

Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place

Volume 1. *Text*

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Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place is dedicated to the memory of Harry Lawrence - philosopher, opening batsman, groundsman, who treasured the hidden place.

Abstract.

This practice-led Ph.D. study examines the potential conception of urban non-places through art photographic practice and writing (the *text*). The term “non-place(s)” (borrowed from Marc Augé, the French anthropologist) is used within this study as a deliberate provocation to the reader to re-engage with those transitional areas of land situated in the urban landscape that are viewed as interstitial – without a clear function or meaning compared to more valued spaces in the city, such as parks, and memorial sites.

In general, these non-places are prohibited sites, which to some degree, adds to their anonymity in relation to the general public’s awareness. Most people (apart from a growing interest from urban psycho-geographers) avoid these sites, with their knowledge largely based upon the ubiquitous version promulgated by the media and potential developers of these “wasteland” / “brown field” sites (often associated with those areas of derelict land left abandoned since the 1970s post-industrial decline in England), which through such nomenclature, serves to under-value the unique qualities that this study seeks to present /reclaim. In this sense, one of the discursive aims of this study is to challenge the more expedient perception of such places by critically ‘erasing’ the prefix *non*, to reveal a place with meaning, that might be valued in a more imaginative way.

In this sense, the practice acts as both a critical catalyst, and conduit, through which various disciplines are conflated in order to propose a different conception of non-places. A key aim within this text, is to emphasise the synergy between photographic practice and its equivalent in writing. Each embodies the other to form the *practice*. They are not separate elements within the Ph.D. submission.

Although the leitmotiv of the study is located in the field of landscape representation, the text includes an eclectic range of allusions from within visual culture, to promote a broader academic debate between photography and the expanding fields of landscape studies, new cultural geography, anthropology, memory studies, new urbanism, and eco-criticism.

The study proposes that through such an inter-disciplinary discourse mediated by photographic practice, a more idiosyncratic critical lens might emerge to challenge how we might conceive the contemporary *Terra Nullius* – the urban non-place(s). This text should be read in conjunction with viewing the *Dossier* (Volume 2): a visual record of the photographic archive that was produced during the period of the Ph.D. study. It should also be considered in relation to the works included in the final exhibition of photographs *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place*, which took place in The Corridor Gallery, School of Design, University of Leeds, in December 2010. A list of these works follows.

Keywords: *urban photography, landscape representation, non-place, cultural geography, anthropology, memory, urbanism, eco-criticism, re-generation, post-industrial, late capitalism, walking.*

Final exhibition of works in the Corridor Gallery 29th November - 13th December 2010



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Introduction.

The main aim of this Ph.D. research study *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place*, is to develop a practice in the field of landscape art photography that contributes to the understanding and conception of the urban “non-place”.¹ Non-place(s) is a fairly new term, often attributed to the French anthropologist Marc Augé, in which he deploys the term to describe a particular late twentieth-century spatial experience relating to the more anonymous, transitional places in which people are mainly ‘passing through’ to their more *meaningful* destinations. In Augé’s book: *non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity* (further discussed within the text) he identifies an interstitial place, ambivalent, in which people feel alienated from their surroundings; it is in this sense, that the archetypal non-place for Augé would be the contemporary airport concourse, a space devoid of obvious cultural identity (save for global branding of course) in relation to meaning, collective memory, a sense of belonging. One of course, might challenge Augé’s definitive exemplar of non-place, as one could perceive airport spaces as meaningful, in the sense that there is at least the human drama and interaction associated with arrival and departure, which invests their superficial anonymity with meaning, an identifiable sense of place, however transient that might be.

My own adoption of the term non-place seeks to broaden Augé’s definition to include those pockets of abandoned land which are very rarely visited, often prohibited and marginalised by the effects of post-industrial decline since the 1970s in England, pejoratively referred to as ‘brown field’ sites, or more commonly – ‘wastelands’. These sites are usually avoided. Since the mid-1980s in England the non-place has become associated with the re-generation agenda ascribed to late-capitalism which has resulted in such sites becoming even more elusive to an unambiguous definition and place-making. In this context, I use the specificity of the term non-place, as a polemical agent, to challenge how such places could be conceived and valued within the culture. To further anchor this proposition, the opposite of non-place would be the national park, a landscape embedded in national myths and narratives, and of course, the graveyard – the apogee of a place with meaning and cultural identity. With this in mind, the intention of the study is to re-present a different conception of non-place, to eradicate the prefix “non”, to reclaim the more valued term of *place*.

1. Other sources include, Nencini Francesco & Pirovano, Stefano; *I Non Luoghi* (“The Non Places”), Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2005. Augé, M. *Non-Places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, (trans. John Howe), Verso, 1995. Although similar “non-places” exist in some form within the emerging cities outside the West, most notably the Indian maidan, such parallels are beyond the scope of this paper. (Please note, that my subsequent references to “non-place” in the text will be as: non-place).

The way in which my artistic practice has functioned in non-place(s) has been embedded within this text submission as a textual equivalent of this methodological approach, as well as an allusive revelation of the study's 'inner world'. In this sense, the aim of the text is to operate as an *ekphrasis*², a vivid description of a visual work of art, more commonly applied as a rhetorical device in which one medium of art tries to relate to another medium by defining and describing its essence and form, and in doing so, relate more directly to the audience. Its main role is to demonstrate how the research is embodied in both the collection of photographs, the writing, and literature research.

These two research notions conflate within the text submission to help define the intent of my hermeneutic approach, to manifest photographic practice. As Duncan and Ley assert, 'as such, the world within the text is a partial truth, a transformation of the extra-textual.'³ To provide some clarity for the reader regarding my critical methodology, my approach to the design of the text, the deployment of the photographs and 'critical ability' in relation to a potential contribution to research, I have found the analysis of the hermeneutic approach to 'representation' offered by James Duncan and David Ley extremely useful in my desire to produce a concomitant research journey between the practical work and the text submission. Duncan and David Ley extremely useful in my desire to produce a concomitant research journey between the practical work and the text submission. Moreover, their claim that the same processes 'are at work' in the reading and consumption of the 'texts' – involving the reader's own experience of the world, and the 'inter-textual' (the 'context of other texts'), has provided me with a more coherent critical architecture from which to explicate my key aim, which is to contribute to the field of landscape art photography and the ways in which non-place can be conceived.

The topos of non-place (its representation) here, functions as a conduit through which a range of disciplines could operate within the expanding field of 'landscape studies', of which a truncated list might include: landscape representation (in the arts & humanities), new cultural geography, anthropology / ethnology, memory-studies, and eco-criticism. Each of these disciplines provide a different critical lens through which we might conceive the contemporary *Terra Nullius* – the urban non-place(s) through photographic practice.

The photographic practice involved numerous field excursions on foot to various non-place sites within a four miles radius of the Royal Armouries in urban south-Leeds. The five year study has produced an archive containing over one thousand digital photographs. Many of these

2. *Ekphrasis* or *ecphrasis*, . In ancient times it referred to a description of any thing, person or experience. The word comes from the Greek *ek* and *phrasis*, 'out' and 'speak' respectively, and the verb *ekphrazein*, to proclaim.

3. Duncan, J. & Ley, D. 'Introduction', *Place/ Culture/ Representation*, eds. Duncan, J. & Ley, D. Routledge, 1993, 9.

the general public, I organised an extensive guest list, and also contacted various newspapers, and even Channel 4 news were interested in making a short bulletin to coincide with the show; I had an interesting conversation with the director of Channel 4 news, Martin Collett whilst he was concluding filming Jon Snow in Iran, in which Martin stated “that’s exactly what we should be covering”, in response to my earlier point that there were still unexplored urban issues in the U.K. that his news programme should be considering. In the end, Elissa Midgley cancelled my film tour with Nicholas Glass to concentrate resources on the Conservative conference in Blackpool.

The study also generated an exhibition outside the U.K. including, *Terra Nullius: Jim Brogdena* solo exhibition, curated by Josef Bubeník at the Galerie Katakomby, situated in the Centrum Experimentálního Divadla, in Brno, Czech Republic, October 2008. Once again, this exhibition allowed me to reflect on the development of the study through another public lecture to an audience composed of Brno’s artistic community, regional architects, landscape designers, and local university students interested in architecture.

More recent shows have been based in Leeds spaces: *Signs of Life*, was a joint exhibition featuring the urban detritus assemblages of Matthew Shelton, at PSL[Project Space Leeds], and was curated by Pippa Hale (Northern Art Prize coordinator) and Kerry Harker (also curator of the Terrace Gallery at Harewood House). This show ran from the November 2009 to February 2010. On the strength of this show at PSL, I was invited to arrange a solo show at The Leeds City Museum, from August 2010 - November 2010.

Although this may be an obvious statement to make, the additional benefit of these various exhibitions, has been to expose the photographs (and extracts from the related writing) to a wider audience, beyond the purely academic. But most importantly, in relation to the key decisions within the study, the various ‘platforms’ have provided an opportunity for supervision tutorials in the most appropriate context – the reality of a public exhibition. This testing ground for the work (especially in relation to scale, editing, and framing), has been invaluable in reflecting upon the reception of the work, often involving a public address to a variety of ages and backgrounds. For a more pragmatic reason, the Project Space Leeds show, finally confirmed to me that my photographs should change their scale, and become more intimate in their public address. This is in the context of numerous discussions with both Professors Palmer and Hill, relating to scale of my photographs, and also, whether they should be framed or not. Finally, the *South of the river* show at the Leeds City Museum has convinced me that my photographs do indeed need to invite the viewer closer, to experience the spatial intimacy of non-place.

To conclude this rather truncated evaluation of related outcomes from the study, it is worth stating that *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study has delivered a range of outputs

since 2005. The appendix provides a more comprehensive list of these, but this includes numerous conference papers, solo and joint exhibitions, and several newspaper features. I have also produced two peer-reviewed articles exploring the notion of non-place for the academic journals: *Entertext* 6.3 2007 “Encountering the ‘Non-Place’” (peer-reviewed by the Professor of Sociology at Alabama University, Mark Lagory), and the journal *Colour Design & Creativity* which published my article ‘Forensic Intimacy: A Digital Exploration of ‘Non-Place’ in 2007. The published work has been substantiated by four conference paper presentations, produced during the period of this study, and are detailed in the closing text appendix.

Furthermore, the *Dossier* (which is submitted as *volume 2*) provides a visual record of the iterative nature of the practice over the course of the period of research, through a conventional chronology, in addition to other elements which have informed the development of the study.

A research platform.

No research study emerges from a *tabula rasa* – there must be some ‘platform’ for the departure. The conception of *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* can be approached through my practice and experiences before 2005. Some of these may appear anecdotal, but as Meaghan Morris contends:

[Anecdotes] are orientated futuristically towards the construction of a precise, local, and social discursive context, of which the anecdote then functions as a *mise en abyme*. [For me, they] are not expressions of personal experience but allegorical expositions of a model of the way the world can be said to be working.⁴

In 1964 I was six years old living in the inner-city district of Hunslet, in Leeds. During the mid- 1960s, I witnessed the deracination of the local, largely white working-class inhabitants, who saw their brick-built back-to-back houses demolished, to be offered accommodation in the more peripheral areas of the city. Older patterns of community life, created by the nearness of (often generational) work, school, church, allotments, and numerous recreational activities arranged through the affiliated working mens club, were disrupted by dispersal into new purpose-built high-rise flats and estates. As a boy the relocation seemed to take a long time, which allowed me to experience a partially destroyed neighbourhood, containing abandoned houses, complete with flooded cellars. I developed an empathy for bricks⁵, all the while developing a ‘muscle-memory’

4. Meaghan Morris (“Banality in Cultural Studies,” in Mellencamp, *Logics of Television*, 14–15.) quoted by Victor Burgin in *In Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*, Introduction, University of California Press, 1996, x – xi Preface.

5. *Trümmerfrau* is the German-language name for the women who helped to clear the brick and rubble devastation in the aftermath of World War 2, within the four occupied sectors of Berlin. Obviously, this reflection and subsequent allusion emerges through the study.

for walking over this landscape of forgotten bricks, remains of bonfires, burnt mattresses, discarded Rington's tea chests⁶, and small churches like islands, adrift from their absent congregations. In the context of the text to follow, these boyhood recollections (seemingly liberated from the cultural lens to follow), formed a coral of memory, that in many ways, has determined the topography of my study – a place known, and embedded through lived experience.

As the footnotes and bibliography hopefully attest, there has been a genuine discursive invitation in this study, to form relationships within quite different and unexpected critical fields, from the more opaque musing of Kierkegaard, to the more populist allusions to contemporary films like *KES*.⁷ Such allusions are not intended to be desultory or for ostentatious effect, rather their function is to enable the reader to enter my artistic practice 'consciousness' – how I operated both in and out of non-place.[Fig. 1]



1. Chris Grayston, *Jim Brogden in non-place* 2007.

6. The Rington's tea factory provided children with discarded tea chests during the 'chumping' weeks leading up to the 5th November bonfire night. "Chumping" was a local verb to denote the foraging of flammable materials for the fire, and would be guarded into the night by local buys, to deter other boys from stealing their stack. Such stacks were often located in abandoned cellars and outside toilets.

7. The film *Kes* 1969 (UK) directed by Ken Loach, was based on the novel *A Kestrel for a Knave* written by Barry Hines (a South Yorkshire writer). I am preparing to complete an article comparing the two films: *Kes* and *Crim-Blanc*, in their representation of boyhood and alienation, in relation to the taming of wild animals for companionship and development of 'self'.

The aims of this text.

The aims of this text is to present an experience for the reader that elucidates the synergy between all aspects of the practice, whilst suggesting how non-place might be conceived, and perhaps valued. In this way, the experiential aspect of the practice – the physical engagement with non-place through walking, climbing, whilst avoiding various obstacles and security measures is meant to resonate through the text as another journey. The text style and shape reflects the experience of taking the photographs in these different non-places. The emergence of this text should be read concomitantly with the submitted *Dossier*⁸, and in specific relation to the twelve works selected for exhibition in the Corridor Gallery, of the School of Design, University of Leeds in December 2010 (as part of my final Ph.D. submission).

My photographs (and other visual references) are located in the text to act as a supportive ‘signposts’, to make explicit the embodying of the research in the practice. There is no particular chronology in the deployment of my own photographs in the text, but where appropriate, I have tried to include those that I regard as key photographs within the development of the study.

My critical analysis of the photographs here is not intended to foreclose other readings of the work. Rather, my interrogation of the photograph is deliberately eclectic and often includes allusions to other influential works within visual culture. The intention, as researcher-photographer, is to communicate a conception of non-place to a range of potential readers (both academic and non-academic), where ‘experience interprets experience, organising it into new forms – in the case of research, into forms accessible to other people.’⁹ There is an exhortation to the reader to participate in the ‘transformations’ within this text, an invitation to form their own interpretations.

The conflation of extra and inter-textual activities within the text should be engaged with as a representation of the 5 years study- its allusions to other texts and images; to make the analogy more tangible, the reader might apprehend this text as a palimpsest equivalent of those non-places represented in the practice. The frequency of allusions echos the detritus and enigmatic landscape codes experienced in non-place. The various ‘clicks’ associated with the camera’s function and my own photographic decisions, coalesce with an undulating prospect of references that have colonized the study both through the ‘practical work’ and through an ongoing critical reflexivity; a process that happens whilst walking to the sites, on the train, and in the studio. Reflection on the practice, is of course, the practice as well – it never ends, is imbricated with the other. This constant ‘clicking’, shifting between the present reality being photographed and the concomitant allusions, comes close to describing the process enacted in *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place*.

8. In which examples from the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* archive and outputs from the study are contained.

9. Vaden, T. ‘The Relationship Between Experientiality and Research’ Openess, Criticality and Language – Notes on the methodology of practice-based experiential research, *Artistic Research*, Academy of Fine Arts, (eds.) Satu Kiljunen and Mika Hannula, 2002, 96.

This text, (which is also open to the reader's own allusive input, as no text is static), becomes a textual simulacrum of the non-place, in which an accretion of allusions and references permeate the experience of reading.

The purpose of Terra Nullius.

The hyperbolic use of the trope *Terra Nullius* in the title of the Ph.D. study (and related outputs) is intentional. The term operates as a mock-heroic device that affects the reception of this text, and also that of the practical work when exhibited. *Terra Nullius* is a Latin expression deriving from Roman Law meaning 'empty land' or 'no mans land'. Modern applications of the term emerge from the sixteenth and seventeenth-century doctrines describing land that was unclaimed by a sovereign entity. Ironically in the context of the study's more anthropological meditations, it is worth noting, that the doctrine gave 'legal force' to the settlement of lands occupied by so-called 'backward people'. The United Kingdom for example, relied on this principle to claim possession of Australia.

The potent conflation between the rather archaic Latin term, and the more familiar visual evidence of the contemporary urban landscape, acts as a catalyst in which the audience must in some respects reassess their initial reception of the work, for in most cases, notably in historical and legal applications, the Latin lexicon embodies a particular authority, prestige, or a conferred status. In this respect, the initial response(s) to these images of zones of dereliction – perceived wastelands, often conterminous with new-build developments, could be viewed as polemical.

The deliberate juxtaposition of ironic title captions for each photograph encourages a polemical encounter with the work. This caption strategy has been problematic throughout the course of the study, in that certain respondents value the 'entry' into the work that the titles offer, whilst others find the imposition sometimes misleading, or foreclosing of potential interpretations. In response to the various opinions received over the last five years, I have reproduced numerous caption titles (*Dune* 2007 changed to *Sand* 2007) to enable a broader access to the study, without foreclosing the possibility of other readings. In this sense, the photographic practice has developed to be dialogic without being propagandist: the images are framed to emphasise the direct address, to invite a more sustained conversation – a debate in relation to the current notions surrounding contemporary landscape art photography and through the conception of non-place.

To redefine the more straightforward definitions of what a non-place constitutes, we may need to venture outside Marc Augés departure lounge of supermodernity, to a less technologically

controlled environment, liberated from CCTV / surveillance, a much more physical confrontation with weather, human agency, abandoned industrial sites, redundant spaces on the verge of recovery, regeneration or cultural erasure –‘ruptured’ zones in the sense developed by Peirre Nora.¹⁰

According to Nora, this break in the ‘cult of continuity’ between history and memory, and the places of memory (*lieux de mémoire*), is explained by our move from a more ‘rooted past’ to an experience of the past as disconnected from a more continuous flow of history and experience. And, in the particular context of the late twentieth century, sites of memory often inscribed and legitimised by monuments, only exist because the more valued *milieux de mémoire* –the established neighbourhoods in which collective memory is embedded in an authentic experience of the everyday, no longer exists. The contribution made by Nora to notions of place, finds particular resonance in the subsequent work of Augé, as he meditates on those non-places that erode any sense of Nora’s ‘citizen-memory’.

In general, the sites that I have investigated (not surprisingly) are found near prohibited sites within the urban milieu, where access and ownership are often ambiguous, or in dispute; they can be apprehended as fugitive locations – having been created through a process of speculative land investment, and forgetting.

There is the heightened sense when walking through these areas that non-place has the potential to reveal a version of England swathed in contesting notions concerning identity, loss, memory, the conceptions of landscape, and how we arrive at a more meaningful place. In this sense, the inter-dependent relationship between the photographic practice and text is a declaration to view non-places in a different way.

10. The term “rupture” in this context is synonymous with Pierre Nora’s epic examination of French national memory in: *Les lieux de mémoire* (Realms of Memory), Vol. 2: La Nation (Paris: Gallimard) 1986.

Chapter 1: Walking as a decisive moment.

If you share our views why not join us?

Whatever fuels your passion for walking, The Ramblers will help you get the most out of the countryside around you. And your membership will help us protect the pathways you love today, and the ones we'll help you discover tomorrow.¹¹

There is no 'decisive moment', as there is for Cartier Bresson in my photography, only a series of quantum decisions. These small shifts, follow the route(s) of my various walks to the numerous zones within the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study. The hunter checking his traps is a trope that occurs in this context of the journey; if we focus in on these traps, then we begin to notice a diverse range of motifs, changing over the course of the study, through natural, human agency, and the more anticipated transformations associated with the 'times of the day', various lighting and weather conditions, together with the broader seasonal differences.

Through the visual exploration of these non-places as a peripatetic photographer-researcher, one physically experiences the link between the motorcar and the urban landscape – a contributory factor, in my view, in the production of the marginal non-place(s), inscribed in various ways by the marginal in our society. According to Iain Sinclair in his journey around the M25, London Orbital, itself a pedestrian rage against the pervasive inscriptions of the motor vehicle, those elusive areas manifest by the 'the imagination can reach out towards ambiguity.'¹²

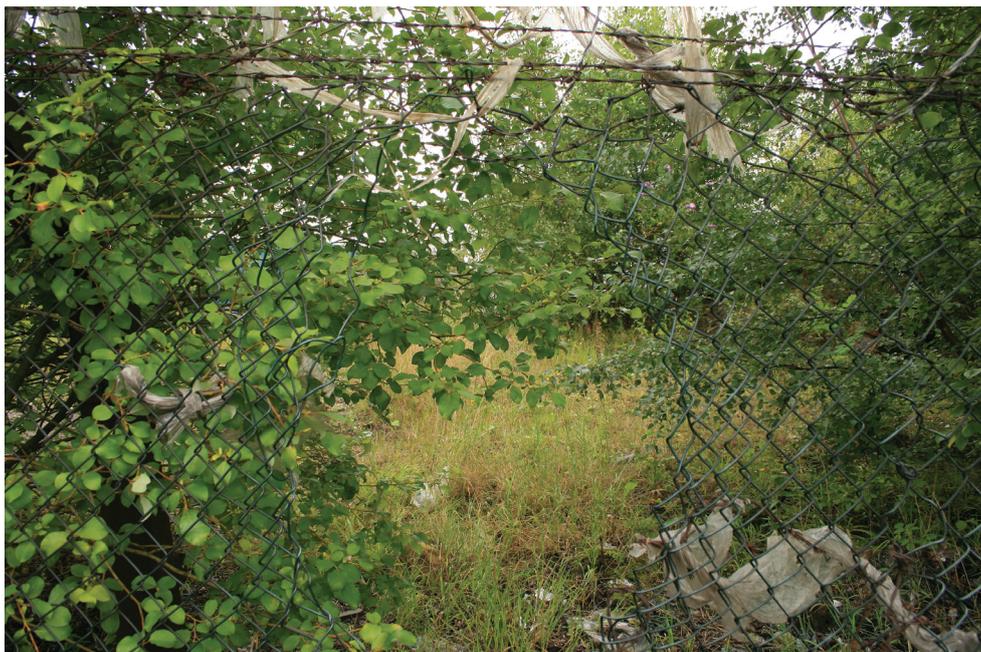
The potential of this activity is discussed by Michel de Certeau in his essay *Walking in the City*: 'Pedestrian movement can be seen to open up individual experience to new and different ways of perceiving and designing the world.'¹³ De Certeau's subsequent proposal that walking is a form of spatial 'enunciation'¹⁴, and that walking through the city is similar to the routes of syntax and language, is an elegant if rather opaque notion. Yet his declaration of walking as a voice in the city, makes for an interesting relationship within the ekphrasis aims of this text, itself an attempt to recreate in another form, the performance of walking and photography.

11. This rather ironic chapter epigram is extrapolated from a large (half-page) promotional advertisement placed in the weekend edition of *The Guardian* newspaper in 2006. Interestingly, the full colour photograph (top) shows a thirty years old male (perhaps British-Asian / Caucasian) from a back view surveying the Lake District from an elevated (and solitary) view, making quite explicit references to the Romantic paintings associated with Caspar David Friedrich. The copywriting celebrates the double-meaning of: "if you share our views." Although a more extensive exploration of The Ramblers is beyond the scope of this study, it should be noted here, that the organisation, renowned for its radicalism in securing a wider access to previously privately owned land (the famous Peak District direct action being probably the first example of walking as protest). The copy used here, could have been equally deployed as an epigram for discussions regarding 'walking' and of course, as a deconstruction (in a Barthes sense- Mythologies) The New Sublime. I await the promotion that shows a representation of the 'self-actualisation' afforded by an exploration of the non-place? The Charity Working for Walkers, www.ramblers.org.uk

12. Sinclair, I. *London Orbital: A walk around the M25*, Penguin Books London, 2003, 49.

13. Certeau de M, 2002, "Walking in the City", *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press) 40

14. *ibid.* 98.



2. Jim Brogden, *Opening*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm

In some quarters, the act of walking in the city is regarded as a ‘political act’, a way of undermining the authority of an automotive design-led city, where the pedestrian is often regarded as an inconvenience, unless of course, they are involved in recreational shopping (especially in North America). The more recent examples of positive action, reminiscent of the eighties ‘road protests’ movement, and ‘reclaim the streets’ attests to the disenchantment felt by many in the urban landscape. In this context, one could argue, that my study takes the form of an implicit critique of the various transformations that have taken place in the urban landscape over the last fifty years.

The act of walking is inextricably linked with the performance of photography here. It functions both as an architectonic device within the *praxis* (expressed in the decision of where to set-up the tripod), but also serves to structure the imaginative experience of place, in that it constantly reminds one of the historical narratives and fractures within the spaces walked through [Fig. 2], the sequence of changes which have formed these non-places in the first place. Walking in this sense, is part of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* methodological¹⁵ approach, a revelatory practice.

15. Over the course of the five years PhD study, walking (and deciding where to walk), has been a creative research act. In general (and for obvious safety reasons, vis à vis my photographic equipment), the walks and subsequent photography, have taken place between 9.00am – 2pm; this period of time would have contributed to the sharp depth of field present in many of the photographs.

The potential of walking to reinvigorate a dialogue with the city has an interesting history. Although the tradition of *flâneurism*¹⁶ and the attitudes to the *dérive*¹⁷ denote a more distracted “drifting” to counter the more embedded spatialisation of the city, its adoption by the Surrealists provided the Situationists¹⁸ with a potent practice to interrogate political space. The point that this necessarily truncated historical purview proves, is that an exploration of the city through walking in the least well-known parts of the city (even as Atget¹⁹ was to so poignantly reveal in his photography of the hidden recesses of Paris,) has a certain heritage in the arts.

It is inconceivable these days, to discuss the role of landscape photography without firstly establishing the role of the photographer – the dialectics of the ‘witness’, and the nature of the access to the site. Some of these concerns, regarding the politics of representation exist throughout the study, and are anticipated by Paul Seawright in his own reservations concerning forthcoming representations of Africa: [Fig. 3]

I’d never considered making work that extended beyond my sphere of direct experience. I wrestled with the problems that making work in another country presented, not least that I have been critical of non-indigenous practice in Northern Ireland.²⁰

In relation to Seawright’s concerns, I view my own relationship to the study’s sites with confidence, bolstered by an ‘indigenous’ sense of belonging – having lived there up to the age of twenty one; nevertheless, I am still aware of my changed status, as the returning photographer – researcher, burdened by all the tensions associated within the Western ‘scopic regime’ and the Cartesian perspectival inheritance.²¹

16. *Flâneurism* - The term *flâneur* comes from the French masculine noun *flâneur*—which has the basic meanings of “stroller”, “lounger”, “saunterer”, from the French verb *flâner* - “to stroll”. Charles Baudelaire derived a meaning of *flâneur*—that of “a person who walks the city in order to experience it”. The notion of the *flâneur* has accumulated significant meaning as a referent for understanding “urban phenomena and modernity”.

17. *Dérive* a French noun used by Guy Debord to mean ‘drift’, and incorporated by the theorists of Situationism to mean ‘locomotion without a goal’. The idea owes much to Surrealism and the confrontation with the marvellous. It prefigures the more contemporary term psychogeography and its modern proponents of Iain Sinclair (even though he resists the label), and the late W.G. Sebald, although these two seem to adopt a more purposeful form of walking.

18. Founded in Paris in 1957, used both artistic and practical activity to “unleash a free and spontaneous” creativity in the realm of the everyday. Their main critique was to subvert the ‘society of the spectacle’ in which citizens become mere actors.

19. Eugène Atget (1857-1927) A remarkable inventory of seemingly prosaic Parisian spaces, often devoid of people. The motifs of stairs, steps, windows, alleyways, windows, doors, resonate within the canon of twentieth-century art photography. See Geoff Dyer’s entertaining insights into the photography of Atget in the *Ongoing Moment*, Little Brown, 2005, 115.

20. Seawright, P. ‘In Conversation’ (with Russell Roberts), *Invisible Cities: Paul Seawright*, Ffotogallery Wales Limited, 2007, 99.

21. See Martin Jay’s Scopic Regimes of Modernity- that Western culture uniquely privileges the visual, and argues that what he terms “Cartesian Perspectivalism” has been a dominant force. The French film theorist Christian Metz coined the term “scopic regime” in *The Imaginary Signifier* (1982, 1st pub. 1975) to distinguish the cinema from the theatre.



3. Paul Seawright, *Underpass* (detail), 2005.

The photograph *Opening* 2009[Fig. 2] appears representative of a penetration of a familiar wire fence, and other improvised entrances and exits. Yet, are we facing an entrance or exit? Without ‘foreclosing further readings’, the invitation is deliberately ambiguous, exploring the options posed by the non-place in reality, whether to accept the invitation left by the unknown visitor signified by the fence aperture, and so enter the site of *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place*, or more commonly, reject the *Other*, and refuse to enter, (according to Victor Turner), ‘new realms of possibility.’²² Interestingly, the very nature of the non-place site, is its elusive terrain, in which we might be simultaneously entering and leaving; this spatial ambiguity is more noticeable in sites where remnants of fences still exist, and where older boundary walls have been compromised by partial demolition or re-wilding. In this sense, it offers an experience on the threshold of inside and outside, both in a phenomenological and hermeneutical sense. The ‘non-contemporaneity’ of Bloch is pertinent here, as the actual physical experience of passage and photographic performance, collides with the historical past in a present flux.²³ This state of almost photographic ‘rapture’ (to allude to the fatal diving condition ‘the rapture of the deep’), provides the welcome hiatus, an act of severing, which becomes its own ‘reality-effect’, as the photographer erects the tripod to decide which view to enclose within the frame.

22. Turner, V, ‘Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage’ in *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, London: Cornell University Press, 1967, 95.

23. Ernst Bloch, in his essay ‘Summary Transition: Non-Contemporaneity and Obligation to Its Dialectic’, 1932, identified various strands of time, both archaic and contemporary, that co-existed alongside each other conflated in an untimely manner. “Not all people exist in the same Now”, he poignantly states. This state relates to my ludic simile of the “drowning man”, the ability within the human condition to live in different moments, and that this state affects my own allusive artistic practice.

My more purposeful embodiment of the *flâneur* method, is echoed in the work of several artists and key critical thinkers, each of which have become synonymous with a particular region, city, town, or locality. In the work of Vincent Van Gogh we acknowledge the transformative affect of *Provence* on the artist's personal vision. The landscape itself invests his vision with a universalising force, whilst stimulating an almost scientific preoccupation with the perceptual challenges posed by the *Provençal* light, colour, and terrain. We could assert here that Van Gogh's approach to his practice involved the reflexivity of walking, just as much as his correspondence with his brother Theo allowed an important reflexive space. Similarly in the work of Paul Cézanne we find an equivalent act of walking to the motif; in Cézanne's case, the pilgrimage often arrives at *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*. The symbolism of the journey into the desert, to experience something otherwise unreachable imbues the work of both artists, and has influenced other contemporary artists and thinkers.

The writings of W.G. Sebald have provided a welcome maverick reference in the development of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study, more notably, in his exploration of the 'local'; and how the local can function when one digs deeper. In Sebald's haunting travel memoirs (they are difficult to categorise): *The Rings of Saturn*²⁴ and *Austerlitz*²⁵ the itinerary of the journey enables a more confessional investigation into the dormant folds of history and personal reverie:

I cannot say how long I walked about in that state of mind, or how I found a way out. But I do remember that suddenly I stood on a country lane, beneath a mighty oak, and the horizon was spinning all around as if I had jumped off a merry-go-round.²⁶

There are of course, many other artists and commentators (some discussed later) who have directly used the idea of the journey in their work. One might consider the British Land Art movement, with its more notable proponents being Richard Long and Hamish Fulton, who (inadvertently perhaps) contributed more to a concept of landscape art photography than sculpture, through their 'recording' of often isolated land art pieces in what could be termed 'conceptual photography'. This recording of the outside art event / sculpture, has been augmented by Andy Goldsworthy in his consummate documentation of ephemeral organic sculptures (and in terms of art book sales – has become a best-seller).

24. Sebald, G.W. *Austerlitz*, Hamish Hamilton:London, 2001.

25. Sebald, G.W. *The Rings of Saturn*, The Harvill Press London, 1998.

26. *ibid*, 172.

Returning to the site.

I do not propose to redefine a new hybrid theoretical model based on a conflation of the two concepts of Lacan's *The Real*²⁷ and Kierkegaard's notion of *Repetition*.²⁸ Rather, I speculate that my practice does impact on these two concepts however rudimentary, in relation to the exposing through photography of a particular place by a constant return over five years. Furthermore, the question is, does this consistent return to the motif through photography's production of the 'reality effect', lead to a penetration of Lacan's symbolic order, to a heightened awareness of the *Real*? Is the photographer able to shed the symbolic by such repetition, such numerous encounters? And, in a purely phenomenological sense, are we able to sever the cord of cultural conditioning by this immersion in a repeated photographic performance? The *Google* photograph [Fig. 4] below shows the area where the various *Cottage* and *Avenue* photographs were taken through different seasons and over several years, demonstrating the reclaiming of nature and the potential transformation of this small zone. [Fig. 5] [Fig. 6] [Fig. 7] [Fig. 8] [Fig. 9] [Fig. 10]

If we consider the notion of return, in what way does this sequence of images help us to



4. Google aerial view, Hunslet, Leeds, 2006. *Cottage* and *Avenue* site area (in red line)

27. Jacques Lacan's notion of *The Real* underwent various revisions throughout his career, but for our purposes here we might consider the concept's paradoxical nature, its unattainable sense of 'absolute being' - that final part of the tripartite symbolic order which is forever beyond the individual, due to the impenetrable mesh of symbolic signification. And, as Sean Homer asserts:

The real is the unknown that exists at the limit of this socio-symbolic universe and is in constant tension with it [...] From 1964 onwards the real is transformed in Lacan's thinking [to mean that] which is unsymbolizable. The real is that which is beyond the symbolic and the imaginary and acts as a limit to both. Jacques Lacan, *Routledge Critical Thinkers*, 2005, 81-83.

28. See a definition of Kierkegaard's most abstruse works, "Repetition," in the *Introduction to The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* edited by Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino:

Repetition appeared on the same day as Fear and Trembling. Written under the pseudonym Constantin Constantius, it remains one of Kierkegaard's perplexing works. The author's concept of repetition is notoriously hard to grasp. He tells us that repetition is recollecting forward, that it is the interest of metaphysics, but also that on which metaphysics founders. The idea of repetition is connected with repentance, atonement, and it is identified with eternity. It is also the "watchword of ethics." Edward F. Mooney ("Repetition: Getting the World Back") unravels the various strands in this tangle of meanings and argues that, first and foremost, repetition is a form of meaning-acquisition bound up with the double movement of giving up and receiving back the world." Page 11.



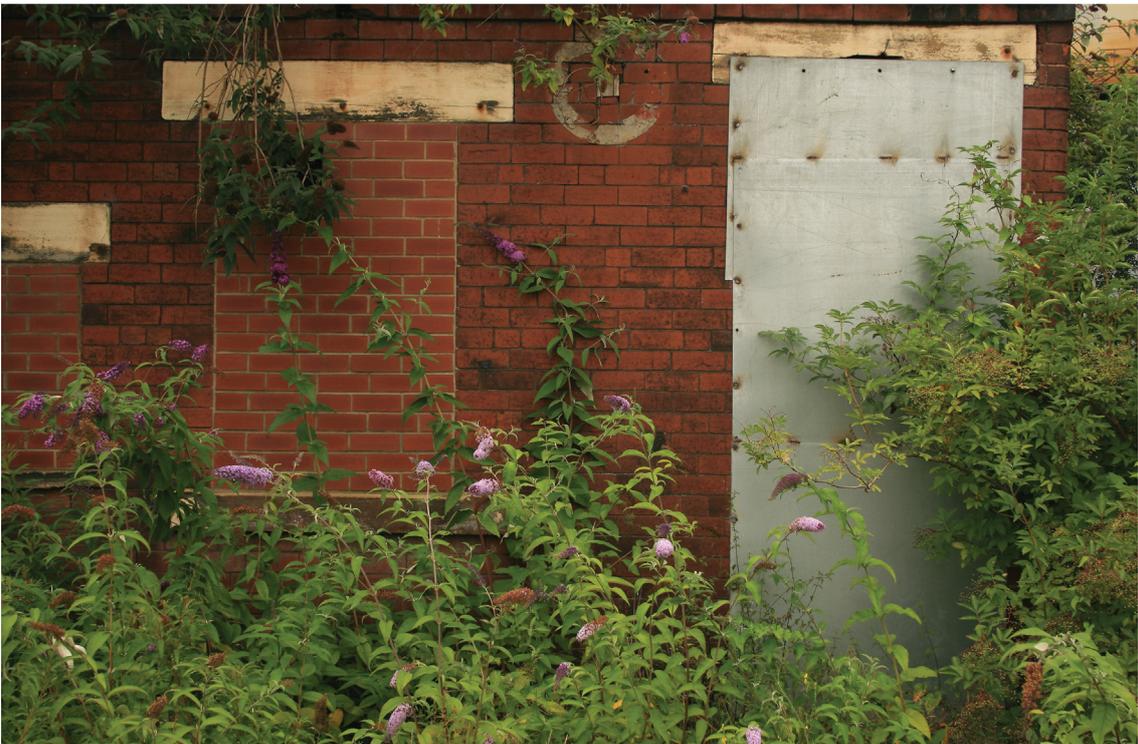
5. Jim Brogden, *Cottage*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm



6. Jim Brogden, *Cottage in summer*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm



7. Jim Brogden, *Cottage in summer #2*, 2009.



8. Jim Brogden, *Cottage in summer #3*, 2009.



9. Jim Brogden, *Cottage in Winter #1*, 2011.



10. Jim Brogden, *Avenue in February*, 2011.

apprehend the true reality of this particular place. Does the series of temporal still images make a more profound aesthetic statement, or provide an answer in relation to the impenetrability of Lacan and Kierkegaard's critiques?

I can only reflect that the photographic penetration of the *Real* is not possible here, as it depends too much on the unstable notion of the *punctum*²⁹ to erode Lacan's tripartite 'symbolic order', or in the Barthes sense – the *studium*.³⁰ To salvage something from this philosophical detour, we might consider that the landscape photographic act exposed within the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study could be seen to guide the spectator to a less familiar experience of place. Through the notion of the 'return' a heightened confrontation with place may be achieved, rather than a facile avoidance of such urban places. If (in the West) we regard the current hegemony (reality) as espousing the global market, in tandem with the popular expectation of 'long-haul' holidays to previously remote and exotic destinations, then the dissemination of a study proposing the very opposite, in the form of the non-place, may puncture – or at least prod, someone's reality, readjust their conception of place, and how it functions? Moreover, do these theoretical *cul-de-sacs* (or gaps in the fence), assist in the interrogation of the research questions? Perhaps, when we consider the key question related to the conception and value of non-place, the recognition that the less codified spaces within our landscape might provide a discursive arena for further philosophical meditations.

And, if the study can learn anything from Kierkegaard's (Constantin Constantius's) return to Berlin, it is that there is no 'going back' to restore, or recapture the idealised past experience:

So I arrived in Berlin. I hurried at once to my old lodgings
to ascertain whether a repetition is possible. [...] The recollection of these
things was an important factor in my taking the journey. [...] But here, alas,
again no repetition was possible.³¹

where it is better to savour the experience as memory, protected from the invasion of the present. In this sense, the past remains a 'foreign country' where they do indeed 'do things differently'.³²

29. Barthes uses the simile of the punctum to describe the unintentional "prick" of the photograph, its ability to elicit a personal response from an individual viewer, which was beyond the initial purpose of the photographer. The botanical definition of *punctum vegetatis* provides a poignant reminder of recolonisation within the study, as it describes the first point of a plant's budding.

30. The *studium* for Barthes represents the intentions of the photographer, and the more conventional public readings of the image within a constructed culture.

31. Kierkegaard, S. *Fear and Trembling Repetition, Repetition*, trans. & eds. Trans. Hong, H.V and Hong, E. H. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1983, 150–152.

32. A ludic reference to L. P. Hartley's famous quote regarding the past: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.", taken from his wistful novel *The Go-Between*, 1953, 1.

Establishing presence.

Contemporary cultural geography is often referred to as ‘new cultural geography’; it harnesses a more diverse range of investigative tools, and potential critical perspectives, as it realigns itself with a rapid global reconfiguration. The unique possibilities of photography have been acknowledged as a potent tool in this interdisciplinary ‘toolbox’ according to James Duncan:

Photography has also played a large role in twentieth-century ethnological representation. What better way to assert the primacy of the visual, produce a ‘true’ representation of the place in question and establish presence than through the use of photography? But the mimetic claims of photography can also be called into question.³³

This is not surprising, if we recognise the historical deployment of photography in the nineteenth century exploration of the great American landscape, and nearer to home (in some sense), the various Arctic and Antarctic expeditions supported by the Royal Geographic Society, provide some of the most memorable applications of the photograph as a form of documentary record.

Valued in its direct relationship with the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study, a more recent example of this practice can be found in Luc Delahaye’s synthesis of anthropology and geography, in his book *Winterreise 2000*, in which he creates a visual essay on the re-configured geography of a post-*Glasnost* Russia, whose displaced people are represented as causal victims of a too rapid embrace of global capitalism. Another country which has recently embraced global capitalism is China, and interestingly, in view of the non-place being the ‘shrapnel’ from this sudden collision, Professor Christianson at the University of Leeds (an expert on Chinese affairs) stated to my surprise, during the opening of my first show in the Corridor Gallery in 2007, that such sites do not exist in these states in China: people would be living in these areas, or the sites would have been cleared within a week; there was no concept of letting areas ‘go back to nature’ in the way depicted here.

The potential relationship between photography and a more spatialised practice is explored by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*, in which he argues that the role of photography is to locate ‘implicit and un-stated oppositions’,³⁴ where we experience a political economy of space’ in

33. Duncan, J. ‘Sites of Representation’, *Place / Culture / Representation*, eds. Duncan, J. and Ley, D. Routledge, 1994, 43.

34. Lefebvre H. *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell) 1991, 65.

which the processes of centralisation and monopolisation that underwrite capitalist competition, produce direct and indirect spatial effects which transform lives at ‘micro and macro levels’. Of course, there are other transformations open to photography in its interrogation of space, not least the possibility of the transcendental.

Is it still possible to speak of the sublime in the context of global communications, new capitalism, and the increasingly ubiquitous panoptic strategies employed by both the public and private sector? If we interrogate the body of photographic work within the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* archive, is there evidence of some confrontation with a new ironic dialogue with the post-Romantic / Sublime?

In the photograph *Wire* 2010 [Fig. 11] we witness a return to the same location used for *Delivery* 2007 [Fig. 12], in which a familiar shopping trolley is shown overturned, leaving its cargo of multi-coloured cables strewn underneath a blossoming hawthorn tree. In this context, the delivery in question, functions (is framed also) to suggest a ritualistic offering, a new kind of paganism perhaps? The contemporary referent of cables, shopping trolley and concrete constructed perimeter fence post, are all that sever the depicted scene from an implicit simulacrum of a Romantic landscape. The image invites a melancholic meditation on photography’s capacity to communicate an already receding present, a past, whilst also allowing the viewer to speculate on the future through their own projection; what event took place here? Who deposited these cables? Have they just left the scene? Are they standing just outside the frame? For what purpose have these various cables being left here under this particular tree? Will the protagonist return to the theatre of this scene?

Part of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* strategy here, is to use the landscape conventions of other periods, and in particular, the notions attached to the Romantic period, with its revelation of the awe, shock, and transformative potential of hitherto neglected and disturbing landscapes. The psycho-aesthetic revolution inherent in the work of painter Caspar David Friedrich, have been alluded to here, in part, to differentiate the iconography of non-place from its more conventional and popular representations in the media, as dormant development land. By utilising, ironically sometimes, the conventions of Romantic landscape painting, there is the possibility of ‘wrong-footing’ the spectator, in that we are confused by finding the seemingly abject scene beautiful?



11. Jim Brogden, *Wire*, 2010. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm



12. Jim Brogden, *Delivery*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm

In his celebrated Northern challenge to the established 'grand narratives' of art history, Robert Rosenblum contemplates the radical painting of Caspar David Friedrich:

Monk by the Sea, a picture whose seeming emptiness bewildered spectators [...] suddenly corresponds to an experience familiar to the spectator in the modern world[...] confronted by the overwhelming, incomprehensible immensity of the universe[...]whereby the artist, projected into the lonely monk, explores his own relationship to the great unknowables [...] ³⁵ [Fig. 13]



13. Caspar David Friedrich, *The monk by the sea*, 1809. oil on canvas

In this context, the use of the head-high tripod in my own practice, may be taken to operate as a surrogate figure, although the spectator's apprehension of the scene, their own inevitable projection, might make them forget that I am present.

The photograph *Avenue in Summer 2009* [Fig. 14] presents another example of a return to a familiar location, but invokes different questions of the image. Where does the avenue go? Is it really an avenue? Why not a street? Where are the promenading people? The photograph is colonised by the title caption, in which a linguistic sign, promises a more joyful promenade than is evident through the visual sign system. The visual dichotomy of the two zones depicted in the *Avenue in Summer 2009* photograph each reveal a different period.

The road surface in particular, is a testimonial to the longevity of physical materials: the Yorkshire stone cobbles, still present on the right-hand side of the frame, whilst the somewhat expedient tarmac surfacing on the left-hand side, which connotes a more contemporary surface, is already showing signs of nature's penetration.

35. Robert Rosenblum *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko*, Thames and Hudson, 1975, 10-14.



14. Jim Brogden, *Avenue in summer*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm

Within the broader context of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* archive from 2008 onwards, the receding black rectangle of the tarmac emerges as a central leitmotiv of the dark inscription, a *Munchian shadow*³⁶ [Fig. 15], the burnt area (a temporal signifier) stating that all inscriptions, however destructive, will be erased by nature in time.

This phenomenon reaches back to the spirit of Romanticism, where the ordinary place was transformed into the extraordinary through the power of representation. And, as the world experiences diminishing resources, over-population, and increased pressure on land, perhaps a new Sublime is to be found in the ordinary places left behind?



15. Edvard Munch, *Puberty*, 1895. Oil on canvas

³⁶ Edvard Munch, Norwegian symbolist painter. See his painting *Puberty* 1894-5. Famous for its depiction of vulnerability and the metonymic looming shadow behind the figure.

Chapter 2: Representations of the Urban Landscape.

The city stands to itself, the late
October sky a sportdome
of clear Fall blue; Virginia creeper,
with ample cladding, warming the brick walls
to a dark glow, a gross finery.
When I close my eyes the sun
beats in silent clamour against them.³⁷

It is necessary, albeit beleatedly, at this juncture, to further qualify my usage of the term landscape. And more particularly to develop a sense of the *diaphor*³⁸ of landscape. Its potent conflation of two dissimilar notions explains its tensive meaning, both as *land* in a utilitarian sense, but also as an aesthetic space, often communicated and transformed by various representations.

An acknowledgement of this contested term, might suggest that an entire study could be devoted to the various etymological adventures of *landscape*, and its subsequent interpretations; but for my purposes within the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study, I have made a critical allegiance with the definition provided by Denis Cosgrove in his *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*:

[Landscape] denotes the external world mediated through subjective human experience [...] Landscape is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of that world. Landscape is a way of seeing the world.³⁹

The word 'experience' is also useful in relation my own practice; an awareness of Althusser's notion of the 'ideological apparatus'⁴⁰ and its correlation with both internal and contextual theory, and the pervasive mediation of cultural construction through 'power', provides a more synthesised

37. Hill, G, *Scenes From Comus*, (63) Penguin Books, 2005,46.

38. In "Landscape Theory Assessments" Kenneth Olwig cites Yi-Fu Tuan's exploration of the concept of 'diaphor', observing that the tension of the term *landscape* is derived from its dual concomitant meaning as a 'political space', an economic domain for people, especially those involved in working the land, and who inhabit landscape as land, space, in contrast to its more transformative affect(s) through aesthetics and the 'place making' and scenery, established through various representational practices, which could include painting, writing, cinema, and photography. Olwig, K, 'The "Actual Landscape," or Actual Landscapes?', *Landscape Theory*, The Art Seminar Vol 6, Eds. Delue, R. Z, and Elkins, J, Routledge, 2008, 158.

39. Cosgrove, E, D. Chapter 1 'The Idea of Landscape', *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, (with a new introduction), The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, 13.

40. Althusser, L. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", (1970), 163.

hybrid critical position, further supported through some exposure to Husserl's phenomenology, and its more recent heir – 'experiential theory': a theory which emphasises the possibilities of experiencing the world through an acknowledgement of the critical value of 'lived experience'.

These various critical positions echo the popular anthropology of Clifford Geertz⁴¹, in which the value of local knowledge – 'of being there', is communicated through a 'thick description'. This new anthropological paradigm, provides a welcome anchor for the ekphrasis aims of this text: to make the textual equivalent of the experience / practice a vivid encounter for the reader.

To provide an anchor for this reference within the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study, I would propose that the physical presence of my practice – its being-there-ness, its evidential occupation of a specific space in time, and that both the photographic outputs and the reflective / critical writing, present a form of "thick description" advocated by Geertz, to make the work (its context) more accessible the general reader. This need for the photographer – artist – researcher to establish their practice in the complex theoretical arena of landscape, is explored in the *Landscape Theory* discussions featured in *The Art Seminar* series. The contested area of landscape representation was discussed at length, particularly the duality of the 'inside' lived experience and 'outside' the act of representation. The following assessment comment offered by Robert Riley acknowledges the current ambiguity in relation to a stable landscape critical framework:

Confusion abounds[...] Internal theory, traditionally [...] wedded to history, has dealt with the development of design and landscape as a self-contained phenomenon. Contextual theory [examines] the relationship of a landscape to the culture and society in which it is embedded. Experiential theory deals with the response of human beings to landscapes – a field that [...] holds enormous value for our understanding of landscape.⁴²

The neutrality of pixels.

The medium⁴³ of digital photography has its intrinsic associations, and might for example relate to a democratising quality often attributed to the wide-spread ownership of various digital

41. See Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays on Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, 1983.

42. Theory Comments made by Robert B. Riley, Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture and Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the former editor of *Landscape Journal*, in *Assessments, Landscape Theory, The Art Seminar*, eds. Rachael Ziady Delue and James Elkins, University College Cork, Routledge, 2008, 290.

43. An expanded notion of mediatization in relation to my choice of digital photography is beyond the scope of this study, although it is useful to remind the reader of Marshall McLuhan's famous declaration that 'the medium is the message'. This phrase was introduced in his most widely known book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, published in 1964. McLuhan proposes that a medium itself, not the content it carries, should be the focus of study. He said that a medium affects the society in which it plays a role not only by the content delivered over the medium, but also by the characteristics of the medium itself. (1st Ed. McGraw Hill, NY, 1964; reissued MIT Press, 1994, with introduction by Lewis H. Lapham; reissued by Gingko Press, 2003).

visual recording devices (varying in megapixels of course) to the ubiquity of dissemination through a diverse range of media channels, which might include web sites, social networking sites, mobile phone transfer, to the medium's more conventional use in advertising / print, and the art gallery system. But in the context of this study, does this apparent availability of the digital medium enable a particular representation of the urban landscape to ensue? Does the apparent 'collapse' of the digital print (if one ventures too close) empathise with the fragility of the non-place, its transience? But we must recognise, that a deliberate research tool - digital photographic practice, has been chosen for this study. As a simplistic explanation, one could cite the inherent *embourgeoisement*⁴⁴ of other media, especially painting, and that digital photography (being a fairly recent technological development), manages to retain a more neutral position - possessing less 'cultural baggage'?

In general, one could claim, that the investigative tool of photography (largely based upon its extensive surveying / documentary history), is still an appropriate method by which data, the evidence, is brought back for subsequent interpretations. There is no other medium as compelling as photography in capturing (embalming) the *what has been*. The 'funereal' resonance of the photographic act through the pressing of the shutter - a metaphorical throwing of the wreath over-board to the moment gone forever; the unique ability of the photograph to embed the photons of light reflected from the immediate past. A paradoxical trace of now.

Due to the transience of non-place, photography provides part of a discourse, a form of arrest, to facilitate subsequent research reflection and analysis, whilst it could be seen to transform these very findings through the theoretical *labyrinth* of representation itself. One is reminded of Wittgenstein's axiom, of each photograph (thing) having the potential to modify 'the whole logical world, the whole of logical space, so to speak.'⁴⁵

The Wittgenstein quote here is significant, in the broader context of the study from the peripatetic activity, the shifts previously alluded to, and the incremental 'clicks' (praxis and theoretical) which together constitute the unified practice, whilst also having the potential to each time modify the direction of the practice. As a precursor to chaos theory, Wittgenstein's point is important as it states that even the most specific micro event (a non-place in Leeds) could have the potential to transform - that meanings are not immutable, fixed. In this context,

44. *embourgeoisement* Marxism views the bourgeoisie as emerging from the wealthy urban classes in pre- and early capitalist societies. The term in this sense, denotes a bourgeois appropriation of cultural artifacts to further bestow personal status in society. The outcomes from artistic practice become embroiled in the politics of ownership and 'products.' Also, the term carries with it a suggestion of an art that is conventional, that fails to question existing values. Paintings especially, are denuded of their aesthetic / socio-political power by their involvement in this exchange of goods. They become mere hedonistic objects on walls for the owner's consumption. In relation to my digital outputs in this study, the work is not engaged with as a potential purchase by the audience, and this lack of an ownership 'drive' (in my view) enables the study to communicate in a much more radical way. (I make these comments in the context of my lack of gallery representation of course, but these are not limited edition prints, and their function is purely dialogic).

45. Wittgenstein, L. *Notebooks*, entry for July 11, 1916, pp 75-75c.

photography is employed throughout the study as an ‘ontological medium,’⁴⁶ in which the viewer is urged to consider each photograph’s polysemous surface, that embodies practice, revealing a conceptual matrix. An embodied knowledge that has the potential to be reinterpreted through subsequent critical contexts / re-framing, to create in the Raymond Williams’s sense of a ‘structure of feeling’⁴⁷; this notion is relevant in its relationship to the study’s aim, to bring forth evidence of a particular historical period de-codified (to a certain extent) through the evidence of human agency in non-place. The clear message is that these photographs use the critical ‘lubricant’ of non-place to reveal what was happening between 2005–11 in a specific urban landscape. However limited the information might be, it is still a record (under certain conditions) of a particular experience through photographic practice. If indeed, the practice contains this cultural experience, then the option of the archive could be seen to provide the most obvious repository for this ‘knowledge’. The medium’s suitability as an archival resource has an established ‘track-record’, although Foucault’s misgivings are still relevant⁴⁸: that the archive once established, is not inviolable, and could become vulnerable to misuse, or interpretations that were not envisaged by the original author – photographer– researcher, irrespective of the embedding of the inter / extra –textual fields in the final *text*. This realisation, this ‘letting-go’, is part of the elusive production of knowledge, that the contribution to the broader field of landscape photography is always in flux, open to future interpretations.

The ‘state of England.’

Following in a tradition that includes Daniel Defoe’s *A tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain*⁴⁹ in the eighteenth century, to the more contemporary travels of Paul Kingsworth’s *Real England*⁵⁰, my investigation of non-places could be viewed as a further extension of an idea of the revelatory journey, to explore the condition of England during a specific period in history.

46. See Michael Fried’s book: *Why Photography Matters As Art As Never Before*, Yale University Press, 2008, 347.

47. See Raymond Williams, *Preface to Film* (Williams and Oram 1954). An important term in relation to the ambitions of the study – to communicate a sense of a culture in a particular period in history, in which an official consciousness, interacts with a “lived experience”.

48. For Foucault the archive is a repository for statements from history; yet this chronological discursive thread is open to question, due to the ‘density of discursive practices.’ For further reading see Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, 128.

49. *A tour thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain* is an account of his travels by English author Daniel Defoe, first published in three volumes from 1724 to 1726. A non-fiction work that gives a matter-of-fact account of Defoe’s visits to various places, at a time when there were no ready reference works. It is also a valuable source-work for anyone trying to get an idea of the state of England, Scotland and Wales a few decades before the Industrial Revolution. (The Industrial Revolution is normally reckoned to have begun in the 1760s, though some scholars say it had already started when Defoe was writing.) For a full digital text visit: http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/contents_page.jsp?t_id=Defoe

50. See *Real England: The Battle Against The Bland* by Paul Kingsworth, Portobello Books, 2008. A contemporary journey around England that elegiacally captures the final resistance against the damage caused by rampant globalisation in an increasingly corporate landscape. The book is a sustained manifesto ‘against homogenisation.’

As described in the earlier background to the study, my own journey was ignited by the disappearance of a remembered landscape, encapsulated in the erasure of a much-loved cricket ground, set amongst the industrial heart-land of Hunslet, in south Leeds. Of course the cricket ground H.N.C.C becomes an ‘everyman’ symbol for a green space, that at the time occupied an important place in the life of a working-class community, as a meeting place for different generations. The newspaper cutting [Fig. 16] below, has been in my possession from around 1966, but now appears prophetic in its need to convince sports readers of the unique quality of something as insignificant as a cricket ground⁵¹



16. Peter Snape, *Yorkshire Post* clipping, circa 1966.

The sentiments appear even more prescient, when we consider the demise of so many open spaces, and forgotten corners within our local surroundings. And in the context of my own subsequent research for this study, the rather elegiac style of writing anticipates the influence of Iain Sinclair’s protests against homogenisation and the loss of a sense of place. Peter Snape’s article entitled: ‘*Nelson keep flag flying in desert*’ in the league cricket section of the *Yorkshire Post* prefigures many of the themes explored in the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study: the relationship between hidden locations, the fragmentation and scopic repercussions associated with car travel, and the contested area of landscape beauty and valorisation.

Along with my father, I played for the Hunslet Nelson Cricket Club until I was eighteen. [Fig. 17] All that remains now, is a section of stone steps leading down to where the pitch used to be, along side the Hunslet tabernacle church. The fate of this vanished world, its gradual fading into personal myth and the memories of those who participated in its life, mirrors the rapid changes wrought on the English urban landscape since the 1960s.

51. Snape, P. *Yorkshire Post Newspapers*, circa 1966 (date obscured). ‘Behind the advertising hoardings next to a tabernacle and unnoticed by motorists speeding along a main access road to the M1, lies the headquarters of Hunslet Nelson - their Low Road ground functional rather than beautiful, a green and solitary oasis in the cricketing desert that is South Leeds.’



17. Agnes Lawrence, *Tea interval, Hunslet Nelson Cricket Club pavillion, circa 1955.*

The Hunslet Nelson cricket club's ground lease (which dated back to 1869) was sold-off during the mid-1980s to local entrepreneur Rodney Fairburn seen on the roller below [Fig. 14], who was determined to extract the most from his 'investment', by installing a golf driving range on part of the boundary area. But eventually, the landlords (Yorkshire Water) refused to extend the lease on the ground, and by the late 1980s the club was terminated. [Fig. 15] The ground, which had been situated in the 'heart' of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* site, was re-developed by the early 1990s, and is now forgotten amongst a variety of new business enterprises, including a drive-in McDonalds, and a pre-fabricated factory dealing in vacuum repairs.



18. New owner Rodney Fairburn, *HNCC towards Low Road, circa 1986.*



19. Jim Brogden, *Views from Hunslet Nelson Cricket Club, abandoned cricket square, 1988.*

One function of this study, in relation to the questions of ‘conception’ and the related ‘value’ of specific non-places, could be its potential to reflect upon a set of similar circumstances facing a range of major cities in England. This search for sites that reveal a socio-political truth, is epitomised in England by a chronicler of the late-capitalist hinterland, the writer Iain Sinclair.⁵² According to Simon Grimble, Sinclair rekindles the tradition of the ‘moral’ journey – to assess the current condition of the nation: through ‘a tradition of non-fiction writing [that] often takes the shape of a journey to find prospect, a view over the condition of England which will show how the part is related to the whole.’⁵³

In much of Sinclair’s writing, (which echoes some of the earlier reflections on de Certeau and the relationship between language and the act of walking) the over-abundance of quotidian description, is at once a celebration of the contemporary everyday enmeshed in the residue of a shrinking past, and also a soliloquy of revulsion for modern life. He confesses for us all. Sinclair’s writing is a form of personal archaeology, in which his goal is a more authentic experience of place, liberated from the all too constant application of trans-global business and business park aesthetic. Like the small dog who must confront the larger dog through his own fear, Sinclair inhabits the liminal terrain which he concomitantly loathes and desires. These edge zones provide some consolation for Sinclair, as fleeting ribbons of memory that tether his hope for a more local and idiosyncratic urban future, declaring with a pioneering spirit that ‘walking; moving across a retreating townscape, stitches it all together: the illicit cocktail of bodily exhaustion and a raging carbon monoxide high.’⁵⁴ One cannot underestimate the influence exerted by Sinclair on my study. He has been a ‘role-model’ in the sense of his persistent exploration of the more prosaic juxtapositions that vividly reveal the tensions within the constricted urban milieu of England.

In the photograph *Two Fences* 2009 [Fig. 20] the of the older wire fence might suggest a contestation of space, ownership, and inevitably, a statement about access. The tight juxtaposition of the two fences could be interpreted as the incursion of new capitalism – surpassing an older industrial model, less preoccupied with security. The rigid steel fence (slightly behind the original), protects an equally anonymous structure, whose function is equally impenetrable.

52. As Sinclair himself recognises in his introduction (written in 2010) to Richard Mabey’s *The Unofficial Countryside* (first published in 1973) this book was the precursor to many of the more contemporary examinations of the liminal urban landscape and the expanding genre of psycho-geographical meditations: ‘...Mabey identified so neatly the transitional quality of unwritten places...’ *The Unofficial Countryside*, Little Toller Books, 1973, 7.

53. Grimble, S. ‘Somewhere to Stand: Descriptive Writing and Cultural Criticism in Iain Sinclair’s *Lights Out For The Territory*’, *Deterritorialisations... Revisioning Landscape and Politics*, eds. Mark Dorrian and Gillian Rose, Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2003, 175.

54. Sinclair, I, *Lights Out For The Territory: 9 Excursions in the Secret History of London*, Granta, 1997, 4.



20. Jim Brogden, *Two Fences*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm

The ‘pull’ of this photograph, which also includes iconographic conversations with American photographers of fences,⁵⁵ emerges in my view, from the close proximity of the two fences, the tension created through this squeezing of space, proclaiming the difference between new and old. What remains outside this unequal contest, is the enigma of the space that each fence seeks to secure. The formal properties of this photograph employ a restricted field of view to dramatise the connotative potential of the sloping concrete fence post on the right side of the frame. The intention here, is to juxtapose a less explicit boundary marker being usurped by a new declaration of ownership, a form and style of exclusion perhaps that is symptomatic of a more mendacious Sinclairian England: of ‘gated-communities’, an *audited* landscape – paradoxically less accountable, anonymous, and increasingly (in relation to urban landscape design/planning), more homogenous.

Similarly, the photograph *Brown Field* 2007 [Fig. 21] provides another example of this more generic classification of space, a eugenics of landscape. And, in this context, the pejorative term ‘brown field’, is an example of a nomenclature being hi-jacked for ideological reasons; reinforcing the power of language to both eradicate and bestow value.

In many ways, the title *Brown Field* functions as a synecdoche for available land – an economic resource, the direct opposite of ‘green field’, an area to be protected against over development, the spread of suburbia.

55. Geoff Dyer in his book on photography: *The Ongoing Moment* makes the interesting observation that certain visual tropes surface throughout photography’s history; the example of the white picket fence becomes a recurrent theme in the work of Strand, Weston, etc.



21. Jim Brogden, *Brown Field*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm

The image, taken in the early spring of 2007, shows the first buds appearing on the solitary tree, against a far horizon of recently constructed pre-fabricated units. How can this scene be labelled a 'brown field' when we can clearly see a flourishing tree?

One lesson that this may teach us is: look what happens if we leave places alone, rapid re-colonisation ensues; a situation, I would argue, that is happening throughout England to varying degrees.

But the *Brown Field* photograph suggests other allusions through the more general iconicity of the tree in Western art, as well as more recent parallels with the commemorative trees planted in the aftermath of the first world war,⁵⁶ by families visiting the battlegrounds of Normandy, so prescient in relation to the subsequent ecological movement, and the more recent example of 'guerrilla gardening'. But this act of planting trees resonates more powerfully with the *seven thousand oaks project*⁵⁷ coordinated by the German artist Joseph Beuys; a tribute to his dead father, the oaks project was eventually completed by his son. [Fig. 22]

56. See Paul Gough's 'From Heroes' Groves to Parks of Peace: Landscapes of remembrance, protest and peace' *Landscape Research*, Volume 25, Issue 2, 2000, 213 – 228. Also, Morgan, J, *Arboreal Eloquence: Trees and Commemoration* (Ph.D. thesis) Department of Geography, University of Canterbury, N.Z. 2008.

57. Joseph Beuys 7,000 oaks planted between 1982 and 1987 for *Documenta 7* (1982)



22. Joseph Beuys, *Seven thousand Oaks project*, Documenta 7, Kassel, 1982.

We might wish to consider the Joseph Beuys reference to oak trees, in relation to Ulrich Baer's analysis of concentration camp sites in his *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*, in which trees are shown inadvertently hiding a place of ineffable trauma [Fig. 23], quite indifferent to their complicity in execution.⁵⁸



23. Mikael Levin, *Untitled*, from *War Story*, Munich: Gina Kehayoff, 1997.

⁵⁸. See Ulrich Baer's *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*, The MIT Press, 2005, 118.

Regarding the digital index.

One might still postulate, that even in a world with countless images, be they analogue or digital, the mesmerising function of the photograph still persists: it points and demands –“look at this!”

And, in relation to my own *praxis*, each photograph eschews any pictorial zone which is out of focus; the aim has been to achieve a depth of field clarity from the foreground to the far distance. The purpose of this wide depth of field, was to establish a *heightened* photographic naturalism, which would make a claim for the digital photograph's index.⁵⁹ A validation of the event – that it took place, and that such places do exist. And, as Professor David Hill playfully remarked, the ‘digital image always starts with a date and time encoded’, providing further evidence that the event took place.

Whilst acknowledging to a certain extent Mitchell's digital prognosis in his 1992 book *The Reconfigured Eye*⁶⁰ in which he postulates that the digital image is a ‘meta-image’ – a construction of squares, capable of modification, whilst also serving as a pathway ‘elsewhere’, the analogue versus digital argument seems largely redundant, for several reasons: there has never been a golden-age of indexical truth in photography, its evidential authority has always been questionable. How does someone, something, get to occupy the frame? And where is their position in that frame? These are just two of the possible questions concerning the authority of the frame.

A vivid example of this problem is to be found in the controversial recording of the indigenous North American Indians in which the ‘imperialism’ of the frame is made culpable in a form of myth-making, whilst in stark contrast, the concomitant pioneering / surveying programme of the camera was implicated in cultural genocide of the same Indian tribes, by promoting new territories and expansion by the (often white) new settlers. All these factors question any claim to truth.

Furthermore, we should not forget, that there have been numerous examples of ‘chemical’ intervention within the early forms of photographic practice, from the disappearance of Trotsky⁶¹ in Soviet photographs [Fig. 24], to the more compromised documents of truth, revealed through the re-assessment of Joe Rosenthal's iconic image of the American Marines *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima*, 1945, which it transpired, had actually depicted the second flag-raising event of the day. [Fig. 25]

59. Relating to the “index” from Charles Peirce's ‘Trichotomy of signs: icon, index and symbol’, in “Division of Signs” in *Collected Papers*, 1932[1897].

60. William J. Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-photographic Era*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992.

61. Joseph Stalin made use of photo retouching for propaganda purposes. On May 5, 1920 his predecessor Lenin held a speech for Soviet troops that Leon Trotsky attended. Stalin had Trotsky retouched out of a photograph showing Trotsky in attendance.



24. Trotsky re-touched from the right photograph



25. Joe Rosenthal, *Raising the flag on Iwo Jima* (artist's proof), 1945.

We must always consider the critical presence of the photographer, with all its attendant complexities of power, privilege, a client's agenda, without forgetting of course, the context and dissemination of those representations.

To reflect on my own photographic practice in the light of some of these indexical arguments, I need to explain that my use of full colour digital photography within this study, attempts to avoid the potential cultural valorisation often associated with 'wet' black and white art / documentary photography; its perceived (in some quarters) preoccupation with craft / print quality, and the exclusivity of the collectable limited edition print, in favour of the more ubiquitous digital print. Moreover, the photographs represent a series of non-places that include some references to an industrial heritage; but importantly, through an absence of the more common 'art / documentary' mode of black and white, they could be seen to have been 'liberated' from accusations of sentimentality and nostalgia, which are embedded in England's affection for the landscape of empire. In contrast, the intention is to encourage the audience to engage with the colour of reality (the world is not black and white), without the reassuring *gestalt* - the unification offered by the black and white 'zonal system', more often ascribed to the practice developed by Ansel Adams.⁶²

⁶² The *Zone System* is a photographic technique for determining optimal film exposure and development, formulated by Ansel Adams and Fred Archer in 1939–1940. The Zone System provides photographers with a systematic method of precisely defining the relationship between the way they visualize the photographic subject and the final results.

The photographs in the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study aim to avoid where possible, an explicit Cartesian perspective. At this point, it may be useful to describe the *praxis* (technique) in detail.

Since abandoning a cheaper *Canon IXUS* camera in 2006, due to its inherent distortion of horizontal forms (and my own modified ambitions for increased scale and detail), I have used the *Canon EOS 400* (with 50mm lens), shooting in RAW 29MB image files, whilst adopting the larger colour gamut provided by the Adobe RGB ‘colour space’. The files (which in an analogue sense are un-exposed) are transferred through my G4 Apple Macintosh Powerbook and converted (exposed) as uncompressed TIFF files. No cropping is undertaken. In the main, the photographs have been taken using a tripod (with use of an external cable release). Importantly (in relation to the earlier views on presence), the height of each shot reflects my standing point-of-view (where possible), to facilitate viewer projection. Although my print sizes have varied over the study period, I have now (finally) decided on a finished image size of A2, within a white border area of A1; this decision (after much reflection), seeks to invest the photographs with a greater intimacy. The smaller scale decision also proposes a more appropriate encounter with the hidden qualities of non-place, in which the viewer is encouraged to move closer to the print.

However prosaic the point may be, digital photographs still rely on the real physical world to exist (excluding virtual worlds of course). To assuage any further concerns regarding the veracity of digital photography, it is now possible, according to Dr. Hani Farid at Dartmouth College, to test whether images have been digitally manipulated through algorithmic digital forensics.⁶³

The ‘drowning man’ and the particular lens of visual culture.

I employ the aphorism of the drowning man (allegedly seeing the kaleidoscope of his life unfurling in the throes of drowning) to describe the experience of working within the ocean of art history, in which each artist is undoubtedly influenced by an aesthetic osmosis – the eclecticism of practice. We should note, that this lens could be seen to be a further (perhaps a more tangible) example of the artist’s intentionality – to both embrace (whilst also repelling) his/her position within the ideologically agreed Western canon. I am aware that my photographic work shows the influence of other artists / film-makers / photographers within an extensive definition of visual culture. There is nothing surprising by this disclosure, but what does this declaration mean in relation to the aims of the research study, and the value of my own ‘critical ability’ in this respect?

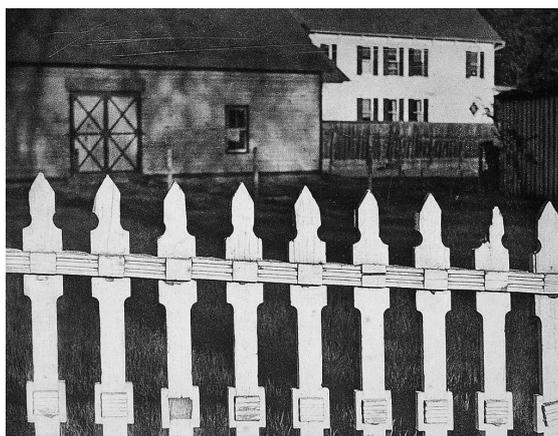
⁶³. See Dr. Hani Farid “algorithms” explanation in *After Photography* by Fred Ritchin, W.W. Norton & Company, 2009, 39.

Contextualising the practice.

In the essay *Artistic Research in Fine Arts*, Satu Kiljunen asserts that art-practice research should position itself and communicate within the broader historical context of art:

The need to construct theories, to analyse and express one's own thinking in relation to tradition, philosophy and visual problems of art, is an inherent element in the tradition of art. With these sentiments in mind, I would hope that the subsequent analysis of works that have informed the study will serve to further embed my practice within a broader lineage of visual practitioners who have contributed to our understanding of landscape representation.⁶⁴

To provide a critical insight into my practice, I have decided to emphasise visual texts, such as: paintings, films, and of course photographs. These references might (within the academic arena) be regarded as desultory, or to a lesser extent – idiosyncratic. Nevertheless, the subsequent melange provides an honest selection of direct influences that have situated and critically affected the course of my study. The study has been informed by the canon of North American photography, which includes the work of Paul Strand [Fig. 26], Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Edward Weston, Robert Frank, William Eggleston [Fig. 27], Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Stephen Shore [Fig. 28] Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, and more collectively, those photographers who participated in the seminal 1975 exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* at George Eastman House, the Centre for Creative Photography, curated by William Jenkins.⁶⁵



26. Paul Strand, *The White Fence*, 1916.

⁶⁴. Kiljunen, S. "Artistic Research in Fine Arts," *Artistic Research*, eds. Satu Kiljunen and Mika Hannula, Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, 2002.

⁶⁵. *New Topographics* (2nd edition) Copublished by Steidl and the Centre for Creative Photography, in cooperation with George Eastman House. 2010.



27. William Eggleston, *Untitled*, c.1971.



28. Stephen Shore, *Gardner Junction with Sunset*, 1980.

Although the anecdotes which refer to the formation of the show, and the selection of the participating photographers sometimes has a typical 1970s ‘Easy Rider’ serendipitous quality, the show’s impact, still endures, and continues to exert a pervasive influence on subsequent representations of the built environment. Their combined work, often re-working the same motifs of doors, vacant spaces, windows, deserted gas stations, motels, business infrastructure, seems to have been culturally absorbed within photographic consciousness, such is their ubiquity in the various manifestations and frequent quotations within a more popular export of American culture – witnessed in advertising, and of course, the ‘soft diplomacy’ of the American film industry.

Before we examine particular elements within the *New Topographics* show, it is important to note those precursors who provided the iconographic platform for such radical pictorial excursions in which the human was absent (most of the time).

This particular American motif which combines absence and a suspension of time, best described as an anticipatory mood, a referent of waiting, is embodied in the work of the painter Edward Hopper. This quality of absent reflection in Hopper's paintings have exerted a pervasive influence across American visual culture, and this residue permeates the rather melancholic stillness evident in the *New Topographics* show. Hopper's decision to represent an ordinary, perhaps more marginal aspect of American culture was an inspiration for the artist to be discussed subsequently. Although we do witness figures in the paintings of Hopper, in many ways they appear as extensions, operating as formal devices within a largely narrative urban/landscape. There is a sense of isolation, whilst paradoxically, we encounter figures embedded in various situations: petrol stations, diners, apartments. To assuage this overwhelming sense of contemporary alienation, Hopper attempts to reconcile this existential condition through the unifying qualities of often strong directional light, suggesting a transformative moment in the figure's predicament. A painting by Hopper which encapsulates the notion of light, stillness and absence is *Early Sunday Morning* 1930. [Fig. 29].



29. Edward Hopper, *Early Sunday Morning*, 1930. Oil on canvas.

The title is important in our interpretation of the scene; for we are not surprised to witness a deserted street on a Sunday morning. The entire scene alludes to a series of subsequent American motifs, found in films such as *High Noon* 1952 [Fig. 30] directed by Fred Zinnemann, and *Bonnie and Clyde* 1967 [Fig. 31] directed by Arthur Penn, where a static shot is prolonged to create cinematic tension, taken to its extreme dramatic *dénouement* in the 'spaghetti western' films of Sergio Leone, notably his *A Fistful of Dollars* 1964 [Fig. 32] in which close-ups of protagonists are inter-cut with middle distance shots of buildings and landscapes in strong light.



30. *High Noon*, 1952, directed by Fred Zinnemann.



31. *Bonnie and Clyde*, 1967, directed by Arthur Penn.



32. *A Fistful of Dollars*, 1964, directed by Sergio Leone.

Hopper's visual sensibility, his pursuit of the everyday American scene could be seen to have affected another precursor of the *New Topographics* show - Ed Ruscha. The iconographic similarities between the two artists can be seen in their embracing of popular culture and the seemingly mundane aspects of urban life. The Hopper motif of the gasoline station, is further developed by Ruscha in his book *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* 1963 [Fig. 33] produced along the Route 66 travelling from Oklahoma to Los Angeles. The book inscribes each photograph with a name and location. This minimal textual engagement, combined with a somewhat indifferent and bored gaze at such utilitarian subject matter, is prophetic of the more detached representation explored by the 'deadpan' genre of photographers to follow.

Ruscha's style of documenting the prosaic American landscape continues in 1966 with his book project: *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* [Fig. 34]. Using a Nikon camera attached to the rear of a pick-up truck Ruscha documented every house on the strip, which he then pasted into their correct position, inserting house numbers where appropriate. The creative reverberations from much of Ruscha's work from this period can still be evidenced in the use of the more authentic 'vernacular' locations seen in post 1960s art-house movies both in American and Europe, and more recently television title sequences such as the *Sopranos*. In art and literature we can trace Ruscha's celebration of the local landscape, and in particular, projects which incorporate the notion of the journey in relation to direct experience and primary research. Following in the tradition established by Walker Evans, Robert Frank, and to a certain extent, the more spontaneous 'on the road' urges of the Beat generation of artists, poets, and writers, Ruscha represents a particular post-1960s vision in response to the American landscape, that implies through its apparent ennui, an idiosyncratic preoccupation with an emerging, and much harsher commercially-driven new frontier, a newness that had yet to be reconciled, evaluated, within American culture.



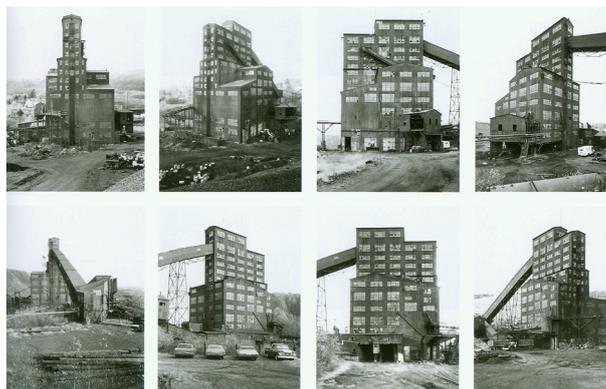
33. Ed Ruscha, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, 1963.



34. Ed Ruscha, *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, 1966.

The various journeys undertaken by Bernd & Hilla Becher, in order to produce their industrial photo-work *typologies*, echo the approach championed in the books of Ruscha, and together, prefigure the dispassionate compositional attitude evinced by many of the *New Topographics* photographers. Perhaps the main difference inherent in the Bechers' *typologies* compared with their younger American counterparts, is a preoccupation with photography's unique ability to 'salvage', to archive transient structures, employing their 'trade-mark' approach to neutral lighting and framing of each subject - the remnants of a less technological industrial past. [Fig. 35] As Michael Mack asserts:

The Bechers' own work has played a significant role in the developing industrial preservation movement, and their teaching at the Düsseldorf Art Academy has instilled in the generation of artists now dominating European art a subtle sensibility to the excavation of man-made landscapes.⁶⁶



35. Bernd and Hilla Becher, *Harry E. Colliery Coal Breaker, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, USA*, 1974.

⁶⁶ Mack, M. "Architecture, Industry and Photography: Excavating German Identity," *Reconstructing Space: Architecture in Recent German Photography*, AA Publications, 1999, 10. The students who studied under Bernd Becher at the Düsseldorf Art Academy between 1976-1997 include: Laurenz Berges, Johannes Bruns, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, Thomas Ruff, Heiner Schilling, Thomas Struth, and Petra Wunderlich.

In this context, I suggest that the Bechers provide an almost forensic examination of the structure's 'DNA', to preserve it through the photograph as artifact for future resurrection. In marked contrast, the subjects and style of the *New Topographics* photographers maintain an often direct critical address through the intentionality of their framing, yet we feel that the criticality exudes a much cooler and a more contemporary irony, even suggesting a banal aversion to the encounter. Some of the original criticism directed at the show from various visitors, was related to its somewhat casual nihilism – a more ironic, less epic representation of the American landscape, without an explicit humanism present, so often attributed to the work of the F.S.A. between 1935–43.⁶⁷

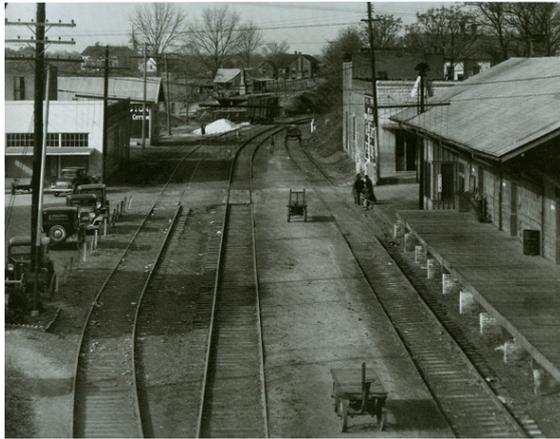
In the F.S.A. work of Russell Lee and Walker Evans, we witness a creative departure from the original F.S.A. 'brief'; both photographers manage to provide the required documentary evidence, whilst their images were augmented by a clarity of vision that prefigured the direct compositional address evident in the *New Topographics* show, and acknowledged the dignity of their human subjects, often in the context of abject conditions, in which poverty fails to erode the pride of those depicted, a defiance, even in the more 'staged' shots.

In the work of Walker Evans, we see a more communal America, in which individuals, (somewhat paradoxically one might suggest in the context of the migration of tenant farmers depicted in John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*), still appear embedded, connected to the land, however tenuous; we witness people connected to places and the built-environment, which in the *New Topographics* show seems untenable, not only by the absence of discernible figures, but by the selection of places and architecture: even the older buildings in the *New Topographics* show communicate transience – down-market motels, whilst the new buildings suggest an anonymous imposition on the landscape, through ribbon-development, and the prophetic business park. In contrast, Evans's buildings however fragile their materiality, imply a more organic development within their immediate location; weather-beaten and often displaying surfaces with their own accretion of local narrative, in the form of posters, in various states of legibility, these structures provide a sense of place, and a compelling local identity. [Fig. 36] The overall effect, is that the audience believes that people may have lived here, do live here, and stayed, depending on socio-economic circumstances of course. [Fig. 37] This quality of people belonging in a real place, in which some familial, generational investment has been made, is exemplified in the memorable photograph by Russell Lee, *FSA client and his sons; Caruthersville, Missouri, 1938*. [Fig. 38]

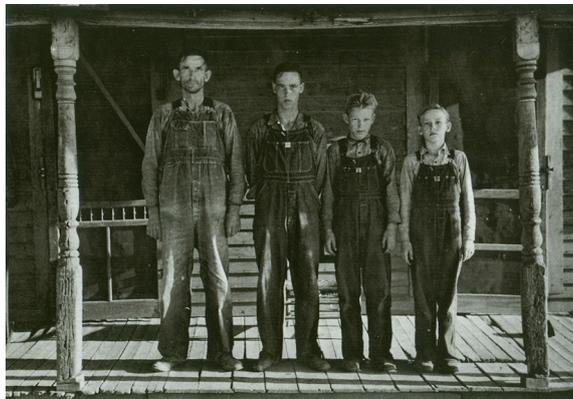
67. Stryker, R. E. and Wood, N. *In This Proud Land: America 1935-1943 As Seen In The FSA Photographs*, Galahad Books, New York City, 1973. An examination of the work undertaken by the photographers commissioned by The Farm Security Administration. It was Roy Emerson Stryker who directed this group of photographers. Interestingly, in the context of the text here, Ansel Adams referred to these photographers as a 'bunch of sociologists with cameras' (in conversation with Stryker).



36. Walker Evans, *Country store; near Moundville, Alabama, 1935.*



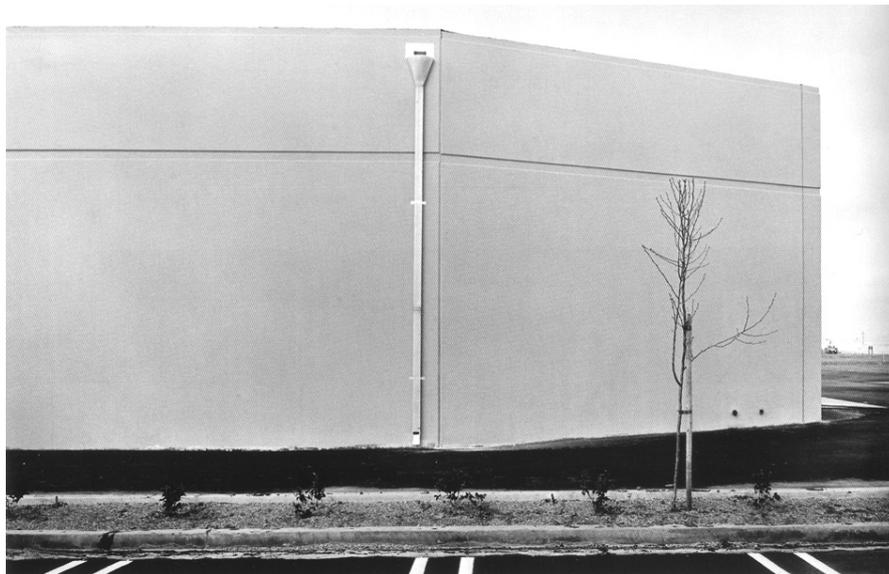
37. Walker Evans, , *Edwards, Mississippi, circa 1935.*



38. Russell Lee, *FSA client and his sons; Caruthersville, Missouri, 1938.*

The father and sons seem to have been fixed within the frame like immovable fence posts that may have once designated their farm. The figures appear immutable – monuments to a vanishing relationship to the land.

Although with a less obvious compassion demonstrated by Walker Evans and Russell Lee, Lewis Baltz's offers a cooler resistance to the emerging transformation of the mid-1970's American landscape. The apparent impenetrability of Baltz's work during this period can be explained by a minimalist aesthetic deployed to repel any straightforward interpretation of the scene represented. According to Brit Salvenson, Baltz had conducted 'socioeconomic analysis of the development in Orange and Santa Clara counties' yet his subsequent photographs remained 'uninformative, like the buildings themselves.'⁶⁸ The images which confront us in Baltz's *The New Industrial Parks near Irvine, California* produced for the Castelli Graphics publication in 1974, [Fig. 39] seek to emphasise the anonymity of this new architectural phenomenon, in a deliberate gesture (perhaps) to break with the more compassionate investigation of American life shown in the expansive 'celebration' undertaken by the FSA photographers. The viewer can only speculate as to the function of these pre-fabricated buildings, devoid of human presence, where an immaculate distribution of interlocking abstract spaces complete with achromatic tones, provides the only aesthetic solace, the beauty of the morgue.



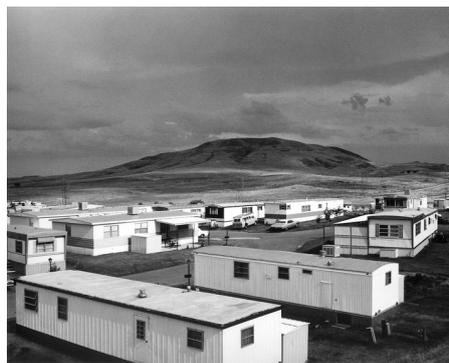
39. Lewis Baltz, *South Wall, Unoccupied Industrial Structure, 16812 Milliken, Irvine, 1974.*

68. Salvenson, B. "New Topographics," *New Topographics*, Center for Creative Photography (2nd Edition), Steidl, 2010, 42.

The contribution made by Robert Adams within *New Topographics* is less abstruse than Baltz, in the sense that we encounter images which are more accessible critically in relation to the rampant real estate development revealed in *The New West*, an ironic epitaph to a more expansive American West, that had nearly disappeared:

Many living by the Front Range today would understand those sentiments. Though the mountains are no longer wild, they still dwarf us and thereby give us courage to look at our mistakes – expressways, Tyrolean villages, and jeep roads. Such things shame us, but they cannot outlast the rock; in sunlight they are even, for a moment, like trees.⁶⁹

Although compositionally refined, with a direct clinical beauty, the black and white photographs of Adams, traverse the ‘front wall’ of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, to reveal a moral aesthetic contest between a newer commercial infrastructure, and an older land still resistant to any subjugation. Still the underlying shape of the old West persists, as new mobile homes are represented as a temporary defilement of the landscape, as well as alluding to the earlier pioneers and settlers of the West in their horse-drawn wagons [Fig. 40]. Adams makes sure that the viewer is reminded of a more permanent feature, by the inclusion of classic landscape motifs, such as distant mountain ranges.



40. Robert Adams, *Mobile homes, Jefferson County, Colorado, 1973.*

In the photograph *Along Interstate 25* [Fig. 41], there is the suggestion of a desert dune, complete with an isolated clump of brush. It is only when our eye surveys the extent of this tilted horizon that we notice the more obvious man-made intrusion of the metal protection barrier.

69. Adams, R. “Mountains,” *The New West: Landscapes Along the Colorado Front Range*. Aperture (originally published in 1974 by Colorado Associated University Press under the direction of John Schwartz), 2008, 113.

The image is at once an *homage* to a tradition of nineteenth century archive surveying (discussed later in the text) an unknown American landscape (in the Western sense) through an invitation to the viewer to speculate on the landscape over and beyond the landscaped ridge, whilst the rigid square format presents an uneasy and limiting spectacle: the formal dichotomy of the photograph distributes the two motifs which might suggest a wilder less sterile landscape - the white cloud in the top left-hand section echoes the remaining symbol of the old West in the rather forlorn central scrub surviving the sculpted embankment. The black and white image both unifies these two triangular elements of land and sky, yet through the emphasis on surface differences - the scraped texture of the embankment denuded of vegetation, the epic vision of the old West has been tamed within an automotive aesthetic.



41. Robert Adams, *Along Interstate 25*, 1974.

In this collection of photographs Adams traces the rapid transformation of the landscape, and is critical of its consequences:

Here no expediency is forbidden. A new house is bulldozed to make room for a trailer agency; sidewalks are lost when the street is widened; shrubs die in the smog and are replaced with gravel. Read the eschatological chaos of signs.⁷⁰

There are of course, plenty of cars on show, but these appear abandoned (parked) in a modern day simulacra of a ghost town, another ironic revolt against a necessary consumer/commuter product which permits this kind of tract expansion. Yet overall, the achievement here

⁷⁰. Adams, R. "The City," *The New West: Landscapes Along the Colorado Front Range*, Aperture (originally published in 1974 by Colorado Associated University Press under the direction of John Schwartz), 2008. 63.

is less the subject of a new man-made experience, and more concerned with the photographer's leitmotif for generations – the formal transformation of form through light, as Adams's declares: 'The Front Range is astonishing because it is over-spread with light of such richness that banality is impossible.'⁷¹

Although in the foreword to *The New West* John Szarkowski proposes a more sanguine, possibly redemptive quality in Adams's investigation – that viewers may find 'in these pictures nourishment, surprise, instruction, clarification, challenge, and perhaps hope,' I would still assert that however beautiful these photographs are, they form a visual protest against this type of insensitive development. This assertion may have further support when we consider the relationship of Robert Adams to Ansel Adams. As William Jenkins explains, the younger Robert Adams was a devoted 'disciple' of the older photographer, writing in a "fan" letter to him in 1979, that he regarded his work as representative of a purer West.⁷² Furthermore, Robert Adams's first purchase was Ansel Adams's *Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico*. What is emphasised here, is that both artists share a vision that places nature, especially the American landscape, as possessing a redemptive force.

This feeling of dislocation from place, inhabits *The New West* project: the only frontier now is the signage on the petrol station photograph entitled *Pikes Peak*, that declares "Frontier", beyond which the sun goes down over a distant range. The rare appearance of a human is shown either digging foundations for a tract house (his own grave, or symbolically the old West's grave), in silhouette within a sterile interior, or obscured through shade and scale. The exception to this apparent human absence, is the photograph *Sunday School. A church in a new tract. Colorado Springs*, where a group of teenagers congregate outside in strong light, dressed in formal clothes, again with the recurrent mountain range in the distance.

In many ways, this form of photographic proto-eco-critique is echoed by Baltz's in a radically different approach to landscape in his *Candlestick Point* project: the planar axis framing continues, yet the subject matter is quite different from the earlier cool minimalism shown in the earlier industrial parks work. Produced between May 13 – July 2 in 1989 Baltz documents the more accidental collision of the man-altered landscape through the bizarre movements of 'waste-management' and the unpredictable movements of nature. [Fig. 42, 43] In the Romantic sense, the images depict the destructive results from American consumerism, as Candlestick Point becomes a repository for a 'washed-up' detritus of wooden railway sleepers, ubiquitous car tyres, now assembled in totemic mounds (more often associated with the earthworks of Robert Smithson made in the 1960/70s) of discarded building materials, forming a forgotten, and eroded civilisation.

71. Adams, R. "Introduction," *The New West: Landscapes Along the Colorado Front Range*, Aperture (originally published in 1974 by Colorado Associated University Press under the direction of John Schwartz), 2008. xiii.

72. The letters are reproduced in *Reinventing the West* page 3. Cited in "New Topographics." by Britt Salvenson, *New Topographics*, Center for Creative Photography (2nd Edition), Steidl, 2010, 44.



42. Lewis Baltz, *Candlestick Point*, 1989.



43. Lewis Baltz, *Candlestick Point*, 1989.

In the postscript to this substantial project, Gus Blaisdell refers to the suggestion of the sublime in the nonedесript flatness of Candlestick Point as a: ‘wasted reality...a place as apart as cemeteries, national parks, civic plazas – an underbelly of the sublime, where the wasted challenges the composed.’⁷³ This sense of places that are “apart”, which are difficult to engage with ontologically, permeates the work of other photographers who have been influenced by the critical reverberations surrounding the *New Topographics* show in 1975, and the subsequent show in 1981–82 *New Topographics: Photographs by Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, and Joe Deal*.

Although the photographer John Gossage (who is referenced within this study at a very late stage) was a friend of both Lewis Baltz and Robert Adams, he was not invited to exhibit at the original *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-altered Landscape*, exhibition in 1975, yet, according to Gerry Badger, he could be regarded as a ‘fellow traveller’.⁷⁴ Gossage’s subject matter is highly relevant to the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study, in relation to the locational specificity of his recently reissued Aperture photography book *The Pond*: an explicit methodology, in which walking becomes a prerequisite support for a particular evocation of place through a photographic narratology – a sequential narrative of *terrain vague*. Interestingly, in relation to the adoption of the non-place term in this study, Badger (in his concluding essay for *The Pond*) claims that Gossage is more concerned with ‘non-place’, rather than a specific place, whilst also acknowledging the tensive liminal space that exists between city and country.

Unlike his American contemporaries (excluding Ed Ruscha), who exhibited prints concomitantly with publishing books, Gossage privileges publication over prints and a gallery show. *The Pond* (regarded by many as more than equal to the great American photography books) presents a series of black and white photographs preoccupied with the discursive tension that exists between nature, culture and notions of wilderness. The content and form of these photographs differ from his *New Topographics* contemporaries in subtle ways: there is evidence of a deliberate literary *homage* to Henry David Thoreau’s transcendental book, *Walden*,⁷⁵ which, in the final page of Gossage’s book we see the re-photographed extract “The Pond” erased, in a dystopian gesture, suggesting that we live in a more problematic relationship with nature and an increasing consumerist culture.⁷⁶ The photographs themselves attest to this drama: many of the images resist the inherent formal ‘austerity’ presented by many of the *New Topographics* photographers, and instead, pursue a

73. Blaisdell, G. “Space begins because we look away from where we are: Lewis Baltz: Candlestick Point,” *Lewis Baltz: Candlestick Point*, Gallery Min, 1989.

74. Badger, G. “Genesis of a Photobook,” *The Pond*, John Gossage, Aperture, 2010: 54.

75. Published in 1854, *Walden* explores Thoreau’s experiences over the course of two years in a cabin he built near Walden Pond, owned by his friend and mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson, near Concord, Massachusetts.

76. Badger, G. “Genesis of a Photobook,” *The Pond*, John Gossage, Aperture, 2010: 54.

compositional agenda that exploits unusual framing and focus shifts; often suggesting an animalistic viewpoint. This sense of unease (replicated in so many of the ‘teen’ horror genre movies at this time) created by Gossage in a fairly nondescript district of Columbia, Maryland, could be explained by the peculiar disquiet invoked by the narrative sequence, in which we follow the steps of the photographer, having to avoid, as he does, the various detritus on the way to the eventual suburban ‘refuge’. The journey must be taken without re-tracing one’s steps (an echoing of the one-take in cinema), a decisive performance according to Gossage, in which ‘each stop was specific, and all the pictures interlocked [and] when you have a destination in mind, you don’t double back.’⁷⁷

On concluding this journey, we appreciate the liminal vulnerability proposed by the sequence, in which a reciprocal process of landscape *osmosis* is suggested by the wilderness encroached upon by a “creeping” suburban development, which itself is dependent on socio-economic conditions, to prevent the reverse – the re-wilding of suburbia. This potential conflict of reappropriation contributes to the narrative power of the book.

As a project concerned with the medium of photography itself as a recording tool, these ‘pictures’ also contribute (in a ludic way) to the debates surrounding beauty, nature, and the intrusion of the man-made, by documenting the unexpected detritus along the way. Yet, in the exploration of trees, we sense broader pictorial allusions to the formal arabesques present in Japanese woodcut prints. Nevertheless, such an abundance of information, often presented through various depth of field decisions, imbues the book with a strong forensic resonance. Indeed, depending on one’s interpretation of the journey and images alone, a crime could have been committed here.



44. John Gossage, *Plate 11*, *The Pond*, 1985.

In the photograph on page 11 [Fig.44] Gossage seems to refer (as did Robert Adams in *The New West*) to the nineteenth-century archive of American survey photographs. The *homage* is not straightforward, as it relies on the nuanced effects of depth of field, and focal viewpoint, to create

⁷⁷ Gossage, J. Quotation from a conversation with Toby Jurovics, Curator of Photography Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., December 2009.

a 'macro' re-presentation of the erstwhile epic American landscape, in which arbitrary limestone fragments of rock are invested with a monumental character. If we temporarily cropped the hazy wooded background, it would lend the scene an even more ambiguous scale. A fairly recent cycle track, still damp from its own impression, further suggests the sense of another journey, finding a safe passage through this desert in miniature.

The re-evaluation of *The Pond* through its installation at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 2010, as a series of sequential prints following the form of the original book, acknowledges the often overlooked contribution made by Gossage to the photographers of place, both in America, and to a wider European context, through his own work / travels in Germany.

This critical and aesthetic *export* was further embedded through the European travels and teaching undertaken by many of the participating *New Topographics* photographers. For example, Lewis Baltz lived in Europe during this period, whilst Stephen Shore had a solo exhibition in Düsseldorf in 1977, which lubricated his relationship with Bernd Becher, and the inevitable influence upon the emerging students at the Kunstakademie, which included Thomas Ruff, Candida Höfer, Thomas Struth, and Andreas Gursky, whose different styles emerged to explore the minimalist architectonic principles espoused in the work of the Bechers and the *New Topographics* photographers - through an examination of the everyday, albeit in a much more monumental scale.

For my own contextual purposes, and as a continuation of this discussion surrounding the legacy of *New Topographics* on the choice of what makes an interesting subject for photography, I want to deviate from the well-documented success of the Düsseldorf School, to evaluate the more intimate photographs of two other German photographers who explore (inadvertently perhaps) the notion of non-place in Berlin: Ulrich Wüst and Michael Schmidt.

On viewing Schmidt's work: *Berlin after 45*, a body of work containing thirty two images (although he has been documenting Berlin since 1965), we witness a sustained examination of the more undeveloped, vacant areas of the urban milieu.[Fig. 45] There is no discernible human presence, save for the casual detritus, also found in *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* - the jetsam resulting from different layers of agency over time. One is reminded of the cataloging of different cities undertaken by both Eugène Atget and Berenice Abbott. This same evocation of alienation, a particular urban solitude, is presented in Schmidt's Berlin *corpus* of deserted pavements, and parked cars.

The history of the photographic representation of the empty city is explored by Steven Jacobs in *Amor Vacui: Photography and the Image of the Empty City*:⁷⁸ from the annihilation and remnants of Pompeii [Fig. 46] to the melancholic musings of Georges Rodenbach in *Bruges-La-Morte* in 1892 to the more contemporary images of a devastated Beirut by Gabriele Basilico in 1991. [Fig. 47] Jacobs interprets this preference for the more empty ‘voids’ in the urban landscape as symptomatic of artists reacting against the ‘kaleidoscopic culture of congestion celebrated by street photography’, and that this represents a physical ‘dilution of the city to a form of de-dramatisation.’⁷⁹



45. Michael Schmidt, *Berlin after 45*, 1980.



46. Giorgio Sommer, *Strada di Salusto, Pompeii*, 1880.

78. Jacobs, S. “Amor Vacui: Photography and the Image of the Empty City”, *Visualising The City*, Vol. 30, No.2, Summer, History of Photography, 2006.

79. *ibid.* 2006, 118.



47. Gabriele Basilico, *Beirut*, 1991.

In the Berlin of Ulrich Wüst (often concentrating on east Berlin), the notion of empty space, devoid of explicit human presence (usually) is found in a more architectural context. The often oppressive architectural spaces in Wüst's urban photographs, rely on the configuration of a designed space in which light is obstructed, causing sharply defined angular shadows to exist. When figures do appear in Wüst's images, an anxiety is translated through the representation of their urban situation, in which each figure must negotiate a clearly demarcated series of solid diagonal boundaries - a scheme of urban design where the person is made to feel insignificant, and must adapt to the bigger political goal, in the context of east Berlin's communist era.

The stark architecture presented in Wüst's project, forms an interesting dialogue with the apparent anonymity and clinical minimalism celebrated in the first *New Topographics* show. What perhaps links the two, is the representation of a landscape of power, in which structures appear, but their function is often obscured. One might infer from Wüst's east Berlin photographs, that the buildings function as housing blocks, or perhaps prisons. [Fig. 48]



48. Ulrich Wüst, Berlin (East), Mollstrasse, 1983.

The ultimate construction and subjugation of landscape provides us with the final example of the sustained influence of the *New Topographics* project, is found in the *Nature as Artifice* (New Dutch Landscape in Photography and Video Art) exhibition at the Kröller - Müller Museum in Otterlo, Netherlands in 2008. It is worth noting, that the relationship with the 1975 Eastman House show is further supported by the participating artists in the *Nature as Artifice* show citing the major influence on their work from 'Lewis Baltz, Robert Adams and Stephen Shore - along with Walker Evans, who did not take part in 'New Topographics' - as models or sources of inspiration.'⁸⁰

The legacy of the landscape representational tradition in the Netherlands (mainly transmitted through the medium of painting), and its enduring influence on cultural perceptions, is subverted by the breadth of this show. A different version of the Netherlands is revealed, which seeks to erode the tourist myth of a land of windmills, reed beds, canals and dunes. The exhibition exposes the Dutch landscape to what it is: the most artificially constructed landscape in the world, quite literally - a 'constructed landscape' in every sense. The artists here, present a more vulnerable vision of the Dutch landscape, without sentimentality, a land reclaimed in the form of polders, through the use of dykes and various technological drainage devices. Of course, such land is valuable, and the results are often seen as a maximised landscape to realise the initial investment. This commercial and aesthetic conflict informed the work of the *New Topographics* to a certain extent, yet within the *Nature as Artifice* show, the criticality is more explicit, more political. The same detached framing persists in many ways, exemplified through the framing distance of Baltz, Adams and Shore, yet the iconography presented is located within a more spatial narrative; these images are more accessible in that sense.

In his series of photographs exposing poisoned Dutch landscapes Wout Berger echoes Baltz's *Candlestick Point* in the pursuit of a paradoxical beauty. Also inspired by Stephen Shore's 1982 book, *Uncommon Places*, Berger became fascinated by the strange transformations of flora and fauna found in the most polluted Dutch landscapes.

These bizarre findings became part of his *Poisoned Landscape* project produced in the late 1980s. This project is particularly revealing in its relationship to a Dutch tradition in which the act of photography is embedded within notions of social justice - a kind of visual 'direct action'.

The specificity of this need to embed social criticism beyond the aesthetic surface of the photograph is evident in Berger's *Amsterdam, Diemerzeedijk IBS- code 025-007 June, 1986* [Fig. 49]; the 'IBS' code within the title refers to the Interim Act on Soil Decontamination' which was

80. Heuvel, V. D. M. "Nature as Artifice," *Nature as Artifice: New Dutch Landscape in Photography and Video Art*, NAI Publishers, 2008, 14.

implemented in the Netherlands in 1983.⁸¹ On the site of a former incineration plant now showing a paradoxical and vibrant re-colonisation of flora, Berger's photograph presents a problematic encounter for the spectator: the quality of colours and textures confronted here resemble more exotic natural phenomena – coral reefs for example, whilst the art historical allusions may suggest the paintings of Van Gogh, or the later paintings of Claude Monet. Yet at the same time, the title disturbs this aesthetic encounter by its factual geographical and scientific disclosure. And, in some sense, the operation of the photograph forms a dialogue with the earlier concerns of the Sublime, that encouraged a new engagement with shock and awe presented by a wilder nature, evident in mountain landscapes for example.



49. Wout Berger, *Amsterdam, Diemerzeedijk IBS -code 025-007 June, 1986.*

In many ways, the geographical specificity of Wout Berger's photographic methodology forms an appropriate conduit through which I might contextualise my own criticality within the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study: from the peripatetic humanistic 'mission' of the F.S.A photographers (providing its own imperatives of social justice), to the more detached critical address evident in the *New Topographics* show and its broader impact on late twentieth/ twenty first century photographic practice.

81. *ibid.* Although the preoccupation with social justice permeates Wout Berger's 1980s work, his later work is far more concerned with the more perceptual and formal problems posed by photography. His final photograph in the *Nature as Artifice* show has been selected from his *Roadside Flowers* project, which explores the Dutch need to control nature. The sowing of seeds to encourage more-biodiversity on the hard-shoulder of roads, resulting in beautiful strips of sinuous 'meadows' which Berger has documented through macro photography. This project in particular, relates to some of the underlying biodiversity themes within the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study. 2008, 34.

Perhaps the most significant connection here, in relation to my own study (excluding the E.S.A work) is that most of the work discussed features contemporary places without the more explicit protagonist the human figure, which was so prominent in pre-1970s photography. And importantly, for my text here, it is this legacy which continues to reconfigure the notions affecting landscape representation, whilst providing an understanding of photographic critical history which has enabled such a practice as my own to exist.

Unexpected conversations.

The following references, provide a more idiosyncratic range of landscape allusions which have informed the critical development of the study. Still regarded as the quintessential Northern social-realist [Fig. 50] film set in the coalfields of South Yorkshire, *KES*, a narrative of a schoolboy and his eponymous Kestrel, depicts a different English landscape.⁸² A metonymic landscape that clearly defines the stark isolation of the boy's inner-world, his alienation, a state which is only temporarily deferred by the companionship of this other wild creature.⁸³ The landscape in the film *KES* is defined by a post industrial patchwork of derelict land, resulting from various inscriptions made by the mining industry, interwoven with parcels of semi-rural habitats.



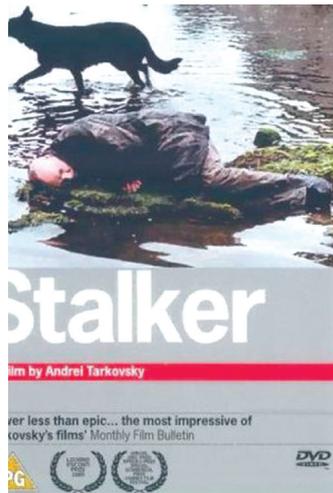
50. *KES*, Directed by Ken Loach, 1969.

The most influential landscape representation on the study, has been the Russian film *Stalker*.⁸⁴ [Fig.51] The film's preoccupation with the 'zone', a secret and forbidden area, only accessed by the main character Stalker (as guide), has been a major influence on the study.

⁸². A further point regarding the influence of this film on my study: the confidence shown in the directorial style towards a Northern landscape / subject reinforced the preliminary stages of my study, by reaffirming that those landscapes which are familiar can still resonate beyond to other audiences. The film provided a welcome antidote to the Hockney model (before his return to East Yorkshire) in which one was better off seeking more exotic locations for inspiration. (Of course other Northern films from the 1960s and 1970s have been invaluable in forging this recognition, but are beyond the scope of this study).

⁸³. I have noted in recent lectures on 'narrative cinema' within the DESN 1800 School of Design lecture programme (and proposed journal article), that there are parallels to be drawn with Ken Loach's *KES* and the 1958 cult French film *Crin-Blanc*, where we witness a similar narrative of a boy taming a wild creature, against the more inconsiderate (and joy-less) machinations of the existential adult world. *Crin-Blanc* (White Mane) the 1953 French classic directed by Albert Lamorisse (who also directed *Le Ballon Rouge*) is set in the desolate marshes of the Camargue in south-west France; it tells a tale of a boy who tames a wild stallion called White Mane.

⁸⁴. *Stalker* directed by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1979.



51. *Stalker*, Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, 1979.

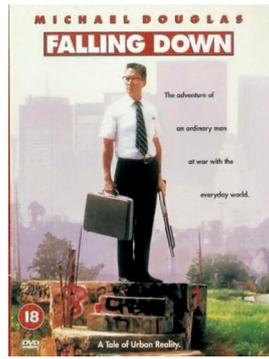
The enigmatic period in *Stalker*, set amongst abandoned utilitarian buildings within an emerging wilderness, prefigure both *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place*, and the dystopian imagery of the Chernobyl disaster with its own evacuated remnants. [Fig.52] My boyhood explorations of redundant subterranean concrete air-raid shelters erased during the completion stages of the M1 motorway section entering Leeds, completes a personal eclectic triangle.



52. Pripyat near Chernobyl apartment block (unknown photographer), circa 1990.

Although there is no direct invitation to be guided through the American urban landscape in Joel Schumacher's film *Falling Down*,⁸⁵ [Fig.53] described as a 'tale of urban reality', we follow Michael Douglas in full peripatetic paranoia as he takes on the role of the 'ordinary man [being-in-the-world] at war with the everyday world,' a human lens through which the audience experiences

⁸⁵The film *Falling Down*, directed by Joel Schumacher in 1993, and starring Michael Douglas. Described in the promotional material as a "Tale of Urban Reality." The more controversial aspects of the film beyond the 'practice of space', were the contentious representations of multicultural America, and the film's somewhat reactionary (neo-Conservative) agenda. An interesting film to compare with the Oscar-winning film *Crash*, in their portrayal of ethnicity and power. The compelling leitmotiv of *Falling Down* in view of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study, is the film's interesting relationship to some discussions on de Certeau and Lefebvre and "spatial practices", made quite poignant by the main character's insistence that he is just trying to "get home".



53. *Falling Down*, Directed by Joel Schumacher 1993.

a somewhat eschatological vision of a dislocated modern ‘edge city’, a phenomenon explored by Edward Soja in his investigation of *Thirdspace*:

All excursions into *Thirdspace* begin with this ontological restructuring, with a presupposition that being-in-the-world, Heidegger’s *Dasein*, Sartre’s *être-là*, is existentially definable as being simultaneously historical, social, and spatial.⁸⁶

A photograph that continues the idea of a peripatetic human agency across the urban landscape is *After the Fire* 2010 [Fig. 54].

Here the viewer is shown the aftermath of the fire, in which paradoxically, a new barrier is formed from the charred remains of brambles, reminding one of a wilder nature, more redolent of desert scrubland, or the Wessex heath-lands evoked by Thomas Hardy in his novel *Return of the Native*.⁸⁷ But my own associative projections of wild-country are tempered here, by the middle distance surfacing of pre-fabricated industrial units, a pervasive sign of modern storage, with its own *sexed-up* nomenclature of ‘logistics’.

The architectonics of *After the Fire* belong to a subtle change in the body of work since 2008, in which the formal address of the photograph emphasises a frontality (using a strong horizontal element) to the viewer – a dialogical invitation, a compositional method also adopted in *Burnt Ground* 2009 [Fig. 55], and also *Plot* 2009 [Fig. 56].

⁸⁶ Soja, W, E. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places*, Blackwell Publishing, 1996, 73.

⁸⁷ Asquith, M. “A drama of grandeur and unity”: Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*. *The English Review*, 14.1 (Sept 2003): 21(3) Also, closer relationship with Egdon Heath and *After the Fire* 2010 is that both locations seem to negate the effects of sunlight, as though they are beyond illumination. Hardy emphasises the absorptive qualities of heath land, its dark brooding. The notion of the return is interesting in the context of other discussions within the text.



54. Jim Brogden, *After the Fire*, 2010. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.



55. Jim Brogden, *Burnt Ground*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.



56. Jim Brogden, *Plot*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

All three of these landscapes aim to allude to other contemporary works that explore a paradoxical Sublime: the desecrated desert images featured in Richard Misrach's *Desert Cantos* project [Fig. 57], in which he was initially drawn to the essential beauty of the desert landscape, yet remained to record its environmental abuse evidenced by abandoned weapons, dead animal pits, and the detritus related to an encroaching human habitation. Misrach's own defense of his beautiful images resonates within a broader aesthetic debate, in which he proposes that the 'beauty' in his work helps to convey challenging ideas - that 'it engages people when they might otherwise look away.'⁸⁸



57. Richard Misrach, *Desert Fire #1*, 1983.

⁸⁸. *Lure of The Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentred Society*, Lucy Lippard, The New Press, 1997, 180.

Misrach continues to explore those places where contamination or destruction has occurred. His most recent project *Destroy This Memory* documents the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. These untitled photographs present various abandoned homes and buildings which carry the often angry, poignant, and humorous messages left by owners who have fled the disaster. In many ways, these inscriptions act as figures in the landscape, providing a form of displaced urban poetry – a dystopian Twitter. [Fig. 58]



58. Richard Misrach, *Destroy This Memory*, 2010.

An encounter with a previously damaged/exploited landscape is also suggested in the reclamation of redundant open-cast lignite mines at Lausitz⁸⁹ in former East Germany, known as the 10 - year *Internationale Bauausstellung Fürst – Pückler – Land* (IBA) project.⁹⁰ [Fig. 59]



59. Petra Petrick, *Old coal pits in the Lausitz area*, circa 2005.

⁸⁹. 'One option was to do nothing—to leave the landscape to its own devices as a wilderness', *The Architects' Journal*, 2005, 26.

⁹⁰. Furthermore, the 2004 German pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2004 ninth International Architecture Exhibition *Deutschlandschaft: Epizentren Der Peripherie* brought together a range of German architectural practices and landscape design theorists to explore the phenomenon of non-place and its migration to the 'urban fringe' to form a 'hybridized scape' according to Francesca Ferguson.

Although there are numerous paintings within the canon of Western Art which have informed this study, the painting to have affected the spirit of this study, is the symbolist work *Isle of the Dead* (third version) [Fig. 60], painted by Arnold Böcklin in 1883. But why would a symbolist painting influence a contemporary photographic research study? I would propose for these reasons: although there are figures in the painting, the overall mood is one of a melancholic absence, in which the spectator's presence, their point-of-view is immediately behind the photographer, investing the scopic experience with an evidential quality – following the photographer into a private world, the 'island' of non-place.



60. Arnold Böcklin, *Isle of the Dead* (third version), 1883.

But importantly, it is in terms of the painting's architectonic qualities – the frontality of the central motif, the unfolding island, which affected the compositional decisions within my study. By reducing perspectival elements, the attention of the viewer is retained, to (as Böcklin states) 'to produce a stillness [*in the photograph*] that one would be awed by a knock on the door.'⁹¹

Addressing the image and the dialogic frame.

As *Isle of the Dead* asserts, a title affects the reading of a work in the same way that the photograph is also affected by the title provided. But why give a title in the first place? Surely any

91. Culshaw, J. *Rachmaninov: The Man and his Music*, 1949, 73. (My emphasis).

title conforms to a certain labelling convention, however cryptic? Yes, the photograph should stand-alone. My earlier titles were tested during one of the School's postgraduate presentation forums in 2009. Some of those present, felt that they were being 'patronised' by several of the photographs titles. Whilst understanding their point of view, I felt that the photographs needed titles to reinforce the aims of the project. But in an effort to 'take on board' some of this criticism, I decided to amend many of the original titles - to ensure that further readings of the photographs would not be foreclosed.

A formal invitation.

Whilst eschewing the perspectival space that creates the more angular shapes of perspectival recession, my photographs rely on the stability of planar axes, which in themselves, serve to counter the apparent disarray associated with these marginal areas. As a result, the viewer has time to contemplate, to negotiate the digital surface. The index operates in a declarative way, directly pointing to the key signifier within the photograph's *tableau form*; I refer here to a parallel with the pictorial elements more commonly found in painting, in which the French sense of a construction of the 'pictorial' is emphasised.⁹²

In comparison to the work produced after 2007, the framing of the iconography in the earlier photographs was too obvious. These photographs, notably *Boundary* 2007 [Fig. 61] and *Green*



61. Jim Brogden, *Boundary*, 2007. Exhibited as a genisis print 42 x 54 cm.

⁹². Cited by Michael Fried page 18, in *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (2007): Jean-Pierre Criqui "Bustamante as Photographer (Notes for an Unfinished Portrait)," trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods, in Jean-Marc Bustamante: oeuvres photographiques 1978-1999, exh. Cat. (Paris, 1999), p. 162.

Room 2007 [Fig. 62] appear too graphic in their intentions to reveal the potency of *objet trouvé*, and examples of ‘chance-juxtaposition’. In contrast the work produced beyond 2007 is more suggestive, less prescriptive, as the middle-distance space enters the frame, proposing a more expansive reading of the photographs in relation to the potential conceptions of non-place.



62. Jim Brogden, *Green Room*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

The value of non-place.

In relationship to the U.K. in particular, some might argue that many of our landscape encounters are deeply affected by the pervasive ‘lens’ of the heritage industry, working concomitantly with numerous literary associations. For example, we might wish to consider *Brontë Country* in West Yorkshire, and *Hardy Country* in Dorset. This process of both explicit and implicit designation, and privileging of one place over another is most evident in the designation of the National Park, the quintessential landscape ‘construction’ (in the cultural sense), complete with the obligatory visitor centre, and further articulated through the interactive tourist information screen. It is here that we witness the visitor as ‘pilgrim’ to the venerated site, suggesting a degree of complicity in an agreed valorisation of nature and landscape. Furthermore, let us consider what I describe as ‘the plaque effect’,⁹³ where value is bestowed upon landscape through a form of spatial branding.

⁹³. I first used my term “plaque effect” to describe the bestowing of value on certain landscapes in my article “Encountering the “Non-Place,” *ENTERTEXT* 6.3 ,2007, 328.

Do we then concede that culture is predisposed to privileging certain landscapes for veneration and commemoration?

It may be difficult to refute that established natural icons such as forests, mountains, and rivers, have embedded various cultures – providing a cultural stability through associated rituals, symbolism, a profound ‘sense of place’ and belonging. This landscape symbolism, I suggest, is often resurrected to bolster the notion of national identity for various reasons.

To agitate the debate further, I would argue that those organisations that already purchase land and act as the guardians of ‘areas of outstanding beauty’ – most notably in the U.K., the National Trust, might wish to re-consider their criteria when acquiring future sites. The acquisition of a non-place within their landscape portfolio would surely elicit a broader debate relating to heritage, and to that most difficult of words – beauty. Indeed, how ironic it would be if such valorisation led to an increase in access to the non-place, thereby placing those innate qualities previously discussed, at risk.

The messages that culture communicates are explicit in most cases. The language of heritage, re-gentrification and its sibling, re-generation, pervade our everyday lives. It is this power of language that confers special treatment for certain landscapes as being worthy of preservation.

When I have shown the photographs of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* to various groups of architects and urban planners, both in the UK and Czech Republic, Brno⁹⁴, I anticipated their architectural fantasies as a provocation for debate by declaring: ‘I imagine that when you see these photographs, you start to imagine your own architectural schemes there, you see potential buildings, grand projects.’ If we hypothesise, for demonstration purposes only, how the authority of the plaque might conspire in the reification of the non-place, say for example, on an anonymous arboreal embankment along the M1. How different would be the perception of that place?

A contextual summary.

In relation to such a diverse range of critical references within visual culture, it is worth reflecting on at this stage, the possible *differences* presented by *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place*. An obvious difference would be the academic context in which my own study has developed over the period 2005–11, where different levels of the practice have been situated, disseminated, and encountered by various audiences. Due in part to its digital materiality and the ‘democratising’

94. Brogden W J., “Terra Nullius VEREJNOST A KOUZLO VIZUALITY”, *Rozvoj teoretických základů výtvarné výchovy a otázky kulturního vzdělávání* journal, (pp.220–227 Chapter III) eds. Radek Horáček and Jan Zálesák pub: Masaryk University, Faculty of Pedagogics October 2008.

aims of the research, the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* photographs and writing have not entered into a representational order so firmly. The various modes of showing the work, has always been in a more latent, liminal space: for example the website, which in itself, contains the more elusive records of screen-based viewer ‘hits’, including a surprising discussion of my images in Spanish on a Peruvian photography blog, without my permission or knowledge. In this context, the digital mode of representation and subsequent archiving, enables multiple modes of transmission, scale, and variations on ‘objecthood’ to develop. With this in mind, my images (to varying degrees) reside in different places from other photographers, even though the scanning and eventual digitisation facility exists for purely analogue photographers as well. This latency in the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* archive – is located in the various external ‘solid-state’ hard drives in my studio. This digital *flexibility* has been evident throughout the various exhibitions, conferences, and lectures attached to the study.

I would propose that my photographs suggest an encounter with a post-Romantic subject, where nature is shown to be reclaiming the post-industrial space, involving an explicit conversation with the history of landscape representation. In support of this declaration, Robert Smithson states that ‘one person’s ‘materialism’ becomes another person’s ‘Romanticism’ ...In a sense, it becomes evident that today’s materialism and Romanticism share similar ‘surfaces.’”⁹⁵

95. Smithson, R. “An Aesthetics of Disappointment,” in Jack Flam (ed.), *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 81.

Chapter 3: Anthropological encounters in non-place.

He did not want the warm clover and the play of seeding grasses; the screens of quick-set, the billowy drapery of beech and elm seemed best away; and with great cheerfulness of spirit he pushed on towards the Wild Wood[...]⁹⁶

One might suggest that one of the functions of this practice is to witness the dismantling and erasure of a particular collective memory; recording an encounter which celebrates images of intervention and departure: ‘prayer flags’ of various plastic bags caught in hawthorn – signs of absence epitomised by the photograph *Plastic 2007* [Fig. 63], that may present an elegiac substitute for human presence.



63. Jim Brogden, *Plastic*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 54 cm.

In relation to the study, such images provide field evidence of a certain anthropology of the everyday, one example being that certain people in the city were gathering wire cables illegally from wasteland sites between 2005–11; some of whom may be living ‘off-the-grid’,⁹⁷ whilst engaging in activities to make a meagre amount of money from local scrap dealers.

⁹⁶. Grahame, K. *The Wind in the Willows*, Viking Kestrel 1983 (First published 1908), 46.

⁹⁷. The term “off-the-grid” (OTG) or off-grid also refers to living in a self-sufficient manner without reliance on one or more public utilities. The term also carries a subversive connotation that repudiates the more conventional consumerist life style.

Such anthropological evidence would be more expected within the so called third-World, not less than a mile radius of a cultural landmark, the Royal Armouries in Leeds. Some of the ‘residents’ that I have met during my field visits were ex-servicemen from the Falklands conflict and the first Gulf War. I met John (an ex-wireless operator from the Falklands conflict) who was living at the time in a tent within the dense hawthorn bush immediately to the right of the upturned shopping trolley in the photograph *Delivery* 2007 [Fig. 12], where he relied on power for his functioning DVD player from nearby cement works, visible as the white towers in the photograph *Burnt Ground* 2009 [Fig. 54]. Some of these chance meetings are described in the short film made by *Yorkshire Post* Newspapers in October 2007, during which I discuss the ‘ancient quality’ of these wire-burning sites.⁹⁸ [Fig. 64]



64. *Yorkshire Post* Newspapers web film Jim Brogden, 2007.

As previously discussed in the photograph *Wire* 2009 [Fig. 11] (page 20), one encounters an *imbroglio* of wire cables, although the shopping trolley is absent now. The aesthetic paradox in the *Wire* image, is ‘detonated’ in my view, by the perceived contradiction within the photograph’s index, one in which the wire cables connote (perhaps) that this contemporary *Arcadia* has been invaded by the *Other* – represented here by marginal activities and human detritus. Yet, on a scopophilic⁹⁹ level, the indexical surface is presenting a rather beautiful and seductive tangle of plastic cables, although the function of this bizarre *offering* eludes the viewer; in a state of *après coup*¹⁰⁰ they might consider the juxtaposition of two different kinds of beauty: one embedded in the pastoral, the other its antithesis, the anonymity of technology.¹⁰¹ This contradicts a more conventional conception of non-place as devoid of landscape value. What is suggested here is that photographic representation reveals a place which the viewer might have deliberately avoided. Moreover, one might ascribe a transfer of knowledge between photographer and viewer through the transmission of non-place signification.

98. *Feral Leeds: A Walk on the Wild Side* full page *Yorkshire Post* newspaper feature and associated web film written by Sheena Hastings (on the work of Jim Brogden). Web link: <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/highlights/Feral-Leeds-A-Walk-on-3233887.jp>

99. From Scopophilia (in the Lacanian psychoanalytical sense), the pleasure in looking.

100. In its relationship to after the event, a belatedness, the French expression provides a stronger link with the notion of severing from the past, and also the continued relationship with the camera’s shutter, the ‘click’ which is also a photographic ‘guillotine’ of the present.

101. The intrusion of wire cables becomes metonymic for modern technology within an essentially pastoral scene.

As Barthes suggests through his persuasive analysis on the elusive pull of certain images, the photographer can only control to a certain extent the eventual interpretation of their work.

Considering the punctum.

The pervasive notion of Barthes's *punctum*, his meditation on photography's address, has provided a notion to consider in this study:

Last thing about the punctum: whether or not it is triggered, it is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph and what is nonetheless already there.¹⁰²

For Barthes there is the potential for the *punctum* to be present in most photographs, yet the 'shock' the 'prick' of its discovery depends on the particular spectator's response (what they bring) to a detail in the image. Other spectators may be unaffected, oblivious to this emotional affect produced by the photograph in question. Different photographs will affect different people in different ways. But what is crucial for Barthes, is that the detonation of the *punctum* cannot be predicted by the photographer who produced the image, and therefore eludes his or her intentionality. The photographer in this sense, can only control the *studium* - which contains the more general codes associated with a conventional system of signs their cultural meaning. We might infer from this claim that the *punctum* is the more memorable and potentially subversive/radical element within the photographic representation. But is this potent 'detail' beyond the control of the photographer?

A graze, bruise, scar?

I would like to propose that Barthes's view on the spectator's private response to the *punctum*, could be reviewed, or at least questioned. For my part, the photographer's intentionality, which involves the duality of the conceptual and the perceptual, evidenced by the construction of the tripod and framing of the motif, setting exposures, and finally the pressing of the shutter, proves that the scene to be represented is important to the photographer, both in relation to the more intuitive response to the *punctum* 'prick' (its ability to emotionally jolt the individual viewer),

102. Barthes, R. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography (La Chambre Claire)*, trans. Richard Howard, Vintage, 2000, 55.

and the more conventional public operation of the *studium*. Importantly, I would suggest that the photographer can be aware of both the affect and effect of the two elements *punctum* / *studium*, in such a way, and this is intended as a provocation; that for the photographer (and the potential spectator), what is created, is the hybrid notion of a synthesised ‘graze’ / ‘bruise’. And in a more reflective sense within the subsequent ‘life’ of the photographic archive – a ‘scar’. Barthes’s ‘prick’ of the *punctum* suggests a more temporary puncture of the viewer’s engagement with the image, whilst my ‘scar’ suggests a more permanent feature. (People usually boast about scars as well). In this sense, the ‘scar’ becomes the substantive content of the study, an archive of extra / inter –textual material that can be accessed in subsequent years for different interpretations.

This description supports the declaration posited within the ‘introduction –research aims’, that any researcher / interpreter is never a neutral interloper within the dynamics of ‘spatial practice’ as a framing decision is made, for whatever reason. Essentially, the original photographer is equally affected, whilst demonstrating some control of the workings of the elusive *punctum*, by including certain referents within the photograph.

Of course, one can never designate where the viewer will find their own *punctum* ‘moment’, nor should one. For my own part, the referents which operate as a *punctum* in this study, are usually associated with evidence of a particular, often enigmatic human agency: remnants of wire, metal fragments, ensnared plastic bags, the remains of fires, abandoned shoes and handbags, and other inscriptions; for these are my ‘pricks’, ‘wounds’, ‘scars’ on the semiotic skin of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* archive. Such transitory traces and detritus inscribe sites with a particular mood, that lets people know that they have arrived in a familiar place. [Fig. 65]



65. Jim Brogden, *Wall*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm

Supermodernity and urban amnesia.

The need to belong to a particular landscape still exists within a more general alienation and *ennui* associated with late-capitalism; compounded by a feeling of dislocation from the immediate present and the recent past; a condition described by Marc Augé as ‘supermodernity’.¹⁰³ According to Augé, these effects are embroiled in recent notions of ‘accelerated history’ and a history without meaning, where the pace of time and rapid transfer of information precludes any meaningful reflection upon the recent past, where ‘our need to understand the whole of the present that makes it difficult for us to give meaning to the recent past’.¹⁰⁴

This public ‘amnesia’, a feeling of disassociation from the recent past through the complex negotiation with the present and compounded by an uncertain future, might, I suggest, find physical form in the non-place. Non-places can provide the interested ‘visitor’ with evidence of a dispossessed human agency, the marginal place frequented by the marginal. Although one could argue that capitalism created urban non-places in the nineteenth century through dynamic industrial expansion (and housing provision for its workforce etc.), I would argue that during the 1960s, a unique transformation of the urban landscape took place, through the adoption of the new aesthetic of high-rise urbanism – supported by a road development strategy. Although this urban renewal included provision for palliative green open spaces, since the early 1980s these same urban zones have continued to change through the construction of the ubiquitous ‘business park’, its associated ‘ribbon development’, and the more recent appearance of the gated community. These new structures, which are seen to promote a return to ‘city living’, are often ironically contiguous to the remnants of an industrial past that relied upon workers living within walking distance, and the sound of the factory siren. Many of these workers, many of whom are now retired, now find themselves displaced to the new estates located throughout the metropolitan zone.

Here the topography of late-capitalism (in comparison to the nineteenth century model) reflects the struggle over space. Who controls it? For what reasons? And to what ends? If we consider nineteenth century capitalism to represent the desire for faster production, then the late-capitalist (twenty first century equivalent) seems more concerned with the economic advantages of ‘out-sourcing’, utilising ‘smart technology’, and of course ‘flexibility’, the euphemism for workplace insecurity. Also, the late-capitalist model is content (in certain circumstances), to ‘sit’ on assets – especially land. My point here, is that speculative investment in land, and certain properties of course, could be a contributory factor in the production and fragmentation of non-places throughout Western cities. As a result of this complex zoning of the modern city into various active

103. Augé, M. *Non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*, Verso (London & New York) 1995.

104. *ibid.* 30.

and dormant sectors, we witness the inscriptions made by investment capitalism (and the state) on our sense of the city as ‘place’.

Where to dig and what to remember.

To act on Benjamin’s advice that memory is the theatre of the past, and that ‘fruitless searching is as much part of this as succeeding[...] and in the old ones dig to even deeper levels,’¹⁰⁵ we might consider that the present participles of digging, remembering, and photographing (all deliberate acts), are all, to a certain extent – selective. So in what sense do we attempt to ‘dig’, and subsequently remember in these most elusive of places. Is the process of digging, searching, and researching, a form of mourning? Does the final archive function, as a mausoleum to these forgotten urban sites? Is the exhibition a cortege of images that elicit a more active remembrance? Perhaps the non-place will not be erased without some form of landscape legacy, memorial. In this rather elegiac tone, let us consider the photograph that I regard as the most metonymic in relation to a suggestion of mourning for the disappearance of non-place: *The Deluge* 2007. [Fig. 66]



66. Jim Brogden, *The Deluge*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

105. Benjamin, W. *One Way Street: and other writings*, trans. J .A. Underwood, Penguin Books, 2008.

A collapsed buddleia becomes a potential metonym for commemoration, made more allusive by the biblical resonance of the title, a flood, where a floral tribute has been cast adrift. This image provokes the audience to analyse the available evidence offered: what was the function of this place? Depending on the particular audience, the photographs could offer a range of readings, some more disquieting than others. A different signification might be prompted by the appearance of washroom tiles in a partly erased landscape. This question of 'connotation' provides a critical patina for the study; to illustrate this point, I would claim that once one has seen the footage brought back from the extermination camps, and other landscapes of 'trauma', how can one view certain surfaces with an 'innocent eye?' For example, one's apprehension of chimneys and wire fences will always be haunted by the lens of the *final solution*.¹⁰⁶

Some form of consolation.

Can the modern self find some form of consolation by finding new urban encounters – new routes in those non-places previously overlooked? Could this potential re-engagement with non-place (however infrequent such encounters may be) form some tenuous sense of collective belonging with place, as a gesture of 'resistance' to the ineluctable homogenisation of the local, regional, and national landscape?

In the context of inexorable urban change, how can we recover what has already been lost from the urban landscape in the recent past? And what exactly is it that we wish to recover? One might suggest, that the non-place functions as a fractured archive for a form of collapsed collective memory. Non-places are potential palimpsests, commemorating the displacement of the urban community's 'sense of place' – each one unique, depending on the neighbourhood and city. For as the debate broadens in relation to the conception of non-place, the more likely the erosion of *non* in non-place may occur, with the potential to be re-transcribed as 'place' perhaps? Although I understand that my claim for non-places to be perceived as an emerging 'memorial' places could be viewed as simply absurd (in the context of their largely ignored status), I would like to suggest here that the memories of these non-places (especially those associated with our formative years, referred to earlier), have the potential to contribute to the *DNA* of the self, and in the broader sense, to the accretive collective memory of a community and nation.

¹⁰⁶The Final Solution (German: *Die Endlösung*) was Nazi Germany's plan and execution of the systematic genocide of European Jews during World War II, resulting in the most deadly phase of the Holocaust. Heinrich Himmler was the chief architect of the plan, and the German Nazi leader Adolf Hitler termed it "the final solution of the Jewish question."

It is common practice for people to make sense of their social identity in reference to their environment; for example, 'to place someone', to 'know one's place.' One person's place (with meaning) could be another person's non-place (without meaning), a selection process as unpredictable and complex as the formation of memory itself. According to Peter Jackson, 'this language of social existence is unmistakably geographic', as he calls for a decoding of landscape imagery, a reading of the environment through 'maps of meaning', which reveal, reproduce and sometimes resist social order.¹⁰⁷ To continue this navigational metaphor, we might wish to consider non-places as random folds within a much used map, a narrative glue, which, however fragile that adhesion may be, could be seen to make an important contribution to the accretion of collective memory. Antze and Lambek examine the significance of this narrative process within the architecture of memory, of a continuity 'between past and present, between who we are and who we think we are', in which 'memory operates most frequently by means of the threads of narrative.'¹⁰⁸

Paul Ricoeur also reminds us in *Memory, History, Forgetting* that:

It is through the narrative function that memory is incorporated into the formation of identity: [with] "memory as the temporal component of identity, in conjunction with the evaluation of the present and the projection of the future."¹⁰⁹

It is also worth considering here, that the re-generation, or the overly 'enthusiastic' preservation of these sites could sever these dormant social and economic narratives from future exploration, thereby precluding an alternative direction in negotiating the modern self.

The palimpsest, memory, and 'what has been'.

A further conception and value of non-place could be in its contribution as palimpsest; and in particular, the way in which a manuscript of place (with its promise of historical conflation and meaning), echoes the polysemous aims of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* photographs as indices - 'traces' of multiple events, available for the belated witness.

Through this declaration, non-place acts as a memorial for a displaced urban community, commemorating, in some new form, its passage, and an obscure acknowledgement for those who venture there, through its evolving relationship with the alleged inequities of late-capitalism.

107. Jackson P. *Maps of Meaning: an introduction to Cultural Geography* (Routledge, London)1995.

108. Antze P, Lambek M. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, Ed(s). Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (Routledge UK) 1996, 17.

109. Ricoeur P. "The Exercise of Memory", *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago) 2004, 81.

In this place of departure, human absence finds consolation in each man-made fragment found amongst that part of the palimpsest which is still *writing* – the enduring re-colonisation of nature. With each new spring, the man-made remnants formed by more distant habitation and industrial use, become less distinct, camouflaged within rampant flora and more recent detritus.

It is perhaps, in this seemingly incoherent collision between the different layers of human intervention (and absence of intervention) juxtaposed with the associated affective trace(s) of memory, which provides the more compelling (at least for the more general reader?) topos of this study. One might suggest, that the human being, in his / her state of *Dasein*,¹¹⁰ evolves as an ever-changing anthropomorphic ‘palimpsest’, through a complex (often psychoanalytical) process of self-understanding, involving the active reflection on one’s formative years (where there is always the inclination to self-mythologise). Those self-inscriptions of memory are often located, and in some cases depend, on the trigger of place to be recalled for personal reverie. To continue in this rather wistful tone, might we consider that the photographs in this study function as relics from these sites of memory?

Non-place as counter-monument.

But surely within this opportunity to preserve we must confront the paradox, that through the act of valorisation itself, we attenuate those qualities which we initially valued, the site negotiating its own history.

In this context, the photographs become a suggested counter-monument to a journey and place that is no longer possible to experience, due to the recent re-development of many of the sites during 2009–11. For example, the site of *The Deluge* 2007 [Fig. 65] photograph is now a *Miller Homes* development. There are no monuments here to the erased Esso oil depot that occupied this land until the 1980s, or the workers, and the associated businesses of pubs, cafes, mechanics, bakers etc. To assuage these concerns of an erased public memory, Philip Smith argues for a broadening of acts of remembering, in which:

various types of place require nourishment of narratives[...] Their special nature, then requires forms of remembering [...] Monuments index, solidify and define the nature of space[...]¹¹¹

^{110.} *Dasein* (Gr.) used by Martin Heidegger in his monumental *Being and Time*, and generally translates to ‘being’ in its ontological and philosophical sense of personhood and reality.

^{111.} Smith, P. “The Elementary Forms of Place, and Their Transformations: A Durkheimian model,” *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 22, No 1, 1999.

In relation to this sense of loss in the everyday, Petri Ravo reminds us that a 'landscape is always a landscape for somebody'¹¹², a statement given greater significance if one recognises the potential effects of an imminent deregulation of planning laws in the U.K., in an effort to 'fast-track' local initiatives, the new euphemism for off-loading Governmental responsibility and cost. A strategy where the value of 'green-field' sites may be reconsidered within the 'big idea' of the re-exhumed 'Big Society' promoted by David Cameron during the recent Conservative election campaign and now through the Liberal/Conservative coalition government.



67. Jim Brogden, *Passage*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

The photograph which seeks to define a possible counter-monument¹¹³ within the study is *Passage* 2007. [Fig. 67] One is reminded perhaps, of the integration of collective memory within the architectural practice of Carlo Scarpa in Italy, where the relationship between the old and new structures is redefined by a sensitive negotiation with *genius loci*.¹¹⁴ [Fig. 68] Through his deliberate interventions, renovations, and the retention of existing features in older buildings, Scarpa successfully reconciles architecture with place.

112. Dr. Ravo, J. P. *In this Very Place: War memorials and Landscapes as an Experienced Heritage*, Dept. of Geography, University of Oulu, Finland.

113. Although I understand that my claim for the non-place to be perceived as an emerging memorial place, or "counter-monument", could be viewed as simply absurd (in the context of the largely ignored status of such places), I would like to suggest here that the memories of these non-places (especially those associated with our formative years, referred to earlier), have the potential to contribute to the DNA of the self, and, in a broader sense, to the accretive collective memory of community. See the *Monument for Peace and Against Fascism* in Germany 1986 which was designed to disappear over time by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev. In this sense, even a monument, paradoxically, does not have to last forever. What better acknowledgement of the nature of memory itself, but its own erosion over time?

114. see 'Carlo Scarpa - Friedhof Brion in San Vito d'Altivote', *Architektur + Beton*, K. Kinold, Hatje Verlag: 1994, 124-131.



68. Carlo Scarpa, *I Tomba Monumentale Brion*, in San Vito d'Altivole, Italy, 1969–1978.

His juxtaposition of different architectural layers maintains a fabric of memory and history, which suggests a more humane championing of postmodernism's architectural discourse.

If we probe *Passage* deeper, inviting other interpretations, one could suggest, that the photograph is not only concerned with the passage of memory and its potential to be fixed within the photograph as object, but that it also forms an echo, perhaps as an exhortation to the viewer to recognise that the photograph itself, is questioning their own position as witness in what Barthes describes as an *antiphon*, in which the photograph – viewer relationship creates a form of alternate chanting.¹¹⁵ The photograph's central iconicity is redolent of the camera's function – the suggestion of aperture, the invitation to light, the fixing of trace photons. But the doorway (gap) here, is also reminiscent of darker episodes in photography's history, from Fox Talbot's *The Open Door* 1843 [Fig. 69], to Eric Schwab's 1945 image of piled up corpse in a Buchenwald storage shed, a document



69. William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Open Door*, 1843,

115. In Barthes's words, the 'Photograph is never anything but an antiphon of 'Look,' 'See,' 'Here it is'; it points a finger at certain vis-à-vis, and cannot escape this pure deictic language" *Camera Lucida*, Vintage, 1980, 5. The musical connotation implicit in this context of an exchange, and interaction is a memorable description in relation to the possible function of the presented photograph, and its affective power to elicit a response from the spectator. A more specific musical definition states - 'any piece of music performed by two semi-independent choirs in interaction, often singing alternate musical phrases, is known as antiphonal'.

later quoted in *Untitled* 1997 from Mikael Levin's *War Story*, a project re-tracing the journey his father made during the second world war. [Fig. 70]



70. Mikael Levin, *Untitled*, from *War Story*, Munich, 1997.

In *Passage* 2007, the debris outside the lower improvised entrance / exit might allude to animal activity perhaps, whilst the suggestion of an excavation from within, connotes its own relationship with memory and recall. The inherent modernism here is of course transient, as we note the encroaching vegetation from the left of frame, which, left un-checked, will surely consume this building in the next few years.

In the context of our own times, with the attendant challenges presented by global capitalism, we should also remind ourselves of the essay *Nine points on Monumentality*, written by Sert, Léger, and Gideon, reflecting on the landscape(s) of the second world war: 'Monuments are[...] only possible in periods in which a unifying consciousness and unifying culture exists.'¹¹⁶

Others have argued, most notably Pierre Nora, that rather than preserving public memory, the monument, even the counter-monument, displaces memory, and in this way, it supplants a community's memory work within the materiality of the monument, in which 'less memory is experienced from the inside' the more it 'exists through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs.'¹¹⁷ If this is the condition, then might we consider that the photograph escapes this relinquishing of the memory-duty, by its relationship to the archive? Or, as Foucault has already warned us - there is no guarantee that the photographs deposited in the archive, or subsequently exhibited in galleries and edited in books on contemporary landscape photography, will remain true to the memory of place and people, if that was ever possible anyway. Moreover, if we acknowledge the omnipresence of

¹¹⁶ Sert, Léger, Gideon, *Nine Points on Monumentality*, essay 1943, published 1958, 48.

¹¹⁷ Nora, P. *Les Lieux de mémoire* (Realms of Memory), Vol. 2: *La Nation* (Paris: Gallimard), 1986, 1.

the internet, and increasingly, the ambitions of Google to secure, even without copyright it would appear (although strongly resisted in France 2009, through a government debate) images and texts in their digital ark, this might be the ultimate challenge in securing the 'what has been' for future generations to interpret.

Chapter 4: The New Landscape.

She had so often tried to imagine who had made the first garden; the first person to plant flowers for the pleasure of them, the first time flowers were deliberately set aside – with a wall or a ditch, or a fence – from the wilderness. But now she felt, with an almost primordial knowledge, that the first garden must have been a grave.¹¹⁸

My contention here, is that those disparate non-places still emerging in our hidden urban landscape might be conceived as a form of ‘new landscape’, a place that requires a more radical stewardship, to retain its essentially idiosyncratic qualities. Ever since Robert Smithson initiated a way of working with ‘entropic landscapes’¹¹⁹ in the late sixties, through the recovery of ‘damaged nature as culture’ there has been a surge of artists-activists, responding in various restorative and interactive ways to the reclamation of landfills, ‘clear-cuts’, and ‘other industrial wounds’. But significantly, in relation to this study, Lucy Lippard declares that these artistic negotiations have occurred ‘rarely in their own neighbourhoods.’¹²⁰

The credit-crunch landscape.

I would argue, that space is ideologically groomed through (most) re-generation projects, to subjugate a more radical political debate concerning landscape valorisation. So what are the results when the investment in such redevelopment projects is withdrawn, or frozen until the market ‘picks-up?’ What does the re-generation site do in the meantime, and how might we interpret this landscape stasis?

From the start of the economic down-turn in the U.K. from 2008 to 2011, I witnessed an immediate halt in the re-generation of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* sites; many of these had become increasingly prohibited in relation to access for photography. New fences were re-established, with higher dimensions, and improved security materials, linked, in a more systematic way, with more robust fluorescent –wearing security personnel. One must acknowledge that I am not taking photographs in Iraq or Afghanistan here, but for the interested reader, the average time that I have been able to photograph freely in these more secure spaces, has been in the region of forty minutes – the time it takes for security guards to detect my presence, and then make the obligatory mobile phone call to a superior, and the eventual walk from the portakabin

118. *The Winter Vault* written by Anne Michaels. Bloomsbury, 2009, 327–328. The novel explores the relationship between landscape, belonging, and memory.

119. See Robert Smithson: *The Collected Writings*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1996 (edited by Jack Flam).

120. Lippard, L. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentred Society*, The New Press, New York, 1997, 184.

to where ever I might be at that time. Interestingly, the security guards were more interested in the mode of access – “where did you get in?”, rather than the photographic mode of operation. In most encounters, I would find myself ameliorating the confrontation by stating that “I used to play here as a boy”.

In my view, the most compelling images in relation to the aims of the study, were taken between 2008-11. These images invoke more profound questions about the notion of landscape as a culturally agreed construction, and how those landscapes become embedded in that culture. A photograph which questions this historical construction of landscape by its deliberate denial of explicit signifiers, is *Landscape 2009* [Fig. 71], which is essentially a bull-dozed rise in the land, the former site of *The Deluge 2007* [Fig. 66]. It is here, that we witness a site that has been crushed, shredded, and compressed by machine tracks, yet we also notice on a closer viewing, a nascent ridge, fertile with new growth. The framing of the landscape shows the early stages of this process of re-colonisation. But the photograph also ‘speaks’ in a critical sense, to other images, other landscapes. The image provides a potential critical conduit through which other inter-subjective debates could emerge, due in part – to the apparent ‘inconsequence’¹²¹ of those places represented, and perhaps



71. Jim Brogden, *Landscape*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

121. During a tutorial discussion exploring the difference between the analogue surface and the “collapse” of the digital surface in relation to the index, Professor Roger Palmer describes several of the more suggestive photographs from 2008 onwards as: “places of inconsequence” in which the apparent “emptiness” of the subject matter seems to find its equivalent in the digital print surface. (Ph.D. Tutorial 10.12. 09).

an ontology that is not even earth-bound. I refer to the other-worldly images associated with the more recent representations of the planet Mars.¹²² [Fig. 72]



72. Calvin J. Hamilton, *Mars Twin Peaks*, from *Viking Lander 1*, 1997.

The remaining down-to-earth referents appear subjugated on first viewing, but are discernible through a closer examination; we begin to notice different types of rubble, red brick fragments, amongst the gradual appearance of vegetation. To extend the allusive interpretations suggested by *Landscape 2009*, we might consider its physical resemblance to ancient burial mounds.

What then are the effects of this rapid transformation of the remembered urban milieu into non-place? Perhaps a consequence of this new urban configuration, is that the notional link between a 'sense of place' and a sense of collective belonging, becomes more ambiguous and increasingly untenable, as James Corner suggests:

Landscape can often obscure from its occupants the ideological impulses that motivated its formation and instead foster in them the feeling that they are in possession of a beautiful and innocent past, that they have escaped from the inequities and problems of the present.¹²³

There is evidence amongst certain sections of the contemporary arts, of a renewed interest in the eidetic potential of landscape to change policy, to engage with places that do not conform

122. Mars photographs see 'Viking Lander 1' images produced by Calvin J. Hamilton. Views of the solar system at <http://www.solarviews.com>. The Twin Peaks are modest-size hills to the southwest of the Mars Pathfinder landing site 1997.

123. Corner, J. "Eidetic Operations and New Landscapes," *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1999, 157.

to the more conventional template of landscape beauty and spectacle. Embracing this new aesthetic in North America, are several prominent photographers who in various ways, could be seen to investigate versions of the non-place urban landscape. One of the most memorable of these projects, *Walking the High Line* [Fig. 73] was created by the photographer Joel Sternfield during 2000.¹²⁴

Sternfield's seasonal recording of the redundant fourteen miles long elevated New York commercial railway questions amongst other things, the various notions surrounding beauty (and



73, Joel Sternfield, *Looking south at 27th street, September 2000.*

more importantly in relation to this study) – questioning the potential integration and function of *re-wilding* in relation to the legacy of the post-industrial urban landscape.

In the supporting exhibition catalogue: *Joel Sternfield: Walking the High Line*, Adam Gopnik describes the natural restoration as ‘grasses and even small trees sprout from the track bed.’¹²⁵ As a successful postscript to Sternfield’s project and perhaps as a pertinent example of how photographic-practice research can make an impact in real lives: the objective of *Friends of the High Line* to preserve this sinuous park from insensitive development – to promote it as an elevated green walk-way, has been successful. After ten years of lobbying, the New York Council approved the application to begin the preservation of the High Line:

While the [...] completion of the ULURP [...] does not guarantee full preservation, it is a major, positive step in the right direction. Friends of the High Line has always envisioned transforming the entire High Line into continuous public open space.¹²⁶

124. Brogden, J. Forensic Intimacy: A Digital Exploration of ‘Non-Place,’ *Colour: Design & Creativity Journal*, 2007, 1 (1): 4, 1-12 <http://www.colour-journal.org/2007/1/4/>

125. Gopnik, A. *Joel Sternfield Walking the High Line*, Pace/MacGill Gallery, (Steidl, Göttingen) 2001, 47.

126. Thanks ‘to the visionary leadership of City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and the City Council members, the future of the High Line at the rail yards is looking bright. On Thursday, July 29, 2010, the New York City Council voted to approve the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application that gives the City of New York permission to acquire the High Line at the West Side Rail Yards.’ For further information, see: <http://www.thehighline.org/news>

How to turn a brown field green?

At a time when the main agenda has been focused on more global environmental issues, such as climate change, the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and more recently floods in Pakistan and the emerging nuclear crisis in Japan unfolding in March 2011, the potential of the indeterminate non-places to make a positive contribution to the broader debate, has perhaps been overshadowed by their seemingly mundane locations, and their relative small scale. And to anticipate further doubts as to the research value of non-place, I would assert that in the West such sites should be regarded as a significant bio-diverse asset. To support this view, one might consider this hypothesis: imagine if all these fragmented non-places (in which, for arguments sake, one might include motorway embankments and roundabouts etc.) were gathered into one specific area, then I would estimate that the scale, and importance of that area would rival a U.K. National Park's contribution to biodiversity.

This sentiment was echoed by John Vidal's *Guardian* newspaper article published in May 2003, in which he challenged the assumption that the post-industrial site was a worthless wasteland:

[...] Being hailed as England's rainforest [...] the former Occidental site on Canvey Island is an oasis in a landscape of oil refineries, new housing, massive roundabouts and drive-through McDonalds. Laid out with concrete roads and street lighting, it has been untouched for 30 years [...] it has already been found to be home to at least 1,300 species, including 30 on the UK "red list" [...]¹²⁷

There are parallels to be drawn here between the problematic access to certain non-places, and the difficult access to land owned by the Ministry of Defence in the UK, where again, paradoxically, there is evidence of a flourishing wild life habitat. If we extend the coverage, we are also reminded of the former industrialised zones of East Germany, the no-man's-land following the route of the now redundant Berlin Wall, and the more recent exposure of the clandestine green corridor tracing the route of the former *Iron Curtain* in Eastern Europe, where unsurprisingly, nature has benefited from a restricted programme of industrialisation.¹²⁸

127. John Vidal, "It doesn't look much, but this bleak corner of Essex is being hailed as England's rainforest" (London: *Guardian Newspapers*, 3 May 2003).

128. See "Fall of Berlin Wall was a hot moment for conservation." After the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989, 'it was only a matter of time before Germany would be reunified and its internal borders redrawn. Over the following 10 months, one man, Michael Succow seized the moment to set aside large chunks of land as nature reserves.' 28 July 2010 by Peter Aldhous <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn19233>.

A redemptive site?

Can these different encounters in non-places, provide a redemptive function for those who have witnessed their gradual socio-cultural decline from *place* to non-place?



74. Jim Brogden, *Cloud*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

In the photograph *Cloud* 2009 [Fig. 74] we are placed in a dichotomous space confined beneath an open sky in dark and light. The aperture of the sky in *Cloud* 2009 is framed, emphasised. A cloud caught, reveals the surface of the photographic print, whilst the door to the immediate left in shadow, offers, against our Western scanning desire, a less Sublime retreat from this diptych of light and dark. [Fig. 75]



75. Jim Brogden, *Cloud* (Detail), 2009.

The exact framing of the cloud above the broken curve of the brick wall required the pressing of the shutter at a particular time – a potential *punctum* moment. This isolated cloud, with its own porous physicality, is in contrast to the semi-permanence of this enclosure, is accentuated by our knowledge that it too has a more immediate transience. And so, as we tilt our heads to follow the cloud's blue passage, we are perhaps reminded of our own impermanence as a spectator to the temporality of the depicted scene, amongst the quiet decay of the post-industrial remnant, and against the infinite suggestion of sky.

A different kind of beauty.

Any attempt to critique the contested term – beauty, is bound to flounder, and I approach it with due caution. Surprisingly, many spectators have used the words 'bleak' and 'beautiful' in response to the photographs, as Professor Matthew Kieran attests:

what first struck me about Jim Brogden's work is the beauty of the photographic prints[...]unlike the Pre-Raphaelites, the work's beauty arises from that which many of us would not normally appreciate in real life.¹²⁹

As Kieran develops this argument, we are reminded of the unseen value of non-place, and how the photographic representation both questions and enables a new apprehension of its potential contribution to the transcendental and the everyday:

How is it that the prints themselves are beautiful whilst, or so it may seem to us, what is depicted is not?[And as] Immanuel Kant¹³⁰ recognised, even where the subject matter itself is unappealing, nonetheless it can be depicted beautifully:¹³¹

This re-engagement with the historical motif of the ruin in a transformed setting, often enmeshed in rampant natural re-colonisation has found echoes in the work of two recent artists, Robert Polidori's ultimate non-place excursion in *Zones of Exclusion: Pripjat and Chernobyl*, 2003: a powerful testament to the restorative energy of nature juxtaposed with the fragile evidence of man's settlement enveloped within a new wilderness of post-nuclear contamination.

129. Kieran, M. "A Photographic Sense of Industrial Beauty," Preface, *Terra Nullius: New Urban Encounters*, Jim Brogden, Fugitive Publications, 2007, 5.

130. Immanuel Kant, trans, James Creed Meredith, *Critique of Judgement*, rev, ed, Nicholas Walker (Oxford: O.U.P., 2007), Pt. 1, Bk 11, Section 48, p. 141.

131. Kieran, M. "A Photographic Sense of Industrial Beauty," Preface, *Terra Nullius: New Urban Encounters*, Jim Brogden, Fugitive Publications, 2007, 5.

We continue the seemingly paradoxical idea of nuclear power contiguous with nature, by acknowledging the significant influence exerted by Derek Jarman on the development of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study. Most particularly his preoccupation with the notion of a lost landscape of England, through a subversion of the conventional landscape aesthetic. Like Polidori, Jarman seeks to conflate a more arcadian utopianism (perhaps made more elegiac in view of his HIV condition at the time) with the ‘dark side’- the *realpolitik* of the contested landscape. Although Jarman is well-known within the art-house film circuit for his explicitly personal (independent) films, he is now more fondly remembered for his redemptive garden [Fig. 76], created on the unforgiving English ‘desert’ of Dungeness, the largest expanse of shingle in Europe:

The night comes, the shingle dissolves in the dark. The stars are out and the great liner of Dungeness B twinkles on the horizon. Dawn can be a miracle, the sun floating up from the sea and slowly crossing the garden.¹³²

The eponymous film *The Garden*, combines Jarman’s innocent ‘trade-mark’ *Super 8* footage showing him tending his garden, with a more insistent application of biblical allegory.¹³³

But it is Jarman’s idea, his legacy, in which the garden becomes a form of ‘protest’ against the more homogenous conventions of what is beautiful in landscape, that should be cherished here - that deserves to be acknowledged within this study.



76. Howard Sooley, *Derek Jarman’s Garden*, Dungeness, 1995.

132. Jarman, D. *derek jarman’s garden* (with photographs by Howard Sooley), Thames and Hudson, 1995, 115.

133. *The Garden* is a 1990 British arthouse film by director Derek Jarman produced by James Mackay for Basilisk Communications in association with Channel 4, British Screen and ZDF. It focuses on homosexuality and Christianity set against a backdrop of Jarman’s bleak coastal home of Dungeness in Kent, and his garden and the nearby landscape surrounding a nuclear power station, a setting Jarman compares to the Garden of Eden.

Twenty first century ruins.

I met the American sociologist-photographer Camilo José Vergara at the *Photography and the City* conference organised by the University College Dublin Clinton Institute for American Studies in 2006.¹³⁴ What struck me, during Vergara's talk, was his determination to chronicle the urban change in American cities [Fig. 77], charting its decline and de-urbanisation:

I have concentrated on those areas of the cities which have been left behind, and which are sometimes referred to as “reservations of the poor,” or hyper-ghettos.¹³⁵



77. Camilo Vergara, *Fern Street, Camden, NJ*, 1979, 1988, 1997, 2004.

Vergara's *rephotographic* method requires him to replicate the exact vantage point and angle of view, and lens selection. He returns to the exact spot where his previous photographs were taken, to document the changes that have taken place since his last visit. Buildings may have been demolished, or new business ventures may have colonised the site. A previous car park may now have become an improvised basket ball court for example. Vergara plots his position on maps, and make notes of his head height and other *aide mémoires*, to achieve a scientific replication of the previous photographic 'experiment'. This mapping of locations within American cities, is also evident on Vergara's website.¹³⁶ On occasions, new structures will block previously open vistas. What emerges from this practice, is an archive of scientific evidence that demonstrates the distinctive changes that have occurred over time – a form of visual sociology of certain American cities. Although he has documented several major American cities, including Camden, which he regards as 'the murder capital of America', his radical proposal to declare twelve square blocks of downtown Detroit a 'skyscraper ruins park' was an imaginative and highly controversial Romantic gesture – an 'American Acropolis':

¹³⁴ The international conference also included the opportunity to view Vergara's American Ruins: Documenting Post-industrial Decline in American Cities show of photographs at the Gallery of Photography, Dublin June 29 – July 30 2006. See www.ucd.ie/am-erstud and for more information on Camilo José Vergara's work visit: www.invinciblecities.com

¹³⁵ Vergara J, C. cited by Liam Kennedy in *American Ruins: An Introduction to the work of Camilo José Vergara*, exhibition catalogue, Clinton Institute for American Studies, 2006, 2.

¹³⁶ Visit <http://invinciblecities.camden.rutgers.edu/intro.html> and see databases for Harlem, Richmond, CA and Camden, NJ.

We could transform the nearly 100 troubled buildings into a grand national historic park of play and wonder, an urban Monument Valley[...]wild animals—squirrels, possum, bats, owls, ravens, snakes and insects—would live in the empty behemoths, adding their calls, hoots and screeches to the smell of rotten leaves and animal droppings.¹³⁷

Vergara's ongoing archive of American ruins declares in activist mode: this is what is happening in these marginalised communities, in which trees grow to maturity through abandoned community libraries. The anger, and frustration is made explicit during his concluding address to the conference: 'we should have been documenting other cities ages ago, it's too late now.'

But perhaps, the mood should not be too despondent in the light of Julian Temple's more recent documentary film set amidst the contemporary ruins of a once prosperous Detroit.¹³⁸ Temple's film [Fig. 78] reveals a quite different story, as we see evidence of a 'street-level' green resistance - a renewal in the face of a de-urbanisation aftermath, in which existing tenants who remained behind, together with newcomers to the area in search of a new alternative lifestyle, have re-planted vegetables in non-place allotments, to become more self-sufficient.

This new conception of what constitutes a 'life-style' amidst the ruins of Detroit, seems to resonate within the 'new -urbanism'¹³⁹ movement developing in America - a challenge to the conventional topographies related to the density / scale of centralised cities, and their counterpart, the suburban sprawl, and the reliance on a spatial practice that prioritises the automobile. In contrast, this movement promotes the idea that existing and new town developments should incorporate walking, in the daily routines of school, work, and shopping. Although there are many



78. Gönderen Anybody, film still from *Requiem for Detroit*, Director Julien Temple, 2010.

137. Vergara J, C. *Metropolis*, April, 1995.

138. 26 July 2010 see *Requiem for Detroit*, directed by Julian Temple.

139. On "new urbanism" see *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* by Miwon Kwon (MIT Press 2004: 209), and also *New Urbanism: Towards an Architecture of Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993).

artists, writers, and photographers engaging with the late- capitalist urban condition through ‘de-urbanisation’, it is Vergara’s sociological tenacity, the concentration of his particular field of reference, that has most informed the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study; a passionate advocacy and validation of photography itself as a research mode of operation, that can provoke, and initiate real change in society, echoing the social evangelism of Lewis Hine and other social pioneering photographers.¹⁴⁰

Yet in this context, one might consider what is *unique* about photographic research? First of all, the qualitative claims of the word “unique” (in relation to the relativism of Postmodernism) appear untenable – or at least, an anachronistic aspiration. Nevertheless, in relation to photographic practice as research within academia, the question deserves consideration. One of the more obvious differences in the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study’s contribution to knowledge could reside in the fact that the geographical location of inquiry that produced the extra-textual field (the photographs) occurs in a series of unique non-places in south Leeds, no longer available in their original form for future investigations, due to their recent change of identity through complete re-development. In contrast, many of Vergara’s sites, even though he has monitored their various transformations over the years, still retain some of their residual sense of identity / place, whereas in my south Leeds *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* sites, many of the areas are now unrecognisable from their 2005–11 photographic records.

Adopting a similar urban strategy in Vancouver, the photographer Roy Arden’s work forms interesting parallels with my own study. We appear to be drawn to similar ‘landscape events’, often characterised by the representation of the abject as potentially monumental, epic, and sublime.

This sense is explored by Nancy Tousley as she traverses Arden’s ‘pictorialist ideal’ and apprehends a realistic image of ‘everyday life’, where ‘[t]he space travelled has social meaning and allegorical meaning [we] move conceptually from an iconic image of the sublime in nature to an abject remnant of the natural.’¹⁴¹

140. As Geoff Dyer discusses in *The Ongoing Moment* Lewis Hine (who had instructed Strand in photography at the Ethical Culture School in New York, believed that ‘good photography’ is a ‘question of art’, yet Hine himself felt strongly that the medium of photography should contribute to social change and reform. We see in Hine’s own photograph of *A Blind Beggar in Italian market District* 1911, an emphasis on the beggar’s surroundings, not the face of the beggar. *The Ongoing Moment* page 13. Little Brown 2005.

141. Tousley, N. “Roy Arden – Imagining the Real,” *Roy Arden*, (exhibition 01.02 – 19.03.06. Ikon Gallery, publication, 2006, 1.



80. Roy Arden, *Pulp Mill Dump (#1)*, Nanaimo, B.C. 1992.

But of course, we could view Arden's *Pulp Mill Dump (#1)*, Nanaimo, BC 1992 [Fig. 80], as a direct *homage* to the earth-works/photographs of Robert Smithson, in particular, his seminal piece: *Asphalt Rundown* 1969, created in Rome. [Fig. 81]



81. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, Rock salt, mirrors and glass elements, 1969.

As part of Smithson's *Pours* series between 1969-1970, we witness the 'geoprocess of an alluvial' flow employing pre-fabricated industrial materials.¹⁴² As Smithson emphasises, he was less interested in the 'process itself' than the record of an erosion being absorbed. Although it may not have been the artist's intention, one is reminded of the siting of this work in Italy, with

142. Graziani, R. *Robert Smithson and the American Landscape*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 93.

its own historical legacy of volcanic eruptions at Pompeii.¹⁴³ It is also worth contextualising the *Pours* earth works in relation to the more contemporaneous environmental incidents which occurred in the late 1960s. For in 1969 in particular, Smithson must have been aware of the oil spill in the Santa Barbara Channel, California, which resulted in the contamination of beaches and the destruction of aquatic species, a portent, in many ways of the future BP environmental disaster off the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, writing in *Art Forum* in 1966, Smithson explains the key themes in his work – the landscape of degradation; ‘backwater sites...slurbs, urban sprawl.’¹⁴⁵ In many ways, *Asphalt Rundown* reminded Smithson of home and ‘the associations you could have from the falls of Paterson’ in New Jersey, itself, situated on a dormant volcano, and regarded as the first designated industrial city in America.¹⁴⁶

The influence of *Asphalt Rundown* on both Arden’s (and my own) work is the presentation of earth works as an eco-political critique, a paradoxical engagement with the notions of the sublime, whilst the ‘angle of repose’ of many of these earth works suggest more ancient sites.

With this in mind, one could situate my series of ‘man-made’ mounds¹⁴⁷ as a continuation of this Smithsonian¹⁴⁸ concern with new forms of landscape emerging from man’s intervention and the results of waste management (or lack of). Without making overt comparisons with Smithson and Arden, my two photographs *Units 2009* [Fig. 82] and *Landscape 2009* [Fig. 71] (page 82) explore a similar iconography, the same dialogic address. Yet the sheer detail displayed in the Arden image (more avalanche than ‘pour’), the sense of materiality in the discarded wood pulp, presents a more provocative encounter in relation to the notions surrounding the Canadian landscape.¹⁴⁹

143. Pompeii was destroyed during a long catastrophic eruption of the volcano Mount Vesuvius over the course of two days in 79 AD. The eruption buried Pompeii under 4 to 6 meters of ash and pumice, and it was lost for over 1,500 years before its rediscovery in 1599.

144. Rice Odell, *Environmental Awakening, The New Revolution to Protect the Earth* (Washington, DC, 1980). Cited by Ron Graziani in *Robert Smithson and the American Landscape*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 94.

145. Robert Smithson, “Entropy and the New Monuments,” *ArtForum* (June 1966), reprinted in Smithson, *Writings*, 11.

146. See “Four Conversations Between Dennis Wheeler and Robert Smithson (1969/1970)” in Eugenie Tsai (ed.) *Robert Smithson Unearthed: Drawings, Collages, Writings*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, 82.

147. See an extensive grouping of my landscape *mounds* in the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* Dossier ‘Volume 2’ provided as part of my Ph.D. submission.

148. A more explicit mirroring of Smithson’s work (although unintentional during the study’s 2005–10 period) is evident in the comparisons between *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* and Smithson’s personal essay *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey, 1967*, in which the artist considers the importance of the ‘monumental’ in the everyday, seeing ruins in the partial new buildings: ‘That zero panorama seemed to contain *ruins in reverse*, that is – all the new construction that would eventually be built...[and] *rise* into ruin before they are built.’

149. Although the metonymic notions surrounding trees exists in most cultures, my suggestion here refers to the particular resonance of trees in Canadian culture, through the indigenous North American Indian culture, but the more recent pioneering myths often associated with the vast Canadian forest wilderness, from Jack London’s *White Fang*, the novels of John Buchan, to the ‘legend’ of Archie Bellamy, an Englishman’s adventures as *Grey Owl*. In many ways, the rise of the ecological movement can be traced to Canada.

Arden's work, could be seen to contribute to the theme of a culture in ruins, the West's own consumerist pathology entwined in an eschatological denial, that allows the disposal of vast amounts of detritus in diminishing land-fill sites. Perhaps the use of the mound / hill as motif, is meant to remind the viewer of a more ancient human history, in which such landmarks were places for gatherings, rituals, different offerings?



82. Jim Brogden *Units*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.



83. Jim Brogden *Sand*, 2007. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

The notion of an entropic offering inhabits the photograph *Sand* 2007 [Fig.83] suggesting the fate of man's ambitions, his monuments in the context of temporal erosion. The material metonym of sand, in its various states, figures in many of the photographs, either as a remnant from previous attempts at renovation, the irony of pointing (the 'index' of the builder – "look" this wall needs fixing), to its material requirement in the making of mortar for construction. It is an essential ingredient in the matrix of brick and concrete structures, yet in relation to entropy an allusion, the material is forever wanting to return to its original granular state. It also suggests a relationship with photography itself, in the form of glass – the lens.

As a material created by the action of the sea (salt, not river sand), we do not expect it to be the site of re-colonisation (save for specialist dune species of flora). The apparent incongruity of the mound of sand in the corner of the enclosed brick space, might also suggest another enigmatic narrative. Our rational view is that sand is meant to be used once delivered. So what went wrong? This remaining sand is disquieting, reinforcing the mood of absence, a fracture in the conventional narrative process, in which materials are assigned specific functions, and are used over time. But here, the schedule is broken by a form of dismembering that is exacerbated by the prominence of the brick wall, the material 'sibling' of sand: a strange example of chance-juxtaposition, an homology of highly-charged metonymic devices. The photograph presents a scene – a micro-landscape of mountain with forest and cloud. A material synonymous with the temporal and the decline of civilisations in antiquity, could be considered appropriate in the context of non-place and the imminent imposition of re-generation. The apparent reclaiming of nature represented by the green plants, provides a particular index that declares – look how nature is quick to recover when man abandons materials intended for building. The digital pixel brickwork replicates the eventual appearance on screen, and the transference of ink dots.

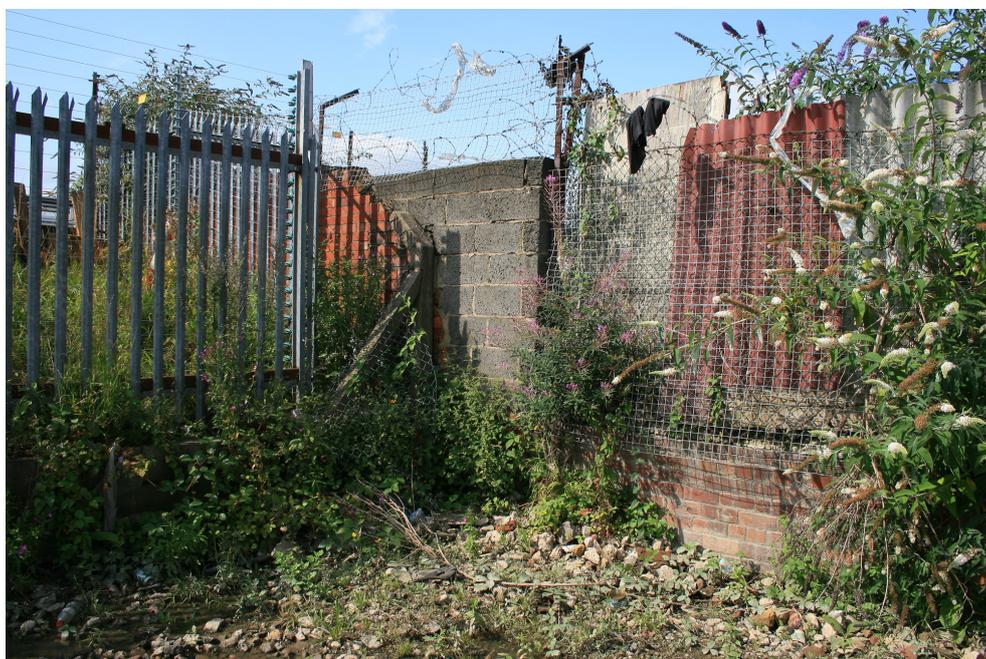
In a more sombre hermeneutic mood, one might wish to consider the space of executions, of confined brutality, but not all the photographs in this study propose an eschatological future for non-place.

Future prospects.

To arrive at any new prospect, one has to acknowledge the ending of some other preceding journey, as the photographer –researcher confronts a physical boundary, or an unexpected rise in the land. The re-generation process pushes the inscriptions of the past to the margins of non-place. These final non-place promontories become the evidential cul-de-sacs of memory, the last journey possible, where the prospect is occluded by the intersection of different barriers. We are reminded of Flusser’s description of the photographer’s urge ‘to hunt for new states of things, situations never seen before, for the improbable, for information.’¹⁵⁰

The sense of a photographic ‘quarry’ is strongly suggested in the photograph *The Corner* 2010[Fig. 84] – the archetypal *non-place*.

The scene reveals an intriguing assemblage of improvised barricades from different periods, resistant to access and disclosure; a flux of new and past visual references. In this context, the pervasive buddleia, noted for its attraction to butterflies, and from a botanical critique, the most rampant of all flora within the non-place ‘environment’ in my experience, hints at the transmogrified future for this terminus. The metaphor of the butterfly is appropriate, perhaps emblematic of many of the non-places within this study – the metamorphosis from derelict space enveloped in new developments, to a new conception based on a hidden bio-diversity.



84. Jim Brogden *The Corner*, 2010. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

150. Flusser, V. ‘The Gesture of Photography,’ *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, trans. Mathews, A. Reaktion Books, 2000, 39.

A photograph which marks the end of the most important site within the study, is *Hard Core* 2009 [Fig. 85] The title (inflected with irony) literally describes what is about to happen in this ambiguous landscape. The imminent 'wave' of rubble (hard core) still poised, will eventually be spread to provide foundations for a new *Miller Homes* development (2010-11). [Fig. 86]



85. Jim Brogden *Hard Core*, 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.



86. Jim Brogden *Miller Homes*, Leeds, February, 2011.

Re-visioning the urban future.

I was thinking about the rubbish, the flapping plastic in the branches, the shore-line of odd stuff caught along the fencing, and I half-closed my eyes and imagined this was the spot where everything I'd ever lost since my childhood had washed up, and I was now standing here in front of it[...] ¹⁵¹



87. Jim Brogden *New Land* 2009. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

The photograph *New Land* 2009 [Fig. 87] in a deliberate *homage* to those pioneering images of the American West, ¹⁵²[Fig. 88] declares through the snagged flapping plastic sheets on the last remaining fence that the more idiosyncratic non-place, has finally been ‘tamed’, for a re-developed future, as anonymous as an Augé airport concourse. The left of frame is illuminated by a sky that has been vertically sliced in a modernist gesture, whose more distant view shows the fragile inscription of an aeroplane ascending far away from this unresolved space. Like most futures, the restricted access given to the spectator on the immediate left is open to speculation, in every sense of the word. The suggestion is one of arrival, or in alluding to Ford Madox Brown’s *The Last of England* ¹⁵³ [Fig. 89] painting, perhaps the more decisive ‘one way ticket’ of departure.

151. Ishiguro, K. *Never Let Me Go*, faber and faber, 2005, 263.

152. C. E. Watkins, *Cape Horn two miles west of the village of Celilo*, 1867 Regarded as one of the defining images of its age. A juxtaposition of ‘raw beauty’ with the pioneering spirit of the American West.

153. The quintessential image of departure. A couple are depicted emigrating to Australia. There are strong allegorical parallels with the biblical flight into Egypt. This is particularly relevant in discussion related to Derek Jarman’s book and film using the same title.



88. C. E. Watkins, *Cape Horn two miles west of the village of Celilo*, 1867. (Photo: Oregon State Library).



89. Ford Madox Brown, *The Last of England*, 1852-1855. Oil on panel.

The final destination presented by the photograph *Prospect 2010* [Fig. 90], reveals the mausoleum of non-place, the eschatological sampling of history and place graded in rubble and dust. The fence has been pulled down to offer a view of a landscape simulacrum, which provides a potential prospect as a purely mechanical process; that will change on a daily basis as various plant machinery re-deploy the materials represented here, in an unintentional ‘earth -work’ project. In one respect, one might view this scene as a ‘testing ground’ for various topographical designs - an experimental zone for landscape architects, resulting in a landscape chameleon.



90. Jim Brogden *Prospect*, 2010. Exhibited as a genesis print. 42 x 59.4 cm.

Conclusion

Although many of the non-places explored since 2005 have now been erased through re-generation, new non-places (like stars) are constantly emerging. And, as Andy Beckett reveals in his recent *The Guardian* newspaper article, there are signs that the public are beginning to re-engage in ‘the gaps developers [have] left’ and where another ‘world is being built [...] more playful, less predictable, even slightly utopian’.¹⁵⁴ With this in mind, one might speculate, that the study’s record of these incremental changes that have taken place within the non-places of south Leeds between 2005–2011 might form an archival dialogue with the work produced by the French photographer Marc Riboud in his documentary project commissioned by the Picture Post in 1954.¹⁵⁵ [Fig. 91]



91. Marc Riboud, *Swinging round the lamp post, Hallidat Street, Burmantofts*, 1954.

154. Becket, A. ‘In the gaps developers left, another world is being built’ *The Guardian* | Saturday 21st August 2010.

155. John Roles, Head of Leeds Museums, explains: ‘ In May 1954, a young photographer, Marc Riboud, was sent to Leeds by Picture Post, the renowned photo-news magazine. His job was to photograph the city for [...] *The Best and Worst of British Cities* [Riboud] went about recording ordinary working people going about their daily lives.’ Most of the archive was lost for 50 years until the collection was found and reunited with Marc Riboud. In 2004, Riboud returned to Leeds in an attempt to re-photograph it. Not surprisingly, Riboud found it ‘difficult to duplicate his earlier photographs.’ See page 6, *A Lasting Moment: Marc Riboud Photographs Leeds, 1954 & 2004*, Eds. Anna Douglas and Janet Douglas, Leeds City Council, 2009.

Although the aims of our projects are quite different, in that Riboud is far more concerned with the representation of Leeds people involved in everyday activities, when conflated, the two archives could form an interesting debate in relation to photographic representations of Leeds, (but I am aware that this explication is beyond the scope of my text here).

One potential function of the *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* archive, could provide an opportunity for future dissemination of the photographic outcomes across other disciplinary fields, which might include: socio-political history (especially in a north of England context), cultural geography, and new anthropology/ethnology, with its emphasis on a 'lived experience' promoting a research methodology that values the 'local', rather than the 'elsewhere'. And, as David Bate declares in his robust argument in *Art, Education, Photography*, the ubiquity of photography makes it an ideal catalyst and facilitator for a variety of debates within a range of contexts:

Photography as a practice is both in and out of art. Photography is a social thing encountered everywhere. It cuts across every type of discourse, every division and boundary (institutional, political, geographic, ethnic, age, sex, economic, psychic, and so on).¹⁵⁶

The *Terra Nullius: Encountering the Non-Place* study also seeks to contribute to the larger debate(s) surrounding the notions of 'spatial practice', the increasing importance of bio-diversity, urban landscape architecture in relation to re-wilding, and of course - the various arguments associated with the conception and valorisation of landscape itself. As the photographs and text suggest, the non-place may be engaged with as an emerging 'new landscape'- without apparent design, yet a place that is becoming increasingly valuable through its more obscure function as a refuge for a forgotten and less prescriptive urban experience.

156. Bate, D. 'Art, Education, Photography', *The Photography Reader*, ed. Liz Wells, Routledge, 2003, 435.

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Becket, A. "In the gaps developers left, another world is being built", *The Guardian* | Saturday 21st August 2010.

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Key to Pronunciation.

The use of italics signifies the following:

Titles of works.

Words in French and German.

Certain emphases.

Appendix.

Related outcomes during the period of the Ph.D. study 2005–11.

Books.

Brogden, W, J. *Terra Nullius: New Urban Encounters*, Fugitive Publications UK. 2007.
ISBN 978-0-9556982-0-0 (pbk)

Publications in Refereed Journals.

Brogden, W, J. 'Terra Nullius' *VEREJNOST A KOUZLO VIZUALITY: Rozvoj teoretických základů výtvarné výchovy a otázky kulturního vzdělávání* journal, (pp.220–227 Chapter III)eds. Radek Horáček and Jan Zálesák pub: Masaryk University, Faculty of Pedagogics October 2008.
ISBN: 978-80-210-4722-8

Brogden, W, J. "Forensic Intimacy: A Digital Exploration of 'Non-Place'" *Colour Design & Creativity* journal 2007. ISSN 1753-7223

Brogden, W, J. "Encountering the 'Non-Place'" *ENTERTEXT 6.3* journal 2007.
ISSN 1472 3085

Exhibitions.

Affiliations: Inscriptions in Space Jim Brogden & Paul Wilson

Two-person exhibition, Norman Rea Gallery University of York,
22nd November 2010 – 10th December 2010.

South of the River, Jim Brogden solo exhibition, Leeds City Museum Gallery,
3rd August 2010 – 1st November 2010.

Signs of Life, Jim Brogden & Matthew Shelton joint exhibition, PSL[Project Space Leeds]
(curated by Pippa Hale & Kerry Harker), Leeds,
16th November 2009 – 27th February 2010

Terra Nullius: Jim Brogden, solo exhibition, Galerie Katakomby Centrum Experimentálního
Divadla, (curated by Josef Bubeník), Brno, Czech Republic,
2nd October 2008 – 30th October 2008.

Terra Nullius: New Urban Encounters, Jim Brogden solo exhibition, Round Foundry Media Centre,
Leeds, 5th October 2007– 30th November 2007. (Arts Council England funded).

Celebrate Leeds 2007 and *Light Night LCC* invited visual artist.

Terra Nullius, Jim Brogden solo exhibition, the Corridor Gallery, University of Leeds,
12th February 2007– 23rd March 2007.

Conference Papers Presented.

Brogden W.J. "Forensic Intimacy", *Chances and Challenges* PhD Research Symposium between the Universities of Leeds, Gothenburg and Helsinki, School of Fine Art, University of Leeds, 24th – 26th May 2007.

Brogden W.J. "Representing the New Unknown in the Well Known" *The Photograph and the City* International Conference, University College Dublin, Clinton / Jefferson Institute for American Studies, 29th June – 1st July 2006.

Brogden W.J. "Non-Space and Identity" *Constructing Identities* International Conference, Cardiff University, 22/23 June 2006.

Brogden W.J. "Liminal Places", *Recovered Landscapes* Inter-Disciplinary Conference, CCASE-NET (EPSRC), Gunpowder Park, London 30th March 2006.

Other Media.

Feral Leeds: A Walk on the Wild Side full page Yorkshire Post newspaper feature and associated web film written by Sheena Hastings (on the work of Jim Brogden).

Web link: <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/highlights/Feral-Leeds-A-Walk-on.3233887.jp> 2007

(*Terra Nullius* photographic research archived online www.terranullius.co.uk)

Awards/Grants.

Vast Agency design photography award £500 February 2010

British Council Erasmus exhibition support Brno, CZ, October 2008

Arts Council England individual award 2007 £1,500

RIBA individual photography award 2007 £300

DLA DESIGN photography award 2007 £300