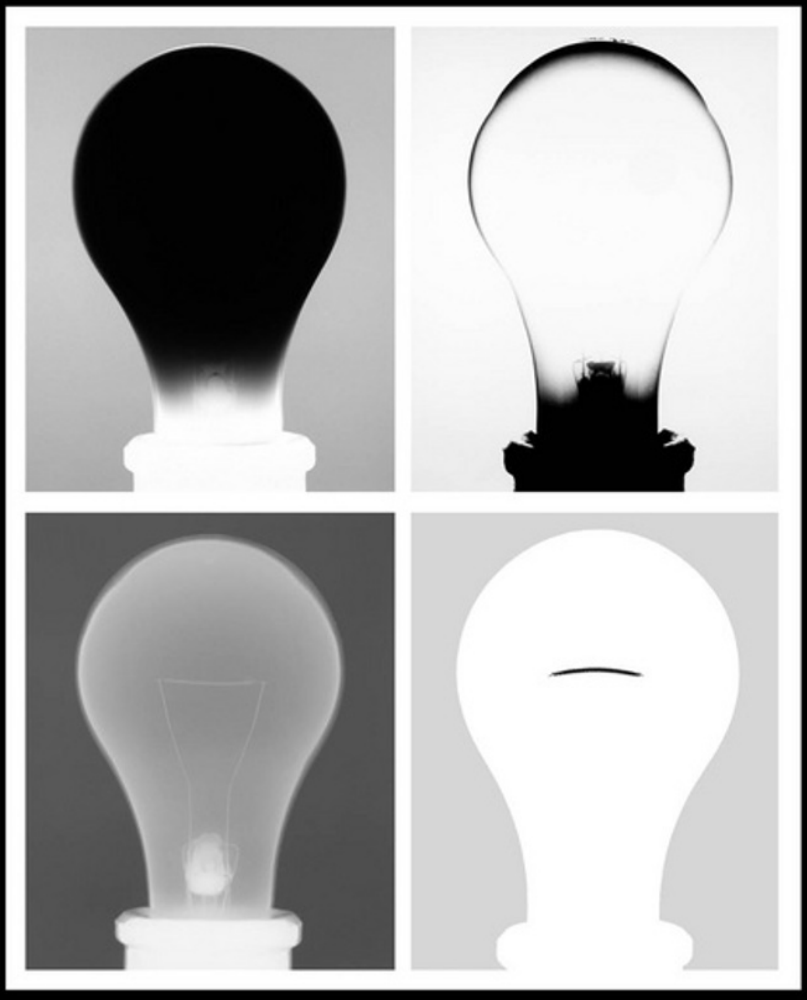

FOUR ARTS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

An Essay in Philosophy

Dominic McIver Lopes

WILEY Blackwell

James Welling, *Flower 009*, 2006. Chromogenic print mounted to acrylic, 116.8 × 94 cm. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, New York/London.

Four Arts of Photography

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Four Arts of Photography

An Essay in Philosophy

DOMINIC McIVER LOPES

With commentary by

DIARMUID COSTELLO AND
CYNTHIA A. FREELAND

WILEY

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For Turner Wigginton

Contents

List of Illustrations

Notes on Author and Contributors

Dominic McIver Lopes is Distinguished University Scholar and Professor of Philosophy at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *Understanding Pictures* and *Sight and Sensibility: Evaluating Pictures*, as well as books on computer art and the nature of art. His first camera was a Kodak Instamatic 124, which he used to document his family's migration from Scotland to Canada.

Diarmuid Costello is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick. He co-directed the Arts and Humanities Research Council project on Aesthetics after Photography, and has co-edited issues of *Art History*, the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, and *Critical Inquiry* on photography. He is now working on a book titled *On Photography* for Routledge. He grew up on the smell of D76 and Neutol WA, and supported himself through art school as a photographer.

Cynthia A. Freeland is Moores Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston. She is currently (2015–2017) serving as president of the American Society for Aesthetics. Her publications include work on ancient philosophy and feminist theory as well as aesthetics, and her most recent book is *Portraits and Persons.* Her photo stream can be viewed on Flickr, where she is known as "Philosopher Queen."

Preface

Philosophers cultivate the virtue of cool detachment, but philosophers of art must make a special effort to keep their aesthetic passions in check. Neutrality clears space for multiple perspectives and frank confrontations, but it can be fragile. Slight errors in emphasis, hasty generalizations, too obvious assumptions, and slips of imagination can mislead catastrophically. We must therefore curb our enthusiasms. Yet, I confess I have a soft spot for photography.

My first book, *Understanding Pictures*, took on drawing and photography as our two principal modes of imaging, and I thought an article that I subsequently wrote about the aesthetics of photography would be my final say on the topic.[1] Then came the passion. Over the past 10 years, I looked at a lot of photography as a private citizen rather than as a professional philosopher, in a city with an intense photography scene. Readers of early drafts of my book on computer art urged me to say something about digital art, which got me thinking about digital photography. Soon after, my stepson began to train as a photographer, and our conversations brought the practice of photo-making back into my life—I grew up taking and printing photographs. Back on the professional side, Diarmuid Costello asked me to join him in co-editing a special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* on photographic media.[2] His enthusiasm rubbed off, along with some (though not enough) of his vast knowledge. The last straw was an invitation to speak at a show of contemporary photography at the Kunstmuseum Bonn during the summer of 2011, for this led to the key idea of this book.[3]

Through all this, I had become convinced that some of the most compelling, and also pleasing, works of visual art in recent decades were photographs. A rarity, photography appeals as much to ordinary art lovers as to art world insiders. At the same time, I was annoyed whenever I heard critics say, as they too often do, that photography only became a serious art form in the 1980s, mainly through the efforts of the Düsseldorf and Vancouver schools. No amount of critical discourse could get me to reconsider 150 years of brilliant photographic art. Even the narrative of its triumphal march through the gallery gates seemed to assume a stunted or partial picture of photography.

This essay uses a little philosophy solicitously to gauge the power of photography as an art. The approach is not philosophy in the standard academic mode, where theoretical analyses are constructed and tested through technically precise (some say tedious) argumentation. Neither is it the kind of philosophy–criticism that draws philosophers, critics, and art lovers to the writing of Richard Wollheim, Arthur Danto, Martha Nussbaum, Alexander Nehamas, or Robert Pippin.[4] I lack the skill and sensibility for that. My aim is not to argue for a thesis, and I cannot pretend to plumb the depths of specific photographs. I aspire instead to open up and complicate our shared view of photography, counteracting a history of thinking about it from one narrow perspective after another.

As its subtitle proclaims, this book is an "essay." The word has acquired a squalid reputation through repeated association with classroom assignments requiring students to say pretty much nothing in 500 or 5,000 words. When added to subtitles, "essay" has become meaningless, except to foretell the onset of some dry academic prose. I want to repatriate the word. The essay is a relatively short text that tries out a new idea, without full-on proof, scholarly discussion, and literature review. The essay is experimental, concrete, and personal in its vision (but not always anecdotal). In landscape architecture, gardens are a design opportunity where ideas are put in play, freed from clients' demands, and follies are built. The essay is the garden of philosophy.

I am tremendously lucky to know many gifted thinkers and scholars. Without their intellectual generosity, this book would never have been written. My thanks to Gemma Argüello, Aleksey Balotskiy, Diarmuid Costello, Richard Eldridge, Emma Esmaili, Susan Herrington, Luning Li, Samantha Matherne, Madeleine Ransom, James Shelley, and Servaas

Van Der Berg. Thanks also to audiences at UNAM, Auburn University, the Kunstmuseum Bonn, Cal State Fullerton, Dartmouth University, the University of Durham, the 2015 New Philosophy of Photography Conference at the Institute of Philosophy in London, the University of Miami, Minho University, Northwestern University, the University of Oklahoma, the 2013 Ovronnaz Workshop on the Philosophy of Photography, Paris–Sorbonne University, the University of Utah, the University of Valencia, the University of Warwick, and my 2014 undergraduate seminar in the philosophy of photography. A big thanks to five anonymous referees, whose reports set the gold standard for intelligent, constructive peer review.

The bones of the book were presented as the 2012 Mangoletsi Lectures at the University of Leeds, and I am grateful to the donor who sponsored the lectures and for the warm hospitality of Matthew Kieran, Aaron Meskin, and all the members of the Leeds philosophy department.

Philosophy moves forward through dialogue, but only indirect traces of the dialogue tend to get written down and preserved. Outsiders often miss out on an important and rewarding part of the life of philosophy. Regretting this, Plato wrote dramatized conversations among interested parties, and Plato's model remains viable.[5] Another model is the commentary, a kind of conversation in slow motion, and this book includes a pair of commentaries—by Diarmuid Costello and Cynthia Freeland. For me, it is a great honor to get a thorough going-over by my most respected peers. Costello and Freeland do not agree with everything I say. Good thing too, because their insights and acute observations show us the way forward. Nothing makes me cringe like a book that presents itself as being the last word on its topic. Freeland and Costello get the last word here, but our exchange is an invitation for you to join in.

Notes

1 Dominic McIver Lopes, *Understanding Pictures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and "The Aesthetics of Photographic Transparency," *Mind* 112.447 (2003), pp. 432–48.

2 Diarmuid Costello and Dominic McIver Lopes, eds., "Special Issue on The Media of Photography," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*

70.1 (2012), pp. 1–163. Reprinted as *The Media of Photography* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

3 Dominic McIver Lopes, "Jetzt Sind Wir Alle Künstler," in *Kunst und Philosophie: Fotografie zwischen Inszenierung und Dokumentation*, ed. Julian Nida-Rümelin and Jakob Steinbrenner (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2012), pp. 105–22. Translated and reprinted in *Estética, Cultura Material e Diálogos Intersemióticos*, ed. Ana Gabriela Macedo, Carlos Mendes de Sousa, and Vítor Moura (Ribeirão: Edições Húmus, 2012), pp. 185–98 and in *Enrahonar: Quaderns de Filosofia* 50 (2013), pp. 45–57.

4 Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987); Arthur Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Martha C. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alexander Nehamas, *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Robert Pippin, *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

5 For example, Bernard Suits, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia*, 3rd ed. (Peterborough: Broadview, 2014).

Wonderment to Puzzlement

Voicing a disappointment well known to curious minds, Donald Davidson acknowledged how hard it is "to improve on intelligibility while retaining the excitement."[1] Familiar phenomena seen through a haze can come to have an exotic allure that rarely survives straightening them out. An exception is the philosophy of photography. Those who puzzle over photography are apt to find that the topic grows more—not less—interesting as their puzzles are solved.

Photography's relentless successes over the past two centuries have done little to dampen its magic. Soon after the exhibition of the first Daguerreotype, Edgar Allen Poe nominated it "the most extraordinary triumph of modern science," and Lady Elizabeth Eastlake later recalled the "wondering gaze" that met the triumph.[2] Since then, photography's domestication—becoming "a household word and a household want"—has advanced by leaps.[3] The invention of dry photographic plates freed the camera from the chemistry set. Soon after that, mass-manufactured handheld cameras were marketed alongside convenient drugstore photo-finishing. The adoption of high-speed 35-mm film from the movie business was followed by the perfection of user-friendly autofocus and automatic exposure control, the invention of instant imaging via Polaroid and then digital display, and (most recently) the migration of the technology out of the single-purpose camera and into the pocket-sized smartphone. By mid-2012, 300 million photographs were being uploaded to social media sites per month. By 2014, it was 300 million per day. Taking photographs is now as natural as turning doorknobs. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called it "the most ordinary thing of all," while Susan Sontag found it to be "as widely practiced an amusement as sex and dancing."[4] As with sex and dancing, more seems never to be too much. Our response to photographs—of recognition, pleasure, and discovery—remains irresistible and visceral. The power of photographs

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

to command this response, like the power of humor to command a smile, has never faded.

Not every success story makes the philosophy books. Good puzzles grab philosophers. On one hand, the stunning success of photography seems to stem from its capacity to effortlessly and impartially record our visual world. Photographs seem to have a special epistemic virtue, and we tend to trust them more than we trust other images. On the other hand, we value photographs as works of art and as expressions of the artistic vision of the photographer. So it is hard to deny both that the camera is an unbiased witness and that it can be used with the same expressive force as the paintbrush, chisel, or diatonic scale. Yet, it cannot be true that photographs are valuable both as means of artistic expression and also as objective records that neutralize the personal perspective. We face a dilemma and we must take sides, but both sides seem right. Disconcerted, the philosopher rolls up her sleeves.

Notice that the two sides face off as a debate about the standing of photography as an art form. Impressed by photography's epistemic power, you might reason as follows. Photographs are objective visual records because they are the products of machine imaging rather than mind work. However, making art requires mind work, and art's value is achieved through mind work. So, taking a photograph is no way to make a work of art or to make something having the kind of value we find in art. Ergo, photography is not an art.

A cheeky comeback sticks up for photography's expressive potential. If anything is a bedrock datum from which we may reason, it is the fact that photography is an art. Look around any art gallery (or its web site), and you will see plenty of evidence that photographs count as art and express the artistic vision of their makers. Since photography is an art and since we nearly all take photographs, it follows that we nearly all make art. Ergo, photography is art's democratic apotheosis.

These contrary bits of reasoning are caricatures, of course. They magnify core features of the fancier lines of thought that galvanize genuine debates about photography. Both leverage the puzzle about the nature of photography into a debate for or against photography's prospects as art. For both, photography is an art only if it breaks free of machine imaging to allow for personal expression. So if you accept that photography has special epistemic power because machine imaging leaves no room for the personal touch, then you come out against the

artistic standing of photography. If you accept that photography is an art, then you come out against the machine-based epistemology of photographs. The caricature zooms in on three concepts that dominate thinking about photography: the concepts of art, epistemic authority, and personal expression—or art, machine imaging, and agency.

As informative (and fun) as they are, caricatures are still simplifications. Must we really choose between machine objectivity and the expression of a personal vision? Surely not all photographs give us accurate records of events! That some lie is hardly news.[5] Maybe some excel epistemically while others excel artistically? Or maybe photographers can harness the objectivity of machine imaging precisely in order to reach their artistic goals? Either way, we get the sensible result that some but not all photographs are works of art. What blocks our path to this result is the assumption that photography is an art only if it breaks free of machine imaging to allow for personal expression. But is that true? If not, then how can we understand photography as a mind–machine collaboration?

Questions like these call for a closer look at the mechanism of photography, the nature of artistic expression, and the demands of art, especially as conceptions of each of these play out in subtle and sophisticated reasoning that we can take seriously. The agenda for this essay is to come to terms with each of the three core components of the reasoning that spins out of the puzzle.

To lay the cards on the table, this essay does not prove that photography is an art. On the contrary, it starts with the fact that photography is an art. A walk around the galleries or an afternoon's web browsing gives us far more confidence in this fact than any amount of slick reasoning to the contrary. Faced with some philosophy purporting to show that we cannot know that there is a physical reality, the philosopher G. E. Moore held up his hand and remarked, "here is a hand." His point was that no amount of philosophy could outweigh the truth of that. The gesture said, "Halt! Enough already!" Well, nobody needs philosophy to settle the question of whether photography is an art. Photography is an art.

A little philosophy can still illuminate how and when photography is an art. After all, the cheeky reasoning to the rah-rah conclusion that we are nearly all photographic artists goes too far. Photography is an art, but many photographs are not works of art. Nearly everyone takes

photographs, but the photographs that you and I take are not works of art. Anyway, mine are not. So the question arises, what makes some photographs works of art?

To answer this question, this essay digs deeper into the caricatured positions. After a brief aside about one photograph, we trace the path of skepticism about photographic art through the history of thinking about photography. Romping through the history, we gather the components of the most sophisticated and powerful skeptical reasoning. As it turns out, this reasoning is most interesting not for its (false) conclusion that photography is not an art, but rather for the astonishing fact that, despite its hold on our thinking, it goes wrong at every single step. Many pieces of reasoning have some flaws, including some appealing ones, but reasoning with serious staying power that is flawed through and through … that is amazing. And important, because each mistake, at each step, points to a different way to think about photographic art.

Therefore, let us replace the clumsy question "is photography an art?" with a question that calls for a more nuanced answer. When is photography an art? This question has (surprise!) four answers, each revealed by a different fault in the skeptic's reasoning, each correcting our understanding of the core concepts in the puzzle of photography, each opening up a unique perspective that we can take in order to appreciate photographic art.

Plumbago

With a flourish of his hand, G. E. Moore brushed off skepticism about the existence of the external world. In tribute to Moore, why not hold up an image where the artist's hand played a starring role? The frontispiece to this volume reproduces one of James Welling's Flowers series. Nobody who has seen the series or read the words of the critics who have written about it can seriously doubt photography's artistic power.[6] At the same time, the series does invite us to wonder how photographs function as art.

Start with what we most plainly see. Looking at *Flower 009*, you see a flower, a spray of plumbago. In fact, *Flower 009* is a photogram, made by placing plumbago blossoms directly onto a photosensitive surface,

then exposing it to light and developing the print. What we see is an imprint of light that has passed through the delicate petals, creating an image. Photograms such as this are the ultimate photographic traces. No camera with its system of optics interposes a level of interpretation. Yet, the reality of the flower presented in *Flower 009* is not the reality that we are accustomed to seeing. Somehow we see how flowers look and we also see flowers as we have never seen them before.

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet? Perhaps, but names matter. Flowers are classic tokens of beauty, quintessentially colored things, symbols of light itself, marks of love. For Elaine Scarry, they are the things most perfectly suited to be presented to vision.[7] To romanticize a little more, they are plants' gifts in return for the light they consume. Looking at the Flowers series naturally leads us to reflect upon the cultural significance of flowers as well as on the operations of light and color in photography.

Look at *Flower 009* in the right frame of mind and it is easy to slip from seeing foliage to seeing shape and color for its own sake. The image is formally gorgeous, using light to put the reality of what is depicted in tension with an abstract space. Can there be an abstract art of photography?

Finally, let us come to the hand of the artist. The images in the Flower series were made by arranging blossoms directly on sheets of 8 × 10″ monochrome film in the dark. Once expose and printed, the resulting negative was then contact printed onto color paper using light filtered though a mosaic of hand-cut filters. Here, we have photography without a camera. Instead, an arrangement of flowers by hand and hand-cut filters restore to flowers what was bleached away in making a monochrome photogram. Photography disassembles bits of the world to reassemble them anew.

Anyone writing on Welling's work quotes his idea that any camera is "a time machine, producing pictures that could have been made any time in the prior 135 years."[8] Each photograph contains within itself a whole history of technical decisions about optics and chemistry. Technical decisions are never made in a vacuum: they are shaped by aesthetic and scientific concerns. *Flower 009* gives us a glimpse of the four arts of photography that are to be found by taking a close look at the history of photography and the history of thinking about photography.

A Short History of Photography Theory

Theorizing about photography is as old as photography itself. Indeed, older. In 1786, the painter Joshua Reynolds anticipated concerns about photography when he wrote about one of its forbears, the camera obscura. Set "a view of nature represented with all the truth of the camera obscura" next to "the same scene represented by a great artist," and "how little and mean will the one appear in comparison of the other."[9] Departing from Reynolds' pessimistic verdict is a train of thought that reached speed with the invention of photography a few decades later, that has never since slowed, and that impels the sophisticated reasoning to skepticism about photographic art. Here are four main stops along the way.

1. Early Skepticism Henry Fox Talbot, one of the inventors of photography, worried that his brainchild might prove "injurious to art, as substituting mere mechanical labour in lieu of talent and experience."[10] Fifteen years later, the issue loomed large in Lady Eastlake's landmark essay, where she offered that art "appertains to the free will of the intelligent being, as opposed to the obedience of the machine," and that "to investigate the connexion of photography with art [is] to decide how far the sun may be considered an artist."[11] Talbot himself was bullish on photography's artistic potential, while Eastlake was neutral, but some were definitely bearish. Peter Henry Emerson, writing toward the end of the nineteenth century, held that photographs are "sometimes more beautiful than art, but are never art."[12] Around the same time, Charles Baudelaire cited "simple common-sense that, when industry erupts into the sphere of art, it becomes the latter's mortal enemy."[13]

Baudelaire puts the case rather badly. Machine processes are not strictly incompatible with artistic ones. Almost all art-making takes advantage of technology, and has always done so. Consider prepared paints in tubes, the pipe organ, the printing press, and curtain wall skyscraper construction. These are not lethal to the arts of painting, music, literature, and architecture; they have spurred valuable developments in these arts. The point was grasped perfectly well by the first generation to puzzle about the artistic standing of photography. They were not against technological art per se. Their concern began with a conception

of photography as a specific kind of technology. This conception of photography combines three elements.

First, photography automates image-making. Eastlake's reference to the sun's artistry intentionally echoes Daguerre's description of the camera as "merely an instrument which serves to draw Nature … [it] gives her the power to reproduce herself."[14] A recurrent metaphor likens the photograph to a mirror—in Oliver Wendell Holmes's famous words, a "mirror with a memory" that "reflect[s] images … and hold[s] them as a picture."[15]

Second, by automating image-making, photography eliminates skill in drawing. The point is not that automated processes invariably eliminate all human skill—that would be a gross error. Photographic processes often require skills of various kinds, especially technical know-how. Nevertheless, one can make an image with a camera without knowing how to draw an image by hand. This was touted as a novel benefit of the technology in a report to the French parliament recommending Daguerre for a state pension. Photography "calls for no manipulation which anyone cannot perform. It presumes no knowledge of the art of drawing and demands no special dexterity."[16] By the way, this report of 1839 correctly predicted the widespread use of photography in tourism, in documenting facts and artifacts, and in reproducing art works.

Third, and in consequence of this, are several closely connected features of how photographs represent. Photography secures, in Daguerre's words, "accuracy and perfection of detail."[17] A photograph of a scene can only represent that scene as having features it actually has, and photographs tend to represent more of those features than do drawings or paintings. Accuracy and degree of detail are independent, of course, for there can be inaccurate detail and accuracy with missing detail. A third feature is impartiality, as it is called by the early theorists, though it would be better, albeit more awkward, to say that photographs are systematically selective.[18] They are selective in the sense that there are some classes of visible features that they cannot represent. Monochrome photographs do not represent color, for example, and no photograph represents features outside the field of view or smaller than its resolution permits. Drawing is not selective in a systematic way. A draughtsman may simply choose to omit a red patch on a sitter's face, though she paints in color. She may choose whether or not to draw in the sitter's eyebrows, or lashes.

Early theorists also understood how these three closely connected features come as consequences of the more basic fact that photography automates image-making so as to eliminate drawing ability. Talbot wrote that "it baffles the skill and patience of the amateur to trace all the minute details visible on the paper."[19] Holmes puts it with characteristic eloquence that

> in a picture you can find nothing which the artist has not seen before you; but in a perfect photograph there will be as many beauties lurking, unobserved, as there are flowers that blush unseen in meadows … the very things which an artist would leave out, or render imperfectly, the photograph takes infinite care with.[20]

An image made automatically is systematically selective. It records as much detail as the system allows, as accurately as it allows. This is the source of photography's epistemic value. As Eastlake put it, photography's "business is to give evidence of facts, as minutely and as impartially as, to our shame, only an unreasoning machine can give."[21]

What secures photography's epistemic power is precisely what lands it in artistic hot water. For Eastlake, "the sharp perfection of the object … is exactly as detrimental to art as it is complimentary to science."[22] Why? She explains that "when greater precision and detail are superadded … the eye misses the further truths which should accompany the further finish."[23] The problem with photography is that, being so accurate and impartial, it fails to convey the selective truths we get from art. The familiar tale that photography drove painters out of the business of realism into the business of expression and abstraction is all wrong. For several decades before photography came along, painters had been seeking more than mimesis. As Hegel complained, "enjoyment and admiration become the more frigid and cold, the more the copy is like the natural original."[24] Painters agreed and so aimed for a kind of transformation rather than perfect copying. Photographs, they thought, could never match this achievement.[25]

A spur line branches from this main line of reasoning. Peter Henry Emerson considered that "the medium must always rank the lowest of all arts, lower than any graphic art, for the individuality of the artist is cramped … it can scarcely show itself."[26] Presumably, in serious art, the style of the artist shows through in their work, and in serious graphic art the artist's style comes out in how they interpret a scene pictorially.

Photography's accuracy and systematic selectivity means that photographs cannot express the styles of their makers. Therefore, photography is not a serious graphic art; it is a minor art at best.

2. Pictorialism The early theorists' skepticism about photographic art provoked a defensive reaction in "pictorialist" photography. The characteristic marks of this movement, which dominated photography for a few decades in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, included the staging of elaborate narrative tableaux modeled on Academic art, an emphasis on the effects of light and atmosphere mimicking those found in painting, and the liberal use of such darkroom manipulations such as combination printing and touching up negatives. An example is Clarence H. White's *Landscape with Figure* of 1906, which would be easy to mistake for a Symbolist reverie (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Clarence H. White, *Landscape with Figure*, 1906. Gum bichromate over palladium, 24 × 19 cm.

A woman, not of this world, garbed in white robes, carrying a glass orb, floats through a picturesque landscape, all in soft focus, grainy, deeply shadowed. Henry Peach Robinson, himself a pictorialist photographer, articulated the movement's rationale in considerable detail.

Robinson granted the assumptions of earlier theorists. He accepted that "a pure, unadulterated machine-made … photograph … is the most perfect specimen of realism the world could produce; useful in a thousand ways, it would not be art any more than a minute catalogue of the facts of nature, however full of insight, is a poem."[27] Unlike a painting, a photograph such as this involves no skill in "suppression and selection."[28] The workings of the automatic process leaves little room "to enable a photographer to express himself in his material."[29]

Having gone so far in step with his theorist predecessors, Robinson refused the skeptical conclusion that photography is not an art. Another conclusion is consistent with earlier theorists' assumptions. The art of photography lies not in its accuracy, detail, and impartiality; instead, it lies in such painterly effects as the technology permits the photographer to undertake. Automatic image-making is not the whole of photography; it is simply a step in the artist's process. What comes before the tripping of the shutter is the staging of an evocative scene, and what comes afterward is rendering a print, molding and retouching it to echo what the scene evokes. White's *Landscape with Figure* illustrates this perfectly. Pictorialist photographs "could have come from no other hands and minds than those which produced them"—they are "as individual as the works of the most mannered painters, and represent not so much the subject which was before the camera as the photographer's individual impression of the subject."[30]

3. Straight Photography Pictorialism was loudly, unremittingly denounced by the "straight photography" movement that succeeded it. Anticipating the straight photographers, Emerson described retouching as "the process by which a good, bad or indifferent photograph is converted into a bad drawing or painting."[31] Joining this verdict, Walker Evans portrayed the pictorialist photographer as "an unsuccessful painter with a bag of mysterious tricks"; Paul Strand decried the "introduction of hand work and manipulation [as] merely the expression of an impotent desire to paint"; and Edward Weston condemned the "folly in taking a camera to make a painting" as "incompatible with the logic of the

medium."[32] For these photographers, any attempt to redeem photography by imitating painting only succeeds in abandoning photography altogether. The impact of this indictment was so overwhelming that it was not until recently that major works of pictorialism were exhibited in art galleries as anything but historical curiosities.

In the background of this reaction to pictorialism is a pair of principles that form the backbone of modernist art criticism.[33] The first is that every art has a unique medium with representational, expressive, or formal powers of its own. For example, the medium of painting might be making marks on a flat surface. Paired with this is the principle that genuine works of art are those that exploit the special potential of their medium. Or, put more modestly, the principle says that effective works of art are those that exploit their medium's special potential. So, if the medium of painting is making marks on a flat surface, then paintings are effective when they promote our interest in flat, marked surfaces.

Strand echoes modernist doctrine when he writes that "photography … finds its *raison d'être*, like all media, in a complete uniqueness of means."[34] What uniqueness of means belongs to photography? He answers that "an absolute unqualified objectivity" makes up "the very essence of photography," distinguishing it from other arts.[35] As the historian Beaumont Newhall put it, "the ability of the camera to capture the utmost possible detail of the natural world is its chief characteristic, and should be fully realized."[36] Judged by modernist principles, pictorialism fails photography by turning its back on the special potential of its medium.

The logic of the tussle between pictorialism and straight photography recapitulates that of the early theorists. Photography's special epistemic power clashes with its expressive potential, so if its credentials as an art depend on its expressive potential, then photography is not an art insofar as it does in fact have a special epistemic power. Pictorialism accepted these propositions but promoted the art of photography as a hybrid of the newly invented techniques of photography mixed with techniques taken from painting. Weston saw this: "behind the [pictorialist's] approach lay the fixed idea that a straight photograph was purely the product of a machine and therefore not art. He developed special technics to combat the mechanical nature of his process."[37] Straight photography spurned this solution. Taking the bull by the horns, it attempted to reconcile photography's epistemic power with its expressive

potential, so that its standing as art may rest on its specificity as an imaging medium.

How to have it both ways? To begin with, different art media may open up different avenues for personal expression. Facture is important in painting. Tiny perturbations in the marking of a surface by hand and the accumulated effect of a large number of these across the surface can be expressive and can stamp a painting with its maker's identity. An anonymous contributor to the 1908 volume of *Camera Work* observed that, in most architecture, the "'personal touch' *does not exist*, and it appeals to the emotions solely through its proportions."[38] This writer then put it that photography resembles architecture because it mediates personal expression through composition alone. Straight photographs with perfect compositions depict perfectly composed slices of reality. Even so, "full credit for any such composition belongs to the photographer who has seen it, and seized it."[39]

Weston's essay, "Seeing Photographically," offers the richest account of the elements of the photographic process for which the photographer deserves credit. Weston begins by accepting the limitations imposed by modernist art criticism: the task is to detail how photographers can "best express whatever it is we have to say … within the *frame* of [their] particular medium."[40] To see photographically, a photographer must "see his subject matter in terms of the capacities of his tools and processes."[41] Knowing these capacities amounts to knowing how the finished print will look. Consequently,

> the finished print must be created before the film is exposed. Until the photographer has learned to visualize his final result in advance, and to predetermine the procedures necessary to carry out that visualization, his finished work (if it be photography at all) will present a series of lucky—or unlucky—mechanical accidents.[42]

Weston then specifies some of the parameters that a photographer may set through their use of the camera as a tool, including "amazing precision of definition" and "infinitely subtle gradations from black to white" that give "a special tension to the image."[43] By varying these and other parameters, it is possible to achieve many different compositions of one subject, all with the kind of epistemic merit that makes photography special.

Bringing this idea to life is a metaphor that identifies the photographer with the lens or the camera. The photographer is not someone who operates the device. She is the device. For example, having insisted that a photographer "must follow the realistic tendency under all circumstances," Siegfried Kracauer describes her as an "indiscriminating mirror … identical with the camera lens."[44] Seeing photographically is seeing with the camera as an extension of the eye.[45]

4. Recent Ambivalence Finally, we arrive at the fourth and most recent stage in the history of thinking about photography. The early theorists established a dialectic centered on the propositions that photography is not an art unless it accommodates artistic expression, and that machine imaging thwarts artistic expression. The pictorialists expanded photography to include painterly touches that allow scope for artistic expression. Straight photography identified what the artist expresses with what the machine images, so as to distinguish photography from other graphic arts. One more response to the early theorists' dialectic remains, and that is to take up a stance of ambivalence.

Ambivalence to the dialectic is not the same as dismissing it altogether. Someone who is ambivalent appreciates that there continues to be an issue about the artistic and epistemic features of photography. With this acknowledged, the idea is to change the subject, usually because an obsession with the historical dialectic obscures important features of photography. Ambivalence relegates the dialectic to the background without resolving it.

Walter Benjamin put the early theorists' dialectic at a distance when he wrote that it was a "fundamentally anti-technological concept of art with which the theoreticians of photography sought for almost a hundred years to do battle, naturally without coming to the slightest result. For this view understood nothing except to accredit the photographer before the exact tribunal he had overthrown."[46] Benjamin then went on to speculate about the impact of photography on our concept of art, particularly how it undermines the traditional idea of art works as expressions of a special artistic vision with an "aura" of unique objecthood. He changed the subject from whether photography is art to what photography does to art.[47]

In Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, ambivalence allows a shift of attention to photography's impact on its viewers. The book opens with

the core philosophical question, what is photography? That is, "by what essential feature [is] it to be distinguished from the community of images," which would endow it with "a 'genius' of its own"?[48] Barthes's answer famously distinguishes between the *studium* and the *punctum*. The *studium* is the body of information that we bring to a photograph in order to appreciate it as a work made intentionally. The *punctum* is the "element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me;" it is "that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)."[49] Insofar as the *punctum* is unintended and is secured by the mechanical origins of photographic imaging, it is photography's special "genius." This "genius" may not be artistic, as it is borne of mechanical accident, with the result that "it does not necessarily attest to the photographer's art; it says only that the photographer was there, or else, more simply, that he could not *not* photograph the partial object at the same time as the total object."[50] Indeed, this claim sets Barthes in opposition to the theory of straight photography: "the photographer's 'second sight' does not consist in 'seeing' but in being there."[51] Notice that the logic leading to the art question is accepted while the question itself is set aside. What is interesting about photographs is what the *punctum* can do to us.

A final case of ambivalence is Susan Sontag's *On Photography*. Sontag is far less sanguine than Barthes about the value of photography, and she seeks to warn of its dangers, which stem from its nature as a process for machine imaging. The making of photographs is, in an important sense, not dependent on the photographer: "the process itself remains an optical–chemical (or electronic) one, the workings of which are automatic."[52] As a result of "the mechanical genesis of these images, and the literalness of the powers they confer," photography forges a "new relationship between image and reality."[53] In other words, Sontag endorses the conception of photography as epistemically special, agent-free imaging. Were she also to accept the premise that art cannot result from agent-free imaging, her thinking would echo that of the early theorists. In fact, she acknowledges their logic, writing that "the history of photography could be recapitulated as the struggle between two different imperatives: beautification, which comes from the fine arts, and truth-telling."[54] Yet, her concern is not with where logic leads once this is accepted. The art question, at the end of the day, distracts us from what is more important—namely, the damage that photographs inflict

on our imaging practices, our visualizing skills, our sense of reality, and hence our emotional responses and moral sensibilities.[55]

Once, as a result of ambivalence, the historical dialectic no longer seems so momentous, it becomes easier to accept photography's credentials as an art form. Ambivalence makes it easy to brush aside pesky skeptical reasoning. Sontag remarks that "it cannot be a coincidence that just about the time that photographers stopped discussing whether photography is an art, it was acclaimed as one by the general public and photography entered, in force, into the museum."[56] This having been accomplished, ambivalence becomes mandatory, as the old debates on the art question are better suppressed. Is this a good result? Not as long as those debates can still tell us something useful about photography.

The Dialectic Endures

Consider, for example, the ruckus over the so-called Hockney–Falco thesis.[57] David Hockney has long made images that explore the intersection of painting with photography, and in 2001 he published a book arguing that some advances in realistic painting techniques from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries came about through the use of sundry optical devices as aids to image-making.[58] Hockney's book won an extraordinary level of media attention for a book on art. While some of the coverage centered on scholarly disputes about the details of the evidence for the thesis, it was not the squabble among historians that made the headlines. Chuck Close, whose work as a painter also flirts with photography, put the hubbub down to the fact that "some people are amazed that their artist heroes have cheated."[59] As an anonymous correspondent to *Camera Work* admitted back in 1908, "painters dare not say that they sometimes use the camera as an aid to their work for fear of being thought inartistic."[60] Or as Sontag quipped, the Hockney–Falco thesis is a "bit like finding out that all the great lovers of history have been using Viagra."[61] If Ingres's doing like Richard Avedon makes him an artistic cheat, then how is photography not cheating at art?

Bourdieu notes that "photographers are always obliged to develop the aesthetic theory of their practice, to justify their existence as photographers by justifying the existence of photography as a true art."[62]

While painters, poets, and composers are also anxious to establish their artistic credentials, they are not obliged to establish their personal credit as artists by defending the art status of painting, poetry, or music. Like as not, that strategy would get them nowhere. Photographers have had a special burden—to establish their standing as artists partly by justifying photography's claim to be an art.

How to Do Things with Theory

The aim of this essay is not to fire another round into historical battles. Rather, we may use the patterns of inference that we find in the history to understand how photography can be practiced as an art. As we have seen, the history contains the makings of some sophisticated reasoning for the skeptical claim that photography is not an art. Since we know that photography is an art, we can glean some understanding of when and how it is an art by examining where the reasoning goes wrong. The next step is to reconstruct the somewhat loose historical inferences into a well-connected series of propositions.

These should be anchored in a theory of photography, which says what makes an item a photograph and characterizes the nature of photography. From this theory, added to a number of further premises, the skeptical conclusion should be reached, and the resulting reasoning should represent the historical dialectic. Several different arguments fit this bill, but here is one (it is reproduced in the Appendix):[63]

(S1) a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, and

(S2) if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought, but

(S3) an image is a representational art work only if there can be an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought,

(S4) so no pure photograph is a representational art work, but

(S5) photography is an art only if some pure photographs are representational art works,

(S6) so photography is not an art.

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

Call this the skeptic's argument. Its opening premise is an idealization based on a theory of the nature of photography, and it runs from there to its skeptical conclusion by a series of small steps. Together, (S1) and (S2) tell us that there can be no interest in a pure photograph as a depictively expressed thought. Since (S3) makes that a requirement of an image's being a representational art work, it follows that a photograph cannot be a representational art work. But then (S5) makes being a representational art work a condition of photography's being an art form. Skepticism ensues.

Logic is not for showing off. The point of putting the skeptic's argument so formally is to make explicit how its key terms operate. In other words, the argument is a way to pin down and examine the collection of otherwise vague and wandering ideas about art, machine imaging, and artistic agency that have shaped so much thinking about photography. The next step is to examine the key moves in (S1) to (S5) with an eye to how they articulate the history.

Skepticism as Method

Before getting into details, though, let there be no misunderstanding. The skeptic's argument is worth taking seriously, and it is taken seriously in what follows. However, it is not to be taken seriously in the sense that, being unsure of what to think about its conclusion, we wish to weigh up the reasons for and against that conclusion. Nor is it to be taken seriously in the sense that, identifying its conclusion as a threat, we are determined to protect photographic art by proving that conclusion wrong. Instead, it is taken for granted in the following pages that photography is an art. That is a bedrock fact. The skeptic's argument is moot. Even so, an interesting argument for a false conclusion can be informative, not because we learn that its conclusion is false but because we may learn something from the fact that one or more of its premises is false. This is why the skeptic's argument is worth taking seriously.

In this way, it resembles many skeptical arguments. Conceivably, for example, you are a brain in a vat. This brain of yours has been kept warm

and nourished by a team of scientists, who have kindly supplied its severed nerve endings with impulses carefully calibrated to give you experiences of walks through the park, conversations, meals, and (at the moment) readings of philosophy books. So artful are these scientists that you could not tell these false experiences from their true counterparts. Since you cannot tell the experiences you now have from those that would be fed to a brain in a vat, you do not know which scenario you are in. Therefore, you do not know you are not a brain in a vat. You do not know that you have not lived a lie. This could be *The Matrix*. Heady stuff!

But we need not take the reasoning on its own terms. Suppose you start with the knowledge that you are not a brain in a vat. Then questions such as these arise. What is conceivable? Can we really conceive the scenario from *The Matrix*? Is it possible for the experiences of the envatted brain to be indistinguishable from the experiences of embodied brains? Does knowing that you are not a brain in a vat require that you be able to read that fact off your experiences? The brain in the vat argument touches off many good questions. Likewise, the argument for skepticism about photographic art brings on questions about the nature of photography and when it is an art.

Methodological skeptics examine reasons for skeptical conclusions not in order to test those conclusions, nor even to inoculate against them, but simply as tools for understanding the phenomena that the reasons bring into play. The plan going forward is to look more closely at each step of the skeptic's argument, trying to appreciate why it has seemed so compelling, especially in historical context. Put another way, the plan is to discover what we can about photographic art by repudiating the skeptic's reasoning. Since that reasoning is logically valid and has a false conclusion, at least one of its premises is false. As we shall see, all of them turn out to be false, and each false premise brings into view a different kind of photographic art.

Now for a closer look at the four key moves of the skeptic's argument. Each should be understood charitably, with full respect for its persuasive power and its historical antecedents. To look up the argument in full, see the Appendix on page 133.

Purity

Anchoring the skeptic's argument is a theory of photography that implies and is implied by (S1). The theory says that:

> (P) a photograph is an image that depicts by belief-independent feature-tracking.

The difference between (P) and (S1) is that (S1) applies to "pure" photographs. It stipulates that a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking.

Purity is a tool designed to sharpen the question of whether photographs can be works of art by nature.[64] The nature of photography is depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking. So photographs are works of art specifically because they are photographs only if they are works of art specifically because they depict by belief-independent feature-tracking. The skeptic assumes that a good test is to focus on pure photographs, which depict only by belief-independent feature-tracking. Unless a pure photograph can be a work of art, photographs are not art by nature.

"Pure" is flexible word in English. It can mean "mostly," as when we say that someone talks "pure humbug." Pure humbug may include one or two important truths. The word can also be used to express an aspiration or a norm. Pure kitsch strives to attain the ideal of kitsch.[65] Pure love aims at another ideal. In (S1), purity is pure essence. A pure X is made of nothing but the essence of X. Since the essence of water is the H_2O molecule, pure water contains only H_2O. Pure wool is a fabric made from fibers all shorn from sheep. Likewise, a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking because, according to (P), photography's essence is depiction belief-independent feature-tracking.

Many actual photographs are "impure" because they combine photographic and non-photographic depiction. Perhaps, as a matter of fact, no photograph has ever been truly pure. No sample of water is 100% H_2O. Perhaps every photograph involves some non-photographic depiction. These are nevertheless photographs according to (P) because they depict in part through belief-independent feature-tracking. The skeptic suspects that they are works of art only because they depict

non-photographically. Thus, the skeptic's argument starts out with the assumption that if any pure photographs are works of art, then the reason must be that they depict photographically. Only then are some photographs art by nature.

Honest Signals

Belief-independent feature-tracking is a mouthful. Apologies for that. So, what is it? The answer, as we have learned from the history, must articulate the idea that photographs are machine-produced images with a special epistemic power absent from drawings.

Biologists who study animal communication have developed a helpful conceptual framework.[66] Photography is a signaling system wherein individual photographs are cues to the appearance of depicted scenes. Drawing is another signaling system of the same type, since drawings also cue the appearance of depicted scenes. Unlike drawings, though, photographs are reliably "honest signals." The reason is that they are indices: an index is a signal that is hard to fake because of constraints on the signaling system in which it is produced.[67] Male tigers scratch marks as high as they can reach on tree trunks, to signal their size to potential rivals. The scratch marks are indices because they are cues to the size of the tiger, and tigers cannot scratch higher than their maximum reach, which is determined by their size. By contrast, when a sheepdog raises the white tip of her tail into the air, she signals the presence of a threat, but the raised tail is not an index because nothing in the signaling mechanism eliminates false alarms. Some sheepdogs raise their tails when they see squirrels, and squirrels do not prey on sheep. Photographs, unlike drawings, are honest signals because they are indices—this is a consequence of the theory of photography summed up in (P).

Begin with depiction by feature-tracking, which has two parts.[68] First, an image depicts a feature of a scene by tracking it only if the feature it depicts is in fact a feature of the scene. For example, it does not track the color of a red car unless it depicts the car as being red in color. If it depicts a red car as green, then it is not tracking the car's color. However, getting the actual color right is only one half of depiction by feature-tracking. The second requirement says that an image depicts a feature of a scene by tracking it only if the image would depict the scene as having

a different feature, were the scene to have that different feature. If the scene had been different, there would have been a corresponding difference in what the image depicts. A depiction does not track the color of a car unless it would depict the car as being blue, were it blue, or pink, were it pink, or yellow, were it yellow. If the image depicts a red car as red and would depict it as red even were it another color, then it fails to track the car's color. Putting the two requirements together adds up to a definition of depiction by feature-tracking. An image depicts by feature-tracking just in case two conditions are met. First, it depicts a scene as having features that the scene actually has. Second, were the scene to have other features, the image would depict it as having those features instead. Feature-tracking is doubly sensitive to how things are and to how they might be.

The idea is not that photographs must track all features of objects, nor even that they must track all their visible features. That would be asking far too much. Black and white photography does not track color, and Richard Avdeon's washed out portraits do not track the presence of moles and freckles on his sitters' faces. No matter. Black and white photographs do not depict color, and Avedon's glamor shots do not depict blemishes. All that is required by (S1) is that the depicted features be tracked. Where there is no depiction, there need be no feature-tracking.

Depictive feature-tracking is not unique to photography; it also found in drawings. A courtroom artist with an eye for sartorial detail might make drawings that track the color of a witness's tie. The tie is red, and her sketch depicts it as red; were it blue, she would depict it as blue; were it yellow, she would depict it as yellow, and so on. She performs just like the courtroom camera. Since both drawings and photographs track features in this way, depiction by feature-tracking does not explain why only photographs are indices.

The difference between photographs and drawings lies in how depiction by feature-tracking is secured. Drawing is an action, actions are done intentionally, and intentions are associated with beliefs.[69] A courtroom sketch depicts the red tie as red and would depict it as blue, were it blue, only because the artist believes that it is red and she would believe that it is blue, were it blue. Drawings depict by tracking features of scenes because artists' beliefs track those features. In a formula, drawings depict by belief-dependent feature-tracking. Not so, when it comes to photographs. They secure depiction by feature-tracking, no matter

what the photographer believes about the scene's features. A photograph depicts a red tie as red and would depict it as blue, were it blue, even if the photographer is color blind and has wrong beliefs about its color. Maybe he believes that the tie is pink. Were it blue, he would believe it was purple. These false beliefs are neither here nor there. Photographs depict by belief-independent feature-tracking.

As a theory of photography, (P) captures and improves upon the spirit of earlier ideas. The most deeply rooted of these holds that photography differs from drawing because it is a mechanical process that automates image-making. This idea needs to be supplemented.[70] A machine is simply a tool, and many tools are used to make images, often by automating a task in the sense that the tool performs the task. Printing presses automate image-making. So does paint in tubes, a marvelous innovation that freed painters from the laborious business of preparing pigments by hand. Clearly, photography is machine imaging in a special sense, which can now be made explicit using (P). Photography, unlike printing and Sennelier oils, automates depiction by freeing image-makers of belief-dependent feature-tracking. Even if this terminology is unfamiliar, (P) is not entirely new, for it is implicit in the conception of photography as a machine process that appears in the early theorists' dialectic.

Some philosophers like to stress that photography, unlike drawing, is a causal process, and this also needs filling in. After all, drawing is a causal process too! Mental acts such as seeing and believing are causal. The skull is not some kind of isolation chamber that disconnects our thinking and acting from the causal flux of our world. Presumably, the idea is that photography is purely causal, whereas drawing is causal but also intentional. (P) expresses this claim, for intentions depend on beliefs.[71] The core distinction is between depiction by belief-dependent and belief-independent feature-tracking.[72]

Tradition also takes it that automated imaging diminishes the agency of the photographer, perhaps to the point where it vanishes. Early theorists acknowledged that photography demands skill; they did not simplistically equate automation with reduced opportunities for action. Many tools afford new possibilities for action. Nobody could pull off a hammerhead turn without an airplane, and the electric guitar made it possible to create and perform new kinds of music. Photography might limit the agency of the photographer only in a very specific sense. Again, (P)

supplies the needed specifics. Action is intentional and intentions involve beliefs, so belief-independent feature-tracking is not something a photographer does. She delegates the task to her camera. It does not follow, absurdly, that photographers have no intentions in taking pictures, but only that their intentions are not involved in that part of making an image that consists in depicting a scene by tracking its features.

The punch packed by (P) comes from its power to concisely, precisely, and comprehensively articulate a whole body of influential ideas about photography, including ideas about its epistemic capability. As we saw, photographs have been trusted for their accuracy, high degree of detail, and impartiality. More recently, some have added that photographs are fictionally incompetent. Drawings of Anna Karenina, werewolves, and the study at 221B Baker Street exist, but photographs of them are impossible. Try taking a photograph of a non-existent object or scene. In Barthes's words, "painting can feign reality without having seen it … in photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*."[73]

Grounding the trust we seem to have placed in photography is the fact that depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking yields an honest signal. Photographs are indices. As appealing as it may be to say that it is the use of machine imaging technology that ensures accuracy, detail, impartiality, and fictional incompetence, this is not the whole story. Photography is a mechanism for tracking features independent of belief. The belief-independence of mechanism limits opportunities for inaccuracy, partiality, and fictionalizing.

A nice feature of an epistemology of photographs built along these lines is that it stops short of unduly denigrating the epistemic competence of agents. Recall Eastlake's statement that photography's "business is to give evidence of facts, as minutely and as impartially as, to our shame, only an unreasoning machine can give."[74] This fits a larger shift, during the nineteenth century, from trust in the judgment of expert observers to a suspicion of expert judgment, which led to a valorization of data obtained wholly without an agent's judgment.[75] Happily, we need not go along with this and say that photographs have epistemic merit because they sideline the corrupt judgments of agents. Photographs are useful because they use belief-independent feature-tracking, but expert judgment also has its uses. Indeed, drawings have epistemic advantages of their own.[76] We need not commend photographs at the expense of individual judgment.

Give (S1) and (P) their due and interpret them charitably. Soon we will consider what we can learn about photography by taking them to be false. The more we appreciate their appeal, the more significant the fallout if they are false. Their falsity will trigger a deep rethink of core ideas about photography spanning almost two centuries—ideas about art, machine imaging, and agency.

Depictively Expressed Thought

While (S1) anchors the skeptic's argument, its crux is (S2) and (S3). According to (S2):

> if pure photographs are images that depict only by belief-independent feature-tracking then there can be no interest in them as depictively expressed thoughts.

Support for this proposition comes from two claims. To begin with, images that depict only by belief-independent feature-tracking cannot express thoughts depictively. Belief-independent feature-tracking is incompatible with depictively expressed thought. In addition, we cannot take an interest in an image as a depictively expressed thought unless it does in fact express some such thought. To make the reasoning clear:

> (S2a) if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking then it cannot express thoughts depictively, and
>
> (S2b) if a pure photograph cannot express thoughts depictively then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought.

(S2) follows directly. The logic helpfully separates out a claim about our interest, in (S2b), from a claim about the object of our interest, a depictively expressed thought.

What is a depictively expressed thought? The answer is probably the most elusive part of the skeptic's argument. Examples should help, but finding them requires some idea, inexact as it may be, of what they are supposed to illustrate. At least there is this. Whatever goes into expressing thoughts depictively may be found in painting, but there is no trace of it in belief-independent feature-tracking.

Many paintings express thoughts, and they depict, but some go further. They express thoughts by depicting what they do in the way they do. Roger Scruton writes that "if I were to describe … what I see

in a picture, I would be bound not merely to describe the visual properties of the subject but also to provide an interpretation of the subject, a way of seeing it."[77] He imagines a portrait where

> we see not only a man on a horse but a man of a certain character and bearing. And what we see is determined not by independent properties of the subject but by our understanding of the painting. It is the way the eyes are painted that gives that sense of authority, the particular lie of the arm that reveals the arrogant character, and so on. The picture presents us not merely with the perception of a man but with a thought about him.[78]

An imaginary example like this one misses an important point, namely that thoughts are expressed through the finest of depicted details, in "the way the eyes are painted" and "the particular lie of the arm." It is imperative to look at a real painting.

Take Thomas Gainsborough's 1770 *Portrait of David Garrick* (Figure 2). A student of Samuel Johnson, Garrick was an actor, playwright,

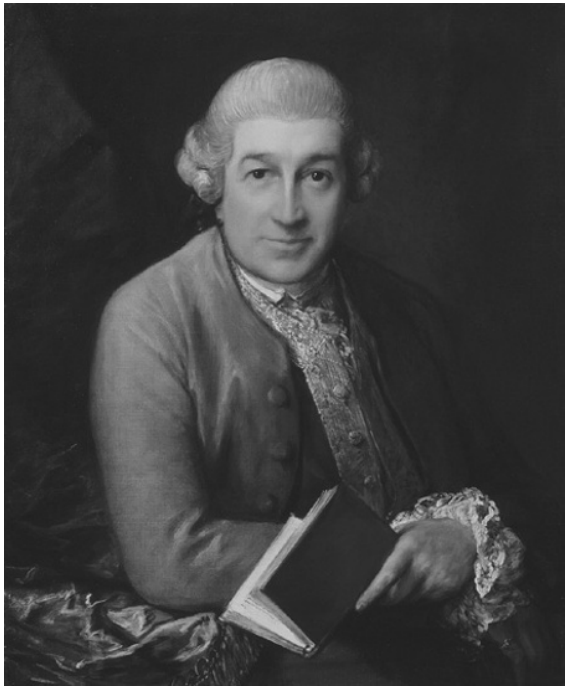

Figure 2 Thomas Gainsborough, *Portrait of David Garrick*, 1770. Oil on canvas, 76 × 63 cm.

and impresario who pioneered a more realistic acting style to replace the heavily mannered style of the time. One contemporary observed that he so perfected his approach that "the deaf hear him in his action, and the blind see him in his voice."[79] Gainsborough's portrait certainly shows how Garrick looked, but in addition to this, it shows Gainsborough's attitude toward the actor. His dress is elegant but not flamboyant, and his posture is relaxed and informal. The leather-bound volume in his hand is the ancient emblem of learning, yet he holds it lightly, fallen half closed, indicating a complete familiarity with its contents and no trace of bookishness. He is no English professor. The hint that he wears his learning lightly is reflected in the sociably bright eyes and the slight smile, which seem to prefigure a display of wit meant to please, not impress. As we see him here, Garrick is more Jack Lemmon than Al Pacino.

The portrait does two things. First, it depicts Garrick's visual appearance, enabling us to see how he looked. Second, it cues us into Gainsborough's attitude to Garrick. We can detect from the picture how Gainsborough felt about his sitter.

No such thoughts as these can be expressed in the medium of photography, says the skeptic, as long as (P) is true. The claim is not that a photographer cannot take a picture in order to express an attitude to its subject. We know perfectly well what the army photographers thought about the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg. However, we do not read these thoughts off how the aftermath is depicted. We read them off the aftermath itself. It tells its own story. We may read thoughts off photographed scenes but we cannot read thoughts into them.

For another example, take Rembrandt's *Portrait of an Elderly Man*, dated 1667 (Figure 3). At first glance, this painting looks unfinished. Its heavy impasto seems to have been applied haphazardly and in haste. The sitter's coat looks like it has just been roughed in, while his face is specked with white highlights that seem to have been scattered higgledy-piggledy across his flesh. As closer inspection makes clear, though, every brushstroke has been laid down deliberately and assiduously, with all the skill Rembrandt had at his command. The critic Andrew Graham-Dixon suggests that "painting a picture that looks like a sketch may have been Rembrandt's way of emphasising his subject's apparently frail hold on reality, enhancing

Figure 3 Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of an Elderly Man*, 1667. Oil on canvas, 82 × 68 cm.

the sense that here is a person so uncertainly connected to the world he could vanish at any moment."[80] Having reached this conclusion, it is then easy to see how Rembrandt's old man seems barely able to sit upright in his chair and is in danger of sliding forward, right out of the frame. *Portrait of an Elderly Man* is a depictively mediated meditation upon its subject matter.

Unlike photographers, painters can misrepresent details, so that the depicted scene is not exactly as it appears in the picture, and they can also select what details are included, suppressing others. As a result, we are apt to treat every detail in principle and most details in practice as included in order to make a point. We glom onto the thought as the best explanation of these details.[81] By contrast, pure photographs track features of scenes no matter what the photographer's attitude might happen to be. Accurate, detailed, and non-selective, photography lacks the very tools needed to express thoughts through depicted details.

The best explanation of how a scene is depicted in a photograph is not that the photographer was trying to tell us something. How the scene looks far better explains how it appears in the photograph. True, a photographer can select a camera angle, frame the scene, and fine-tune its focus and luminosity. That is not much, though. Automated feature-tracking means that photography cannot make the thoughts of the photographer visible in the details of the photographed scene.[82]

So goes the case for the claim that images made only by belief-independent feature-tracking cannot express thoughts depictively. Add to this claim the supposition that we can only take an interest in an image as a depictively expressed thought if it does in fact express such a thought, and (S2) follows. The more compelling the reasoning for (S2), the more momentous the implications if it is false. That is coming. Stick for now with the skeptic's argument. Add (S1) to (S2), and it follows that we cannot take an interest in photographs as depictively expressed thoughts. So what? The next step is to link such an interest to art, and to representational art in particular.

Drop Through

To reach the conclusion that photography is not an art, something has to be said about what makes an image a work of art. This is done in (S3) and (S5). According to (S3),

> an image is a representational art work only if there can be an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought.

Works of representational art must capture and hold a particular kind of interest, and (S3) identifies that interest as an interest in some depictively expressed thought. Why? Coming at the question obliquely, we can ask, what does (S3) rule out? What other interest might we have? The answer: what gets ruled out is the possibility that an interest in a representational art work may simply be an interest in its subject matter.

Sontag famously wrote that "in photography the subject matter always pushes through."[83] That is, it pushes through the photograph to dominate our interest. In the tiresomely repeated overstatement, photography is by nature pornographic. Echoing Sontag, Scruton puts it that "our

attitude toward photography [is] one of curiosity, not curiosity about the photograph but rather about its subject. … The photograph is transparent to its subject, and if it holds our interest it does so because it acts as a surrogate for the represented thing."[84] Accordingly, "if one finds a photograph beautiful, it is because one finds something beautiful in its subject; … if the photograph is sad, it is usually because its subject is sad; if the photograph is touching, it is because its subject is touching, and so on."[85] Our interest in a photograph "drops through" the photograph, collapsing into an interest in the photographed scene.

When it comes to painting, we have an interest in an experience of a scene informed by a thought. This interest is directed upon the image itself, so that it does not drop through to the depicted scene. Once we have grasped Gainsborough's attitude toward Garrick, we no longer take interest simply in how the actor looked. The painting itself engages our interest because it alone makes Gainsborough's thoughts visible. After all, if you could (go back in time and) meet Garrick face to face, you would not see him in a way that reveals how Gainsborough felt about him. By contrast, the photograph is, like a mirror, merely a duplicate of the actor's appearance. Our interest in it drops through to its subject matter; that same interest would be satisfied in a face-to-face encounter.

Drop through is the key to reasoning to (S3). First, an image is not a representational art work unless there can be an interest in the image itself. No interest in a work that is redirected elsewhere, to anything but the work, is an interest in it per se.[86] Second, an interest in the image itself is either an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought or as a duplicate of the depicted scene. After all, images either result from belief-dependent feature-tracking, wherein thoughts may be expressed depictively, or they result from belief-independent feature-tracking, which yields duplicate appearances. Third, as we have just seen, an interest in an image as a duplicate is only an interest in the duplicated object. Taken together, these three claims imply that an interest in an image as a duplicate is not an interest in the image itself. Hence, an interest in the image itself is only an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought. Finally, we get the result that images are not representational art works unless there can be an interest in them as depictively expressed thoughts. (This reasoning is diagrammed in the Appendix.)

Again, the goal is not to establish the truth of (S3) but to bring out its appeal and hence the significance of denying it.

Representational Art

Now the momentum toward the skeptic's final conclusion is all but unstoppable. All that remains is (S5), which says that:

> photography is an art only if some pure photographs are representational art works.

This assumption does double duty. First, it staves off any desperate hope that photography might be an abstract art. Second, it underlines the role of "pure" photographs in the argument's opening premise.

One might ask why photography cannot be an abstract art. If an interest in what a photograph depicts drops through to become an interest in the depicted scene, that still leaves an interest in the formal features of its surface—lines, volumes, and colors. Many paintings are not interesting if viewed as representational, and more than a century of abstract painting now generates huge interest among gallery-goers.

Distinguish between two modes of abstraction. In its more rigorous mode, an abstract image does not depict anything at all. There is nothing to see in it but lines, volumes, and colors. Piet Mondrian's grids, Barnett Newman's zips, and Jackson Pollock's drips are classic examples. In its mixed mode, an abstract image is one that appeals only to an interest in its formal features, though it may depict something. A good example is Henri Matisse's *Yellow Curtain* of 1915. While it does depict the yellow curtain of its title, that adds little or nothing to why anyone cares to look at it.

The mixed mode suggests how to rescue photography from the devastating consequences of drop through. When it happens that we can take no interest in a photograph as a representation, perhaps we take an interest in its formal features instead. When we can take no interest in it as a vehicle for a depictively expressed thought, then maybe we can compensate by taking an interest in the arrangement of lines, volumes, and colors on its surface. The interest is not an interest in the scene: it is an interest in the photograph itself.

Nice try, but the proposal is not worth taking very seriously. Skeptics happily admit that photography is potentially an abstract art. This is a "throwaway" concession that concedes little of much importance. We want photography to be an art because it is depictive, not in spite of it. Lewis Hine's child laborers, Eugène Atget's proto-surrealistic visions of Paris, Weston's bell peppers, Cindy Sherman's storyboards … to shrug these off as irrelevant to photography's claim to be an art is a grotesque perversion of our real and abiding interest in photography as representation.

Consider, for example, the testimony given by some expert witnesses in the 1990 trial of the Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center on charges of obscenity for exhibiting Robert Mapplethorpe's X Portfolio. When asked by prosecuting counsel whether some of Mapplethorpe's photographs showed sexual acts, the show's curator replied, "I would call them figure studies." Having characterized a photograph of a finger inserted into a penis as "a very central image, very symmetrical, a very ordered, classical composition," she went on to explain that "subject matter is unimportant, no matter how grotesque. What matters is technique."[87] This testimony might have been a shrewd courtroom ploy, but it travesties Mapplethorpe's achievement to reduce the X Portfolio to a set of still lifes. Dave Hickey puts it forcefully: "it is insane or morally ignorant to expect, or even desire, a beholder to confront Robert Mapplethorpe's passionate, partisan, and political celebrations of marginality and not respond to the subject … which deals so intimately with trust, pain, love, and the giving up of the self."[88] Even his actual still lifes—his calla lilies, in particular—are not mere still lifes.

What if we throw in the towel and grant that no pure photograph is a work of art? Does that mean that no photograph can be a work of art? Not at all! Some photographs are works of art, but not because they are photographs. An artist may take photographs, then retouch here and there, or mask parts of the image, or combine many images into one. She is now, the skeptic cheerfully grants, a painter. Insofaras what she makes is a product of the art of painting, it may well be a work of art. For all that, photography is not itself an art.

The assumption is that what makes something a work of photographic art must be the features that distinguish pure photographs from other kinds of images. Spelled out in terms of the skeptic's argument, (S5) leverages the ideal of pure photographs in (S1) in order to support

the denial in (S6) that photography is an art. What if we replace (S5) with a weaker claim that makes no mention of pure photography? What if we say that photography is an art only if photographs are representational art works? That would sink the skeptic's conclusion. As we have seen, everyone, including skeptics, agrees that some photographs are representational art works. That would be enough to vindicate the art of photography.

For the skeptic, there is another important reason not to weaken (S5) in this way. Doing so means giving up on the hope that there is an art of photography with a distinctive character of its own. In other words, the doctrines of modernist art criticism demand (S5). To take just one example, Siegfried Kracauer posited an aesthetic principle that "the achievements within a particular medium are all the more satisfying aesthetically if they build from the specific aesthetic properties of that medium. … a product which, somehow, goes against the grain of its medium—say, by imitating effects more 'natural' to another medium—will hardly prove acceptable."[89] Given this doctrine, severing the art of photography from depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking makes artistic photographs into second-rate paintings. Modernism enjoins serious art photographers to take advantage of the special power of the technology, depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking.

So rests the skeptic's case. This is not the only way it can be stated. Some skeptics would no doubt wish to see it put some other way. We need not haggle over words. The aim is not to be fair to flesh-and-blood skeptics. After all, we are assuming that they reason unsoundly to a false conclusion! The aim is rather to systematize the perfect storm of ideas about mechanism, art, and artistic agency that have puzzled thinkers for so long.

Isolating the Arts of Photography

Photography is an art. Why use philosophy to try to prove or defend this truth? That would be an academic exercise indeed! Far more enlightening is to work out how photography is an art, or when it is. If our thinking has been cramped and constrained, then the way to loosen it up is to take it apart. Now philosophy has a positive role to play.

The first task has been to organize photography theory in the form of the skeptic's argument. Since that argument reaches a false conclusion and since it makes no bad inferences, one or more of its premises must be false. What are the implications of their being false?

For the rest of this essay, the strategy is to treat the falsity of each substantive premise of the skeptic's argument as a guide to an "art" of photography. Given four substantive premises—(S1), (S2), (S3), and (S5)—there will be four arts of photography, or four broad ways of practicing photography as an art. Examples of each of these arts refute a skeptical premise. More usefully, though, an explanation of how each premise goes wrong clues us into important features of the examples, and exposes the commitments undertaken by those who make and consume photographic art. The four arts of photography are very rough guides to how to appreciate different kinds of photography, or how to appreciate photography in different ways. Methodological skepticism is an aid to appreciation.

As it happens, the four arts of photography that emerge from implementing this strategy roughly line up with the history of photographic art during the past 100 years. The "classic tradition" approximates the straight photography that dominated the scene from the 1920s to the 1960s. What will be called "cast photography" meshes with certain trends that have dominated the photographic art world since the late 1970s. Lyric photography is more prominent in recent developments, which also include a deepened interest in the fourth art, of abstract photography.

From the fact that the four arts roughly line up with the history of photography, it does not follow that they recapitulate how the history has been understood by critics and historians. The labels "classic tradition," "cast photography," and "lyric photography" are deliberately artificial. They are reminders that the four arts of photography only roughly align with the history of photography and the categories used by historians and critics.

If you are a critic or historian, do not be miffed by the mismatch. The four arts are very broad, and you may detect antithetical movements within one art or territorial overlaps across two or more arts. Schemes of categorization need not compete; they may complement each other, especially when purposes differ. Consider the four arts as a proposal to view photography from a slightly new angle, given an alternate reading of the history.

Proposals that categories have tidy boundaries can cause allergic reactions. Real-world boundaries are rarely as tidy as philosophy predicts. The latest developments have ancient antecedents, and past practices persist even if they no longer get the headlines. Boundaries are further blurred by hybrid photographs that belong to more than one of the philosophically defined arts. To appreciate hybrids as belonging to one single art is at best an artificial exercise. Many of the most impressive photographs to be discussed next few sections excel by the standards of multiple arts of photography. Welling's *Flower 009* (frontispiece) has already been presented as an exemplar of all four arts of photography.

Yet, artificially tidy categories have their benefits. In watching a movie, it can enhance appreciation to attend separately to acting, cinematography, soundtrack, and screenplay. Taking them separately makes it easier to measure the special contribution of each to the movie overall. Isolating the four arts of photography yields similar benefits. Not only can we identify hybrid cases as hybrids, we can also pinpoint how ingredients drawn from different arts contribute to the overall flavor of the masala.

The method of isolation works like this. Each art of photography is taken to stand up to one and only one premise of the skeptic's argument, with the assumption being that all the other premises are true. The virtue of this method is that it factors out conditions that normally interact in complex ways, equipping us to examine how those individual conditions blend in the making of hybrids. By no means does the method imply that photographs should be made as exemplars of only one art at a time. Nothing much recommends making a game of arguing over which pigeonhole a particular photograph goes into. Philosophy is not the carpentry of pigeonholes. Idealization sharpens the powers of human understanding without dictating behavior.

To Possess Other Eyes: The First Art

The first art of photography best aligns with the production of photographers like Henri Cartier-Bresson, Edward Weston, André Kertész, and Diane Arbus. Some but not all of these personally embraced the label of "straight photography." "Modernism" is the moniker that tends to be applied to these photographers and their peers in retrospect, usually by art historians, especially in connection with the writings of John Szarkowski. As curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York from the 1960s through the 1980s, Szarkowski commanded attention and used it to lead the cheer for "modernist" photography.[90] Labels do not matter until they bring in false associations: "modernism" is a tricky word. The safe course follows Barbara Savedoff, who enlists photographers like Cartier-Bresson, Weston, Kertész, and Arbus under a broader banner, the "classic tradition."[91]

However it is viewed as a historical and critical category, works in this tradition can be understood, from a theoretical perspective, as standing up to (S3). (S3) asserts that an image is a representational art work only if there can be an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought. To stand up to this proposition, two conditions must be met. First, some pure photographs serve no interest in depictively expressed thoughts. Second, these same photographs are works of representational art. How can a photograph ever meet both conditions?

Photographs appear throughout Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, whose narrator reflects at considerable length on their appeal. In the course of a disquisition on a (fictional) impressionist painter, he remarks that when we call a photograph "wonderful," we will find that it is an

> unusual image of a familiar object, an image different from those that we are accustomed to see, unusual and yet true to nature, and for that reason doubly striking because it surprises us, takes us out of our cocoon of habit, and at the same time brings us back to ourselves.[92]

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

Later, he compares a photograph to a kiss for its power to "evoke out of what we believed to be a thing with one definite aspect the hundred other things which it may equally well be, since each is related to a no less legitimate perspective."[93] Travel supplies another metaphor: "the only true voyage," he muses, "would not be to visit new lands but to possess other eyes, to see the world with the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred worlds that each of them sees, that each of them is."[94]

These passages from Proust intimate that representational art is not limited to two options, either addressing an interest in depictively expressed thoughts or addressing an interest in pieces of the world by presenting photographic duplicates of them. The third option is that works of representational art, especially photographs, can address an interest in experiences of seeing the world that are significantly different from experiences with the naked eye. Perhaps photography is a representational art because it invites and repays our interest in a distinctive form of seeing.

If this is correct, then (S3) is false, but nothing is said against (S1) and (S2). Indeed, the impact of photographs in the classic tradition is amplified by accepting (S1) and its epistemic corollaries. To see this, distinguish two epistemic functions that photographs may perform.

One is to document the world. Weston saluted photography as giving the photographer

> a means of looking deeply into the nature of things, and for presenting his subjects in terms of their basic reality. It enables him to reveal the essence of what lies before his lens with such clear insight that the beholder may find the recreated image more real and comprehensible than the actual object.[95]

We tend to trust photographs in a way that we do not trust other representations because photography seems to be endowed with a penetrating documentary honesty.

Proust regards photographs as performing a second, revelatory, function.[96] Garry Winogrand is reported to have said, "I photograph to find out what something will look like photographed."[97] Taken literally, what the photograph enables him to see is something he does not see with his eyes alone. It expands the scope of vision, in company with telescopes, microscopes, and other optical aids. Kracauer writes in the same

vein that we look at photographs "in the hope of detecting something new and unexpected—a confidence which pays tribute to the camera's revealing faculty."[98] In 1966, Szarkowski noted that "photography's ability to challenge and reject our schematized notions of reality is still fresh."[99] For Sontag, photographers of the classic tradition "were supposed to do more than see the world as it is." Their special brief was to capture the moment "when one can see things (especially what everyone has already seen) in a fresh way," to render "everyday life apotheosized, and the kind of beauty that only the camera reveals."[100] The revelation is not mediated by thought: "thought is regarded as clouding the transparency of the photographer's consciousness, and as infringing on the autonomy of what is being photographed."[101]

In its revelatory mode, photography trades on our faith in its documentary accuracy. A theme of Stanley Cavell's *The World Viewed* is that photographs (and movies) appeal to our wish to see the world as it would look if not seen by anyone.[102] The most emphatic way to deliver on that wish is to show us a world that does not look as it looks when we do see it face to face. The drama is heightened if the revelation also has a credibility that preempts our taking it for fiction.

Within philosophy, Savedoff has most eloquently sung the story of the classic tradition in her book on *Transforming Images*. "Photographs," she writes:

> do not simply record; their fascination is not simply that of preservation. Photographs transform their subjects. They have the power to make even the most familiar objects appear strange, the most chaotic events appear structured, or the most mundane objects appear burdened with meaning. Photographs seem to reveal to us things that cannot be seen with the eyes alone.[103]

Yet, what we see photographically does not appear to be some other world than our own, for "one of the central fascinations of photography [is] its power to 'document' an unfamiliar world that is at the same time *our* world, transformed."[104] Moreover, this transformation is not wrought by means of thought: "when a photograph defamiliarizes … the photographer is not seen as giving us his or her impressions or imaginings, but as showing us the way things really look."[105] Finally, Savedoff

underlines how the impact of these visions is redoubled by our faith in the epistemic authority of photographs, so that "disturbing images in photographs are seen as corresponding to a disturbing reality; they are not so easily dismissed as mere fantasy."[106] Note that what ensures this effect is our confidence in the special epistemic power of photographs, not the fact that they have this power. Maybe our confidence is misplaced. Savedoff argues only that, "whether it is warranted or not, we tend to see photographs as objective records of the world."[107]

Before moving on to some examples, remember that (S3) is a guide to where to look for them. If (S3) is false, then some images are works of representational art, but not because they serve an interest in depictively expressed thoughts. Although the skeptic assumes that an interest in an image is either an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought or as a duplicate, he overlooks a third option, that we may take an interest in what images reveal. This is a genuine third option for photography if transformative photographs do not express thoughts depictively and are not mere duplicates. Whereas an interest in an image as a duplicate is wholly an interest in the duplicated object, Proust's and Savedoff's transformative photographs serve a combined interest in the depicted scene and in the image itself.

Two tasks set the agenda. One is to establish that the interest we take in a photograph from the classic tradition is not an interest in a depictively expressed thought. The second is to establish that the interest we take is an interest in the image itself and not only the depicted scene. Of these tasks, the second is more pressing; skeptics will wonder whether it can be carried out.

The challenge goes like this.[108] A revelatory photograph is one that shows a scene as we do not see it face-to-face. Only by means of the photograph do we see it thus. Nevertheless, the target of our interest remains nothing but the scene itself. Granted, the photograph is the only means of discerning the features of the scene in which we take an interest, but the photograph is merely a means to discernment. When we use it as a means to discern features of the scene, we do not take an interest in the photograph itself. Our interest drops through to the scene. (S3) stands strong: the case for it does not rest on a false dilemma.

Part of the reply is that the challenge sets the bar too high. The skeptic thinks that differences between how a scene looks in a photograph and

how it looks face-to-face do not mean that we take an interest in the image itself. In that case, why suppose that the differences between how Garrick looks face-to-face and how he looks in Gainsborough's painting are enough to show that we take an interest in the painting itself? Why not argue as follows?

> Only in the painting do we see Garrick as Gainsborough thought of him. Nevertheless, the target of our interest remains nothing but Garrick. Granted, the painting is the only means we have to discern how Gainsborough felt about Garrick, but it is merely a means. When we use it as a means to discern features of the actor, we do not take an interest in the painting itself. Our interest drops through to the actor. It follows that painting is not a representational art.

This is an absurd way to reason precisely because it sets the bar on what counts as representational art too high.

Suppose that we can take an interest in an image itself and not merely in what it represents. The question is what conditions an image must meet in order to sustain our interest in the image itself. One condition is that it not duplicate the face-to-face experience: duplication pulls our interest through to the duplicated object, so that it is no longer an interest in the image itself. However, transformative representations do not duplicate face-to-face experiences that we could otherwise have. If duplication is the crux, the skeptic's challenge fails.

Might some condition apart from lack of duplication give the skeptic what she needs? Avedon's famous photograph transforms our experience of Elizabeth Taylor, and Gainsborough's painting transforms our experience of Garrick. Neither is a duplicate, so the difference between them is not that one is a duplicate and the other is not. Rather, the difference is that only one expresses a thought depictively.

This difference is not enough to secure (S3). Paintings and photographs may reveal unseen reality in different ways. Why should the one and not the other focus our interest on the image itself? To answer that it is because the one and not the other involves depictively expressed thought begs the question: it assumes (S3) while making a case for (S3). In conclusion, the problem with (S3) is that it overlooks the possibility of transformative representation.

Revelations

Photographs in the classic tradition have a wide and enduring appeal that is explained by taking (S3) to be false. These photographs are works of representational art not because they express thoughts depictively; they are works of representational art because they show us what cannot be seen with the naked eye. Potentially, they accomplish this in many different ways, by taking advantage of different elements of the photographic process. Since photography is so familiar to us, we should not be surprised if these elements are also familiar. Photographs can be especially effecive when they reveal by using simple means and without trickery or special effects. Kracauer listed some mechanisms by means of which photographs "metamorphose" nature: "by transferring three-dimensional phenomena to the plane, severing their ties with the surroundings, and substituting black, gray, and white for the given color schemes."[109] Szarkowski's list is offered in a similar spirit: photography exploits detail, framing, time, and vantage point.[110] No news here.

Nothing is more obvious than the fact that photographs capture their objects fixed at a moment in time. Consequently, we may see photographed objects as having features that are not normally visible when we see them in the flesh. Henri Cartier-Bresson's most famous work, *Behind the Gare St Lazare* of 1932, is an ideal exemplar. It fixes a moment of a perfectly ordinary happening—a man hopping a puddle—and the result is otherworldly. Flattened into a silhouette and then reflected in the still water of the puddle, the leap shows us motion in a new way. The content of this revelation can hardly be summed up in words—it is a visual value. In photographs, wrote Rudolf Arnheim, "the rapid course of events is found to contain hidden moments which, when isolated and fixed, reveal new and different meanings."[111]

Photographs frame space as well as time, and every photograph cuts the photographed object from the larger environment it would normally be seen to inhabit. The most humdrum stuff of life can be put in the spotlight, so that we see it differently. Bill Brandt's *Nude, East Sussex Coast* of 1959 (Figure 4) depicts two knees and an elbow close up, pimpled by the cold of the English beach. It brings into view, by framing, what is otherwise too obvious and ordinary ever to see. It reveals how familiar body parts look when removed from their usual context. Contemporary cultural practice insists that things must be placed in context, which only

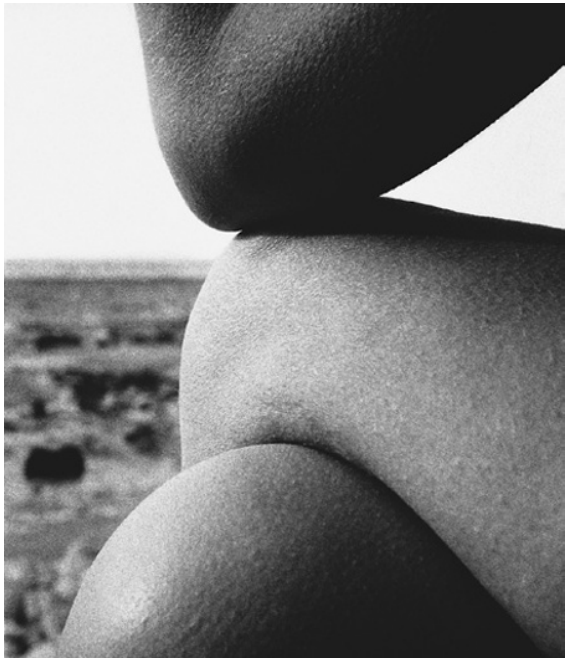

Figure 4 Bill Brandt, *Nude, East Sussex Coast*, 1959. Gelatin silver print. © Bill Brandt Archive.

implies that decontextualizing can be revelatory. With change of context comes a change in the features the object itself may be seen to have. Framing decontextualizes and thus, as Szarkowski saw, "to quote out of context is the essence of the photographer's craft."[112]

Color space is also transformed in photographs. This is most dramatic in monochrome photography, which detaches luminosity from hue. The close-tone printing of Weston's pepper photographs reveals a world of sensuous objectivity, where inky light renders surface details that would otherwise seem to be obscured by a chromatic haze, yielding a strong impression of the object itself. Yet, for all its sensuous beauty, it remains a vegetable.[113] In the words of the art critic Sean O'Hagan, Weston's photographs "make the commonplace wondrous and beautiful … the tonal quality of his black-and-white prints imbue everyday objects … with a heightened presence that sometimes makes them seem almost unreal."[114] O'Hagan's irony is that they seem unreal precisely because they make such a strong impression of reality.

Many images counterpose the three-dimensional space of a depicted scene with the two-dimensional space of the image surface. Sometimes the experience of one alternates with the experience of the other, and sometimes a single experience combines both.[115] Either way, the phenomenon is not typical of face-to-face experience. When you look at Brandt's *Nude* (Figure 4), you see an elbow resting on crossed knees and you see the stack of two-dimensional ovoids on the image's surface that realize these three-dimensional shapes. This does not happen when you see your own limbs on the beach.

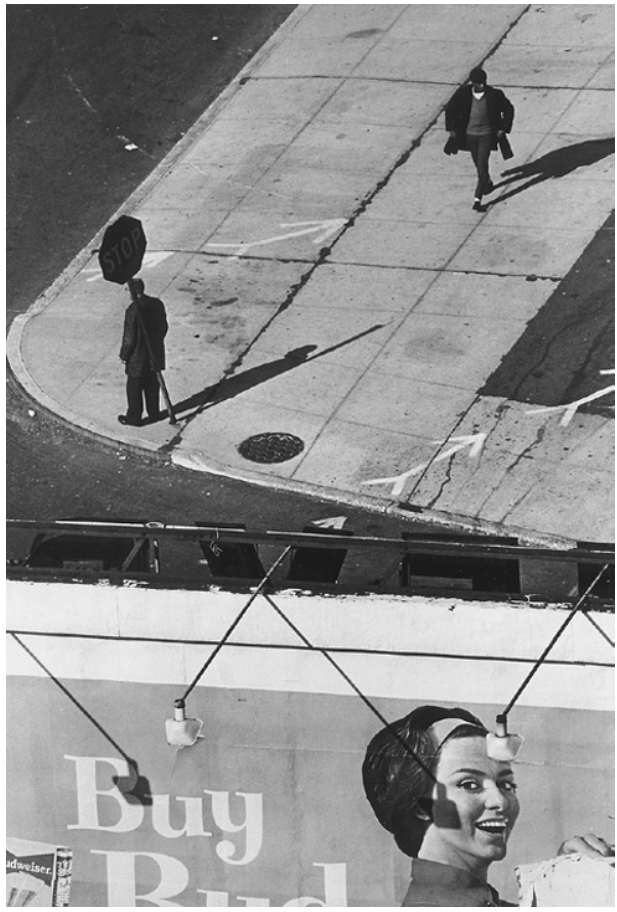

Figure 5 André Kertész, *Buy Bud, Long Island*, 1962. Gelatin silver print, 24 × 18 cm. © Estate of André Kertész/Higher Pictures.

Because our experiences of images have this twofold character, flat image surfaces can draw attention to features of a worldly scene that we tend to overlook. Sometimes they are features it would not have otherwise.[116] André Kertész's *Buy Bud*, taken in 1962 (Figure 5), is a study in the representation of two-dimensional planes in three-dimensional space, each reflected onto the two-dimensional composition of the photograph itself. The plane of the billboard clashes with that of the street, and the street twists strangely away from the plane of the two men and the stop sign. How can their shadows have been cast from the same light source as the shadows cast upon the billboard? The photograph's reality is non-Euclidian. That arrests us. Seen face-to-face, the same spaces would give us no pause. Paradoxically, it is the photograph's solid and uncomplicated two-dimensional composition that so twists a three-dimensional scene. The dizziness we feel is only mocked by the arrows painted across the sidewalk. Savedoff compares the effect to that of certain Hokusai woodcuts, but adds that "the shock is greater, since the disjunction is 'found' in the world, not composed by the print-maker."[117]

These four examples of how photographs can refresh our experience of the world hint at a catalogue of photographic resources for inducing similar effects—flattening, stillness, choice of viewing angles and lens perspective, focus, depth of field, lighting, filtering, and so on. A complete catalogue is not needed to make the point that photographs can be revelatory in myriad ways. Here is one more example, before drawing some lessons.

A recurring theme of photography writing is that looking at photographs enables us to experience bits of the world that are distant in time or space—the past or the far away.[118] Through photographs, as Kendall Walton notes, "we can see our loved ones again, and that is important to us."[119] Indeed, that is very important, though it can also be useful when a photograph equips us to see a scene without being on scene, because being on scene would not give us the same experience as the photograph.

For one thing, being on scene typically means being in a position to act in appropriate ways, and that shapes what is perceptually salient. Consider Eddie Adams's famous 1968 photograph of General Nguyễn Ngoc Loan executing a manacled Viet Cong prisoner. If this image invites you to respond with empathy, then it is only because you are not on scene. Were you on scene, you would feel shock, fear, or some other response incompatible with empathy. On-the-spot witnesses act

on seeing the pistol, whereas photographic viewers feel empathy (or indignation) on seeing the victim. The photograph works as it does by displacing the viewer from the reality of the situation.[120]

The flip side of the viewer's absence is the camera's presence. An essential part of the context of photographed scenes, it can powerfully impact agents who are aware of it. By intruding upon or disturbing them, it can show them in a new light.[121] They pose, of course, and even an actor no longer acts before the camera when he or she poses for it. Sometimes cameras catch people unawares, not yet ready to pose—a theme of Garry Winogrand's *Women Are Beautiful*. Midway between these, the camera may catch the truth that is exposed by the failed pose. Diane Arbus professed that

> our whole guise is like giving a sign to the world to think of us in a certain way, but there's a point between what you want people to know about you and what you cannot help people knowing about you. And that has to do with what I have always called the gap between intention and effect.[122]

Shots like the 1963 *Teenage Couple on Hudson Street* are tours de force because it seems impossible for the sitter not to have closed the gap. As with Adams's photograph, Arbus's has provoked a moral response, but not because anyone on the scene might have acted, and hence acted better or worse, morally speaking. The teenage couple are in no danger that calls bystanders to action.[123] If there is a genuine moral controversy, it concerns the moral permissibility of what appears to be a breach of her sitters' privacy and an abrogation of their right to control images of themselves.[124] No matter how we judge morally, the fact that the controversy is genuine already proves that Arbus's photographs do reveal something about their sitters that is otherwise hidden. As Sontag tells us, "Arbus photographs to show … that there is another world. The other world is to be found, as usual, inside this one."[125]

What lessons can we draw from these photographs, as they have been described over the past few pages? The goal has been to understand one mode of photographic art as standing up to (S3), the third premise in the skeptic's argument. Reaching this goal means carrying out two tasks.

One task was to find photographs that sustain an interest in what they depict that is not an interest in a depictively expressed thought. Suppose

a skeptic insists that the Cartier-Bresson, the Brandt, the Weston, the Kertész, and the Arbus express thoughts by depicting the world. What is the content of these thoughts? Perhaps each expresses the thought that the world is as it is photographically revealed to be. If they express some further thought, that thought is not all that interests us. The evidence is that the experience of a world transformed is sometimes fascinating, whatever the thought expressed. If the thought is just that the world is as it is shown to be, then that concedes our interest in our so experiencing it.

The second task is to show that the interest we take in these photographs is an interest in the photographs themselves, and not merely in the scenes they depict. Were it an interest that could be satisfied by looking at scenes instead of photographs of them, then the skeptic would have prevailed. However, our interest is not satisfied in this way, because these photographs give us experiences that do not duplicate experiences of seeing scenes in the flesh. Might a skeptic insist that the revelatory experiences that photographs give us do not focus our interest onto the photographs themselves? As we saw at the end of the previous section, insisting upon this sets the bar too high. Reflection on examples of transformative images also tells us that the answer is negative. Here is why.

An interest in an item is always an interest in it for the features it has, and revelatory photographs have interesting features that are not features of the scenes they depict. *Behind the Gare St Lazare* is eerie. That is part of what captivates us. Moreover, it is eerie because it reveals what the photographed scene looks like, though that scene is not eerie. Brandt's *Nude* warms us to our embodiment because it reveals something about our knees and elbows, but they are not the source of the warmth. Arbus's teenage couple tells a great deal about these two people. We might call it clinically insightful. This grabs our attention. As interesting as the young couple may be, they are not interesting in this way—they are not clinically insightful.

Transformative photographs sometimes have interesting features that are not features of what is revealed. The idea is that if an image has an interesting feature because of the experience it affords, where that feature is not a feature of the photographed scene, then our interest is not merely an interest in that scene. It is an interest in the photograph itself. So a photograph need not hold our interest in it as a depictively expressed thought if it is to be a representational art work. The assumption

that an interest in an image is either an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought or as a duplicate amounts to a false dilemma.

The strategy is not, remember, to skewer the skeptic; it is to use the skeptic's argument as a tool to understand the arts of photography. Here is how to understand one of these arts, the classic tradition. Photographs in this tradition take advantage of the technical resources of photography to reveal the world as it does not look to the unaided eye. Confidence in the epistemic power of photography amplifies the revelation: what is revealed is reality, not an artist's fancy or a side effect of the mechanical imaging process. Seeing the world anew is interesting and can help to make a photograph interesting in its own right. Insofar as the classic tradition appeals to such an interest, the case against (S3) articulates the components needed to appreciate the power of many much-loved photographs.

Understanding the classic tradition as standing up to (S3) does not sweep away all reservations that one may have about it. Sontag worries that photography "flatters the viewer, creating a false sense of ubiquity, a deceptive mastery of experience."[126] Revelatory photographs are no exception, for "insofar as photography does peel away the dry wrappers of habitual seeing, it creates another habit of seeing: both intense and cool, solicitous and detached; charmed by the insignificant detail, addicted to incongruity."[127] Rebukes such as these are sometimes deserved, though one might wonder whether they are too indiscriminate. Anyway, the complaint does nothing to weaken the artistic standing of the classic tradition. Who said art must be perfect? Or that it is never dangerous?

Thinking Through Photographs: The Second Art

Methodological skepticism is a tool for articulating when photography can be practiced as an art, where each art is seen as standing up to one of the main planks of the skeptic's argument. The classic tradition, which stands up to (S3), persists and has a large and enthusiastic following, but the second art stands up to the second premise of the skeptic's argument:

> (S2) if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought.

This premise misses the fact that some photographs depict only by belief-independent feature-tracking and yet we take an interest in them as depictively expressed thoughts.

A look at the reasoning for (S2) brings the second art of photography into sharper focus. The key is the idea of an incompatibility between depiction by means of belief-independent feature-tracking and depictively expressed thought. If a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, then it cannot express thoughts depictively. Since this says nothing about our interests in photographs, a further premise is needed: if a pure photograph cannot express thoughts depictively, then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought. The whole argument runs like this:

> (S2a) if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, then it cannot express thoughts depictively, and
>
> (S2b) if a pure photograph cannot express thoughts depictively, then we can take no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought, so

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

> (S2) if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought.

This logic is flawless. Accordingly, if (S2) is false, then either (S2a) or (S2b) is also false. The culprit is the former, the incompatibility assumption. Considering how this assumption goes wrong sheds light on photographs that stand up to (S2). They interest us because they express thoughts depictively, even as they depict only by belief-independent feature-tracking.

Photographs that express thoughts by belief-independent feature-tracking are not products of the classic tradition. The classic tradition's crowning achievement is to modify how we see without expressing interesting thoughts. The second art takes an entirely different approach. It does not tackle the dilemma at the heart of the classic tradition, namely that an interest in an image itself is either an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought or as a duplicate. The classic tradition responded that this a false dilemma because it overlooks photographs that minister to an interest in revelatory seeing.

The second art of photography does not reach for a response like this. Photographs that express thoughts by means of belief-independent feature-tracking may as well be duplicates. After all, if we may take an interest in a photograph as a depictively expressed thought, then why worry that our interest in it as a duplicate drops through to the duplicated scene? Supposing our interest in a photograph as a duplicate does drop through to the duplicated object, that leaves us with an interest in the thought expressed by the photograph. Now the profile of the second art comes into focus: we are looking for photographs that use belief-independent feature tracking to duplicate scenes and thereby express thoughts.

The artistic standing of works in the second art is consistent with the theory of photography represented by (S1), with the link between thought and representational art that is forged in (S3), and with the presumption, in (S5), that the photographic art that we care about is representational in a distinctively photographic manner. In accordance with the method of isolation, the plan is to seek paradigm cases of the second art of photography that take (S1), (S3), and (S5) for granted while standing up to (S2) alone.

Photography in Conceptual Art

In their purest form, works in the second art of photography document scenes while nevertheless finding a way to express thoughts depictively. Historically speaking, they emerged out of the adoption of photography by conceptual artists, who were attracted in particular by its capacity for straightforward, deadpan documentation.[128]

Although the title of "conceptual art" has been recycled and applied to such recent stars as Damien Hirst and Gabriel Orozco, it originally named a movement that came to prominence in the 1960s with the work of figures such as Robert Barry, Walter DeMaria, On Kawara, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Merle Ukeles, and the Art and Language group.[129] These artists shared a common ambition to make work undermining the then-dominant conception of the function of art. On this conception, art succeeds when it expresses extraordinary inner states of the artist, delivering to its audience powerful doses of aesthetically charged visual interest. The paragons are abstract expressionist painters like Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. Their canvasses hold the eye spellbound and foretell the spiritual exertions of their makers. In reaction to this, conceptual art turns the heat right down. The splendor of paint is replaced with text, performances, or ideas that put the artist at a distance and leave the world pretty much unchanged. Kawara's Today series (1966–) is a set of paintings made one each day showing the day's date lettered onto a solid background. Autobiography chronicles the bare passage of time. Ukeles's *Touch Sanitation* (1978–1980) consists in her seeking out and shaking the hands of New York City sanitation workers. For his Inert Gas series of 1969, Barry opened four cylinders of gas at four sites in California. The artists subvert the power of the image to focus and intensify visual interest.[130]

For some conceptual artists, the boundary is blurred between the work and the photographic documentation of it. The work is the photograph, or the photograph is part of the work. Either way, the photograph is a document boasting little visual interest, betraying little about the character of its maker. In 1969, Douglas Huebler made *Duration Piece #11* by taking 12 shots at 15-minute intervals of an entirely humdrum, randomly selected bit of shrubbery. *Duration Piece #11* simply records the world without comment. Other Duration Pieces are variants of this, repeating at the level of the series the methodology

of each piece. *Duration Piece #5*, executed earlier the same year, is 10 black-and-white photographs taken in Central Park. Each time Huebler heard a bird call, he pointed the camera in the direction of the call and took the shot. As he explained, "the world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more. I prefer, simply, to state the existence of things in terms of time and place."[131]

Photography provided the perfect tool for artists eager to cut art down to the size of everyday life. Lucy Lippard established the point by explicitly invoking the traditional theory of photography. "Photography," she wrote, "is notoriously unselective. … once a viewpoint is chosen extraneous detail cannot be omitted, nor reality re-arranged. It can bring art to the level of everything else."[132] To exploit this side of photography is to exploit its documentary capability.

The conceptual artists who used photography were not trained in photography and cared little for the traditions of photographic art that preceded them. Neither the painterly effects of the pictorialists nor the revelations of the classical photographers would have suited their purpose. Their cameras were consumer-grade instruments, they processed their prints in commercial labs, and they went for a low-fi look.

What do their efforts have to do with an art of photography that stands up to (S2) in the skeptic's argument? (S2) says that depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking repels any interest in depictively expressed thoughts. Huebler's Duration Pieces depict by belief-independent feature-tracking, but do they appeal to any interest anyone might have in thoughts about shrubbery or birds? Any thoughts they might express are not expressed depictively.

If works like Huebler's prey upon any step in the skeptic's argument, it is (S3). In this respect, they are half-siblings of the classic tradition. However, instead of pointing to a third option (revelation) between duplication and expressing a thought, they challenge the assumption in (S3a) that an image is a representational art work only if there can be an interest in the image itself. This requirement cannot be right if *Duration Piece #11* is art and if the image itself is simply too ordinary to be interesting. There is more than one way to take a knock at (S3).

For all that, works like *Duration Piece #11* bridge to the second art of photography, which stands up to (S2). Conceptual art of the 1960s played a formative role in developments that took place starting in the

1980s. What 1980s art inherits from Huebler and others is an openness to straightforward documentary. There is no photographer's eye, but instead an interest in expressing thoughts through documentation.

Five Mimics

The arts of photography that can be read off the skeptic's argument do not always align with the categories wielded in art history books, but that is nothing to worry about so long as alternative perspectives shed light on what we care about. Crisscrossing the second art of photography is a tangled web of post-conceptual artistic programs. Critics and historians trace many divergent tendencies. The second art includes works that go under the banner of "tableau" or "pictorial" photography, but also works labeled "post-modern" or "pictures" photography or "appropriation art."[133] Yet, all share something in common. Each has its own way of getting in the face of (S2).

What first strikes gallery-goers who encounter Jeff Wall's *Mimic* of 1982 is something that gets completely lost in translation to the page. At 2 m in height and more than 2 m wide, the photograph is enormous, on a scale with history painting, and this gets emphasis from its being printed as a transparency backlit by a light box. One might say it owns the wall. Moving from its physical presence to what it presents, we see a racially charged exchange between three figures on a Vancouver street. The bearded aggressor derisively mimics the epicanthic folds of the eyes of his East Asian target, while his girlfriend drags behind, weary of whatever has led up to the moment. The East Asian man remains a step ahead and almost glances back, aware of a threat but not quite able to catch the taunt. That the taunt is not intended to be visible to its target hints that a difference in social status is a factor in the aggression, alongside racism. Meanwhile, as we wend our way through this narrative, we come to realize that the photograph is not a candid snapshot: it has been staged. The tells are subtle until they are mentioned. The lighting is theatrical, the participants in the drama are acting, and the level of detail at the large scale means that the photograph has been stitched together from several shots, each of part of the overall scene.[134]

Mimic is an example of what Wall calls "near documentaries." These he describes as "pictures whose subjects were suggested by my direct

experience, and ones in which I tried to recollect that experience as precisely as I could, and to reconstruct and represent it precisely and accurately." Many of them "depict moments or events from obscure, unswept corners of everyday life, covert ways of occupying the city, gestures of concealment and refuge, shards of hope and rationality, traces of failure and guilt."[135] As these words suggest, Wall downplays obvious readings of the political content of *Mimic*: "it's easy to denounce racism: you just say 'racism is bad'." *Mimic* intimates instead that "there was this energy in this man that could have gone elsewhere but didn't and it has ended up here."[136] He adds that "when this particular type of man undergoes certain kinds of stress, stimulation, or provocation, this kind of thing emerges. I don't think it's accidental; it's determined by the social totality, but it has to come out of an individual body."[137] The bearded man's gesture is less than it appears to be, since it is not thought out or deliberate. At the same time, it is more than it appears to be—its betrayal of larger social forces is "an inverted form of profundity" that echoes Baudelaire's idea of the painting of modern life.[138]

In explaining *Why Photography Matters as Art As Never Before*, Michael Fried ambitiously connects Wall's work to a passage from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Culture and Value*.[139] Wittgenstein asks us to

> imagine a theatre, the curtain goes up, & we see someone alone in his room, walking up and down, lighting a cigarette, seating himself, etc., so that suddenly we are observing a human being from outside in a way that ordinarily we can never observe ourselves; as if we were watching a chapter from a biography with our own eyes,—surely this would be at once uncanny and wonderful. More wonderful than anything that a playwright could cause to be acted or spoken on the stage. We should be seeing life itself. – But then we do see this every day & it makes not the slightest impression on us! True enough, but we do not see it from *that* point of view.[140]

Imagine a kind of art that duplicates everyday life and leaves it just as it is, undisturbed. To the question what makes it art at all, not everyday life, Wittgenstein points to a particular point of view that we may occupy. What point of view? Fried conjectures that Wittgenstein is thinking of an attitude of Kantian disinterested contemplation—contemplation that does not depend on the subject having a desire for the object of contemplation.[141] On Fried's own analysis, the point of view centers practices of visual art that aim to suppress or outmaneuver the viewers' awareness of

themselves as spectators, even of works that make a fuss about their being there to be seen.[142] Since many other ways of proceeding have been proposed in the history of aesthetics, it may be wise to remain agnostic on how to understand the point of view.

In his writing on the photographer Andreas Gursky, Bence Nanay explores how recent photography can engage picture-viewers.[143] Gursky's photographs are frequently viewed as comments on contemporary culture. For one critic, they "focus on the most recent phase of capitalism, apparently commenting on reified leisure, consumerist fantasies, and global transformations of production."[144] Another writes that a photograph of rows of shoes for sale "symbolizes the dizzying plenitude of these commodities, their sameness and difference"—an idea that fits Gursky's celebrated *99 Cent* to a T.[145] If this is correct, the photographs are allegories. Maybe they are. But Nanay proposes something more interesting, that Gursky's photographs stage their viewers in gallery space.

Take *Paris, Montparnasse* of 1993. At 2 m in height and more than 4 m in width, yet printed in remarkable detail, the image is a combination of several shots (as is *Mimic*). Nanay observes that its amplitude together with its fineness of detail induce a bifurcating effect. The overall composition is emblematically modernist, with the grid of the apartment façade, the greenery of the ground plane, and the gray sky overhead all arranged in regular horizontal bands. Blur the details, and it would be easy to mistake *Paris, Montparnasse* for an abstraction. At the same time, though, the fine specificities of the grid, which depict the intimate lives of the apartment dwellers, beckon us in for a closer and closer look. Prosaic but humanly interesting, never superfluous, apparently endless, the details of the dwelling bring us so close that the overall composition is lost. Nanay concludes that the photograph must be "seen from two different perspectives, both close up and from far away. If we take only one of these perspectives into consideration, we are missing out on something."[146] To appreciate both the macro and the micro, we must "walk away from the print to take in the entire composition and then walk closer to check some details and then walk back again, and so on. Gursky's photos must be among the pictorial works of art that require the most legwork."[147] *Paris, Montparnasse* choreographs this movement, in which we swing from one perspective to the other, seeking their integration.

Readings of *Paris, Montparnasse* and *Mimic* as snippets of social commentary—racism is wrong, we live like bees in hives or rabbits in hutches—fail to explain some important features of each photograph, including the staging of near documentary and the staging of the picture viewer in gallery space. Satisfying interpretations explain all the important features of what is being interpreted.

The photographs in Cindy Sherman's Untitled Film Still series of 1977–1980 do not have the monumental size of the Walls and the Gurskys, so they isolate the element of documentary staging. Each work in this series shows Sherman herself, playing a role from some imagined scenario. She stands in for the Woman in the Kitchen in *Untitled Film Still #3*, for example (Figure 6). In Arthur Danto's vivid description:

> The Girl is always shown alone, blond sometimes and sometimes brunette, sometimes a working girl, sometimes a wife, pretty in her apron, threatened in her kitchen—and sometimes she is shown mooning with a letter in her hand or someone's bland photograph on her dressing table, under the mirror in which we see her tender back and the reflection of the space into which she stares, with a man's jacket slung on an empty chair, and a drained glass. Feminine to the essence, soft, vulnerable, fragility her middle name, good, still Daddy's brave girl, cutely independent, determined despite the

Figure 6 Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #3*, 1977. Gelatin silver print, 18 × 24 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York.

> threats and obstacles, a little heroine, The Girl in the Still condenses the myths that defined life's expectations in Middle American fantasy.[148]

Obviously, the series is a critique of myths about femininity, but that does not explain why Sherman has gone to the trouble of photographing herself as "The Girl." Why does she do this? And why by means of photography? The intent is not to reveal, for what Sherman shows us is a stereotype we have seen a thousand times before.

Douglas Crimp's classic account of the series answers these questions by spotlighting the ambiguity between Sherman as creator of a scenario and as player within her own creation. He writes that:

> though Sherman is literally self-created in these works, she is created in the image of already-known feminine stereotypes; her self is therefore understood as contingent upon the possibilities provided by the culture in which Sherman participates, not by some inner impulse. As such, her photographs reverse the terms of art and autobiography. They use art not to reveal the artist's true self, but to show the self as an imaginary construct.[149]

Danto offers a different hypothesis. Performance art sought to erase the boundary between the artist and the community that is erected when artists make images in the name of self-expression. Dispensing with images meant artist and audience could encounter each other directly, in the flesh, in some art space. Sherman goes a step beyond performance art. If performance art is the antithesis of depiction, then the Untitled Film Stills bring about a synthesis of depiction and performance. Danto explains that Sherman "has re-entered the pictures the performance artist has stepped out of, and done so in such a way as to infuse her images with the promise and threats of the performance artist's real presence."[150] She enacts the depicted figure and uses photography to ensure her presence to the viewer. She pierces through the "contingent possibilities provided by the culture."

Before drawing some lessons about the second art of photography, here are two more examples, both of photographs that, in very different ways, represent other pictures.

One is Sherrie Levine's *After Edward Weston* of 1981, an appropriation of a poster of six of Weston's photographs of a nude boy. Crimp reports that when Levine showed her work to a friend, who remarked that he would like to see the Weston originals, she replied that they

will "make you want to see that little boy, but when you see the boy, the art is gone."[151] An essay on Weston by Clement Greenberg opens by warning that it "proves so difficult to make a photograph transcend its almost inevitable function as document and act as work of art as well."[152] Recalling Weston's belief that photographs should be fully visualized before the shutter is tripped, Crimp adds that, "Levine has taken the master at his word and in so doing has shown him what he really meant."[153]

At the same time, Levine plays off a long tradition of making paintings that depict other paintings. Savedoff discerns a systematic ambiguity: while a painting of a painting of a scene makes the scene seem more real, it also brings home that what seems real is only represented, because we are made especially aware that we are looking at a painting.[154] By contrast, photographs of other images tend not to heighten awareness that what seems real is only painted—they do not work to undercut the sense of illusion. After all, we believe we are looking at a transparent document.[155] Levine's appropriation of Weston grafts onto photography the systematic ambiguity of painting. Weston's boy seems no more and no less real in the Levine than in the Weston original. However, as long as we know that, despite their superficial identity, the Levine and the Weston are distinct works, the transparency of photography is thrown in doubt. There is more to Levine's photograph than the boy we see in it. *After Edward Weston* promotes an awareness that we are dealing with representation.

Starting in 1989, Thomas Struth made several series of what have come to be called "museum photographs." Among the first of these is *Louvre 4, Paris.* Its scale of almost 2 m square typifies the series and brings us back to the problem of large-scale photography. The photograph shows visitors to a museum in a space before a painting. Sometimes, as in *Louvre 4, Paris*, they look on quietly as a group; sometimes they are shown in solo study or milling about inattentively. Although they do not pose or act, as do the figures in Wall's near documentaries, they occupy a space built for contemplating art, and it is natural to seek some consonance between them and the paintings on display. A solo spectator is shown contemplating a pair of Rembrandt portraits in *Kunsthistorisches Museum 3, Vienna*. The throng shown in *Galleria dell'Accademia 1, Venice* echoes the jumble of its backdrop, Veronese's *Feast in the House of Levi*. A woman pushes a stroller toward Gustave Caillebotte's *Paris*

Street in *Art Institute of Chicago 2*. Returning to *Louvre 4, Paris*, the museum visitors form a diagonal that doubles the diagonal in Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*. Hans Belting describes them as "eyewitnesses of the human drama in the painting, within which almost every gaze out of the picture is directed toward a distant signal of rescue. The gazes of the viewers follow the gazes of the shipwrecked sailors, but our own eyes have already taken in this double sequence."[156]

Struth helpfully explains what he was after: "I wanted to remind my audience that when art works were made, they were not yet icons or museum pieces. When a work of art becomes fetishized, it dies."[157] To this end, he photographed museum visitors interacting with paintings and then put us in the very same position by exhibiting his photographs at the scale of painting in the same kind of setting. Perhaps this is a response to Benjamin's concern that photographs of paintings reproduce everything about them except their presence in time and space, the element responsible for their "aura."[158] If the danger of the gallery is that it fetishizes aura, the remedy is to be brought to see what engagement and disengagement look like.

Works by Gursky, Levine, Sherman, Struth, and Wall are blue-chip stock in recent art photography, and they have been characterized here by borrowing from widely accepted criticism, without going deep into any critical programs. Criticism has tended—perfectly appropriately—to emphasize their differences. Of course, critics must attend to differentiating details. Even so, our five photographs mark a significant departure from the classic tradition. Their subject matter is new and so are some of the methods for presenting it—the staging of near documentary, outright appropriation, and the staging of the spectator's experience in gallery space. That they share these features in common is not necessarily interesting, however. Not every commonality is relevant to critical appreciation. Do these departures from the classic tradition matter?

Cast Photography

In the classic tradition, thought without an interesting depicted scene is banal; in the second art, interesting thought cancels the banality of the depicted scene. Recalling the passage that Fried takes from Wittgenstein, methodological skepticism gives us a handle on the "point of view" that

makes something interesting out of a documentary record. So the second art of photography stands up to premise (S2) of the skeptic's argument by denying (S2a), the incompatibility claim—images that depict only by belief-independent feature-tracking cannot express thoughts depictively. Any apparent incompatibility is dissolved by the right conception of depictively expressed thought, a conception implicated in apt appreciation of the work of Gursky, Levine, Sherman, Struth, and Wall.

To proceed systematically, three points must be made. The first is that our five exemplars are pure photographs, images that depict only through belief-independent feature-tracking. Point two is that they represent something that is not identical to what they depict through belief-independent feature-tracking. They are doubly representational. The third and final point is that this represented extra is achieved in a particular way—that is, depictively.

Point one is straightforward. The customary practice of for photographers in the second art is to take photographs in a documentary mode. True, Wall and Gursky stitch separate shots into one image, but the purpose of the operation is simply to produce a single, large image with a high level of detail, exactly like one that would have been produced by a camera with extraordinarily high resolution. Wall reports the painstaking work of making *Morning Cleaning, Mies van der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona*: "I think I shot for about twelve days. The light was only right in the early morning, from about 7 to 7:35. I had only about seven minutes each day to photograph the space as a whole, because the shadow patterns change so quickly in the morning."[159] The resulting set of shots had to be pieced into a seamless whole with seamless geometry, lighting, and exposure. Compare this to filming a movie on location, where the overriding concern is to ensure depiction through belief-independent feature-tracking, even if it entails many hours of shooting and assemblage with an eye to continuity.

The heart of the matter is the second point: our five photographs represent on two levels that do not collapse into one. On one hand, a photograph depicts the scene that was in front of the camera when the shutter was tripped, the scene whose features it tracks independent of belief. Call this the photographic "object." On the other hand, a photograph may represent something further, something that it does not depict. Call this the photograph's "subject."[160] Put in these terms, the point is that a photograph may have an object and a subject.

(The terminology is only intended to keep the two layers of representation straight; please ignore extraneous associations!)

Peter Alward suspects that reluctance to accept the possibility of double representation originates with a limited conception of imagistic representation. Paintings are made by what he calls "creating," which is "making something new by means of combining or modifying various kinds of raw materials."[161] Since photographs are not made this way, the skeptic doubts that they could come to have subjects. Reasoning this way overlooks the second kind of making, which Alward calls "casting," and which "involves choosing from among a collection of preexisting objects."[162] The paradigm of casting is the selection of actors by a movie's casting director. Through the casting director's choices, the actors on his or her roster—for example, Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn—come to represent characters—that is, David Huxley and Susan Vance (in the 1938 comedy *Bringing Up Baby*). Making by casting generalizes beyond the movies. For example, *Fountain* means what it means through Duchamp's act of selecting a urinal. With the idea of casting in hand, Alward proposes that photographs represent subjects through a process of casting.

Skeptics have recognized the possibility but dismissed it. Scruton concedes, "I may take a photograph of a draped nude and call it Venus, but … it should not be thought of as a photographic representation of Venus but rather as a photograph of a representation of Venus."[163] In other words, a photograph may represent an object that represents a subject, but it does not follow that it represents the subject. In a formula:

> P represents O and O represents S, but P does not represent S.

All that the photograph does is record the representation of S by O. Moreover, if the lesson of *Fountain* is that casting does not require staging, a photographer may cast an object without staging, by fiat. She may, for example, take a photograph of a drunken tramp down in the Tenderloin and entitle it *Silenus.*[164] Her photograph represents the tramp who now represents Silenus, but it does not represent Silenus. Finally, this proposal explains why we make the mistake of thinking that photographs doubly represent objects and subjects. We simply confuse what the photograph represents—the object—with what that object represents—the subject. We think P represents S when in fact P only represents O and O represents S.

No doubt, some photographs that seem to represent S merely represent O, which represents S. The question is whether this is the only coherent scenario. Or, reversing the question, does this scenario fit all cases? Are there cases that call for a different scenario?

What if there is a subject that is not represented by the photographed object? The objects of Levine's *After Edward Weston* are the boy and maybe also the Weston poster. Its subject is something similar to the logical consequences of the classic tradition or the mediated character of photographic imaging. This is not something represented by the boy or the poster.

Sherman herself is the object of *Untitled Film Still #3*, where she plays the Woman in the Kitchen (Figure 6).[165] Perhaps it is correct to say that the photograph does not represent the Woman in the Kitchen. Perhaps it represents only Sherman, and it is she who represents the Woman in the Kitchen. The point is irrelevant because the Woman in the Kitchen is only part of what the photograph is about. Its subject is the thought that Crimp and Danto attempt to triangulate, a thought that is not represented merely by Sherman's posing in costume.

Mimic represents three actors—they are its objects. Its subject is partly a rebuke of the racism of the tough guy type toward the Asian man, but it is also about how small tears in the social fabric release energy in the form of a mocking gesture. Again, this is not something that is simply represented by actors on a Vancouver street, leaving out the photograph and its distinctive form of display.

The apartment house and gallery interior that are portrayed in *Paris, Montparnasse* and *Louvre 4, Paris* are not represented by those photographs as representing anything at all. Neither photograph has a subject, on the theory that at best photographs can represent some objects that represent subjects. That theory is false if Gursky's and Struth's work engages ideas about the enlivening of images through literally mobilized powers of perception.

In each of our five cases, we have a photograph that represents a subject but does not represent an object that represents the subject. In a formula:

P represents O and P represents S but O does not represent S.

Therefore, some photographs doubly represent both an object and a subject. They do not simply represent object that represents a subject.

That leaves the third and final point. Is the subject represented in a particular way—that is, depictively? Do we get to the subject at least partly through depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking? An essential part of the thought that is expressed by Levine's *After Edward Weston* is that the work is a photograph. Only a photograph could reflexively draw attention to its own opacity as a photograph. Sherman's commentary on the masquerade of gender depends not only on her playing roles but on her taking shots mimicking film stills of herself playing the roles. Wall's photography of modern life is achieved by recording a scene and exhibiting it to pack all the punch of an advertising display. Only by depicting a gallery space does *Louvre 4, Paris* provoke us to think about how to enliven that space, and the photographic depiction of the Montparnasse apartment house façade is crucial to its micro-level effect and hence to the dynamic interplay between the micro and the macro that embodies ideas about active perception.

These photographs do not express thoughts in the same way as do the Rembrandt and Gainsborough described earlier (pp. 26–28). Gainsborough's portrait shows Garrick as more like Jack Lemmon than Al Pacino. To accomplish this, the portrait depicts Garrick as having visible features that would evidence the likeness between Garrick and Lemmon. Inspired by this, skeptics might impose a restriction on the depictive representation of subject matter, saying:

> P represents S depictively only if P represents O as S.

Recall Scruton's words: depictively expressed thoughts "inform our way of seeing the canvas … and it is at least partly in terms of our apprehension of thoughts that we must describe what we see in the picture."[166]

Accepting the restriction would spell bad news for the second art of photography, for none of our examples represent O as S. The Gursky does not represent the apartment house as mobilized spectatorship. The Wall does not represent the actors as a rupture in the social fabric that permits the spontaneous escape of certain energies in the form of a gesture. The Sherman does not represent the artist herself as a thought about the power of culturally contingent gender roles.

No matter. The restriction is a terrible idea because it rules out how some paintings express thoughts depictively, and seeing this deepens our understanding of cast photography. Andy Warhol's *Two Hundred*

Campbell's Soup Cans shows rows and rows of soup cans, perhaps to express a thought about the watering down of meaning. This thought is not represented by soup cans per se, nor does the painting represent them as a watering down of meaning. Warhol's painting adds up to more than the simile that meaning is watered down as soup is watered down. Rather, the thought is expressed at least in part through the artist's repetitive imaging of the cans. The proposal that expressing a thought depictively requires that O be represented as S sets the bar too high even for painting, let alone photography.

For an image to express a thought depictively, it must ask its spectator to undertake an appropriate act of looking: one of seeing what is depicted. Sometimes seeing what is depicted is necessary to grasp the thought, so that the thought could not be brought to mind without it. On other occasions, the act of looking is needed only to grasp the thought completely, so that only a gist can be got otherwise. A third option is that the thought is normally but not necessarily grasped by seeing what is depicted. Or seeing what is depicted in the image may be one among many routes to the thought, where it suffices for grasping the thought. Often we can grasp the thought by seeing what is depicted, so long as we bring certain stores of background knowledge to bear.[167] Equipped with a little backstory, seeing what is depicted in works of cast photography is enough to take on board the thoughts they express.

Rarely is it fair to imagine that we can paraphrase depictively expressed thoughts into one or two sentences. Gainsborough's portrait expresses an attitude toward Garrick that would be extremely hard to translate into words without loss. Saying that Garrick is more Jack Lemmon than Al Pacino is a kind of shorthand or metaphor. Likewise, the intellectual content that Levine conveys in *After Edward Weston* does not reduce without remainder to the proposition that photography in the classic tradition is appropriation. The thoughts expressed in cast photographs are better viewed as thematic materials (the feminine, the artist, the activity of seeing, social agency) than propositions to be assessed as true or false. Thematic materials are expressed better by telling stories, making pictures, or finding ways to nudge us into points of view.[168]

Works in the second art of photography take advantage of casting plus depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking in order to express thoughts depictively. They falsify (S2a). Insofar as they give us interesting food for thought, they also stand up to (S2). We can take an

interest in a photograph as a depictively expressed thought even as it depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking.

With special power comes special vulnerability. Sometimes a thought is expressed that does not hold enough interest to counterbalance banal documentation. Granted that the charge is a fair one, it does not impeach every cast photograph. Levine's *After Edward Weston* may leave some people cold, but nothing like the same charge sticks to Sherman's Untitled Film Stills or Wall's intense light boxes.

A New Theory of Photography

Philosophers defending photography from the skeptic's scorn have borne down hard on (S2) and (S3), drawing encouragement from the power of works of classic and cast photography. Since methodological skeptics do not aim to refute the skeptic's argument, they have no particular reason to call it quits and take a rest when one or two arts of photography are in safe hands. With methodological skepticism paying off so handsomely, why acquiesce to (S1)? (S1) implies the traditional theory of photography, which says that:

> (P) a photograph is an image that depicts by belief-independent feature-tracking.

Since (S1) implies (P), it goes down the tubes if (P) is false. Why not size up the advantages of rejecting the traditional conception of photography?

The skeptic's argument maps out the resources deployed in different arts of photography. A practice whose MO is to stand up to (S3) while accepting (S1), (S2), and (S5) will accentuate photographs whose interest lies neither in duplication nor in any thoughts they express. That is the classic tradition. Cast photography stands up to (S2) while accepting (S1), (S3), and (S5). It directs its efforts at making photographs whose interest does lie in the thoughts they express by means of duplication.

Is there a third art of photography that stands up to (S1) by denying (P)? What possibilities does denying (P) foretell? How can we understand some works of photographic art as exploring them?

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

Making and Taking

The theory that photographs are images made by belief-independent feature-tracking is not a philosopher's invention; it gives concise, precise, and unifying expression to an assemblage of ideas about photography with a long and influential history. To see how (P) goes wrong, the assemblage must be unraveled. Start with photography's automaticity and its implications for the agency of the photographer.

Even as early theorists celebrated photography for neutralizing the influence of human biases, they also despaired that it might so cramp the agency of the photographer as to leave her no room for artistic expression. Bourdieu sums up the worry:

> given a sort of autonomy, the [camera] can paradoxically be seen in competition with the creator … because the photographic process sets in motion a series of physical–chemical reactions which do not seem to require the support of an intention in order to occur, because the objects which the photographer perceives are selected from the collection of natural objects, photographic creation can always be reduced to a natural recording of nature.[169]

So reduced, the artist has been squeezed out.

Technology per se does not get the blame, as the early theorists knew full well that any tool generally enhances some opportunities for action, and they held that photography only limits the agency of the photographer in a very specific sense. This is where (P) comes in. On the standard view of agency, agency is what is exercised in doing an action. On the standard view of action, an action is an event done intentionally. Since intentions involve or accompany beliefs, depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking is also intention-independent. While photographers have intentions in taking pictures (you may intend to shoot the Grand Canyon), these intentions are not involved in tracking the features of the depicted scene (you do not intend to depict the speck of a vulture hovering above the canyon floor). Therefore, the part of taking a photograph that is depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking is not an action and it cannot manifest anyone's agency. (P) models the tension that the early theorists saw between photographic automation and photographic agency.

Both the classic tradition and more recent cast photography accept (P). So do they also accept the tension between the agency of the photographer and the automaticity of the medium? Putting it another way, they are both arts, but are they arts that hinder expressions of artistic agency?

Historically, this question gets couched in a distinction between major and minor arts. Emerson was earlier quoted as ranking photography as a minor art because "the individuality of the artist is cramped … it can scarcely show itself."[170] For Bourdieu's subject population, taking a photograph "contradicts the popular representation of artistic creation as effort and toil"; photography is seen as "prosaic and desacralizing, automatic and blind, its products necessarily lack the personal intention and the laborious merit that lie at the root of the petit-bourgeois concept of value."[171] Implicit in this idea of a minor art is a contrast with painting as the model of a major art, where depiction calls upon human labor. Thus, "photography isn't quite an art. The camera doesn't leave you with that much freedom; it's not like being a painter. … Painting … remains the obligatory aesthetic reference."[172]

The ranking of major and minor arts is a distraction. Why not simply say that photography differs from painting in how it allows artists to express their agency? To add that it is therefore a "minor art" takes this fact and gives it a pejorative spin. Cast photography and the classic tradition accept (P) and its implied limitation of agency, but they reject any aspersions that get attached to it.

Indeed, the limitation is embraced as a virtue in cast photography. What matters is that photographs can be made to convey thoughts. Conveying thoughts requires action on the part of the photographer, which expresses her agency. Part of this action is taking a picture. While depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking may not be something she does, the camera is not simply a short cut to depiction; it is a necessary ingredient in the thought that gets conveyed. The pencil and the brush are not equally good alternatives for Gursky, Levine, Sherman, Struth, and Wall. Meanwhile, a great deal of labor happens before and after the shutter is tripped. Bookending Wall's painstaking work every morning in the Barcelona Pavilion are the hundreds of hours he (and his assistants) subsequently spent in the studio, combining the partial shots of the Pavilion into a single image. This is labor on a magnitude unsurpassed since painters ground their own pigments.

The classic tradition also welcomes photography's limitation upon agency as a virtue. Revelation is unexpected, serendipitous, and hence unintended. Consequently, what is revealed cannot bespeak the photographer's agency. No doubt, the photographer still deserves some credit, for it takes a special eye to see the unexpected and then photograph it. In Cartier-Bresson's words:

> photography is not like painting … there is a creative fraction of a second when you are taking a picture. Your eye must see a composition or an expression that life itself offers you, and you must know with intuition when to click the camera. That is the moment the photographer is creative … Oop! The Moment! Once you miss it, it is gone forever.[173]

That moment is not one for thinking: "thinking should be done beforehand and afterward, never while actually taking a photograph."[174] In the classic tradition, photographic agency is exercised by seeing photographically (see pp. 12–13).[175]

What leads to revelation is the accidental, and it is the accidental that lies beyond the bounds of agency. The accidental is not chance, or objective randomness, as in the throw of a pair of dice. Chance is not particularly revealing. The photographs in John Baldessari's Throwing Three Balls series of 1973 depict random moments but they are completely banal on a visual level.[176] Rather, the accidental, as it figures in the classic tradition, is simply what is unexpected from the perspective of human finitude. The universe unfolds in accordance with its own laws and is largely deterministic at the macro level. Our ability to predict the unfolding is imperfect, as fortuitous accident can reveal. True randomness cannot reveal what the accidental reveals, namely an unexpected part of a deterministic world.

In sum, cast photography exploits the documentary duplication of cast or staged scenes, while the classic tradition takes advantage of revealing accidents. Both require depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking that is not intentional. But actions are done intentionally, and agency is exercised by doing actions, so both arts rely on imaging processes that do not involve the exercise of the artist's agency. A tradition of thinking along these lines gets crystalized in (P).[177]

As deep as it roots may sink, the thinking is nevertheless mistaken. The mistake's source is the sharp distinction between photography and

painting that is embodied in (P). Bringing the error out into the open will make it easier to see why (P) is false and what a third art of photography looks like. Simply put, the error lies in a conception of agency that is too demanding because it too strongly binds agency to intentions.[178]

Davidson observed that "attributions of intention are typically excuses and justifications; attributions of agency are typically accusations or assignments of responsibility."[179] Without worrying too much about its details, Davidson does make an arresting suggestion, namely that attributions of agency and intentionality perform different functions.

At bottom, attributions of agency pick out some events as acts of agents rather than what simply happens to them or befalls them. Suppose I spill some coffee: that might be an act of mine or it might not. Maybe I spilled the coffee intentionally, out of spite. My bad. Or maybe I was jostled. If I was jostled, the coffee spill is not my act and does not manifest my agency. So, which events are acts of agents? The answer is not simply those that are done intentionally. After all, spilling the coffee might have been my act even though I did not intend to spill the coffee. Maybe I intended to spill the tea, and I thought the coffee was tea. So there are three cases: I spill the coffee intentionally, I spill the coffee without intending to spill the coffee but the act is mine, or the act is not mine at all because I was jostled.[180] The lesson is that intentionally acting implies an exercise of agency, but not vice versa. An agent may act unintentionally.

Hamlet acts in stabbing Polonius, but he does not intend to stab Polonius. So why is this act Hamlet's at all? One answer exploits the idea that one act can be described in many ways.[181] Hamlet stabs Polonius. Hamlet stabs the person behind the arras. These are not two acts; they are one and the same act described in two ways. Moreover, although Hamlet does not intend to stab Polonius, he does intend to stab the person behind the arras. There is a way of describing Hamlet's act on which it is intentional. So here is why the stabbing of Polonius is an act of Hamlet's: it is an act that has a description under which he does it intentionally. In general, events are acts of agents when they are intentional under some description. Thus, the spilling of the coffee is my act if I intend to spill the coffee. But it is also my act even though I do not intend to spill the coffee, so long as there is another description of the act on which I do intend it—for example, spilling the tea.

Another useful idea is the "accordion effect," which Davidson describes succinctly: "once [someone] has done one thing … each

consequence presents us with a deed; an agent causes what his actions cause."[182] My turning the key causes the engine to start, so my act is not just to turn the key. I also start the engine. The queen moves her hand, causing the vial to empty into the king's ear, causing the poison to enter his bloodstream, causing his heart to arrest, causing him to die. The queen puts poison in the king's ear, she poisons him, and she kills him—she does all of these things. They are one act under different descriptions.

Thus, the effects of acts are different from the effects of mere events. For example, the bat did not break the window even though it caused the motion of the ball that broke the window: the bat is not an agent. By contrast, Maria did break the window (perhaps unintentionally) when she swung the bat, causing the motion of the ball that broke the window. Maria is an agent, who causes what her action causes: she may not have intended to break the window, but the breaking of the window was nonetheless her act because it was an effect of her hitting the ball, and she wanted to hit the ball. "It is," as Davidson puts it, "a way of inquiring whether an event is a case of agency to ask whether we can attribute its effects to a person."[183]

Attributing intentions to an agent explains their action because intentions are reasons for action, but intentions only explain actions under descriptions. Someone flips a switch, turns on a light, illuminates the room, and alerts a prowler: these are one act described in four ways, and not all of them explain the act. His wanting to illuminate the room explains what he did, but he did not do the act in order to alert the prowler. Attributing a reason to an agent describes their action by placing it within a pattern of beliefs, attitudes, goals, and facts about the agent's personal traits and wider social context. However, since acts are not intentional under all descriptions, they may also be explained in strictly causal terms that leave out agents' intentions. This is how to explain the alerting of the prowler, which was simply caused by flipping the light switch.

As Davidson pointed out, attributions of agency and intentionality may perform different functions. To put it most broadly, attributions of agency typically have to do with crediting events to agents; attributions of intentions have to do with explaining acts as done for reasons. The two tasks are quite different and call upon different resources. Crediting agents does not require that we explain their acts as intentional under every description, and our explanations may appeal to facts outside the

agent. The discovery of the structure of DNA is credited to James Watson and Francis Crick, and it is explained partly by mentioning their intentions as expressed in the design of their experiments, but Watson and Crick did not intend to discover that DNA is a double helix. The gap between agency and intentionality makes room for the unexpected, so that we may credit agents with acts whose explanation refers to mechanisms beyond intentional oversight.

Photographic agency is no different from agency exercised outside art. The queen's agency is not diminished because she prefers the automaticity of poison to the manual workings of the garrote, and Watson and Crick get no less credit for their discovery because it was unexpected—that is, a discovery. Likewise, taking a photograph is an act if it is intentional under some description. Many features of Cartier-Bresson's photograph of Cardinal Pacelli can be explained by reading it as the product of an act under intentional descriptions. Cartier-Bresson intended to capture the cardinal surrounded by a crowd, he intended to use the bracketing techniques of photojournalism, he intended to invite something unexpected to record itself, and he intended to trip the shutter. He did not intend that the man in the upper left, with the unfortunate mustache, be shown as looking away from the cardinal. To explain how the photograph came to depict this detail, we appeal to the causal mechanisms of the camera rather than Cartier-Bresson's mental states. For all that, he did the act of taking the picture, which was the same act as taking the picture of the man looking away. Saying that he did only what he intended equates agency with intentionality in a way that leaves no room for unintended action.

Moreover, saying that he tripped the shutter and the rest was the camera (and some chemicals) leaves no room for the accordion effect, by which agents cause what their actions cause. What happens from a mechanical point of view when a hand is jostled, causing a shutter to trip and an image to be made, is no different from what happens, from a mechanical point of view, when the shutter is tripped deliberately. The same causal chain eventuates. Yet, the latter is an act of taking a picture, while the former is just something that happens. Therefore, photographic agency varies independent of automaticity. They are not in competition. It is an error to think of the mechanism as a limitation on agency.

The error flows from a strong linkage between photographic agency and intentionality. What is the linkage, exactly? An insanely high standard

is set by the ideal of the author as exerting intentional control over the art work in its every detail.[184] A better proposal is that the acts of authorial agents must be intentional under every artistically relevant description. No feature is an artistic feature of a work unless the work was made to have the feature for a reason. Even this is too stringent. Think of all the artistically relevant features of paintings that are unintended, from patterns of craquelure to the retrospective impact of future works. So perhaps the idea is that, for each kind of art (painting, dance, the sonnet, etc.), there are certain canonical descriptions under which works in that art must be made intentionally if their makers are to get credit as agents. In the case of painting, for example, the brushstrokes and feature-tracking must be done under intentional descriptions. Something like this is suggested when the agency of the painter is used to benchmark that of the photographer. Why assume this though? Why benchmark the agency of the photographer against that of the painter?

Puzzling over the idea of automaticity in photography, Joel Snyder conjectures that "photographs resist exhaustive explanation solely in terms of human action."[185] The conjecture is true only when what is to be explained is feature-tracking and only when the explanation is assumed to appeal to human intentions. That is, it could only be true given (P), the proposition that a photograph is an image that depicts by belief-independent feature-tracking. When it comes to drawings, feature-tracking might possibly be explained solely with reference to human intentions. According to (P), photographic imaging differs from making images by hand, so that the former turns out to be automatic, limiting the agency epitomized by the latter.

Painters get credit as the agents of painterly creation. Pair this with a conception of agency as strongly linked to intentions and with the proposal that photography undoes the link, and the contrast follows. But what if the conception of agency as strongly linked to intentions is too demanding?

I Am a Camera

Anxieties that "photography has been, and still is, tormented by the ghost of painting" imply a contrast with paintings[186]—not paintings in the specific sense that brings to mind the use of a brush to spread

viscous paint on support. The contrast is with a much larger class of images that are made by acts of drawing. Since (P) is a theory of photography and since drawings are not photographs, it is straightforward to pair (P) with a theory of drawings:

> (D) a drawing is an image that depicts by belief-dependent feature-tracking.

A nice feature of this theory is that it does not take too literally the idea that drawings are made with the drawing tools listed earlier. Another feature of (D) is that it so tightly interlocks with (P) that (P) fails unless the contrast with (D) holds up. If the contrast with (D) is spurious, (P) will have to go.

The obvious way to challenge the contrast between (D) and (P) emphasizes how much photography shares with drawing.[187] Opportunities abound for photographers to take control over what they do, under the guidance of their beliefs, in a display of skill and intelligence. According to (P), to exploit these opportunities is to cease to do photography and to draw instead. But why concede that the opportunities are not photographic? To make the point plausible, consider functions that are controlled by the photographer's beliefs but that are specific to photography as we commonly understand it rather than drawing as we commonly understand it. Such functions include:

> using a particular film with a specific effect in mind, choosing a certain camera and lens combination, setting up all the items in front of the camera, focusing on certain objects and dropping others out of focus, taking exposure readings, setting the lens and shutter speed, developing the film with one rather than another developer, printing a negative in any of the numerous ways it might be printed.[188]

None of these are ways of drawing. The point is worth pressing, though it quickly bogs down because it relies on "our common understanding" of what is specific to photography. Maybe the "common understanding" is not the source but a product of the distinction between drawing and photography that is expressed in (D) and (P). A common understanding laden by theory cannot be used to choose between theories.

A better challenge lets up on the skeptic's claim that photography is depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking, and instead zeroes in on how drawing imbricates photography.[189] The ideal of drawing as saturated with intentions and meticulously controlled by thought is cherished but wrong.[190] The truth is closer to Christopher Isherwood's famous description of himself in *Goodbye to Berlin*: "I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed."[191]

According to one expert, what "most challenges all our comfortable assumptions about drawing" is the case of Nadia.[192] In the early 1970s, at the age of 7, Nadia was diagnosed with what is now known as autism spectrum disorder. This is a very broad syndrome that allows for a huge range of functionality from one case to the next, but Nadia's level of function was at the low end of the spectrum. She was unable to dress herself or handle a fork and knife, she had poor motor control, and her vocabulary was limited to about 10 words. Nevertheless, at the age of 3, without instruction or practice, she had begun making drawings of astonishing realism and detail (and beauty), displaying consistently powerful foreshortening, perspective, occlusion, and proportion within and between objects. Never spending more than a few minutes on each picture, she drew from memory, with evident pleasure, her original sources taken sometimes from life but more often from picture books, though she mentally edited, rotated, and embellished both kinds of sources. Her talent was not just outstanding for a child with learning issues, or for a child; she outshone highly skilled artists. Lorna Selfe, the psychologist who studied her, recounts her own reaction upon first seeing Nadia's drawings: "here was a clumsy, non-verbal child with severe learning difficulties drawing like Leonardo da Vinci."[193] Nadia's drawings are now famous and have been displayed in galleries.[194] Once she had been diagnosed, Nadia was given intensive therapy focusing on language and basic life skills. She learned to dress herself, increased her vocabulary to 200–300 words, and began to speak simple two- or three-word sentences, but she also lost her talent, reverting to a child-like drawing style.

How did Nadia make her amazing drawings? How indeed does anyone draw at all? Drawing is an operation that takes input in the form

of visual experience or visual memory and organizes it to produce output by means of a manual motor sequence.[195] This is what Nadia did at the very highest level. Taking into account her overall cognitive profile, we can see that a high level of performance in drawing dissociates from a high level of performance in other areas. If she drew like da Vinci, then that is proof that drawing like da Vinci does not require a mind that is in every way like his.

Given the meager facts we have about her, it is not easy to explain Nadia's drawing performance, and a number of hypotheses have been floated.[196] One cluster of hypotheses is that Nadia had some special ability that was not due to her autism. For example, she may have had an exceptionally powerful eidetic memory, which enabled her to visually recall features of a scene without gaps or distortions and which was sufficient to guide motor sequences for drawing.[197] According to a second cluster of hypotheses, Nadia's drawing skill was due to some autism-related deficit. For example, Selfe believes that Nadia's performance was caused by her lack of language and her inability to classify and conceptualize: her "inability to form internal representations of objects as categories and thereby order her experience, allowed Nadia to draw the visual world untrammelled by cognitive processes, which systematised and imposed structure."[198] Most children begin by drawing what they know and slowly learn to draw as they see. For example, they draw more accurately when asked to draw a two-dimensional pattern than when asked to draw a three-dimensional object that the very same pattern depicts.[199] The hypothesis is that Nadia's drawings are not inhibited by what she knows.

Hypotheses in both clusters dissociate advanced drawing from the ability to classify and name objects. They also dissociate advanced drawing ability from belief, since beliefs necessarily involve concepts. If (D) is true, Nadia should be impossible. She is real enough. Ergo (D) is false. Admittedly, the evidence for either hypothesis is not cut and dried, as Selfe makes amply clear, but even this admission damages (D). It turns out that what is involved in drawing is an empirical matter that is not to be settled by speculation from the armchair.

Here are two descriptions of drawing a curve.[200] Looking at the curve, you classify it using a specific curve concept. It is a "C47" curve. Then, using that concept as guidance, you move your hand to mark the surface, laying down a shape that will induce others to have a visual

experience that triggers the C47 curve concept. This is an intellectualist model of drawing as using concepts of every feature tracked. The alternative is that you look at the curve and at the surface you mark, as you mark it, and you let feedback from the look of the surface join with the look of the curve to control the movement of your hand. Drawing is eye-hand coordination, muscle memory; it is less like selecting the right word from a lexicon and more like running backward to catch a fly ball. (Catchers do not do calculations to place themselves to make the catch. They move backward at a speed that will keep the ball at a constant angle in the visual field—and they may not even know that they use this trick.) When you draw, a concept of a feature may occur to you and it may play a part in what you do, but its occurrence is not essential to tracking the feature and it may play no part in your act of drawing. Drawing may bypass high-level concept-laden cognition. Both of these descriptions are coherent. Capable drawers will recognize the second as very often closer to the mark.

Nadia's talent is one reason to endorse it; another is the story of a discovery of Galileo's about the moon.[201] Overturning the long-established opinion that the surface of the moon is smooth, Galileo proved what we now know, that it is "rugged and uneven, and, just like the surface of the earth, full of great outcroppings, deep cavities, and ravines."[202] The telescope gets the lion's share of credit as Galileo's aid, but as much glory should go to ink and paper and the astronomer's excellent drafting skills. Looking through his telescope at the moon in its first and last quarters, Galileo made a series of careful observations about the distribution of light and dark over its surface. There are dark patches in the sunlit portion of the moon's surface and light patches in the portion that is in the shadow of the sun; these reverse from one quarter to the other; and the boundary of shadow marking the moon's light and dark sides is irregular. How did these observations lead to a new discovery?

Imagine this. Galileo peers through his telescope and draws what he sees, patches of light and dark. Then, expert draftsman that is, he pauses, suddenly struck by the realization that what he is doing matches what he would do when using ink to show cast shadow. He reasons: if the inky patches represent shadows, then there is something that is casting the shadows, therefore the surface of the moon is mountainous. We will never know if this was Galileo's actual train of thought. If our imagined

scenario is true to history, it illustrates something important: it is possible to make a discovery by making a drawing. Since to make a discovery is to come to believe something that one did not already believe, the belief that the moon has mountains could not have guided the drawings that led to the discovery. All Galileo did was lay down irregular patches of light and dark on paper to match those he could see in his telescope. As long as drawing something puzzling can be a way to discover what it is, some drawings depict by belief-independent feature-tracking.

Even if Galileo's process did not go as we have just imagined, belief-independent feature-tracking played a role in his proof of what he discovered. The proof is an argument to the best explanation. There are patterns of light and dark visible on the surface of the moon. The best explanation of these patterns is that the moon's surface is peppered with mountains and valleys. Ergo, the moon has mountains and valleys. For this proof to work, alternate hypotheses must be ruled out—for example, the hypothesis that the moon's surface is made up of materials of different densities, such as water and rock. Some data are needed to rule out this hypothesis and to rule in the correct explanation. These data cannot have been gathered in a way that already assumes the truth of any hypothesis; they must be gathered neutrally. Since Galileo presented his data as drawings, they must be a record of what he saw that was not "theory-laden" or influenced by what he believed he was looking at. Unless he had the discipline to draw with his beliefs and hunches set firmly aside, he could not have used his drawing to prove his hypothesis.[203] From the fact that his proof worked, it follows that he drew his data independent of belief.

Nadia's drawings suggest that drawing is dissociable from high-level cognition implicating conceptualization and belief. This same dissociation allows us to make discoveries or prove hypotheses by drawing.[204] Drawing is not always depiction by belief-dependent feature-tracking. The contrast between (D) and (P) should be abandoned.

Interesting, maybe, but is any of this relevant to art? Galileo and Nadia did not make art. In art, presumably, drawing is saturated with intentions. The presumption is implausible. Many and perhaps all drawings, including those that are works of art, are images that depict by tracking some features in a belief-independent way. Monet did not conceptualize the color of every brushstroke he laid down in his great canvases of water lilies. He simply mixed paint on his palette using feedback from his eyes until it looked right. Nor did Ingres conceptualize

every curl of Monsieur Rivière's coif in his portrait of 1805. At the same time, Monet believed that he was depicting lilies, and Ingres that he was depicting hair. In the vast majority of cases, some depicted features are tracked under the guidance of belief, while others are tracked non-conceptually and therefore independent of belief.

The safe conclusion is that (P) and (D) exaggerate the contrast between photography and drawing. Drawing is not a wholly concept-laden process. Since beliefs involve concepts, drawing can bypass belief. If photographs are images that depict by belief-independent feature-tracking, then they are no different in this respect from drawings made by belief-independent feature-tracking. (D) and (P) fail to distinguish photography from drawing. Joel Snyder and Neil Walsh Allen long ago cautioned that theories of photography tend to "establish what is peculiarly photographic about photography by way of a contrast with what is peculiarly 'artistic' about art."[205] They added that we should not be surprised when this enflames the skeptic's argument.

The New Theory

The plan is not, of course, to refute the skeptic's argument but to use an understanding of how its four main premises go wrong in order to shed light on four arts of photography. If (P) cramps the vistas of photographic art, replacing it may open them up again. So, what is photography, if not imaging by means of belief-independent feature-tracking? Patrick Maynard and Dawn Wilson have outlined an approach that leads to an entirely new, even radical, answer to this question.[206]

For Maynard, photography is "a branching family of technologies … whose common stem is simply the physical marking of surfaces through the agency of light and similar radiations."[207] Light is usually involved in the act of drawing too, but not in the same way. "In the case of photography," as Maynard explains, "it is radiation that *forms* the image whereas in painting it is not."[208] What this means is not easy to spell out, but the gist is that light itself makes the marks in photography, whereas, in drawing, light is used to make the marks. By the way, "marks" are simply visible features of a surface. They need not be layers of pigment, and they need not be permanent or long-lasting. Stipulate that the patterns on computer or slide projector screens are also marks.

Notice also that Maynard declines to define photographs as images that depict. Photography is a process designed for recording information about the world, but that information may not be packaged depictively. In other words, some photographs inform us about scenes even though we do not and cannot see the scenes in them. Depiction may fail in photography. Anyone who has ever played around with a camera has at least been tempted to take pictures that push the boundaries of depictive legibility. Often, the result is a complete loss of information—a friend once sent me a box full of snapshots of philosophers attending a conference, but the shots were so badly out focus that they might as well have been jellyfish. Sometimes, though, depiction fails but information is preserved. A good example is the long exposure of a fast-moving object, usually a train, resulting in a band of horizontal stripes, like an Ian Davenport painting gone sideways. The train is not depicted, but the photograph still gives us some information about its dominant colors. Needless to say, photographs typically convey information about a photographed scene by depicting it. Kertész's *Buy Bud* (Figure 5) informs us about the two men on the street by depicting them, so that we see them in the photograph. Gursky's *Paris, Montparnasse* informs us about what goes into Parisian apartment house windows by depicting them.

Building on and refining Maynard, Wilson proposes that photography is a process with several distinct stages that involve an exposure to light and culminate in the marking of a surface.[209] Although Wilson herself characterizes them slightly differently, the following breakdown of the stages of the photographic process is inspired by her work. Why not follow her to the letter? The answer is that it makes sense to draw boundaries between stages in a way that helps to articulate the distinct arts of photography.

The first stage is a pro-photographic scene. It might be a man hopping a puddle behind a train station in Paris, a sunbather on a cold and rocky English beach, leaning elbow upon knees, a crowd looking at a painting in the Louvre, or actors playing out a drama on a street in Vancouver's East Side. It is *pro*-photographic in the sense that a photographic apparatus—normally a camera—is set up before the scene so as to feed into the second stage of the process. Indeed, the vantage point of the apparatus is part of the pro-photographic scene, and the "apparatus" may include a human operator. Not all bits of the world are scenes, because many are not in the process of having their picture taken.

At stage two, a dynamic light image of the pro-photographic scene is projected onto a photosensitive surface. This is a changing, two-dimensional pattern of light of different wavelengths, usually but not necessarily funneled through an aperture and lenses. Imagine something like a tiny movie playing inside the camera. Technically, this light image is invisible because we do not look at the photosensitive surface inside a camera. In practice, a similar pattern of light is presented in a viewfinder or on a mirror, focusing screen, or LCD display. The camera obscura also delivers a light image—this was the initial step in the invention of photography. Notice that the light image can show motion—it dynamically changes over time. It is often like a little picture that depicts the pro-photographic scene, but it need not be like that, for there can be a loss of the very kind of information needed for depiction.

Third is a photographic recording event, where information in the light image is captured and recorded on a storage medium—an emulsion or a data file. As the light image changes over time, the recording event captures some information about the changing pattern of wavelengths, though the effect of change is negligible whenever the recording event is short enough or the pro-photographic scene is still enough. Famous examples are Atget's streets of Paris, which seem eerily emptied of traffic. In fact, there was the usual Parisian commotion, but Atget used very slow film requiring such long exposure times that only motionless asphalt, stone, and concrete were recorded. Anyway, the photographic process has so far yielded nothing to look at that deserves the name of a photograph. Some photons from the dynamic light image have moved some electrons in a sensor or emulsion into a higher energy state. There is no marked or differentiated surface visible to the human eye. There is no image. Undeveloped emulsion and data files on computer chips are not images.

Images are made to be looked at, so the photographic process culminates in the creation of an image for visual display. This is the mark-making stage, where some of the information captured in the recording event is taken as input to make a visibly differentiated surface. Dozens of technologies—electronic, chemical, and mechanical—have been invented to perform this function. Familiar ones include Polaroid, silver halide and inkjet printing, halftone printing, slide and data projection, mounting transparencies in light boxes, digital screen display, and LED billboarding.

These fours stages of the photographic process supply the ingredients for a new theory of photography. What is a photograph? The new theory answers: a photograph is an image that is a product of a photographic process, which includes a photographic event plus processes for making marked surfaces. Stated in full:

> a photograph is an image output by a mark-making process taking input from an electro-chemical event that records information from a light image of a pro-photographic scene.

All four stages of the photographic process are essential to making a photograph, but only one is fundamentally unique to photography. The pro-photographic scene is a bit of the world, and light images are nothing more than optical projections of bits of the world. They are specifically photographic only when they feed into the photographic event. The same goes for the mark-making stage. No mark-making processes associated with photography are unique to it. Computational processing of data files and inkjet printing are elements of digital drawing, while light-sensitive film is used to print books and etch silicon chips, to take just two examples. Mark-making is specifically photographic only when fed from the photographic event.[210] Only the photographic event is intrinsically, fundamentally photographic.

The family of photographic processes is large and diverse. The daguerreotype is now rare and difficult. Polaroid photography is back. Nowadays casual photographers are more familiar with two-stage film and print as well as digital photography. In the consumer-oriented film and paper process, the recording event is the exposure of photosensitive emulsion on film using a camera. The film is developed and fixed, and then used to expose paper coated with another photosensitive emulsion, which is again developed and fixed. In digital photography, the recording event is the exposure of a photosensitive charge-coupled device to create an electronic data file. This inputs to several stages of software processing that generate a file for display on a screen, for projection, or for printing by inkjet or laser printers, or by offset press. Hybrid processes begin with the exposure of photosensitive emulsion on film, which is developed, fixed, and then scanned to create an electronic file for mark-making. All of these provide for myriad adjustments through filtering, bending color curves, touching up, cropping, photomontage … and the list goes on.

From one angle, the new theory subsumes the traditional theory. An historically, artistically, and epistemically important subset of photographs is made up of images that do in fact depict by belief-independent feature-tracking. Among these are major works in the first two arts of photography. The new theory does not give them the boot. It simply says they are special cases, for there are other photographs that either depict by belief-dependent feature-tracking or do not depict at all.

From another angle, the new theory is narrower than the traditional theory. Taken at face value, ignoring the spirit behind it, the traditional theory of photography pairs with a theory of drawing that counts drawings as photographs even if they are made without the aid of photographic recording events. Nadia's horses and riders, Galileo's sketches of the moon, and Monet's water lilies track features in a belief-independent way. The new theory of photography predicts that images such as these are not photographs.

Drawing in Photography

Traditional theory ironically flubs the line between photography and drawing precisely because it attempts to put them in opposition to each other. Everyone always knew that both could be combined in making one image. Surely it did not take long, in photography's early days, for some wag to draw a mustache on a photograph of a lady? It seemed obvious that the tache is not depicted photographically. Therefore, given the assumption that photographs cannot be made by drawing and drawings cannot be made by photography, it made sense to say that one is belief-independent and the other is belief-dependent. Yet, as we have seen, opposing photography to drawing in this way is a bad idea if some drawing is also belief-independent. What does the new theory say about the difference between photography and drawing?

At first glance, the answer may appear to be that the new theory minimizes the difference between photography and drawing. Recall the brouhaha over the use of the camera obscura by some notable painters of the past (see p. 15). There sits Vermeer, peering at the brilliant image of his model projected onto the back of his device. He copies it meticulously with fine, invisible strokes, attending to the pattern of light with such concentration that he ends up reproducing optical flares caused by

flaws in his lens. How does this process differ from the photographic process? There is a scene, a light image, and mark making, but no photographic recording event. In its place is a neural recording event. Are these very different?

Going a step further, imagine a painter working without a camera obscura. Around 1755, Chardin settled himself into a pro-chirographic scene—a bouquet of flowers in a blue-decorated vase on a table. Light images formed on his retinas, and his brain recorded some of the information in the light images and then processed it—maybe implicating his system of beliefs—to control motor sequences that arranged oil paint on canvas to render an artifactual image that you can see in the National Gallery of Scotland. This process corresponds stage-by-stage with the photographic process. Instead of the photographic recording event, we have a neural recording event.

Are they one and the same process? Some stages are intrinsically the same, differing only in how they link up with other stages. Obviously pro-chirographic and pro-photographic scenes are exactly the same except that one is present before a draftsman and the other before a photographer with her apparatus. The same goes for the light images: they occur in different places (retina, camera back) that feed into different subsequent stages, but they have the same intrinsic features. They are both two-dimensional changing patterns of light from a scene, guided through lenses, apertures, and filters. What about the mark-making stage? According to the new theory, the only feature that specifies photographic mark-making is its origin in a photographic recording event. Nothing rules out photographic image-rendering by making marks by hand.

That leaves the third stage in each process, the recording event. While these are analogues of each other, they are not intrinsically the same. One involves recording by means of a chemical or electronic tool or technology; the other is psychological and neural. This is a difference, but it can hardly matter momentously. Insofar as they record scenes, Vermeer and Chardin work much like a Linhof or a Powershot. (And while of course they do much more than record scenes, so do Cartier-Bresson and Levine.)

Faced with this outcome, it is mighty tempting to convict the new theory of photography of tempting us into absurdity. Drawing and photography are different, and the difference between them amounts

to something. The new theory represents how they differ but not how their difference amounts to much. A silver print and a pencil drawing are no more unlike each other than a pencil drawing and a pastel. Media provide ways of making marks that can take input either from photographic events or neural events, or both. So much the worse for the new theory of photography. Time to get back to the drawing board—or, ahem, light table.

The strength of this indictment of the new theory indicates how tight a lock (P) has on us, for the point of (P) and its corollary in (S1) is not merely to distinguish drawing and photography but to make them disjoint, having no overlap. The problem with the descriptions just given of Vermeer and Chardin is that they assume that drawing is whatever is excluded by photography.

Dropping the assumption offers a fresh take on drawing. Drawing is not by nature a way to record information in a light image—though it may be used to that end. Instead, drawing is a method of making marks. The point is obvious to any child. To draw is to move parts of one's body through space so as to lay down marks on a surface. The two-dimensional spatial trajectory of one's movement is typically congruent or isometric with the resulting pattern of marks, and this congruence explains how that pattern of marks came to be. Simply put, the circle of wet ink on silk is similar in shape and size to the circular motion of the hand of the monk who wields the brush: he draws a circle. So does a graphic designer who moves her hand across a table so that her mouse transcribes a circle whose curvature is measured by a computer and relayed onto a screen. The same goes for a paralytic person who inscribes the shape with a tool clenched between his teeth. Drawing is richly embodied mark-making.

One implication of a conception of drawing as embodied mark-making is that not all images are either drawings or photographs. Some paintings are not drawings because they are made by throwing or spilling paint. Jackson Pollock's drips are made by sometimes vigorous bodily movements, but not ones that trace a path congruent with the resulting marks. Some tie-dyes are images—as in the tie-dye dancing bear beloved of Deadheads—but they are not made by drawing either. Images produced by writing computer algorithms are another example.

A second implication: a photograph might be completed by drawing. What makes an image a photograph is that it is rendered from information

in the recording event. What makes an image a drawing is that its surface is marked by means of certain bodily movements. Drawing and photography are not mutually exclusive. Information from a photographic recording event might guide bodily movements to mark a surface. The resulting image is both a photograph and drawing. Not in the way that a mustache on a headshot is both a photograph and a drawing, for it is a photograph made by drawing.

Photographs made by drawing can have a special significance because they originate in richly embodied action with a distinctive expressive character. Drawings may be traces of the thoughts and feelings of the artist as they are transmitted through her arm. By the same token, there may be active blocking of the channel from mind through arm to surface, as we shall soon see happens in some photographs by Gerhard Richter. Making marks by printing has different expressive resources. Photography avails itself of the expressive power of printing and drawing too.

The take-home message is that photography and drawing are not disjoint. Each is not what the other excludes. They overlap in the sense that each can serve the other. What happened is that the early-nineteenth-century invention of the photographic recording event was useless in conjunction with then available brush, pencil, and burin-based mark-making technologies. Daguerre and Talbot did not invent the optical camera; they invented chemistries for taking light images and making visibly marked surfaces. Since these mark-making technologies were invented for photography, they came to be seen as specifically and essentially photographic. In fact, they are not. Handwringing over "painting" on film and touching up prints is a symptom of this disconnect between the traditional theory of photography and the reality of photography. What is special about photography shrinks to a core, the photochemical and electronic technologies that enable the recording event. What matters are the many ways we have to make photographic images.

The New Theory and the Third Art

As in science, a theory in philosophy prevails if it enables us to explain or shed light on important phenomena better than its competition. Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection is correct, at least in its main elements, because it provides the best explanation of biological

diversity and change. Likewise, the new theory of photography prevails over the traditional theory if it helps us to make sense of how we use photographs in art and communication.

Therefore, the new theory gets a leg up if there is a third art of photography that stands up to the traditional theory stated in (P). Since the traditional theory predicts that there is no such art, it is in trouble if there is one. Meanwhile, one might think that the traditional theory has the advantage over the new theory when it comes to photographs outside art, which we regard as honest sources of information. After all, the traditional theory was developed partly in order to explain photographs' special epistemic power. Has the new theory enough resources to construct an epistemology of photography? A look at the third art of photography should be followed up with a look at photography's epistemic powers.

Lyricism: The Third Art

Julian Bell's book on painting talks of how tools and materials "surprise us by their difference from thought: that is their playfulness, their fun, that is their idea of indeterminacy, of half-meaning."[211] The same playful difference from thought gives us a third art of photography. This art stands up to (S1) by replacing the traditional theory of photography with the new theory. Photographs need not depict by belief-independent feature-tracking. A photograph is an image rendered by making marks based on input from a recording of information about a light image of a scene.

Photographers have always made the most of their materials. The impact of photographs in the classic tradition is vastly amplified by command over technique. Fifty thousand shades of gray perfectly model the tactile contours of Weston's peppers, even as they give an impression of nothing but pure, sensuous light. This is virtuosic handling in the darkroom of the finest-grained silver halide emulsions. As Stieglitz rightly emphasized, "in proper hands print-making is essentially plastic in nature."[212] Unlike photographers in the classic tradition, who limited their materials to standard photographic image-rendering, pictorialists such as Stieglitz commandeered a wider range of image-rendering tools. They prefigure contemporary photographers for whom there are no holds barred when it comes to making an image from a recording event. The difference is that the inventory of image-rendering tricks is now colossal.

Liberal use of this inventory characterizes the third, lyric, art of photography.[213] In lyric verse, we find heightened attention to the musical qualities of language, to the materiality of the sounds of speech, and to their emotional resonances. Lyric photography foregrounds the technical—optical, chemical, electronic—materials of photography. It plays with the qualities of the light image and the rich potentiality of mark-making, taking them for what they are and not merely as

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

instruments of depiction or thought. No doubt every really interesting work of photographic art does this to some extent. The division of photography into these four arts is not clean; many photographs cross the boundaries. Works in the fourth art are exemplary distillations of photography's lyrical impulse. The new theory of photography equips us to see them as such.

Slow Time at the Present, an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel in 2012, featured several monumental works by Craigie Horsfield. One entitled *Broadway, 14th day, 18 Minutes after Dusk, New York, September 2001* is labeled as "tapestry (wool, cotton, silk, synthetic yarns)." Another, depicting a crowd at a rock concert, is labeled as "fresco (inkjet print, wood, plaster, aluminium, wax)." From a distance, they look like prints on paper, and indeed they started out as film stills. The twist is that the frescos are painted by inkjet printer *al fresco*, onto wet plaster, and the tapestries were woven at a mill in Flanders, from image files on digitally controlled looms.

The Jacquard loom was the machine that propelled the Industrial Revolution, and it was also an early example of a computer ("programmed" with punch cards).[214] Using it to render a photograph evokes the history of photography as much as the history of painting. Fresco and tapestry were the most highly prized pictorial media of their time, reserved for the walls of palaces and churches. Photographs of historic events such as 9/11 and cultural rituals such as the rock concert are put on an entirely unexpected footing when made by methods that were archaic by the time of the first photographs, 200 years ago. In Horsfield's words, Slow Time and the Present concerns "a dilated or deep present … in which our thinking about the past accounts for parts of our experience for which we have no other resource."[215] Surprise at seeing finely detailed, realistic photographs made up of paint and yarn unsettles our expectations.

Tapestry, inkjet fresco—Horsfield's images are pure photographs because they are products of the four-step process recognized in the new theory of photography. Information in a light image of a pro-photographic scene is chemically or electronically captured in a recording event from which a visible, materially embodied image is made. What so intrigues us in Horsfield's work is its material form. As Carol Armstrong sees it, Horsfield "thinks through processes, techniques, and technologies … as a means of material speech."[216] Admittedly, she then worries whether his

images are genuine photographs. "Is a digital, let alone a woven-textile version of a photograph still a photograph? Are medium definitions and the boundaries that come with them to be policed or crossed?"[217] These questions have bite only so long as the traditional theory of photography dominates our thinking.

Two facts are patently obvious to viewers of Richter's *Betty* of 1988 (Figure 7). It is painting at its lushest, though it is somehow photographic too. There is no mistaking it for a Cibachrome print, yet it is no ordinary painting either. Richter makes his "photo–paintings" by tracing slide images projected onto canvas, and then painting them in. Diarmuid Costello explains that Richter regards this method as more than "painting pictures *of* photographs or painting pictures *from* photographs." It is "something more accurately thought of as putting painting

Figure 7 Gerhard Richter, *Betty*, 1988. Oil on canvas, 102 × 72 cm.

in the service of photography—to the extent of making photographs by painting."[218] Richter himself is blunt: "I'm not trying to imitate a photograph, I'm trying to make one. And if I disregard the assumption that a photograph is a piece of paper exposed to light, then I am practising photography by other means: I'm not producing paintings that remind you of a photograph but producing photographs."[219]

Artists are hardly infallible, even when they comment on their own work, but neither should they be dismissed out of hand. Maybe Richter's account of himself is literally true. The standard critical response takes him at his word while accepting the traditional theory of photography expressed in (P). Thus, Costello writes that Richter's method

> effectively turns him into an "automatic," or perhaps "quasi-automatic," recording device or transcription machine, mimicking the mechanical apparatus—strictly speaking, that of the enlarger rather than the camera insofar as Richter's practice is one of enlarging existing images—with the laborious work of the hand in an attempt to escape the strictures of subjectivity and personal experience.[220]

For Richter, the elaborate procedure mobilizes photography to cancel the conventions of painting and repel the urgings of personal experience.[221] The trouble is that the enterprise is doomed if drawing necessarily implicates subjectivity and personal experience. Then the question is, why paint at all? If the aim is to "escape the strictures of subjectivity and personal experience," then why not cut to the chase—take photographs and have them printed commercially? The deep challenge of the photo-paintings is not to explain the "photo" side of the equation but to make sense of it alongside the painting side of the equation.

On the traditional conception of photography, *Betty* is a drawing made from a photograph, and Richter is tilting at windmills. What if the new theory of photography is correct? Richter's enterprise now succeeds in every respect. *Betty* is literally a photograph—one completed by painting. Insofar as mark-making is done under control of information recorded in the photographic event, it sidesteps the kind of subjectivity that overplays personal experience. At the same time, painting and traditional photographic printing stand shoulder to shoulder as methods for making marks. Neither is more photographic than the other, though they differ enough in their comportment and impact. So an artist has reason to select one over the other, depending on circumstances. Putting

it the other way around, from the perspective of painting, Richter paints to make photographs because there is a mode of painting that cancels the conventions of the traditional, thought-saturated practice of painting and repels the urgings of personal experience. He paints as part of making photographs.

Horsfield and Richter propel us out toward the far reaches of the realm of photography, as its boundaries are drawn by the new theory. Pushing the limit is work by Helena Almeida, such as the 1977 series entitled Study for an Inner Improvement. Performance art is routinely documented in photographs, and Almeida is working within a performance tradition, but her photographs are not mere documents, for they explore the idea of identifying a performance with an image or series of images. Study for an Inner Improvement is a series of photographs of the artist creating the series, in part by making the same kinds of gestures as will eventually result in her applying a stroke of her signature blue paint atop the photograph. Where Sherman put the artist back in the picture by literally photographing herself, Almeida put the artist's marking gesture back in the photograph by literally painting onto it.

To treat the series as photographs with paint on them, or paintings with photographs under them, is to refuse the proposition that the silver halide print overpainted in blue is the outcome of a single act of making a photograph partly by drawing. It is only the photograph of Almeida painting blue paint onto the silver halide print that represents the identification of making with the product made.

Occupying terrain closer to the traditional conception of photography is some of the work of four more photographers—Richard Mosse, Catherine Yass, Thomas Ruff, and James Welling. They thematize the projection of the light image, making marks not by using techniques traditionally identified as non-photographic but rather by deflecting the standardized processes of traditional photography into new channels. They embody an impulse, described by Carol Squires, "to go against the grain of accepted procedures, to disrupt, augment, deform, and expand the notion of what a photograph could be."[222] The impulse probes the nature of photography as a mark-making system.

Mosse's Infra series, which was displayed in galleries and made into a book, depicts scenes from the war-torn eastern frontier of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2010–2011. For this series, Mosse loaded his large-format wooden view camera with Kodak

Aerochrome, a discontinued film stock with infrared sensitivity, designed for military surveillance. Aerochrome shows the greens of the jungle—and of military camouflage—in hot pink, coral, and margarita blue. One critic writes of Mosse's portrait of General Février that

> the potential aggression of the young soldier—with his big boots and his huge rectangular wristwatch catching our eye while he seems to be obscuring the weapon at his side—is thoroughly negated by the unfamiliar pinkish tone to his uniform, the soft crimson of his beret, and, above all, the profusion of magenta foliage behind him.[223]

In an essay written for the book, Mosse portrays the Congo conflict as "so pathologized that it is well past the point of human comprehension," and he confesses that the series came out of "a personal struggle with the disparity between my limited powers of representation and the unspeakable world that confronted me."[224]

Yass's photographs of the Royal Sovereign Light off the East Sussex coast evoke a calmer, contemplative mood. They are transparencies mounted in light boxes made by printing two superimposed shots taken of the lighthouse moments apart, one positive and one negative. She explains that "I like the idea that you capture a kind of gap, which wasn't caught on film" and which imparts a feeling of being drawn into the world of the image and captures the viewer's "interior landscape."[225] A portfolio of six digital prints entitled Invisible City uses the same technique to similar effect, interiorizing a busy Tokyo intersection.

Reversing the concern of his contemporaries, Gursky and Struth, with high resolution and detail, Ruff is a lyricist of low-fi. His jpeg series of 2002–2007 is made up of digital photographs in jpeg format appropriated from web sites. The format's very lossy compression is combined with the 72 pixel-per-inch screen resolution that was the standard at the time.[226] Enlarged and printed at a scale of meters, their underlying digital structure pops into view along with unexpected artifacts of the compression—color desaturation, ghosts, and moiré patterns.

Spinning off the jpeg series are a series of nudes, appropriated from Internet porn sites. A work such as *ga08* of 2001 is a lavish inkjet print on rag paper. Its color palette has probably been digitally altered, and it

may have been passed through blurring and softening filters. Jerry Saltz reviewed the series in the *Village Voice*:

> with the "nudes," Ruff substitutes something celebratory for suspicion and anger; he takes on a genre everyone is an expert on but few artists have employed without running into trouble. Ruff may think these pictures are analytic or objective, but they're also sweetly, luxuriously visual. Up close they go kind of gaga. Skin melts into tiny, pointillist pixels, which then warp and moiré; colors shift, pictorial space contorts. Sex slips into something ravishingly, optically comfortable, and these everyday, off-world images morph into para-paintings from the Planet Love.[227]

Ruff's handling of the resources of digital mark-making transforms the original content of the photographs. This particular transformation has been a theme of European art for centuries. The exposed, vulnerable, sexually accessible naked body becomes the nude. In the words of Kenneth Clark, the "huddled, defenseless body" sheds any "uncomfortable overtone" and becomes the "balanced, prosperous, and confident" nude.[228]

Clark himself doubted the capacity of photography to depict the human body as nude. Showing bodies' warts and all, photographs cannot idealize in the way that the nude requires. The background is the traditional conception of photography as recording reality without selection. "In almost every detail," he wrote, "the body is not the shape that art has led us to believe it should be."[229] Clark's doubt dissipates when the traditional conception of photography is replaced with one that cheers on Ruff's manipulations as legitimately photographic.

Mark-making is not the only stage of the photographic process that yields to artistic manipulation. Welling's Glass House series of 2006–2009 gives the impression of some trickery with Photoshop. In fact, although they were shot on a digital SLR camera and printed by inkjet, their distinctive appearance was obtained by orchestrating the light image with pieces of curved Mylar plastic, clear and colored glass, and diffraction gratings. Welling set up the camera on a tripod in the landscape and held his filters up in front of the lens, improvising with them while keeping an eye on the "live preview" screen on the camera back, finally taking a shot when the light image came together as something interesting.[230]

Welling means this use of the medium to reflect the series' subject, Philip Johnson's Glass House in Connecticut:

> this big glass box, plunked down in the Connecticut landscape, seems like a conceptual sculpture, a gigantic lens in the landscape. When I realized I could make the glass red or add reflections to the face of this supposedly transparent house, my project became a laboratory for ideas about transparency, reflectivity, and color.[231]

Any temptation to describe the result as painterly originates in a distinction between painting and photography that Welling's photographs vanquish.

Although photographs illustrating the third art of photography are sometimes revelatory, and they sometimes express thoughts, a large portion of the interest we take in them as works of art centers on their knowing and non-standard use of elements of the photographic process. The light and color effects in Mosse, Yass, and Welling are not revelatory in the way that typifies the classic tradition: they do not show our familiar world made strange. The work of Wall, Gursky, Sherman, Levine, and Struth exploits realistic depiction to articulate ideas in photographic form. Horsfield, Richter, and Ruff express thoughts less through realistic depiction as through technical choices. They make marks with silk thread, pigment suspended in linseed oil, but also the jpeg data format, graphics cards, display screens, Photoshop effects, and inkjet prints.

The skeptic's argument is structured around three main propositions. Photographs are images made by belief-independent feature-tracking, but that means we can take no interest in them as depictively expressed thoughts, and an interest in them as representational art works can only be an interest in them as depictively expressed thoughts. The classic tradition stands up to the last proposition, conceptual photography stands up to the middle proposition, and the third art of photography stands up to the first proposition. Works by Horsfield, Richter, Yass, Mosse, Ruff, and Welling are pure photographs by the light of the new theory of photography. Their appeal is to an interest in the building blocks of the photographic process, which is one process for making marked images.

Channel Conditions

Lyric photography accentuates the elements of a process that is designed to convey information in a particular way, from a projected a light image into a marked or differentiated surface. We are brought up to see through the how of the process to the what of the information conveyed. Upending the customary hierarchy of means and ends, lyric photographs carry information but invite us to dwell upon the mechanics of the means of communication.

The aneroid barometer is a device for transmitting information about the air pressure at a place and a time. The main working part is a small capsule containing a vacuum and a spring that prevents the capsule from collapsing. A change in the external air pressure causes the cell to expand or compress, driving a series of mechanical linkages to a pointer arm against a graduated dial. In this way, the device carries information about a source, say that the pressure is now 1002 millibars, to a receiver who can read this off the dial.

Needless to say, the barometer's carrying this information depends on its working properly. However, the location of the pointer on the dial does not carry the information that it is working properly. Fred Dretske defined the channel conditions of a signal as conditions that either generate no relevant information or generate only redundant information about the source.[232] The barometer depends on conditions at the source (the air) and at the channel (the mechanical linkages) but it carries information only about the source.

From time to time, the barometer needs to be checked and calibrated. One way to do this is to check the instrument against air pressure known from a trusted instrument housed at the weather office. Given a report that the pressure is now 1002 millibars, we can determine the channel conditions of the barometer by seeing if its pointer indicates 1002 millibars. Now the instrument is not yielding new information about the air pressure because we already know that, but it does indicate to us that it is working properly. Dretske's idea is to separate information carried about a source from the condition of the information-carrying channel. A device's channel conditions determine "the framework within which communication takes place not a source about which communication takes place."[233]

Photographs resemble barometers. They carry information from sources through properly working channels, and we are mainly interested in learning about their sources, not the conditions of the channels. When it comes to representational art, however, interest in the source tends to pair up with interest in the channel. That is certainly true of classic and cast photography. Weston delightfully depicts the contour and the greens of a pepper using a palette of grays. Wall made *Mimic* tell a story and put across some ideas by means of theatrically lit actors and a light boxed transparency. Yet, channel conditions loom especially large in the third art of photography. Lyric photography is about how photography works as a mark-making process. Welling does not photograph filtering, and Yass does not photograph the gap between two exposures. To put it like that is not the best way to understand what they are up to.[234] Instead, by photographing bits of the world, these photographers explore how to convey information by photographic means.

The Purist's Challenge

Lyric photographs tweak the variables of the photographic process as it is characterized by the new theory of photography, whereas the traditional theory of photography does not welcome lyric photographs with the same warmth. The new theory has the upper hand, if there is an art of lyric photography, but it is too soon to pop the champagne cork of victory. Traditionalists have a couple of challenges up their sleeves. Can the new theory do a decent job of explaining the special epistemic features of photography? Traditional theories certainly can. Hold this challenge for now. First, a challenge to the new theory for its artistic implications—call it the "purist's challenge." Both challenges put the vexed issue of digital photography on the agenda.

Traditional theories do not flatly deny that lyric photographs are works of art. Not even the flintiest skeptic sinks to that conclusion. Instead, they say that none are pure photographs. They are all hybrids of photography and some other art. Horsfield's *Broadway* is a hybrid of photography and tapestry. Richter's photo-paintings and Almeida's documentations are hybrids of photography and painting. The strategy does not extend very smoothly to the work of Mosse, Yass, Welling, and Ruff, who do not borrow any of the techniques or media that we

associate with painting and drawing. Not much should rest on this observation, though. Perhaps in these cases pure photography is hybridized with elements of a painting-like art that spins off photographic technology, an art where combination printing and filtering belong in the same toolkit as the scissors and brush. The true challenge lies in the assertion that lyric photographs inherit their artistic standing from non-photographic parents—tapestry, painting, or mucking around with new imaging technologies. As long as they are art because of their non-photographic roots, the fact that they are photographs is not what makes them works of art. In the logic of the skeptic's argument, none are pure photographs, so none indicate how photography can be an art.

They are pure photographs according to the new theory of photography. After all, they are images output by processes where information in light images of pro-photographic scenes inputs into the making of visibly marked or differentiated surfaces. The Richter and Almeida, Ruff and Yass are no less pure for having been made by painting, drawing, or print-making. Painting, drawing, and print-making can be stages in genuinely photographic processes.

Putting the point somewhat differently, neither theory balks at the very idea of purity. Purity need implicate no dubious norms or ideals. A pure photograph is simply an image that results from a process that is 100% photographic. The two theories part ways only when it comes to what is 100% photographic. The new theory welcomes a great deal of pure photography that tradition excludes as an alloy of photography.

So far, this merely restates the disagreement between champions and opponents of the third art of photography. To take a step toward addressing the purist's challenge, consider that we have been here before. The current disagreement recapitulates the spat between pictorialism and straight photography (see pp. 9–12). Pictorialist photographers borrowed from the subject matter, thematics, and styles of nineteenth-century painting, and they felt free to adapt existing painterly techniques for use in making photographs. They refused to divide photography from drawing. Straight photography dismissed pictorialism, citing a couple of core doctrines of modernist art theory. First, every art has a unique medium. Second, genuine works of art must exploit the uniqueness of their medium. Assuming the traditional theory of photography, photographs cut it as art only insofar as they capitalize on belief-independent feature-tracking.

Does the new theory of photography square with modernist doctrine? Yes and no. It complies with the first but not the second modernist doctrine. On one hand, it does assign photography a unique medium. Only photographs are images that are made by a process that involves a photographic recording event. No other kind of image is defined as conveying information from the recording event. On the other hand, the recording event is only one stage of the photographic process, and the other stages are not unique to photography. So the new theory predicts genuine works of photographic art that do not make art out of the photographic recording event that is unique to photography. Lyric photographs come to be works of photographic art because they harness opportunities for image-rendering that are not unique to photography—drawing and digital mark-making, for example. By expanding our conception of pure photography to include lyricism, the new theory runs head to head with the traditional theory but also with the proposition that purity implies uniqueness.

Purists complain that the third art of photography runs afoul of the doctrines of modernist art theory. To twist Kierkegaard, purity of art is to will one thing. The reply: so much the worse for modernist art theory! Left at that, the dispute is at a standstill, with one side sticking up for doctrines that the other side abjures. And it may seem pointless to try to get past the standstill. Both sides accept that lyric photographs are works of art. They only disagree on whether they are hybrids that do not inherit their art genes from their photographic lineage, or whether they are purebred photographic art. Yet, something more can be said—and it enriches the story of the arts of photography.

Photography Plugged and Unplugged

Modernist doctrine is prescriptive. It makes a norm of the rule that genuine art is art that exploits its unique medium. Why accept this norm? Does it follow from some more fundamental feature of art? Why think that this feature is a general feature of all art and not a specific feature of art in the mode of modernism?

Here is a trick to use when faced with questions such as these. Suppose there is a category that is like art in all respects except that it defies the modernist norm. Call it "schmart." Works in the third art of

photography are schmart. They defy the modernist norm, for what makes them works of photographic schmart has little to do with what is unique to photography. Fine. But is this just a verbal quibble? Schmart is not art. Art is not schmart. Does the difference make a difference?

Fried speaks of recent photography as a "photographic regime"—a complex of themes, concerns, and representational strategies.[235] A regime is a practice in the sense that it is constituted by some norms that prescribe certain themes, concerns, and strategies. What establishes the norms is simply that members of the practice comply with them on condition that other members of the practice do so too.[236] Structurally, a photographic practice is much like other kinds of social practices.

Take dog breeding. No good specimen of a Shetland sheepdog stands a meter at the shoulders. Why is this? Nothing in the nature of *Canis lupus* determines what it is to be a good sheltie. The national kennel clubs publish the norm for the height of a sheltie, and sheltie breeders comply with the norm on condition that other sheltie breeders do so too. In fact, what makes them sheltie breeders is that they acknowledge the norm and try to breed dogs that comply with it, on condition that other breeders follow suit.

Needless to say, we will not find the norms that constitute artistic practices published by official bodies like the kennel clubs. No secret art world cabal legislates these things. Instead, the norms are implicit in the creative, appreciative, critical, and curatorial behavior of practitioners. Implicit norms work as well as explicit ones to structure practices. The norms of artistic practices are implicit but people nevertheless comply with them on condition that other members of the practice also comply.

Lyric photography is a practice whose defining norms are to make photographs that thematize processes of image-production and then to appreciate them as made with this goal in mind. What makes someone a member of the practice is that they follow these norms on condition that other members of the practice do so too. It is a schmart practice. Why not an art practice?

We have refined the question about whether the boundary between art and schmart marks a difference that makes a difference. Classic photography, cast photography, and lyric photography are all practices, but the modernist admits only the first two as genuinely artistic practices. Lyric photography fails to make the grade because it does not foreground the recording event, as do classic and cast photography. So the

question to ask is whether there is something special about art practices that rules against the artistic aspirations of lyric photography.

Greenberg and other modernists expected the modernist norms to be grounded in the nature of art, but subsequent history has dashed their hope. A great many traditional and contemporary art practices defy modernist art norms. Media are combined and blended in opera, the movies, and installation and performance art, for example.[237] These practices may not get the nod when judged by modernist standards, but why judge them by any standards except their own?

These will be white-knuckle statements for doctrinaire modernists, who will retort that something must put art practices in a different league from non–art practices. Modernist norms tell us what that is. Surely it will not do to be told that anything goes so long as it is allowed by some practice or other!

Recall the cheeky comeback to the caricatured version of the skeptic's argument from the opening pages of this essay. If anything is a bedrock datum from which we may reason, it is the fact that photography is an art. Since photography is an art and since we nearly all take photographs, it follows that we nearly all make art. The rah-rah conclusion of this argument turns skepticism on its head. Moreover, it is true that photography is an art and we nearly all take photographs. Are we all then artists? Clearly not. Some photographic practices are not art practices. Then what makes some photographic practices art practices?

Lyric photography ups the stakes. Intervening in the channel conditions of the photographic process is easy to do, especially with digital technology. Digital photography differs from traditional "wet" photography in three interesting ways.

First, digital image-rendering technologies are general purpose. The algorithms, datasets, and transduction devices used for creating, storing, and displaying photographs are also used for making other kinds of marked surfaces—not all of them images, for that matter. In standard digital photography, a charge-coupled device is designed to record information in a light image, and store it for a short period of time in a pattern of electron charges on its surface.[238] This pattern is then used to generate a "raw" data file, which must be processed to create an image that can be displayed on screen or in print. Beyond the recording event at the surface of the charge-coupled device, this process is not dedicated to photography: it is routinely used to create and

display non-photographic images. Putting the point concretely, Photoshop not only edits and transforms raster images from cameras but also ones "painted" with a graphics tablet. Likewise, inkjet printers are not only used to make photographic images but also drawings—and text of course. Encoding in a common digital format serves general purpose information processing.

Second, as everyone knows, digital technologies make photographic image-making relatively accessible by reducing cost and increasing push-button automation. This continues a long trend of "making good images cheap and cheap images good."[239] A striking result is the sheer number of photographs being created—now trillions per year. Meanwhile, expensive equipment and training are no longer needed to master most photographic techniques. Everything from cropping and adjusting contrast and gamma to retouching and combination printing is implemented as algorithms that operate on image files with a click of the mouse or a swipe of the finger. To take a homely example, the skillful handling of the airbrush that was once needed to remove redeye has been replaced with automatic redeye reduction.

A third observation also concerns accessibility. Newly shot photographs are largely destined not for printing but for on-screen display, and some of these are published for asynchronous display on sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Flickr. Calling these sites "social media" for "social networking" is not all hype. The basic function of social media sites is to connect people together into communities around shared interests. We share interests in all sorts of things, from travel to pets and children, to the trivial details of the daily round. Many of us also share our interest in photography, by sharing our photographs. Social media permit the kinds of communications and exchanges needed for those who take photographs to become participants in a photographic practice.

Sites like Flickr encourage this. Flickr is organized into groups, some promoting a high level of medium awareness and a willingness to play with the variables, sometimes deliberately drawing attention to medium. A Flickr convention mandates that members share image metadata and declare all elements of the photographic process used in making a photograph. Soon after photography became widely available, amateur photographers set up photo clubs to share know-how and equipment but also to contest and converge on norms. Flickr groups are photo clubs with members from all over the world, not just in the neighborhood.

Groups of Flickr users often develop practices centered on interests that are not regulated by the galleries, the art press, and the seminar room. These institutions once controlled large scale image sharing and so set the norms for photographic art. Flickr unseats the establishment by allowing large scale image sharing by nearly anyone nearly anywhere nearly any time.

A striking illustration of this independence from the establishment is one Flickr group's response to a prank posting of a Cartier-Bresson photograph—one of his iconic shots. Unaware that they were looking at the master's work, members of the group laid into it as "gray, blurry, small, odd crop."[240] When this was reported, the reaction was derisive hoots. The scoffers wondered how anyone with a serious interest in photography could be so ignorant of how to appreciate the work of arguably one of the most important photographers in history. Justified or not, derision misses the interesting point. Photographic practices may now develop around appreciative norms that are openly at odds with or that simply pay no heed to the art establishment and the recognized canon. They operate beyond the establishment's reach and without its patronage.

At a minimum, photographic practices govern the creation, display, and public appreciation of photographs. Digital technologies have made all of these easier, spurring the rise of new photographic practices, both on a micro scale and a large scale. Some tools of photographic processing are now more accessible and, more importantly, it is much easier for anyone to make photographs as participants in photographic practices. Social practices are built on communication and the internet fosters communication like nothing else. Ours is an era of more and more sophisticated amateurism.

Lomography has spread in just a few years right across the globe. Having started out as an on-line trade in cheaply built Soviet imitations of German cameras, it has expanded to very inexpensive plastic cameras. Sloppily built equipment tends to produce all kinds of normally undesirable effects, such as light leaks, vignetting, and poor focus, and lomographers also like to experiment with past-dated or stressed film stock and cross-processing (where stock is run through the "wrong" chemicals). Yet lomography does not attempt to set the clock back to the analogue age. Its practitioners standardly scan their images and publish them online, and lomography web sites give a good idea of the movement's aims and ambitions.

Scruton gripes that "photography is democratic: it puts into the hand of everyman the means to be his own recorder. To defend its artistic pretensions is to make everyman an artist."[241] The purist's challenge is this. Surely not all interests around which a photographic practice may be built count as art. It sets the bar far too low to say that a photographic art practice is one whose norms address an interest in photography. In particular, if the new theory of photography is correct, these interests span a huge domain. Better to give up on the new theory and spurn the third art of photography than to lose sight of what is special in photography practiced as an art. So goes the challenge.

The reply is this. "Art" is a fighting word wielded to legitimize some cultural practices at the expense of others. Part of its use in the culture wars lies in making claims about the nature of art. When the artistic legitimacy of some practice is in dispute, you can be assured that parties to the dispute also disagree about the nature of art. Often they disagree about what art is because they disagree about some specific practice, and not the other way around. In the circumstances, why not avoid sociological disputes by taking the weight off the concept of art?[242] Everyone agrees that there are many practices where photographs are made to be appreciated, and everyone also agrees that not all of them will earn recognition as art practices. Why should status recognition trump appreciation?

Photographers like Horsfield, Yass, and Ruff have, as a matter of fact, won recognition in the art world. The best explanation of this fact may or may not be that they practice lyric photography. The ways of the art world are never so transparent. Be that as it may, the significance and interest of these works is brought out when we view them as products of a lyrical photographic stance. That there are other photographers doing similar work that is not labeled "art" tells us little about what interests us in lyric photographs.

There is special reason to be wary about skirmishes over the "art" label in relation to photography. Bourdieu's book on photography reports sociological research that ties the distinction between art and non-art photography to socio-economic status. He uncontroversially observes that, "photographic practice is considered accessible to everyone, from both the technical and the economic viewpoints," and adds that its casual practitioners do not view themselves as engaged in the making of legitimate art.[243] Art is viewed as part of highbrow

culture, a domain policed by economic and cultural elites. Despite this, many photographic practices are much like those that get called art practices in that they provide opportunities for creativity and appreciation. As Bourdieu eloquently pleads, "most of society can be excluded from the universe of legitimate [i.e. highbrow] culture without being excluded from the universe of aesthetics."[244] The difference between "art" and "schmart" is not a difference that makes a difference that we should care about.

Digital technology's appearance on the scene caused an epidemic of hand-wringing among photography writers, and a benefit of the new theory of photography is that it predicts that digital photography is a natural development of photography that does not introduce a radically new form of imaging (though it does feed into a powerful new image distribution system). For example, it has been said that a digital image "differs as profoundly from a traditional photograph as does a photograph from a painting."[245] Savedoff takes the next step: with digitization, "photography again finds itself moving closer to painting."[246] The new technologies "not only imperil photography's documentary and journalistic functions, but also threaten a fundamental aesthetic distinction between paintings and photographs. … the creative freedom provided by digital manipulation is bought at the cost of photography's distinctive power."[247] Views like these exert little grip given the new theory of photography. On the new theory, digital technology is yet another tool for image-rendering in 200 years of technological innovation.

One big event in recent high art photography is said to be its finding a place on the museum wall alongside painting, not in separate galleries.[248] Equally big news is the migration of photography onto the small screen. The full significance of this event is much easier to see if the traditional, analogue-oriented theory of photography is replaced by the new theory of photography. The new theory puts us under no pressure to think of digital photography as fundamentally different from its analogue predecessor. Both belong to photography's family of technologies for making a marked surface out of a recording event. Not every snapshot is a product of a practice centered on norms of appreciation but it is mere distraction to make much of the fact that not every practice like this gets labeled "art."

The Knowing Eye

Having been invented by scientists, who first saw it as a new tool of inquiry and only later began to suspect the possibility of photographic art, photography's special epistemic character has dominated thinking about its nature. The early theorists' enthusiasm for photography's accuracy, detail, and impartial selectivity persists today, as Richter repeats the commonplace that a photograph "is the only picture that tells the absolute truth" and Bourdieu confirms the widespread belief that "its precision and fidelity cannot be questioned."[249] Yet, the new theory of photography omits to mention anything that can bear much epistemic weight. A second challenge to the new theory is that it cannot explain photography's epistemic power. Ignoring this challenge is not an option, precisely because the traditional theory was crafted above all to explain why we trust photographs as we do. Can the new theory equal the traditional theory on the epistemology of photography?

In order to size up the challenge, the first step is to zero in on photography's epistemic power. Photography does seem to beat painting as a tool to gain or convey knowledge. Scott Walden invites us to:

> imagine there is a crime scene and that both a police photographer … and a police sketcher are brought in to make their respective images. Eventually an arrest is made and at the trial the jury needs to learn about the crime scene in order to determine whether or not some vital but subtle piece of evidence was present. … Under such circumstances the widespread intuition is that the jury would prefer learning via the photograph to learning via the sketch.[250]

So photographs stand apart from other kinds of images because they possess "a quality of credibility absent from all other picture-making."[251]

What is this "quality of credibility?" Photographs are introduced as evidence in scientific reports, journalism, and courts of law. They can

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

also be used to make discoveries. A dramatic example is Michelangelo Antonioni's movie *Blow-Up*, whose protagonist believes he has photographed a romantic tryst but discovers upon closer inspection that he has recorded a murder. However, handmade images are also used to make discoveries and present evidence. Photographs are not unique among images in serving some epistemic purposes.

Nor can it be said that photographs never lie. Of course they do, although it is more surprising when they lie. As Sontag writes, "the consequences of lying have to be more central for photography than they ever can be for painting, because photographs make a claim to be true that paintings can never make."[252] Deceptive photographs provoke pronounced anxiety and pronounced delight. Trick photography exists but there is no such thing as trick drawing. Moreover, fear of digital deception has been a source of headlines for several years now, while it is not news that painters embellish the truth. In 2014, the Metropolitan Museum in New York mounted a show entitled Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop. Predictably, people came in droves.

What explains this? Either we give photographs special treatment or they merit special treatment—or both. These are not at all the same. We may fail to treat photographs as they deserve. Therefore distinguish the psychological claim that

> we treat photographs as having an epistemic virtue not possessed by other images

from the normative claim that

> photographs have an epistemic virtue not possessed by other images.

Scenarios like Walden's and Antonioni's directly confirm only the psychological claim. Ample evidence supports the claim that we treat photographs as epistemically special, by contrast with other images. So, grant the psychological claim. What about the normative claim? Are we correct to give photographs special treatment?

Whereas the psychological claim causes no great difficulty for the new theory of photography, the normative claim puts it in peril. Suppose the normative claim is true. The standard explanation of why it is true comes as the traditional theory of photography summed up in (P). However,

the new theory does not imply (P). On the contrary, the new theory severs the connection between being a photograph and being an image made by belief-independent feature-tracking. Non-photographs (e.g., Galileo's moon drawings) may be made by belief-independent feature-tracking, and photographs may be made by drawing that depends on belief. Even if there is something epistemically special about belief-independent feature-tracking, the new theory does not award the monopoly on belief-independent feature-tracking to photography, so it does not explain the normative claim. If the normative claim is true, then that is a reason to junk the new theory and return to tradition.

Philosophers have thought that a theory of photography ought to explain the normative claim. A number of ideas have been floated; here are a couple.[253] Catharine Abell argues that photography is a more reliable depictive system than is drawing.[254] A courtroom artist who depicts a witness as wearing a red tie might easily have depicted him as wearing a blue tie. A courtroom photographer who takes a photograph of the witness could not have done the same so easily. The use of the photographic apparatus means she could not so easily depict the red tie as blue. Not so drawing, which means that a drawing might easily be swayed by the artist's mistaken beliefs, or whims, or deceptive intents.[255]

Robert Hopkins makes a more radical proposal.[256] What is epistemically special about photography, by contrast with drawing, is that when it is operating properly it affords factive experience. An experience is a mental state, and a factive mental state is one that satisfies a demanding condition: it represents a situation only if the situation obtains. In other words, factive experiences cannot fail to represent things as they are. Seeing is factive: you see that the light is red only if the light is red. Memory is also factive: you remember being dealt a royal flush only if you were dealt a royal flush. If you were not, then you cannot remember it—at best you have an apparent memory. Experiences of photographs are, for Hopkins, like seeing and memory. When photography is working properly, we photographically experience Armstrong on the moon only if he was on the moon.

Surely some photographs lie, however? Not a problem, for Hopkins's proposal is qualified: it applies only to photography when it is working properly. Traditional photography is designed to afford factive experience. It is made up of a collection of components—for focus, exposure, color matching, printing, and the like—and these components secure

factive experiences when they are used per design, even if they can be used against the grain. When all goes according to plan, photographs give us experiences that show how things are. The experiences are factive. At the same time, some photographs fail to give us factive experiences because the photographic mechanism is not functioning as designed. Maybe there is a mechanical malfunction; maybe the problem is some human interference.

Setting aside the differences between these proposals and others in the same ballpark, it is easy to see how they would be explained by the proposition that photography is imaging by belief-independent feature-tracking.[257] Hopkins writes that photography:

> can allow only a restricted role for human agency. … The reason is simple: people make mistakes. … Of course, handmade pictures can reflect the facts. … But factivity requires more than capturing the facts, it requires doing so as a matter of necessity. Handmade pictures never do that, since, when accurate, they are so because they reflect how someone—whoever made the picture—took things to be. As a result, handmade pictures are always vulnerable to error, whether or not they succumb to it.[258]

Abell makes similar points. Photography is a system of honest signals: it builds in protections against human influence so as to boost its reliability or sustain factive experience.

The contrast between this traditional picture and the new theory is vivid. Two options are available. One is to abandon or modify the new theory; the alternative is to reject or modify the normative claim. The alternative is worth a try because abandoning the new theory orphans the art of lyric photography. Since the normative claim has something right, it might be upgraded in a way that is consistent with the new theory, that explains some of the attraction of the original normative claim, and that explains why the psychological claim is true and why we tend to treat photographs as honest signals. A tall order? The idea of a photographic practice supplies all the resources needed to pull off the trick.

The technology of photography has been taken up into a number of social practices. Each practice centers on some norms that are established by the fact that members of the practice comply with them on condition that other members of the practice do so too. Some of these practices are artistic or aesthetic because their central norms address the artistic or aesthetic interests of makers and appreciators of

photographs. Yet, photographic practices may center on interests that are neither aesthetic nor artistic, or not exclusively so. Epistemic practices center on norms that secure a role for photographs in contexts where evidence is presented and discoveries are made.[259]

How do these knowledge-oriented norms look? According to the new theory of photography, a photograph is a product of a photographic process where an artifactual image is rendered from a photographic event that records information in a light image of a pro-photographic scene. Nothing in this theory of photography restricts how the light image is formed or how the surface is finally marked. The light image may be altered in various ways—recall Welling's manipulating it with filters and reflecting glasses. What information is recorded and conveyed through the image depends on the chemistry or electronics, as is demonstrated by Mosse's use of infrared film. Since a photograph might also be made by Photoshopping or drawing—recall Ruff and Richter—there is a potential for a massive loss of information from the pro-photographic scene. The suggestion is that knowledge-oriented photographic practices have norms that govern how photographic equipment is designed and manufactured and then subsequently used to serve our epistemic needs. Norms such as these are socially imposed restrictions on the photographic process.

Unlike artistic and aesthetic norms, epistemic norms sometimes get stated explicitly as rules of professional conduct. A forensic photographer is enjoined to follow guidelines such as those published by the United States' National Institute of Justice, which also offers courses that train photographers to comply with its standards. The pro-photographic scene is to be placed in standard lighting, with scales provided where measurements are needed. The light image may be filtered to reduce noise or remove extraneous information—for instance, reflections can be removed with a polarizer. A digital camera is now standard, and it should be fitted with an asymmetrical lens of normal focal length that focuses precisely. Depth of field is to be maximized. A raw data file is to be saved to record the precise state of the sensor without further processing. Metadata is to be collected to document the channel conditions of the shot—lens, aperture, exposure time, and the like. An image should be displayed using a calibrated screen or printer. The chain of custody is to be documented. In the background of these norms are norms for the manufacture of standardized photographic equipment,

so that it can be used in this way.[260] Police departments do not purchase equipment from Lomography shops!

When stakes are high, the epistemic norms governing photography may be enforced by sanctions. Despite all the fretting about the danger of digital technology to photography's epistemic credentials, there has been no catastrophe. The reason is not that the technology makes manipulation hard, for it does not. Nor is it that film is still used to ensure the honesty of the signal. On the contrary, film is now more likely to be used in aesthetically oriented practices and has largely disappeared from the newsroom and the forensic lab. Rather, the reason why we continue to trust photographs is that, in epistemic photographic practices, photo-manipulation is unprofessional, and is punished. This is not new. Darkroom trickery was always possible. Though it might have been harder, requiring more skill and specialized equipment, the temptation was always there in circumstances where cheating might pay, so it did happen from time to time. The reason it was not common was that editors, courts, and peer evaluators were vigilant and the penalties for being caught were severe. With digital technologies, doctoring is easy, but that makes little difference, provided that the penalties remain severe.[261]

On March 30, 2003, the photojournalist Brian Walski was on assignment in Iraq for the *Los Angeles Times*, and he had just taken a series of shots. Realizing that a shot of a British soldier gesturing to some civilians to take cover would make a stronger composition if combined with a shot of the same civilians taken moments later, he cut and pasted the two shots into one image, and this image was printed in several newspapers.[262] When the ruse was discovered, Walski lost his job and has never since worked in photojournalism. He now does weddings.

The advantage of the new theory of photography is that it does not build photography's epistemic power into its very nature. There may be a range of photographic practices that are more or less strict in ensuring that photographs convey information from the pro-photographic scene. Forensics, science, and journalism stand at one end of the spectrum. Fashion photography permits some doctoring but only within recognized limits—it is okay to airbrush the blemishes on Eve's face but not to Photoshop the flaws in Yves's dress. In lyric photography, the whole point is to render images freely, without concern for infallible documentation. The aesthetic trumps the epistemic. In classic

and cast photography, neither trumps the other—aesthetic and epistemic norms are yoked together.

One class of photographic practices is epistemic, centering on norms that restrict the photographic process in order to ensure belief-independent feature-tracking. For historical reasons, this restricted conception of photography dominated both the design of the technology and its use. It would be perfectly accurate to call the epistemically centered practice "standard photography." As important as it is, standard photography is only one kind of photography. The error of history has been to assimilate all photography to fit the model of standard photography.

Just as standard photography dominates our thinking about photography, art drawing dominates our thinking about non-photographic imaging. The usual name in English for someone who draws in a serious way is "artist" (not "draughtsman"); "painter" also implies "artist," and hence English speakers are careful to say "housepainter." "Photographer" does not have the same automatically artistic connotation. Indeed, it has been common since the 1980s for art photographers to insist on calling themselves "artists" rather than "photographers." A conception of photography that privileges its epistemic contributions pairs with a conception of drawing that privileges artistic and aesthetic achievement.

Both conceptions are mistaken, and each goes wrong because the other does. Drawing practices are not always artistic or aesthetic; they are not even mostly artistic or aesthetic. Non-photographic drawings have always been used to present evidence, make discoveries, and document appearances.[263] Standard photography is not the only photography, and photographic art need not adapt itself to it (as happened in classic and cast photography). Photography can be practiced without regard for knowledge-oriented norms.

Where does this leave the normative claim, namely that photographs have an epistemic power not possessed by other kinds of images? Standard photographs merit our trust; non-standard photographs, not so much. Meanwhile, in exact parallel, some non-photographic drawings do not deserve much trust, but some do. When they do, they result from belief-independent feature-tracking, and they may be products of practices that exploit belief-independent feature-tracking by carefully controlling the conditions in which they are made.

So strongly do we associate drawing and painting with Ingres, Picasso, and their ilk that it takes special effort to consider scientific and technical

contexts instead. Archeological drawings of stone tools are made by highly specialized artists in accordance with strict rules that are laid down in textbooks.[264] The object is to be illuminated from 45° in the upper left. The ventral surface of the stone is to be placed at the bottom of the drawing, and, when multiple views are shown, profiles are to be shown next to the edges they display. The scale is to be fixed at 1:1. Paper types, drawing instruments, and techniques of penciling and inking are standardized. Finally, a well-defined representational vocabulary is strictly followed. For example, stippling indicates the cortex of the stone, with greater density indicating greater roughness. Curved direction lines indicate snapped surfaces, while thermal fractures are shown by spider lines, spoked lines, or swirls. An authority explains that, "properly drawn artifacts are invariably more informative than photographs in illustrating a prehistoric knapper's workmanship as well as an artifact's form and diagnostic features."[265]

There are many other non-photographic drawing practices subject to stringent knowledge-oriented norms. Once a building or landscape is complete, the client will commission a set of "as-built" drawings. As-builts document the final structure and whether or not it conforms to the "constructions sets" used by the builders, for future needs and for insurance purposes. The architect's signature on the as-builts makes her legally liable for what they depict.

Of course, these cases will seem unusual, just as photography that breaks past belief-independent feature-tracking will seem abnormal, even outré. What seems normal and what seems special is an artifact of an asymmetry in our thinking about photographic and non-photographic images. Standard photography, with its epistemic norms, dominates our thinking about photography, whereas art, with its norms for appreciation, dominates our thinking about hand-made images. The proposal is that neither is inherently epistemic or aesthetic; both are made so by means of norms in social practices.

The improved normative claim is that images made by belief-independent feature-tracking have an epistemic virtue not possessed by other images. Epistemically virtuous images come not from photography but from belief-independent feature-tracking. Standard photography secures its virtue by regimenting the design and use of technology to ensure belief-independent feature-tracking. So large does it loom in scientific and technical imaging that it overshadows hand-drawn work.

For contingent historical reasons, it also overshadows non-standard photography. No wonder we treat photographs as epistemically special, just as the psychological claim would have it.

Projecting social norms onto the nature of the technology is a bad idea, though it so easily happens because technologies arise out of and are fitted to serve social needs. The new theory of photography steers us well clear of the mistake. Photography is a wide field where social practices may sink their roots. One aim of this essay is to break the dominance of the epistemic conception of photography over how we think about its artistic promise.

Abstraction: The Fourth Art

Having stood patiently by for the length of this essay, and for much of the history of photography, it is time for abstract photographs to step into the limelight. Classic photographic art stands up to premise (S3) in the skeptic's argument, cast photography stands up to (S2), and lyrically inflected photography stands up to (S1). Only one plank of the skeptic's argument remains, (S5), which asserts that

> photography is an art only if some pure photographs are representational art works.

One route to abstract photography understands it as an art of photography that stands up to (S5).

Three Routes to Abstract Photography

The critic Dominic Eichler recently described some abstract photographs by Wolfgang Tillmans as exposing "a forgotten reservoir of unseen pictures, a kind of mysterious, enormous underbelly of photography past and present."[266] Some of Talbot's very first photographs were abstract—the *Oriel Window* of 1835 readily reminds us of a small Rothko, for example—and Talbot continued to make abstract photographs for 20 years after he had perfected the calotype. Yet, these early abstractions have been viewed as mere curiosities, technical exercises. Even the vogue for the photogram in the interwar period is rarely treated as more than an eddy in the main history of photography. If a side effect of dominant thinking about photography has been to mask the existence of abstract photographs, then systematic arguments drive everything

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

out into the open. What is otherwise implicit or taken for granted is made explicit, open to scrutiny.

In his book on the topic, Lyle Rexer recovers abstract photography by stressing its continuities with the main moments in mainstream photography. Modernist period abstract photography shared the ambition of the classic tradition to open up a window into a hitherto unseen reality. Photograms like the ones made by Man Ray and Lotte Jacobi (e.g. Figure 8) present a literal truth while simultaneously alluding to transcendent orders of experience or complex hidden realities.[267] As Rexer writes, photography presented itself as having "for the first time achieved its true power, to solicit from a chaotic world the underlying forms of a more beautiful coherence."[268] What impels some abstract photography is what also impels the first art of photography.

Nothing in this impulse speaks against the traditional theory of photography. We learn on auntie's knee that the nineteenth-century invention of photography so took the wind out of painting's sails that

Figure 8 Lotte Jacobi, *Photogenic c.* 1946. Courtesy of the University of New Hampshire, Lotte Jacobi Collection.

painters had to rethink their destination. Photography's having made realistic depiction a trivial achievement, painters tacked toward an exploration of light and form. The effects of this new direction first made their mark on figurative painting. For Monet, painting is about how paint transmits light. For Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire is an invitation to conduct a visual analysis of three-dimensional worldly space fitted to a flat surface. Ultimately, the story goes, we arrive at the abstractions of Mondrian, Pollock, and Newman. Whether or not any of this is true, note how it assumes that if abstract painting moves to grounds where photography could not follow then there could be no serious abstract photography.

The story pops up in photography theory too. For example, Greenberg placed photography between a rock and a hard place. The rock is that "photography is literary art before it is anything else: its triumphs and monuments are historical, anecdotal, repertorial, observational before they are purely pictorial."[269] The hard place is that Greenberg thought that only the "purely pictorial" is any good, certainly not what is not historical, anecdotal, repertorial, or observational. Needless to say, abstract painting is "purely pictorial."

An example from another direction is Kirk Varnedoe, a curator at the Museum of Modern Art until 2001. What he says is eye opening because it reveals how much abstract painting borrows from photography. "The invention of photography," he explains,

> fed not only the language of representation but the language of abstraction that is encoded within the representation of things: blur, halation, fogging, solarization, dazzle, grain. Think of all the abstract aspects of photography that feed an encoded, abstract language of representation. They become so much part of our thinking that we almost take them as natural, but they are in fact abstractions induced by the process of photography."[270]

The irony is that painting went abstract to evade the threat of photography but, as it made the getaway, it purloined elements of abstraction from photography. Irony aside, the deeper point is that, as Varnedoe knows perfectly well, this particular borrowing from photography is eye opening precisely because painting seems to own abstraction to the exclusion of photography.

Savedoff is the only philosopher to have written on abstract photography, and her conception of it is colored by her passion for the classic tradition and hence the denial of (S3).[271] Accepting the traditional

theory of photography, she takes photographs to be depictive images, so that some are abstract only in the sense that they foreground form, composition, and texture over their manifest depictive content.[272] One of Savedoff's favorite examples is Imogen Cunningham's *Leaf Pattern* of 1929, which balances an interest in abstract patterns with the depiction of clearly recognizable pieces of foliage. The result is that we see the leaf transformed. Thinking of Aaron Siskind's photographs of fragments of two-dimensional surfaces, Savedoff grants that some photographic subjects are barely recognizable. Yet, insofar as our interest in all photographs is informed by a knowledge of how they are made, we are inevitably drawn into the project of trying to identify the object photographed. "We are," she writes, "pulled back into an examination and re-examination of the image in an effort to make sense of its forms. … The beauty of the abstract composition is still tethered by the world; the difficulty of identification just draws us that much deeper into the photograph."[273] The poetics of the classical tradition, which denies (S3), explains our interest in abstract photography.

So do approaches to abstract photographs framed by the denial of (S2). Gursky's Rhine photographs depict the river, its grassy banks, and the sky in horizontal bands of green and pale blue with the balance and subtle modulation of hue that one might expect to find in the abstract expressionism of New York painters of the 1950s. Yet, critics make a point of the ideas they communicate. For example, according to the Christie's auction house catalogue description, *Rhine II* is "a dramatic and profound reflection on human existence and our relationship to nature on the cusp of the twenty-first century."[274]

No doubt, Gursky's Rhine photographs evoke thoughts while Cunningham's close-ups of leaves change our perceptions. It is not wrong to frame abstract photographs in these ways. Even so, we end up with an incomplete picture of photographic abstraction if we approach it from these perspectives alone. Downplaying the usual association of Tillmans's Blush series with aroused states of the skin, Eichler warns that "abstract pictures don't necessarily need to be dragged back into the world of narrative and clear associations to make sense."[275] The same point could be made about Cunningham's leaves, which need not be understood as visual revelations.

Another, perhaps more recent, route to abstract photography detours through lyric photography. Some abstract photographs explore and

exploit the stages of the photographic process. We find this in Ray Metzker's 1960s "multiples"—groovy, gridded syncopations of simple forms. Nowadays abstract photographs are made by means of a staggering range of operations on the pro-photographic scene, the light image, and the optics or chemistry of mark-marking. Abstraction's kinship with lyricism suggests that the traditional theory of photography is hostile to both if it is hostile to one. Being anxious to draw a bold line between photography and drawing locates abstraction well inside the domain of drawing. It becomes hard even to imagine how a photograph can be abstract.

Isolating Abstraction

A tonic dose of methodological skepticism remedies the sidelining of abstract photography. None of the premises of the skeptic's argument is true, but the point is not to prove that. The idea is to see what we can learn from their falsity. Discussions of abstract photography tend to collapse it into one or more of the first three arts of photography. Isolation is the way to get the whole picture. Abstract photographs do stand up to (S1), (S2), and (S3), but let us consider them principally as challenges to (S5). (S5) squarely denies the existence of abstract photographic art. What if (S5) is false and (S1) to (S3) are true? In pure cases, abstract photographs are images that depict by belief-independent feature-tracking, reveal little of interest about the visual world, and communicate no special thoughts.

Any photographs that stand up to (S5) while accepting the traditional theory of photography are depictive. But how can abstraction coexist with depiction, if one is defined as the absence of the other? Take another look at (S5):

> photography is an art only if some pure photographs are representational art works.

This does not say that photography is an art only if some pure photographs represent. There is a difference between representing, on one hand, and being a representational art work, on the other. A work that represents may not be a representational art work. Thus, photographs

that stand up to (S5) belong to a photographic art made up of pure photographs that are not representational art works even though they do depict.

What is a representational art work? The obvious answer is conjunctive: a representational art work is representational and it is art. This would be bad news for a fourth art of photography. It implies that a photographic art work that is not a representational art work does not represent. So denying (S5) means denying the traditional theory of photography and (S1). Happily there is another answer that does not equate being a representational art work with being an art work that represents. A representational art work is a work that is art because it represents. It is art representationally. It achieves artistic standing by taking advantage of the resources of representation. So a work may represent even though it is not the case that it is art because it represents. Works in the fourth art represent, but they are not representational art works because their representational character does not earn them art status.

Why believe (S5)? Recall the line taken by the defense of the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center and its director on a charge of obscenity for exhibiting Mapplethorpe's X Portfolio (p. 32). The experts testified to the formal quality of Mapplethorpe's images but willfully ignored or brazenly denied the importance of their contents. Surely this is a travesty of Mapplethorpe's achievement. We want his photographs to be art works because they depict, not in spite of it. The concession that we may take an interest in photographs for their formal qualities alone should be resisted—hence (S5).

All the same, what is true as a rule need not be true in every case. When a work is art because of its representational character, it is a bad idea to ignore that and focus only on its formal features. By the same token, there is no harm done if a work is not art because of its representational character.

Before turning to some cases, a word about depiction. Some conceptions of depiction set the bar extremely low, so that it turns out that many images that we call "abstract" are in fact depictive.[276] For example, Wollheim holds that an image depicts if it permits us to see one spatial arrangement in another. Seeing a blob as foreground against background meets Wollheim's minimal condition. In Jackson Pollock's drips, we see complex three-dimensional knots of space in two-dimensional streams

of paint. The drips depict those spaces, if Wollheim is right. Hence, very few paintings fail to depict—Barnett Newman's zips, maybe.

Setting the bar on depiction this low makes it harder, not easier, to see how a photographic art practice can stand up to (S5). After all, the suggestion of three-dimensional space is an important element in a great deal of photographic art. Most photographs interest us at least partly because of the spaces that they suggest. The fourth art will not have a chance if it is unable to take advantage of the suggestion of three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional, flat surface.

To avoid this problem, a beefier conception of depiction will do the job. As it happens, the beefier conception is endorsed by common thinking. An image depicts a scene only if the scene can be identified in a special way—perceptually, by using one's eyes. When visual images depict, they present visual likenesses.[277] A photograph does not depict a pepper unless understanding it in the right way implicates an experience of looking at it that is like an experience of looking at a pepper. The English word "pepper" represents a pepper but does not depict a pepper because your understanding it in the right way does not involve an experience of looking at the string:

p – e – p – p – e – r

that is anything like an experience of looking at a pepper. Typically, the relevant experiences happen unprompted. Just a look at one of Weston's photographs of peppers is enough to trigger the experience as of a pepper. In other cases, the experience needs to be puzzled out, as in Cunningham's *Leaf Pattern*. Background knowledge may be crucial—the experience eludes us until we are explicitly clued in. You know that this:

–O –

represents a Mexican riding a bicycle, seen from above. With this hint, the experience falls into place.

Exemplars of the fourth art of photography are works of art, and they depict in this moderately robust sense. Yet, they are not works of art because of what they depict. Their depictive content is not the focus of practices of abstract photography.

Throughout this essay, arguments have been used to unsettle routine patterns of thought. We can get a handle on the implications of denying (S5) by diagnosing the error in an argument for it. Start with the plausible assumption that our interest in works of art takes them on their own terms, for what they are. So photography is an art only if there can be an interest in a pure photograph for what it is.[278] Add to this the claim that pure photographs are representations, and it follows that photography is an art only if there can be an interest in a pure photograph as a representation. From here, it is a short step to (S5), that photography is an art only if some pure photographs are representational art works.[279] Since the logic seems solid, (S5) is false only if one of the premises of the argument is false. The claim that pure photographs are representations is safe so long as we accept the traditional theory of photography. The problem is with the opening premise, namely that photography is an art only if there can be an interest in a pure photograph for what it is. Its problem is that it is too strong. Why not say instead that photography is an art only if there can be an interest in a pure photograph for part of what it is?

An image is not only a representation; it is also a "design"—an arrangement of features that do the representing.[280] However designs come about—through belief-independent feature tracking or through making marks from a photographic event—taking an interest in them is one way to take an interest in a photograph for part of what it is. The practice of pure abstract photography is compatible with the fact that photographs are representational. The practice simply highlights and feeds an interest in photographs' formal qualities—qualities that are often submerged by our interest in depiction. Abstract photographs are works of art only because they minister to this interest. They are works of art, but they are not works of representational art. Time to discard (S5).

Philosophy Smothered in Beauty

Eileen Quinlan's *Night Flight #33* of 2008 is a straight shot using a film camera, without subsequent manipulation. The photographed objects are triangles of glass, but having an experience as of triangles of glass adds little if anything to our interest in the photograph. Savedoff suggests that photographs like Cunningham's *Leaf Pattern* delay or impede

depictive recognition. Presumably the arrival of recognition catalyzes or amplifies revelation. But Quinlan's glass shards are either obvious at first sight or add nothing as they are resolved by vision. *Night Flight* pulls us in with the strong depth of its composition, the crisp prismatic reflections around its center, and the ethereality of its tones. The effect of fast-forward motion is powerful and disorienting in an image that is both simple and mysterious, legible and elusive.

An equally timeless but more tranquil and elegant effect is produced by Lotte Jacobi's thoughtfully elegant *Photogenic* of circa 1946 (Figure 8). Jacobi's Photogenics are all photograms, and this one is evidently made by imprinting some translucent, folded stuff. Paper or fabric, perhaps. It scarcely matters to find out. The photographer's portraits of such influential figures as W. H. Auden, Marc Chagall, and J. D. Salinger are well known for having captured what she called the "souls of her sitters." The Photogenics capture the soul of space by economically suggesting the traces of movement through it, as if they were photographic equivalents of Alexander Calder's mobiles.

Pushing the boundaries of the traditional theory of photography is Jessica Eaton's *cfaal 109* (2011), from her series entitled Cubes for Albers and LeWitt. This is made by shooting a set of cubes—one white, two gray, and one black—and then exposing the film to red, green, and blue primaries, so that the grayscale values of the cubes control the colors of the resulting print. Despite the multiple exposures, this is a standard photograph, for there is no violation of belief-independent feature-tracking. Again the point is moot, though. The aim is not to record the details of the cubes but to study relationships between color and space in the style of Albers. While the result is a depiction that affords an experience similar to the experience of looking at cubes, our interest is not in some cubes in Eaton's studio.

Once they have achieved their aim, the rigors of isolation may be relaxed. In particular, works that stand up to (S5) are not representational art even if they are depictive, because what they depict is not an important factor in how they function artistically. As a result, standing up to (S5) does not require a denial of (S1). But neither does it affirm the traditional theory of photography. Tradition makes what is special about photography its manner of depiction. Depiction is neither here nor there when it comes to the art of abstract photography. Therefore, there is no harm at this stage in swapping out the traditional theory for the new theory.

Shirine Gill's *Untitled No. 1* of 2008 (Figure 9) might be called painting with light. A pro-photographic scene is made up of a light source and also the photographer's body in motion. Using a long exposure, she choreographs the dynamic light image to create a recording of what appears to be pure moving form. Objectless photographs that foreground light as an element of the photographic process are sometimes called "luminograms."

Another option is to exploit chemistry and the fourth stage of the photographic process. Tillmans's Silver series is made by running exposed photographic paper through dirty processing machines filled with water, so that the pattern of exposure is modified to pick up traces of crud. What is interesting are the marks the crud lays down on the paper, but what comes before that is still a light image and photographic recording event. The new theory of photography does not require that

Figure 9 Shirine Gill, *Untitled No. 1*, 2008. Courtesy of the artist.

photographic processing preserve most, or much, information recorded in the photographic event.

Representation is only one among many routes to art. This has not been news to anyone since the late eighteenth century, when music without lyrics first began to spread.[281] By the mid-twentieth century, it had become obvious that painting need not travel the path of mimesis. Unsurprisingly, the grip of the representational theory of art has been most tenacious when it comes to photography, because it has seemed entangled with the traditional theory of photography. The fourth art of photography loosens this grip. Eaton, Jacobi, and Quinlan demonstrate that the traditional theory does not rule out abstract photographic art. Skeptics conceded the point on a throwaway basis, because they thought that abstract photographs could not be very interesting.[282] The works described above nix that idea. The seriousness of the concession equals the deep interest we can take in the fourth art of photography.

Crosscurrents and Boundary Conditions

Photography is probably the first art to have developed alongside and in tandem with systematic thinking about its nature: photography theory has always been implicated in photographic creativity and appreciation. From this it does not follow that every individual photograph falls neatly into one and only one art of photography. Boundaries blur and even central cases can be mixed cases.

Methodological skepticism treats the skeptic's argument as a tool by taking it seriously in a rather special way. Without letting it goad us into defending the plain truth that photography is an art, we exploit the precision and cohesion of the skeptic's reasoning in order to understand photography's artistic potential. The aim is not to regiment the practice of photography but to appreciate it. Philosophy is not metaphysical accounting that tots up categories for their own sake, though it can sometimes come across that way. In this essay philosophy has been used to bring out some hidden structures in our thinking that obscure photography's range of powers. Philosophy is like a stain applied by a scientist to a specimen in order to highlight what is important and display it against a more complex background. At the end of the day, methodological skepticism is a tool—a tool for understanding and appreciation.

As we have seen, the skeptic's argument articulates a logic behind the history of photography. The first photographers gloried in the technology's documentary acuity, the pictorialists pulled it closer to the painting of their time, and the classic tradition reacted against pictorialism, until a return to documentation in conceptual art opened the door to cast photography like that of Sherman, Levine, and Wall. Recently, photographers working under a lyrical impulse have explored the multiple potentialities of photographic imaging. Abstract photography turns out

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

to invert the starting point—in abstract photographs documentary depiction is barely relevant.

Behind this history lies a set of assumptions. Photographs are honest signals because they depict the world by tracking its features in a way that is independent of the beliefs of photographers. This means that they cannot express thoughts through what they depict. Yet, representational art is all about the expression of thoughts and photography is a representational art if it is any kind of art. So photography is no kind of art. The key components of this reasoning are depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking, depictively expressed thought, and representational art. The first leaves the artist out, the second requires an artist, the last is the skeptic's unhappy conclusion.

Resisting this conclusion means rethinking the assumptions that make it seem inevitable. The strategy of this essay has been to welcome that rethinking as a source of guidance about how photography may be an art. One art of photography, which lines up with the classic tradition, stands up to the assumption that representational art is all about the expression of thought. Some photographs offer us new and revealing visual experiences. A second art of photography, exemplified by some important art made since the 1980s, stands up to the assumption that thoughts cannot be expressed where there is depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking. Where depiction is mechanical, there can be artistic agency. Lyric photography is our third art, which questions whether photography is depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking, and which conceives photography as means of fashioning marked surfaces from recording events. Finally, since art need not be representational, a fourth art of photography foregrounds form over content.

Stain having been applied to our specimens, their underlying structures pop out. The four arts are the arts of experience, thought, process, and form. Put somewhat differently, each appeals to a different interest that we may take in photographs. Methodological skepticism disentangles these four interests and their artistic roles, so that we can see the presence of each in any photograph that we care about.

Interests need not conflict or jostle for elbow room. One item may appeal to and even coordinate several interests. Sometimes interests aggregate, with each adding a quantity to a sum. Sometimes they interact with each other, so that the end result is more (or sometimes less) than the sum of the parts. Randomly select a photograph that intrigues

you, and the chance is good that it will appeal to more than one of these interests. Take a strong photograph that represents one of the great historical traditions, and it may well appeal to several interests, even if it emphasizes only one. Thankfully, artistic practices are not always pure, no matter how strenuously ideologists may insist that they should be. Probably none of the photographs illustrated in this essay are pure cases of one art, appealing to no interest associated with another art, standing up to only one step in the skeptic's reasoning.

Relax the isolation strategy and the four arts of photography combine with each other to serve up many more arts. In principle each may combine with any of the others to net 24 possibilities.

Working backward through some examples, Gill's *Untitled No. 1* (Figure 9) is a work of lyric abstraction. By moving herself and her camera through a space in front of a light source, she composed a light image and so manipulated the channel conditions of the photographic process. The same goes for Tillmans's Blush photographs, which are made with a handheld light source.

Weston's peppers are lyric revelations. They show us how peppers look as never seen before partly by accentuating the side of photography that is akin to print-making rather than snapshotting. If Ruff's *ga08* aestheticizes the naked boy and makes a nude of him, then maybe it also brings us to see his body anew, as not essentially vulnerable?

Many photographs' formal qualities matter, so that the precariously stacked ovoid masses making up the surface of Brandt's *Nude, East Sussex Coast* (Figure 4) comport with and riff off its quiet content, a content which lets slip a well-known secret. Revelation is amplified through abstraction.

The abstraction of Gursky's *Rhine II* obviously echoes *Paris, Montparnasse*. Nanay reads *Paris, Montparnasse* as a study in active spectatorship.[283] To see the photograph in its entirety and at all levels of scale, we must step back to take in the macro-level apartment house and then step forward for a close up of its inhabitants' spaces before integrating them in imagination. Taking in the photograph's formal composition demands the same kind of integration of disjoint macro and micro perspectives—of the grid and the individual boxes making it up.

At the beginning of this essay, we met Welling's *Flower 009* (see the frontispiece), not yet equipped to look at it with fourfold vision. Does it show us a flower, unexpectedly, for what it is? Does the documentation of plumbago blossoms cast upon film in a darkroom function to articulate

some of the rich thematic associations of flowers? Does it use the material process of photography playfully, for fun, with an idea of indeterminacy, of half-meaning? Does it smother content in the beauty of form and color? Answer yes to all four questions, and perhaps *Flower 009* achieves a delicate balance of all four arts of photography.

Armed with the four arts, we might also revisit some historical movements. For example, pictorialism combined elements of lyricism and cast photography. What had seemed like painterly techniques were treated by pictorialists as legitimately photographic means. Blurring and touching up ennobled the print and gave it the right (usually melancholy) atmosphere. At the same time, scenes were carefully arranged so that, when given atmosphere, they would suggest mystical narratives or transcendental realities.

The straight photographers came down hard on the pictorialists for violating the doctrine of purity. From their aversion to pictorialism, they drew the lesson that a photograph is really successful only when it does what only photography can do. Given the traditional theory of photography, this doctrine led away from both lyricism and casting, toward the classic tradition. If there was something wrong with pictorialism, modernism was the cure—only by accident, because the cure did not treat the underlying cause. Some wonder whether sticking single-heartedly to one art produces better results, or whether a masala is better. It is hard to believe there is a clear cut rule. Why should there be?

To make a party game of it, one might call up photographs on Google Images and sort them into categories: lyric, classic, and classically lyric with a touch of abstraction. Games are fine but what matters more in our engagement with art is appreciation. Philosophy cannot deliver nuanced critical judgments, but it can help us to discern the individual ingredients that may be mixed together for subtle effect. Philosophy hands off to criticism and theory, with the hope that it has given them something useful to work with.

Boundary Conditions

Mixed or pure, central cases imply borderline cases; it is no fault in a theory if it predicts and helps make sense of how one phenomenon shades off into another. Some photographs do not fit even the more

generous and easygoing theory of photography as a means of making marks using information from a recording of a light image of a scene.

In 1996, Ellen Carey had spent more than a decade taking photographs with a 20 × 24 inch camera fed with Polaroid film. With this system, a shot is taken and then pulled through the camera's rollers, which break open a pod of reagent and spread it over the film to begin the chemistry needed to get a visible image. By accident, Carey continued pulling the film out of the camera, creating an abstract form on a scroll-like sheet. This was the start of her Pull series. Normally, a light exposure is involved, but the act of pulling the film through the camera wipes out any image that we could experience as resembling the light source. Later images in the Pulls series dispense with the recording event entirely.

For Carey, this an example of "photography degree zero." Presumably, the reasoning is that since the Polaroid system is a photographic technology, it makes photographs even in the absence of a pro-photographic scene, light image, or recording event. Yet, according to the new theory of photography, Carey's Pulls are not photographs because the recording event is required, and the scene, light image, and mark-making process are not essentially photographic except insofar as they tie in to a photographic recording event.

Hiroshi Sugimoto first captured the art world's attention by taking very long exposure shots of cinema interiors with movies playing. What results is a pure white rectangle, the sum of all the projected light from many rapidly projected images. The series is about the photographic light image and the recording event. A more recent series dispenses with both. To make the Lightning Fields, Sugimoto ran hundreds of thousands of volts of electricity through photosensitive emulsion, and then processed it in the usual way to make prints. According to the new theory, the result is not a photograph because there is no pro-photographic scene, light image, or photographic recording event. Surely it is not a drawing or painting either.

Not much is to be gained by worrying about the impact on the new theory of photography of classifying the Lightning Fields and Pulls as photographs. They are called photographs, and it is not hard to see why. Both employ mark-making technologies that have a long association with photography. Polaroid technology was conceived and delivered as a member of the family of technologies that makes up photography. Sugimoto's Lightning Fields are gelatin–silver prints, art photography's

quintessence. Taking a bird's eye perspective, we may wonder why these particular mark-making technologies are photographic. The answer is that they are very often used to render images from photographic recording events, though they can be put to other uses too. Were it not for this tie between specific mark-making processes and the photographic recording event, we would hardly even entertain the thought that Lightning Fields and Pulls might be photographs. What is on—or just over—the boundary depends on what is at the center. Technologies that are associated with photography can be used outside the photographic process, strictly speaking.

One boundary lies between photography and non-photographic imaging; another demarcates photographs that are art from those that are not. A caricatured version of the skeptic's argument, presented at the beginning of this essay, was met with an equally caricatured reply. Photography is an art and nearly everyone takes photographs, so nearly everyone is an artist—photography is the democratic apotheosis of art. The problem with this reasoning is that art photographs are taken within artistic practices, so not everyone who takes photographs makes art. At the same time, it is unlikely that anything completely general can be said about which practices are artistic. Many practices revolve around a serious interest in photography, but they nevertheless fail to qualify as art practices. The smaller the difference between art and non-art photography, the less it matters to us, as aficionados of photography, to police the boundary.

Ironically, a side effect of ancient anxieties about photography's artistic credentials may be that the boundary between art and non-art is especially porous in the case of photography. Cartier-Bresson is probably one of the two or three most important photographic artists of the previous century, and he devoted a great deal of his energy to photojournalism, publishing in magazines such as *Regards* and *Vogue*. His news shots of the coronation of George VI and Elizabeth got prominent display at a 2014 retrospective at the Pompidou in Paris. Likewise, Avedon carefully straddled a neighboring boundary between art and fashion. Could a painter get away with this?

In view of photography's invention as a scientific instrument, the boundary between art and scientific images is especially fascinating. Anna Atkins's book entitled *Photographs of British Algae* was the first of several of her collections of cyanotypes—photograms made by a process

related to the blueprint.[284] Atkins's work now appeals as much, if not more, to the aesthete as the botanist. Eadweard Muybridge's photographic studies of motion are textbook material in the history of photographic art.

Nowadays the artist–scientist is more likely to be found working in interactive computer art than in photography, but contemporary photographic artists have access to vast supply of scientific images for appropriation. Ruff's Stellar Landscapes are images of celestial bodies, printed at large scale, full of detail and splendor. The twist is that they were taken by NASA space vessels and downloaded by Ruff. My personal favorite is the Cassini series, which features images from a mission to Saturn that capture the majesty of the planet's rings in a way that rivals the efforts of abstract painters. Crisp bands of perfectly uniform color are enameled against an inky nothingness.

The standard line on the series is that it highlights the inauthenticity of contemporary scientific images. Images made to probe the mysteries of nature are easily misinterpreted by non-specialists: specialist knowledge is needed to use them as sources of accurate information.[285] Most shots of celestial bodies are false-color images, made by recording light outside the visible spectrum and rendering an image through an artificial mapping onto visible hues. There is no point in space from which one can view the Ring Nebula and see the spectacular blues and oranges of the Hubble Space Telescope image.[286] The nebula simply does not have that color. Adding the color makes it easier for us to resolve the details of the nebula's structure. Needless to say, the powerful color palette ups the aesthetic impact. So when Ruff adds color to his NASA downloads, he does what the scientists already do. NASA calls one of its Cassini–Huygens shots of Saturn's rings *Cool Shadow*.[287]

"Inauthenticity" is a strong word. Astronomers engage in epistemic practices where the details of false color are well known and false color images are perfectly good sources of information. As it turns out, astronomers also act on their aesthetic interests when they make false color images. Only given the traditional theory of photography is this a problem, for it opposes scientific to aesthetic interests except where there is revelation. But the color we see is not revealed. Drop the traditional theory, and there is far more room for making images that join aesthetic and scientific interests. Astronomers make instructive photographs of the stars by a kind of painting.

Does it follow that NASA's shots of Saturn's rings are works of art? Not so fast. Art comes out of participation in an artistic practice. NASA scientists do not as a rule belong to artistic practices. Nevertheless, what Ruff and NASA do with data gathered by the Cassini spacecraft serves similar aesthetic interests. That is another boundary crossing that the right conception of photography permits us to celebrate.

Photography is not an art. This proposition has long nagged at photographers, photography's theorists, and its enthusiasts. Lodged deep beneath the skin, it has been a constant source of irritation. Perhaps some of its hold on us comes from the equal and opposite response, namely that photography is an art. Perhaps that response puts matters too simply. If this essay is on track, photography is not an art. It is not even four arts. It is many. And there are many non-artistic yet equally interesting photographies. The assemblage of ideas that support the nagging proposition need but a little rearranging to supply building blocks for a far more articulate appreciation of photography.

Appendix: The Skeptic's Argument

(P) a photograph is an image that depicts by belief-independent feature-tracking, so

(S1) a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, and

(S2a) if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking then it cannot express thoughts depictively, and

(S2b) if a pure photograph cannot express thoughts depictively then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought, so

(S2) if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought, but

(S3a) an image is a representational art work only if there can be an interest in the image itself, and

(S3b) an interest in an image itself is either an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought or as a duplicate, but

(S3c) an interest in an image as a duplicate is only an interest in the duplicated object,

(S3d) so an interest in an image as a duplicate is not an interest in the image itself, so

(S3e) an interest in an image itself is only an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought, so

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

(S3) an image is a representational art work only if there can be an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought,
(S4) so no pure photograph is a representational art work, but
(S5) photography is an art only if some pure photographs are representational art works,
(S6) so photography is not an art.

Doing Justice to the Art in Photography

Diarmuid Costello

In *Four Arts of Photography*, Dominic McIver Lopes takes aim at the narrow focus of mainstream philosophy of photography to date. If he is right (and I believe he is), philosophy has taken a significant but nonetheless partial subset of photographic practices as a model for thinking about the whole. As a result, a small number of epistemic questions have tended to dominate discussions of its nature. In what I shall call its "orthodox" guise, the thinking runs as follows. In photography, the image is produced by a non-human recording mechanism. Unlike human beings, recording mechanisms are immune to transcription errors generated by selective attention or false beliefs. Mechanisms that are immune to these errors are especially reliable carriers of information. So photographic images are known to be reliable sources of information, simply because they are photographic, whereas images made by the human hand are not. Call this photography's "epistemic privilege."

But the very same reasoning has led many to believe that photography is artistically hobbled from the get-go. We look to art for just those traces of subjectivity that are revealed by a particular artist's choices about what to thematize and what to suppress and how to do so. But these choices compromise an image's reliability as an information carrier. So photography's epistemic privilege comes at the cost of its artistic potential. Call this photography's "aesthetic deficit." As a corollary, when a photograph does succeed as art, it must be to the detriment of not only its epistemic privilege, but also its purely photographic nature. Variants of this pattern of reasoning, which posits a zero-sum contest between photography's aesthetic and epistemic capacities, have been the basis of a recurring skepticism about photography's artistic potential since its invention.

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

Four Arts of Photography intervenes in this standoff between epistemic privilege and aesthetic deficit by rejecting the narrow epistemic focus of the mainstream philosophy of photography and by seeking to show that photography's epistemic benefits need not come at the cost of its aesthetic potential. Whether or not there is a trade-off depends on how a particular photographer engages with the art form—or, as Lopes would have it, with which of the various arts of photography he or she is working in. To see this, we need a more nuanced conception of photography's artistic possibilities.

The setup is both bracing and elegant. Lopes refuses to dignify skepticism regarding photography's standing as art by trying to prove that photography is an art. That skepticism is false is taken as a datum. That is the bracing bit. The kind of skepticism that Lopes focuses on is clearly of Scrutonian descent, but Lopes takes the skeptic's reasoning to be an instance of more general patterns of thinking about photography. Since there is nothing wrong with the skeptic's logic, despite the skepticism being false, there must be something wrong with the skeptic's premises. If Lopes is right, there is something wrong with every premise in the skeptical argument. There are four substantive premises in the argument as Lopes reconstructs it, and he sets out to demonstrate that they are all false by isolating each in turn and showing how one of the corresponding "four arts" of the title stands up to it. That is the elegant bit.

Lopes calls his approach "methodological skepticism." The gambit is that counter-posing skeptical patterns of reasoning with different ways of practicing photographic art provides a better sense of how photography can be art and where skepticism overlooks them. The take-home message, which will come as no surprise to anyone who cares about photography, is that contemporary skepticism about photographic art stems from an undifferentiated, philistine ignorance of the field—despite its puffed-up, self-important guardianship of aesthetic value in art.

Straight modernist photography, or what Lopes calls "the classic tradition," is said to stand up to the skeptical premise that "an image is a representational work of art only if there can be an interest in it as a depictively expressed thought." It stands up to this premise by drawing attention to a source of genuine aesthetic interest in an image that the skeptic neglects. Images produced by belief-independent feature-tracking defamiliarize the world so as to feed an aesthetic interest in revelatory seeing—that is, in seeing the world photographically, as one

has not seen it before. This is revelatory because one knows, courtesy of knowing that the image has been produced by belief-independent feature-tracking, that it is the world itself that one is seeing, not some invention on the part of an artist. So understood, photography satisfies an aesthetic interest in seeing the world transformed by its photographic depiction.

What Lopes calls "cast photography" is presented as a legacy of conceptual artists' recourse to photography for its most banal, documentary capabilities, and encompasses a broad range of post-1970s developments in photographic art. When cast photography succeeds, it shows that representing interesting thoughts is not only compatible with, but can even cancel out, the banality of depicted scenes. As in the classic tradition, it accepts the orthodox claim that pure photographs depict solely by belief-independent feature-tracking; unlike the classic tradition, it shows that this does not preclude photography expressing thoughts by choosing between scenes available for documentation. By "casting" existing objects and scenes in this way, the second art imbues images with subjects distinct from those objects they depict through belief-independent feature-tracking.

The third art of photography, which Lopes calls "lyricism," tackles the orthodox account head on, by disputing its most fundamental claim, namely that "a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking." Lyricism encompasses a wide range of practices focused on the material processes and procedures of photography itself, thematizing them so as to put pressure on the view that pure photography consists solely in belief-independent feature-tracking. If there are pure photographs that do not depict solely by belief-independent feature-tracking, we have a powerful incentive to formulate a new theory of photography. Lyric photographs are made through diverse forms of mark-making—most not unique to photography—guided by information output from a "photographic event" (of recording a light image).

The fourth art of photography, which Lopes calls "abstract," stands up to the final premise in the skeptical argument, namely that "photography is an art only if some pure photographs are representational art works." Here, it is important to recall that the methodological skeptic isolates each premise in turn and pairs it with a practice of art photography that is said to stand up to just this premise while letting the other premises pass unchallenged. Leaving untouched the cornerstone of the

orthodox theory—depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking—Lopes cannot construe abstract photography as non-representational; rather, he holds that its representational character cannot be what makes it art. His proposal is that abstract photography is art that foregrounds photographs' formal properties to sustain an aesthetic interest.

So much for the "four arts" of the title. Real-world cases, as Lopes acknowledges, are typically hybrid: they stand up to more than one premise simultaneously. The isolation strategy is simply a heuristic for bringing out the variety of in-principle-distinguishable ways in which photography can be art and the corresponding ways skepticism goes astray by neglecting them. From a philosophical perspective, Lopes' way of carving up the terrain results in a fresh take on the issues that is elegantly conceived and bracingly delivered. As a bonus, it introduces philosophers to a range of photographic art practices with which many may not already be familiar.

But the goal, I take it, is also to serve non-philosophers, particularly critics and theorists of photographic art. As Lopes describes his ambition, it is to show them that philosophical approaches to photography bring something worth taking seriously to the table, something that should be of use to them. The ambition is laudable: I am sympathetic to the goal and to the belief in the relevance of philosophical reflection for other fields. So what are the implications of Lopes' "methodological skepticism" outside philosophy? Will it do much to engender a more philosophically informed criticism? One way it might is by leading by example—by modeling from the opposite direction what a more art-critically-informed philosophy might look like. Does it?

Here I think the answer may be yes or no, depending on what one takes a critically informed philosophy of photography to involve. Lopes is certainly more familiar with photographic art than most philosophers who write about photography, and this can only be a good thing when it comes to showing how philosophy bears on artistic practice. Even so, I suspect that many art critics and theorists may bridle at Lopes' division of the field. Take what he calls "cast photography:" this includes postmodern appropriation and mimicry of genre conventions in the "Pictures" of Sherrie Levine and Cindy Sherman, as well as the resurgence of something much closer to a modernist aesthetic in the "Tableaux form" of Jeff Wall and Andreas Gursky—two diametrically opposed tendencies in recent art photography.[1] Lyricism ranges just as

broadly: from Richard Mosse's hot pink documents of war-torn Congo, made by exploiting the effects of infra-red on the visible spectrum, through Thomas Ruff's pixelated pornographic screen-grabs and Craigie Horsfield's enormous, meditative textiles of crowds, circuses, and fire works, to James Welling's disorientating images of Philip Johnson's Glass House. These artists are doing quite different things with technical process and thematic content. Yet, for the purpose of contesting the skeptical argument, these differences are moot.

Lopes is the first to acknowledge that the four arts are philosophical abstractions: they do not purport to carve the art world at its artistic or critical joints. Instead, they take the premises of the skeptical argument as an optic through which to view art world practices in a new light: "The arts of photography that can be read off the skeptic's argument do not always align with the categories wielded in art history books, but that is nothing to worry about so long as alternative perspectives shed light on what we care about" (p. 52). What we care about is likely to vary significantly between disciplines, but one question that naturally arises is whether methodological skepticism does, or indeed could, illuminate what we care about, if it categorizes such different practices as standing up to the same skeptical premises. Note that, on Lopes' account, such differences do not count as photographic, because they do not reflect the deep structural possibilities afforded by the medium. What I am calling "critical" differences fall through that mesh. Clearly, parsing the arts on the basis of the skeptic's argument divides the field in a more coarse-grained way than criticism requires. It is compatible with Lopes' approach that there may be greater differences within the arts than there are between them, and these differences matter, however insignificant they may seem philosophically.

Need this be a problem? It might if criticism looked to philosophy for how to go about its business, but why on earth should it do that? Criticism is fine just as it is—or, if it is not, the problem is not one that philosophy may be expected to sort out. This brings me to a rather different sense in which philosophy might matter for criticism. Criticism might look to philosophy for some analysis or elucidation of those concepts on which its practice depends that do not typically come up for sustained interrogation by critics. These concepts pertain not only to the identification and demarcation of the critical domain ("photograph," "photography," "photographic") but also to what a photographer does.

The latter can be understood specifically ("expose," "capture," "process," "print," "edit") or generically ("act," "intend," or "cause"). The generic set of terms is especially important because photography has always been shadowed by worries about its mechanical substrate impacting its standing as an art. The skeptical argument is a direct descendant of such worries.

The book really delivers on this front, by drawing on G. E. M. Anscombe and Donald Davidson to illuminate the gap between agency and intention. In a nutshell, intention entails agency but not vice versa: though all intentional acts are acts of agents, not all acts of agents are intentional.[2] A plausible conception of agency cannot require that acts be intentional per se—that is, under every description—but merely that they be intentional under some description. Putting it this way creates space for us to do many things that we do not intend to do—so long as there is at least one description of what we do under which we do intend it, and so can be asked for our reasons.

How might such apparently abstruse considerations help the working critic? As Lopes demonstrates in discussing a famous image of Cardinal Pacelli by Henri Cartier-Bresson, they show that a photographer need not intend every detail in a shot, on the model of a (ridiculously overblown) conception of intention in painting, in order for the shot to count as an expression of his or her agency. Even what gets recorded solely because it happens to be in shot alongside the intended subject, and so had to be recorded, may express the photographer's agency. Details that Cartier-Bresson could not have anticipated and probably was unaware of (he held the camera above his head to get the shot) can be subsumed under the intention to depict the cardinal surrounded by the faithful. This small piece of conceptual machinery immediately defuses some of the standard worries about the photographer's lack of absolute control over what makes it into the image.

Granted, depiction by belief-independent feature-tracking is not itself something we do—a machine takes care of that—but it can be part of something we do so long as, in Anscombe's words, it is "swallowed up" by some broader description, as in the Cartier-Bresson case.[3] Were criticism to take this on board, it would no longer be periodically assailed by the kind of worries that arise from implicitly understanding photography by means of an opposition to painting. Recall the millennialism that greeted digital photography—all that talk about "photography

after photography" and the "ontology of the digital image"? Were photography and painting not assumed to be mutually exclusive, the scope for manipulation afforded by digital "painting by pixels" would not have seemed to question photography's existence. Painters typically manipulate one set of tools, photographers another, but the tools overlap and intermingle, and either can express artistic agency. This is one implication of Lopes' approach for criticism.[4]

So much for what criticism might learn from philosophy. What might philosophy learn from criticism? Philosophy typically looks to criticism for a more nuanced understanding of the field, and Lopes' references attest to wide reading in the critical literature, even if it is not always easy to put such reading to use, philosophically. Take Lopes' remarks about Jeff Wall and Gerhard Richter.

According to Lopes, Wall practices cast photography. Cast photography stands up to the claim that "if a pure photograph is an image that depicts only by belief-independent feature-tracking, then there can be no interest in it as a depictively expressed thought." It uses casting: selecting, staging, lighting, framing—in sum, directing—objects so as to make images convey thoughts that are not exhausted by the scenes depicted. In casting, all the action is in the staging rather than the recording of the scene. The recording of the scene remains a matter of belief-independent feature-tracking, just as orthodoxy maintains. But, contrary to orthodox assumptions, feature-tracking can be a means to express thoughts in pictorial form. In Wall's *Mimic* (1982), the thought is about how "small tears in the social fabric release energy in the form of a mocking gesture" (p. 61), though this is not what is recorded. What is actually recorded is a staged interaction between three people in a Vancouver street. Lopes terms the thought expressed the work's "subject," and what is actually recorded the work's "object," respectively. The photograph records the object, but it has been staged in such a way as to communicate the larger subject.

Unlike painting, as Scruton understands it, a photograph's subject is not represented by depicting objects in such a way as to communicate thoughts about them (P depicts O as S). But this is not because photography, as Scruton understands it, passively records objects that already represent subjects, as when actors are filmed while acting (P records O, and O represents S). Rather, cast photographs depict objects, and in doing so represent subjects (P depicts O and represents S). Cast

photography is *doubly* representational, representing at two distinct levels. Lopes' account of these differences is subtle, but may be harder to secure than he believes. It is not clear, given the stress on belief-independent-feature-tracking at the primary level, what transforms mere recording into depicting. Moreover, it presumably matters that Wall's figures are depicted in one way rather than another—it is hard to imagine a harmonious group representing "small tears in the social fabric"—and, given this, it seems odd to deny that the communication of the thought depends, at least to this extent, on how the figures are depicted, namely, as conflicted.

If that is right, it is not clear what is wrong with claiming that this image depicts its objects in a particular light, just as (much) painting does. The racist is depicted as both menacing and cowardly, making his gesture at the outer edge of the Asian man's field of vision. The Asian man, by contrast, is depicted as caught between two ways of responding, not sure whether to confront or ignore a gesture that he is not sure he has witnessed. The racist's girlfriend, who has to be dragged along, makes a point of staring straight ahead, despite the glare from a low sun. If the response is that none of this is depicted photographically, since the camera merely records three actors acting out a scene on a Vancouver street, we are back with P records O and O represents S: the photographer, unlike the painter, does not represent a menacing racist; he uses a machine to record an actor who does so. Although even new theorists such as Lopes are willing to grant the idea of bare recording at the primary level of belief-independent feature-tracking, the orthodox construal will not do. To focus on the camera as a recording device is to look in the wrong direction: it is the intentions of the photographer, not the mechanics of the camera, that need to be considered. And it seems that Wall really does intend to represent O as S: the racist as menacing, the Asian man as uncertain, the girlfriend as unwilling accomplice. He simply uses a camera in order to accomplish this.

Contrary to what orthodoxy maintains, these representational acts do not take place prior to and independently of the exercise of photographic agency. Wall has to direct all this, and be looking through his camera for the moment at which it all coheres. The full representational act, which includes directing the actors, is completed when Wall trips the shutter, thereby endorsing what appears on the ground glass back of his view camera. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say

that his endorsement remains provisional, waiting upon confirmation at the light box. This would certainly be true of images that are post-produced.[5]

Richter, by contrast, practices lyricism. For Lopes, this means that some of Richter's paintings count as photography in a lyrical vein. This claim is sure to elicit debate, as are Lopes' claims about lyricism more generally. Many of the practices brought together under the banner of lyricism will not count as photography if the orthodox view is correct and pure photographs are images that depict solely by belief-independent feature-tracking. Take Richter's paintings *Betty* of 1988 (Figure 7) and *Lesende* of 1994. Though they might be mistaken for photographs when viewed in reproduction, it seems natural to characterize them as oil paintings that take photographs as either their source material or subject matter. That is, they are paintings of or about photographs. As is well known, this is not how Richter sees them. Richter calls them "photo-paintings," by which he means something much stronger than paintings of or from or about photographs—a way of making photographs by painting:

> I'm not trying to imitate a photograph; I'm trying to make one. And if I disregard the assumption that a photograph is a piece of paper exposed to light, then I am practicing photography by other means: I'm not producing paintings that remind you of a photograph but producing photographs. And, seen in this way, those of my paintings that have no photographic source (the abstracts, etc.) are also photographs.[6]

Lopes wants to take Richter at his word, and notes that it is hard to do so while clinging to the orthodox theory of photography. But the new theory provides just what is needed:

> a photograph is an image that is a product of a photographic process, which includes (1) a photographic event, plus (2) processes for making marked surfaces (p. 81).

This is Lopes' pithiest statement of the new theory, and it makes one very canny move. The first clause ensures the distinction between photographs and non-photographic images by implicating a photographic event (the recording of information from a light image) in the causal history of all photographs. As a result, the second clause, concerning the use of various processes and technologies for marking surfaces, need no

longer discharge this burden. Processes for marking surfaces may now include non-photographic technologies. In effect, the first clause acknowledges the causal or natural aspect of photography: the darkening of silver salts or the generation of electrical impulses on exposure of various kinds of light-sensitive surfaces to light. But it shrinks photographic causation to a point, the recording of the light image, without defining photography as belief-independent and without opposing photographs to images made by hand. It thereby frees up the image-rendering process to be anything photographers want it to be. The crucial conceptual point is that photography is now conceived as a multi-stage image-making process that begins, but does not end, in a photographic event. All photographs implicate such an event, but further image-rendering processes are required to make the information recorded available in a form that may be visually appreciated.[7]

Consider *Betty* and *Lesende* in this light. The independence of Lopes' two conditions, together with the fact that both Richter paintings originate in photographic events (they are painted from photographic sources), mean that the paintings count as photographs for Lopes.[8] This will be enough to make many balk. But the photographic look of these images arguably obscures just how counter-intuitive a result this is. To see this, one needs to look away from images that so obviously resemble their photographic sources.

Imagine the following case. Using an opaque projector, Richter projects a photograph of Kölner Dom onto the surface of a canvas, traces its outlines, and sets about painting the image. Almost finished, he then blurs the image by dragging solvent across the still wet surface. Applying more and more solvent, but still not happy, he eventually resorts to either scraping away the image or dragging fresh paint across the canvas with an outsized silkscreen blade. How should we understand the resulting image: is it a painting, a photograph, both a painting and a photograph, or neither? The final image, which appears to be a largely monochromatic gray abstract with residual traces of other colors and some facture, is clearly a painting—what else would one call it? But it also implicates a photographic event in its causal history. Like *Betty*, it originates in a photographic event to which further image-rendering processes have been applied. So described, there is little difference between them. But if it is a photograph, what is it a photograph of? Can the gray monochrome before us really be described as a photograph, let alone a photograph of Kölner Dom?

Lopes offers the beginnings of a response to this worry. He talks at various points about marks being made "guided by" or "under the control of" information output from a photographic event, and of pure photographs being "output by processes where information in light images of pro-photographic scenes inputs into the making of visibly marked or differentiated surfaces" (p. 97). These are vague formulations; it is hard to be sure what they rule in or out. What constitutes sufficient (or merely necessary) control or guidance for something to count as a photograph on this account? Perhaps Lopes takes being "under the control of" information recorded from a photographic event to be a vague notion with fuzzy borders—if so, what counts in one instance need not generalize to others. Be that as it may, one thing is clear: Lopes cannot appeal to belief-independence to rule an image in or out without sliding back into the account he means to outflank. So, as yet it seems he has offered no principled basis for saying that this is not a photograph of Kölner Dom.

Perhaps the bullet is one that Lopes is prepared to bite. He grants that "nothing in this theory of photography restricts how the light image is formed or how the surface is finally marked. … Since a photograph might also be made through Photoshopping or drawing … there is potential for a massive loss of information from the pro-photographic scene" (p. 109). Discussing Wolfgang Tillmans, he acknowledges that "the new theory does not require that photographic processing preserve most, or much, information recorded in the photographic event" (pp. 123–4). Read carefully, such formulations imply that total loss information, total absence of control, would prevent the resulting image counting as a photograph. That being the case, more needs to be said if Lopes wants to stop this slope extending all the way to Richter's gray monochrome.

In fact, one does not need to look far to locate the beginnings of a response to such worries. One way to go would be to place an experiential or appreciative constraint on what suffices. Set aside its causal history and focus for a moment on the monochrome before us: we would not normally entertain a gray monochrome to be a picture of Köln Cathedral in anything but a metaphorical sense. Anything we would be willing to entertain as a picture of that august building will either resemble it to the point of facilitating a visual experience as of the cathedral, or at the very least permit us to see something that could be the cathedral in its surface. In other words, one may plug in one's preferred account of depiction at

this point. Unless the thinnest recognition requirement is met, we are likely to reject, absent special considerations in its favor, the claim that the monochrome is a picture of the cathedral. The spirit of Lopes' proposal is, I take it, that there is no reason to treat photography differently. Perhaps one should say that once its photographic genesis no longer bears on its appreciation, the canvas really is just a monochrome painting.

Is this true of my imaginary example of Kölner Dom? Saying yes seems to present a dilemma: either the image is a photograph, and a total loss of information is possible after all; or it is not a photograph, and its photographic origins do not matter to its appreciation. The former is unpalatable, for reasons already considered. The latter is false: it makes a difference to appreciating two gray monochromes if one knows that only one was arrived at by over-painting or erasing a photorealist image. One need only imagine another gray monochrome, also derived initially from a photograph and titled "Auschwitz," to see this quite vividly. But a third possibility is consistent with the spirit of Lopes' approach: the image is no longer a photograph, but its photographic origins nonetheless matter to its appreciation as a painting. If that were the case, Lopes' view would turn out to be less permissive than either Richter's, taken at his word, or those critics' who endorse his more extreme pronouncements.

Both philosophically informed criticism (as opposed to criticism that ventriloquizes large chunks of the critic's preferred philosophers) and critically informed philosophy (as opposed to philosophy that appeals to the same jejune examples repeatedly) remain something of rarity. Each demands a dual focus. The former requires the critic to be mindful of generally applicable conceptual distinctions, despite the fact that criticism requires attention to particulars. The latter requires the philosopher to be aware of fine-grained critical differences, despite the fact that making generalizable conceptual distinctions entails means rising above such differences. The aptitude, broadmindedness, and patience for such dual focus are rare: accomplished exponents of either domain tend to master one at the expense of the other. Perhaps we are beginning to see this change. Once these aptitudes are no longer considered mutually exclusive, philosophy may finally do justice to the art in photography.

Four Thoughts about *Four Arts of Photography*

Cynthia A. Freeland

The Uses of Philosophy

What role can philosophers play in understanding either art or photography? Dominic Lopes aims to use philosophy "solicitously, to gauge the power of photography as an art" (p. xiv). He says he does not have the interest or talent for philosophy-as-art-criticism *à la* Arthur Danto, Richard Wollheim, Martha Nussbaum, and Alexander Nehamas. Lopes is too modest about his potential as a philosopher–critic, judging from his fine discussions of such works as Eileen Quinlan's *Night Flight* and Lotte Jacobi's *Photogenics*. Still, I understand why he contrasts his goals with those of the critic–philosophers. Those thinkers share broadly cognitivist views about art: philosophical interpretation can help show how meaning is communicated by a work's artistic features—style, symbolism, imagery, and so on. Philosophy can also *assess* a work's meaning, judging it plausible, novel, or insightful.

Other philosophers have also, famously, written books about art, and some of their texts are still read today. Two examples are Aristotle's *Poetics* and Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. These thinkers were less interested in whether a given medium was art, or in how to construe the meaning of particular works, than in describing individual genres. Ostensibly, they both dealt with tragedy, though the true subject of Nietzsche's text includes the Wagnerian operas he so admired (at the time). For each philosopher, the appropriate account of art is normative. For Aristotle, tragedy has a natural development and aim—eliciting catharsis. For Nietzsche, the best tragic art presents a Dionysian vision of horror through the beautiful veil of Apollonian art.

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

Philosophers no longer compose prescriptive accounts of individual art forms or genres. This makes it surprising to recognize that there are prescriptive elements in dismissals of photography as art. The thinkers Lopes discusses, such as Susan Sontag and Roger Scruton, did not presume to dictate what photography should be or do—but they definitely told us what it could *not* be or do. They made presumptions about what art is meant to do or achieve. This is what motivates Lopes to employ philosophy's power to analyze arguments denying that photography is art. The goal is not to dictate what photographic artists must do or what their works mean, but to free this medium up from murky-minded gatekeeping. Lopes' clear formulation of the premises of the anti-art argument and his careful examination of each one do us a service. A plus is that he can show how the mistaken assumptions underlying various premises of the traditional argument match up with possibilities for several distinct artful uses of photography. He is right, then, to characterize his aim as being "not to regiment the practice of photography but to appreciate it" (p. 125).

Photography, Social Practices, and Flickr

Lopes' essay is theoretical but opens by acknowledging strong personal roots; he confesses to having "a soft spot for photography." He grew up taking and printing photographs. I did not, but when I first tried it, the love was immediate. I learned darkroom techniques when I was a junior professor and took Photography I and II during summer vacation. The darkroom was conveniently housed in the basement of my office building, and I spent from 9 to 5 there every day, emerging dizzy from chemical fumes. Later, when I was on the board of the Houston Center for Photography, someone brought in a digital camera for us to marvel at. That was probably around 1988. We thought it was a gimmick that would never have much to do with art—most everyone worshiped the fine art print. But the gimmick caught on, and, before long, studio photography programs no longer even included darkrooms but were competing for computer funds.

Flash forward to October of 2004 when I first joined the online photography community Flickr. A number of us who had been using

Fotolog made the switch to Flickr, which was fairly new then, due to problems of copyright violation on the other site. Fotolog was like a diary for me and I could not imagine living without it. The statistics wizards at Flickr tell me that since 2004 I have uploaded a total of 12,212 photographs, which have had a total of 2,823,558 views.

This personal history is intended as background for consideration of some points Lopes makes about photographic practices and art. He writes, correctly, that not all photographic practices are art practices. So which ones are? The invention of digital photography and the growth of social media have allowed communities to meet in new ways, gathering around shared interests and appreciative norms "not regulated by galleries, the art press, and the seminar room" (p. 102). Some observations about appreciative norms in the huge Flickr community might be useful in sharpening the question of which practices are art practices. I will mention two examples.

First, I administer a group on Flickr featuring photographs of cakes. Groups on Flickr are a way of sharing photographs around similar interests, from cats, airplanes, and trees to nudes, landscapes, and ships. I launched the group in 2004 with the title "Cake, have it and eat it too!" My interest lies more in eating than creating cakes; I enjoy taking photos of enticing cakes at local bakeries or patisseries when I travel. As it turned out, cake design was the strongest interest among people who joined this group, which now (to my surprise) has 8,983 members who have posted a total of 98,648 photographs. The discussion topics do not concern the art of cake photography but the art of cakes—their baking, decoration, and, sometimes, marketing.

An interesting challenge arose at one point, prompting me to intervene as moderator: it involved the popularity of so-called "kitty litter cakes." These are made in a large pan and resemble—you guessed it—well-used kitty litter boxes, complete with big balls of chocolate "stuff." They are realistic and look very repellent. Made as a joke, they are popular even though people often can't bring themselves to take a bite. When members of the cakes group complained about these photos, I summarily deleted them. I live with cats and already look at too much actual kitty excrement in litter boxes. In a revised group description, I stated that the cakes must look delicious and appetizing. Clearly, this is not a standard related to norms of art, though it does involve appreciation and aesthetic values.

A second example comes from the popular phenomenon of high-dynamic-range (HDR) photography. Many groups on Flickr are devoted to HDR. A helpful description is provided by Peter Thoeny, whose Flickr name includes the epithet "Quality HDR Photography." He explains that a scene has high dynamic range if there is a great difference between its brightest and darkest areas. This range is captured in cameras by using f-stops or exposure settings. Good cameras have a varying range of f-stops, while printing devices, whether paper or LCD display, have a lower range. In either case, the dynamic range available is far less than that of the human eye. The challenge of HDR is to use multiple images or resources of processing and software in order to capture and/or print the wider range of light available to our eyes—despite using a technology that is inherently more limited.

HDR images always look surreal to me—ironic, given that the aim is to capture what we can actually see so as to make the resulting image more realistic. I describe HDR images as surreal because they counter expectations of "normal" photographs. The range of colors available in an HDR-processed sunset scene, for example, is so marvelous that it calls to mind some sort of heavenly paint box.

HDR is still controversial even though (maybe because) it has become so popular. Someone deliberately flamed the members of one Flickr HDR group by posting that "HDR Sucks." Needless to say, that troll's claim elicited multiple responses. Defenders compared HDR to a digital darkroom. Thoeny explains that prejudices against HDR stem from mistakes by amateurs who tend to "overcook" their images. Another advocate said, "If you don't like HDR, that's fine but don't go around crapping all over people who do and their work. Photography is an art and that art covers many styles and genres and beauty is in the eye of the beholder."[1]

Unlike the cakes group, members of the HDR groups on Flickr do aim at "artistic" photos. But the popular consensus is that the artistic is entirely subjective. I just cited an instance of this view. Thoeny provides another: "Artistic HDR processing definitely manipulates images, so HDR images are not to everybody's taste. I am cool with that, art is a very subjective matter."[2]

What can we conclude about art practices in these social contexts? Lopes says that an art practice has norms of creativity and appreciation, but he worries whether this gives up too easily on the question of art. There is no authority that lists standards for art, as kennel clubs do

for dogs. For Lopes, this is as it must be, because "it is unlikely that anything completely general can be said about which practices are artistic" (p. 130).[3] It is confusing that Lopes provides such an open-ended account of when photography is art by reference to social practices. The knotty work of his essay involves examining the standard argument against photography counting as art. I wonder whether this strenuous perusal is necessary if we can bypass it and account for photography's status as art in terms of relevant social practices.

To be fair, Lopes does say more about when a social practice should count as art. He gives his own example of a Flickr group ostensibly concerned about the art of photography. When someone submitted a particular image without identifying its source, group members faulted it for numerous problems and defects. Embarrassingly, it turned out to be a classic shot by Henri Cartier-Bresson, making the critics seem like dunces. But Lopes does not denounce them. The group members had distinct norms of their own that simply did not conform to expectations of the art photography establishment. Lopes seems to celebrate their independence: "These practices operate beyond the establishment's reach and without its patronage" (p. 102).

What does this open conception of art practices suggest about my two examples of Flickr groups? Both groups have norms. However, the cakes group seems not to participate in photography as an art practice, since the shared norms have to do with cake making as an artistic practice. (Nothing rules out cake photography being an artistic practice, though, and many books are dedicated to the fine art of food photography.)

It is harder to assess whether the HDR groups are dedicated to a particular art practice. Many participants seem genuinely concerned with what is artful or not within their domain. Creativity and skill are applauded—for example, achieving expressive effects by highlighting a scene's "Gothic" or serene aspects. And, as we saw, "overcooking" is derided as amateurish. There are shared standards of aesthetic excellence, and thus Lopes could point to implicit norms that explain the "creative, appreciative, critical, and curatorial behavior of practitioners" (p. 99). But it is still hard for me as a philosopher to agree that HDR groups share an artistic practice, given that so many participants endorse the view that beauty and art are subjective! If art is in the eye of the beholder, then in what sense is there a shared norm or artistic practice? Perhaps we simply must call such people irrational. We can focus on the

implicit norms that govern actual practices of posting and commenting, and discount as nonsense more general claims about the nature of art.

A Different Model of Art

The thinkers who express skepticism about photography's status as art often evince a strain of what I call mysticism in their writing. They resemble the early sitters for photographic portraits who feared that a photograph would steal their souls. By capturing light rays reflecting from their faces, the camera would remove and retain particles of their being. From this perspective, photography is not mechanical but alchemical or magical. This view is reiterated by Roland Barthes:

> The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me. … I am delighted (or depressed) to know that the thing of the past, by its immediate radiations (its luminances), has really touched the surface which in its turn my gaze will touch.[4]

Susan Sontag in *On Photography* attributes the mystical approach to everyone, conjecturing that "we" would value even a blurry photo of Shakespeare more than a fine Holbein portrait—even regarding it as something like a nail from the True Cross.[5] In the same vein, Kendall Walton writes that we value perceptual contact more than information: "we sometimes display and cherish a photograph of a loved one … even a fuzzy and badly exposed photograph, long after we have extracted any interesting or important information it might contain."[6]

It is noteworthy that most of this mystical talk concerns photographs of people; no one waxes lyrical about achieving perceptual contact with a bouquet or an old train station. But even poor-quality images of people can mean something to us—especially of our ancestors, artists, and statesmen. I think, contra Sontag, that this appeal extends beyond photography to include painted portraits. Art historians conjecture that the genre of portraiture originated in funeral images intended to facilitate contact between the living and those who have gone on before.[7] Our human desire to possess photographs of certain things similarly reflects

a belief that such images will afford contact with some great mystery, whether Bigfoot, Nessie, or the elusive ivory-billed woodpecker.

I suspect that Lopes, like others, wants to dispute the dismissal of photography as art because it involves a kind of derogation: photography is *less than* art (because it is mechanical, realistic, uncreative, etc.). But derogation does not capture the tone of the writers I cited in the preceding text, their awe at photography's magic. What if photography is not art because it is *more than* art? Or something besides art? We can better understand the mystical strain by placing it in broader historical context. Patrick Maynard has helpfully distinguished two broad historical functions of images, depiction and manifestation. While the European West emphasized depiction, dominant images from the Orthodox East were religious icons, facilitating contact with holy figures. An icon is an image "providing realism through the sense of presence."[8] Even though photography emerged from the Western art tradition, Maynard argues that it also became associated with manifestation, hence with the historical role of icons. He explains, "testimonies about 'nearness', 'contact', 'emanation', 'vestige', 'trace', 'co-substantiality', and so on, register a sense that photographs of things can combine with these [depictive] characteristics a strong manifestation function as well."[9]

Others besides Maynard have distinguished two broad image functions. A similarly dual conception of art history is drawn, for example, by the German art historian Hans Belting.[10] I have written about this issue elsewhere, so will not belabor it here.[11] My point is that the entire argument about whether photography is an art may reflect not so much a confused conception of either art or photography as a blurring of two very broad and influential traditions of image functioning.

We believe that, as sophisticated heirs of the Western European tradition, we will not feel the allure of an "Eastern" conception of the so-called "acheiropoietic" image—one mysteriously sprung into life with no contributions from human hands, such as the Turin Shroud.[12] But isn't that just what the mystical descriptions of photographic images sound like? Perhaps we are not as sophisticated as we pretend. Remember that we live now in the era of perpetual presence—to the world and to each other—via Facebook, Skype, Twitter, and selfies, all relying upon photography to sustain the magic.

At the Boundaries of Photography

My fourth and final thought concerns another definitional project, this time not about art but photography. An important concept in the classic argument that photography is not art is the so-called "pure photograph": this is an "honest signal" or "index" of the real. Lopes contrasts the standard view with the "new theory of photography." On the new theory, many elements of what was regarded as essential to photography need not be present, even things as basic as the lens, the photographic print, light source, or camera. A photograph can even take the form of a painting, as with Gerard Richter's painting *Betty*. Richter's kind of mark-making can be counted as photographic, because it exemplifies a broadened notion of "the photographic event," a multi-stage causal process. The short and tidy summary, as Lopes gives it, is that "a photograph is an image output by a mark-making process that takes input from an electro-chemical event that records information from a light image of a pro-photographic scene" (p. 81).

Certain unusual cases that Lopes discusses, such as Richter's *Betty*, Sugimoto's Lightning Fields, or Carey's Pulls, are granted the photography label because of their ties with the central paradigm of image-rendering via recording events. Lopes is happy to extend the boundaries even "outside the photographic process, strictly speaking" (p. 130). He appears to accept Maynard's account of photography as "a branching family of technologies … whose common stem is simply the physical marking of surfaces through the agency of light and similar radiations."[13]

But just how far can we push the boundaries of photography? Everyone knows that the "photo" part of the English word "photography" refers to light. Some easy extensions involve light that is not from the visible spectrum. Infrared and ultraviolet photographs employ forms of "radiation" (to use Maynard's term) not visible to us, though other creatures can see them—such as bees and some birds that have ultraviolet vision. But we humans can only see at the extreme ends of the light spectrum by using special equipment or images recorded in special ways. An example Lopes describes fits within this category: Richard Mosse's photos done with a film sensitive to infrared, which turns jungle green to hot pink, coral, and blue. Mosse exploits this film's strange color effects for expressive ends to critique the "pathology" of the

Congo wars. Ultraviolet photography works either by using reflected UV light or by evoking fluorescence. It has medical (dermatological) and forensic applications, but can also be used expressively, for instance, to create intriguing portraits. Thus, Cara Phillips' series titled Ultraviolet Beauties aims to dismantle standard ideals of facial beauty.[14]

There are more forms of radiation, some along the electromagnetic spectrum, and some not, that can also be recorded, transferred into a medium, and processed into visible images. These are not usually called photographs, but we might follow Lopes' openness about the boundaries of photography, and note the similarities among the respective multi-stage causal processes, to justify their inclusion in photography. Two examples are X-ray images and ultrasounds (sonograms).

X-rays are further along toward the high-frequency/short-wavelength end of the electromagnetic spectrum than ultraviolet light. After initial discovery by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895, these images have become ubiquitous. In the X-ray process, a certain short-wavelength radiation emitted by electrons is passed through a body, and then its image is fixed on a photographic plate or other sort of screen. An X-ray image resembles the object—typically a body part—that it is "of" or that caused it, whether a hip joint, hand, or lung. This is not to say that such images are easily "read." It takes training and experience to interpret spots as tumors or light areas as necrotic bone tissue. But X-rays resemble familiar things enough that they have become an effective tool in the artist's cabinet. Examples range from Robert Rauschenberg's life-sized print *Booster* (1967), incorporating a series of X-rays of his entire body, to works by Belgian artist Wim Delvoye featuring X-ray visions of intimate acts of kissing and even intercourse (we might dub them "X-rated X-rays").

Ultrasounds or sonograms take us a clear step further than X-rays, because they require transforming non-visual input from high-frequency sound waves into electrical pulses and then into visual data. Echocardiograms are examples, but it is not tempting to regard them as photographs because they are hard to "read" or interpret. But one type of sonogram is now readily available and commonly treated as a type of photograph: I refer, of course, to the fetal ultrasound.

There are distinct ways of processing ultrasounds. Those in the B-mode (for brightness) are based on analysis of echogenicity of tissues, and highlight the growing fetus's morphological features. These tend to

be diagnostic devices used in medical settings. But recent years have seen the rise of so-called "boutique ultrasound" salons where 3D and 4D ultrasounds using surface reflectance provide images that look more like the visual images we are used to—that is, photographs.[15] They provide prospective parents with "keepsake ultrasounds." Remarkable 4D ultrasound images showing movement can readily be found on YouTube. They are lifelike and 3D. It is easy to see faces and other features of fetuses and watch as they suck their thumbs, yawn, or blink. The images closely resemble conventional photographs or videos. They readily fit into the multi-stage causal process that is the paradigm of the new theory of photography. For these reasons, I consider it plausible to expand the boundaries of photography to include this kind of imagery.

Still, some pressures to extend the boundaries further should be resisted. I would draw the line, for example, at DNA maps or fMRIs. The latter require still-contested techniques of interpretation to convert sets of data about blood flow into images. It is much harder here to trace the causal relationship between the pre-photographic scene or event and the resultant image. This is true even though popular media reports often allude to fMRIs not merely as pictures but as "photos" of the brain.[16] For fMRIs to be photographs would stretch the magic of photography several stages too far. Photography would then be able to capture not simply an external trace but our inner selves, emotions, or souls. Perhaps photography can do all this, but if so, it happens through art—not through the machines and calculations of the laboratory.

Notes

1 Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 47 (1974), p. 5.
2 Edgar Allen Poe, "The Daguerreotype," *Alexander's Weekly Messenger* 4.3 (1840), p. 4; and Elizabeth Eastlake, "Photography," *Quarterly Review* 101 (1857), p. 442.
3 Eastlake, "Photography," p. 442.
4 Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*, trans, Shaun Whiteside (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 47; Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 8.
5 Retouched photographs were exhibited and caused much public clamor as early as the 1850s. Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 86.
6 For example, Noam M. Elcott, "The Shadow of the World: James Welling's Cameraless and Abstract Photography," *Aperture* 190 (Spring 2008), pp. 30–8.
7 Elaine Scarry, "Imagining Flowers: Perceptual Mimesis (Particularly Delphinium)," *Representations* 57 (1997), pp. 90–115.
8 Steel Stillman, "In the Studio: James Welling with Steel Stillman," *Art in America* (February 2011), p. 57.
9 Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Edward Gilpin Johnson (Chicago: McClurg, 1891), p. 316.
10 Henry Fox Talbot, "Calotype (Photogenic) Drawing," *The Literary Gazette* 1256 (1841), p. 108.
11 Eastlake, "Photography," p. 445 and 466.

Four Arts of Photography: An Essay in Philosophy, First Edition. Dominic McIver Lopes.

12 Quoted in Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking Through Photography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 268.
13 Charles Baudelaire, "The Modern Public and Photography," trans. Jonathan Mayne, *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (Stony Creek: Lete's Island Books, 1980), p. 88. See also William J. Newton, "Upon Photography in an Artistic View, and Its Relations to the Arts," *Journal of the Photographic Society* 1 (1853), p. 6.
14 Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, "Daguerreotype," *Classic Essays on Photography*, p. 13.
15 Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," *The Atlantic* 3.20 (June 1859), pp. 738–48.
16 Dominique François Arago, "Report," trans. E. Epstean, *Classic Essays on Photography*, p. 19.
17 Daguerre, "Daguerreotype," p. 13. Other early writers who echo this include Arago, "Report," p. 18; Poe, "The Daguerreotype," p. 4; Eastlake, "Photography," p. 453.
18 See Berenice Abbott, "Photography at the Crossroads," *Universal Photo Almanac* (1951), pp. 46–7.
19 Talbot, "Calotype," p. 108.
20 Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," pp. 738–48.
21 Eastlake, "Photography," p. 466.
22 Eastlake, "Photography," p. 462.
23 Eastlake, "Photography," p. 460.
24 G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 43.
25 Jan von Brevern, "Resemblance after Photography," *Representations* 123.1 (2013), pp. 1–22.
26 Peter Henry Emerson, "Death of Naturalistic Photography," *Photographic Theory: A Historical Anthology*, ed. Andrew E. Hershberger (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), p. 89.
27 Henry Peach Robinson, *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph* (London: Percy Lund, 1896), p. 70.
28 Robinson, *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph*, p. 66.
29 Robinson, *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph*, p. 70.
30 Robinson, *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph*, p. 70.
31 Peter Henry Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1890), p. 184.
32 Walker Evans, "The Reappearance of Photography," *Hound & Horn* 5 (October–December 1931), p. 125; Paul Strand, "Photography," *The Seven Arts* 2.4 (August 1917), p. 524; and Edward Weston, "Seeing Photographically," *Classic Essays on Photography*, p. 171.

33 The classic exposition is in the writings of Clement Greenberg—for example, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7 (1940), pp. 296–310. Applications to photography are Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960) and John Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye* (New York: MoMA, 1966). See also Greenberg, "The Camera's Glass Eye: Review of an Exhibition of Edward Weston," *The Nation* 162 (March 9, 1946), esp. pp. 294–6. Also see Roger Seamon, "From the World Is Beautiful to the Family of Man: The Plight of Photography as a Modern Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55.3 (1997), pp. 245–52.
34 Strand, "Photography," p. 524.
35 Strand, "Photography," p. 524.
36 Quoted in Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization*, p. 202.
37 Weston, "Seeing Photographically," p. 171.
38 Anonymous, "Is Photography a New Art?" *Camera Work* 21 (January 1908), n.p.
39 Anonymous, "Is Photography a New Art?" n.p.
40 Weston, "Seeing Photographically," p. 170.
41 Weston, "Seeing Photographically," p. 173.
42 Weston, "Seeing Photographically," p. 172.
43 Weston, "Seeing Photographically," p. 172.
44 Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, p. 13 and 15.
45 See also Henri Cartier-Bresson, "Introduction," *The Decisive Moment* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), n.p.
46 Walter Benjamin, "Short History of Photography," trans. Phil Patton, *Artforum* 15.6 (February 1977), pp. 46–51.
47 Joel Snyder, "Benjamin on Reproducibility and Aura: A Reading of the 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility," *Philosophical Forum* 15.1–2 (1983–84): 130–45.
48 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1980), p. 3.
49 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 26–7.
50 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 47.
51 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 47.
52 Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 158.
53 Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 158.
54 Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 86.
55 Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 80, 87, 111, 158. See also Stephanie Ross "What Photographs Can't Do," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 41.1 (1982), pp. 5–17.

56 Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 131.
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149 Douglas Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism," *October* 15 (Winter 1980), p. 99.

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161 Alward, "Transparent Representation," p. 13.
162 Alward, "Transparent Representation," p. 13. A precursor is Coleman, "The Directorial Mode," but Coleman understands casting more narrowly, so that Levine's appropriations are not made by casting.
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250 Scott Walden, "Objectivity in Photography," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 45.3 (2005), p. 261.
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255 That is, Abell analyzes reliability using certain counterfactuals. The most nearby possible world where the tie is drawn as blue is much closer to the actual world than the most nearby possible world where the tie is photographically depicted as blue.
256 Robert Hopkins, "Factive Pictorial Experience: What's Special about Photographs?" *Nous* 46.4 (2010), pp. 709–31.
257 In fact, Abell and Hopkins hold that it is contingent that photography supports belief-independent feature-tracking. When push comes

to shove, they hesitate to endorse (P). See also Cohen and Meskin, "On the Epistemic Value of Photographs," p. 206.

258 Hopkins, "Factive Pictorial Experience," p. 714. See also Abell, "The Epistemic Value of Photographs," pp. 96–7.

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274 Maev Kennedy, "Andreas Gursky's Rhine II photograph sells for $4.3m," *The Guardian* (November 11, 2011).
275 Dominic Eichler, "Thinking Pictures," p. 9.
276 Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, p. 62.
277 Investigators agree on this, though they disagree about whether this fact is self-explanatory or needs explaining. For a comprehensive survey, see John Kulvicki, *Images* (London: Routledge, 2014). The classic works are Flint Schier, *Deeper into Pictures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Lopes, *Understanding Pictures*; Hopkins, *Picture, Image, and Experience*; John Hyman, *The Objective Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); and John Kulvicki, *On Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
278 See Kendall Walton, "Categories of Art," *Philosophical Review* 79.3 (1970), pp. 334–67; Allen Carlson, "Nature, Aesthetic Judgment, and Objectivity," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 40.1 (1981); and Lopes, *Beyond Art*, ch. 8.
279 The step is not direct but it requires nothing controversial.
280 Lopes, *Sight and Sensibility*, pp. 25–8.
281 Peter Kivy, *Philosophies of Arts: An Essay in Differences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), ch. 1.
282 For example, Scruton, "Photography and Representation," p. 591.
283 Nanay, "The Macro and the Micro."
284 Anna Atkins, *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* (London), pp. 1843–53.
285 Erica Fahr Campbell, "Outer Space: Thomas Ruff's Altered Reality," *Time* (October 17, 2011).
286 See www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/science/ring-nebula.html#.U8g-71b1L8t.
287 See http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/catalog/PIA17137.

Doing Justice to the Art in Photography

1 Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October* (Spring, 1979), pp. 75–88; Chevrier, "Adventures of the Picture Form in the History of Photography"; and Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art As Never Before*.
2 See also Lopes, "Photography and the 'Picturesque Agent.'"
3 Anscombe, *Intention*, §26.
4 One attempt to take up this lesson has already been made by Charles Palermo in "Automatism," *Critical Inquiry* 41.1 (2014), pp. 166–77. For a critical response, see Diarmuid Costello, "But I Am Killing Them! Reply to Baetens and Palermo on Agency and Automatism," *Critical Inquiry* 41.1 (2014), pp. 178–210.

5 Wall's first use of digital montage is *Stumbling Block* (1991), and *Mimic* dates from 1982. Jeff Wall, *Catalogue Raisonné 1978–2004* (Gottingen: Steidl/Schaulager, 2005), pp. 291–2.
6 Richter, "Notes, 1964–1965." Lopes cites my discussion of this in "On the Very Idea of a 'Specific' Medium," where I reserve judgment as to whether Richter's photo–paintings are in fact photographs, but argue that there is no reason not to regard them as such on Fried and Cavell's account.
7 Here, Lopes is building on the influential Phillips (Wilson), "Photography and Causation."
8 In fact, Lopes would say that they are both photographs and paintings: they are paintings because Richter employed richly embodied mark-making, hand-eye coordination, and advanced motor skills; they are photographs because they implicate photographic events.

Four Thoughts about *Four Arts of Photography*

1 HDR Photo (Flickr Group), www.flickr.com/groups/1304786@N23/discuss/72157626839326193.
2 Peter Thoeny, "What Is High Dynamic Range (HDR) Photography?" www.flickr.com/photos/peterthoeny/13345987993.
3 Lopes also writes: "The smaller the difference between art and non-art photography, the less it matters to us as aficionados of photography to police the boundary" (p. 130).
4 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 80–1.
5 Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 154.
6 Kendall Walton, "On Pictures and Photographs," *Film Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Richard Allen and Murray Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 72.
7 Cynthia Freeland, *Portraits and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), ch. 2.
8 Actually, this is a quotation from one of the characters (Veronica) in the dialogue Maynard invented in Patrick Maynard, "The Secular Icon: Photography and the Function of Images," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42.2 (1983), p. 165.
9 Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization*, p. 247.
10 Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
11 Cynthia Freeland, "Photographs and Icons," *Photography and Philosophy*, pp. 50–69.
12 Barthes actually makes the comparison: "Might one not say of it what the Byzantines said of the image of Christ with which the Shroud of Turin is

imbued: namely, that it was not made by human hand, *acheiropoietos*?"—Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 82, translation corrected by Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization*, p. 235.

13 Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization*, p. 3.

14 "Cara Phillips Creates Portraits of 'Ultraviolet Beauties'," *Huffington Post* (June 22, 2012), www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/22/cara-phillips-ultraviolet-beauties_n_1606131.html.

15 For example, "Baby Pictures: Prenatal 4D Video Ultrasounds," www.babypicturesultrasound.com/index.html.

16 Adina L. Roskies, "Are Neuroimages Like Photographs of the Brain?" *Philosophy of Science* 74.5 (2007), pp. 860–72.

Index

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