7   Definition of absence for completion[1]

1. Stephen Heath 'Narrative Space', *Questions of Cinema* London: Macmillan 1981, pp19-75, p54.

This property [of montage]... consisted in the fact that two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition.
Sergei Eisenstein *The Film Sense* London: Faber 1948, p14.

By reminding us that vision is as much a physiological process as an optical one, the stereoscopic image acts as a kind of screen-onto which the viewer's perceptions of an illusory space are projected. There is a similarity between this notion of *projection* and the way cinema, particularly the fiction film, requires its audience to participate in the construction of *filmic* space and simultaneously, in the construction of the film's narrative.[2] By framing a scenario in a certain way and ordering a story in a particular sequence, the film sets up expectations about spatial relationships and provokes hypotheses about the narrative significance of specific events. Drawing on Duchamp's edict about the spectator, the remaining three chapters will consider how film, as a medium which is inherently perspectival, invites the viewer to become an active player in the process of making meaning. I am less concerned with the particular qualities of film as such than with considering the relationship between viewer/film spectator and artwork/film in the light of ideas developed by film-makers and theorists and realized in certain films, notably Chris Marker's *La Jetée* and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*.

2. The 'space' particular to film is literally the outcome of a marriage of narrative and the techniques of film or cinematic production. It also relies on the spectator's active (although not necessarily conscious) engagement in the process of interpreting the meaning or sense of a film. In terms of the fiction film (as opposed to the documentary - or to a lesser extent, the biographical film), it could be argued that a fictional narrative is propelled by the reader/viewer's desire to know what will happen next, to know how the story will *end*. Not that the viewer of a documentary is unconcerned with what is being communicated, but that the fictional narrative leaves the real world behind and creates a notional space which is as much a product of the spectator's motivation as it is a representation of a particular space or situation. I will look more closely at these ideas in chapter 9.

3. Sergei Eisenstein 'Unity in the Image', *Selected Works Volume 2: Towards a Theory of Montage (1937-40)* (eds. M. Glenny and R. Taylor), London: BFI 1991, pp268-280, p269.

4. Ibid. p270.

In *Unity in the Image*, Sergei Eisenstein draws an analogy between the ways in which stereoscopic and moving images create in the viewer a sense of space. On the one hand, the stereo image laterally juxtaposes two subtly differing views of an object or space whilst the film image is constructed out of various frames which are ordered in a sequence. In both systems, the *difference* between the images is the key to our understanding of the space they project. If "binocularity is the existence of two viewpoints that enable an object to be seen in relief", the multiplicity of viewpoints which can be utilized in a film sequence can give us a sense of the relative spatial disposition of a scene over time.[3] Eisenstein uses the example of a building photographed from front and back to differentiate between these two modes of juxtaposition or *montage*, a term which has become a defining quality of the filmic as opposed to the pictorial. The resulting shots of the building obviously cannot be fused stereoscopically to produce a perception of relief but when viewed sequentially they can give "a 'relief' impression of the building that is 'mental'".[4] For Eisenstein moreover, this juxtaposition of images over time does not only lead to a spatial awareness but

embeds narrative (he uses the term 'metaphor') within the very structure of the film process. That is, by locating an image or a sequence before another representing something possibly quite different, the film-maker can infer a semantic link between the two. Whereas two stereoscopic images correctly constructed and positioned can be *perceptually* fused to create a unified sense of space and volume, images which are too dissimilar to be perceived in this way may be *conceptually* or *imaginatively* fused to create meanings which are beyond the scope of the individual image. As Eisenstein explains:

"And now we come to the conclusion that not only is *das Urphänomen* (as the Germans would say) of film, movement; that it not only contributes a new enriched quality at a further stage of development, i.e. montage; but as we have seen, an essential structural constituent is the deployment of metaphor, while the decisive element is its power to create images, all of which derive in equal degree from the same fundamental principle of *juxtaposition*."[5]

5. Ibid. p273.

We have seen that stereoscopic images are predominantly derived from the tradition and techniques of linear perspective. Although the first such 'pictures' were drawn by hand by Sir Charles Wheatstone in the early 1830's, the rapid development and ensuing cult of the three dimensional image can be attributed to the almost simultaneous development of photography, itself grounded in the same perspectival regime. Bearing in mind Eisenstein's correlation of stereoscopy and filmic montage in terms of 'juxtaposition', it would be useful to consider the relationship between the perspectival or photographic and the moving image other than in terms of their common ancestry. Developments in both optics and chemistry made photography possible and although film is intrinsically linked to this history, its differences are as apparent as its similarities to the earlier medium.[6] If movement and as Eisenstein suggests, metaphor are particular to the structure of film, a consideration of such properties may illuminate how we view pictures, images and representations in general.

6. The repetition of an image manifests the interval between repetitions and creates a difference in the image's perceived identity. Difference occurs in the transformation of subjective perception. Similarly, when we describe an event which is repeated - "I brush my teeth everyday" - each repetition is not perceived as identical but in terms of its resemblance to other repetitions. That is, the perception of difference or similarity is an effect of the spectator's engagement. See Gilles Deleuze *Difference and Repetition* (trans. Paul Patton), London: Athlone Press 1994 (1968), pp70-79; for an analysis of repetition in narrative, see Gérard Genette *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (trans. Jane E. Lewin), Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press 1993 (1972), pp113-114.

Although the films and theories of Russian film maker, Lev Kuleshov, have become almost a footnote in the history of the early cinema - Eisenstein was briefly a pupil in Kuleshov's workshop but later distanced himself from the latter's somewhat rigid theorising - it is useful to be reminded of some of his ideas as presented in *Art of the Cinema* (1929).[7] Kuleshov also saw montage as the essential tool of the film maker, the chief structural element through which significant meaning was achieved. He maintained that the actual content of the film's frames was less important than the sequential organisation of that material, his use of the term 'material' referring more to the celluloid itself rather than to the photographic referent. From 1920 onwards, his workshop conducted

7. Lev Kuleshov (1899-1970) 'Art of the Cinema', *Kuleshov on Film: Writings by Lev Kuleshov* (trans. & ed. Ronald Levaco), Berkeley: University of California Press 1974, pp41-123.

8. Ronald Levaco 'Kuleshov and Semiology: selections from Lev Kuleshov's *Art of the Cinema*', *Screen* 12/4, Winter 1971/72, pp103-121, p105.

9. Viktor Shklovsky 'Sterne's Tristram Shandy', *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (trans. & eds. L.T. Lemon and M.J. Reis), Nebraska: University of Nebraska/Bison 1965, pp25-57; also Peter Brooks *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press 1992, p14.

10. Shklovsky, op.cit. p57; I will consider the fabula/syuzhet narrative model in more detail in chapter 9.

a number of 'experiments' intended to examine discrete aspects of the cinematic process and, influenced by Russian Formalist critics such as Shklovsky or Brik (who both worked with him on film projects), Kuleshov attempted to isolate the specific formal attributes which he saw as the essence of the medium. As Ronald Levaco points out "It [the Russian Formalist approach] strove to parse the film, to identify and to create a taxonomy of cinematic expression."[8] Viktor Shklovsky's 1921 essay on Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* attempts to pinpoint the formal qualities particular to the novel - "the minimal units of narrative" as Peter Brooks has put it - and he differentiates 'story' (fabula), "the temporal-causal sequence of narrated events", from 'plot' (syuzhet), the telling of that story in a distorted and disenfranchised manner which emphasizes the novel's opacity and artifice over and above the beguiling simplicity of story-telling.[9] Shklovsky in particular distinguishes between 'motivated' and 'unmotivated' details in the narrative with the latter being less a means of endowing the fiction with a sense of realism than with drawing the reader's attention to the fabric of the work, to the signifying process itself. Sterne's almost constant digressions from the primary narrative are seen as indicative of the novel's emphasis on 'plot' over 'story' as the organising principle behind that narrative and hence its status as typically novelistic, "the most typical novel in world literature" as Shklovsky puts it.[10]

Kuleshov was intent on articulating the particular qualities of film and the general thrust of *Art of the Cinema* is towards creating a highly ordered system or method of film making (with which other directors such as Eisenstein took issue). Like Shklovsky, Kuleshov's experiments and theories were intended to address the formal aspects of the film medium. He differentiated between what he called *screen* space, the two dimensional space of the projected film, and *world* space, the space in which the events portrayed in the film were performed and recorded by the camera. By precisely ordering the relationship between these two realms through choreography, composition and montage, Kuleshov maintained that the film would communicate succinctly and enable the audience to assimilate the plot speedily and with ease. Similarly, influenced by the films and techniques coming from the USA and particularly by the work of D.W. Griffiths, Kuleshov developed a theory of montage through which rapid cutting between different shots, he hoped, would rid Soviet cinema of its inertia and over-dependence on theatrical conventions. He aimed to put every portion of the screen in the service of the plot and to disintegrate the static relation of camera to both actor and set. Perhaps Kuleshov's most famous experiment in this respect (as reported by Pudovkin who for a time worked as an actor in Kuleshov's workshop) which produced what has since become known as the 'Kuleshov Effect', involved the juxtaposition of a frontal shot of an actor,

apparently displaying no visible sign of emotion, with alternately, shots of a steaming bowl of soup, a child playing with a doll and a woman lying in a coffin. Kuleshov's intention was to point out that the meaning of an edited sequence of film lay less in the subjects it portrayed than in the relationship of its constituent parts or shots to one another. When the sequence was projected, the audience allegedly "marvelled at the sensitivity of the actor's range", seeing in the impassive face expressions of hunger, joy and grief respectively.[11] In Kuleshov's words, "with correct montage, even if one takes the performance of an actor directed at something quite different, it will still reach the viewer as intended by the editor, because the viewer himself will complete the sequence and see that which is suggested to him by the montage."[12] In an insightful paper on the Kuleshov Effect, Stephen Prince and Wayne Hensley have questioned the verifiability of Kuleshov's method and the success of his experiment. As no clips of the film have survived, our only foothold on the work (other than Kuleshov's recollections in *Art of the Cinema*) is Pudovkin's third person report of the audience's response. In a recreation of the experiment held under conditions adhering closely to the reported details of the original, Prince and Hensley found that the sequence was far from an effective means of communication, their audience survey revealing that only a small percentage of viewers came anywhere near interpreting the intended meanings correctly.[13] Of course, the seventy years separating contemporary audiences from those of Kuleshov's era have witnessed vast changes in both the techniques and prevalence of the moving image and perhaps we are less easily duped.

Other notable experiments in 'creative geography' created what could be called 'virtual' spaces - and what Kuleshov called a "new earthly terrain" - by a similar use of montage.[14] For example, two actors were filmed separately walking through different parts of Moscow. The subsequent footage was cut together in such a way that they appeared to meet and shake hands whereas in reality, they were at a distance of some two miles from each other. When the sequence was edited it was found that there was no footage of the actual handshake and as the original actors were unavailable for a further session, two replacements were used wearing the same outfits. The camera was pointed only at the two hands shaking and the resulting footage inserted into the sequence. Further trickery involved the insertion of some footage from an American film so that after the handshake, the backdrop to which was Gogol's monument, the two actor's turned to look out of frame with the next shot showing the White House in Washington. "Deciding to go further, they [the actors] leave and climb up the enormous staircase of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour [subsequently demolished in Stalin's era]. We film them, edit the film and the result is that they

11. Ronald Levaco 'Kuleshov' *Sight & Sound* Spring 1971, pp86-109, p88; Levaco quotes Pudovkin's *Film Technique and Film-Making* London 1954.

12. Kuleshov, op.cit. p54.

13. Stephen Prince & Wayne Hensley 'The Kuleshov Effect: Recreating the Classic Experiment', *Cinema Journal* 31/2 Winter 1992, pp59-75.

14. Kuleshov, op.cit. p52.

are seen walking up the steps of the White House!" As Levaco notes, Kuleshov "sought to demonstrate that physical space and 'real' time could be made totally subservient to montage. And he sought to prove, in turn, that the source of the associational power of montage was in the viewer's consciousness, his perception of the edited material which did not bear any relationship to 'objective reality.'"[15] Although the lack of tangible evidence regarding his experiments may detract from our appreciation of them and the overly formalistic approach apparent in his writings may now appear dated, Kuleshov was perhaps one of the first film makers to realize the camera's potential for creating and manipulating another kind of space and another kind of viewing peculiar to cinema and to translate those insights into theoretical propositions.

15. Levaco, op.cit. p88.

The space of Kuleshov's 'new earthly terrain' was constituted through a kind of mental piecing together of clues and cues on the part of the viewer. This space, moreover, was less a product of purely representational or illusionistic methods than of a combination of these with a narrative drive, or as Eisenstein would have it, metaphor through juxtaposition. The construction in the last example of a plausible but, ultimately, 'impossible' urban setting hinges on the staging of a meeting between two people and the resulting interpretation has as much to do with the audience's capacity for deducing meaning from a sequence of disparate images as it has to do with the recording of an event, perhaps more so. The space peculiar to film/cinema is produced through framing and re-framing, through the accumulation and cross-referencing of viewpoints. The viewer adopts, moves between these viewpoints and by inference, moves within the space of the film which may also be the space of the plot, that is, the space of the narrative. It is the film in terms of its sequence which regulates this movement. This last point is made by Stephen Heath in his essay on the structuring of what he calls 'narrative space' in film and its manipulation of the viewer's subjectivity, of his or her role as participant in the process of constructing meaning.[16] Heath's larger project has at its core the intention to reveal the ideological forces at work in the cinema and the process of film making and like Shklovsky and Kuleshov, he looks at the medium in terms of a signifying practice. From a Marxist standpoint which informs much of his thinking about cinema, Heath maintains that ideology is effective only when it is imperceptible to its intended public and that if a film is to conceal its ideological basis, it must appear transparent as a medium, directing attention away from its mechanics and towards the narrative illusion it projects. As Daniel Dayan notes "it must be coherent and readable entirely on its own terms".[17]

Heath is very much concerned with articulating the spectator's role in the

16. Heath, op. cit. pp19-75.

17. Daniel Dayan 'The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema', *Movies and Methods* (ed. Bill Nichols), Berkeley: University of California Press 1976, pp438-451, p447.

construction and interpretation of meaning and he acknowledges film's perspectival heritage in the way it posits a centrally-located and unifying viewer or subject. Unlike painting, however, film is concerned with movement and the relation of movement to space, of objects to their context in sequence. The re-framing of the film image necessary to construct the impression of a coherent illusion through, for example, camera procedures such as shot/reverse shot or look/point-of-view, constantly moves or relocates this central position and with it the spectator who becomes the gravitational centre of an ever-shifting space and the receptor of the narrative which organizes this movement. Movements of characters within the frame determine what is visible or out of sight and necessarily function as narrative elements. Likewise, movements of the camera - movements of the frame itself - disrupt the boundary between the *outside* and the *inside* of the image and require the spectator to readjust their perception of both represented space and narrative action. Film space is a product of this switching between views (shooting being a highly organized process with rules, for example, governing changes in camera angle between shots to achieve effective 'matches') and is distinct from pictorial space to which it is, of course, related via photography.[18] Although constituted through frames, filmic space unfolds over time with the viewer inhabiting or projecting themselves into this space from a static central position: "What moves, finally, is the spectator, immobile in front of the screen. Film is the regulation of that movement, the individual as subject..."[19]

A central term in Heath's discussion of the activity of looking at film/cinema is the system of the 'suture'. Originally coined by Jacques-Alain Miller, in response to the work of Lacan (Miller was also responsible for the transcription and compilation of Lacan's *Seminars*), suture in its original context was used to describe the relation of the subject "to the chain of its discourse", to articulate the subject's sense of self as a unity or as unified image. It was derived from Lacan's ideas concerning the Imaginary and Symbolic levels of the subject's development, the former being manifested (initially) in the child's recognition of its unified image in a mirror.[20] Although there has been much discussion and criticism of the 'system of the suture' (the extent to which it was or is a theory imposed on the process of film making after the event),[21] it was originally appropriated for film theory by the critic Jean-Pierre Oudart in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1969 as a means of examining the film subject's (or viewer's) relationship to the film sequence.[22] The central idea of the suture 'system' in film terms is that for each 'filmic field', each view given by the camera, there exists an alternative view corresponding to the look/field of what Oudart dubbed the "Absent One", a kind of spectral being, a lack or gap in the fabric of the film

18. see Noel Burch *Theory of Film Practice* (especially 'Spatial and Temporal Articulations' and 'Editing as a Plastic Art'), New York: Praeger 1973.

19. Heath, op.cit. p53.

20. Miller, op.cit. pp24-34.

21. see William Rothman 'The System of the Suture', *Movies and Methods* (ed. Bill Nichols), Berkeley: University of California Press 1976, pp451-459.

22. Jean-Pierre Oudart 'Cinema and Suture', reprinted in *Screen* 18/4, Winter 1977/78, pp35-47.

which generates an unease in the viewer's imagined unity of space/place. It is centred around the *shot/reverse shot* structure in which the represented viewpoint constantly changes as the camera obliquely frames one character looking out of frame and then another from a reverse angle, implying an imaginary 180° line of sight between them. The camera occupies these positions obliquely as if to state that we see a character's point-of-view not as an 'I' but as a 'him' or a 'her', i.e. "this is what he sees."[23] Whilst such shots are often preceded by a broader shot establishing the characters' location in relation to one another, Oudart is more concerned with those instances without an establishing shot where the spectator is forced to construct the required relationship. One view poses an absence in the field beyond the frame and a corresponding sense of lack in the viewing subject which successive views ceaselessly recapture for the film "binding the spectator as subject in the realization of the film's space."[24] Or, in Dayan's interpretation of Oudart, "to any filmic field defined by the camera corresponds another field from which an absence emanates."[25] Suture literally refers to the tying or stitching together of the lips of a wound and in Miller's definition, it is used to describe the "general relation of lack to the structure of which it is an element, inasmuch as it implies the position of a taking-the-place-of."[26] Anyone who says 'I', who aims to determine the field in which they operate as a universal structure is, according to Miller, engaged in a process of suturing. Or again, "Suture names the relation of the subject to the chain of its discourse: we shall see that it figures there as the element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in."[27]

In terms of film and the *elasticity* of film space, as Bordwell has put it, what is represented is not *extensional*. The space referred to does not exist beyond the frame in a coherent and unified sense but is welded - with narrative - in the process of a stitching together of points-of-view, looks, framings and juxtapositions.[28] This process occurs within the viewer and is a product of their impulse or desire for a unified perception of both space and narrative. For example, the camera may picture a character such that their gaze is directed out of frame. This absence (and the corresponding implication of an object of that view) is subsequently filled in the case of a typical shot/reverse shot dialogue sequence - such as in *Vertigo*, where Scotty (James Stewart) is talking across a table to Madeleine (Kim Novak) after her rescue from San Francisco Bay - by framing the character who is the recipient of that look, usually from a slight angle, that is, from a position which implicates the camera as a 'third' person or witness to the dialogue. (The camera was traditionally not supposed to look directly at the actor "lest it denounce its [cinema's] fiction" by enabling the viewer to perceive the cinematic mechanism; in looking at the camera, the actor

23. Dayan, op.cit. p447.

24. Heath, op.cit. p52.

25. Dayan, op.cit. p448.

26. Miller, op.cit. p26.

27. Ibid. p26.

28. Bordwell, op.cit. p111.

29. Oudart, op.cit. p37.

30. Heath, op.cit. p54.

31. Bordwell, op.cit. p111.

32. Roland Barthes 'The Third Meaning:

Research notes on some Eisenstein stills',

Image, Music, Text (trans. & ed. Stephen

Heath), London: Fontana 1977, pp52-68,

p61.

33. Ibid. p64.

is effectively looking at the viewer, inadvertently acknowledging their presence as a witness to the situation portrayed.)[29] In such a way the film ceaselessly poses a lack which is then filled, constantly ebbing and flowing between the projection of an absence and a subsequent presence. According to Heath, the viewer is the element which   shuttles between these states as if woven into the film's fabric: "Fields are made, moving fields and the process includes not just the completions but the definitions of absence for completion."[30] Bordwell suggests that the processes suture delineates are in practice more related to the pre-conscious than to the unconscious. It is more of a cognitive-perceptual activity where the spectator constantly checks shots against expectations and adjusts their hypotheses about the space and events portrayed accordingly.[31] At whatever level this process occurs, in order for the illusion to override the artifice of its making, the film must appear to seamlessly combine these discrete shots. It is predicated upon the viewer *not seeing the joins*.

In a meditation on certain stills from Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*, Roland Barthes identifies another level of meaning, what he calls the 'third meaning', which emanates from certain details in the images. If an image can be said to convey meaning in terms of 'information' and 'symbolism' (depicted objects or situations may have a symbolic value whose meaning is derived from their relationship to a particular cultural context), both of which Barthes incorporates into what he calls the 'obvious' meaning, in certain instances the image may also carry a 'third meaning'. This he describes as 'obtuse' in the sense of a meaning blunted in form so as to prevent a clear or lucid reading, or which indeed may effect a slippage in reading. Barthes identifies the obtuse in some of the details in the Eisenstein stills which one might say were at the level of the incidental; for example, in the contrast between one actor's refined countenance and another's roughness, heightened by the absurd theatricality of his make-up; or in the momentary disposition of a woman's facial expression in relation to her costume head-dress. Her gesture invokes a condition (and our reading) of grief but in this and other such details, Barthes also identifies a significance which seems to point to some other meaning but which simultaneously eludes interpretation. This significance - or rather *signifiance* to use Barthes' term, that is, less a description of 'significance' than of the process of signification - engenders a kind of puzzlement in the viewer and disrupts slightly the 'realistic' portrayal of the event. This obtuse or third meaning emanates from "a signifier without a signified, hence the difficulty in naming it."[32] It is as if Barthes is asking: How can you describe something that does not represent anything?

Moreover, it is the stills themselves which provoke Barthes to incorporate into this conception what he calls the 'filmic', "that which in the film cannot

34. Sergei Eisenstein 'Beyond the Shot' (1929), *Selected Works Volume 1: Writings 1922-34* (eds. M. Glenny and R. Taylor), London: BFI 1991, pp138-150. "I opposed him [Pudovkin, who was a proponent of Kuleshov's ideas] with my view of montage as collision, my view that the collision of two factors gives rise to an idea." (p144)

35. Barthes, op.cit. p66.

36. Ibid. p69.

37. Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida* (trans. R. Howard.), London: Cape 1982, p6.

38. Ibid. p27.

be represented [using language]. The filmic begins only where language and meta-language (criticism) end."[33] Experiencing the film in the inevitability of its sequence prevents the viewer from alighting on these details. One is only aware, perhaps, of their presence as a kind of mental after-image, a sense of something other than that which is overtly the subject of the sequence - the 'obvious' meaning, that which is indicated by the primary narrative. If the technique and theory of film montage is dictated by the need to create an awareness of temporal continuity from a collection of fragments in order to maintain a narrative coherence, the film *still* enables the 'inside' of the film image - those details which point to the 'third meaning' - to be considered more easily. Eisenstein, in his opposition to Kuleshov's montage theory, urged an understanding of how the inside of the frame could relate to successive shots, thereby emphasising the importance of the relationship between both framing and montage as equally important semantic tools.[34]

By loosening the single frame from its place in a sequence, Barthes maintains that we can consider the image not only in terms of the narrative thrust in which it plays a part, the obvious meaning which is attached to the figures or objects or scenes represented, but also as a surface to be *scrutinized*. A frame may or may not yield a reading outside of the obvious but the process of stilling, of freezing the frame, gives us a glimpse of those aspects of the diegesis (the represented world and its narrative organisation) which escape the main reading, and which can reveal those details which endow the film with its particular resonance as a medium. Painting and photography lack the "diegetic horizon" of film as they are too bound up in "the construction of stasis", too concerned with pictorial logic.[35] Sequence, the representation of movement and space through the sequential projection of frames, is, by contrast, the logic of film. By stilling that movement (which is not necessarily the movement of things depicted but more the actual movement of the film through the projector), those aspects of the diegesis not central or obvious reveal themselves and, for Barthes, allow that which is purely filmic to be observed. The film still "scorns logical time (which is only operational time); it teaches us how to dissociate the technical constraint from what is the specific filmic and which is the 'indescribable' meaning."[36]

If the 'third meaning' of the film or rather, the film stilled, points to a referent which has escaped, photography for Barthes is a medium to which the referent "adheres".[37] In his last book, *Camera Lucida*, he distinguishes the informational and symbolic levels of the Photograph (he usually refers to this as a general class, hence his use of an upper-case 'P'), which he calls the *studium*, from another level of its affectiveness in which a figurative element in the picture

punctuates the image's stability, its dominant meaning. In counterpoint to the 'obtuse' meaning's bluntness, Barthes identifies this detail as the *punctum*, "the element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow and pierces me" but which is similarly distinct from the Photograph's primary or obvious meaning.[38] Barthes' motives in *Camera Lucida* are far more personal than in his notes on Eisenstein with the driving force behind the book being a search for the essence of Photography as it relates to images of his recently deceased

39. Ibid. p55.

mother. The book is suffused with the poignancy of this absence which Barthes constantly uses to ground or contextualize his musings and to which the Photograph, as he sees it, unremittingly refers. Unlike the moving image where one is "constrained to a continuous voracity; a host of other qualities, but not pensiveness", the Photograph is fastened to its referent which it pins "like a butterfly".[39] The rays of light emanating from the object bear a causal relation

40. Ibid. p55.

to the image produced which expresses itself as a record of a moment, an affirmation that what is pictured existed, an affirmation that *this-has-been*. Whereas the film camera records what is in front of it with the intention of reproducing that movement on the screen, the Photograph 'poses' its object, or rather, its object constitutes itself (or *himself*, as this is Barthes talking) "in advance" as an image.[40] The Photograph, albeit a specific type of photograph which, unlike Jeff Wall's work, is saturated in the moment in which it was taken, does not 'recapture' this object for the viewer in the present. On the contrary, it maintains the irrevocable distance in *time* between then and now, between a previous moment and the time of viewing. By positing that this-has-been, the

41. Ibid. p96.

Photograph - and therefore *every* photograph according to Barthes' hyperbole - also asserts that the moment has passed and to his horror, reminds him that also 'this-is-no-longer': "In front of the photograph of my mother as a child, I tell myself: she is going to die: I shudder... over a catastrophe which has already occurred. Whether or not the subject is dead, every photograph is this catastrophe."[41] Not only does the photograph locate the image in its relation to a past event; it also constitutes the gap between past and present inducing what for Barthes, at least, could be called a vertigo of time.

42. Ibid. p115.

"Now, in the photograph, what I posit is not only the absence of the object; it is also by one and the same movement, on equal terms, the fact that this object has indeed existed and that it has been where I see it. Here is where the madness is, for until this day no representation could assure me of the past of a thing except by intermediaries; but with the Photograph, my certainty is immediate: no one in the world can undeceive me."[42]