Thus the actual formal considerations are paramount in preliminary definition which can lead us to a consideration of function. Above all, the title must be positioned in some way initially in or above the text, spatially and/or typographically separated in some way from other written or printed verbal



signs. Only then can its specific relation to the image or images be discussed.

The linguistic form of the title can now be seen as significant, and the relation of title and narrative will verify itself in the reading. It is common for a statement or proposition of any kind<sup>13</sup> when identified as a title to become summative of the whole work and prepare our reading of the work (bearing in mind that titles are, and are usually meant to be, read before the work is looked at). A title is not necessarily to be distinguished by its content: whatever this is, the focus of the title will become the focus of the reading. But there are general tendencies, particularly in the limited corpus of examples chosen here, and possibly indicative of titling tendencies with photographic works. If the title emphasises the main protagonist or object (Michals' The Unfortunate Man, The Fallen Angel, Fulton's 100 Mile Walking Stick) the vagaries of the text as a whole come to support the title by making the reader aware of a protagonist or object as highlighted (whether this aspect is visually highlighted is another matter). Such preparation can also be coupled with a function of identification (particularly if no other verbal text is involved); the title can identify situations of place (Michals' Christ in New York, Fulton's The 'Yark' River Maine), time (Michals' 5.15a.m. April 22, 1903), type of work (Michals' Portrait of Vincent and Esta), or, especially in the case of narrative texts, can summarise an event (Michals' The Woman is Frightened by the Door, Fulton's On the Way to Aldbury Hertfordshire).<sup>14</sup> There are a variety of usages, with a tendency towards the summative, or emphatic

of main object or protagonist, or merely providing background information. We can, however, talk only of tendencies since these functions do not necessarily distinguish 'title' from other accompanying verbal texts, notably 'caption'. Beyond representing the establishment of an initial and/or overall statement, 'spatially and/or typographically distinguished, we have little to go on.

The difficulty of specific definition is highlighted in those visual texts (either single or serial images) where the image is accompanied by one short verbal text. A single text is already distinct, and as long as it remains a short statement can be referred to either as caption or title. The overriding considerations seem, therefore, to concern the length of the statement rather than the content. Certainly Newhall defines caption according to a 'norm' (again probably based on a limited corpus) of length: 'briefly stated information usually occupying no more than four short lines which adds to our understanding of the image and often influences what we think of it.'<sup>15</sup> Apart from the reference to length (a title of any more than two lines would be unusual but not impossible) there is nothing in this definition which could not apply to a title or similar accompanying reference, or indeed to a longer text. Similarly, when Newhall goes on to analyse the four main types of caption -- 'enigmatic', 'miniature essay', 'narrative' and 'additive' -- the analysis of content, although it goes some of the way towards outlining the types of relation between photograph and written text, fails to explain just why these accompanying texts are 'captions' and not 'titles' or 'texts'.



In photographic texts with accompanying verbal statement(s) what is commonly regarded as a 'caption' appears primarily to be distinguished, as in the case of 'title', by position, in that it is to be expected below the image. In classic photojournalistic practice (which provides the basis for Newhall's definitions) this is indeed usually the case. In such a case we are dealing with images which are not normally titled. Nevertheless, there are also cases of captions relating to images near, if not necessarily adjacent, to them, although in this kind of practice the information supplied by the caption which normally hinges on object and character identification (as opposed to background information relating to the situation of photographing which can be provided elsewhere) necessitates the close proximity of visual and verbal texts. However, if the normal space occupied by this kind of accompanying text is below the image it is worth pointing out that in art practice the base of the image is the space normally allotted to title; even our spatial distinction might thus be invalid. Given these practices, and the fact that the title and caption can not ultimately be distinguished by position, length or content, it would seem that the distinction 'title' as opposed to 'caption' has no value.

Such a conclusion does little to establish different types of accompanying text, but there is still a variety of verbal textual types. In fact, if it is necessary in the text as a whole to distinguish different types of accompanying text, then this will be signalled, and usually typographically, but it need not always be the case and will relate ultimately to the exigencies



of the text as a whole. Other ways in which different types of text are distinguished relate more directly to the relation the written or printed texts hold with the visual text they are accompanying. A simple example of photojournalistic practice taken from The Guardian (Fig.36) front page shows first of all how a distinction can be created within a singly positioned text on the basis, primarily, of purely typographical criteria. The 'title' 'Explosions Aftermath' is formally distinguished by capitalisation from the rest of the text which, as is indicated by the use of colon, is meant to be an expansion of it. In this case, where we are justified in using the term 'title', the dual distinction title/non-title is signalled in the text. Here, the title tends towards a cryptic preparation for the more expansive caption (or text?). Ultimately, however, it shows us merely that titles, whether cryptic, or complex and full grammatical statement, tend to be correspondingly short.

All of the above goes to show the difficulty in making absolute distinctions, especially without regard to the exigencies of the individual combined text. Where distinctions need to be made they will be indicated in the text, and primarily by typographical criteria. When such distinctions are made we are left with different portions of an overall verbal accompaniment which relate to the image and the text as a whole in different ways. In such cases, as divisions are signalled in this way, we are possibly right to talk about 'title', 'caption' and 'text', otherwise the distinction does not tell us much, and we would be better referring to the accompanying 'text' in all cases.<sup>16</sup> Distinctions are the establishment

of categories in the text by the text which tend to be defined in opposition; this kind of criterion is used by Newhall in her definition of the third usual type of accompaniment, the 'text', which she defines as 'the main literary statement accompanying a series of photographs, usually presenting information about the theme and its background not contained in photographs and captions'<sup>17</sup>. Here, Newhall doubtless has in mind the main essay in a feature, which does not purport specifically to identify the content of particular photographs. But whether the main essay in a photojournalistic feature can be said to be 'accompanying' in the first place, and in what way, is a major question. Again, beyond considerations of size and possibly position (supposedly long and nonadjacent) there is nothing in the outline of content which could not be applied to title and caption apart from the exclusive disclaimer 'not contained in photographs and captions'. The information provided by accompanying text(s) can be of many types, and need not be limited to statements in certain positions; nor need the information provided by 'captions' in close proximity to the image be necessarily directly related to visual content. Even in our example of newspaper practice the (Fig.36) information provided by the accompanying 'caption' (which is no less a 'text' for being short and near the image) varies between that which can be visually identified: 'The bows of the wrecked...tanker', and that which is not 'contained' in the photographs: 'Panamanian registered...Petrogen One, one of the two vessels which exploded...etc.'. Furthermore, if a written or printed text of any length 'accompanies', even in close proximity,



with background statements and extraneous information, it is questionable just how much it can be said to form part of a 'combined text'. This is possibly behind Newhall's statement that 'Text, no matter how closely related to the photographs is a complete and independent statement of words'.<sup>18</sup>

The inability to postulate anything other than tendencies and the variety of textual types concerned indicate that absolute definitions of 'title', 'caption' and 'text' are neither possible nor desirable. Where distinctions need to be made these will be indicated by the text itself. In some cases, as in the example from The Guardian, there will be a definite typographical (Fig.36) indication, and 'title' will be indicated; in other examples, like Fulton's 100 Mile Walking Stick, where (Fig.19) the accompanying verbal statements are variously distinguished (by separation, centring, use of italics and roman, large and small capitals, upper and lower case) it would be difficult to make any definitive assessment of 'title' as opposed to 'caption', which is also true of the Fulton images with only one short identifying statement (e.g. Grims Ditch / Ancient Pathway (Fig.13) / Hertfordshire), nor would it be profitable to do so. As for 'text', whether this is to be closely related to or independent of the images is a question which can only be answered by examining the combined text as a whole in detail; every accompanying verbal statement is a 'text' no matter how long or where placed. I propose to use the term 'text' in reference to all types of accompanying statement, with a possible distinction between 'title' and 'body' if this is indicated by the work.



Thus we return to Butor (1969), who operates a similar distinction. Butor, however, was concerned with the incorporation of the verbal within the frame of the visual. This is a feature which must be considered in beginning to analyse the photographic narrative text in more detail, for there are, here, a number of possibilities. Indeed, any accompanying verbal text can, within certain physical limitations concerning length, be superimposed on the visual. The incorporation of shorter textual statements and titles is a particular feature of the magic lantern slide. In the photoroman the incorporation of verbal fragment within the frame is a common and valuable method of verbal/visual integration and anacrusis. A distinction must be made, however, between incorporated texts and textual fragments which accompany images, and those which arise more integrally from the images themselves. Verbal texts which fall into the latter category, and are commonly thought to have arisen in photographic texts as a result of their widespread use in comic strip, are speech 'bubbles' and thought 'clouds' (actually both cloud shaped, but usually graphically distinguished by their connection to either the mouth or the head of the character).<sup>19</sup> Here again it must be stressed that functionally they cannot ultimately be distinguished from accompanying verbal texts placed outside the image, which often provide the same information: in the case of direct speech, with the use of quotation marks (see the Nadar/Chevreur interview) -- this was (Fig.8) in fact the norm in earlier photographic narratives before speech bubbles were adopted. Although the incorporation of the verbal into the visual is a particular feature

of the economical style of photoroman, such texts are only here distinguished formally.

The analysis of texts in combination can thus begin from formal considerations: whether photographic images are accompanied by written, printed or spoken texts; whether internal or external to the picture frame; whether close to, above or below the image; whether formally distinguished into 'title' and 'body' or other; whether integral or non-integral in terms of picture content. A more detailed functional analysis can begin from this point.

### Relational Function

When Barthes noted the ubiquity of visual/verbal combinations and the lack of structural analyses he was prefacing his own work on the subject, which remains seminal. His two essays dealing with the combination of the photographic image and printed verbal text 'Le Message photographique' and 'Rhétorique de l'image'<sup>20</sup> provided the point d'appui for subsequent work on the subject, of which there has been little.

In both articles Barthes was at pains to stress the connotative function of the accompanying text, which he felt had come to separate present day text/image combinations from a more 'illustrative' relation in the past: 'the text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to "quicken" it with one or more second order signifieds. In other words...the image no longer illustrates the words; it is now the words which, structurally, are parasitic on the image.'<sup>21</sup> However, even at the

end of the earlier article Barthes had come to admit that certain types of shorter more closely identifying texts (usually referred to as 'captions') seemed to connote less than others (notably what is usually referred to as 'title' and longer 'text'), i.e. that the specificity of the signified of the 'caption' was often far removed from a signified of connotation, whose character 'is at once general, global and diffuse',<sup>22</sup> and that 'the closer the text to the image, the less it seems to connote it'<sup>23</sup> -- that in reality we are more likely dealing with degrees of amalgamation. And in fact, despite the overall emphasis and conclusion of the first article, various possibilities were outlined: that the text makes explicit, or provides a stress, that it sometimes amplifies a set of connotations, that a closely identified 'caption' seems to have a duplicative function such that it appears to be included in the denotation, that the text<sup>24</sup> sometimes invents new signifieds which are retroactively projected into the image, that the text can even contradict the image so as to produce a compensatory connotation, etc. -- actually a variety of functions spread across a variety of forms, united only under the belief that some kind of cooperative venture is taking place as 'second order signification', and that the text has a 'repressive' function as regards the creation of meaning.

In the later article Barthes made more effort to specify the nature of the relationship of image and text, and it is here that he introduced the terms 'anchorage' and 'relay'. The first of these appears to emphasise the denotative function of the accompanying text (a response to the polysemic nature of the image) in a kind of selective



elucidation: 'at the level of the literal message, the text...helps to identify purely and simply the elements of the scene and the scene itself'<sup>25</sup>; it is thus an anchorage of possible denotations by nomenclature. The term 'relay', on the other hand, is reserved for texts where 'text...and image stand in complementary relationship, the words, in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level, that of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis'<sup>26</sup>. Here, Barthes would appear to be concerned more specifically with narrative texts of the type we are dealing with, although not expressly discussing serial imagery. Thus he concludes: 'Relay is less common...it can be seen particularly in cartoons and comic strips.'<sup>27</sup> This would lead us to conclude that the functions 'anchorage' and 'relay' can be distinguished according to the use of single or serial imagery, but it is difficult to see how the functions of the combinations can remain quite separate. To begin with, most 'relay' type combinations inevitably involve the deictic function, and 'anchorage' type combinations inevitably involve the reference to some diegesis or anecdotal level. The newspaper example, for instance, combines both deictic (Fig.36) and diegetic propositions in the same statement (a distinction which it might be better to see as relating to the use of nominal and verbal groups -- NP and VP, the basic functional units of proposition in transformational-generative analysis), but these also relate to features either present in (denotative) or absent from (realised at a higher level) the image.<sup>28</sup> If anything, the terms 'anchorage' and 'relay' point towards general tendencies

in text/image relations, but these areas are themselves related to problems concerning more detailed functions of identification and expansion.

Allied to these are further problems of a conceptual nature, some outlined by Barthes in his articles, concerning the very notions of 'illustration', 'duplication' and 'redundancy' -- problems which involve a much more detailed consideration of text/ image combination either with single or serial images. These appear to me to fall into certain categories. Firstly, does the text or does the image or do both, and in what way, undertake the function of identifying and specifying ('denotatively' or 'sigmatically') the features of the aesthetic object? Secondly, is the information given by the text or the image additional (emphatic?), duplicative (redundant?) or contradictory, and in what way does this operate? Thirdly, is the relation between the image and the verbal signs simultaneously or successively autonomous (parallel?) or symbiotic, and how does this operate? This might then lead us to consider whether one aspect of the combined text does indeed dominate the other (as visual signs, following Barthes, are felt to do).<sup>29</sup>

Attempts have been made to broaden the terms of the discussion along similar lines. Following Barthes, Bassy (1974) attempts to outline five criteria which underly the analysis of the relation of image and verbal text, in which the distinction of 'anchorage' and 'relay' represents merely the first analytical category. In Bassy's terms 'anchorage' assures both the denomination and finally the codification of the image, whereas with 'relay' the linguistic message explains, develops or extends the

image. Despite the fact that Bassy is attempting to work at a further level of abstraction, there are immediately problems in the lack of conceptual distinctions. One might ask, for example, how the difference between 'explanation' (relay) and 'identification' (anchorage) can be maintained in the verbal text, and whether they can be ultimately separated. Bassy's second conceptual category for consideration in undertaking a semiotic analysis of combined texts concerns whether the text and image are tied by 'contiguity' or by 'analogy'. This appears to concern the question of whether the linguistic message in some way complements the image, by completing or prolonging it, or whether they both relate analogously to each other, or to a pre-existent 'réalité existentielle mais hypothétique'<sup>30</sup>. It is hard to see how this kind of distinction can be successfully separated from the deictic/diegetic which underlies the 'anchorage'/'relay' distinction. This also applies to the third category, which supposedly separates the 'syntagmatic' from the 'paradigmatic'. In 'syntagmatic' relation of the type Bassy proposes the verbal text and the image are said to entertain between them relationships of predicative or attributive order (e.g. image: subject, text: predicate) which takes us straight back to 'ties of contiguity' and 'relay'. 'Paradigmatic' relations lead directly back to the 'analogous' relation and identification of 'anchorage'. The fourth distinction, which involves two different types of denotation: 'designatum' and 'definitum', concerns the nature of identification: whether this is merely a matter of the verbal giving name to an already identifiable object, or whether the verbal contains the



crux of the identification. Here, Bassy, working from a notion of verbal primacy, actually fails to engage the related problem of textual redundancy. Finally, Bassy proposes a distinction based on whether the image's énoncé has a structure analogous to that of the verbal (though how this can be substantiated he does not say), or displays a system which is unassimilable to the linguistic expression. This appears to duplicate the second category in some way, while involving the tautology of analysing according to a revealed structure which can only be revealed as a result of the analysis. The kind of analysis presented by Bassy, which is self-referential and conceptually somewhat vague, will not take us much closer to engaging the fundamental problems of the relation between text and image.<sup>31</sup>

Another text which tries to approach the problem from outside as it were is that of Rio (1978), where he attempts, in a way similar to Bassy, to outline four levels of relation between speech and the image, by presenting conclusive categories before considering specific examples. The first of these categories, which involves the activation of worldview, cosmology, ensemble of concepts which organise a given society and the iconic models which this ensemble elaborates, relates back to the ideological function of connotation as already suggested by Barthes. The remaining three categories duplicate the general tendencies of relation already discussed (e.g. (ii) the speech and the image are constituent parts of the same message) but with particular concern for visual/verbal primacy: either (iii) the image pretending to visualise a discourse (illustration) or (iv) the speech

trying to elucidate the image (critical discourse). These categories, while they are useful, like Bassy's, in pointing to general areas of concern, do little to help in throwing light on the problems when applied to specific texts.<sup>32</sup> In the latter analysis, for instance, the very concepts 'illustration' and 'elucidation' are in need of explanation, as is the nature of 'autonomy' and 'symbiosis'. Thus it still appears to me that there are fundamental problems in the relation of photographic image and verbal text which relate to the three main questions suggested above. These problems will be taken as referring to (i) identification, (ii) duplication and (iii) autonomy.

### Identification

Problems connected to the function of identification concern the main denominative function of the literal text as expressed by Barthes as 'anchorage': 'At the level of the literal message, the text...helps to identify purely and simply the elements of the scene and the scene itself.'<sup>33</sup> (my emphasis) According to Barthes this is the most frequent function of the linguistic message, especially in advertising and the press photograph. Such a function can be seen in the press example used here, where the nominals of the text (NPs) correspond (Fig.36) directly to their relevant counterparts in the image. The use of the nominal phrase is common in shorter identifying texts, representing as it does the simplest form of denotative operation. But it must be said that even within the general category 'identification' this is carried out in different ways which entail different



image/text relations. The simplest of identifying phrases can identify the spatial location of the shot (e.g. Michals' 'Madrid', 'Minsk' etc.) and/or the temporal location (Michals' '5.15a.m. April 22, 1903').<sup>34</sup> Place and time are commonplaces of the accompanying verbal text, whether immediately adjacent to the image, or separate from it. The latter Michals example, however, serves to point out that although this usually relates to the place and time of photographing which will coincide with the space and time of the photograph this is not always the case, especially in narrative texts (where it is possible that there is a greater tolerance of discrepancy). As examples of the usual type of 'captioning', though, we might cite a typical photographic collection, where the accompanying texts are printed separately, Parr's Bad Weather,<sup>35</sup> which has the following type of listing: '1. Epsom Station, April 1975, 2. Slaithwaite, March 1980, 3. Jubilee Street Party, Elland, July 1977'<sup>36</sup> and so on. Even in the first three examples quoted here there is a range of information offered in terms of its specificity, some of it relating to the actual object ('Epsom Station') or local site, some relating to the general area ('Slaithwaite') and some to the event ('Jubilee Street Party'). A similar and common practice is represented by a Brandt Portraits exhibition catalogue<sup>37</sup> which appends the verbal text to the bottom of the pictures, giving only name of object and date of photographing: '1. Stephen Spender 1941; 2. Robert Graves 1941; 3. Alun Lewis 1941 etc.'<sup>38</sup> These represent the simplest examples of Barthes' 'recourse to nomenclature', but already we note a variety of types of specification.<sup>39</sup>



To begin with we have identifications of place, time and object.<sup>40</sup> This can relate to the photographic content or to the situation of photographing, or (as is the case mainly with spatial and temporal information) to both. Such information can vary according to its specificity, as indeed can the content of the image. Thus different types of identifications are set up as a result of the text constructed by image and verbal statement working in tandem. The Michals photograph of a Russian sailor which is accompanied by the subtitle or caption 'Minsk', obviously sets up a different kind of combined (Fig.37) text (where the verbal text identifies the general geographical background) from that which results when the verbal text attempts to 'identify' an otherwise 'cryptic' or 'illegible' image. We might therefore be able to divide the simplest of 'identifications' into 'expansive' and 'reductive' specifications. Here we return to one of the areas noted by Bassy: whether the verbal and the visual are joined by relations of 'contiguity' or 'analogy'. 'Expansive' specifications would tend to identify through amplification in relation to image content (a photograph of a tree might have the accompanying 'divergent' statement: 'Scotland, 1976'). 'Reductive' specifications would tend to identify by nominalisation, deixis, or more detailed naming of image content (a photograph of a tree might have the accompanying 'convergent' statement: 'Twenty-year-old oak tree in Autumn').<sup>41</sup> 'Expansive' and 'reductive' would here apply to the epistemological horizon of the combined text.

In reply to this it might be said, though, that because of the complexity of the visual, each 'identifi-

cation' on the part of the verbal is already 'reduced'; as Barthes notes: 'in all...cases of anchorage, language clearly has a function of elucidation, but this elucidation is selective, a metalanguage applied not to the totality of the iconic message, but only to certain of its signs.'<sup>42</sup>

The nomenclature which accompanies the portrait is a good example of the tendency of the short verbal statement to identify (and possibly construct) the sigmatic 'node' of the image. Michals' portrait of Hildegarde Knef, for (Fig.38) instance, shows how, even when the verbal provides information (here through naming) not provided by the image, the deictic force of the nominal reduces the focussing power of the reader, setting up a main object at the expense of the rest of the photograph. In this sense we might say that the image always overspecifies in relation to the verbal text which accompanies it but can never equal it in detail. This is true even when the text incorporates a verbal group which summarises (Michals' 'De Chirico Reading a Newspaper'), where the verbal group (VP) again elucidates a chosen aspect at the expense of others. On the other hand, when the verbal chooses to name it can be seen as overspecifying in relation to the information contained in the image. The conclusion to all this might be, then, that the image and the text provide different types of information, but the verbal is capable of expanding or reducing the focus of the combined text.

The consideration of this problem, which normally focusses on the role of the accompanying verbal as though it is postcedent to the information supplied by the visual, might suggest that the function of elucidation is a second

degree role limited to the verbal text and denied to the visual. There are occasions, however, when the visual plays a role which can be seen as 'elucidating' the verbal (mainly by specification). This is normally the case when the visual is compared to a verbal description, or the presentation of appearances, where the fuller, more succinct and more detailed specification in the visual constitutes ipso facto an amplification of the information which the verbal provides. As an accompanying text, in this sense, the verbal is destined to be selective, and probably a restraining influence on the reading of the image. But Porcher (1976) makes the point that it is possible for some photographs to work like a caption, or shorter accompanying text, by themselves restraining the liberty of reading. This, he maintains, is especially true of well lit, frontally highlighted photographs of objects (in common use in publicity imagery), where a kind of filtration or semantic selection is encouraged through the parameters of the construction of the image; in these publicity images, he concludes, the caption does not appear to be semantically decisive.<sup>43</sup> We would thus have to regard identification as a kind of focussing device which can be shared between the visual and the verbal messages, a result of combined highlighting effects: by the image in its construction, by the text in its tendencies towards deixis and nomenclature. Neither text necessarily provides all the information for a full 'identification', which is now a result of the signification of various aspects pertaining to an object through a combination of different sign systems, each one being capable of both expansion and highlighting.



## Duplication

This still leaves the problem of whether the information given by the verbal text duplicates, reinforces, emphasises or adds to that given in the image and/or vice versa. It was implied above that each time an identification tells us something we would not know from the other text alone it could be regarded as expansive. In the case of the accompanying verbal message this kind of expansion can result from noting what is seen and naming it, noting what is seen but not visually highlighted, noting what is seen but is connected or contiguous to the image, or otherwise expanding the information which relates to that contained in the image. As regards the visual this expansion could be directly related to the 'overspecification' of the image, or image highlighting. But, as we have seen, identification itself is not so simple. In certain situations the verbal text, for instance, will straightforwardly expand and add to the information presented by the image, but even the simplest noting or naming of a pictured object presents problems in the analysis of combined texts, one of the most immediate entailing whether the verbal information, if closely tied through identification, reinforces or duplicates that provided by the image.

To take a simple example: a photograph of a tree with the accompanying lexical item 'tree' -- in this case is the verbal reinforcing the visual, or is it merely duplicating the information? The first possibility would imply that the visual is somehow primary in the reading process, but 'waits' for confirmation by the

verbal text (Berger: 'the photograph begs for an interpretation, and the words usually supply it').<sup>44</sup> Of course the visual message could be quite successful without the verbal text, although, in such a simple example, limited to object presentation. There is, furthermore, a possibility that the verbal message actually duplicates the information contained in the image, in which case it could either be said to reinforce it, or to be redundant; Barthes mentions the possibility of doubling information in the linguistic message.<sup>45</sup> However, Porcher (1976) makes the valuable point that the concept of 'redundancy' ignores the fact that the information contained in the visual and the verbal messages is never exactly duplicated since it is possible that the photographic image actually has a different function from that of the linguistic aspect.<sup>46</sup> In the example used here these can be seen as tendencies in the linguistic message towards naming and in the visual towards visual detailing, but this example can also be taken as a general indication of the respective tendencies towards visualisation and nomenclature (and, possibly, diegesis) in the visual and the verbal texts respectively. Barthes also makes the point, though, in order to combat the idea of separate texts working in division, that duplication of the image by the words is impossible since in the movement from one structure to the other second order signifieds are developed.<sup>47</sup> The result, then of a combination such as the example used above is a kind of emphasis in the combined text, which derives from qualities of emphasis and types of information provided by two different semiotic systems working together. This conclusion is similar to that concerning the possibili-

ties of identification.

A simple example such as above is rare; accompanying verbal texts are on the whole more extensive and more complex, expansive or even, in some cases, seemingly contradictory. In the latter case the verbal, rather than reinforcing the combined identification, seems to operate a denial. In an extreme example of this kind of coupling, Magritte's The Key of Dreams,<sup>48</sup> the verbal (Fig.39) text serves largely to deny the image, thus highlighting the surrealist distortion of the rational mind, the breakdown of 'realism', and at the same time pointing out the conventional nature of verbal semiosis. In other examples, particularly the more recent 'suggestive' texts of Fulton (e.g. The Bering Sea (1977): a series of six landscape photographs (mostly of flat horizons and empty skies, with no 'animate' objects or traces visible) with five individual captions 'reindeer', 'geese', 'raven', 'seal', 'duck'), rather than having Barthes' 'new signified being retroactively projected into the image',<sup>49</sup> the caption can either be taken as being denied (note, here, that it is the verbal which is denied, since the visual has a greater burden of the ideology of realism behind it and is regarded as more stable and reliable, indeed more 'truthful'), or it can be read in a non-literal mode, as suggestion or semantic nuance, or, in this case, as an accompanying fragment relating to the whole diegetic context of the experience of walking and photographing of which both the photographs and the words are shards. Normally, and this seems especially true of the single image, the verbal is only capable of expansion according to the semantic field within or immediately contiguous



to the image; in narrative serial images the semantic horizons can be all-embracing in relation to either the immediate or the wider diegetic context. Where the information in visual or verbal appears to be duplicated, a process of reinforcement of the semantic boundaries is going on, but it is a result of the combination of different types of information.

### Autonomy

Mutual reinforcement implies a double dependence, but how symbiotic is this visual/verbal relationship? Is it possible that even in combination the two texts can work autonomously? In terms of function, as we have seen, the verbal and visual can operate similarly regarding one another. Both texts can serve to specify, to amplify and to highlight a semantic core, but analysis tends to treat them as separate texts. For Barthes a complementary relationship is the result of 'relay',<sup>50</sup> mainly operative in the joint construction of some kind of diegesis and particularly relating to serial images, but this kind of relationship seems to be in operation in the simplest single image texts too. Porcher, who analyses the relation of visual and verbal in terms of homologies and oppositions, makes the point that if we follow Barthes in saying that verbal language serves to 'tame' ('apprivoiser') the polysemic image by guiding the reader to a perception which is to be noted, then we also ought to take account of the fact that verbal language is itself polysemic, and can itself overdetail, thus working against its tendency towards containment (a point that was made above).<sup>51</sup> In

this sense the verbal can equally be seen to be in need of semantic emphasis and reinforcement through the visual. In all texts, not only those operating through a kind of 'relay' which might relate them to a larger diegesis, we are dealing with a combined textual construct which is realised at a higher level. This means that however much we may be inclined to analyse the combining texts as separate, we should be dealing with a construct which is the result of cross-contaminations and reinforcements developed from a reading in a certain order, following the direction of certain highlighted information and emphases laid down in all parts of the text. In fact there seems to be much more mutual reinforcement than separate operation in a combined text, the operations, after all, contributing to a total message like semantic building blocks. As regards textual autonomy, then, it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of separate operation in combined texts since all functions are, in the end, contributory, the final message coming about as a result of a symbiotic relationship of mutual support. This tendency for texts to converge towards a semantic core can be seen especially in cases of superficial redundancy (duplication), which builds a strong semantic core, and also in cases of seeming opposition or denial, where the reader strives to supply the semantic core of the relation as expressed in the combined text. This can be compared to the way in which the reader strives to supply the connecting link across the interstice separating two seemingly disparate image units.

### Serial Relation

Up to this point the discussion of problematic areas in the relation of verbal and visual in combined texts has concentrated on the single image with simple accompanying verbal text. When one comes to consider texts constructed of serial images and linguistic accompaniment the situation becomes more complex. As the discussion of autonomy has implied, this entails not only the possibility of the combined text as synchronic construct, but also the diachronic construct which results from the extensive continuity of verbal/visual discourse. In the latter case this involves the accompanying verbal text not only in relation to the single image space, but also to the interstitial space, an area in which the verbal can often relate less directly to a preceding or succeeding image (in this sense no longer 'accompanying' in the same way) than to the space of their relation. In such a case the complexity of the text as a whole involves both images and linguistic messages in the flow, also, of narrative continuity, such that the verbal no longer needs to be so closely tied to individual identifications.

The newspaper images and accompanying text discussed above have already indicated, however, that (Fig.36) it is a 'diegetic impetus' which can often underly expansive identification, in the above example signalled by a relative clause: 'which exploded on the refinery quayside blast at San Roque'. A diegetic impetus can underly other types of verbal statement accompanying the single image, especially the summative, a common example being the use of nominal group with verbal qualifiers, e.g. Michals' 'A Man Dreaming in the City', 'De Chirico Reading a Newspaper'. With



single images they tend to reflect back ('retroactively projected'?) as expansive identifications, but in visually based narrative texts such statements become of necessity aspects of a 'binding'. In the narrative texts of the type we are dealing with here the diegetic impulse often appears to override the verbal function of identification.<sup>52</sup>

Having already established the possibility of purely visual narration, it now remains to be seen exactly what the incorporation of the verbal adds to the narrative. We will be limited here, for reasons of space and economy, to a concentration on the photoroman, which displays a particular succinctness.<sup>53</sup>

#### General Tendencies.

In the photoroman Night of Evil the verbal (Fig.10) statements are formally distinguished (by the kinds of frame which surround them and their position vis à vis the image) into three types: (i) speech bubbles, (ii) thought clouds and (iii) textual statements (all other types of accompanying verbal message). The latter, which comprise statements relating to the interstice and statements relating more directly to the image content, are placed in a number of positions inside the image either at top left hand corner or bottom right hand corner, or both (the latter is commoner in other photoromans), and there is also the possibility of statements placed above, below and between the images. In this example the statements most often involve the temporal -- relating to frequency (p.10 'It was a pleasant evening as always'), simultaneity (p.10 'While the peacefulness filled Judith's

mind with other thoughts'), duration of interstice (p.31 'After about half an hour...'), 'duration' of image (p.23 '...the girl stood for a moment or two'), repetition (p.52 '...where the phone was ringing again...never stopping') -- temporal statements which relate to those categories of the discourse it is difficult, if not impossible, for the visual alone to state as succinctly. Otherwise, the verbal text in this example tends to express the characters' emotional reactions (p.48 'Judith was only too happy to take Sally downstairs...'), physical sensations (p.56 'Her heart pounding, Judith crept slowly up the stairs...'), or general motivations, reactions, wishes and other thoughts in reported speech (p.18 'But it wasn't easy. She was nervous now, jumping at every sound'; p.66 'But she knew that for a long, long time -- whenever she heard the ringing of a telephone-bell -- she would remember this night.').

In this kind of text the verbal statements tend to contribute to or create a particular economy of expression which increases the fluidity of the narrative. Thus a number of statements are diegetically summative, either of the interstitial (p.16 'Judith listened a moment longer, stunned into a kind of daze...'), or of the diegesis as expressed 'within' the corresponding image (p.30 'They drank their coffee...'). Where the statements appear on the surface to duplicate information contained within the image they enhance those aspects of the image it is important to highlight for the speedy flow of the narrative (p.21 'But suddenly she found herself staring into two, huge bright eyes!'). For similar reasons verbal statements can highlight some aspect of the image which

is not emphasised within the image, but which is not absent from it, and which is again necessary for the dramatic flow (p.49 'And he drove straight past Judith in fifty-nine without even pausing...'). This filling in of details necessary for the narrative's dramatic continuity extends not only to visual details not indicated in the image (p.38 'as she turned away from the house, a curtain flickered in an upstairs window.'), but more especially to aural details which are impossible (within the confines of this kind of text which stops short of the onomatopoeic transfer of comic strip) to convey purely visually (p.41 'But, suddenly, there was a horrible piercing ring from the telephone.'; p.42 'But it kept ringing and, upstairs, Sally began to cry...').

Statements which relate neither to the interstitial diegesis nor directly to the image content are rare in this kind of narrative text. Authorial comment is restricted to vital and emphatic details of psychological make-up (p.26 'The sergeant at the police station was sympathetic...'), or statements emphasising the drama of the situation (p.65 'And now the nightmare was over'), which can also be achieved, and often is, through thoughts in reported speech. The only other notable 'extraneous' messages are the frequent conjunctives which litter the text, either alone (p.7 'And...'; p.12 'But-- ') or appended to the longer statement (p.13 'So it was supertime...'; p.14 'Then peace...'). These ubiquitous perforations also serve to intensify the relentless flow of the narrative.

Narratives similar to the above are characterised by their economy. The use of the verbal appears to be



directly related to (i) those aspects which the visual cannot relate as succinctly or efficiently, (ii) those aspects which are interstitially necessary to bind the narrative in view of the economic use of images and (iii) those aspects which need to be underlined or emphasised to maintain the most efficacious narrative flow. In many ways, then, the way in which the verbal relates to the visual can be seen as either compensatory or affirmative. This can apply to both the textual and discursive aspects of the visual, according to the parameters outlined in previous chapters.

### Serial Text

To begin with, the verbal text serves to identify in a way which is necessary for the the cohesion of the series. In Fulton's A Public Footpath on Nackington Farm, Canterbury, for instance, the title identifies both images as being of the same place, thus compensating for a visually weak identification and guaranteeing the necessary conditions (the transformational matrix) for narrative cohesion. This can be contrasted to two similar images which are verbally identified as being of different places (Langa, Western Iceland / Churchill River, Northern Manitoba, a series decoded according to a comparative matrix). The verbal can also guarantee the temporal succession (e.g. the use of dates '1971 / 1970' in the first Fulton example). The verbal text serves both to identify through naming, but can also tend to lead the gaze to, and thus highlight, certain aspects of the image which are necessary for a correct narrative interpretation.

Such information and such emphases are often guarantees of repeated identity vital to the narrative cohesion, especially where the cohesion is not primarily, or not as 'successfully' visually constituted.

Image related and interstice related verbal messages both play a vital role in the establishment of differentiation and cohesion, either compensating a visual lack or a visual weakness, or actually in overriding the purely visual evidence. In the Nackington Farm (Fig.14) example they actually serve to identify the individual temporal 'states' as well as indicating the temporal progression of the narrative from right to left. In some instances the verbal message can become burdened with the establishment of cohesion or differentiation when the visual evidence seems to indicate the contrary. In the magic lantern lecture sequence Jack the Conqueror, (Fig.7) images 1 and 5, ignoring for the moment differences of framing and shading, are shown by the verbal text (apart from their places in different parts of the series) to be differentiated in narrative terms -- here the verbal text appears to be acting in a compensatory fashion. Apart from constituting it, the verbal text can also dictate the nature of the differentiation when it is not indicated (or not indicated clearly) by the visual; it can, of course, merely underline it.

The verbal text, then, is capable of providing for or underlining any kind of cohesion which is either not indicated or weakly indicated. This would apply to temporal cohesions between successive images (particularly in photoroman through the use of temporal conjunctives: 'Later...', 'Then...', 'After a few minutes...' etc.,

or, in these and other texts, the use of specific temporal details: '1971 / 1970'). Spatial identity can be indicated through naming or simple statement of identity when the two spaces indicated are seemingly or largely dissimilar. In such cases the verbal text can be the basis of the formation of a transformational matrix, which without it would be comparative, and thus can be paramount in forming the narrative reading. The verbal can compensate for the lack or weakness of object cohesion by pointing out identifications not emphasised by the images; thus it can identify a character, for instance, partially or obscurely visualised with one later apparent (in Night of Evil the prowler and telephoner is identified (Fig.10) verbally as the next door neighbour: an identification the reader might not be trusted to make purely visually but which is vital for the narrative).

With the optional parameters of cohesion, the verbal is not capable of compensating or establishing cohesions which are purely visually based (graphic cohesion, animate and inanimate vectors) but it is again capable of reinforcing the establishment of the cohesion even where visually constituted. This can be done by diegetically summative statement (Night of Evil p.56 'Judith crept slowly up the stairs...') or emphasis of the relevant aspect of the image (p.38 '...a curtain flickered in an upstairs window...'). Thus the verbal can establish or support the vital establishment of spatial, object and temporal cohesions, and support the establishment of optional cohesions in the visual core.

### Serial Discourse



A similar situation holds for the features of the discourse, where the verbal has a vital role to play in both the establishment and maintenance of discourse temporality, focalisations, modality, person and tense. In compensating for visual inadequacy or strengthening visual weakness the verbal has a role of substitution and support.

To begin with, the temporal statement can both establish the order of succession (the use of '1971 / 1970' above) or can underline the order of succession even where it follows a left-right norm in the reading of the images. The use of consecutive signals ('And...', 'Then...', 'Later...' and so on) adds to this onward flow of images. With deviations from pure chronological succession the role is similar. In purely visual narratives a prolepsis can only be established by a later analepsis which resituates the time of the diegesis; by incorporating a verbal text the prolepsis can be identified much more speedily and directly; the same applies to analepsis, where some kind of marker is needed. In visual texts, where prolepses and analepses often form part of a projected fantasy, the bracketing can be done visually -- usually by the use of special framing devices -- but, especially in the photoroman, the preparation is usually carried out verbally too, the verbal message often indicating that the sequence is contained within a speculative thought bracket. Sometimes, however, an anachrony will rely mostly, or wholly, on the verbal to establish itself, as in Michals' Private Acts, where the images which are strongly tied to a strict chronological succession can only signal temporal shifts weakly ('speculation' being established (Fig.14) (Fig.21))

by the repeated image of the protagonist in the same pensive situation), and the fact that the speculation is retrospective has to be signalled in the verbal text ('Now he thought of then'; 'Now he thought of how it was then' and so on). The succinct visual signalling of retrospective or projective speculation is difficult to achieve unambiguously; where a specific shift needs to be signalled the visual will rely on verbal support and specification. One might even suggest that combined texts tend to rely mainly on the verbal to signal and/or reinforce most of the temporal displacements and inserts in the text, as well as reversed chronologies -- any break, in fact, in the strict chronological order of left to right to which the visual series is tied. This would also apply to the visual's incapacity to signal simultaneity through succession, where the verbal information is vital (Night of Evil p.57 'Meanwhile, (Fig.10) outside the front door...').

In the signalling of duration measured by steadiness of speed, exactitude in specifying the interstitial temporality can only be achieved by recourse to 'external factors' (as was noted in Chapter 4). Although the individual images are capable of showing measurable boundaries (e.g. clock faces),<sup>54</sup> such 'external factors' will normally involve an accompanying statement which will be a verbal indication of length of ellipsis. Faced with the fact that the image has no specific duration itself, a duration can be 'projected' into it by the accompanying verbal text. Similarly, the incorporation of dialogue in the image can imply a duration related to the length of the speech act, but in this case it will be less exact. Visually

implied duration is limited to the measurements inferred from the degree of differentiation between consecutive images and overall diegetic context, but the verbal is capable of exact indication of both interstitial and image related durations.

Relations of frequency, as has been noted, entail particular difficulties for the visual text alone, since the correspondence of the single event to the single visual signification is overriding. The category of frequency which gives most trouble in the visual is the single signification of an event which happened more than once, and here the visual is forced to rely on the iterative capacity of verbal language. Where visual repetition is possible it will, furthermore, be tied to repetition of event so that the capacity to relate more than once what happened only once is also impossible without recourse to verbal indication. Here, the verbal plays a seminal role in showing any deviation from the visual's one to one correspondence (Night of Evil p.52 'Fifty nine, where (Fig.10) the phone was ringing again...never stopping...demanding to be answered...forcing Judith to lift the receiver'). All in all the verbal plays a significant role in the establishment of discourse temporality to compensate for the visual's bond with the spatial.

For this reason, especially in the photoroman, accompanying verbal texts rarely relate to the descriptive, except to enhance what is already provided visually (Night of Evil p.21 '...two huge, bright eyes!'), to support a focus which is vital for narrative purposes (this can be achieved by naming or otherwise specifying the main protagonist or main narrative object), or to



relate visual details which are vital for the correct establishment of narrative interstice and either not shown or shown 'weakly' (p.58 'The door gave way beneath his shoulders.'). However, when it comes to focalisation rather than focus the verbal usually plays an even greater role in identifying the shift in discourse perspective. Variations in point of view allied to camera position form part of the regular 'non-marked' visual discourse; sometimes, however, the viewpoint is to be allied to a certain character position and it is this identification which is provided verbally. Again, it is possible for purely visual texts to provide the correct identification (as in the classic filmic techniques of incorporating a portion of the character in the image or alternating the seen with the viewer), but in economical texts of this kind the viewpoint is more succinctly and successfully prepared and identified externally to the images. The photoroman leaves no room for ambiguity. This identification can once more be related to the signalling in shifts from the 'normal' or 'neutral' flow of narration (Night of Evil p.23 'But would she have felt so peaceful if she'd known that, from the shadows of the night, she was being closely watched?'; p.33 'But, unknown to Judith, as she turned away from the house, a curtain flickered in an upstairs window. Someone was inside.'<sup>55</sup>) specifying the viewpoint as that of a significant 'other'. As with visual bracketing devices and temporal shifts a visual viewpoint bracket (the binocular-shaped frame etc.) can be either supported by the verbal, or dispensed with altogether in view of verbal specificity.<sup>56</sup>

Other aspects of the discourse which are

problematic in purely visual texts can become almost wholly dependent on verbal indications. This is particularly the case with the specification of person and the establishment of homo- and heterodiegetic discourse, where the visual alone is non-specific. Michals, for instance, usually relies on the verbal to establish the protagonist as 'he', 'she' or 'I', thus distancing the visual narrative text even further from the usual dual (photographer / non-photographer) distinction which obtains in ordinary image collections. The Man in the Room identifies the (Fig.40) image as coincident with the viewpoint of the 'I' of the verbal text; A Letter from My Father and I Dream (Fig.41) the Perfect Day in New York City identify the 'I' as (Fig.42) the protagonist portrayed by the image -- neither of these are the same character as that who appears in the self-portraits. This also indicates wider possibilities in the narrative text, whose fictional basis removes it from the realist ideology of ordinary image collections.

The establishment of tense in the narrative, which has been discussed above, is similarly a function of the verbal text, which is capable of great subtlety, especially in comparison to the visual's tie to a kind of constant 'presence'. In this case, as in the case of the overlay of interrogative, declarative and other functions, which are after all linguistic functions operating at contextual level, the verbal text tends to envelop the image as a whole, without specific relation to any detail of the image itself. One might take the view that the image alone is limited to the present, or that narratives always operate in the past, and that the image is affirmative, but the power of the verbal to dominate

according to tense and mode suggests that the image has no specific power in these areas.

All in all, then, one could draw the conclusion (bearing in mind we are dealing with a limited corpus of examples) that in the establishment of the narrative text the verbal tends to support the visual rather than compensate for its lack of power -- after all, the establishment of cohesions and differentiations can be successfully carried out by the visual alone. When it comes to the discourse, however, the verbal is paramount in either compensating for the visual's incapacities or operating more economically and efficaciously. In the signification of visual aspects (physical appearance, visual detail, relative position, direction of movement and so on) the verbal plays little part.

### Dialogue

Up to this point the verbal text has been discussed as though it consisted of accompanying linguistic statements. But the verbal aspect of the combined text takes on different forms, some more integrated than others into the image space. Dialogue and quoted thoughts, in particular, far from supporting aspects of the image content, often tend to dominate it completely such that the images, whose content is as a result weakened, become simple background identifications, or contextualisations for the speech act or thought process, with (and often without) the appropriate expressions and accompanying gestures of the speaking or thinking character. The effect is probably increased where the thought or dialogue is



expressed in quotation marks beneath the image; where the dialogue or thought is integrated, the use of balloons brings the words or ideas visually closer to the subject.

In early photographic narratives (particularly illustrated songs) the appended dialogue becomes the focus of the discourse, and the characters, rather than being depicted in the act of speech (which is rare even in contemporary photoroman) lend a heavily gestural support to the speech act (and not to its content), concerned merely to identify visually the sender (and sometimes the receiver) of the spoken message. In this respect the Nadar/ Chevreul interview is exceptional: in most (Fig.8) images Chevreul is depicted in the act of speech, and an attempt has been made to make the gestures fit the content of the message, although there is always much room for manoeuvre as gesture operates within much wider categories. Modern photoromans attempt a vague correspondence between the emotional state of the character and the content of the dialogue, but the least expert of them rely wholly on the dialogue, with the pictured expressions often ranging from the neutral to the inappropriate.

Where the image has to 'carry' a range of emotions accompanying speech and the reactions to speech it will tend towards a 'median' expressive position, but this, coupled with the vaguer categories of gesture, has the effect of making the specificities of the spoken dialogue more important. While some expressive and gestural backgrounds would be inappropriate, the visual is on the whole not capable of the emotional specificity of the verbal (even the emotions of the simple Fry's 5 Boys (Fig.43))

series would be impossible to convey with the same exactitude through the facial expressions alone). Photoromans tend to place a further onus on the dialogue by the constant use of visually unsophisticated backgrounds and simple highlighting (through clear focus, lighting, centring, enlarging etc.) of the speaking character in almost every image. The character is swiftly identified so that the dialogue can be read more effectually; where balloons are used the same applies. Far from the visual hiatus that Fresnault-Deruelle (1977) suggests in his analysis of comic strip -- 'le chiasme produit par l'appendice des ballons, ruine pour quelques instants la succession narrative' -- <sup>57</sup> balloons (and thought clouds) lead the eye more smoothly through the verbal text by introducing it into the image space. For this reason Bergala (c1978) draws the following conclusion concerning the effect of the incorporation of dialogue in the photoroman: 'En fait, dans le roman-photo...la série iconique est excessivement appauvrie, presque résiduelle. La narrativité y est prise en charge essentiellement par les dialogues et une structure narrative tout à fait stéréotypée.' <sup>58</sup> In such cases the role of the visual becomes almost secondary (in illustrated song texts this seems to be wholly the case whenever the visual is limited to contextualisation of character), but the images still incorporate a number of situation and character identifications, establish cohesions and differentiations, present acts, events, positions etc., without which the dialogue alone would not make sense.

This would also apply to those photographic narratives where the dialogue, or any other verbal text,



is spoken against the image. The same needs for identification occur (as in film, through focus, close-up, position, gestural emphasis and all other processes of isolating the speaking subject), but in this case the image space is not invaded, nor is the verbal text strictly allied to a certain portion of the visual text (where the visual is constructed of separated image units, the aural can be continuous). In fact the incorporation of an aural text opens up a number of possibilities of rapport.

### Aural Texts

The juxtaposition of images and aural text is one area which has already received a good deal of attention in view of its importance in the filmic text. Burch (1973), for instance, begins his discussion of the structural use of sound in film with the following claim: 'The fundamental dialectic in film, the one that at least empirically seems to contain every other, is that contrasting and joining sound with image.'<sup>59</sup> This kind of combination is not unknown with static photographic narratives, in particular magic lantern lectures, similar photographic slide presentations, La Jetée<sup>60</sup> or other texts constructed of an aural and a (usually projected) static visual text.

In many combined texts of this type the sound text can be seen as an aural equivalent of the printed linguistic message, with the added possibility of simultaneity (while not impinging the rectangle) and, in the case of dialogue, thought verbalisation and sound effect, an increased possibility of synchronisation. In many



ways, then, it performs functions relating to the image similar to those of the printed text. It can thus be divided into similar categories: dialogue, thought verbalisation, textual commentary etc. Since these functions are all converted into spoken discourse, however, more reliance has to be made on diegetic context and voice quality to distinguish them. Indeed in most examples of the type outlined above, the aural text seems to take on a more 'diegetic' function (increased use of straightforward narration, dialogue and textual comment) which could be a result of the possibilities, or exigencies, of accompanying the images with a more extensive verbal text.

The functions of the accompanying aural text can thus be analysed largely according to the functions of the printed verbal text. Deictic and interpretative functions are equally possible, as are compensation and support for the construction of cohesion and differentiation; similarly, the use of aural signals of temporal displacement, aided or not by visual markers of transition (usually type of cut, e.g. dissolve) and bracketing (type of frame, type of focus) and the use of sound background to identify point of view, the use of aurally related establishments of person, tense and mode -- all these show the aural to be the equivalent of the printed or written.

In some ways, however, the use of a sound text tends to imbue the images with more 'naturalness' -- this is particularly true of dialogue in different voices, different intonations and especially the use of sound effects (the latter, albeit limited in range, were a striking feature of the magic lantern narrative). Where

the aural is representing the aural (compare the visual representing the visual) the results are more successful in specificity; furthermore, Lotman (1976) quotes Mukařovský as stating that, in film, sound actually augments the surface of the screen, giving it additional dimensionality.<sup>61</sup> The same is true of the static projected visual narrative with accompanying sound text, because it is the result of the creation of a kind of 'aural space' resulting from the sonic manifestation of out-of-field through the addition of dimensions equivalent to sound volume and distance. In visual narratives with written or printed verbal texts, the creation of sound effect has to be achieved either (i) by accompanying verbal statement (Night of Evil p.19 'At the other end of the line there (Fig.10) was only hollow laughter, then a final click...'), (ii) by the use of onomatopoeic signals (a common feature of comic strip but rare in photographic texts) or (iii) by visual indications of sound quality only, achieved by either typological (the use of bold, capital, or larger lettering for emphatic statement) or framing devices (jagged speech bubble frames are common for telephone voices). Without the accompanying aural, the sonic out-of-field can only be noted by the text at 'second hand', in the textual comment or in the visible reactions of the characters (which; especially in photoroman, is rarely reliable enough on its own).

A further type of accompanying aural text which is wholly denied to the printed verbal/visual text is the musical. Although the use of music as a continuous sound presence is a particular feature of film, interspersed musical accompaniment was common in the magic lantern



show.<sup>62</sup> This kind of aural text performs a variety of functions which are mainly supportive of the combined text. It can play a role in underlining the differentiations and cohesions of the narrative text, and, especially through the use of particular motifs or other intratextually consistent differentiations, can aid the identification of character and thus help to signal specific character identified focalisations. The accompanying musical text is also capable of establishing, or supporting the establishment of, shifts and brackets in the discourse, through the supplying of musical signals and 'frameworks' (a device similar in some ways to the visual framing of temporally or otherwise displaced or inserted passages). Musical texts can, however, also function as sound effects, the musical form taking on a much more directly diegetic role. In narratives (especially film) which utilise sophisticated sound sources, the sound effect track is usually separated from the musical; in magic lantern lectures (and with silent films) the use of a generally live and improvised musical accompaniment incorporates 'musical sound effects' into a heavily formulaic scoring. It might be said, in fact, that the distinction of diegetically integrated and less diegetically integrated scoring (equivalent to the distinction between sound effect and textual commentary, possibly) is a development of later and more sophisticated narratives.<sup>63</sup>

#### Textual Balance and Domination

Having separated various strands of the combined text for the purposes of analysis, it must be said that



the viewer is actually faced with an integrated whole. As Gorbman (1980) notes of film: 'image, sound effects, dialogue, and music-track are absolutely inseparable during the viewing experience, and they form a combinatoire of expression.'<sup>64</sup> The question now remains whether in this 'combinatoire' the role of any textual type can be said to be dominant, or whether the whole is formed of texts in symbiotic balance.

In the above discussion it was concluded that the verbal text both compensates for and supports the visual in photoromans which tend to be dominated by the dialogue, but other examples of photographic/verbal combination might tend to emphasise one text at the expense of the other. Indeed, the photoroman represents only one type of combination. Simply regarded in terms of numerical balance (number of words, number of images) photographic and linguistic texts in combination range from extensive written texts with infrequent illustration (especially illustrated novels, newspapers) to photographic books with interspersed verbal texts ('photographic essays' and the like).<sup>65</sup> These might point to corresponding degrees of integration, from verbal based texts with minimal image engagement to image based texts with minimal verbal engagement.

Illustrated novels rarely use photographs, but they underline the function of illustration, which is basically the 'visualisation' of certain moments in the larger text. In the sense that they are separated from the main textual flow, and are optional additions to it, they represent the non-integrated extreme. Commonly accompanied by a relevant quote from the verbal text,

they represent in some senses a momentary 'vision' imbued with the artist's personal imaginative construction. As non-universal constructs relating to a fictional text they perform a role which is possibly thought inappropriate to the more 'objective' visualisations of photography. However, since the idea of 'momentary visualisation' also underlies the formation of visually based narrative texts, the actual concept of 'illustration' cannot be easily divorced from narrative visualisation in series. Indeed, there are examples of illustrations removed from the linguistic text they are meant to accompany and independently imbued with a quasi-narrational function. This is particularly feasible with stories which are well known, and do not need accompanying linguistic iteration. Examples are the showing of Phiz's Dickens illustrations as lantern slide sequences,<sup>66</sup> and one thinks of the use of the Stations of the Cross images, and stained glass sequences for their particular narrative mnemonic power. It has in fact been suggested by Pächt (1962) that more potent and genuine forms of medieval narrative were actually evolved in Old Testament illustrations. As he notes, illustration tends towards the quintessential.<sup>67</sup>

According to Barthes (1977) the function of illustration was to clarify the text, whereas now the 'text loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination'.<sup>68</sup> It is not apparent, however, how or why this shift has taken place. If the image's function was to clarify the text, then surely it still performs this function through visualisation? A photograph, for instance, lends a particularly concrete and immediate presence which the verbal text is incapable of. The truth

of the matter is probably that, rather than a shift towards verbal functional dominance, ubiquitous modern visual/verbal combinations testify to particular types of shared and combined semiosis, which are a long way from mere illustration.

At the other extreme from 'illustrated' texts are those visually based texts where verbal involvement is minimal: photographic books, mainly organised, by title, according to a thematic content link, or a single photographer, and those narrative texts (like Going to Heaven) (Fig.30) with no verbal involvement apart from title, which indicate that reliance on the verbal is not necessary for narration. This leaves us, however, with a vast area in between, where the relative dominance of one particular signifying system might be difficult to assess. A numerical assessment (number of images versus number of words) would tell us very little, so would attempting to relate the performance of the systems according to their partial contributions to different functions (clarification, emphasis etc.). If one looks at the newspaper example (Fig.36) cited earlier, in which the two images and accompanying text were also coupled with a much longer body of verbal text, it is apparent that any function like 'illustration' or 'clarification' is as much provided by the accompanying text in relation to the images as it is provided by the images in relation to the main body, or the main body in relation to the images, and in fact the three parts form a whole whose interlocking constituents feed off one another, even though they might retain different emphases (visualisation, nomenclature, diegetic explanation, analysis).



When we come to assess the contributions of visual and verbal to a continuous narrative text like the photoroman, relative value is equally hard to discuss. Although it has been suggested that the constant presence of accompanying dialogue can have an effect of 'neutralisation' on the images, the texts nevertheless share a number of different functions, and there are examples with much more sophisticated images. This is not to say, however, that the verbal text is absolutely vital for the establishment of a successful narrative (as Going to Heaven proves) although there might be a (Fig.30) need to provide verbal narrative linkage between images which are rather disparate. The latter would only be true, however, in cases where the imaginative intervention of the reader was to be kept to a minimum. All in all the verbal in the photoroman is used to inculcate upon the reader those aspects of the narrative work (thoughts, emotional responses, motivations) which the visual alone would be incapable of signifying as accurately. Recourse is also made to the verbal in such texts in order to further 'close in' the reading horizons by the use of more definite and more economical significations of shifts and brackets in the discourse, for which the visual equivalent might appear to be too laborious. This is not the same as saying that the verbal's role is more vital.

This does tend to imply, however, that visual texts, which are specific in some areas (descriptive, spatial, actantial, gestural details) are weak in others (complex emotional response, thought, motivation), but there are occasions when this non-specificity can be advanta-

geous. The tendency of images to form speech act backgrounds in dialogue-centred texts means that the image has a particular burden of 'containment'. In some photoromans the image is called upon to contain the expressions and reactions appropriate to a number of separate statements. In magic lantern shows, where the image is retained on screen throughout an (often lengthy) accompanying verbal text, the image is called upon to relate specifically to some part of the verbal (usually the beginning -- probably to excite interest and draw the audience into the image), and gradually to provide a summative background to the rest of the spoken portion. Certain exigencies might indicate that in such combinations the visual is always less important, but this actually depends on a deliberate neutralisation of visual details as one sees in photoroman (the clear signification of every protagonist in every photograph, invariably well centred, lit and foregrounded, the character with most to say facing the camera, faces and torsoes blotting out the setting etc.), and even here, it still makes a direct contribution to the economy of the text as a whole.<sup>69</sup> In other cases the need to offer simultaneous summative support within the one image produces particularly effective use of specific detail; this is illustrated by the images in the song set Down Home in Tennessee, where the second image, for (Fig.35) example, manages to specify and summarise the content of eight lines of verse.

The primacy of the visual or the verbal in combined texts appears, in sum, to be a function of the text as a whole, and a result of the way in which meaning is created as a combination of individual specificities.

When one image is combined with a closely related portion of text, the question concerning whether the image is clarifying the words or the words are clarifying the image seems almost academic. Even where the image is providing 'background', it still contributes through its specific strengths. The question of domination is ultimately impossible to answer.<sup>70</sup> Even in works where the visual is said to 'precede' the verbal (as in the photograph/poetry book Remains of Elmet by Fay Godwin and Ted Hughes,<sup>71</sup> where the poems are said to have been written in response to the images)<sup>72</sup> the resulting combination forces one to feed off the other.

The combination of visual/verbal texts seems, then, to operate according to the exigencies of overall meaning creation in the discourse, and the context in which it is placed. While advertising discourse tends to rely on the visual for object identification, the photoroman relies on dialogue presented against a visual background. Newspaper practices tend to rely more on descriptive visual capabilities, whereas 'art' practice tends to exploit the visual's enigmatic or suggestive power.<sup>73</sup> All such examples testify to different types and degrees of reader involvement, and the need to take account of the wider context within which the communication takes place.

### Conclusion

The combining of visual and verbal signs in texts is an area which has received little specific analysis. Although work on the subject by Barthes drew valuable



overall conclusions, specific details of individual roles are more difficult to confirm. Indeed, certain concepts regarding functions, e.g. 'identification', 'duplication', 'autonomy' are themselves problematic. Thus, although it would be possible (limited, here, to the photoroman) to draw general conclusions about the verbal's tendency to either compensate for or support the visual in its incapacities and weaknesses, it is better to discuss the combinations according to their individual capabilities in relation to the establishment and operation of text and discourse, following the analyses suggested in Chapters 3 and 4. In this respect the relationship, although it involves different efficacies and emphases, can ultimately only be seen to be symbiotic. The different exigencies of the wide range of texts on offer (as Chapter 1 has indicated) means, furthermore, that no ultimate valuation can be placed on either system in the end.

Notes5. Combined Texts

1. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1964, p.38.
2. See Chapter 3.
3. Burgin 1977b, p.18.
4. Ibid., p.18.
5. Which is also why recent trends in visual (particularly film) studies have been concerned with the construction of the viewing subject by and in verbal language.
6. Berger and Mohr 1982, p.82.
7. Given the reservations expressed in Chapter 3 about 'motivation' in signification.
8. See Chatman 1978b, p.223.
9. It is possible that certain aspects of temporal signification (in contrast to what Chatman says) can best be carried out visually (the use of visual temporal measurement, clock faces; temporal embeddings), and there is also a possibility that certain spatial aspects might best be signified verbally. Evaluations are difficult, if not impossible, to make with different signifying systems. It would probably depend on the needs of the text in hand and the emphases of the discourse.
10. Butor op.cit., p.11.
11. Newhall 1952, p.18.
12. See Vanoye 1979, pp.20-21. It must be said that Jakobsonian functions are usually applied to linguistic communication as a whole.
13. I do not agree with Butor (1969, p.19) that the use of a number (or even 'untitled') heightens the absence of title -- these are still 'titles' and statements meaningful in relation to the work.

14. These examples, and those immediately preceding, are cited for their linguistic form and most of them are not illustrated in the visual appendix. They are taken from Michals 1976 & 1984 and Fulton 1972.
15. Newhall 1952, pp.18-19.
16. Especially in the case of the photoroman, where the distinction between caption and text would be impossible to maintain.
17. Newhall 1952, p.18.
18. Ibid., p.18.
19. Both are usually referred to as 'balloons'.
20. 'Le Message photographique' in Communications 1 1961, pp.127-138; 'Rhétorique de l'image' in Communications 4 1964, pp.40-51. Both are translated by Heath in Image-Music-Text Collins: London 1977, pp.15-31 and 32-51 respectively, to which page references refer. See bibliography Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961 and Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1964.
21. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961, p.25.
22. Barthes 1967 orig.pub.1964, p.91.
23. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961, p.26.
24. 'Text' here referring to accompanying verbal text.
25. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1964, p.39.
26. Ibid., p.41.
27. Ibid., p.41.
28. Not everything absent from the image is 'realised at a higher level', which is possibly misleading in the reference to 'expansive' information provided by written or printed verbal text.
29. Actually Barthes seems to draw different conclusions about verbal and visual 'dominance' throughout the two articles. At the beginning of 'The Photographic Message' he notes how a photograph can change its meaning according



to verbal context (p.15), but he maintains that in combination it is the words which, structurally, are 'parasitic on the image' (p.25), and he talks of the verbal text as 'a kind of secondary vibration, almost without consequence', which nevertheless 'loads the image, burdening it with a culture, an imagination' (p.26). In 'Rhetoric of the Image' the combined message is said to have linguistic substance: 'After the linguistic message, then, we can see a second, iconic, message' (p.35). Since images are polysemous, it is said to be the task of the linguistic message to 'fix the floating chain of signifieds' (p.39: 'Anchorage'), and for this reason 'the text has a repressive value' (p.40), or 'substitute value' (p.41). In closer 'diegetic combination' text and image are said to stand 'in a complementary relationship' (p.41: 'Relay'). The reason for this is probably that Barthes is relating 'dominance' to specific functions and not treating it as an absolute evaluation.

30. Bassy 1974, p.301.

31. Although this is not to dismiss the discussion as a whole, which has some value in outlining the problematic areas of abstract relation, even if the distinctions between them are difficult to maintain.

32. Especially when the texts as a whole seem to combine a variety of functions.

33. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1964, p.39.

34. Examples cited for the verbal form of their titles and thus not illustrated in the visual appendix. See Michals 1976 & 1984.

35. See bibliography 'Parr 1982'.

36. Under 'List of Photographs' on p.3.

37. See bibliography 'Brandt 1982'.

38. Brandt 1982, pp.3-5.

39. A variety of types which the simple Brandt captioning does not represent.

40. Compare the use of relevant visual criteria for differentiation and cohesion (Chapter 3).

41. 'Divergent' and 'convergent' referring, here, to outer parameters of the semantic perspective, set up by the texts in combination. 'Divergent' verbal statements tend to 'open out' the information, 'convergent' statements close it in on itself. This refers to a kind of referential horizon, and to the 'expansive' or 'reductive' function of the verbal text.

42. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1964, p.40.

43. See Porcher op.cit., p.187. One might also consider, here, examples of combination where the verbal text is vague and the image is more 'specific'.

44. Berger and Mohr 1982, p.92.

45. See Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961, p.26.

46. See Porcher 1976, p.177.

47. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961, p.27.

48. See in particular the use of this painting in Berger (1972, pp.7-8) to show that 'seeing comes before words'.

49. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961, p.27.

50. See Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1964, p.41.

51. See Porcher 1976, p.200.

52. In the sense that a verbal highlighting that is necessary for individual image identification can be masked or dominated by a highlighting which is necessary for diegetic identification.

53. And it must be emphasised that the photoroman is only one of the great range of visual/verbal narrative texts which there is not space to consider here. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the specific analysis of a photoroman might lead to valuable general points. Outlining one specific analysis serves at least to show how much work there is to be done on combined texts.

54. Muybridge accompanied his images with a chronological grid.

55. This latter example shows how the visual in photoromans can be downgraded almost to the non-specific. The actual camera viewpoint (and the supporting visual identification of the hand) do not correspond exactly to the upstairs window indicated in the verbal text.

56. In which case the frame could be the 'neutral' rectangle. The freedom regarding framing devices in photoromans which rely on the verbal text for the establishment of discourse positions can be seen in Threat from the Grave (Fig.34) where, apart from the use of cloud-shaped frame to contain the hypnotic vision, no attempt is made to contain visually the dream vision of the former boyfriend after his first introduction in head profile framing with low (classically: threatening) lighting. Note in this text, too, the use of jagged frame to heighten emotional tension, and the use of blank background to emphasise the character.

57. Fresnault-Deruelle op.cit., p.178.

58. Bergala op.cit., p.82.

59. Burch op.cit. orig.pub.1969, p.90.

60. See the reference to Chris Marker in Chapter 1. La Jetée, although generally regarded as a 'static' text projected as film, actually contains one moment of animation: the woman opening her eyes.

61. Lotman 1976 orig.pub.1973, p.81.

62. Where musical interludes were interspersed they tended to serve a much more summative or commentary function. This is true especially of the text accompanying Jack the Conqueror, which more or less constitutes a religious 'service' with interspersed hymns (see Fig.7).

63. The incorporation of the sound track must have had a dramatic effect in removing the heavily diegetic impulse from musical accompaniment. It is possible, though, that the music continued to be 'anecdotal' as well as 'emotional'.

64. Gorbman op.cit., p.190.

65. Although form or numerical balance is no guarantee of visual and verbal function in combination.



66. Cook (1963, p.89) gives the example of Phiz's illustrations to The Pickwick Papers. The extraction of illustrations to well-known stories and their projection was a common practice.

67. See Pächt 1962, pp.2,53. Pächt suggests telescoping into a single moment as an unsuccessful Greek answer to the problems of visual narration. His discussion of the St. Alban's Miniature (The St. Alban's Psalter, p.85) suggests a similar practice in later English art. The burden of 'containment' in visual illustrations implies that this is a general tendency.

68. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961, p.26. But see note 29 above.

69. In other words, the exigencies of the text tend to dictate the relative contributions of verbal and visual.

70. Even though it might appear obvious in certain texts at the ends of the spectrum of 'numerical' visual/verbal relation.

71. See bibliography 'Godwin and Hughes 1979'.

72. Ibid., p.8: 'Fay Godwin set out to capture some impressions of this landscape at this moment, and her photographs moved me to write the accompanying poems.' This would not necessarily affect the sign as read.

73. In such a short space it is impossible to do justice to the variety of combined texts, which would require a full length study. The conclusions reached here outline general tendencies only.

## 6. CONCLUSION: CONTEXT

### CONCLUSION: CONTEXT

Throughout this thesis there have been points where longer and fuller discussions were needed. The limitations of space and economy have necessitated focussing on the practical workings of a limited corpus of examples; often the result has been rather the suggestion of methods of analysis than the analysis itself. Apart, however, from the various areas of concern which have already been tackled or outlined, a number of wider implications are involved, particularly in relation to the role of the reader and the greater context. Before these areas, together with more general points, are considered, however, it is necessary to take stock of the results of the preceding analysis.

Examples of visual narrative are many and varied, and are not tied to a specific culture or historical period.<sup>1</sup> As a type of visual narrative, photographic serial narrative texts can thus be situated in relation to a number of 'histories' concerning different strands in the development and use of visual serial texts, which go right back to the Old Kingdom of Egypt, and possibly beyond. These histories are important because they show that the photographic narrative series still shares a number of features with visual narrative texts in general. Significant, then, is the concept and use of the ideal and salient moment, and the impetus towards typification which can be seen in the most ancient examples, particularly in a context of encomium. Here we can also note the use



of gesture and the dichotomy of public and private narrative space which underlies a number of early examples.

With the development of the perspective system, however, certain aspects of older forms (like the medieval European use of temporally articulated but spatially undivided space) may have disappeared from the visual narrative text as we know it today, especially in relation to the development of later forms with narrative intent connected to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century interest in trompe l'oeil and 'realistic' representation in both public and private domains. Indeed, the great upsurge in the development of a variety of visual narrative forms (shadows, marionettes, tableaux etc.), which is not unconnected to the development of theatrical settings and the idea of 'entertainment', represents another strand in the establishment of visual narrative texts. In the public domain, these forms show the use of semiotically mixed combinations to be the norm. The use of projection and animation enters into the narrative in this kind of milieu, in contrast to the more literary or academic history behind the use of 'illustration' (Hogarth). The impulse behind all these forms is relevant to the variety of projected, animated, public narratives, and the static, two-dimensional representations which photographic serial texts also display.

The development of photography led to both the replacement of formerly non-photographic imagery, and to the development of new forms. In the latter case, the wider context is fundamental, consolidating the photographic narrative's place in the more documentary milieu, tied, as photography was initially felt to be, to the

efficacious creation of certain types of knowledge. It was not long, however, before photography could also be seen as a valid basis of extensive fictional narrative texts, for which its use was given a major propulsion by its incorporation in magic lantern shows. In the latter case, photography entered into the most sophisticated public narrative milieu apart from film (which, in many ways, did not immediately succeed it). The widespread use of this form was doubtless encouraged, if not made possible, by the usurpation of the medium of the 'lantern lecture' by Victorian church institutions (especially in England).

The documentary impulse, and the photograph's combination with the printed word in a public domain, was retained in the use of the photographic series in reportage, which saw its heyday in the middle years of the twentieth century. This is testament both to the rise in importance attached to the image itself, and, in the introduction of the 'photo essay', to the fact that the photographic series could present a fullness of documentation away from, but possibly developed from, the idea of mere 'illustration' (a tendency which has been noted as regards the development of visual narrative texts in general right from the medieval period). Despite the rise of television, this milieu, and the milieu of advertising, still retain the use of the photographic series, especially in relation to a certain succinctness of expression and the efficacious and direct signification of transformation, which underlies the narrative impulse itself.

The use of the photographic image in more



extensive fictional texts, and in combination with the printed word, returned with the photoroman, which appears to have developed in response to the Hollywood film narrative in its heyday. But this form can also be seen as linked to those static visual narratives, the stereoscope and postcard set, the magic lantern narrative, which enjoyed huge popularity apart from the film.

The use of the more 'considered' or 'contemplative' photographic series (which feature also underlies in part its use in magic lantern shows and reportage) has also appealed to artists investigating form in development. This would apply to artists working towards the use of film, and to artists wishing to represent abstract formal developments, but, in the art world, the photographic series has also been used for its capacity to document, and its efficacy in fictional narratives. Use of the photographic series in this context, then, actually bears testament to a similar variety of types, in relation to a variety of underlying efficacies and impulses, which can be seen throughout the history of the visual narrative in general. Here, one would be more aware of the increase in the imaginative freedoms of the reader, and the diminution of exactitude along with the concomitant extension and investigation of narrative boundaries. Such analytical tendencies have also led to the self-reflective use of the series in analysing photographic practice itself.

Although in many spheres the non-animated photographic series has been usurped (particularly by cinema and television) the static photographic narrative series still survives, especially in educational domains. Even



in other more popular and public domains it has been retained or reintroduced: in England the photoroman seems to be undergoing a revival, and there has been a recent upsurge in interest in photographic practice in general, and in photographic collection. It is not likely that the non-animated photographic narrative, which performs particular functions and fills a particular role, will disappear.

When discussing the photographic series, however, it is necessary to consider what actually constitutes a visual narrative. For this one would have to look at narrative theory in general. In the description and analysis of narrative there are a number of problem areas, mainly connected to the outlining of levels of operation, and the definition of narrative boundaries. Although there has been much terminological confusion, there are areas of agreement, particularly in relation to the analytical division of the text as a whole into separate levels. Originally related to the notions of story and discourse, deep and surface structure, there is a need to extend this analysis to incorporate a further level of operation, especially if one is to attempt to take account of the textual situation of the work. As analytically constituted in three interconnected levels (text, discourse, story), narrative can be seen basically as the signification of an event through a change of state.

Many of the traditionally defining aspects of the narrative work do not add to this fundamental proposition. Thus the presence or absence of signified human actants is not definitive. The same is true of

traditional attempts to separate narration from description (mimesis/diegesis) which in visually based texts is more an effect of emphasis in complex propositions. The signification of a change of state requires only that a transformation is established in the text according to the building of differentiations and cohesions of identity.

The visual narrative text presents particular problems with regard to the analytical unit, especially since the text units are not necessarily equivalent to the discourse and story units, although some kind of confluence is often the case since these texts are dependent on the interstice for the establishment of differentiations and cohesions. This interstice is important, too, for the establishment of any kind of narrative logic, which, at its most basic, is signified by the mere fact of succession, and is equivalent to a chrono-logic.

In such perforated texts the role of the reader as narrative producer rather than mere consumer becomes more important. Given the minimal conditions for narrative, other aspects of the reading, which have in the past been proposed as defining characteristics, like teleology, narrative satisfaction, will be seen to be a priori present if the narrative is to be intelligible. Although the degree of closure might be directly related to the degree of enigma, such features, although necessary concomitants of a narrative reading, are not definitive.

Various other features of narrative texts do not appear to be necessary concomitants. One cannot, for instance, define the text according to its focalisations, nor can one separate the fictional, the poetic or the analytical as distinct narrative or non-narrative



discourses. This latter proposal, which would seek to involve the notion of verification, and the text's situation within wider discourse contexts, does not go far enough in considering the primary semiotic conditions.

Only in the signification of transformation is the reader correctly engaged in a narrative experience. The reader's role can thus not be underestimated, especially in relation to the filling in of interstices. Yet given the minimum conditions in the text for a narrative reading, it must also be said that this reading will ultimately require the cooperation of a reader who can be influenced by other factors -- aesthetic and cultural norms, and the reading context. Although the basic definition would state that narrative is a particular engagement of a reader with a text which fulfils certain conditions -- signifying an event through a state change established as a transformation by at least two consecutive images -- the role of the reader, and other influences on the reading, are areas which would require a fuller consideration.

Since the text itself is important as the situation of the narrative work, it would be necessary to characterise this non-animated photographic text and the way it operates. This can first be done by considering the types of sign which constitute it. Considering the material properties of the signs will not tell us much about their operation, but signs in general have already been defined according to traditional categories. There are problems here, however, in the conceptualisation of the photographic sign as motivated by or motivator



of the aesthetic object, and discussions of photographic signification have been particularly contaminated by the ideology of realism.

As a sign, the photograph must firstly be seen as the signifier of an aesthetic object (regardless of the ontology of the referent and the subject before the lens). Among signs in general, the photograph obviously shares many features with the visual as opposed to the verbal. As a visual sign, however, the photograph is difficult to define according to the somewhat contaminated Peircian distinctions, nor can it be adequately distinguished according to the material properties which might affect the schemata. Since the notion of direct photographic equivalence to the object can be shown to be false, the photograph cannot easily be distinguished from any visual sign, and the notion of 'photographic codes', especially if one follows an argument which emphasises the sign-as-read (an act of production in consumption as it were), is questionable.

In common with other visual signs, then, the photograph can be defined as constructed according to different levels of signification. The basis of the most fundamental isomorphic code is reliant on simple graphic constituents it shares with visual signification in general. Beyond this, at a more 'organisational' level, it also shares formal aspects with other visual signs, even if the photograph is felt to 'objectify' more. Like all static visual images, the photograph is temporally limited, even though its reading must be seen as a temporal, sequential activity.

When we come to analyse the sign in series,

it is probably most useful to attempt a description of the still photographic series in contrast to film. Film is normally distinguished by its incorporation of the persistence of vision and the constitution of the phi phenomenon (both of which relate directly to the sign-as-read). Since these aspects of filmic signification can be said to have equivalents in the non-animated series, it might be better to conclude that film is fundamentally distinguished by the speed of projection which controls the reading. The still photographic series is distinguished by a corresponding lack of temporalised mobility and the resultant 'mobilisation' of spatial ellipses. The most valid distinction between the two visual narratives is the contrast of still and animated (with or without mobile camera) and the possibility in film of the direct signification of dynamic change in form, along with the resultant 'stereokinetic effect'. The successive effacement deriving from superimposition distinguishes only projected from non-projected texts.

Although the differences between animated and non-animated, projected and non-projected texts affect the operation and perception of differentiation and cohesion, we must again look to the interstice as the most significant point of image relation. Shot/image relations will thus be related to the capacity of differentiation and cohesion across the interstice in still photographic narrative texts -- this will at least involve temporal, spatial and graphic criteria. Differentiations can be invoked in any of four ways between the non-differentiated and the elliptically differentiated, in order to guarantee the necessary transformational matrix in narrative

compositions. Concomitantly, the text must also establish certain cohesions according to the same spatial, object (and possibly temporal, though this might be a matter of interpretation best left to the level of discourse) and graphic criteria. Some of these criteria are vital for the establishment of narrative cohesion, but some, along with vectorial (mostly cataphoric) capabilities, can be optional. Only when such conditions are fulfilled can the text be said to be the 'situation' of the narrative.

Since there is much more involved between the text as narrative situation and the story as ideal plot construction, we need to take account of the further level of 'discourse', which corresponds to a large degree to the 'shaping' of the work. For this level we have previous work by film theorists and narrative theorists to go on. This will involve not only the shaping of temporal discrepancies but also the various 'positions' established within and vis à vis the narrative.

In attempting to establish the discourse unit, the notion of paradigmatic choice is important, particularly those choices outlined in Genette's theory concerning discourse/story discrepancy.<sup>2</sup> Much of this concerns the temporal dimension, but there is immediately a problem in defining discourse time, which we must see, finally, as a construct (as is story time). This means that certain categories are going to concern relative proportion.

Of the categories which Genette introduces, certain types of relations of 'order' are indeed possible in our text, with certain conditions. Thus prolepsis, for instance, will require the restoration of temporal



continuity in a succeeding analepsis. Where the analeptical and proleptical features of relation are to be divided into the internal and external, they would be better referred to as insertions and displacements respectively. In our text the compulsive forward movement suggests that analepsis and prolepsis are not in fact symmetrical possibilities, and analepsis is more likely. Paralipsis is also possible, if successively related, and the reader freedom involved in the still photographic narrative (as long as certain other compulsions are slackened) also introduces the possibility of reversal. 'Duration' presents particular problems with texts which display no durational qualities, and in which one is constantly relying on factors external to the image. The inevitability of constant temporal ellipsis also poses problems. Constantly referring to a 'norm' of 'pace', one is forced to conclude that only Genette's 'summary' and Chatman's 'stretch'<sup>3</sup> are distinct possibilities, the latter less common. The possibilities are even more reduced in terms of 'frequency' relations, where the visual alone is tied to a strict one to one correspondence.

Since spatial organisational aspects are largely the property of the text, a corresponding set of categories for spatial relations is not a feature of the relation of discourse to story. Discourse represents, if anything, the regulation of narrative rather than textual information.<sup>4</sup> However, there are other areas of regulation, largely the result of prepared, immediate or bracketed contextualisations which further 'position' the relations in the discourse. These can be seen as concerning the regulation of narrative information, beyond the purely textual,

in terms of both the information's quantity and its quality.

To begin with, these can involve the traditional category of 'viewpoint'. In the still photographic narrative, with its confluence of visual and conceptual perspectives, we are dependent on vision for knowledge, and can immediately distinguish only character-identified and non-character-identified viewpoints. All variants relating to the visual construction of the image can be mobilised as 'subjective' but in visual texts a strict correspondence is not likely. 'Identification' in this sense is often a result, therefore, of tacit agreement on the part of the reader.<sup>5</sup> This would in turn tend to imply that mixed focalisations are the norm in texts constructed of a series of complex visual statements. The discourse also tends to maintain a 'neutral' position, and it is variations from this position which tend to be signalled and visually maintained. External (non-character-identified) focalisations can also be divided into the 'existent' and the more 'conceptual', the latter involving a character-identified view, but a view from outside the embedded focalisation.<sup>6</sup>

A string of embedded relations can also intersect and complicate the identifications of person in the discourse. This affects the operation, especially, of homo-diegetic and autodiegetic narrations. In respect of the signification of person the visual narrative is severely limited, and we might even say that, where a character is visualised, there is only one narrative person: the third person. Otherwise, the visual text will be greatly dependent on the accompanying verbal, as it is in all cases of weakness or incapability. The same would apply

to the establishment of tense. On the other hand, the visual's capacity to signify the look from within increases the possibility of the infringement of narrative levels, and complicates the narrative relations.

The analysis of the discourse level is most revealing in terms of the strengths and inadequacies of the visual text alone. But texts are rarely constructed simply of the visual. Although there is little previous detailed work to go on, something must be said concerning textual combinations.

The respective roles of verbal and visual in combined texts will first and foremost be related to the particular strengths and weaknesses of visual and verbal signification in general. But before an analysis of the function of texts in combination is attempted, it is necessary to outline the kinds of verbal accompanying texts we are dealing with. Traditionally divided into the pre-existent categories 'title', 'caption', 'text', the accompanying verbal statements can only be definitively distinguished if the text itself signals the differentiation. This will largely be done formally. In terms of function, the most certain division is simply between the 'title' which has general emphatic and/or identificatory tendencies as spatially and/or typographically distinguished initial and overall statement, and the 'body' of the work. The other verbal 'text' can be external to, or even integrated into, the picture content.

Taking our lead from the work of Barthes,<sup>7</sup> it will be seen that there are a number of problems when dealing with the functions of verbal and visual texts



in combination. Not least of these is the difficulty in deriving general tendencies from specific texts, and the combination of different functions within the simplest statements and images. Many of the problems relate, too, to the concepts of identification, duplication and autonomy applied to the combined text.

In terms of identification, the verbal appears to provide nominal specifications of many types: principally relating to information about place, time or object. In relation to the information provided by the image, such specifications can be seen to be expansive or reductive. But specification is not the reserve of the verbal only, since both verbal and visual can provide different types of information; indeed in some sense both can be said to 'overspecify'. Although the verbal in practice possibly has more influence on the expansion or reduction in semantic focus, the visual specificity of the image also presents us with an incontrovertible base. Identification is a function resulting from combined operation. When the information provided by visual and verbal texts seems to be the same or similar, the functions of semantic reinforcement or semantic duplication are hard to separate. But since visual and verbal information is never quite the same, so called 'duplication' is really an effect of textual emphasis, a reinforcement of the semantic boundaries. In combined texts, then, neither text can be said to be 'autonomous', since the creation of the text as a whole depends on mutual reinforcement, the role of both texts being to contribute to a semantic whole.

When we come to consider the serial text, however,

we must also take account of the relation of both texts to the interstitial, and the diegetic impulse, which can tend to dilute the individual specifications.<sup>8</sup> In general, taking the photoroman as an example, the verbal statements in visually based narrative texts tend to relate to the temporal, emotional reactions, physical and aural sensations, character motivations and ruminations: those aspects of the narration which can be more economically or efficaciously signified by verbal enunciation. Since the text as a whole is economical, verbal statement has a tendency to be diegetically summative, providing or supporting the narrative focus and the compulsive onward movement with the use of conjunctives. Authorial comment is rare.<sup>9</sup>

Since the verbal can be seen to be generally supportive or compensatory with regard to the visual's weaknesses and incapacities, we would expect it to complement the capabilities already outlined concerning the establishment of narrative text and discourse. Although the visual is capable alone of establishing the narrative text, the verbal can support the differentiation, and help to identify temporal, spatial and object cohesions. The verbal can both establish and underline the order of succession, serve to identify the deviations of anachrony more succinctly, specify duration, and signify any frequency deviations from the visual's one to one correspondence. The verbal can identify or support the identification of viewpoints in the discourse, and is vital in the establishment of person (with the corresponding homo- and hetero-diegetic discourse categories) and tense in the narrative. It is vital, too, in the signification

of aural phenomena, particularly when the accompanying verbal text is a sound text which provides a sonic manifestation of out-of-field, and adds to the text as a whole a new dimension. This is also true of music, which can establish sound effect, but generally plays a supportive role.

Looking at combined visual and verbal non-animated narrative texts as a whole, it must be said that there is a great variety of texts, with various degrees of integration, but functionally there will always be similarities. The need for the verbal in an image-based narrative series will depend on the construction of the visual layer, and the designs of the constructor for the imaginative role of the reader. In photoroman, where the reader's imaginative intervention is at a minimum,<sup>10</sup> the verbal is used to reduce imaginative possibilities, such that the reader asks no questions of the text, or asks only those questions which are necessary for the efficacious flow of the narrative. In many texts the reader's role is more searching and more imaginative. Thus we return to the importance of the reading subject as the producer of the text. At this point we reach an important area which there has not been time or space to consider hitherto, and which concerns the other variables which might influence the reading, and thus affect the construction of the text if we are taking the reader as producer rather than mere consumer.

At various points throughout the thesis the suggestion was made that theories and analyses of narrative texts be based more on consumption, than construction



of signs. This kind of emphasis at least has the virtue of sorting out the problem of motivated signs and photographic codes. But if one is to consider the point of consumption as a point of production, a full analysis cannot be carried out without considering the reading subject, which introduces the problem of individual response, and other more 'environmental' factors, which introduces the problem of pragmatic and ideological influence on the reading. This would apply even to the most 'closed' texts, like photoromans, which still require the reader to fill in the lacunae even if under strict guidance.

When speaking of the individual subject one would need to be concerned not with individual response, but with the construction of the subject in (and in cooperation with) the text as the 'consumer/producer' who can be relied upon to interpret the text as a member of a particular social group, that 'framework of individual consciousness determined even in its most intimate levels, by constants which belong to the collective unconscious'.<sup>11</sup> This applies not just to the 'lacunae' of the text, which entail, according to Dällenbach (1980), 'when the text resorts to negations, fails to make explicit the connections between different sequences, disturbances of phrasal and sequential relationships, inconsistent and conflicting viewpoints',<sup>12</sup> which are probably better considered as the moments when the text 'reveals itself', but to the simplest establishment of a legible reading. This would apply to the most 'open' works where the imaginative contribution of the reader appears to be maximally engaged,

and to the more tightly constructed work, like the photoroman, where the imaginative contribution of the reader is still engaged to fill in textual lacunae, within already presented semantic horizons.<sup>13</sup>

The establishment of the subject, however, entails even more than this. In the classic Marxist sense of production, the text itself can be seen, following Vazquez (1973, originally published 1965), to (i) supply the material object, (ii) produce consumption by supplying it also with a mode of consuming the object, and (iii) determine the consumption by creating the very needs which are satisfied by consumption, i.e. by creating subjects which are adequate to the objects.<sup>14</sup> This three-fold operation applies particularly well to the way in which the narrative text involves the consuming subject and engages it in the work, in its most simple act of signification. The subject is, thus, involved in the 'consumption' of signification itself, the most basic tying of signifier and signified. If even this level of consumption, the operation of the sign, involves the positioning of a subject, then we are coming closer to that area of consciousness, which is shared by members of a given social group, which is necessary to the operation of signification and which Kristeva calls 'that other scene of the before-sense production of sense'.<sup>15</sup> For this, one would have to be aware of how the subject is psychologically constructed within signifying practice.

These considerations, which it is not possible to go into at this stage, but which it would be necessary to consider in any discussion of narrative reading, in turn necessarily involve the notion of ideology, which

can, from the outset, be seen as an influence on the construction of the text in reading. Although there is disagreement about the concept 'ideology' itself, various theories of ideology can be seen as directly relating to the production of a meaningful text. Whether one sees ideology in the classic Marxist sense as 'false consciousness', as the early Barthesian 'level of connotation', as Eco's 'overcoding' or as the Althusserian 'representation of the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence',<sup>16</sup> it cannot be denied that ideology is produced in signification, along with the subject. Ideology can thus be seen to form part of the construction of meanings in society, whether these are 'correct' or not according to other factors (especially Marxist analysis and the class make-up of individual consciousness), and which are constructed as 'natural'. In the case of photographic narrative the operation of ideology can be seen in the most basic signification of objects, and the false ideology of realism can be seen most of all, as has already been pointed out in the thesis, in the breakdown of the natural relation between what I have chosen to call the photographic 'subject' (before the lens) and the (aesthetic) 'object'. Photographic signs, as Williamson (1978) points out, are given exchange value in capitalist society,<sup>17</sup> and the very fact that we take part in the process of exchange (along with the direct correspondences that that exchange entails) is itself constitutive of ideology. The exchange value is fixed, and entails what Eco (1976) would call the attribution of certain properties to a sememe ignoring the non-linear and contradictory format of its semantic



space.<sup>18</sup> Where there might appear, in more 'open' works, to be a choice of meanings, these are still fixed meanings. It might be said that the ideology of meaning can only be challenged by the exposition of signifying practice.

There are, however, more immediate or more 'tangible' influences on the reading of the work, which a fuller analysis of the narrative text would have to consider. This would involve, apart from the expectations and definitions of meaning creation provided by the text itself, the 'situation' of the work as a whole, both physically and culturally. The consideration of a text's contextualisation would entail the necessity of a narrative 'pragmatics'. Gasparov (1978), for one, has proposed the following 'additional connotative factors' in the relation of 'text' and 'context': (i) 'variants in code presentation' (oral v. written), (ii) 'performative variants' (homo- or heterogeneously performed texts), (iii) 'situational variants' (official, practical, literary discourses), (iv) 'appellative variants' (attitude to the addressee) and (v) 'expressive variants' (authorial comment: attitude to basic content).<sup>19</sup> Some of these (differences in type of signification, the operation of combined texts, authorial comment and positions established in the discourse) have already been mentioned in the body of the thesis, but others, particularly those involving the wider context, have not.

In order to undertake a 'successful narrative pragmatics, then, one would have to be aware of the way in which the reading context can affect the reading. This is especially important with some visual narrative

texts where the minimal conditions for narrativity are established but the parameters of the work are more 'open'. The pragmatic considerations would involve the both the practical and the 'discursive' situation of the work. In the first place this would entail a more detailed consideration of the implications of 'public' and 'private' experiences, and an examination of the concept of 'mass privacy'<sup>20</sup>. Here, notions of the projected versus the unprojected narrative experience would come into play, especially, in relation to the former, the use of the verbal narrator, the lecturer, in the darkened space. Where the lecturer serves to guide and structure the gaze this would increase the possibilities of control, just as the use of superimposed projected images denies the possibility of the retrospective view. This can in turn be contrasted to the spectator's control of viewing time as manifested in the static non-projected narrative, and its implications. One would also have to consider the ramifications of the structured relation of lecturer and audience, along with the authoritarian presentation of the narrative.

Allied to these considerations, it would be necessary to consider the expectations which result from the kind of discourse in which the narrative series is placed. Here, the expectations concerning the text can influence the reading and the construction of meaning. The same text placed in an aesthetic or an advertising milieu will be read quite differently, for instance.<sup>21</sup> In this respect, the magic lantern lecture represents a particularly interesting example. As Boudu (1983) has pointed out, the magic lantern experience could be said



to require a 'congregation' rather than an audience.<sup>22</sup> Certainly the Jack the Conqueror 'service' indicates (Fig.7) how the viewer is already positioned by the expectations of the viewing experience as a whole, allowed a particular role according to the ultimate 'message' of a particular religious ideology. Yet such texts also show how the separation of different types of discourse can be difficult to decipher. Indeed, the illustrated song text shows how the viewing environment provided for a confluence of discursive situations, combining ideas of 'entertainment' and 'promotion' within a strong moralising context. With such experiences, the audience is allowed direct participation in the textual construction (in Jack the Conqueror, through involvement in hymns or hymn-like songs which underline the authorial comment on the narrative),<sup>23</sup> but only within strict overall confines. For a text placed in an aesthetic environment, the reading can be said from the outset to be more likely to be reflective, given the modes of behaviour appropriate to the art gallery, which will in turn influence the reader's relation to the work. A work presented as documentary discourse will again create different expectations relating to the signification itself and the ideology of realism which underlies it. Contextualisation of the work as a whole would thus need to be considered in relation to the construction of the text, the positioning of the subject, and the ideology of the signification.

Considerations such as those above will in turn lead to an assessment of exactly why the static photographic narrative is made use of. One can underline



the text's efficacy in terms of various roles in constructing a text and a discourse and its basic ability to construct narrative, but ultimately it is significant to consider the reasons for its success. As we have already noted, the still photographic narrative is still in use in more educational contexts, and it is in similar contexts in the past that it enjoyed a great deal of success. But at the time of its heyday around the turn of the century, the public projected narrative was particularly usurped by religious institutions in strongly moralistic contexts.<sup>24</sup> Doubtless the combination of the darkened viewing space, the satisfaction of the scopic drive, the guiding of the gaze by the accompanying lecturer, the use of lengthy viewing times with the single image and the lack of animation produced a situation of viewing control which was unequalled by other types of visual narrative. In respect of the latter effect, Prissette, a champion of the slide sequence in the sixties, praised the use of this type of narrative for its ideological efficacy, saying that each image presents a privileged instant and, unlike cinema, the attention is not distracted so much by intermediary passages, the use of 'fondus enchainés' rendering 'transitions heureuses'.<sup>25</sup> Fell (1974) also sees in the static photographic narrative a particular power resulting from the concentration on moments (which he allies to the freeze effect of melodrama, in contrast to the film's 'bourgeois' focus of attention on states of individual consciousness).<sup>26</sup> For Richter, too, the static sequence (scroll) was more contemplative a medium than film. It must be said, though, that the success of static photographic narrative often depends on a greater toleration

on the part of the viewer of gaps in continuity, and, in its heyday, relied on the confidence which the audience had already invested in the documentary power of the photograph and, according to Fell, a confidence in narrative continuities which had already been established.<sup>27</sup>

The success of the photographic narrative in certain contexts of fluid narration can be contrasted, however, to its efficacy in revealing the text through the very gaps which it exhibits. More than one analyst has commented on the resultant 'tension' in texts combining the static image with the printed word.<sup>28</sup> A particular confluence of static and dynamic and the possibility of more contemplative involvement make the still photographic series particularly efficacious in revealing, as Richter discovered, 'process' rather than 'fact'.<sup>29</sup> It is not surprising, then, to see artists wishing to analyse the structure of photographic narrative, or the basis of photographic practice itself, utilise the static photographic narrative form. Claass, (1981) for instance, maintains that the the sequence actually constitutes the site of the separation of form and content,<sup>30</sup> in contrast to the film, which can appear to be definitive, closed. The photographic narrative can, on the other hand, as the magic lantern narrative and the photoroman attest, deal successfully with the constitution of similar 'closed' forms of narration, reducing the semiotic tensions, and limiting the viewer's power of contemplation in its own structured flow.

The study of the history of the photographic series, the definition of narrative, the establishment

of narrative text and discourse, and the operation of textual combination has shown that the photographic narrative series is a valid object of study, and a successful narrative form, which, if anything, merits further consideration.



Notes

6. Conclusion: Context

1. Regarding, that is, visual narratives as a whole, although certain forms (e.g. magic lantern shows) are historically and culturally specific.
2. Genette 1980 orig.pub.1972.
3. Ibid., pp.94-95; Chatman 1978b, pp.68,74.
4. But the narrative through the textual, of course.
5. Meaning, here, viewpoint identification and not necessarily psychological or other identifications.
6. 'Conceptual' only in the sense that they involve a visualisation of thoughts conceived by the character.
7. Barthes 1977 orig.pub.1961 and 1977 orig.pub.1964.
8. 'Dilution' being an effect of the photoroman and similar texts, often simply a question of the diegetically motivated counterbalancing or even overriding of the individual image specifications through highlighting.
9. Conclusions which relate most specifically to the photoroman.
10. A minimum, that is, for this type of text. It might be said that the static photonarrative series in general requires more imaginative intervention on the part of the reader than other visual narrative series (film, for example).
11. Mukařovský 'Art as a semiological fact' (Twentieth Century Studies 15/16, Dec 1976, pp.6-11), p.6. This essay, originally 'L'Art comme fait sémiologique' 1934, is also translated in Mukařovský 1978, pp.82-88, where the translation has 'the framework of individual consciousness is constituted, even in its innermost layers, of contents belonging to the social consciousness.' In this instance the translation in the former is preferred, although the essay has not been itemised in this translation in the bibliography.
12. Dällenbach 1980, p.437.

13. There would thus be no absolute distinction between 'open' and 'closed' texts, which is what Eco (1974) has suggested.

14. Vazquez op.cit., p.227.

15. Quoted in Laing 1978, p.100. See also Kristeva 1975.

16. See especially Laing 1978, Eco 1976, Barthes 1967 orig.pub.1964, 1973 orig.pub.1957, 1977 orig.pub.1961, 1977 orig.pub.1964, and Larrain 1979, p.159.

17. See Williamson 1978, p.42.

18. See Eco 1976, p.293.

19. Gasparov 1978, pp.246-247.

20. Particularly in relation to the provision of identical texts for mass individual consumption.

21. Although it will still be the same constructed text and will not bear a different relation to 'reality'.

22. Boudu op.cit., p.65.

23. The audience is always, of course, required as reader to participate in the textual construction. The difference here is that the public expression of audience (really authorial) comment is allowed space in the text.

24. This can be compared to the way the Fascist Party in Italy usurped the comic-book form in the 1930s (the apogee of the Fascist regime coinciding with the apogee of the use of comic-strip stories in Italy in 1936). The Catholic Church in Belgium monopolised the comic-book form at the same period. (Source of information: Pierre Couperie in a series of lectures on 'Paralittératures' at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris Oct-Dec 1981).

25. See Prissette 1968, p.200.

26. Fell op.cit., p.53.

27. Ibid., p.162.

28. Especially Bergala c1978 and Lotman 1975a.

29. Richter 1971, p.114.

30. Claass op.cit., p.18.



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