J.J. VOSS M.F.A. SUBMISSION 1ST. PAPER

HUNTING AND TRAWLING - TWO MODES OF PERVERSE PHOTOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION

Whenever I point the camera at people I can presume they might be thinking a multitude of things: flattery, perhaps narcissistic delight, guilt, apprehension, hostility. An allegation of invasion of privacy is also a common reaction - a reaction which is difficult to understand in a contemporary society which is both obsessed with and informed by photographic images.

Are these kinds of responses an advantage or a hindrance to the way I wish to work? I prefer to make a kind of candid photography, to open up unconventional meanings within candid portraiture. There are ethical and practical limitations which largely determine my techniques of photographing people. The limitations placed upon my photography in terms of the photograph's meaning are also cause for concern, and start at the time the film is exposed. There are also limits operating in social conduct as well: repeatable and familiar conventions are expected in people's behaviour in order to make sense of their actions; in a way one's life is a performance for others, and at certain times a performance for the camera. My photographs are taken on the off-beats of such performances, the unexpected, uncertain or unrehearsed moments.

The title of this paper relates to two methods of making photographs of people in situations where the photographer and subjects do not really know each other and, more importantly, do not enter into any contract on how, when or where the photograph is "taken". I call these   approaches, "Hunting" and "Trawling". They enable me to arrive at a kind of "Perverse" photograph. "Perverse photography" means self-willed, indecorous and unconventional photography. Why bother deliberately breaking broadly practised codes of portrait photography? (Most photographers choose not to, and they don't encounter any of the problems to which

I shall allude later in the paper.) My own reasons are:

- To disrupt simple and predictable narratives seen within most portrait photography.

- To demonstrate that as a scopophile and voyeur my drive to photograph in a "perverse" manner is not just to simply see "forbidden sights", but to experience and pass on to the viewer the joy and thrill of seeing them.

- To question social roles and relations of power - whilst participating in an anarchic defrocking of the weight of social order. (But not in the known manner of the "socially concerned" photographer - the "Documentary" tradition.)

- To obliquely decry the erosion of social justice which is currently occurring; to touch on the issues of equity within society, but not lapse into didactic moralism. I wish to avoid a kind of "Moral" photography (c.f. Moral Painting).

- To celebrate the idiosyncracies of human existence.

- to raise the issue, what is "public" and what is "private" territory.

In "Perverse" photography the decorum usually adhered to in portrait photography is deliberately dispensed with in order to overthrow codified responses of dignity, civility and "normal" social behaviour. These codified responses generally end up as predictable "performances" for the camera. In order to subvert such "performances" it is necessary to break the rules of manners. It is dangerous but fertile territory. "You've got to get close to get the truth... You get too close and you die."[1] This statement made by the character John Cassady, the Photojournalist in the movie Salvador, is meant literally in the film but is a useful metaphor with which to both question photographic "truth" and to introduce the concept of photographer as "hunter". You don't have to be in strife-torn El Salvador to see things as Cassady did. I feel this whenever I am photographing, and sense that many other "prying" photographers feel similarly. The risks involved may range from a heightened sense of alienation, through disdain

and ridicule from others to actual bodily harm. In the course of my "Perverse"

photography I have experienced all these. It is a moot point indeed as to whom

is most at risk, the "Perverse" photographer or the subject of the photograph. A

parallel analogy would be the risk taken by either the hitch-hiker or the motor-

ist who gives the ride. Popular opinion would tend to cite the prying photog-

rapher and the hitch-hiker as being least at risk, but popular opinion is fre-

quently incorrect.

"HUNTING"

In this paper "Hunting" refers to the photographer as a 20th century hunter

of images. I wish to deal with images of people pursued, confronted and some-

times directed (through various behavioural cues rather than verbally) by the

photographer. I wish to capture an orchestrated image of people at moments when

their performance is not organized, when the slips occur, when there is surprize

and doubt.

This is also the domain of the Paparazzo those ruthlessly relentless in their

search for sensational photographs of celebrities. The main function of the ar-

chetypal Paparazzo is to "catch out" the well-known and the famous, to record

a trite image of these people which disrupts their performance as credible in

their publicly known field of endeavour. The aim is to show the subject as app-

earing to lose control of their "known" persona, but at the same time, by using

the known persona-performance as a point of departure, to reinforce it. A one

liner "truth" is arrived at, and consumed by a carnival audience. The act of the

Paparazzo photographing, and initial reading of the image, are truculent, but as

meaningful images they are often curiously vapid because of their reliance on a

closed and predictable meaning. The Paparazzi, as depicted in Fellini's film

La Dolce Vita, behave like annoying insects, buzzing around people and sizing

them up for the sting. Those Paparazzi perpetrate visual gossip and act as pho- -

tographic pickpockets. My photographs don't gossip, but they often involve

minor theft.

Then there is the "Private Eye", ever at the client's service to "get the

dirt" on somebody else. This genre of photography is perhaps the most extreme

and least defensible expression of what is meant by "hunting" in relation to

photography. Here is the photographic domain of mercenary surveillance taken

to the ultimate. I am sometimes cofused with this kind of photographer - and

this misapprehension is surely the reason why several of the people in my pho-

tographs seem to be expressing alarm, or worse. I have been lunged at with a

knife by a (thankfully older) man in a kaftan, and held by the scruff of the

neck by another man who questioned me as to whether I was "Police or Press"?

(he was prepared to believe "Artist"; though with a stern warning nerver to pho-

tograph him again). In the words of a Punk woman who lashed me with her studded

leather jacket, "I know my rights, even if you are a fuckin' Pig". The worst

encounter was when an attacker first struck my camera and then my head with his

motorcycle helmet. There was no way my attacker could have thought I was photo-

graphing him. He approached me from the other side of the street, yelling "what

do you think you are doing taking photographs of people just like that?" It

seemed he had taken it upon himself to avenge my transgression of social eti-

quette and photographic decorum. Society's self-appointed protector had "drawn

fists". As he tried to push-start his motorbike and make his exit, I checked

my camera settings and decided I very much had the right to photograph who and

when I wanted. I proceeded to photograph him as he kicked at me and threatened

to kill me. I was "hunting" under the most alarming circumstances! I am not

known for my fighting prowess or conventional male fortitude, but there was no

question, I was getting very "close to the truth" and was "hunting" in a war

zone, despite injuries and the apparent absurdity of my actions.

The Photojournalist in a <u>declared</u> war zone (like the character, Cassady,
above) believes he is representing some kind of "truth" about the conflict
which existed prior to him arriving. Such a Photographer, under the Geneva
Convention, is specifically categorized as a non-combatant - though this often
isn't observed in warfare. When my investigative photography turns to "front-
line" situations I am operating in an <u>undeclared</u> war in the public domain and
I am a combatant, not only in situations where I am hostilely received or in-
jured, but often when I am "hunting" and conflict occurs which did not exist
prior to my arrival. Evidently some of the reactions above indicate an intense
paranoia about the assumed surveillance and an abrupt response to my scopo-
philic serendipity.[2] The photo subjects' apprehension and perceived invasion
of privacy, mentioned in the opening paragraph, can all be seen to be oper-
ating here. These reactions also point out the assumed power of the photograph,
in the "wrong" hands, to definitely exercise social control. Paradoxically, the
power to exercise social control via photography, to me, is anathema. What of
the people who <u>do</u> actively use photography to compromise and control people's
lives? How do "Private Eyes" and the like regard the non-instrumental use of
photography? What is their attitude to those whom they photograph who are, after
all, actors in the "theatrum mundi"?[3]

> And out there in Hollywood I learned what pigs do when they want to
> appropriate a mystery. They approach in great fear and attempt to ex-
> ercise great control.[4]

Direct character assasination or the gathering of adversarial evidence is
<u>not</u> what is aimed for in my photography, however when one behaves in an uncon-
ventional manner with the camera, or does not appear to conform to widely ac-
cepted modes of dress and behaviour, then alarm or confusion <u>might</u> be expressed
by people who are being photographed. Unlike the Paparazzo, the "Private Eye"

or the Photojournalist, I am enquiring after my own interests, and, far from

being mercenary I actually lose money continuously.

The Photojournalist has much in common with both the Paparazzo and the "Private Eye" but he or she is governed, largely, by an altruistic code of ethics - a rather shakey but widely touted philosophy of "balanced" facts being visually depicted.

> ... unlike the area of art, photoreportage is not the expression of a projected inner vision, but a documentary report on reality... the statement is formed by experienced facts.[5]

Most photojournalistic images however reinforce the performances which their subjects would like us to see, or at least what the editor wants us to see. When people's performances are disrupted, when we see a celebrity looking other than sincere and composed, then we can usually witness this disruption as simple and predictable - the "goof photo", "blooper" or caricature. The real disruptive barbs, when in use, are usually found in the journalism - the text - rather than the image. Photojournalistic images have the function of confirming the text which they accompany. One never sees photojournalism without text, even in its most undirected form, the photojournalistic image is shown with a place and date or subject name. In the instance of "soft" or human interest news, the illustrative photograph, as in the "hard" or lead stories, confirms the text and is generally visually simple. In contrast to "celebrities" or "demons", the less important "everyday" people are never depicted in a harsh or defamatory fashion.

"TRAWLING"

"Trawling" refers to a more intuitive and less keenly sought after construction of meaning within the photograph. "I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording not thinking."[6] None of the more consciously construc-

ted disruptions or confirmations of people's performances occur here. Chance

plays a part, and it is more of an existential encounter between photographer

and subject. The aim is not so much to disrupt people's performance, although

the photograph often does. One could think of "Trawling" as a kind of "Action

Photography".[7] "Existentialism proceeds from the subjectivity of the individual,

but it claims that this subjectivity is the only objective fact in experience."[8]

The "Trawler" must cast the net far and wide,[9] taking different risks than

the "Hunter". The risk of not catching much of interest is high, but some of

the unseen images from the depths have a quality of their own which may surpass

in some way an image consciously thought out by the photographer (of the same

subject matter). A particular conscious view which is projected via a photograph

is in a sense a blinkered view. In a "Trawling" photograph greater reliance is

placed upon the found image and the subconscious is allowed to exert it's in-

fluence. The meanings that come out in the image are more likely to be consis-

tent with the photographer's own subjectivity - meanings which come from his or

her own dramatic inner truths, not "truths" from the outside world. These per-

sonal insights whilst "trawling" are allowed to come out by a diminution of con-

scious control, as opposed to the "Hunting" photograph.

When I operate in "Trawling" mode I feel like a drifter, moving not so much

aimlessly but in a fairly non-goal oriented way through the "social landscape".

I'm an outsider and an unknown quantity who gets by as best as he can with the

net, sometimes stationary and sometimes moving, but never really knowing exact-

ly where I'm headed. The net is not a driftnet because I can't be everywhere

all the time and there are recurring interests in certain fishing grounds: like

shopping centres, public transport, city streets and gatherings of people. The

photographic "Trawler" is an image pirate and emphatically not a "Flaneur" or

"Flaneuse",[10] the Dandy who mooches about from place to place and nonchalantly

has the facility to attend or acquire whatsoever he or she fancies.

To be employed as a photographer is a coveted position in society - it is
assumed to be an ideal living of wealth and "creative" expression. Rarely is it
just that, and I shall briefly raise this issue further on. The issue has been
mentioned here because it is directly related to my "Trawling", by way of met-
aphor. Occasionally I am employed to photograph for others. It is precisely
this irregular "hired hand" situation which is felt by me as "Trawler" and drif-
ter pursuing my own interests. Norman Mailer in his essay "The White Negro"[11]
describes the Beats of the 1950's as being culturally and experientially clo-
ser to Negroes than to the White "mainstream" American Dream ethos. The Beats
knew that The Bomb meant possible death for all at any moment, and considered
the Straights' or Squares' conformity to Judeo-Christian ethics, naive sci-
entific positivism, and materialism to be anathema. Satre's existentialism mix-
ed well, they thought,.with the adaptive imperatives of the Negro's lot,
and a psychopathic approach to life. It was the beginning of the contemporary
"me now" generation which, although it underlines the hypocrisy of many of the
White Bourgeois - reared Beats' choice of becoming Beats', does relate to my
photographic practices and my desire to strip away pretense and artifice. Mailer
writes that Beats and their very close cousins the Hipsters saw life as only
worth living if they could

> ... live with death as immediate danger, to divorce oneself from so-
> iety, to exist without roots, to set out on that unchartered journey
> into the rebellious imperatives of the self.[12] (my emphasis)

Whilst most of the above sentiments are arguably ridden with idealist delusion
they are doubtlessly useful for incisively assulting "mainstream" Judeo-Chris-
tian and Capatalist moralities. The words "unchartered journeys" in the quotation
above neatly encapsulates the essence of "Trawling".

The aesthetic form of a "Trawling" photograph is partially informed by pre-

visualization from experience. It is most relevant to point out that there is a much stronger element of chance than whilst "hunting", in both form and content. A large proportion of my images made whilst "trawling" are executed without looking through the viewfinder.

The most extreme example of a "Trawling" photograph which I have made was when the camera was placed on the floor, with the self-timer activated, and then "walked" in the way one might lead a dog, around a room full of people until it tripped the shutter itself. Of course the lens was facing up and not down. In a "Trawling" photograph people are generally either very camera aware and typically looking straight into the lens or quite unaware of it and going about their lives. Those who are camera aware are far less conscious of the photographer than would usually be the case. When someone is looking directly at the camera the resultant image suggests direct engagement with the viewer of the photograph - something which is often lacking when the camera is raised to eyelevel in the usual manner and the subject might look away from the camera, either to avoid the implied self revelation or to strike the sort of pose they feel would be appropriate.

"PERVERSE PHOTOGRAPHY"

It has been previously mentioned that "Perverse Photography" means self-willed indecorous and unconventional photography. "Hunting" and "Trawling" are two ways of working towards that end, and here I shall point out how the two modes overlap sometimes, and then go on to examine two photographs which I have made in the course of pursuing "Perverse Photography". Following that, further references shall be made to the broader aspects of photography in relation to "Perverse Photography". -

Acts of "Hunting" or "Trawling" photography are not mutually exclusive, nor are they discreet pure forms of working photographically. Each practice may overlap or contain elements of the other. The image, or its most obvious "read-

ing" can be at odds with the intention (or lack of it) at the moment of hitting the shutter button.

Only rarely when "hunting" will I look through the camera viewfinder, then so as not to indicate to people that a photograph is imminent, or a certain person is the subject. Here is an example of how the two modes of photography might operate. When an intentional "Hunting" photograph is made by subterfuge. without actually looking through the viewfinder, the framing and therefore content, to, a degree, slides off towards the chance aspects of "Trawling".

In a "Hunting" photograph the subjects are generally well aware that they are being photographed because the camera is raised to the eye,[13] whereas in a "Trawling" photograph the subjects are often much less aware of what is about to happen or perhaps even totally confused to the point of astonishment. This confusion arises for a number of reasons. Two which seem more obvious are: the lack of conventional cues that a photograph in the making is imminent - introduction of the photographer verbally and his or her stated desire to make an exposure, then the raising of the camera to eyelevel; and the lack of contract or dialogue with the attendant apprehension as to both what kind of performance is expected from the subject and within what context the photograph is to be displayed.

When "trawling" and photographing intuitively the situation arises regularly when surroundings or persons hit a note of recognition, or an extraordinary conscious association.is made. At this point I may become much more aroused and directed in the desire to meticulously construct the image in both,form and content. I then find myself "hunting".

As a voyeur and scopophile I can operate concurrently as "Hunter" and "Trawler" using the tension between these two ways of working to create further readings (and hopefully not dilute meaning or lapse into obscurantism).

IMAGES

Two photographs are shown here - the first is a photograph of two young ·
people at an "exclusive" dinner party held in a large "public"[14] venue, which
despite appearances, was made when I was operating in a "Trawling" mode. Im-
portantly, I had been photographing in the streets of the area, and was directed
to the event by a chance meeting with a "street kid" on the grounds that there
was free food and music there, and I approached the gathering with no particu-
lar intention other than to "trawl" (since I had already eaten) with my camera
just as I had been doing outside. I was not invited into this gathering nor ask-
ed for my ticket. Having walked directly off a public road and through the large
entrance, "Gate A", I was met by a scene reminiscent of They Shoot Horses Don't
They, [15] complete with horse. People everywhere were dancing old style, drinking
and eating. A woman was on stage holding aloft a trophy, a golden sheep. The M.C.
was beside her calling for applause, calling for everyone to thank the sponsors,
"Fourex!" I suspect the National Party Fighting Fund was the chief beneficiary
that night. Shortly before I made the exposure for the photo with the star and
the sterling young couple, a horse and rider made an entrance. Both had sequen-
tially flashing little lights all over and the rider sang through his microphone
"Like a Rhinestone Cowboy" as the terrified horse and he galloped back and forth
in front of the stage, narrowly missing thronging connoiseurs of country culture.
I went into a frenzy with the camera, looking through the viewfinder for the first
time that evening, and all my film was gone. The "credibility" of the camera had
been my ticket, and I was there to experience the evening, a drifter almost in
rags, which is also credible garb for many a "top" photographer. My accidental
masquerade was complete, and with a film duly donated by another "top" photogr-
apher, I wandered past this couple. Perhaps my unconscious (at the time) feel-
ings about them were projected by them back at the camera, I was looking a good

(ABOVE) J.J. VOSS "UNTITLED" 1989 (FROM PHOTOPHOBIA)

way to one side of them when I released the shutter, focus had been preset all
that evening.

The young man is seemingly affronted and confronted by the camera, but he
may be striking an heroic pose for it, he wasn't singing. He is perhaps play-
ing the "knight in shining armour". This could be a tender scene of subordination
and faith. The young woman has her head on his shoulder and has lost her power
to do anything by enveloping her hand in "Her Man's" dinner jacket. One of his
hands appears truncated and tensely on the edge of the frame - but it might be
anyone's hand, and his gaze is head on, defiant to the camera. If the young
woman's eye were closed she would seem to be in a contented sleep, but she is
equivocal, aware of the camera, but perhaps deferring any response to it for
the young man. The star introduces elements of narcissism and righteousness in
conjunction with confirming their projected status: envoys of sex stereotypes -
the spunky young man and the demure young woman; the perfect match.

The next photograph is one taken in the Parliament House of Tasmania whilst I was "hunting". The person shown is the Right Honourable Robin Gray, as he is exiting the Chamber and entering the corridors of the House. I had been "hunting" Mr. Gray for some weeks "on the hustings" during the Tasmanian election campaign of 1989. In this period I found out one reason why he (like so many successful politicians) had survived as a leader for so long. He was consistent in his public performances and he continuously alluded to both a group identity ("Tasmanians") and his good intentions.[16] Of the several hundred negatives taken with him as a principal subject, perhaps three or four show him without a galvanized grin. Each one where he was revealing an atypical countenance was made at a time when his exemplary performance slipped, when not only under extreme pressure (the lot of all contemporary politicians), but at times when he was in unfamiliar territory and, literally, out of control. I was attempting to aggressively disrupt his iron clad performance, strip away his personal and political armour, and move in for the kill - to see and represent the "forbidden" sights.

During the course of this election campaign I was working as both an artist and paid photojournalist. I was experiencing intense conflict within myself due to this situation. It is outside the scope of this paper to elaborate further about this conflict at any length, but I have since given up taking photographs at the behest of correspondents, editors and the dollar: principally because the two ways of photographing, at least for the present, are too conflicting in their disparate requirements. Also, as an artist I set the visual agenda and have a much freer hand to attempt more complex imagery in terms of meanings - there was no contest, in the end.

What was behind my drive to hunt down Robin Gray? A disruptive indecorous photograph was not required by the newspapers, at least from a little known freelance like myself. A complex, equivocal or "strange" image was not required from

(ABOVE) J.J. VOSS "UNTITLED" 1989

any Photojournalist. As a "Hunting" artist I wanted to shatter his charisma so
as to subvert his codified decorum of authority, to strip back his appearance
to reveal a character, deliberately hidden. Mr. Gray must have sensed this be-
cause on several occasions he verbally and emphatically pointed out my photo-
graphic behaviour to voters in crowds and at small gatherings. On various occ-
asions he clasped my upper arm, he asked me who I was working for, he asked me
if I was still working, he called me his "old friend" and he grinned and grinned.
Apart from these two words I shall restrain myself from further quotation, due
to the Laws of Libel and Mr. Gray's propensity for acting on them, which is on
public record. Libel Laws underpin the "weight of social order" to which I re-
ered earlier in this paper. At this point I must say that I do not consider my-
self Mr. Gray's "old friend", by any of the generally accepted criteria of fr-
iendship or even acquaintance. The fact is he probably didn't know who I was,
but he sensed I wasn't there to bolster or dutifully record his charismatic image.
It is equally important to point out that I do not consider myself Mr. Gray's
enemy. I was "hunting" Mr. Gray as charismatic political leader, not Citizen
and person.

In the photograph of Mr. Gray he can be seen to be almost looking at the view-
er, but his gaze and forward lean indicate he is moving towards a further dest-
ination (the toilet as it was). He is not stopping to perform charismatically
so as to reveal a magnanamous yet affable smile for the camera - a mandatory
"revelation" for any senior patriarch and one which he and his ilk attempt re-
lentlessly. His clothing is immaculate and consistent with his position, yet he
is equivocal in his juxtaposition with the sceptre-like doorhandle, not actually
clasping or pushing it. Here, on his first day in Parliament after losing gov-
ernment he is, in Freudian terms, leaving the womb of the Parliamentary Chamber,
through the Oedipal opening of the door and irresolutely touching the phallic

door handle which is so securely fastened, and not his for the taking. At this moment of departing the seat of power over which he had recently lost control, I was there waiting for my quarry.

The scenario and the resultant photograph seem to beg further discussion of it in relation to Freud's Totem and Taboo.[17] Parliament can be seen as the "primal horde" and Mr. Gray as the "primal father" falling. Myself, his political opponents and the Press could be seen as the "rival males". However, I am neither hungry nor do I covet his position, so I shall not develop this analogy further.

Freud writes briefly on scopophilia and wish-fulfilment; this relates more directly to my prying and demanding to be accepted as a junior and temporary observer in the general affairs of Parliament around the time of Mr. Gray's fall from power:

> Simple-minded girls, after becoming engaged, are reputed to often express their joy that they will soon be able to go to the theatre, to all the plays which have hitherto been prohibited, and will be allowed to see everything.[18] (my emphasis)

My scopophilic "Hunting" activities had not gone unnoticed in Parliament over the weeks during and directly after the election. I had been photographing Mr. Gray and other political actors inside the House, and shortly after taking the photograph discussed above I was asked by the Clerk of The House to refrain from further photography because it would "not be politic", and was referred to Standing Order 429. 429 apparently had been dormant for some time, and severely limits the use of "photographic equipment" or "any mechanical recording device" in the House. I was under the impression that Parliament was a place where important public affairs were debated and controlled, and that it was open to the Public and the Press as well as Parliamentarians. Evidently my "hunting" photography was so unpopular and bad mannered that I was fit only for the Stranger's Gallery,

and not allowed to record the forbidden sights of Parliament. I had passed be-
yond being a defacto Press Gallery person and had been stood up on my scopo-
philic desire to become an "engaged (to Parliamentary affairs) simple-minded
girl" (a Citizen Mr. Clerk of The House?) ... "able to see everything", and to
photograph it. My apparently underactive superego has been awoken in order to
restrain my "hunting" ego, by outside agents, themselves driven in their urge to
exercise a type of parental authority by vision. I mean the kind of vision ass-
ociated with social control.

> ...the attitude of the super-ego towards the ego, particularly in re-
> gards of such matters as duty, order and the like, it is hard not to
> see traces of the anal component of the anal-sadistic phase. Similarly.
> scopophilic elements may perhaps be concerned in the careful "watching"
> exercised over the ego.[19]

> I have had complaints from quite a large number of Honourable Members
> that they have been obstructed in moving around the precincts of the
> Parliament because of people wandering around the corridors taking
> photographs without permission... I do not want to restrict the access
> of the Media or any other individuals... but they must act in accordance
> with the Standing Orders.[20] (my emphasis)

Like hunting of rare animals, my photography in Parliament has been curtailed,
if not stopped. At least I got to see and represent several performances. Still,
unlike certain rare beasts, the politician, in one form or another, is not a
threatened species.

CONCLUSION

Can photography disrupt exemplary performances? What is meant by an exemplary performance, here, is a socially correct and advantageous character projection made by people when in front of an unknown audience. The audience may be seen or unseen, and a strong similarity between actors and people in social life is assumed. A controlled codified performance which is repeatable is essential to the actor as much as it is to the politician, the belle and the beau or the junior clerk. As a selective trace of a performance, steeped in "reality" and eminently repeatable the photograph stands in good stead.

There is very little credence afforded to someone who cannot show a consistency of some type in their mental and physical presentation - even if there be different projections towards different groups in society. Mutability before a particular audience does not generally auger well for credible recognition. Even the stand up comic or certain unpredictable visual artists and performers achieve recognition through the experienced knowledge that they will be unpredictable or "unconventional" - thus setting up a repeatable new convention, a different type of performance to, say, the politician or merchant banker.

The aim of "perverse photography" is to disrupt exemplary performances in order to achieve insights into people and their situations, which are generally hidden, and I believe many of my photographs, like the one of Mr. Gray do this. Paradoxically a most exemplary performance (by the young couple) came up in the "trawl net".

Self image whether negative, complimentary or perceptively accurate has been given a reflective blow by realist representations like that offered by both still and motion photography. People are likely to place great faith in a photographic representation of themselves or others - and this will only create anxiety if it is different to their idealized mental image of self.

Lulu: Look at this photograph

Sergius: What's wrong with it?

Lulu: Tony Tanner looks better than me. They ought to shoot the pho-
tographer. He's probably in Tony's employ.

Sergius: (studying photograph) You don't look so miserable with Tony's
arm on you.

Lulu: Why that's just publicity. I can't stand Tony.. (Blackout)[21]

This extract from Norman Mailer's play The Deer Park illustrates that kind of

anxiety. In this case, and it is not uncommon, the anxiety is based on narcis-

sism in conflict with the exemplary representation. The excerpt also raises the

issues of motive to photograph, contract, and the result: Lulu, playing an act-

ress' part in the play, decries the photograph's misrepresentation of her, but

concurrently and cooly brushes off the photo's impression that she and Tony are

"close", as being a deliberately constructed exemplary performance (what the

audience normally demands) based on misrepresentation! Within this fertile ex-

change it is plainly demonstrated that Lulu is suspicious of the photographer.

The camera never lies! This is, of course, an absurdity - but nevertheless

a heartfelt sentiment behind most of the naive concepts with which we may

approach photography. Despite the fact one may know that editing occurs on sev-

eral levels; including framing (what elements are or are not included), expose-

sure (just how much is shown and does the eye see it just that way?) and timing

(exactly when the image is made). The camera may not lie, but does this mean it

tells a "truth"? Photography undeniably has the potential to depict what is, or

more correctly was before the camera in meticulous visual detail. It may, with

great effort, come close to the illusion of reality - to a semblance, an accurate

trace, a simulacrum. But visual evidence is not truth! Truth has personal, so-

cial and cultural connotations relating to ideology and allegiance.

One only needs to look at a photograph made on time exposure, or with flash

at night, to realize that photography can show what isn't seen with the eye.

Then which is real and which is abstracted representation? Still photography of the more realist style allows the viewer a chance to examine the image minutely, to enter into conjecture between the scene shown, his or her interpretations of it and to question the intention of the photographer. Voyeurism is encouraged, if not demanded. A kind of voyeurism which allows the viewer, among other things to check the visual representation against the prior knowledge of the situation or subject - to see if the representation is congruent with reputation or expectation. The ideal of a two dimensional "signposted" confirmation of a performance can be traced back to a hunting scene painted on the cave wall.

This "perverse photography" project has been a worthwhile experience because it has made me more aware of rigid conventions regarding life performance and personal appearance. It has also highlighted the fact that meaning in the photopraph may be consciously or unconsciously constructed, and that the resultant photograph is often at odds with intention.

I consider carefully, but am puzzled by the criticisms railed at my "perverse photography" on moral and ethical grounds. Regarding the moral grounds, perhaps criticism is forthcoming because the photographs do not confirm narratives which viewers expect, and would like to see depicted. Ethics are rules of conduct in certain areas of human endeavour, and in a speculative area of enquiry and art practice it would seem fair for me to choose my ethic if and when the need presented itself.

At times when artifice is disrupted by my photography it is clear that people are scared of various "truths" which may be revealed via the camera, because the image of their life performance is out of control. This I relate to an anxiety which has been activated by narcissism in conflict with their public image, made worse by the alienation felt by many people living in the neo-conservative "First World". Perhaps their sense of personal worth is at a low, and must be

bolstered by a <u>fixed icon of self-image;</u> they might assume <u>any</u> photographic representation which conflicts with their idealized and emblematic self image is also a sinister exploitation. Real sinister exploitation and manipulation does exist in photographically enhanced operations like advertising, television, newspapers and numerous other "informative" publications.

I would suggest a disrupted variation on people's idealized performances for the camera is both interesting and informative, and may lead to further and less absolute ideas on personal and social identity.

<u>NOTES</u>

1. from Oliver Stone's film <u>Salvador</u>. Jack Cassady was an actual Photojourn-
   alist, a war correspondent who was killed in El Salvador. The quotation is
   from the film and not the person.

2. "serendipity" may seem in conflict with the notion of "hunting" photograph-
   ically. But as will be suggested further on in the paper, "Hunting" and
   "Trawling" are neither totally discreet nor mutually exclusive modes of work.

3. the theatre of the world

4. <u>Existential Errands</u>, Mailer, Norman p.103

5. <u>Modern Photojournalism: Origin and Evoloution 1910-33</u>, Gidal, Tim - Foreword

6. <u>Goodbye to Berlin</u>, Isherwood, Christopher p.7

7. cf. Abstract Expressionism in painting

8. <u>Marxism and Existentialism</u>, Odajnyk, Walter p.10

9. analogous to the concept of a wide-cast net is the use of a wideangle lens,
   which is usually employed.

10. see Baudelaire's essay "The Painter of Modern Life"

11. see "The White Negro", Mailer, Norman (pub. in <u>Advertisements for Myself</u>).

12. ibid. p.271

13. Alfred Eisenstaedt, a Photojournalist who started photography around the
    "birth" of Photojournalism in Germany in the late 1920's and achieved wider
    recognition working for <u>Life</u> and other pubs. in America, was greatly en-
    amoured with the use of a waist level viewfinder, where the photographer <u>looks
    down at the camera</u> and not in a line of sight at the subject, because the
    subjects were not so aware of the photographer's intention. A more "natural"
    and very photojournalist ethos was then seen to be operating.

14. The venue referred to was the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Circular Quay,
    Sydney. The function was the National Cattleman's Gala Ball. This venue seem-
    ingly has dual roles as both a "public" entry and exit point for travellers
    and a place for large "private" functions.

15. <u>They Shoot Horses Don't They?</u> a film depicting a fatal marathon dance com-
    petition

16. Refer <u>The Fall of Public Man</u>, Sennett, Richard chapter 12
    I had noted Mr. Gray's repetitions, but am indebted to Sennett for clearly
    elucidating the ways of working employed by (Charismatic) Politicians

17. <u>Totem and Taboo</u>, Freud, Sigmund
    Freud postulates in his "primal scene" scenario that the Primal Horde (group)

was lead by a dominant male, the primal father, who "kept all the women to himself". Rival males eventually killed him to displace his dominance over the women and literally ate him (out of guilt). This explains my reference to "not feeling hungry". A too vividly imagined simile with me playing out the "rival male" role is most distasteful!

18. Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, Freud, Sigmund p.253
    The outrageously sexist suppositions are not my views and are lamentable.
    They were written c.1920
19. Papers on Psychoanalysis, Jones, Ernest p.195
    c.f. "watching over" and "parental authority by supervision" (in Parliament)
    with the Panopticon
20. Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) First Session 1989 p.205
21. The Deer Park (play version), Mailer, Norman p.91

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J.J. VOSS M.F.A. SUBMISSION 2ND. PAPER

WEEGEE KLEIN AND WINOGRAND : ANTECEDENT PERVERSITY

WEEGEE KLEIN AND WINOGRAND: ANTECEDENT PERVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I shall examine self-willed, "perverse" and bad mannered pho-
tography as practiced by three artists: Weegee (Arthur Fellig, 1891-1968), Will-
iam Klein (b.1928) and Garry Winogrand (1928-1984). Each of these people were
raised in New York U.S.A., in families on the lower end of the socio-economic
scale. Each of them are widely known for their photography of the people of New
York. The specific city is not critical - but New York is a very large "Western"
city and this is important to their work. The three exhibited a compulsion to
photograph - an immediacy which was apparently driven by a photographically vi-
olent response to the "Big City"- and a voracious voyeurism.

An anarchic, headlong charge at life is evident in their photographs. Weegee,
Klein and Winogrand all relied heavily on their instincts to varying degrees, so
the headlong charge indicates the level of energy rather than a formularized
strategy and a known result. Weegee comes closest to predictability and a con-
sciously arranged photographic strategy - despite his claim to being a psychic
photographer.[1] Winogrand insisted on the paramount importance of formal organ-
ization, despite the populist social content of his photographs. Klein, like
Winogrand, set out to deliberately push his photography to the limits in order
to find out what results were possible aesthetically and conceptually. Klein
and Weegee overtly transgressed the rules of good conduct socially and photo-
graphically. Winogrand was seen to be doing similar things whether he perceived
and accepted this or not.

All three operated in a "battle zone" and took physical as well as photographic
risks, and were quite aware of it. All three were highly self-motivated watchers
of social life who used photography to widely disseminate their findings. I have
used the term "watcher" in contradistinction to observer because that word is

laden with a pompousness and passivity which had nothing to do with any of the three artists above, and because this paper should be seen as following on from the first one "Hunting and Trawling: Two Modes of Perverse Photography". In that paper I mentioned the notion of a visual and compulsive control over people and their activities, and likened Parliament to the operation of Bentham's Panopticon The Panopticon is an alarmingly accurate metaphor with which current social mechanics may be viewed - a specifically visual structuring of social order.

The social content of Weegee's, Klein's - and despite intransigent denials - Winogrand's work, reflects a voracious power of photography, a power which seems to respect no limits as it asserts its capacity for seizing the events of social life. Foucault's discussion of the model of the Panopticon and my reflections on my own photography led me to think about "perverse photography" as a means of working against "panopticonality" but it raises that vague and problematic state: "freedom". Freedom from what? Freedom from the easily recognizable, the predictable and the "safe" outcome of a photographic encounter. The main problem with this state of "freedom" is that it must be fleeting, not subject to being institutionalized and hence not broadly practised. As a condition for a working photographer it is apt to fall less towards modes of recognition and repeatability than "traditional" and consciously ritualized photographic models. In this paper I am roughly equating "freedom" with absolute subjectivity - a subjectivity which is neither guilty nor unsure of itself....

In relation to subjective photography Jean-Claude Lemangey's words describe the basic credo of some of the Subjektive Fotografie exhibitors:

> The movement claimed to exhalt above all the individual free will of each creator. Existentialism provided its framework, stressing the radical liberty of human beings ...subjective photography... emphasis laid on the purity of the process itself, rather than that of its results[2]

The Subjektive Fotografie exhibitions were motivated by Otto Steinert and were shown in Germany in 1951,1954 and 1958.

In the Subjektive Fotografie exhibitions William Klein was represented along

with Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange and Henri Cartier-Bresson - three photograph-

ers duly allowed the "individual free will" to be practitioners of not only

"the purity of the process" but also the purity of its results . I do not for

a minute devalue the work of Adams, Lange and Bresson, but I do suggest their

work was rather conscious and "strict" in its results - as they have said of

their own work.

> Cartier-Bresson, you might say, is the nocturnal burglar who knows the
> combination of the safe in advance. ...No-one sees him work, no-one sees
> him leave... Klein on the other hand proceeds about his work in broad
> daylight, carrying a hand grenade. He enjoys danger, preferring to dyna-
> mite the safe, and leaves a calling card on which are photographed his
> fingerprints.[3]

I am not arguing that Klein, Weegee and Winogrand produced work which was

basically the same, but I intend to concentrate more on what I perceive to be

their similarities, and mention differences only when it seems most necessary...

A prime constituent of the photography done by Weegee, Klein and Winogrand is

the fact that many of the people represented are in transitional spaces like the

street, parks, railway stations, markets, amusement parks or occasional venues

like restaurants, art galleries, bars and sports stadia. The implication of tran-

sience and the short journey is strong. Even in the "exclusive" restaurant or

the "invitation preferred" gallery opening it can be said these and the other

venues mentioned above are "public". Of course quite "private" experiences and

exchanges occur in these public spaces, and it is precisely that somewhat du-

plicitous area into which Weegee, Winogrand and occasionally Klein pry. Partic-

ularly in the more evident public situations as well as the more "exclusive"

venues the "gathering of strangers"[4] retains or maintains a degree of privacy

in public (by hoping for, if not demanding, a personal space). Erving Goffman

wrote

it is often best to consider personal space not as a permanently pos-
sessed, egocentric claim but as a temporary, situational preserve into
whose centre the individual moves.[5]

It is around this "gathering of strangers" - each with their "situational pre-
serve" - the rules of manners in public operate. And it is into just this sit-
uational space that photographers like Weegee, Klein, Winogrand and myself often
intrude. The intrusion might actually be at a reasonable physical distance
(Weegee said he always set focus at ten feet) but be generally viewed as opor-
tunistically cruel, or rude, due to the timing and the nature of acts depicted.
Those using wider angled lenses like Klein and Winogrand (and myself) move in
significantly closer to the subject and their proximate space, and in so doing
often depict a <u>confrontation</u> with the photographer as much as the subject's "per-
formance". One thing is for sure, there is much less likelihood the subject is
unaware a photograph is imminent if the photographer is very close. In my paper
"Hunting and Trawling..." I highlighted the contention surrounding a style of
photography which intrudes on people (specifically regarding my own work), and
replied to persistent criticism of this by claiming the benefits of both the in-
sights to be gained beyond the subjects' controlled presentation to the camera
and the "right" of the photographer to work this way: choosing his or her own
ethics and thereby questioning the nature of a broadly assumed and imposed eti-
quette. There is, of course, an ethical problem in the appropriation of a sub-
ject's likeness without a prior contract. However this problem also regularly
surfaces in photography done <u>with</u> a prior contract. (Refer to "Hunting and
Trawling..." and the excerpt from Mailer's <u>The Deer Park</u>, -(play version). The
portrait photography of Richard Avedon is not suddenly appropriated or exis-
tentially experienced without warning... writers, performers, politicians, drif-
ters and prison inmates are brought into his studio knowing they are to be photo-
graphed, presumeably entering into a verbal contract about the "shoot". The

cameras used by Avedon, of larger formats, require quite slow and deliberate operation - yet many people find great difficulty with the "entrapped" and perceived exploitative nature of most of Avedon's images. I suggest that the nature of "people photography"[6] in general is not that of an equable two-way exchange or "conversation", and that there is a lot of confusion and contention surrounding the slips that must occur if one is over confident of the assumed veritable accuracy of photography: an accuracy which is presumed to somehow work in concert with good intentions and careful negotiation between photographer and subject. The camera and the process of photography do objectify and distort, and this is without the various differences in the viewers' readings of the photograph,and often despite intention! Klein in particular and to a lesser extent Weegee and Winogrand (when they use flash) acknowledge the non-literal and "wild card" aspects of photography and exploit them, making them more obvious, but in a rigorous manner.

When viewing the work of Weegee, Winogrand and Klein we are not taken into the subjects' homes, sites of work or their particularly private spaces as was the case with Dianne Arbus, Bruce Davidson, Bill Owens or the intrusive "acquisitive" French photographer Sophie Calle. Garry Winogrand entitled one of his best exhibitions Public Relations and in an ironic way the title describes the sort of photography which subjectively depicts people in public places as seen not only by himself, but also Weegee and Klein. It is as if they are showing us not only "this is what I saw" but also "this is what I felt, when in the scene".

The three photographers examined in this paper were uncompromising in their approach to photography and the social life they depicted. They represent over fourty years of photographing on the razor's edge. They were eminently cool when working in the heat of calamity, pretense, tension and chaos occuring in threatening urban situations.
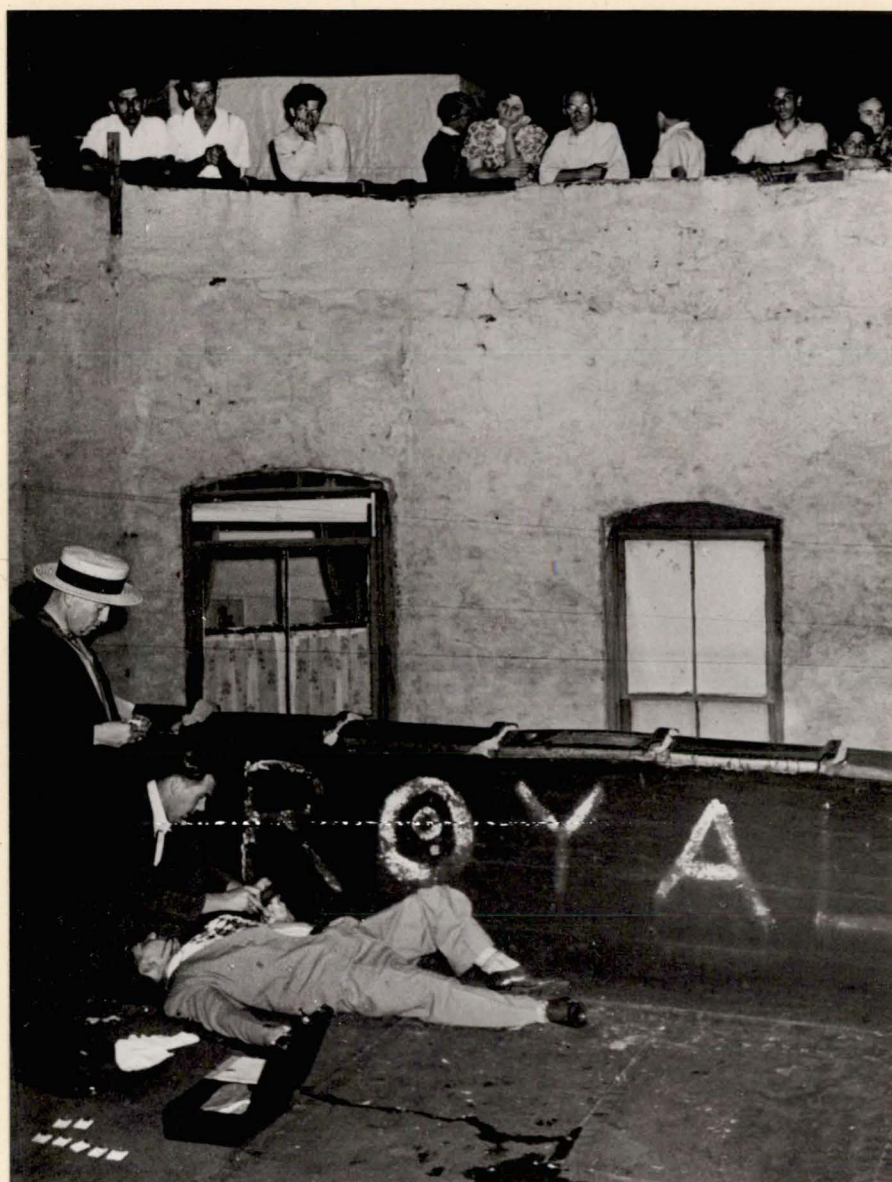
(ABOVE) IMAGE 1: WEEGEE "AT THE PALACE THEATRE" (1945)

(ABOVE) IMAGE 2: WEEGEE "ACCIDENT VICTIM IN SHOCK" (N.D.)

(ABOVE) IMAGE 3: WEEGEE "MURDER VICTIM 1944"

WEEGEE, THE 1930's AND 1940's: THE ANTISOCIAL PRODUCTION OF ART?

A picture is like a blintz... eat it while its hot.[7]
People get bumped off. Some day I'll follow one of these guys with a
'pearl gray hat', have my camera set and get the actual killing...
could be... I got the above statement with a check from Life maga-
zine. ...The other was only a cheap murder, with not so many bull-
ets so they only paid ten dollars for that.[8]

Usher Fellig came to New York as a ten year old. His journey from Austria

brought him to Ellis Island Immigration Terminal which he called "the most

beautiful place in the world".[9] The immigration officer changed his name to

Arthur. When he left home aged eighteen he travelled the streets of New York

moving from place to place eking out a bare living, and no doubt becoming

streetwise. After six years of this he gained some respite from the less glam-

orous side of life on the streets of New York, when he got a job as a darkroom

worker for a newspicture agency, Acme. By various accounts Weegee was tough and

proud. He refused a job working for Acme as a photographer because it required

wearing a white shirt and tie. He stayed in the darkroom for more than ten

years, occasionally being sent out with the camera at night, when his uncouth-

ness was not likely to be witnessed by those who "mattered". Among his several

second jobs was that of playing a fiddle accompaniment for silent movies -

I loved playing on the emotions of the audience... I could move them to
either happiness or sorrow... I suppose my fiddle playing was a sub-con
scious kind of training for my future in photography[10]

Was Weegee psychopathically manipulative? It should be pointed out his friend

and fellow photographer Louis Stettner insisted Weegee was a Humanist, and also

a shy person. Weegee would have been a most interesting psychoanalytic subject.

At various times in his life he is described as both voyeur and exhibitionist,

as being shy and full of brashness, as staunchly "lumpen" Proletariat and "pet

of the cultured set (... show at M.O.M.A. ... assignments at Vogue)".[11]

The list of contradictions goes on - psychic photographer and cruel opportunist, "The Famous"[12] and furtive wheedler.

From the late 1930's and throughout the 1940'S Weegee went freelance - in the strongest sense of the word. He was a nightstalker who raced across New York at top speed all night most nights looking for hot news. "Fires and Murders"[13] were his staple fare, and he was an original exponent of "urban combat photography".[14] He also found time to haunt venues like a dive in the Bowery called "Sammy's", the cinema and the gala evenings of the uptown New Yorkers. Weegee was perhaps most alienated and sadly wanting when he voyeuristically cruised lovers' lanes - a persistent fascination and a situation where he would normally use infra-red film and flash. One notable example is illustrated "At The Palace Theatre." - image 1. This famous image shows a passionate embrace in the dark of a movie theatre: public space, private situation. The cinema-goers who surround the lovers are nonchalant; perhaps the then new technology of three-dimensional cinema has overwhelmed them, or perhaps the cinema provides a haven of relaxation and tiredness takes over. The three-dimensional glasses imply a kind of vision imposed upon the audience if they are to see the movie clearly. The image takes on a most bizarre twist if one does not know the glasses were a prerequisite for a three-dimensional movie. Just what is the audience doing? Evidently, vision the subject here, is an altered or shrouded vision. Of all the people depicted only the young woman is capable of "normal" sight yet her eyes are closed. Passion can isolate it's participants from more mundane matters. In this photograph Weegee visually underscores this semation by including the empty seat in the frame. The embrace of the young woman and her companion is not half-hearted, as one can see by viewing her curled feet and the positions of the hands. The Speed Graphic's[15] lens gives one a voyeuristic entrance to this situation, and the infra-red film intensifies the voyeur-

ism by prying through the weave of the woman's blouse in a manner impossible with other filmstock. This photo would have fitted well in the chapter "The Escapists" in Weegee's book - ` Naked City.[16] In this chapter Weegee writes

Laugh - its good for you... forget all about (wartime difficulties)... that lonely ache in your heart every night waiting... I even laughed my-self... and forgot all about my inferiority complexes.[17]

The middle-aged man in the top right of the image is also flanked by empty seats. This affords him not so much privacy but a desparing alienation, borne out by his dejected, almost painful, pose. The man is a visual simile for Weegee or any other person who wishes to make more personal contact, male or female, and the seat next to the young woman is vacant - perhaps for the viewer to move into the scene. Weegee writes of lovers "I wouldn't want to disturb them for the world"[18] (my emphasis), which has an interesting double meaning, relating to seizing escapist pleasures in the face of the daily grind.

When power lines went down and were lying live on the street Weegee went in to expose his film to the electric events that were out of the ordinary, but very much of the real: "people could forget their own troubles by reading about others."[19] The immediacy and drama of many of his photos convey an intense terror, which is remarkable considering the direct and unequivocal framing. If many of Weegee's photos seem like stills from gangster movies it is no accident. He claimed to have known all the members of Murder Inc. and to have implored them to steal light-coloured cars in which to murder their victims, so as to aid the tonal separation of his photographs - "have it in good taste".[20] Weegee re-ferred to the boys of Murder Inc. as "very nice guys, they didn't try to cover up";[21] probably referring not only to the brazeness of their foul play, but also to the way they would allow him the "right" to photograph the killing scene so as to convey a stark revelation for all to see. The revelations are not a doc-umentary equivalence with reality nor a predictable reportage: Weegee was aware

from his years in the darkroom of print control, the transference of three-

dimensional information onto photographic paper, and the emotional expressive-

ness of flash. There is no denying he was a photojournalist by definition and

that he had no background in art, but it is naive and unwise to dismiss him

(as many have within art circles) as limited in aesthetic capability as a photo-

grapher. As an interpretation of events on the street they are milestones, par-

ticularly in the context of reflecting and laying open for analysis the street

culture of the time and place. Importantly, he was from the culture he was inter-

preting and his more bizarre and intense (some might say cruel) images convey a

rough dark carnival where the atmosphere of existential danger and mortality was

dominant.

The madcap nature of Weegee's involvement in these deadly dramas and the tran-

sience of life on the streets is brought home when one reads about how he set up

an office space in Manhattan Police Headquarters, where he would doze next to the

radio and spring to life when a transmission sounded promising. Stettner writes

that Weegee would sometimes operate out of

> ... an ambulance containing a sort of hidden perambulatory darkroom.
> Then with sirens screaming, he would lie down in the vehicle and de-
> velop the glass negative as it was sped to the telephone company for
> transmission.[22]

It is more widely known that Weegee had a film darkroom along with various photo-

graphic and personal supplies in the boot (trunk) of his car, as well as the fact

he was the first civilian allowed to have a mobile radio tuned to police bands.

Beyond mere utility it is interesting to note Weegee's mobile lifestyle in the

automobile, that major icon of American life and freedom of movement and speed.

Marcel Duchamp told us art depends on its context and I maintain this is as equ-

ally true for the situational genesis of art as it is of the location of recep-

tion.

In American culture the automobile was not only a symbol of speed and free-
dom of movement, it was also the location for many a journey's abrupt end, a
symbol for untimely death. "Accident Victim In Shock" (n.d.) - illustrated im-
age 2. - is an example of such an instance. I have chosen to briefly look at
this image instead of better known and more graphic disaster photographs like
"Tenement Fire 1945", "Tenement Fire, Harlem 1942" and "Murder In Hell's Kitchen"
(n.d.) not only because an automobile is the setting but also because there is a
formally disjointed but physically connected relationship between a policeman and
a woman displaying horror and anguish. The Humanist and social aspect of this ph-
otograph becomes evident if one can get past Weegee's bad mannered snatching of
the image at such a time. The more recent photos of Leonard Freed's Death In New
York (involving violent deaths and the police force) are worth comparing with Wee-
gee's work - they are much more evidentiary in a clinical style and have less sym-
pathetic representations of the police than Weegee's photographs. Freed's work is
more silent and the emotions of people not evident. In Weegee's image the accident
victim, in shock, seems to be frozen in time and frozen two-dimensionally onto
the car's windscreen. She is framed or trapped by the dense dark tones surround-
ing her, "hovering". Although notable visually, the large letter "A" is inci-
dental. The lines created by the steering wheel and the windshield wiper seem
to restrain her more emphatically into her horror. The large flower in her hair
seems incongruous, its implication of adornment and gaiety partly masked by the
flash shadow. A social drama of an unplanned kind is depicted here.

Weegee frequently photographed those who were stressed. "Murder Victim 1944" -
illustrated image 3. - shows more than a reportage or forensic photograph would.
This is achieved formally by much more of the scene being included in the frame
than a forensic shot would disclose, and conceptually by depicting the body being
examined and "processed" by the detectives with the line of spectators above not
looking down at all, as might be expected of them. Everyone on the rooftop looks

either tense or dazed, the detectives are sombre but businesslike. The onlookers
are psychologically remote from the scene of the murder and their separation is
enhanced by the light-toned band of the building. In front the spectators look
at the camera instead of the murdered man. Weegee was using his presence to al-
ter the onlooker's gaze and thereby obtain a photograph with a perverse "edge"
and meaning. Weegee (and the viewer) are elevated above the street level this both
dilutes the perspective (as does the light-toned wall) and allows the viewer a
similar vantage point to the onlookers. Down on the street the graffiti "royal"
provides an incongruous backdrop in a part of town which seems neither regal nor
specifically Anglicized (The letter "o" in "royal" is reminiscent of insignia
on R.A.F. aeroplanes). The separation between the onlookers, the detectives and
the murdered man imply either an enforced or voluntary self-distancing from
the corpse on the part of the onlookers. In this photograph Weegee is showing
most of all two ways of handling death: the business-like task-oriented one of
the detectives (actors), and the dazed impotence and distancing of the onlookers
(the audience who may only look, but at this instant have changed the rules of
the game).

Allene Talmey is one of the critics who may not have researched Weegee's
statements or his life thoroughly, or perhaps lacks a broader understanding of
his photographs in an artistic context so much that she falls into the trap of
attacking him gratuitously - sometimes on the most frivolous grounds. She writes
as if he must be expunged from the annals of art in a way reminiscent of Nazi
propaganda unleashed upon "entarete kunst".

> When he was young, Weegee gave off an air of middle age, his dark eyes
> restless, slightly vague, his hair too long... melted down within his
> crumpled clothes hanging off him like washing on a line [23]

and a perhaps less irrelevant (he)

developed no theories... cared so little about technique... knew little

about painting or sculpture or art photography... never bothered to
think about (art)... used his camera not to celebrate the people he
photographed but to make a narrow, spare living.[24]

This is simplistic, ad hominem abuse, which shows no understanding of Weegee's

professional and cultural situation. Colin L. Westerbeck Jr. also lapses into

elitist revulsion and misrepresentation of Weegee's relationship with his photo

subjects.

As opposed to Brassai who took two years to get to know his subjects
before even beginning to photograph them, Weegee knew none of his. He
did not want to know them, who would?[25] (my emphasis)

Westerbeck's question only repeats the callousness and lack of empathy which

Weegee himself had been widely accused of perpetrating! Westerbeck's essay

"Night Light: Brassai and Weegee" does have several cogent and more generous

insights into Weegee's photography - despite positing Brassai as a far better

photographer. But the implication that it is much more reasonable and merit-

orious in art terms to spend a long time getting to know the subject - to deal

with him or her with decorous kid gloves - is most one-eyed. It also indicated

a complete misunderstanding of the transience and immediacy of the photographic

"blintz" platter (not palette!) within which the "Perverse" Weegee operated.

Not only the environment and its events are misunderstood but also the tech-

niques of "Hunting", "Trawling" and "rapid fire" are discounted arbitrarily.

"This was a good 'catch' for me."[26] ...Weegee did know about the peoples' likley

life experiences even if he did not know them personally. The problem of sudden

intrusion and a tendency to objectify people whilst photographing them is more

a problem of social etiquette than a theoretical problem. (I assert this in the

light of the previously stated nature of "Perverse" photography. It is widely

held Weegee was both "perverse" and a photographer!)

Weegee was no saint and most people would question his ethics and lack of
decorum, however as a person from the Lower East Side he "knew the score" re-

garding the social realities of the "lowlife". As far as I'm concerned his di-

rectness and black humor are logical and reasonable strategies in his photo-

graphic depictions and his attempts to cope with the squalor and violence of

his milieu. His egotistical approach to his career and public profile were,

and are surely echoed throughout society - his inferiority complex was not

affected (delusions of grandeur are often a countermeasure to inferiority)

and it must be remembered his apparent photographic callousness and "cruelty"

do not necessarily convey a simple disdain towards humanity. Weegee may have

acted antisocially but his unconventional and bad mannered photography shows

one aspect of human existence in a manner that doesn't attempt to empty itself

of traces of the photographer's involvement in the situation.

> There is a large and recognizable sector of his work in which Weegee
> is not a detatched reportorial professional. ...This private eye had -
> a vital insensitivity that is precious. [27]

Weegee's photographs are profoundly Humanist and social in their content,

without showing the usual traits of being "socially concerned" or attempting

an "objective" Documentary style.

(LEFT) IMAGE 4: KLEIN
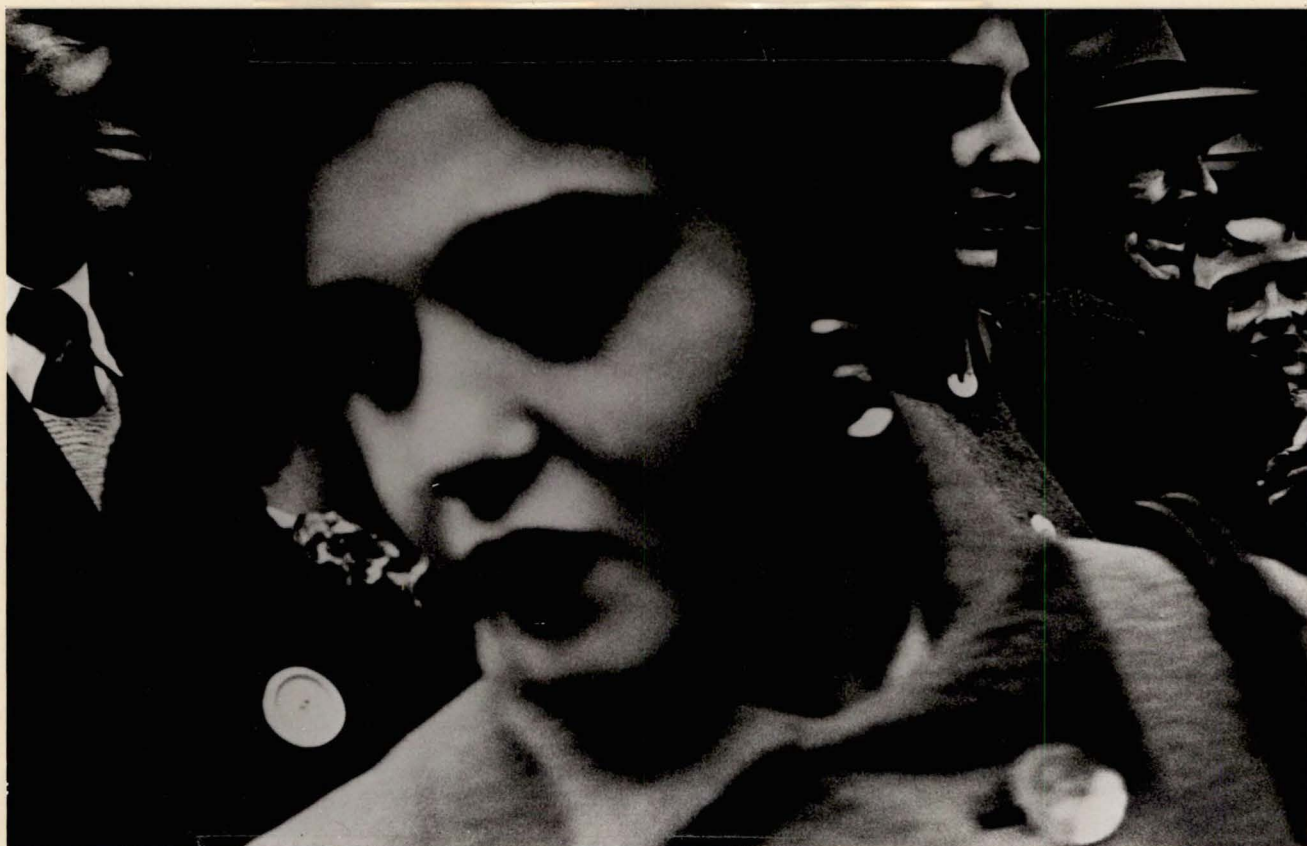
"BROADWAY AND 103RD. STREET"

(1954-5)

(BELOW) IMAGE 5: KLEIN

"DANCE IN BENSONHURST, QUEENS N.Y."

(1955)

(ABOVE) IMAGE 6: KLEIN   "ST. PATRICK'S DAY 5TH. AVENUE" (1954-5)

WILLIAM KLEIN, THE 1950's AND 1960's: THE TRANCE PRODUCTION OF ART?

I want to do something altogether vulgar[28]

I like Cartier-Bresson's pictures, but I didn't like his set of rules
... that photography must be objective... objectivity doesn't exist.[29]

... European photography - too poetic and anecdotal. For me photography
was good old-fashioned sociology, muck-raking and on another level,
mine. ... an example of primitive photography-intentional and net. So
Trance plus Chance. Witness plus Witness. Revels plus Reveals. What
else could I say?[30]

Like Weegee, Klein was born into a poor Jewish family in New York, around
the time Weegee was in the Acme darkroom. I have the impression his socio-
economic conditions were not quite as arduous. When Klein was a child in the
Depression his father was fortunate enough to have wealthy legal practitioner
relatives to employ him. William Klein was reportedly the sharp-witted black
sheep of the Klein clan, and his career from its beginning to the present has
been characterized by non-conformity both in his artwork and his strategies
regarding acceptance by and financial rewards from various employers. He worked
intensively in painting, graphic design, still and motion photography and the
results from his photographic endeavours were problematic to the "mainstream"-
particularly the American photographic "mainstream." His photographs of New York
were far too gritty, tense and "non-photographic" to appeal to coffee table
or art publishers and his films usually expressed confrontation rather than
discretion. He made films about the May 1968 Paris uprising, one savaging the
fashion industry (Vogue in particular, his most lucrative employer for several
years) titled "Who Are You Polly Magoo" (1965-6), and others which dealt con-
tentiously with subject matter such as Black Power and the war in Vietnam.
Klein created trouble everywhere, especially with the French Government
during his residency in France and the American "Establishment."

Jean-Paul Satre wrote to the French Government on his behalf, and film

makers such as Chris Marker, Jean-Luc Godard and Alain Resnais encouraged his

work and used his film footage in "Far From Vietnam" (1967). Klein, unlike

Weegee, had an active interest in art from an early age, he haunted New York

galleries and seminars and was not intimidated by adult company when it came

to questioning, commenting and making "wisecracks". He had the self-image of

an outsider and wished to escape his home environment. Klein graduated from

high school very young, and despite already being quite a serious painter de-

cided to study sociology at what is now called City University (N.Y.). A year

before graduating his escapism got the better of him and he joined the army.

"For the first time I was away from home, dating girls, eating pork. I enjoyed

it."[31] The spirit of anarchism in the face of social realities was, for Klein,

fully established early in his life, and is evident in contrast to Weegee's

more private disdain towards, and pragmatic use, of employers, the Police and

the "Establishment". The G.I. Bill of Rights was Klein's ticket to Paris, to

further his education, specifically in painting. This use of the American sol-

dier's rights to further their education was typical of Klein's pragmatism

which ran concurrently alongside his uncompromising criticisms of "mainstream"

culture. In Paris Klein studied briefly but intensively with Fernand Leger.

> Fernand Leger's involvement with the working man's movement in the
> 1920's inspired him to portray numerous workmen in his imagery, and
> Klein's continual photographing of the everyday man in his environ-
> ment... Even his fashion pictures in Vogue also confronted fashion
> with everyday life in everyday situations.[32]

Klein's work in still photography has been sporadic but intensive. His photo-

graphic work which I wish to look at in this paper is from some of his first

socially based "subjective fotografie" (he previously did some photography with

emulsion on glass of a very formalist geometric style - literally painting with

light) which he produced exposures for over an eight month period in 1954-5,

when he returned to New York specifically to use the camera and to photograph
"with a vengance" [33] the people of his birthplace. Klein's specific project was
to stretch photography towards new limits, to consciously break common photo-
graphic conventions and "objectives" in order that different "truths" might be
gained about people as rendered by the camera. The importance of his own sub-
jective desire to visually attack the "social landscape" and the generally unex-
ploited capabilites of the camera are central to Klein's photographs. For exam-
ple, the way the movement of either subject or photographer (using slow shutter
speeds) can alter not only the look of the subject (rendered as a blurr, implying
motion) but also the whole psychological atmosphere of the photograph.

Take for example "Broadway and 103rd Street" (1954-5) - illustrated image 4 -
an image in which immediacy abounds. The first time I saw this picture some years
ago, it left me in a state of shock despite my presuming that the photograph had
been orchestrated. That is, it was not a witnessing of imminent or likely death
by shooting. Having since learned of Klein's project to visually depict a person-
al version of the New York Daily News I can see this image appearing in the
"obituaries" page - a "living in the knowledge of dying" Beat image indeed! In
the Klein quotation at the beginning of this section one can note the way he su-
ggests that revelling can lead to revelation. After the impact of threat and imm-
inent violence, the revelation I get from this photograph is portrayed by the an-
gel-faced boy who is watching his friend and attempting to gently restrain him,
from his unambiguous gesture that he is "packing" and feels like using his "piece".

The restraining action of the younger boy is not very active and his angelic
expression might be one of admiration as well as one of observation. The older
boy with the gun portrays anger and tension in the extreme, his mouth taut, not
needing to say anything. He is confronting the viewer with a face aged by bitter-
ness and wrinkles well beyond his years, which is not unusual in "street" kids.
The light-toned stripe on the windcheater of the younger boy gives the image a

kind of inverted triangulation so that one may visually "travel" from the vicin-
ity of the gun barrel and older boy's mouth across to the younger boy's eye and
ear, then follow his stripe to its end in the dark-toned void under the older
boy's hand. There is a much tighter vertical triangulation between the gun barrel,
the older boy's visible eye and the young boy's eye. Obviously, the gun and the
hand are both enlarged and out of focus - on a less obvious level they are given
prominence of meaning and refer to "reality" more than, say an extremely sharp
technical photograph with a standard (non-wideangled) lens. When something like
a gun in the hand is quickly produced in one's face, one does not presumably
focus on the gun at all but at the eyes and body movement of the person holding
it. "Real" vision or at least that which one's eyes afford will show very close
objects out of focus if elements in the scene further off are to be viewed con-
currently. In the mind's eye, or psychologically, the importance of the threat-
ening event demands a "larger than life" view of it, just as the wideangle lens
has enlarged the size of the hand and gun. So in terms of a convincing simulation
this grainy piece of "news" is very realistic! Here, I am attatching an emotional
and experiential sense to the word "simulation" - the sort of techniques I be-
lieve Klein used to direct his photography and the kind of chance-trance photo-
graphs which came from it.

Klein worked in bursts on still photography, which was speculative or specif-
ically for himself. Perhaps he needed to do this to maintain his high energy
way of photographing. Both the personal newspaper "collages" and the movement
(blurr) shown in "Dance in Bensonhurst, Queens N.Y." (1955) illustrated, image 5
relate to filmic conventions. As previously stated, Klein made several films
between 1958 and 1979. The blurr and graininess of "Dance ..." suggest the film
still - an excerpt from what at 24 frames per second has a seamless and continuous
logic in its motion. Like many of the best "blurry" photographs, one of the first
issues to deal with as viewer is the implied motion which exists in stark contrast

to the repeatable facility to study and dwell on the still photograph in an iso-

lated edited fragment in time. The tension within this "moving" still photograph

hovers somewhere between hyperactivity and a sense of the grotesquely scary.

The boy appears to be more of a bearded dwarf with a flattened head and no

eyes. Both children seem to have lost an arm and have merged together in the

murky tones at the bottom of the photograph and the point where their arms would

be expected to exist. The girl appears to be in a highly agitated and demented

state. Her visible arm swung high as if to warn the viewer off, ends in a dis-

figured hand reminiscent of a cloven hoof. Her arm which is beginning to fuse

with the distant building forms one prong of a trident shape completed by two

power poles, one of which appears to be anchoring the boy to the street. The

outermost sections of the photograph give this "trance" image a very "normal"

ground on which to spin and pulsate - a car on the road on one side and a bill-

board on the other which says "Holiday Greetings".

"St. Patrick's Day 5th Avenue" (1954-5) - illustrated, image 6.- like "Broad-

way 103rd. Street", is an image which both questions and draws comparisons with

the way one's eyes see and vision via photographic representation. Several of

Klein's photographs are remarkable for the manner in which, at first glance,

they belie the wideangle lens used. "Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Broadway"

(1954-5) is perhaps Klein's best known image, one of "sociological muckraking",

showing four large heads "on the street" within the frame. The four people are

apparently looking at each other in a compressed perspective similar in style to

a telephoto lens. The important factor to note in this image and "St. Patrick's

Day..." is that Klein was extremely close to the subjects (and his camera would

have been perpendicular to the ground). In "St. Patrick's Day..." the heads of

people in the background are smaller in scale than the woman who dominates the

frame - and that is characteristic of the wideangle's perspective. The device

which starts to disrupt that characteristic is the conjunction of all persons

in the frame via very dark tones and black. Conversely, but working in a
similar way, one can notice bright tones and white occurring in both the fore-
ground and the background. This too serves to disrupt normal perceptions of
depth and work against the exaggerated perspective of the wideangle lens. An
eerie two-dimensionality pervades the photograph. What sets this image apart
from, say a more conventional photograph exposed in full and even daylight is
the lack of midtones. Where they do occur is in the foreground, on and around
the woman who occupies that space. The button on her coat and the button on the
coat behind her appear to be of a similar size which furthers the sense of two-
dimensionality.

The people in the background are rendered in sharp focus and provide a back-
drop of "regular" types who may be watching a parade, display or the like. Klein
was consistently attracted to photographing populous events like parades, fune-
rals and demonstrations. It doesn't matter so much what point of attention is
occupying the people in the background. What is important is that they are gaz-
ing very much in one direction (excepting the face on the extreme right hand
side).

The woman in the foreground is facing, perhaps moving, in the opposite direct-
ion ... "against the tide". This, as well as her out of focus representation
and larger-scaled head, sets her apart and presents her as mysterious. This
mysterious appearance is established firmly by her eyes not being visible -
normally a central feature in an image of a person confronted by the
camera at such close distances. Her "missing" eyes call into question not only
her regard of the photographer but also that toward the viewer of the photograph.
In not being able to see her eyes the feelings of surprise, flattery or disdain
which might have been evident are not. One senses the fleeting and the unknown
instead.

The construction of psychological tone or mood by way of using the camera
and enlarger in a manner that is not concerned with the sharpest, most literal
representation possible can be seen in photographs from the (Impressionistic)
Pictorialist genre. The major difference between the "distortions" of Pictor-
ialism (at its height from 1896-1914) and the developments within Abstract
Expressionism (to which I parallel Klein's 1954-5 New York photographs) seem
to begin with the general lack of investigative fervour in Pictorialism. In sim-
ple terms, photographers subscribing to this style tried to emulate paintings,
partly, I believe to distinguish themselves from blandly realist amateurs and
partly to elevate the level of photography's acceptance within fine art circles.
Alfred Steiglitz and the Photo Secession group were prime movers of this appro-
ch in America. Pictorialism tended to make fuzzy and soft photographic represen-
tations of fairly standard (and elitist) sorts of subject matter: idyllic rural
scenes, Classical architecture, semi-reclined "Venuses", and when the lens turned
toward a city street it was always rainy or foggy and the people, viewed from a
long distance, were more formal elements of the photograph than vehicles of per-
sonality or social experience. Jean-Luc Duval writes of the Pictorialists

> all too often they lost touch with reality and truth, merely repro-
> ducing the effects peculiar to the other arts.[34]

What I think Duval means by "reality" and "truth" is the photographer's will
(conscious or sub-conscious), social circumstances, and the "permission" for
photography - the process itself - to be allowed to express itself using means
which were inherently characteristic. This is the sort of approach Klein took.

At the time Klein was printing his New York photographs in 1955 The Family
of Man tried, with impressive authority (the curator,Steichen,M.O.M.A. and the
237 represented photographers including Cartier-Bresson and a neophyte Garry
Winogrand), to make the viewers of the exhibition feel that everyone was Good;

everyone had that seed of universal "human nature", and that there was a de-
cisive moment in which the human essence could be captured on film. That ess-
ence of "human nature" was not only good, but the same everywhere. A ridgidly
conceived Humanism ruled, concerned "with basic human consciousness rather than
social consciousness".[35] It is now widely perceived that The Family of Man not
only avoided "social consciousness" and all of the difficulties of that arena
but that it also severly underplayed the role of individual photographer's
visions. In The Family of Man "The real complexities of life, rooted in the so-
cial order, are overlooked."[36], as were overtly subjective, contentious and
"perverse" photographic visions. There was no room for images which didn't fit
into the style of cheery or at least "human condition" Reportage in an age when
Life magazine was at its zenith.

Weegee had made photographs for publication in an age when newspapers and
magazines were still "perfecting" the use of photographic images to confirm or
at best elaborate on texts, Klein grew up in an era when the appetite for visual
imagery from the world (rather than from the heart or the imagination) was quite
compulsive. He expressed a desire to record his visual diaries where he set the
agenda and let chance and the underutilized characteristics of the camera have
a large say in the results. Klein also had a strong interest in the idea of a
pastiche-collaged Beat type of visual newspaper as the basis for his New York
photographs - a kind of sub-conscious journey through the visual and social fab-
ric of that city. Robert Frank is a well known contemporary of Klein's, and he,
like Klein had to weather derision of his work. Also like Klein he had to have
his book published in France (1958) two years after Klein's was published. Frank
felt frustrated with the photojournalistic narratives which confirmed a dominant
ideology. He had this feeling in common with Klein, along with a rebellion again-
st the graciousness and artificiality of photographs made in the studio or

"classically" done with well-known landmarks and buildings as a prime element

in the picture (unless the meaning of this landmark contradicted its depiction).

For both Klein and Frank art (photography) was

> To 'experience', to feel intuitively, directly, without inhibition, ...
> And the stuff of raw undiluted experience was out there on the city
> streets or the road.[37]

I have referred to these places as transitional spaces which provide a location

and an inspiration for my photography, like that of Weegee, Klein and Winogrand.

Frank and Klein operated in an atmosphere of Existentialist rebellion, an

awareness informed, but not dictated to, by the immediate conditions of life.

Frank's work is much more the work of a cool observer, despite a certain dark-

ness of content and informal experiential look, his presence at the moment of

the photograph is rarely obvious. He did not take a bad-mannered psychopathic

charge at Americans to see what came up like Klein did, rather he quietly and

perceptively went "on the road" and allowed the people of America to show just

how much of a dream life really was for themselves.

Klein did not, to my knowledge, have meetings and minor collaborations with

Jack Kerouac like Robert Frank. Neither did he get his New York published in

America as Frank's The Americans was. New York was too hard hitting, gritty and

grimey and overly subjective - he had run into problems attempting to convince

publishers that photos like "the picture of the sailor in the rowboat in Central

Park." and "the Statue of Liberty"[38] were not prequisites for a photographic

book - in a similar manner to which Weegee experienced. Worse than the lack of

comprehension felt by Weegee's intended publisher, Klein was told "This is not

photography, this is shit."[39]

The full title of Klein's book of still photography is Life Is Good And Good

For You In New York - Trance Witness Revels. Dark sarcasm surrounds the first

part of the title, its tenor is very tongue in the cheek and oppositional - opp-

osing not just the self-righteousness of "The Establishment", but more specif-

ically its (as perceived by some, especially during the Cold War) arms of visual

propaganda such as <u>Life</u> and <u>The Family of Man.</u>

> Klein told Lemangey
>
> I thought that an absence of framing, chance, use of the accidental and a
> different relationship with the camera would make it possible to liberate the
> photographic image... The camera can surprize us. We must help it to do so.[40]

I can only guess, beyond the obvious, "sub-conscious", what Klein meant by "trance".

Perhaps he is also referring to the informational overload which is more than

possible in a densely populated urban environment. Most people tend to filter out

everything which isn't of interest or may induce thought and stress (I deliberately

imply a connection between those two qualities) in order that they might control

their lives more efficiently. Norman Mailer wrote of the American urban profes-

sional class as being "a class which is devoted utterly to control, and they have

lost control of everything.[41]

Klein's "trance" definitely only operated when he was out initiating his

images on film. His photographs were meticulously printed. He was said to be most

upset about jibes at the graininess and "poor printing", neither of which "belonged"

to the "fine" print.

Klein hated over-theoretical discourses and deconstructions. Always fuel to the

fire, he attacked Roland Barthes who had written about one of his images in

<u>La Chambre Claire.</u>Barthes liked the image but Klein responds

> Since its Barthes talking we all have to say Hmm, that's interesting. The pri-
> soner being sentenced to the chair might only see the wart on the judge's nose.
> You might think there's something wrong with him, and, of course there is. Th-
> ere's something wrong with Barthes too, but that's what makes him Barthes.[42]

Klein set off on this tirade because Barthes had found his "punctum" in that pho-

tograph in the little boy's bad teeth and Klein thought it unbeleivable such a

scholar would miss or pass over the main elements of the picture which are, after

all what the photographer experienced and then printed.

(ABOVE) IMAGE 7: WINOGRAND "VENICE, CALIFORNIA" (C. 1982-3)

(ABOVE) IMAGE 8: WINOGRAND "STATTEN ISLAND FERRY, N.Y. 1971"

(ABOVE) IMAGE 9: WINOGRAND "TENTH ANNIVERSARY PARTY, GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, N.Y., 1970"

GARRY WINOGRAND, THE 1970's AND 1980's: THE ASOCIAL PRODUCTION OF ART?

I photograph to see what things look like photographed[43]

Winogrand: I'm interested in learning-testing what's possible in the
           frame.
Charles Hagen: Is it learning something about photography...
Winogrand: Absolutely...
Charles Hagen: Or about life?
Winogrand: Well I don't know - are they different?[44]

... It's all about form. Everything. you can talk about content, but
art is all about form.[45]

All I really do is keep my eyes open... I trust my instincts[46]

William Klein approached photography allowing chance and subconscious "trance"

to guide his selection, following his background in painting and sociology.

Garry Winogrand has staunchly maintained his photographs are only about framing

and Formalism. When questioned on the content and social implications in his

work Winogrand seemed to always answer the question in terms of the form or the

"interesting" disruption between what was seen by the photographer and what was

evident in the print (in terms of form).

    Charles Hagen: Do all photographs have a symbolic or narrative content?
    Garry Winogrand: To some degree, yes. Look, everything is symbols to
    somebody... It doesn't have anything to do with taking pictures! God
    forbid you should have all this mumbo-jumbo in your head when your'e
    working! But it's interesting to try to understand.[47]

A theoretical construction of meaning in the photograph, according to Winogrand,

would seem to be merely a mental novelty and not of primary importance! The

above quototion is one of the least form oriented statements I have been able

to find which Winogrand made!

    Garry Winogrand grew up in the Bronx. His father was a leather worker and his

mother an "outworker" seamstress. From an early age he used to wander the streets of New York at night to escape his parents (who happened to have been Jewish like Klein's and Weegee's parents).

After high school Winogrand joined the army and worked as a weather forecaster in Georgia (U.S.). Winogrand started to study painting at Columbia University, briefly, on the G.I. Bill. His pursuit of painting was short-lived after a friend at university introduced him to the on campus 24hr. access darkroom. Winogrand started a lifetime of an obsessive-compulsive relationship with photography. Since 1950, the "city hick - an undisciplined mixture of energy, ego, curiosity, ignorance and street-smart naivete"[48] probably exposed one million frames of film. At the time of his death, in 1984, there were 12,000 rolls of film that were unedited - a quarter of them undeveloped.

Winogrand reportedly lived through the photographic process. After thirty odd years of photographing instinctively Winogrand's work appears to have lapsed into banality and uncertainty. In the last few years, he was "like an overheated engine that will not stop even after the key has been turned off."[49] Winogrand said that he was a desparate man who needed to find a purpose and meaning in his life, and that in "finding" photography he avoided self-destructive distractions such as crime or "hard" drugs. Witnessing his prodigious and massive output of images it is not difficult to believe this. His reticence regarding the content of his work served not only to either confound or invite the "mumbo-jumbo" of critics, but also to function as a balance or safety-valve on photographing such patently social subject matter in an incisive manner.

Here I shall briefly examine three of Winogrand's images including one of his very last images which most certainly wasn't either banal or uncertain, and one which he never saw himself as a print. The film was processed after his death. This situation is particularly interesting for two reasons. Firstly, Winogrand seemed to be deliberate about allowing others to "read" into his photographs

their own meanings - an attitude which recognizes the individual nature of

meaning(s) one might glean from the photograph. With foresight, this allows

for the meanings to change significantly over time or across cultures without

leaving himself open to charges of being didactic, absolute or narcissistic

about his own cultural milieu or his photographs of it, were he to be specific.

In simple terms Winogrand can be seen as an avid anti-intentionalist - one who

simultaneously avoids a socio-psychoanalytical critique of either his work or

milieu, yet democratically invites such investigation. The second reason it is

interesting to examine a photograph developed and printed (but not exposed and

first "seen") by someone else is that Winogrand was acutely aware of the disjun-

cture between "real" personal vision and the image resulting from the camera's

version of it.

> When I'm photographing, I don't see pictures. I deal with things in
> terms of what's interesting. When I look at pictures, when I look at
> the contacts, then I have to ask, is the photograph interesting[50]

So in reviewing a photograph never seen by its instigator, the anti-intentional

ethic Winogrand seemed to prefer must be close to its limits. I suspect this

proximity to absolute limits is well beyond what Winogrand would have chosen

because he was, as has been mentioned, meticulously intentionalist about the

composition or form of his photographs.

The "posthumous" photograph is one of a "social gathering", an incident in

Venice, California exposed c.1982-3. The image is a psychosexual minefield, and

as good as any formal arrangement Winogrand has ever constructed. As an instinct-

ual street photographer in an urban "battlezone", Winogrand must have been in a

situation of potential danger - remember he was using what was probably a 28mm.

wideangle lens, and as such virtually on top of this group of people, well

inside their "personal spaces". Unlike Weegee and more particularly Klein, Win-

ogrand was not prepared to take photographs which chanced anything in the framing.

Charles Hagen: Do you try to induce chance, to bring chance elements
into your pictures?
Winogrand: No way, no. I use the viewfinder. It's foolish... If photo-
graphy is a passive act, and I think it is - you basically deal with
what is - within that context, I'm aggressive. I'm probably if not the
most aggressive photographer, certainly one of the most.[51]

So one can assume that this image wasn't taken sideways, or from waist level.

Winogrand's influence via Robert Frank is well known, and in an image like

"Venice, California" (c.1982-3) - illustrated image 7., an awareness of mortal-

ity drip and crackle from the frame. Here, reference is not simply being made

to the possible danger Winogrand faced in seizing or "hunting" the image, but

also to its presence in the photograph itself. The group of people depicted are

"hanging out" in a public space well removed from the domain of "normal" urban

American life, where candy is bought and sold, people wear "neat casual" and

quiet new automobiles shuttle to and fro. The prevailing weather is clearly[52]

warm to hot and sunny yet the "street cool" of this group suggests the cold mar-

ble or stainless steel of a mortuary is not far off. This provides a wonderful

counterpoint to the social life depicted. The hair nets, hairstyles and similar

clothing of the three central males indicate that they are "home boys" - members

of a street gang - who all seem directed in their attention towards the central

female and her serpent. The python which emanates from her pubic region is sup-

ported and cradled by her hands, it simultaneously heads off towards the young

female and loops around the central female's neck in an ominous fashion. This

photograph exploits the disjunction between three dimensional "real" vision and

its representation in the photograph both eloquently and alarmingly - it is a

highly constructed use of perspective and tonal visual punning. The hands of the

two central males seem to meet and strongly suggest a snake's head. Both these

men have a stance which exudes threat and an ability to withstand attack. The

man with an eye patch has a drawn mouth, his left leg seems to have an artific-

ial stump (the park bench "leg") his left hand apparently at the central fe-
male's lips. She appears on the verge of kissing this "outlaw pirate's" hand, as
she guardedly looks at the serpent-like conjunction of hands moving her way.
The "homeboy" in the middle has a cocky yet sardonic expression and appears to
want posession of the snake - to go for the thrill and deprive the central fe-
male of her serpent, her ability to contain the masculine agression, and her po-
tent status as keeper of the snake. The young female watches the "homeboys" cir-
cumspectly as she too touches the snake. The man in the background (No. 54 on
his shirt) is standing tensely and looking away as if Winogrand and his camera
represent an intrusion and interuption to his witnessing the drama unfold.
His leg, and the arms of both women all appear to converge around the snake and
are of a similar size. On the left hand side of the image threatening shapes and
the part profile of yet another man add to the tension of the image.

The sense of "decisive moment"[53] is acute, as is the instantaneous orches-
tration of the image by Winogrand and the _seeming_ lack of camera-consciousness
by all the main "players" of this power game. The tilted horizon gives the image
a further edge of immediacy, and is strange when one considers how stable the
main elements of the scene appear. The device of tilting the horizon was one
which intrigued Winogrand, and he treated it as a test of the limits of what
could believably "still hold up" in his compositions.

> Most of the time when my photographs are interesting its because the
> content is on the verge of overwhelming the form.[54]

As usual, Winogrand here obliquely addressed the issue of his photograph's con-
tent and he gives a strong clue as to how much meaning is really intended, and
how much responsibility he is placing on the viewer and not himself for the inter-
pretation of his photographs. To talk of the content starting to overwhelm his
stated main goal - the photograph's compositional form - there can be little

doubt how important the photographic social messages were to Winogrand.

I can see a similarity between the wilfullful, "perverse" imagery of Weegee and Klein in relation to Winogrand's photographs. All three depict social life where the subjects are highly aware of and engage, or feel confronted by them and their cameras. (They also created images where the subjects avoid the camera's attention or are unaware of the photographer's intentions to photograph them). With many of Winogrand's photographs his presence and confrontation is somewhat less obvious (eg. "Venice, California") than is the case with Weegee and Klein, despite recurring camera - to - eye contacts. One can sense that Winogrand is allowing people to play their parts more than is the case with the violent head-long charges of Weegee and Klein, whilst he is still "manipulating" them. Klein showed us vengeful personalized "chances" under his eventual editorship. Weegee, as an early tabloid photographer often showed us the city "as a theatre of dis-aster".[55] Winogrand often presents the city as a series of people acting out their roles in life, showing the viewer a theatre of self-absorption. Winogrand's agency as ring master of the social circus tends to be transparent in the sense that it is not so obvious - it is the viewer's response and summation which lar-gely inform his images' meanings, and that is what Winogrand insisted upon.

"Statten Island Ferry, N.Y. 1971" - illustrated, image 8 - is an image which calls attention to itself on the grounds of formal arrangement, and then uses this device to begin to "discursive(ly)"[56] describe a temporary social order on a moving "occasional venue" - the ferry. The ferry is a social melting pot, as well as a means of transportation - it provides a setting where people are for-ced into proximity with each other, for the duration of the journey. In the cen-tre of this image are two people who are striking a "pose" as though they were at a gallery opening, social function or intermission at the theatre, not taking a ferry ride. It is as if the "sea" of passengers has parted and that the two

in question have chosen the point on the ferry most removed from others. The
centre implies the non-marginal, but these two have apparently marginalized
themselves in decorous exclusivity. Well dressed, they both appear possibly
intruded upon by Winogrand and his camera - and by association the gaze of the
viewer - as if their "private performance" has been impinged upon.

The central pair are clearly "cordoned off" formally by Winogrand. They are
not only delineated from the other passengers, but more subtly from each other
by the pole between them, and the two doors behind them, possibly toilet doors -
signs of gender division in public architectural and "transitional" spaces.
They are the only people in view partaking of refreshments and this serves to
set them further apart from everyone else. The other passengers simultaneously
provide a framing device around the central pair and appear as extensions of the
ferry's architecture, gazing across the harbour and, with few exceptions, obliv-
ious of the camera.The reference to social stratification is strong, and literal
formally - there is a broad similarity to the Weegee image, discussed previously,
"Murder Victim 1944" in the way different social situations are delineated by the
physical spaces in which the subjects have been arranged.

There are three cameras on the ferry which one can see in the photograph, none
in use. The man wearing the checkered shirt just to the right of the central pair
is turning around to look at them, or to "avoid" Winogrand, and his camera co-
incidentlly points in their direction, as it is held near his leg. This is an
interesting device in the photograph which both subtly directs further attention
to the central pair and provides a kind of metaphoric motif of the camera as in-
strument via which this image is produced. The process is revealed by reflex and
implication. Similar but more obvious examples of this metaphor can be seen in
Lee Friedlander's photograph of two women wearing sunglasses, both holding cam-
eras just below their faces and in Winogrand's Public Relations photograph

"Apollo 11 Moon Shot, Cape Kennedy, Florida 1969", where a woman is photograph-

ing Winogrand and his camera whilst everyone else has cameras and binoculars

trained on the moon "shot" which is occurring in the opposite direction. Leo'

Rubinfien in his short article on Winogrand "The Man in the Crowd" writes that

Winogrand (and this is also most relevant to the photography of Weegee, Klein

and myself) "brought (that) man in the street back as the fictional describing

persona of his art: the artist himself as the man in the crowd".[57]

Many of Winogrand's photographs from Public Relations describe the goings on

at high-profile exclusive events such as press conferences, state banquets and

New York exhibition openings. One of the most formally resonant from this ex-

hibition was "Tenth Anniversary Party, Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1970" - ill-

ustrated, image 9. It is also one of the more socially descriptive images, where

people are apparently enamoured with their own being. The gestural orchestration

of this picture is quite remarkable. The main project stated by Winogrand behind

"this most ambitious of his projects"[58] was to photograph "the effect of the me-

dia on events".[59] In the instance of "Tenth Anniversary Party..." Winogrand him-

self is the only implied media exponent - in several of the images in Public Re-

lations a more literal depiction of media affecting or more correctly creating

"events" is shown. "Tenth Anniversary Party..." was one of two Winogrand photo-

graphs exhibited in the major London exhibition Floods of Light: Flash Photog-

raphy 1851-1981, curated by Rupert Martin. In this image, like Weegee and unlike

Klein, Winogrand was using the much maligned, flash - as a wondrous burst of

hard directional light "It is certainly the use of flash which has caused the

most controversy among photographers."[60] and it must be added, photographic sub-

jects and critics! Nadar and Timothy O'Sullivan were using flash to illuminate

photographs of miners at work in the 1860's - it is notable that in these photo-

graphs the subjects have their backs to the camera. In those days bursts of li-

ght came from small but intense explosions of magnesium. Some of the earliest

flash photography of a specifically and illuminating social nature, with faces

and squalid living situations depicted, were by the "concerned" journalist Jo-

seph Riis, a Dane who had emigrated to New York, and were made from the mid

1880's on. Weegee had photographed New York's "lowlife" as well, fifty years

later, and had also turned his camera and flash towards the people of the "high-

life" uptown. In "Tenth Anniversary Party..." Winogrand continues that tradition

but on a more sophisticated formal level. Where Weegee's scorn and sarcasm to-

wards the wealthy occasionally drew some flak, but generally was considered a

"fair shot" and with some good humor at the time of first publication, Wino-

grand's photographs in exclusive "occasional venues" (again, meaning spaces wh-

ere people meet temporarily and don't normally inhabit) generally were either

"tactfully" regarded only for their formal complexity, or savagely criticized.

A.D. Coleman was one of several critics who were not amused, and who took a ra-

ther spurious tack of criticism - in much the same manner as Allene Talmey

attacked Weegee - stating that Winogrand's Public Relations photographs all loo-

ked similar: Coleman charged that Winogrand was a hypocrite, daring to denigrate

the gallery circuits and corporate or government sectors which actually paid his

way. The knowledge of this particular criticism provides one with more under-

standing as to why Winogrand rigorously avoided elaborating on the social con-

tent of his work!

"Tenth Anniversary Party..." shows the life of self-conscious gallery-goers

in a contradictory fashion - the people are at once "frozen" by the flash, yet

their image of cocquettish panache and fluid decorum knowingly saunters from the

print surface. Their gestures are correlated, intertwined by visual pun, and

choreographed as if by meticulous co-operative design. If the synchronicity of

movement in this image were alone not enough, Winogrand managed to depict a

painting or tapestry in the background which seems to prescribe the gestures of

the dancing people.

> Flash is one of photography's most powerful and sensuous weapons...
> The hyper-real became the surreal. Gesture becomes exaggerated, em-
> otion is caricatured.[61]

I disagree that, as a generality, emotion is caricatured by the use of flash ,

per se - should caricature be the aim, then there are other more reliable means

such as the use of the wideangle lens close to the face or the inclusion of hev-

ily loaded and ludicrous symbolism adjacent to its subject. Presumably "emotion",

here, means implied emotion via facial expression. The rest of the quotation is

most helpful in assessing "Tenth Anniversary Party..." I particularly respond

to Gerry Badger's description "sensuous weapon",.flash's sensuousness often be-

ing overlooked. Here, Winogrand has exploited the illumination bias to the fore-

ground which flash affords its user. Its use not only illuminates more intensely·

(which is obvious) but also lightens tonality or colour value as the case may be.

The well known aesthetic when using direct flash of the "cut out" or intense two

dimensional effect is used here to suggest a superimposition of the "bleached"

woman and an arm on the right hand side of the frame which hover over the rest

of the scene. The flash shadow intensifies these uncompromisingly two dimensional

white forms. The three women who are plainly in view appear physically connected,

the "bleached" one on the left hand side trancelike, and all three apparently

aware of the camera. The woman in the centre of the image has her hand held in

a manner which displays an infinite "black hole" which visually balances the

glowing orb of "flash flare" above. The shape of her web-like garment relates

to these points of interest. Several "positive" and "negative" shapes co-exist

in this image due to its flash illumination. The men who are visible in the im-

age are somewhat cretin-like, perhaps they are inebriated, or an instant of so

called "cruel depiction" has undermined their decorous cool. The man with the

bow tie could be camera shy with his tongue like it is, or he could be drunk:

his white shirt extends the gestural motion within the photograph and leads

the viewer to his countenance. "Winogrand's photographs are comedies not of

character, but of situation".[62] In this photograph one is witnessing a kind of

social semaphore which Winogrand has only helped, not caused to go awry.

> ...photographs do not really have any narrative ability. You don't
> really know what's happening; you don't know what happened a second
> before or a second after[63]

Whether Winogrand by this statement was being his obscurantist and cagey self

or had some fascination with and deference towards motion photography I am not

sure. To deny the narrativity of socially based photographs seems to require a

far more complex argument to have a chance of being convincing. Speculation sur-

rounding meaning within the photograph has long had a legitimacy, since it was

first noticed that the "pencil of nature" wasn't a neutral equivalent to "re-

ality", and speculation requires some form of narrative. Tod Papageorge sheds

light on Winogrand's approach: (It is)

> commomly assumed that photographers should have the same wary, res-
> pectful relationship to what they describe in their pictures that
> moral philosophers presumably have... because (a picture or a poem)
> resembles the world (it) is therefore equivalent, and morally re-
> sponsible to it... A photograph... is as wanton a fiction as any
> description; but it is also, of course, a particularly convincing
> one...[64]

A "moral responsibility" is surely an obligation to describe diadactically a

narrative, and this is what Winogrand chose to avoid.

John Szarkowski mentions Winogrand's consistent refusal to be conceptually

"disoursive" about his images using such terms as "clever evasions" and "dis-

claimers". In "taking on" or choosing American social life the "social landscape"

as it was referred to around and after the December 1966 exhibition

Towards a Social Landscape[65] and the related show New Documents,[66] Winogrand

had chosen a forebodingly complex subject matter. It seems hard to improve upon

what Szarkowski argues:

> Photography is based on the faith that there is a relation between
> aspect and meaning, but how does one describe the meaning of chaos
> without submitting to it.[67]

Clearly, Szarkowski saw American social life in all its peregrinations and per-

mutations as chaotic.

I am in agreement with what Szarkowski surmises about Winogrand's photographs

being speculative and adventurous, despite the realist aesthetic and the familiar

looking content. Regarding the perception that Winogrand was not describing the

"social landscape" via simple illustration, that which was already known, Szar-

kowski wrote:

> New knowledge could not be called into existence by an act of will,
> but had to be discovered through experiment, the play of intuition
> and luck[68]

Winogrand proclaimed himself as one of the most aggressive photographers, and

elements of "hunting" are certainly evident in his work (e.g. close proximity to

subjects, parody, and highly orchestrated composition) but one would do well to

dwell on the above quotation so as to gain a more complete and I think, more

correct assesment of his work. I conclude that Winogrand, too was very much a

"trawler".

Szarkowski goes on to say that a further reason why Winogrand was rigorously

tautological about content was that he (Winogrand) was probably "protecting him-

self from the dangerous, often disabling condition of being simultaneously art-

ist and critic.[69] This widely held view is worthy of consideration, but not the

virtual enshrinement which it seems to have attained. It is a hard line attitude

which apparently seeks to undermine subjectivity and Intentionalism. Of course it

is difficult for an artist to fully and accurately describe his or her own work - but that description is <u>not</u> necessarily and fundamentally suspect![70] John Szarkowski does qualify his position by using the word "often", and I suggest this is just as well.

Leon Rubinfien observed Winogrand as the man, or artist, in the crowd - one who was obsessed by the process and the results of photographing that crowd. There is a sense of sadness and loss when any major artist dies, yet with Winogrand those feelings appear to have characterized his life as well. His biography reads like tragedy. Despite his many exhibitions, grants and sometimes critical acclaim, from 1961 onwards hardly two years seem to go by between divorce, separation (including his children), accident, injury and disease - all, with the possible exception of disease, caused directly or indirectly by his desparate addiction to photographing "the crowd". Winogrand's compulsion to photograph people can be seen as a response not only to curiosity and enquiry but also as a means to re-establish contact with people and to overcome his losses in personal life.[71] A sense of alienation and shell-shocked wandering is apparent in many of the subjects as well as the photographer. This was evident in "Statten Island Ferry" where the passengers, forced together, wait for the journey to finish, look at the view, and only rarely interact. It is much less obvious in "Tenth Anniversary Party..." but it is arguable that the codified performances of self-expression in dance and decorous social intercourse serve as both a ritualized attempt to overcome alienation which still exists and further seeks to make the gallery goers somehow exclusive from other social life, and its problems. William Burroughs wrote of the "other" Americans such as those depicted in "Venice, California" (yet here I feel it is relevant to all who exist, even if temporarily in "transitional spaces").

People wander around unrelated purposeless most of them looking vaguely
sullen and hostile... But a complex pattern of tensions, like the elec-

> trical mazes devised by psychologists to unhinge the nervous systems
> of white rats and guinea pigs, keeps the unhappy pleasure-seekers in
> a condition of unconsummated alertness[72]

This is not only a description of street life but perhaps how Winogrand felt

when photographing it, and why he finally became as Szarkowski put it "like an

overheated engine that will not stop even after the key has been turned off."

Winogrand's voyeurism was more a compulsion than gratification.

Winogrand's photographs generally have the aesthetic appearance of "documen-

tary" and "news" photos - of the unsensational "soft" kind. On these grounds

alone one can see a similarity between Winogrand's work and that of Weegee and

Klein, both of whom had the "daily news"approach overtly on their photographic

agenda. Winogrand gave the viewers of his photographs the "news" or visual in-

formation to go on, but has demanded of his "readers" that they themselves pro-

vide the text. His stated asocial and anti-narrative photographic project was

not simply used to protect himself from or confound criticism (that being un-

likely anyway) but to underline the power of visual communication to "speak for

itself", an unassuming democracy on Winogrand's part in terms of not closing

meaning, and to paradoxically further emphasize his own observations of social

life.

CONCLUSION

The three artists who's lives and work have been briefly examined here pro-
vide subjectively directed insights into social life. Their photographs pro-
vide viewers with a starting point based on the personal intention of the photo-
graphers with which to begin to construct meaning. The intention of each of the
photographers would have ranged from highly specific and aggressive through to
the semi-conscious and intuitive.

Of the three, Weegee's images seem to be the most literal descriptions and so
may erroneously be equated with Documentary Photography. Weegee's images did have
to have an economy and simplicity about them as they were used in tabloids
and magazines. The photographs do, of course, have an existence separate from
that use. When Weegee did in fact achieve fame he lectured in the U.K. and
U.S.S.R., and moved from New York to Hollywood where he played "character" parts
in other people's films and gave technical advice on film production. His new
photographic project was one of formally distorted "trick" photography, the most
widely known example of which was an extremely grotesque portrait of Marilyn
Monroe. His expressive sensationalism from the gut on New York streets had be-
come caricature and "techno-tricks" in Hollywood.

William Klein worked using still photography in Rome (1956),Moscow (1959-61),
Tokyo (1961) and sporadically in Europe, America and the U.K. in the late 1970's
and early 1980's. Some of these photographs are very capable images but in gen-
eral lack the immediacy and mystery of his New York photographs. There is little.
sense of the vengeful chance-laden charge which he took at the people in the city
of his youth. In both form and content Klein's post-New York images give the im-
pression of a more formularized travelogue of "human interest" photographs.

Garry Winogrand was a desperate man (this is written with great respect) who's
photographic alacrity was both inspired and made more hard-nosed by the social

mechanics of megapolis. His humorous images were dark and his bleak images had formal beauty. He set about solving visual problems and raised problems of meaning in the process, deliberately. Around 1972 he left New York as home base to lecture, photograph and live in Chicago, Texas, Massachusetts, California and briefly Greece and northern Europe. As "Venice California" and many other images indicate, Winogrand was still capable of making incisive imagery but the consistency of lucid image making faltered regularly when compared with his images from New York.

There is very little appraisal of Klein's still photography so I take a rather singular responsibility for the views expressed on his later work. The view that Weegee and Winogrand were at their best in New York is widely held, and I agree. Because the three artists' most lasting impact[73] came from work done in the specific social environment where they spent their formative years I argue that there is a strong case for subjectivity being a valuable tool in not only visual expression but also social enquiry. Subjectivity is often erroneously regarded as the mere opposite of objectivity yet it is my belief the two approaches may well overlap. Objectivity is an ideological structure for viewing the world - a sometimes reductive and consciously depersonalized vision disposed to hide the impulses of subjectivity.

It is surely not hard to praise the virtues of subjectivity within art circles. It is more problematic to gain wider acceptance of what I have described as "perverse" photography. It is hoped that this paper shows the potential illuminations made available by those who practise(d) bad mannered and wilful photography as a rigorous aesthetic strategy.

NOTES

1. "Weegee", the name, derives from the Ouija board: because of his "nose" for events and the use of the police radio band he amazed people with his ability to be on the scene of the crime or calamity sometimes, he claimed, before the event happened.

2. A History of Photography Lemangey, Jean-Claude. N.Y. 1987 p.190

3. William Klein Photographs Heilpern, John. N.Y. 1981 p.18

4. This concept is used to describe the social situation of (generally younger) people who moved to Paris and London from various parts of Europe around the middle of the 18th. cent. This trend was in sharp distinction to the lives that most people led, previously, when it was usual to stay in the one village, town or city for the whole of one's life. The displaced "strangers" needed to find new modes of expression to "read" each other as their individual positions and pasts were unknown. Sennett claims "manners" and dress were these means. Refer to The Fall of Public Man - Sennett, Richard N.Y. 1977 ch.3.

5. Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order. Goffman, Erving. Ringwood, Vic. 1972 p.54

6. I believe this term opens up, without being haphazard, the way one might think of "portraiture" or "candid portraiture". It also implies the plural and the social more effectively.

7. Weegee ed. and introduced by Stettner, Louis N.Y. 1977 p.14
    Here Stettner is quoting Weegee.

8. Naked City. Weegee N.Y. 1975 (originally 1945) p.78

9. Weegee introduced by Talmey, Allene N.Y. 1978 p.9
    Talmey quoting Weegee

10. Coplans, John "Weegee the Famous" Art in America Sept. - Oct. 1977 p.37
    Coplans quoting Weegee

11. ibid. p.41

12. This was Weegee's trademark or "buyline" stamped on each of his prints. The self-proclaimation finally stuck!

13. Naked City, Weegee N.Y. 1975 p.11
    Weegee specialized in photographing calamities. Fires and murders often happened at night and required a detatchment which few except certain "newshounds" had. Weegee seems to have regarded social life with both an attitude of callousness and empathy. He had a philosophy that events happened like clockwork and that there was an inevitability about them which he regarded with a gallows humor. Weegee was open about the fact "Fires and Murders" were his "bread and butter"

14. Hoberman, J. "American Abstract Sensationalism" Artforum Feb. 1981 p.44

15. The type of camera used by Weegee. It's name is apt regarding the manner
    and content of Weegee's photography!

16. see note 8. Originally published in 1945, this book was illustrated and
    written by Weegee and dedicated to: "To You The People Of New York".
    William Mc Cleery, Editor of P.M. Picture News, wrote in the foreword "I think
    that Weegee's subjective portrait of N.Y. must be regarded as a work of cre-
    ative art, because, although all the elements were there for anyone to use,
    no one had ever used them as Weegee has."

17. ibid. p.94

18. ibid. "Lovemaking on the Beach" p.180

19. Weegee Stettner, Louis N.Y. 1977 p.6. Stettner quoting Weegee

20. ibid. p.11. Stettner quoting Weegee. See also Weegee by Weegee, N.Y. 1975
    pp.72-3

21. Weegee, Stettner Louis N.Y. 1977 p.11. Stettner quoting Weegee

22. ibid. p.7

23. Weegee introduced by Talmey, Allene N.Y. 1978 p.5

24. ibid p.5

25. Westerbeck, Colin L. Jr. "Night Light: Brassai and Weegee". Artforum Dec. 1976

26. Naked City, Weegee N.Y. 1975

27. Coplans, John "Weegee the Famous" Art in America Sept.-Oct. 1977 p.41

28. A History of Photography Lemangey, Jean-Claude N.Y. 1987 p.194

29. William Klein Photographs Heilpern, John N.Y. 1981 p.21

30. Klein, William "William Klein" Camera (Lucerne) May 1981 p.24 pp.39-43

31. William Klein Photographs Heilpern, John N.Y. 1981 p.13

32. Porter, Allan "William Klein Apocalypse" Camera (Lucerne) May 1981 p.23

33. Klein, William "William Klein" Camera (Lucerne) May 1981 p.42

34. Photography History Of An Art Daval, Jean-Luc N.Y. 1982 p.124

35. The Family of Man Steichen, Edward N.Y. 1955 Introduction

36. American Images: Photography 1945-1980 ed. Turner, Peter. Melbourne 1989
    Badger, Gerry "From Humanism To Formalism" p.13

37. ibid. p.14

38. Weegee Stettner, Louis N.Y. 1977 p.14. These were "standard" images required
    by potential publishers Weegee visited. Klein faced the same problem only
    more so

39. Klein, William "William Klein" Camera Lucerne) May 1981 p.42 also William

39. William Klein photographs Klein quoted by Heilpern

40. A History of Photography Lemangey, Jean-Claude N.Y. 1987 p.194

41. Existensial Errands Mailer, Norman. Canada 1972 p.73

42. William Klein Photographs intro. Heilpern, John N.Y. 1981 p.18 Heilpern quoting Klein

43. This quotation and slight variations of it exist on taped interviews and in the memory of various critics and associates of Winogrand.

44. Hagen, Charles "An Interview with Garry Winogrand" Afterimage Dec. 1977 p.9

45. ibid. p.11

46. ibid. p.11

47. ibid. p.11

48. Winogrand: Figments From The Real World Szarkowski, John N.Y. 1988 p.15

49. ibid. p.36

50. Hagen, Charles "An Interview with Garry Winogrand" Afterimage Dec. 1977 p.9

51. ibid. p.10

52. This photograph was developed and printed by Thomas Consilvio, Winogrand's friend and regular printer from 1974 until Winogrand's death. This fact, as well as the quality of the prevailing light and apparent absence of flash illumination suggest the print would be very much as Winogrand intended, had he selected it.

53. Winogrand's sense of, and reliance upon, an acute sense of timing in his imagery is obvious. He, like Klein, Frank, Friedlander and numerous other (principally American) photographers respected Cartier-Bresson's similar sense of timing, but not the ideological "freight" that went along with it.

54. Hagen, Charles "An Interview with Garry Winogrand" Afterimage Dec. 1977 p.11

55. On Photography Sontag, Susan. Toronto 1974 p.55

56. Tod Papageorge used this term to describe Winogrand's photographic meanings in his catalogue essay for Public Relations N.Y. 1977

57. Rubinfien, Leo "The Man in the Crowd" Artforum Dec. 1977. 2nd. last paragraph - source used here p.493 Photography In Print ed. Vicki Goldberg N.Y. 1981

58. Winogrand: Figments From The Real World Szarkowski, John N.Y. 1988

59. ibid. p.32 quotation from Winogrand's Guggenheim project proposal

60. Floods Of Light: Flash Photography 1851- 1981 Martin, Rupert (curator-essayist) London 1982 quoted from Foreword. Davies, Sue p.7

61. ibid. Badger, Jerry p.78

62. Public Relations Papageorge, Tod N.Y. 1977 p.16

63. Hagen, Charles "An Interview with Garry Winogrand" <u>Afterimage</u> Dec. 1977 p.11
64. <u>Public Relations</u> Papageorge, Tod. N,Y, 1977 p.15
65. George Eastman House of Photography N.Y. Dec. 1966 - Feb. 1967 exhibition included Winogrand
66. M.O.M.A. N.Y. Feb.-May 1967 exhibition included Winogrand
67. <u>Winogrand: Figments From The Real World</u> Szarkowski, John N.Y. 1988 p.40
68. ibid. p.40
69. ibid. p.41
70. I have received this impression from a few critics and curators (in more diplomatic terms) and believe that, in many varying degrees, the opinion is widespread. I am not simply railing at critics, their input is most valuable to the art world and often more germaine than what the artist him or herself claims. A critic's view is just that. It is usually competent and insightful, not "objectively" gospel.
71. Winogrand often photographed as an artist - voyeur directing his attention specifically towards women, especially at times when his marriages were failing. His book <u>Women Are Beautiful</u> drew flak from many female art critics and didn't sell well to the "Playboy" (generally male) market, simply because it was too complex and didn't set out to be simplistically arousing, I have deliberately not discussed the more (sexually) voyeuristic aspects of Winogrand's work here because it is such a large area of enquiry and debate It is worth noting that Winogrand didn't publicise either his would-be or actual (sexual) affairs in the manner in which Weegee was notorious - loud, long and exaggerated.
72. <u>Junky</u> Burroughs, William S. pub. Harmondsworth 1977 p.69
73. There is still a formidable number of images as yet unseen exposed by Winogrand. William Klein is alive and one can only hope to see his most recent work. It is most unlikely any radically different work will be published from Weegee's legacy of 5000 negatives.

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J.J. VOSS M.F.A. SUBMISSION 1990

DOCUMENTATION

My original Proposal was motivated by an awareness of the work of such pho-tographers as Lewis Hine, August Sander, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Esther Bubley, Weegee, Robert Frank and Garry Winogrand; my previous work in photograph-phy, and my experiences from life.

From childhood I have had a heartfelt resentment towards pretence and the un-critical adoption, or apparent adoption of "favourable" mores by people so that they might not only gain social advantage but also decry those who don't (or can't) act similarly. I was very perturbed by evident social stratification apparently being a consciously imposed order, to the advantage of a few at the expense of many. This awareness probably helped inform my choice of the categories "important" and "unimportant" people in my original Proposal.

I was prepared to view the Western urban environment somewhat too simplistically as a place where class-interest groups struggled, as discreet fronts, against each other in order to gain ascendancy and domination. I had a tendency (not an absolute view) to regard Radicals, Proletariats and the Unemployed as posessing more valid insights into life and more "correct" behaviour patterns than those of the "cap-tains of society". When I was younger I was a rebel without a pause (which is not so uncommon) and despite the problems this created for myself and others it did prevent me from wholeheartedly adopting a Marxist-Lenninist-Maoist-Castro approach to life. Over the past several years it has dawned on me that not only was an authoritatian zeal for quashing individual expression evident when Communist or Far Left groups gained power, but also that the world was not inherently oper-ating via an organized conspiracy, exercised by a dominant group against all others, despite circumstantial and historical evidence to that effect. Gramsci's theories of hegemony cracked (but didn't entirely crumble) in the face of my observations of social life, with a bit of help from Michel Foucault.

These observations - that no relations were inherently discreet or oppositional, that people have complex personal identities and do not, as individuals, have the

dogma of a particularly interest group "naturally" occuring in their minds - led me to adopt rather Anarchist principles, and a strong deference towards Existentialism, both of which remain with me in a pragmatically moderated form to date.

I began taking photographs in 1982 and was rather naively impressed by the perceived ability of the medium to communicate "truth", in a speedy and efficient manner. I was taken by the notion of Documentary Photography which I have subsequently come to think of as a kind of denial of personal vision and ideology, despite their obvious operations upon that subject matter which attracts Documentarians (which in itself is a subjective choice). Documentary Photography seeks and appears to be objective when it is actually subjective. As well as the direction of interest, the elements of the scene exclude or include, aesthetics intrude on objectivity, even when "straight" photography is in use.

My interest in Marxist Art in the final year as an undergraduate made me aware of the problematic "blank" Karl Marx drew when trying to reconcile his appreciation of Classical Greek sculpture with his own theories of historical materialism, by which art from another age and culture should really be irrelevant, if not incomprehensible. Walter Benjamin wrote of the "aura" of artworks, to begin to explain the problem. My research into this area also alerted me to the great differences between Social Realism and Socialist Realism. Elements of the former I embrace in my work as a point of reference and departure, elements of the latter I strive to avoid due to its prescriptions and proscription of any dissent. In an earlier year of the degree course I investigated Nazi Art, so I had come to suspect visual propaganda as being the 20th. Century expression of all that was questionable in Moral Painting.

I applied to do the Master's Degree directly after graduating, amid certain cautions (not from the academic staff of Uni. Tas.) to the effect that it would be wiser for me to take a year or two "off" and direct my energies to related but non-academic pursuits. This was, after all, an approach often adopted and I was

"broke". I was not, however, greatly in need of more and varied life experiences. I was too directed in my intentions to continue with further specu lative photography, and enthusiastic to push myself further.

Two issues affected my coursework in significant and unforseeable ways. In the early part of the course I found myself trying to function commercially as a Photojournalist. I thought it would be a good way to earn some badly needed money in an area closely related to my personal photography, which sometimes gets mistaken for "misguided" or techincally flawed Photojpurnalism! Certainly working in that area heightened my one-eyed determination to get a photograph under difficult circumstances, and my interest in politics served me well and was expanded. I was very wrong in thinking that, because there were superficial similarities between my coursework and Photojournalism, that they were "closely related". Photojournalism required my work to be simple visually and conceptually. A basic requirement was that the content had to be close to the lowest common denominator of comprehension - a simple narrative emulating conventional representations visually. I realized this was not what I needed to do in my coursework, in which I have come to actively seek ambiguity - unlike the Photojournalist. In fact while working in the area, I was also seeking to undermine the fiction of the "transparent" Photojournalist, which resulted in interesting photographs for myself (three are shown in the exhibited submission, the one with Andrew Peacock, Michael Hodgman and Robin Gray, the one with Robin Gray besieged by a Press contingent seemingly entranced and the one with Michael Hodgman behind the women with "bleached" hands and teacup) and a lot of worried looks from and no sales to any editors, who knew what was needed - not that type of photograph. I lost sight of what I was doing in my coursework and, in the heat of the Tasmanian election campaign tended towards good Photojournalism and cliches.

Weegee's photographs had an air of compulsion about them (many were of disasters) and only a hint of artistic acceptance prior to the 1960's when, in the age of .

Pop art, they were seen as retrospective cultural documents extraordinaire, inter-

esting art circles greatly. Richard Avedon reportedly slides graciously yet clin-

ically between commercial assignments and his own Art Photography with resound-

ing successes in both fields. That experience is most uncommon, or has been to

date. My delight at making occasional sales and publications was not echoed in my

coursework, the results of which started looking like easy access photostories!

I don't wish the tenor of these lines to sound like a wholesale diatribe from

the high moral ground of Art against Photojournalism. I look forward to working

in the area again, but I couldn't work on two such contradictory premises con-

currently. My frustration with experiences in Photojournalism is best expressed

as a plea. Isn't there a place for more complex imagery, perhaps explained by

text, in the mass media? (refer to "Hunting and Trawling..." pp. 13, 14, 1st.

M.F.A. paper) I chose, with some highly relevant critical encouragement, to cease

my extracurricular activities.

In May 1989, I became ill. I thought, for a while, that it was "burn out" - a

response to the stresses of the course (particularly the conflict with Photojourn-

alism) relationship problems, parental responsibility etc. No doubt all these

factors made things worse or helped precipitate whatever it was that was wrong

with me. Whether it was or wasn't Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is not an issue, here.

What is relevant is to say that after months of physical pain, excessive involuntary

sleep and very disturbing mental confusion over the most basic issues I was for-

ced to accept that I could not possibly sit for examination. I had to not only

"give up" temporarily, but to take a distanced critical look at my approach to

what I was doing in the course. Before becoming ill I had been very directed in

attempting to craft and conceptually structure my work to conform to the highest

standards of conventional representaion - and had been hell-bent on structuring

the arrangement of the (generally uninspiring) photographs in a regimented manner

which specifically directed a reading of social stratification and hierarchies

of power. It was being fanatically obvious and a bit dry. I have my illness to

thank for forcing me to "let go" and become more intuitive again.

In describing my work practices, at the outset I should mention that I work intensively for a few days at a time exposing quite large amounts of film in an effort to get images which are of encounters on the street, in the park, on public transport and at places where people gather in groups. I then develop and contact proof the films, and use the contact sheets in the manner of sketches and note-books - as a resource of raw data from my photographic excursions. This is followed by the task of "reading" the contact proofs, and rigorously editing them firstly on the grounds of what is visually and conceptually interesting to me in the particular single image, and then with regard to how it will correlate to a group of images for exhibition - in this case socially based "Existential Encounters". The work presented in this submission should be seen as being as much about the process (in terms of strategy more than technically) of me photographing people as it is, more obviously, about the people depicted.

During this course I considered ways of working which departed from my prior methods. I considered alternative photographic processes (principally the use of colour), using other techniques from other media (drawing onto the photograph, making the image more three-dimensional on a hand made paper base), and I thought about making the photographs much bigger. .

I rejected the idea of using colour photography for two reasons. Firstly, because of the continually moving chance-laden aspects of my moving through urban, social spaces I would run into problems with the likes of orange garbage bins and lime green cars taking undue attention away from the subjects of the photograph. Unlike black and white photography it is close to impossible to suppress such distractions when printing. This was especially a problem when "Trawling" and unwanted material came up in the "net". The other reason I rejected the use of colour was that, with flash or open sunshine the photographs tended to be too natural-istic, i.e. the illusion of reality was too intense. My concern was not about using the different colours of light on film in cases where I was indoors under

flourescent illumination. Instantly, when viewing a black and white photograph, the viewer has no confusion about whether it is exceptionally close to what he or she would see, there being no colours. This sets the "monochrome" image apart as an excerpt, a point of narrativity and an abstraction, even if very clear in detail.

The idea of using other media in conjunction with photography was very short-lived because I didn't really want to allude to my agency in the finished work in that manner. I wanted to both allow the photographic process to do what it did best in an unmitigated way, any "effects" being in camera, and I wanted to allude to my presence purely by people's reactions, and whatever clues resided in the print.

The possibility of making my photographs much bigger has occurred and re-occurred to me, and has been suggested to me by others. I decided, finally, not to make the prints large because that would project an heroic colossal and overpowering sensation onto the viewer, and not relate well to my close-distanced photographic encounters. Tension and confrontation are meant to be felt when viewing these images, not fear or insignificance. I plan to force a quite short viewer to print distance in the exhibited submission, referring to confrontation and a close-proximity encounter with the subjects in the photographs. The smaller print invites the viewer to come closer, and this is important. It was also important for me not to go "overboard" on the presentation of this work at a grand scale, as this strategy could in fact dilute, by an obvious foregrounding, the tension that exists within the images; that of them being average sized, "fine" prints of situations that might not usually be presented in such a manner. I wanted to exploit the clash between the luxury of a carefully printed object (the photograph) and the sometimes alarming, brusque content of the encounters.

The work I have done prior to this course has similarities to this submission in that it was of people, and done on small format in black and white - but it

was always done as primarily single images - that is, each photograph existed in its own right and it was not necessarily to be seen in conjunction with others. Previously I would often photograph several people in the one photograph - and during this course of study that approach is not so common. My photographs in this submission are meant to be seen in a group and are meant to achieve a sense of the populous and the social when viewed in relation to each other, as a group.

My previous work rarely utilized the vertical frame (turning the camera on its side by 90°) - a device which I have used much more frequently in this submission. The vertical frame suits depictions of singular people or small groups more than the horizontal, which is often more effective for larger groups of people photographed from further away. People are taller than they are wide, and the vertical frame heightens the sense of directness, the "upright" and the unmitigated encounter. In this submission I have used horizontal framing where a greater description of surrounding elements or adjacent people is required and where either the gaze of the subject or the "movement" within the frame is compositionally heightened by using that device.

The use of lenses wider than "standard" had been consistent throughout my photographic practices, but in the first year of study in this course I experimented with telephoto lenses, and floundered. When I used flash at night with the telephoto, subjects usually looked silly, or unequivocally alarmed (remember by the time the flash is seen the exposure has already been made - the surprise of the flash itself at night didn't provoke the responses in the photographs). I contend that it is literally a distanced voyeurism to photograph people with a telephoto lens, implying a fear or furtiveness on the photographer's part. Photographing people using a telephoto lens is not necessarily subtle or considerate, words often used to describe Candid Photography from a distance. It is the preferred mode of the Surveillance Photographer one who, unlike myself, tries to hide photographic activity and avoid an encounter with the subjects, When I was not using flash illumination with the telephoto lens my   cont..

photographs lapsed into "character studies" which might do well as "human interest"
photographs but do not suit this submission. From my experiences, and for my pur-
poses, the telephoto lens afforded too much of a reductive "tunnel vision", and
a spatially flattening perspective. Not only were the depictions of people rather
simple in that their surroundings were not shown - the urban architecture, other
people nearby etc. - but it was time consuming and clumsy having to focus. Using
a telephoto made my intention to photograph a specific person all the more obvious,
causing them to "pose" or avoid.

The wideangle lenses I have used, principally 35mm., 28mm. and occasionally 24mm.
suit the work I have done for three important reasons.

- If, as I have sought, the subjects are not to be diminuitive within the frame,
then I must move in very close with a wideangle lens. This may either heighten
the tension and confrontation of the encounter or provoke confusion and doubt as
to whether or not the person photographed was actually included in the frame
(wideangled lenses as the name implies take in a lot of the scene). Both the above
situations break the "smile for the camera" or "subtle character study" cliched
responses of the subjects. It is most necessary for me to act suddenly, generally,
to affect my photographs. This calls attention to my presence and my proximate
encounter with the subject much more interestingly than when photographing at a
distance.

- By using wideangle lenses it is possible to concurrently show the surrounds of the
subjects, even when well inside their "personal spaces". Whilst wishing to avoid
lapsing into Photo-Caricatures, the distortions afforded by the wideangle lens -
principally that of exaggerated scale change between foreground and background
elements of the scene - are used to give an edge to the photograph - to further
point out that it is from the "real" but not a Documentary equivalence to the real.

- I can preset focus from between 1m. and 3m. and not have that technical consider-
ation to worry about, using up fleeting moments and prompting hesitation. Wider

lenses allow this technique and "standard" to telephoto ones don't.

My agency or directorial presence - when viewing these photographs - is an important aspect of the work yet at the same time the photographs are depictions of who and what was before the camera during a particular moment, a kind of Existential document. I orchestrate, I mediate but importantly I do not create from the abstract or imagination. The use of "straight" relatively unmanipulated photography has always been a feature of my work, but more so in this submission than was the case previously when I often used photographic techniques like long shut-ter speed with flash for aesthetic effect.[2] However these aesthetic effects could be seen to detract from the veracity and the validity of a more "straight" photographic approach. An impression of directness and reference to an encounter have generally been served better by a less aestheticized approach. I mentioned previously my awareness of the critical nature of a work's aesthetic appearance and should further point out I am talking about a reasoned tendency above.

The photographs in this submission of the McDonald's boy, the male face filling the frame (out of sharp focus) or the man yawning under the National Emblem are hardly "straight" photography. By incorporating less literal images in the submission alongside the more "straight" photographs (which I have sought to represent more frequently), I felt that the work as a whole would invite not only an evidentiary, "forensic" inspection, but also more of a participation and a reflection on the part of the viewer.

Flash Illumination

Flash is an important tool at my disposal and one which certainly alters the aesthetics of a photograph. It is arguable that using flash is far from "straight". I have come to regard the use of flash as standard practice for myself, and it is the detailed sharp rendition that flash gives (when used at regular synchronization

2 see example in back section

i.e. briefer shutter speeds) that in the main describes my use of the term "Straight Photography". Flash is a very active source of illumination, the subject is literally bathed by a discharge of photons which is both intense and exceptionally brief. Flash inherently lightens subjects at a close range the most, and diminishes in its effect the greater the distance. It is understandably alarming in some instances, for subjects to experience such a flood of light, and it is certainly the most problematic aspect of my photography regarding people's reactions. I do not necessarily mean people's apparent reactions in the photograph, by the time the flash is seen the exposure has already been made. I used to use a technique of dummy firing the flash, to provoke reactions of surprise, and to then expose the frame immediately afterwards, but have rejected that tactic as too manupulative, trite in a Paparazzi sense and questionable on the grounds of does it in anyway depict aspects of chance in a photographic encounter? (no). So whilst working on this submission I have been sure that any surprised or alarmed countenances are the result of people's hypothetical projections about the use for or existence of a photograph of themself, or simply the facial expression they had at the moment of exposure, and what attracted my photographic attention.

I have sought to exploit unique aspects of flash illumination. There is a strange quality about the tonality which flash affords when used at night, or indoors - its fall-off in illumination as distance increases. This actually reverses the convention often used in drawing, painting and "available light" photography of outdoor scenes - that the foreground is usually darker or more clearly defined than the background. Literal unmanipulated photographs tend to exhibit a softening of clarity and lighter tonality in the distance. Atmospheric haze affects clarity, the light-toned sky is often perceived (rightly) at a distance and the illumination is generally from above and wide-spread, differing greatly from direct flash emanating from the camera.

In the photograph of the McDonald's boy, the one with Andrew Peacock and the

bleached snake-like hand and the photograph with the hands and teacups in the foreground I exposed the film with a view to allowing the peculiar light "fall-off" effect to come through in the print, to leave the foreground bleached and add emphasis to its elements - shape and negative shape are called into question. The technique was also adopted to emphasize gesture, which itself is an aspect of my attention throughout this submission.

In other photographs like the photograph of Alan Bond, the "Nazi" Punk and the older couple (man with black eye), I knew that I would probably try to "correct" the overexposed foreground when printing, so as to give a more consistent tonal rendition between foreground and background.

I have sought to heighten the disjuncture between the "real vision" afforded by one's eyes and the vision afforded in its representation (the photograph). Yet in many instances I have not drawn attention to the non-literal photographic rep-resentations as overtly as would be the case with more aestheticized representations in this submission like the long shutter speed with flash (which produces a more Impressionistic, blurred and tonally "bleeding" image). Sometimes smaller diff-erences create a higher degree of tension than more obvious differences which call attention to themselves.

Making Art From The World

Many artists spend the bulk of their art producing time in a fixed location eg. their studio, and often construct their imagery through processes of thought and imagination over a fairly long time span. My art results from an interpretation of "realities" of a social nature, outside of my own existence. That is, my exist-ence in terms of my conscious individual self working from ideas or imagination - my presence near the scene depicted does figure, sometimes to a large degree. Most of my art producing, or more correctly art initiating time (getting the latent image exposed onto the film) was spent moving about from place to place - outside

of my own room, my studio or any such fixed personal domain. In fact my studio is the darkroom, where many hours are required to make the print - the object and artifact - but nowhere near as many hours as are spent gathering the latent images on film. The art which I produce is quite exoteric, not referring directly to intensely personal or private visions peculiar to myself.

I believe there is a large degree of erroneous supposition along the lines of "factual neutrality" when the photographic genre "Documentary" is mentioned. My work is more about confrontation and encounters, it is not "Documentary" in the generally accepted sense. That mentioned, I can do no better in describing the Modernist ethic which surrounds my approach to photography than to quote Ann Tucker from her essay "American Documentary Styles". Walker Evans, Weegee, Robert Frank, Lee Friedlander, Dianne Arbus and Garry Winogrand "photographed urban life, strangers and social fabric rather than their personal lives and fantasies."[1] As if conscious of, or referring to the voracity and capability of the medium (photography) to relentlessly represent vast amounts of fine detail, that is how I have approached making photographs - continuously and in large numbers. Sometimes I would expose 150 images in a day. Whilst Candid and Street photographers have to learn to live with "missed" photographs, and the often unfruitful results of having to make lightning-fast decisions in changing situations, I have not taken apopoximately 16000 frames over the duration of the M.F.A. course to hedge my bets and increase my chances - with my eyes closed, in the blind hope that fate must provide something of interest. I know the high "failure" rate of this particularly chance-laden genre of photography.

I make many photographs so that I might affect small but important changes in the elements of the scene photographed when "Hunting" - pursuing highly directed

[1] The Art of Photography 1839-1989 Catolougue ed.: Weaver, Mike - "American Documentary Photography" Tucker, Anne p. 298 pub. Yale Uni. Press 1989

and consciously constructed photographs. I also make many photographs so that I-
might allow the chance-laden aspects of photography in large and populous areas
to operate when "Trawling" - when the "net"of many negatives is not huge and des-
perately hopeful, it is strategically "placed" in areas which seem like they might
be productive. Taking lots of photographs is a response to the great multiplic-
ity of people, events and shapes within the urban environment. The informational
overload, to me,demands a strident hard-working response, even when "Trawling"
and not consciously goal-oriented. It concurrently allows for more options in
the choice of the final image.

Editing

In this section I want to explain why I selected certain images for the final
submission from the many I have on film. The editing process has been very rig-
orous and difficult. Occasionally I know that I have an engaging photograph when
I make the exposure - the elements in the scene, co-incidences, paradoxes and
subject expressions make a strong impact and the frame, like my encounter or ob-
servation, is well-remembered. When "reading" or preliminarily editing the proof
sheets I am aware of them as a diaristic visual record of my photographic encoun-
ters.

I approach editing in a manner ranging from casually glancing and associating
(like one might read an "entertainment newspaper") through to intensly critical
examinations, questioning form, content, impact on myself and hypothecizing on
the viewer's associations. I have enlarged several frames from most films I have
exposed (some films are entirely without interest) to postcard size,and this has
proven valuable in assisting the final editing. Obviously there are many images
that get to this small print stage which are subsequently rejected for final
printing. I have found it a helpful tactic to review contact proofs several times

often months apart. This is because my attentions and sensibilities, whilst not varying wildly, are different at different times.

In a sense I have returned to my earlier practice of selecting, as a single image, a photograph primarily for its visual coherence, complexity or interest, and secondarily for its content and implications. This is a means of making the work have a more open conceptual framework when grouped for final submission and be more visually interesting. This approach was commensurate with and informed by my decision not to use prints in the final submission that were entirely without paradox, irony or mystery - those I have referred to as "dry" and "obvious".

I shall examine some proof sheets (illustrated) to detail some of my editing decisions.

Film Proof Sheet M74

The image selected from this contact proof, no. 4, the woman serving in the juice bar, stood out to my attention from other frames on the film because of her seeming lack of camera awareness (when she knew I was going to photograph her) and her distinct lack of liveliness. Her hand is textured like the plastic of the large stack of cups she regards with an almost robotic resignation. The whole scene is anything but "natural", a concept which contrasts with the scene's evident sterility. Intrusive and commanding attention, the cups draw the viewer's initial glance as they do the woman's gaze. Frames 12 and 15 show that my confrontations with the camera are often understood in a cheerful manner, but do not suit this submission. Frame 42, at the top, and frames 3,11,23,24,25 all hold interest for me as documents of encounter, and formally. Frame 11, depicting the same people as in frame 12, has a tension about it which doesn't fully erupt, and provides an interesting comparison of the same subjects' different reactions to me. Frames 23 and 25 have an engaging compostion but relatively unengaging subject matter.

Film Proof Sheet M75

This film, like the one above, M74, was exposed over two or three hours in

the streets and stations of Sydney and is a record of my visual and experiential

responses to that environment and its people. The image I have selected, no. 35

is the face of a male commuter as he stepped onto the train, looking at the camera

lens as he "rubbed shoulders" with me. His eye was approximately half a metre

from the lens. His face is menacingly lit and partially blacked out by the flash

illumination. The flash is coming from too close a range to fully cover his face.

This is an encounter about which it is hard not to feel both claustrophobic and

threatened. Both the subject and the viewer are confronted. The wideangle makes

his features quite grotesque as it simultaneously depicts part of the region which

is known as "Hell's Half Hectare" - the corrugated iron emblazoned with grafitti

around Macdonaldtown Station. There appears a bizzare impression that the high-

lighted patch of graffiti has fallen from the blacked-out eyesocket at this mom-

ent of Existential danger. I chose this image for the poster of my recent exhibit-

ion Photophobia.I have generally selected images where I am close to the subject

in this submission, and this image is the most extreme example. Experienced en-

counter and a phobia generated from implied confrontation are implicit. Frames

14, 15, 27 and 32 from this film show a harsh angularity in the urban landscape

which apparently dominates and frames the subjects, but they are relatively devoid

of a sense of encounter with the photographer. Frame 10 has an interest in that

the judge further from the camera has deliberately hidden his face, but the com-

position of the frame is clumsy and to "crop" the image to remove some of the

building above would also remove part of the grate in front of the judge.

Film Proof Sheet M284

This roll of film depicts encounters with a wide variety of people as they,

like myself, move through the urban environment. Frame 1 (in the third row due to an

error in cutting the film into strips) has a steady directly gazing and gentle qual-

ity about the young woman's reaction to my action of literally spinning around

suddenly to expose this frame. Her document holder has an idealized teenage ro-

mance scene depicted on it,and the image was considered for inclusion in this sub-

mission, but it did not have the visual interest and formal resonance within the

photograph of the McDonald's boy, frame 33. This photograph was made with the cam-

era placed on the counter and tilted up as he handed me a coin. I used a fairly

long shutter speed to allow the receeding lines of flourescent lights and the ill-

uminated menu to show. I knew that his hand would be large and brightly illumin-

ated by the flash. His expression is quite neutral as he looks away from the lens,

alluding to the drudgery and,paradoxically,multiple encounters with "all sorts"

of people in his work. Frame 15 is one of those compositionally better than others,

and has a strange psychological quality about it, but the illumination is not as

engaging as frame 33 and there is less obvious reference to an encounter with the

people depicted. Frame 31 is extremely confrontational and the woman clearly did

not want her face to be seen, but it is a little too simple,and the lights in the

background do not work well as a framing device. I was trying to use this technique

in a similar manner to the photograph of the McDonald's boy (frame 33).

Film Proof Sheet M293

Frames 26, 27, 28 (flash did not fire) and 29 depict subject matter and sug-

gest ethical problems at the limit of my photographic encounters. After a relative-

ly uninspired photographic visit to the "new" Darling Harbour Complex in Sydney

and a ride on the monorail I came across these derelicts in Town Hall Station.

I was affected by their situation and the severe injury to one man's nose after

the contrast of visiting the opulent tourist destination previously. These men

were obviously settled in for a night of watching passers by, drinking, smoking

and reading(!) until another violent incident or the Police displaced them fur-

ther afield. Despite my very real empathy and sympathy I moved in to photograph

them. A glance at frame 26 reveals a pitiable "concerned photographer" type of

image. The next frame, 27, which I selected for this submission,shows two vastly different reactions to my photography, and establishes a sense of paradox in the image which is echoed by the surrounds - marble steps and steel roller door. The man on the right has assumed that I am not a direct physical threat to him and that perhaps he is to be elevated into an order of mass exposure like a magazine or newspaper (this assumption is quite common among people I photograph). His battered friend however, clasps his hand and exhibits a resignation to terror which I had to deal with and the viewer may ponder,

I am not a gratuitous psycopath but I often go into a "Perverse" mode of photographing which suppresses widely held standards of decorum and ethics. What has been gained from my questionable intrusion? A photograph which has many of the elements of an exposé of the disadvantaged,but which breaks the quite familiar conventions of such photographs. I think this photograph might hold the attention of various viewers for some time. Familiarity or a swift repression on the part of the viewer often prevails with a more typically "socially concerned" photograph like frame 26. I must say that I have a clear conscience about taking this photograph, and that I am still affected emotionally by this image.

Film Proof Sheet M381

In my editing of this film I was initially much more interested in the enchantment of the onlookers towards the eventual subject selected (Alan Bond). This whole roll of film was exposed on a camera equipped with a waist level viewfinder which affected the points of view - being either a low camera angle or high one, when the camera was held above my head. Some frames (35-8) were exposed without sighting through the camera at all. Frames 24,34 and 39 attracted my interest in terms of lighting and composition but tended too much towards the "human interest" type of photograph. Many of the photographs of Mr. Bond sit quite flacidly in the oeuvre of Photojournalistic imagery - they rely on the public recognition of this "import-

ant" man, and show, with little dynamism, a standard sort of "impromptu". Press

conference (frame 37, taken without looking through the camera), is the most in-

teresting because of the heavy shadows and the lighlighting of the flash. The strip

of negatives on the bottom of the proof sheet was taken as Mr. Bond was whisked

away to a hotel in his limousine, to reflect on a day more bitter than sweet -

he had won the Sydney to Hobart yacht race but had lost a large part of his wealth

that day. The frame I finally selected, after printing frame 8 was frame 7. This

was exposed when a well-wisher's hand reached out towards Mr. Bond as I was photo-

graphing him with flash through the blacked out limosine window. A strange layering

of space occurs in this image due to reflections of a building, the sky and the

proportionately distorted hand. There is a tonal similarity between the hand and the

subject which disrupts normal perception of depth and makes the hand appear to

to touch Mr. Bond's acket behind his rather disheveled face and near the hand

the sky gives the impression of a flame. His gaze is directed away from the camera

and his face in profile is met by the distorted reflection of the buiiding in a

diagonal arc through the fingers of the hand towards the bottom of the frame.

The Process Revealed?

Here I want to briefly point out my plans to use giant proof sheets as a major component of this submission, and my subsequent rejection of the idea. I thought that an interesting and valid approach to representing aspects of multiple encounters and the transient photographic journeys I am involved with was to present an unmediated depiction of an entire roll of film. Personally I have found the inclusion of film type and frame number information utilized by photographic artists in the 1970's and early 80's quite drole and laborious, not to mention insecure about photography's status as a discreet and not ancilliary artform (i.e. the need to underline this is a photograph not a painting or a litho). This personal dislike is directed at single images; as a means of alluding to the sequential and multiple there is, for my purposes, more sense in using film edge information.

In presenting enlarged proof sheets I was not only referring to the issues above but also exposing, for all to see, the missed frames, the technically flawed and the multiple attempts to organize (when "Hunting") or experience (when "Trawling") situations at different moments or camera positions.

I considered and tried making giant proof sheets with film strips from film exposed at different times and places (i.e. from several different films) with a view to arranging the film strips as predominantly vertical or predominantly horizontal frames, by similar site and subject matter and by similar exposure density and illumination. In some cases the results were very Photojournalistic picture stories, with a pale reference to film stills, in others they were so obviously discontinuous (by frame no. information) that the sought impression of continuous and transient encounters was terminally disrupted. With difficulty I could have blacked out the film edge information whilst printing, but the basic (and terminating) problem still presented itself - they looked like giant proof sheets, and denied the rigorous editing and careful printing of the selected en-

largement. Critically, my response after doing several, was "so what!" Some examples are presented separately from the exhibited submission as back up material and as part of this Documentation.

Grouping Images

The idea of arranging my photographs into groups arose for the following reasons. I sought to make the works more complex and resonant visually. I wanted to break away from the convention of having images in a line down the wall. I felt a need to give the impression that my works were bigger. When I first used this approach (late 1986) my prints were smaller at 30 by 40cm, and currently at 40 by 50cm. they are still small by the standards of contemporary exhibitors worldwide.

I grouped photographs (double hangings, stepped hangings, triangles and rectangles) in exhibitions at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney (ETC., 1986 and Photophobia, 1990), The Long Gallery, Hobart (Rothmans Art Teachers' Exhibition, 1987) Chameleon, Hobart (Landfall, 1988 and Photophobia, 1990).

Prior to my M.F.A. candidature and early in the course I sought to strongly imply social hierarchies, by grouping images. Using this strategy was also attempting more visual complexity and resonance. An emphasis on certain key images was possible by double hanging, placing a photograph on its own or higher than others, and I used these approaches for Landfall and Photophobia at Chameleon (23 images) and at the A.C.P. (44 images) - the more radical triangular presentations, of around 6 images each having been used in the previous exhibitions detailed above. Commensurate with these strategies of exhibiting, but veering off towards the former approach, I used vertically ascending triangles as well as stepped hangings to leave the viewer in no doubt as to my allusions about social stratification for the final M.F.A. critique for 1990. A guest critic was impressed but many other

people thought that the obvious ordering was just that, and I was diluting the aspects of transience, chaos, confrontation and encounter which I wanted to represent. I was equivocal about the criticisms, but as much because of what I had learned from becoming ill the previous year (i.e. that I was not being intuitive) as the numbers of those who thought these arrangements detracted from the work, I decided to hold in check my tendencies to over-construct meaning. Why had I returned to the more obvious construction of grouped shapes after moving away from them previously? I suppose that I have a strong motivation to work like that, and a desire to have my work seen and at least partially understood by a very wide cross section of the community, not just people within art circles or those with an educated sensibility to art. The two reasons above are reasonable enough, I think, but the "bottom line" is that an obvious hierarchical representation does not suit the content of my photographs. A feeling of mystery and the invitation to speculate about the subjects (and the photographer) evident in the single photographs was lost. The approach was valid for some of my earlier work and may be in the future when a directed meaning via such structuring suits my aims.

It is understood from both advice given by academic staff at the outset of
this course and from reading the Documentation of previous candidates that, after
embarking upon the proposed course of study, certain changes in emphasis or even
basic thrust occur. Despite careful consideration before writing my Proposal of
Study I have found that I have needed to radically change most of what I origin-
ally set out to do, due to my experiences and insights during the course of study.
This arose out of both my own self-criticism and the critiques of peers and aca-
demic staff.

The function of this Amended Proposal might best be served by pointing out the
aspects of the original Proposal which maintained a validity and interest for
me during the entire course, and then point out what concerns are central to my
project in addition to these. I shall quote from the original Proposal in point
form to reiterate the aspects of enquiry still relevant.

- to critically investigate the power of appearances regarding people.
- (partially adhered to) to provide an analysis or make a statement as regards
  their ("people's") position in "society"
- I wish to go well beyond making simple "human interest" stereotype images.
- why there is a self-image people have which tends to bind them into one of these
  categories (i.e. "important", "unimportant". This will be investigated by way
  of disrupting their usual "performances" for the camera)
- (to make photographs which subvert and question the tendency of people) "to act"
  out these (stereotypical) roles and regularly project "favourable" images of
  themselves before the camera.

In fact one of the basic aims of my initial Proposal was found to be suspect -
that of specifically constructing a visual social heirarchy in the categories
"important" and "unimportant". This was fraught with difficulty in that it
relied too much on what I really seek to question.

The "important"/"unimportant" dichotomy I originally wished to pursue had
some relevance to this submission but for the reasons outlined above should no
longer be seen as a central issue.

I want to find an alternative and more interesting way of investigating both
social hierarchies and people's self-presentations to the camera ("poses"). I have
come to realize that I relied too much on a somewhat obvious construction

of social heirarchies in order to achieve that investigation's represen-

tation (see Working Process). The investigation was becoming more of a confirm-

ation of social hierarchies, along quite conventional Socialist, Concerned

Photographer, and Paparazzi lines. A more amorphous and less specific represen-

tation of people is sought, allowing aspects of chance, irony and an "existent-

ial encounter" to come out in the work.

Another issue which was missed or repressed in the initial Proposal was that

of myself acting as a confrontational and wilful photographer, deliberately dis-

pensing with generally applied conventions of decorum..This approach is central

to the project and was adopted not for vicarious or gratuitous reasons but so that

a tension might be set up between photographer and subject, subverting conven-

ntional Portrait and Candid conventions and hopefully leading to more illuminating

and/or complex insights. To me it is a more "honest" approach, and most import-

antly allows the viewer of the work to more easily enter into a cross-examination

of the self and society.

I wanted to allow the photographic process to do what it does best, to repre-

sent vast amounts of (in my case, social) information in fine detail, and then

to edit the results rigorously..I wanted to explore the dichotomies of the public

and the private, the intruder and the intruded upon, the "hunter" and the "hunted",

the experience and the experienced, the found and the constructed, the encounter

and the encountered.

I investigated writers such as Sigmund Frued, Norman Mailer and the

writings of relevant photographers as a theoretical base for this submission,

not Carl Jung as I had originally intended.

I relate to the world, more specifically the people in it, photographically.
Is this some kind of behavioural problem, a travesty upon humanity, intrusive
and objectifying?

In relating to people and social situations photographically I am choosing
another mode of relating instead of, say, seeking to directly buy or sell, entering
into discourse or any of the more usual relations which occur between people. I
argue that most relations between people have aspects of intrusion and objectification-
seeking to gain some insight or advantage. Because the codes of these relations
are often more easily and accurately understood, and etiquette surrounding the
exchanges more defined, it does not make these pursuits inherently any more valid
or acceptable than my "Perverse" Candid Photography.

I have not set out to create a pantheon of social types - I do wish to spark
enquiry and debate amongst the viewers of my imagery. Hopefully that thought pro-
cess will lead to a kind of personal and social cross-examination. I do not deny
the agency and personal visions of myself, but do see them as somewhat less rel-
evant to my work than would be the case for many artists. The work submitted can
be viewed as coming off a kind of cultural reflector board which has a surface
texture (aesthetics) formed by myself and a content mediated by my editing, but
not layed bare via prescription. As pointed out in my first paper "Hunting and
Trawling...", despite appearances, many of the photographs were first exposed on
film utilizing aspects of chance and a subconscious approach. I referred to this
mode of photography as "Trawling". The term "Hunting" was used to describe photo-
graphs which were more consciously constructed and sought out in a highly-directed
manner. The overall photographic project I have submitted I have called "Perverse
Photography".

During both the practical work and theoretical enquiry of the course I be-

came more aware of the reasons why conventions of dress and manners exist.
I have also further realized that anything which is not easily understood or recog-
nized by the population in general is likely to be received with confusion or hos-
tility. I believe that in the case of my photo project the end justifies the means.

Over the course I have learned to become less worried and vigorous about con-
sciously directing my photography ...paradoxically succumbing to a subscription to
formularized conventions as my measure of success. I have loosened up (despite
the "straight" aesthetic of many of my photographs) but I contend that I most
certainly haven't become "slack" or blase.

I learned, or more correctly, was emphatically reminded that what is
camera consciousness at the moment of exposure becomes a returned gaze or a heigh-
tened, frozen presence evident to the viewer of the photograph. The viewer is aff-
orded a potentially long duration in which to study the subject(s) in minute detail
- continuous actions, embarrasment or a two-way sense of privacy being invaded are
not a problem - or at least it is only problematic in retrospect. The eye contact,
or obvious avoidance of eye contact, and an awareness of close proximity gives the
viewer an ability to experience an encounter in a paradoxical way - simultaneously
distanced yet close.

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