PRESENTED IN THIS BOOK IS DOCUMENTATION OF THE WORK PRODUCED
DURING 1985-'87 WITHIN THE MASTER OF FINE ART COURSE AT THE
TASMANIAN SCHOOL OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA.

NOVEMBER, 1987.

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book no:

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SECTION 1: PROPOSAL AND AMENDMENT.

"The photo then becomes a bizarre medium, a new form of
hallucination, false on the level of perception, true on the
level of time."

Barthes, Camera Lucida.

My work anchors itself in the specificity of the
photographic record. Although it is an accepted fact that
photographs lie, at the same time it can be argued that they
do contain an element of truth - a knowledge that at some
time an event occurred and was recorded. It is this
inherent photographic quality, this dichotomy between
representation and construction, reality and imagination
that I intend to investigate and use to pose questions about
our own notions of reality, of the world we exist in and of
who or what we are.

To date all my concerns have involved a progression towards
this point. My first major piece (Queenstown), deliberately
mis-used time and place. The latest work (Untitled 1983),
used an almost filmic technique - a series of frozen
photographic moments to allow the viewer space to enter.
This desire to manipulate the photographic moment along with
the concerns of alienation and vulnerability, of barriers
and the need to break them, form the basis for my current
motivation.

My recent work comes from both observed experience and from
a strong personal feeling of self investigation, growth and
struggle. The work is intended to explore the state of flux
in human existence - to reveal both the outer precariousness
and vulnerability and the inner conflicting desires and
fears that form and shape a personality. Munch has been a
source here in the way that, for me, his figures seem about
to shatter and dissolve into a landscape which itself seems
ready to dissolve.

The technical resolution of these ideas will take some time.
In using photographed figures in an obviously constructed
and shattered way I intend these and the installation as a
whole to stand as a metaphor for the various tensions and
forces that are at work. At present I am experimenting with
altering and rephotographing human figures out of smaller
multiple images to form expanded, fragmented but
recognizable forms. These figures will be worked into the
larger context of an installation format, itself a
construction, and I will need to experiment with the use of
space, juxtaposition of images and the various relationships
and tensions that can be created and used.

At first glance it might appear easier to use some other medium for this construction. However it is important that the work has a direct anchoring in reality, so that it becomes, in effect, not a total fantasy created solely from imagination but involves a play between real and unreal, fiction and fact. It is this bizarre, unresolved tension in the photograph which holds and will continue to hold such a strong fascination for me.

16th March, 1987.

To the Higher Degrees Committee.

WORK PROPOSAL: RUTH FROST

The Higher Degrees Committee are asked to note that, while
my work proposal has provided the basis of my current
practice, in its outline of concerns and aims, the physical
transformation of these is now unlikely to appear as an
installation. The figures with `the various relationships
and tensions' are being resolved within a series of large
composite wall pieces.

Ruth Frost.

SECTION II: THEORETICAL SUBMISSIONS.

SEMINAR   PAPER 1.

This paper was first suggested to me under the title "The Politics of Representation". I have held loosely to this, but it is more a look at the various critiques, theories and ideas expressed about photographs and photographic practice. My reason for doing so is to arrive at a better understanding of what it means to photograph and, in the light of recent theories, to find where it is that my practice stands. I have juxtaposed two books, using <u>Camera Lucida</u> by Roland Barthes as a guideline, and introducing arguments from <u>Thinking Photography</u> (edited by Victor Burgin) when relevant. Barthes deals with the photograph from a personal, subjective viewpoint. The essayists in <u>Thinking Photography</u> deal with photography "as a social phenomenon, as a producer of meaning. They challenge the concept of the autonomous, spontaneously creative artist, the idea of documentary truth in photography and the notion of purely visual languages. They develop an account of the production of meaning in a photograph within social institutions, within a society with a history and within the unconscious."[1]

Barthes' book is divided into two parts. The first is relatively simple - in it we first meet his concept of photographic death and his division of his interests in a photograph into "studium" and "punctum". It is the second part that provides difficulties. We find Barthes' definition of the photographic essence to be contrary to the theories propounded in <u>Thinking Photography</u> - i.e. that the photograph and photographer alike are products of a preconstituted field of discourse. I will discuss the concepts of death and violence in photography ; take a look at the act of looking itself and finally the notion of power based on knowledge as truth.

Part One

Barthes writes :

"By nature the photograph has something tautological about it. It is as if the photograph always carries its

referent with itself, both affected by the same amorous
or funeral immobility. At the very heart of the moving
world they are glued together. The photograph belongs to
that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot
be separated without destroying them both. Desire and
its object, dualities we can conceive but not perceive.
Whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner a
photograph is always invisible : it is not it that we see
- in short the referent adheres." [2]

This is his first major point, one to which he returns in the second
part of his book.

His second observation is included in a description of his
feelings while being photographed. Once he feels the scrutiny of the
lens he changes, transforming himself into image - his image, the image
which he desires, the photographer's image etc. : it is the advent of
himself as "other".

"When I discover myself in the product of this operation
what I see is that I have become Total Image, which is to
say, Death in person ... turned ferociously into an
object - I am put at their mercy, at their disposal,
classified in a file, ready for the subtlest
deceptions." [3]

I will leave this concept of Photographic Death for the moment,
and discuss it when I deal with the second part of his book. Suffice to
say that Barthes has made an observation that when photographed, a
living subject is turned into an object.

In the last section of Part One, he struggles to define the
attraction that, for him, existed in various photographs. There were
two elements whose co-presence established the particular interest he
took. The first he termed "studium", an enthusiastic interest, a
trained interest derived from shared experience, whether emotional,

practical or historical. Its basis was cultural and common. Most photographs provoked only a general, or polite, interest ; they were invested with no more than "studium". The second element would break or punctuate the "studium". The "punctum" was private and incommunicable, with the power to expand the image beyond what was seen "... as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see."[4] (One should note here his linking of "punctum" with desire).

Part Two :

In this second half of his search for the nature of photography, Barthes uses as his guide a photo of his mother taken in early childhood (the Winter Garden Photograph). It was the only one out of many that, for him, truthfully showed the essence of the face he loved and from it he derived his theory of the noeme of photography.

> "What I had noted at the beginning in a free and easy
> manner, under cover of method, i.e. that every photograph
> is somehow co-natural with its referent, I was
> re-discovering, overwhelmed by the truth of the image. I
> call photographic referent not the optionally real thing
> to which an image or sign refers but the necessarily real
> thing which has been placed before the lens, without
> which there could be no photograph. In photography I can
> never deny that the thing has been there. There is a
> superimposition here, of reality and of the past. And
> since this restraint exists only for photography, we must
> consider it, by reduction as the very essence, the noeme
> of photography. The name of photography's noeme will
> therefore be 'that-has-been' - what I see has been here
> in this place which extends between infinity and the
> subject. It has been here and yet immediately separated,
> it has been absolutely, irrefutably present and yet
> already deferred. ... I had identified truth and reality
> in a unique emotion, in which I henceforth placed the
> nature, the genius of photography."[5]

Barthes states that the photograph is literally an emanation of the referent - "from a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me who am here."[6] He is not the only one to reach this conclusion. Both Susan Sontag and Rosalind Krauss state that the photograph is not only an image but a trace. For Krauss it is a transfer from the real, "a photochemically processed trace causally connected to that thing in the world to which it refers."[7] Sontag, in her book, On Photography, describes photographs as deathmasks or footprints, they are stencils off the real (Sontag, Susan : On Photography : Penguin Books, N.Y., 1979).

I am going to leave Barthes with his noeme "that-has-been" and explore instead the world of the Thinking Photographer as espoused by Victor Burgin, John Tagg, Alan Sekula and others. A quote from Julia Ballerini will serve as a general introduction. She writes :

> "Photographs are meshed into our worlds in ways incomparable to those of any other medium. Not only is their population the most dense of all imagery but increasingly our contacts with situations tends to be filtered through them. Photographs are closely bonded to the world in that their images are the only ones caused by their referents. Despite all artifice or any apparent lack of it, their subjects are here before us in a state of actually having been there. Whether acknowledged in a glance or given closer scrutiny all photographs inevitably oscillate between the actualities of 'here' and 'there' and summon connections invisible in the imagery itself."[8]

What is claimed here is that it is precisely Barthes' noeme "that-has-been" which has so intricately woven photography into our lives - to the extent that it shapes our perception of the way things are, our notion of reality.

Victor Burgin, in an essay entitled "Looking at Photographs" states :

"Recently, theory has moved to consider not only the
structure of appropriation to ideology of that which is
uttered in a photograph, but also to examine the
ideological implications inscribed within the performance
of the utterance".[9]

Not only photographs themselves (this is understandable) but their very
structure of representation – not only the object depicted but the way
it is depicted (angle of view, composition, framing etc.) all work in
subtle ways to reinforce ideology. Burgin's project entails an extended
analysis, constructed across the practice of photography, of the role of
psychic structures in the formation of daily reality and of the
particular part played by photography as a central ideological
apparatus. Two elements are important to this study – one, the degree
to which the detours of memory, fantasy and other primary process
operations infiltrate the process of looking, defining its discursive
dimension ; the other, the way the photographic apparatus itself
reflects unconscious structures of fascination.

In order to deal with the ideological formation of the photo
image one must first examine the truth value of that image, as a
representation of visual reality. "The photo", says Alan Sekula, "is
imagined to have a primitive core of meaning, devoid of all cultural
determination."[10] This elevates the photograph to the legal status of
document and testimonial, giving it a mythic aura of neutrality. John
Tagg would counter such a proposition by arguing that photographs are
not automatic records of things seen, they have no language of their
own. The photographer turns his or her camera on a world of objects
already constructed as a world of uses, values and meanings – "though in
the perceptual process these may not appear as such but only as
qualities discerned in a natural recognition of what is there."[11] In
other words, things are never simply things to us – in the very moment
of their being perceived as objects they are placed within an
intelligible system of relations. They take their place or position
within an ideology. All that constitutes reality for us is, then,
impregnated with meanings ; these meanings are the contingent products

of history and in sum reflect our ideology : the naturalness of the
world ostensibly open before the camera is a deceit. Objects presented
to it are already in use in the production of meaning and the
photographer has no choice but to operate on such meanings. The basis
of any mood or feeling a picture might produce, as much as any mood or
feeling it might be thought to transmit, depends not on something
individual or mysterious but rather on our common knowledge of the
typical representation of prevailing social facts and values.[12]

For Burgin, Barthes' simple statement "this-has-been" is
unacceptable. It is precisely the acceptance of just such a statement
and the connotations it involves - the equation of 'this-has-been'
therefore this is truth/reality - that he is arguing against. "A
photograph," he states, "is not to be reduced to pure form, nor window
on the world, nor is it a gangway to the presence of an author. The
photograph is a place of work, a structured structuring space within
which the reader deploys and is deployed by what codes he/she is
familiar with in order to make sense. Photography is one signifying
system among others in a society which produces the ideological subject
in the same moment in which they communicate their ostensible
contents".[13] If one is to agree with Burgin, then one cannot separate
the notion of the 'photograph' from its implication in the production of
meaning in a society.

Burgin starts his argument by observing (as does Barthes) that
it is almost as unusual to pass a day without seeing a photograph as it
is to miss seeing writing. Photographs permeate the environment,
facilitating the formation, reflection and inflection of what we take
for granted. He states that it has previously been most usual to view
photography in the light of art but to do this consigns to shadow the
greater part of our experience of it - it is a partial account which
leaves the social role of photography largely untouched. Photographs
offer themselves gratuitously (as Barthes says, photos come from the
world to me). As a free and familiar coinage of meaning, photography
shares an attribute of language, but this autonomous language of
photography is never free from the determinations of language itself -

even a photograph which has no writing on or around it is traversed by language when read by a viewer – in memory and association.

> "The intelligibility of the photograph is no simple thing – photographs are texts inscribed in terms of what we may call 'photographic discourse' but this discourse like any other engages in discourses beyond itself. The photographic text is the site of a complex intertextuality, an overlapping series of previous texts taken for granted. These prior texts are autonomous – are latent to the manifest text and may only be read across it symptomatically – photographic imagery is typically laconic. The notion of the purely visual image is nothing but Edenic fiction."[14]

Burgin stresses that regardless of how much we may strain to maintain a disinterested aesthetic mode of apprehension, an appreciation of the purely visual, when we look at an image it is instantly and irreversibly integrated and collated with the intricate psychic network of our knowledge. It is this which pre-constructs the photographer's intuitive response to these fragments of the flux of events in the world, producing his/her recognition that there is something there to photograph. "It is neither necessary nor desirable to make psychological assumptions concerning the intentions of the photographer, it is the pre-constituted field of discourse which is the substantial 'author' here – photograph and photographer alike are its products and, in the act of seeing, so is the viewer."[15]

So far, two major points have been made : firstly, the notion of the photograph as a neutral view of reality, as a window on the world, if you like, is a myth ; and secondly, there is no pure image or language of the photograph, everything we perceive is already fixed firmly in ideology.

The article 'Representation and Sexuality' by Kate Linker gives a clear insight into the arguments previously stated and prepares the ground for those to come. I quote :

"What has become apparent is the role of these varied representations, founded on but not identical to language, in constructing what we know as reality. Since reality can be known only through the forms that articulate it there can be no reality outside of representation, ... With its synonyms truth and meaning, it is a fiction produced by its cultural representations, a construction discursively shaped and solidified through repetition, ... Representation, hardly neutral, acts to regulate and define the subjects it addresses, positioning them by class and sex, in active or passive relations to meaning - hence the forms of discourse are at once forms of definition, means of limitation, modes of power."[16]

In other words, it is no longer a question of "this-has-been" but of reality constructed by a culture for a culture. Linker stresses that Burgin's practice is directed against a formalist conception of photography as a purely visual medium and of the photograph as a transparent reflection of its subject. Such formalism asserts photographic neutrality based in adequation of image and meaning, and is countered by Burgin with the conception of the image as a discursive form whose reading emits, intervolves and variously engages psychic, social and institutional texts. Photographs are apprehended through language. This scripto-visual condition defines the photograph in its social use outside the visual and formal constraints that characterize its artistic practice. What this indicates is that meaning cannot be located within the image as a pre-existing or expressed characteristic, but is continually displaced to an intertextual fabric whose elaborations parallel the mechanisms of dreams. From the laconic structure of the manifest elements unfold chains of association and fluxive references which "... spread out into the intricate network of our world of thought, consciousness, subliminal revery, pre-conscious thought, the unconscious, the way of phantasy"[17]. It is in this context that Burgin places photographic imagery. The direct, redundant relation between image and text situates the reader in a passive, rather

than active relationship, as consumer not provider of meaning and this confirmation and reinforcement of subject positions has made photography a prime instrument of ideology.

The equation of the photograph with ideological tool and its implication in the production and circulation of meaning in society has been developed as one of Burgin's strongest arguments. Before exploring his ideas further, it is interesting to juxtapose his notion of photograph/ideological apparatus with a statement by Barthes, who manages to give a subtle twist to the meaning of reality in photographs.

> "The photograph's essence," he says, "is to ratify what
> it represents, it is authentication itself. Photography
> never lies, or rather it can lie as to the meaning of a
> thing, being by nature tendentious, never as to its
> existence. Its force is superior to anything the human
> mind can or can have conceived to assure us of reality
> ... Every photograph is a certificate of presence. This
> certificate is the new embarrassment which its invention
> has introduced into the family of images. It is neither
> image nor reality – a new being really, a reality one can
> no longer touch."[18]

Barthes uses this argument to side-step the notion of the photograph as representing a fabricated reality. For him the photograph is not a copy of reality, but an emanation of past reality, bearing testimony to time, not the object photographed.

> "I now know there exists another punctum. This new
> punctum, which is no longer of form but of intensity, is
> Time, the lacerating emphasis of the noeme
> 'that-has-been', its pure representation."[19]

Here once again the spectre of photographic Death is allowed to surface. According to Barthes the photograph, by showing the absolute past, tells of Death in the future. He states that society is currently

undergoing a crisis with the notion of death and is quick to point to
the irony of a people who use the photographic image as proof of life -
an image that produces death while attempting to preserve life. He
writes that Death (or its symbolic appearance) must be somewhere in a
society ; if it is no longer in religion it must be elsewhere.

> "Contemporary with the withdrawal of rites, photography
> corresponds to the intrusion in our modern society of a
> symbolic death, outside of religion, outside of ritual, a
> kind of abrupt dive into literal death."[20]

Barthes' use of the word 'death' in relation to photography is
problematic, and, if seen in the light of ethical considerations which I
will deal with a little latter on, disturbing. However, to return to
his previous statement, I do believe he has a point.

In his book, Western Attitudes Towards Death, Philippe Aries
describes four ways of dealing with death in European culture. Early
beliefs were defined in an acceptance and familiarity with death : "We
shall all die". The twelfth century saw a concern for the individuality
of each person introduced into the idea of the collective destiny of the
species, stressing the importance given throughout the entire modern
period to the self, to one's own existence, (one's own death). From the
eighteenth century onwards, however, death would be thought of as a
break. The emphasis was less on one's own death than with the death of
the other person ("thy death"), whose loss and memory inspired in the
nineteenth and twentieth century the new cult of tombs and cemeteries.
Memory conferred upon the dead a sort of immortality and their monuments
were the visible sign of their permanence. The Monument perpetuated
Memory.

This is, I think, what Barthes is alluding to when he writes that earlier societies managed so that memory, the substitute for life, was eternal and that at least the thing which spoke death should itself be immortal (this was the Monument). But by making the mortal photograph into the general and somehow natural witness of what has been, modern society has renounced the Monument.[21]

In the twentieth century there was, in Aries' words, a brutal revolution in traditional ideas and feeling. Death, so omnipresent in the past that it was familiar, would be effaced, would disappear, become shameful and forbidden. It was a technical phenomenon obtained by a cessation of care. Death has become taboo - the cause of the interdict is the need for happiness, the moral duty and the social obligation to contribute to the collective happiness by avoiding any cause for sorrow. To counter death we now have the photograph, which proves existence and certifies experience and happiness, (the denying alibi of the distractedly alive).

This is so - up to a point - for as Susan Sontag states, "photography is a elegiac art, most subjects photographed are just by virtue of being photographed touched by pathos"[22], ("the photograph is without future, this is its pathos, its melancholy" - Camera Lucida, p.90). Sontag warns that to take a photograph is to participate in another person's mortality.

> "Photographs show people as being so irrefutably there -
> they state the vulnerability of lives leading towards
> their own destruction, and this link between photography
> and death haunts all people".[23]

It is in Barthes' description of the photograph as turning subject into object that, I think, he comes closest to any notion of death. He writes, "with the photograph we enter into flat death ... if I like a photograph, if it disturbs me I linger over it, the photograph justifies this desire even if it does not satisfy it - ... Alas, however hard I look I discover nothing. I obtain this sole knowledge, long

since possessed at first glance, that this indeed has been ... I must therefore submit to this law. I cannot penetrate, cannot reach into the photograph - I can only sweep it with my glance like a smooth surface. The photograph is flat, platitudinous in the fine sense of the word, (as if the horror of death were not precisely its platitude) - I exhaust myself realising that this has been".[24]

To equate a photograph with death must necessarily involve the notion of violence and aggression in the act of photographing itself. I introduce this here because it raises ethical considerations linked with my interpretation of Barthes' notion of photographic death (subject into object), and, both his idea of death, violence and aggression are implicated in the act of looking itself.

Sontag writes, "the very passivity and ubiquity of the photographic record is photography's message, its aggression - it is implicit in every use of the camera. To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed, it means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge and therefore like power. It turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed."[25] Sontag extends Barthes' concept of the referent to a point where it is not only like its subject, it is seen as part of, an extension of and a potent means of gaining control over it, of acquiring it. Through being photographed, something becomes part of a system of information (as distinct from experience), filtered into systems of classification and storage. (I cannot help but remember Barthes' comment that "they put me at their mercy, at their disposal, classified in a file, ready for the subtlest deceptions." Camera Lucida, p.14). As Rosalind Krauss has observed, the camera frame is an image of mastery (the capture of the photographic subject) and the camera's act of seeing is essentialised as a superior power of focus and selection. Thus we have a picture of the photographic act as being implicitly violent and aggressive.[26]

To my mind, this concept is intricately bound to recent psychoanalytic theories concerning the act of looking itself. Burgin writes that the signifying system of photography, like that of classical

painting, at once depicts a scene and the gaze of the spectator - an object and a viewing subject. Photographic representation implies both a framed scene or object and a controlling point of view. The subject/viewer is placed as geometric point of origin of the scene, in an imaginary relationship with real space, this scene both radiates from and returns to this controlling position occupied by the camera and conferred, in looking, on the viewer. It is the medium's putative transparency that bestows the illusion of naturalness, effacing the image's fabrication under the guise of objectivity. To the point of view, the system of representation adds the frame through which the world is organized into a coherence it lacks. "The perspective system of representation represents before all else, a look, implying subject and objectified other".[27] But the clue to the social predominance of objectifying modes of mastery is to be found far earlier in psychic structures of fascination. "Our conviction that we are free to choose what we make of a photo hides the complicity to which we are recruited in the very act of looking".[28] Looking is not indifferent, it is always implicated in a system of control.

Freud first designated the sexual pleasures of looking as an independent drive - scopophilia, which assumed both active and passive forms. These psychic implications are elaborated by Lacan who identifies a double inscription of psychic life in the look - the essentially autoerotic, narcissistic moment of the mirror phrase, the moment of identification of and with the self, (an erotic investment in one's unified image) and the look which is a component of the externally directed sexual drive to objectify the other - voyeurism. His discussion of the look emphatically returns to this theme of the look as a guarantor of imaginary self coherence. The two are conjoined in their imaginary or imagistic function of fending off lack through the investment of self coherence. "The primary suturing instance of the discourse of still photography takes the form of an indentification of the subject/viewer with the camera position and this shifts between the poles of voyeurism and narcissism. In the former instance subjecting the other as object to an inquisitive and controlling surveillance in which seeing is dislocated from being seen and in the latter effecting

dual identification with both the camera and the individual depicted."[29]

John Tagg imagines a history of photography as an insistent practice inserted into the very heart of the modern social order and characterised by a double momentum. An ever more intimate and exacting attention to bodies and a diverse constitution of space as itself a realm of phantasy and control, submission and consent, a space of the Imaginary and Ideological. On the one side all kinds of portraiture, time and motion studies, photographs in official documents and files, humanist documentaries and pornography. On the other the landscape tradition, aerial surveys, astronomical photography, micro photography topographical records, certain kinds of advertising images and so on. "Two kinds of longing. Two kinds of subjection. (The gaze has both passion and perspective)."[30]

The argument has turned to the act of looking as a drive to master, to objectify, as a means of control, to the photograph as a reflection of unconscious structures of fascination. Burgin further elaborates this with the conclusion that the wholeness, coherence and identity which we attribute to a photograph is a projection, a refusal of an impoverished reality in favour of an imaginary plentitude. It is an imaginary investiture of the real which he links to Lacan's theory of imaginary self coherence.[31] Photography, as is film, is described as a sort of 'wish fulfilling machine' - an instrument of phantasy and desire. This seems to be in direct correlation to Barthes' concept of the photo as an object of desire, (Myself I see only the desired object) and his designation of the punctum of a photograph as a kind of subtle beyond.[32]

Desire then, or the look, is crucial for this discourse on, against and about photography. For Barthes, "the look accomplishes the unheard of identification of reality with truth - it becomes at once evidential and exclamative - bearing the effigy to that crazy point where effect (love, desire) is a guarantee of Being. It then approaches to all intents madness."[33] For Victor Burgin and associates the look

has more sinister connotations – it is irrevocably tied to the concept
of power.

Here too, the violence, aggression and even Barthes' theory of
photographic death are more understandable. The link–up is easy to
follow. To photograph someone or something turns subject into object –
objects that can be symbolically possessed – open before the controlling
gaze – the look – the invitation to power. As stated by Sontag : "to
photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting
oneself in a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge and
therefore like power."[34] With this statement the ideas as argued by
Burgin and associates pass into the realm of the constant articulation
of power as knowledge and knowledge as power which the French
philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault, has explored. Foucault
argues that each society establishes what he calls its 'regime of truth'
– that is, the types of discourse it harbours and causes to function as
true, the techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining
truth, the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as
true. It is within this regime of truth that we must situate the
photograph.

To quote Burgin : "Foucault has directed our attention to the
action of power in the truth effect. Society is ordered on the basis of
what it holds to be true. Truth does not stand outside of discourse.
It is produced by material forms of discourse inscribed in concrete
practices"[35] (i.e. no transcendent truth, only that which we make for
ourselves). The current interest in Foucault lies in his recognition of
the political within the ideological through the intimate connection of
the production of knowledge with the exercise of power. "Our modern
innocence speaks of power as if it were a single thing – on one side
those who have it, on the other those who do not. We have believed that
power was an exemplary political object, we believe now that power is
also an ideological object, that it creeps in where we do not recognise
it at first – into institutions, into teaching, but still that it is
always one thing."[36] (Barthes)

Here we have a concept of the photograph as linked to ideology, which in turn works within our society to reinforce dominant notions of truth, knowledge and power - necessarily Capitalistic power. John Tagg links the photograph with the concept of currency. We should also note here Burgin's use of the phrase 'coinage of meaning' and Sekula's notion of task, of the photograph as being someone's investment in a message : "they are pieces of special paper, tokens, items produced by a certain elaborate mode of production and distributed, circulated and consumed within a given set of social relations. Photographs are objects of manipulation."[37] What he is stressing is the absolute continuity of the photograph's ideological existence as a material object, whose currency and value arise in certain distinct and historically specific social practices that are ultimately a function of the state. Photographs are used to naturalise our beliefs and practices. "We live according to a generalised image repertoire, only images exist and are produced and consumed. What characterizes the so-called advanced societies is that they today consume images, and no longer like those of the past, beliefs."[38] (Barthes)

According to John Tagg, we cannot be innocent of the values that adhere in the realism of photos. "We may live in the space of the picture, its reality, its ideological field - but as the picture draws us in we are drawn into its orbit, the gravitational field of its realism. We seem to experience a loss of light from the picture to us and from ourselves into the picture. We are invited to dream in the ideological space of the photo. It is now that we should remember that dreams really do have a meaning and are far from being the expression of a fragmentary activity of the brain - when the work of interpretation has been completed we perceive that the dream is the fulfilment of a wish".[39] Barthes too, talks of entering a photograph - the object of his desire, of fulfilment. "Inescapably I passed beyond the unreality of the thing represented, I entered crazily into the spectacle, into the image, taking into my arms what is dead, what is going to die - gone mad for pity's sake."[40]

Finally these two different, yet strangely parallel thoughts on photography separate. For Barthes, the noeme of photography is simple,

banal - "that-has-been" - but such evidence, he writes, can be a sibling of madness. "The photograph is an extended loaded evidence - as if it caricatured not the figure of what it represents, but its very existence. The fact that this object has indeed existed, that it has been there where I see it. Here is where the madness is - for until this day no representation could assure me of the past of a thing except by intermediaries - but with the photograph my certainty is immediate - no one in the world can undeceive me. The photograph then becomes a bizarre medium - a new form of hallucination - false on the level of perception, true on the level of time. A temporal hallucination so to speak, a modest, shared hallucination - on the one hand, it is there, on the other, but it has indeed been - a mad image, chafed by reality."[41]

The crux of the matter is this : photography as an ideological apparatus/weapon that constructs/uses us as much as we use/construct it (as much as we speak it so it speaks/shapes us[42]) as opposed to Barthes' "that-has-been".

The Thinking Photographers and their ilk have pulled the world of the photograph apart, and rightly so, but I cannot help thinking of a statement by Barthes which says - "so much, no more". What is it really that they have done? In trying to uncover the ideological role played by photographs, they seem to me, to have at one and the same time, enmeshed it even more firmly into the way we perceive things. (As was pointed out, we have a psychological investment in looking). Ideology is not something 'out there', to be seen through ... it is unconscious. After all that has been said, Barthes' 'mad image' still remains, 'that-has-been', linked to reality, to our perception of it, linked to the look and to desire.

FOOTNOTES

1. BURGIN, Victor : Thinking Photography : Macmillan, London, 1982.
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3. Ibid.: p.14.

4. Ibid.: p.59.

5. Ibid.: pp.76-77.

6. Ibid.: p.80.

7. KRAUSS, Rosalind : 'The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism' : in
    October, Vol.19, 1981 : pp.3-34. P.26

8. BALLERINI, Julia : 'Artificiality and Artifice - The Portrait' : in
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9. BURGIN, Victor : in Thinking Photography : Macmillan, London, 1982
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11. PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP : Photography/Politics : One : London, 1979 :
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12. BURGIN, Victor : in Thinking Photography : Macmillan, London, 1982
    : pp.41-47. /edited by Victor Burgin.

13. Ibid. : p.153.

14. Ibid. : p.144.

15. Ibid. : p.207.

16. LINKER, Kate : 'Representation and Sexuality' : in Parachute,
    Montréal, Quebec, Canada, Vol.23, Sept.Oct.Nov.1983 :
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17. BURGIN, Victor : in Thinking Photography : Macmillan, London, 1982
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18. BARTHES, Roland : Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography :
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    1984 : pp.85-87.

19. Ibid. : p.96.

20. Ibid. : p.92.

21. Ibid. : p.93.

22. SONTAG, Susan : <u>On Photography</u> : Penguin Books, N.Y., 1979 : p.15.

23. Ibid. : p.70.

24. BARTHES, Roland : <u>Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography</u> :
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26. KRAUSS, Rosalind : 'The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism' : in
        <u>October</u>, Vol.19, 1981 : pp.3–34.

27. BURGIN, Victor : in <u>Thinking Photography</u> : Macmillan, London, 1982
        : p.187. /edited by Victor Burgin.

28. Ibid. : p.148.

29. Ibid. : p.189.

30. PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP : <u>Photography/Politics : One</u> : London, 1979 :
        p.194.

31. BURGIN, Victor : in <u>Thinking Photography</u> : Macmillan, London, 1982
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32. BARTHES, Roland : <u>Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography</u> :
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        1984 : p.59.

33. Ibid. : p.113.

34. SONTAG, Susan : <u>On Photography</u> : Penguin Books, N.Y., 1979 : p.4.

35. BURGIN, Victor : in <u>Thinking Photography</u> : Macmillan, London, 1982
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36. BIRD, Jon : 'The Politics of Representation' : in <u>Block</u>, Vol.2,
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37. TAGG, John : in <u>Thinking Photography</u> : Macmillan, London, 1982 :
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38. BARTHES, Roland : <u>Camera Lucida</u> : Translated by Richard Howard :
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39. TAGG, John : in <u>Thinking Photography</u> : Macmillan, London, 1982 :
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40. BARTHES, Roland : <u>Camera Lucida</u> : Translated by Richard Howard :
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41. Ibid. : p.115.

42. BURGIN, Victor : in <u>Thinking Photography</u> : Macmillan, London, 1982
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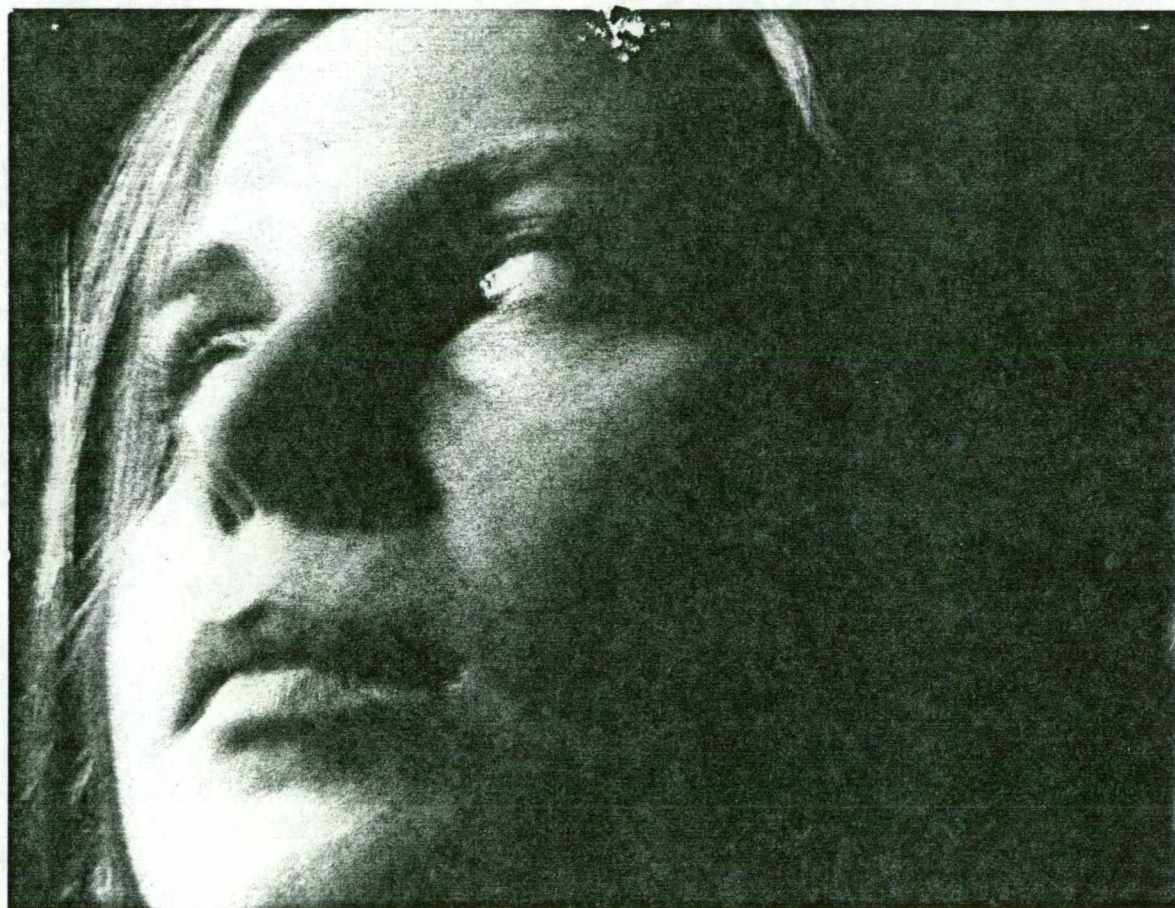
SEMINAR   PAPER 2.

My previous paper initiated an attempt at <u>understanding</u> the various theories circulating around photographic practice. I explored the notions of aggression and power implicit in the photograph, their implication in the process of looking and the idea of the photo as an <u>instrument</u> of ideology, a product of the field of discourse, in which photographer, photograph and viewer alike, were caught. To sum up, "the camera and lens were regarded simply as pieces of machinery which allowed an image, a duplicate of the world, to be transferred onto film. A photograph stood as evidence that whatever was inside the frame of the image really happened, was really there, it was authentic, convincing, true. But photography actually involved just as much artifice as any other mode of visual representation. Photos were no more innocent of cultural formation than any other products of human society."[1] Barthes' <u>Camera Lucida</u>, on the other hand, named photography's essence as being 'that-has-been', linking it with desire and madness.

During the research my fascination with <u>Camera Lucida</u> was reinforced and I came to the conclusion that although 'The Thinking Photographers' had exposed the myth of photographic authenticity, in concentrating on uncovering the role of photography within ideology and the subtle ways it is enforced within the image, they had somehow missed the point - indeed they seemed to entangle these images even more firmly into our perception of things.

This paper, then, is intended as an expansion of these ideas. I concluded with the words - "my next paper will be all about desire." It is, in a manner of speaking : about my desire to finger the pulse of the peculiar power of the photographic image, to find Barthes' madness and the reasons for its provocation. (Barthes did attempt an explanation, which is why I continue to find his book fascinating.) I think there is more to the story than the fact that photos are "stencils" or "causally connected traces", even more than "that-has-been", as Barthes so eloquently put it.

In this second paper I have decided to start my search with a loose exploration of ideas associated with words currently used to

explain photography's fascination. Words such as "desire", "fetishism", "disavowal". These are general topics, necessary, but important only in so far as they are pieces of the puzzle - the search intensifies in the area of psycho-analysis and the formation of the human subject.

The Photograph and Desire

Throughout his book (Camera Lucida) Barthes continually links photographs to desire. That photos can and do provoke desire needs no argument, but how and why bears a more thorough investigation.

In The Power of the Image, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1985, p.12) Annette Kuhn writes that beauty or sexuality is desirable exactly to the extent that it is idealised or unattainable. For Barthes, the most erotic portion of a body is where the garment gapes. It is intermittence which is exotic, the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing, between two edges. It is this flash itself which seduces, or rather, the staging of an appearance as disappearance.

> "What pleasure wants is the sight of a loss, the seam,
> the cut, the dissolve, it is the seam between edges, the
> fault or flaw which excites desire."[2]

Sartre might extend this with the question, "Does one usually want what one desires?" - usually not - a desire is never satisfied to the letter precisely because of the abyss that separates the real from the imaginary.[3]

To look at a photograph beyond a certain period of time is to become frustrated. The image, by degrees, becomes a veil behind which we now desire to see. ("As if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see." Camera Lucida, p.59). With a photograph we never really quite have it - it is illusion. The photograph is object as nothing, it is, of course, actually not there. Desire is maintained precisely because desire remains ungratified.

Why desire is never satisfied can be explained in the Lacanian terminology of desire/lack. Meaning, or a place in patriarchal structure, is attained only at the price of loss. It is in this lack (the effect of a primordial absence) that Lacan bases the instigation of desire, which is distinguished from want in that its satisfaction is never attained. Desire is deviation, ex-centric, constantly forced away from the aim and into displacement. (If we did not lack we would not desire.) There is no adequation between the need and the demand that conveys it, it is the gap between them that constitutes desire. Desire is a perpetual effect of symbolic articulation. It is not an appetite – it is essentially excentric and insatiable, coordinated not with the object that would seem to satisfy it, but with the object that causes it.[4]

> "Desire and the secret collusion with which it envelops the pleasure of knowing and of dominating with jouissance, these amount to no other derangement of instinct than that of being caught in the rails – eternally stretching forth towards the desire for something else – of metonymy".[5]

The photograph then, could be seen as a gap through which we desire to enter. But no matter how strong the illusion, how strong the desire, it remains isolated, sealed, a tiny world, separated, cut off ... perpetually unattainable ... infinitely desirable, the site of Barthes' flaw or fault.

Photographs as Fetish

Victor Burgin writes that man's desire in/for the image is lodged under the sign of fetishism. The fetish is that fragment which allays the fetishist's castration anxiety by serving as a reassuring substitute for that which he construes as 'missing' from the woman's body.[6] Normally conceived as a masculine practice – but also feminine – it intervenes as an effort to suture loss, to bind up, to

psychologically allay the anxiety of castration. The photographic look
is ineluctably implicated in the structure of fetishism, for the
photograph, like the fetish, is the result of a look which has
instantaneously and forever isolated, frozen, a fragment of space and
time.

In an article, 'Photography and Fetish'[7], Christian Metz
observes that photographs are more likely to work as fetishes because of
their size and the fact that they can allow the possibility of a
lingering look. Metz draws a parallel between the timelessness of
photography and the timelessness of the unconscious and of memory
(immobility and silence lend authority to a photograph). The snapshot
is an instantaneous abduction of the object out of the world into
another world - into another kind of time. The photographic take is
immediate and definitive, like the constitution of the fetish in the
unconscious, fixed by a glance in childhood, unchanged and always active
later. He quotes Dubois, remarking that with each photo a tiny piece of
time brutally and forever escapes its ordinary fate and is thus
protected against its own loss. The fetish too means both loss and
protection against loss : "fetishism remains a token of triumph over the
threat of castration and a protection against it."[8] This act of
cutting off a piece of space and time - of keeping it unchanged while
the world around continues to change - is a compromise. The compromise
consists in making the seen retrospectively unseen by a disavowal of the
perception and in stopping the look once and for all on an object, the
fetish. Metz also introduces a new term which he calls the 'off-frame'.
For him the off-frame effect in photography results from a definitive
cutting off, which figures castration and is figured by the click of the
camera (as was Barthes' death). The spectator has no knowledge of the
contents of the off-frame, yet cannot help imagining, hallucinating.
It insists on its status as excluded by the force of its absence inside
the rectangle of paper and is reminiscent of the description of lack in
the Freudian theory of the fetish (also perhaps a hint of that desire
that spirals around it). It marks the place of an irreversible absence,
a place from which the look has been averted forever.

Rosalind Krauss writes that when the fetish comes to life, some process has been interrupted. Her observation that this process occurs in the realm of the visual, anchors fetishism firmly in the area of visual representation. "The blow that stops time and decrees that on the sight of its arrest there be built the (sexually indeterminant) substitute of the fetish occurs in the realm of the visual – which now becomes the theatre for the endless rehearsals of fabricated vision."[9]

Photographs and the Process of Disavowal

Freud considered fetishism the prototype of that cleavage of belief "I know very well but ..." Photos are able to fix on our belief to concentrate it, to spend it all at the same time on a single object. Photographic representation accomplishes that separation of knowledge from belief which is characteristic of fetishism. The pervasive structure of disavowal links fetishism to the image and to fantasy, its motive being to maintain the imaginary unity of the subject at the cost of, in the face of the subject's actual splitting. "I know that the reality offered in this photograph is only an illusion but nevertheless..."

The structure of disavowal is not confined to cases of fetishism proper, it is so widespread as to be almost inaccessible to critical attention. As Burgin says, it is as if the first repudiation of the maternal phallus stretched the first model of all repudiations of reality and constituted the origin of all those beliefs.[10] The movement to and fro which ceaselessly sets off the intensity of the disavowal sustains the spectators' pleasure. "The spectacle is always a game, requiring the spectators' participation as players, accomplices. Never passive the spectator works, but that work is not only a work of decipherment, reading, elaboration of signs. It is first of all, and just as much, if not more, to play the game, to fool him/herself out of pleasure and in spite of knowledge. It is to maintain the mechanism of disavowal at its highest level of intensity. The more one knows the more difficult it is to believe and the more it is worth it to manage to."[11]

Photographs and Fantasy

I would like here to draw attention to a book, The End of Art Theory : Criticism and Postmodernity, by Victor Burgin. In this book Burgin states that fetishism denies - disavows - difference. To do so it presents a fragment as self-sufficient. He equates the film still (or photograph), a material entity, with the mnemic-image, a psychic entity. What they have in common is that they are both fragments which have nevertheless achieved a sort of representative autonomy.

He recalls Barthes' use of the word "punctum" as being a meaning not pinned down by words. Fragments of certain photographs moved Barthes in a way which was strictly incommunicable. The "punctum" was unpredictable and private - purely image. Burgin's particular understanding of the "punctum" entails an understanding of fantasy. He writes : "a highly cathected image fragment takes the place of, stands in for, a narrative. What stands out, as if in focus against an incomplete background of indistinct details is a situation in an image ... we are now in the presence of fantasy."[12] This is why psycho-analytical accounts of fantasy are important.

Burgin's explanation of the role of fantasy within the photographic image extended my original equation of the photograph and desire (whether as object of, as lack or as absence) and the photograph as fetish (part of the process of disavowal), with its fascination. For me, these concepts, although giving a better understanding of the workings of the mind in relation to photographic imagery, fell short. Here was a partial account of why a photograph can maintain interest or excite desire. My fascination, my consuming image - or more specifically my madness, had yet to be touched on.

The madness I looked for went beyond the madness of passion and desire. It was elusive ; a world of illusion, a strange, haunted, half world neither real nor unreal. The notion of fantasy seemed to bring it closer. The idea of the photograph as a fantasy/dream world (not only a scenario of desire) - the idea of people being drawn into this image world, taking their place in it - was important to me.

Taking us back to early experiences[13], Burgin gives the
example of the child sucking at its mother's breast and quotes Freud's
observation that the first wishing seems to have been a hallucinatory
cathecting of the memory of satisfaction, adding that in this scenario
is incorporated the Lacanian schema according to which desire insinuates
itself between need and demand. It is directed neither to an object
(the milk), nor to a person, but to a fantasy - the mnemic traces of
lost satisfaction. He develops this with the assertion that the first
fantasy is then most fundamentally motivated by the desire to fill the
gap (photos too create gaps, leave absences) opened between the infant
and the maternal body. A body already fantasmatically displaced in
relation to the real. Fantasy however, is not the object of desire, but
its setting - the subject does not pursue the object or its sign, rather
the subject appears caught up in the sequence of images.

The primal moment of satisfaction, in so far as it survives,
does so as a constellation of mnemic traces, several representative
elements linked together in a short scene. It is such a fantasy
configuration which is indelibly inscribed as an ever-present principle
of organization in the psychic life of the subject ; Burgin states, "it
is precisely such an intertextual, mutual imbrication of anecdotes,
pinned together by a fragment which allows Barthes to see his
punctum."[14] Burgin also stresses the involuntary nature of the
unconscious eruption and the fact that it may come from something
transindividual (i.e. not personal) ; also the overall structural
stability of the fantasy (albeit constantly subject to transformations),
which serves to regulate and organize the otherwise formless
displacements of desire. "To such potentially anarchic and polymorphous
movements of desire, fantasy opposes the constancy of its forms, to the
erratic fantasy opposes the hieratic. It is because of the
mise-en-scène of desire, which is fantasy, that dissemination does not
centrifugally dissipate itself, but rather circles back on itself to
repeat - but differently - which is to say that the movement describes
not so much a circle closed, but a spiral, perpetually renewing itself
by conquering new territory while nevertheless tracing the same
figure."[15]

He follows this with a curious but apt analogy. He describes gallery walls (and what is displayed on them), as being the negative of cinema. The gallery is a cinema without walls in the forms of the countless stills and synopses to which we are exposed, these in turn dissolving into the broader flood of images issuing from our society of the spectacle.

> "The grand narrative of human existence, the meaning of life, the source of inspiration and legitimation of all social institutions and individual actions is now encountered in a different way - as representative fragments whose connections and ultimate meanings must be implied : a material heterogeneity whose narrative/ideological coherence depends upon a psychological investment - largely unconscious and therefore radically inaccessible to the discourses of an ethical and political culture - except in so far as these discourses themselves issue from an unconscious matrix as the heavily elaborated transcriptions of common fantasy scenarios."[16]

He makes the point that psycho-analysis comes into existence with the recognition that what we call material reality, "the real world", is not all that is real for us, unconscious wishes and the unconscious fantasies they engender are as immutable a force in our lives as any material existence. Drawing on Freud's observations that unconscious fantasy structures exert as actual a force on the life of the subject as do socio-economic structures, he concludes that what marks psychical reality is its stability, its coherence and the constancy of its effects upon perceptions and actions of the subject. "Psycho-analysis recognises no such possible state of unambiguous and self-possessed lucidity in which the external world is seen for and known as simply what it is."[17] (My emphasis.)

Images (especially photographic) operate in a similar way to that of the fetish by presenting highly charged fragments (as the fetish

captures a fragment) that are triggered by and capable of triggering the fantasies of unconscious desire. Fantasies that can be just as real for us as reality itself.

The subject of fantasy, however, does not finish here. Camera Lucida was dedicated to a book by Sartre, The Psychology of Imagination. Sartre states that the imaginative consciousness that we produce before a photo is an act, that we become aware somehow of animating it, of lending it life. For Sartre, one of the essential factors of the imaginative consciousness is that of belief (and what are photographs if not authentic, believable, true?). He claims that aesthetic contemplation (e.g. of a photo), is an induced dream and the passing into the real an actual waking up. His comments on the imaginary consciousness and dreaming are worth describing in detail, and it is interesting to hold the thought that, although his descriptions are mainly about dreams, he could be talking about photographs.[18]

He states that the time of unreal objects is itself unreal, it has no characteristics whatsoever of perceptual time, it is a shadow of time. The world of imagery is completely isolated and can be entered only by unrealising oneself in it. A complete world can appear to him as an image and this world closes on his consciousness. Consciousness is taken in, is fascinated by a swarm of impressions, it grasps them as being this or that object, as an image, as standing for this or that and then suddenly it is completely in the game (the game of disavowal, of spectacle). It apprehends these shining impressions as standing for an object which is at the farthest remove from a world, the contents of which are lost in the fog. "In its relation to desire reality appears only as marginal."[19]

Consciousness is unable to engage in reflection, it is carried along by its own decline ("we seem to experience a loss of our own reality - are invited to dream in the ideological space of the photograph," says Burgin[20]). Sartre continues, we cannot free ourselves from it, we are fascinated with it. This world is sufficient unto itself, it can neither be dissipated nor connected by a perception,

since it does not belong to the domain of the real. It is its very
unreality which puts it beyond reach and which gives it a compact
opacity and strength. The feeling that is aroused is a feeling of
belonging in this imaginary world in which one must be unreal if one is
to enter. Once an imaginary self occurs in the fascinating world of the
dream it closes - it is no longer an imaginary spectacle before him
because of the fact that he is viewing it, now he is represented in it.

Sartre also comments that our imaginary self breaks into pieces
and disappears at contact with reality - yielding its place to the real
self. For the real and the imaginary cannot co-exist, being a matter of
two types of objects, feelings and actions that are completely
irreducible. In light of what is to follow, however, I wonder if they
can and do both exist in the unconscious and in photographs ; and if so,
does this possibly explain their fascination?

Stephen Heath places a different emphasis on fantasy (or rather
as to why we fantasise) with his emphasis on the experience of the
subject in language (i.e. us) as an experience of its lack-in-being, the
lack of its aphanisis or fading.[21] It is because it parries this
moment of lack that it is henceforth held in the ceaselessly displacing
join of symbolic and imaginary - separating, responding, putting on
images, caught in a specific problem of representation and fantasy (the
postponement of the truth of division, of aphanisis). It is because it
parries this moment of lack that an image comes to the position of
bearing all the cost of desire.

Although he is referring to film, his conclusions hold true for
photographs as well. The film (or photo) proposes for the subject it
includes and creates in a scenario of desire fulfilled, a subject bound
up in the consistence of the imaginary. It is an elaboration of an
imaginary order of wholeness, an image in which the ego seeks resolution
as totality.[22] The basic apparatus of identification starts with the
importance of the look. The characters look, the camera looks, the
spectators look (the spectator can do no other than identify with the
camera). It is a filling in, a completion of the subject, the

translation of plurality into a certain history - the single vision, a coherence of vision, of exactly a vision.

The apparatus of look and identification establish the viewer in the totalising security of looking at looking. The spectator is dispersed to be re-established in mastery. What is involved is an "... imagination of the ego, the setting of an ideal movement of desire and image, the spectator emancipated, unhindered by the existence of bodies, mobile in his/her images, the free play of an egocentric appropriation and fantasy relation."[23] Fantasy is the very regime of the image as totality.

> "The image is never pure, never an image. Strictly speaking indeed the image is not an order of the visible but of the invisible, a speculator that adjoins real, symbolic, imaginary, the subject against difference, transformation."[24]

The human subject, as formed in language, is a subject split, a lack -- the photograph forms a kind of idealised world which is his/hers to enter and possess.

Evidently fantasy and desire go hand-in-hand, Heath's explanation of why we may desire to enter an image verifies this. It did seem, however, that the scope of my search had been broadened considerably. Partially with Burgin's observation of the strength of fantasy and of the role it plays in shaping our perceptions - (I think that Sartre's description of his dream world, which I equate with the world of imagery, describes this beautifully) - but also with the inclusion of the concept of the human subject as lack, a subject split and divided, itself a parody of images.

Here my search turned to an investigation of the Freudian and Lacanian theories of the subject as formed and divided by language and the implications these hold for our discussion of desire, of lack, of fantasy and the unconscious. To explain briefly, what unfolds is a

concept of a subject which continually shapes and forms itself according to an ideal, an ideal that is imposed from without. In the course of this the subject becomes divided, split and this lack becomes the driving force which propels it endlessly towards an identity which it can never quite grasp.

Heath writes that the unconscious is a concept forged on the trace of what operates to constitute the subject.[25] The operation here is that of the order of the symbolic (or language) as cause of the subject ; and the place of the symbolic, the locus of the operation, is the place of the Other. Hence there are two domains, the subject and the Other, with the unconscious between them their active break.

The unconscious is the discourse of the Other and is structured like a language (here the concept of language is extended as a form of knowledge - 'La langue' which goes well beyond everything the being who speaks is capable of stating).

"The Other was there long before we came in the world and its circulating structures determine us as subjects."[26]

Burgin states that there is no subject prior to its construction across the field of representations[27]. It is a vicious circle to say that we are speaking beings ; according to Heath we are 'speakings' - a word that can be advantageously substituted for the unconscious.

Formation of the Human Subject - The Mirror Stage

Lacan takes the child's mirror image, later to be replaced by language, as the model and basis for its future identifications. To quote, "The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation - and which manufactures for the subject the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body image to a form of its totality, and lastly to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity which will mark with

its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development."[28] (My emphasis.) As shown, this image, this specular self, although salutory for the child since it gives it the first sense of a coherent identity, is a fiction because it conceals or freezes the infant's lack of motor co-ordination and the fragmentation of its drives. Furthermore, that moment only has meaning in relation to the presence and look of the mother (Other) who guarantees its reality for the child. What we have here is a strange triangle of relationships that is set up between the imago, ideal image, the mother - or Other - and the subject/child.

Burgin provides an interesting comment here in relation to photography. Emphasising the surface and boundary of the mirror phase (the reflection) he observes that identification may be made in respect of the specular brilliance of the photographic surface itself.[29]

The mirror stage is central to Lacan's account of subjectivity because its apparent smoothness and totality is a myth. "The subject sees himself as constructed by the reflected, momentary, precarious image of mastery, imagines himself to be a man merely by virtue of the fact that he imagines himself."[30]

Formation of the Human Subject - The Social Self

Lacan then extends the mirror image to become the model of the ego function itself, the category which enables the subject to operate as 'I'. The mirror stage reveals the fictional nature of the centred, whole subject, showing the image of our first recognition to be a misrecognition, a falsity. Soon language replaces this image as the signifier assumes ascendancy over the subject, enabling it to be represented within the matrix of social communication.

"It is in the Other that the subject is constituted as ideal that he has to regulate the completion of what comes as ego or ideal ego - to constitute himself in his imaginary ego. Where the subject sees himself, where

that real invented image of his own body that is given in
the schema of the ego is forged, it is not from there
that he looks at himself. It is in the space of the
Other that he sees himself and the point from which he
looks at himself is also in that space."[31]

The 'I' with which we speak stands for our identity as <u>subjects
in language</u> – the mirror image represents the moment when the subject is
<u>located in an order outside itself</u> to which it will henceforth refer.
The very imago which places the child divides its identity into two –
cleaves it into self and objectified other. The subject is the subject
of speech, constituted in language as division or splitting[32] and
subject to that order.

Kate Linker[33] adds that if the mirror stage in its
cohesiveness provides a model for the ego function, if it <u>locates</u> the
<u>self within language</u>, then it places it in a <u>relation</u> of <u>dependancy</u> to
an <u>external order</u>, shifting according to placement, <u>lacking fixed
identity</u>. ("It is this moment that decisively tips the whole of human
knowledge into mediation through the desire of the Other"[34]). This
specular self is the social self – it is not an entity with an identity
– for whatever identity it appears to have is derived only by
<u>identifying</u> with <u>others' perceptions</u> of it. The self is always like
another.

Lacan states,

"I am a man, means I am like he who I recognise to be a
man, and so recognise myself as being such."
('I' is an Other)[35]

Subjects in language persist in their belief that somewhere
there is a point of certainty, of knowledge and of truth. When the
subject addresses its demand outside itself to another, this other
becomes the fantasised place of just such a knowledge or certainty.
This is the Other – the site of language to which the speaking subject

necessarily refers. The Other appears to hold the truth of the subject and the power to make good its loss, but this is the ultimate fantasy. Linker stresses Lacan's emphasis on the subject's circling around this fantasy of unity, emphasising its divided, uncohesive status and inherent instability. For this subject is always in process, produced in and through the modalities of language. Lacan returns repeatedly to the role played by specularity and to the look as guarantee of imaginary self coherence.

Formation of the Human Subject - 'I am a Picture'

Much of Lacan's theory is derived from a study of mimicry by Rodger Caillois. Rosalind Krauss's article, 'Corpus Delicti' gives the clearest account of this phenomenon. She writes that the life of any organism depends on the possibility of its maintaining its own distinctness, its self possession. Mimicry is the loss of this possession. The animal that merges with its setting becomes dis-possessed, de-realised, as though yielding to a temptation exercised on it by the vast outsideness of space itself - a temptation to fusion. The individual breaks the boundary of its skin and occupies the other side of its senses, it tries to look at itself from any point whatever of space. It is alike - not like something but simply, like. She calls this a projection - an operation through which the seeing subject is defined as a projection, a being-seen and correlates it to Caillois' subjectivity of vision. To quote Caillois - "It is with represented space that the drama becomes clear, for the living being is no longer the origin of the co-ordinates (the more conventional notion of the look), but is one point among others. It is dispossessed of its privilege and in the strongest sense of the term, no longer knows where to put itself."[36] She then observes that this relationship, in which the subject occurs as a being-seen from without is the one that Lacan constructs in his domain of the essentially visual.

It is here that he diagrams the scopic drive to elaborate the dynamics of a specifically visual dimension within which the subject is

dispossessed. Previous discussions on looking, the look, have tended to emphasise the roles of narcissism and voyeurism so it is interesting to find a return to this first psychic investment in looking - scopophilia. Lacan observes that we are beings who are looked at in the spectacle of the world.

The root of the scopic drive is to be found entirely in the subject, in the fact that the subject sees himself. What is involved in the drive is making oneself seen. The drive is given the task of seeking something that each time responds in the Other and at the level of the scopic drive it is the gaze.

> "The gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I
> am a picture."[37] (Lacan)

The gaze is the object on which depends the fantasy from which the subject is suspended. From the moment that this gaze appears the subject tries to adapt itself to it ; furthermore, of all the objects in which the subject may recognise its dependence in the register of desire, the gaze is specified as unapprehendable and Lacan stresses that this is why it is, more than any other object, misunderstood. To quote Krauss, the visuality that Lacan is describing is "a mastery imposed from without, imposed on the subject who is trapped in a cat's cradle of representation, caught in a hall of mirrors, lost in a labyrinth."[38] What we have here is a subject which constantly forms itself in the image of others (or the 'Other'), who are in turn formed from images, ideas, expectations, representations and so on, ad infinitum.

It is interesting to note the role played by narcissism in this process. Narcissism, denoting the attitude of a person who treats his/her own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated has been expanded to include the concept of the ideal ego as being the target of self love. Freud writes that the development of the ego consists in a departure from primary narcissism and gives rise to a vigorous attempt to recover that state. This departure is brought about by means of the displacement of libido onto an ego ideal

imposed from without – satisfaction is obtained from fulfilling this ideal[39]. Similarly, Lacan reintroduces narcissism as an essential structure in the satisfaction that the subject gains from the specular image giving it a pretext for such a profound misconstruction. He says of the subject, that scarcely has its image been discerned than it falls in love with it. "This passion brings to every relation with this image, constantly represented by my fellow man, a signification which places me in such a dependence on this image that it links all the objects of my desire more closely to the desire of the other than to the desire they arouse in me."[40]

Lacan also emphasises the aggression that, for him, is in all life that involves subjection to this structure. This point is worth noting if one views it in the light of recent discussions concerning the aggressiveness in photography, the wish to dominate and capture, involving spectators and practitioners alike. Lacan's subject brings a tinge of hostility into the world of objects. The pleasure derived from meeting himself in the mirror becomes, when confronting his fellow man, an outlet for his most intimate aggressivity. "From this point on the ego is a function of mastery, a play of presence, of bearing and constituted rivalry."[41] (There is in this a similarity to the 'double' – although at first constituting a reassurance, a guarantee of life, it turns on the subject and becomes threatening, sinister.) Lacan's subject ends up by recognising that this being has never been anything more than its construct in the imaginary and that this construct disappoints all its certainties. "This ego is frustration in its essence – not frustration of a desire of the subject but frustration by an object in which its desire is alienated and which, the more it is elaborated, the more profound the alienation from its jouissance becomes."[42]

Conclusion

During the research for this paper I was struck by the similarities between, on one hand, the unconscious and Lacan's Other,

and on the other hand, photographs and the way we react to them, to the point of wondering if this was the particular power that photographs have. By way of explanation Freud has stated that the processes of the systems of the unconscious are timeless ; they are not ordered temporally – they have, in fact, no reference to time at all (Freud: On Metapsychology, Pelican Freud Library Vol.II; Penguin, 1984; p.191). Photographs too are timeless – it is this that gives them authority. The experience with which we view a photograph can, and has, been likened to the mechanisms of the unconscious (and of dreams), in the flow of images and associations they release, mnemic traces, in Burgin's terms that series of 'psychic pans and dissolves' (Thinking Photography, Macmillan, London, 1982, p.212) which pre-figures the dream and the workings of the unconscious mind. Lacan views the unconscious as an area that must be apprehended in its experience of rupture, between perception and consciousness, in that non-temporal locus. As an idea of another locality, another space, another scene, the between perception and consciousness (Lacan : Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis, Penguin Books, 1979, p.56). This surely prefigures Sartre's description of the photograph, "that other world, timeless, that floats between the banks of perception."[43] In the Lacanian notion of the Other I also find similarities, for our relation to photographs is not entirely different from our relation to the Other and the desire it provokes. We seek its gaze, seek confirmation of ourselves but receive nothing, emptiness, which conclusion reminds one of the horror and death Barthes speaks of as he contemplates and scrutinizes the photographic surface (it is also the source of its fascination and frustration). Annette Kuhn writes "The photograph is seen as Other – the other scene, the site of mystery and enigma, shadowy, the mise-en-scène of the unconscious, of Freud's uncanny, at once both familiar and threatening."[44]

In this area too, I had hoped to find answers. The world of the unfamiliar and uncanny, and in it the powerful image of the double, once again described the photographic image and certainly provided the basis for our fascination with it. Freud describes the uncanny as that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long

familiar. Its effect, often produced when the distinction between
imagination and reality is effaced, is caused by something secretly
familiar which has undergone repression.

The double is connected with reflections, shadows, the belief in
the soul and the fear of death. Originally an insurance against
destruction to the ego and created from the primary narcissism which
holds sway in the mind of the child and primitive man, the double takes
on a different aspect when this stage has been left behind. From having
been an assurance of immortality it becomes the harbinger of death, of
menace.

Surely it should have been the answer to my fascination with
images but Freud's explanation of this fascination seemed somehow to
deflate it. This wasn't Barthes' mad image – the one I was in search
of. In Freud's argument, the preoccupation with all that was uncanny,
including the double, could be understood as the reassertion within
adult life, of more psychologically primitive states, namely those
related to what he termed the omnipotence of thoughts and to a belief in
animism – all those bonds which children and tribal man create between
themselves and everything around them in order to gain mastery over an
all too threatening and inchoate environment.

> "Our analysis of the uncanny has led us back to the old
> animistic conception of the universe, which was
> characterised by the idea that the world was peopled with
> spirits of humans and by the narcissistic overestimation
> of subjective mental processes as well as by all those
> other figments of the imagination with which man, in the
> unrestricted narcissism of that stage of development,
> strove to withstand the inexorable laws of reality. It
> seems as if each one of us has been through a phase of
> individual development corresponding to this animistic
> stage in primitive man, that none of us has passed

through it without preserving certain residues and traces
of it and that everything that now strikes us as uncanny
fulfils the conditions of touching those residues of
animistic mental activity within us and bringing them to
expression."[45]

Rosalind Krauss, in her likening of the realisation of these
earlier states of being to Barthes' stabbing "punctum", does extend this
idea. She writes that the collapse of the distinction between
imagination and reality, analysed by Freud as the primitive belief in
magic, animism and narcissistic omnipotence, are all potential triggers
of that metaphysical shudder which is the uncanny - for they represent
the breakthrough into consciousness of earlier states of being and in
this breakthrough the subject is stabbed, wounded by the experience.
This trauma is a blow that penetrates the protective armour of
consciousness, piercing its outer shield, wounding it by its effect of
stabbing (Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle"). She reminds us that
Barthes connects the "punctum" to a kind of sudden fright that punctures
the defences or to the shudder of fatefulness that is the uncanny.

"That simple click is what Breton has called the
'explosante-fixe' and that combination of madness and love, released by
the essence of photography (that-has-been) which Barthes described as a
'gone mad', is in its uncanniness, its convulsiveness, a kind of 'amour
·fou'."[46]

Krauss relates the uncanny to that convulsive madness released
on confrontation with the knowledge that photographs ordain death as
they appear to give life. This is the wound that (for her) all
photographs have the power to deliver, for each is also a double and a
death. It is true that the person who has been photographed (not the
total person who is an effect of time) is - so to speak - dead, but her
conclusion was still an anti-climax, somehow not 'mad' enough. It was
not my madness.

Foucault provided a useful perspective in his book <u>Madness and Civilisation</u>. What intrigued me was that in each point of his discussion I could equate his description of madness with the photograph. In his introduction he writes that we elect others to live out the chaos that we refuse to confront in ourselves. By this means we escape a certain anxiety, a certain moment of our own existence - that moment of disturbance, of penetrating vision into the depth of ourselves. In this I saw the compulsion to secure oneself in space and time, to certify existence, happiness and experience. His description of the madness of sixteenth century imagery is ascribed to the diversity of meanings attached to the forms and figures used. "Meaning is no longer read in an immediate perception, the figure no longer speaks for itself. Between the knowledge that animates it and the form into which it is transposed a gap widens, it is free for the dream - thus the image is burdened with supplementary meanings and forced to express them; dreams, madness and the unreasonable can slip into this excess of meaning - its power is no longer to teach but to fascinate."[47] (The likeness to photography is almost uncanny.) Similarly in the literature of the period, where the madness portrayed was that of man and his illusions and self attachment. "In this delusive attachment to himself man generates his madness like a mirage. The symbol of madness will henceforth be that mirror which, without reflecting anything real will secretly offer the man who observes himself in it the dream of his own presumption."[48] In the seventeenth century madness was expressed in the irony of illusion - and what better vehicle of illusion than the photograph itself, that which "plays on the surface of things, over all the workings of appearances, over the ambiguity of reality and illusion. It hides and manifests, it utters truth and falsehoods, it is light and shadow."[49] Madness here was at the heart of things and man, an ironic sign that misplaced the guideposts between the real and the chimerical, beginning where the relation of man to truth is disturbed and darkened. In its confinement, during the classical period, madness became for Foucault, the 'paradoxical manifestation of non-being (photographs as objects that are there but at the same time not), until finally, at the end of the eighteenth century, in what he constitutes as one of the greatest conversions of Western imagination, it became, upon its

release, the madness of desire. Language and desire caught in the
limitless presumption of appetite and the insane dialogue of love and
death - need I state the obvious? (Later still it was seen as that
which alienated man from himself and nature - again that equation of
photography/madness, the object and its referent).

I finally found my madness in a statement by Lacan. A modest
statement - but staggering in its implications. "The captation of the
subject by the situation gives us our most general formula for
madness.'[50] Here was the madness that I had felt, here too was my
perception of the double and the uncanny. For the photographic image is
the very double of our existence. (No wonder the shudder, the
uncanniness). Here finally was what I interpreted as Barthes' madness.
It is not so much the fact that the photographic essence is
'that-has-been', but, (as he states earlier) in the light of our
formation as subjects, the photograph ... "is an extended loaded
evidence, as if it caricatured not the figure of what it represents but
its very existence." (My emphasis.)[51]

In this sense it is truly a mad image - 'a mad image chafed by
reality' - our reality, for we are the mad image and in the photograph
we see our own reflection. This is the wound that every photograph has
the power to deliver. This is the fascination, the horror and madness
that they possess - for in the photographic image we see ourselves as
image - flat, no depth, image succeeded by image, animated by another's
perception, and in its mad reality we see our own, for on the one hand
we are indeed here ('my certainty is immediate - no one in the world can
undeceive me') but on the other we are most definitely not.

The image that I have in mind is a bizarre carnivalesque mirror,
carnival being referred to here as that which sweeps away individuality,
"where man is no more than a reflected image"[52] propelled into the
whirlwind of his own fragmentation, split into the subject of the
spectacle and object of the game.

Burgin talks of a new subject for the new society of information technology. A subject radically de-centred, formed in the wake of the signifier, the traces of its work, leisure and consumer activities, invisible and scattered across the fields of contemporary life in the West. To this scattered and invisible field of the subject as data, society has added the scattered but visible field of the spectacle — sucked into the subject and into which it projects itself in a countless series of identifications. Burgin's society is one of the spectacle, in which the image has effectively replaced what it represents. A society where the referent is eaten alive by the signifier. To quote — "we are a society of the simulacrum — a copy of which there is no original."[53]

The myth of photography as truth was replaced with a new myth. The photograph as an ideological weapon that had been seen through, its game exposed. But what if it does speak the truth — the truth of a "real without origin or reality"[54], the advent of the self as 'Other'?

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FOOTNOTES

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5. Ibid., p.167.

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13. Ibid. : see 'Diderot, Barthes, Vertigo. Pp.113-139.

14. Ibid. : p.125.

15. Ibid. : p.128.

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17. Ibid. : p.138.

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21. Heath, Stephen : Questions of Cinema : Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981. Pp.83-84.

22. Ibid. : pp.116-120.

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24. Ibid. : p.242.

25. Ibid. : see pp.77-80.

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31. Ibid. : p.144.

32. Heath, Stephen : Questions of Cinema : Indiana University Press, Blooomington, 1981. See pp.117-118.

33. Linker, Kate : 'Representation and Sexuality' in Parachute, Montrêal, Quêbec, Canada, Vol.23, Sept.Oct.Nov.1983. Pp.12-23. See p.15.

34. Lacan, Jacques : Ecrits : A selection : translated by Alan Sheridan : Tavistock Publications Ltd, London, 1977. P.5.

35. Ibid. : p.23.

36. Krauss, Rosalind : 'Corpus Delicti', in October 33, Summer 1985, Pp.31-72. P.50.

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39. Freud, Sigmund : <u>On Metapsychology. The Theory of Psychoanalysis,</u> Pelican Freud Library, Vol.II : Compiled and edited by Angela Richards. Penguin, 1984. See pp.86–96.

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46. Krauss, Rosalind : "Corpus Delicti", in <u>October 33</u>, Summer, 1985, pp.31–72. P.72.

47. Foucault, Michel : <u>Madness and Civilisation : A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason</u> : Translated by Richard Howard : Tavistock Publications Ltd, London, 1967. Pp.19–20.

48. Ibid. : p.27.

49. Ibid. : p.33.

50. Lacan, Jacques : <u>Ecrits</u> : A selection translated by Alan Sheridan : Tavistock Publications Ltd, London, 1977. P.7.

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52. Kristeva, Julia : <u>Desire in Language : A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art</u> : translated by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez : Blackwell, Oxford, 1980. P.84.

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54. Ibid. : P.172.

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SECTION III: DOCUMENTATION OF WORKS.
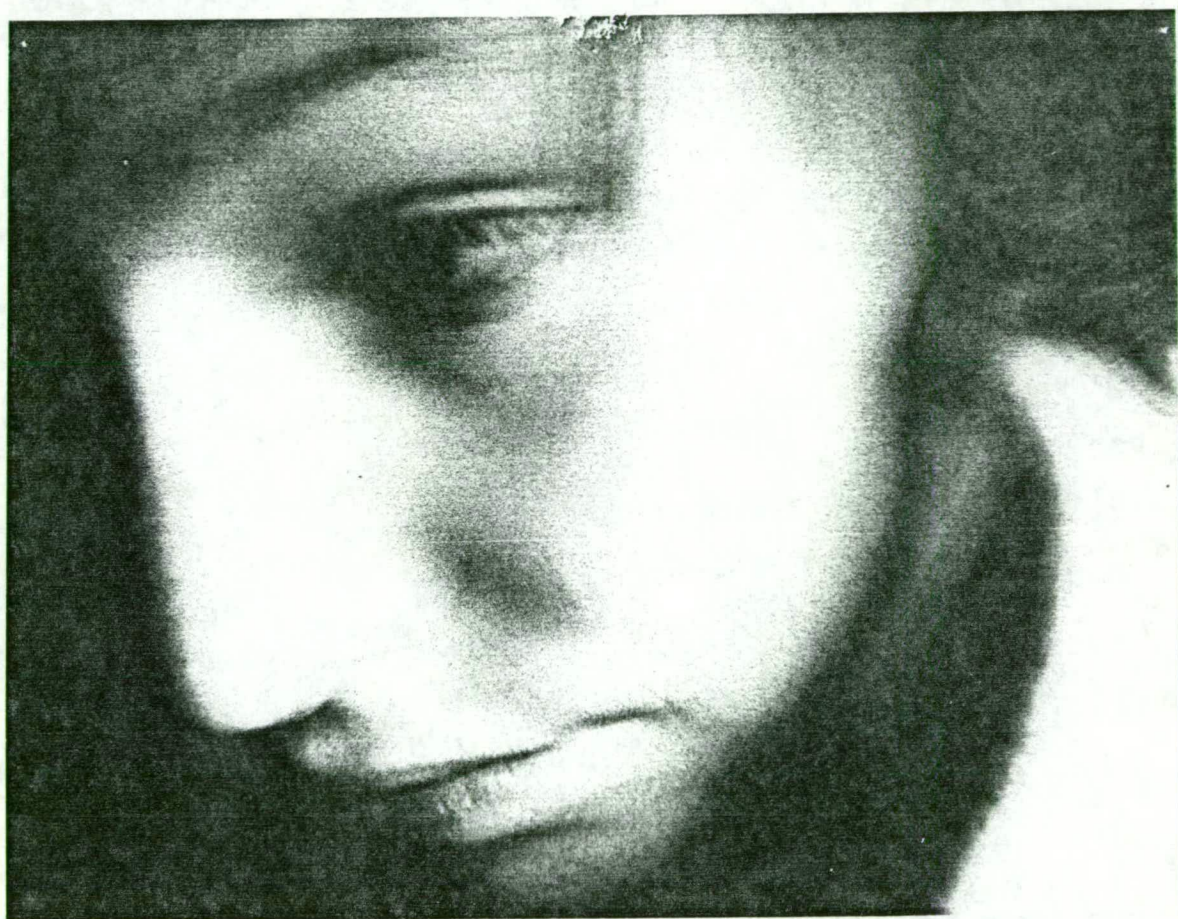
I commenced this course with a number of aims and
ideas: a strong desire to question reality (no doubt fueled
by my own over active imagination); linked closely to this
was the notion of a fragmented, conflicting identity and the
concerns of vulnerability and alienation. Also significant
was my fascination with the photographic image and my need
to understand and relate this to my own practice.

Over three years the format and emphasis of my work has
understandably changed, evolving towards a more subtle
interaction between these areas and a clearer appreciation
of the photograph as a means to express them.

I avoid any single reading of the works but rather emphasize
their commitment to actively engage the viewer, to question
- and the fluid, interchangeable nature of all the concerns
that inform them.

Firstly there is the notion of the medium itself. No matter
how thoroughly recent theory has pulled the photograph
apart, seen through its myths and exposed its lies it is
inexorably linked to reality and, by implication, truth. To
this end I have tried to conceal my use of collage as much
as possible and then re-photographed the final, constructed,
model. These images would not have the same power for me
if, for example, they were painted or drawn. The fact that
they are photographs, even though collaged and drawn into,
creates a tension. (It is this bizarre, unresolved tension
that holds my fascination.) It is important that the work
has a direct anchoring in reality, so that it becomes, in
effect, not a total fantasy created solely from imagination
but involves a conflict between real and unreal, fiction and
fact.

They could be true, with a slight, sideways twist of the
imagination. It is no accident that I use the photograph
and its special qualities to present a different 'picture'
and to question notions of reality and identity. The image
I have in mind is one where `real' and `unreal' overlap and
merge, of a world where fantasies are erected and labelled
truth, where reality, as we know it, is based solely on
construction and myth. Underlying this is a sense of
alienation, the notion of identity itself as an interminable
series of images, of barriers raised for protection and the
fear and vulnerability that comes from the realisation of
how firmly we are trapped within our own constructions.

Perhaps after all the photograph does have a grain of truth,
for mirrored in its struggle between fabrication and reality
I see a reflection of our own parallel existence.

The size of the works and, ideally, their installation play
a crucial role in both implying this sense of `mirror' and
emphasizing the disorientation and breakdown between real
and imagined. Although my ideas have been resolved within a
series of large, collaged wall pieces, the installation as a
device remains a significant consideration.

BLACKMANS BAY PRIMARY SCHOOL: COMMISSIONED PROJECT - 1985/6.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK.

Three framed panels that fit together to form a total size
of five feet (high) by nine feet (long). The piece was made
by collaging photographs then re-photographing each panel in
sections. All the prints are on silver bromide paper and
dry mounted onto acid-free board.

This work, commenced in late 1985, was commissioned under
the Art in Public Buildings Scheme for Blackmans Bay Primary
School. The guidelines given were that the work should
relate to the school in some way.

After spending a number of weeks observing and photographing
I chose to work directly with the children rather than
approach the piece from an historical or activity related
level. My reasons for doing so were varied. The children's
acceptance of me and their eagerness to be photographed, my
fascination with their moods, fantasies, games and role
playing, their vitality ... to me they were the school. The
piece is a visual attempt to describe my (and their)
reactions to the experience.

Another important factor in the style and conception of the
piece was the space itself. The area designated, the
entrance way to the main hall/gymnasium and canteen was
cold, concrete and lifeless. It needed something large and
visually alive.

I soon realised that my accustomed approach would not be
adequate. My previous works had incorporated the use of
groups of images to set a mood or construct a narrative but
the energy of the children precluded this. A sequence of
single images seemed to suggest a succession of isolated,
broken, moments but my impression was a more chaotic one. A
collection of fragments and experiences that overlapped and
merged, generating a sense of vitality and movement. I
needed something more encompassing, more intense. The
change from sequence or series of images to a large collage
constructed from these fragments seemed a logical step.

Formally, the resolution of the piece posed many problems.
My work with sequential imagery certainly prepared the way
but the number of images used, the task of constructing a
space on a two-dimensional level, of balancing images to
form a complex `whole' instead of a linear narrative,
demanded a new approach and was a valuable experience.

While I do not consider it as part of the main body of my
work, the construction of the piece - more specifically the
use of collage and manipulation - was of crucial importance
and has influenced all other work to date. Working as I do
from feelings, emotions and fantasied images the realisation
of the potential of collage, the prospect of creating my own
believable reality and the tension this raises with regard
to the photographic image was (and still is) an exciting
direction.

"The Photograph then becomes a bizarre medium,
a new form of hallucination: false on the level
of perception, true on the level of time: a
mad image, chafed by reality."

Barthes, Roland.
Camera Lucida:
Fontana Paperbacks,
8 Grafton Street,
London. 1984.
p. 115.

`UNTITLED 1986/7`

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS.

Five large wall pieces. Each piece is ten feet (long) by
six feet (high) and consists of six panels which fit
together to make up the whole. They were made by assembling
smaller collages which were drawn and painted into, then re-
photographed. All the prints are on silver bromide paper
and dry mounted onto acid-free board. They are unframed.

This group of five images was my first attempt to deal
directly with my thoughts on the photographic medium and my
concerns of myth, construction and alienation. The imagery
was drawn from an experience of wandering the streets of the
old city of Zurich at dusk/night: no traffic, sounds
muffled by the snow, faces caught in the gleam of
streetlights and passing into darkness, impersonal stares
... no contact.

I decided to pursue, and experiment with the use of collage
for two reasons. Firstly because these images, although
based on an experience, are imaginary; collage gives me a
licence of imagination not possible in the single image.
Secondly, the notion of the photographic image as a
construct is an integral part of my own feelings on society
and identity, and my main reason for using the medium is to
portray this.

The photographs for the backgrounds were taken at dusk to
heighten the feeling of unreality - dusk is a special time
for me, it is neither day or night but an in-between time
that leaves space for the imagination. The images were
blurred slightly to add to the feeling of dream - of merging
and breakdown.

All the figures were individually photographed in full
sunlight, confusing the origin of the light source and to
emphasize the mask-like quality of the faces.

Painting into the collage was at first conceived only as a
device for creating a receeding space and drawing the
collaged pieces into a believable image. More
experimenting, however, revealed the potential of the
enlarged, re-photographed, marks themselves and was used as
a further means of connoting chaos, fantasy and the
breakdown between real and imagined.

The positioning of the figures and the construction of the street scene were designed to intensify the impression of being able to walk into these images, and were important devices to create an illusion of a dissolving and merging of image space and real space.

The final mock-ups were re-photographed to blend the collages, make them believable as a single image and to obtain the size that I needed. I had originally tried re-photographing them in smaller, easier to manage sizes but realised the effect was too disjointed to maintain the illusion of a single image; hence my mastery of my fear of working with large prints and the eventual resolution of each image into six large panels.
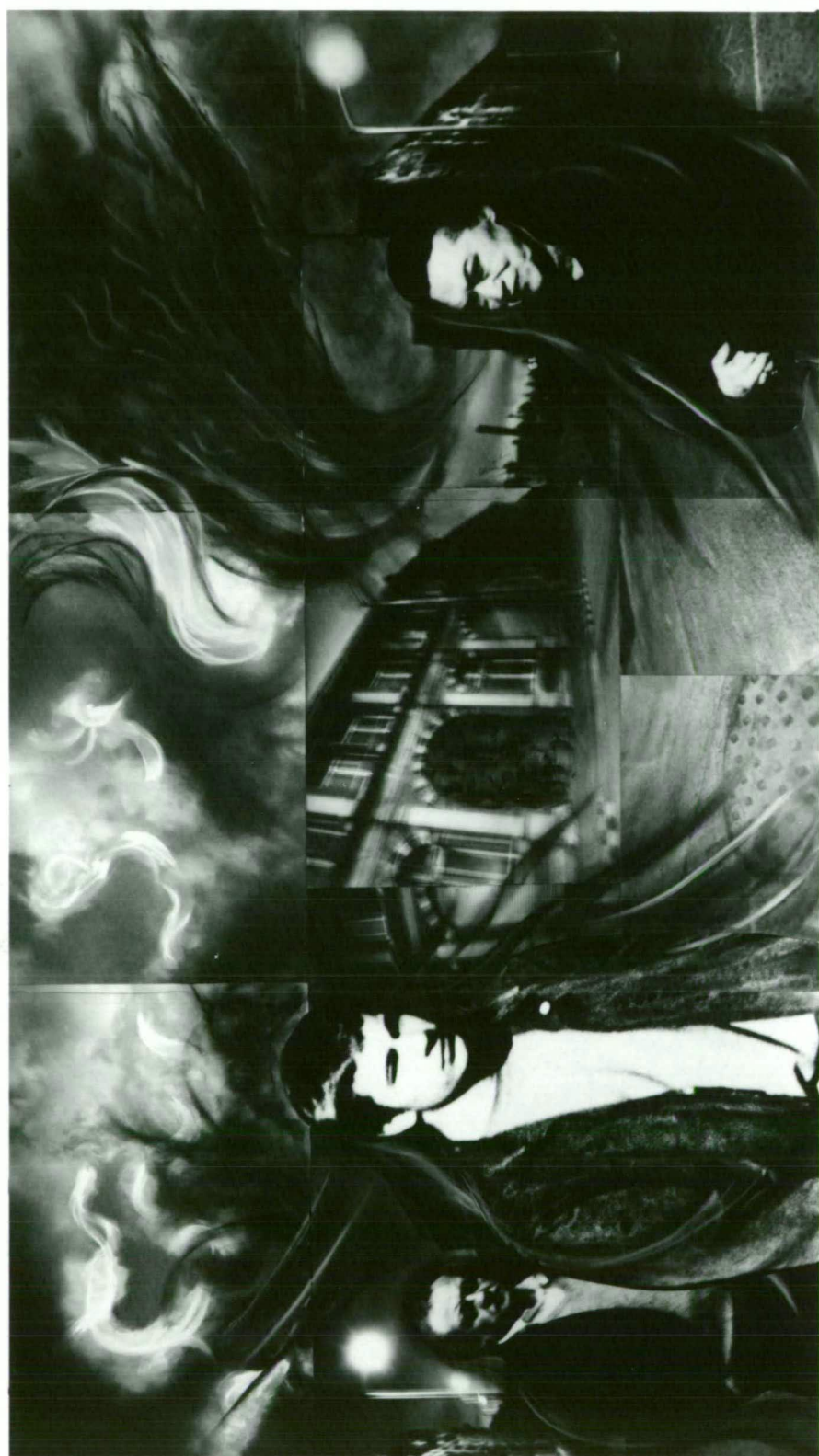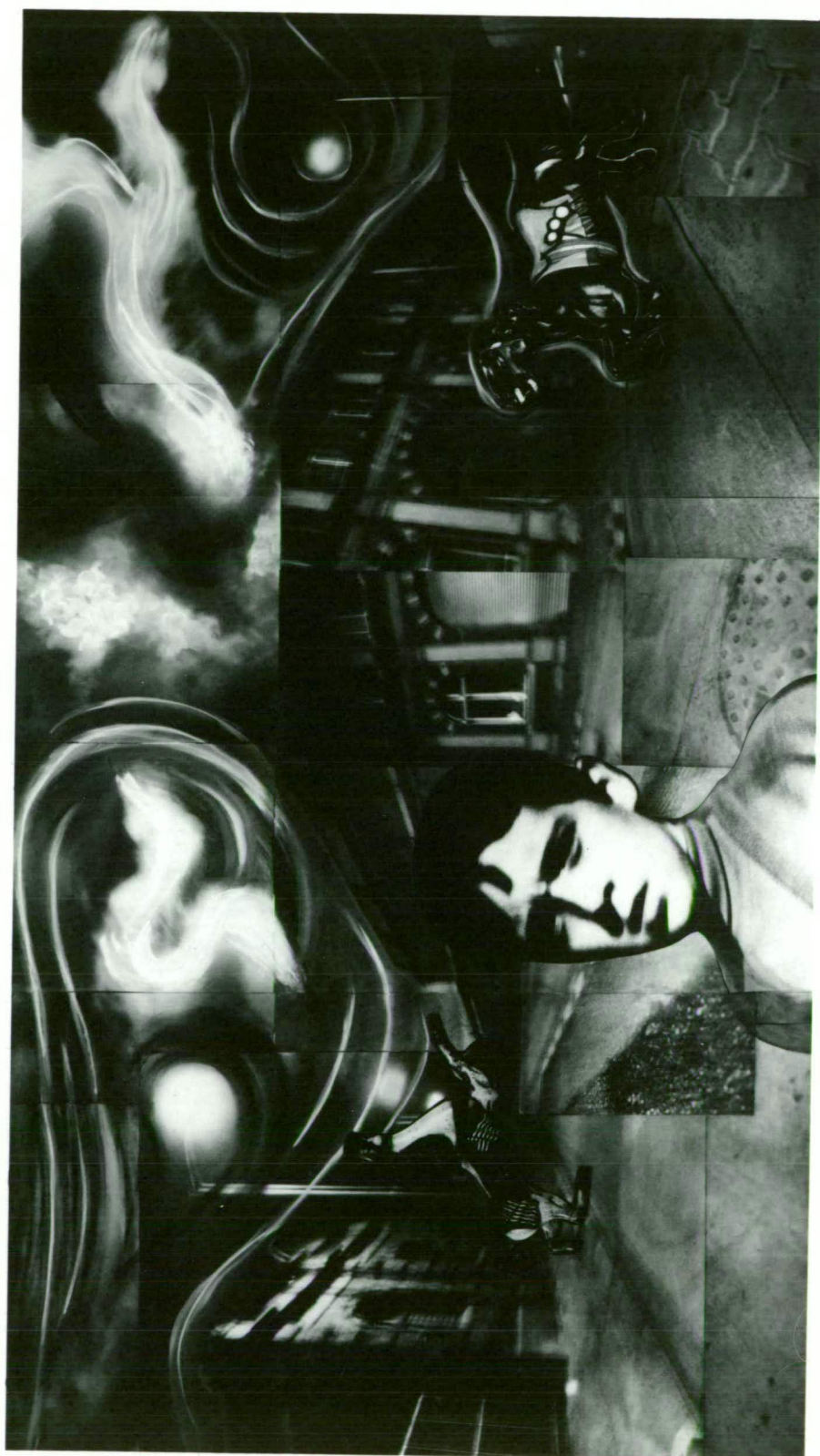
`UNTITLED 1987'

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS.

Three large pieces. Two of the works are nine feet (long)
by forty inches (high) and consist of three panels which fit
together to make up the whole. The third piece is twelve
feet (long) by forty inches (high) and consists of four
panels. They were made by putting together smaller collages
which were drawn into and then re-photographed. All the
prints are on silver bromide paper and dry mounted onto
acid-free board. They are unframed.

This piece evolved from a mental image of a room shut away
from the world; an ill-lit, windowless place in which people
acted out the endless motions of their lives unobserved and
forgotten; a room thick with the stuff of dreams.

I had intended to approach the construction of the works in
a similar manner to my previous collages but after a number
of unsuccessful attempts found it necessary to re-evaluate
my ideas. The feeling of stagnation and dream seemed to
call for simplicity - a more subtle merging of dream and
real.

The elaborate constructions of my first works were
unnecessary here. Intense spotlighting was used to create
the effect of infinite space. I found, too, that I was only
interested in the top half of the room - hence the format of
the works changed - in this manner I hoped to enhance the
sensation of disorientation and floating, of being drawn
into the image.

One of my main concerns with the piece was the creation of
an almost tangible sense of dream and illusion. My
technique of blurring the images lacked the quality I looked
for and painting into the piece, as I had done before, was
too chaotic and direct.

The problem was solved, finally, by placing tissue paper
over the unexposed photographic paper, wetting it and
spraying developer over the surface before making the
exposure for the room images - creating a thickened, dream-
like atmosphere.

These works were intended to be seen with my previous
collages. The concerns of the blending of inner and outer
worlds, of real and imagined space and the photographic
medium are still important although I feel they concentrate
more on private fears and a sense of the familiar as being
claustrophobic and threatening - on barriers, loneliness and
isolation.
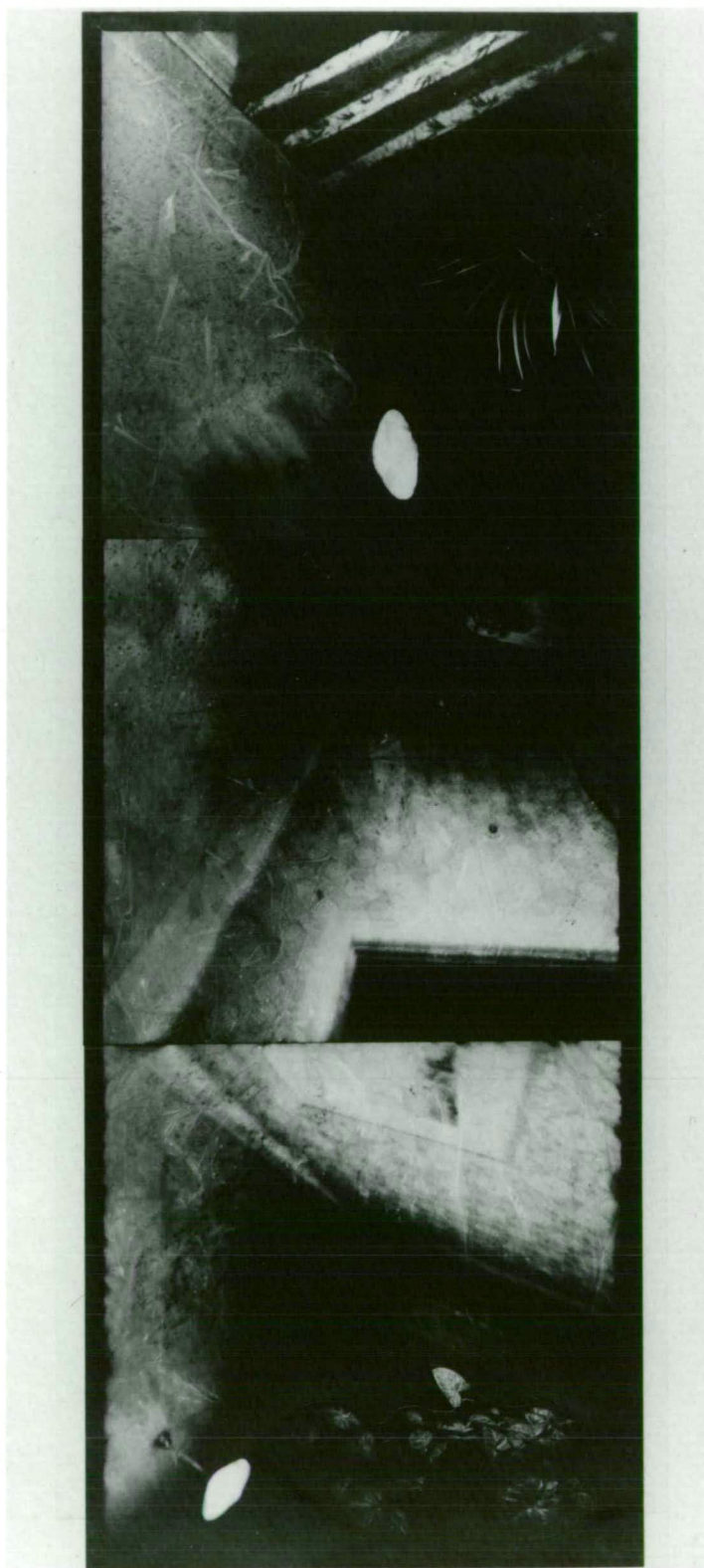
FIGURES 1987

<u>Description of Works</u>

Three pieces; each one is seven feet (high) by forty inches wide and consists of two panels which fit together. They were made by assembling photographs which were drawn into and re-photographed. All the prints are on silver bromide paper and dry mounted onto acid-free board. They are unframed.

These works relate directly to the `shattered figures' mentioned in my proposal. At that time I was experimenting with photographing the human figure in a fragmented, constructed way and composing portraits from smaller, multiple images to form broken, yet recognisable forms.

Towards the end of 1985 I abandoned this procedure. My reasons for using multiple images had been to imply a sense of the composite ideals and emotions that shape a personality. I felt though, that the method used simply gave me a series of disjointed, contorted figures. It was too literal, with no connotation of the subtleties and tensions involved. Shortly afterwards I commenced photographing for the Blackmans Bay project which led to my experiments and use of collage and the completion of the two series of works - `Untitled 1986/7' and `Untitled 1987'.

With the effects gained from my experiments for the `Untitled 1987' series I felt I could once again attempt to resolve the figures. My thoughts on them had altered slightly, influenced by the research for my seminar papers. Now the emphasis was not only directed towards a multi-faceted personality but also to the idea of the human subject <u>as</u> image. The image I saw was more fluid: a figure suspended in a web of dreams and fantasies, drifting, reforming, pulled in different directions by the currents of desire, fear and conflicting emotions.

Once again, the elaborate constructions of the `Untitled 1986/7' pieces appeared unnecessary.  The figures suggested an implied sense of fantasy and tangled illusions rather than any background constructed from real space.  This feeling was obtained using the same technique as with the `Untitled 1987' images, but, I extended the process to

include the figures themselves and evoke the impression of change and disintegration.

While I have resolved the three figures shown, I do not feel that they complete the piece and intend to continue experimenting and working on the idea.

SECTION IV: WORK PROCESSES.