Arresting Vision:

A Geographical Theory of Antarctic Light

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Abstract

As a site at the margin of terrestrial systems, Antarctica disrupts the usual practices of visual representation. This thesis investigates, what I call, *chronogeographical* approaches to visual culture within the Antarctic terrain. The material and theoretical chronogeographies of vision are mapped through the action of light, to elucidate on the shifting terrain of form - that is the Antarctic landscape. Historically, the thesis explores how the 1980s anti-mining campaign, organised by environmental groups challenged the political and visual hegemony of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. The campaign highlighted the feedback between the circulation of images and initiatives to protect the Antarctic landscape. Situated within this visual economy, the thesis focuses on how representation demarcates abstract and imaginative spaces for the production of the landscape - creating fugitive images of Antarctic spatialities.

The thesis follows the fugitive testimony of the image through fields of knowledge, from the arrest and flow of landscape to the aesthetics of mobility. Critical art practice is considered as an interstice that highlights the conditions under which landscapes are given visibility, both cognitively and optically. A stratum of histories, mappings and sitings, structure the investigation into the transmission, materiality, and memory embedded in different media employed in the production of Antarctica. Through this sedimentation of geographies, the thesis proposes that the limits of representation may be found in Antarctica. It is argued that this shattering of commonly available visual languages can be a means to aerate our creative explorations of place. From this site, broader issues about the economy of the visual and the limits of visibility are examined. The thesis concludes that only by attending to the complex geographies of the image can the geopolitical aesthetics of place be accounted for.

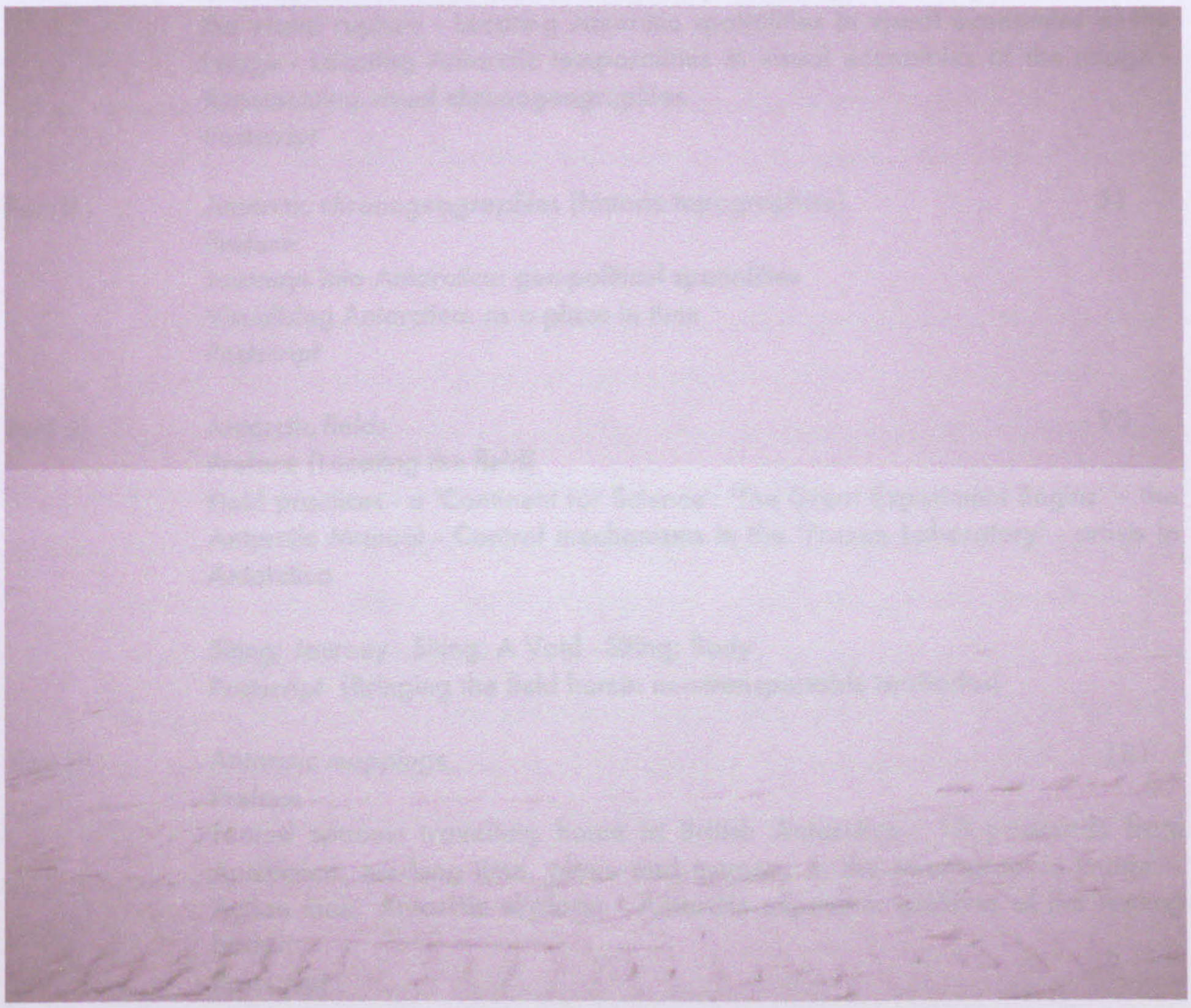

Plate 1

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Acknowledgements

Some landscapes affect our being in the world more than we can ever account for - Antarctica suggested certain possibilities with a rare clarity. Flying back from Antarctic, exhausted, I had to push my eyes open to see the last of the ice. Now that landscape continues to keep my vision open, as it did every time I looked, and could not stop looking in Antarctica. On returning to London, I have found those possibilities elsewhere, in the city, and on the move, but nowhere did they appear so unruly declared. I learnt in that landscape about the undisciplining effects of Antarctica - crashing into what I thought I had known, about places, and images. The impetus for this work came from the landscape, and the forms of unknowing I experienced there. It seemed an impossible project at times, to talk about a place that made nothing short of silence or laughter appropriate sounds - but there is something about the wild brain chemistry that Antarctic light induces, that had a fantastic imposition.

I went to Antarctica with the Graduate Antarctic Studies course and Antarctica New Zealand. I thank K396 for their humour and company out on Windless Bight. Particularly to Tim Pearn who generously shared our peacefully flagged tent and a glass of Largavullin on an ice sofa. His energy and exuberance in that space formed a joyful match to my own. During the GCAS course, I was fortunate to meet Alan Hemmings, who has generously engaged in conversation ever since. Many people subsequently helped me get this project off the ground. Particularly, my supervisor, Klaus Dodds, who graciously accepted a lot of enthusiasm as grounds for a PhD, and has allowed me to find my own path through the work ever since. I appreciate the consistency of his support. I thank my colleagues at Royal Holloway, particularly Catherine Nash and David Lambert and the members of the Historical Geographers at the IHR.

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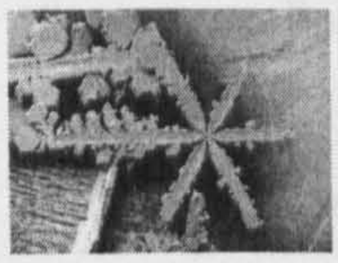
Preface: Landscapes *after* Antarctica



The imposition of place is its *afterimage*
Its geography is what remains of seeing.[1]

In March 2001, a balloon sent up into the Antarctic atmosphere to 120,000 feet, captured the earliest light of the universe. Collecting light from the cosmic microwave radiation, it observed light formed about 300,000 years after the Big Bang - from an era before the creation of stars and galaxies. The residue of this early light, and of other less dramatic instances of it, has a specific clarity. What can be said between the excess and silence of this light? Of its aliveness and traces in memory?

The *afterimage* of Antarctica begins in light, as light forms arrests in Antarctic vision. The intensity of light produces multiple refractions, mock suns, mirages, auroras, blinding, and the compression of distances, awake-ness, and euphoria. This radiation of arresting light is a route into the geography of Antarctic vision. Exhibiting a landscape of perpetual light and perpetual darkness, of mirages and auroras - Antarctica displays the limits of terrestrial illumination. The possibilities and opaqueness of the landscape as representation - resides in this action of light. Light gives form to landscape as a navigable terrain, ensuring its survival in forms of cultural memory such as the photographic plate. Simultaneously it demonstrates the impossibility of landscape's formation into representation – whiteout.[2] Matter is given form through light, and the very possibility of a primal geography of aesthetic description resides in its elucidation. Yet, confounded by the visibility of landscape's doppelganger – the mirage - the nature of geographical description is brought into question. In the darkness of Antarctic night, the aurora exhibits energetic fields of energy, which the light of day obscures. Like the dead light of the photograph, that is also a counter-memory to remembrance, illumination blocks perceptions of the zone of experience that will never be object or image. This opaqueness and visibility of Antarctica's geography, characterises a medium of exchange between the project of landscape knowledge and the limits of its illumination.

In the recognition of form, place is arrested as a landscape – a discrete scene. If, as Primo Levi suggests, "to comprehend is the same as forming an image",[3] landscape can be thought of as a series of arrests - a field of action punctured and inflected through the site of the

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[1] Author's Field notes, Windless Bight, Ross Ice Shelf, 78°35´S 167°5´E (December 1999/2000).
[2] White out induces a condition termed empty-field myopia, which results from the eyes focusing at a relatively short distance. This concept of perceptual limits is explored in Anne Noble's series, *White Out* (2004). [1].
[3] Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), 190.

image. The image gives form to place – it is, what Barthes calls "an arrest of interpretation".[4] Like a constellation - that gives an orientation in the vastness of the heavens, form allows an inhabitation of the dimensions of vast space. In the blizzard of images that forms the landscape of vision, I have no such image of Antarctica. The legacy of that place was (and is) its *afterimage of light;* a remainder within the synapses, suggesting the possibilities and limitations of arrested vision. Like the stars, which are the light-remains of places, the memory of light that inhabits landscape has differing durations. This Antarctic trace was not so accessible, its transmission relatively short, yet its illumination was durable. The productive experience of disorientation that thinking with Antarctic light forced was to not allow the reduction of place into a position - an arrested image. In this clarity and strangeness of light, an alternative geographical theory can be articulated that accounts for an enlivened landscape of vision. By highlighting the uncertainty of geographical forms, Antarctic light reconfigures geography to present a porous account of its objects. This reconfiguration happens at the intersection of visual culture and geography - as geography primarily relies upon an aesthetic description of the world to produce its knowledges. Thus, the affects of Antarctic light challenge the project of geographical description and knowledge formation.

The dilemma of light is a dilemma that haunts all knowledge formation. Escaping the bounds of a definite article, light is neither wave nor particle. It has, what is called a wave-particle duality, simultaneously exhibiting an indefinite physics of being. Light is neither something carried in the ether, nor a defined medium, it exhibits a confounding materiality that can only be read through a porous landscape of affects. Thus, light is the manifestation of doubt that haunts the formation of knowledges about place. Mirages obscure, looking directly into light creates blind spots in vision, but through its trace, its action can be read. These traces stand as a testimony in the darkness, and point to another landscape that is already lost to the possibilities of vision.

A theory of Antarctic light offers a way to read landscape and its image as both a fleeting entity and memory. Light is a condition of landscape and its trace - it offers the very possibility of the formation of memory. The afterimage of light - seared into the receptors of memory - illuminates the possibilities of seeing into place. In the presence of light, landscape is enlivened, given form and colour. In the darkness (which is the loss of presence), light is the trace of that landscape, its radiation a residue in bodies, images, and information. Through this residue, we form our images.

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[4] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 2000), 93.

In conceptualising the vicissitudes of seeing, this work owes much to Barthes notion of the image as a "certain but fugitive testimony".[5] That is to say, we can say very certain things in the moments of arrest, while acknowledging that in that speaking, the testimony that we hold images to is already fugitive – as the light shifts. The testimony of the image is held to account by time, and the possibilities of its destruction in time. For each image's *being* is a testament to its rescue from destruction, and so it secures its trace as an active force in the world. Arrests form these crystallisations. In the action of arrest, the image carves out permanencies from the flow of historic, physical and cultural landscape information. The image arrests light, and so arrests landscape. If we consider the production of landscape as *a series of acts*, that are geological, material, psychic, epistemological, and glacial, on which time and distance bears, we must consider the *spatial* and *chrono* dimensions of this geographical information. Accordingly, the structure of the thesis is sympathetic to the intellectual project of examining Antarctica as a series of *landscape acts*. As a *stratum* of landscape, the image geographies discussed are layered, elliptical and touch upon one another, forming a porous sedimentation of Antarctic knowledges. Within this stratum, critical art practice is considered as a *searching tool* in that geography. Like light, art practice can illuminate a way of "extending out into something that doesn't yet exist - almost like falling off"[6] – into spaces of Antarctica unknowing.

As the image arrests it also displays a lightness of movement to illuminate into places yet unknown - casting out light into space. Images remain because they arrest us, and so we care for them. For images of place, this rescue is a form of psychic and cultural salvage. What this salvage suggests is - a *thinking with*, rather than about place. As Barthes comments, "From the real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant... As Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star... light, though impalpable is here carnal medium."[7]

In the light of such knowledge, the arrests that I make in this thesis have a dialectical relation to a landscape that left a trace, as intense as the liveliness of that landscape. The work came from Antarctica, and forms a return across those "immeasurable but still definite distances."[8] It is to those 'immeasurable distances' that I turn next, to elucidate on a how Antarctic light affects vision to highlight the gaps between objects and their aesthetic description - to bring to light the holes in the geographical text.

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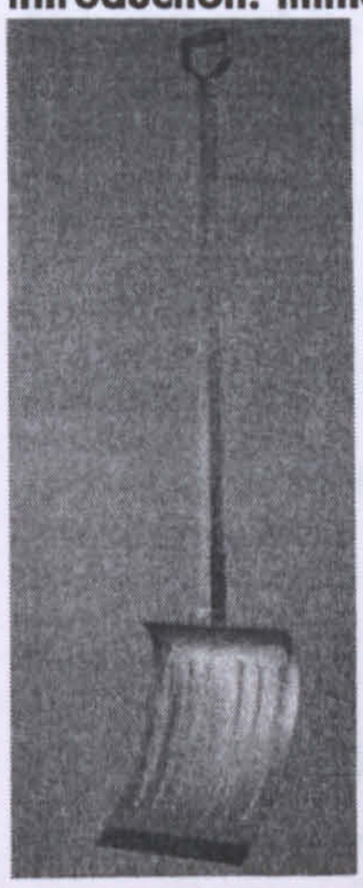
[5] Ibid., 107.
[6] Cindy Nemser, "A conversation with Eva Hesse" in *Eva Hesse* ed. Mignon Nixon (Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 10.
[7] Barthes 2000, 80-81.
[8] Edgar Allan Poe, *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2002), 7.

Plate 2

Introduction: Immoral Mapping, and the case of Charles Wilkes' Antarctic fallacy



Space is a doubt: I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It's never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it.[9]

Duchamp's snow shovel, 1915

The Antarctic explorer Charles Wilkes stood trial by court-martial, on the charge of immoral mapping.[10] Wilkes faced an indictment of "scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of morals"[11] for his designation of land where there was none to be found. Wilkes' claimed to have "discovered a vast Antarctic continent...". He records that "we ourselves anticipated no such discovery; the indications of it were received with doubt and hesitation; I myself did not venture to record in my private journal the certainty of land until after three days after those best acquainted with its appearance in these high latitudes were assured of the fact; and finally to remove all possibility of doubt, and to prove that there was no deception in this case".[12] On the 19th January 1840, Wilkes confirmed that what he saw was the Terra Firma of an Antarctic continent, and possession was taken of Wilkes Land.[13]

While the Antarctic landscape seemed to suggest the discovery of slowness, time was literally of an essence in the sighting of land. Dumont D'Urville had claimed discovery of the continent on the afternoon of January 19th (originally he claimed the 18th but he had not taken account of his crossing of the International dateline). After consulting the logs of the other two ships, the *Peacock* and *Vincenne*, Wilkes claimed land on the morning of January 19th, and sent a message to the Secretary of the Navy to that effect.[14] Wilkes' claim thereby preceded D'Urville's by a few hours.

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[9] Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), 91.

[10] Other misdemeanours on the expedition, Midshipman May was charged with "disrespect to his superior in the execution of his office" with regards to the manner of his labelling of a box of shells.

[11] David B. Tyler, *The Wilkes Expedition* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1968), 381.

[12] George Murray ed., *Antarctic Manual* (London: Royal Geographical Society, 1901), 360-1.

[13] The expedition began 18th August 1838 and reached Antarctic seas in 1839.

[14] The events of the first United States Exploring Expeditions are contained in five volumes *Narrative of the U. S. Exploring Expeditions 1838-42*, published by the US government with an additional 16 volumes of scientific results.

Doubting Wilkes' claim, after being sent the details of the voyage, Captain Sir James Clark Ross set out in 1841 in the *Erebus* and *Terror* to Antarctic waters. Ross sailed over the assigned position of Wilkes Land and thus concluded that no such land existed. Ross' 1847 *Narrative* gives an account of the claims for and against Wilkes Land, claiming that Wilkes failed to follow standard cartographic practices and proclaimed land based on 'assumption of land' rather than facticity. Ross comments that only what was "really and truly seen" should be included and that which had the "appearance of land" be marked so.[15]

The mystery of Wilkes Land continued through Antarctic exploration to be a source of disputed facticity, and many explorers felt compelled to go and discredit its existence for themselves. Carsten Borchgrevink, on his 1898-1901 expedition went to look for it and concluded it was the Balleny Islands that Wilkes had seen. Robert F. Scott on his *Discovery* expedition went to find it, Ernest Shackleton on the *British Antarctic Expedition* 1907-9, and Douglas Mawson in 1914. Ironically, Wilkes' main detractors, Ross and Mawson also mapped land that was later found to be an illusion.[16]

Paul Simpson-Housley[17] argues that Wilkes' salvation from his tarnished reputation came in the form of a *superior mirage* in which distant objects loom up in the clarified Antarctica atmosphere, under particular meteorological conditions. He argues that the difficulties of discerning *form* as a condition of Antarctic landscapes. The conditions of receiving light are such that the appearance of form is created when there is no such formation. Ironically, much of Wilkes Land has been proven to exist, with the exception of - appropriately enough - *Termination Land*, which has been revealed to be an icy feature. Generally, his landfalls are (accurately) locatable from his drawings within 40-50 miles south of where Wilkes sighted them. David Tyler, a Wilkes defender, argues that the displacement of the depth of his sightings are a result of the clarity of the polar atmosphere, which made things appear closer than they actually were. Cartographically, from the region between *Disappointment Bay* at 148° to 165° East Longitude, is the only mapping that has been proven inaccurate.[18]

The origins of the expedition stemmed from John Symmes petition for a US led expedition to substantiate his *Hollow Earth* theory.[19] Symmes' theory proposed that the earth was a semi-hollow sphere of concentric spheres that had their entrance at the poles. The sublime theory of the internal world argued that the strange atmospheric refractions, luminous auroras and

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[15] Tyler 1968, 153.
[16] James Clark Ross named Parry Mountains in 1841 and Mawson mapped MacRobertson Land in 1929-30.
[17] Paul Simpson-Housley, *Antarctica* (London: Routledge, 1992). See Cp. 6 "The enigma of Wilkes Land, 61-68.
[18] The accuracy of over 1,000 miles of coast mapped by Wilkes was verified as remarkably precise by the aerial mapping carried out during the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958).
[19] The theory of Hollow Earth was first proposed by Edmund Halley - of comet fame - in 1692.

the variation of compasses indicated gases escaping from the hole at the pole. Although Symmes' theory had received extensive scientific criticism, no one had yet gone far enough to the Poles to dispel his speculative theory.[20] To support a bid for funds for a southern expedition, the Secretary of the Navy employed Jeremiah N. Reynolds to collect information from the public as to what areas of the globe were most in need of exploration.[21] Reynolds - although a keen supporter of Symmes' theory (who lectured on the possibility of openings at the Pole) - made more subdued pleas for an expedition to the southern continent in favour of commerce. He collected information from captains, journals, and logs in a number of coastal locations including Nantucket, on what geographical information had most validity for commercial exploration.

One of Reynolds's lectures was attended by Henry Allan, brother of Edgar Allan Poe, which inspired Poe to write his only novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. The novel ends with the hero's vessel plunging into a polar abyss, having fallen into Symmes' 'hole at the pole'. One text was literally engulfed by another. Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* was published in 1838, in serial form, when Wilkes set sail for the Antarctic Exploring Expedition. Thus, Poe's narrative was published in light of growing public interest about the Antarctic.[22] Poe's narrative accounts forms a fictitious log, filling the days of his imaginary expedition with Antarctic adventures - while Wilkes wrote in his logs, the days of a real expedition that were subsequently held up as fiction. In the light of Poe's narratives, and the Wilkes controversy, Reynolds's published his own story "Mocha Dick or the White Whale" in *Knickerbocker Magazine* (1839), which has been suggested[23] (along with the plates from Wilkes' own *Narrative*) as one of the sources for Melville's *Moby Dick*.

The story of Wilkes and his immoral mapping serves as an introduction to the themes of this thesis - namely Antarctica as a *visual disturbance* (or unstable object) in the production of landscape knowledges. Antarctica - as a site in the breakdown of visibility - casts doubt on both the facticity and fiction of geographical knowledge. Wilkes' charge of immoral mapping highlights the conditions under which landscapes are given visibility - cognitively and optically. The mistaken visibilities of Wilkes, calls forth the doubtful certainty of images and objects as the traces and remains on which the facticity of knowledge is built, and then in

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[20] Symmes wrote and lectured tirelessly on Hollow Earth, even though he was considered an indifferent writer and poor speaker (he suffered from stage fright, which eventually killed him). Despite this, Hollow Earth captured the popular imagination as an inverted heaven on earth, and still has many followers today.
[21] Tyler 1968, 5.
[22] Poe actually reviewed Reynold's *Address, on the subject of a surveying and Exploring Expedition to the Pacific Ocean and the South Seas* in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in January 1837 (in Poe 2002, 188).
[23] See Appendix, "The Earliest Sources" in Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1986), 991-1011.

Wilkes' case broken down. The cartographic sketches that Wilkes forwards to Ross, as his geographic testimony of possession, are sailed over. The diaries and narrative that Wilkes produces during his court martial, to substantiate his claim in time (prior to D'Urville) and to the cartographic facticity of his geographical possession, are prised apart by counter claims and counter narrations. Even the value of the objects from the expedition, were received as a doubtful accumulation.[24]

Wilkes had been meticulous in controlling the knowledge production and accumulation of narratives and objects from his expedition. In order to restrict counter-narratives, he reduced the number of scientists included in the expedition from twenty-five to seven, and he prevented them from examining their specimens below deck. All specimens had to be placed in his care. And all members of the expedition were to keep journals as part of the performance of their duties, and to submit them to Wilkes for editorial approval at the end of the voyage. To counter the charges of 'immoral mapping' levied against him, Wilkes published his *Narrative* as an official account of the expedition. However, by then the forms of production that his voyage had given visibility to were already circulating freely. The pictorial plates of this Narrative formed the basis of Melville's description of Moby Dick. The counter narratives of fiction, of Melville's, Reynolds's, Symmes', Cooper's and contemporaneously, Poe's account of Arthur Gordon Pym, made fictitious use of the facts he had so scrupulously attempted to control. As Ross returned to the site and sailed over Wilkes Land, doubt was cast on the production of all the geographical knowledge Wilkes had attempted to secure, and on Wilkes as a curator of that knowledge.

In the strange Antarctic light, Wilkes had seen a superior mirage. The geography that was visible to him had been displaced through a climatic distancing device of landscape. Whereas light normally travels in a straight line, when light rays pass through air layers of different temperatures, they curve towards the cooler air. The rays then enter the eye at a lower angle than the angle at which the image lies, thus the image is displaced, and so a mirage is sighted. What was sighted was a *phantom displacement* of the landscape; an image emitted off the real through climatic constellations, a form of *snow*[25] in the transmission of landscape information.

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[24] The original Act of Congress 1846 to establish the Smithsonian Institute stipulated that that the Wilkes' collection was to become part of Smithsonian Institute, but Joseph Henry, the first secretary of the Smithsonian was concerned that "filling a costly building with an indiscriminate collection of objects of curiosity, and giving these in charge to a set of inactive curators" would dull the research edge of the Institute's purposes of advancing knowledge. He feared that the accumulation of materials would swallow space and time. The resulting collection of specimens and objects were eventually to be the founding objects of the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institute. (Source: Michael Heyman, "Smithsonian Perspectives" in *Smithsonian*, March 1996).

[25] In communication technologies, snow or noise is a description of the interference of the environment of transmission in the communication of information.

The breakdown in regimes of the visible casts doubt, making a space for the consideration of forms of unknowing. At the point of breakdown, the value of considering the counter intuitive landscapes of the Antarctic is to regard the structure of systems of knowledge that are used to account for its geography.

In Poe's literary fiction, and the geographical fiction of Wilkes, we witness the two ends of knowledge production – as geographical description attempts to close the distance between narrative and voyage and secure landscape in the traces (Wilkes), art practice opens it up (Poe). Like Yves Klein's *Blue Globe*, Poe's text served as a kind of anti-map to Wilkes' exploration narrative. Poe's narrative is in fact punctuated by holes in the text that form the structure of the hero's adventure, until finally he disappears into one. His fiction takes the holes in the text of geographical meaning to its truest narration, as the facts of Wilkes' geography are productive of a false narration. As the artist Robert Smithson comments, "True fiction eradicates the false reality".[26] Fiction implies the existence of fragile structures (or holes) around which our knowledge is formed and rests (as a fleeting testimony). Accepting knowledge's slippages (its mirages), calls into question the shadow of knowledge (its phantom displacement). Wilkes' knowledge practices (of geography) are his access to the unknown - Poe's practices of unknowing are an access to knowledge. It is the mirage that brings to light, with a false light (rays that enter the eye at acute angles) the unexpected condition of knowledge.

The Antarctica landscape is a medium of exchange that has the aesthetics of a counter intuitive landscape. Kim Stanley Robinson described the Antarctic factor as "Murphy's law to the power of ten. Things fall apart. The centre cannot hold. Nor the axis spin."[27] Much like Smithson's spiral jetty, the 'hole at the pole' is the site of the loss of centre - it is a form of *open limits*. Georges Perec comments, "When nothing arrests our gaze, it carries a very long way. But if it meets with nothing, it sees only what it meets. Space is what arrests our gaze, what our sight stumbles over..."[28]. In the Antarctic landscape, vision stumbles over some strange arrests. As Poe navigates to the biggest hole at the pole - the zero point from which all distance is measured - he finds that space has collapsed in on its axis, "into the embrace of the cataract, where a chasm threw itself open".[29] Perec suggests that, "there is nothing ectoplasmic about space, it has edges, it doesn't go off in all directions..."[30] Yet in some

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[26] Robert Smithson, *Slideworks* (Italy: Carlo Frua Catalogue, 1997), 80.
[27] Kim Stanley Robinson, *Antarctica* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 176.
[28] Perec 1997, 81.
[29] Poe 2002, 179.
[30] Perec 1997, 81.

places it does - so that all directions are edges that collapse into the curvature of the earth. In this, the geometrics of space can be found in Antarctica, what Poe calls "immeasurable but still definite distances."[31] To be in the Antarctic is to change space - to clear the familiar aesthetic sensibilities of orientation, and to accept forms of unknowing as a consequence of the landscape's dynamic geography.

[31] Poe 2002, 7.

A note on the visual material presented in the text

As a part of the text, the visual material presented in this thesis is displaced, and made to play in different structures to those in which they were encountered. The tendency of images to be constantly on the move means that such arresting analysis is already a postscript on their journeys. Their agency, as I will argue, is fleeting yet historically located – as is the Antarctic landscape they give geographic description to. The reader will encounter them in a different form of reproduction, and in a different space of representation. The images will do their own work, and can be *imagined alongside*, and sometimes in opposition to the critical discussion. They are not illustrations. In the context of this thesis these images are employed to do alternative work, in a different discursive system, which may produce altered relations between the connotations that have been noted by the critical discussion.

Where I have attempted to conjure the image, to look for its formal qualities, I do this to elucidate on the connections and historical depth of those forms. This will at times seem suggestive, and indeed it always is, in the partiality of the images testimony. I recognise what may be called the openness of the image, or even the potential for cataclysmic indeterminacy. The intention here is not to confuse, but to acknowledge the silences within and outside the images that are discussed. The theoretical opportunity that this unsettling of a fixed approach to the image presents, undermines the authority of such prescriptive interpretations without setting up alternative truth claims. The approach does not close down the images borders, but opens them up and facilitates the consideration of different extrapolations/meetings in the imagination. The visual material available and encountered during the research of this thesis serves as a testament to its mode of production. Thus, the inclusion and exclusions encountered are part of my own conceptualisation of Antarctica, and my critical attempts to know and produce knowledges about it.

The photographs included in this thesis that are my own (and the cameras) belong to an impossible exchange. I took no photographs for the first three days in Antarctica and then as the space stabilised (I opened my eyes and it was still there) I engaged with the cameras way of seeing. In the landscape the photographic frame was a puny screen to a wider vision, yet where photographs were taken it was to attend to the directions already set forth in the landscape (through the intervention of being there and others being). As such I make no claims for them, save that they may hint at certain geographies already at work – like sign posts – they make a stable horizon in an unstable vision. A lens is a safe place from which to look, and is a mode of comprehension from the very first. Images open place in other spaces

as they close down our memory of it, even in the action of 'taking' (a photograph). The photograph then is an accomplice to the experience and a practice in forms of geographic knowing. The photographs included here make space more visible by rendering it less so through the unifying language of photography. In this violence the photograph is the remainder of that economy of seeing.

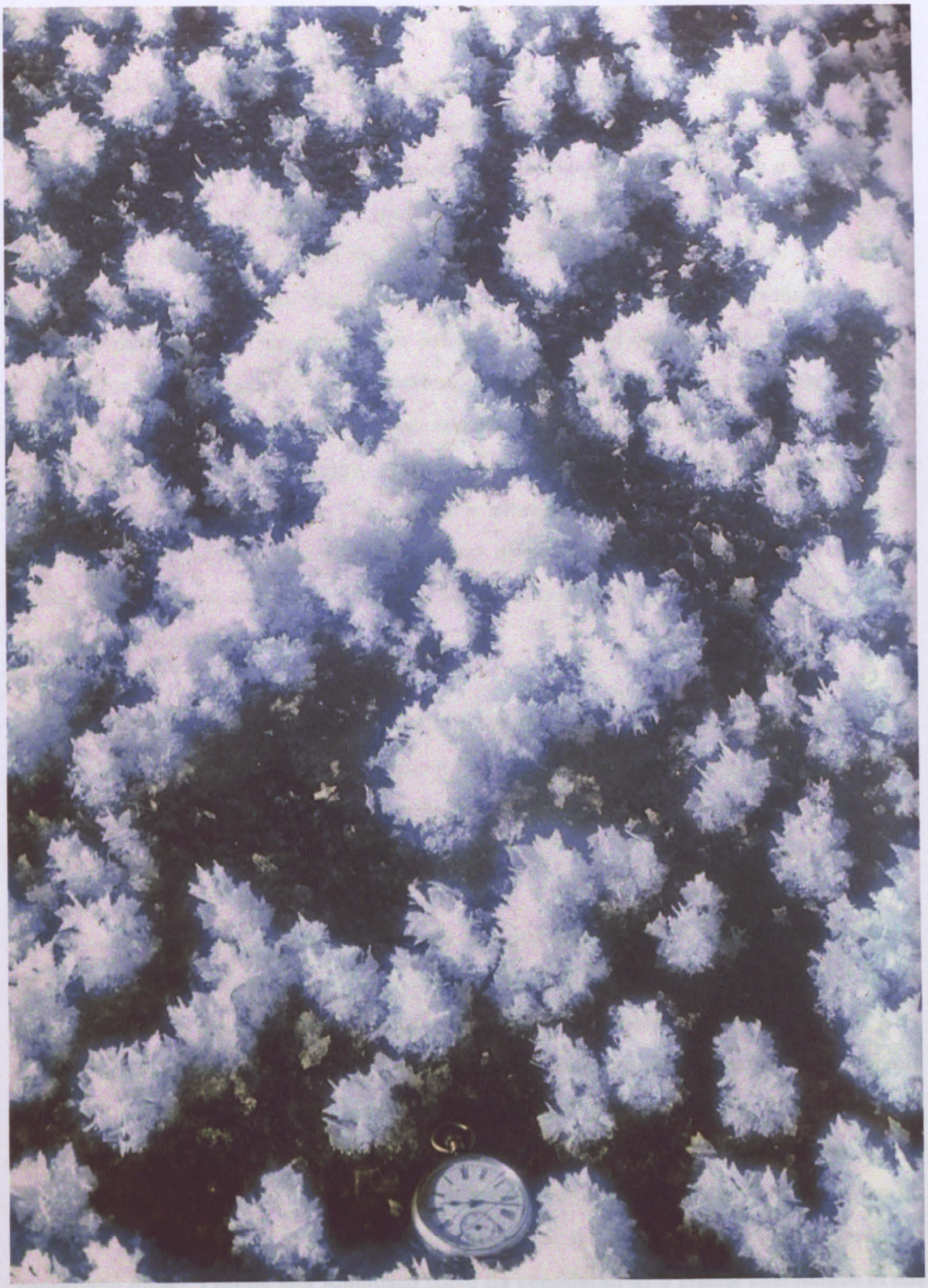

Plate 3

Part I: Preface

This thesis seeks to address the geo-*graphical* journeys of Antarctic visual cultures. Part I is a discussion of the image-geographies that theoretically structure the subsequent geographies in practice. By attending to the themes and tensions within the possibilities of such a geography, it will discuss the role of vision and visualising technologies in the production of Antarctic knowledges. It begins by locating the image in the relations of its production. In order to situate the geo-politics of the image, the forms of labour that are made available by the image are discussed. It is argued that the image is the material and imaginative site through which human and environment interactions are formed, and thus the visual economy is at the nexus of that politic. As subjects we come into a pre-signified field of vision, and as such I refer to environment as landscape, to indicate the belatedness which we inhabit these formations. As Mitchell argues, "landscape is already an artifice in the moment of its beholding, long before it becomes the subject of pictorial representation".[32] Within this politics of landscape, the visual forms the site of enunciation, as images order space for material and imaginative inscription.

It is a complex site, as the image moves through multiple visual fields, and this interplay between image, imagination and place, forms a fractured geography of discontinuous realities of place. The dislocation that aesthetic technologies effect is discussed by journeying through these fragmented spaces of the vision world.

The disjunctive temporalities of media create changed economies of distance and nearness, reconfiguring both physical and image space. The conflation of these two spaces that are inflected through the spectre of technology, presents a problem of representation. The representational problem of mapping the perceptual and corporeal experience of place is discussed in relation to time and media. It is argued that only by attending to the form and mobility of the image can there be recognition of its geopolitics - a geopolitics that is simultaneously a geopoetics.[33] As images enact a geo-graphical description of the world, they form a constellation of possible inhabitations for the subject. As an aesthetic and a conceptual object, I argue that Antarctica could be considered as a critical intervention in this geographical description. The argument proceeds by locating Antarctica as a site of disturbance in the visual economy and in the ordering of western systems of meaning. As an unstable object, Antarctica is productive of tensions between forms of knowing and unknowing - where unknowing is characterised by a condition of non-visibility. As an

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[32] W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 14.
[33] For a critical overview of the meanings and practices associated with geopolitics, see G. O. Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 1996).

incomplete knowledge project, Antarctica has the potential to call into question the formation and structure of visual knowledges. The potential of considering disorder is to productively write against the en-closure of the site, and its arrested development. Acknowledging this mutability of site through aesthetic events opens place to productive political interventions. Such interventions ensure that place is not artificially held still and that the mobility of landscape is acknowledged. Thus, I argue that Antarctica is a productive site in which to observe this movement (and be moved by it) by considering other geographies of place.

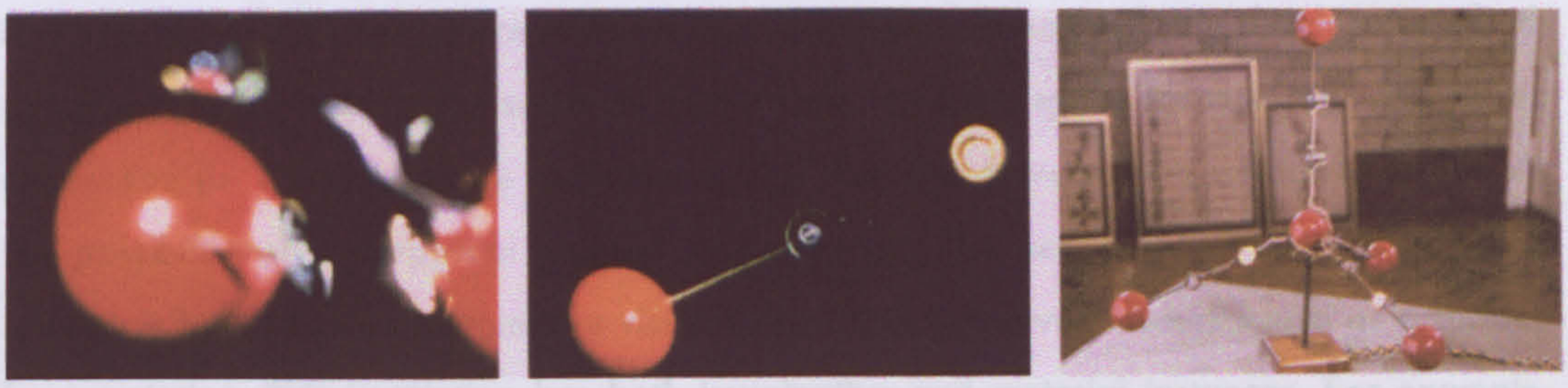
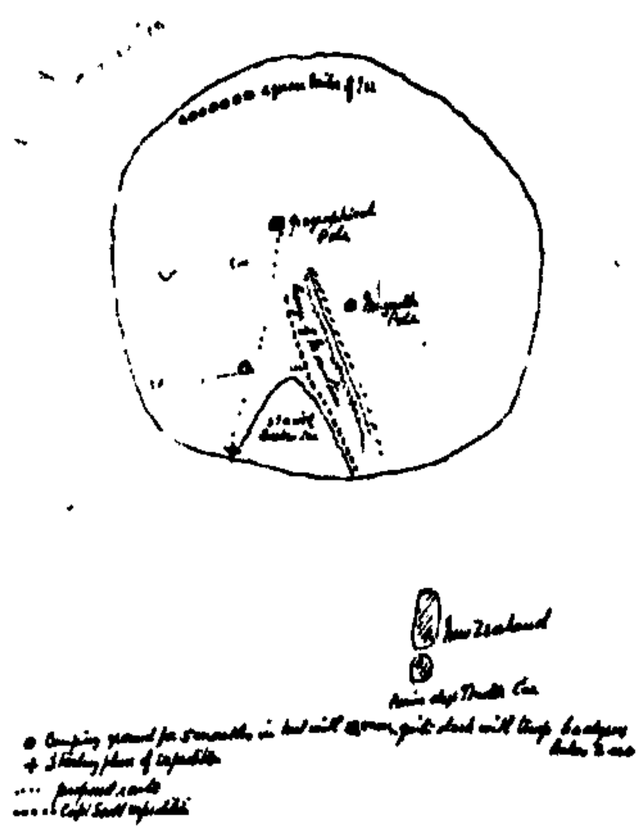


Plate 4

Part I: Geographies of visual culture: placing the Antarctic image in space and time



How can an object have a story? Well, it can pass from hand to hand... or alternatively it can pass from image to image, in which case its story is that of a migration...[34]

Images are now as much a material force in and between societies as are economic and political forces. Contemporary visual culture - the combined product of "the media" and a variety of other spheres of image production - can no longer be seen as simply "reflecting" or "communicating" the world in which we live: it contributes to the making of this world. Individuals and nations act in accordance with beliefs, values, and desires that increasingly are formed and informed, inflected and refracted through images...[35]

Introduction

Antarctica is on television. Shackleton[36] sits in a restaurant. He sketches a map of the Antarctic on the front of his menu and draws a line across it. Cut to the next scene; a sign is hung above a London office proclaiming 'The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition'. As a line is drawn across the blank space of Antarctica, a journey is conceived. The sketch enjoins both geographical production (Antarctic as *tabula rasa*, an open space for marking) and poetic production (a 'crossing' of the continent; a 'first' line that traverses the unknown) to *enable* the possibility of a corporeal journey to Antarctica. The possibility of the geographical journey is built upon an imaginative visual culture that cognitively orders space as a surface for inscription. This inscription has both imaginative and material instances. For example, sponsors fund the expedition on the promise of exclusive rights to its visual productions, while today contemporary tourists learn to walk on water 'in the footsteps of Shackleton' cruises. The sketch informs and forms the actual possibilities of journey.

As an audience, we are about to find out that the corresponding geographical space (that the sketch denotes) is not so easily traversed, either by Shackleton or by the television production company.[37] The example epitomises the interplay of representation and the clearing of an imaginative site for future production.

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[34] Roland Barthes, "The Metaphor of the Eye", in Georges Bataille *The Story of the Eye* trans. J A Underwood (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 119.

[35] Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces, Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1996), 22.

[36] Channel 4 *Shackleton*, staring Kenneth Branagh as Shackleton, directed by Charles Sturridge 2002

[37] All filming for the production was done in Greenland because of the provisions of the Protocol laws prohibiting the use of dogs in the Antarctica and the costs involved in conducting environmental impact assessments for activities in the Antarctic (required by the Protocol) as well as the logistics of getting to the Antarctic.

The form of the journey begins in the image. For Shackleton, representational practice opened up an imaginary space for a geographical journey that can be re-presented within the jurisdiction of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). Thus, the image acts as a grounding activity for forms of 'knowing' and knowledge production. Making *space into image* is about making place into a transportable territory (through abstraction) that allows other forms of imaginative, psychic, scientific, national and political labour to take place. Whether this is labour against the primordial vastness or against the shifting boundaries of ice flows, representational practice can offer a respite, or an arrested place of stability from which to build meaning, or plan an expedition.

The sketch clears a space in the imagination through visual erasure - a line is drawn across a continent to cancel a point (the pole). The line draws across a failed 'first', attempting to erase the Norwegian flag from the British geographical imagination. The emptying of space and its re-inscription betrays both a psychic and political desire; Shackleton's desire to return to Antarctica, and British desire to re-inhabit Antarctica in more successful ways (to draw a route across a map that isn't a 'second'). Shackleton's mark making in the continent is reanimated and reinvested with meaning by contemporary audiences,[38] through their desire for spaces of representation where heroic journeys can still take place, without the need for postcolonial revisionism.[39] In this thesis, representational practice is the site within which these negotiations take place (as sketch, map, television drama, tourist brochure, photograph) opening the imaginary and physical territory of Antarctica to labour. In the opening of territory, the visual is a *site of enunciation* in the politics of place.

In the opening of geographical spaces through the image, I argue that there are three distinct spatial orderings that form the complex geography of the image: the space of Antarctica (as object and discourse); the space of the image (as object and discourse); and the space of the viewer (or position as a viewing subject). Within this visual economy, spatial orderings form and re-form culture to directly effect precise geographic places. Even though all the filming for the television drama was conducted in Greenland, the interest in Shackleton has been a major contributor to the rise in Antarctic tourism, with many companies such as Quark, offering Shackleton-style voyages. As Antarctica is *inflected and refracted through images*, there is no direct path of meaning from the image to place, or place to the image, that

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[38] The race between England and America to produce 'Shackleton' was billed "A NEW RACE for the South Pole is underway..." characterising the race between the two actors billed to play Shackleton's (Kenneth Branagh and Russell Crow) in what the paper calls 'South Pole mania'. Vanessa Thorpe *The Observer* (2 September 2001), 9.

[39] The lack of indigenous peoples in the Antarctic has meant that 'heroic' journeys that were made within, and as a direct consequence of Imperial impulses have not undergone the same analysis as those made in other inhabited parts of the world.

produces its story. Yet media images produce a distinct landscape of affect on geographical entities.

As Barthes suggests, the story of the object is the story of its migration through images. *Antarctica is on TV*. The object of landscape and the object of the image are one in the same space. The two conditions of ordering space that occupy the same representational moment are intractable, yet their politics lie in the push and pull of these relational aesthetics. The Antarctic of the image is never freed from its other object-hood – that of its material circumstances (as photography, film, new media). The object-hood of both image and place is fractured by this simultaneous *movement* through the spaces of the image and the space of landscapes matter. Rather than one migration,[40] there are many that occur through different histories, materialities, media and practices. All of these migrations together form a distinct yet fractured geography that produces the object of knowledge that is taken as Antarctica.

Considerable physical and historical geographical knowledge has been amassed about Antarctica,[41] but little research has interrogated the visual and conceptual formation of these knowledges. This thesis seeks to question the production of these knowledges and map their politics by addressing the assumptions in the formations and structures of the visual economy of Antarctica. The limits, and opportunities, of these knowledges are approached by concentrating on how the boundaries are defined between and among: fields and epistemes of knowledge; media; modes of visuality; flows of landscape; geographic and non-geographic frontiers; embodiment and virtuality; and different media technologies. These knowledges formed at the edges of terrestrial systems are compelling as the terminises of those systems, but to concentrate on this solely would be to fetishise the reach of those systems and to ignore the landscape itself.

Further, Antarctica's defining lack of indigenous peoples means that Antarctic knowledge is always in negotiation with centres of knowledge remote from the site of experience. Similarly, few people (relative to human population) have had direct experience of the territory, making Antarctic knowledge extremely, even quintessentially, mediated. The traversing of Antarctic space and global space are thus intimately linked from early exploration ('knowing' the geographical limits and the shape of Antarctica) to present day activities (making Antarctica known in global environmental debates). Rather than making another transportable territory, I have focused on the tensions of that mobility, so that the non-

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[40] Migration implies the metaphor of a distinct mobility and uncertain destinations, where unknowing is a characteristic of the journey – it is a process of unfixing fixed locations.
[41] See C. Fogg, *A History of Antarctic Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

transportable, non-visible may also be taken into account. As a landscape that is profoundly counter-intuitive for human inhabitation, Antarctica is an extraordinary site from which to consider another kind of visibility, that of the fictions and breakdown within those systems of vision and visuality. As I propose through the course of this thesis, Antarctica - because of the disruption that it causes to systems of visibility - offers a site for the profound reconsideration of the dialectics of seeing.[42] This I call an alternative geographical theory of Antarctic light.

Antarctica has been mapped through many different overlapping practices of fieldwork and remote and imaginative observation, and these practices have received discipline-specific attention.[43] As a field of visual culture, there has been no broader synthesis of how these visual cultures intersect and produce Antarctic knowledges.[44] Geography has been the predominant point of departure for Antarctic images, from its imaginative inception by the Greeks as a spatial balance to the Northern Hemisphere (conceived as part of a global symmetry), to the voyages of discovery that facilitated its corporeal exploration. Even Antarctica's nomination proposes the spatial operation, opposite the bear (or the Arctic). Historically, these spatial imaginings of Antarctica have been the basis for all subsequent aesthetic engagement. Geographically, Antarctic images travel furthest, because an image of Antarctica is always an image of negotiation with the North, and the distance that lies between. Jules Verne's character Captain Nemo, upon reaching the South Pole,[45] unfurls a flag with a big 'N' on it (for 'Nemo' the text tells us), but as Verne's joke recognises, the only positionality available from that point is towards the North. In this negotiation, the Antarctic image never remains in place, and is always articulated within the ideological structures of making itself visible in other places - consequently, the image makes both representational and geographical journeys.

Simultaneously, "every voyage is the unfolding of a poetic",[46] and a movement through physical or theoretical geographic space. The operation of journeys (or migrations) is a theme that runs through this thesis. The temporal dimensions of image-journeys create dynamic geographies that are shot through with many different kinds of time (discovery's time, memory's time, fieldwork's time, photography's time, political time, historic time,

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[42] The concept of a *dialectics of seeing* was used by Walter Benjamin to describe how the act of cognition was a form collage, of thinking in images. For a discussion of Benjamin's dialectics see Susan Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

[43] For a summary of Antarctic publications, see www.arts.utas.edu/efgj/english/representations_of_Antarctica/ 01.07.03. and www.antarctic-circle.org/fauno.htm 01.07.03.

[44] See William E. Lenz, *The Poetics of the Antarctic* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1995): Stephen Pyne, *The Ice* (IWashington: Univ. of Washington,1998): Simpson Housley 1992: Francis Spufford, *I may be Some Time* (London: Faber & Faber, 1996).

[45] In Jules Verne, *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (New York: Platt & Munk, 1965).

[46] Trinh T. Minh-ha *"Other than myself/my other self"* in *Traveller's Tales*, ed. Robertson, Mash Ticker, Bird, Curtis & Putnam (London: Routledge, 1994), 21.

modernity's time, geological time, movie time, 'real time') - what I call chronogeographies. These journeys, travelled from north to south and back to north are potentially destabilising for the thresholds and boundaries of visual languages, temporalities, and cultural practices we use to engage with space, "a disturbing yet potentially empowering practice of difference".[47] Theoretically, the geographies explored in this thesis are constituted by the negotiation of that distance, a voyage to and from Antarctica. I call these Antarctic spatialities. The meaning of this production of space, "inflected and refracted through images"[48] is to construct a set of knowledges about, and the object of, Antarctica.

The visual culture of Antarctic spatialities connects geopolitical[49] imperatives (the politics of colonisation, resource management, symbolic inhabitations) with artistic practice and scientific visualisation. Although these forms of practice are often theoretically isolated (as 'science' and 'art', which are by no means uniformed disciplines), the particularities of the production of the image in Antarctica and its reception in forms of popular culture demand a *broad* visual culture approach. The visual geographies of the Antarctic image traverse complex terrains, intersecting the cultural domain and discourse of the practices of science, exploration, artistic practice, optics and popular culture, and the attendant imaginative and historic constructions of these cultural forms. This calls for a movement through the image production of different disciplines, while maintaining a precise historical appreciation of the differences in practices and representational forms. The production of Antarctic images is constituted by distinct yet interchangeable practices, namely those of science, exploration, tourism and the humanities. Across this production run issues of race, gender, sexuality, nationalism, imperialism and wealth.

Each image is then a territory that summons many other invisible territories into being, effacing these as it builds upon them as a condition of its production. As de Certeau comments;

> The narrative's appearance makes the place of its production disappear; it makes this place its secret, the invisible condition of possibility of its own emergence. All that remains... are scattered pieces, flotsam and jetsam: a fragmented body.[50]

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[47] Minh-ha 1994, 23.
[48] Burgin 1996, 22.
[49] Jack Child summarise geopolitics as "the relationship between geography and politics that is, political geography. In a limited sense, this definition is valid and emphasises the impact that geographical factors have on politics by creating limits and opportunities for political, social, cultural and economic activities." Jack Child *Antarctica and South American Geopolitics: Frozen Lebensraum* (New York & London: Praeger, 1988), 22. For a fuller discussions on geopolitics see Klaus Dodds, *Geopolitics in Antarctica: Views from the Southern Oceanic Rim* (London: John Wiley,1997) *Pink Ice* (London: I B Tauris, 2002).
[50] Micheal de Certeau, *Heterologies, Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1986), 140.

The 'flotsam and jetsam' of images, increasingly fragmented through uneasily reconcilable spaces of representation (the spaces of Empire and the spaces of the televisual) present a difficult mapping. The maps that these pieces conjure - with their fragmented indeterminacy - are multidimensional, bisecting, and ultimately untenable fields of visuality. Yet, the image is also a territory that displays its modes of production (though secretively) and creates a space for future production. Thus, the image is already located - by the forms of labour it enables. The politics of the image are not to be found in a set of relations exterior to the image, but there within its erasures (visual and imaginative), and the territories it re-inscribes and those that it inscribes upon. The placing of the image within this *landscape* is that which creates the object of Antarctica in the geopolitical imaginations; as the sum of the imaginative and material discourses of the image.[51]

The geopolitical discourse of the image is generated by knowing as a *drive* within historical discourses and epistemes of knowledge. Antarctica, as non-productive landscape (not even sufficient to support human life) is an anomaly within the drive of Modernity. Often Antarctica's spatial appearance is as an exterior representation outside Modernity; often as a utopian or dystopic projection in a narrative on Modernity's progress; or as the 'first place' or the 'last place'; or as a sacred site of the last great wilderness or as a site of catastrophe in the narratives of global warming and the ozone hole; or as the gendered other,[52] the last virgin continent. Often only by metonymy does Antarctica exist as a possibility, which raises important questions about how practices produce discourses of otherness and what kinds of difference they are able to encompass. As a profoundly *uncultural* space, Antarctica's appearance in Modernity's projection is as a remainder. The difficulties of this projection provide an opportunity to look at the geographical assumptions that drive Modernity's ordering. However, the resilience of imaginative projections of the Antarctic as a site 'on the edge' of geographical systems can also can affect its own erasures. Such an image has very real usage for the grounding of sites of production in unexhausted territories, such as those currently 'explored' by Southern Ocean fisheries and biotech companies. Consequently, aesthetic labour must be connected to the boundaries, territories and frontiers of capital. In this next section, I will therefore explore how Antarctica's historic ordering in global systems has produced the specific geopolitical object of Antarctica.

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[51] Geopolitics as an academic discourse has a tendency to assume its object, and in this sense the object is taken as a flat form that is rigid and bounded, rather than something constituted by the multiple practices thorough which we know it.

[52] The first women were included in the National Science Foundation (NSF) Antarctic programme in the 1969-70 season. Today women make up one third of the NSF's science programme. Three texts examine the role of women in the Antarctic: Elizabeth Chipman, *Women on Ice: A History of Women in the Far South* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press,1986); Barbara Land, *The New Explorers: Women in Antarctica* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Comp., 1981); Esther D Rothblum, Jacqueline S Weinstock, Jessica F Morris eds., *Women in the Antarctic* (New York & London: Haworth Press, 1998).

Problematising the geopolitical 'object' of Antarctica

Antarctica's aesthetic ordering in the contemporary imaginary is embedded in the material and political practices developing in the region. To elaborate on this further (and highlight some of the themes that will be developed through the thesis), I will explore Antarctica's ordering within modernity's spatiality to elucidate how Antarctica's placing has always been determined by its relation to the north. Rarely has Antarctica been considered as a landscape that productively disrupts modernity's projections of meaning on to it. Rather, Antarctica is frequently positioned as a space in which these projections are disavowed – a space before and after the fall; a pre-modern space of landscape, and a post-modern space of catastrophe. This is a temporal spacing driven by the geographical 'progress' of modernity across the globe, where Antarctica is placed as the least accessible and least desirable geographical continent. There are many more spatialities that can be seen to operate within this narrative, predominantly concerned with imperialism (and imperial science),[53] the performance of certain kinds of masculinities,[54] and science as a dominant method of knowledge production.

From the late 1980s onwards, geopolitical questions about Antarctica were raised by a Malaysian led United Nations (UN) on the 'Question of Antarctica' (first posited by India in 1950s) to discuss overt first world/third world Antarctic relations in the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs). Less overt is how Antarctica is implicated in the politics of postcolonial states, where national imaginaries of Antarctica are displayed to resolve, or perform, nation formations. For example, Antarctica plays a significant role in the negotiation of Australian and New Zealand domestic and international identity politics. Similarly, the postcolonial states such as Malaysia,[55] Singapore and India, are currently negotiating the dilemmas of producing scientific and cultural narratives of Antarctica within a system of control that is dominated by first world states (AT). Contemporaneously new geopolitical and economic frontiers are being formed that do not operate firmly within national identities or

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[53] Imperial science – science that is un-retractable from the national interests that are bound up in the motivation, regulation, and justification for designating Antarctica as, 'a Continent for Science'.

[54] Gillian Rose genders the pursuit of complete geographical knowledges as masculine and heterosexual, she says "more importantly for their claims of power through knowledge, they also desire a whole/knowledge of the world. Geographical knowledge aims to be exhaustive. It assumes that, in principle, the world can be fully known and understood. Michael Curry has recently described this as geography's 'architectonic impulse': a 'desire to create an ordered, hierarchical system... which seeks to refer all sciences to one principle'" Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography, The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 7.

[55] Malaysia and Singapore have both been 'exploring' Antarctica through science and through extreme journeys (in 2000 a Singaporean team sponsored by *Microsoft* tried to walk to the South Pole, and a Malaysian team tried to skydive onto the Geographical Pole - both these postcolonial journeys ended in failure). While they were unsuccessful in terms of their aims, they were instrumental in further consolidating the new frontiers of capital by the use of Antarctic representation as a virtual resource for multinationals.

Plate 5

the physical geography, those of bioprospecting,[56] trans-national corporations; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); 'Fifth World':[57] tourism; virtual Antarctica; and Antarctica as an academic resource.

Whether considered as the site of a belated imperial upsurge or, as Sir Vivan Fuchs[58] has suggested, the last place where a certain type of masculinity can be performed, Antarctica's placing is directly relational to the industrialised world in environmental and cultural terms. The inescapable symbolic dimension of practices in Antarctica as a form of production is contrasted with the relatively use-less value of the land in terms of cultivation and exploitation. Although this balance has shifted since the late 1980s with debates over mining and contemporaneously with fishing and bioprospecting, and the futurism of Antarctica's usage for mineral and oil extraction, tourism or as a virtual resource.

Geopolitically, the power and control of the image in Antarctic politics has been fundamental to Antarctic governance because it is conducted in sites outside of Antarctica, where the place is invoked as an abstracted landscape (often to governmental ministers for whom Antarctica exists only as a conceptual object). Power struggles over the control of image production mark the politics of any land usage, as "landscapes, whether or not they are populated, are about land and land use, space, frontiers, boundaries, territories".[59] However, because of the unequal system of access to the landscape the exchange between image-makers and audiences are marked by a distinct power imbalance. Issues of access to Antarctica have been the greatest regulatory control within this politic; access is controlled by geography, wealth, technology, the ATCPs, gender, discipline and cultural marginality.[60]

Despite the lack of attention that historically has been paid to aesthetics in Antarctic politics, the late 1980s debate over the regulation of Antarctic resources - Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities (CRAMRA) - intensified its consideration, and resulted in the protection of Antarctica's 'aesthetic values' being designated as part of the environmental governance, in the Protocol on Environmental Protection (Protocol). The

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[56] Bioprospecting was one of the key issues discussed at the ATCM in Madrid June 2003.
[57] The 'Fifth World' is described as "made up of a growing number of people who have loyalties and interests that transcend political boundaries" and are not arranged in terms of nation state boundaries, in Suter 1991, 127.
[58] Antony Nelson, in the preface to Vivian Fuchs book *Ice and Men*: "Whatever part they played, every individual has enjoyed the sense of battle with nature, the wonder and beauty of an unknown world, and the achievement of survival and success. There are few places left today where young men can experience these things – learn the art of self-reliance. But the Antarctic is one of them." Vivian Fuchs, *Ice and Men* (Oswestry: Antony Nelson, 1982), 2.
[59] Anne Raine "Embodied Geographies: subjectivity and materiality in the work of Ana Mendieta" in *Generations and Geographies* ed. Griselda Pollock (London: Routledge, 1996), 230.
[60] Considered within the spatial explorations of modernist art, the challenges that Antarctica presents to western representational practice are considerable, despite this it has remained a marginal place located outside the concerns of contemporary art practice.

political debate over CRAMRA (that is discussed in Part II) is the crux of the contemporary visual ordering debate and its legacy, in the form of the Protocol has been instrumental in forming Antarctic futures. The geographical journeys that were made in the late 1980s by NGOs such as Greenpeace, with the specific political agenda to bring back images, enabled a significant visual re-mapping of Antarctica. The image production of these voyages not only challenged dominant mythologies of the continent in representational terms, but also bought Antarctica in from the periphery to the centre of a debate on the politics of human impacts.

Questions of human impact centred, at this stage, primarily on the issue of risk. By introducing risk as an anxiety (the risk of pollution, the risk of exploitation, the risk of destruction)[61] the NGO campaign, through stark and simplistic imagery firmly brought Antarctica into modernity's time frame.[62] Ironically, the concept of Antarctica as a site of contemporary environmental concern was erected upon narratives of a pre-modern wilderness threatened by the industrial consequences of modernity's progress. This contemporary debate was a significant change from imperial-scientific narrative of Antarctica[63] and the autonomy that the ATCPs had hitherto enjoyed. The subsequent actions by ATCPs can been seen, in part, a response to the challenges brought to bear on the Antarctic Treaty during this time; a challenge that was predominantly articulated through the production and management of geopolitical images of the Antarctic (and continues to be so).

The struggle over the 'image' of Antarctica in the popular culture is one of the most significant, yet unacknowledged political concerns of all the key Antarctic players, from national Antarctic programmes and NGOs, to tourist operators and Antarctic 'gateway' ports, such as Ushuaia and Hobart. Regulated through hierarchies of control and censorship, the power of reproduction of particular images of Antarctica is key to issues of 'gate keeping' within Antarctic politics (or what can be called the ordering of Antarctica in the geographic imagination).

Representation of space and the spaces of representation made available, have real and lasting effects in terms of 'rights' in the governance and use of Antarctic landscape. Since the abeyance of direct political claims under the AT, the cultural politics of Antarctica are the primary place of struggle for political articulation; these cultural forms are often seen as illustrative of other power relations by geopolitical analysis rather than as a political site in their own right. Thus, there is a great necessity to retain the visibility of these politics within

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[61] See Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage, 1992).

[62] Aesthetic modernisation was the result of the GP journey to, and image making in Antarctica. This visual 'event' is discussed at length in Part II.

[63] Antarctica conceived as a 'frozen laboratory': a place to extract information from and a place of extreme science.

seemingly benign cultural forms (such as the Antarctic Artist and Writers programme of the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand) and to take account of the structures in which they are embedded.

The political and cultural landscapes of control that order the Antarctic - do so based on a global visual economy. As a visual field, global discourse prioritises a visibility remote from the site of experience over a relational landscape aesthetic.[64] In doing so, Antarctica becomes a *remainder* to global systems – an awkward terminus to a trajectory of meaning - that accounts for difference only in so much as it registers an extreme point- the "highest, driest, windiest, coldest...last continent". In its belatedness to the global scene the potential disruption that Antarctica might wreak in the visual field has been passed over in favour of conformity to global systems. While it might be expected that a cultural geography of the Antarctic would make an account of Antarctica's orderings - so as not to repeat an indifferent projection over place, it is Antarctica's potential to disorder that offers the possibilities for considering a reconfiguration of the visual field. As Barthes asserts, "Why mightn't there be, somehow, a new science for each object? A *mathesis singularis* (and no longer *universalis*)?"[65] Writing against the closure and indifference of globalising systems of meaning requires attention to the shifts, instability and flows in Antarctica's geographies, and the technologies of arrest that crystalise them.

This precarious and shifting mapping is a representational uncertainty at a narrative level of visual languages, and that of its writing. It is to this issue that I turn next, in order to clarify the forms of writing that characterise this shifting Antarctic terrain.

Looking back in/at Antarctica: bodies of memory, landscapes of images

The imposition of place is its afterimage.
A mark of presence - like looking too long at the sun - the impossible image bleached into the synapses of vision.
Its geography is what remains of seeing.
Unyielding to reproduction, it finds no double in the representational order.
A haunting - an unstable memory beckons, only to find no other referent.
Searched for - so that it might be found again, and its solicitousness brought to order - it is lost to time, empting the image of everything save absence. A blind spot in vision.
The afterimage is historical - small and compelling.
Out of the corner of the eye, like desire, it winks. A direct view, that is no longer visible.
Do we imagine we continue to see, out of desire?

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[64] Nicholas Bourriand, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les Presse du Reel, 2002) describes relational aesthetics as a sociable art that is about promoting conversation, where the artist seeks to examine the relations that the work will create among the public. He cites small-scale experimental interventions in the relational sphere that offer hope of interstices in capitalism. It is work that no longer attempts utopian solutions, but makes little angelic gestures to re-stitch the relational fabric.
[65] Barthes 2000, 8.

A series of landscape events, nominated Antarctic is the residue of this sight.
The traces lead back through corporeal sensation, optical experience, to a sentient being.
Landscape viewed from various positions.
Shifting.
Reconfiguring,
the space outside turns itself inside.
The imposition of place challenges the possibilities of how we inhabit space.[66]

The journey between the image of place and the marking on and in the memory of the body is landscape's starting point - an illumination. I begin with an image in order to open up the theoretical discussions of geographies of the visual and to consider the different registers through which such geographies pass. Image is experience, and memory, and object, and each has a material register; of matter, bodies, paper, film, and canvas.

The tidy geographies of real and imagined images do not account for how images are simultaneously a mental location as well as a physical one. The image is this apprehension of form - this visual perception is crucial to both material existence and to the imagination. To perceive is to be, but the reverse is also true: to be perceived is to be; the perception of A by B brings A into existence. And if to be perceived is to be, then also to be imagined (to be seen in the mind's eye) is to be. Landscape exists at this material and imaginative register of perception. I touch matter and so I grasp an image of it, I also have an image of matter that my fingers have grasped, that remains in the mind's eye. An image can be thought of as the imaginary resolution of real contradictions between the lost and invoked landscape. The presence that is absent indicates an assemblage of seeing. The image provides a safe space from which to look, as representational space (in both the psychic and material order) is the space of man's signature, and thus can propose what Barthes calls, "a world without fear"; the image as a "fraternal product".[67] In form, exists the possibility of an inhabitation.

The *afterimage* has no double, yet it seeks a 'likeness', to pull other images into its own economy. Images pull at each other, as we seem to remember places we have not seen and are unaccountably drawn to images that give form to what we cannot on our own make visible. At times the difference between the visual economies of the imagination and the material can be quite marked, but a connecting thread runs between them, as is evidenced by the historical movement of the etymology of aesthetics.[68] Aesthetics have been conceived theoretically as both a historical process and as a physiological one. As Susan Buck-Morss

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[66] Author's Field Notes, 1999/2000.
[67] Roland Barthes "The Plates of the Encyclopaedia" in *New Critical Essays* Trans. Richard Howard (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1990 (1972)), 28.
[68] For a brief discussion on this see Susan Buck-Morss' discussion on "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered" in *October, The Second Decade, 1986-1996* ed. Krauss et al. (Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press,1997), 379. And Terry Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

comments, it is a concept that, "bounces like a ball among philosophical positions".[69] The 'push and pull' of this relationship between aesthetic identification and non-identification is not linear, but a dialectic.

As Barthes comments, what is interesting is the *movement* - "the analysis of codes perhaps allows an easier and surer historical definition of society than the analysis of signifieds...".[70] He urges that we do better to take stock of how things are made to signify rather than to look directly to the "ideological contents of our age..."[71] In respect of Benjamin's seminal essay, Barthes asserts that the networks that animate the image are the arbiter of culture's work;

> that which makes of an inert object a language and which transforms the unculture of a 'mechanical' art into the most social of institutions.[72]

He argues that it is the support of the imaginative that gives mobility to the image; without this identification, the image is no more than the sum of its material circumstances.

The subject is the primary site of the formation of social relations through vision and a discussion of vision in the formation of subjectivities is essential to place the image within the social and cultural relations that animate it. It is therefore necessary to discuss how subjectivities are formed through the visual, and what the implications there are for subjectivities formed through the differing spaces of visual technologies. To do this, I will turn to the much-quoted story of a sardine can that Lacan encounters whilst out at sea, as this provides a departure point for the thematic discussion of vision and visuality.

The story in short: Lacan, on a boat at sea, sees among the flotsam a sardine can, and one of the fishermen says, *'You see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!'* Lacan is perturbed by this logic, because he reckons on a world that does *look* back on the perceiver. The example of the can is attractive because it immediately assumes the form of a complex image: a dynamic of vision between the can, the reader, Lacan, the academy and the language of signification and subjectivity (la can/Lacan). As Martin Jay argues, "it helps us understand the complexities of a visual register which is not planimetric but which has all the complicated scenes that are not reducible to any one coherent space".[73] Taking Lacan's can as a starting point, I suggest that an Antarctica gaze could be theorised as located within an expanded field of vision that could potentially destabilise the socialised gaze that Lacan

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[69] Buck-Morss 1997, 379.
[70] Roland Barthes "The Photographic Message" in *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), 31.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Martin Jay, "Scopic regimes of Modernity" in *Vision And Visuality* ed. Hal Foster (New York: The New Press, 1988), 84.

conceives of. I argue that the physiological and conceptual peculiarities of the Antarctic landscape *unsettle* a socialised gaze, thereby effecting a de-centring of the subject position.

The conditions of the Antarctic environs are such that they provide a clearing from which to question the power relations embedded in visual formations of the subject. And through this "visual disturbance"[74] the signification process that socialises vision reveals its operation. The repeated and wilful rejection of the sensory information on and in the body, in particular on the eye as the sight/site of vision, in favour of a homogenising and legible formation of space demonstrates the seduction of the organising structures of western vision. Revisiting Lacan's reading of the sardine can's 'looking back' I suggest is a way of thinking about how to map the event of the image. It is another way of saying that, "All landscapes ask the same question: 'I am watching you – are you watching yourself in me?'"[75]

Bryson summaries Lacan's position,

> Lacan's account depends, not on the irruption of another personal viewer but the irruption, in the visual field, of the Signifier. When I look, what I see is not simply light but intelligible form: the *rays* of light are caught in a *rets*, a network of meanings, in the same way the flotsam is caught in the net of the fisherman. For human beings collectively to orchestrate their visual experience together it is required that each submit his or her retinal experience to the socially agreed description(s) of an intelligible world. Vision is socialised, and thereafter deviation from this social construction of visual reality can be measured and named, variously, as hallucination, misrecognition, or "visual disturbance." Between the subject and the world is inserted the entire sum of discourses which make visuality different from vision, the notion of unmediated visual experience. Between retina and world is inserted a *screen* of signs, a screen consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social area.[76]

So why does the sardine can look back? Because it is embedded in a network of meaning that exist before and beyond Lacan's looking. It looks back because it is already a *priori* a signifier; it represents even before Lacan's look gives it representation. As Baudrillard might say, it screams for attention. It is, as he would have it, already a photograph, or in Lacan's case, already a signifier. So, what of the subject's looking in Antarctica?

Place the subject in Antarctica on the polar plateau.
The sun goes round in circles.
Distance (and thus a sense of location) collapses into unreadable space.
Time has dissolved into this constant circling around an undifferentiated horizontality.
The horizon has no end or beginning.
Its edges recede to enclose the subject in formlessness.
Punctured by optical illusions, phantom visual disturbances, the light disturbs as it illuminates.
The intensity of the light reflected off the ice burns the unprotected retina, searing blind spots onto the organ of vision.

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[74] Norman Bryson, "The Gaze in the Expanded Field" in Foster 1988, 91.
[75] Lawrence Durrell in Lucy R Lippard's *Tourism, Art and Place* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 15.
[76] Bryson 1988, 91.

Sensually the body is invaded at a cellular level, each breath dries and threatens to freeze the lungs. The skin is robed of its moisture. The body is in a state of constant dehydration. Wounds re-open, and life is unsustainable without support from elsewhere.
Here, is the constant threat of physical and psychic fragmentation as a condition of landscape.[77]

In short, Antarctica offers the strangest and most exhilarating dislocation from any socialised aesthetic orientation in landscape. In contrast to the bodies positioning on the threshold of disintegration, the aesthetic environment is resplendently whole, without a single bisecting verticality. Antarctica is predominantly a landscape composed of variations on one element (frozen water) and ablated by katabatic winds that conspire to remove all attempts at visual or conceptual footholds. Biological barren, Antarctica is a place of constant and unremitting visual and bodily erasure: whiteout. It has no likeness. In this Antarctica can be thought of as a *visual disturbance* that inverts the normative inhabitations of, what Martin Jay calls the scopic regimes of modernity - a regime that Walter Benjamin considered to be shocking to the subject.

Benjamin characterises modernity and its assault on the aesthetic faculty as being about shock, and the protection of the organism from shock. Starting from the Freudian notion of the unconscious as a protective shield against 'excessive energies', Benjamin writes, "the technological altered environment exposes human sensorium to physical shocks that have their counter part in psychic shocks".[78] Benjamin in his Artwork essay[79] described the process of modernisation as one of sensory alienation effected through the flooding of the senses, which causes numbness that is relieved through the illusion of technological stimuli of phantasmagoria.[80] Benjamin followed Freud's location of subjectivity on the body's surface, which thus urges a consideration of aesthetics (as a science of perception) as fundamental to the experience of subjectivity. Benjamin argued that the mechanics of the machine have their psychic counter-part in the "sectioning of time", the throb of repetition without development. This socialised process(-ing) causes, what Benjamin calls a "protective eye", where perception is deadened by the need to protect the organism from the constant shocks of technology. Through over-stimulation - numbed to alleviate its violence to the senses - we are collectively, Benjamin argues, "cheated out of experience".[81] We "see too much - and

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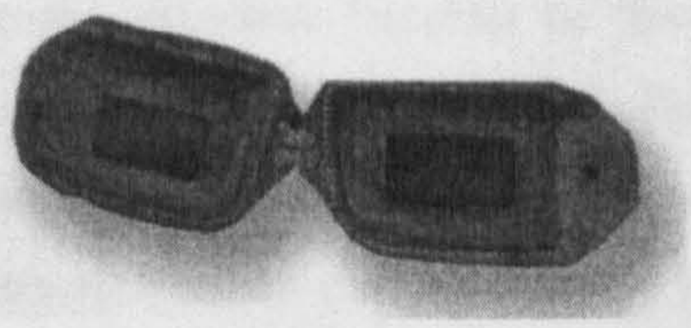
[77] Author's Field notes 1999/2000.
[78] Buck-Morss 1997, 388.
[79] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Arendt, (New York: Schocken Books, 1969)
[80] "Phatasmagorias are a technoaesthetics. The perceptions they provide are "real" enough- their impact upon the senses and nerves is still "natural" from a neurophysical point of view. But their social function is in case compensatory." (Buck-Morss 1997, 394.). Marx used the word to describe the commodity world and its veiling of the traces of the production process through its mere 'visible presence' that encourages the contemplation of it as a thing apart, open to the investment of subjective desires.
[81] Benjamin 1969, 137.

register nothing".[82] The themes of this experience of modernity, according to Benjamin are fragmentation; too much to see, causing the repression of memory, which is fractured through the prism of technological illusion.



Benjamin's modern subject is caught between the repetitive fragmented moments of technology's spectre, respondent only to fragmented aesthetic experience, deadened by the need for self protection - aesthetically, and thus psychically cauterised. As Buck-Morss comments,

> Thus, the simultaneity of over stimulation and numbness is characteristic of the new synaesthetic organisation as *an*aesthetics. The dialectical reversal, whereby aesthetics change from a cognitive mode of being "in touch" with reality to a way of blocking out reality, destroys the human organism's power to respond politically even when self-preservation is at stake...[83]

If the phantasmagoric visual experience is productive of a fragmented psychic experience, it is also productive of a fragmented experience of place. The implication of fragmentation for a relationship to place, the production we seek of it, and the construction of subjectivities in relation to place, is key to the meanings we ascribe to the futurism of place, as a geographical entity. As Jameson argues, the subject is inserted into "a multi dimensional set of radically discontinuous realities, in which the truth of experience no longer coincides with the place of experience."[84] Visual experience and experience of place are severed - alienated from one another.

To get at this form of alienation, let me return to Lacan's can. In a Lacanian view, the screen is constituted by a mesh of cultural meaning and discourses: a screen that, if we accept Benjamin's account of modernity's subject, is a screen of alienation. The numbing of aesthetic sensibilities becomes a condition of orientating oneself in the world of modernity. And as Benjamin has argued, the physical shocks of modernity have a psychic counterpart in the experience of subjectivity. However, Benjamin's alienated subject does not have an original unalienated condition, so *visibility* of this alienation is productive of *recognition*, and thus provides a potential field of action.[85] Returning to the polar plateau, I want use the extraordinary physical conditions of the Antarctic to think about the radical potential of

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[82] Buck-Morss 1997, 390.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Frederic Jameson "Cognitive Mapping" in *Marxism and Interpretation of Culture, ed.* Nelson, C. and Grossberg, I. (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988), 351.
[85] Film in Benjamin's account offers the capacity to level technology's bungled reception, by moving the subject towards a self-reflexive sensory engagement (the importance of film, for Benjamin is that it addresses a collective subjectivity).

loosening Lacan's screen. The physical experience may be more like, what Barthes calls, the experience of a *punctum* in the visual field.

Barthes describes *Punctum* as the element in the photograph that pricks or wounds the viewer, like a tear or hook that allows the subject into an image, thus disrupting its logic as a material and structural object. *Punctum* is not a socialised/mass memory, such as that of Antarctica as the site of the ozone hole, but it is what Barthes sees as a subject (that which is not socialised) and others don't see. And so, *punctum* is a way of forging identity, by being wounded by the image, thereby overcoming the anaesthetics of an alienating collective vision. He extends the social to the individual, by focusing on the small overlooked detail that triggers memory and allows the viewer to appropriate the image for her/himself. "The *punctum*, then is, a kind of subtle *beyond*" writes Barthes "...as if the image launched desire *beyond* what it permits us to see".[86]

To make a claim for a continent, as a *remainder* ('a subtle beyond') in globalising systems - that offers an occasion for the de-socialisation of seeing, through an epistemological tear in the fabric of a socialised visuality - is not what Barthes conceives of. Although *punctum* is not a socialised address, it does suggest a futurism based on an uncanny accumulation in a technologically based optical unconscious. In his search for the subject's visual field within technology, Barthes looks to the emotional configurations that beckon him as a viewer. His search is for the punctures in the socialised visual field, orientated by an emotional response to a tear in the aesthetic register. By exploring it as a *wound* he opens the dialectic of the image within the subject to an aesthetic register informed by the subject's own unique experience. However, could this emotional *leading* that punctures the socialised field of vision be the basis for considering the reconfiguration of socialised vision in other spaces? Those spaces that extend beyond the individual, that nonetheless puncture the socialised aesthetic configurations, such as may be found in the physical and psychic excesses of an unintuitive landscape, such as Antarctica?

Barthes says, on the one side there are the images of "unconcern, shifting, noise, the inessential (even if I am abusively deafened by it), on the other the burning, the wounded."[87] The path between the two sets of photographs form the basis of Barthes *Camera Lucida* and reveals the structural configurations of both; the identification and non-identification with the image and the spaces of inhabitation that this affords. It is the "disturbance" for Barthes that breaks through the logic of configuration that marks the noise and abusively deafening effect

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[86] Barthes 2000, 59.
[87] Ibid., 98.

of the socialised aesthetic (that threatens Benjamin's subject and the Barthes 'private life'). So the 'disturbance' rescues the subject from the deadening of anaesthetic that is the effect of the reproductive capacity of the machine, and in this act, the disturbance rescues the fragmentation of the subject's psychic relation to the world around.

Benjamin demands that the only way to restore humanity to the alienated subject is to *undo* the alienation of the corporeal sensorium, to *restore the instinctual power of the human bodily senses for the sake of humanity's self preservation*, and to do this, not by avoiding the new technologies, but by *passing through* them.[88]

If subjectivity (and mass subjectivity as its ideological and aesthetic form) is rendered as an effect of technology, it does not allow us, as Benjamin urges us, *to pass through it*, instead it confines and traps us. Captive within its dimensions, and its imagined forms of subjectivity, the tortured subject is unable to locate in opposition to these forms, unable to respond as Benjamin asserted politically to that which threatens to the point of destruction (the implication of this to place will be discussed in Part II). As Buck-Morss comments, the "sensory addiction to a compensatory reality becomes a means of social control"[89] that threatens to crush, for pleasure (see discussion in Part II on the aesthetics of destruction) Benjamin's "tiny, fragile human body".[90]

> In the "great mirror" of technology, the image that returns is displaced, reflected onto a different plane, where one sees oneself as a physical body divorced from sensory vulnerability - a statistical body, the behaviour of which can be calculated; a performing body, actions of which can be measured up against the "norm"; a virtual body, one that can endure the shocks of modernity without pain. As Jünger writes: "It almost seems as if the human being possessed a striving to create a space in which pain... can be regarded as an illusion"[91]

The perpetuation of violence exacted against the subject in Benjamin's imaginary, calls for us to recognise the structures we inhabit - the form and shape of our images - in order that we make efforts to pass through them. And, that we understand how desire is routed through the image.

As the image offers other worlds for us to *live* in (spaces of imaginative inhabitation) it leads desire, in so much as we go looking for these places. This is the dialectical relation that is part of a consideration of how we make our *passings* through the ways in which we are placed by visual technologies and as viewing subjects. Through an understanding of the inhabitations

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[88] Buck-Morss 1997, 377.
[89] Ibid., 395.
[90] Benjamin 1969, 84.
[91] Buck-Morss 1997, 405.

that images leads us into, and how our own desires lead our searching, a form of passing may be possible.

Antarctica: the visual rupture

Antarctica offers a double blinding - the surrounding of whiteout and the condensation of distance in the rarefied atmosphere. In the visual economy, the image makes its object - Antarctica - but it also fails to do so. Time and space evaporate into the landscape, as Antarctic processes seem to affect a terrestrial slippage - a slippage in the temporal processes that has made Antarctica the testing site for extra-terrestrial rehearsals. As the image fixes, vision slips. There is no mimetic reproduction in the representational order that has any sympathy with the Antarctic landscape - every cultural practice of visualisation that makes the Antarctic object has been developed in relation to other social experiences. For example, the material and visual form of the photograph is the product of its mechanical reproduction. It is a perfect form to mimetically reproduce modernity's vertical impulses and fractured spaces of arrest, but it makes a line of the circle of the horizon. A photograph makes the dome of the plateau (all 13,800.00km^2 and 0.2x10^{17}tons of it) into a flat white block. Temporally, Antarctic processes are slow unlike the camera's lack of duration. Yet, the discovery of Antarctica is marked by the discovery of photography, and so it is one of the most crucial sites in a relational aesthetics of the Antarctic. This tension signals the limits and opportunities of representational practices to the comprehension of Antarctic spatialities.

The disturbance of Antarctica's cultural otherness (its lack of an indigenous population, the corporeal dislocation and subject disorientation) locates it as a product of modernity's signature but also at the point that threatens to reveal its limitations through an aesthetic and epistemological disruption. My argument is that Antarctica offers the experience of an aesthetic sensory awakening at both an optical and cognitive level (albeit an experience itself embedded in the experience of modernity, and thus positioned in relation to it). Thinking back to Lacan's socialising screen of visual discourses, if that screen offers an uncomfortable signification for what is seen, then the disturbance of the socialisation of sight is possible. As the social reproduction of vision is located within the signifying systems, the historical meanings ascribed to Antarctica are the basis of the increasing attempts at knowing the Antarctic. Yet, there are significant factors that thwart this process, primarily this knowing has been hampered by the expediency exhibited in this relation; an inability of Western knowledge systems to address the limits of knowledge and a dependency on knowledge systems that do not recognise difference (or respond to this challenge through over

compensation in representation). Therefore, in *Part III*, I will show how this is both a result of the structures of production and difficulties in resolving imaginative and aesthetic complexities of Antarctic fields. In these fields it is argued that signifying practice sees a break from representational likeness - a relational aesthetic - because all representational practices have been developed in relation to other visual terrains. Thus the signified and signifier have a disrupted dialectic relationship, and this threatens the operation of signification. And, although creative practice is mutable, intelligibility demands that the communication strategies of production are such that the risk of straying into a realm of un-translatability of sensorial experience is minimal. It is just this task that Benjamin demands as the only way to restore a productive aesthetic experience to the alienated subject.

Often, Antarctica as a *silence* in the operation of signification is exchanged for the extreme point in cultural discourse, that is the edge of, but not a disruption of modernist narratives (the coldest, highest, windiest, last place, etc.). The desire for a transportable image of Antarctica ascribes to the normalising of the Antarctic object, and thus its strategies of production are aligned towards this goal. Only by a significant rethinking of the ideological and governing structures of production of Antarctic visual cultures - particularly those of the Artist and Writers Programmes (discussed in Part III) - could Antarctic silences be productively addressed through a relational aesthetic.

At this point, the possibility of Antarctic aesthetic ruptures become crucial: what are the possibilities for unknowing if no adequate discourse exists within the social arena to provide a screen from Antarctica's look? Physically a screen can be a prosthetic domestication of sight, such as eye protection, a camera lens, and a cognitive arrangement that makes the landscape into a geographic form. What if these temporal physical screens are loosened? Can we look, for a moment, and be *looked at* in the realm that threatens to expose the social? When the boundaries of an adequate social mesh of discourses are so thin, how can this tell us something about our looking? Bryson argues that,

> Everything I see is orchestrated with a cultural production of seeing that exists independently of my life and outside it: my individual discoveries, the findings of my eye as it probes through the world, come to unfold in terms not of my making, and indifferent to my mortality.[92]

Although I would argue that the indifference that Bryson proposes is a little more mutable, and the threshold of the social is a membrane that is both constituting and constitutive, it is this embedded-ness in the cultural production of seeing that is significant in passing through it. The terms of visuality exist *a priori* and are temporally relational, so my 'individual

[92] Bryson 1988, 92.

discoveries' are never alone, they are comforted everywhere by the reduced, familiar, domesticated signs. The image of Antarctica is divided; the homogeneity of the image, intact, brings the Antarctica into view as unproblematic and as representable, while corporeal sensation refutes these frames of reference that propose a world signified without difference.

As a geographical and conceptual site/sight, the Antarctic offers a site to see those signifying practices as un-embedded (laid over a landscape that 'speaks'/signifies in un-cultural ways) and often unconcealed (because of the lack of alternative imaginings from indigenous peoples). Whether in Antarctica or London, if the formation of vision is brought to light - then the power and symbolic relations within the visual field may also be taken into account. Part of this accountability is the reminder Antarctica provides for re-thinking beyond the structures of humanist relations to place. The inhabitation that the rest of the globe affords humans is denied in the Antarctic (life is unsustainable without resources from outside/the lack of conceptual purchase) and this raises important questions about the inhabitations that we expect in the world, in place, the image, and knowledge.

The creative potential for recognising forms of unknowing is an aesthetic opportunity, simultaneously of the landscape and the image. The architecture of the Antarctic imaginary forms an intersecting geography of place and image that depend on one another for meaning. These extremes of geographical distance and imaginary otherness are held in a tension that negotiates presence and absence: Antarctica as imaginatively conjured and Antarctica as unassailable. The Antarctic image is located within those intersecting networks and discourses of speaking to, and the limits of speaking to difference. Jacque Derrida[93] argued that attempts to theorise meaning in the image (as art object) fell into two camps, either determined in the object or determined outside the object. He claimed that we will never approach meaning if we work within these frames and do not acknowledge that meaning has already been established by the frame within which we come to the object - the entire sum of intersecting discourses, institutions and knowledges that not only mediate our looking but are part of the object we perceive.

Akin to Lacan's concept of *rets* – the network of meanings – the art object is caught like flotsam in the net of the fisherman, just as it is caught in the net of Lacan's socialised seeing, as signified. The tale of the sardine can suggests an allegorical method, a way of visualising meaning that is caught in the likeness of another set of images. The oscillation of these intersecting visual fields and the lack of stability they present (the can that 'bobs' in the sea,

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[93] See Jacques Derrida. *On Grammatology*. Trans. G. C. Spivak. (John Hopkins Univ. Press: Baltimore, 1974), 15-16.

catching the light and alerting Lacan to the internalisation of the gaze of the other) reminds us, as Lacan is reminded, that meaning is held in a network that prefigures our observation. Thus, the object operates in a dichotomy - what is considered exterior is productive of it and so is inherent to it - the very stuff of which it is made. The impurity of boundaries between the material edges and the immaterial vision that makes the object 'look back' constructs both the object and its networks of intersecting meanings.

It is not enough to trace a work of art through its networks or its spatialities (historical or otherwise), because these networks are dynamically constituted, as is the image, constituted by memory's work (the effect of time and representation). The visual net that Lacan suggests can be helpful as an allegorical approach to account for the image at particular junctures of time. Essentially, Lacan's network of meaning catches and is caught in time. It embraces the winking of the can as a relational disruption in the field of vision and in the shifting positions that locate, and that Lacan is located by. These movements are the products of that vision.

Locating Antarctic spatialities in visual economies of the image

The politics of location and the theorisation of spectatorship, which owes much to the work of Derrida and the post-structuralist school can broadly be seen as, what is now called a visual culture approach to vision and visuality. Visual culture, Irit Rogoff suggests, is defined as an arena differentiated from film and art histories because "it signals an understanding that conceptualizations of 'other' or of 'value' form part of the field of inquiry rather than being added as categories to interrogate and revise the status of existing corpuses of historical materials".[94] Rogoff suggests that an analytical approach demands that the structures that produce knowledges are equally as sustaining of the 'knowledge' as the particular 'subject' it identifies - what might be called an *embodied knowledge production*. This requires us to go beyond the 'object' (if ever-such object-hood can be assumed as stable) to the structures of support, the modes of signification it is embedded in, and the located and locating subjectivities that are realised through vision. This process, Rogoff suggests, is "increasingly tempered by the slippages between the ever-eroding boundaries of exclusive object-hood and coherent subjecthood";[95] as Lacan's play on words in his story of La-can demonstrates. Moreover, this suggests a *porousness* of object/subject boundaries. The can, like Lacan's located gaze and the gaze of the other that he is located by, is as productive of subjectivity as the subjects themselves are (the two are conflated in Lacan's joke). Moreover, it must wink, and thus must be acknowledged to be relationally performative to signification and subjectivity. Spatially the performance of this looking and looked back-at-ness is organised

[94] Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma, Geography's Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000),18.
[95] Ibid.,18.

around the gaze. As Pile and Thrift summarise, it is both locating; sight as a beckoning and pleasure of desire; and a location, a site in which we are placed by this desire.

> our analytical gaze must notice site/sight are orientated in each exchange of glances through lines of meaning and power, which can be specified in the hall of mirrors of the look... Each dimension of seeing invokes differently a different kind of space between the person who looks and the object that looks back: there is a position, distance and an orientation to the look, which specifies a particular space of meaning and power: this space is neither isolated nor abstract; this space both contains and refuses an infinite number of invocations of meaning and power; this space is constitutive of the visual practice, it is staging and integrating the lines of power and meaning between the look and the look-back.[96]

This proposes a strategic visual culture, "a social production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes; social beings actively emplaced in space and time in an explicitly historical and geographical contextualisation",[97] through and by vision (the signification and structures of representation and viewing subject positions). The idea of a gaze and being gazed upon, whether by others or by other non-human forms, is a problematic at the heart of the debate about the operation of the visual in forming subjectivities (centred around Laura Mulvey's provocative 1975 essay).[98] Although it is not something I will discuss at length here, it is important to note that the theory of the gaze as a structure of understanding vision, is highly debated as it privileges a theoretical construct of vision over an optical one. Rather, I want to keep an idea of sites/sights of vision in mind in order to address other ways we might think about the structures of the visual. Brennan's work argues against a notion of the gaze, (following Martin Jay's lead, then diverging from it);

> At the beginning of his *Downcast Eyes*, Jay suggests that some physiological explanation of human visual experience needs to sit alongside the culturalist one... Jay opts for the more modulated view, which allows for some physiological explanation of vision within a cultural one.[99]

Brennan suggests that these conflicts become particularly acute with a notion of the gaze; an immaterial, symbolic function, or metaphorical notion that is not paralleled by a significant physiological counterpart, as the eye receives light rather than gives it out as was once thought,

> if I am right the distinction between a receptive and a constructed vision (active and passive) is the source of all disruption of received views. It is the condition of pluralities. But it is a condition that depends on the existence of things that are beyond our control.[100]

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[96] Steve Pile & Nigel Thrift, *Mapping the Subject* (London: Routledge,1995), 46.
[97] Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* (London: Verso, 1997), 2.
[98] Laura Mulvey, "Visual pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in Laura Mulvey *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillian, 1989),14-26.
[99] Teresa Brennan in *Vision in Context* ed. Martin Jay & Teresa Brennan (London: Routledge, 1996), 219.
[100] Ibid., 288.

The importance of this point that is rarely registered in images of the Antarctic (by framings that domesticate the usual conditions of Antarctic space) is the physiological effect of looking in the Antarctic - the effect of a specific light. This looking adds another layer of synthesis to Lefebvre's two spaces of the social and psychic in one time. Such are the material conditions in Antarctica that one might make a case for the inversion of the gaze as both a metaphorical (as Lacan and Sartre do)[101] and physiological operation. The reflectivity of the ice (especially on the polar plateau) is akin to looking upon the sun, the light is so penetrating that the retina can be burnt in the process. Jonathan Crary notes that a great many pioneers of visual concepts destroyed part of their retinas in the process of their formulations of theories of vision. They sacrificed their sight for a site from which to think about the visual.[102]

Antarctica is literally a place where it is unsafe to look for long in an unprotected manner. The inscribing effect of light in the Antarctic on the organ of sight, and the visual phenomena re-order the logic and expectations of seeing, to actively denigrate vision. A metaphoric gaze laid on the surface of Antarctica is reflected back with an intensity that obscures and even prevents looking. If the subject on the polar plateau looks, she or he is doubly looked upon - it is a physical effect that is hard to circumvent, and any attempt to do so must be viewed as the employment of a cultural conditioning so strong that it is willing to neglect all evidence to the contrary. By registering the physical and perceptual arrest of this blinding vision, the embodiment of visual culture can be accounted for - rather than viewing it as a set of practices that is removed from our inhabitations. This argument expands the visual economy to something that accounts for the embodiment and the intensity of ruptures in visual regimes.

If we are to consider approaching Antarctic difference, there must be a consideration of how physiological differing visions within place are superseded by cultural and psychic necessity - to maintain control over vision's arrest and not to become disorganised by it. To keep the physiological and cultural in tension prompts a detailed examination of the processes and ordering of the visual through fieldwork, and its structures and epistemes. One way of thinking about this, is again to move away from a consideration of the image as text, but as embedded in the process of vision, and thus as an instance of its affect. Thus, I argue how the effect of vision is an arrest that is an instance of embodiment - that affects the kinds of inhabitations we can make in places - psychologically, physically and as Benjamin suggested, historically (conceived through the arrest of images). Extending consideration of the embodiment of vision to the Antarctic - where the arresting visions are inflected through

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[101] See Jacque Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis* (New York: Univ. of New York Press, 1995 (1973)) and Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (London: Routledge, 1943)

[102] Jonathan Crary in "Modernizing Vision" in Foster 1988, 34.

Antarctic light - the hallucinogenic quality of looking questions seeing as productive of a stable external reality and a stable subject/object-hood. In the porousness of this exchange, the autonomy of visual regimes is shaken into realising other forms of ordering, that exist in excess of vision as a controlling form of arrest.

The landscape's look back highlights how vision is at the threshold of control - where autonomy is either assumed or relinquished (to account for our looking). Antarctica's intense return of light, and the scale of the landscape that cannot be incorporated into a human centred field of vision, challenge an assumed autonomy and unity of vision (such as the gaze suggests). In this challenge resides a potential ethics of cultural interaction with landscape - whereby power over landscape is reconsidered. By accepting a porous and affecting vision, there can be a loosening of the solidifying action of visual methodologies that arrest images in time and in meaning. In the rupture of the Antarctic visual field - the look back suggests - the process of a dynamically embodied vision.

What this discussion has attempted to show is that there is no one methodology that can be used as an analytical tool to represent the labour of the visual. Rather a multiple set of considerations are needed to keep the social, psychic and physiological spaces (that constitute the subjects experience of space) in tension. The most fundamental consideration that this reconsideration of these visual economies prompts is the action of time as a determinant in the meaning and geography of the image. The next section will consider the labour of time, (and memory, as time adjudicator)[103] and the problem that time's operation in the visual economy presents to writing the geography of the image. In short, a *chronogeographic* approach to landscapes of the image.

Locating Antarctic temporalities in visual economies of the image

The emphasis on the critical spatial paradigms in philosophical, sociological and geographical thought about representation and the space of representation, has often neglected, the pulse of time running through geographies of the image. The problem of accounting for time is essentially a problem of representation. The image is already in time; to place it there only speaks to its condition. Yet, such time-space is fraught with representational problems. The image operates as a signifier only in the present but it holds many other times in the structures of its enunciation. It holds the time of memory, photography, discovery, material, and culture. Jameson warns about the dangers of trying to map this time by spatialising it, expressly demanding that we need to thoroughly think about how we make

[103] If we lose our memory, we also lose a sense of geography, as space not demarcated by time, folds in on itself.

visible these operations and structures of production that are distinctly, as an effect of new technologies, invisible.[104]

Virilio (1998) argues that new technologies introduced speed into times' equation (although speed presupposes the notion of some existing stability of time). Speed, not only poses a problem of remembrance in a globalised culture that is information rich, but as Virilio argues threatens a more sinister operation in 'real-time' technologies which seem to offer time's double immediately, and thus disenfranchises us from any tenable sense of distance/space - like the mirage. For Virilio the technologies of the 'real' turn space (and time/distance there within) into a contested ground, that which "operates within the space of an entirely virtualised geographical reality".[105] It is a virtualised geography that has had profound effects on physical geographies and real bodies; in Virilio's example the missile arrives before human vision, and we literally don't know what's hit us. The acceleration effect, as a condition of distance within space presents time as a condition in the proximity of those spaces available to us.

The time dislocation that Virilio suggests has its roots in a sense of geography pre-empted in the narratives of modernity - albeit with marked differences that modernity's dreamwork was only just able to comprehend.[106] The failure of modernity's' utopia of technology as libertatory (as highlighted by Benjamin), not only caused fractures in our aesthetic orientation, but equally in our sense of time. As previously argued modernity's' narrative placed Antarctica in one sense clearly on the margins, before and after modernity's' time - pre and post industrialisation, while simultaneously Antarctica was heralded as the first modern state[107] internationally governed and removed from the politics of war. Caught in modernity's' time, Antarctica was a place to be ordered as an expression of Modernity's epistemes - it was the 'last place' in the dialectic of progress, and the 'last place' left unordered on the global map.

Victor Burgin makes the point that "In the modern period, space was predominately space traversed",[108] and thus its seemingly infinite horizons (that were a condition of the utopian drive of modernism) found paradoxically a limit in Antarctica as the last place on the map, and simultaneously a constantly renewable horizon of physical and psychic space, that could continue to be a 'first' place of modern thinking. In one sense, the historic utopian potential of

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[104] Jameson 1995, 2-3.
[105] Paul Virilio, *Pure War* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1998),16.
[106] The films of Andy Warhol (such as *Sleep and Empire*) from the late 60's suggest a recognition of the acceleration of time, as Warhol attempted to slow his films down to the speed of human processes.
[107] Keith Suter, *Antarctica, private Property or Public Heritage* (London & New Jersey: Zed, 1991),180.
[108] Burgin 1996, 43.

Antarctica was superseded by the failure of modernity's narrative, although it by no means replaced it. The narrative of Antarctica as the first modern state had failed, and continues to fail to address the divisions of power that inhabit the rest of the globe; international governance meant the select and predominantly first world governance of the ATCPs; rights of access were and are based on financial capability; and imperial science became the alibi of occupation. And while the AT is a remarkably unique order of governance it is haunted by the spectre of imperialism in the modern period. Antarctica framed within modernity's progress, and the increasing cost of that progress across the globe, appears to place it in its failed horizon (as a place under threat). Antarctica can also be considered what Jameson calls a 'hole in the text' of modernity's' utopian project, and thus a potential creative site from which to view the disruptions of its projections.

As the spaces of representation fractured, largely as an affect of the machine, Modernity's grand narratives still harboured ambitions to establish autonomy of vision. In Rosalind Krauss' essay 'The Im/pulse to See' she puts forward the consideration of a potentially disrupting force in the stability of vision, arguing the issue of rhythm in the visual space, 'a kind of throb of on/off on/off on/off'[109], that was set in contrast to the desire for autonomy of vision. Interestingly, her argument necessitates the introduction of the experience of time to the visual equation within the space of representation. She comments, "That the autonomy is not secured simply in relation to matters of space, but depends as well on very particular limits set on the experience of time." If time is an active force within the visual field that threatens to disrupt its legibility, the specifics of this time belong to the form, or the space of representation. A variety of intersecting dimensions of time must be considered in an attempt to understand Antarctic orderings.

Rather than taking the 'ice core' approach, a historic excavation, akin to Simon Schama's approach in *Landscape and Memory*,[110] I look at a shifting unstable chronogeography that is on the move. As Kittler comments "Media cross one another in time, which is no longer history."[111] Following, Jay, I suggest a historical plurality of scopic regimes, rather than an exclusive scopic regime that tends inadvertently to be called the 'geographical imagination', suggesting a monolithic shared vision. For example, Cosgrove's approach in *Apollo's Eye* is a historically linear model and while this clearly presents a 'deep historical geography,' it defines a singular scopic regime - rather than recognising the plurality of vision (albeit

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[109] Rosalind Krauss "The Im/Pulse to See" in *Vision And Visuality* ed. Hal Foster (New York: The New Press, 1988), 51.
[110] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995)
[111] Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewritter* Trans. Winthrop-Young & Wutz (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999) 115.

unequal) and the historic interplay between scopic regimes. It also does not give due weight to the disparity of different cultural forms,[112] and the disproportionately realised regimes of different cultural forms within different spaces (Antarctic communities/science/Southern Hemisphere). A relational aesthetics must give sufficient weight to different aesthetic forms and genres embedded in patterns and practices of signification.

To talk of the geographical imagination as one thing or the other is to assume some kind of homology of thought, and an isolation of the images in relation to other images. Whose geographical imagination we might ask? It is essentially a political and culturally constructed category, which belies an ever-changing configuration of forces and relations of power (and powers of production). In making assumptions about homogenous nation states, in terms of the geographic imaginary there needs to be care so that the changing frontiers of relations are not ignored, particularly with regard to how the Antarctic community itself functions as a small, international, closely knit group, and more importantly the changing dynamics of cultural production through new technologies.[113]

As this thesis will explore, the artist camped on the Ross Ice Shelf discovering slowness, produces images that may also end up in the same representational space (a national programme website for instance) as 'real time' images from web cams in Antarctic stations. Artistic practice offers very different spatial and temporal practices to the space of new technologies that seems "to be moving, once again toward self enclosure... One of the phenomenological effects of the public applications of new technologies is to cause space to be apprehended as "folding back" upon itself."[114] Within these two spatial practices of art practice and televisual relay are two very distinct relations to space and time, which produce distinctly different proximities to Antarctica.

Representing visual chronogeographies

The difficulties of marking the images labour within space and time is considerable. To keep all the spatialities of the subject, and the spaces of representation of new technologies in play is a near impossibility. As Jameson comments, it is multidimensional problem of representability that unfolds through space,

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[112] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

[113] The production of visual images of Antarctica is not confined to the geographical site of the continent - from the aeroplane mapping to virtual mapping systems that relay information directly to the United States (as in the RADARSAT map of the Antarctic where images were beamed directly to the Byrd Research Centre in Ohio). Journeys are increasing occupying multiple spaces of representation such as the *Origins* project (http://www.exploratorium.edu), which involved 40 webcasts from the continent by its team of virtual 'reporters'.

[114] Burgin 1996, 43.

> representability: a term that raises in its turn the fundamental historical question of the conditions of possibility of such representation in the first place. It is a question which necessarily opens out onto the nature of the social raw material on the one hand (a raw material which necessarily includes the psychic and the subjective within itself) and the state of the form on the other, the aesthetic technologies available for the crystallisation of a particular spatial or narrative model of the social totality.[115]

A way through this daunting task is to map the image's operation of touch as the sites from which meaning can be unfolded and refolded. Mapping is an analytical process with which to unfold the reverberation echoes, concentration and repetition, that give the image its ideological and aesthetic force at a particular moment. There are many potential mappings, intersecting, bisecting, temporal and spatially active. A place on the map is also a place in *time, of which images are sites positioned in relation to geographical place and to historical* place. The geopolitics of the image are established not just in how the image is utilised in a particular political moment but the specific historic narratives that each moment evokes, maintains, reverberates with, dislocates, fractures, or displaces – its geopoetics.

Addressing the problem of representation in the complexity of non-visible geopolitics, Jameson turned productively to a form of cultural mapping. The analogy that Jameson convincingly suggests is not an analogy of the visual object with another, but a vector with which to connect the signifier (the object that *exhibits*) with the system of signification to reconcile the porous conceptual object with all the relations that constitute it. Accounting for the image's work in geopolitical regimes, his model of geopolitical aesthetics and its method of reporting from local to global, was a means to access the political. Through analogy, he mapped a geopolitical terrain of a media form. Where my argument diverges from Jameson, is how to account for the subject's experience within that form. As Jameson goes from the local to the global by concentrating on the structures of production, does his theory move too quickly over the *places* of the image, in its consideration of form? As Jameson tries to make visible an aestheticised politic, his concern is to account for late capitalism read through the media economy. But how do we account for the places that this media economy passes through? The particular geographical places that can be changed as a result of their representation in media, and the places made available to us as viewing subjects? I have argued that the image be considered in a broad, non-reductive mode of analysis. And that this analysis should have at its centre a consideration of how the technologies and viewing conditions of the image impact upon the subject (collectively and individually) within relations to place.

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[115] Frederic Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*. (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995), 4.

No simple mode of analysis presents itself for such a geography. Only by considering the subject's experience of embodied visual economies, I have argued, can a relational geopolitical aesthetic be enacted. Only such a relational aesthetic has the possibility of addressing Benjamin's concerns of how we pass through, rather than become trapped in, the technological forms that mediate and condition our experience of place. Benjamin suggests that only through the recognition of technology's capacity for the production of subjectivities, can the subject be released into a field of action. The critical politics of this passing lays in the consideration of the 'look back' - the *visual disruption* that exhibits the formation of regimes of visuality - and through recognition - demonstrates how subjectivities are constructed in/through vision. In that wounding of the landscapes' 'look back' is the dynamic geography of seeing.

Postscript

Antarctica was on TV. The first image I saw of Antarctica recalled my earliest memory – that of the sky, looking out an aeroplane window - only it was inverted. Like an image of light cast on the retina, the space was turned upside down, and for a moment remained there, before it was assembled in the recognition of form. What pricked me was this momentary inversion - a world where the law of gravity had exceptions. Later, as I followed that image to Antarctica - a history of seeing offered no form to what I saw. That rupture was euphoric. Only through an explanation of puncture, at a physical and conceptual level can I explain this landscape of affect. Antarctica looked back.

As Lacan's example of the 'look back' exhibits the structure of vision, Barthes demonstrates how to comprehend that look. As the punctum wounds us as a viewer, that wounding causes a visual disruption in the structure of visuality - enabling the possibility of an inhabitation that exceeds the image's cultural/technological assemblage. For Barthes, this wounding in the structural logic of the image, allows the viewer an emotional inhabitation - to understand the condition of existence within such form, and to take desire beyond the 'assemblage' into the subject's private space.

The Antarctic punctum is its look back. Such is the power of the Antarctic look back that there is immense difficultly in forming a descriptive aesthetic language to comprehend what is perceived. Through the look back, is the opportunity to pass through the spectre of technology into meanings that, as Barthes would have it, wound. It is through such wounding that the possibility exists to break the numbing screen of our looking. I have argued that as the *rays* of light look back, if they are caught in the *rets* of socialised vision that has no aesthetic language for what is seen - in this disruption exists a way to theorise landscapes of the image and their affect. It is through this visual disruption that Benjamin has argued the possibility of inhabiting an unalienated experience exists. Moreover, this extended visual economy accounts for the tension in the embodiment of images - between the forms of inhabitation that landscape allows us, and the forms of inhabitation we can psychically tolerate. By surrendering the presumed autonomies of control in vision, (our arresting capacity) there is an acknowledgement of the image or landscapes' arresting capacity, that may be productive of positive forms of unknowing.

In the Antarctic, the blinding light and the refracting forms that it is productive of, can be a source of punctum - from the whiteout to the a visual blinding - the intensity of light and its affects is a source of rupture in visual economy (in addition to the extremity of climate,

terrain, and a counter intuitive landscape). In this blinding Antarctic intensity, I argue that we can locate an expanded visual economy - of embodied visual knowledges - that incorporate the potential of landscape's 'look back'. Mapped through a visual landscape of affect, (that is its afterimage) - is what I call, a geographical theory of Antarctic light. It is to the histories of that terrain that I now turn - to elucidate on the politics of the topographies of embodied visual knowledges.

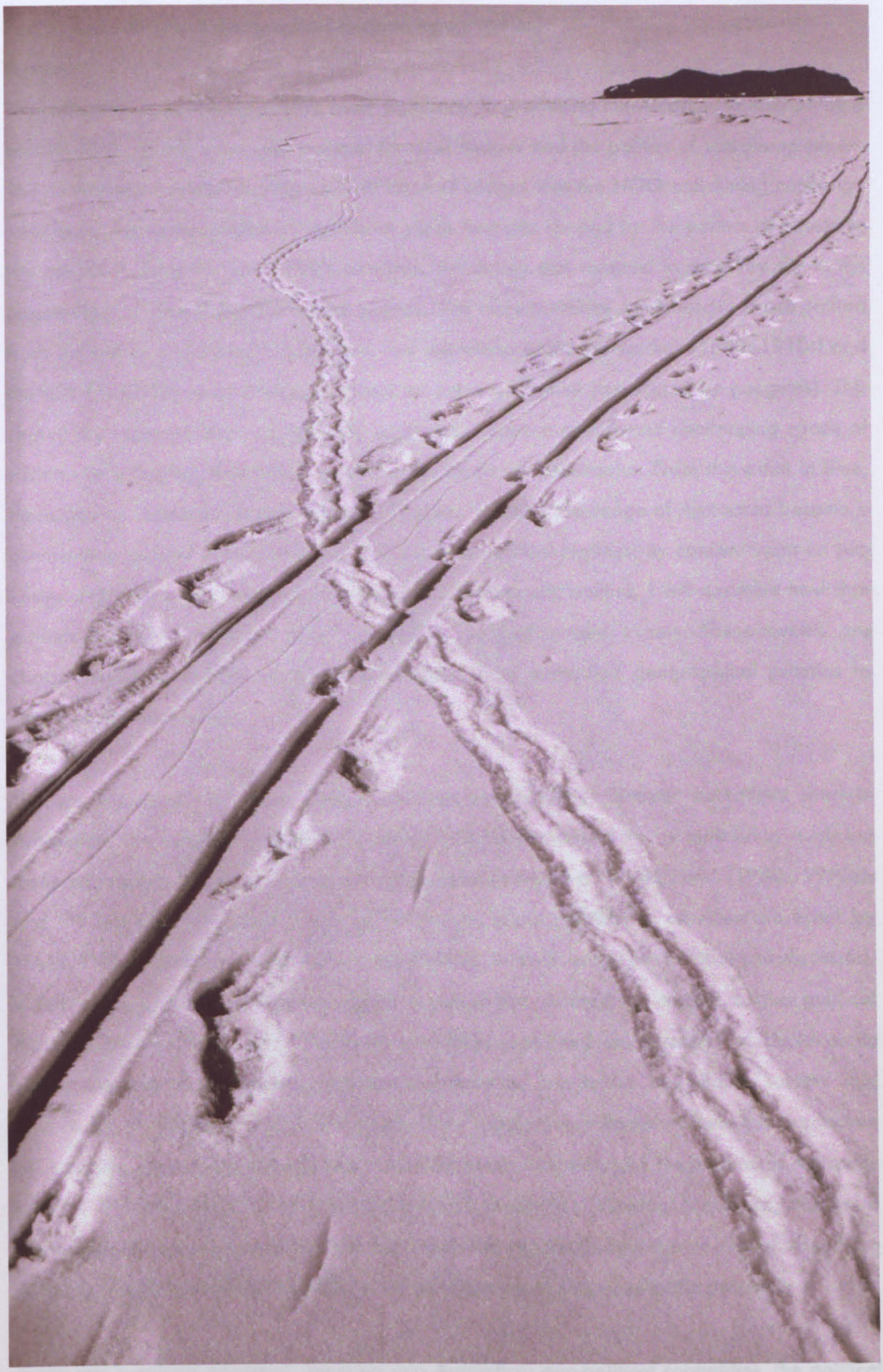

Plate 6

Part II: Antarctic *chronogeographies* (historic topographies)

Preface

Two different types of politics have been significant in producing the Antarctic landscape as a historic (and global) event: the *political force of images* and the *politics of visualising place*. The central event in assuring the political force of images was the NGO anti-mining campaign - this gave rise to geopolitics of visualising place that was shaped by the politics of access to the continent. From the late 1980's onwards, Antarctica was referred to as a key site in the negotiation of global environmental politics. The meta-narrative of Antarctic space shifted from the heroic and scientific human-centred narratives of the Heroic era (1890s-1910s) and the IGY (1957-58) to an environment-centred narrative (albeit personified by penguins). This shifted the representation of Antarctic spatialities - from a robust and challenging space of action - to a fragile, threatened space on the verge of catastrophe. From this point in time, there was an increased aestheticisation of politics, in which the *image* of Antarctica became a *contestation ground* in the negotiation of Antarctic political regimes. By concentrating on two image events that have shaped the topologies of Antarctic politics, I will examine how that politics has been enfolded into two distinct aesthetic-media events. These events are characterised by shifting modes of production, from embodied geographical practice to virtual image economies.

The specific nature of these politics involves two kinds of disaster narratives sited in Antarctica; the debate on CRAMRA, which NGO's responded to by mobilising a global campaign calling for Antarctica to be 'saved' and declared a 'World Park' (1980s/1990s); and the narrative of global warming, which was given visibility as an Antarctic event by NASA's *RADARSAT* mapping technology (2000). In both *image-events* that are discussed, visibility (as a moral and technological impetus) has defined the terrain of the political debate. These re-orderings of Antarctic spatialities mobilized discourses in which Antarctic was at the axis of globalizing environmental debates, first as the 'last chance saloon' and then as the phantasm of the furthest point. These topologies will explore how the production of Antarctic spatialities through the visual economy has changed the nature of Antarctic politics. Thus, the visibility of Antarctic political spatialities (viewing conditions, modes of representation, visual narratives) are discussed with regard to how the politics of visualising Antarctica has impacted on the political forces of images to shape Antarctic politics.

In the first topology discussed, *Journeys into Antarctica: geo-political spatialities*, the political event is organised around Greenpeace's geographical incursions to Antarctic landscape. Through geographical and then visual, possession of landscape, Greenpeace was able to

transmit images of *landscapes in destruction* to global audiences. The effect of the repetition of the threatened landscape through various disaster scenarios set Antarctica on the brink of a time of catastrophe, with a counter narrative of salvation offered through political mobilisation. The NGO 'Save Antarctica' campaign was quick to use the Internet and communication technologies to mobilise global and local networks to achieve a dominant visual homogeny of the Antarctic. The images, sent back from Antarctica, became binary markers in a political campaign of a 'good' Antarctica (timeless landscapes) and the bad 'Antarctica' (threatened landscapes). Despite the visual simplicity of the campaign, the corporeal experience of landscape was carried as a passion - into the forums of the Antarctic political arena. There within, the combination of committed activists and a global image campaign inverted the course of political events, forcing all those involved in Antarctic politics, - to re-envisage the space, and concede to a political force that came from outside a closed political system. This binary narrative was so firmly integrated into Antarctic politics, through the campaign to 'save Antarctica' that it *froze* the production of landscape for all key players in the debate, and remains as a legacy of that engagement. This event demonstrated the political force of images in the production of Antarctic landscapes, and initiated the start of *image wars* in Antarctic political cultures.

The second topography, *Visualising Antarctica as a place in time* examines how the geographical mapping of the world is increasingly superseded by the speed and availability of images of place through new technologies. This historic topology examines the American *RADARSAT* map of Antarctica, exploring the coherence and ambivalence of this vision in the wake of America's non-ratification of the Kyoto Climate Change agreements. The topology serves to highlight how the advancement of scientific knowledge and industrial practices through visualization, form a mutually constitutive - but often contradictory relationship with responsive environmental practice. By tracing the movement of the map from the secret cartography of *cold war politics* to the *hot war of environmentalism* (under the Clinton-Gore administration), the topology highlights how politics are inflected through the image. Through an examination of American visual culture and American-Antarctic relations, I discuss how narratives of global warming that are sited over Antarctica, can have the effect of giving visibility to the Antarctic and simultaneously displacing it, re-situating it as the site of a military-scientific-technological-media event. The deployment of new technologies further poses the possibility of a liquidation of landscape relations, through the primacy of the media event.

Two kinds of 'real time' characterise these topographies, the *real time* of corporeal geographies, and the *real time* of the televisual (or virtual geographies). The effect of both these forms of 'real time' mappings is to produce Antarctica as a threatened environment, on the brink of catastrophe. What differs, in the move from a visual mapping in the geographic field - to that of a disembodied visual field, is the possibility for a *critical consciousness* in these inhabitations. The topologies argue that the 'real time' of corporeal image-geographies has significant differences in the production of the political event - to the disembodied image-geographies, which offer a more complex inhabitation of a *reality without gravity*. This is not simply about making matter *matter* in virtual geographies, but to explore how landscape matter motivates a politics beyond the immediately visible media event.

Part II Journeys into Antarctica: geo-political spatialities

Introduction

In this historic topology of the anti-mining debate, the narrative takes the form of several *image stories* about the changing political narratives of Antarctica in the 1980s. The political debate of the rejection of CRAMRA and the subsequent adoption of the Protocol is a complex terrain that spanned over ten years. In this topology I will not attempt to give an historical account of this,[116] what I want to demonstrate is how geographical journeys to Antarctica radically changed Antarctic politics, within and outside of the political structures of governance. The legacy of Greenpeace's journeys to Antarctica was to affect an aesthetic recasting of Antarctic politics into an *image space*.

Voyages of vision: *MV Greenpeace*

In 1986, the ship *MV Greenpeace* set sail for Antarctic waters. The mission of the voyage was to turn *geographical space* into *image space*, to make Antarctica visible to the world as an environment under threat. On board the *MV Greenpeace*, the crew consisted of photographers, journalists, activists, and scientists. Their rationale is two fold; to produce the Antarctic landscape as an image of a threatened environment to be put into global circulation, and to set up the World Park base. The ship formed the site of circulation and dissemination of images, in the form of photographs, stories, film, and interviews, while the base was the hub of relay, from the inside of Antarctic space to the outside world. As the Greenpeace (GP) ship made its way through the icy water, the landed crew took photographs and film, which was relayed back to the ship and then globally to television and newspaper audiences. The presence of *MV Greenpeace* in Antarctic space installed an observer into an environment previously un-mediated by forces outside the 'club' of ATCP members. According to one campaigner, Greenpeace's presence in Antarctica "had a profound impact on the campaign - it gave GP/ASOC credibility with governments - we knew what it was about to operate in Antarctica; it gave us direct access to other Antarcticans, who could share their views/thoughts etc; it gave us photos."[117] Although there have been tourist boats in Antarctica since 1957, their routes of passage could be plotted, and their predilection towards the picturesque was such that their presence, was not viewed as threatening. While the tourists sought out the beautiful, Greenpeace had a direct rationale to seek out the ugly.

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[116] See Suter 1991.
[117] E-mail Interview with Lyn Goldsworthy 26 October 2004.

Antarctica was superseded by the failure of modernity's narrative, although it by no means replaced it. The narrative of Antarctica as the first modern state had failed, and continues to fail to address the divisions of power that inhabit the rest of the globe; international governance meant the select and predominantly first world governance of the ATCPs; rights of access were and are based on financial capability; and imperial science became the alibi of occupation. And while the AT is a remarkably unique order of governance it is haunted by the spectre of imperialism in the modern period. Antarctica framed within modernity's progress, and the increasing cost of that progress across the globe, appears to place it in its failed horizon (as a place under threat). Antarctica can also be considered what Jameson calls a 'hole in the text' of modernity's' utopian project, and thus a potential creative site from which to view the disruptions of its projections.

As the spaces of representation fractured, largely as an affect of the machine, Modernity's grand narratives still harboured ambitions to establish autonomy of vision. In Rosalind Krauss' essay 'The Im/pulse to See' she puts forward the consideration of a potentially disrupting force in the stability of vision, arguing the issue of rhythm in the visual space, '*a kind of throb of on/off on/off on/off*'[109], that was set in contrast to the desire for autonomy of vision. Interestingly, her argument necessitates the introduction of the experience of time to the visual equation within the space of representation. She comments, "That the autonomy is not secured simply in relation to matters of space, but depends as well on very particular limits set on the experience of time." If time is an active force within the visual field that threatens to disrupt its legibility, the specifics of this time belong to the form, or the space of representation. A variety of intersecting dimensions of time must be considered in an attempt to understand Antarctic orderings.

Rather than taking the 'ice core' approach, a historic excavation, akin to Simon Schama's approach in *Landscape and Memory*,[110] I look at a shifting unstable chronogeography that is *on the move*. As Kittler comments "Media cross one another in time, which is no longer history."[111] Following, Jay, I suggest a historical plurality of scopic regimes, rather than an exclusive scopic regime that tends inadvertently to be called the 'geographical imagination', suggesting a monolithic shared vision. For example, Cosgrove's approach in *Apollo's Eye* is a historically linear model and while this clearly presents a 'deep historical geography,' it defines a singular scopic regime - rather than recognising the plurality of vision (albeit

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[109] Rosalind Krauss "The Im/Pulse to See" in *Vision And Visuality* ed. Hal Foster (New York: The New Press, 1988), 51.
[110] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995)
[111] Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewritter* Trans. Winthrop-Young & Wutz (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999) 115.

unequal) and the historic interplay between scopic regimes. It also does not give due weight to the disparity of different cultural forms,[112] and the disproportionately realised regimes of different cultural forms within different spaces (Antarctic communities/science/Southern Hemisphere). A relational aesthetics must give sufficient weight to different aesthetic forms and genres embedded in patterns and practices of signification.

To talk of the geographical imagination as one thing or the other is to assume some kind of homology of thought, and an isolation of the images in relation to other images. Whose geographical imagination we might ask? It is essentially a political and culturally constructed category, which belies an ever-changing configuration of forces and relations of power (and powers of production). In making assumptions about homogenous nation states, in terms of the geographic imaginary there needs to be care so that the changing frontiers of relations are not ignored, particularly with regard to how the Antarctic community itself functions as a small, international, closely knit group, and more importantly the changing dynamics of cultural production through new technologies.[113]

As this thesis will explore, the artist camped on the Ross Ice Shelf discovering slowness, produces images that may also end up in the same representational space (a national programme website for instance) as 'real time' images from web cams in Antarctic stations. Artistic practice offers very different spatial and temporal practices to the space of new technologies that seems "to be moving, once again toward self enclosure... One of the phenomenological effects of the public applications of new technologies is to cause space to be apprehended as "folding back" upon itself."[114] Within these two spatial practices of art practice and televisual relay are two very distinct relations to space and time, which produce distinctly different proximities to Antarctica.

Representing visual chronogeographies

The difficulties of marking the images labour within space and time is considerable. To keep all the spatialities of the subject, and the spaces of representation of new technologies in play is a near impossibility. As Jameson comments, it is multidimensional problem of representability that unfolds through space,

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[112] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

[113] The production of visual images of Antarctica is not confined to the geographical site of the continent – from the aeroplane mapping to virtual mapping systems that relay information directly to the United States (as in the RADARSAT map of the Antarctic where images were beamed directly to the Byrd Research Centre in Ohio). Journeys are increasing occupying multiple spaces of representation such as the *Origins* project (http://www.exploratorium.edu), which involved 40 webcasts from the continent by its team of virtual 'reporters'.

[114] Burgin 1996, 43.

> representability: a term that raises in its turn the fundamental historical question of the conditions of possibility of such representation in the first place. It is a question which necessarily opens out onto the nature of the social raw material on the one hand (a raw material which necessarily includes the psychic and the subjective within itself) and the state of the form on the other, the aesthetic technologies available for the crystallisation of a particular spatial or narrative model of the social totality.[115]

A way through this daunting task is to map the image's operation of touch as the sites from which meaning can be unfolded and refolded. Mapping is an analytical process with which to unfold the reverberation echoes, concentration and repetition, that give the image its ideological and aesthetic force at a particular moment. There are many potential mappings, intersecting, bisecting, temporal and spatially active. A place on the map is also a place in time, of which images are sites positioned in relation to geographical place and to historical place. The geopolitics of the image are established not just in how the image is utilised in a particular political moment but the specific historic narratives that each moment evokes, maintains, reverberates with, dislocates, fractures, or displaces – its *geopoetics*.

Addressing the problem of representation in the complexity of non-visible geopolitics, Jameson turned productively to a form of cultural mapping. The analogy that Jameson convincingly suggests is not an analogy of the visual object with another, but a vector with which to connect the signifier (the object that *exhibits*) with the system of signification to reconcile the porous conceptual object with all the relations that constitute it. Accounting for the image's work in geopolitical regimes, his model of geopolitical aesthetics and its method of reporting from local to global, was a means to access the political. Through analogy, he mapped a geopolitical terrain of a media form. Where my argument diverges from Jameson, is how to account for the subject's experience within that form. As Jameson goes from the local to the global by concentrating on the structures of production, does his theory move too quickly over the *places* of the image, in its consideration of form? As Jameson tries to make visible an aestheticised politic, his concern is to account for late capitalism read through the media economy. But how do we account for the places that this media economy passes through? The particular geographical places that can be changed as a result of their representation in media, and the places made available to us as viewing subjects? I have argued that the image be considered in a broad, non-reductive mode of analysis. And that this analysis should have at its centre a consideration of how the technologies and viewing conditions of the image impact upon the subject (collectively and individually) within relation to place.

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[115] Frederic Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*. (Bloomington Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995), 4.

No simple mode of analysis presents itself for such a geography. Only by considering the subject's experience of embodied visual economies, I have argued, can a relational geopolitical aesthetic be enacted. Only such a relational aesthetic has the possibility of addressing Benjamin's concerns of how we pass through, rather than become trapped in, the technological forms that mediate and condition our experience of place. Benjamin suggests that only through the recognition of technology's capacity for the production of subjectivities, can the subject be released into a field of action. The critical politics of this passing lays in the consideration of the 'look back' - the *visual disruption* that exhibits the formation of regimes of visuality - and through recognition - demonstrates how subjectivities are constructed in/through vision. In that wounding of the landscapes' 'look back' is the dynamic geography of seeing.

Postscript

Antarctica was on TV. The first image I saw of Antarctica recalled my earliest memory – that *of the sky, looking out an aeroplane window - only it was inverted. Like an image of light cast* on the retina, the space was turned upside down, and for a moment remained there, before it was assembled in the recognition of form. What pricked me was this momentary inversion - a world where the law of gravity had exceptions. Later, as I followed that image to Antarctica - a history of seeing offered no form to what I saw. That rupture was euphoric. Only through an explanation of puncture, at a physical and conceptual level can I explain this landscape of affect. Antarctica looked back.

As Lacan's example of the 'look back' exhibits the structure of vision, Barthes demonstrates how to comprehend that look. As the punctum wounds us as a viewer, that wounding causes a visual disruption in the structure of visuality - enabling the possibility of an inhabitation that exceeds the image's cultural/technological assemblage. For Barthes, this wounding in the structural logic of the image, allows the viewer an emotional inhabitation - to understand the condition of existence within such form, and to take desire beyond the 'assemblage' into the subject's private space.

The Antarctic punctum is its look back. Such is the power of the Antarctic look back that there is immense difficultly in forming a descriptive aesthetic language to comprehend what is perceived. Through the look back, is the opportunity to pass through the spectre of technology into meanings that, as Barthes would have it, wound. It is through such wounding that the possibility exists to break the numbing screen of our looking. I have argued that as the *rays* of light look back, if they are caught in the *rets* of socialised vision that has no aesthetic language for what is seen - in this disruption exists a way to theorise landscapes of the image and their affect. It is through this visual disruption that Benjamin has argued the possibility of inhabiting an unalienated experience exists. Moreover, this extended visual economy accounts for the tension in the embodiment of images - between the forms of inhabitation that landscape allows us, and the forms of inhabitation we can psychically tolerate. By surrendering the presumed autonomies of control in vision, (our arresting capacity) there is an acknowledgement of the image or landscapes' arresting capacity, that may be productive of positive forms of unknowing.

In the Antarctic, the blinding light and the refracting forms that it is productive of, can be a source of punctum - from the whiteout to the a visual blinding - the intensity of light and its affects is a source of rupture in visual economy (in addition to the extremity of climate,

terrain, and a counter intuitive landscape). In this blinding Antarctic intensity, I argue that we can locate an expanded visual economy - of embodied visual knowledges - that incorporate the potential of landscape's 'look back'. Mapped through a visual landscape of affect, (that is its afterimage) - is what I call, a geographical theory of Antarctic light. It is to the histories of that terrain that I now turn - to elucidate on the politics of the topographies of embodied visual knowledges.

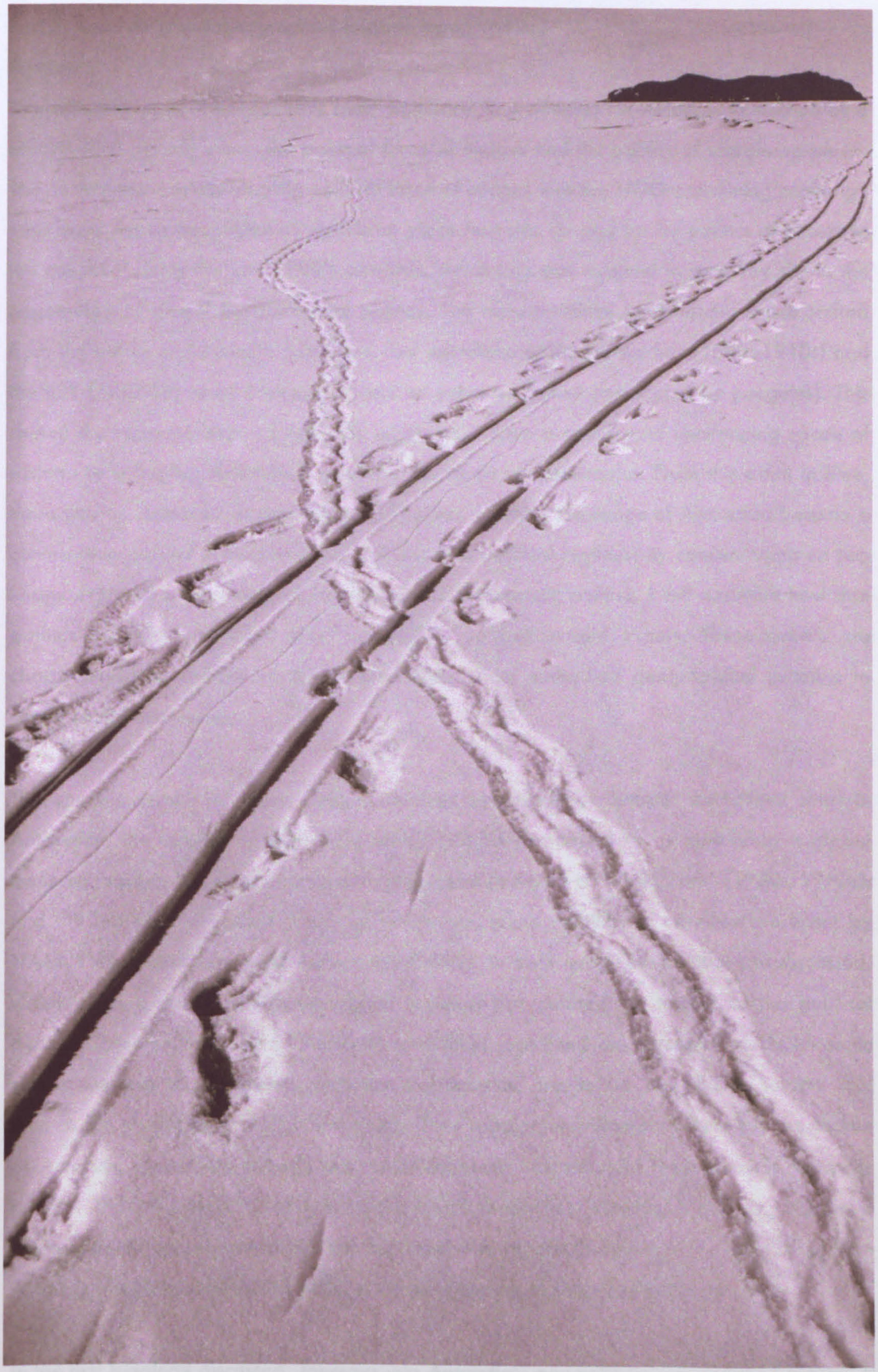

Plate 6

Part II: Antarctic chronogeographies (historic topographies)

Preface

Two different types of politics have been significant in producing the Antarctic landscape as a historic (and global) event: the *political force of images* and the *politics of visualising place*. The central event in assuring the political force of images was the NGO anti-mining campaign - this gave rise to geopolitics of visualising place that was shaped by the politics of access to the continent. From the late 1980's onwards, Antarctica was referred to as a key site in the negotiation of global environmental politics. The *meta-narrative* of Antarctic space shifted from the heroic and scientific human-centred narratives of the Heroic era (1890s-1910s) and the IGY (1957-58) to an environment-centred narrative (albeit personified by penguins). This shifted the representation of Antarctic spatialities - from a robust and challenging space of action - to a fragile, threatened space on the verge of catastrophe. From this point in time, there was an increased aestheticisation of politics, in which the *image* of Antarctica became a *contestation ground* in the negotiation of Antarctic political regimes. By concentrating on two image events that have shaped the topologies of Antarctic politics, I will examine how that politics has been enfolded into two distinct aesthetic-media events. These events are characterised by shifting modes of production, from embodied geographical practice to virtual image economies.

The specific nature of these politics involves two kinds of disaster narratives sited in Antarctica; the debate on CRAMRA, which NGO's responded to by mobilising a global campaign calling for Antarctica to be 'saved' and declared a 'World Park' (1980s/1990s); and the narrative of global warming, which was given visibility as an Antarctic event by NASA's *RADARSAT* mapping technology (2000). In both *image-events* that are discussed, visibility (as a moral and technological impetus) has defined the terrain of the political debate. These re-orderings of Antarctic spatialities mobilized discourses in which Antarctic was at the axis of globalizing environmental debates, first as the 'last chance saloon' and then as the phantasm of the furthest point. These topologies will explore how the production of Antarctic spatialities through the visual economy has changed the nature of Antarctic politics. Thus, the visibility of Antarctic political spatialities (viewing conditions, modes of representation, visual narratives) are discussed with regard to how the politics of visualising Antarctica has impacted on the political forces of images to shape Antarctic politics.

In the first topology discussed, *Journeys into Antarctica: geo-political spatialities*, the political event is organised around Greenpeace's geographical incursions to Antarctic landscape. Through geographical and then visual, possession of landscape, Greenpeace was able to

transmit images of *landscapes in destruction* to global audiences. The effect of the repetition of the threatened landscape through various disaster scenarios set Antarctica on the brink of a time of catastrophe, with a counter narrative of salvation offered through political mobilisation. The NGO 'Save Antarctica' campaign was quick to use the Internet and communication technologies to mobilise global and local networks to achieve a dominant visual homogeny of the Antarctic. The images, sent back from Antarctica, became binary markers in a political campaign of a 'good' Antarctica (timeless landscapes) and the bad 'Antarctica' (threatened landscapes). Despite the visual simplicity of the campaign, the corporeal experience of landscape was carried as a passion - into the forums of the Antarctic political arena. There within, the combination of committed activists and a global image campaign inverted the course of political events, forcing all those involved in Antarctic politics, - to re-envisage the space, and concede to a political force that came from outside a closed political system. This binary narrative was so firmly integrated into Antarctic politics, through the campaign to 'save Antarctica' that it froze the production of landscape for all key players in the debate, and remains as a legacy of that engagement. This event demonstrated the political force of images in the production of Antarctic landscapes, and initiated the start of image wars in Antarctic political cultures.

The second topography, *Visualising Antarctica as a place in time* examines how the geographical mapping of the world is increasingly superseded by the speed and availability of images of place through new technologies. This historic topology examines the American *RADARSAT* map of Antarctica, exploring the coherence and ambivalence of this vision in the wake of America's non-ratification of the Kyoto Climate Change agreements. The topology serves to highlight how the advancement of scientific knowledge and industrial practices through visualization, form a mutually constitutive - but often contradictory relationship with responsive environmental practice. By tracing the movement of the map from the secret cartography of *cold war politics to the hot war of environmentalism* (under the Clinton-Gore administration), the topology highlights how politics are inflected through the image. Through an examination of American visual culture and American-Antarctic relations, I discuss how narratives of global warming that are sited over Antarctica, can have the effect of giving visibility to the Antarctic and simultaneously displacing it, re-situating it as the site of a military-scientific-technological-media event. The deployment of new technologies further poses the possibility of a liquidation of landscape relations, through the primacy of the media event.

Two kinds of 'real time' characterise these topographies, the *real time* of corporeal geographies, and the *real time* of the televisual (or virtual geographies). The effect of both these forms of 'real time' mappings is to produce Antarctica as a threatened environment, on the brink of catastrophe. What differs, in the move from a visual mapping in the geographic field - to that of a disembodied visual field, is the possibility for a *critical consciousness* in these inhabitations. The topologies argue that the 'real time' of corporeal image-geographies has significant differences in the production of the political event - to the disembodied image-geographies, which offer a more complex inhabitation of a *reality without gravity*. This is not simply about making matter *matter* in virtual geographies, but to explore how landscape matter motivates a politics beyond the immediately visible media event.

Part II Journeys into Antarctica: geo-political spatialities

Introduction

In this historic topology of the anti-mining debate, the narrative takes the form of several *image stories* about the changing political narratives of Antarctica in the 1980s. The political debate of the rejection of CRAMRA and the subsequent adoption of the Protocol is a complex terrain that spanned over ten years. In this topology I will not attempt to give an historical account of this,[116] what I want to demonstrate is how geographical journeys to Antarctica radically changed Antarctic politics, within and outside of the political structures of governance. The legacy of Greenpeace's journeys to Antarctica was to affect an aesthetic recasting of Antarctic politics into an *image space*.

Voyages of vision: *MV Greenpeace*

In 1986, the ship *MV Greenpeace* set sail for Antarctic waters. The mission of the voyage was to turn *geographical space* into *image space*, to make Antarctica visible to the world as an environment under threat. On board the *MV Greenpeace*, the crew consisted of photographers, journalists, activists, and scientists. Their rationale is two fold; to produce the Antarctic landscape as an image of a threatened environment to be put into global circulation, and to set up the World Park base. The ship formed the site of circulation and dissemination of images, in the form of photographs, stories, film, and interviews, while the base was the hub of relay, from the inside of Antarctic space to the outside world. As the Greenpeace (GP) ship made its way through the icy water, the landed crew took photographs and film, which was relayed back to the ship and then globally to television and newspaper audiences. The presence of *MV Greenpeace* in Antarctic space installed an observer into an environment previously un-mediated by forces outside the 'club' of ATCP members. According to one campaigner, Greenpeace's presence in Antarctica "had a profound impact on the campaign - it gave GP/ASOC credibility with governments - we knew what it was about to operate in Antarctica; it gave us direct access to other Antarcticans, who could share their views/thoughts etc; it gave us photos."[117] Although there have been tourist boats in Antarctica since 1957, their routes of passage could be plotted, and their predilection towards the picturesque was such that their presence, was not viewed as threatening. While the tourists sought out the beautiful, Greenpeace had a direct rationale to seek out the ugly.

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[116] See Suter 1991.
[117] E-mail Interview with Lyn Goldsworthy 26 October 2004.

Prior to the voyage and interest of Greenpeace in the continent, science has provided a useful rationale for national possession of the landscape (it is designated under the AT that in order to become an ATCP member, the nation must have a scientific base and programme in the Antarctic).[118] What unsettled this comfortable political arrangement was increased fishing in the Antarctic waters and the negotiation of CRAMRA, which in effect designated legislative rights to ATCPs for mining in the future. The negotiations for CRAMRA had begun in 1981 in the closed political spaces of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCM) and continued for the next ten years. The Greenpeace campaign to raise the spectre of mining in the Antarctic in the global political consciousness started in the early 1980s at both grassroots and political levels.

What hampered the effect of the campaign was the lack of publicly available political information. The closed nature of the ATCM, a lack of sufficient evidence about mining's detrimental effect on the Antarctic (should it ever take place), and the closed nature of the Antarctic environment to NGOs, all contributed to a lack of public awareness of the CRAMRA negotiations. Privately, among those working in Antarctica and within Antarctic politics (which were often the same people), there were concerns about the state of scientific stations and the prospect of mining taking place. The contestation over the 'image' of scientists in Antarctica was not irrelevant to the way scientists and the public identified the role and tensions within science - at this time. The reflection, that this attack from outside forces engendered, was a degree of self-reflection by scientists choosing between different permutations of what constituted scientific practice (and its more mundane everyday practices of house-keeping). Although there was considerable self-reflection over the practices of science,[119] scientific activities had an implicit relation with national activities on the continent, thus it was difficult for scientific staff to counter national interests (lest they should find themselves Antarctic based scientists no longer). Concerned about scientific environmental practices in the Antarctic, many of the leading environmentalists working on the Greenpeace Antarctic campaign were scientists, who formerly worked for national programmes.

In the Antarctic, the priority of images conditioned the days of the Greenpeace team. Rubbish dumps, waste sites, and effluent pipes were sought out: wasted matter was to be accumulated into a narrative of ecological degradation. Like the 1960's artists working in wasted industrial sites, Greenpeace was curating the "major earthworks"[120] of the Antarctic. The Antarctic is unusual in the fact that waste will not go away; the conditions of its breakdown are not an

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[118] Antarctic Treaty (1959) Article IX.
[119] For example see John Horgan "Are scientists too messy for Antarctica?" in *Scientific American* 1993 v266 n2, 22.
[120] Quoted in *Eco* (Wellington NZ, January 17-28 Volume XXII, No.3, 1983), 3.

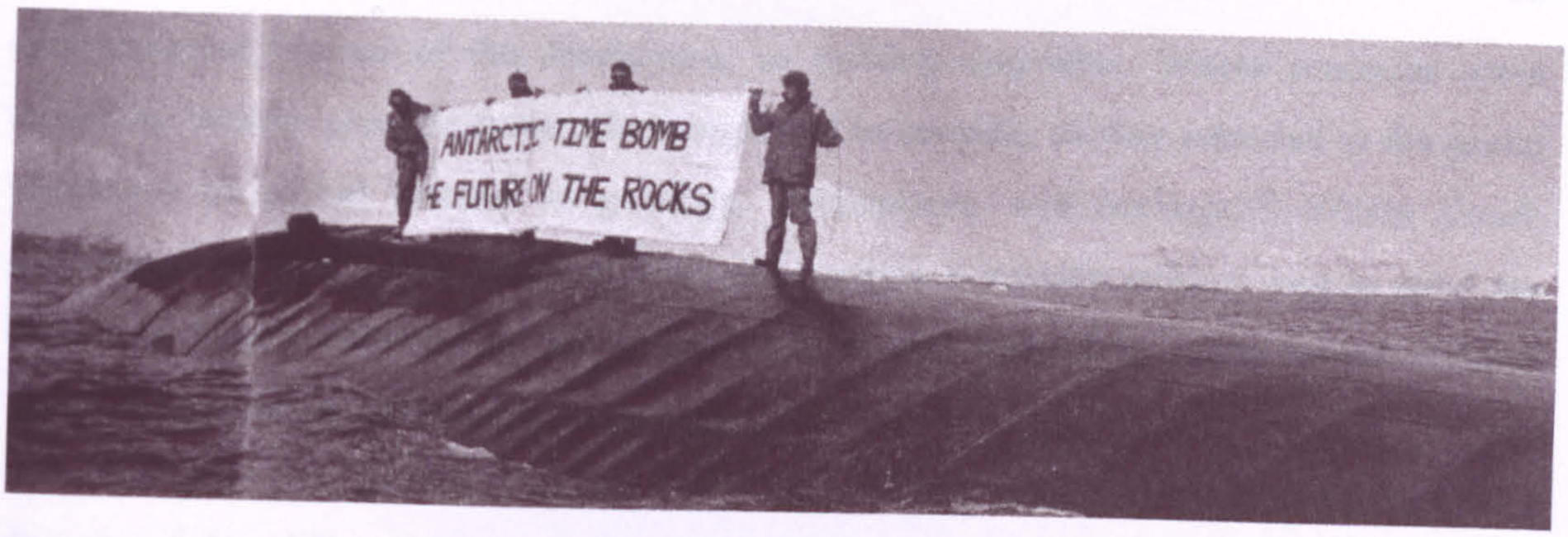

Plate 7

environmental feature of this landscape, so nothing degrades. Waste practices were something that the scientific stations had neglected to consider as they attended to the grand narratives of global systems of geology, atmosphere, and biology.[121] Waste (food, machinery, oil, PCB's and radioactive waste) became a visually striking way to read the impact of human activities in the environment. It also helped to relate larger political questions concerning Antarctica's future usage.

Greenpeace's public relations exercise effected a community change within the ATCPs[122] by casting doubt on scientific activities. The figure of the scientist as a suitable guardian was called into question. And by extension, doubt was cast regarding the authority of scientific opinions on the potential effects of the industrial practices of mining. This response to scientific activities highlighted the delicate position of science as a discipline poised between public good and characterised by perceived excesses in the pursuit of knowledge. The Antarctic station, as the site of excess, in films such as John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982) and novels such as H. P. Lovecraft's *At the Mountain of Madness* (1937)[123] are an exaggerated indication of the fears about the culture of scientific outposts unregulated by societal influence. Much to their surprise, Antarctic scientists found that they have their own paparazzi. And this visual re-description of science as a wasting, rather than a heroically productive activity, affected a new geographical model of Antarctica.

One of the key sites of this media campaign was the French station Dumont D'Urville (referred to affectionately as 'DuDu' by the Greenpeace campaigners). The French were trying to build an airstrip by dynamiting five small islands, so that they might collapse together to form a site long enough to accommodate a landing strip. The islands they had chosen for this new runway were ice-free and home to several penguin colonies (only 1 percent of Antarctica is ice-free, and it is the same location where all Antarctic biodiversity is to be found). In the process of blasting, penguins were killed and it was argued that the breeding habitat for several bird species was being destroyed.[124] There was a particular tension to this campaign, as the relationship between France and Greenpeace was at an all-time low - after the French sinking of Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior* a year before in New

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[121] Previous attacks on the ATCPs had come in the form of a political attack on the ownership by the club of, predominantly first world 'Antarctic aristocracy' of ATCP members, but never as to the validity of scientific activity. Even when scientific activity had been attacked as a cover for national occupation, it was done so discreetly within the forum of the AT meetings, and it never held scientists to account for their methods or the housekeeping of their inhabitations.

[122] For a discussion on regime change in the Antarctic community see, Lorraine M. Eliot, "Continuity and change in cooperative international regimes: the politics of the recent environment debate in Antarctica" Working Paper 1991/3, Department of International Affairs, The Research School of Pacific Studies, (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1991).

[123] Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) was inspired by Byrd's 1929 flight over the South Pole.

[124] After several years of construction, the completed project was eventually abandoned in 1994 after parts of a nearby glacier collapsed into the sea, causing a freak wave that damaged the cliff on which the airstrip was sited.

Zealand (1985), in which the photographer Fernando Pereira was killed. On board the MV Greenpeace were four activists from the *Rainbow Warrior*, who were acutely aware of photography's deadly politics. The events at 'DuDu' form the most sensational and explosive event of this Antarctic re-mapping; dead penguins, Greenpeace protestors in front of bulldozers and the dynamiting of pristine environments. This media site of machines and bodies was the most dramatic part of an *image war* that Greenpeace had started in the Antarctic. Using the guerrilla media tactics of dehumanising technological excess pitted against passionate campaigners bodies, scientific stations and their personnel could neither counter nor contain this contra image.

As a highly effective communications organisation, Greenpeace were able to mobilise a visual narrative of the Antarctic as a threatened landscape by recording the activities and detritus of scientific stations, thereby countering the idea of Antarctica as a pristine laboratory and the scientist as a benign observer. The closed nature of Antarctic politics - and the legal affirmation of scientific rights had insulated national scientific programmes from public accountability. Thus, their mechanisms for public relations and media manipulation were limited compared to the highly sophisticated media machinery of Greenpeace. The effect of the publicity of the less desirable aspects of human inhabitation on the continent served to highlight the potential risk factors of further human activities, which were being considered under the CRAMRA negotiations. The threat of mining, and its industrial processes not only had the potential for increased waste, but for Greenpeace and other organisations that were forming to fight the CRAMRA, it brought into view larger questions about the use of global landscapes and environmental abuse. Unlike media reporting on national and regional disasters, Greenpeace mobilised global imaginaries of environmental abuse, suggesting protest at a local and global level (such as letters to local MPs and the PM of Australia).

The globalisation of Antarctica as an environmental site was achieved by a change in the ordering of Antarctica in global systems, from a space at the periphery, to a site at the axis of global debates. This change in status form a marginal environment of Heroic endeavour (1890s-1910s) or scientific investigation (IGY, 1957-70s) to a global environmental narrative, is a product of the particular visual narratives that Greenpeace was generating from the Antarctic, coupled with a change in the perceived nature of global environmental threats. The ability to visualize these threats went apace with their recognition through global modelling systems. Peter Newell[125] comments that it was not until the late 1980's that *global* environmental threats made their debut in the media, among them global warming. The view of the earth from space, brought back by the 1969 mission to the moon, it is argued,

[125] Peter Newell, *Climate for Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 79.

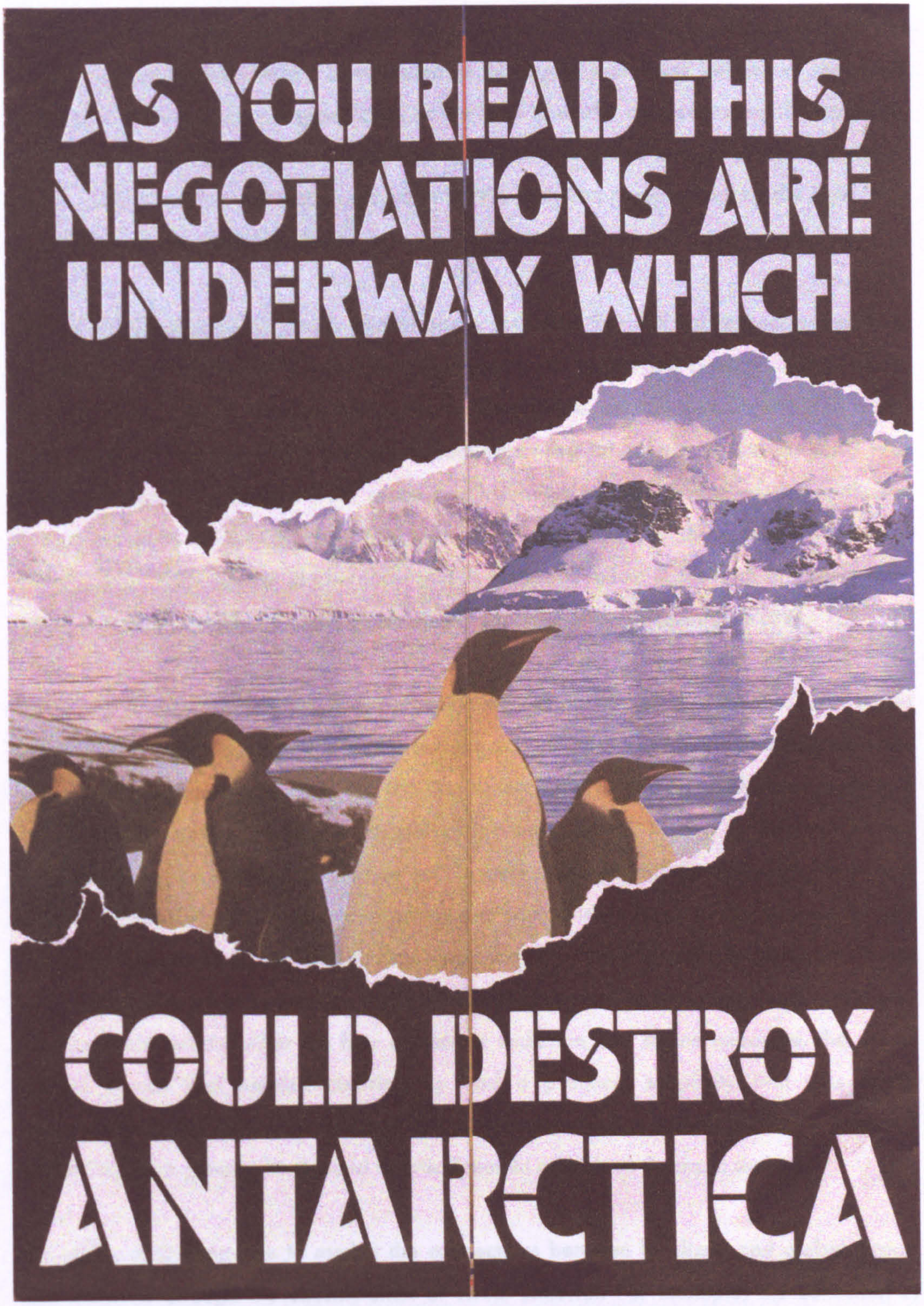
AS YOU READ THIS,
NEGOTIATIONS ARE
UNDERWAY WHICH
COULD DESTROY
ANTARCTICA

Plate 8

fundamentally altered a world-view of the planet as an integrated ecology system that promoted a globalised vision. Stuart Allen et al. argue that these images of the earth contributed to "an epistemological break at the level of media representation".[126] However, this view from the heavens was counterbalanced by an image of a more embedded risk of global distribution that was first visualised in WWII, and then repeated during the Cold War period - that of the mushroom cloud.

Cold War images of toxic clouds and airborne radiation that did not respect geopolitical boundaries - contributed to a more threatening notion of globalised systems of distribution. The ozone hole, as an invisible fissure in the atmosphere, could be conceptualised as an event precisely because of the history of visualisation that had characterised the Cold War period. Whereas the images from space had visualised a static image of the earth, the modern industrial military machine had imbued an atmosphere of dispersal as a dynamic spatiality (the 1986 disaster at Chernobyl and its European fallout in the form of nuclear rain, served as a distinct reminder of the globalising distribution of environmental threats).

It could be argued that the image of Antarctica was intimately linked to the fears and hopes that the public had about human impacts and the apparent limits of growth that extended and ended in the Antarctic landscape. The fact that Antarctica provided an aesthetic of purity in a sea of chaotic and troublesome images of the uses/abuses of the environment is not unconnected to the visuality of damage and its acceptable permutations. Clearly, what was visible was troubling. Environmental damage that was invisible (such as the ozone hole and global warming) was harder to articulate and connect to more invasive bodily fears. In this sense, Antarctica could be seen as a site for the displacement of increasing fears about non-communicable threats. After the fear of nuclear radiation and ozone exposure, the site of rubbish dumps that needed clearing up had a practical simplicity that was easily communicated. The shift in the order of things, from localised to global narratives (enabled by the Cold War geographies) found its articulation in rubbish on Antarctic stations.

The ability of Greenpeace to exploit the connections between localized and global threats was achieved through the accumulation of visual material. For example, the collection of waste stories from many Antarctic bases, through repetition, amplified these waste sites into symbolic sites of destruction, in a greater wilderness. Waste was a means to conceptually join Antarctica to an emotional geography of threatened environments all over the globe. As the

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[126] Stuart Allan, Barbara Adam & Cynthia Carter. ed. *Environmental risks and the media* (London: Routledge, 2000). 3. For a fuller discussion, see Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye* (Baltimore & London: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 2001), where he argues that the view from Apollo's eye represented the culmination of historical desire for an ever-ascendant viewpoint, which ironically found its ultimate return in the Apollo photographs of earth.

expansion of human globality was read through this accumulation of waste, the global integration of environmental systems was being increasingly articulated through ecosystem modelling in scientific visualisations. What Antarctica uniquely offered to a narrative of global environmental impact was a stark, minimal landscape aesthetic that put this waste into dramatic relief. As nuclear testing in the American desert gave the mushroom cloud a distinct aesthetic of the technological sublime, so the stark Antarctic white desert leant a sublime landscape of purity to the visualisation of the human impacts of an industrialised society. The impact and appeal of Greenpeace's colour images on leaflets to *Save Antarctica* were stark and arresting. Antarctica looked like the sky. It had a vertigo all of its own. In the psychic terrain of purity and danger, the Antarctic served as the ultimate space of aesthetic clarity.

Simultaneous to the production of Antarctica as an axis of global environmentalism, it was also ordered as the 'last place' - to do something different from the unrelenting progress of global capitalism. Greenpeace's campaign message was simple. It called upon global audiences, as a global community to effect a moral 'clear sightedness' in this space of symbolic hope:

> There has never been a more urgent need for people to stand up and declare their intention to protect Antarctica. It could yet become a symbol of hope, a unique example of humankind's capacity to preserve its past, present and future.[127]

As the waste stories narrated an accumulation of harm, the political call was for vision to light a sign of hope amongst the images and practices of global destruction. The coalition of Antarctic interest groups (including Greenpeace) was formed into the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) and this sought to set new boundaries in the conceptualisation of decision making in Antarctic politics. And through their utilisation of new technologies, Greenpeace's voyages were able to transmit a globally accessible vision of Antarctica.

As globality is not just a spatial consideration, but also a temporal one, Greenpeace were relaying images and information at a speed that the governmental organisations could not counter. Accordingly, the agenda set forth by ASOC "requires governments to have vision, and will".[128] The stress on vision was a conceptual and spiritual argument (but also a technological one); it required audiences to be moved by the image of a place, to see its aesthetics as intrinsically valuable by mobilising the visibility of those aesthetics. In a world of already diminishing resources, to allow aesthetic production to be prioritised over the production of resources was as difficult an argument to make. The simplicity of ASOC's argument was only partially anchored in the Antarctic landscape, as its primal appeal was to

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[127] GP Antarctica Information sheet 1988

[128] ASOC Release, 'Environmentalists officially propose a world park for Antarctica' 19 November 1990.

Plate 9

our sense of vision, our very capacity to imagine alternative strategies for feeling about the world we inhabit.

Antarctica was billed as the 'Last heaven on Earth',[129] and a place "that lifts the spirit and stimulates the mind".[130] The political sabotage of CRAMRA, through the anti-mining campaign lead to an effacement of Antarctica as a precise ecological entity in favour of a utopic fantasy - a sacred space - where the ideals of an alternative humanity could be realised. The issues at stake were simplified into a kind of morality play in order to facilitate their unambiguous assimilation.[131] Antarctica was simultaneously offered as a gift, a hope, and finally, redemption. As Greenpeace claimed,

> Antarctica has gained a special place in people's hearts as a symbol of hope; if we can protect this last great wilderness from greedy human exploitation, there is a hope that we can *repair* the rest of our severely polluted world. Because it is a near-pristine wilderness, because it is a zone of peace in a world of conflict, because it is mysterious in its isolation, because we live daily in an overcrowded and polluted world, Antarctica has come to represent more than just conserving a wild continent.[132]

What the dissemination of images achieved was this simple translation, of the good, bad, and ugly environmental practice. The distinguished zoologist, Martin Holdgate, Director General of the IUCN, talked about achieving "a dream"; rejecting mining in Antarctica was no longer an ecological argument but a moral one that demanded the consideration of future generations, our "grandchildren"[133] in the images that were produced of the Antarctic. He invoked a sense of responsibility to a wider humanity (albeit a genealogical one) that was framed as global; the dream that is invoked is a dream of "global citizenship" to fight "global threats". As the landscape expanded into the global, so did the subject.

The idea that emerged from the Antarctic campaign for NGOs, was that this one place should be left sacred. Antarctic was ordered as a philosophical axis on which the excesses of the world turned. The idea of Antarctica in the late 1980s was amplified beyond the continent itself. It is an idea that eventually the Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke would echo:

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[129] 'Last heaven on Earth', *Today* (8 May 1990).
[130] Speech by the Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, *Sixteenth National Conference of the Australia Institute of Internal Affairs*, Hobart 18 November 1989. It is interesting to note that Antarctica New Zealand adopted the mission statement of 'Antarctica, refreshing the human spirit' in 1998.
[131] GP had a significant media history of David and Goliath campaigns. The photographs of big whaling ships and rubber dinghy's produced a kind of ecological sublime, in the pitching of the miniature against the machinations of the gigantic.
[132] GP International, "A realistic Dream for Antarctica", GP International *Document for an Eighth UN Debate* (October 30 1990),1.
[133] Martin Holdgate in IUCN document 19 March 1991 and Soviet President Gorbachev, quoted in GP International 1990, 3.

> I am firmly convinced that one of the greatest legacies of our generation can leave to the future may yet be one of the simplest: one continent unspoilt, a testament to our own recognition that in other corners of the world we have already gone too far.[134]

After five years of dream weaving in the Antarctic, Greenpeace's document for the Eight UN meeting (1990) at which Antarctica was to be discussed, was entitled 'A realistic dream for Antarctica'.[135] The foreword was written by Lyn Goldsworthy, just one of the political vectors that carried a passion for the landscape from Antarctica, to the political spaces of contestation, and then into the political forums of legislation.[136] She had worked in and on Antarctica for nearly eighteen years, and became the Australian NGO delegate for ASOC at the ATSCM, (April 22-33 1991, Madrid). As a Greenpeace campaigner, she had moved through many different political spaces in the Antarctic debate, from the field and campaigns in Antarctica, to the outside and inside of political forums. Lobbying politicians involved a combination of "lipstick politics" and "many, many late nights briefing colleagues back at home, preparing commentaries (ECOs)[137] for publication the next day, schmoozing with diplomats" to media briefings and "sewing penguin suits, making banners for them to hold, organising tons of ice for the penguins to die on in front of hotel where the negotiations were at... short sharp media-oriented statements."[138] "And then there was being in the Antarctic itself - completely different world, amazingly powerful, inspiring, rendering one inarticulate - but also always being under scrutiny, always having to ask questions."[139] The Antarctica, she promoted re-envisioned Antarctica as a fracture in a utilitarian concept of space; place considered as intrinsically valuable. As she comments,

> If we decide to forego mineral exploitation in Antarctica, it would be the first time humans collectively have valued the environmental integrity of a continent over an assessment of its economic potential.[140]

In the media, the World Park was reported as a utopian ideal by both pro and anti CRAMRA supporters. *The Australian*, saw "the creation in Antarctica of a world wilderness park - a

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[134] Speech by the Australian Prime Minister, Sixteenth National Conference of the Australia Institute of Internal Affairs, Hobart 18th November 1989.

[135] *GP International*, 1990.

[136] Accounting for the duration of involvement in Antarctica of many of the anti-CRAMRA campaigners, the landscape had an active role in driving the politics of that campaign, engendering a particular critical and emotional consciousness within its campaigners. Lyn Goldsworthy comments, "My first trip to Antarctica 1987 - and more specifically, my first glide through icebergs - completely changed my relationship with the Antarctic, and with the way that I approached the campaign. Until then, it was a campaign, something I believed in but was not personally emotionally connected to. After, protection of this amazing place became a passion - a lifelong passion - while I stopped being a paid campaigner on Antarctic issues in 1991, I have continued to work on this issue - and will until my dying day." Goldsworthy 2004.

[137] *Eco* was a NGO publication intended to provide alternative ideas and proposals to delegates, and to report on and analysis the conference and inform the public outside of the debate.

[138] Goldsworthy 2004.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Lyn Goldsworthy, Foreword "A realistic dream for Antarctica" in GP International *Document for an Eighth UN Debate*, (October 30 1990)

utopian notion that is impossibly idealistic in an imperfect world."[141] In short, it was described as "a pie in the sky campaign".[142] New Zealand Foreign minister, Russell Marshall labelled the decision as 'Utopian'.[143] The 'Antarctica seduction' that was being pitched by the media was the idea that we can start out over, in the clear light of unpolluted vision. The suggestion of the clarity of vision that Antarctica might provide also provoked the routine denunciation of the utopian.

Greenpeace, through their geographical remapping and accumulation of images, instigated a change in the Antarctic spatial narrative. Photographic proof of destruction proved an essential weapon in this remapping because of the continent's previous inaccessibility. And through the repetition of a simple, morally unsophisticated, visual narrative in the media, Greenpeace succeeded in polarising an arrested Antarctic politics.

Australian-Antarctica spatialities

In September 1988, at the height of the discussion on the usage of the Antarctic environment, Australian Antarctic postage stamps came through the letterbox along with Greenpeace leaflets, celebrating the themes of 'Environment, Conservation, and Technology'.[144] The stamp designs showed a juxtaposition of fore-grounded wildlife with machines on the horizon. For example, 'Dolphins and *Nella Dan*' shows the hulk of a ship in the background, foregrounding the dolphins, with the ship in an almost 'pursuit-like' chase. Ironically, the stamp reproduced the Greenpeace images of whaling in the Antarctic that were in circulation simultaneously. As these stamps of a celebrated technological vision dispersed around Australia,[145] the MV *Bahia Pariso* ran aground and disintegrated in the Bismarck Strait, in the Antarctic Peninsula, spilling 950,000 litres of diesel fuel.[146] On the 6 November 1989, to protest Greenpeace deployed a banner from the hull, with the words "Antarctic Time Bomb" written on it.[147] Two months later, the Peruvian research ship *Humboldt*[148] ran aground in the Antarctic Peninsula puncturing two fuel tanks. Eighteen days later, the super tanker *Exxon Valdez* ran aground spilling about 50 million litres of crude oil into Prince William Sound,

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[141] "The Greening of Antarctica" in *The Australian* (24 May 1989), 10.
[142] Ibid.
[143] "Antarctica 'worth a try'" in *The Australian* (24 May 1989), 3.
[144] These stamps were designed in response to the 20th Meeting of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research in Hobart, September 1988 (Source: Australian Antarctic stamps archive, Australia post Headquarters, Melbourne Victoria).
[145] At the same time GP issued local post stamps for use on their campaign support vessels and their Antarctic Base. These stamps paid the cost of postage from the vessels concerned to the nearest regular postal collection point to raise funds for GP conservation tasks as well as publicising their projects. Stamps are denominated in New Zealand Dollars and were issued through their Auckland Headquarters.
[146] 28 January 1989.
[147] GP international, *Expedition Report, GP Antarctic Expedition 1989/90* (Netherlands), 51.
[148] 6 March 1989.

Alaska.[149] Goldsworthy commented that, "Australian government had been saying, accidents won't happen etc, and then here was *Exxon Valdez* with beautiful landscape behind, spewing oil everywhere!"[150] The polar aesthetics of the *Exxon Valdez* visually resonated to articulate potential threats to the Antarctic. While Daley and O'Neil argue that the concentration on the disaster narrative of the *Exxon Valdez* spill naturalised a discursive consideration of marine transportation systems and the pursuit of alternative energy sources,[151] it did effectively exhibit the threats to polar environments of oil extraction. The celebration of 'environment, conservation, and technology' offered an unsettling visual disjuncture with the circulating media images of such technological failure.

On 22 May 1989 the Australian Prime minister announced the "absolute commitment that the Australian Government has to no mining in the Antarctic",[152] he suggested the replacement of CRAMRA with the "the concept of an Antarctic Wilderness Park".[153] Acknowledging the international as well as internal opposition to such an idea, he justified his political course by cited a much developed idea of environmental paternalism over "fragile environments".[154] As CRAMRA was rejected, a case for Antarctic 'Australianess' needed to be made. As the largest claimant state, Australia had an extraordinary energy invested in Antarctic, as was demonstrated by the use of stamps to assert sovereignty rights. During this era of Australian politics, there was a marked change in the narrative of the environmental space of Antarctica as a fragile environment liable to be marked by human 'progress', while pro-CRAMRA supporters argued that Antarctica was a robust environment protected by the Southern Ocean and environmental inaccessibility. Concepts of wilderness had been heavily constructed and contested in Australian consciousness by environmental campaigning for non-commercial utility of domestic spaces in Australia, such as the 1972 Peddlar Dam campaign, the 1986 Franklin River, battle of Farmhouse creek, and the 1989 Hobart campaign against wood chipping.

Two interconnected concepts of wilderness were at work in the idea of a wilderness park status for Antarctica; firstly, the enlargement of Australia's national space into Antarctica, and secondly, a changing narrative of what that space 'means' to Australians. This dual spatial concept of a wilderness park is at once a unifying concept for the entire Antarctic landmass

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[149] March 24th 1989
[150] Goldsworthy 2004.
[151] P. Daley and D. O'Neill, "Sad is too mild a word': Press coverage of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill" in Journal of Communication 41, 1991, 53.
[152] Transcript of joint news conference with the Prime Minister, Senator the Hon. Gareth Evans and Senator the Hon. Gareth Richardson, Parliament House, 22 May 1989 (media release)
[153] ibid.
[154] ibid.

that encloses it in a term that negates the pie-shaped wedges of national claims, and simultaneously it was a mechanism to assert Australian national identity over the space. Within Australia, there was considerable opposition to the World Park idea and to what Australian Antarctic identity means, especially from Philip Law a former director of the AAD,

> If Australia refuses to sign she will be utterly discredited among the treaty nations and will be branded as naïve, ignorant and obstructive... and the Antarctic treaty - one of the world's most idealistic political achievements - will collapse. The campaign for an Antarctic world park is doomed to failure.[155]

Similarly in Britain, the pro-CRAMRA argument is located in the fragility of consensus in international agreement. Australia's stance on the 'Wilderness Park' was viewed as contributing to a fractured political space - by dividing international consensus. When questioned by a journalist about the rather surprising and quite unexpected course of action Australia was taking (given its participation and endorsement of six years of CRAMRA negotiations), the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke replies by pointing out, in a straight forward manner that CRAMRA was legally inconsistent with a no mining stance (as it had been for the last six years), which reveals nothing of the extraordinary 180 degree turn that Mr Hawke had just taken.

The zeitgeist of an environmental sensibility that the Australian government claimed to have suddenly tapped into, belied an active image campaign from NGOs that targeted Australia as a potential leader in the rejection of CRAMRA. Furthermore, as Mr Hawke made a stand against 'no mining', he also propelled Australia as a key player in the international Antarctic community, establishing a position in Antarctic politics that is far stronger than Australia's influence on other international issues. As Dr Mosley co-ordinator of 'People for an Antarctic World Park' commented,

> The decision on Antarctic mining could well be a turning point in world politics as far as the priority given to the environment is concerned. For once, because of its veto power, Australia finds itself in a position where it can play a leading role.[156]

From the periphery of Antarctica to Australia, the rejection of CRAMRA is marketed as an endorsement of what it is to be Australian, "Australia, under this government, has not been a country, which just wets its finger to the aura of international opinion and says well that's what determines Australia's position, if we believe that something is right then we have to be prepared to pursue it."[157] No one is more surprised about Mr Hawke's decision than his advisors and cabinet, as the Australian Antarctic legal advisor, Andrew Jackson commented:

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[155] Dr Philip Law (Director, Antarctic Division, 1949-1966) "Warning on Antarctica", in *The Australian* (May 18th 1989), 12.
[156] Dr D J Mosley, co-ordinator 'People for an Antarctic World Park', in the letters section of *The Australian* (16 May 1989), 12.
[157] Ibid.

> What the officials didn't take account of, is what the Prime Minister was doing in terms of reacting to Greenpeace, who were able to generate a very simplistic view of what the issues were, and the Prime Minister basically made the decision to say 'no' we're not going to sign the minerals convention, and what he was doing was not responding to the qualified, sensible advice from officials but responding to a popular image of what Antarctica is about - and the image is false, but not invalid.[158]

Once Hawke's decision to 'say no to mining' had been made, the story had to be disseminated quickly, with the political concerns of 'Australia's own back yard' transposed to Antarctica. In rejecting CRAMRA, the government was forced to adopt the media image established by Greenpeace and other NGO campaigns. As Mr Hawke was presented with his inflatable penguin from Greenpeace supporters, he also whole-heatedly adopted the image of Antarctica that they had produced. As Jackson comments:

> After the decision by government to say we are going to go down a different path, officials relied very strongly on a public campaign by Greenpeace and others that was based on misinformation because that simplistic view of Antarctica was exactly what was required to shift that debate.[159]

At this point in the debate, Antarctic politics became truly polarised; support for CRAMRA was conceived as pro-mining and all ideas contrary to this, were located in the term 'Wilderness Park' or 'World Park'.

Voyages of vision: *MV Gondwana*

On the 26th September 1989, the *MV Gondwana* set sail from New Zealand for Antarctica. Australia had rejected CRAMRA, and Greenpeace campaigned for a 'World Park' to persuade additional Treaty Parties to follow suit, with the new vision of a heaven on earth. The self-generated press release reads, "Greenpeace's new polar ship 'Gondwana' heads south to Antarctic controversy".[160] The boat was auspiciously named after the Gondwana continent, of which Antarctica was once a part. Conjuring up an ancient geological ghost that once dominated the Southern hemisphere, the ship takes on the mythology of the global continent. The *MV Gondwana* has cost Greenpeace 2.57 million dollars, and her role is to make visible the "careless attitudes toward the fragile Antarctic environment, in sharp contrast to the public images these countries have attempted to project".[161]

Direct warnings have been issued from the US and obliquely from France, as the express intention was to bring back more images of the French base Dumont D'Urville and the US station McMurdo.[162] Again, the ship's objective is as an *agent of visibility*, to visually map the

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[158] Interview with Andrew Jackson, Manager, Antarctic Treaty and Government, AAD, Hobart (13 & 26 November 2000)
[159] Ibid.
[160] GP Press Release, (7 October 1988).
[161] GP Press Release, (5 October 1988).
[162] Interview Maj de Poorter 12 January 2000 & 5 April 2001, Christchurch NZ.

other 'ugly' Antarctica.[163] Greenpeace's aim, beyond its waste stories,[164] is to produce the World Park as a visual object, thus substantiating the conceptual idea already generated.[165] The destination of the *Gondwana* is a new idealistic space; "This voyage is the most imaginative yet in the Greenpeace campaign to have Antarctica declared a World Park."[166]

In pursuit of a World Park, a Greenpeace survival hut blocked the semi-constructed airstrip at DuDu, and a media entourage recorded fireworks used to scare birds from their nests, and penguins that were removed to pens before their nests were dynamited.[167] But the Greenpeace expedition co-ordinator, Pete Wilkinson was concerned that the focus on the dramatics of the event that brought so much publicity to the global campaign was obscuring the local environmental issues;

> The focus so far has been French aggression, but now we have an opportunity to change the focus to the real issue surrounding Dumont D'Urville - the impact of the airstrip on the ecology of the area.[168]

The impact of dramatic images of destruction is now constrained by some more delicate negotiations with the French to join Australia in rejecting CRAMRA. 'DuDu' "was a tricky one that year: Airstrip project still on, but France also supportive of replacing minerals convention with environmental instrument... campaigners understood the need to have protest but not alienate France, but for crew members that was harder to accept (especially after very heavy campaigning year before)."[169] There is an uneasy cross-over of the different political spaces of negotiations (local and global), that "led to some lengthy discussions at crew-meetings", but the "Main problem was that after the previous year of very heavy images from Dudu, the press was not very interested in "softer" action, so it did not result in much media".[170] Allen et al. argue that, "the emphasis on the extraordinary at the expense of the ordinary, decisively shapes what gets reported and how"[171] during the 1980s. The media appetite for the spectacular, which propelled Antarctica into global news, also contributed to the loss of an opportunity to reflect on the complexity of many of the environmental questions that the question of Antarctic raised.

The *Gondwana* was mapping Antarctica as a public visual space, in that the World Park campaign was telling a visual story that had been excluded by governmental science

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[163] E-mail interview with Lyn Goldsworthy (8 November 1999 & 7 May 2001)
[164] GP International, *Expedition Report, GP Antarctic Expedition 1989/90* (Netherlands), 51.
[165] For a discussion on the World Park, see Eco (Wellington NZ, January 17-28 Volume XXII, No.2, 1983).
[166] GP Press Release (8 January 1988).
[167] GP Press Release (13 January 1989).
[168] GP Press Release (11 January 1989).
[169] de Poorter 2001.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Stuart Allan, Barbara Adam & Cynthia Carter. eds. *Environmental risks and the media* (London: Routledge, 2000), 5.

projects. And the language of a world park, suggested a communal space of play. Rejection of CRAMRA was understood by Greenpeace as a democratic intervention in a world governance that is economically driven by business interests and politically by a few national powers – for the environmental community, if Antarctica was 'lost', any chance to change the global environment was also lost. By the end of 1989, the discursive and visual terms of reference in the Antarctic debate had changed completely.

> The Greenpeace Goal – A World Park
> Greenpeace holds a different vision for Antarctica's future...[172]

Greenpeace did not only hold an alternative vision of what Antarctica could become it was in the process of creating a different conceptual object. There was considerable confusion of what the concept 'World Park'[173] or 'Wilderness Park' represented. As far as the public were concerned, the message had to be kept 'clear and simple'. The Greenpeace publication, 'A realistic dream for Antarctica' attempted to populate the vision of what a World Park might mean. In response to negative responses from the then director of the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) - who exemplified the view that the World Park concept was a potential threat to science activities - Greenpeace commented that this response "demonstrates a serious misunderstanding of environmental NGOs views on the place of science in a World Park..."[174] The 'realistic dream...' proposal responded to reassure scientists that their activities were compatible with Greenpeace's conception of a World Park;

> The ASOC proposal for a World Park is founded on the principles of ensuring the ongoing protection of Antarctica's globally significant values – its wilderness, its role as a global pollution monitoring zone, its scientific contribution, and its role as a zone of peace.[175]

As the finer detail of what the World Park concept meant was being debated, Greenpeace continued to establish a image of it through visual accumulation; photographs of a banner being held by Greenpeace activists saying 'World Park' in front of French airstrip; the World Park base in front of Mt Erebus at Cape Evans; World Park printed across photographs of dead penguins; World Park banners over icy landscape.

In the single object of an image, the nuances of the Greenpeace vision are lost, but in the accumulation of images and concepts, the NGO campaign created an idea of Antarctica that operated in an entirely different emotional landscape to previous geographical models. As

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[172] GP campaign leaflet, 1990
[173] Post 1989 New Zealand argued that it had advocated World Park back in 1975, then it was a concept that barely go off the ground, so it was assumed that it would not in 1990 when NGOs were arguing for abandonment of CRAMRA and a conservation convention.
[174] D.J. Dewry, Director, British Antarctic Survey, in a letter to New Scientist, 9th June 1990,"The total banning of all human activity in this region as promulgated by some groups has to be seen against the possibility of using the unique natural observatory conditions of Antarctica to address questions of global relevance".
[175] GP international 1990, 1.

Barthes has commented about myths, they are a special kind of 'sign' in that they are not constructed from whole cloth, but from a set of elements that are already packed with meaning and association.[176] After the rejection of CRAMRA, the language that was finally used in the Protocol document was that Antarctica's "aesthetic and wilderness values"[177] be of paramount consideration to all Antarctic activities. An accumulation of images was conjured.

The Aestheticisation of politics; and the reordering of Antarctic Visual Cultures

The collective NGO campaign to 'Save Antarctica' instigated the biggest change in Antarctic cultural politics since the 1960s. The aestheticisation of Antarctic politics became a crucial consideration for all Antarctic interests. As a media campaign, Greenpeace mobilised unprecedented global interest in the Antarctic and highlighted the lack of media knowledge of governmental Antarctic cultures. From the point at which Australia rejected CRAMRA in 1989, governmental bodies were forced, however reluctantly to accept the NGO vision of the Antarctic - as the dominant narrative of Antarctic spatialities. Subsequently all government bodies have invested heavily in securing control over Antarctic cultural politics, through investment in web communications, public relations officers, visual archives and the artist and writers programmes.

For example, in Australia in 2000,[178] Antarctic Research was named one of the four key areas of the University of Tasmania's research strategy. The Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery (Hobart) mounted an exhibition that 'recognises the special historical links between Hobart and Antarctica.' The AAD consolidated the biggest Antarctic visual library into a public archive. In contrast to the small article that appeared in *The Mercury* (Hobart's Newspaper) in May 22 1989, in 2000 at least one article appears daily, with by-lines such as, "Port goes cosmopolitan with a dash of the Antarctic".[179] Emphasising the regional and national dynamics of Antarctic politics, there is controversy as "fuel doubts threaten polar gateway *image*... Premier Jim Bacon is outraged, 'Hobart is Australia's gateway to Antarctica and therefore fuel companies that can't guarantee adequate fuel for Antarctic expeditions are acting *against the national interest*' Mr Bacon said".[180]

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[176] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Jonathan Cape: London, 1972).

[177] Protocol Antarctic Treaty, Article 3. For a subsequent approach to aesthetic and wilderness values see Rosamunde Codling, "Wilderness and aesthetic values in Antarctica", Information paper at the XXII Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (Tromso, Norway, 1998) and Rosamunde Codling, "Concepts of Wilderness in the Antarctic" *International Journal of Wilderness* Vol.3 No.3. 1999:35-38.

[178] During the 2000/01 Antarctic season I was a visiting researcher at Institute of Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies, funded by a scholarship from the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London which hosted a conference called "The Future of Antarctica: Exploitation versus Preservation", during the CRAMRA debate, at which the Australian Prime Minister gave the opening address.

[179] *The Mercury*, December 29 2000

[180] Ibid.

The designer of the Australia postage stamps of 1989 visits Antarctica as part of the AAD's Humanities program and designs a new set of postage stamps for 2001, which shows a distinct change in rationale. The stamps are designed to: "create the atmosphere of the Antarctic - complete isolation, unbelievable silence, vast space... the landscape overwhelms all."[181] 'Mawson Square' is constructed, and his grandson was taken to the Antarctic as part of a media campaign to consolidate Australian Antarctic heritage through ancestral connections. A government-tourist partnership called *Polar Pathways* run guided historic polar walks around Hobart, and there are more penguins in town than on a Greenpeace demonstration. As part of the scientific co-operation between Malaysia and Australia, there are plans for the extensive development of Asian-Antarctic tourism, with Hobart providing the cultural and economic gateway to these activities. The extensions of these new Antarctic markets in Asia are brokered through scientific alignments. You can buy a bottle of Mawson wine, send a penguin postcard, and visit the *Antarctic Experience* for a ride in an Antarctic simulator and a tour round an Australian Antarctic station.

The importance of the rejection of CRAMRA was that it allowed a previously repressed dialogue about alternative environmental perceptions to flourish. The failure to endorse the CRAMRA denoted a much wider debate about what meaning is - (and was) - located in Antarctica. However, media coverage led to a distinct culture that naturalised global environmental damage by concentrating on local environmental accidents (such as oil spills and the dynamiting of Dumont D'Urville) rather than expanding the public debate to consider the regimes and fundamental structures of industrial breakdown in the environment. This displacement of the industrial impacts to the realm of the accidental, coupled with the duration of coverage of environmental issues to the 'event' of an accident left the hegemony of systems relatively intact. As rubbish was cleared in the Antarctic, it displaced the problem of waste onto the furthest geographical point, thereby attending to the results rather than the causes of industrial system failures. As a narrative of a 'world park' ring fenced the Antarctic for protection, it displaced a national green politic in Australia and other ATCPs into geographically distant territory. The politics of visualising Antarctica as a displaced instance of industrial breakdown will have significant implications in the later debate over global warming.

Media concentration on the sensational - obscured some of the most important questions that the 'Antarctic question' raised in international management of collective space - particularly

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[181] *Janet Boschen, Stamp Designer, Interview Melbourne Post, Melbourne (1 February 2001).*

those raised by the UN in the 'Question on Antarctica'[182] of the postcolonial politics of the AT.[183] The world park concept effectively silenced the criticism of countries such as Malaysia and India about the rights of first-world claimant states to governance over what was perceived to be a global commons. The adoption of the Protocol, while implementing environmental protection did maintain the status quo of existing claimant states to the Antarctic. And, it can be argued, promoted their governance through a concept of environmental stewardship (particularly in New Zealand and Australia).

The rejection of CRAMRA and the adoption of the Protocol prevented a complete overhaul of Antarctic governance and allowed the Antarctic Treaty to remain intact. While the Greenpeace campaign had embarrassed national programmes and forced ATCPs to operate a more transparent governance, it also instigated a regime change of public relations within national programmes. Accountability, in the 1980s did have a radical effect on the nature of Antarctic politics, but the backlash was increased control and management of the image of Antarctica, and a simplification of the conceptualisation of the continent. For example, The World Conservation Union, *A Strategy for Antarctic Conservation* discussed the need for better public information, education and training by party members in their public communications. It suggested a public awareness campaign ought to be developed as "an integral part of the implementation of an Antarctic conservation strategy."[184] This combination of a media production and the lack of discursive consideration about the possible permutations of Antarctic regimes contributed to an *arrested vision* of Antarctica. The effect of the minerals debate arrested the development of Antarctica in a moment when there was an opportunity to reflect on the loosening of meanings that are thought through with Antarctica. The threat of a vacuum, in the aftermath of the failure of the CRAMRA negotiations, hastened a quick resolution of Antarctica's form as an environmental and cultural object, in the Protocol. The opportunities to evaluate Antarctica as a visceral space (and a wider engagement with the environment as an active medium) were foreclosed for a quick resolution. The speed at which the Protocol was instigated after the rejection of CRAMRA, was in part because of the fear of a lack of regime to provide adequate coverage to the environment, and because of the development of a polarised narration of Antarctic spatialities by NGOs.

The disruptive recasting of Antarctic image-space by Greenpeace's geographical journeys,

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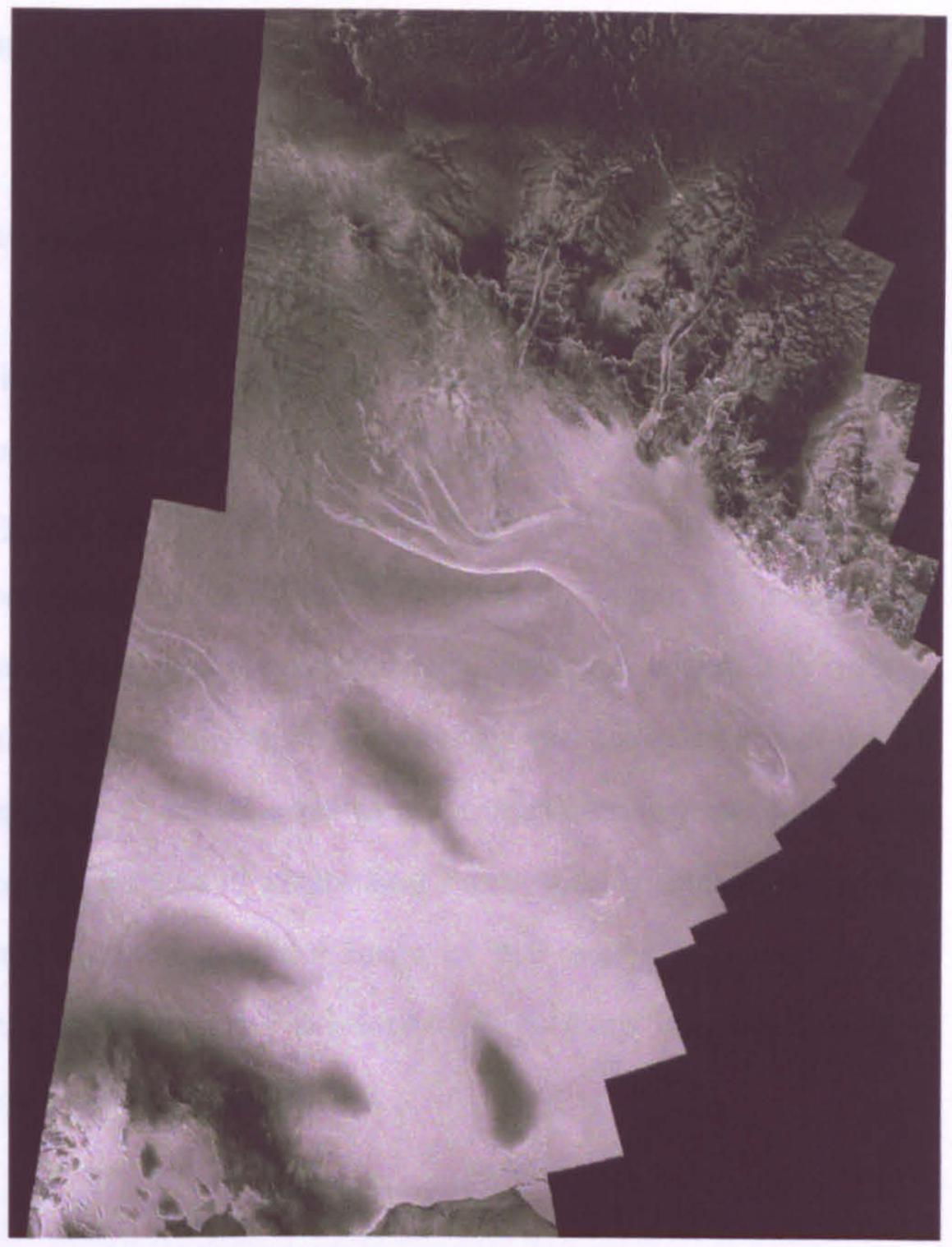
[182] See 1990 United Nations General Assembly Records 44th Session. Resolution, 26 January 1990. A44/124. And 1991 United Nations General Assembly Records 45th Session. Resolution, 14 January 1991. A45/178.
[183] For a discussion on contemporary postcolonial questions in New Zealand and the Antarctic see Klaus J. Dodds & Kathryn Yusoff, "Settlement and Unsettlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Antarctica" in *Polar Record* 2005 (in press).
[184] The World Conservation Union, *A Strategy for Antarctic Conservation* (Switzerland: IUCN, 1991), 33-34.

aestheticised Antarctic politics and prised apart new political spaces. Within this politic, the flow of Antarctic landscape streamed through images and through subjects, to affect a presence in that debate, as an embodied knowledge. As the landscape continues to flow, the images have remained the same - commodified, repetitively reproduced, and circulated by all Antarctic interest groups from tourism to science programmes to local Hobart shopkeepers. Despite the huge investment in Antarctic visual cultures, the *blandification* of the Antarctic continues apace with its increasing commercial value as a virtual object. As the Antarctic image of the *same again* was arrested in its development, the discursive voyages of vision no longer have the disruptive power to illuminate the terrain - but many of those that made those journeys continue to work towards other Antarctic futures. It is to Antarctica's future visualisation amidst the politics of global warming - caught in the virtual environment of satellite mapping - that I now turn.



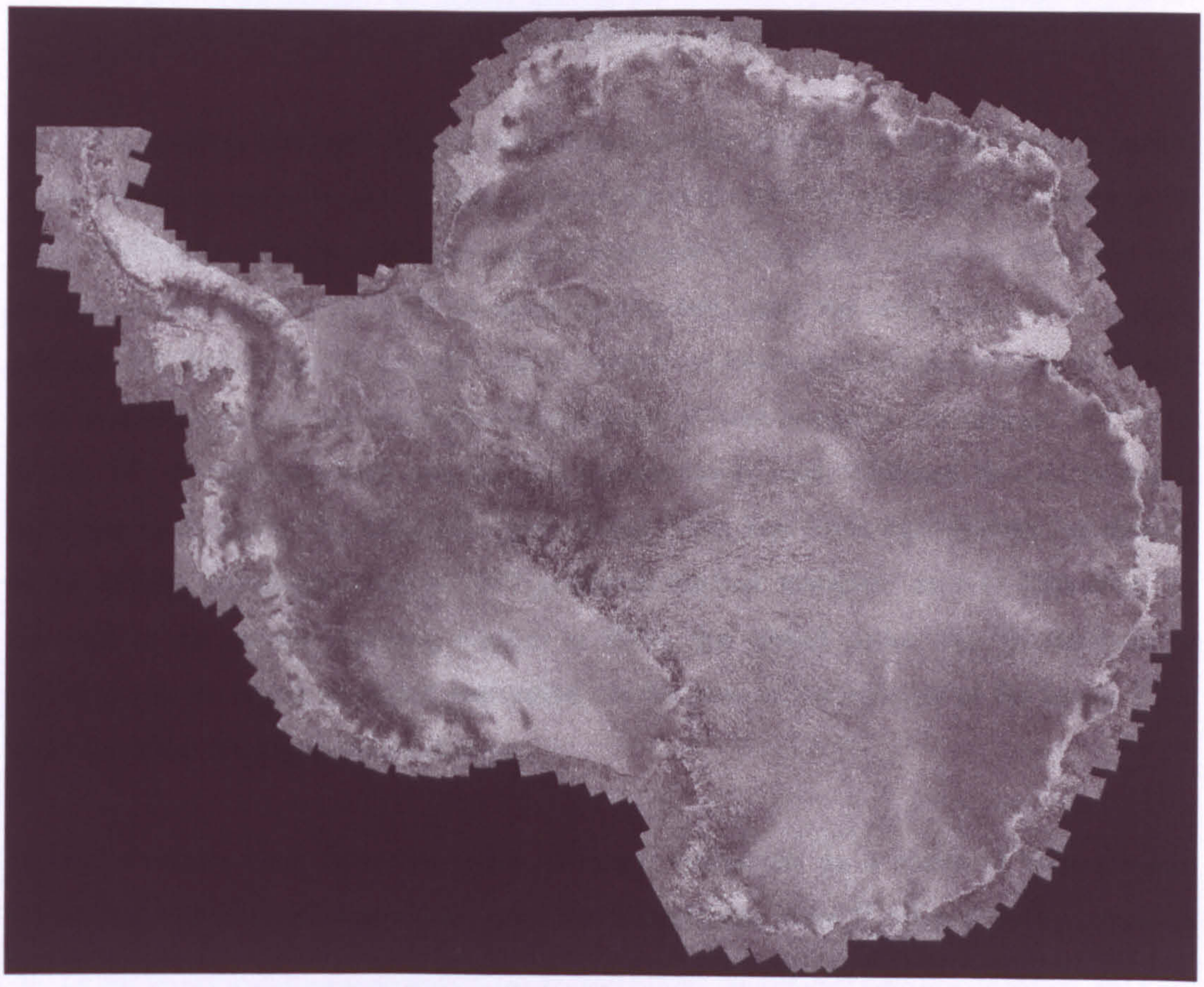


Plate 10

Visualising Antarctica as a place in time; from the geological sublime to 'real time'

Introduction

In this historic topology, I look at the operations of aesthetic cultures of mapping that both document destruction and render it innocuous through technologies of distance. The realisation of geopolitical imperatives through scientific visualisation, as a geographic practice, brings to light particular tensions and operations within Antarctic and global visual cultures. The subject of this topology will be the NASA *RADARSAT* [10] map of Antarctica that exhibited the effects of global warming - as a scientific and media event. I examine this map as a narrative cartography that exhibits the ideological structures on which it is built – specifically to expand upon how visual labour of the image reveals the complex topology of the political event through the mapping of these aesthetics. Concentrating on time as a spatialising operation, I conclude that the politics of visualising Antarctica is embedded in the histories of its media production. And that the political force of the image is bound to the ambiguities of scientific visualisation's technological sublimity - a sublime inhabitation in a technologically generated space that is removed from action.

Globalising Visions

"O, how glorious would it be to set my heel upon the Pole and turn myself 360° in a second!"[185]

When the southern continent was no more than a utopian dream, the English botanist Joseph Banks wanted to curve the world around his vision and mould the geography of space to his gaze. His fantasy was the privileged optical view-point of the Pole, where he could see and be seen to see, making the 360° of space around him, obey the central-ness of his subject position. The aim of Cook's voyage was to confirm an absence of place - closing the world map, and to put pay to the speculative geographies of terra incognita. On January 30th 1774 at Lat. 71° S, the expedition reached the farthest south, and confirmed that no temporal zone was to be found. The drive for a globalizing vision, that Banks had desired, led directly to the satellite technologies that in 1997 produced the first 'complete' map of Antarctica. By the time of the second mapping mission in 2000, the global vision, that the technology afforded was an image of global destruction - in the form of the collapse of the Larsen B ice shelf - an affect of global climate change.

Antarctic visions have traversed many different viewpoints as a result of technological innovation and political aspirations; from the 'Albatrosses view'[186] offered by the airplane

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[185] Joseph Banks quoted on http://www.70south.com 18/10/01.

[12] to the globalizing vision of satellites that leads directly to the RADARSAT map. In 1997 (and again in 2000) the first complete satellite map of Antarctica was produced in America by remote sensing.[187] With the Amundsen-Scott South Pole station in place[188] and a sign hung over the door that reads, *'United States welcomes you to the South Pole'*, the desire for bodily and aerial possession of the landscape has now been obtained. American activities in the Antarctic increasingly occupying the interior,[189] spiralling out from the mythological centre of the Pole across the entire continent - offering on paper at least, a document of settlement [11]. Dispensing with the horizon,[190] the US strategic aim has been for a higher and higher viewpoint, to find a new virtual frontier of Antarctica out of place. Ironically, as US mapping reached far into space, Antarctic remained unmapped by remote sensing until 1997 because of climatic conditions.

As a remainder to Modernity's incomplete project of global mapping, Antarctica can be framed within its utopic dreams and failed horizons in the contemporary era. The increasing cost of progress across the globe came to rest in Antarctica - both as the furthest point of terrestrial inhabitations and as an environment in which they were given greatest visibility - from the stores of scientific information in ice cores to the location of the ozone *'hole at the pole'*. As the technological eye of the RADARSAT probed into Antarctic space, it was to reveal the effects of global warming and thus visibly located Antarctica as the dramatic site of these failed narratives of unlimited industrial production. As a global ordering, this ecological disaster narrative has folded into it, utopic fantasies of its own, displacing disaster from western inhabitations through a spatialising operation - so that the 'event' of global warming becomes a global, but not a local, event.

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[186] A detournment of the Albatrosses view was performed by GP outside the CCAMLR (Convention for the Conservation of Marine and Living Resources) Annual Meeting in Hobart, December 2001, when dead albatrosses were spread out in front of the delegate's coach to protest at the near extinction of many Albatross species through longline fishing for Patagonian Toothfish. The rationale for the 2002 GP voyage to the Southern Ocean was to photograph drowned Albatross' on fishing lines to force a public debate on Southern Ocean fisheries.

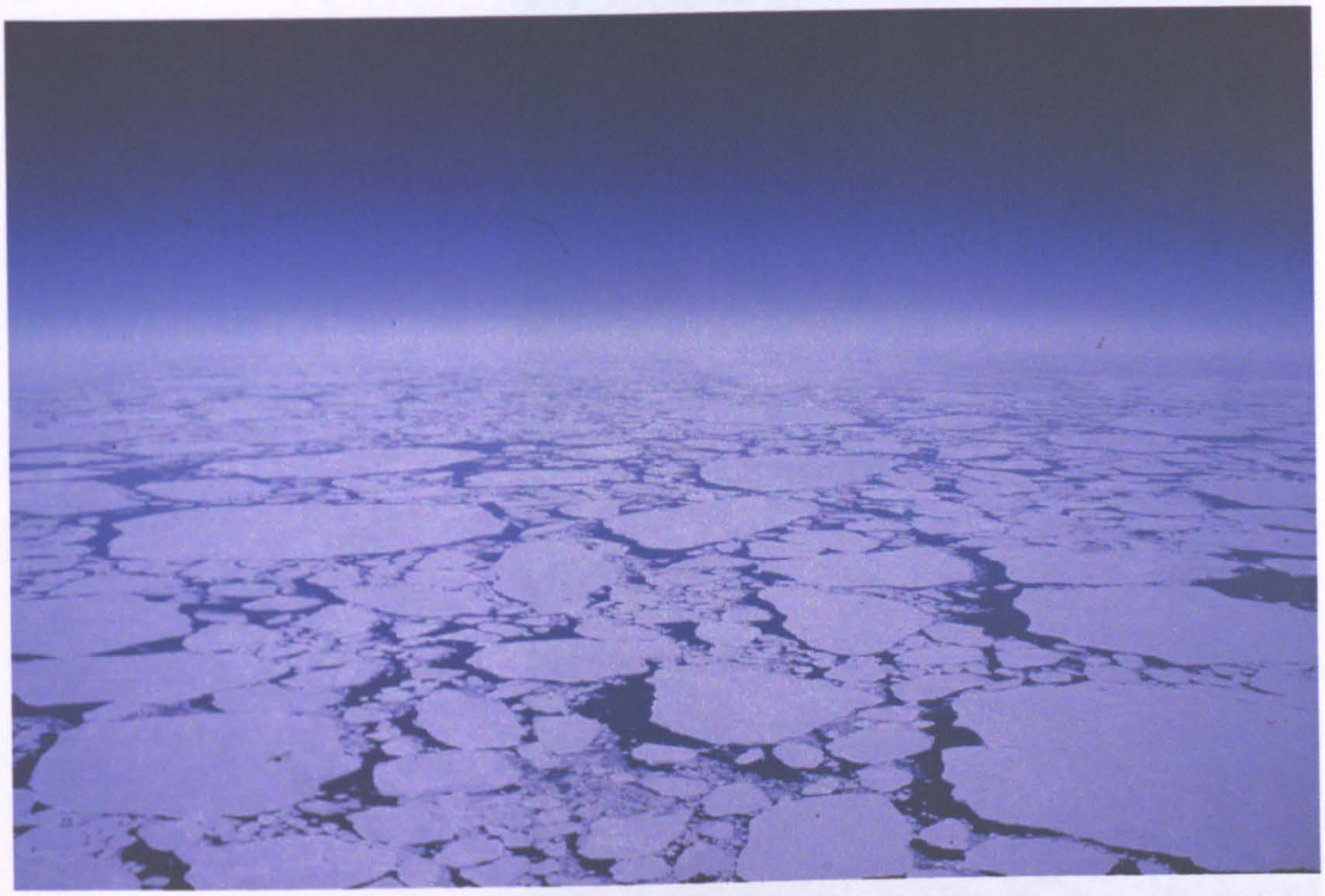
[187] 'This 'Antarctic Mode' provides capability for the first time of nearly instantaneous, high-resolution views of the entirety of Antarctica. The dates of the first Antarctic Mapping Mission (AMM-1) was 9 September - 20 October 1997. The second, AMM-2, 3 September - 17 November, 2000. (Source: http://www.svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/vis.11.12.2000).

[188] South Pole station was created under the programme of research carried out during the IGY, and it was re-build and enlarged in 1999/00.

[189] Bases in Antarctica from the first permanent settlements at Discovery Point, Cape Evans and Cape Royds during the 'heroic era' have been constructed at the continental margin, until the development of flight technologies allowed for the possibility of permanent settlement in the interior.

[190] Louis Marin comments, "The use of the term horizon is attested from the second half of the 13th century. At first the word signified 'limit', the limit of the gaze, the limit of the sky and earth... 'horizon' which originally meant limit, the power of circumscribing a place, came to mean immensity, infinity - such as the limitless horizon of the ocean... Then beyond the horizon, in the imagination, appear Utopias..." The dispensing of the horizon that had framed the US expansion in the West, inverts the limits of perception into utopic fantasy. Louis Marin, "The Frontiers of Utopia" in Krishan Kumar & Stephen Bann eds. *Utopias and the Millennium*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1993), 7,813.

Plate 11



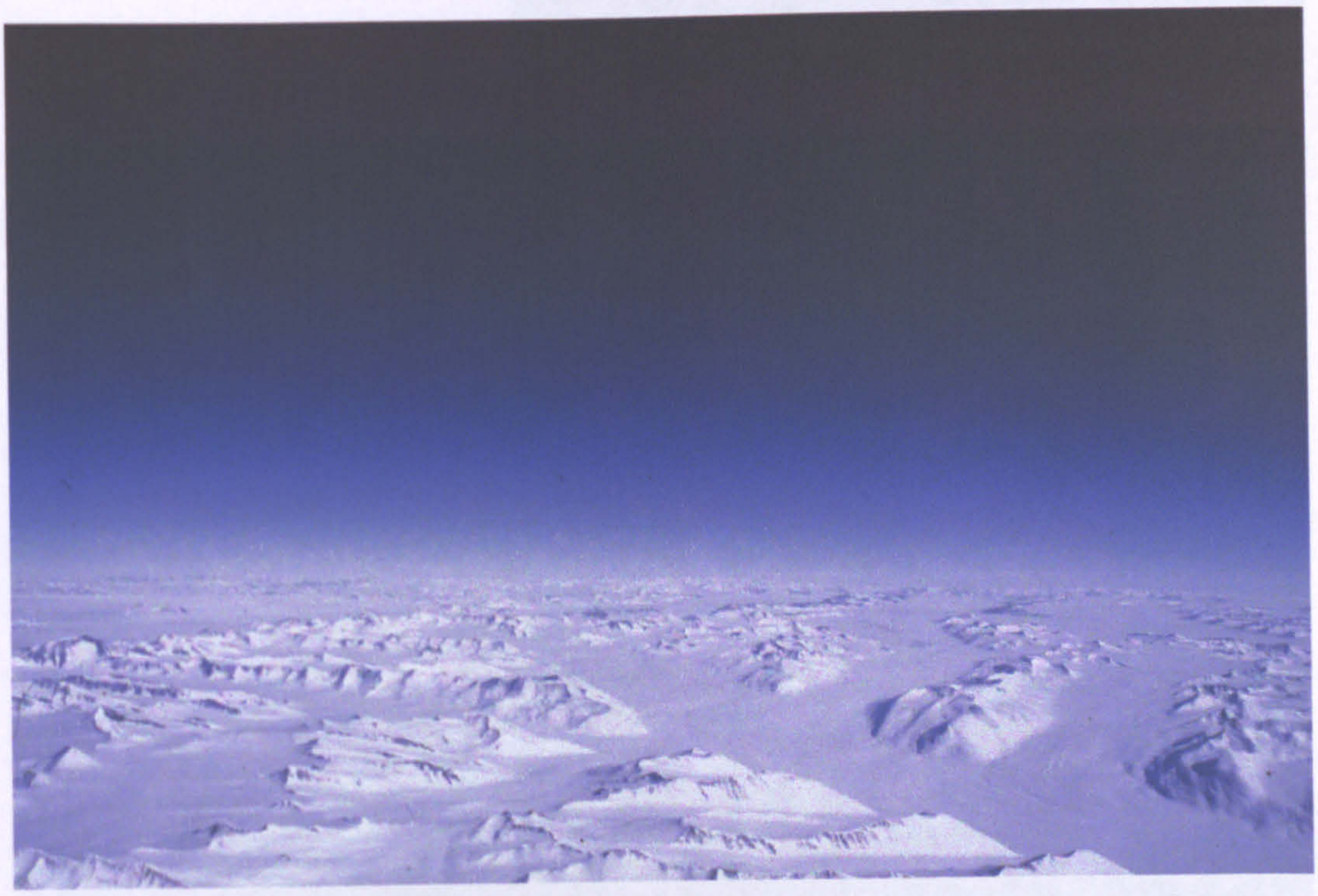


Plate 12

Plate 13

As Antarctica was environmentally marked by Modernity's progress, as the last blank space on the map, it simultaneously provided an imaginary respite from the problems of disorder.[191] David Trotter[192] makes a convincing argument for modernism's paranoia as the recognition of the problem of disorder, which he sees as *trauma theories* written against a world of increasing chaos. Viewed as a trauma theory, Antarctica's ordering seemed to offer a last space of uncomplicated representation, as spaces of representation fracturing in Europe at the beginning of the new century.[193] As a phantasm of the furthest terrestrial territory, Antarctica offered a visualisation of space that could be viewed as symptomatic of anxieties over increasing closure of space. In the RADARSAT map, a similar anxiety can be witnessed, over a space unenclosed by the US imperial eye, a space that has until 1997 thwarted the project of planetary enclosure. The ideological and technological imperatives of US mappings, and the connection to US concerns over military superiority, can be seen to inhabit such representational desire. More pragmatically, Antarctica was the 'awkward' testing ground for new technologies to be used in outer space.

The RADARSAT eye finds a frontier, occupying the reaches of space to generate a vision of place. And directing a dual colonizing gaze toward both Antarctica and outer space. So rather than move the tactics of Empire from Antarctica to outer space, the achievement has been to occupy both simultaneously, neatly joining the US's concerns for Antarctica as a model for space. Virilio comments that this cybernetics of the heavens directly descends from the history of the military line of aim - a line of vision that strategically and symbolically delineates a territory.[194] Yet, there is no simple scopic regime that denotes this territory. As the technical eye of RADARSAT beamed the images of satellite surveillance to the laboratory of the Byrd[195] Polar Research Centre in Ohio State University, the vision it takes of Antarctica operates in a number of scopic regimes. By examining the complexities and inflections of the

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[191] Modernities' order complexes are gendered masculine: a paranoia that demanded a female abjection (Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies I & II* Trans. Stephen Conway, Eric Carter & Chris Turner (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, 1988), predominately articulated in the representational practice and space of landscape. Echoing the sexualisation and genderisation argued by Rose as an intrinsic part of geographical practice, the virgin territory of the South unequivocally provided an alternative site for the narrative of exclusively masculine orderings uncomplicated by natives or women (Rose 1993, 7). Denis Cosgrove notes, "Like the summits of the World's great mountain ranges, the "purity" of the white, empty Polar Regions acted as imaginative opposites to equatorial "hearts of darkness". Devoid of disturbing human presence, they were silent stages for the performance of white manhood" Cosgrove 2001, 217.

[192] David Trotter, *Paranoid Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001).

[193] European representation space underwent tremendous conceptual changes in response to industrialisation and global wars. The extreme point of this was Futurism and Cubism, which broke the representational planes of perspective and realism. Cubism paved the way for the conceptual art project, which took the destruction of the representational plane to its logical terminus in the dematerialisation of the art object.

[194] Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema, The logistics of Perception* Trans. Patrick Camiller London: Verso, 1989), 2.

[195] The American Richard Byrd was the pioneer of flight in Antarctica, producing the first aerial maps of the continent achieving the mythologized 'albatrosses' view'; but again at the height (of what was then) technological achievement Byrd's utopian, heavenward propensity was strong, he reflected, "Here is a door ajar through which one may escape a little way and for a short time out of our little world, from the noise and chaos of civilisation into the silence and harmony of the cosmos and for a moment be part of it," quoted in Rachael Weiss, *Imaging Antarctica*, (Boston Massachusetts: Nordico Polarities Publication, 1986), 12.

visual regimes that produce the map in the popular culture site of the NASA website, in American visual culture, in global scientific visualisation, I will show how the politics of visualising place are intractable from the histories of the media in which they are embedded. Within the differing medias that characterise the conditions of viewing are different mythologies of time, that as Kittler argued, "are no longer history."[196] As new technologies significantly depart from traditional medias in their narratives of time, they also build upon existing mythologies of landscape to visualise virtual places.[197] In order to situate the RADARSAT map in an historical American mythology of landscape, I will briefly discuss Antarctica's ordering in American visual culture.

Ordering Antarctica in the American imagination: *from cold war to global warming*

In the lexicon of the American cultural imagination the Antarctic has a significant, albeit marginal, historical place, unlike the Arctic (a clearly "productive" landscape of capital). In 1837, Jeremiah N. Reynolds[198] fantasised that, Americans should "circle the globe within the Antarctic circle, and attain the Pole itself; yea, to cast anchor on that point where all the meridians terminate, where our eagle and star spangled banner may be unfurled and planted, and left to wave on the axis of the earth itself!"[199] At work here, in the desire to 'circle the globe' is a homogenising drive of US Antarctic policy that will find its expression, finally, but not irrefutably in the RADARSAT map.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Antarctica remained at the margin of US interest, as an imperial and literary spatiality, until the shifting politics of concern, from the cold war to global warming, saw a change in America's strategic interests in Antarctica. The military imperatives of spy satellites that had mapped and *hidden in* Antarctic space in the mid 1970s and early 1980s neatly translated into new images for the environmental frontier that was being delineated in the Antarctic post-Protocol and in domestic American politics. This shift represents not just a change in political imperatives, but also a change in how the visual politics of Antarctica were managed, from the secrecy of the cold war period to the confident deployment of the technologies of visibility in the mapping of environments. The Clinton administration brought Antarctica in from the cold periphery. On 15 September 1999, the President delivered a speech entitled, *Protecting Antarctic and the Global Environment* at the International Antarctic Centre, New Zealand, to coincide with the declassification of modified

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[196] Kittler 1999, 115.

[197] While occupation of the landmass has accelerated relatively slowly, in comparison, the visible and invisible communication networks have rapidly increased in the form of web-cams at the South Pole, satellite mapping and 'real-time' images.

[198] Reynolds had previously been a strong supporter of Symmes Hollow Earth Theory, but in his fantasy, he takes command of the hole at the pole, and rather than conceive of it as an edge, he sees it as a globalising axis.

[199] Quoted in Lenz 1995, 120-121.

satellite images of the Dry Valleys (from the cold war era) in order to 'help scientists measure environmental fluctuations'.

The release of the satellite images connects very clearly the shifting territory of the technologies of war to the territories of environmentalism: the hidden gaze of surveillance becomes the scrutinising gaze of new geographies of fear. As the BAS headline declared, "Satellite spies on doomed Antarctic ice shelf".[200] The decision to make these images available coincided with the increased desire for America, to be seen as an environmental steward in Antarctica, reflecting a husbandry approach to 'wilderness', rather than an overtly colonial model of settlement. Unlike the claimant states in the Antarctic, US Antarctic policy has been characterised by an ambiguous approach towards ownership claims, as Christopher Joyner & Ethel Theis identify,

> The ingenious solution of "freezing" claims to territory has served U.S. Antarctic interests well. By removing sovereignty as an issue, the United States was relieved of its own sovereignty dilemma. This also permitted the United States unrestricted access to the entire continent.[201]

So whereas claimant states are constantly in the process of defending the cultural and physical possession of their self-designated sectors, the U.S. has freely wandered across the Antarctic, occupying its centre and its peripheries (America's occupation of the South Pole symbolically, if not strategically provides a continuous territorial claim). As Joyner & Theis note, "A claim could therefore diminish American freedom to move and establish bases anywhere on the continent."[202] As is the case with areas designated under the Common Heritage of Man principle, in reality, dominance is secured by the largest financial and logistical investment:

> From the late 1920's to the time of the signing of the AT, the US flew more planes, mapped and photographed more territory, and sent more expeditions to Antarctica than any other state.[203]

Simply by dominance in the air and on the ground, and the largest investment in cultural activities, such as the Artists and Writers Program, the US seemed to achieve the much desired, homogeneity to their global reach. The accumulation of information, alongside a physical and virtual presence in the landscape secured ascendancy. The implicit dominance of the US as a controlling interest means that there was no need to declare it as such.

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[200] BAS Press Release, 18 September 1999.
[201] Christopher C. Joyner & Ethel R. Theis, *Eagle Over The Ice, The U.S. in the Antarctic* (Hanover & London: Univ. Press of New England, 1997), 37.
[202] Ibid., 40.
[203] Ibid., 225.

What characterised this period of the Clinton and Gore administration (1993-2000) is not only the clear links that they made between global warming[204] and the changing Antarctic environment, but their personal interests in the Antarctic and a commitment to financially investing in that future.[205] Clinton, in his speech at the Antarctic Centre expresses his disappointment that 'he was not able to fulfil a lifelong desire to go to Antarctica.' Al Gore, in his book, *Earth in the Balance* locates his personal experience firmly in an American cultural conception of the world's geography,

> At the bottom of the earth... I stood in the unbelievable coldness and talked with a scientist... about the tunnel he was digging through time... At the bottom of the world, two continents away from Washington DC, even a small reduction in one countries emissions had changed the amount of pollution found in the remotest and least accessible place on earth.[206]

The world which Gore imagines is reconfigured around a US military gaze; its plastic geography, moulded around a conception of the reach of US power, from the centre (Washington DC) to the bottom of the world, and back. Although this belies a model of cold war notions of near and far, it also firmly connects a line between US environmental policy (the Clean Air Act, in this case) and environmental effect; a line that was to be erased by the proceding administration of George W Bush.

The aesthetics of destruction

In the context of the non-ratification of The Kyoto climate change agreements, the RADARSAT map, as the product of American mapping technologies, presents a troubling visual representation of disintegrating Antarctic environments at a time when industrialised America is set to increase its CO_2 emissions.[207] The image of fracturing of ice is a popular visual signifier for global warming that makes explicit the connection between CO_2 consumption and the destruction of polar environments.[208] As one image of melting ice, imaginatively

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[204] "'The overwhelming consensus of world scientific opinion is that greenhouse gases from human activity are raising the Earth's temperature in a rapid and unsustainable way' the president said." ANZ Press Release 14 September 1999.

[205] President Clinton requested an increase in funds for the NSF for 2001 from $675 million to $4.75 billion, $136 million of this was for research into biocomplexity in the environment, including Antarctica research. (Source: http://www.enn.com/enn-news-archive/2000/02/02162000/nsfunds_10058.asp 14/09/99).

[206] Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance* (London: Earthscan Publications, 1992), 21.

[207] The Kyoto Protocol 1997 set targets and a timetable for 38 nations to control emissions of greenhouse gases (predominately CO_2). Rather than reduce CO_2 output the US has raised its emission about 12% over 1990 levels and is on track to rise another 10% by 2008 (Source: D. G. Victor, *The Collapse of the Kyoto Protocol*, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000).

[208] Although the connection between global warming and melting ice sheets is contested, not least by those with substantial interests in fossil fuel, scientific consensus does exist on global warming. One of the reasons for such a polarised public understanding of the problem has been blamed on unbalanced media coverage, "The effect of such coverage may be to encourage the view that no scientific consensus exists on global warming; to position global warming as a hypothesis rather than fact, even though the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) has declared there to be a 'discernible human influence on the climate system'" (Source: Peter Newell's discussion of the 'media constructions of global warming' in *Climate for Change, Non-State Actors and the Global Politics of the Greenhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), 82. The basic document of the IPCC also states that

chases another, the political stance of the US[209] over climate control ironically re-produces Antarctica as isolated and remote from human impact, in precisely the same way as the map's aesthetics collude to produce a decontextualised environment.

Conceptualising the RADARSAT map within the rhetoric of an 'aesthetics of destruction' ties the map firmly to the visual technologies of war that proceed this visual simulation and the contemporary politics of global warming.[210] American visual culture has relentlessly engaged in the spectacle of destruction in all areas of cultural and military production, characterising the language of both the cold war and contemporary period. As Baudrillard and Virilio have argued, America's self identity is intimately bound up in the rhetoric of the cinematic, ultimately imagistic and dramatic (a closeness that the events of September 11th 2001 seem powerfully to confirm). Contextualising the map within a cinematic aesthetics of destruction elucidates on the topologies of American landscape narratives that the map builds upon (and competes with) as an image circulating in mass media.

Viewed on the NASA web site, the fragmentation of the Larsen B ice shelf[211] (3,250km^2) over a 35-day period unfolds within the dynamics of movie-time. One can experience the compression of the reality of time and space, within this simulation, in which the predominant narration becomes about witnessing the spectacle of change. The accelerated narratives about Antarctica and its imagined place in time invoke American cinema's insistence on a "landscape of events".[212] Similar to a plethora of American disaster movies, the emphasis is on the dénouement: when disaster strikes. As the accompanying text directs – the 'main collapse can be seen in the last scenes'. Antarctica, the sublime sign of the beginning of time, of geological origins, is visualised as fragmenting, heralding the break up of an estimated

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"Average sea level is expected to rise as a result of thermal expansion of the oceans and the melting of glaciers and ice sheets" Tor Ragnar Gerholm ed. *Climate Policy after Kyoto* (IPCC's Basic Documents 2.8, Multi-Science 1999).

[209] Internationally the Bush administration has refused to sign up to the agreed measures of the Kyoto Protocol and has further shunned attempts at global environmental management by refusal to attend the Earth Summit in South Africa (26th August 2002). Locally, in the Ross Sea region, Antarctica, the US refused to participate with the New Zealand 'Ross Sea Region State of the Environment Report' 2001 (the first comprehensive environmental report for this region of the Antarctica), which includes within its boundaries the largest human settlement (and thus human impact) in Antarctica; McMurdo, (the US station).

[210] Despite the extensive usage of images by environmental campaigners, John Miller comments that in a desire to gain the widest possible acceptance the environmental community have "decided that appeals to aesthetics are unscientific", preferring to advance scientific and economic arguments for environmental protection rather than "to recognise the legitimacy of aesthetics." In contrast, Miller argues that an aesthetics sense is the fundamental "means to bridge the conceptual and emotional gap between the natural and the manmade." John Miller *Egotopia, Narcissism and the New American Landscape* (Tuscaloosa & London: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1997), 137, 145.

[211] The main collapse of the Larsen B ice shelf was visualised between the 31 January - 7 March 2000, about 3,250km^2 of ice shelf disintegrated over a 35 day period, displacing an estimated 720 billion tons of ice that is thought to have existed since the end of the last major glaciation 12,000 years ago. During the last 50 years the Antarctic Peninsula has warmed by 2.5°C, much faster than mean global warming. One response has been the retreat of five ice shelves. (Source: BAS Press Release 19 March 2002 No. 5/2002).

[212] Paul Virilio, *A Landscape of Events* Trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press, 2000)

12,000 years of stability; conceptually signalling the end of time through ecological catastrophe.

Temporally and contextually, the image is dislocated to become an *event* for a moment's entertainment that can be replayed over and over again in senseless repetition, unlike the corresponding reality of the simulation. Repetition has two modalities, it offers the psychic fantasy of starting over and assuages terror through the banality of such repeatability. This neutralises the power of destruction as a psychological imperative to act. In this simulation, Antarctica is envisaged as an aesthetic space of the cinematic: both as the nemesis of American culture and as the extension of its fantasies about time, and the end games of time.

As still images, the RADARSAT maps become fragments of the Antarctic *body*; fetishistic movie stills of the moment of destruction. The maps engage with the proto-filmic in the partiality of images taken on sweeps of the landscape, and then electronically 'sewn together' to be cast into the fiction of one time. Locating the image within American visual culture, Warhol's *Disaster series* calls forth a fascination with death and aesthetics of destruction that had been building in America in the 1950s and 1960s. Warhol's repetition of the *virtually the same* casts us into a relationship with the filmic; the image as *mechanical reproduction* makes it not a representation, but a still, an image within an imaginary form inherently embedded in the machines movement of time.

Warhol's images of car crashes [10a], made at the height of the Cold War, suggest an emergent obsession in the American popular culture with the *event* and its documentation. The series, whose aesthetic appearance the RADARSAT map echoes, indicates the estrangement of events and their representation in the visual culture of the *catastrophe*. The single event, documented as the same again, becomes one event happening over and over - the iceberg as signifier of environmental disaster - or as one BAS headline reads, "The collapse of the... ice shelf is the latest drama in a region of Antarctica that has experienced unprecedented warming over the last 50 years."[213] Like Benjamin's angel of history, "he sees a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage."[214] Imaginatively the visual memory of photographs of breaking ice, and warnings over global warming, collide together into the spectacle of destruction: Antarctica as an *object tragedy*. And as Virilio comments, "The audience itself no longer knows whether the ruins are actually there, whether the landscape is not merely simulated in kaleidoscopic images of general destruction."[215]

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[213] BAS Press Release 19 March 2002 No. 5/2002
[214] Benjamin 1992, 259.
[215] Virilio 1989, 49.

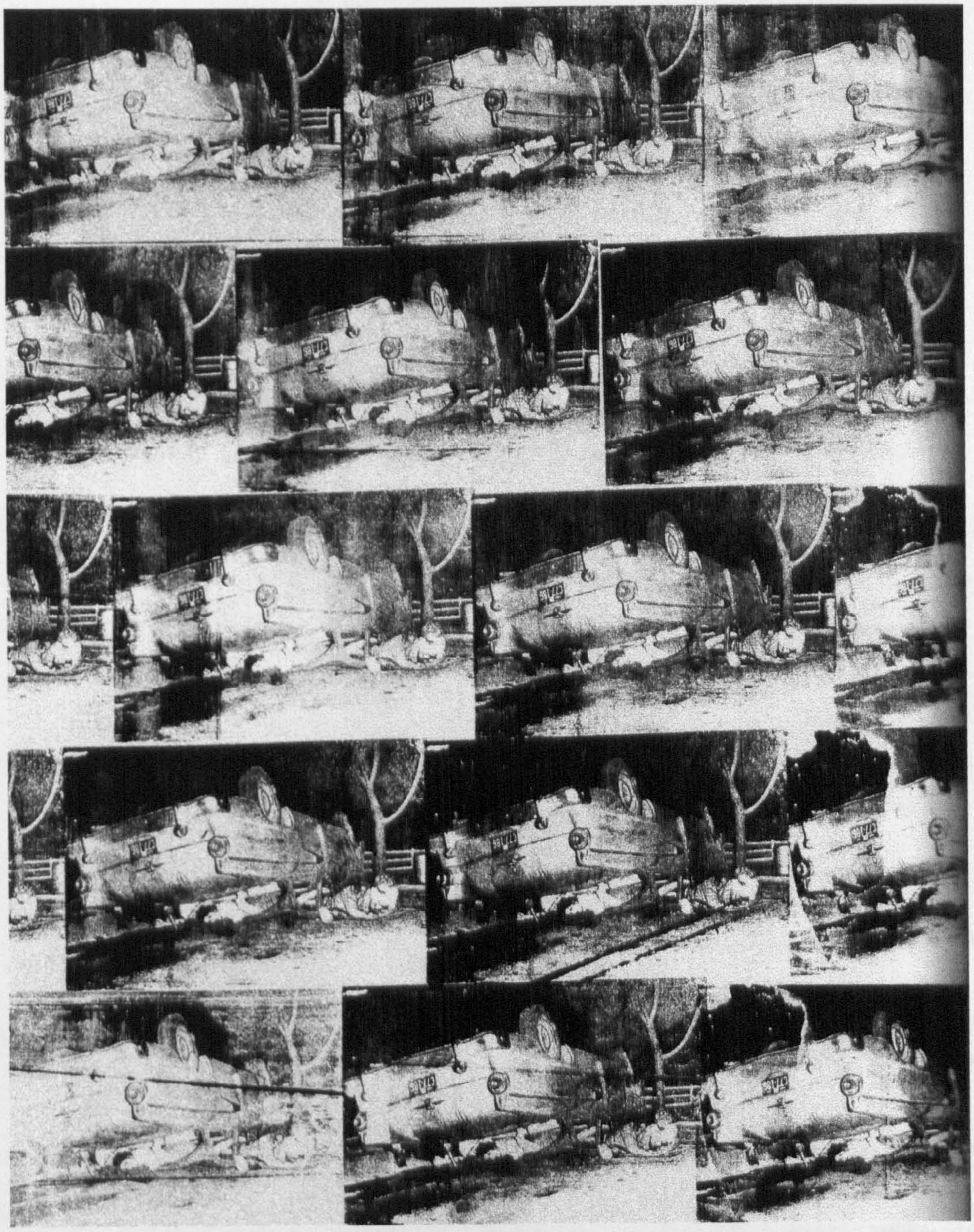

Plate 10A

With ecological destruction as an event marking the fall of modernity, the assumptions about the nature of historical time are most evident: Antarctica as the limit of modernity's progress and modernity as no progress - only destruction. Wherein, historical progress reveals itself to be a progress only of change. Benjamin defines the extreme moment of the fascist aesthetic as when, "self alienation has reached such a degree that it is capable of experiencing its own destruction as an aesthetic enjoyment of the highest order."[216] Benjamin highlights the potential risks that culture runs when it aestheticises politics. As Neil Leach argues,

> It is not simply that aesthetics may dress up an unsavoury political agenda and turn it into an intoxicating spectacle. Rather, with aestheticization a social and political displacement occurs whereby ethical concerns are replaced by aesthetical ones. A political agenda is judged, therefore, not according to its intrinsic ethical status but according to the appeal of its outward appearance.[217]

The displacement of ethical concerns for aesthetical ones through aestheticisation, operate in the event of the RADARSAT map - akin to Warhol's concern with the surface and appearance of media events that structure the subject's relation to the image. As the simulation of the event of the *Larsen B* collapse conspires to produce Antarctica as the site in the spectacle of global warming, it is relatively absent as an environment that exists within a contemporary economy of American environmental practice. Primarily, Antarctica is cast as an aesthetic image before it is an environmental space. The vision of the technical optic is thus haunted by a narcissistic drive to regard destruction and to celebrate this as aesthetic pleasure. The pleasure is heightened by two kinds of distancing: that which the technology affords by reproducing familiar disaster narratives and the geographical distance of placing disaster in Antarctica. Such a visual space, as Virilio writes, "operates within the space of an entirely visualised geographical reality."[218]

The ambiguous collusion of aesthetic imagery and environmental politics is no more evident than in the concluding remarks of Clinton's speech;

> It is a bridge to our future and a window on our past... Let us vow, in this place of first light, to act in the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty, to conquer the new challenges that face us in the new millennium.[219]

Clinton's imagery echoes early visual conceits that imagined the unknown - which was often transmuted into the Antarctic - as a symbolic arch of experience to the 'untravelled world', just as the RADARSAT imagined a 'new window' on the Antarctic continent. Within this conceit, Antarctica is imagined as *a place in time* as much as a geographical place: a

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[216] Benjamin 1992, 242.
[217] Neil Leach, *The Anaesthetics of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1999), 19.
[218] Paul Virilio, *Polar Inertia* (London: Sage, 1996), 16.
[219] Clinton, http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/antarctic/clinton/start.htm 11/99

temporal bridge into the future and onto the past. Clinton thus clearly ties the declassified satellite images with the *symbolic production of truth*, the visuality of the technological eye seen as the guarantor of the real, and thus invested with its symbolic weight. The 'untravelled world' is aligned with visual darkness, and Clinton urges the illumination of the images to prompt a 'bridge' to positive action. The Christian symbolism of a place of 'first light' is connected to the enabling vision of the US gaze into the unknown. Thus, Clinton re-invests the potency of the imaginary spaces of Antarctica, drawing together the technological and the poetical into an idea of the *technological sublime*. The technological sublime is characterised by a dispassionate aesthetic engagement with mass destruction, rather than the possibility of the subject's destruction that characterises the Kantian sublime. Post Kant - the technological sublime drew together the traditional aspects of awe and elevation with the rationality of a 'mathematical sublime'. Awe in nature, was replaced by awe in technological nature - a technology that is productive of its own nature. As such, global warming has a technological sublimity, as it is the event of a weather created through technological expansion - viewed as an aesthetic event generated by technologies of vision.

Topologies of surface

The RADARSAT map is probably one of the most abstract images of Antarctica ever produced, fearfully large and 'unearthly' in its cool colouration, but reassuringly contained within the recognisable dimensions of conventional mapping techniques. Its aesthetics mimic the fetishisation of surface that was of concern to the American Abstract Expressionist school - layers of surface rendered to build the depth of a complete landscape. Scientific visualisation uses what are called isosurfaces, which means that everything on the surface has the same value (like isobars). The surfaces are given qualities borrowed from things we are familiar with (transparent/plastic/sensual) and use ambient and direct light to create regimes of viewing - to conform to ideas of what already mythologized landscapes look like (in the case of the Mars images - the North American landscape).

The uniformity of the satellite vision and the aesthetics of scientific visualisation render plastic and homogenize the living skin of Antarctica's surface - as one imagines the liquid ice overflowing the gaps in the Transantarctic Mountains, the polar plateau as the great fountain of ice. In an age when the dynamics of ice flow and the constantly changing shape of Antarctica's borders are well known, if not fully understood, the impetus to promote a stable view of these shifting boundaries offers a nostalgic search for a coherent unity of vision - the map consists of over 4000 images electronically sewn together to produce the map in one

time. As Klaus Theweleit[220] argues in his book *Male Fantasies*, this desire for a perfect, hard, uniform certainty of surface that resists 'flow' and 'streams', parallels the aesthetics of fascism. The US vision transcended the lines of claimant states across the surface of Antarctica, thereby producing the *territory* as 'whole'. This aesthetic effects a 'clearing out of space' for the American imagination by erasing human presence and furnishing investment in another *terra incognita* unmarked by human activities.[221] Thus, the map enacts the transparent violence of enclosure and the simultaneous opening up of the territory.

In the RADARSAT map, Antarctica floats in a sea of darkness presenting its sharp boundaries against the flat space of the unknown, refuting the oceanic, and replacing it with a technological fantasy of its own. The void of the blank colour – that is an informational black spot - provides a lack of geographical context. The position of elevation means that the map does not mimic the eye, revealing the assumption that our prosthetic sight has become so comfortable that such an embodied space is symbolically redundant. At the same time, this perceived technical/scientific impartiality is propelled by a very human desire to penetrate a territory beyond corporeal exploration. One of the stated aims of the RADARSAT map was "to simply expand our ability to explore the vast, remote, and often beautiful, southernmost continent"[222] - evidence that there is an apparent reluctance to give up the romantic dimensions of *terra incognita* even at the height of its apparent technological mastery.[223]

The role of unknown space can be seen as metonymic of the shifting horizon on the globe - an elusive and challenging horizon of meaning, and its limits. By completing the global map we in effect, turf out the angels and signal the limits of our imaginative *reach*. As Baudrillard argues, "Now, the phantasm of the ends of the earth is a phantasm of the territory having some extreme furthest point – the symbol of a possible end and of the outer reaches of thought."[224] However, what the visual technologies of satellite mapping have achieved is not the destruction of those imaginative spaces, but their recasting, and thus, reinvestment, in the technological sublime. What may well see the eventual destruction of the *terra incognita* is the erasure (that is also amnesia) that accompanies such an imaginative projection; by removing Antarctica from the concept of a global ecosystem, by insisting on its 'otherness' in

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[220] Theweleit 1987, 249.

[221] For a discussion on 'human erasure' in landscape see Jonathan Bordo's discussion on portraying 'wilderness' in his essay, "Picture and Witness at the Site of Wilderness" in Mitchell 1994, 292-294. And Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* (London: Routledge, 1992),125., where she argues that erasure of the human creates an empty place/space *a priori* for Imperial imaginings, "a landscape imbued with social fantasies... all projected onto the non-human world".

[222] 'The Goal' of AMM1, (Source: http://polarmet.mps.ohio-state.edu/radarsat/radarsat.html 17/07/01)

[223] Lyotard "has argued that aesthetics is the transgressive realm where libidinal desires remain uncontained and so reveals the limitations of an ordering theory." David Carroll *Paraesthetics: Foucault/Lyotard/Derrida* (New York & London: Methuen, 1987), 24.

[224] Jean Baudrillard, *Screened Out* Trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso 2002), 129.

time and in space; it is visually and conceptually removed from the harm of our activities elsewhere on the planet. Whereas the angels traditionally signalled an unknowable but heavenly place at the edge of maps, *contemporary terra incognitae's* signal an artful distancing, productive of topographies of absence of place - which science visualisation imagines across.

The "imaginary of a time, the cinema of a society."[225]

The RADARSAT map presents a complicated vision: a territory that opens its surface for the investiture of imaginary projections, but is simultaneously inexhaustibly occupied by the disembodied optic of American technology. Placing the RADARSAT map in its visual chronogeography reveals no simple hegemony of visual regimes. Rather, competitive and even parasitical histories of visualisation emerge in which the hierarchies of visual regimes are directly relational to the possession and settlement of Antarctica, as a place for the production of particular knowledges.

The NASA-RADARSAT technological machine carried an image of Antarctica into a realm of factitious topology, in which the surface of the physical landscape is directly present in one time - as an 'event' and a globally circulated image. And thus, it casts out any relation to landscape's own systems of duration. Upon this structure, science *presents* itself as an active agent in vision. Rather than debunking the mythic time of *terra incognita*, this scientific visualisation builds upon it as it erases, not only through its aesthetic production (the sublime surface), but also through the *availability* and narrative of new technology to present itself actively in time (global visibility). As speed is a metaphor identified with modernity's progress, scientific visualisation naturalises the political territory of Antarctica as a *Continent* for Science through its production of frontier knowledges. As Paul Virilio writes, "technological space... is not a geographical space, but a space of time." It is a space with a history, "that is the product of representations."[226] The global warming disaster narrative mobilised in the RADARSAT 'movie' map builds on the *always-there* narrative for its dénouement. This is, as Doreen Massey has commented, "in effect, to turn space into time, geographical difference into historic sequence."[227]

These constructions of Antarctica *in time* may be viewed as ideological, in the way that Barthes speaks of ideology as the, "imaginary of a time, the cinema of a society."[228] The imaginary of terra incognita is inflected through the image, yet, as I have argued, it is not

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[225] Barthes quoted in Burgin 1996, 264.
[226] Paul Virilio quoted in Burgin 1996, 43-44.
[227] Doreen Massey "Some Times of Space" in *Olafur Eliasson The Weather Project*, (London: Tate, 2003), 114.
[228] Barthes quoted in Burgin 1996, 264.

inscribed in the image as a stable ideological meaning, but through the image's geopolitical moment. The movement of images from one context to another makes it impossible to view the map as an ideological product, but as it enters specific political contexts, the map can take on an ideological role. As place becomes predominantly marked as a moment in time, it also runs the risk of becoming a virtuality that allows, and perhaps even promotes a reckless abuse of the ecological environments. The geopolitical moment of the RADARSAT map suggests that the capacity to bring destruction into view is where power is located, not in the site that it is cast off.

Thus, the RADARSAT map offers only a partial vision of the technological landscape it travels in - as Antarctica is cast into oceanic space, these supports are erased. This erasure is enacted at an aesthetic level, and by bringing the image into a fictional one time (that will be animated into another fantasy of movie-time). Thus, time is artificially stabilised in sweeps of the landscape - a modern day 'mapping under sail' - then it is collaged into a globalised image (a one time available instantaneously everywhere); the seams neatly erased. Once the image enters the NASA website it is mobilised into *real time*. As each image of Antarctica floats in its own reality - an electronic pulse without dimensions - remote from place, it calls forth the need to recognise the *isolating potential* within new technologies, of *time* and of *space*. The technological inhabitations that the RADARSAT map affords contemporaneously, exercise a particular American narrative, displaced onto the Antarctic. The technological form, creating discontinuous realities of place, doubles this displacement of narrative over place.[229]

Hal Foster makes a convincing argument for the inseparability of the space of representation and effect of representation in his essay *Death in America*. Talking about Warhol's *Death and Disaster* series, he remarks that,

> in a spectacular society the mass subject often appears as effect of the mass media (the newspaper, the radio), or of a catastrophic failure of technology (the plane crash), or, more precisely, of both (the news of such a catastrophic failure). ... reports of disastrous death like *129 Die* is a primary way that mass subjectivity is made.[230]

Foster's point is that the forms of visuality within particular visual technologies distinctly create the space and dimensions in which we recognise our own identities. Subjectivity produced as an *effect* of technology is precisely what Benjamin urges sensitivity toward, in order that we may recognise, and then loosen those power relations that locate us as subjects - rather than

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[229] The discontinuity of what may be called physical space and virtual spaces of engagement is not a new phenomena, but the *acceleration* of those fractures in new technologies are productive of untenable crystalline formations.

[230] Hal Foster, "Death in America" in *October, The Second Decade, 1986-1996* eds. Rosalind Krauss et al. (Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 365.

to become an affect of visual technologies' reproductive capabilities, of time and of the real. Where the subject is located by the shocks and time of the machine, the subject becomes an affect of the machines' reproductive faculty: reproduced as mass-socialised subject. By extension, the relation that we accord to place can become simply an effect of the representational faculty - Antarctica as a landscape of events in an American disaster movie.

The impact of disaster narratives is a question of scale and duration. The compression of a global atmospheric event into the temporality of a car crash renders the event fascinating, while the excitement stems from the *proximity to the real* event. The aesthetics of a simulation of disaster that is taken off the real, stimulates because of the reality of that destruction happening somewhere in an abstracted, but geographical space. The proximity between the real and the viewing of the real begins to collapse. Proximity to disaster, Freud argued was an unconscious sublimation of immortality that kept death other by representing it, and insulating ourselves against life. Life regains its fullness in proximity to death – but for this to happen spectatorship needs to be shaken. I have argued that the repeatability of the destruction is a seduction of the idea that we can begin again, and so defers the subject's time to that of technological capacity for producing the same again, without shaking spectatorship. The political implications of the image are deferred through the normalising repetition of the aesthetics of destruction, and thus productive of a numbing to the fear of destruction. The illusion of repeatability secures the deferral of a responsive political act - so the image holds sway over the object. Ironically, the most recent American disaster movie, *The Day after Tomorrow* begins on the Larsen B ice shelf. The disaster unfolds from the disintegration Antarctic ice shelf, displacing ice that destroys the Hollywood sign, thereby inverting the narrative of displacement within the medium that constructs it. The Antarctic landscape - where disaster strikes - is appropriately, a computer-generated image. This Hollywood event contrasts the map's "narrative failure" at a political level with its "narrative success" in the visual economy.

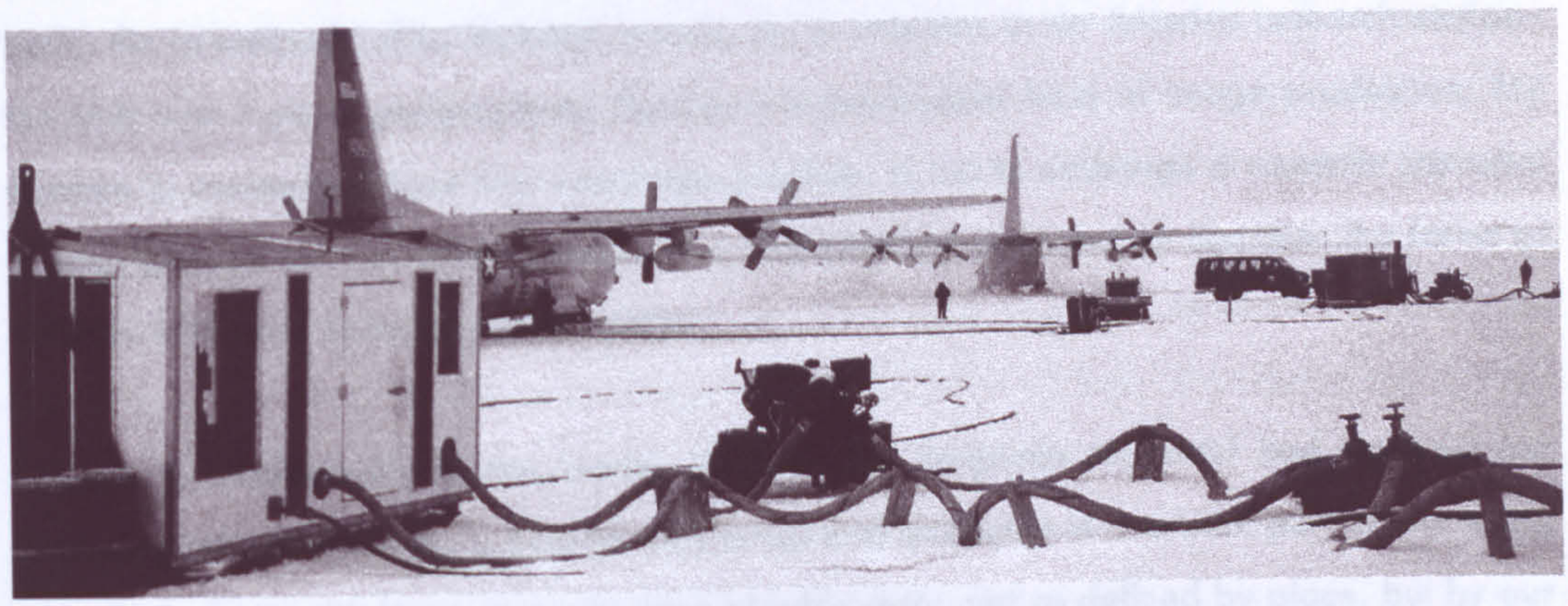

Plate 14

Part II Postscript

The waste and wasting of Antarctica, as a means to read human impacts in the environment, characterised both the image-topologies discussed. The waste story accumulated epic proportions in the short duration from the late 1980s until 2000. Ironically, as the waste stories accelerated to a global scale, the politics of mining in the Antarctic shifted to the micro scale of bioprospecting. The rubbish dumps that Greenpeace eagerly photographed, seem an untidy littering compared to the glacial proportions of the wasting ice sheets. This is in part, a change in the capacity of damage, but also in the capacity of media technologies to produce the *scale* of each event. The embodied eye was exchanged for the disembodied optic, the committed (often lifelong) activist, for a receptor in an America research station - the shift was from a *geographical field* to a *technological field* of image production. My concern in contrasting these two visual topographies, is not to exchange a romantic narrative of engagement, for the cold hardness of a disembodied view, but to consider the forms of *isolation* that occur in images of Antarctica.

Realigning aesthetically in the world, *through* (as Benjamin suggests) and *beyond* our technological entrapments, is part of awareness that aesthetics is a crucial part of our living ethically in the world. Here we might think of subjectivity, not as defined by place, but by our *passings through place*. If we recognise the socialisation of seeing, we must also recognise our complicity and responsibility within that seeing - what Bryson calls our "ethical *accountability*"[231] for the formation of political as well as symbolic orders. As destruction sharpens perceptions of responsibility towards place, the complexities of our inhabitations of new technology are often characterised by mistaken visibilities - where immediacy is mistaken for nearness and the acceleration of time has an ambiguous relation with accelerated pathways of perception.

Thinking about the duration of political involvement, beyond the immediately visible, is a means to understand the political *affect* of these images. The RADARSAT map brings the long view of environmental damage into view, to crystallize around the duration of an instantaneous event. Greenpeace's campaign brought a localised Antarctica into view, for a crucial ten years surrounding the rejection of CRAMRA and the establishment of the Protocol. The globalising view of the RADARSAT optic that swept the surface of the Antarctic landscape, offered a vision of glacial change, that has yet to prompt any feedback on the

[231] Bryson 1988, 107.

information it carries, particularly from its national producers. Currently it serves other agendas of attempting to homogenise a globalising vision of technological sublimity.

Greenpeace produced a binary topology of landscape, a 0-1 of environmental morality - a constant unremitting pulse through the entire Antarctic political event of stark choices, disaster or redemption. RADARSAT produced from the 0-1 of digital data landscape streams; a surface, for the politics of the environment and entertainment to be inscribed upon. Beyond these images that vicariously serve and their histories of surface and depth, there are questions about the nature of accumulation that the subjects who use media register when they inhabit the landscape (physically and virtually). The image has its own form of historic accumulation, as a technological form, and as cultural memory. Beyond this, there are other kinds of accumulation that are about how the practices and sites of engagement affect storage of landscape in excess of the optical range. The politics of Antarctic aesthetics are in the image, and in the landscape. The effects of site are not necessarily crucial to potential inhabitations of the spaces offered in the image, but it may well be a dimension of the *critical consciousness* that inhabits this proximity; that posits human duration over global communication. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this desire to inhabit what is seen was the historical legacy of the Greenpeace campaign, which undeniably prompted a vast increase in tourist numbers to the Antarctic.[232] It was to the many that were involved[233] in the NGO campaign (and are still involved), the Faustian deal that was made.

We might conclude that there is no historic topology of new technology, that the form of new media landscapes are elliptical, mixed up and weakly connected layers of time and meaning. The RADARSAT map dispenses with the limits of a horizon that have clouded the US optic to the ends of the earth, yet finds it again, in the abstract aesthetic qualities that exhibit an elliptical relation to the completion of a globalising project. Layers of time efface and erase the site that they touch with their satellite beams, as much as they may suggest connections with it. The Hollywood disaster narrative presumes a shared condition of time between Antarctica and Hollywood, in which landscape is reduced into the same temporality as a car crash. In this Antarctica is not only superseded by the technological form of its transmission, but by a globalising American cinematic narrative. The RADARSAT map unhinges a vision of Antarctica from the landscape, isolating it from the western world, both aesthetically and politically, while simultaneously reinstating it as the *product* of an American global reach.

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[232] In 2003-04, 15,000 tourists visited Antarctica.
[233] Interview with Alan Hemmings, ASOC and New Zealand delegate, Hobart 19 December 2000.

In the geographic mapping of Greenpeace, there is a relation to the reality of time, between the points of transmission and the act of gathering landscape as image. Communication technologies were utilised as relay machines, not as a form to swallow and recast landscape into the technological sublime. The difference between these two landscape topologies is that in the late 1980s the distance between the image production and the subject's time was not yet untenable. The impetus to disseminate information quickly, kept a gap open between the instruments of transmission and the presence of Greenpeace in the landscape. In the RADARSAT map, that time lag is lost, and so the experience of the image breaks the constraints of any chronological relation. And as Virilio argues about real-time technologies, *time becomes cinematic.*[234] *In real time technologies, there is no obvious spacing between the* fiction of *real time* and the subject's lived experience of time. This affects, through repetition, an amnesia of cultural memory, as the technological event inscribes itself again and again, as a mass cultural memory; a collective vision of the technological event that can eclipse the environmental surface that it inscribes upon. Repetition empties events of history, by installing the *same again*. In this erasure of the landscape, a potential inhabitation of connected meaning is effaced. Where that meaning may be picked up again, is through the subject's inhabitation in those landscapes.

The contrast between these two examples is a contrast of speeds: speeds of presentation and investment in images, and speeds of change in landscape. Real time presumes a shared telepresence between the subject's time and the time of communication. Yet, there are distinct differences in the nature of the *real* that these two real times adhere to. The real time of technological vision has only our reception, but no subject for the real to occur to. Politically the reception will only matter as long as it usefully serves. The duration of its long view over landscape is compressed into the duration of the technological event - a moment of arrest that may or may not have a longer political duration. The continued reception of the map, as an information event rather than an entertainment event, will depend on the political arena that the image is drawn into. It will also depend on the refusal of furthest point, in favour of the potential to act, that the long view offers. The fictional instantaneity of the RADARSAT map may prove to be the nature of its political event, as speed uproots landscape from its environment. The illusion of having overcome distance is to have erased time, but in that erasure, is only another fiction of time. As the speed of images is matched by global reach, time becomes more political because of its *globality* – it reaches farther into our lives, more quickly than ever before – yet it may also threaten to empty us of a relation to the spaces that we inhabit.

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[234] Virilio 1989, 18.

If space is a contestation ground, as Virilio proposes, the contest is to make space somewhere we can inhabit, and not to be virtualised out of our ecological body, and anaestheticised to self-harm on a global scale. By recognising the types of isolation that new technologies generate, and the sites that these images feed off, the floating image, acquires some gravity. It is to the gravity of that site that I now turn.


LONDON
PRATTS
BIRDS
BAKING
POWDER
CAPTAIN
BISCUITS
EDINBURGH
S S TERRA NOVA
LYTTELTON

Plate 15

Plate 16

Part III Antarctic Fields

Preface

It may seem straight forward to ask where Antarctica is located, but if we think of the different processes by which the Antarctic is known through the interpolation of geographies, images and landscape, determining the *site* of Antarctica becomes less certain. Even at the level of the geographical facticity, such as continental dimensions, environmental information is unstable as the constant flows of ice annually create an Antarctic double. Such is the Antarctic inversion, that the normalising strategies that are productive of knowledge elsewhere appear glaringly inappropriate. From this Antarctic margin I will look at how landscape is made *visible* by the arrest and escape of Antarctic flows through specific field practices. The optical and conceptual act of making landscape through the representation *instigates a conversion whereby the material slips away into the materiality of the differing* media that support the image.[235] In the slippage of matter, the processes of making a *transportable territory* of the landscape can be witnessed. In this residue of Antarctic matter, *and its affects, is a space where the specific site of Antarctica can be located* - a place, I will argue that is neither visible nor still.

Locating the field

The body in the field takes control of the surface, moving through its materialities, connecting eye and discourse, as the new landscape from the very first communicates as representation. Fieldwork constitutes a doubly inscribed form of spatial writing: the traversing of the material surfaces of the terrain and academic labour in the epistemological or ontological field. Within the field, space is made into the places in which we *dwell*, the Antarctic we *know* through representation: narration, field notes, photographs, models, methodologies and a plethora of other commutative strategies; through bodies: the bodies in the field, bodies of knowledge, bodies of machines for codifying landscape and events, the body as instrumentation; and through the imagination: completing the circuit of information in the observer or viewer.

The ability to cohere the unknown into a configuration of understandable information that can be transmitted, and thus encoded, requires an effort of will that is both *precarious* and *practised*. In this Part, I intend a balance between the imaginative construction of Antarctic 'fields' and their material instances. The landscape of the material (embodied experience, objects and places of matter) is held in tension with, and often subsumed by the landscape of

[235] Media carries a kind of inner life, something that is not connected to what it represents but to its material circumstances and its ability to resist decay. Examples of the material that supports the image could be any thing from protective eyewear to the canvas that supports a painting. Each media has a differing history based on its materiality and its cultural relation to the subject. The inner life of media is a consideration in thinking through media as a form of history.

communication (field notes, representations, images, nomination), with the former always in excess of the latter. As previously discussed, before and behind every image of Antarctica is only ever another image, an infinity of images, that never can exceed the physical field. Lest they like Lewis Carol's map, produce a life-size representation that subsumes the landscape beneath it. Even when the Antarctic weather reduces visibility to zero in *whiteout,* there is excessive sensorial information but nothing visible to transmit - only static - white noise. By thinking through the expenditure in the process of making places *visible* through communication strategies, a certain *fleshing out* of the field can be exacted. In this way, I want to avoid reducing Antarctica to the limits of its commutative strategies[236] - rather, to consider the processes of making landscapes mean by the arrests of particular data flows. This focuses the discussion on the environment in which images occur and move rather than on their content per se.

Space remains remote until it can be converted into information (inhabitable form) and thus place asserts its exchange value through an informational economy. The arrest of continuous flows of information into transportable territories of knowledge (whether image, sign or scientific data) is determined, and limited by time. Arrest is a means by which to halt time's passage, and by arresting the flow and making place into image, something new is made of place. As time never stops in place, only in the image, thus, time's arrest is the limit of all representations. A consideration of the site and the informational transfer from it (how the site becomes visible to the viewer) allows us to engage in a discussion of how site is negotiated, explored, imaged, imagined and changed by field-practices. While images cannot return to the field, they remain an instance in what it becomes. Such an arrest of data flows, is what David Harvey talks about as the "process of place formation... carving out 'permanencies' from the flow of process creating space."[237]

Rather than seek a recovery of landscape or a essentialist phenomenological body-in-the-field (a now lost body, recoverable only through narrative), I want to concentrate on sitings that position the field, and enlarge places beyond their physical parameters - in order to generate multiply sighted geographies. In the process of making landscape mobile, it is that which will not travel and become a dislocated object that is left unrepresented in the field. Reversing the discussion in *Part I,* (a discussion of the fields that the image moves through) *Part III* will concentrate on the processes of production of Antarctic landscapes via fieldwork, and its remainders.

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[236] This approach is taken from Bourdieu's critique of the structuralist textual model that he argues, reduced social relations to communicative relations and more precisely, to their decoding operations. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972).
[237] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 261.

There is no recovery in landscape except through the imagination. Paul Carter's introduction to *The Lie of the Land*[238] provides an apt challenge to such projects of recovery:

> Just as the bulldozer desecrated the ground, so the landscape architect resacralizes it; and neither moment, with its implicit divisions between inside and outside, sacred and non-sacred, ever recognises the openness of the ground, the ground as process.

Despite the thoughtful critique that Carter suggests in thinking through the land as mobile, ungrounded and released into, "an infinity of positions, poses, points of rest"[239] his own militant cries to, "Let the ground rise up to resist us, let it prove porous, spongy, rough, irregular – let it assert its native title, its right to maintain its traditional surfaces"[240] suggests an essentialised notion of the land. The traditional surfaces that Carter opines, are ones in which we trip up, fall down and that impede the flat space that he argues we perceive, conceptualise and fetishise about. Unwittingly, and despite the destabilisation that Carter proclaims, he seems to contend for a surface beneath which there is land unfettered by cultural practices and perceptions. As if a land exists under our language and our bodies and can be known without them, rather than a knowing that exists in the between-ness of these bodies. In the desire to find some place beneath, he perhaps neglects the dirt and porousness of the environment (and not just the land) that makes its way, intentionally or not, into our accounts (the asides, the mould on the paper, the frozen hand that can write no more and scrawls across the page, the lost, abandoned or neglected texts, and strange epiphanies of being that mute language). Aside from imperial histories, there is of course another ground, but it is a ground that can only be located in its absence. It is precisely the location erasing activities of certain imperial texts (and contemporary ones) that enable their mobility beyond the specifics of the ground they traverse. As Mary Louise Pratt argues in *Imperial Eyes*,[241] what is called for in order to destabilise the primacy and totalising affect of imperial narratives, is the story of *another letter*.

Pratt begins *Imperial Eyes* by narrating the expanding geographical field of the British explorer, 'Livingstone' that is written through her personal and professional geographies. The proliferation of his name through the mundane spaces of the drugstore in a Canadian town to streets named 'Livingstone' that litter disparate geographies, suitably demonstrates the expanded geographical text of Euroimperialism. She illustrates how geographies of conquest are "struck together with words, all across the globe, with words"[242]; Livingstones' in her case. Or as Seamus Heaney, in the collection of poems *Fieldwork* puts it, "Vowels ploughed

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[238] Paul Carter, *The Lie of the Land* (London: Faber & Faber, 1996), 4.
[239] Ibid., 3.
[240] Ibid., 2.
[241] Pratt 1992.
[242] Ibid., 2.

into other: opened ground."[243] His poetic fieldwork articulates how words penetrate, to open a productive space of labour. Thus through a combination of embodied and non-embodied processes of knowledge production (Livingstone's fieldwork) a multiplicity of other sites that intersect time and place form a text; a haphazard and deliberate reproduction of his conquests. The multiple displacements of the field of Livingstones' reproduce the colonisation of space and knowledge inherent in Euroimperialism, and as Pratt calls for, it requires "the story of another letter".

In calling for another text, there is the explicit recognition that "contestatory expressions from the site of imperial intervention", counter-histories and counter-knowledges "are unwitnessed, suppressed, lost, or simply overlain with repetition and unreality."[244] The story of another letter can only be told in so much as it can be found, and is, as Pratt argues, *readable*[245] - that the field of inquiry acknowledges it as such. In this idea of readibility, Pratt recognises that behind every letter, there is only the possibility of another story to be told to speak to the assumptions of the dominant narrative, rather than the possibilities of a site of "native title".

The valency of another story, in turn problematises the validity of dominant narratives and authoritative voices, reconstituting the site (or "contact zone")[246] as a more precarious space of engagement. The relationship between the letters and their histories makes visible the hierarchy of their ordering in the construction of knowledges, as a historic event and as a contemporary one. Re-examining the site of fieldwork and dominant practices there within requires that fieldwork not only be considered as a metaphor for the transaction of spatial writing, but that the specific practices that bring the field *into view* be considered. The I/eye-in-the-field is an optical instrument for observation that is practised, but not impervious to disruption (as is argued in *Part I*). The historic optic of the eye and its extension through instrumentation is a distancing apparatus of physical and psychic proportions. The intellect seeks to bring the new and unexplored to light by employing visible ordering strategies. Curiosity and exploration required the physical and conceptual mobility of bodies in contact with other bodies, of sea, of other peoples, of landscape, and of ice. All these practices of visibility are what bring the far near and organise space in such a way that it constitutes a *field of inquiry*, locating the site of meaning in and beyond the ground upon which it moves.

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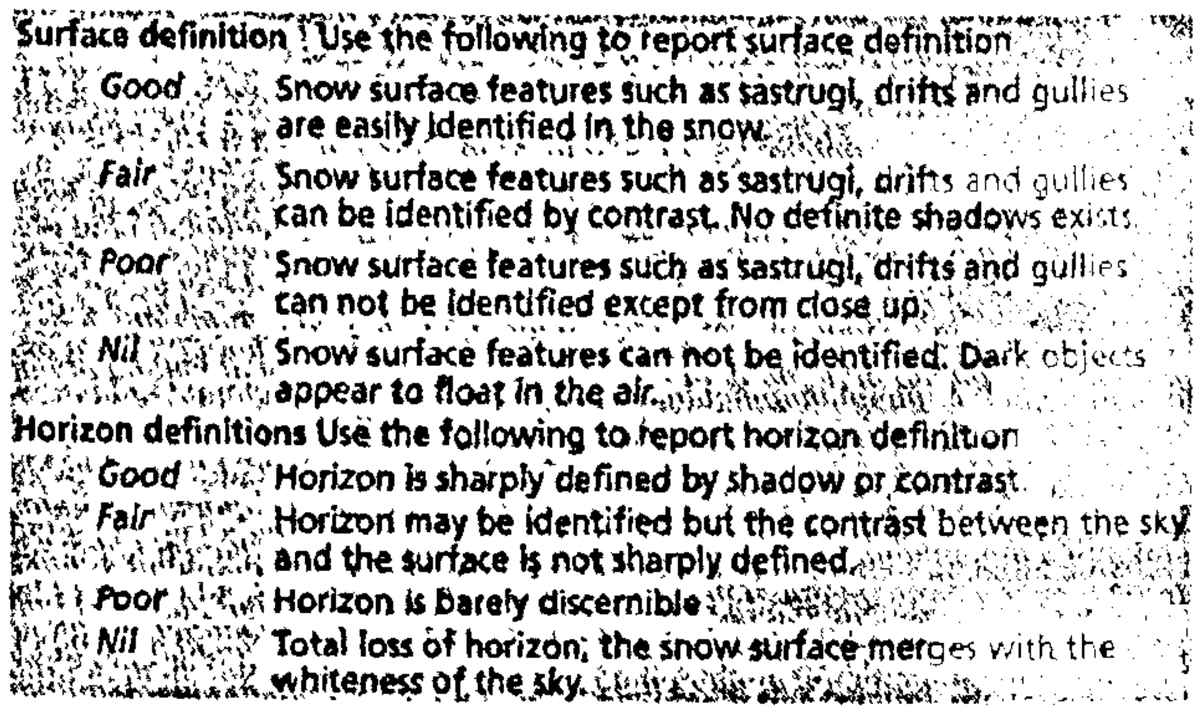
[243] Seamus Heaney, *Fieldwork* (New York: Noonday Press, 1989), 33.
[244] Pratt 1992, 2.
[245] Ibid., 4.
[246] Pratt's explanation of the 'contact zone' recognises that the point of encounter is not necessarily defined by fixed spatial and temporal boundaries and continues to be re-staged through individual and institutional registers.

The processes of *visibility* - of making the matter into landscape through an unfolding view of geographical features requires the landscape to be constituted by the building blocks of geographical knowledge. Geography's periodic table – rocks, rivers, hills, mountains, weather – form the stable units of meaning on which such descriptions of place, as a landscape, is built. In this production of the field, the visibility of Antarctica has a mobility that is predicated on particular modes and points of transmission. A *landscape in transmission* is the condition of matter being made into representation, and the dislocation of that image from the site of its production. There within the space is a communication field, within which historically, the explorer is a point of relay. These *points of transmission* are constituted by the sastrugi, zephyrs, nunataks, that form the units of geographical data and nomenclature to the practices that are learnt and exercised in the field. The bits of geographical knowledge - the language of narration and its objects – offer stability amongst the unfamiliar and disorientating new Antarctic landscape. As Wilkes' 'immoral mapping' demonstrated these precarious assumptions about stable geographic and geological form constitute a shifting landscape of difference.


Surface definition Use the following to report surface definition
Good Snow surface features such as sastrugi, drifts and gullies are easily identified in the snow.
Fair Snow surface features such as sastrugi, drifts and gullies can be identified by contrast. No definite shadows exists.
Poor Snow surface features such as sastrugi, drifts and gullies can not be identified except from close up.
Nil Snow surface features can not be identified. Dark objects appear to float in the air.
Horizon definitions Use the following to report horizon definition
Good Horizon is sharply defined by shadow or contrast.
Fair Horizon may be identified but the contrast between the sky and the surface is not sharply defined.
Poor Horizon is barely discernible.
Nil Total loss of horizon; the snow surface merges with the whiteness of the sky.

Carter argues that geographical discourse assumes its objects in a way history is unable to, and thus is unable to acknowledge the mythic nature of geographical knowledge.[247] He contends that the physical geography of place is agreed upon and so can become the scene/space of the historic event. He suggests that the, "theatricalization of place, the evacuation of any mental geography associated with it, is an important elision."[248] Carter argues that the historical act of encounter occurs within a mythopoeticially-constructed space, a legacy that the Enlightenment bequeathed geography. This is the nature of the mythic *ground* he contests on which geography is built. And while Carter's insistence that geography claims to offer an impartial description of the earth surfaces elides much critical geographical work - his argument that the poetic of geography (which transforms physical places into habitable places), speaks to how narration traverses over its ground (and to the assumptions often made in social science methodologies about the inert nature of geography's objects).

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[247] Paul Carter, "Gaps in Knowledge: the geography of human reason" in *Geography and Enlightenment* ed. David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 295-319.
[248] Carter 1999, 299.

The debate about the geographical objects that constitute narratives of exploration perhaps does not surface because it is assumed that we already know what those descriptions mean, and the surfaces and objects they denote. Assumptions about landscape and its composition become explicitly exposed in non-intuitive landscapes, where the terrain is not so easily traversed. The Antarctic engaged early explorers in excessive problems of navigation and perception, disorienting their bodies, minds, and instruments. Mirages became a common aspect of Antarctic travel; the collapsing of depth often allayed perceptions of distance, as the proximity to the magnetic south allayed their compasses. The "locational problem"[249], as Simpson-Housley calls it, for Antarctic explorers, the "misperceptions of location, misperceptions of landscapes and seascapes, and incorrect attributions to distances and landforms result from many causes, and often impede[d] survival."[250] The effects of light and weather in Antarctica are examples of disruptions in the order of knowable landscape phenomena. The readability that Pratt stresses is also a matter of the transmissibility of the information. In the case of landscape at its very basic level - at the units of geographical object-hood - a fog casts doubtful contours on matter and phenomena that can be aesthetised, but not necessarily grasped.

Beyond the visibility of traces and practices, there is nothing we can recover,[251] what may be productive is to think historically how the desire for visibility reduced the field to the communicative strategies of a reductive visual economy. By addressing the historic construction of landscape in scientific exploration, in its excesses beyond, and reduction to, the visible, I argue how the ordering strategies created a site of exclusive scientific inquiry in the Antarctic. Alongside this, the methodologies of site-specific critical art practice (in contrast to scientific field practices) will be employed to suggest how the artifice of the *Frozen Laboratory* may be opened to the destabilising effects of the landscape outside. Through a critical discussion of the site, the discussion will focus on how the processes of mobilising landscape may be made more reflexive to such mobility. And thus offer the possibility of 'another letter' through a critical reflection on the site of Antarctic landscapes.

Field practices

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[249] See chapter 4, 'Problems of Antarctic navigation and perception: the compass, longitude and mirages' in Simpson-Housley 1992, 38-50.
[250] Ibid., 38.
[251] Beyond the texts that narrate the encounter between landscape and bodies, there is nothing outside save our imaginative ability to read the nuances, suppressions, over confident assertions and controlling mechanism through a historic lens, to cloud the inside. Experience in the landscape that these bodies travelled through is an important instance in imagining those bodies into place and understanding the dimensions of that place outside of representation. Thus, contemporary fieldwork in Antarctica secures - at least in part - a more dimensional relation with past fieldwork.

To extend the discussion of geographical knowledges beyond their representations, geographers[252] and anthropologists[253] have looked to the field to disturb the confident borders of representation and look for the excesses beyond and in its formation. Throughout these academic and practice-based debates about landscape and fieldwork (utilised as concept and to denote practice) the impetus behind such moves have been to reconsider the field in the ways it frustrated, challenged and often overwhelmed its workers, to counter and sometimes undermine the precarious nature of engagements with other people and places. Unsettling the traditional field has been a means to re-engage with contemporary fieldwork and reflect on the dynamics of exchange between the producers of knowledge and their *travelling objects*.

The idea of a self-reflexive practitioner is not new, but the shift into postcolonial/post structuralist critique (which follows a wider shift in the humanities) made it impossible for geography to carry on unperturbed with its traditional objects. As Felix Driver comments,

> If we think of geographical knowledge as constituted through a range of embodied practices - practices of travelling, dwelling, seeing, collecting, recording, and narrating - the subject of field-work, its geography and its history, becomes more difficult to escape. In this context, the 'field' may be understood as a region that is always in the process of being constructed...[254]

The consequence of this reassessment has been to prompt a considerable re-evaluation of the visibilities of histories, and an examination of the limits of representation. Acknowledging the porousness of object boundaries does not simply extend the narrative of encounter, but simultaneously questions the material objects on which Foucault's taxonomy rests (wherein knowledge production based on reference to material objects is always classifiable). To keep open a space for Antarctica to be more that its objectification (and resist the conflation of practice into its objects) - I want to look at how Antarctic science constructed through its field practices, a 'Continent for Science'.

A 'Continent for Science': 'The Great Experiment Begins'[255]

> A good and happy revolution makes few headlines in times as sensational as ours. The gift of a whole continent to the pursuit of knowledge, even if it is the most desolate place on earth, does not have the same visceral effect as, well, choose your own favourite disaster from this morning's news. What has very quietly happened is that the entire Antarctic has become the exclusive province of the scientists, and what

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[252] See Driver 2001, and Michael Bravo & Sverker Sörlin, ed. *Narrating the Arctic*, (USA: Science History Publications, 2002).

[253] See Nicholas Thomas & Diane Losche, eds. *Double vision: art histories and colonial histories in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1999) and Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds, Reason and Madness in the exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000).

[254] Felix Driver, "Field-work in geography" in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (25, 2000), 267-8.

[255] Title of Chapter I in Peter Briggs, *Laboratory at the Bottom of the World* (New York: McKay1970).

> they are doing is one of the most wholesome, intellectually exciting of all contemporary stories. The adventures go on in the minds of the most brilliant men of our time.[256]

The *geographical gift of a continent* to science happened largely through the efforts of scientists during the 1957-8 International Geophysical Year (IGY), and particularly through the aestheticisation of extreme science as a forum of national endeavour (albeit framed within a context of International co-operation). The designation of Antarctica as a 'Continent for Science and Peace' under the AT in 1961[257] was the product of distinct changes in field practices (and thus delineation of the field) from its early exploration at the turn of the century. Early Antarctic exploration has been sporadic rather than a continuous history of attentive geographical inquiry. After Amundsen reached the South Pole in 1911 (and Scott shortly after), the Pole was not traversed again by another human until 1956. The 1930s saw a systematic US-led aerial inquiry and mapping by Byrd and Ellsworth, but not until the IGY did systematic national science-orientated activities become a reality (the nations that participated in the IGY later formed the ATCPs). Up until the IGY, exploration (and its sciences) was largely subservient to the directives of imperial projects and conquests of *firsts*. This is evident in Amundsen's literal reversal of attention, from North to South, when he discovered that the North Pole had been reached. Scott, similarly, on reaching the Pole second bemoaned his lack of primacy, "terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without reward of priority".[258] But as Philip Law - leader of the AAD comments - this achievement of territorial firsts underwent a significant shift post World War II:

> The era of territorial competition of the first 50 years of this century has given way to an era of technological competition, in which nations use the arena accorded by the Antarctic to demonstrate their technical and scientific skills.[259]

Antarctica, as conceived by Law, became the site of a technological performance *in et extremis* during the IGY. As with other wastelands such as the American desert that offered no immediate economic extraction, these sites entered the Fordist labour economy as testing grounds for new technologies.[260] Whereas Antarctic has historically been constructed as a landscape of testing and endurance through the embodied journeys of the heroic age,[261]

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[256] Ibid., 1.

[257] The AT (1961) stated in the Preamble that, "it is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue forever to be used for exclusively peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord." Aside from the continent designated for peace, which held contested claimants on the continent in check, what was *affected was the transfer of an entire continent to a single discipline.*

[258] Scott 1913, 544.

[259] Quoted in Briggs 1970, 16.

[260] Contemporaneously Antarctica forms the site of NASA's testing of machinery and models of human inhabitation for its Mars projects.

[261] Both Shackleton and Scott attempted to embrace the 'modern age' by bringing motorised tractors and sledges with them, but in both cases their machines failed almost instantly, and the tried and tested combination of man hauling and dogs that had been characteristic of Arctic exploration was relied upon. The most technologically

there was a significant shift during the IGY (in keeping with the changes in the modern industrial complex) to a modern science with its emphasis on technological capability.

Nations involved in the IGY were no longer so concerned about the acquisition of space, as by its traversing - by tractor, by plane, by satellite - wherein polar inertia was transformed into the scene of the scientific event.[262] Post World War II saw the joining of rationality and space into what Lefebvre calls *abstract space*, wherein the gap between language and object - that Foucault argued as a condition of enlightenment knowledges - ceases to be the constraint that abided in knowledge production. The regulation and rationalisation of anonymous space created its own terms of reference, as in the modernist sculpture and architecture that was its visible form. This rationalisation of Antarctica space can be seen, first in the lack of attention it received after the 'heroic era', and then in the scientific testing that formed the basis of the activities of the IGY. The technical rationalisation of science did not however replace the historical legacy of the Enlightenment, it happened alongside it, and was often subsumed by the more visible nature of its field practices (such as the Fuchs-Hillary 'adventure')[263]. As the AT demonstrated in its designation of a 'Continent for Science', the concept of anonymous space could be rationalised to such an extent as to perform an extensive *geographical gift* of a continent to science.

The most reproduced photographic images of that period are of man and machine, and machines being taken to their limits - tractors in crevasses, rather than broken bodies. The warring body fighting Nature pre-World War I became the warring machine of post-World War II. In this change, the Antarctic explorers body underwent a conversion - like the modern industrial bodies of the factories - to be relocated in its technological relation. The romance of the explorer as a physical and moral body in the landscape was coming to an end, overtaken by the re-siting of Antarctica as a testing ground for technological capability, driven by the impetus of science in the national military machine post atomic bomb.[264]

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advanced equipment that both men brought with them was their camera equipment, both expeditions being equipped with the latest Germany models in still and moving cameras.

[262] Briggs, not short of enthusiasm for the 'great gift' of a continent to science, titles his chapters with a decidedly Vernian air: 'The Mysterious Electric Envelope', 'A Feast in the Southern Ocean', etc. The science he narrates from the 'Laboratory at the Bottom of the World' is clearly no ordinary science.

[263] The 'cult of personality' between Hilary and Fuchs was the major headline during the IGY (the TAE was not even part of the government funded event) demonstrating a significant appetite for the myth of a national explorer-hero in the media rather than the more mundane nature of scientific discoveries (such as the discovery of the terrestrial magnetic field from Explorer 3 data and the Soviet launch of Sputnik). Significantly, however the journey of the Trans-Antarctic expedition was made by motorised vehicle and relied on the explorer's mechanical skills rather than his brawn or bravery. The establishment of an infrastructure in the Antarctic was significant in shifting the narrative from isolated fieldwork and self-reliance, to permanent fully equipped research stations and a network of support agencies.

[264] The detonation of the atomic bomb could be considered the zenith of the scientific technological sublime - with its grotesque tragedies and monumental imagery. According to Edmund Burke, "whatever is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too" in Edmund Burke, "A philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and

Although much is made of the co-operation between nations during the IGY and the sharing of information and support,[265] the displays of technical prowess during this time were considerably nuanced by global political imperatives. Amid the changing image of Antarctic activities, the narrative of rationalised scientific practices (as part of a modernity's technological drive) sat ambiguously next to the traditional narratives of the explorer/scientist-hero. As a testing ground - a space of the exploration of technologies and its limits - Antarctica's use-value was codified into that of a laboratory. And thus, Antarctica became known as *A Laboratory for Science*. In retrospect, such a move may seem fantastical, or a 'revolution' in Peter Briggs words, yet it was predicated on the historic settlement and possession of the Antarctic by explorers operating within the bequeathed tradition of Enlightenment science.[266] The formation of this historical tradition of scientific inquiry has its earliest manifestation in the 1901 Antarctic manual.

The Antarctic Manual (1901)

The story of the fieldwork of the 1903 British *Discovery* Expedition begins with a field guide: *The Antarctic Manual For the Use of The Expedition of 1901*.[267] Produced by RGS, with a preface from its president, Sir Clements R. Markham, the Antarctic Manual was presented to the Expedition and to RGS Fellows. It served as both a manual for use and an Antarctic guidebook (or narrative) for geographical fellows; and thus it functioned as a practical guide to traversing both the physical and imaginative terrain. As was the geographical order of things, the Antarctic manual had an Arctic predecessor,[268] prepared to give, "easy access to information, otherwise inaccessible, which was required by the officers in their scientific investigations." Markham comments, "I was convinced that an 'Antarctic Manual' for the Expedition of 1901 would be even more useful, if prepared with the same objective in view and on similar lines."[269] In the line of its conceptual projection, the manual thus accorded the

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Beautiful" in *The Philosophy of Edmund Burke* ed. Louise I Dredvold & Ralph G. Ross (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1967, 1757), 256-57.

[265] There was considerable support between nations during the IGY, especially during technological failures, wherein cooperation could equally have been termed rescue. For example, the US icebreaker twice rescued a Japanese ship that was besieged by ice.

[266] For a collection of papers that explorer the formation of geography during the Enlightenment see Livingstone & Withers 1999. In their introduction, Livingstone and Withers quote Stoddart's argument that modern geography is a constitutively European science with its origins in the voyages of Cook into the Pacific in 1769. The confirmation of a Southern Land was very much part of that emergent geographic tradition. Cook's expedition reached furthest south (Lat. 71° 10'S., 106° 54'W.) on January 30th 1774 and confirmed that no temporal zone was to be found. The completion of a global world picture (albeit fragmented and partial) by the removal of the last geographical void of *Terra incognita* contributed to the confidence of mapping practices and the rationality of globalising strategies of the Enlightenment.

[267] George Murray, ed., *The Antarctic Manual For the Use of The Expedition of 1901* (London: Royal Geographical Society, 1901).

[268] The terms of engagement with Antarctica would be considerably different to that of the Arctic given its lack of indigenous peoples. Unlike Markham's guide books that followed the rationale 'that one polar glove fitted all' and subsequently produced landscapes in which indigenous peoples were constantly finding themselves not there - according to European Imperialism.

[269] Markham in Murray 1901, viii.

Polar Regions an undifferentiated view. In accordance with the plan, the manual consists of Ice Nomenclature,[270] instructions on observation, and the memoirs of polar exploration. Under the heading, 'Geography' can be found cartographic information and the journal accounts of Arçtowski, Bernacchi, Biscoe, Balleny, Balley's Mate, Darwin, Dumont d'Urville and Wilkes. The volume concludes with an extensive Antarctic Bibliography. The scope of the Antarctic Manual defined a realm of scientific inquiry and practices against other ways of being in the landscape that were concurrently being practised in the Antarctic. The largest of these was the seal and whaling industry that contemporaneously had an extremely large presence in Antarctic seas, and particularly close to islands such as South Georgia. The explorers would have relied upon these knowledges, not only to inform their cartographic practice but also an appreciation of the landscape and its weather patterns. The sparse acknowledgement of these knowledges indicates, in its absence, the divisions between appropriate knowledges and appropriate knowers.[271]

A detailed examination of the *Antarctic Manual* not only revealed the strange new world of incomprehensible things found in the Antarctic margin, but structures approaches to the different phenomena, objects and life forms. From the leadership advice contained in Wilkes *Narrative* to the global project of simultaneous observation of the magnetic and meteorological conditions of the earth (of which the Antarctic was to be one of many observation stations) - the field manuals sought to transmit and encourage the generation of both global and localised knowledges. Like the Encyclopaedia, the *Antarctic Manual* delineated a field of Antarctic practices, narrations and modes of traversing Antarctica that reveal specific orderings of the landscape, the body in the field, and the appropriate 'objects' of scientific knowledge. The manual makes many suggestions on how an explorer should be in the field, wherein the explorer's utility is defined not so much by what he might see, but what he might be able to communicate. As the words of Ice nomenclature build the narratives of the explorers, the views and practices of science constructed the field. As Antarctic knowledge - in the form of cartographic and scientific understanding - was still comparatively open at the turn of the century, the suggestive and questioning rhetoric of the Antarctic Manual exposes how the edges of the project of reason turned into conjecture. The diversity

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[270] The section on 'Ice Nomenclature' was the first ice dictionary so the explorers could name what they saw. The 81 listed words started a process that would, in little over a hundred years later lead to the formation of an Antarctic dictionary, Bernadette Hince, Antarctic Dictionary, *A complete Guide to Antarctic English* (Melbourne: CSIRO & Museum of Victoria, 2000)

[271] The unacknowledged utilisation of whaler's knowledges indicates how such knowledge needed to be secured in the body of the explorer rather than that of a whaler. For example, when the British explorer Ernest Shackleton completed his epic boat journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia in 1914, he came to the whaling station to mount a rescue attempt for his stranded crew. At that time, the population of whalers at South Georgia amounted to more than 700. Ironically, Shackleton had previously ignored the extensive localised knowledge of the whalers that advised him at the beginning of the voyage not to proceed because of the harsh ice conditions.

Plate 17

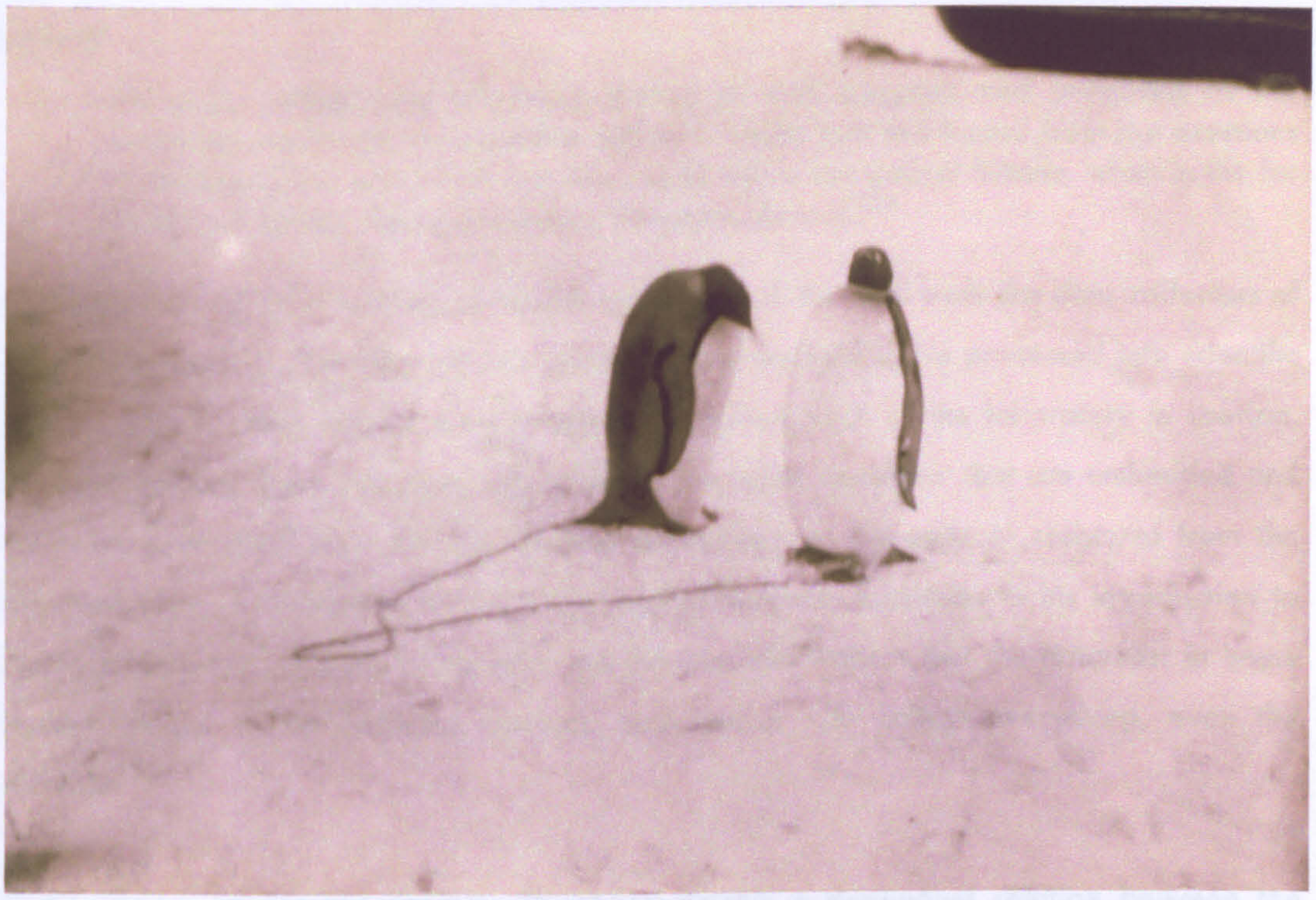

Plate 18

of scientific practice included in the Antarctic manual is by no means homogenous, and the range of authors and different subject matters of their attention, indicates a heterogeneous field of inquiry marked by tensions, competition and uncertain orderings. As Markham's introduction to the text illuminates - the hierarchies of geographic knowledge production are evident:

> No polar vessel ever left these shores so well adapted and prepared as the *Discovery*, to secure the valuable scientific results that are hoped from the exertions of the explorers; and I trust that one useful aid to our gallant friends, when in the far South, will be Mr. George Murray's 'Antarctic Manual.'[272]

Explorers sent out from London, under the patronage of the RGS were the *data collectors* of scientific endeavour, securing the raw material from the field to be processed into scientific results, often in other centres of knowledge production, such as the laboratory in London. Amongst the text, there are many references to the 'open questions' that are embedded and surround Antarctica, from the construction of icebergs to the eyes of creatures from the abysmal zone. As Professor D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson concludes in his introduction to Antarctic Zoology, "Lastly, let me reiterate the one last request that the naturalist at home makes always of the collector abroad, and that is - to collect everything, even the invisible."[273]

In his plea to the data-collectors, Thompson signals a dependent relation between the laboratory and the field. In calling for the collection of the invisible, he hints at the different orders of visibility that the scientist at home possesses in his examination of data, that for the collector in the field is liable to be invisible. Although there were scientists in amongst the explorers on the expedition, it is clear that divisions existed amongst the fieldworkers and specialist scientists, who never entered the physical field. The rigorous attention to detail that was required in the procuring of samples suggests that scientific truths were only partially made at the site of discovery. As with Cherry-Gerrard's emperor penguin's eggs that were obtained during *The Worst Journey in the World*, for the purpose of attempting to prove a missing link in the evolution chain, their destination was the Natural History Museum. On returning to London, Cherry-Gerrard duly delivered his eggs to the museum and is met by a surly response from the curator of the collection, who dismisses the value of the eggs, which nearly cost him and his companions their lives. This uncomfortable transition from field to the centre of knowledge production becomes the moral epilogue of Cherry-Gerrard's tale; the loss of a tradition of exploration and scientific inquiry is replaced by a "nation of shopkeepers" who order and bureaucratise knowledge. The scientific model on which his

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[272] Markham 1901,viii.
[273] Professor D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, "XIX ZOOLOGY: KERGUELEN ISLAND: AN INTRODUCTION TO ANTARCTIC ZOOLOGY", in Murray 1901, 287.

ideas of Antarctic exploration rest, accentuates the "sensual and moral", which Outram argues that Enlightenment science tried to pull apart.[274] For Cherry-Gerrard, the scientific staff at the museum exemplified the demise of an age of embodied and spirited engagement with the world.

Although, according to geologist W. T. Blanford the Antarctic offers considerable scope to the explorer:

> A person embarked on a naval expedition, who wishes to attend to geology, is placed in a position in some respects highly advantageous, and in others much to the contrary.[275]

Mr Blanford's chapter is exemplary in positioning the explorer in the field and demonstrating the means by which subjective impressions were to be converted to objective observation through stringent methods of recording and instrumentation. These methods of Foucauldian control ordered the landscape and positioned the explorer within it, suggesting *step by step* processes for moving forward to geological discovery. In his *Methods for Observing* he suggests:

> To a person not familiar with geological inquiry, who has the privilege of landing on a new coast, probably the simplest way of setting to work is for him to imagine a great trench cut across the country in a straight line, and that he has to describe the position.[276]

Located in his imaginary trench the explorer is then advised to,

> collect suites of rocks, specimens and fossils. For this end, he can hardly collect too copiously, *for errors in the naming* of the rocks may thus be corrected, and the careful comparison of such specimens will often reveal to him curious relations which at the time he did not suspect. He must record on the spot, such observations as may give a permanent interest to the specimens, accompanying them by sketches or photographs when useful, and *not trusting to memory*.[277]

Data must be reproduced, and the notation is such that the observations make possible re-enactment of the scene, far from the location of the find. Blanford warned, "The mere collecting of rock, without some detailed observations on the distinct whence they are brought, is of comparatively little value..."[278] He also warned of the obscuring nature of the landscape in the production of such knowledges, "In view of the probability that the greater portion of the Antarctic land, whether continent or archipelago, is shielded from observation by a sheet of ice, it is to be feared that but few observations on its geology will be practicable..."[279]

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[274] Dorinda Outram, "On Being Perseus" in Livingstone & Withers 1999, 290.
[275] W. T. Blanford, "X GEOLOGY" in Murray 1901, 179.
[276] Ibid., 183.
[277] Ibid., 180.
[278] Ibid., 180.
[279] Ibid., 178.

Beyond the shielding potential of the ice sheet, the Antarctic landscape unorganised the explorers in other ways. Explorers tried to protect themselves from this in practical and cognitive ways, from their clothing and vision-restricting devices to the maintenance of cultural practices such as lectures, lantern shows, theatre and the utilisation of the printing press for publications. While Blanford, Fellow of the Royal Society, sited in England, systematically staged encounters with the geology of Antarctica, it by no means suggests that the ordering of practice and place bare upon the experiences of the explorers. Cherry-Gerrard's narrative hints at many other encounters that happened either at a decidedly emotional and or at a much more ecstatic level;

> much of that risk and tracking toil had been undertaken that men might learn what the world is like at the spot where the sun does not decline in the heavens, where a man loses his orbit and turns like a joint on a spit, and where his face, however he turns, is always to the North.[280]

These 'other' narratives range from the extreme distress of witnessing their stranded ponies float out to sea on ice floes, unable and forbidden to attempt rescue, to the excesses of the *Winter Journey* that leave Cherry-Gerrard's senses so disorientated. As he confided, "such extremity of suffering cannot be measured; madness or death may give relief... As we groped our way back that night, sleepless, icy, and dog-tired in the dark and the wind and the drift, a crevasse seemed almost a friendly gift".[281]

The psychic pull of London is however evident in the explorer's accounts, and it is difficult not to think of Scott, often framed as a martyr to science with his sledge weighed down with 'copious suites of rocks' dying eleven miles from a supply depot.[282] Had the Pole party shirked the burden that academics in the metropolis, such as Blanford, placed on the explorer, they perhaps would not have paid with their lives for the "abnegation"[283] to science. This was the bind that explorers often found themselves in, the implicit demands of science was the basis for their journeys (although it was not necessarily why they made them) and thus, it exacted a weight they must carry.

The stress on samples and their precise naming and cataloguing emphasises how scientists in metropolitan centres attempted to direct, through the posing of questions and the outlining of preferred practices of collection, the production of knowledge at both an intellectual and practical level. *Where* the completion of the incomplete knowledge projects of natural history

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[280] Cherry-Gerrard 1937, 533.
[281] Ibid., 289.
[282] The *Pole Party* had 16kg of geological samples on their sledge when their bodies were found.
[283] See Fabian, "Self-control called for "abnegation," an ascetic virtue, fuelled by the knowledge that exploration in all its respects must be subject to the norms and injunctions of science." Fabian 2000, 7.

occurred, was a matter of much contention. As Dorinda Outram argues, the explorers' knowledge posed the problem of belief, trust, and facticity that besieged Enlightenment science:

> The essential and prior step was to place trust in the explorer himself: trust in his moral integrity and trust in his perceptual accuracy. Both were important. The explorer had to be trusted both to see and to tell, had to be trusted to interpolate action with rationality.[284]

Outram's discussion elaborates the suspicion that scientists in metropolitan centres had of the field science of explorers which helped create some of the quintessential dilemmas of scientific facticity. Her subsequent argument highlights how many questions were made about the claims of fieldwork to produce adequate knowledge through direct observation, and how this was at odds with the laboratory-based science that promised epistemologically based truths.

The authority of advice given by the scientist in London to the explorer in the field was legitimised by a genealogy of travelling advice and scientific inquiry. Mr Blanford's suggestions are taken "for the most part from those drawn up by Charles Darwin for the Admiralty 'Manual of Scientific Enquiry,'"[285] with a few additions made from the geological portion of "Hints to Travellers,"[286] issued by the RGS. Similarly, Markham outlines how many subsequent polar explorers had eagerly taken up his Arctic Manuals - instigating a mythology of encounter in the Polar Regions. As Outram comments, "By authorship, explorers transmit these acts and categories into the European world. Thus, the way in which explorers perceived the new terrain they discover is often the founding pattern for subsequent European perceptions of the area."[287] The pattern of repetition was found in the form of information - rather than what was found per se - and the negotiation of that form with the European centre and its expectations. Accordingly, the Manual weaves one kind of space between objects and classifications - its topography is a lacuna of the undiscovered that suggests the reassurance of accumulated discovery.

The manuals of previous exploration regulated the field of vision and the focus of data collection, and so established the grounds upon which new ground could be encountered. The reliance on disciplined habits of work, Fabian suggests may well have been a cipher for more anarchic unsettling in the field, and served to elide more disordered encounters. Following Fabian's argument, the *Antarctic Manual* can be thought of a *distancing device* - a

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[284] Outram 1999, 283.
[285] Blanford 2001, 178-179.
[286] See Driver 2001, 49-68.
[287] Outram 1999, 288.

withdrawal into an ordering system that kept the landscape at bay. It was also a device produced at a distance from the landscape. In the *Antarctic Manual* (Markham's definitive guide to the region) list of contributors, only 65 out of the 435 had been to Antarctic Regions. This means that the predominant knowledge producers about Antarctica were situated at a remote site from the object of their knowledge production. Essentially the control of the *new* that the *Antarctic Manual* advocated, was imposed from outside onto the landscape, rather than from a place of physical and conceptual proximity.

Outram argues that a fine line existed between the possibilities of the new (which was a demand of the expansionism of Enlightenment science) and the limits of the description of the new; "And this is exactly what exploration is about: establishing the new as a category of experience".[288] As a category of experience - the new - however unsettling, was brought to order through this conceptual practice. The attempts to negotiate the new, to describe it, traverse it, and not become disorganised by it, was the continued threat and exhilaration of exploration. The dilemma that the explorer faced - that exemplified Enlightenment concerns - was how to arrest the world "into forms of communicable truth" without allowing the power of experience "to shatter the aesthetic communities on which the possibilities of description rests".[289] The organising methods of instrumentation and categorisation provided the means of eliciting contained bits of the landscape. By attending to the bits of information, rather than the dizzying whole - description could be employed in ways that familiarised the new, *bit by bit*. The problem that the Antarctic landscape posed, and in particular, the polar plateau, was the undifferentiating and inherently unstable bits of ice. Or rather, the immense, overwhelming differentiation, in the orders of a single material - that arrested with far more verve than it could be arrested. Looking at any one of the explorer's accounts the narrative reads as a continuum of such altercations with the macro and micro bits of ice. As Pyne says of the berg, "Its travels have a mythic quality, a retrograde journey out of an underworld. It is a voyage that joins microcosm to macrocosm, that builds from a single substance - ice crystals - a vast, almost unbounded continent."[290]

Attempts to arrest the field introduced time as part of the equation of field observation - as it was doubled in the narrative of discovery that introduced anxiety as a condition of its accumulation. Such dependency on the immediate "observations by the way"[291] was at odds with a perception of science that was moving towards a model of repeatable experimentation (or testing). Such repeatability was hampered by the extraordinary dynamic conditions of the

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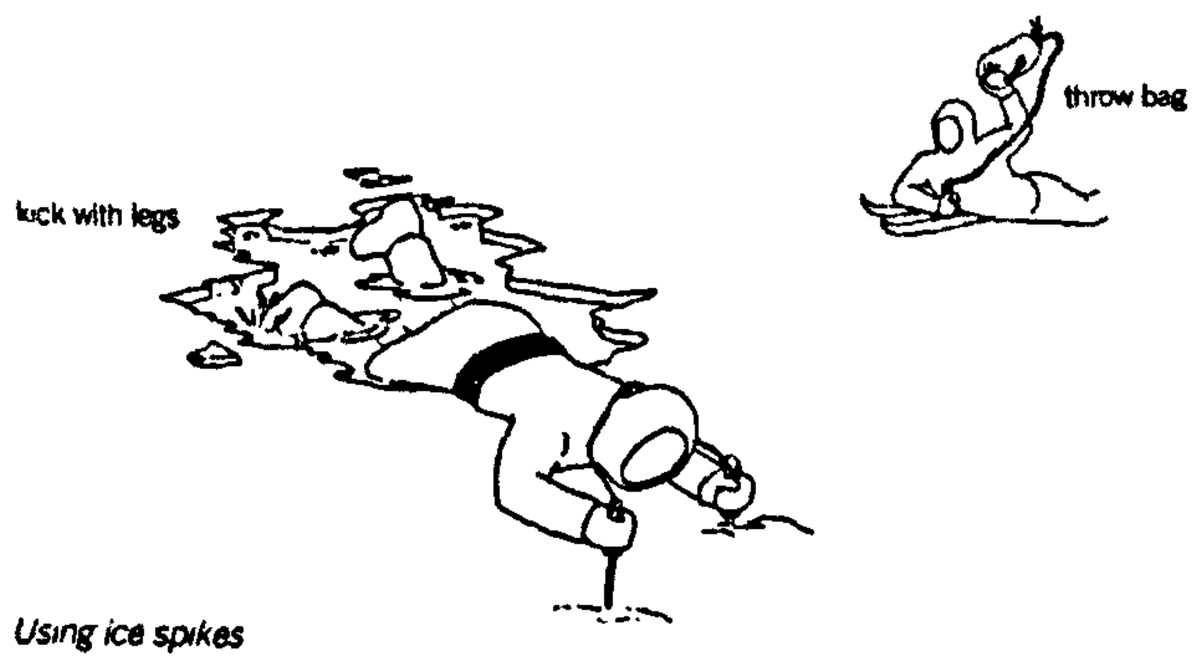
[288] Ibid., 285.
[289] Ibid., 285.
[290] Pyne 1998, 6.
[291] Markham 1901, viii.

Antarctic, and the short season of light. The communication of visible truths in the field was fleeting and so delimited by the appearances of surface rather than depth. Through the material object, the substance of depth was realised, but this could only happen once the object had been dislocated from the field. This mobility of objects allowing a literal *stilling* through the removal of the climatic conditions that obscured viewing perceptions. It is precisely in an attempt to counter the flow of information, and the deluge that it threatened, that geography's points of transmission (as units of geographical data) become so significant to allow an aestheticised approach to the new landscape. As the bits of geographical data held the site still, discovery rather than destabilisation occurred. The frequent disordering of such communicative strategies in the Antarctic suggests that its *bits of geographical data* had a profoundly disorientating affect on its explorers. From mirages to snow blindness, seeing stable geographical data in the landscape was continually thwarted.



Using ice spikes

One important means of arrest was instrumentation, which formed an extension to the observations of the body and at best, regulated its excesses or tendencies to disorder. Such a model of organisation was not, however standard across the sciences. Blanford, for example explains with considerable pride, how the geologist is situated in a different contemplation of time that that of other scientists;

> in the wasting operations of air, rain, frost, rivers, waves, and the other denuding agents on the surface of the globe, he sees the processes which have planed down whole continents, levelled mountain ranges, hollowed out great valleys...[292]

The geologist witnessed geological time, not merely the 'wasting operations' of weather, but the processes that have laid down the Antarctic continent. And by '*not trusting to memory*', the location and aspects of observation, the explorer could order time so as to make useful discoveries. Rather than arresting time, the geological method that Blanford champions, places the body as a witness to deep tectonic time.

According to Blanford, in his discussion of the outfitting, the geologist in the field is a keen observer not subservient to technologically complex instrumentation;

> *Outfit* - The essential articles of a geologist's outfit are neither numerous nor cumbrous. A very large proportion of the known geology of the world has been

[292] Blanford 1901, 180.

> made out with no more elaborate appliances than a hammer, a pocket compass with small index to serve as clinometer, a pocket lens, a note-book and a pencil. No scientific observer has to depend more on his own knowledge and faculty for observation, and less on instrumental appliances, than the geologist.[293]

The author clearly makes distinctions between the geologist and his 'outfit' and other scientific practices that required much more instrumentation to convey and produce valid observations. This lack of dependence, suggests the author, gives the geologist a heroic freedom in the field, unencumbered by instrumentation (only rocks). The body of the geologist is the site of observation, his eye and knowledge the optic of opportunity. Strict measures are given on labelling and numbering to avoid a situation of doubt, so that the collector "in after years feel sure that his tickets and references are correct". Thus, Blanford highlights how there is no simple translation between what constitutes useful knowledge, and that which is observed. The concerns over communicable truths from the field are concerns about the capability of the communicator of the landscape. The information is simply there. The successful geologist is an ordered and ordering body in the landscape that traverses the limits of communication and negotiates its mobility. As Outram argues, the explorer was in the business of the "gaining of new knowledge in conditions of continuous transition" wherein the explorer, as a body in the field was inculcated in the location and dislocation, caused by the production of new knowledges. And moreover, it was a production predicated on continuous and precarious transmission, from the feedback of the landscape as cognitive information, to the difficulties of speaking the new.

Armed with the pragmatism of ordering the new, through tested strategies the author concludes, re-stating his concept of good geologist practice (authors italics):

> In conclusion, it may be re-urged that the geologist must bear in mind that *to collect specimens* is the least, though a very important, part of his labour. If he collects *fossils* he can hardly go wrong; if he be so fortunate as to find the *bones of any of the higher animals*, he will, in all probability make an important discovery. Let him, however, remember that he will add greatly to the value of his fossils by *labelling* every single specimen, by never *mingling* those from *two formations*, and by describing the *succession of the strata* whence they are disinterred.[294]

The discovery of a fact of geology was predicated on rigorously disciplined collection, categorisation, dislocation, and organisation of material. The successful geologist, according to Blanford must use his body as the site of observation to imagine and experience Antarctica, and his mind to categorise, dislocate, and produce it. As a Cartesian body of inquiry in the landscape, information could be received and internalised through the body, and made objective through the arranging of these observations by mental labour and

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[293] Ibid., 180.
[294] Ibid., 187.

exacting classification. At the very least, the explorer was a data collector – a hauler of rocks for the metropole – at best, these objects secured the narration (and thus the narrator) of exotic curiosities.

Narrative was a form of aesthetic instrumentation that crafted the density of objects, more than it was a medium for the translation of things. And thus, it had a transitional quality that acted as an aesthetcising lens onto the unknown and peculiar. I quote Arthur E. Shipley's narrative of the ABYSMAL FAUNA OF THE ANTARCTIC REGION at length, to demonstrate the conjuring curiosity of such narratives:

> No light from the sun penetrates the deep sea. There is no day and night. In connection with this absence of light from without certain animals, notably the Fishes, Crustacea, some Echinoderms, and Worms, have developed phosphorescent organs, but the part they play in illuminating the depths can hardly be greater that that of the policemen's bull's-eye in lighting up London during a November fog. Corresponding with this darkness, lit up by an occasional phosphorescent flash, the animals of the depths have either lost, or are losing, their visual organs, or have developed enormous eyes... If we could see the bottom of the deep sea, we should see, except in those few places where a current is active...Certain curious features occur over and over again in the deep-sea creatures for which there seems no obvious reason.[295]

The author goes on to describe how the creatures who have retained eyes, "have, so to speak, followed an evolutionary path in the opposite direction, and instead of evolving immense eyes, have suppressed eyes altogether, their place has been taken by a great development of tactile organs."[296] The concern with *seeing* that permeates the account is paralleled with the attempt to shed the light of knowledge onto such abysmal depths. To make visible, is to make knowledge. And the descriptive narrative is one of the fundamental tools in the process of this visibility. In a world structured into the explainable and the peculiar, the new introduced doubt only in so much as it questioned the order of things, but not the ordering strategies. It is not difficult to see how the scientific manuals furnished and gave plausibility to other secondary narratives, such as the florid world of Jules Verne's fiction.

Considering the next extract from Shipley's account of Abysmal Fauna, the voids of Antarctic knowledge rather than suggesting the vulnerability of knowledge formations, simply suggest the fantastical and decidedly un-modern forms of life that 'for no obvious reason' exhibit a reversal of the order of things. The combination of a deep time of organisms and the challenge of making visible such curiosities was compelling to audiences.

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[295] Arthur E. Shipley, "XVIII. ZOOLOGY: ON THE ABYSMAL FAUNA OF THE ANTARCTIC REGION" in Murray 1901, 243-244.
[296] Ibid., 245.

> The existence of the stalked Crinoids, otherwise only known as fossils, of the deep-sea Medusæ, to which Haeckel attributes an archaic structure, of remarkable forms of deep-sea forms Holothuridoids and Trunicates, goes far to fulfil the hopes with which the voyage of the *Challenger* set forth... There, undisturbed by the fret of tide or current, in quiet and gloom, they have developed into new forms, which are as characteristic of the depths of the great Ocean as a mountain-fauna is of the Alpine Heights.[297]

The fascination and curiosity of such scientific narrative fuelled and reflected the *new forms* that Antarctic exploration offered. As Shipley comments, the realm of the deep Antarctic beds is equal to the world's other exotic regions, of the great oceans or Alpine heights. Narrative is clearly part of the scientific apparatus - the ability to tell a good yarn, to excite, stimulate (and embellish, where appropriate) was part of the expectation and construction of scientific accounts. As Michael Bravo and Sverker Sörlin comment, narratives "are not only a means of describing material practices... they are practices in their own right'.[298] Narrative considered as an instrument in the field, was one of the means by which the "deep-sea Medusæ" could be arrested and aestheticised into image. In this aesthetic conversion, the power of arrest that the Medusæ possessed was harnessed through the shielding mirror of scientific narration.

Consequently, the section on 'Geography' in the Manual is organised as a two-fold discipline of narration and cartography. This indicates how the received narrations of previous exploration shaped and modelled subsequent ones. More importantly, it demonstrates how the practices of narration and cartography provided a body of spatial writing that was both poetic and seemingly objectified in the measuring and observing of geographical formations. This dual process of the *sensual* and *serious* descriptive registers of observation gave geography its shape, as a convincing form of knowledge production. The terrain is thus mapped imaginatively, and the points of transmission verified through instrumentation, forming a self-supporting transaction of knowledge formation. The cartographic map provides the *site* on which the narrative can take place; a tableau of exploration based on the interaction between these two practices. The truth basis of both these transactions are, as Outram argues, based on the body of the explorer, his observation and the narration of his body within a new landscape.

By demonstrating the dilemmas of verifying truth and securing a stable relation between knowledge and knower in both the physical and ideological sense, Outram argues that body of the explorer secures the field and field knowledge. As the body learns, Outram argues, it also teaches, "What the explorer's body taught its witnesses allowed them to believe. That

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[297] Ibid., 246.
[298] Bravo & Sörlin 2002, 24.

body was a living proof of the otherwise unseen and un-seeable vastness of the world."[299] As the body of the explorer was the guarantor of truth through its witnessing of the new landscapes of exploration, it was also the point of relay for the landscape. In the explorer's body the landscape was realised, ice crystal by ice crystal, and its affects pictured, ordered, recorded and orientated. The processes and problems of locating the body in the landscape and the landscape in the body formed the nexus of the explorer's orientation. It was however, a necessity for a *mobile visibility* that secured that orientation.

The Antarctic explorers, furnished with the *Antarctic Manual* were armed with communication strategies to arrest the data flow of landscape that threatened to overwhelm them by its constant transmission. It is clearly hinted in their actions (compulsive returns to Antarctica/depression) and their accounts that much else remained in their bodies and in their cognition of the Antarctic landscape that was in excess of the visual, and that could never be transmitted. As Outram concludes, we have not escaped the dilemmas that haunted exploration knowledge in the Enlightenment, because we have "not yet come to terms with the cognitive and moral issues involved in making dislocated images of in fact located objects."[300] The comprehension of our historically constituted *communication strategies* (or modes of visibility) and beyond their limits, to the possibilities of imagining another more fully constituted landscapes, thus remains. In the processes of making landscape visible, and making that visibility mobile, our cognitive and ethical issues are still are located.

Fabian argues that, far from being an uncomplicated resolve, the arrests of imperialism were "inherently contradictory - indeed anarchic - so that their true nature had to be concealed or, better, negated by projecting to the world images of a purposeful *oeuvre civilisatrice*: intrepid explorers mapping the unknown."[301] The project of negation, that Fabian presents, and is evident in the *transportable territories* of the explorer's knowledges, suggests that Antarctic explorers existed at the margin of ordered and disordered landscapes, the floes literally falling apart beneath their feet. Their manual was a cognitive and practical guide for keeping the landscape in its place, a means to arrest its flow. That is not to say that such ordering was possible.

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[299] Outram 1999, 291.
[300] Ibid., 292.
[301] Fabian 2000, 4.

The organisation that the Manual effected set in place a rigidity of encounter, like its sub-sections of disciplines. It organised Antarctica in an inert space, excluding any disrupting aspects of the landscape, or simply acknowledging this disruption as strangely ordered things from the abysmal zone. It is the historic legacy of this ordering strategy of Antarctic encounters, finding no disruption in the subsequent years that lead to its excessive conclusion - the landscape designated as laboratory.[302]

Control mechanisms in the 'Frozen Laboratory'

The instigation of the 'Frozen Laboratory' proceeded directly from the regimes of knowledge production that were initiated by the Antarctic Manual. As science became increasingly atomised into specialist fields - supported by the development of national Antarctic organisations (such as BAS and the USAP/NSF) - increasing control over the explorer/scientist in the field ensued. The conversion of the field into the laboratory was achieved through this rationalisation. The field is constituted by a complex variety of embodied spatial practices that involve the arresting/ordering of fleeting, and often overwhelming phenomena; the laboratory is a more controlled and regulated environment, a space of repeatable experimentation. By transferring the metaphor and concept of the laboratory onto the field, the acknowledgement of a "more open and diffuse space"[303] is subsumed under the auspices of control. By passing the "complex and contested enterprise"[304] of making knowledge in the field, the conceptualising of Antarctica as a frozen laboratory elides the most interesting dynamics of that production, and relegates landscape to an inert surface of information upon which science extracts. This neutralises the landscape's informational relay at the source of its transmission. Making the field into laboratory closes down the ambiguities of knowledge production and the potential for snow that inhabits all informational structures. In this transformation, the ablating action of the Antarctic landscape is silenced.

Antarctica conceived of as the 'Frozen Laboratory', emphasises the conditions upon which scientific knowledge production rests. The laboratory is a condition of the achievement of meaningful experimentation in scientific practice: a place of discovery and the production of

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[302] The Antarctic Manual continued to be used until it was replaced by field guides that gave technical instructions, first aid directions etc. Contemporary field guides are for practical use and include no narratives or discussions of science - which has been atomised into discipline specific knowledges. One interesting manifestation of the Antarctic manual was the production of manuals by Brian Roberts at SPRI for the Admiralty during World War II. The manuals were intended as geographical handbooks for soldiers working in snow and cold climate conditions. Arctic and Antarctic research had provided extensive knowledges for war time combat in adverse conditions, and many of the items listed for soldiers were under the 'Shackleton Pattern'. (Source: SPRI Archives, Brian Roberts MS 1308/52).
[303] Driver 2000, 267-8.
[304] ibid.

legitimate facticity. Thus, the laboratory is a basic instrument in the organisation of the modern scientific fact. And so, it is the condition of the laboratory sutured into the landscape, which makes Antarctica the site of the production of scientific knowledges. In this reciprocal production, Antarctica is made and re-made as laboratory, as part of the continuum of the production of scientific facts about the continent. Every discovery is also a confirmation of the site as laboratory. Only through other ways of making knowledges that do not require a laboratory as the condition of production, will the site expand beyond this enclosure. Considering a re-siting of Antarctic fields, artistic practice that requires the studio as its site of production reproduces a laboratory effect, rather than contesting this arrangement.

The historic transition of the site of knowledge production - from the body of the explorer to the laboratory- shifts *being in the field* from an embodied metaphor to a spatial one. A specialist scientist that conducts research in the Antarctic replaces the Antarctic explorer as amateur scientist and/or data collector. The space of control expands beyond the Antarctic Manual to the whole continent during the increasing technical manifestation of scientific practice, and to some extents beyond the scientist to his technology. The *Ice Cube* of a physics experiment, or the ice core that measures millions of years of climatic conditions, becomes the axis of the narrative of science. The contemporary scientist is an anonymous being, unlike the sentient body of the early explorer - exposed and vulnerable to the Antarctic weather, clutching a frozen manual under his arm as the only form of protection with which to encounter Nature. The early explorer wrestled, like Epstein's *Jacob and the Angel*, to maintain control of his body in the landscape – such as Scott's wrestling with himself as man, leader, moral and finally physical body (no cocaine tablets were taken at the end). What the 1961 AT achieved was the extension of the rationale of control from the body to an entire landscape - which was to be enjoyed as the scientists' own exclusive laboratory, until the 1980s.

The implementation of the Protocol, while recognising the need for environmental protection by national organisations, highlighted the concern that accompanied this challenge to the autonomy of science in Antarctic. The National Research Council's 1993 report - made at the request of the US Department of State - to address the potential issues of impact on scientific programmes by the implementation of the Protocol, is an example of the anxieties that such regulations brought to the practice of Antarctic science:

> there is reasonable concern that the implementation of the Protocol could harm the science required for environmental protection, including scientific monitoring. There are also questions as to whether the traditional primacy of scientific excellence as the

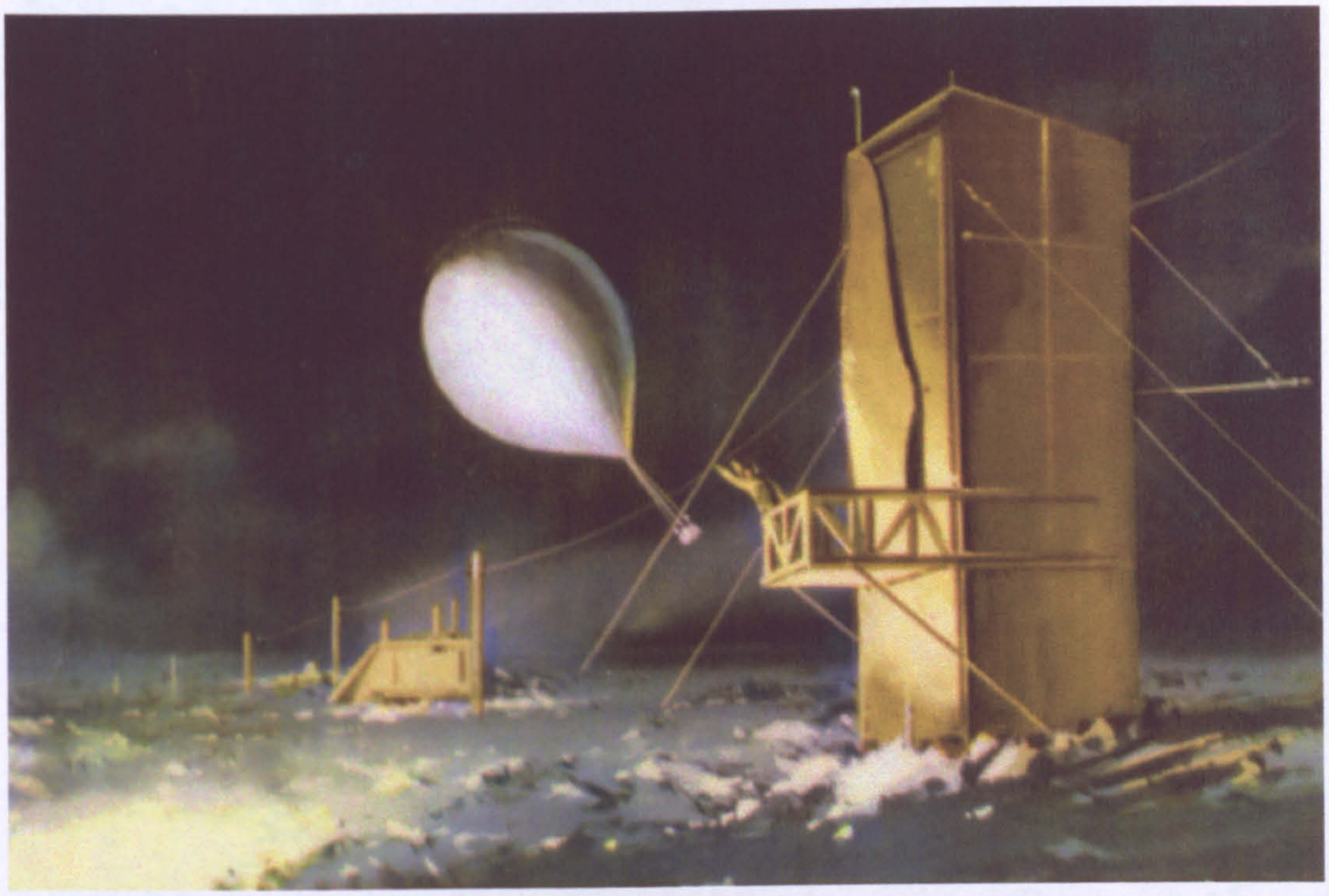

Plate 19

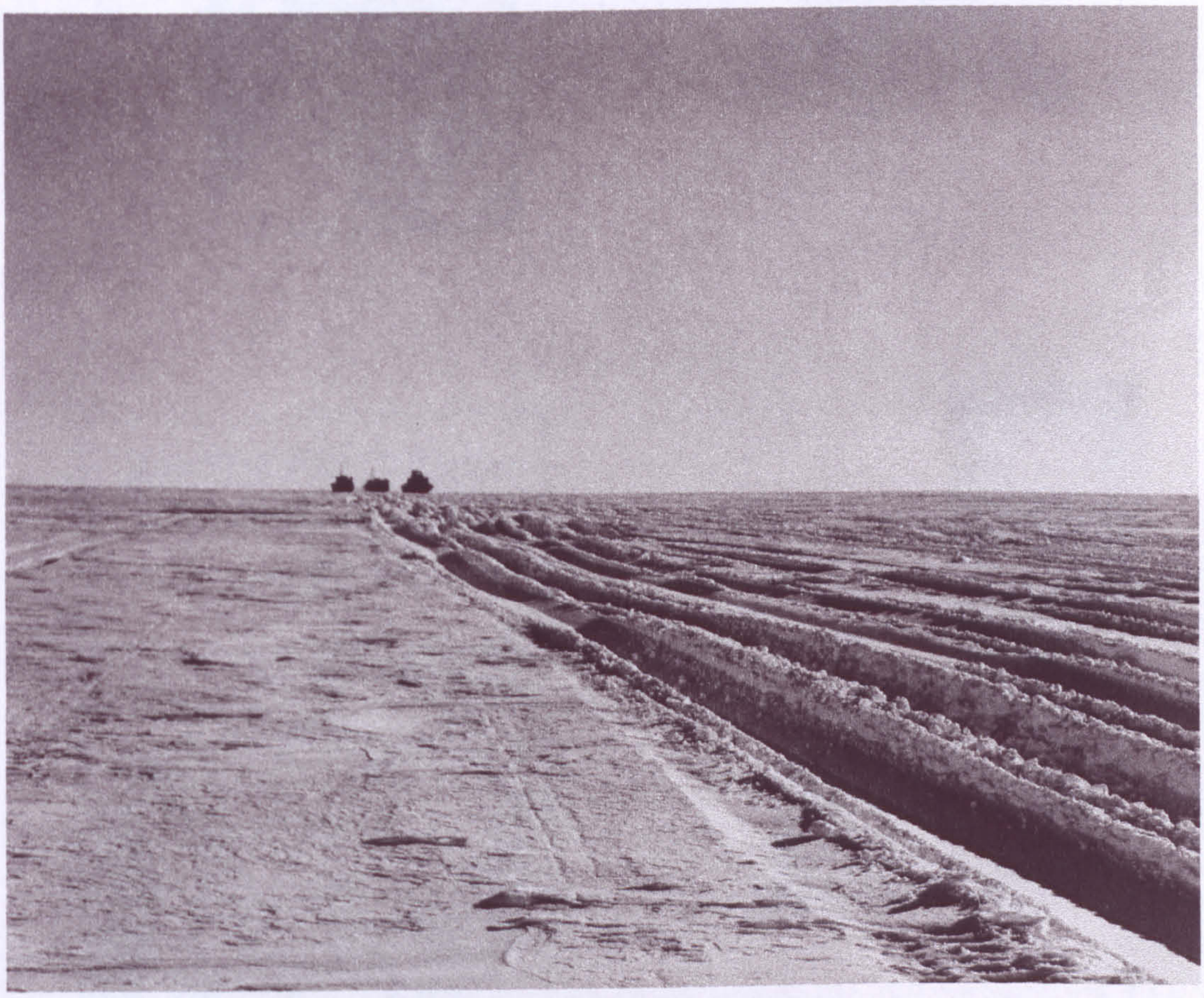

Plate 20


1966
10к.
ПОЧТА СССР
10 ЛЕТ СОВЕТСКИХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ В АНТАРКТИКЕ
14-1 63
СТАНЦИЯ В АНТАРКТИКЕ «ВЕЛИНГСГАУЗЕН»


1966
ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ В АНТАРКТИКЕ
ПОЧТА СССР
10к.
14-1 63
СТАНЦИЯ В АНТАРКТИКЕ «ВЕЛИНГСГАУЗЕН»


АНТАРКТИДА-
КОНТИНЕНТ
мира и
ДРУЖБЫ
СССР
АНТАРКТИДА-КОНТИНЕНТ МИРА И ДРУЖБЫ
МОСКВА К-9 26/I 1961г

Plate 21

Plate 22

Plate 23

Plate 24

Plate 25

Plate 26

> principal determinant of the research to be pursued might be superseded by other criteria.[305]

The introduction to the report displays explicit concerns over external regulation and control, and the possible encroachment that 'other criteria' may have on scientific activities. While it was considered that external accountability may mean more automated instrumentation and remote sensing which "should be strongly encouraged",[306] there were concerns over the bureaucratic invasion that outside forces may bring with them. As it contends,

> Many Antarctic scientists have concerns, however, that the journey through the bureaucracy of required forms and approval loops may become figuratively more arduous than the journey to the continent itself... Specific requirements must be measured not only in their adherence to the Protocol, but also by their impact on the ability of researchers to conduct not just science, but the best science.[307]

The evident preciousness - that having the optimum conditions to do the 'best science' - is due to the history of an almost exclusive space of inquiry since 1957-8 when permanent science bases were settled on a continuous basis. This gave scientists unprecedented control in managing the borders of the field and on disseminating an image of the Antarctic as a space of the discovery of scientific facts. One of the crucial aspects of the Protocol, that goes unmentioned that had one of the biggest effects on science activities in Antarctica, was managing the visibility of the field. The challenge that the Greenpeace activities posed to the control of the *image* of Antarctica demonstrated the importance of visibility in the production of knowledge. A specific way in which the visibility of the field has considerably changed since the 1980s is by the investment in Artist and Writers Programmes by national programmes.

Artist & Writers Programmes

The creation of the Artists and Writers programmes in America, Australia, New Zealand and Britain formalised a hitherto haphazard process of artistic engagement with Antarctica since its exploration began. The artist and photographer of the 'heroic era' had a clearly defined role in producing the expedition for home audiences, against which images helped to secure considerable sponsorship monies for the expedition. Thereafter artists have travelled to the region as guests of scientific programs and by private expeditions. One example is Edward Seago who visited Antarctica in 1956-57 on board *Her Majesty's Royal Yacht Britannia* and the BAS *John Biscoe* at the request of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh (who was returning from the 1956 Melbourne Olympics). The Trip was made as part of what James Reid, the publisher of the monograph, *Edward Seago, The Landscape Art*

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[305] National Research Council, *Science and Stewardship in the Antarctic* (Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1993) viii.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Ibid., 48.

was to later call, "The World Tour of 1956-57: Antarctica, the South Atlantic and West Africa". Buffered by the enveloping agency of the sea - traditionally associated with Britain's historical prowess over maritime space - the journey made by the Royal Yacht had all the flavour of the grand tours of the colonial era connecting the last remaining 'pink bits' left on the map; South Georgia, the Falklands, Gough Island, Tristan da Cunha, St. Helena, Ascension Island and the Gambia. It must have felt like one of the last great colonial journeys, albeit to a smaller more fragmented imperial world, that was at the time embracing the post-colonial politics of international co-operation of the Antarctic IGY. This emphasises how the illusion of the status quo of imperial journeys, and the rationalisation of modern scientific practice could exist alongside each other.

Today, the Royal Yacht having been scrapped, Seago may well have travelled down to the Antarctic on the BAS Artists and Writers Program (2002). Seago went to Antarctica as a privileged friend and was securely embedded in the aesthetic of a colonial landscape tradition, and so was immune from the politics that such journeys bring for contemporary artists. The role of the contemporary artist in Antarctica - ambiguously placed between the disciplines of science and art and between national and critical landscape traditions - is much less clearly defined. By looking at the application and selection criteria for these programmes, the representative strategies (and thus ideological structures) that govern national programmes, can be located.

The NSF was the first official Antarctic programme which energetically embraced sending Artists and Writers to Antarctica (1957), followed by the AAD Humanities Program (1987), then ANZ 'Artists to Antarctica' (1998) and lastly the BAS Artists and Writers program (2002).[308] The role of the artists within these programmes is conceived by the NSF to be "that the artist utilise the arts and letters primarily to advance understanding of Antarctica, rather than the other way around... the projects must result in works that are *representative* of Antarctica or of activities in Antarctica".[309] The language of 'representation' is further clarified by proposing work that 'looks like Antarctica' and is not abstract. The insistence on a realist aesthetic precludes most modern and contemporary critical art practice, and furthermore suggests a *defined* image of Antarctica. NSF promotes the utilisation of aesthetics "To enable interpretation and presentation of the Nation's Antarctic heritage".[310] This demonstrates how

[308] All four of these countries had artists travelling to Antarctic with science programmes before they were officially organised under specific programmes.
[309] http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp 25/04/02
[310] ibid.

the programmes are seen to actively construct national heritage - to "utilize serious writing[311] and the arts in order to increase understanding of the Antarctic and help document America's heritage resulting from activities there". Art practice is conceived solely on the utility value of its aesthetic to communicate national activities and heritage – wherein there is a politics of aestheticisation.

Art, considered as a communication utility, is product rather than practice. This point is made emphatically by BAS Director, Chris Rapley, who explains: "The primary objective of this new Programme is to increase public interest and awareness of BAS science and its importance to Earth System Studies".[312] Conceptually the function of artist is to illustrate the practice of national science, transferring the mantle of 'the myth of the explorer-hero' to 'the myth of the scientist-hero', and thus maintaining the tradition that has co-joined the arts and science in the age of imperial exploration. The New Zealand objectives initially seem to embrace a more holistic approach, suggesting the role artistic practice may provide in confronting the questions that activities in the Antarctic,

> In an age of diminishing resources and frontiers Antarctica has become a symbol of wilderness and natural heritage. On one hand it holds the key to understanding the impacts of humans in the global ecosystem, on the other its very presence offers hope that we can learn to live in harmony with that environment and each other. The Artists to Antarctica programme aims to encourage understanding among New Zealanders of the values of Antarctica and its importance to us as a nation.[313]

ANZ's *Vision* supports this notion of, "Antarctica: refreshing global ecosystems and the human spirit". But as the above quotation indicates, as a human becomes a New Zealander, a global vision becomes a national vision, and Antarctica is spatially limited to the Ross Dependency. The overriding theme to all of these programmes is the consolidation of national interests defined through the discipline of science by aesthetic practice.

The number of applications to the programs differs but traditionally it is very small compared to other competitive artistic fellowships, for example the NSF receive 12-22 applications annually and typically select 3 (fellowships have been awarded evenly to photographers, writers and painters). The gender differentiation is strongly biased, with 18 out of 27 recipients being male, and there is almost no representation from ethnic minorities or

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[311] This does not include academic work as no academic writer or researcher has been part of the NSF's Artists and Writers program. The US academic Chris Joyner (International law) had to go with the New Zealanders in 2001 because of a lack of sponsorship from the NSF.

[312] Press release, 10 January 2001 PR No.1/2001 Issued by BAS Press Office

[313] ANZ leaflet, 'Opportunities for Artists and Journalists to visit Antarctica' See http://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz/artists2.html 7/21/99

indigenous peoples.[314] This upholds a history of Antarctica as predominately a space in which the dominant social actors are white males. Artists in Antarctica are commonly referred to across Antipodean and US Antarctic cultures, as *Jafa's*, which means "just another fucking academic".[315] This indicates something of the prevalent cultural attitudes to non-scientific staff.

The assessment procedure for programmes is slightly different, but in all cases, scientists manage the programmes. Applications to the NSF are judged by, "A National Science Foundation panel consisting of staff scientists and science administrators who are knowledgeable of and sympathetic towards the liberal arts".[316] BAS assessment is conducted by "an independent review panel of eminent individuals from the worlds of art and science."[317] An administrator runs the AAD selection process, and then applications are put before a review panel of scientists. Only the BAS programme is co-facilitated by the Arts Council - the other programmes relying on the 'sympathies' of those inclined to 'the liberal arts'. Far from any serious consideration of critical artistic practice that is inclusive of differing practices and media, as well as differing practitioners, the arts programmes are an exercise in aestheticising national and science agendas (this is not to say that critical art practice is not a possibility within these programmes).

Controlling the artistic production of Antarctica and by extension the visual space of Antarctica is specifically located in the failure of 1980s CRAMRA campaign. Scalded by the political success of the NGOs communication campaign, national programmes (post Protocol), began to invest heavily in the imaging Antarctica and the building of visual archives to wrestle control back from their critics[318] and to bolster the scientific communities self image. After enduring taunts of 'dirty scientists', there was a need to re-promote and re-brand scientific activities as; (a) environmentally aware (b) inclusive of non-scientific activities (c) able to communicate with lay public (d) the primary activity in Antarctica that was consistent with envisaging Antarctica as a spiritual/sacred/beautiful/natural place, rather than opposed to these (making criticism an incorporated part of participation and collaboration). In order to regain control of the visual terrain of Antarctica - coupled with increasing developments in scientific visualisation, a greater emphasis on visualising

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[314] Two Aboriginal artists, Rose Bauman and Lin Onus went to Antarctica during the 1993 UN Year of Indigenous People.
[315] Jan Sensbergs, *Voyage Six – Antarctica* (Melbourne: Powell Street Gallery, 12-29 April 1988), 7.
[316] http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp 25/04/02
[317] http://www.bas.co.uk 25/04/02
[318] This included a desire to wrestling control back from the post-colonial nations such as India and Malaysia that had led to the UN 'Question on Antarctica', by re-investing in images from the 'heroic age' of exploration and thus Antarctica's 'white histories'. This is perhaps most blatantly demonstrated by stamp design where both Australian and Britain have produced stamps that display a past/present image of Antarctica's white 'actors', but is also inferred through a multitude of other cultural practices. See Dodds & Yusoff 2005.

knowledge, and the importance of spectatorship to tourism[319] - science engaged in a prolific visualisation of Antarctica. The 1990s saw a significant re-structuring of political power around a visual economy.

Controlling the means of production in the Frozen Laboratory has regulated artistic practice as well as marginalising the possibility of a critical visual culture. Concentration on the *object* of art practice has rendered forms of practice that are not reflexive to site, thus repeating the limitations of scientific methodologies to engage with place. The artist in Antarctica is placed at the intersection of a complex exchange between the aesthetics of landscape and the politics of landscape aesthetics, and the work must be considered within this context. Rosalind Krauss[320] argues that photographs cannot be removed from the context of their production, claiming that, "'the discursive space' of an expeditionary photographer was not the same 'discursive space' of a Parisian painter".[321] Locating the artist historically in the field, and thus in an appropriate discursive space, is a necessity for a reflexive practitioner. The artist in Antarctica is a historic subject who has been instrumental in determining the form and visibility of the narratives of Imperial journeys. While the work of the early expedition artists remains outside this frame (in popular culture), the significance and effect of their work in making a particular kind of Antarctic visible is neglected. Because of the current forms of patronage and the severe limitations that they impose, a critical position may well be outside of the physical landscape. To not go there[322] or remain with the archives/museum (as in Rachel Weiss' project *Imagining Antarctica)* resists the forms of regulation that national programmes exert.

One emerging form of cultural criticism that remains firmly outside the landscape is that from the academy. Unrestrained by national patronage, Antarctic cultural criticism is an emerging discipline. One of the main problems is that these accounts are produced at a distance from the landscape, so potentially run the risk of reducing Antarctica to its representational strategies – its geography to informational systems. Spufford acknowledges in a later piece of writing (written after the author's first trip to Antarctica) how his work missed part of the engagement with the landscape by concentrating on what was said rather than that which was not. As he recounts, "But I now see I was missing a good half of the encounter. I missed

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[319] Marc Augé, *Non Places* Trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 1995).
[320] *Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's discursive spaces" in Visual Culture: The Reader* eds. Jessica Evans & Stuart Hall, (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 193-209.
[321] For a discussion of the discursive spaces of landscape photography, see Synder 1994, 191-2.
[322] Another form of resituating knowledge production is the recent strands of 'Antarctic Knowledges' that have taken place within the academy at conferences - CSAA Annual Conference Christchurch NZ, December 2003, 12th IHG, Auckland NZ, December 2003 and the AAG Conference, Philadelphia, March 2004.

all this silent space around me; I missed the bodily reality of all the actions done in it."[323] By missing the exclusions and dilemmas that went unrepresented, and the representations that remained to stand in for all of their experience, he effectively wrote out the landscape.

In contrast, Pyne's *The Ice* offers a very different Antarctica that is both visceral in its physical descriptions, and attentive to the intellectual construction of the Antarctic. His chapter 'Heart of Whiteness',[324] offers probably the most thought provoking consideration of Antarctic art in the wider context of mainstream art movements,[325] although ultimately, this analysis is sacrificed to the wider aims of the book to see the Antarctic as an 'esthetic sink' rather than adequately examining why the Antarctic has never received the attention of 'high culture'.[326] Part of the neglect of the visual by critics of Antarctic culture in favour of literature has to be attributed, in part, to the enthusiasm with which key figures in literature have embraced the symbolic and physical space of Antarctica as a territory in which to engage with utopian projects. This willingness to see the polar environs as a metaphoric horizon beyond which utopian imaginings can be fantasised, has attracted an impressive range of writers to tackle and appropriate this space, such as Poe, Melville, Shelley and Coleridge and some well known science fiction writers such as Verne and Lovecraft (and a glut of less accomplished ones). This tradition has continued in contemporary literature - from the popular travel log of *Terra Incognita* by Sara Wheeler[327] (where she weaves her own journey of recovery to promote a utopian landscape of spiritual restoration[328]) to the science fiction of Kim Stanley Robinson's[329] *Antarctica* (in which he attempts to synthesis Antarctica's utopian potential through a kind of role-playing with the 'key players' in the Antarctic game). Contrary to Antarctic art, which has historically only found expression in discrete public spaces such as the local museums of 'gateway' towns (such as Hobart Museum and Art gallery[330] and Canterbury Art Gallery and Museum, Christchurch), or in the portfolios of individual artists. As Pyne comments:

> Antarctica has never made a Xanadu, a Hudson River, a Montparnasse; no art colony has flourished there, no cultural icon emerged from its discovery, no archetypal images emanate from its scenery; no artist or period made Antarctica its own.[331]

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[323] Francis Spufford, "On Observation Hill" in *Women and children first*, (Granta 67 Autumn 1999)
[324] Pyne 1998, 149-207.
[325] Pyne successfully demonstrates how the terrain of art and science diverge after the culture of exploration becomes a culture of science. Pyne 1998, 149-207.
[326] Pyne concludes that modernism had the conceptual apparatus to deal with the Antarctic, but not the interest; in this he misses the point of modernism's self-referential dialectic that had no interest in site.
[327] Sarah Wheeler visited Antarctica as an NSF Fellow in 1994/1995 and also made a trip to the Peninsula with BAS, 1995.
[328] This is the theme of Jenny Diski's novel *Skating to Antarctica* (London: Granta, 1997).
[329] Kim Stanley Robinson was an NSF Fellow in 1994-5.
[330] An example of which is the photographic exhibition *Looking South*, 19 December 1995 Hobart.
[331] Pyne 1998, 150.

The marginality of artists interested in the Antarctic has been matched by the marginality of the spaces of display and dissemination of this work. Although a self-fulfilling relation, this marginality (that is dramatically changing) highlights some of the tensions of situating the work and suggesting the types of audience that it can expect. Outside of the concern of critical art practice, Antarctica has not functioned as a site that has attracted significant attention from high profile critical artists until recently - predominately because of the reconsideration of site-specific art practice.

Historically, there have been many amateur art exhibitions,[332] such as *Images of the great south land* (1997) at the National Wool Museum, Geelong celebrating 'Fifty years of Antarctic vision and endeavour by ANARE artists 1947-1997'.[333] Of the retrospectives of work that have taken place, most notably was *Antarctic Journey, Three Artists in Antarctica*, an exhibition of the work of three of Australia's artists, John Caldwell, Bea Maddock, Jan Sensberg at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, (Hobart 19th July 1988)[334] that launched the Australian Humanities program (1987). The catalogue is the only publication of its kind that draws on group interviews with the artists to consider the journey to/in Antarctica and the particular problems and opportunities it presents to artistic practice. Beyond these discrete spaces of exhibition catalogues and private collections with their limited audiences, where Antarctic art has had most exposure, it is to *illustrate* other forms of Antarctic activity such as national science program's annual reports (or walls) or on the covers of Antarctic related literature. Courtney Kidd, one of the few critics to consider 'Antarctic art' as a possible theme, concludes:

> Artists who use Antarctica as a catalyst for their work have no common aesthetic - what they do share is the desire to use Antarctica as subject for their unique way of communicating an ideology and thus interpretation.[335]

Contrary to Kidd's reluctance to consider expeditionary art within the same discursive space as that of other contemporary art practice, the international travelling exhibition *Imagining Antarctica* (1984-86) curated by Rachel Weiss, explores a broad range of images and ideas about Antarctica. It included the work of some forty artists from around the world including Robert Smithson (USA), Nancy Holt (USA), Herbert Ponting (England), Wolfgang Hahn (BRD), Jose Bedia Valdes (Cuba), Thorbjorn Lausten (Denmark) and Marjorie Agosin (Chile).

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[332] Other amateur exhibitions include three exhibitions held in the Antarctic Division's Conference Room, Melbourne, on behalf of the ANARE club and the (then) Antarctic Wives Association in 1972, 1975 and 1979, showing a variety of paintings, drawings and cartoons as well as handicrafts.
[333] Exhibition catalogue, published by ANARE CLUB Inc., Melbourne.
Photographs of the work are stored in the AAD archive (Images 2186B3 to 2193C2).
[334] Exhibition catalogue *'Antarctic Journey, Three Artists in Antarctica'*, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services, 1988).
[335] Courtney Kidd, "The Unframed Eye, perspectives on Antarctica" in *Art and Australia* (Vol. 33 No.4 Winter 1996), 505.

The exhibition started at the Stadtmuseum, Linz, Austria in 1986, and travelled to many museums and galleries around the world. Rachel Weiss was sponsored by the NSF Antarctic fellowship program, but did not receive logistical support to visit Antarctica, suggesting that any sort of installation work is not considered as 'appropriate' art.

Indeed, the regulations state that artists must avoid work that is "excessively abstract, or not recognisable as having come from the Antarctic".[336] This highlights the mode of realism that is in operation, and the dynamics of an audit culture that requires a recognisable object. Weiss' exhibition does what no previous review of the work has done, which is to situate scientific visualisation next to other artistic practice that imagines Antarctica, thus considering images of Antarctica in the same discursive space. In the catalogue, images of 74,000-year-old ice crystals can be viewed along side Robert Smithson's Antarctic map.

Given the investment (both financial and logistically) that national programmes have put into building a body of Antarctic art, there is no question of its perceived significance in the building of distinct Antarctic cultures. While the investment, in terms of logistical support is small in comparison to the support of science, art production about Antarctica has a disproportionately large significance in communicating about national science. Increasingly, national programmes not only control the means of production but are concerning themselves with disseminating the work, as is evident in ANARE and NSF publications, and ANZ's recent development of an Artists to Antarctica alumni.[337] The control of spaces of dissemination is set to increase as ANZ for example, outlined a plan in its Annual Report 2000/01 to develop an international exhibition of artist's works for 2003.[338] It currently spends the second largest amount of its budget, after science logistics on 'public awareness and education'[339] that includes the 'Artists to Antarctica' programme. There is also evidence that it is not only governmental bodies that are promoting Antarctic art, but also local interests, as part of a much bigger economic and cultural strategy to establish Antarctic 'gateways'[340] particularly in the southern hemisphere cities of Christchurch and Hobart, (where considerable investment is being placed in the consolidation and invention of Antarctic heritage).[341] And as national

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[336] Pyne 1998, 201.
[337] Antarctica New Zealand *Annual Report 2000/2001*, 30-31.
[338] Ibid., 34.
[339] In the financial year 2000/01 $816, 715 was spent on Public Awareness and Education $5, 209, 946 was spent on the planning and facilitation of Science, and considerably less $255, 986 on Environmental Stewardship. Antarctica New Zealand Annual Report 2000/2001 p36
[340] The establishment of Antarctic 'gateways' as centres of Antarctic culture has legal and political consequences for the contested claims of ownership over territory in Antarctica and the territory of the Southern Ocean. Establishing significant Antarctic traditions is as important mechanism in establishing the 'rights' of ownership and promoting Antarctic tourism, which brings in considerable revenue.
[341] Antarctica New Zealand also supported the Antarctic Heritage Trust, Antarctic Visitors Centre, Craig Potton Publishing, Kelly Tarlton's Underwater World and Antarctic Adventure, New Zealand Tourist Board in Antarctica

claims continue to produce contested territories in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, the *cultural capital* of a visual archive becomes increasingly important in securing Antarctic legitimacy and economies.

To this end, a gallery has been set up in Mawson Square, Hobart (2000) and a new wing at Canterbury Art Gallery and Museum, Christchurch (2003) to exhibit work collected from the artists in Antarctica program. A private sponsor, Sir Angus Tait, Chairman of Tait Mobile Radio NZ - which operates communications in Antarctica - donated the money for this extension. Investment in the intellectual and visual dimensions of communications then forms one strand in a larger commercial sphere of communications technologies that are practised and are tested through their usage in the Antarctic environment. The importance of communications in public relations, and in the field in the acceleration of the extraction and circulation of information, implicates any communicative strategy that operates in and describes a topology of the landscape, including art practice.

Conceived as a communication technology that circulates, an art object more readily displays its commodity form - through its mobility and by the lack of snow that inhabits its circulation. Snow is the interference that haunts transmissions, the broken signal that impedes the delivery of the message - the left over environment of communications. The snow in representation is that which resists the reduction to pure message, and thus to meaning – the interference caused by mobility – a snowstorm in communications. As such, it provides a useful metaphor - the acknowledgement of this breakdown is the acknowledgement of the limits of making dislocated images of a specific place.

Site-specific arts practice may offer a consideration of the site as place, rather than site as a location for the extraction of information, for science and communicators. Although, more precarious than is acknowledged - scientific field-practices are governed by *a priori* knowledge formations. The naming of Antarctica as a 'Frozen Laboratory' indicates the type of controlled and regulated space of engagement that disciplines such endeavours. A laboratory is a space of inertia (a zero value space or a *non-place* in Marc Augé's words)[342] in which experiments take place and theories are enacted. The laboratory evacuates the landscape, as it makes it anew through its reassembling of landscape information into data sets. The methodology touches the landscape through extraction, but never allows itself to be

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(source: Antarctica New Zealand *Annual Report 2000/2001*, 20) suggesting a strong financial link between the visual production of Antarctica and national economies.
[342] Augé 1995.

disorganised (or surrounded)[343] by it. The de-localisation of knowledge as a spatialising operation, Pratt argues, reduced both the difference and distance of the *entangled objects* from "the tangled threads of their surroundings".[344] The abstraction and extraction of objects from the systems in which they were located and their subsequent relocation onto the *tabula* (as Foucault argues) was both a visualizing and material operation.

As Foucault's taxonomy contends, the *tabula* offered a continued effort to secure the closing down of space between the representational system and the material object by spatial extraction. The importance of this spatial extraction is that it resides on the surface, by which I mean the visible surface, and does not penetrate beyond, to the excessive entangled invisibilities. What cannot be seen or what cannot be made visible through visualising practices (be they scientific visualisation or the application of instruments as interpretative mediums) literally remains ethereal. However the extraction is never complete, the flesh resides in the field and the field in the flesh. The isolated, named, pinned, dead creature on the *tabula* still calls forth a re-animation in a denser reality, where its liveliness expands beyond its contained death. As death makes creatures seem a little smaller than our cognition has them, we can understand the nature of this spatial contraction. The fragmentation of life into forms of arrest, not only deadens liveliness, but also diminishes spatial expansion while simultaneously stimulating it in the imagination. In the dialectic of spatial telescoping, liveliness is exchanged for the potency of signification, and the stabilisation it affords.

The importance of approaching landscape as an unbounded instance in a process of coming to, being in, and moving away, from place is not to repeat the *bounded*-ness of the scientific fact (or image) that creates itself as a complete world. By thinking through this aforementioned spatial contraction, we can look at how the *traces* of practice point towards the *residue* of a more energetically engaged presence. And how practice might, by acknowledging its *tabula* (or site of construction) admit how the residue of its extraction is but a small trace of much larger environs - the trace read as trace. The methodologies of site-specific critical art practice are organised around the site, and what it calls forth to the subject, it therefore offers a place from which to disorganise this field of logic.

By addressing some of the tensions about what constitutes a site, how it is located, and what the terms of specificity are, I have attempted to show that the site is a multi-constituted cognitive and materially place. For it to be a productive site from which to work, the tensions

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[343] For a discussion on the cognitive possibilities of 'surroundings' see Olafur Eliasson, *Surroundings Surrounded, Essays on Space and Science* ed. Peter Weibel (Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press, 2001)
[344] Pratt 1992, 31.

between the discursive and material, much like the tensions that worked through the explorer's body at the turn of the century, need to be held in a relational balance. In the subsequent sitings, I will consider site-specific art practice as a means of opening up a creative dialogue about possible (and actual approaches) to the site of Antarctic landscapes.

Plate 27

One's mind and the earth are in a constant state of erosion, mental rivers wear away abstract banks, brain waves undermine cliffs of thoughts, ideas decompose into stones of unknowing and conceptual crystallizations break apart into deposits of gritty reason. Vast moving faculties occur in this geological miasma, and they move in the most physical way. The movement seems motionless, yet it crushes the landscape of logic under glacial reveries. This slow flowage makes one conscious of the turbidity of thinking. Slump, debris slides, avalanches all take place within the cracking limits of the brain. The entire body is pulled into the cerebral sediment, where particles and fragments make themselves known as solid consciousness.

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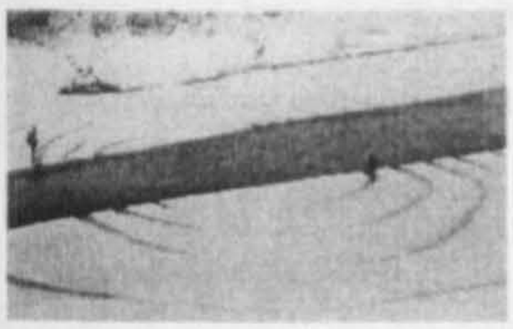
The refuse between mind and matter is a mine of information[345]

[345] Robert Smithson, "A sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" (1968) in *Land and Environmental Art* ed. Jeffrey Kastner (London: Phaidon, 1998), 211-213.

Introduction



The work is deeply concerned for art. This is to say that for the work, art is never a given, and that the work can find art only by continuing toward its own completion in radical uncertainty, for it cannot know in advance whether art is what it is.[346]

Blanchot highlights the importance of risk within the production of work - as a condition of its art. Within a product-led economy, it is precisely the risk within the creative process that cannot be contained, because of the uncertainty it introduces to the realisation of art. The limits imposed by the nature of the Antarctic artist programmes exhibit themselves in the breadth and nature of the resulting work. This can be seen both in the lack of exploration that much of the work undertakes and through the tendency to rely - like the explorers before them - on the tried and tested methodology of style to cover difference. This is in part a response to the 'fleeting observations' that a singular visit to the continent allows artists, and because of the nature of risk taking that both the artists and science programmes are prepared to accommodate. For this reason, I will predominantly concentrate on the few works that engage critically with Antarctic space.

There is a considerable mass of Antarctic work, now accumulated, that variously serves in the extension of the artist's and national programmes portfolio of images. But where risk and uncertainty is not a viable dimension of engagement, the work cannot transgress the conditions of its own production. The Antarctic art practice that will be discussed in these sitings has, for the most part been produced outside of the frame of national programmes, either through private expeditions or from a site outside the physical continent.

The *radical uncertainty* - that is the potential and possibility of work, and a requisite to penetrate an originality of experience that Antarctica offers - is blanched by these limitations. To *doubt* language and to *risk* its aesthetic shattering is to acknowledge different registers of being, and be open to the possibilities of an authenticity of place through that experience. Within this possibility, risk is a condition of the potential to make work that addresses a relational specificity, rather than producing Antarctica within an undifferentiated continuum of artistic style. The more a range of agencies work to make Antarctica productive of various commodities – from the trade marking of Antarctic biota genes by bioprospecting companies to Saatchi & Saatchi's branding of Antarctic heritage – the more important it is that the work continue toward the uncertainty of art. In the instability of meaning, resides the ethical

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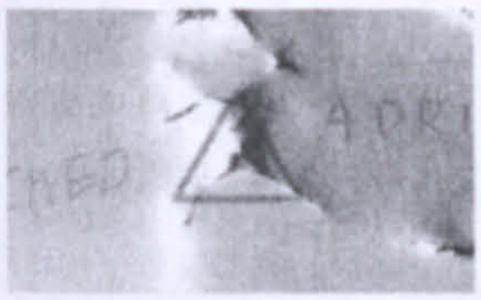
[346] Maurice Blanchot, "The Original Experience" in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader* ed. Clive Cazeaux (London: Routledge 2000), 344.

imperative that points us back to the frailties of our knowledge formations, and inescapable powers of fragmentation that is a condition of knowledge's mobility. Here, I, follow Miwon Kwon's argument - that only in those cultural practices that have a relational relation, can the localised be turned into a long term commitment that transforms passings into social marks (see Appendix 2).

The following sitings of a journey, a void and bodies are intended as an exploration into the slippage between cognitive and non-cognitive processes in the production of landscapes - in the refuse between mind and matter - that the artist, Robert Smithson suggested. What follows is a discussion of some of the potential considerations of Antarctic sites that have been raised by critical art practice in and outside of Antarctica.

Plate 28

Siting: Journey



O brothers, do not forbid your senses... the adventure of the world without human beings that lies beyond the sun.... You were not made to live like beasts, but for the pursuit of virtue and of knowledge.[347]

Dante's Ulysses journeyed into unsettled meaning. In the pursuit of knowledge, his conceptual horizon was a boundary that is always in transition - like the horizon that he sailed towards. In the pursuit of knowledge, Ulysses travels through matter and mind to exceed the limits of the human world. Following Dante's circles of hell to the centre, Ulysses would eventually find his way to the last circle, that is the Ice. Inspired by Dante's Ulysses, the lines from Tennyson's poem of the same name informs one of the most prominent physical and cultural markers in the Antarctic landscape. His mantra of "To seek, to find, and not to yield", is quoted on the cross to Scott and his men, that stands on Observation Hill, dominating Ross Island. The cross is a marker in the fatal legacy of Ulyssesian quests. It arranges the landscape into a space charged with meaning about the radical uncertainty of those journeys.[348]

Unlike Ulysses who chose never to yield, the men that the cross commemorates, and those who chose Ulysses as a hero, were bounded to a return (at least in theory) and thus bound to the negotiation of two conditions of distance and knowledge: the journey out and the journey home. Of course, which was which, is something that is still debated by contemporary sojourners in Antarctica. Such journeys are anchored by fantasy at both ends (the fantasy of journeying home and the adventure of being away).

Spatial differentiation is a condition of knowledge fundamental to all information that travels, in Ulysses's terms "beyond the sun".[349] It is a differentiation located in the distance between mind and matter, and in Foucauldian terms, between language and object. To place oneself beyond the sun, is to place oneself in excess of language. At the Antarctic spatial margin, aesthetic language shatters. It shatters because the physical and conceptual dimensions of Antarctic space have no likeness in European aesthetics. In this shattering, the architecture of thought on which language rests fragments. 'Talking antarctican' involved *silence* and *laughter* - two aspects of punctuation in language. The journey through this margin then becomes a metaphor for the process of moving through matter on the outside of language, while simultaneously trying to bring it inside.

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[347] Dante 1966, 108.

[348] On a more prosaic level, the uncertainty of the journey begins far in advance of the physical journey. For most non-scientists that want to inhabit the Antarctic rather than remain on a tourist boat, the journey starts years before in a plethora of rejection letters from national programmes and a slow inculcation into the pocket of an inward-looking community bound by a certain unspeakability of their experiences.

[349] The American Antarctic newspaper, produced at McMurdo station is called the 'Antarctic Sun'.

Its rare to see the clarity of sensation that surrounds you on an ice shelf in the Antarctic,[350] to look out into a whole space, un-fragmented by the bisecting lines and static energy of cities, where bodies and matter bleed into one another. Antarctica replaces that world because it appears self-enveloped and self-referring. In this Antarctica appears whole because it does not resemble. The only bleed that is visible is that of a human body that has no choice other than to surrender its extremities to the climatic invasion of the ice, as the body breathes in Antarctica. This is of course a fallacy, as invisible global climatic information bleeds into the Antarctic, to be made visible by scientific practices in its ice cores. This collection of weather information in the Antarctic landscape bears (atmospheric) witness to global circulation. As the weather is made into information, it intersects the knowledge structures and histories of western science to become part of knowing Antarctica.

The oscillation between this landscape of information and the landscape that articulates itself aesthetically as radically other is part of the tension that characterises this margin. As language is brought into question, the writing of bodies through space and spatial markers (both organic and man-made) organises the journey - from the first and last iceberg, crossing the convergence, degrees south, crosses, mountains, buildings, flags, tents to economies of scale. As the explorer Cherry-Gerrard's narrative of rounding the great ice barrier exemplifies, "Many watched all night, as this new world unfolded itself, cape by cape and mountain by mountain..."[351] The extrapolation of markers in the landscape at both a physical and conceptual level organise Antarctic space as representation. In thinking through how the Antarctic environment ablates and obscures the possibility of a stable object-hood of landscape (and so stable points of transmission), the artist Dennis Oppenheim's 1960s experiments in Land art are relevant. His work creatively examines the gap between physical and conceptual systems of landscape information, and so it provides a context for how different kinds of information mark and provide way-markers in the landscape.

Oppenheim's practice predominately investigated information in the landscape and landscape as, what he calls "lines of information" - the information about landscape that refers to "larger fields of association".[352] In the work, *Annual Rings* (1968) Oppenheim selected the boundary between Canada and the US to inscribe into the landscape - by

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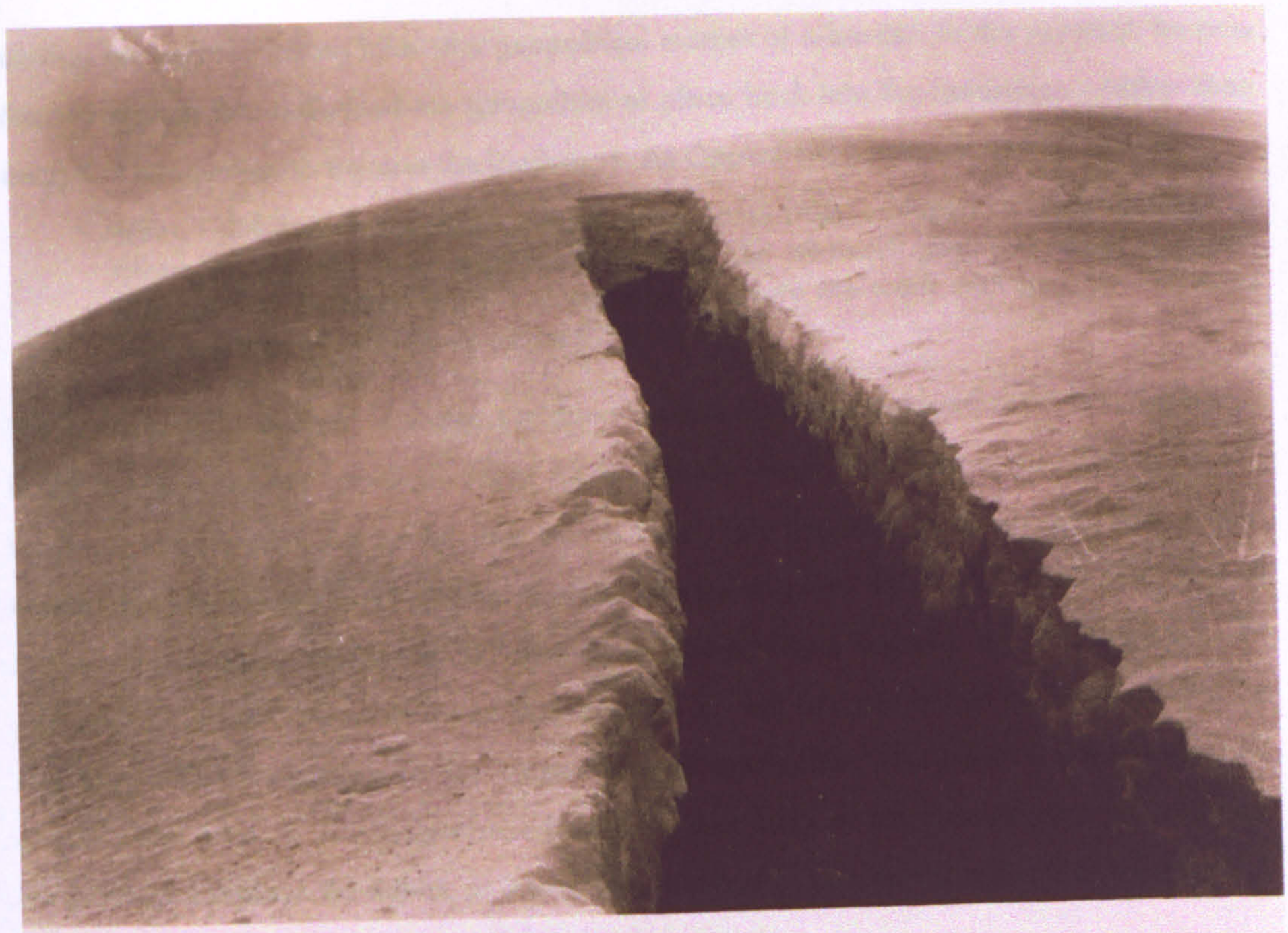
[350] The experience of fieldwork undertaken 'in the field' as opposed to that undertaken within the confines of a tourist ship is remarkably dissimilar for several reasons. Most tourist voyages visit the Antarctic Peninsula, which is a far more convertible to the 'picturesque' than the severity of the rest of the Antarctic continent. And most tourists do not remain on the continent - 'landings' last 1-2 hours and have a strictly controlled spatial area.

[351] Cherry-Gerrard, *The Worst Journey in The World* (London: Picador, 1994), 86.

[352] Quoted by James Dickinson, "Journey Into Space, Interpretation of Landscape in Contemporary Art" in *Technologies of Landscape* ed. David Nye (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 45.



NEGATIVE BOARD. 1968. St. Francis, Maine. 3' x 4' x 50'. Snow and sawdust.

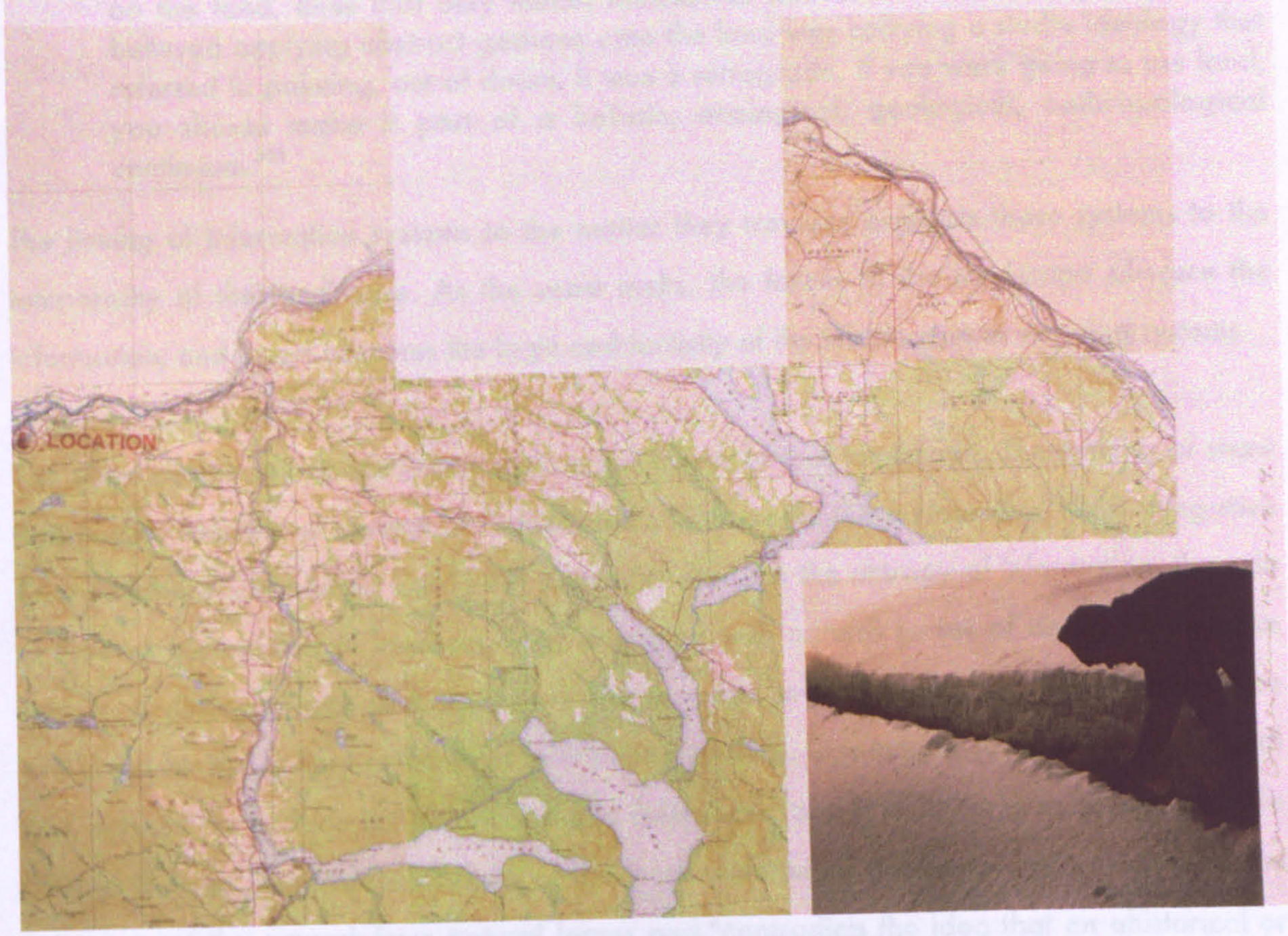


Plate 29

carving through the frozen lake - the geopolitical marker of a border. In this reversal, he puts the information that described the geopolitics of place back into the landscape - rather than using that information to traverse the landscape. As Oppenheim comments,

> When I did lines in the snow... lines which came from a map, I referred to them as information lines. They may have looked like abstract gestures, even Abstract Expressionist gestures, but the intent was to suture the work with lines or notations that had larger fields of association.[353]

The concentration on lines of abstract information that transform the landscape is brought into relief in Oppenheim's practice. What he essentially does is to suture the map onto the territory, transforming terrestrial sites into a map. This explicitly puts the information that creates the site (as territory) in other systems of meaning into the matter of the site. *Annual Rings* references the geopolitical systems of demarcation beyond the site - systems of geopolitical power and information that traverse it - but are not visible or relational to the site. Oppenheim's emphasis on the "larger fields of association" that bisect a site changes the object-based artwork to a system-based artwork, that looks at the between-ness of relations. He plays and replays the nature of inscription, inherent in conceptual systems of information, through the matter it delineates. As Oppenheim comments,

> my use of quasi-scientific nuance or notation was meant to oppose abstract gestures on the land, lines that only meant themselves and didn't refer to anything else. I believed applying abstract gestures onto the land was carrying a studio ideology that referred to painting, out of doors. It was a retrograde. If you were going to use land, you should make it part of a holistic, ecological, geological, anthropological continuum.[354]

The linking of information systems to the matter they traverse connects those systems to the temporality of the landscape. As the snow melts, the forces of the landscape obscure the information, and thus it obscures the logic and facticity of the information in mapping systems.

The effect of entropy opens information to the forces of that landscape. The melting of snow that is characteristic of several of Oppenheim's land works (*One Hour Run* 1968, *Negative Board* 1968, *Accumulation Cut* 1969) highlights, through the entropy of information, the role of time as a condition of landscape. By engaging with natural forces of decay Oppenheim sets up a dialogue with real time - art that is made in and subject to time - rather than preserved by the gallery or abstract information systems. Oppenheim talks about using "real time systems" to exclude art historical studio references, and investigate systems that operate through the site. The transient nature of the work undermines the modernist narratives of the autonomy of the artwork from natural forces and "contradicts the idea that an ahistorical or

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[353] Ibid.
[354] Dennis Oppenheim (1992) "Another Point of Entry" in Kastner 1998, 224.

universal set of values might inform art or be embodied in it."[355] This highlights how the mechanisms that control and regulate landscape information are similarly relational to time, and are not universal, however robust they may appear. As Oppenheim comments - the traverse of abstract landscapes to physical landscapes - becomes embedded in, and relational to, the matter of landscape,

> So this is an application of a theoretical framework to a physical situation - I'm actually cutting this strip out with chain saws. Some interesting things happen during this process: you tend to get grandiose ideas when you look at large areas on maps, then you find they're difficult to reach so you develop a strenuous relationship with the land.[356]

This "strenuous relationship" with land operates at the level of landscape matter, and its ability to obscure and impede the progress of systems that denote it – systems that operate within the purified domain of white space. In this, the use of snow parallels the white space of a canvas, gallery,[357] laboratory, or a map where inscription is practised over non-resistant surfaces. In the erasing space of white surface, abstract information systems pull hidden meanings out of the earth (such as geopolitical borders) - ordinarily unseen (and arguable unseeable) - and then put them back as spatial markers that reference beyond the site to another system of meaning.

Oppenheim's landscapes are not site specific in the sense that they take the site as their focus - it is the relation between the information systems that dictate and inscribe onto the landscape that forms the site. By engaging in that interrelated space of inscription the landscapes asserts its own forces that act on information. In this relational positioning, Oppenheim echoes Benjamin who recommended the "mastery not of nature itself but of the relationship between nature and humanity".[358] The landscape information is ephemeral and remains only as long as its material supports, (often decaying through natural processes), unlike the gallery space and map that operate in a preserved time.[359] Thus, matter disrupts

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[355] Dickinson 1999, 47.

[356] Micheal Heizer, Dennis Oppenheim, Robert Smithson, (1970) "Interview with Avalanche" in Kastner 1998, 202-204.

[357] The role of the gallery and museum in framing the artwork was a form of inquiry that occupied many artists working in the 1960s/70s, such as Smithson, Oppenheim and Serra. The space of the gallery and its part in the construction in meaning in the art object, was part of the critique of artists such as Duchamp, who demonstrated such a point with the 'readymade'. Putting a snow shovel in the gallery, the everyday object was transformed into an artwork through the dialectical relation of the space of the gallery and the authorship of the artist to make 'art'. The dialectic worked to undermine the very structures that supported the condition of its meaning. Duchamp relocated meaning in the artwork from object to a dialogue between the object, author and spatial context of an artwork. It was a form of questioning that rippled beyond the gallery into other spatial contexts outside the rarefied production site of both the studio and gallery. Many artists after Duchamp took up the "ethical imperative of site" relocating meaning from object to spatial context.

[358] Walter Benjamin quoted by Lucy Lippard, "Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory" (1983) in Kastner 1998, 258.

[359] Primarily the landscape is engaged in as a "field of activity" - but this is done to leave only a fleeting trace of this activity in the landscape. There is also no return to those abstract systems of information through extensive documentation in order that the documentation does not exceed the energy of the original exploration and thus

the imaginary totality of a neutral temporality that the map explicitly assumes. As ice decays over time, so will the geopolitical marks that are inscribed there.

By foregrounding the information that acts over the landscape, Oppenheim reveals the indexical function of the map to the site, and the site to the map. Within this dialectic landscape oscillates between its representation and non-representational form[360] - in which lines of information are a condition of landscape's emergence (in both physical and conceptual ways). What obscures this translation is the matter, the very facticity of the material of landscape - rationalism crumbles when mapped into the world. Oppenheim's work therefore suggests, that there is no primary authentic object of landscape, only the fact of matter, information, and decay. The ice, in this instance, both retains and erodes landscape information. It is an active point of transmission, open to both the effect and affecting interventions in the system of making landscape information. Oppenheim's practice highlights the conditions under which information traverses matter, opening information about landscape to the duration of those places. His work inverts the practices of mapping employed in the RADARSAT map, to expand upon how the scientific visualisation imagines across a purely virtual surface. Oppenheim's contemporary, Smithson extends the concept of mapping into landscape to suggest how the idea of site might be dislocated in ways that continue to speak to the site of its extraction.

Actively engaged in the 'mine of information' between mind and matter - Robert Smithson's practice of site/non-site - sets in place a landscape dialectic that oscillates between the physical site and its representation in a gallery. As mapping was the primary practice of knowing Antarctic, Smithson's concern for the processes and limits of mapping, provides a context to consider both artistic and geographical mapping systems. Confronting the inherent inability of representation to ever exceed the physical and conceptual excess of matter, Smithson went to sites and then produced 'non-sites' in the gallery. Thus, he set up a dialogue between physical sites and their geographical or geological representation in the dislocated space of the gallery. Smithson characterised the Site and Non-Site as follows [45]:

Smithson's Dialectic of Site and Non-Site[361]

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become a commodity and object in its own right (and leave its own trace in the landscape). Oppenheim's reservations about documentation often stopped the work going on to another more energetic life (in exhibitions/published field notes etc.) or in the form of photography, which he argued reduced the conceptual to the pictorial. By resisting the secondary life of fieldwork, Oppenheim leaves his work in the field, to resist the reduction into representation.

[360] Here I mean 'non-representational' in a physical sense rather than referring to Nigel Thrift's argument of 'non-representational theory'.

[361] Robert Smithson in *Robert Smithson The Collected Writings* ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley, California: Univ. of California Press, 1996), 152-3.

Site	*Non-Site*
Open Limits	Closed Limits
A series of points	An Array of matter
Outer Coordinates	Inner Coordinates
Subtraction	Addition
Indeterminate (Certainty)	Determinate (Uncertainty)
Scattered (Information)	Contained (Information)
Reflection	Mirror
Edge	Centre
Some Place (physical)	No place (abstract)
Many	One

Smithson argues that the non-site was a "limited (mapped) revision of the original unbounded state... There is a different experience before the physical abyss than before the mapped revision... the bins or containers of my *Non-sites* gather *in* the fragments that are experienced in the physical abyss of raw matter."[362] The photographs, maps, and matter of a site were organised in the gallery so as to point to their closed, fragmented state, while simultaneously conjuring the *absence* of the site of which they are fragmented from. In this sense the non-site forms an anti map, or rather a map that foregrounds its fragmentary process as a disruption in the site. As Smithson asks,

> How can one contain this 'oceanic' site? I have developed the non-site, which in a physical way contains the disruption of the site. The container is in a sense a fragment itself, something that could be called a three-dimensional map... it actually exists as a fragment of greater fragmentation...[363]

Sensitive to the fragmentation of landscape knowledge, Smithson directly confronts the dilemma of 'making dislocated images of in fact located objects'.

In attempting to locate Antarctica in and beyond its representational practices Smithson's site/non-site dialectic suggests a practice that foregrounds the site in its absence. For Smithson,

> There's a central focus point which is the non-site; the site is the unfocused fringe where your mind loses its boundaries and a sense of the oceanic pervades, as it were. I like the idea of quiet catastrophes taking place... the interesting thing about the site is that, unlike the non-site, it throws you out to the fringes. In other words, there's nothing to grasp onto except the cinders and there's no way of focusing on a particular place. One might even say the place has been absconded or lost... You're always caught between two worlds, one that is and one that isn't... Actually everything of importance takes place outside the room [gallery]. But the room reminds us of the limitations of our conditions.[364]

The non-site points us back to site, acknowledging that while representation and 'out of place' matter may not be able to return to the field, they can point to it, and in doing so signal their

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[362] Robert Smithson, "A sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" (1968) in Kastner 1998, 212.
[363] Ibid., 214.
[364] Heizer, Oppenheim, & Smithson 1998, 202-204.

dislocation from that field. The site/non-site dialectic requires an oscillation, not unlike the movement of the sublime - an immensity that dissolves the object into sensation and then restores its boundaries - but there is a marked difference, because in Smithson's work there is no restoration of the object - but 'open limits'. The non-site of *representation installed in the gallery calls the viewer to the site, and in doing so the viewer moves beyond the non-site of the gallery into the imaginative potential of the site.* The viewer is directed to the fuller experience of the site (intellectually and physically) through this movement, only to return to the non-site prompted by the inability to imaginatively realise the site. In its absence, the actual site is not transcended or erased through this process but remains whole - and the 'limitations of our condition' are accounted for. Thus, the site and nonsite *exist in a dialectical* relationship - thus, the fragment is viewed as fragment.

Rather than attempting to stand in for the site and thus subsuming it, the non-site signals its limits and thus the excess of the site. The contained, bounded nonsite is set in relation to the open, scattered site and so effectively investigates the reciprocal presence and absence in representation. Smithson called this movement a *double path* (of signs, maps, photographs) that belong to both sides of the dialectic at once - keeping the site open to the operation of *representation.* As the viewer moves between the cognitive and material sites, a *dialectic* is initiated that is always mobile and relational to both sites at once. As he asserts:

> The two dimensional and three-dimensional things trade places with each other in the range of convergences. Large scale becomes small. Small scale becomes large. A point on a map expands to the size of the land mass. A land mass contracts to a point...[365]

The result of Smithson's dialectic is a *restlessness* between mind and matter that undermines the object boundaries of both the non-site (the art object in a gallery) and the site. In this 'pointing away from themselves to the site', the artwork acknowledges the limits of its representative frame, directing an intellectual and physical desire beyond itself into the open limits of space - a 'subtle beyond'.

For Smithson, capitalism was ruled by abstraction, so in the politic of removing the matter from the site into the gallery, he meant that the non-site would always call forth the site, and thus its located-ness. The oscillation signals the openness of site while demonstrating the arrest of representation - and it goes further to suggest how representation can reorganise sites as fragments of information. This ensures that the site does not deliver its secrets. In Smithson's dialectic landscape meaning remains temporally located in the *dialectical movement* between site and non-site, not reduced to the cold arrest of meaning in either site. As maps elide their

[365] Smithson quoted in Dickinson 1999, 60.

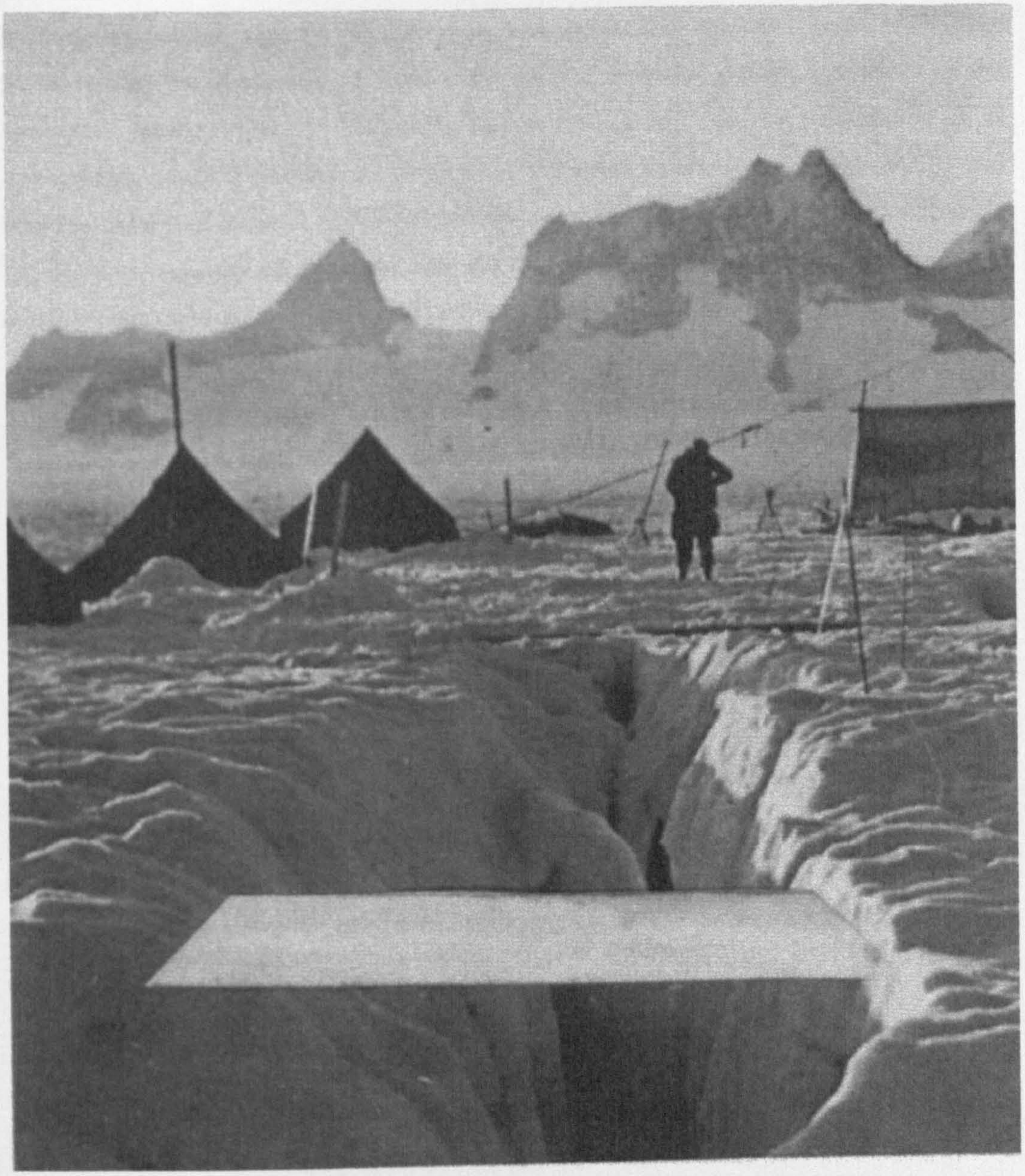

Plate 30

agency as active forces in the formation of landscape by their abstract representational form, Smithson's work explicitly brings this to the fore, through the site/non-site dialectic. In the "promise of occupation",[366] Smithson gets at the very movement of the sensual and psychic correlations that pulsate through landscape and representation.

Smithson argued that when the mind engages with matter, "The movement seems motionless, yet it crushes the landscape of logic under glacial reveries." In this deferment to the exhaustive excess of matter the suspension of boundaries and the possibilities of its disorganising power is asserted. As he argued, "The range of convergence between Site and Non-Site consists of a course of hazards".[367] The recognition of the 'hazards' of an ultimately out of reach convergence, ensures that the located place remains open, scattered and indeterminate, and the non-site its negation. The critic Lawrence Alloway argues that the relation of Non-Site to site is,

> like that of language to the world; it is a signifier and the Site is that which is signified. It is not the referent but the language system that is in the foreground.[368]

Smithson's foregrounding of the language system of mapping concentrates concern on the limits of that system and reveals absence as the condition of mapping. He thus overcomes the dilemma of how to speak to the perceptual exposure of located places - places that are a "series of points" of transmission that have not yet been enclosed - where "...if there is information, the information is so low level it doesn't focus on any particular spot... so the site is evading you all the while it's directing you..."[369] In this *movement*, information is subject to a play between entropic forces and communication - within which matter could be considered as a kind of geological signifying system. It is an idea of space and movement that matches closely with Lefebvre's notion of "lived obedience" to spatial orders. Lefebvre says:

> Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence a certain disorder... Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered... The 'reading' of space is thus merely a secondary and practically irrelevant upshot, a rather superfluous reward to the individual for blind, spontaneous and *lived* obedience.[370]

Lefebvre, like Smithson considers space as already in transmission ordering and disordering our traverse – mind and earth in a constant state of erosion.

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[366] Nick Kaye *Site-Specific Art, performance, place and documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000), 99.
[367] Smithson 1996, 153.
[368] quoted in Kaye 2000, 94.
[369] Robert Smithson quoted in Kaye 2000, 98.
[370] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 143.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, Smithson was interested in the Antarctic,[371] which he referred to as the entropic pole, a point of disorganisation in the landscape. In his Antarctic map, which was part of *The Map Fragment Series* (1969), Antarctica forms the central point in the map from which currents and continents radiate out in lessening concentration. Antarctica is an extreme example of the type of site that Smithson referred to as entropic voids in the landscape[372] - places where energy had been drawn out and the possibilities of information breaks down. His interest was in how these voids displaced the boundaries and practices of systems, such as mapping. Smithson's writing tries to get within the seam of systems, to reverse the docility they induce to our inner discourse. What his investment in the entropic forces of landscape suggests is the need to open the experiences of gathering in landscape to their limits - breathing in the atmosphere of these places, rather than casting out a solidifying field of vision onto the terrain.[373] For Smithson the entropic forces within landscape could be revealed, arrested, and contained by the transmission of appropriate information about the landscape - able to be the mapped, as other terrains.

As information is a language-system, it provided an ordering that halted the entropic forces, thus forming a parallel landscape that signalled arrest as a condition of the operation of language on matter. In that 'mine of information' that was the product of the slippage between language and its object, Smithson highlights the excess of matter that haunts transmission. By concentrating on landscapes where this slippage is most forceful, such as Antarctica, the movement between all sites and their representations is called into question. There is a danger in this analysis of Antarctica (and in Smithson's work) that the idea covers the located-ness of site, making place (as Kwon argues) primarily a function of discourse before it is somewhere located. Perhaps, the covering of an idea (that remains instinctively open) can be thought of like a blanket of snow that covers and protects. In Smithson's work, he engages with a visible displacement - unlike the narratives of the ozone hole and global warming that displace the site in favour of the narrative of the scientific event - and thus place, is accounted for.

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[371] Smithson had Admiral Lord Edward Mountevans, *The Antarctic Challenge* (1995) in his book collection.

[372] Both Oppenheim and Smithson engaged with sites on the margin as an important part of their practice. For Smithson, his non-sites were under theorised places, such as wasted mines, decaying industrial zones, ecological zones, places that displayed entropic forces in abundance. The concentration on non-pastoral sites avoided any association with the cult of/return to/ or recovery of, nature and with any association with an anti-intellectual response to critical art practice. As Oppenheim explained, "...I was drawn to ravaged sites... sites were places that had not been incorporated into a system – dumps, borders of countries, deserts and wastelands - peripheries... the idea was a severe disjuncture from the pastoral." Oppenheim quoted in Dickinson 1999, 44.

[373] The gaze, although anatomically incorrect in its understanding of looking, has resiliently persisted as a descriptor of seeing because of the strong psychic correlation it presents.

The dilemma of mapping seemingly unmappable places such as Antarctica is primarily an investigation into limits and what those limits can teach us about how we know places. In Smithson's practice mapping is a language that becomes a container around matter (like his bins of rocks and dirt) but it can never contain the physical and conceptual excess of the field. In this interplay between language and object, both Oppenheim and Smithson did not seek to divest the artwork of its object hood but to open up their objects to temporality and an indefinite entropic context. The perpetual *mobility* of site relations signalled the limits of object-hood and its temporal and locational porousness - mobility imbued with 'radical uncertainty'.

As Smithson and Oppenheim sought an axis of information exchange of information *about* and *in* landscape, the artist Ed Osborn's work on historic Antarctic images looks at how cartographic practices edited the landscape. He investigates the various conditions of the suppression of spatial openness as a psychic and practice-based transaction. Using the examples of cropped archival photographs he explores the removal of 'white space', which he comments, "look less like simple framing devices than visible artefacts of the limits of what is comprehensible."[374] Osborn attributes the reproduction of a tradition of landscape portraiture to the commercial demands for a readable image and a "reluctance to adjust the mode of representation to fit the landscape".[375] He argues (following Pyne) that this did not change until the advent of aerial photography in the Antarctica, which provided a new model for looking at the Ice. The role of a cartographic framework of landscape representation over an aesthetic one introduced, according to Osborn, a "framework that allows the landscape of ice to be seen in a way that is not compromised by the traditional concept of landscape representation."[376] The introduction of aerial photography in 1920s/30s has continued to provide a measure of Antarctic scale (albeit burned into the edges of Trimetrogon photographs as mapping information) through to the advent of satellite mapping. However, as argued in *Part II*, while aerial images may have provided an antidote to the romanticism of other kinds of landscape photography they are not without their own unacknowledged registers of abstraction and simulations of technological sublimity.

The issue of scale is an intrinsic consideration of Antarctic images, and has made the landscape a fertile site for the consideration of the sublime. Kant argued that scale; either the totality of a profound exteriority or interiority could allow the possibilities of the sublime. Both of these are in abundance in images of undifferentiated representations of, in fact, highly

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[374] Ed Osborn "Southern Exposure" in *Cabinet* (Issue 10, 2003), 41.
[375] Ibid., 38.
[376] Ibid.

differentiated Antarctic matter. Osborn's video piece *Flyover*[377] shows a sequence of aerial reconnaissance photographs fading in and out at roughly the speed they were taken to give a "sense of the scale and timing of the flight".[378] This is accompanied by a voiceover reading extracts from the provisional Gazetteer of the Ross Dependency, "highlighting the difference between the immense Antarctic terrain and the relatively arbitrary set of names placed on it."[379] By relating these photographs to the temporality of the practice of aerial mapping, Osborn disrupts the form of the static landscape objects that they later became. Simultaneously, he reveals through the audio of the Gazetteer how a stable visible object is the prerequisite of possession (through nomination). Osborn suggests that the limited framework of language that the explorers brought with them and the inability to make the landscape cohere to recognisable forms demonstrates the precariousness of this possession. As he contends:

> this Gazetteer went through a number of different versions as the area was mapped, and in examining the successive versions of it one can clearly sense the difficulty in applying language to the geography: Shapeless Mountain, Intention Nunatuks, Mistake Peak... Co-Pilot Glacier, Mount Supernal, and Veto Gap[380]

The stabilising of the landscape as object (through photography) allowed the peaks and valleys to be identified, named and claimed. By re-animating the photographs, Osborn puts them back as practices into the field - practices that produced Antarctica as an object of possession through the accumulation of information. As Osborn comments, "These images and text in *Flyover* are artefacts of a moment when a blank land was first harvested for information..."[381] Through this reversal (object-process), he reveals the photographs as fleeting instances of the landscape rather than its totality, and thus dissolves the incorporation of these kinds of images into a historic narrative of the scientific/technological sublime. The sublime is a temporal journey of looking that relies upon the dissolving of the object (often through fear or other kinds of immensities) and then its reformation, wherein mastery is achieved by the closing of object-hood rather than it's opening. The disruption of the totality of the landscape image in time and in space (this is broken through the fading in and out of the image as instances of the landscape) restores them to a moment of looking overlaid with the production of that looking.

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[377] www.roving.net/videoworks/aip.html 29/03/04
[378] Ibid.
[379] Ibid.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Ibid.

David Stephenson's[382] Antarctic photographs optically explore this experience of dissolution and sublimation. His photographs are full-scale aerial views of the ice with a flattened topography so the viewer is barely able to discern the differentiation of surface. The colouration is a variation on a pale monochrome blue (black and white negatives printed with a pale blue wash) that is barely perceivable as an inflection of colour. The photographic surface and field of vision are such that the viewer's gaze oscillates through and on the surface of the photographic paper and the marks of ice, shifting the subject position from the micro to macro field of vision. The surface dissolves and the sense of a shifting dimension of space is realised through this phenomenological experience. The large scale of the photographs engulfs the viewer, establishing a sublime motif. His photographs destabilise the optical subject position (by) forcing a navigation through image space - as the possibility exists to "fall into them".[383] Ultimately, mastery is realised in the sublime operation through the representation. The space is however, kept open as a spatial-temporal movement across the image. Thus, Stephenson's photographs create a transcendental topography where the location is invested with a vivid sense of the temporality of the experience of looking as the surface produces a shifting sense of gravity for the viewer.

As Stephenson moves the viewer temporally, Osborn's *Antarctic Images Project* juxtaposes several kinds of visual materials together, including home video footage of human activities, archival photographs, aerial photographs, and images from Antarctic web cams, to force together differing media temporalities. He argues that,

> By placing these materials in close proximity, the notion of Antarctica as a distant and distantly imagined site is juxtaposed with the reality of Antarctica as a physical place in which humans exist and work in an immediate and exceedingly practical level.[384]

Providing the diversity of intimate, public, cartographic, and official histories of the Antarctic, Osborn avoids the obvious pitfalls of 'spectacular' Antarctic images and closes the spatial margin between here and Antarctica rather than expanding it. Using "text, sound, video, sculptural elements, and still images to explore the site as both a physical and psychological terrain in terms of the meanings we attempt to inscribe onto it",[385] he keeps the site open to the inscription of heterogeneous meanings - that exist along side one another and extrapolate through intimate and public cultural histories.

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[382] David Stephenson first went to Antarctica first on an AAD Humanities Fellowship and produced some large format representational images of Antarctic wildlife for the University of Tasmania lecture hall. The explorations in the sublime were produced independently of the AAD when he accompanied a scientist as a field assistant. There is a marked difference in the critical approaches that he was able to work through during his independent visit where he was not subjected to the production of a particular product. He commented, that on the second visit he had time to allow the work to take shape through experience rather than having to make work based on a formal arrangement with patrons. (Source: Interview with artist, 6 December 2000, Art School, University of Tasmania).
[383] Ibid.
[384] www.roving.net/videoworks/aip.html 29/03/04
[385] Ibid.

Making a direct intervention in public perceptions of Antarctica, Darren Almond's A is a discursive vector in the fabric of the city.

> Projected iceberg-scale onto a familiar landscape, A is a rent in the fabric of the everyday, a blindspot on the map.[386]

Seeing Almond's A projected on the side of the National Theatre, the upside down image looked like a mirage - a haunting of the imaginary Wilkes Land. The inverted pulsating landscape seemed to make absolute sense, as a fracture in the familiar, when you spend your time trying to think and write a place so remote and absent from this location. The power and command of A is Almond's sensitivity to the mobility of the Antarctic landscape, to its rhythms, forces, fissures, flows, and essentially to its time. Every bit as complicated as the pulsating life force that comprises the city of its location, Antarctica is somewhere with a very different but equally as complex order of times.

There are no set time zones in Antarctica. Rather than following the map of time zones across continents, Antarctic time is pragmatically related to the time zone that the base is in most frequent communication with (so the New Zealand Scott Base is on New Zealand time, the South African on South African) The neat projection out from Greenwich Mean Time that maps the rest of the globe's time zones finds a disruption as it enters Antarctic space. If one applies the logic of extension from the bases at the continental margin to the South Pole, at the Pole one could traverse seven different time zones in a small pirouette. Thus, the pole provides a convergence of the completely unordered time. In disregard to these logical extensions of abstract systems of time, Antarctica establishes a distinct duration of time regulated by weather and hemispheric position. What Antarctica makes visible is the inappropriateness of those cultural systems to this environmental landscape (although ironically Antarctica's 'discovery' is based on the navigational developments that those systems allowed). The challenge for an artist is to try and get inside, if only for a moment, the rhythm of the other kinds of times that the Antarctica offers.[387] Akin to Smithson, who wanted to get inside and become part of the geology of his work by actively trying to suspend the systems that bring us into the regulation of a rationalised time. And Pyne who attempted to write it the geology of *The Ice*. Attempts to resist the convenient fictions of narrating space offer possibilities in understanding the tension within those systems of signification. Resisting

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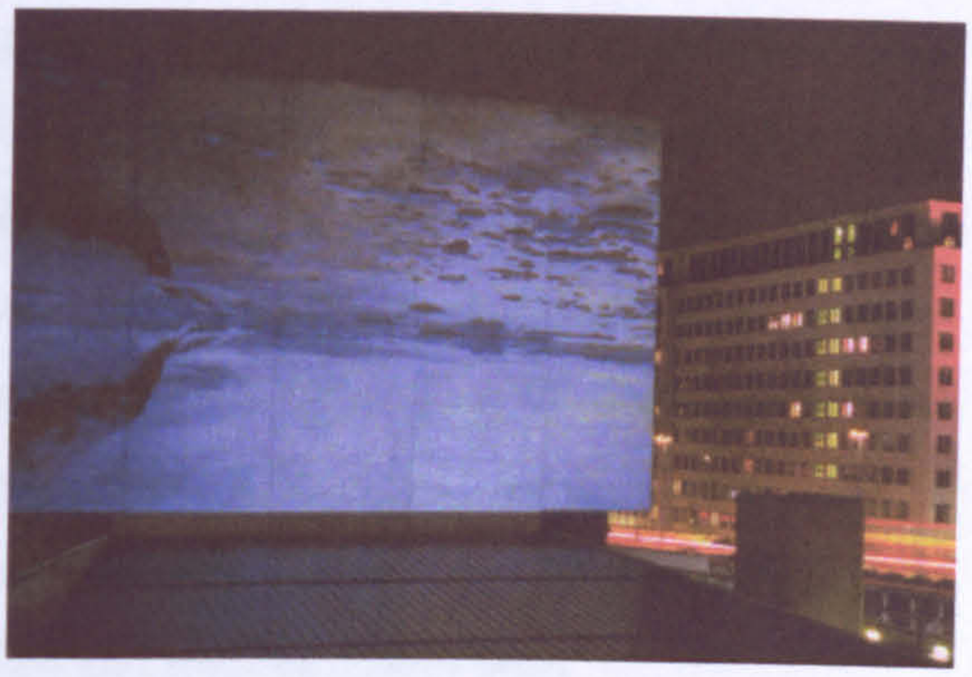
[386] Lyle Perkins in Darren Almond & Lyle Perkins A, text by Cathy Haynes, (Fourth Wall Publicity brochure distributed at the National Theatre during the performance, October 2002)

[387] There is a 'lived obedience' to the orders of Antarctic time, which governs through the environmental conditions access to the continent, working hours and all aspects of logistical manoeuvres.



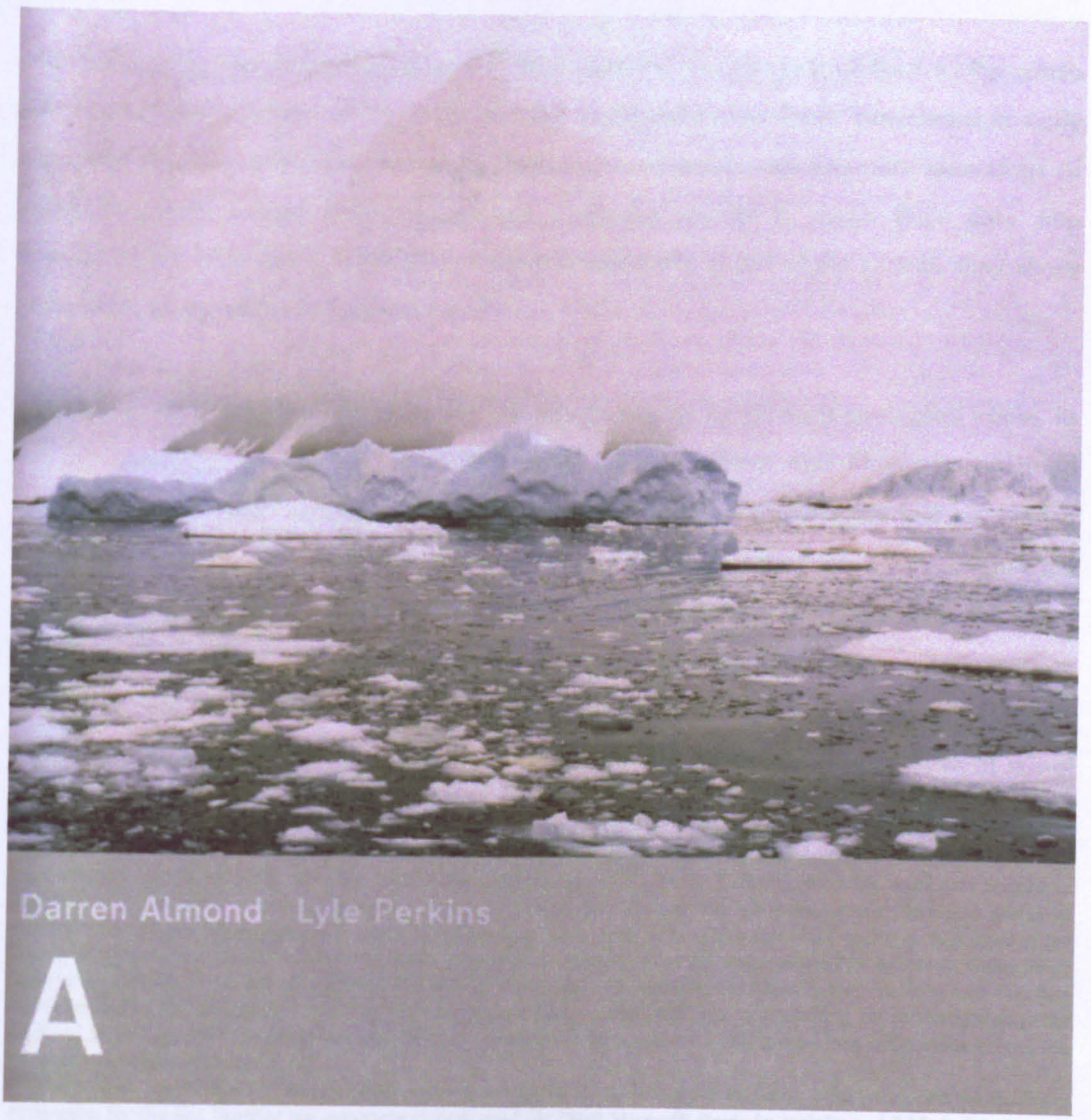


Plate 31

how cultural systems act as insulation to different orders of physical and psychic information, fiction has a "disintegrating order that transcends the limits of rational separating".[388]

Almond, whose previous work has dealt extensively with the intensity of both historic and intimate time,[389] produced a visual and sound journey of Antarctica that is responsive to the psychic and physical affect of moving through the landscape. His temporal journey reckons with Antarctic time, and its tensions. A provides a kind of cognitive geographical mapping of the possibilities of being in Antarctic space - where the energy of Antarctic time is drawn out as infinitely variable - from arrested throbbing images to a slowly morphing terrain. The image is pulsated, inverted, it slowly melts and then suddenly flips, crashing into liquid, sky becoming water, then jerks over ice and rock, charged with the rush of time.

Accompanied by Lye Perkins sound work[390] that combines recordings from the ice - the cracks and rips of fissuring states of ice - with synthetic keyboard harmonics is "reminiscent of early films like *The Fog* and *Salem's Lot*".[391] Included in this mix are scientists recordings of electromagnetic energy fields, which use synthetic sounds to make their data into communicable information. Ironically as Almond comments of "all of the sounds, they chose one's that's pretty similar to cracking ice."[392]

The camera holds and then gives way to movement, tracing Antarctica's geological tracks, its sudden collapses of ice, the crystalline surfaces that refract and illuminate. Almond communicates the lucid arrangement of the space and the lack of confusion that he, among others found there. As he comments, echoing the perspective that the power of flight gave the Futurists in the 1930's, "you come back feeling that man's actions are ridiculous and repetitive."[393] As Almond's most complex film to date A does not fall into the repetitive action that is characteristic of the default response to the overwhelming nature of Antarctic difference. Although, A does obliquely work on the site of natural history films, it is not

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[388] Robert Smithson in *Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1979), 215.
[389] Darren Almond has worked predominately in film and video on subjects that mediate on time, place and intensities of human experience. Interested in the tension between stillness and transition his work has sought to intensify experiences of place by thinking through the passages of time. His work *Night and Day* is a series of mountain scenes that project an eerie sense of frozen time; *Oswiecim 1997 /Journey 1999* explores time lived in the legacy of historical trauma in the town formally known as Auschwitz; *H.M.P. Pentonville 1997* explores 'doing time'; *A Real Time Piece 1996 Tuesday (1440 Minutes)* looks at the representational organisation of time; and *Traction 1999* looked at the vulnerability of his father's body as a map of time, the time of a working life scarred through the flesh; In *Meantime* 2000 Almond accompanied a shipping container that he had turned into a flip clock across the Transatlantic which recorded GMT.
[390] The sound geographies of the Antarctic have been taken up by Vaughan Williams, who produced the *Sinfonia Antarctica* for the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) and Sir Peter Maxwell Davis (a recipient of BAS Artists Award) who produced an *Antarctic Symphony* (2002). Both of these works offer dramatic intensity, but John Cage's *Silence* offers a more critical model of engagement (Cage lived in the Canadian Arctic).
[391] Lyle Perkins & Darren Almond Lyle Perkins A, text by Cathy Haynes, (Fourth Wall Publicity, October 2002)
[392] Darren Almond quoted by Rose George in *The Independent Magazine* (Saturday 12 October 2002), 18.
[393] Almond & Perkins 2002.

constrained by the natural history narrative, nor its rather linear concepts of time (slow motion or rapid acceleration).

What Almond communicates most strongly through his arrangements is how the landscape breathes, and how it feels to breathe in that landscape. As Jenny Diski comments, "other landscapes fidget", but not Antarctica, "It was so untroubled by itself that the heart ached." Spufford concludes, "What more can you ask of a continent?"[394] The Antarctic landscape communicates without the noise that agitates the environment of contemporary urbanity. Surrounded, the experience is intuitively clear and un-scripted - like a puncture of coherent space in the telescopic geographies of the urban. As Almond suggests, "It's like being above cloud level, but you're at sea level. The whole middle territory of human experience is removed."[395] In this gap, Almond's A pursues the strangeness of the landscape - its tearing in the experience of the everyday - without trying to contain. Essentially, he does not try to fill in that middle ground with the logic of explanation or narrative. By concentrating on the temporal, Almond develops a workable visual language for his journey that wilfully interacts in the space 'between mind and matter'.

What fascinated Almond (like Smithson) was Antarctica's degree zero status in abstract systems of comprehending time and geography. He refers to it as "the axis of time and space, the axis of everything."[396] The zero of geographical systems, that all mapping is dependent upon - orders and operates the systems of the most basic geographic arrangements. It is an axis that holds the structure of knowledge construction - the geographical and magnetic point zero provides a magnetic stability that geographical systems are entirely dependent upon to navigate with, and thus it offers the possibility of finding one's location on the globe. The construction of knowledge from this point allows a global geographical image but makes a point of place, so that the knowledge of other places,

> enacts an erasure on the point of its axis. As John Moss comments about the North Pole; the exact pole is a singular zero... its sheer absence, a thrill of white still upon the shifting icecap, upon the spinning globe; the pole is time collapsed to a perfect arithmetic point, a geophysical matrix, a place that occupies no space...[397]

To rationalise the strange anomaly of a circular rather than a directional north[398] from the point of zero - one that points to all directions at once and to no direction - the US government uses a grid north system (where North is in the direction of longitude, towards

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[394] Francis Spufford, "The wish for white" *The Times Literary Supplement* 25 July 1997, 11.
[395] Ibid., 17.
[396] Almond & Perkins 2002.
[397] John Moss, *Enduring dreams: An exploration of Arctic Landscape* (Concord Ontario: Anansi Press 1996), 137.
[398] As Melville comments, at the point of the pole "the needle indifferently respects all points of the horizon alike."

GMT). The US visualise the continent as a grid with McMurdo Sound to the bottom of the page and the Antarctic Peninsula at the upper left. Surprisingly perhaps in the grid map system that the pilots use the mapping arrangement means they actually fly north from McMurdo base to get to the South Pole. Similar to Joaquin Torres-Garcia who drew an *Upside-down Map of South America* with the South Pole at the top of the world, in order to suggest that South America was an avant garde rival to New York, to actually navigate Antarctic magnetic fields the map has to be inverted. The index of difference is simply traversed by the reversal of cartographic meaning. In this reversal, there is a deflection, like the mirrored ball[399] that is the symbolic and navigational marker of the South Pole. The site that the geographical matrix hangs off occupies no space. The marker reflects the construction of space around it - it is a point of inaccessibility. Even at the point of location, information is displaced outwards.[400]

Almond, working on similar conceptual matter titles his Antarctic film A to refer to Alpha. A is the beginning of alphabet, so it is the beginning of language and its possibility. Alpha represents the beginning of a journey into language and the point that it returns to, much like the conceptual position of north in Antarctica. For Almond, the journey dissolved his visual familiarity with the language of home, reinscribing the familiar with the shadow of doubt. In an interview, Almond describes how afterwards, "his familiarity with the visual landscape of home had dissolved... Shadows felt bigger and everything was darker."[401]

It is perhaps appropriate given the earlier discussion of Smithson and Oppenheim, that Almond was an artist accompanying Mission Antarctica - an organisation set up to remove the ecological sludge of decades of scientific debris. Ironically, the yellow bins of discarded industrial waste are visually and conceptually not dissimilar to Smithson's non-sites – they are matter that points to a site of industrialisation and its excess [31]. In Antarctica, they are matter out-of-place standing as testament to the wasting activities of settlement in an unsustainable landscape. Akin to Smithson's bins of rocks and the Greenpeace waste campaign, this debris is in dialectical relation to Antarctic matter - a double path of two kinds of sites. Ravaged by Antarctic weather, the debris is subjected to the entropic forces of the landscape, as it is simultaneously an instance of a system that unleashes its entropic forces into the Antarctic. The two sites of Antarctica and industrialised society have different conditions of time as well as entropic forces, and ought to be considered as having a different scale (or duration) of time. Acknowledging the difference in scale between human and

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[399] A silvered glass ball was the first permanent South Pole marker (placed there during the IGY 1957-58).
[400] Interestingly, in Smithson's *Study for Glacial Mirror* (1969), the reflection becomes a bridge to cross over the void - reflection is used to invert the spatial concept, rather than displace it.
[401] Almond & Perkins 2002.

geological, argues Stephen Jay Gould[402] is the potential basis for an ethics for our human crisis (rather than geological crisis). He argues that the messier ethics of reciprocity is a more appropriate argument for environmental ethics than the flawed environmental arguments of a fragile planet or the need for humans to be 'stewards' to the environment - both of which, he argues reproduce the self importance of man in his environment.

Reciprocity between human and environment, in representational terms suggests such a metaphoric double path such as Smithson's site/non-site. Unlike Ulysses whose desire continued beyond the sun, thinking about reciprocity in landscape is a way to think about what journeys have to teach us, and responsibility within them, not as conquistadors nor as stewards, but as learners.[403] In this mediation, art may provide a dialectic between the conquistador and the steward, or as Smithson suggests the ecologist and industrialist:

> Art can become a resource that mediates between the Ecologist and the Industrialist. Ecology and Industry are not one-way streets, rather they should be cross-roads. Art can help to provide the needed dialectic between them.[404]

It is relevant that Almond's journey was a result of accompanying an ecological group clearing up industrial sludge in Antarctica. The site of that journey is the dialectic between those two places and orders of visible landscapes - Almond in Antarctica accompanying the collection of industrial waste and the performance of A in the centre of the urban metropolis. In this A mediates between the ecologist and industrialist. Almond remained outside of the patronage of national programmes and then he exhibited his work in an outdoor public site, expanding on the marginality of a gallery space.[405] Fourth Wall, the arts company that screened A is an on-going public programme that seeks to alter "the perceptions of our everyday surroundings, re-imaging or re-imagining the urban or rural landscape by projecting dramatic new elements into familiar panoramas..."[406] and so A acts as a rent in the familiar and sets up a reciprocal dialectic between the Antarctic and the urban - and what's more powerful than a fragment of the universe projected into the fabric of the everyday?

It is to the rents in the condition of Antarctic space that I turn next - to the puncture of the void.

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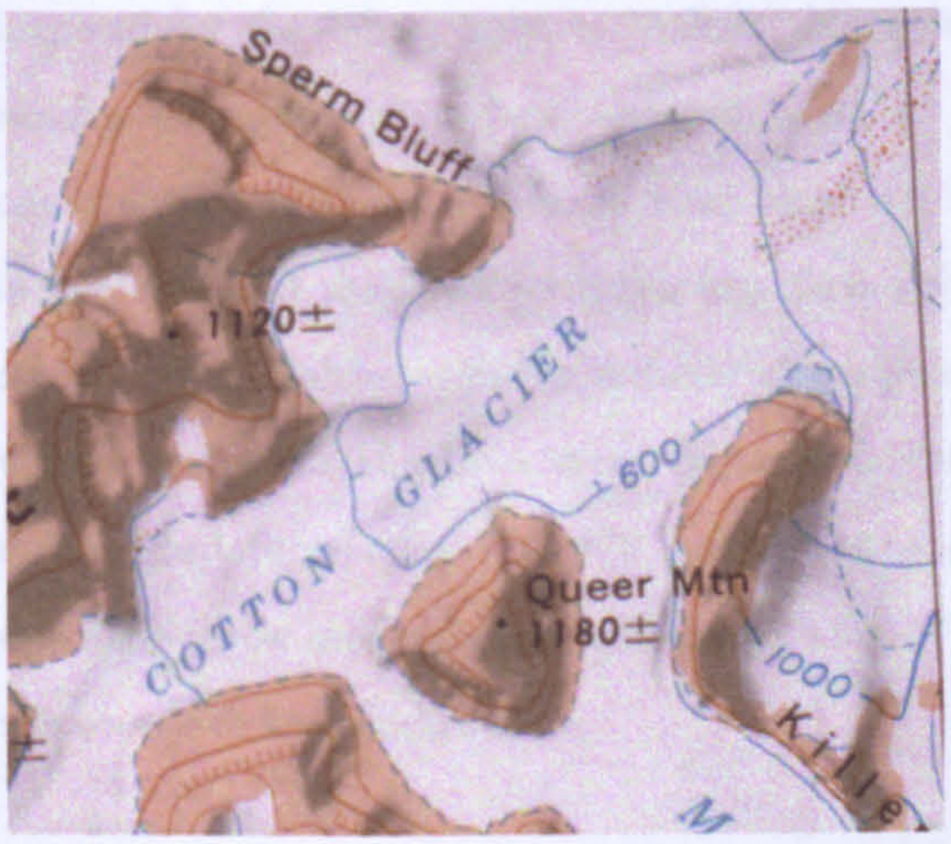
[402] Stephen Jay Gould, "The Golden Rule: A proper Scale for Our Environmental Crisis" (1992) in Kastner 1998, 271.

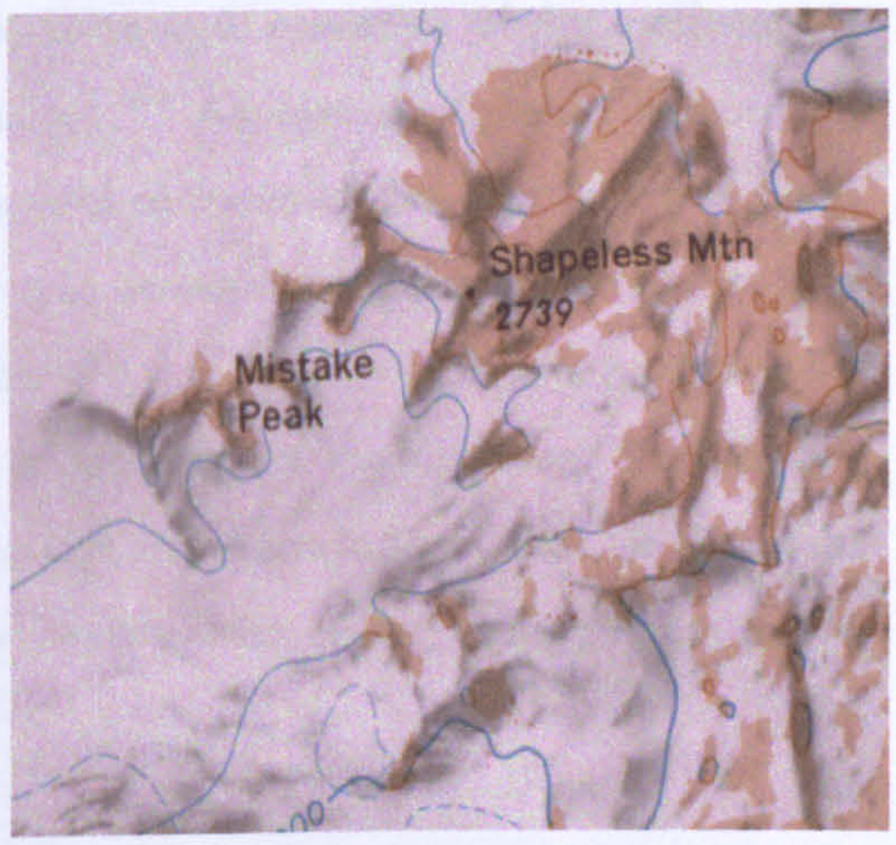
[403] To a certain extent, I echo Barry Lopez here, who writing on his journey to Antarctica said, "Over the years, one comes to measure a place, too, not just for the beauty it may give... but for what it teaches. The way in which it alters the perception of the human. It's is not so much that you want to return to indifferent or difficult places, but that you want not to forget... If you returned it would be to pay your respects" Barry Lopez, "Informed by Indifference" in *World Earth* (Spring 2000), 50.

[404] Smithson 1979, 220.

[405] Almond also exhibited Antarctic/Arctic works, *11 miles... from Safety* in the White Cube, 25 April - 31 May 2003.

[406] Almond & Perkins 2002.


Sperm Bluff
1120±
COTTON GLACIER
600
Queer Mtn
1180±
1000


Shapeless Mtn
2739
Mistake
Peak

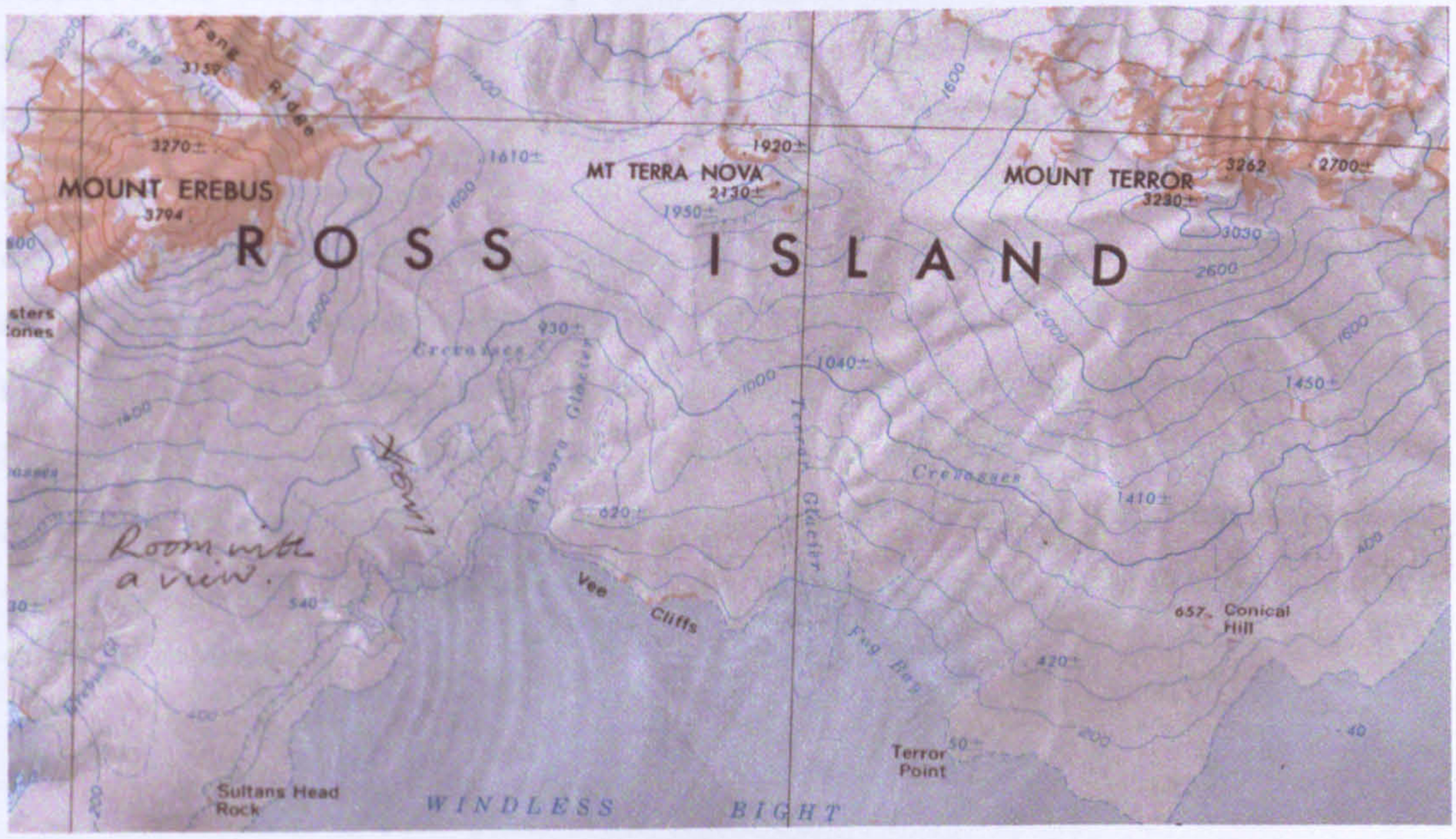
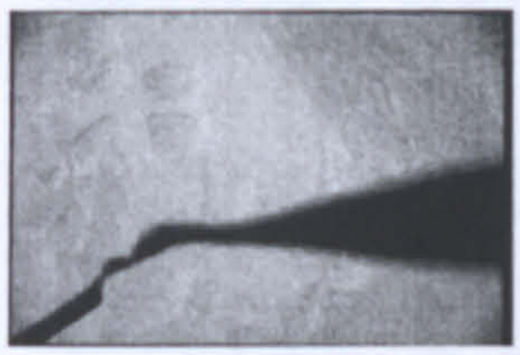

Fang Ridge
3158
MOUNT EREBUS
3794
3270±
1610±
MT TERRA NOVA
2130±
1920±
1950±
MOUNT TERROR
3230±
3262
2700±
3039
2600
ROSS ISLAND
Crevasses
930±
1040±
1000
Aviators Glacier
Tarrant Glacier
Crevasses
1410±
1450±
620±
540±
Vee Cliffs
Fog Bay
657 Conical Hill
420±
400
Terror Point
50±
Sultans Head Rock
WINDLESS BIGHT
Room with a view.
How?

Plate 32

Siting: Void



To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near me... sometimes I think there is naught beyond. But' tis enough.[407]

They say that every snowflake is different. If that were true, how could the world go on? How could we ever get up off our knees/ how could we ever recover from the wonder of it?[408]

Contemplation of the voids of Antarctic matter offers a site for creative opportunity and frozen inertia - a deluge and a desert of information. Melville's whale, whose imagery was inspired by the lithographs in Wilkes' *Narrative*, is an epic narrative of the ineffaceable nature of matter that has Antarctica as its source.[409] As Melville gropes towards a comprehension of the whale, to save him from the void of "naught", he asks "Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation?"[410] It is the very indefinite nature of the whale that casts shadows over the possibilities of knowing in the universe. The whale's unbounded form means that it cannot be organised into knowledge - thus, it threatens annihilation on an epic scale because it will not be made into an object, casting doubt on the site on which knowledge rests.

Notions of the void are fundamentally based on the absence or infinity of structure - a space that is ungraspable as form or object. The whale is a whale, but will not stay as whale, it becomes void and wall, and white matter, and this indefinite state causes a fissure in the structures of comprehension. "The Antarctic calls up for Melville layer upon layer of association... the Antarctic allows a glimpse into the infinite, one that rejects as dangerously reductive interpretations of its singularity or double. To perceive multiplicity... and to be able to reconcile the self to uncertainty... is to apprehend all the meaning a mortal may have."[411] For Melville, the Antarctic embodies the ambiguities inherent in the human process of perception. As such, this discussion of Antarctic voids will explore the negotiation of making meaning in a place of assertive absence of known signifiers, where descriptive languages are rendered uncertain.

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[407] Ahab in Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1986), 245.
[408] Jeanette Winterson, The Passion (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), 67.
[409] David Jaffé, *The Stormy Petrel and The Whale, Some Origins of Moby Dick*, (Baltimore: Port City Press, 1996) argues the connections between Melville's white whale and the white continent narrative in Charles Wilkes' six-volume *Narrative of the US Exploring Expeditions 1838-1842*. Moby Dick was first published in 1851, entitled, 'The Whale'.
[410] Melville 1986, 295.
[411] Christopher C. Joyner & Ethel R. Theis, *Eagle Over The Ice, The U.S. in the Antarctic* (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 1997), 92.

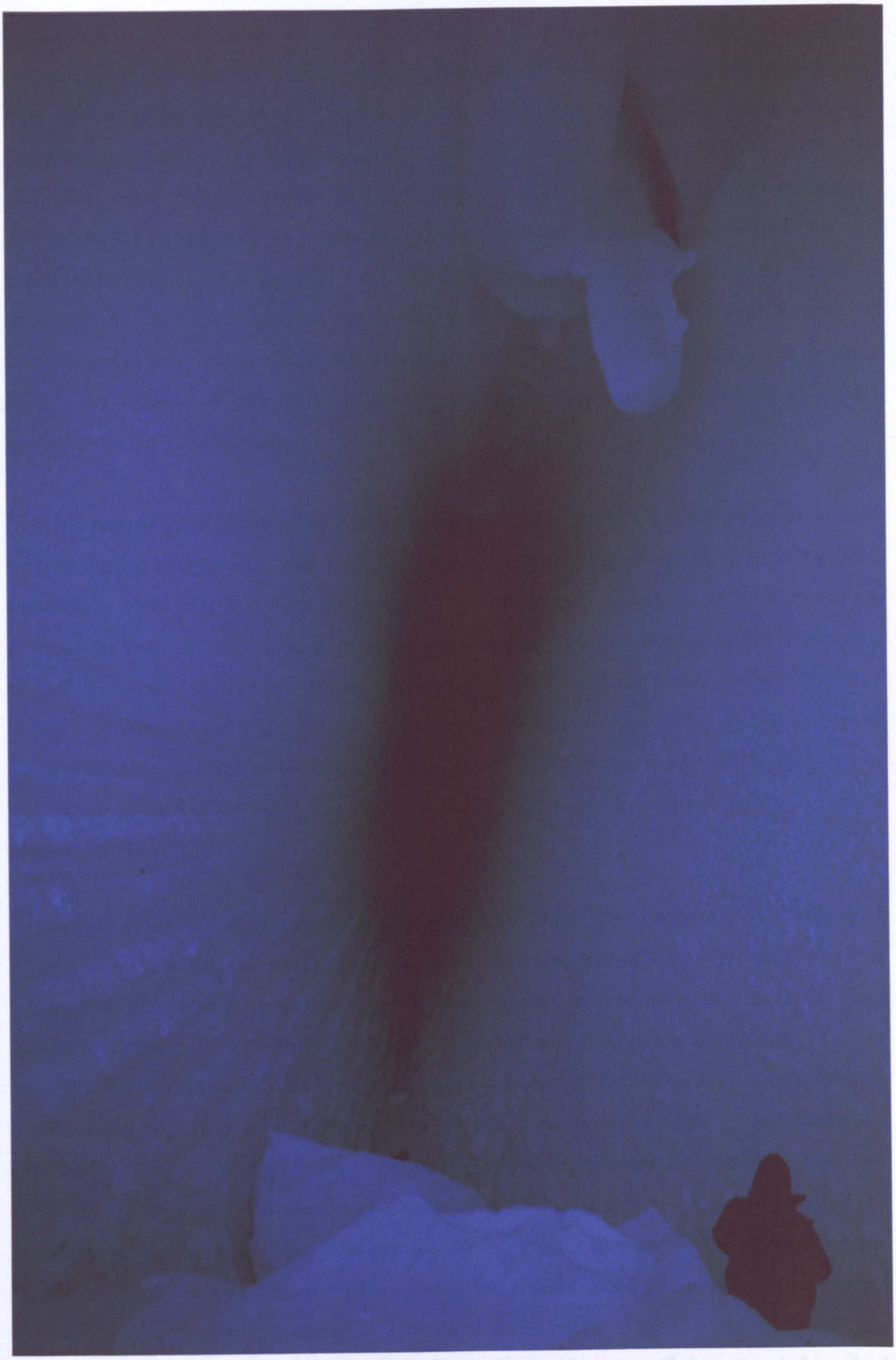

Plate 33

Operations of the void have long been associated with the Antarctic because of its spatial remoteness and the physical qualities of the landscape that confound the logic of object form. Thus, notions of the void, terra incognita, and the blank white space operate as a means to name the unnameable. The voiding presence of Moby Dick - a whale that exceeds in its size and whiteness as a limit of matter that confounds the establishment of meaning - transmutes into metaphor because of its scale. The whale's vastness becomes a metaphor for the irresolvable lack of meaning that haunts Ishmael and drives Ahab's desire. As matter is accounted for, and Ahab pursues the whale, it simultaneously cannot be accounted for, in that Ishmael cannot comprehend the boundaries of it. In this failure to grasp the whale's dimensions, a sense of geography is lost - and space is dissolved into whiteness and mass rendered devoid of navigation.

Like the unique crystallisation of every snowflake that threatens a paralysing deluge of wonder in the imagination, the void is formless - its ordering structure is so infinite, so indefinably open that it cannot be arrested. It is an excess of landscape that cannot be grasped as form, or object, and so it becomes wonderment, or horror, to the dislocated subject. In the excess, emotion replaces a rational object of contemplation, precisely because object boundaries cannot be drawn. The role of emotion as a response to the excess of landscape offers creative possibilities for other kinds of engagements with place that are not wholly based on logical signifying systems. That is, if we can get off our knees to realise them.

At the level of the matter and metaphor of snow, snow overwhelms because it holds infinity of crystallisation to a singular atmospheric operation. Like a system of language, snow's form is the basis of its chemical components, yet it never repeats, and so no logical basic for form can be established - it is structural infinitude. In the multi-media art piece Snow.noise[412] Carten Nicolai considers the variation of snow crystals as a metaphor for creativity. His installation is a documentation and also a laboratory of the process of artificially manufacturing snowflakes. Nicolai's interest in the snowflake is in how chaotic structure manifests itself into an order of patterns, and thus how creativity in chaos can lead us to meaning. Each snowflake is a precise singular form yet the whole, a field of snow found in the Antarctic becomes a void because it is utter differentiated into infinity. The flood of information cannot be made into representation except by erasure, a white stroke of paint across a surface that obscures the crystalline field of snow, or looking without glasses, until the retina is bleached by the light.

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[412] www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media/archives_2001/isnow.noisei

Plate 34

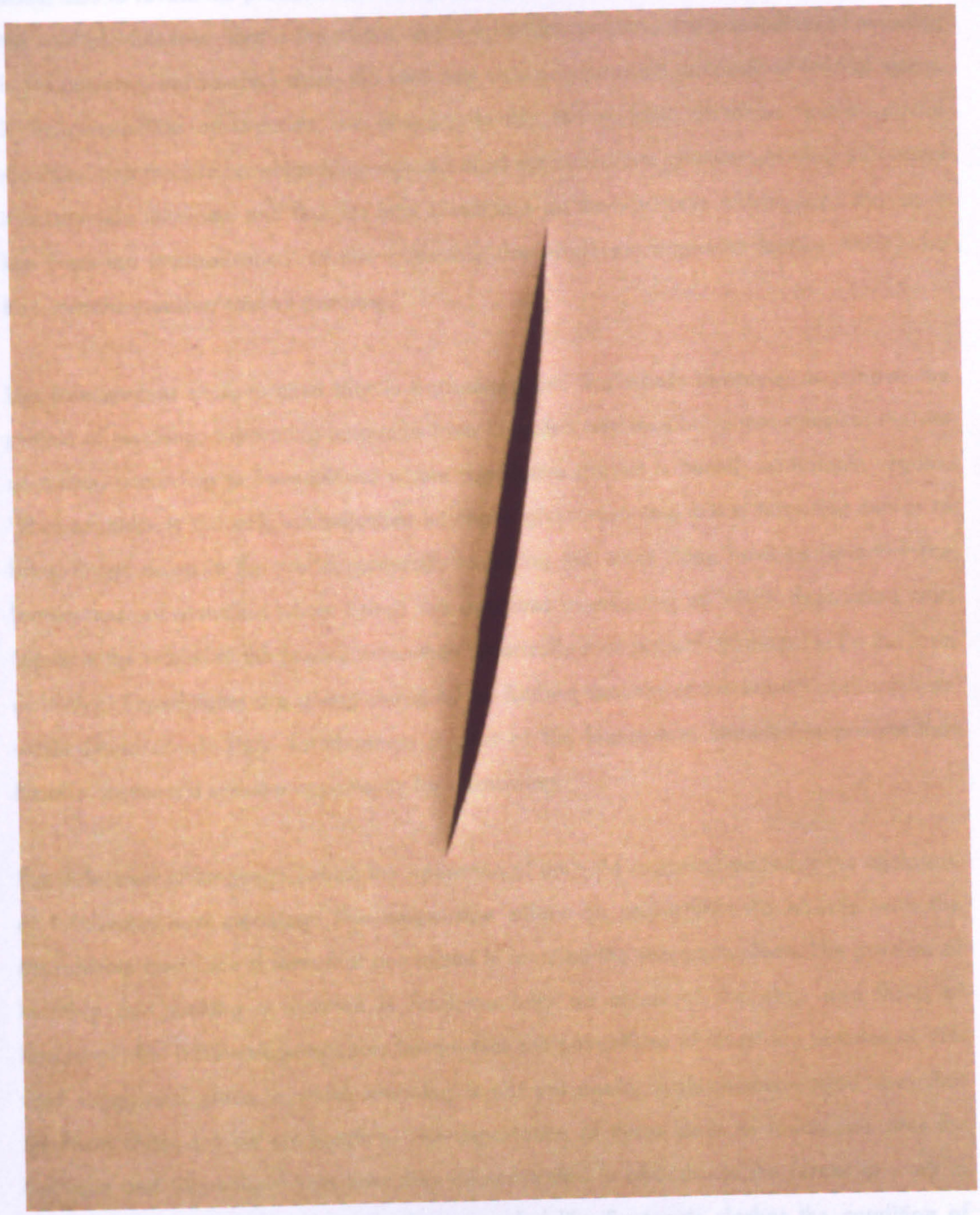

Plate 35

Akin to Lucio Fontana's cuts in the fabric of the pictorial frame, [35] the void slashes the surface of space, and in doing so reveals the possibility of a three dimensional disruption that is the condition of all two dimensional representational planes. The absence of form (the slash) acts to reveal the precariousness of presence (the representational plane). For Ishmael the void of whiteness - that is the whale - is the void that questions the possibilities of meaning in the universe. In Fontana's slash, the void acts as a puncture in a generalised field of vision. If the possibilities of structure are absence in this space, logic dissolves 'under glacial revelries' and the *site* on which language is based are called into question. In Melville's novel it is Ishmael's illiteracy, and thus his lack of reliance on the structures of language that save him from the internalisation' of the voids that the whale encompasses (unlike Ahab who becomes the monster/void he pursues).

The formlessness of Antarctica that is transmuted into the whale threatens to unhook the project of meaning, separating language from its object and thus bring into question the site on which, according to Foucault the whole descriptive project is based. As Bataille argues, "Thus *formless* is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down in the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form."[413] The formlessness of Melville's whale brings the structures of meaning on which description rests 'down in the world' at the precise time when historically such projects of meaning (in the form of Wilkes' Expeditions) are giving shape to the furthest reaches of the known and unknown world (Antarctica). Thus, formlessness is part of the incomplete knowledge project that Bataille argues is a creative opportunity for unknowing.

The deferment of language (which the operation of the void suggests) suspends the enclosure of landscape into meaning. This suspension offers an opportunity to wrestle with the irresolvable questions of form that are raised in locating the subject in place. The practice of locating and making a location is fundamentally an arrest of the ebbs and flows of landscape, but if the deluge appears infinite then the possibilities of arrest are foreclosed. The void suggests a place in which meaning is not yet made, such as the wasted sites that Smithson chose for his art practice. The importance of these kinds of landscape sites for Smithson and Oppenheim was how they demonstrated in abundance the forces at work in other much more processed sites - they revealed like Fontana's slashes the condition of making meaning that haunts the representation of all places.

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[413] George Bataille quoted Yve-Alain Bois & Rosalind Krauss, *Formless* (New York: Zone, 1997), 5.

The irresolvable nature of meaning in the void, its very puncture of absence, is what distinguishes the void from the sublime. The sublime is a word that appears when the usability of language as an appropriate signifier of experience and place is challenged, and is often used as a reference for Antarctic experience. The Antarctic sublime has come to provide a useful catch-all concept for negotiating the threshold of dislocation that the Antarctic suggests, but it is an inappropriate methodology for recognising the differentiation of the Antarctic, because it is predicated on an aesthetic narrative of mastery. The origin of the sublime has the project of 'Enlightenment geography' as its historical context and is thus tied to the conquest of space. There is a telling parallel in the sublime and the Enlightenment's desire for the conquest and mastery of space. Kant locates the sublime in the rational ability of thought to overcome the sensory excesses - matter is tamed by logic. The sublime was a form of mastery at the level of the subject; it explained the encounter with the new and unfamiliar for the threatened subject. It rationally accounted for being overwhelmed, for wonderment and the immensities of encounter while bringing this sensation to order at the most intimate level.

Practised as an as aesthetic tradition (a historical object) and phenomenological experience of place through representation (an analytical tool) the sublime has a precise gendered historical legacy. Situated in the binaries of the bounded male to organic female, man to nature, puny human to engulfing mother earth,[414] the sublime moment is characterised by a return to a pre-oedipal state without language that is reconciled through the representational process itself. The subject is reconstituted and boundaries renewed by the mastery of representation over space. The restoration of subject boundaries is the key difference between ideas of the sublime and the void, and it is this restoration that allows mastery over the object - that which is precluded in the void. The void is formless, or it is the form of absence, whereas in the operation of the sublime form is regained, and meaning is mastered as a consequence. The glacial revelries are brought to order through the application of thought.

The operation of the void is to *unground* the field, to literally remove the ground or site on which observation is based without restoring it to us (the whale grows beyond its matter to the heartless voids of the universe) - thus questing the basis of perceptual knowledge

[414] In painting, the sublime emerges predominantly with paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, J. M. W. Turner and Frederic Edwin Church. After the romanticism of the eighteenth century the ideas of an abstracted sublime can be found in the paintings of Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko. The sublime as a concept and visual exploration of viewing continues to be an important part of industrial relations, in the form of the technological sublime. In 1980's the sublime is taken up as psychoanalytical concept by Jean-François Lyotard, "Presenting the Unpresentable: The Sublime" in *Artforum* (April 1982).

formations. The void ungrounds, whereas the sublime[415] is a desire for a sense of ungroundedness – a desire for the moment of falling and then as meaning is restored, being caught. As the sublime closes down the field/site and ultimately incorporates it into a system of meaning, the void is an assertive absence that keeps space open in an indefinite complexity of meaning.

The void is primarily a spatial concept, like Fontana's *Spatial Concepts* - a three-dimensional puncture in a two-dimensional plane that is the site of the representation of three-dimensional spatial concepts. The slash cuts across the fiction of making three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional plane, and so Fontana exposes the site on which these representations must work. Fontana comments:

> I punctured holes in the canvass as a means of integrating the imaginary space represented on the surface of my paintings with the real space that surrounded them.[416]

Fontana forced the viewer to approach the work of art as an object in real space rather than regard it as representational space. Fontana's *Spatial Concepts*[417] explored in an analogous manner the problem of representing spatial concepts abstractly. The illusion of the representation of space is overcome by the penetration of real space, so mark making in material, and the marks etched out of space are blurred in this action. Metaphorically and in practice, Antarctica is a slash/void in the tradition of Western art's narrative of landscape representation and this is the central dilemma about making art about the Antarctic - *how to eke meaning out of a landscape that prises apart the fiction of representation/the holes in the text?* Working through and against the voiding qualities of the Antarctic landscape, artists have sought to ground Antarctica in representation by resorting to formal and historic representational practices.

One such conceit that can be traced from the moment when Antarctica first entered representational practice to contemporary practice is the romantic ideal of Nature. It is an essentialist view of landscape that imagines Antarctica as the site of an undefiled nature in which the inhuman is given meaning through symbolic narrative. The palpable absence of man in the essentialist landscape fictionalises an invisible spectator, while simultaneously the process of representation implies such presence. This is a characteristic feature of eighteenth century landscape painting in Britain and America in which a Judaeo-Christian idea of a lost

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[415] The sublime comes from the latin, *limen* meaning boundary/limit and *sub*, meaning approaching/towards - thus its root in language means approaching the limit.
[416] Lucio Fontana quoted on www.dolcevita.com/events/fontana/fontana.html 21/01/04
[417] Lucio Fontana founded the Movimento Spaziale (Spatial Movement) in 1947 to radically disavow the creation of illusionary spaces and continued to work experimentally with space in Ambiente Spaziale (Spatial Environments). Spatialism sought to abandon known forms and create a new dynamic art based on the unity of time and space.

Eden has been most consistently employed. The use of the narrative genre places Antarctica into the geography of 'lost' and 'utopian' places and in the case of Landseer and Friedrich, terminal places. Narrative provides a means to address the void - the conquest of space is achieved by the agency of the subject to give meaning to the non-human spaces.

Paintings such as Edward Seago's *Shackleton's Cross, South Georgia* (1956-57) is characteristic of a continuing theme of representational narrative that explores the polar regions as a complex threshold for the dominion of western man, symbolised by the depiction of the cross over a wild nature. The cross is a signpost to carry the eye beyond the structure to another space - a space enveloped in biblical history. So the cross functions as the guardian of time as well as of space - beyond it is a godless, geological time that is transformed by the frame of meaning that the cross provides. It acts as both a warning of the perils of entering into the landscape and of the biblical transformation of the wilderness through sacrifice. The signifying system of meaning (the cross) across the landscape implies man's dominion over it, yet it simultaneously presents a virgin territory so that the viewers are invited to invest in their own dominion over what is an already pre-signified space. In this tradition, Seago's painting is historically linked to key polar paintings such as Casper David Friedrich *Shipwreck* (Polar Sea) (1823) [36] Edward Church's *Icebergs* (1861), Landseer's *Man proposes, God disposes* (1877), [36] Collier's *The Last Voyage of Henry Hudson* (1881), W. Thomas Smith *They forged the Last Link with their Lives* (1895). Although most of these paintings were associated with the Arctic sublime - specifically connected to the epic adventures and demise of the Franklin Expedition - they established (as with the Antarctica Manual) the precedent in the Antarctic.

Landseer's *Man proposes God disposes* 1877, provides a suitable antidote to Seago's mimicry of imperialist narratives - its nature is perverted, consuming and depraved. Landseer was haunted by the fate of the Franklin Expedition, and his painting is a lurid reminder to the 'men that propose' to conquer, that they may be conquered by a force greater than themselves. Landseer's painting is interesting because it follows the narrative practice to the letter, but perverts the scene to highlight the faux epic of the journeys to conquer the 'unkown' (and the representational practices that fuelled the imaginative conception of them). The cross that forms the centre point to Seago's painting cuts right across the pictorial plane in Landseer's painting, formed by the mast of the ship from the *Erebus* and *Terror*. But rather than offering a symbolic dominion over space it is cast adrift amongst the floes, fallen and abandoned into the savagery of the polar bears.

Plate 36

The protean icebergs that haunted the Victorian imagination are turned into great solid rocks of ice. The nature of the bears are bestial, and although Chauncey Loomis in his discussion of the Arctic Sublime[418] argues that the polar bears anatomy is accurate, their savagery is more of a reminder of the savages that the men became. More dog like, than polar bear, the beasts are ravaged, undernourished and suggest the spectre of cannibalism. Symbolically the polar bears become the men chewing over the bones of their fellow men, deliciously chomping on a rib cage and ripping the symbol of national pride apart (in the form of the Union Jack). And the equipment of the expedition is left in ruins - the tools of geography abandoned. They become the nature they tried to tame, and like Melville's Ahab, they become the monstrous void they tried to pursue. As in Moby Dick - which was published little over ten years earlier - the nature that Landseer's painting foregrounds is the perverted underbelly of a sublime.

For others such as Joseph Conrad, the Arctic tragedy was less of a perversion than a romantic disappointment about those "whose aims were certainly as pure as the air of those high latitudes" and who "laid down their lives for the advancement of geography".[419] Conrad, amongst many, counted such costs as an unfortunate expenditure of the project of Enlightenment. He reminisces, as did Landseer's title, about difference between the intention of such expeditions and the actuality of events,

> As gradually revealed to the world this fate appeared more tragic in this, that for the first two years the way of the *Erebus* and *Terror* Expedition seemed to be the way to the desired and important success, while in truth it was all the time the way of death, the end of the darkest drama perhaps played behind the curtain of Arctic mystery.[420]

Despite the gloomy predictions that Conrad recognised in the souring of the Franklin epic adventure, the drama of Arctic mystery was still literally lifting its curtains and playing to large audiences on the Strand.[421] Not put off by Landseer's bestial phantasm, crowds came to visit Frederick Church's epic piece of theatre that was *The Icebergs*, (1861).[422] Church found his icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland, reporting, in the tradition of the English sublime that they resembled "'a cluster of Chinese buildings, then a Gothic cathedral, early style.'

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[418] Chauncey C. Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime" in *Nature and the Victorian Imagination* ed. U. C. Knoepflamacher & G. B. Tennyson (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977), 110. Loomis's discussion maps the key works of the Arctic Sublime and their role in the negotiating the narrative of the Franklin Expedition.
[419] Joseph Conrad, *Single Works: Geography and Explorers* (London: Strangeways & Sons, 1924), 16.
[420] Conrad 1924, 16.
[421] *The Icebergs* original gallery display was recreated at the Tate Britain show, the *American Sublime* (2002). The painting was displayed alone in a darkened room with heavy velvet curtains drawn back to reveal the scene just below eye-level so the that one looks into the enormity of the icebergs and feels a certain vertigo.
[422] Church's painting was the most grandiose meditation on the sublime and it became the key reference point the American sublime when it was sold for a record amount of $2.5 million in the US announcing an investment in an American rather than European master. For a discussion on the life of the painting and its role in American national aesthetics see Tim Barringer, *American Sublime, Landscape Painting in the United States 1820-1880* ed. Andrew Wilton & Tim Barringer (London: Tate, 2002), 224-227.

Together, the icebergs 'resembled the ruins of a marbled city.'"[423] The painting received large acclaim in the US, originally titled 'The North' to coincide with the beginning of the Civil War, it was praised for the sublime quality of the 'mysterious temple' of the Arctic. The central iceberg was said to represent a Gothic cathedral, promoting a comparison between the grandeur of natural and human forms. The sublime for Church and his audience was a form of *meta incognita*. *The Icebergs* invited the viewer into a strange new world of matter, that was liquid and fantastical in its colouration and physicality, but something remained that was familiar, a territory of meaning to be brought home that spoke to narratives larger than icebergs - to a national landscape aesthetic. As Church's original title attests to, *The Icebergs* was 'Manifest Destiny', Arctic style.

Before arriving in London, Church added the now, somewhat obligatory, broken mast in the shape of a cross, to the foreground of the painting. This was perhaps to conform to the religious narrative that was a practice of British epic landscape painting and I suspect to appeal to British audiences invested in the continuing legacy of polar exploration. As if to confirm this investment, Lady Franklin, (widow of Sir John) and many other polar veterans attended the opening of *The Icebergs* in London. In each of these incidents the employment of the sublime effected the conceit of visual analogy where known ways of seeing and representing the landscape are transferred onto the unknown, prompting unconscious recognition.

Perhaps no other polar painting attends to the void as unsentimentally and unforgivingly as Casper David Friedrich's *Shipwreck* (Polar Sea) 1823. Informed by Friedrich's own sense of metaphysical despair the Shipwreck, originally titled *Die gescheiterte Hoffnung - The Wreck of Hope*, was a polar rupture in the narratives of the sublime. Friedrich took the sublime into a void, wrecking the hope of reconciliation into a polar location.[424] Through this existential estrangement, a thwarted reciprocity with the world is located in the Polar Regions. In the ice, hope was crushed by nature, not restored. The matter and location is significant in that ice was used as a landscape of zero of meaning - the existential lack that haunts all meaning. The conventional scaling device of a ship, figures as a barely discernible stern amongst the slabs of ice, to offer no redeeming mark of the cross. The ship is not a ruin, but in the process of being consumed by the ice, as is the viewer's gaze as it is drawn in the vortex at the centre of the painting. The rupture of the ice is like a geological shift in the earth's seismic plates, breaking apart the pictorial plane. The ice slashes space apart.

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[423] Frederic Edwin Church quoted in the Wilton & Barringer 2002, 224.

[424] Friedrich is already starting to create a paradox from the sublime - to identify the sublime is to negate it. By definition, the sublime is meant to lie beyond understanding, yet its technical employment subverts sublimity into a contained experience.

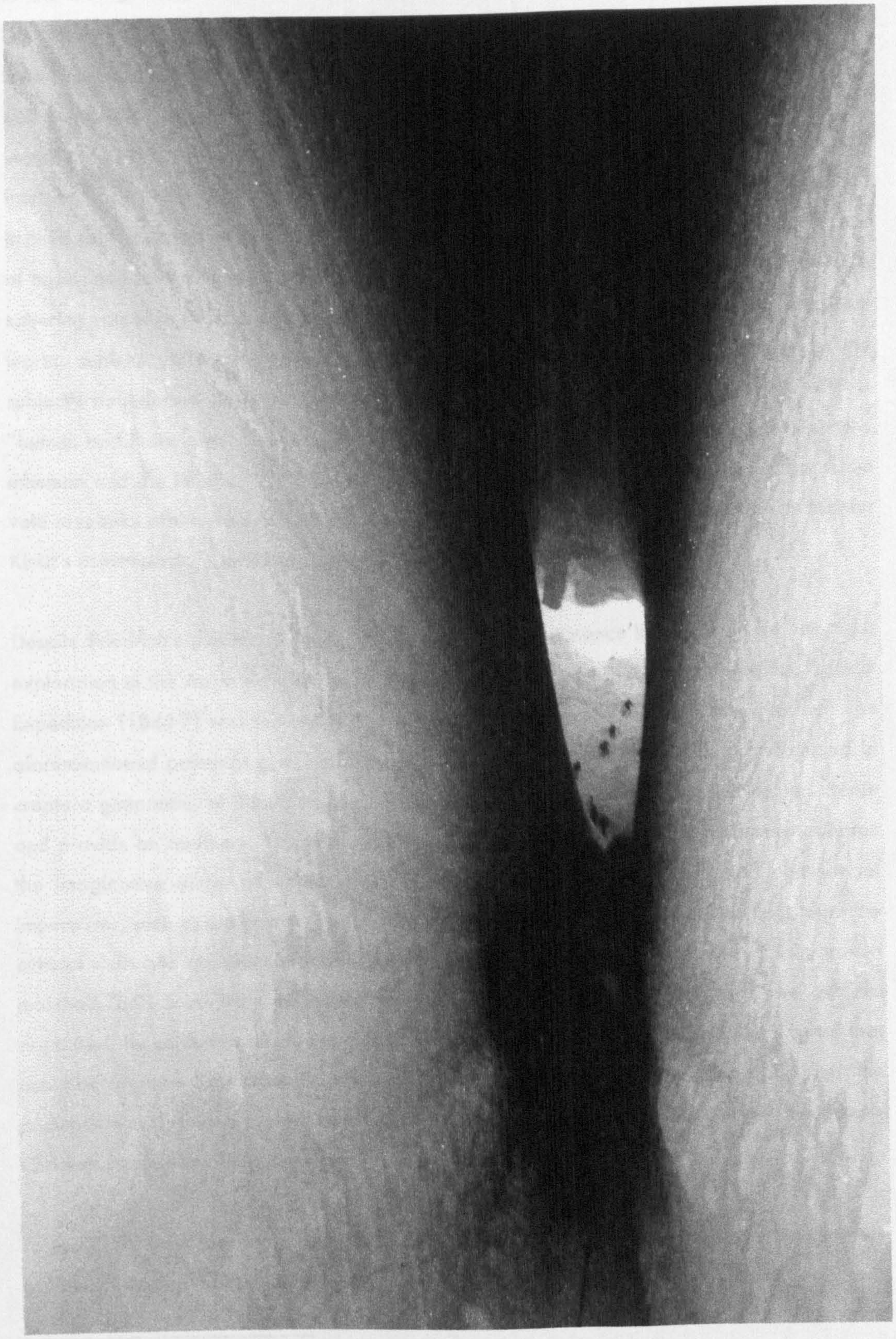

Plate 37

In the background, where conventionally a sublime landscape would be found (as in Landseer's painting) there is the repetition of the forms of the event in the foreground. The shadow sends the viewer back to the rupture in the foreground, intensifying the viewing of it, and forming a border to any other meaning being realised on the horizon. There is no vanishing point to return the subject to order. In this claustrophobic space of geological fracture, the crystalline imaginary that Friedrich creates is devoid of life. Rather than an implied subject, Friedrich paints the terrible fracturing voids of the subject, the internal wreck of hope, and thus meaning. His painting, like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) acts as a sobering response to the sublime, and the exploration it romanticised and visualised. In both works, sublime violence moves against its own seduction into a critical violence on the subject's boundaries. Shelley and Friedrich give shape to the voids, but suggest that what is "human and finite in us", looking into the void will ultimately draw back alienated "from the inhuman and the infinite."[425] To look on Friedrich's painting is to hover on the edge of the void in rebuke of the sublime and its paltry comforts. Contemporaneously, the Russian painter Kleist's commented: "It was like someone having their eyelids removed".[426]

Despite Friedrich's existential voids, the enthusiasm and romance that greeted further polar exploration in the Antarctic with James Clark Ross (1839) and in the Arctic with the Franklin Expedition (1845-7) was testament that the polar sublime could not be easily quashed. The aforementioned paintings gave visibility to the narrative of polar exploration and helped to create a geopoetics of the Polar Regions. It was an aesthetic that exploration helped create and provide an audience for, as the paintings served to encourage and sometimes question the imaginative allure of exploration. The polar sublime also aestheticised commercial imperatives, such as the search for the North West Passage. The key polar paintings mark the cultural shifts and questions that punctuated the Enlightenment project, its spatial exploration matched, and sometimes subverted by the spatial plane of the painting. The sublime organised the confusion of an ever-expanding universe into a supposedly rational event that could be organised for dramatic effect and amusement, although in the case of Friedrich the audience was delivered a much harsher message about the voids that punctuated the Judaeo-Christian mythology of journey.

James Clark Ross' naming of his ships *Erebus* and *Terror* seemed to suggest the resolute confidence that inhabited Enlightenment exploration - or an attempt to fight monstrosity with

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[425] Loomis 1977, 99.
[426] quoted by Peter Campbell, "At the National Gallery" in *London Review of Books* (5 August 2004 Vol.26. No.15), 32.

monstrosity. In Greek mythology *Erebus* was the son of Chaos, the god of darkness who dwelt in the underworld, "the space through which souls passed to Hades".[427] The *Erebus* and *Terror* were the first ships to penetrate the great ice barrier of the Ross Sea, and Ross successfully located the continental outlines of Antarctica in 1839. As if to test the faith in the project of Polar Exploration, the two most prominent volcanoes on Ross Island, Antarctica were named *Erebus* and *Terror* after the two ships. On their return, the ships were re-fitted for John Franklin's search for the North West passage. Ironically, the *Erebus* and *Terror* lived up to their nomination and found a passage to Hades through the Arctic Circle of Ice,[428] and through many a polar painting.[429]

The painterly tradition of a romantic nature carried through to the photography of the heroic era, which was framed by a similar Ulyssesian horizon of meaning. Here is Tennyson:

> Yet all experience is an arch where through
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
> Forever and forever when I move.[430]

In the frame of Herbert Ponting's photography or Seago's painting, Tennyson's arch is figuratively replayed (as tent opening, cross, ice cave) offering the viewer an untravelled world to contemplate through a domesticating portal.[431] This historic theme was developed extensively by the American Sierra Club[432] photographers whose photographic aesthetic (inherited from eighteenth century American landscape painting) had a major role in the re-envisioning of 'wilderness' spaces and promoted the creation of America's National Parks as well as opening up of these territories for public consumption. In their work, the portal slipped away and Nature filled the photographic plate. The bounded structure of the work (through a framing device) was displaced onto the physical limits of the frame. This was often accompanied by new technological development that heightened the descriptive capability of the film. One of the key members of the Sierra Club and contemporary of Ansel Adams, Eliot Porter, visited Antarctica in the 1975 re-focusing American interest in the Antarctic after the IGY.

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[427] Milton *Paradise Lost* Book II line 883.
[428] A conflation of Dante's circle of hell and Erebus' chaos was performed by Dante, an eight legged robot designed to crawl down the crater of Mount Erebus, (developed by Carnegie Mellon University in 1993, to be used in Mars). Dante's legs crippled minutes after it began its decent into Erebus, and it was consumed by the volcano.
[429] This Arctic fate of *Erebus* was overshadowed by the Antarctic tragedy of the New Zealand tourist plane crash into Erebus (the volcano). It would seem that if the idea of Gaia drives the contemporary environmental movement, its nemesis could be found in the idea of Erebus in the polar regions.
[430] Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Selection and Extracts Ulysses and Columbus* ed. H. Clement Notcutt (London: Macmillian & Co. 1913)
[431] With Seago's art historical frame or Ponting's photographic plate, the new is brought into the familiar plane through both physical and historical distancing devices.
[432] The Sierra Club was formed out of Group f/64, which included Ansel Adams, Alfred Stieglitz and Eliot Porter who published wilderness imagery. The aesthetics of the Sierra club were closely tied to the nature philosophy of David Thoreau and the painterly tradition of the eighteenth century American landscape painting school, particularly Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran, and their photographic legacy in the form of Carleton Watkins.

Pyne says of Porter's work, "nature is portrayed as old master. The Ice as precious object, and Antarctica as a last great wilderness".[433] Pyne concludes that Porter is perhaps "truer to the esthetic power of Antarctica: its role as reducer, abstractor, and mirror",[434] yet what Porter does is to transpose one aesthetic of wilderness to make another wilderness. In this elision, the politics of wilderness spaces that the Sierra Club actively produced is overlaid onto an entirely different space. Porter simply finds another object in the Antarctic, one that has a less politically contentious landscape history than the wilderness politics of America.[435] As Weston J. Naef comments about Porter,

> The photographs reproduced here are less about specific places (although a wide variety of places... are represented) than they are about the power of concentration.[436]

Akin to the practice of the Sierra Club, the contemporary photographer Marzena Pogorzaly's response to the Antarctic is characteristic of photographic practice that narrates a monumentalising nature aesthetic, that is both static and magisterial. 'Go south, young woman' the headline[437] reads under Pogorzaly's dramatic photograph of Antarctica[438] [38] The text proclaims the geopoetics of an essentialist 'south' - both a topographical and conceptual place. The ethereal and monolithic quality of the ice - photographed as ruined sculptures - invokes a similar elementary place, an ahistorical 'non-place' of the imagination that is open for investment. The critic Neal Ascherson, says that Pogorzaly has "identified the architecture of the inner dream which draws human being towards the Polar Regions".[439] His commentary encourages the fantasy of Antarctica as a symbolic first place, which stems, from Pogorzaly's comments about Antarctica as a beginning of time, that is paralleled with the beginning of the subject (a pre-oedipal state without language that is deferred onto the landscape). Pogorzaly comments that, "when you are in the Antarctic, it's like being at the Creation - staring at a place which looked like that millions of years ago, when we didn't exist',[440] and certainly the photographs make the same narrative claim.

The recourse to a first place and thus a symbolic place covers what is evidently a difficulty in the maintenance of a relation between language and the object it describes. The scale of different orders of temporality is reduced as geological time is internalised as human time, thus surrendering the difference to historical association. Resolving the difficulty that

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[433] Pyne 1998, 198.
[434] Ibid.
[435] The creation of American wilderness parks is intricately bound up with the creation of reserves for First Nation people, and thus the Sierra Club's work was imbued with a highly political, if somewhat ignored landscape aesthetic.
[436] Quoted in Eliot Porter *Antarctica* (London: Hutchinson, 1978) unpaginated.
[437] Kevin Jackson, "The Friday Review" in *The Independent* (17 September 1999).
[438] Ice Works by Marzena Pogorzaly was exhibited at Ffotogallery, Cardiff from Sept-October 1999.
[439] Quoted by Jackson 1999
[440] Ibid.

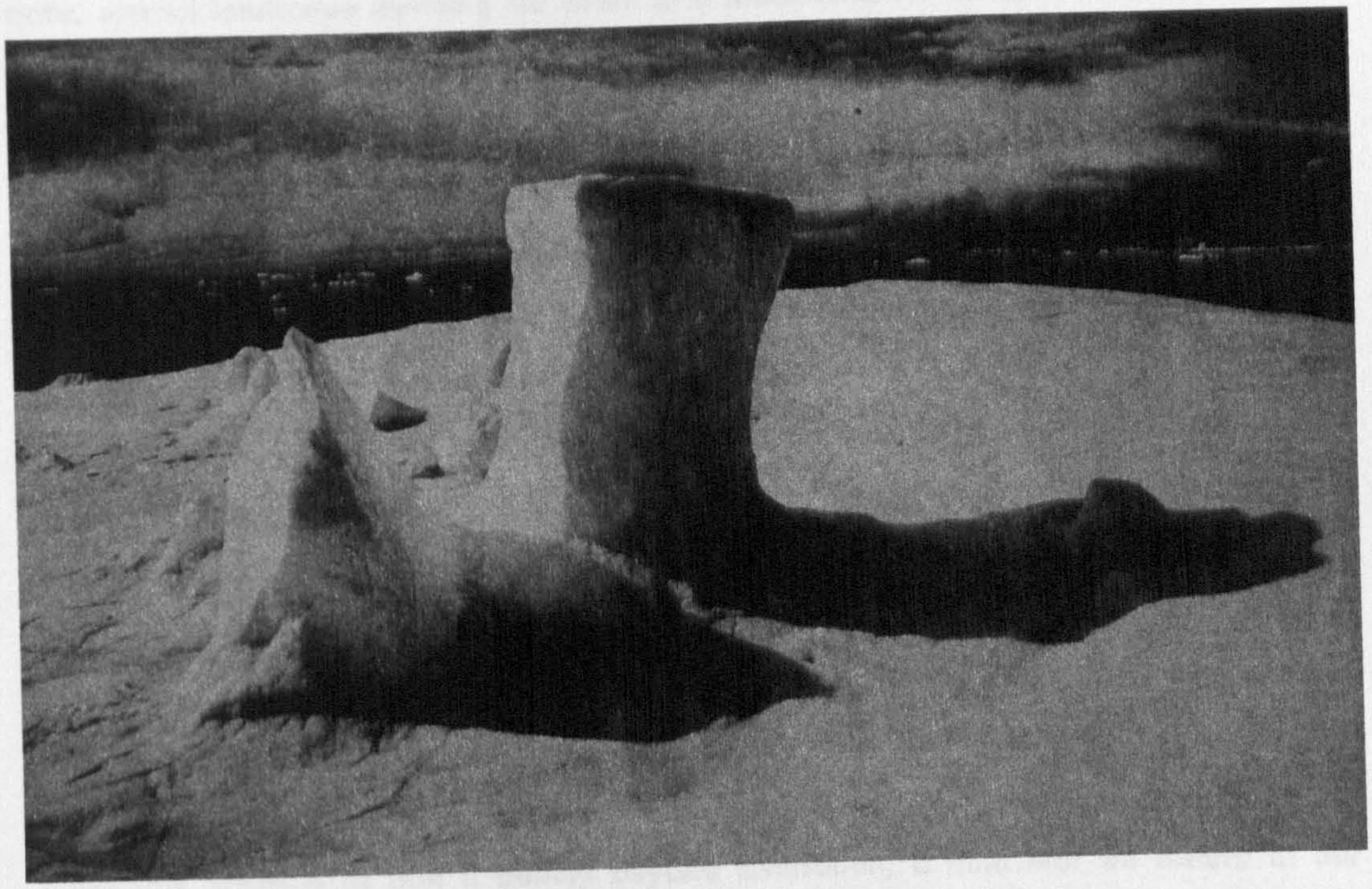

Plate 38

Antarctica presents, by conceptualising it as a first place of childhood or an Eden before the fall, utilises the conceit used in nineteenth century American painting[441] of Manifest Destiny that had clear imperial imperatives in the history of its usage.

Formally, the narrative structure is organised in such a way that the permanence and grandeur of the ice is contrasted against the dark void of the horizon that threatens to engulf the viewer. The formal function of the void (positioned at the traditional 2/3rds eye-line of the viewer) is to dislocate the viewer from other horizons of meaning, foregrounding the stableness of the 'ice works' against the temporal-ness of the sky. The two temporal moments of permanence (geological time) and the fleeting (human time) are fractured by the void. This positioning sets up a spatial conceit of a progressive (fleeting) landscape posited against a static, eternal landscape awaiting the event of a historic/heroic narrative. The movement is one that connects you to the horizon and its threatening void, then back to the foreground - in essence creating a ring fenced spatial and temporal wilderness. It is a symbolic action assumed by the critic Paul Ryan in his review of the exhibition works for *Portfolio* that, "The appeal of such a vast wilderness lies in the fact that it carries no history beyond the natural history of itself; there is a rare purity in this."[442] In this conflation between place and image, Ryan unconsciously responds to how the image produces Antarctica as a place removed from human interference. The myth of an invisible observer that will have stayed at a station, used runways and aeroplanes, produced waste (that cannot be digested by the environment) serves to dislocate Antarctica from time - a time that is clearly recorded the matter of the ice and information of its cores. Similar to the commitment of the West as an American Eden in Watkins's photographs, and before that in Bierstadt's paintings, Pogorzaly's photographs create an Eden of untouched and untouchable Antarctica, it is a place of double salvation removed from the possibility of symbolic harm. This redemption is echoed in Ryan's criticism, "Pogorzaly presents us with a beauty beyond civilisation, a land that we disturb at our peril."[443]

Pogorzaly's creation of an ahistorical Antarctica, leads Ryan to surmise,

> a landscape photograph of Antarctica, however modern, connects us with the birth of time... Antarctica is the last continent on Earth to remain unchanged by man, revolutions, social and political and industrial, has passed it by. It is an eternal reminder of the wild dawn of our planet's life; a stark *memento mori* of the world's end.[444]

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[441] Paul Ryan, "Marzena Pogorzaly" in *Portfolio* (31 June 2000), 60-61.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Ibid.
[444] Ibid.

Unlike the images of the heroic era that create the Antarctic landscape as a theatre for the dramatics of the explorer-hero, Pogorzaly creates a landscape of essential nature. The cleaved ice stands like the most permanent of sculptures casting long foreboding shadows over the plane of ice. The monochrome image resonates with the cult of the ruin - a motif of the cultural landscape of the nineteenth century American Sublime. In paintings grouped under the American Sublime, the ruin functioned to suggest the greatness of ancient civilisations now come to past (to ruin) - suggesting the right or 'Manifest Destiny'[445] of the modern settler over the landscape.

The *Ice Works* are epic, rendered by strong contrasts yet strangely familiar so that they promote recognition rather than alienation, as Ryan comments;

> The elements have sculpted shapes that resemble parodies or abstractions of familiar objects. A phantom ship, fossilised beasts, an abandoned wedding cake, calcified plants and any number of imagined correspondence with the wider world.[446]

In this mimicry of the familiar, Pogorzaly's work follows the genre of other classic Antarctic paintings such as those from the James Clarke Ross expedition *A Remarkable Iceberg* and *Passage through the Ice*, from the *Voyage of Discovery* 1819 where the icebergs resemble the ships and the monumental in nature is made to resemble the man's monuments. The conceit confers a natural majesty on man's monuments and a conversion of nature into a dominion of man. If Pogorzaly photographs are placed in comparison with the Marielle Neudecker's *Unrecallable Now*[447] [39] the visual conceit of the monumental is exposed. Neudecker's work occupies a borderland, oscillating from the sublime to the puny as the viewer traverses the evocative terrain of her epic and miniaturised fibreglass landscapes.

Unrecallable Now unequivocally uses the language of the sublime (as Pogorzaly unambiguously does) to demonstrate both its construction and its effect. The installation of rolling mountains, an ethereal landscape floating in a milky sea of fog is also an artifice of fibreglass fabrications in a tank of liquid. Strangely reminiscent of a place, now unrecallable, Neudecker plays with our cultural memory of landscape as an indistinct vacancy to inhabit. She sets up a dialectic with the sublime by creating its visual pleasures and encouraging the viewer in that romantic fantasy, while exposing its fictions by her use of materials and inversions of subject positions associated with the sublime (an engulfing viewpoint that has the

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[445] Manifest Destiny was first used by John L O'Sullivan in his editorial in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* in 1845. Manifest Destiny was a national will to power that symbolically connected the "vast reaches of the wilderness to an omniscient gaze and larger national will to power..." And it was crucial in legitimising the continental expansion of the US westwards. Quote from Albert Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1991), xi.
[446] Ryan 2000, 60-61.
[447] Mariele Neudecker, *Mariele Neudecker* (Colchester: Firstsite, 1999).

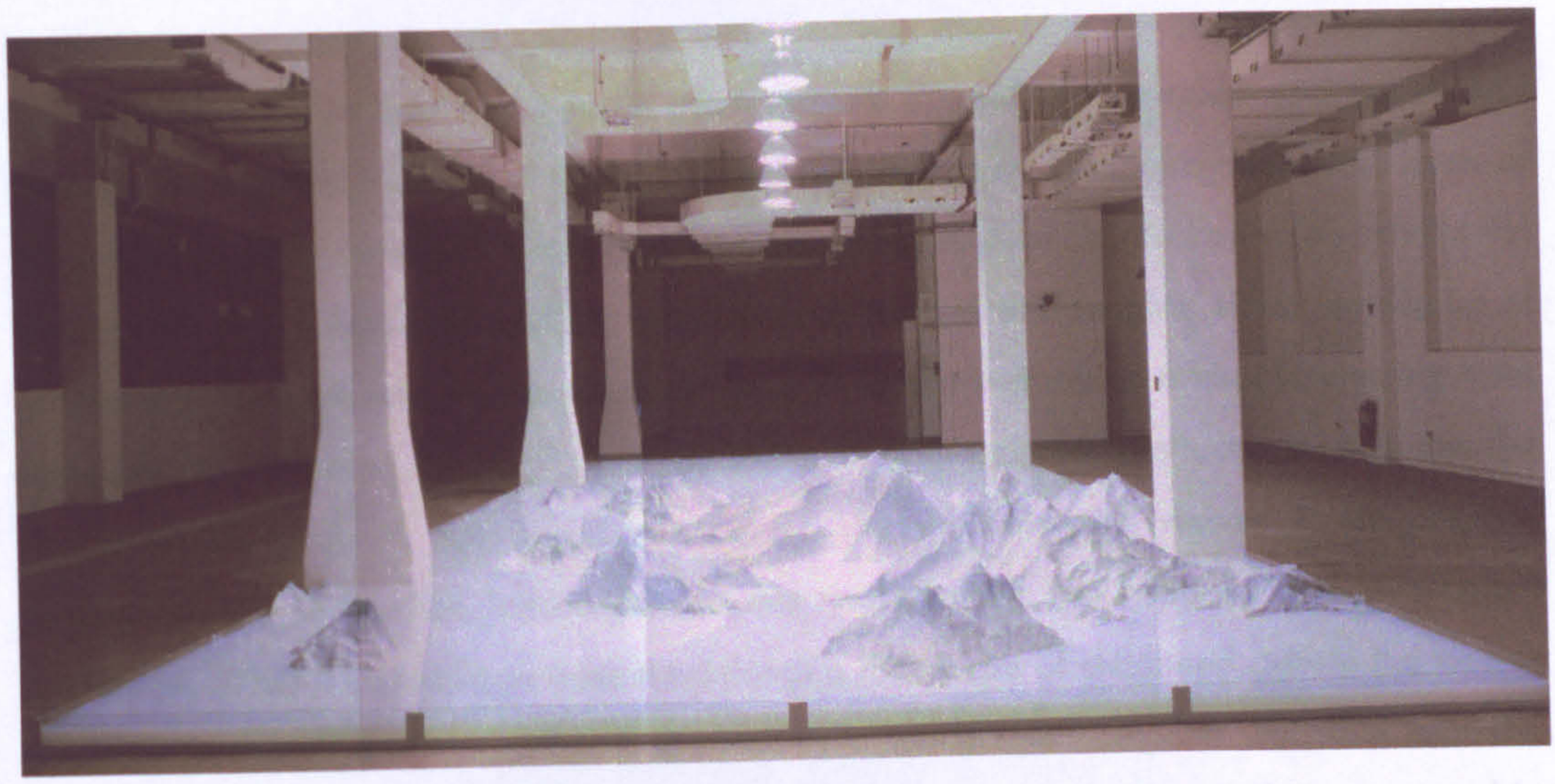

Plate 39

effect of creating the experience of totality necessary for the sensation of the sublime is telescoped so that the viewer has to consciously try and locate the impossible point of engulfment). Neudecker's interest in the sublime has led her to create three-dimensional sculptures of a number of Friedrich's paintings. Going from the two dimensional to the three dimensional removes the viewing position from which landscape (and the sublime moment) unfolds in Friedrich's paintings, instead we get to traverse the strangely familiar landscapes as a set - in all its theatrical dimensions. The scenes are contained in tanks, as bounded spaces of contemplation, and objects of cultural memory. Neudecker reminds us of the importance of the subject as the point of landscape and of the artwork. We have to make ourselves small to inhabit these landscapes and it is our historic memory that animates them. There is playfulness in the way Neudecker encourages our engagement in these model landscapes, promoting an eerie investment while reminding us of their fabrication, and the impossibility of any transcendence.

The gigantic in *Ice Works* has a much more earnest appeal. It is created and maintained through the extreme contrast of tones and the elevated gaze, which produces shrinkage of the subject position - vertigo - that is characteristic of the sublime. In this Pogorzaly mimics the nineteenth century American sublime, which was concerned with heights, either looking up at great natural heights such as mountains or via a viewpoint that traced a visual trajectory from uplands to a panorama below.[448] Contrary to the traditions of nineteenth century sublime, the power of the view is not unequivocally transferred onto the viewer in Pogorzaly's photographs, and thus the landscape remains unobtainable for symbolic and ideological possession. What this shrinkage does is reinforce a landscape of childhood, where the viewer becomes a shrunken Alice. What is created is a landscape complicit with loss and the remembrance of things past - a locus for fantasy.[449] The humility of a small human in a big world is attractive, and it is lent a potent aesthetic in the Antarctic, but it belies a historic reversal in which we can literally cause global operations of the environment. Removed from time, the landscape also becomes removed from our grasp, as Pogorzaly says, "These are hidden things. Very few human beings have seen them".[450]

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[448] For a detailed discussion of these spectator positions see Boime 1991, 1.

[449] Implicit in the historical usage of utopian unspoilt landscapes is the genderisation of space through an allegorical positioning of untouched territory as virginal, and thus a purity awaiting the conquest of male desire. For a much more detailed analysis of gendered landscape relations and the historic inequalities of access to both imaginary and real spaces see Steve Adams and Anna Gruetzner Robins, *Gendering Landscape Art* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2001) and Jacquelime M. Labbe, *Romantic Visualities, Landscape, Gender and Romanticism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998).

[450] Jackson 1999.

Symbolically, these photographs invite the fantasy of a sensual space of the imagination while they empty Antarctica of its specificity. This 'emptying out of place' has particular consequences for our relation to place as Doreen Massey comments, "To create a place as a place for our yearning denies place its own historic place in time".[451] Antarctica's time in these photographs is frozen static, and lost like childhood into a dream. Unlike the photographs of Hurley and Ponting that made the Antarctic into a surface waiting for the active explorer and the event of his arrival, Pogorzaly restores the event to nature, positioning Antarctica in an Edenic language. In this ordering, she simultaneously denies Antarctica another kind of nature by removing it historically and geographically from the reciprocity of human contact.

The commanding presence of the *Ice Works* challenges the popular *National Geographic* genre of the cracking ice (the narrative of a fragile landscape) narrating a landscape that is resolute, powerful and contained, rather than open for harm. In American nineteenth century landscape (and the later photography which followed similar conventions) the majestic landscape painting went hand in hand with its actual exploitation, within which the trope of the sublime acted as a form of advertisement, packaging experience and place[452] for tourist and commercial interests. Pogorzaly's photographs do not operate within the traditional conventions of the sublime because they do not allay the spectators fear, instead the *Ice Works*, like Ozymandias[453] is a ruined visage that guards over the a space of the desert - the darkness of the void. The *Ice Works* are the last ramparts of terra incognita, a place beyond which, Pogorzaly indicates, 'there lies dragons'. But as Joel Synder[454] argues about O'Sullivan's photographs of the American West, by creating the landscape as place not yet known, he began to outline a field of potential inquiry. As Pogorzaly's photographs shows us hidden things they concurrently set up the challenge of unexplored territory. The dramatics of this encounter, as in Ponting's photographs[455] is a struggle with scale (and time) - the foundation for heroic encounters. In the sublime, the unboundedness of landscape viewed by a bounded subject sets up the possibilities for a heroic narrative.

Pogorzaly's photographs circumscribe a terrain in which Antarctica is produced as a place of longing and memories, cut off to all, immutable as a landscape, yet open for fantastic

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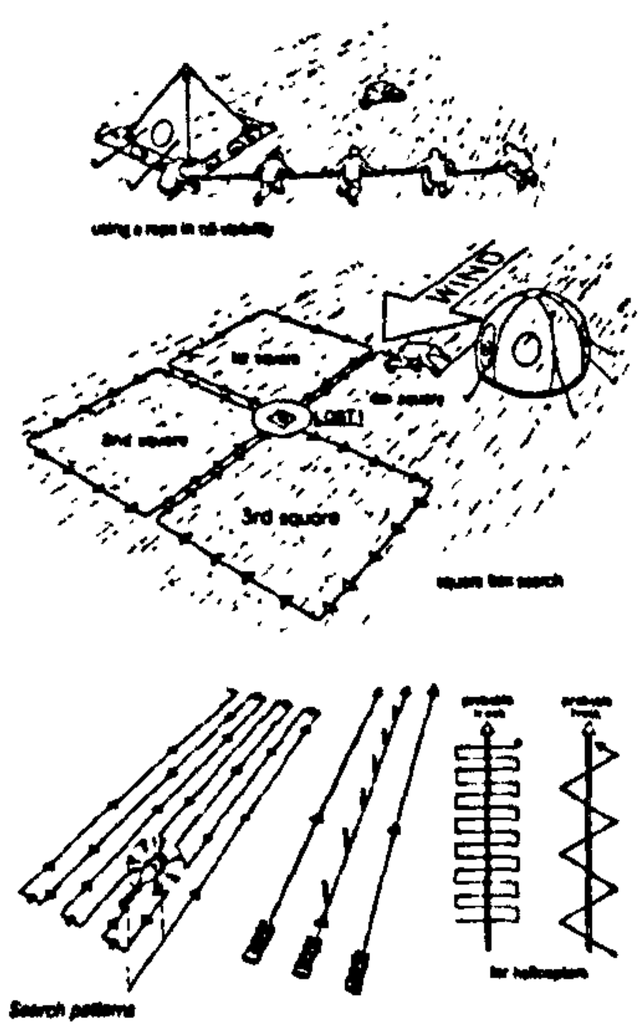
[451] Doreen Massey, *"Getting Away" speaking at Journeys: The Art of Hamish Fulton*, Tate Britain 26 April, 2002.
[452] This idea was put forward by Joni Kinsey in her lecture "Commodifying the Sublime" at the *American Sublime* conference, 19 & 20 April 2001, Tate Britain. The idea is developed at length in her book, Joni Kinsey, *Thomas Moran and the surveying of the American West* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1992)
[453] In a review of Pogorzaly's work, Ryan invokes the words of Osymandias, to talk about the magisterial visage of these photographs, 'Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
[454] Synder 1994, 200.
[455] In Ponting's famous photograph of the Barne Glacier, he included of a fictional figure in the front of the glacier to set up a dramatic narrative of scale between man and landscape. See Spufford 1996, 36-7.

investment. She sets up an abstract reciprocity between image and location - the creation of a ruin visage of the Antarctic stares back at the viewer as a memory of unreachable places. Yet the name gives us a location however abstract, that functions as a destination. Pointing the viewer to the spaces of childhood locates Antarctica in a mythopoetic geography. Tania Kovats' work *cave, grotto, canyon, tomb, ledge, rocky outcrop* exemplifies this construction of generic landscapes in the imagination. She highlights the power that the geography's generic data has to effect cultural recognition that is often mistaken for a kind of primal recognition.

Kovat's interest in different sorts of utopias led her to take features of landscape that appeared in renaissance paintings and isolate them as isolated sculptures of sublime motifs. The building blocks of landscape are isolated as little scenes to foreground the effect of such forms on the imagination, and to highlight the part they play in the construction of utopias. The landscape models explore how topographic features are repeatedly utilised as moral, political, and spiritual metaphors. Work such as *Rocky Road* removes the path from the landscape to indicate how the path invites us into landscape and becomes its direction. Working through the idea that "landscape is a series of incidents coming into being,"[456] Kovats reproduces these geographic motifs and in doing so flattens the dramatics of the sublime furniture, and points to their mass production as objects of cultural memory. The isolated models of *cave, grotto, canyon, tomb, ledge, rocky outcrop* disclose how imagined landscapes are unified through a degree of spatial isolation which protects the utopia from potential corrupting influences.



As the sublime furniture of geographical motifs is formed by a desire for orientation, without such formations, geography cannot begin. In the void, how then do we find our geography? The void is the space that cannot be accounted for, and so it provides a useful metaphor for Antarctica in systems of meaning. It is the thing that cannot be fitted into the system (like the point of the pole) that the system of signification needs in order to constitute itself as a system. The point of the pole is the remainder, as is Antarctica in a global project of inhabitation. The Antarctic is an assertive absence in the possibility of human inhabitation on a physical (life is unsustainable) and psychic scale (meaning

[456] Tania Kovats, *Lost* (Birmingham: Ikon, 2000), 4.

erodes). Thus, Antarctica is an edge as well as a centre, somewhere from which to view other orders and conditions of time and meaning. As Homi K. Bhabha argues,

> The void slips sideways... The enigma of the void is now discernible in the intimation of a movement that obliterates perceptual space and supplements it with a disruptive, disjunctive time through which the spectator must pass...[457]

In the void, an oblique sideways movement replaces the perspectival distance between subject and object to disrupt the command of ordering systems - revealing a blind spot in the conception of distance and time.

As in Fontana's *Spatial Concepts*, the edge of the material holds the presence of the absence of the slash. At this edge, the presence of real space enters the representational plane. The void then is a crisis of representation and also a temporal crisis, joining the topographic with the psychic - just the puncture in perception that Fontana wanted to exact. To understand the void not as a void in the disabling sense, but think of what this un-readability/un-navigation of space allows, enables us to admit to the possibilities of being disorientated. As the map has to be inverted to north to go south, confounding both compass and psyche, Antarctica points to the holes in geographical thought that systems of signification are hung off. To comprehend these holes in the system of meaning rather than cover them over allows us to be responsive to the possibilities of other meanings. In the absence, we can perhaps find a way to recuperate some of the fictions of geographical systems and open them to the landscapes that they traverse. In the lesion around the representational plane, landscape asserts itself as absence, to remind us of the puncture of another space that challenges the representations we make of it. It is to that perceptual field of space that I now turn.

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[457] Homi K. Bhabha, *Anish Kapoor: Making Emptiness* (London: Haywood Gallery/University of California Press, 1998), 14.

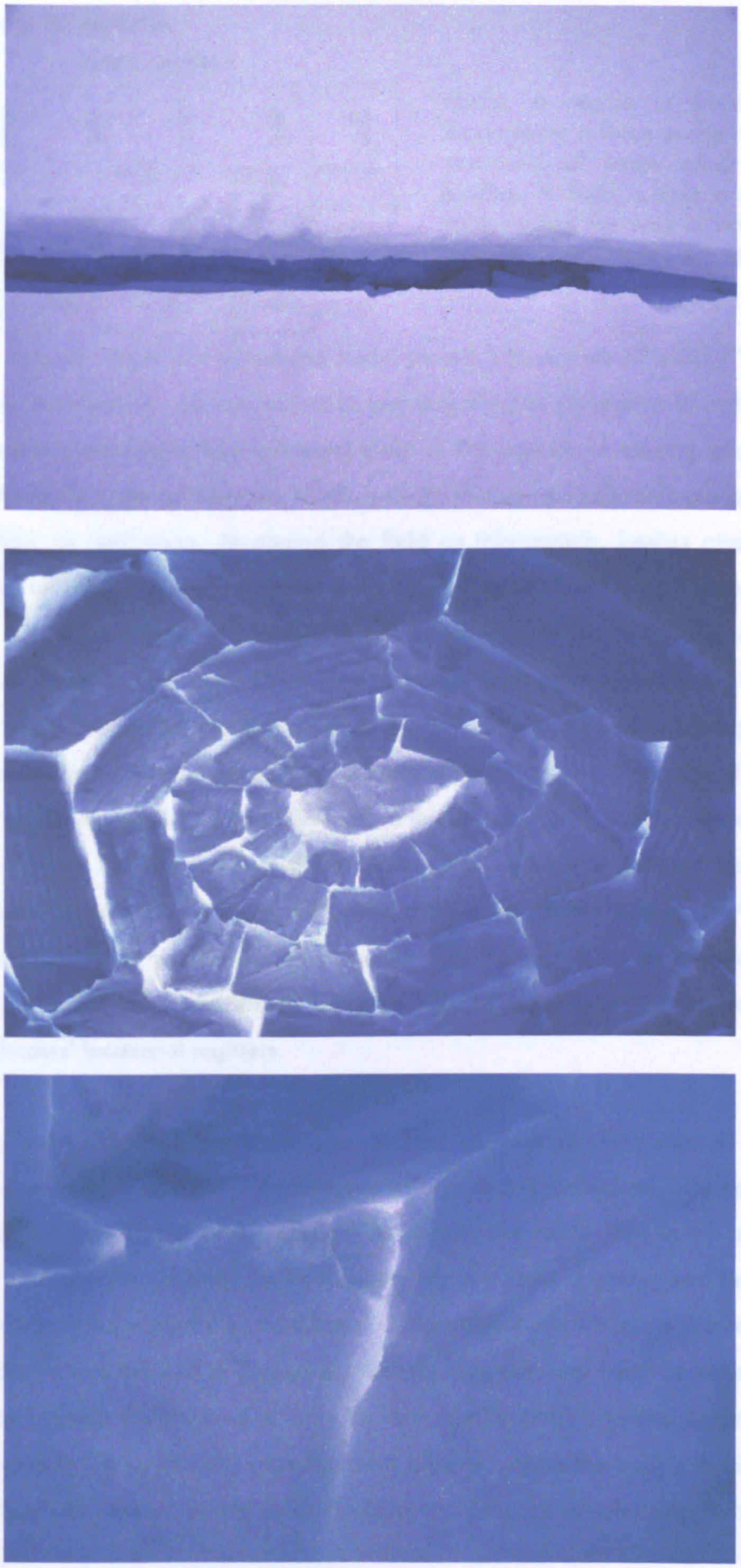
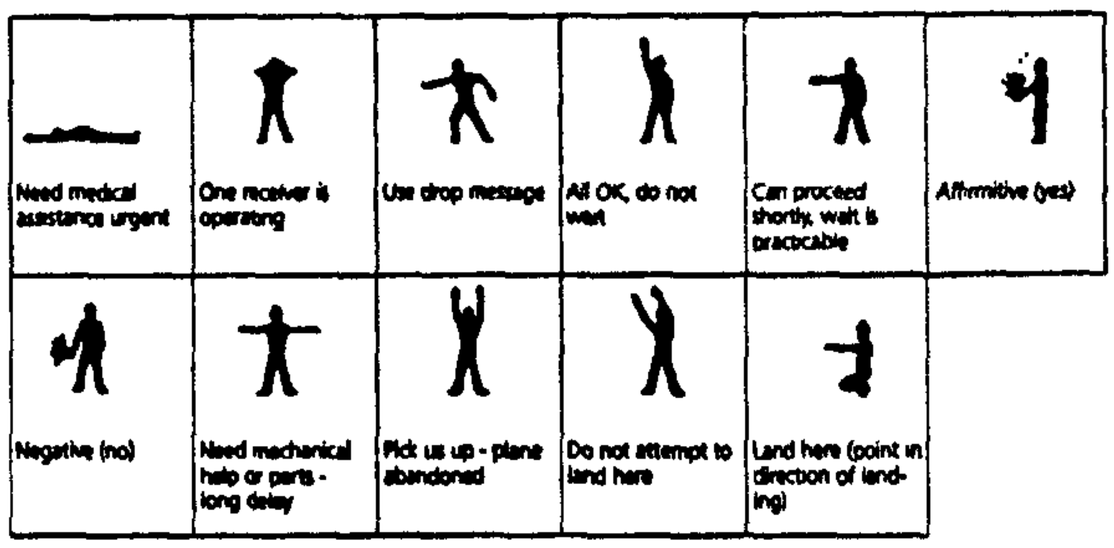


Plate 40

Siting: The Body *(in the field)*

BODY SIGNALS



Field. A region in which a body experiences a force as the result of the presence of some other body or bodies. A field is thus a method of representing the way in which bodies are able to influence each other.[458]

The body in Antarctic fields is a journeying body, placed "into a *state of writing*"[459] - *writing landscape as information* - as the subject is sent travelling to Antarctica in order to write scientific, aesthetic, economic, environmental data. In the process of making information in this space, the body is the primary site of this writing, joining optically and conceptually the matter together as landscape. Arranging the field as information, bodies give space its geography at an intimate level - traversing the terrain by intellectual and physical routes (geography is at once a body of knowledge and knowledge of the body). But what of the landscape, as Tania Kovats asks, "You move through landscape. Does it move through you?"[460] Too often, landscape discussions centre on the movement of bodies through space as if the body's mobility is not permeated by the matter through which it passes, as if landscape neatly stops at the skin or eye. There is little space in contemporary scientific accounts for this transgression (save for the psychological studies that assume a rational body in the landscape), so it forms a silence in the text of Antarctic space. Unlike the explorer's accounts - which locate the body as the site of generation in the formation of knowledge - the contemporary scientist has a specialised body knowledge production that has no place for many of the bodies' locational registers.

As the body moves through the landscape, it does so through the points of landscape transmission, in which certain information is arrested (geological, meteorological, observational, environmental) as knowledge. As arrests are made (like in the selection of appropriate photographic subjects) the body is already in a state of writing and being written as it passes through the sensorial of data flows. Geographical information is drawn in like the light that is drawn into the eye to give us our images. The skin and lungs breathe. The mind wanders. The subject laughs and is ecstatic. Landscape begins in the body. Whether optically, physically, or psychically - landscape is alivened on/in the body's thresholds as a perceptual field. As specific points of arrest form the practice of whatever work is being

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[458] Quoted by Driver 2000, 267-8.
[459] Charles Grivel, "Travel Writing" in *Materialities of Communication* ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, Trans. William Whobrey (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press 1994), 243.
[460] Kovats 2000, 4.

undertaken, and information is made into a portable territory of meaning (to be sent home as data) the excess of landscape information will remain unaccounted for as residue in bodily perception and memory.

In absence of the explosion of sensation onto the body, I look towards relational artworks that open up the transitions within those sensations. This is done in awareness of the fact that, "within the field of art and aesthetics our relationship to the unbounded is also counterbalanced by an awareness of our inevitable belatedness, for in art we are always witnesses after the event. A *representation* is just that-a standing-in for the real thing-and art is always in negotiation at the borderline, it can never cast us into the unbounded."[461] Theory too is a product of displacement. As a witness after the event (writing after another state of writing), I will look at several encounters between thinking feeling bodies in the field of matter - encounters that were generated by the arrest of Antarctic fieldwork.

I argued at the beginning of *Antarctica Fields* that the site of Antarctica is a locational problem, not just to instruments and systems of navigation, but to the body (as the primary site of that navigation). As science accounts for much physical phenomena (and some psychological), how do we account for the ways in which we are directed by place at a bodily level/as a subject? The history of landscape, as well as being an ideological driven formation of space, is also a history of matter relations with the energies and materialities of specific environments. The ice is the measure of Antarctic materialities - there is other matter, a small indigenous biota of lichens that live inside rocks, and spattering of fleas - but Antarctica is primarily composed of ice. The ice constitutes an inhuman geography that ablates life forms from its surfaces, pummelling the geological strata of land that it sits upon into an inverted landmass below sea level. The weight of the ice crushes, grinds, perplexes, and subsumes. Fieldwork in Antarctica consists in a constant negotiation with these actions of ice, at a professional and personal level (ice, as the object of scientific investigation and ice as a the fabric of Antarctic sojourns).

To survive in the landscape requires an excess of energy directed into relation with ice; at a station you shovel snow to keep the structures from being buried; in the field you melt snow for hours to keep hydrated (one huge saucepan reduced to a cup); you test its thickness, dimensions, stability; you learn to hear its fissures as you walk; you begin to understand its weather and actions. The ice is a surface and substance that cannot be traversed without a 'lived obedience' as to the states of ice. Antarctica field manuals (issued by all national

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[461] Simon Morley, "The Friedrich Factor" in *Contemporary Visual Arts, Focus on the Sublime* (Issue 19, 1998 No.36), 33.

operators to their field staff) set out extensive guidance to physical traversing and working practices in the field. Compulsory field training involves extensive practical directions for particular locations and procedures in that field. This accumulated knowledge alerts the body to a taught awareness of traversing the landscape, as other relations with the phenomena of light and space and ice alert the subject to other thresholds of landscape information.

Intensities and Surfaces

Waiting to climb into the belly of a Hercules on an ice runway in Antarctica, Graham picked up a handful of ice with his ungloved hand.
He held the landscape close to his body as we made our way back to New Zealand.
Slowly, the ice melted away through his stinging flesh into another state. He wanted to remember the intensity of the cold and the landscape of experience that lived within that relation.
The matter changes flesh and the flesh changes the matter (both actions imparting their temperatures to the other).
Holding onto matter, the ice became a button - experience folded into that, which would later be folded out.
A transient visibility becomes sublimated.

Anya Gallaccio's work *Intensities and Surfaces* (1996)[462] was a block of ice that glowed with an ethereal luminosity. It was a radiating monument to the materiality of ice, and its captivating presence and to the effects of material on our senses. At the centre, a boulder of rock salt accelerates the melting so that the ice disintegrated from the inside out. While holding the form of its outside surface, the transparent ice forms a window on its internal ablation. The material draws touch and in doing so demands that the work is registered at the level of its material, as touching draws one to stand in the melt water of wasted ice. As the ice is touched, it holds the transient and ephemeral register of encounter as fingerprints caught on its surface. The disintegration witnessed is a sublimation of the deluge of complete disintegration that is held in the rock salt core of the ice. The presence of the ice in differing states of melting is a performance of the porousness of the ice to time - to our presence and to entropic forces beyond our control. The boundaries of the work slip out and bleed into the space, onto the floor, onto hands, into the environment - it is matter out of place, no longer able to keep its frozen form in the temperate space of industrial abandonment. Gallaccio presents a contemporary monolith of sensory excess - the disintegrating presence soon to be an absence. In doing so, she questions how we move along the edge of boundless and bounded, form and formless, presence and absence, as the artwork and material melt and sublimate into the atmosphere. Where there was a compelling presence, after three months

[462] Anya Gallaccio *Intensities and Surfaces* 1996 installation at Wapping Hydraulic Pumping Station, 34 tons of ice, half-ton boulder of Cheshire rock salt.

thaw, there is nothing. The work is lost into formlessness and (in Marx's words), 'All that is solid melts into air'.

Intensities and Surfaces subsumes narrative under the force of matter. The movement of matter produces a different sense that problematises a structural approach to the work - as substance and touch displace a visual-mental consciousness. And as a consequence, the boundaries of representation are pushed back as we negotiate with a material that primarily engages perception not analysis. The matter melts and two traces remain, the memory of an image, and the wasted material of the work. It is the image that migrates as an object of memory - that passes removed from its original circumstance - as the matter is lost, the imagination carries it changed to new incarnations. In the ice, is a physical remembrance stored up in the bodily synapses, which slips in and out of the thinking mind. Gallaccio's installation - as an event of disintegration - highlights the continual transformation of the experience of matter, and the transition of matter into memory. Her commitment to the site-specificity of *Intensities and Surfaces* meant that only a few photographs remain of the work. There is nothing to be purchased or kept as a souvenir of the event, the ice melts and becomes a memory trace in the remembrance of touch and sensation. In the invigorating disintegration of the ice there hastens a falling away of learnt pathways with which we approach matter and its fleeting presence.

You are the Weather

Walking out towards Terror, footprints, one after another interrupt the visible unity of substance - a sentient body of flesh is surrounded by glacial configurations.
The body punctures the surface of this space, in which location is hard to find; two hundred miles this way, and two hundred miles the other, and I will not have moved into another view. There are no visual hooks to hang a scene off, or points to unfurl a view from.
So I plant my body as an interruption in this density of ice.
In Antarctica's horizontality, the body is a vertical void, standing upright when everything else flows, cracks, and sublimates. This extreme horizon is like an exaggerated antidote to the vertical impulses of modernity. And I think what it would be like to go straight to New York on my return from here.
So I lay down.
Now I am encircled by horizon.
From here, I can see the curvature of the earth, scorched into the edge of my vision.
I am surrounded by the Antarctic 'look back'.

The *locational problem* is partially a problem of visuality. As Lacan argued through the example of *La can*, vision in relation to the gaze of the other is productive of the subject's positioning. The artist Roni Horn exhibited a series of photographs, *You are the Weather* (1994-95) [41] of a woman's face shot in various pools around Iceland over two years. In the space of the gallery, the photographs are exhibited at eye level so the subject of the

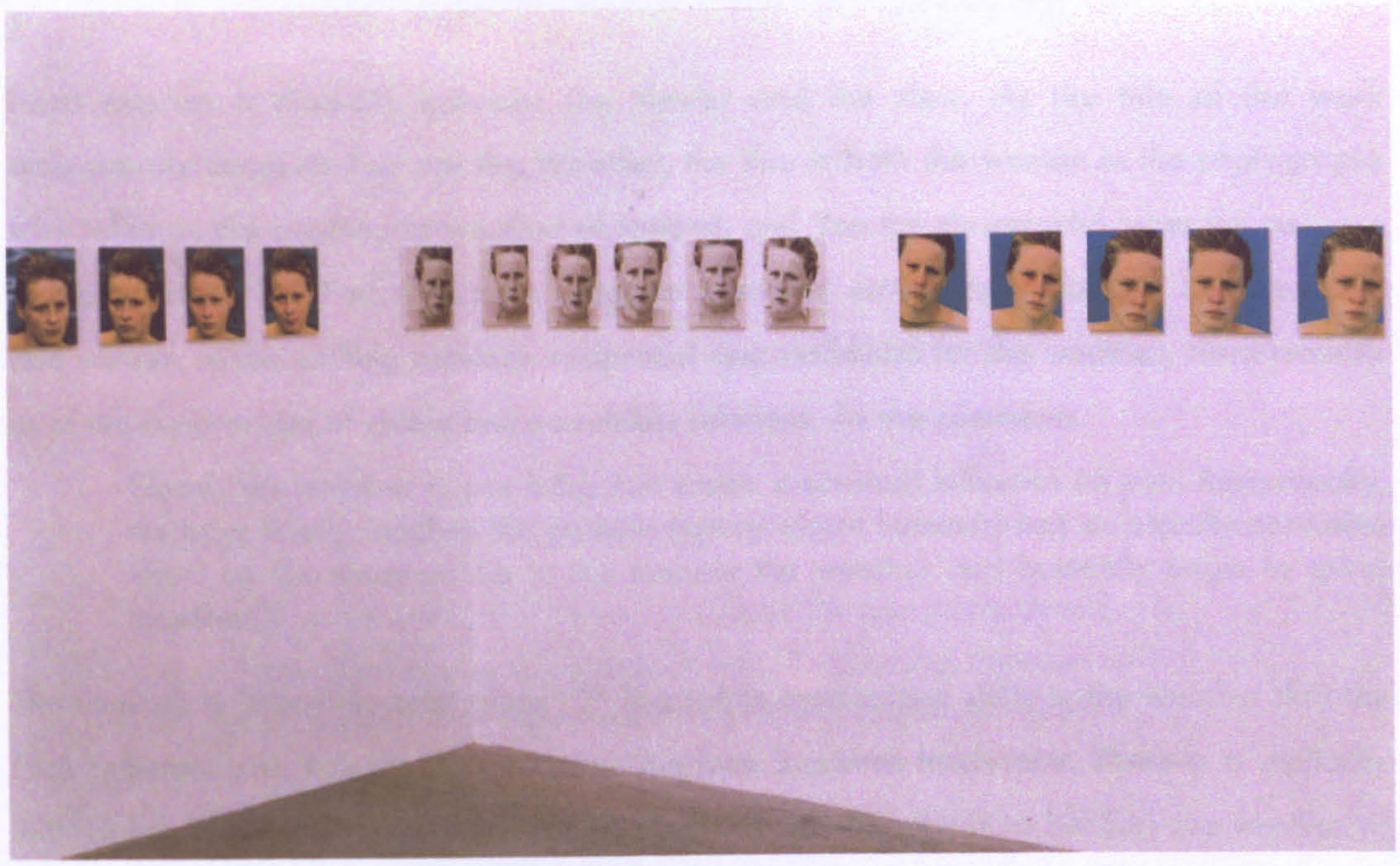

Plate 41

photograph is looking at you from every direction. Horn edited out all the photographs of the woman that do not look directly into the camera, so that the viewer has an active role coming in to face this direct gaze. The hierarchies and voyeurism of gazing are inverted as she makes eye contact with you. As you gaze out on her she returns a gaze that surrounds you as the walls of the gallery do, so you are literally looked through by her gaze (all one hundred of them). As Horn comments "I try to reach the viewer by addressing the bodily and not just the mental/non-physical being. The viewer must take responsibility for being there."[463] The photographs are compulsive, because they are intimate, but she is annihilating your subject position at the same time, reminding you with every look the price you must pay for your looking. As a subject, she gives nothing up, but as a viewer you are held accountable for your view. The autonomy Horn accords her subjects means the landscape visually 'looks back'.

Horn sets up a dialectic between the viewer and the view. As the title of the work ambiguously suggests *You are the Weather*, the *You* is both the woman in the photographs who takes on the geothermic weather of Iceland, and *You* the viewer who takes the measure of that weather. The *You* shifts from image to spectator, setting up a dialogue between view and viewer. In this shifting between reciprocal responsibilities for the weather, Horn reminds us of the reciprocities of visible and non-visible relations. As she comments,

> Clearly the weather is one thing that exerts a constant influence on you. Reciprocally, we have finally reached the point in history where humanity has an equally pervasive effect on the weather. So in this manner the weather and humanity begin to spiral together.[464]

Horn's work is "about face as place".[465] The subtle incremental shifts in the weather that the face registers give it a physical surface. The face becomes landscape. There is a similarity with Horn's other work of Iceland, which never allows the viewer to become too familiar or assume too much about the identity of the place. Like the one hundred photographs of the woman, Horn's work communicates that there is no singular identity or answer to the question of place, only a confrontation to our questioning and desire to find answers. In answers, Horn comments there is only closure. Like Melville's whale there is only the possibility of witnessing the metamorphosis of form, but no access to a finite meaning or intentionality. To make accessible that which is not, is to deny our perceptions in favour of making a transportable territory of landscape, which elides the experience and presence of non-human things.

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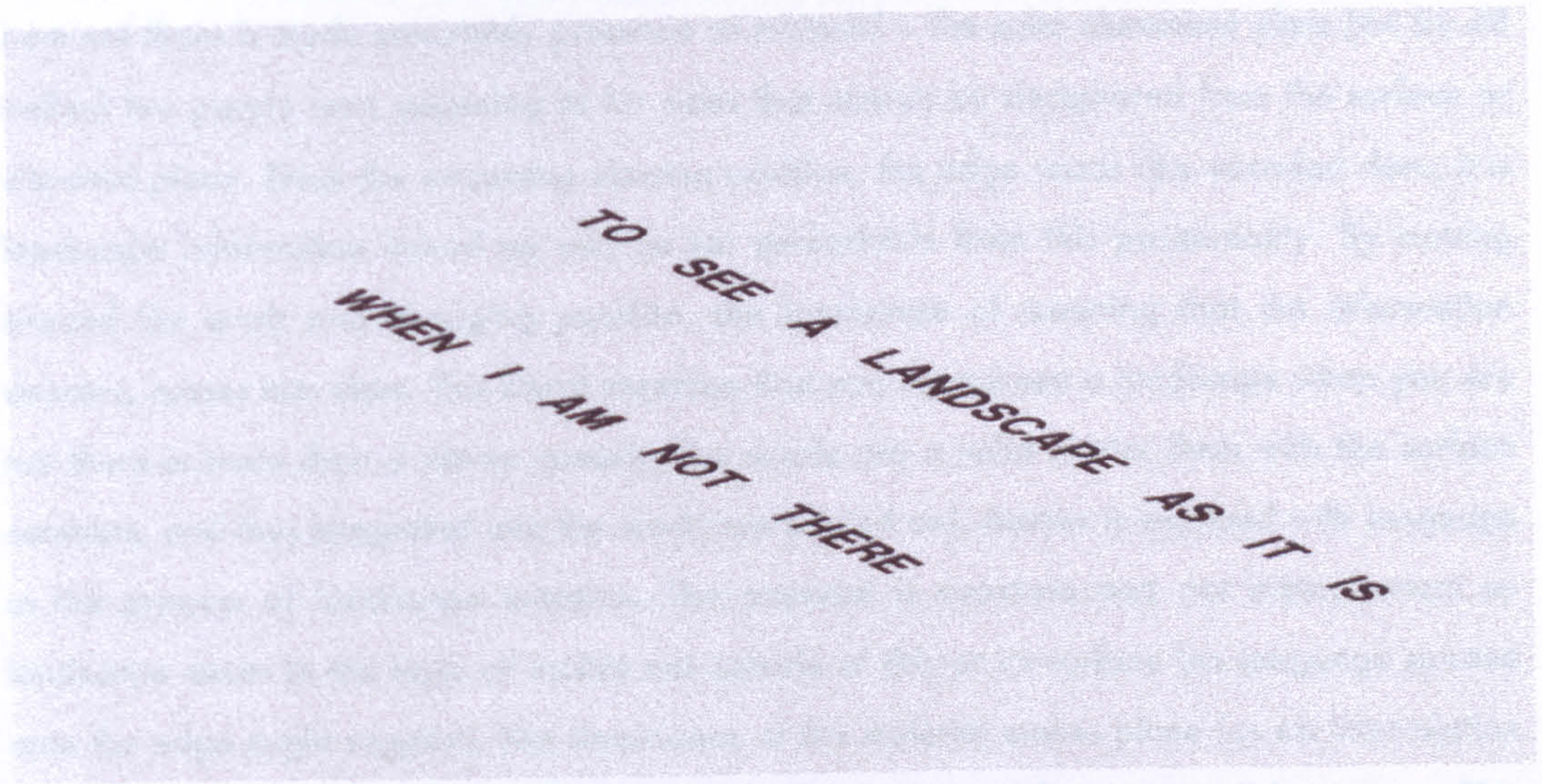
[463] Interview with Roni Horn held in Basel June 1995 www.jca-online.com/horn.html from the *Journal of Contemporary Art* 1997 02/05/02
[464] Ibid.
[465] Ibid.


TO SEE A LANDSCAPE AS IT IS
WHEN I AM NOT THERE

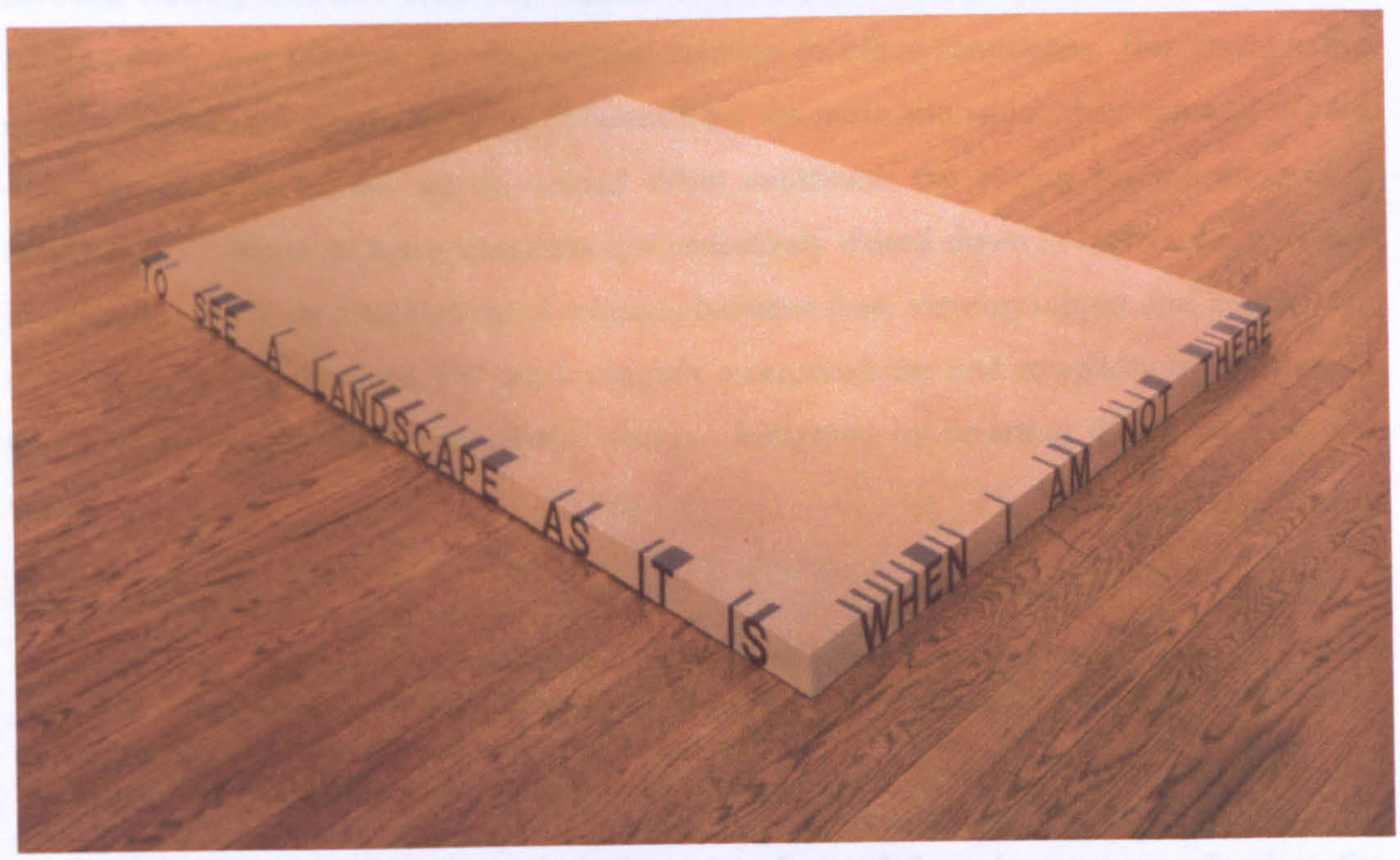

TO SEE A LANDSCAPE AS IT IS WHEN I AM NOT THERE

Plate 42

Horn's *For Thicket No.1* and *Thicket No.1* examine the concept of *To see a landscape as it is when I am not there*. Through this the beautifully simple impossibility of imagining landscape without the 'I' (and eye) that enables it, she draws out the sensual engagement with landscape as a possibility within the subject. In *For Thicket No.1* (1990) [42] *To see a landscape as it is when I am not there* is printed in perspective to create the illusion of three dimensionality on flat plane. In *Thicket No.1* (1989-90) [42] *To see a landscape as it is when I am not there* is made concretely presence as material - the solid aluminium plate (64 by 48 inches) has purple bars adjoining its far sides that cannot be deciphered from the surface or elevated plane. From the oncoming viewing position, the edge reads like encoded data, it is landscape information stored up and as yet unreadable from this positionality. By moving around the work and changing position, the landscape of meaning that the information denotes, comes into view. This literal assertion that you cannot see a landscape when you are not there is more than a clever conceit. The words are a solid matter flush with the surface contours, and thus integrated into the work (not printed on). Matter is enjoined with language in the process of landscape creation. The material is concrete and not metaphorical so landscape exists in the logic of matter not outside of this or its surface (as language printed onto the edge might suggest). The dominance of the material makes place (as an interrelation between viewer, time and material) happen as an experiential not just visible process. This relational viewing suggests an experiential relation to place formations. This prompts the questions; "Are the words equal or different from the mass into which they are set? Where does the meaning of the words reside? What constitutes the seeing (or memory) of a landscape?"[466] None of these questions are reductively closed down in Horn's work, rather landscape is made as a multiplicity of relations between time, viewing subject and matter, that dynamically constitute place. Her work suggests a responsibility and complicity as a viewer in the ways in which we want to inhabit places - instigated by inverting desire back on the viewer.

Viral Landscapes

The ice draws my temperature, as it accommodates me into its dense matter.
Energy bleeds into the landscape in unequal exchange - my rhythms start to slow
intoxicated by this conversation - this glacial intensity.
The edges of the landscape become a porous exchange of ice.

In Helen Chadwick's work, the body is the point of correlation of experience. For her, the body is in constant process, "an event in the dynamics of place... [of] partial and

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[466] Klaus Kertess, "Surface Matters" in *Roni Horn* (The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles catalogue 22 April - 22 July, 1990) unpaginated.

approximate episodes".[467] Beyond the body's thresholds, "matter is pulled back and forth as message", refusing ultimately to cohere to the rationalised completion of inside and outside spaces (akin to the sublimation of the ice). Sensation communicates (registers its message) on surfaces, skin (touch), eyes (vision), lungs (breath) and in the processes of orientation, cognitively and emotionally. Matter has the quality of action. The events of non-human fields of energy are realised as incidents, drops in temperature gradients, the movement of the circling sun, the weather, the compression of the ice that holds and then ceases to hold the weight of a human body. For Chadwick,

> The site curves round my presence whilst I in turn mould the geography of space in mutual circumnavigation, the terrain waxes open... There at the heart of these inscapes are enucleate abstracts eluding definition, stubbornly refusing to cohere.[468]

In this stubborn non-coherence of space in the inscapes of our bodies, Chadwick conceives of an opportunity to think how space is opened in the body beyond its rationalised limits. The body as a process in the instance of landscape opens the body and the terrain, to a dialectic of manifold incursions. Chadwick's *Viral Landscapes* (1988-89) [43] explore at a cellular level the autonomy of the body, in which the cells become an allegorical substitute for the body. The virus is an attack on that sovereignty, hijacking the subject's identity at the cellular level and introducing the possibility of change. Situated within the advent of AIDS, Chadwick argues that rather than a scene of destruction, contamination is a way to think the integration of matter and of inner and outer space. Negating the established modes of autonomy she pushes beyond the commonly assumed surfaces of contact such as the skin, eyes, taste etc. to an idea of dissolvable bodies and matter (akin to Smithson's geological integrations). Her digital photographs overlay her own viral cells on the landscape to explore how within a larger organism the narrative of viral incursions could reveal a radical openness of exchange with the environment that we take as a separate entity to ourselves. Rather than suggesting how the non-visible is alive within the landscape as poisonous blossoms of pesticides or toxins, by using her own cells she wants to suggest an integration that is not about the usual narrative of infection (as was the contemporaneous narrative) but openness to change.

The cells from her ears, nose, vagina, and cervix are vibrantly worked into coastal photographs of Pembrokeshire to form giant images. On the left hand side of the image, the cells are layered against solid blocks of colour, which form the recognisable hyper-chromatic virus cells of scientific visualisation - abstracted against an empty context of space. The cells continue across this border into the landscape as vibrant effluent - as alive within the landscape, as the sea that mixes with the land to form the coast. As with the digital image

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[467] Helen Chadwick *Enfleshings* (London: Secher & Warburg, 1989), 109.
[468] Ibid.

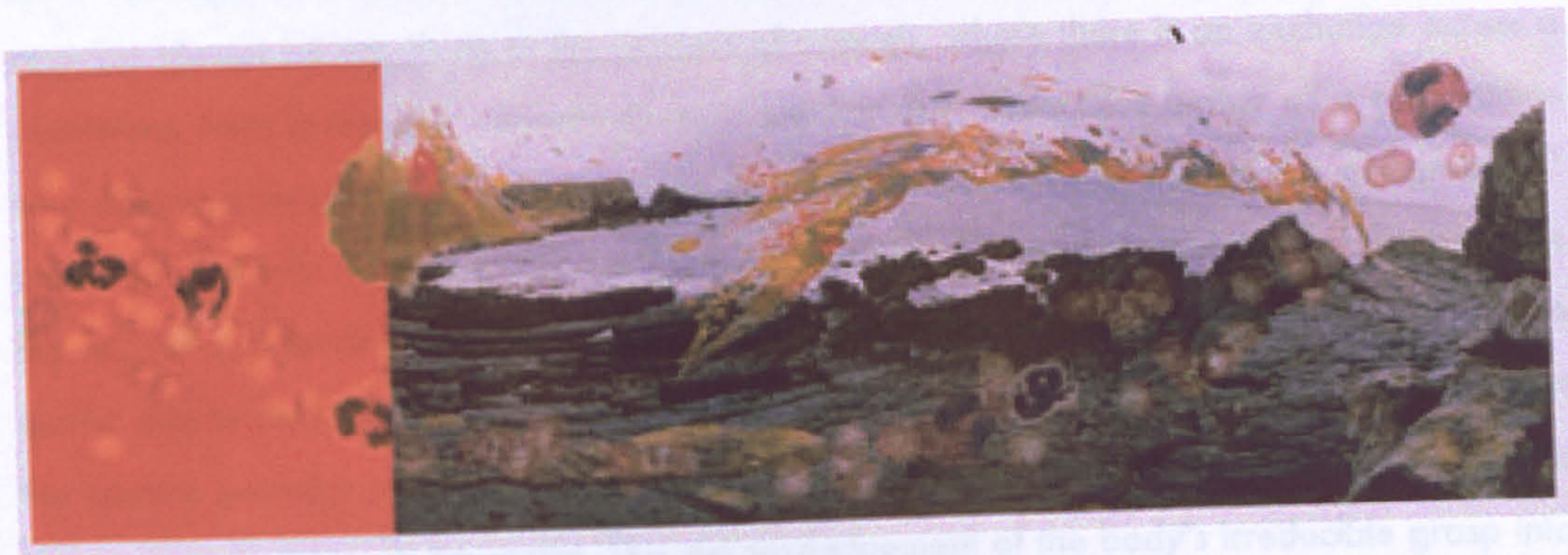

Plate 43

that has the promise of infinite modification of pixilation on its surface, the ecology she suggests is active within the image surface as it is in the flesh. Chadwick writes:

> Willingly relinquished, the 'loss of cultural and personal co-ordinates' could be a most productive moment, permitting the locus of unstable, permeable identities. The derelict corpse of the body-as-representation would disappear...[469]

Chadwick puts forth the argument that relinquishing the representation of a body, as a bounded subject (or corpse) could be a productive moment in which to acknowledge permeability to the matter and identities that surrounds us. And in doing so, she acknowledges our synchronous being with that matter, and the self as an organism in a state of perpetual flux. In this synchronicity, is an overt reciprocity of exchange through a permeable membrane where rigid boundaries are given up for a connected ecology, as at the site of the coast. The ecology she suggests is of reciprocal instances and events.

A viral exchange is a way to think through how we become the landscapes that we enter - not in the imperialist sense of becoming the space we conquer - but through an exchange that may not always be equal. As in the process of osmosis, where there is an exchange across a membrane from a stronger concentrate to a weaker one, Antarctica matter as a concentrate of a single material permeates the body as an assertive force of continuous geography[470] (realised primarily in the horizon and the ice). Giving up the representation of the body as the site of a bounded frontier opens up the possibilities of different forms of relations to matter and to representation. The problematising of inside and outside space is not just about the spatial boundaries of the subject but the processes with which we think ourselves into space and into being in the world. This acknowledgement of the body's irreducible grasp into the world and ourselves (in which touch is a form of vision) is caught in the pathos of Emily Dickinson's poem,

> I felt my life with both my hands
> to see if it was there -[471]

Dickinson cannot make material that which eludes that border, but her poem elucidates how we learn to grasp. The desire to touch delves into the thickness of the world. The stretching out becomes a way to continue to speak to the spaces beyond grasp, thus the action does not forfeit itself to longing in this action. In *Viral Landscapes* Chadwick re-establishes a thread through all matter, problematising the boundaries of the body and the human and non-human - extending a porous perceptual exchange, as desire launches itself beyond. Like Dickinson's

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[469] Chadwick 1989, 97.
[470] The assertiveness of infection is compounded because the body is removed from the violence of urban spaces, which necessitate degrees of psychic and physical closures. The limitations in the Antarctic are imposed by the environmental phenomena rather than by social conditions. Arguably as social and physical space opens up so do the boundaries of the body.
[471] Emily Dickinson, "No.351" in *Emily Dickinson, The Complete Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 166.

poem the living connection between external perception and perception of one's own body are irreducibly entangled. The integration of these two frames of reference (human and non-human) points to other kinds of ecologies. The fluctuations of restless subjectivities that Chadwick images imagine invite a processed based understanding of landscape, fields of energy affecting and integrating with one another, bodies of matter leaking into one another in reciprocal exchange. Thus, Chadwick suggests a much more dynamic way to re-think the body in the field, and the reciprocal exchanges of landscapes and bodies. Her argument offers the possibility of considering 'eyes all over' that transmit cerebral aliveness - rather than a body with organs or a body of objectified organs - Chadwick suggests the bodies of continuous landscapes.

Landscapes of Light - 'The Third Eye'

Antarctica leaks into the body as ice, light, and temperature.
It melts, thaws, freezes, and is animated by light.
As a fleeting sensation passing across and into the body, matter is caught as landscape's fugitive testimony. The intensity of the crystallisation of ice asserts itself on the eyeballs as glare - snow blindness.
Mainlining to the optic nerve the UV light floods in, reflecting off the great ice dome that is the plateau; like a chemical it works into the body burning the retina, in the mind asserting wakefulness.
The solar energy affects the human body, but it is a tender-eyed perception - it sears the eyeballs, as it awakens the practices of seeing.
At the circling horizon is pure light, more intense than that in any part of the planet.
Here, is the atmosphere stripped bare.

Glasses protect and subdue the scene, stemming the luminous flood, but as the explorer Cherry-Gerrard comments throughout his narrative, this light animates an awakening. The men become increasingly awake as the light installs itself in their senses. Reminding himself to sleep after 48 hours of wakefulness, Cherry-Gerrard reflects:

> Such weather in such a place comes nearer to satisfying my ideal of perfection than any condition I have ever experienced. The warm glow of the sun with the keen invigorating cold of the air forms a combination which is inexpressibly health giving and satisfying... no words of mine can convey the impressiveness of the wonderful panorama displayed to our eyes...[472]

In most temperate landscapes light and its movement imbues landscape with an empathetic relation to human circadian rhythms, which are ordered by the light of day and night. Circadian rhythms are a fundamental adoption to the solar changes of light and dark. The term originates from the Latin words 'circa' meaning 'around' and 'dies' meaning day. As the solar light dies around the day in most temperate climates, in the Antarctic interior solar light does not die for four months. As light stimulates the body into perpetual awake-ness, the

[472] Cherry-Gerrard 1994, 88.

flood of light in the Antarctic reorganises the body's responses. Reordering the learnt systems of perceptual responses, (particularly on a short sojourn) the strong stimuli of light affects the body into a state of continued encounter, often until the point of exhaustion.[473]

Awake-ness is associated with penial secretion that is dependent upon light being transmitted to the retina through the retinohypothalamic tract and a second visual pathway (this second visual pathway, often called the 'third eye' is active some blind individuals supporting the concept that their are two pathways of stimulation). The third eye is a useful metaphor to read the sensorial nature of vision - to distance vision from the idea of the gaze laid down, or cast out over a set of objects, abstracted from the sensorium - an embodied vision. The third eye suggests a vision that is not just about sight, but also about wakefulness and stimulation through other eyes (or borders of exchange).

The Antarctic intensity of light is such that there is the sense that it exists to infinity just out of the concern of your eye. Like Ulysses whose margins to the untravelled world lay just beyond the reach of the horizon, infinity seems to exist at the periphery of vision. Akin to light on the perceptual margin of sight, Pol Bury's work 3069 *White Dots* (1922) explored the "aesthetics of slowness" as a means to disrupt the certainty of vision. His kinetic pieces were characterised by imperceptible movement - movement caught on the periphery of vision creating a sense of disorientation. That which was perceived outside of the sightline disrupts vision and its certainty.

The production of the landscape through the effect and movement of light (whether from aurora or sunlight) questions more than what that light makes visible. The surfaces are enlivened by contact with the sun's energy field. It brings the matter into an animated state because of the energy it releases on the surface. The light rays activate an energetic display of colour as the rays refract and liquefy the crystalline surface causing each crystal to be alive with the spectra of the sun. Even when the sun is obscured in white out, there is not an absence of this chroma - the atmosphere becomes an atomised energy of coloured light. The affect of light conjures Antarctica into geography of colour, far removed from the cool blanching at the edges of maps that is Antarctica's representational position. This riot of colour spectra, that is generated from the sun, brings other questions to the fore, as Spufford poses:

> If blue and green bergs prove only to be refraction caused by movement-angles not angels, at work-and if, at the ends of the earth, it is so plain the flooding light only

[473] See Kennaway D J, Van Dorp C F. 1991. "Free running rhythms of melatonin, cortisol, electrolytes and sleep in humans in Antarctica" in *American Journal of Physiology* 260: 1137-44

Plate 44

> conjures appearances from null white substances, does that not lead the mind to see that all colour is artificial?...The poles alert us to a general falsity.[474]

The falsity of perceptions of colour in the Antarctic environment, that turn the 'null white substance' into the work of angels, which in turn turns out to be the work of angles, is a visual conceit that questions the very vision on which it rests. Piero Manzoni made a series of works called *Achrome* (1958), colourless works that were devoid of all internal relationships and thus all symbolic and expressive content. Reduced to the literal material supports Manzoni's *Achrome* concentrated all meaning into those structures of support as the condition of the possibility and limit of all creative inscriptions. As the work was minimalised to its asymptopic limit, the conceptual inflection becomes explicit. In *Achrome*, there is surface and plane and the white base on which colour performs. Whiteness is the concentration of all colours, but it is as Melville recognised, the base that questions the possibility of colour. In the end, it is the profound unity of white as the beginning and end of colour that Melville most recoils from (an atheism formed from the loss of angels). He asks:

> Or is it, that as essence whiteness is not so much a colour as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows- a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink?[475]

In between the dumb blankness of meaning and the fullness of meaning - energies of matter are drawn out through the body - moving in and out of systems of information. For example, one night at a remote Antarctic camp, Cherry-Gerrard's Fahrenheit thermometer read - 77.5°F, he writes, "The day lives in my memory as that on which I found out that records are not worth making." And he concludes, "I will not pretend that it did not convince me that Dante was right when he place the circles of ice below the circles of fire."[476] As one system of explanation (scientific) fails to account for the experience, another (cultural) is employed to allude to it. Information can be found in Antarctic field manuals about icy energy. As the temperature drops the fluids in the body change state, at -10°C snot freezes. As the gradients of temperature shift the body reacts at a cellular and bodily level - cells become cold and freeze, the core temperature drops, the boundaries of organisms pull back to the core. As the body measures temperature between core and margin, it also measures information between the relative temperate margin of the Antarctic periphery and the negative temperature of its core. As Pyne comments this landscape information is both physical and perceptual:

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[474] Spufford 1996, 90.
[475] Melville 1986, 295-6.
[476] Cherry-Gerrard 1994, xi.

> Between core and margin there exists powerful gradients of energy and information. These gradients measure the alienness of the Ice as a geographical and cultural entity.[477]

As the temperature gradients shift the sense of your own body as an organism is reinforced.[478] Akin to the awareness you have of breath in an underwater dive, the extreme difference between the body's temperatures and that of the landscape awakens a bodily awareness to its liveliness. Beyond these systems of learnt gradients of ice, the body learns by reception (field training) and duration in place (fieldwork).

In learning how to traverse a body of ice, to understand its mobilities, to be aware of how it moves, to hear this movement, gradually the nature of ice matters is learnt. But energies exist in excess of these systems - energies that cannot become scientific or environmental information - energies that are perceptual, but not language based - energies that confound the rationalised body, and enliven a continuous landscape of exchange. Our senses remember as we forget. In this memory, a strand runs through materialities and the body that summons us in inexplicable ways. There are many devices for giving visibility to the energies of matter, yet our ability to accept the fields of non-visible energy that our bodies pass through, and become caught in, is much little less certain. And how do we remember the energy of this exchange? And become the landscapes we enter, long after we leave them? Perhaps like Gabriel García Márquez's character Colonel Aureliano Buendía, who facing the firing squad suddenly remembers his discovery of ice. He recalls, "an enormous block, transparent block with infinite internal needles in which the light of sunset was broken into coloured stars...[his] heart filled with fear and jubilation at the contact with mystery".[479]

The work of Gallaccio, Chadwick and Horn attend to these energies of matter, not to present answers or methodologies, but to assert a line of inquiry that answers to an intelligent intuition of how we might visualise these landscapes of matter. In their work matter disrupts, questions and alerts us to the mutable, instinctual forces of landscape through which we pass (and in which we are sometimes held). In this refusal to follow the habitual routes of imaginative access, the matter they traverse alerts us to other kinds of journeys that the body goes on, and lights the way to how a more relational Antarctic aesthetic may be arrived at.

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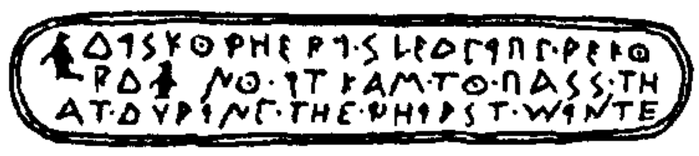
[477] Pyne 1998, 7.
[478] Interview with Francis Spufford, 16 March 2001, London.
[479] Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (London: Everyman's Library, 1995), 21.

Part III Postscript
Returning to the field: Non-transportable territories



"The labour of articulation is forced by the need for orientation. There are works of art that continue to live in the imagination, that do not get edited or dislodged. They make a bridge between one place and another, a horizontal stretch or an emotional horizon that offers the possibility of belief. Art leaks, empties out and doesn't always expect a return."[480]

"May risk light your way"[481]

Writing landscape as information is a restless process. Landscape can be a layout of geographical data or bits of information on the white surface of a page (like the map), but it is also an animated energy in constant transmission. As landscape sends out its *messages*, emulating energy into the ether, there within bodies capture this exchange into a field. The field is historically rationalised to organise and exclude these energies in various knowledge formations and practices - from appropriate subject domains to observation systems. The concept of the field (set in binary to the laboratory) is itself a distancing device, delineating a site open for exploration - the primary perceptual field. In excess of these formations or systems of landscape that bring the field into view, the radiation of physical space is *productive of energies that slip in and out of vision and visuality* (that literally exceed the possibilities of both physical and cognitive visualisation).

As landscape unfolds from knowledge systems and hierarchical practices of encounter, it also unfolds from the eye, and from the surfaces and depths of the body. This geographical data of landscape is in constant flow, as a phenomenon that positions our senses as the receiver in a 'lived obedience' to the physicality of that matter. As our abstract systems of control position the field, the transmission of landscape positions the fieldworker. Within this dialectic, field devices mediate and pronounce the form of our knowledges; transforming data into knowledge through precise physical, cultural, and social formations. Yet there remains the information that exceeds this capture and arrest, and remains in the field or in our *body memory* of the field.

Landscapes transmit in different ways, and our ability to make knowledge from the matter we encounter is a historically constituted process. The explorers of the heroic era were invested in the awe of romantic engagement, and so produced Antarctica in narrative ways incompatible (although surprisingly contemporaneous) with contemporary scientific narratives

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[480] Kovats 2000, 49.
[481] René Char quoted by Blanchot 2000, 353.

of the 'Frozen Laboratory'. The process of visibility that enables *knowing* landscapes requires time and engagement - Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition was on the ice for three years (1910-1913); the average sojourn for a scientist is several weeks; and for an artists on the ANZ programme, 2-10 days. The *locational problem* is also a problem of time - duration in the landscape, and historical time. Culturally we are positioned in powerful historic images of place; the explorers were situated on the cusp of the romanticism of imperial journeys and a more rationalised geographical practice. Contemporary Antarctic artists are positioned between the legacy of an imperial landscape aesthetic, and national patrons (in the form of the Artist and Writers programmes). What unites these historical modes of encounter in the field is the continued problem of processing Antarctic information (whether aesthetic, geographical, magnetic, physical, conceptual or geopolitical).

Antarctica is invigorating precisely because the energy and information that is transmitted resists easy configuration - the message is such that it cannot be fully processed, and so remains in the synapses of body memory as a remainder (as it disorders the orderly delineation of time from GMT and disrupts magnetic mapping). Like the constant flow of light from a lighthouse to the sea, the ship makes the message an orientation, to thwart the risk of being lost. In Antarctica, the message is like the "hieroglyphical markings" on Melville's whale, the "mystic-marked" inscriptions that alert us to another language system yet remain "indecipherable". As scientific information is extracted through ice cores and penguin vomit, the greater conceptual and physical demands of the Antarctic remain largely ignored - in part because of the conceptualisation of Antarctica as the inert space of the laboratory. The suppression of the Humanities within Antarctica culture has left Ishmael's Antarctic challenge,to "Read it if you can" largely unanswered.

The inability to read the messages of the Antarctic landscape, holds off the possibility of its passage into an easy representation. Representation is an aesthetic configuration that holds space accountable to meaning - in the sense that some account can be made of it as a form of information (figurative, representation, abstract or phenomenological). Representation of landscape suggests that all matter offers the possibility of such a configuration, in which energies are bounded into place, however tenuously, as stable entities. It is a logic that extends to the practice of making landscape art, as those energies are bound into the marks of representation, or drawn by light into the surface of film. A host of distancing devices - that are corporeal, material, historical and psychological, achieves stabilisation. Distancing devices through their framing literally quieten place, hold it still, like one might do for a photograph, or to make a sighting of the field. A site such as Antarctica resists this

processing; it will never be quiet still or quieten to be fully in-scripted into representational practice. Like the phantasmagoria of colour, (in which light creates the chromatic surface of the ice) the Antarctic exposes the fictions of the visible and visibility (representational practices and the perception of natural phenomena). This fiction of visibility points to other ways of thinking. Rather than distancing ourselves as a means of ordering landscape, we might bring ourselves closer in, to an intimate relational aesthetic.

As an adequate aesthetic system of description from which to make a language (and thus meaning) is removed in the Antarctic, there exists the possibility of getting lost, and finding oneself upon Mistake Peak. Antarctic geographical data does not communicate sufficiently to give an easily navigational pathway in visual or abstract systems. The insufficiency of the explorer's language to negotiate their object can be witnessed in Antarctic nomenclature of geographical features, 'Mistake Peak, Shapeless Mountain, Purgatory Peak, Portal Mountain, Chocolate Peak, Inaccessible Island, Inexpressible Island'. The lack of easily discernible geographical information manifests as a lack of directional information or orientation - in the pursuit of knowledge, that the Antarctic landscape suggests may be unknowable.

In Antarctic fields, a consistent matter replaces the dematerialisation of other forms of communication, such as the televisual or the postal systems that telescope space into other material orders. As geographical space prevails over the collapse of distances, geographical surfaces and matter prevail over the dematerialised surfaces of the televisual, or networks of the information transfer. Lived obedience to human architecture and social systems are replaced by obedience to geographical phenomena. Distances are dictated by non-human systems such as meteorological or climatic phenomena, direction led by physical geography. Time as an orientating system, is determined by planetary movement, rather than the artificial lights that hold open our days into night. The vastitude is not polluted by the interference of cultural or commodity signs to direct orientation, thus removing the social direction that dictates navigating the topology of the city.

Yet, Antarctic matter is an information explosion on the senses. The excess of information is excessive, (light, temperature, perceptual space) because it either resists current knowledge systems (it is not mobile or visible in the same ways) or it requires a more sensitive practice of reception than is currently in place. I have argued that site-specific art practice has the conceptual tools to provide such a sensitive reception to place - to stretch between the matter and memory of place, in awareness of the mobility that it enacts. This mobility is characterised by the questions that Melville asked throughout his novel *Moby Dick*, 'How can

the form of something that appears formless be grasped? And how can we live with this indecipherability?' A formless thing defies the boundaries of object-hood and thus cannot be made into a stable representation - one that is stable enough to travel. This indecipherability requires fleeting arrests that acknowledge such a positionality as a condition of its knowledge production.

Antarctic science is historically and methodologically situated as to be unable to account sufficiently for the conditions of its knowledge productions. Primarily this is because the type of landscape information that was extracted required an ordered conceptual object. The collections prescribed by the Antarctic Manual were part of the contract between explorer and the institutions of knowledge formation (such as the RGS) that positioned the explorer as a data collector. As with Mr Blanford's geological exegesis, the explorer was requested to collect copiously, to haul specimens from the field and record their precise location from their imaginary trench. The raw bits of data, the hoard of information, would be taken from the site back to London as objects to be sanctified as knowledge through a systematic process. But the Antarctic was unusual in that it did not allow the explorer to dislocate himself as easily as the objects he brought home. Even Amundsen (the archetypal professional explorer, who inverted his poles from North to South in pursuit of his 'first') was incessantly drawn back to the poles, until he disappeared there.[482]

The English explorer was located in different cultural knowledges to that of Amundsen. Despite the extensively available indigenous Arctic knowledges, and knowledges from previous exploration, there was a stubborn resistance to the acquisition of directional information on how to survive and traverse the landscape. Many have argued that this was British Imperial pride at its most arrogant and self-aggrandising, but Francis Spufford offers a different view[483] - that these men were the last of an era of English men that were tied to an idea of awe. A romanticism that was inspired by a particular Judaeo-Christian idea of the world as a reflection of man's soul, with exploration as one of its finest frontiers. Their routes of meaning followed those of romantic imagery into the heartless voids of Friedrich's polar scene. In a sense Friedrich had set the aesthetic scene for these explorers - sublimity was in the mindset before writing ever began. They were bound to an idea of scientific exploration that was becoming outdated and would soon overtake them in its rationalisation of their Ulyssian journeys (note the encounter at the Natural History Museum with Cherry-Gerrard's

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[482] The explorer Amundsen vanished somewhere near the Arctic Circle on 18 June 1928 while on a mission to rescue the Italian Umberto Nobile (a rival explorer) whose airship crashed. A renewed interest in the material traces of polar exploration saw the Norwegian government sending a mini-submarine to search for the remains of his plane in Spring 2004.

[483] Interview with Francis Spufford, 16 March 2001, London.

eggs). The British explorers were unable to give themselves and their exploration over to the rational acquisition of meaning devoid of romance and spirituality. Scott, for example would not put up a tent, use a pair of ski's before his *Discovery* Expedition. The romanticism of the explorers was exaggerated by publicity and myth, it served a nation readying to send thousands to die on the battlefield, but their practices and writings reveal that it was something they also believed to be true.

The romantic aesthetic was a form of orientation or belief. The British Antarctic explorers of the Heroic era saw themselves involved in the exploration of knowledge at the farthest edge of the known world - not as the data collectors that the men of science in London conceived of them as - but as men battling to extract knowledge from Nature's store. Their quest was heroic, in the sense that the text they carried and which gave shape to their journey was a heroic narrative of Ulyssian dimensions. Their conceptual quest was made into another kind of nature, a white space of the imagination that cohered with the white spaces of their photographic legacy, as much as into the not-so white spaces of the Antarctic. But it was never that clean, and they never escaped the pull of the matter, which in some ways claimed more of them than they could ever lay claim to.

Those that did not return to the Antarctic - unlike Shackleton who famously had a heart attack on entering the harbour at South Georgia (whose wife ordered him to be left there because she knew better than anyone that he had a more extensive relation with the Antarctic than he had with her) - were driven into a state of writing. The most obvious of these writers was Cherry-Gerrard, but this rationalisation can be found in the preface to much Antarctic writing written by scientists, visitors, tourists (and the occasional academic) as a way to account for how they were driven into a state of writing by Antarctic encounters. This writing attempts to explain (probably more to themselves that anyone else) something that resides in the body memory that cannot be accounted for. During and after the writing of *The Worst Journey in the World* Cherry-Gerrard had a number of nervous breakdowns after being dubbed 'The Cherry One'[484] in the Antarctic. In their historical placement, the explorers were in the unique position that they had an aesthetic language (a particular English version of the romantic sublime) to give a shape to their encounters. While the sublime and its representational legacy sought to order landscapes (while simultaneously giving the sensation of a disordered phenomenological effect) it did have a language of encounter in which the subject's centre of gravity shifted - if only for a moment - before the conceptual object was closed.

[484] George Seaver Foreword in Cherry-Gerrard 1994, xxxvii.

Where the excesses of the field was most readily acknowledged was at the thresholds of the explorer's body, rather than through his practice. The narrative of Exploration acknowledged, like the narrative of Ulysses, that expenditure was a necessary condition of heroic narratives, and more prosaically of Imperial acquisition. Risk in the enlargement of the territory was part of encountering the new that required a great deal of sacrifice at the "contact zone".[485] The explorer inhabited an open field of abundant phenomena that was productively engaging of body, mind and spirit. Antarctica was an aesthetic space that brought out feelings of awe and beauty and tested them repeatedly in physical, psychic, and aesthetic ways.[486] This aesthetic sensibility, that was integral to the explorer's observations, was slowly erased by the modernisation of science and the role of the professional scientist. Modern science required repeatable experimentation rather than the amateur "fleeting observations" of the multifarious explorer (scientist/artist/doctor/man-hauler). The emphasis of data accumulation shifted to the desire for repeatable configurations. As the explorers produced a romantic Antarctic landscape of charged matter - modern science produced a landscape suitable for the type of information extract that it required, a laboratory. As the mechanisms of control increased, the acknowledged openness of the field decreased. In the rationalised operation of Antarctic scientific production, risk as a dimension of encountering (and even the notion of an encounter) was an unnecessary expenditure. Expenditure in the field is a means to account for that, which is non-portable - a part of the territory that cannot be transported - and so highlights the possibility of different types of engagements that do not reduce place to its communication systems.

Cherry-Gerrard and his compatriots go on the *Worst Journey in the World* risking their lives for some penguin eggs. The scientific staff at the Natural History Museum snuff at the eggs that are brought back, and Cherry-Gerrard concludes his narrative by bemoaning 'a nation of shopkeepers'. His reaction is to those that trade in objects rather than the narratives of encounters, journeys and risk. Thus, his critique unearths a subtler argument about dislocated objects. The lack of interest in Cherry-Gerrard's epic journey[487] by the Museum makes clear that the kind of *locating* that Cherry-Gerrard has experienced in his fieldwork was not appropriate knowledge to the metropole. The objects of science from his fieldwork are conceived of as fully transportable and able to circulate from Antarctica to London, where they are found either useful or not (much like the commodity form of the aesthetic products required by the Artist and Writers programme). Before Cherry-Gerrard's narrative, written ten years later, the penguin eggs are closed to the permeability of the place from which they

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[485] Unlike other Imperial encounters, the contact zone in Antarctica was predominately with the physical geography.
[486] See Simpson Housley 1992, for the explorer's descriptors of the Antarctic landscape.
[487] It was Cherry-Gerrard that chose Tennyson's lines for the cross on Observation Hill.

have come. What his narrative demonstrates are the different kinds of information that are important to the Museum and to the Antarctic Explorer. For Cherry-Gerrard, re-assembling the field (in the subject/museum/academy/reader) required object boundaries to remain porous to their passage/or passing - the mobility of these eggs belie an epic story. To the Museum their location is a geographical point, not a journey, and their value is determined by their ability to fit into established scientific narrative, not to disorder in the ridiculous expenditure of their acquisition. Cherry-Gerrard concludes,

> For we are a nation of shopkeepers, and no shopkeeper will look at research which does not promise him a financial return within a year. And so you will sledge nearly alone, but those whom you will sledge will not be shopkeepers; that is worth a good deal. If you march your Winter Journey you will have your reward, so long as all you want is a penguin's egg.[488]

The romantic aesthetic, that Cherry-Gerrard's advocates, had a form that was concerned with movement (of bodies, subject positions, optically) and of location and dislocation. And it was an engagement that involved risk; realised in the explorer's body (the contested historical site of Antarctic knowledge production). Contemporaneously the site of production of Antarctic knowledges has changed, and is now predominately located in governmental (ATCPs), NGOs, tourist and institutional bodies (such as University of Canterbury, University of Tasmania, SPRI). The autonomy of the explorer's body as the site of production has given way to more disparate social actors, who are for the most part involved in a much more expedient extraction of information. As the spectre of romanticism continues to haunt Antarctic images, the legacy of the explorer's distancing devices and aesthetic practices still remain, but the Antarctic expenditure that pointed to other encounters beyond their language is carefully managed. The risk of Antarctica's physical environment (white out, crevasses etc.) is still a prevalent part of Antarctic culture, but the intellectual risks of not finding your conceptual or aesthetic object have not been allowed to disorder the systems of knowledge production. The risk of a non-visible territory seems almost too much to bear for Antarctic knowledge production, yet it remains the most active condition of that production.

Antarctic landscape information, it has been argued presents a special kind of aesthetic problem that risks the destruction of its object, through the shattering of visual languages unable to cohere to the truth of their production. Pyne argues:

> The Ice has already filtered and reduced the landscape to the simplest environment on Earth. So minimal is the information content of the ice sheet that the very notion of information as structure, as negative entropy, becomes difficult... the polar Plateau, a study in inert uniformity, the absolute disinformation of absolute zero.[489]

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[488] Cherry-Gerrard 1994, 598.
[489] Pyne 1998, 203-4.

Pyne concludes that the Ice is the sum of its negations, because meaning is always constructed in contrast to other landscapes not in relation to Antarctica. In the case of the Plateau, he argues that information is so lean as to be an almost mirror - the more information that is brought to the surface the more it radiates back in a "dialectic between idea and ice."[490] He calls the ice an information sink, akin to Smithson's entropic pole. But is this conclusion, to an otherwise brilliant journeying through *The Ice* a negation in itself? Smithson's practice offers more a creative exploration to that 'mine of information' between mind and matter that suggests that we inhabit the dialectical movement between site and nonsite (or sight and non-sight) as a double path, rather than a reductive sink. The polar plateau radiates more information than can ever be accounted for. The matter of the plateau is not a zero of information - it is not directionally adherent to practised forms of orientation. Assertive in its absence of directional information, the Antarctic is an uninterruptible density of other kinds of landscape messages.

Rather than reflecting back (like the South Pole marker) Antarctica can be seen as a challenge - not to compulsively try and find newer systems for extracting information, or to overlay existing ones to read its hieroglyphic markings - but to accept the possibility of exploring the limits and fictions within those systems we use to conjure place. And to not seek a reduction in that complexity. This is a creative opportunity - to re-think the processes of visualising place by thinking through the sensitive relation of sites in which landscape is made. The danger (highlighted in the discussion of site-specificity - Appendix 2) is that the investigation of limits becomes another kind of extraction that mines the edges, following in Ulysses' footsteps to the undiscovered margin. Where, a fetishisation of the information traces replaces a fetishisation of the object. With this in mind, there is one clear and infinitely complex message that Antarctica sends - a landscape that *disrupts* terrestrial systems, from time zones to subject positions. As a disruption in the net of rational abstract meaning, the Antarctic problematises the extension - from the Enlightenment quest to contemporary extrapolations of meaning - of non-relational meaning systems. In this slippery seam of landscape aesthetics, there is a creative space within which to arrest the dislocation of located objects, and return once more to the field for a more sensitive siting/sighting. An Antarctic dialectic is not simply a negation, but a specific movement between places, bodies, objects, images, fields and sites in which 'risk lights the way' to the production of relational landscapes of meaning.

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[490] Ibid.

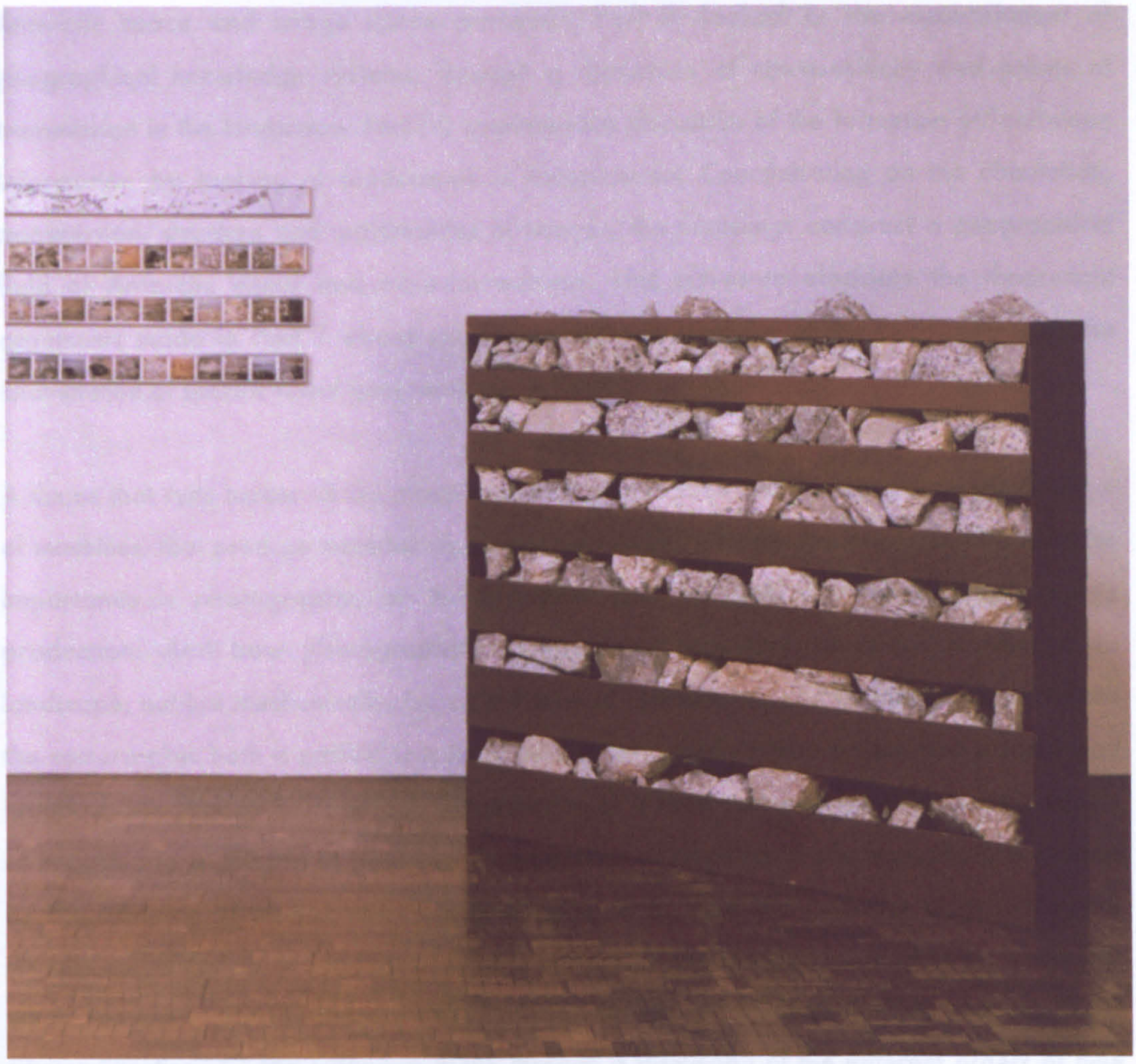

Plate 45

Part IV: Mappings

Preface

The mappings presented here are a collection of *image-geographies*. Each mapping begins with an image as the starting point, from which a thematic discussion of the interstices of Antarctic space and image space proceeds. *Part III* looked at the establishment of geographical knowledge systems, through a discussion of site-specificity and points of transmission in the landscape. *Part IV*, continues the discussion of the formation of landscape information by looking at *landscapes in transmission*. Concentrating on the circulation, transmission, structure and materialities of images, the mappings construct a geographical field of Antarctic visual and material cultures. This serves to elucidate the theoretical arguments made in *Part 1* about spatialities and temporalities of the image, through the examination of specific visual geographies.

A theme that runs across all the mappings is an examination of how the technological arrest of machines, that produce material visual cultures, structure landscape relations. Of particular importance is photography, as the dominant form of Antarctic (and global) image production. And how photography's technological capacity structures a relation to landscape, not just mechanically, but as a historical phenomenon. As an instrument of citation the camera cites both a particular type of time (photography's time ordered by arrests) and historical time (history as imagistic). The photograph is thus, both a way-maker in a landscape of images and a point in its direction. The question of meaning in photography is preceded by the meaning of photography's technological form. And this meaning of technology is directly connected to a question of time. As practice and product of modernity, it exhibits what Jameson calls "autoreferentiality" in the way in which it acts out its "own commodification".[491] The mappings move through a discussion of the different orders of time that images are productive of, and the landscapes these orders affect.

The mappings begin with *Tented spaces: travelling home in British Antarctica* to examine the space of the tent as the locale, through which meaning in the landscape was negotiated. As a space of ordering in the vast landscape, the tent structures Antarctic human-landscape relations. The mapping charts the poetics of tented spaces, and how as a symbolic site of meaning, the tent is often made into a telescopic historic marker in British narratives of identity in the Antarctic. The repetition of the tent in representation, displays the interaction of representational space and spaces of inhabitation in the landscape, wherein the tent becomes the border of that negotiation. Through a discussion of film spaces, narrative spaces and

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[491] Jameson 1995, 5.

tented spaces, the mapping questions how meaning is concretised round this transient domain that structures landscape encounters.

10 postcards from Antarctica: marking time, place and memory in the photographic image sends 10 postcards from Antarctica for the purpose of examining landscapes in transmission. The postcard moves through landscapes, traversing time and memory to construct vagrant geographies: distinct yet wayward knowledges of place. The mapping charts Charcot's first postcard from Antarctica during his chronophotography of the coast of Charcot Land through the history of postal communications to tourist postcards sent from the same location. The postal system sets into play the forces of mobility that shaped the visibility of places on a global scale. At the same time, through the deployment of the picture postcard, the postal system established a commodity form for place that implied a consuming subject in the landscape. At a key moment in the (conflicting) emergence of modernity's spatialities, the postcard's mobility enacted imperial aspirations to bring the world together into a complete system, through a process of fragmentation and proliferation. In its proliferation as a mass media text the picture postcard set an ordered and repetitive act of memory and forgetting place into place. Consequently, a picture of the landscape is in mass circulation at any one given time, a material landscape of communication that flattens the topologies of place, as it traverses space. As a free-floating visual archive of memory, the postal system is in constant circulation transmitting fragments of the landscape. This mapping examines Antarctica as the furthest reach of the postcard, and thus the limits of communication technologies and of empire.

As an antidote to contemporary investment in heroic narratives, *Action man: Antarctic explorer* takes the 1970's special issue Antarctic Action man on another kind of journey, by restaging his adventures through the landscape. Through a visual performance of polar inertia, rather than polar performances, heroic narratives are re-routed into different considerations of meaning. By inverting the heroics of Action man's narrative, the mapping questions what an anti-hero of the Antarctic landscape might look like. By concentrating on the excess expenditure of explorer's accounts, as opposed to the heroic destinations of the original, the mapping considers non-productive landscape encounters in order to explore other possibilities of staging history and geography.

The mappings conclude with *Antarctic exposure: archives of the feeling body*, which concentrates on the bodily sensorium as a register of landscape, in excess of visual regimes. As machines enact their breakdown of landscape, casting us into a relation with time, and re-

casting landscape into image pieces (discussed through the before and after photograph of the *Winter Journey*), the mapping explores how landscape breaks the body down into pieces, enacting a relation to landscape duration. As representation produces the whole body, the exposure of landscape is productive of a fragmenting psychic and physical body. By inverting the writing of landscape through the technological act, the mapping concentrates on the explorer's accounts of non-productive expenditure, when the landscape writes through the body to disrupt the heroic narrative of a contained and purposeful body in the landscape. By entering into a consideration of excess, the mapping discusses the creative potentials of imagining non-productive relations to landscape.

Considering different forms of exposure, arrest, and circulation through the physical and technological landscape, the mappings together form a systematic inquiry into the enclosures and excesses within geographies of visual culture. The Mappings revisit known sites, in order to unsettle their fixity, to get inside the seams of the tent, bodies, practices, popular cultures in order to readdress some of the most powerful mythologies of the Antarctic, and to cast an alternative light on their readings.

Tented[492] Spaces: Travelling Home in British Antarctica

4. Then he bends forward and brushes some snow from its apex. Tent fabric becomes exposed. He turns and beckons to his companions. Mix to
5. Scott's diary is being held in close up in a pair of gloved hands. The right hand brushes frost and snow from the cover of the book and opens it. We see a glimpse of Scott's handwriting.
6. A close depiction of the cross. Close enough to read the words
TO STRIVE, TO SEEK, TO FIND, AND NOT TO YIELD.
Pull back until the cross is seen in its entirety, standing on a bed of rocks. *Fade out*
THE END[493]

At the apex of Observation hill, a cross of Australian Jarrah[494] dominates McMurdo Sound. [28] Its colour is a deep red and the hounding of katabatic winds has raised the names of those that it commemorates proud. From this vantage-point one can see an endless vista of ice, beneath which, somewhere is buried a British Antarctic tent with the bodies of Scott and his companions under a century of compacting ice and stories. The cross commemorates a more fleeting engagement with landscape that has been subsumed by the ice. Although the cross has fallen down, it has been resurrected,[495] and the permanence of text (Tennyson's and the named explorers) remains present in the material object and the imaginative geographies that locate it.[496] In the British Library in the heart of London, Scott's diary is held in the safe[497] as a relic of British Antarctic history. Around these three sites, a plethora of narratives congregate, in the performance of image and text - of British identity within and allied to Antarctica.

The tent is a threshold on which the narratives of Antarctic history are negotiated. Using a selection of images, film and texts that span almost a hundred years I want to show how the tent becomes a key site of the negotiation of British identity within the Antarctic landscape. The mapping will address how ideas of home are acted out, and written into a daily

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[492] Tent: noun, a collapsible shelter, Tent: transient verb, chiefly Scot, to attend to (meaning to care or heed, with caution and obedience).
[493] Meade, W & Montagu, I "Scott of the Antarctic" in *Three British Screenplays* ed. Arnold Manvell (London: Methuen & Co., 1950), 299.
[494] Jarrah wood was one of the main exports of colonial Australia, it is literally the material of imperial conquest that was predominately used in the construction of railways in England. The railway sleepers that begin and end in St. Pancras and Kings Cross, (adjacent to the British Library) were most likely to have been made of Jarrah wood.
[495] After falling down twice, the cross has been resurrected in its original position by the American residents of McMurdo station. Rather than use mechanical means to restore it, the residents decided to carry the cross back up to the top of Observation hill on their shoulders and ceremonially recite Tennyson's Ulysses.
[496] Ponting narration to the film *90° South*: "this far most symbol of the Christian faith on earth seems like a guardian angel of the forbidden lands beyond, reminding those that venture further, in the midst of life we are in death, yet holding out for life eternal. I have never seen anything more inspiring, than that simplest of emblems on that snow hill, erected to the memory of a seaman of the British Navy who died in the *performance* of his duty." *Bfi* Special Collection, William F. Jury No. 34.
[497] The diary is held under the highest security code for access for manuscripts. It has been displayed in the British library, open at the last page.

performance of the explorer's *being* in Antarctica, and in subsequent performances of their journey, such as Herbert Ponting's *90° South*, the 1948 Ealing Studio's production of *Scott of the Antarctic*, Margaret Eliot and Fiona Davis contemporary art practice, and as part of the BAS's public relations.

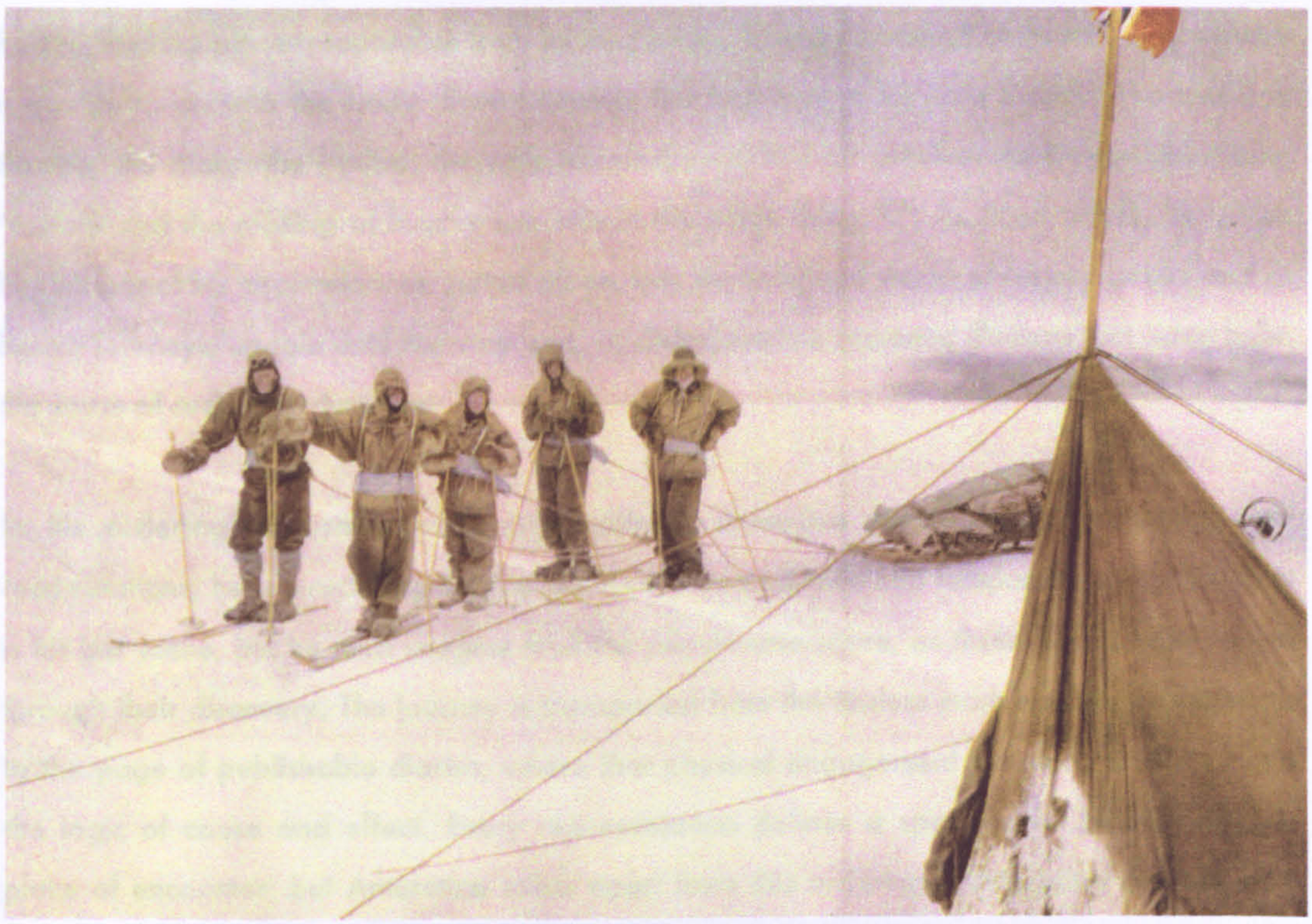
The tent echoes through British Antarctic representation like a conduit of social memory. The reverberations and homologies of shape imaginatively co-join Scott's little tent on the polar plateau to contemporary inhabitations on the continent, and in other sites of meaning in Imperial London, the battlefields of France and contemporary New Zealand. As a site in which the impossibilities and potentialities of representation are played out, the tent is a membrane between human inhabitation and the landscape outside. In this mediation the tent structures a relation with landscape and so becomes a site in which two kinds of identity are written into place; that of the explorer and of the landscape. Mobile in practice (like the tent in Cherry-Gerrard's *Winter Journey*), but culturally and poetically laden, the tent is a fixed and fixing space, a locale from which to make sense of space. In the imaginative space of the interior of the lone British Antarctic tent, how are we located as a spectator of histories? Travelling back and forth through the spatial dimensions of an already defined (yet continually expansive) history, how is the tent re-erected, and the snow that has covered it wiped away, as Scott's rescue party did in 1913?

In his tent at the end

In his tent at the end, Scott places himself into a state of writing. As the landscape has overwritten his body into a now irreversible immobility, Scott writes back his message to the world. From the polar tent, that he has been stranded in and will not leave, he writes, uncertain of whether his messages will ever be found. Acutely aware of his presence on the historic stage, Scott writes his script of 'The End' as an historic screenplay for audiences, known and unknown. As his body has been ravaged, Scott's historical consciousness is such that as he continues to write beyond himself, his body, the tent to the centre of his locale of meaning - to England. He writes to the wives and mothers of the men that lay dead either side of him, eleven letters in all. He writes to his patron, Sir Clement Markham, President of the RGS; he attempts to explain the death that surrounds him, and why there is not a British flag at the pole. As the poet Snowdon Barnett suggests, the reach of patrons (and the institutions they represented) extended a firm grip of awareness into the snowbound tent:

> Markham's malignant shadow
> Shouts in silence from the South
> End of his tether in his tent at the end[498]

[498] Snowdon Barnett "XXVIII It's never settled", from *Last Entry* (Stocksfield: Oriel Press, 1982)




HAD WE LIVED . . . .
"God knows I am sorry to be the cause of sorrow to anyone in the world, but everyone must die. All the things I had hoped to do with you after the Expedition are as nothing now. My only regret is leaving you to struggle through your life alone, but I may be coming to you by a quicker way. All is for the best to those who love God, and oh, my Ory, we have both loved Him with all our lives . . . ."
—WILSON
"My own dearest Mother, I should so like to have come through, for your dear sake. It is splendid to pass, however, with such companions as I have, and as all five of us have mothers and wives, you will not be alone. There will be no shame and you will know I have struggled to the end. Your ever-loving son to the end of this life and the next, when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes."
—BOWERS
"Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. It seems a pity, but I don't think I can write more. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale. For God's sake look after our people!"
—SCOTT

Plate 46

Finally, it is to 'the people' that Scott turns; consciously he marks his page with a 'Message to the Public'.[499] A journey is inscribed through Antarctica and into the pages of an imperial history, making place inseparable from its inscription. Taking command of words, in a way he is unable to do with the body, Scott becomes the historian of his own history. The tent is a theatre, the diary, the bodies, the rolls of unexposed film an archive. As Carter comments; "history and the making of history are one in the same thing."[500] As Scott writes, he writes himself out of his circumstances, out of place, into an imagined world of history books and of heroic journeys, unable until the very end, to disbelieve the romantic illusions that have been the cause of such a predicament.

In his ordering of justifications, explanations, defensive responses to pre-anticipated recriminations, he is structuring his encounters for an audience into temporal phases. The tent is his last scene, but he must imagine it as the penultimate scene, as these stories have to live through their discovery. The journey is transported from the tireless mark marking in the snow to the page of publishable diaries, where that physical engagement becomes arranged into the logic of cause and effect. Every representation defines a spatial relationship with the place of encounter, but Antarctica exists apart from this ordering, obliterating the tent as it did with Scott's body. But Scott's concern as he writes his 'Message' is not to make Antarctica visible, to describe the place he is within, but to justify his journey and define his national subjectivity in relation to the place from which he has come. Antarctica is not named directly, but referred to obliquely as a place of "severe weather, which does not seem to have satisfactory cause", a "the storm that fell upon us", "the surprise that awaited us on the Barrier".[501] The place is subservient in language but active in cause, it has "come out against us".[502] The world that exists inside the tent, and how it has come to be in this place is what concerns the dramatic intensity of this moment of writing. 'Providence' has made them struggle, it has tested them and challenged them as moral beings; their physical decrepit-ness is elevated to a national and spiritual plane of reasoning. In his signifying practices, the landscape is subsumed, relegated to mere historical stage. The illusion is sustained as it is played out on the tent walls, as it has been rehearsed in Scott's head, from an inkling of knowing that things were starting to go wrong that occurred days earlier during the excruciating days of man hauling. As Scott narrated:

> For four days we have been unable to leave the tent - the gale howling about us. We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet

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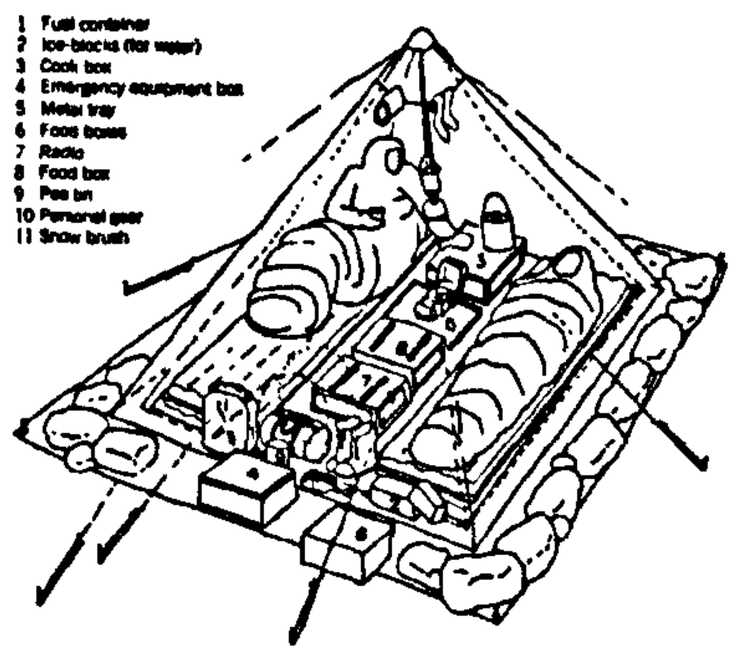
[499] Robert Falcon Scott, "Thursday, March 29" *Scott's Last Expedition*, Vol. I, (London: Smith, Elder & co. 1913), 605-607.
[500] Carter 1987, 346.
[501] Scott 1913, 605-607.
[502] Ibid.

> death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past... These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale...[503]

The brilliant understatement of Scott's last statement, "these rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale" assumes what Carter calls the, "unquestioned convention of the all-seeing spectator"[504] that will recreate the historical event - a spectator that is implicated in the event as much as the writer. Providence has 'come out against them' but it is not God to whom Scott writes, but to the nation, he puts himself as a man first and foremost before his country, from which all moral sentient is derived. He writes himself into the event as an Englishman, in a continuum of Englishmen that stretch down the age repeatedly enacting and conforming what it means to be English, rather than as a creative intervention in that subjectivity. The 'Englishness'[505] that he writes of is located in a prior knowledge of an audience which given the right script, will stage the performance of it and embellishing the imaginary space with nuances of their own, (although this is hardly needed given the strong direction that Scott has so intentionally orchestrated).[506] His writing is located in a particular historical trope of national subjectivity, but he is now part of its sum, and with every retelling there is a confirmation of the ideals that structure this performance – a reconfirmation of the power and presence of an imperial imagination that ascribes to bad fortune, or the will of God, that which it cannot account for.[507] The objective was not necessarily to understand being there, but to give meaning to that presence.



Organisation of gear in a polar pyramid

As Scott writes his exploration as a performance - mapping his movement in Antarctica for those outside the intimacies of his journey - his narrative orders place not just to the audiences 'back home' but to the explorer himself, who transported the rhetoric of home (the conceptual signifying practices) to sustain and feed more basic and immediate needs.[508] The discipline of ordering the landscape and their presence within it is a daily practice of making the Antarctic into an inhabitable place (for the explorer's and home audiences). Almost twice a day (usually at

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[503] Ibid.
[504] Carter1987, xv.
[505] It is this same ahistoric 'Englishness' that Margaret Thatcher appeals to in her first public speech after the ending of hostilities at Port Stanley in the South Atlantic. Thatcher produced an ominous phrase: 'The lesson of the Falklands is that Britain has not changed'. Iain Chambers calls this an attempt "to draw out from the twilight world of the unconscious the seemingly indecipherable metaphysics of 'being British'". Eric Carter, James Donald & Judith Squires, *Space & Place* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993), 145.
[506] *See Max Jones, The Last Great Quest* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).
[507] It is useful to note Felix Driver here: "Such images were inevitably partial; indeed, they were in a sense designed to resolve imaginatively what could not be resolved in other ways. For the business of exploration could be profoundly unsettling", Driver 2001, 4-5.
[508] The diary is what Lacan calls his *sinthome*, or the 'knot' that holds his universe together; the artificial symbolic formation by means of which he preserves his sanity by narrative consistency.

6.00am and 6.00pm) Wilson paints his picturesque watercolours, organising and pictorially classifying the scenes before him with observational fervour, Ponting works tirelessly to achieve his desired images, arranging people and scenes in complicated poses, and everyday Scott attends to writing his diary. He knows himself from the outside, as an image for the public, caught in the flickering light of Ponting's lantern displays, that have been projected to the explorer's through the long winters night. Back at the hut, they have even written scripts and put on dramatic productions at the 'Royal Terror Theatre'.[509] But the hut is far away from this tent, and the aesthetics of isolation cannot obscure, as Scott finishes writing, that he is left to the life of the body and the landscape, both of which he has neglected in favour of his poetic life. As Spufford writes, in his contemporary retelling of Scott's story, "You cannot die in a story; you have to die in your body".[510] As Scott's writing tells one story, his twisted half naked body and snarling teeth tell another. Afterwards there is silence in the tent, until the scene of discovery, eight months later, and again the story of an Antarctic adventure gone wrong unfolds, as an explorer *bends forward and brushes some snow from its apex. Tent fabric is exposed.*

British identity in Antarctica: The Screen of Empire

Antarctica
burrs into life
on a patched sheet
somewhere in France.

British tracks
dawdle the white
screen and country
No mud in sight!

The arc lamp spits
the smoky air,
bold ghosts wave
and disappear

into a blizzard
where clean fun binds
the living and dead
one more time

Smokers' coughs,
farts, nose blowing
punctuate
a repeat showing

of all that broke

[509] See Mike Pearson, "No Joke in Petticoats" in *The Drama Review* 48, 1 (T181) Spring 2004 44-59.
[510] Spufford 1996, 334.

and crashed and fell
in Gallipoli
and Flanders fields.[511]

In 1915, "in response to an appeal from the Front", Ponting gave sets of his Antarctic films (later released as the *Great White Silence* then *90° South*, 1930) "for the benefit of our soldiers in France". The films were "shown to more than 100,000 officers and men of the British Army".[512] The intended resonance between the narrative of Scott's pole party and the sacrifice on the battlefield was not subtle. Rev. F I Anderson, Senior Chaplain to the forces, sent a letter to Ponting praising the inspiring qualities of the film, directly relating the Antarctic journey to their present situation in wartime:

> The splendid story of Captain Scott is just the thing to cheer and encourage out here... The thrilling story of Oates' self sacrifice, to try and give his friends a chance of 'getting through' is one that appeals so at present time... We all feel we have inherited from Oates' and his comrades a legacy and heritage of inestimable value in seeing through our present work. We thank you all with grateful hearts.[513]

The focus on Oates' sacrifice is a telling aspect of the emotional reverberations that the film was expected to generate in its audiences on the Western Front. The expectations of national subjectivity meant sacrifice, contextualised within the domestic relations of gentlemanly conduct. The practices of gentlemanly conduct was an important aspect in structuring British identity in places away from home, if one could take an imagined concept of British society travelling, then England could literally travel anywhere, meet and encounter landscape and peoples, impervious to outside corruption. The supposed impenetrability of this order of relationships prevented anarchy and allowed military structure to remain in tact. More importantly the narrative of Scott responded to anxieties about death, colonising the domain beyond the reaches of life, as an example of how to die in a particular 'clean' way, far removed in geographical distance, but present in a complimentary ideology, amongst the slaughter of the battlefields. The thread of 'English-ness' that Scott had claimed to have picked up was extended, and ran through as a 'legacy and heritage of inestimable value' to the 'comrades' on the Western front - because it served 'in seeing through our present work'. The poetics that Scott had set to work in his writing served in the physical and conceptual practices of maintaining Empire. As thousands of troops sat through the projection of this Antarctic encounter in France, Ponting, having secured the rights to the film,[514] lectured

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[511] Chris Orsman "Behind the Lines, 1915" in *Black South* (New Zealand: Pemmican Press, 1997)
[512] Herbert Ponting, *The Great White South* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1921)
[513] Letters received from the Rev. F I Anderson, Senior Chaplain to the forces, extract printed on sleeve to Ponting 1921.
[514] Ponting bought out Gaumont's rights to the film after Scott's death. It was released as a feature length silent film called *The Great White Silence* in 1920's. In 1929 the Duke of York formally took possession of the film and its negatives, passing them on to the British Empire Film Institute to be held on behalf of the nation, but by 1918 audiences were down for Ponting's film. Ponting put in another $10,000 of his own money to re-release the film again in 1933 under the title, *90° South* however the film was not a commercial success.

daily in London for ten months in 1914, (later touring on the Western front).[515] At a time when the death of men was a growing concern, to soldiers abroad and civilians at home, the film bound, *"the living and dead / one more time"*.

On the films first screening in London, on the 20th October 1911, the film had received a quiet different reception. The *London Standard* reported that

> in a cosy little darkened room just off Piccadilly Circus, last evening, a special company of about forty persons sat and watched a small band of men fighting their way over mountains of ice towards the South Pole... No previous Polar expedition has had such 'live' chronicles taken of its life among the snows.[516]

Unaware of Scott's death, and more importantly the 'recovery' of his script, the film is a different encounter. As the audience, and Mrs Scott (later Lady) sit *"in a cosy little darkened room"*, the images they see appear comical and endearing. As Ponting writes to Scott,

> the picture of you getting into your sleeping bag. That one always brings down the house... it makes them all laugh, because Birdie goes through such funny antics; that, and the film of you & Co doing the sledging, are always voted by everyone the best things in the show.[517]

As audiences in London watched the comic antics of the explorers setting up polar tents, the explorers are not yet dead as they perform this rehearsal for real out on the polar plateau. Unhappy with the economic arrangements of the images, Ponting writes a recriminating letter to Scott about image 'rights' (unaware of the pre-expedition deals Scott has set up without his knowledge), berating him for the lack of financial benefit he is able to reap from the images. As Ponting laments:

> words utterly fail to express my disappointment and chagrin, as though the work I have done in the South is the most difficult, and perhaps the most valuable that I have ever done, from a Geographical standpoint, yet I am unable to reap any benefit from it.[518]

Ponting clearly points out that Mr Amundsen's' arrival has been indicative in the lack of popularity and financial backing that the films have so far received, indicating the very real financial implications of not coming first. As he notes:

> To get back to the films... *you may, I think, safely figure on another two or three thousand pounds... you ought to get something like* $6/7000, perhaps more. If Mr Amundsen had not turned up, there is no doubt that the sum I have always named you, -$20,000 might well have been reached.[519]

After these London screenings, the war would provide the right historical drives to reanimate the popularity of Scott's narrative. Watching this image on a white screen somewhere in a

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[515] Ian Christie, *90° South*, Academy Video release from Argos Films and the British Film Institute, 1933.
[516] Ibid.,
[517] Herbert Ponting, *Another World* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1975), 33.
[518] Ponting 1975, 32.
[519] Ponting 1975, 33.

tent on the Western Front, the response is markedly different – with death pressing so close, who would dare to laugh as Scott struggles into his sleeping bag? The chaplain states that "the intensity of appeal is realised in the subdued hush and quiet that pervades the massed audience of troops while it is being told".[520] In an environment where death is a real and immanent possibility, the sacrifice for empire that the narrative now serves is not comical. Further away from the scene of death, in London, a curious postcard advertising daily showings of the film at the Philharmonic Hall is footnoted with a quotation from the *Daily Telegraph*, 'Scene after scene of inimitable comedy'. On the reverse side of the card the *Sunday Times* is quoted as saying, 'There is nothing in the theatres of London to approach this drama. There is no comedy so amusing, no play so poignant, no tragedy so heart rendering as this tale in pictures'. The *Daily Sketch* proposes that, 'To see Mr Ponting's historic film and hear his brilliant lecture is to realise what being an Englishman should mean...', The *Daily Mirror* is more insistent and suggests that 'people should be made to see it'.[521] The King hoped that Britain's children would see the film and that it "would help promote the spirit of adventure that had made the Empire."[522]

The performance of images and narratives of Scott's death become cultural capital that can be drawn upon to validate, inspire and consolidate the practices of Empire, and the demands of Imperial masculinity. The language of male nationalism, 'history' 'the spirit of adventure that has made Empire' re-makes these concepts anew. The *London Times* writes that the value of the expedition lies in proving that the practice of Empire building can be continued by the present generation:

> It is proof that in an age of depressing materialism men can still be found to face known hardship, heavy risk and even death, in pursuit of an idea. That is the temper of men who build empires and while it lives among us we shall be capable of maintaining an Empire that our fathers builded.[523]

The 'pursuit of an idea' is a crucial aspect of Empire building; conceptually and physically it becomes a justification for the act itself. Cherry-Gerrard astutely comprehends this point, quoting a passage from Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*. Don Juan in conversation with the Devil says;

> But men never really overcome fear until they imagine they are fighting to further a universal purpose – fighting for an idea, as they call it.[524]

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[520] Letters received from the Rev. F I Anderson, Senior Chaplain to the forces, extract printed on sleeve to Ponting 1921.
[521] Promotional postcard for Philharmonic Hall film showings, 1911.
[522] Quoted in Beau Riffenburgh & Liz Cruwys *The Photographs of H G Ponting* (London: The Discovery Gallery, 1998), 107.
[523] Quoted in Cindy Katz & Andrew Kirby, "In the nature of things: the environment and everyday life", Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 16 (1991), 260.
[524] Cherry-Gerrard 1937, 390.

Framing empire as 'an idea' and an idea worth dying for is an essential aspect of separating the imagination from the body, and the afflictions the body might have to face in the service of the idea. The importance of a tangible, aesthetic version of this ideal is needed to personify and disguise the less glamorous economics of empire building. As Deutsche and Ryan comment, the three tenants of domination and possession are namely, *mapping, mythologizing* and *aestheticizing*.[525] The visual mapping of the terrain of exploration can only be realised with an appropriate and seductive aesthetic that lends itself to mythological imagining - the images of Scott in the Antarctic provided a fantastical site for the performance of this idea. A performance that, as Chris Orsman suggests in "Behind the Lines, 1915", is 'a repeat showing' of all the sentiment and ideological structure that 'was crushed and broke' on the battlefields of the First World War.[526]

In contrast to the imagery and idea of Imperial conquest, there is the physical embodiment of it that is often subsumed under its public expression. There is no historic inevitability about the images of those polar explorers; as Scott writes, conscious of his posthumous audience, he cannot know for with any certainty that his words will reach his intended audience. In his writing he is exonerating himself, confronting his own fears as much as those of others; writing at its most basic level engages others in an imaginary relationship and consolidates an imagined life beyond life. In a sense he is writing for himself, because no audience is present, he writes for his idea of the world, an idea of a world in which death is not the end.[527] A sense of moral order "had to exist because they were key elements in complex systems of belief" to discard the idea "would have threatened a whole way of looking at the world."[528] As Carter claims:

> The purpose of keeping a diary and trying to control one's life and thoughts at every moment must be to consolidate life, to integrate one's thinking, to avoid fragmentary themes. It is evident that the force that compels (him) to plunge (his) spirit into reality' is not methodological but psychological.[529]

When Scott writes, "For God's sake look after our people" there remains the distinct feeling that he is calling upon others to do what he could not, namely to bring back his compatriots alive. The re-presentation of the tale situates the story in an actuality that the explorers themselves are unaware of until the end - it is only then, at the dramatic moment of snow-

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[525] quoted in Katz & Kirby 1991, 265.

[526] The experience of which was aestheticised in quiet a different way by the poetry of soldiers in the Second World War (like Wilfred Owen and Seigfried Sasson), who reversed the axiom and made audiences imagine the body and question the idea.

[527] This idea is replicated in the memorial postcards produced after it is known that Scott is dead - an angel over an imaginary cross, holds a halo above this snowy memorial ground shining the light of the heavens on his place of rest. The angel reappears as a motif on the Scott memorial in Devonport, Plymouth. Nearly all of the memorial postcards reproduce some part of Scott's last diary entries.

[528] Yi Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 86.

[529] Paul Carter, *Living in a New Country* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 104.

bounded intensity that the tent can truly become a screen of the Empire, when all else is obliterated outside. In the darkened theatre of iced canvass walls, the performance (that encodes place in a colonial discourse) takes place - a little tent on an Antarctic continent becomes an everywhere, produced by the explorer's imagining.[530]

In this tented space, Scott writes with all his remaining effort, colonising the body as an agent for the ideological purposes. And as his writes against bodily decomposition he follows the established Christian representation of the body as container, and all that remains of Antarctica, is as the scene for this enactment. He writes against the presence and vastness of the place, containing it, by making it subservient to the heroic narrative – As Scott writes his personal imperial history, the landscape remains alien and unspoken. Antarctica is part of a scene, a name that Scott rarely writes. The Antarctic simply sits between British and Expedition; it is an image of a place located between two pillars of ideology, which is recreated in two important scenes in the film *Scott of the Antarctic*.[531] Firstly, a card by a door is stencilled with the wording 'British Antarctic Expedition' on it, and later a smart metal plate has replaced the card beside the office door, representing the expeditions transition from hopeful idea to attainable reality.

However, to solely render Antarctica as a scene to a larger imperial narrative neglects the imaginative work that is produced in the Antarctica. The observing of the mother country in the dramatic performance of journey, and the relics that are returned to the centre, represent an intervention in a British identity that is located at the periphery. The homeland is established and embellishing through practice in Antarctica, but this Imperial culture is not just transported there, it is actively defined and returned in the artefacts of Ponting's film, Wilson's images and Scott's diary. The oscillation between imagined audiences and the practice of writing/image-making - the texts[532] that remain, and the conflicts suppressed in that process of signifying practices - remain deeply ambiguous. It can be viewed as a performance, but it is also a journey located in the uncertainties of real encounters; only in the final denouement of the certainty of death, can a historical perspective realised.

It is only in this moment when death is certain that the tent walls can truly become a screen. Susan Solomon argues that the ten days of blizzard that Scott claims in his diary keeps them in their tent is a meteorological impossibility. She suggests that either Scott lost track of time

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[530] Something of the poetics of Hamlet's soliloquy further elaborates this point of anxiety within an illusion of controlled space, *'I could bind myself up in a nutshell and call myself king of infinite space if it were not that I had bad dreams'*.

[531] Meade & Montagu 1950, 216 & 224.

[532] The diary, photographs, films, drawings of the Polar party

or that the blizzard outside abated, but by then it was too late for Scott (who could not walk due to frozen feet). She concludes, "if his companions could not carry him and told him it was not possible for them to leave, then it might as well have been blowing a hurricane."[533] Although Scott continued writing, she points out, neither Bowers or Wilson chose to say anything more about why they remained in the tent in the last week, only eleven miles from the fuel and food that would have saved them.

When the tent was found and dug out, each of the men went inside to view the bodies, so there would be no dispute over what they had found. Only the Norwegian, Tryggve Gran stayed outside. He later recalled:

> I stayed outside... as a Norwegian it was not my place. The others undid the tent flaps and went inside. Wilson was lying quite peacefully, his feet towards the entrance... Bowers, the other direction. Wilson had died peacefully... Scott was between them, half sitting up, one hand reached out to Wilson. Then I heard a noise... like a pistol shot... I was told this was Scott's arm breaking as they raised it to take away the journals strapped under his arm. Scott had died dreadfully... his face contorted with frostbite.[534]

Ironically, the represented body that Scott had prioritised over his sentient body inflicted one final post-humus injury to his bodily integrity.

Far less equivocal is the re-presentation of this dramatic journey in the 1948 Ealing Studio's film *Scott of the Antarctic*, where the historical perspective forms the basis of the dramatic narrative.

> 2. Close shot, Scott's diary. The camera pans down an open page of the diary, which Scott is just completing. But we do not see Scott, though we glimpse his sleeve, with the three rings denoting the rank of Commander. His voice continues reading the diary entry.[535]

The stage is set with this recurring visual metaphor – a blank page is seen to be written upon by a hand authorised by military office - we do not see Scott but we see his writing, followed sequentially by scenes of Antarctica (*forbidding frowning cliffs and mountain, ramparts of an unknown continent, tortured shapes of ice, a sense of complete desert*). This first sequence sets up the dramatic iconography of the film that continues until the last scene where *"This time, in the tent is silent. All three men are writing. It is even possible to hear the pencil."*[536] The screenplay is written from beginning to end in the unflinching genre of cause and effect - the page serving as the lexicon for its presentation - in which the book assumes a greater authority than the place. As an audience, the story is known through other narratives and

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[533] Susan Solomon, *The Coldest March* (New Haven & London: Yale Univ. Press, 2001), 325.
[534] Quote in the *South: Race to the Pole*, Press Information pack 2001.
[535] Meade & Montagu 1950, 207.
[536] Ibid., 296.

there is little or no attempt to be reflexive to this. Instead the screenplay resurrects the tent, the diary, the journey and the identities of the explorer's with such permanence as to create an idea of historic inevitability. In the location of post-war Britain,[537] the film serves in a different way to Ponting's film. It unashamedly resurrects "all that broke/and crashed and fell/in Gallipoli/and Flanders fields" and had continued to break on many other battlefields.[538]

The concentration on Scott, on his heroics and the structuring throughout the film of Scott's subjectivity, places him at the epicentre of a moral rite of passage. It is not Antarctica that Scott is within, but the moral maze of masculine identity. As an audience see him grow in that identity as the film progresses, *"We watch Scott, standing on the platform and not looking particularly happy, or even hopeful..."*[539] to "SCOTT"S INNER VOICE: Wonderful to be free at last from problems so difficult for me to handle. Whatever lies ahead, I'm now on my own ground"[540] to *"The Polar party receding. As the others watch them they vanish from view, either into the distance or behind some rise in the ground. We hold the empty scene for a few fee."*[541] Whereupon they are truly in the wilderness where they will be tested as men before God and before each other. There are divisions, deceit and concerns beneath the surface: moral order and hierarchy are beginning to be threatened;

> OATES *(his face is drawn)*
> SCOTT *(he cannot keep the weariness out of his voice, and only just manages to suppress the irritation)*
> WILSON *(not ungently but with firmness)*
> *The silence is heavy... snow is still falling in this and the succeeding close ups, in which, it is clear from their bobbing up and down that the men are now marching out of step.*[542]

Like Shakespeare's Lear on the Heath, Scott and the Pole Party are seen to go through a redemptive journey of physical and mental challenge before they die a clean death in the intimacy of the tent. This is a familiar trope in the cross-cultural mythology of walking as a practice to salvation (from Cain to the idea of pilgrimage). As in Lear, the moral imperatives

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[537] For a more detailed discussion of the film's geopolitical history see Klaus Dodds, "Screening Antarctica: Britain, the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey and *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948)" in Polar Record 38 (204: 2002): 3-12.
[538] Response from critics was mixed, some saw Scott as a national hero and others celebrated him as an anti-hero, and the film as an anti-heroic narrative. The lack of a contrived happy ending was praised. One critic commented that, "no dancing Eskimo girls in luxuriously appointed igloos-only ordinary, unheroic looking men whose faces at journey's end are bearded, frostbitten, chapped, bloodshot, indescribably ugly and wholly authentic." (Paul Dehn, *Sunday Chronicle*). Mr. Middleton, who took 40 girls to see the film complained to Ealing studios, that "the girls were in a dreadful state... besides themselves crying because of the ponies being shot" and they thought that the men ought to die because of their treatment of the ponies. Richard Winningham *News Chronicle* dramatically comments, "since then two great wars have shattered our world, drenching the fragments in suffering and calling forth stories of incredible heroism." Ivor Montagu, G/81 *bfi* Special Collection.
[539] Meade & Montagu 1950, 219.
[540] Ibid., 235.
[541] Ibid., 272.
[542] Ibid., 275.

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THE LITTLE TENT.

The photograph which will make the greatest and most poignant appeal to English hearts is the one showing the little tent of death in which the heroes lay down for the last time and calmly awaited the end with a stoicism which has been unsurpassed. It is just as it appeared after the search party had cleared the snow away from about its base.

The little tomb of snow and ice is not visible at the present time; it is swallowed up in the icy darkness of the Antarctic winter. It will remain invisible for five months in every year.

Plate 47

of vision take on a spiritual dimension, Scott also struggles to 'see' clearly at times. While Bowers spots the distance black spot on the horizon (Amundsen's flag) Scott struggles to see what we (the audience) know he doesn't want to see. "26. *Wilson hands Scott a glass. Scott raises it to his eyes. There is silence while he focuses, removing the glasses to fiddle unbearably with the milled screw. He puts the glasses once more to his eyes. Fingers the focus again.*"[543] He cannot plant the marker he has carried so far at the pole so, in essence he must redirect the narrative of this imperial trajectory onto another horizon of moral conscious, in a redefinition of what his journey means.

The overriding implication and theme is the idea of a restorative journey, where mortals are challenged, but overcome their challenges through moral conduct restoring moral order to the world. The clumsy workings of this idea through the narrative of the film suggests a propaganda intent on trying to create some sense of what it is to be British and masculine in an uncertain landscape in the midst of moral disorder. Within Post-war Britain, the celebration of heroic failure can be seen as a cathartic rite of the death of men; of a masculinity that has been shaken abruptly by war. The polar death offers a 'clean' death in the service of nationalism. In the aftermath of such bloody disorder, the polar death presented a complete and unfractured physical and moral British body.

On many screens and in different historical milieus, in France and in London, in 1914, and in 1949, the aestheticised narrative of Scott and his compatriots are played out, and 'Antarctica burrs into life' once more-connecting the 'living and the dead' in a continuing visual performance. Within this performance are ideas about masculinity, imperial spaces, Empire and history - what constitutes and is constituting of a historical narrative. Within this narrative of history, the tent and the poetics of tented spaces becomes the threshold on which these narratives are negotiated.

The poetics of tented space

> *1. Tent interior. The three men are lying in their sleeping bags. Inside, a tiny light, improvised from a tobacco tin containing spirit, is all the illumination; conspicuous are a pile of diaries, a camera and the bag of fossils. Outside rages the fury of the blizzard. The tent fabric shakes.*[544]

Conspicuously within the discursive narratives of this exploration of Antarctica we are left with 'a pile of diaries, a camera and a bag of fossils', and it is these objects that are used to invokes a kind of empirical truth; a material reality that *anchors* journeys made in imaginative, unknown or metaphoric spaces. The British Antarctic tent acts as the focus and

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[543] Ibid., 276.
[544] Meade & Montagu 1950, 295.

the locale of the narrative of Scott: it is an enclosed space that affords an amplified containment for the ideology and expression of his performance, and contains the practices and artefacts of writing and image making. The narrative and object are necessary to each other, but why and how does the tent work as a poetic site for meaning, and an attractive emblem to be worked upon by other ideologies?

In its most abstract form, the tent has what Bachelard calls a poetic *reverberation* as an *ontological amplification* of shelter,

> Through this reverberation, by going immediately beyond all psychology or psychoanalysis, we feel poetic power rising naively within us.[545]

Bachelard's argument of 'naïve poetic power' liberates the material object into the imaginative skein of the non-material. Bachelard proposes it is wrong to 'immediately reduce this language to the psychological reality of the fear felt by man far from existence'.[546] To do so is to diminish the poetics of the idea of shelter, and the identification with the idea of settlement in a world that seems less securely anchored. The shelter allows the possibility of extending out in-to spaces that are not yet clearly defined. The daily dwelling practices of erecting tents, making camp, striking up the primus, brings order to chaos, making inhabitation in the landscape possible. Bachelard suggests that meaning is located in a state of emergence from language - a youthful connection that pushes out into something that doesn't yet exist as language.

> The poetic image is an emergence from language, it is always a little above the language of signification... poetry puts language in a state of emergence.[547]

Although the idea of the poetic image de-contextualises the tent from place it can be a way to understand how the idea of the tented space can have a formal power (a compelling reality that is not reducible to language) that makes it an appropriate site for other meanings to be made in. Bachelard says the task of the phenomenologist is to find within a dwelling, "the original shell",[548] a primordial skein that emulates "an original warmth"[549] to the imagination - the poetics of the image of a tent in an uninhabited icescape have the simple dynamic of this 'original warmth'. An inhabited space in the uninhabited is the 'I' that transforms the space into place. The lone inhabitation is invested with the power of the frontier, of ships at sea, of lighthouses, of humanity in a sea of vastness - a single nuance of home in the wilderness.

> The virtues of shelter are so simple, so deeply rooted in our unconscious that they may be recaptured through mere mention, rather than minute description.[550]

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[545] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), xix.
[546] Ibid., 41.
[547] Ibid., xxiii.
[548] Ibid., 4.
[549] Ibid., 7.
[550] Ibid., 12.

As a signature of the human, the tent invokes the dialectic of inside and of outside – all that is not home. Inside is domestic space. In the business of journey, the tent provides a daily renewal of food, shelter - a safe place to restore oneself.[551] In the everyday practice of the most fundamental nurture, an intimate space is created. Yi-Fu Tuan describes intimate places as "places of nurture where our fundamental needs are heeded and cared for without fuss."[552] For the polar explorer, (and for the soldier) this intimate space is ambiguous, because these daily rituals of making tea, sowing, cooking, dressing wounds have maternal association; the 'good housekeeping' that was so necessary for the maintenance of Empire (the practice of civilisation). In this place of the material relations and practices, identity is held together through ritual - of cooking, cleaning, and tending. These practices in tented spaces are a renewal and establishment of identity - a place of things and a place to write texts, to create narratives.

The New Zealand artist Fiona Davis' installation, in the Canterbury Museum's Antarctic gallery offers a domestic intervention in the heroic narrative of the exploration. Her installations and sound work, *Safe Return Doubtful* intervenes in the museum's displays of primarily heroic objects, to present the individual experiences of the lesser known expedition participants. From her research in the museum's archive, she retells stories of the enjoyment of domesticity felt by the *Terra Nova* expedition's members. Within this context, her intervention casts a focus on the hours that were spent by the expeditioners in tending their camp and clothing. The everyday practices of mending; sowing and washing that are superseded by the dominant narratives of heroic actions are re-inscribed in the space of the gallery, to speak to the erasures within the museums representations.

In a larger work in the foyer, *Ice/Plain as a Glass of water* Davis constructs the Ross Ice Shelf from buttons, in order to interrogate the practices that were integrated into this famous site of heroic era exploration. While the button "recalls rows of tiny buttons taking hours to do up and undo...", the button also serves as a performative cultural action, "buttoning up or containing as part the persona of the European style of dress".[553] The button is a hook of memory to recall the slow, repetitive practices of care that allowed expeditions to achieve their grander narratives of conquest. It also serves as a metaphor for the ways in which the

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[551] The inside of the tent in Scott's case eventually becomes a primordial return, in the sense of a psychic return to an enclosed space, where one is held protected from the elements, a womb turned tomb for him and his compatriots.
[552] Tuan 1977, 137.
[553] Fiona Davis, *Safe Return Doubtful*, Antarctic Discovery Gallery, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand August/September 2003. Artist Statement, courtesy of the artist.

intimacy of days spent in the Antarctic were bound up with the unbuttoning and buttoning of the familiar.

This sense of intimacy is amplified by the spatial relationship of a 'smallness' of structure in contrast to the greater space outside; the small mentions the large and other nuances of other homes, and even the idea of a homeland. Imaginatively the small tent works as a concentrated space of confined messages.[554] The power of simplicity offers clarity of perception;

> The small is accessible to all human senses. Its message, being confined within a small area, are readily perceived and understood.[555]

However, what of the imaginative world outside, of snow and ice? How are the poetics of shelter enlarged by the elements of winter in the comprehension of Western audiences? Tuan says, "winter reminds us of our vulnerability and defines the home as a shelter".[556] Bacherlard exemplifies the point by examining how a single element amplifies the sense of intimacy by reinforcing all that is non-shelter outside and erasing the physical memory of presence.

> Snow, especially, reduces the exterior world to nothing rather too easily. It gives a single colour to the entire universe which, with one world, snow, is both expressed and nullified for those who have found shelter... the winter cosmos is a simplified cosmos. It is a non-house... the house derives reserves and refinements of intimacy from winter: while in the outside world, snow covers all tracks, blurs the road, muffles every sound, conceals all colours... because of the diminished entity of the outside world, experiences all the qualities of intimacy with increased intensity.[557]

Winter also changes the recognised temporal frame - existing within and outside western time zones[558] - leading to a mystical time of stasis when the bodies are *held* awaiting discovery. Outside this intimacy is the wilderness, the real and metaphoric space of the blizzard. Edward Wilson's image of the interior space of the tent [47][559] offers an intimate intervention in the vast space of the outside. The three figures are cramped together within the walls of the tent engaged in the activities of removing their outside clothing (in the first image they are in their sledging clothing and second image they are in their tent clothing).

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[554] This concept is explored by Tracy Emin in her work *All the people I've ever slept with* (1995). Using the poetics of the tent as an intimate space, she recorded the names of all the people she has ever slept with (as patches sown into the fabric of the tent). As an audience crawling into the tent, one is made aware of the conflicting intimacy of the tent and the names of Emin's lovers, and the very public space of the gallery that exists outside. Similarly in 90° South and Scott of the Antarctic we are allowed to share in the intimate space of the tent interior, as a spectator within the explorer's private space.

[555] Tuan 1977, 100.

[556] Ibid., 137.

[557] Bacherlard 1958, 40.

[558] Time and space are collapsed around Scott and his party as they lie dead and frozen in their tent till the winter ends, it is only through their text that striates this time are we able to insert them in a historic chronological space.

[559] Wilson made three drawings of *Camping after dark*; two are pencil sketches and one a chalk and black ink drawing (1903). In his two sketchbooks (retrieved from the tent) there are several other pencil drawings of the tent interior including one of Amundsen's tent at the South Pole (1910-12) (Source: SPRI Archive).

The central figure forms the supporting apex of the scene, in the foreground is a crouched figure attending to his boots and in the background the figure is bent over the stove; although the space is very cramped and their legs are almost entwined, there is a sense of each figure being isolated in their own activities.

The figures, with their obscured faces and chiselled, shadowed bodies are reminiscent of Van Gogh's drawings of the *Potato Eaters;* where his hard mark-marking intimates the presence of bodies that have toiled, now engaged in domestic activities of renewal. The tent walls act like a heavy curtain drawn back from the blank space outside to reveal an inside: the inward-looking private space of tent life, on which the curtains threaten to close. There is a palatable heaviness to the scene that does not invoke the 'original warmth' of home, but simply of a shelter that is weighted by the absence around it. In Wilson's image, Antarctica is rendered as the *tabula rasa* of the blank page. It is a void drawn back to reveal a human presence of dramatic intensity. The intensified presence of the human figures in Wilson's drawings "render a space more empty than mere vacancy could ever envisage."[560] What also happens in this empty space is a temporal movement that creates the uncanny experience of placing the moment ahistorically, rather than in the movement of an outside landscape which disrupts the notion of time and temporal narratives of the inside. Bhabha suggests another way we can conceive of the movement of space, where the void, rather than being contained, 'slips' into omnipresence,

> the making of emptiness - never fails to register a lateral movement, a transitional tremor that disorders the boundedness of the void. The void slips sideways...[561]

In this movement of the void, Antarctica is controlled through abstraction, and the relation between the image and identity in the landscape becomes evident. The tent, as intimate space, establishes the emptiness of the landscape, as an opposing binary, putting into relief that which is contained within - in such a manoeuvre the outside becomes uncontaining, literally empty. The skin of fabric is a membrane that separates positive and negative space. The tent is an incision in the dominance of expansive and pictorial space, curtailing and accentuating its presence by erecting a space that threatens to make this tent, not a tent, but an interior of existence.

> Whenever the human being has found the slightest shelter: we shall see the imagination build 'walls' of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection - or, just the opposite the sheltered being gives perceptible limits to the shelter.[562]

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[560] Bhabha 1998, 11.
[561] Ibid.
[562] Bachelard 1958, 5.

The presence of the tent renders the landscape more empty than vacancy could ever accomplish. Yet, to see this emptiness in relation to a contained space only renders the materiality of this place more physical rather than less. The vastness is only realised when the materiality of the space and its non-material blankness imaginatively touch to bring together a physical, psychological and mythological coherence. The place finds its purchase in the sensitivity of this relation of touch. So as not to render these operations of material, matter and perception static, *touch* (as the negotiation of proximity and distance) offers the consideration of a tentative movement towards less fixed dimensions of distance.

The tent's translation of the spatial into the temporal (a space of human time) makes, what Richard Serra called an anti-environment, "the potential to create its own place and space and to work in contradiction to the spaces and places where it is created... to divide or declare its own area."[563] In this oblique action between perceptual and conceptual times, the place outside becomes an experience of abstracted comprehension. In this slippage, there is a profound exchange of difference.

A more overt idea of the containment of outside space can be seen in Ponting's image from the tent interior, which does more than frame the outside space, it compresses it so that the inside - small as it is - achieves dominance and authority. Antarctica is commanded and subdued as a mere vista rather than as an intense and controlling presence. With that act of image making the katabic winds are held calm, the cold abated and the energy of this place made impotent. The tent used in this way is made as a signifier beyond its materiality, of canvas and pole, but as a marker of the colonisation of space. Unlike Wilson's tented spaces where the tent is an inward looking structure in tension with the void outside, or Frank Debenham's where the tent is unstable and fleeting, Ponting has inverted this intimate space making it the locus of all space. Like the images of the tent marked on the maps of explorer's journeys that quarterise Antarctica in neat dotted lines, the tent loses its temporal-ness of travelling home and it is made into a settlement that makes a territory. The tent is removed from the material circumstances of its being, into an altogether other space where the wind does not howl and threaten to invade, to remove and to obliterate these attempts at presence - where, like the map the explorer moves in linear movements on the surface of the space, inscribing their presence onto the place rather than moving through it. In these inscriptions from base camp to the Pole, time is not measured by any relational movement to landscape, but by the movement of an instrument in Greenwich extended to the furthest and most precarious of sites.

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[563] Richard Serra, *Writing Interviews* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), 100.

In the maps of discovery the tent becomes a telescopic historic icon, a marker of presence thrown down in a static and linear line, as conspicuous as the lines of expedition routes that constantly appear intimating settlements; opposed to the unsettling transient of journey. The tent becomes a *leitmotif* of material presence in an uncontainable space, and in essence, is the locus of that space, from where everything else is directed. In the recording of presence as a fixed marker, an imaginative fiction is created, as impermanence is rendered permanent. The constantly shifting dynamics of ice obliterate and swallow all presence (tents included), and only the images that become history, remain as their testament of presence. The tent is made into the site and the signifier of history. The poetics of the tent as an enclosing, interior space afford an intensification of this encounter. The tent walls that will always face inwards, the enclosed space that makes the screen for projection, and the enclosure makes a theatre in which to contemplate and act out an imaginative life. It is the *enclosure* and *amplification* that means the tent will be worked upon and made to serve other purpose long after it has been pulled down. Tented space must be read as a multiple marker of intimacy, movement and of histories, and equally as a site of ideological constructions. The tent is doubly inscribed with a potent poetics that affirms and celebrates intimacy and movement and stabilises it as a recognisable visual 'anchor' to the unfamiliar landscape; its meaning slides back and forth between the two. The transient object of the tent, implicated in the movement of the explorers as much as in their daily settlement, is the threshold of a tentative inhabitation. A closer reading of place would acknowledge this *movement* - the ice that lies just below the ground sheet, the wind that pulls at the seams and the footmarks that are covered over by the relentless production of landscape.

The tented space is historically, a space of the male explorer from the turn of the twentieth century, and thus connotes colonial occupations. That space, through the fieldwork of the New Zealand artist Margaret Eliot,[564] has been re-inscribed. As a motif in Eliot's painting, the tent repeated appears in her paintings as marker in space. The tent acts as a sign of presence and absence – it reminds us of the small fragile human body and the material screen that protects us - embodying landscape without figurative bodies. Eliot's paintings makes you look at the tent as part of the geology of place; a form that denotes time in human terms, which is not considered as separate or inconsequential to our looking in Antarctica. Rather than invoke Antarctica as *utopia*, as is the historical genre of Antarctic art, she concentrates

[564] Margaret Eliot went to Antarctica initially as a recipient of the Artist to Antarctica Fellowship and subsequently as a lecturer on the GCAS programme from which the work discussed stems. As one of the few artists that has had repeated sojourns in Antarctica, Eliot's work has developed considerably in the critical approach she offers to Antarctic landscape aesthetics. *Tented Spaces* was exhibited in the Tait Electronics Antarctic Gallery from 14 November to 38 March (Kathryn Yusoff "Tented Spaces" in b.135 Bulletin of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, Summer, December 03- February 04)

Plate 48

on the process of inscribing landscape. Utopia signals the limits of our imagination (the invisible walls erected around the vastness); contrary to this, Eliot's work suggests the process of coming to place and making sense of it through the markers of orientation (both human and non-human) that give landscape its form.

The repetition of tents, flags, tracks, and forms in the paintings explore how these markers become concentrated symbols within the materiality of the Antarctic landscape. In a landscape that Barry Lopez called 'autistic',[565] these markers do not just tend our physical needs of direction and protection, but our psychic emplacements as we approach difference. Eliot's paintings offer a complicated sense of engagement with Antarctica, in which nothing of the landscape's difference is given up in an attempt to know what her paintings suggest, is unknowable. In this, Antarctica is given its space. By concentrating on how we establish meaning through the traces, repetition, and echoes of our tracks - the artistic and environmental footprints we leave in the Antarctic – Eliot renders the landscape indivisible from the processes within which we seek inhabitation there.

Conclusion

> *On Fame's eternal camping ground*
> *Their silent tents are spread*
> *And Glory guards with solemn round*
> *The bivouac of the dead.*[566]

In a darkened theatre in London, an illuminated BAS tent is on stage.[567] To the left is, Professor Chris Rapley, the head of BAS alongside Dame Beryl Bainbridge, the author of the Birthday Boys (a novel about Scott's Pole party). The theme is past and present. Behind them on the screen is an image of a BAS tent with an aurora playfully dancing in a darkened Antarctic sky [47]. The image on screen and the image on stage are part of an analogous performance that seem to connect past and present, like a seamless invisible thread running through the materiality of the tent. The dialogue on stage proceeds back and forth between them. The heroic era - and now, the scientific era – it is as if the mantle of the frontier has been handed over from the ideology of exploration to that of science - the tent as the marker or sign of this passage between two kinds of inhabitation. It is a self-reinforcing illusion, 'On Fame's eternal camping ground', the tents that are spread are not silent nor are they eternal,

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[565] Lopez 2000, 50.
[566] The text is quoted from "Heroes of the South Pole" postcard series in Margery G. Wharton *Postcards of Antarctic Expeditions 1898-1958* (Sussex: Wharton 1998), 256.
[567] The British Antarctic Survey event was part the series *Creating Sparks* that aimed to establish a dialogue between science and art, 7 September 2000, Royal College of Music.

they engage in a performance of an imperial history, invested in by Scott, and upheld and reinvested by this contemporary performance. As Felix Driver urges,

> Rather than simply reactivating forgotten histories of imperial exploration, these enterprises are engaged in the business of producing memories: of making the past meaningful for people in the present.[568]

The images and texts are constitutive interventions in this performance. The tented space is a site of memory and a sign of the imaginative and material reality of colonisation, of the past and the present. It is ambiguous sign - built on the shifting ground of the poetics of nomadic utility and intimate shelter - solidified by the emphasis on the text of history over that of place. Only by returning movement to tented spaces, releasing the transient poetics, and leaving its fictional solidity behind, will we *'waken to Antarctica'*.

> Under the fawn glow of the tent,
> waken to Antarctica;
>
> open the flaps: night glares
> over glacier and rusty falls.[569]

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[568] Driver 2001, 217.
[569] Chris Orsman, "The Lakes of Mars" in *Homelight* Nigel Brown, Bill Manhire, Chris Orsman (Scott Base, Antarctica: Blood Falls Press, 1988) unpaignated.

Plate 49

10 postcards from Antarctica: marking time, place, and memory in the photographic image

The postcard flutters: through the postal system, through the letter box, across the world, on its journey, carried by ship, by plane, by hand, from Antarctica to here. The picture is flat, the message repetitive, its pulse is in its geography. It hopes to 'capture' time and place - an image, an arrest, a message, a narrative, a signature of ourselves in other places. As the postcard arrives - and lands securely - it continues to wander through time and memory, from subject to significant other, from here to a now unreachable there; a trajectory entangled in desire and loss: a geography of the fantastic and banal that delivers a gift and a trap.

one: introduction

Starting from Roland Barthes assertion that 'the photograph is a certain but fugitive testimony', this mapping follows the trajectories of two postal *messages* from Antarctica. The context is the establishment of the first post office in Port Lockroy by the French explorer Jean Baptise Charcot in 1904, and a postcard contemplated, but unsent a decade later from the same location. The journeys and representational practices of these two subjects can be located around the mapping of the Antarctic landscape, in relation to time, and the desire to produce Antarctica through the arrest of photography. The practice of photography, in each of these instances is central to the managing and production of symbolic landscapes, and firmly integrated into the ways in which subjectivity is negotiated. As the *fugitive image* of the postcard flutters - this mapping wanders through its vagrant geographies, traversing time, memory and place in the construction of distinct, yet certain Antarctic knowledges.

two: the postal system reaches Port Lockroy

In 1908 Jean Baptise Charcot voyages to Antarctica in the *'Pourqoui Pas?'*[570] He returns to the bay that he named Port Lockroy[571] in search of the post box and the message he wrote four years earlier. The message has survived the passage of time and the harshness of its location. Jean Baptise writes;

> *December 26, 1908*
> Next the approach to Port Lockroy, whose contours are so familiar to us... I go with Gourdon in the dinghy as far as our letter-box... The bottle attached to the mast, containing another phial inside, is unbroken, and we find again the message which we placed in it in February, 1905, as plain and as clear as if it had been put there yesterday. It is easy to understand our emotion as we looked at it. We substitute for it

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[570] The second French Antarctic Expedition of the *Pourquoi Pas?* mapped a total of 1250 miles of coastline and newly discovered territory for the 'honour of French science' (the *Français* mapped 620 miles of coast and islands). There was enough scientific data collected to fill 28 volumes, illustrated by 3000 photographs taken during the expedition. Jean Baptise Charcot's expedition results from the *Français and the Pourquoi Pas?* produced a map, predominantly used by whalers to locate new fishing grounds, which was to be the most accurate map of that region for the next quarter of a century.

[571] After reaching an inlet at Wiencke Island Jean Baptise Charcot named it Port Lockroy after the Minister of Marine on February 19th 1904 during the voyage of the *Français*.

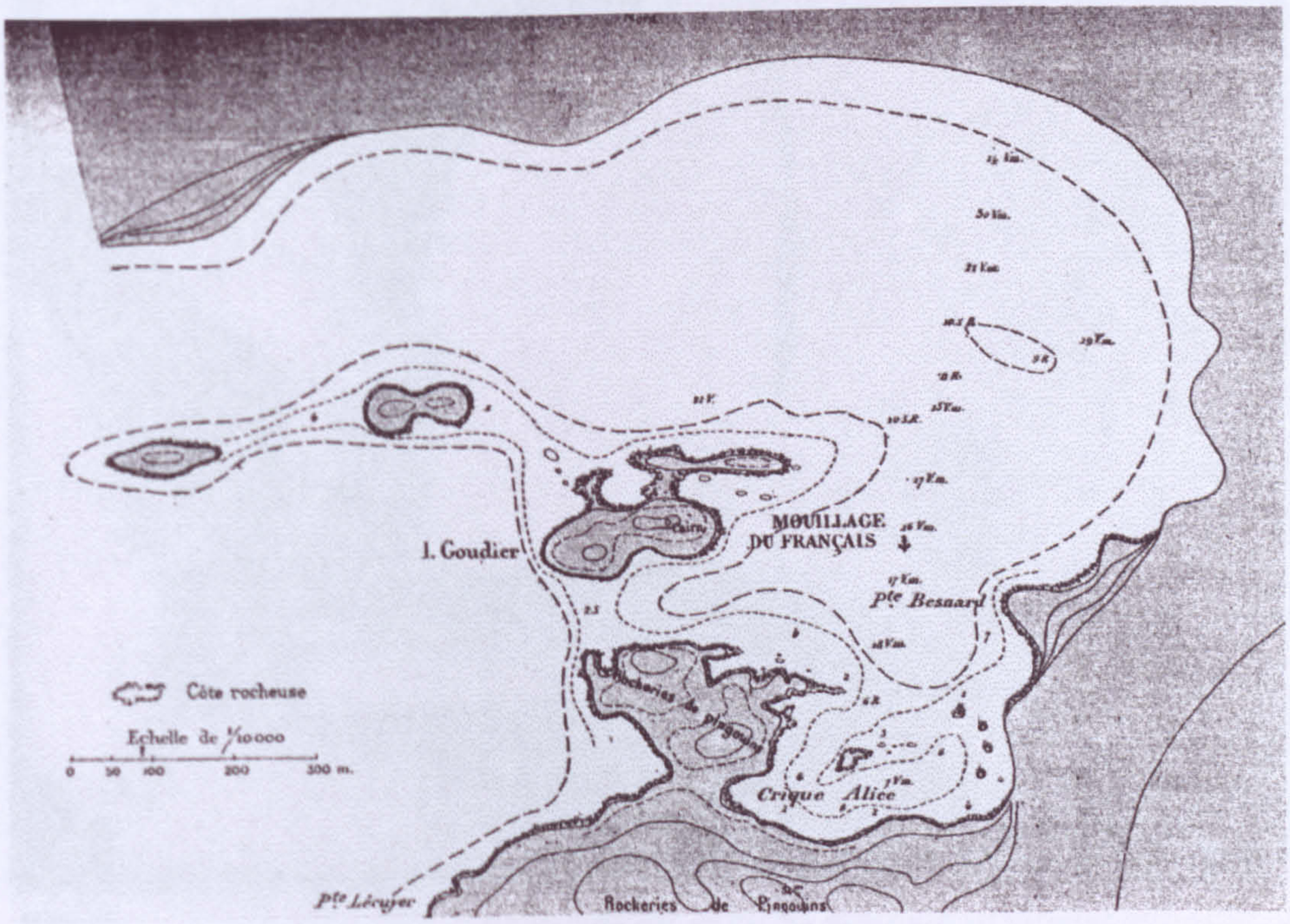
I. Goudier
MOUILLAGE
DU FRANÇAIS
Pte Besnard
Côte rocheuse
Echelle de 1/10000
0 50 100 200 300 m.
Crique Alice
Pte Lécuyer
Rockeries de Pingouins

Plate 50

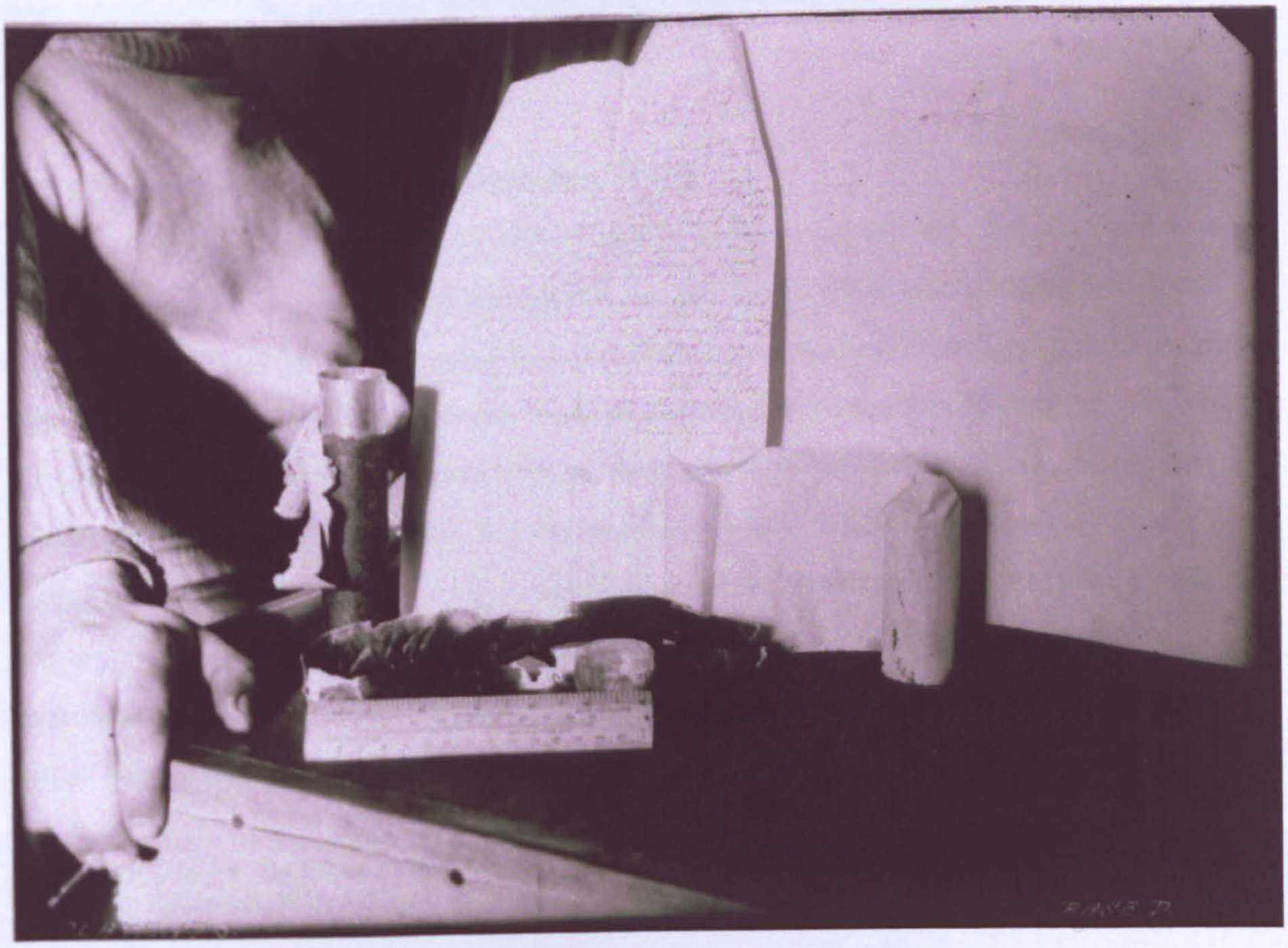

Plate 51

> a temporary note... this letter-box is cleared very irregularly, and so far we have been the only postmen![572]

It is a form of self-witnessing and autobiography that will have many national and individual incarnations in the Antarctica landscape – from the aerial dropping of sovereignty claims by American pilots in 1930s to the activities of contemporary tourists. As *Pourquoi Pas?* traversed the coast, they leave many more messages. Across Europe and the world, the 'golden age' of postcards has just begun.[573]

The World Postal Union, founded in Berlin in 1874, was the first modern capitalist multinational enterprise that formed an entire discursive and geographical space through the territories it connected. Bernhard Siegert argues that the "form in which the World Postal Union deconstructed the letter was the postcard... The postcard spread the news everywhere that subjectivity, as a product of the letter's confidentiality, had been addressed to a public audience..."[574] Initially viewed with suspicion because of its flagrantly 'open' form, (as a text literally addressed to communicate unanimously) the postcard proved to be an "'invaluable means' for achieving the homeland's omnipresence and for bearing the consolidation of the motherly voice...to the farthest front. By 1870 alone, ten million field-service postcards had been mailed."[575] The postcard was increasingly becoming the most popular message for circumscribing geography.

three: the postcard flutters into the landscape of war

The postcard's dramatic arrival into history occurs in the space of war. The postcard was the first information carrier "to be conceived on the basis of a standard format from the outset".[576] By the time of the Franco-Prussian War, when the first French postcard was put in circulation, the postcard had become medium of mass communication. During W.W.I millions of postcards were sent. Siegert argues that the field-service postcard "established a prestabilized order of salvation for the world in which sickness was possible only as a prelude to recovery, wounds only a condition of their treatment, and there was only one place you could go: home."[577] On the battlefield, in the world catatonic of information (where communication went to die) the postcard was a perfect text, a material marker of presence, rather than a message. As this W.W. I postcard demonstrates:

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[572] Dr. Jean Charcot, *The Voyage of the 'Pourquoi-Pas?' The Journal of the Second French South Pole Expedition, 1908-1910* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1978), 55.
[573] Frank Staff, *Picture Postcard and its Origins* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1966), 56. Staff charts the 'golden age' of the postcard as beginning in 1899.
[574] Bernhard Siegert, *Relays, Literature as an epoch of the postal system* Trans. Kevin Repp (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 147.
[575] Siegert 1999, 152.
[576] Ibid., 154.
[577] Ibid., 158.

Plate 52

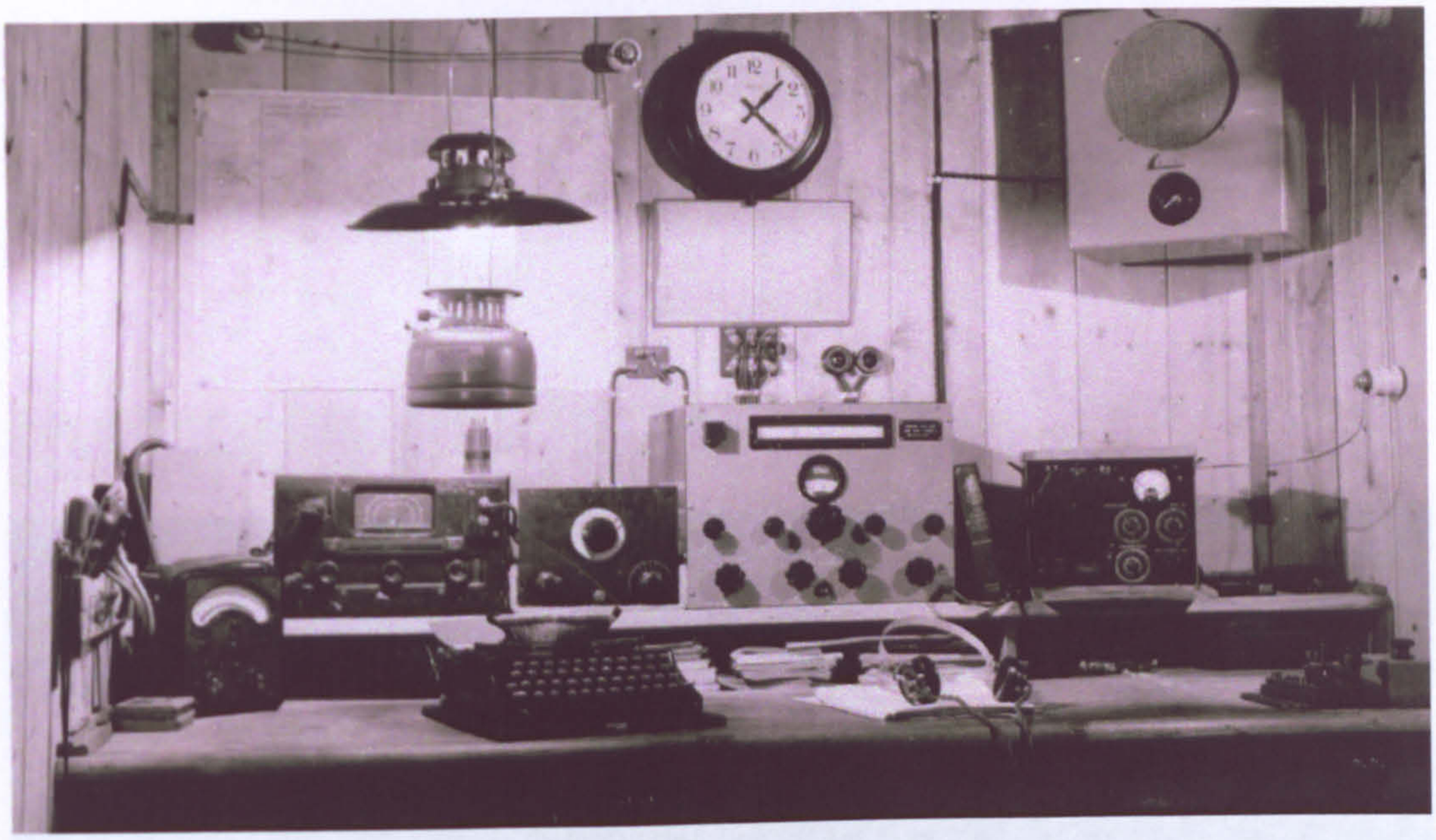

Plate 53

Plate 54

Plate 55

Greetings from France, 1915: Just going to the trenches to see how we like it.[578]

By the time the postcard arrived in England, the author, suffering from shell shock, has been hospitalised out of the front, and remained unable to communicate for the rest of his life. Such is the violence that the postcard's message elided. This reveals the source of the postcard's logic: how the subject's private space of writing becomes a public space of mediation (both external and internalised): the violence of the socialised message in relation to the subject's experience of time: and how, ultimately its message is a form of propaganda.

The postcard doubly serves as propaganda, not just in its message, but also in its ability to circulate an image of place. As a landscape in transmission, the postcard relays an image of place that is a product of an authoritarian frame. For example in Antarctica, the landscape is the target [54]. A 1973 Argentine postcard of the Antarctic Peninsula dramatised the contested sovereignty of the region, while simultaneously making sovereignty claims to the landscape through its sending. In the official stamp the planes penetrate the continent, the concentric coloured circles imitates a target, and the postal mark sights the optical scope of aim over the landscape. The function of representation is to declare Antarctica a territory under siege, literally in the *sight* of the Argentinean line of fire.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first picture postcards began to widely circulate, at the height of Empire building, in particular at the time of the Imperial Exhibitions.[579] From its inception the picture postcard was not merely an ephemeral object, it disseminated an image and naturalised a way of seeing embedded in imperial expansion. As Mark Wollaeger comments, "The picture postcard thus participates in a subject formation marked by empire. For the uncanny subject... the postcard implies a dual relation to the pictured site that re-stages (in a less threatening register) the precarious dynamics of colonial exchange; the tourist assumes the subject position of the coloniser by appropriating the exotic site and returning it to the metropole..."[580] The picture postcard is a literal instance of the photographic and economic power of framing that the tourist already possesses.[581] It is a *document* of *distance* - the incarnation of a journey - and the ability to make those journeys.

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[578] A correspondence from a W.W.I British soldier from France, "My darling sweet, Just done a nine mile march, Just going to the trenches to see how we like it. Well love tea is ready, Harry",

[579] For example, The Paris Exhibition 1889, London's Imperial International Exhibition 1909, and the British Empire Exhibition in Wembley 1924.

[580] Mark Wollaeger "Woolf, Postcards and the Elision of Race: Colonizing Women in 'The Voyage Out'" in *Modernism-Modernity* (Vol 8 No.1 Janurary 2001), 47.

[581] Joan Schwartz argues that photography offered a new means of ordering geographical knowledge in two ways; as a pre-text for travellers and as a surrogate for travel. See Joan M Schwartz, "The Geography Lesson: photographs and the construction of imaginative geographies" in the *Journal of Historical Geography* (22, 1 1996), 16-45.

As the harbinger of an emergent modernity, the postcard established a specific relation to place borne out of the dual mobilities of the expansion of empire (through war and colonisation) and the conceptual shrinkage of the modern world that this effected. Peter Osbourne states that "from its first experience photography articulated a relationship between identity, space, mobility, the market economy and representation - a set of connections at the base of the capitalist modernity which has until now governed the course of the modern world."[582] As a key moment in the conflicting emergence of modernity's spatialities, the postcard (and postal system) enacts imperial aspirations to bring the world together into a complete system, through a process of fragmentation and proliferation. As Wollaeger comments,

> In a historic moment increasingly self-conscious about the inescapably mediated nature of reality, colonial postcards satisfied the desire for the authentic (i.e., the seemingly immediate) even as their cataloguing or exotic images contributed to the... sense that the realm of the unexplored was rapidly shrinking.[583]

As colonial postcards satisfied the desire for the exotic they indicated that the unexplored world was shrinking. It is a shrinkage that Jean Baptise recognises, leaving only the *Pole de Sud* as the last *terra incognita* on the world map. As he comments, "the South Pole has emerged from darkness... our knowledge of the globe must necessarily remain incomplete as long as there continues so large an unknown zone as that represented by the great white spot covering the southern extremity of the world."[584]

four: structure of the postcard

After Jean Baptise's departure from Port Lockroy, the messages ceased until, as part of *Operation Tabarin* (1944) a W.W.II naval operation to establish a firm British presence in Antarctic it becomes the first permanent British Government building on the peninsula. The post office falls into disrepair again until it was officially re-established in 1996[585] to meet the 'golden age' of Antarctic tourism. It opens as a post office and gift shop during the austral summer season to meet the needs of tourists. By maintaining this postage service the British are asserting sovereignty rights over this contested part of the continent and maintaining a site of material tourist consumption under the thin veneer of 'heritage'. Port Lockroy is now the most visited site in Antarctica, as the British Antarctica Heritage Trust proclaims, the "jewel

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[582] Peter D Osbourne *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 13.
[583] Wollaeger 2001, 43.
[584] Dr Jean Charcot, *The Voyage of the 'Why Not?' in the Antarctic* Trans. Philip Walsh (London: Hodder & Stoughton, undated), 1.
[585] The old British base 'Bransfield House' has been restored by the British Antarctic Heritage Trust and is designated as Historic Site No 61 under the Antarctic Treaty (financial and logistical support is provided by BAS).

in the crown of a visit to the Antarctic Peninsular"[586] - thus, linking it to previous British imperial spaces.

In the ritualistic sending of photographic postcards, the tourist pays into the systemised reproduction of 'views' of the landscape and its dominant 'representative' capacity, and pays again, purchasing the stamp, into the postal economy, and the assertion of sovereignty rights. It is a reproduction of both a hierarchical scopic order and an ideological order, through the dominance and consent that is given over to the practice. As Derrida commented, we pay *doubly* for our images, once to the order/system and secondly to the hierarchy of the image. In the action of purchase, Antarctic is aestheticised through a set of inherited representational practices within which the postcard becomes a collaborator. The subject becomes complicit in a global network of desire and capitulation to the reproduction of an act of looking.

As Georges Perec's piece, *243 Postcards in Real Colour*[587] performs, the legacy of the postcards historically constructed generic form runs into the present. The first statement of each of his postcards is a statement of place, a variation on the architecture of 'I am here', followed by the positive assertion of experience in other spaces, 'I'm having a lovely time'. The postcard in 'the age of mechanical reproducibility' is secured by the postmark that marks passage of the generic postcard in time and place, and so authenticates *being there*. This document of presencing renders the subject officially in place, a proof authenticated by the mark of one's entrance into the transactions of the postal system. As a document of distance - the appearance of the postmark implements a confirmation of the geography the postcard has traversed. The postcard *purchased, promoted and circulated* an identity of Antarctica that fully invests in the capitalist market economy (in its circulation through the postal system), yet proclaims its binary opposite: wilderness.

As Marc Augé comments, the traveller's space may be the archetype of non-space, in which a fictional relationship between gaze and landscape is constructed, as he argues the spectator is often the essence of his own spectacle.

> A lot of tourism leaflets suggest this deflection, this reversal of the gaze, by offering the would-be traveller advance images of curious or contemplative faces, solitary or in groups, gazing across infinite oceans, scanning ranges of snow-capped mountains... his own image in a word, his anticipated image, which speaks only about him but carries another name...[588]

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[586] UKHT website http://www.heritage-antarctica.org/ahtuk/restoration/postrestoration.htm 07/01/03
[587] Perec 1997, 218-236.
[588] Marc Augé, *Non-Places* (London & New York: Verso, 1995), 86.

The tourist is thus the exoticisation of his own gaze. In the sending of a postcard "representation is transformed from a channel of knowledge to an engine of desire."[589] It is a space from which *to regard ourselves regarded*, or as Derrida comments in *The Postcard*, the author is the narration's first, if not only addressee and destination.[590] The postcard heralds the self-conscious air of the reproduced, the spectacle of observing oneself being in place. As a form of autobiography, the postcard is an instance of public biography; as the fragmented utterance of reproduced messages take the place of a private letter, and the primacy of a reproduced image takes the place of the text. The spectacle of mass subjectivity that is observed and participated in through the sending of the postcard is a product of the postcard's representational form - that offers an image of the mass biography of the subject.

five: the archive in motion: systems of categorisation

In its proliferation as a mass media text, the picture postcard set an ordered and repetitive act of memory and forgetting place into place. It opened up the "territory of the World Postal Union as an immense space of forgetting, the object of which was the world itself."[591] The picture of the world is in mass circulation at any one given time. As a free-floating archive of memory the postal system is in constant transmission. We buy into the postal system and have to bear the weight of witnessing an image of the world in pieces.

Like a huge archive in transmission through a unified geographical space, the postcard is part of a system of classification that creates a preconceived world of people, sights, monuments, and places; a space imagined in advance. It is not a representative of the real but the reality of a form of classification: a world in aspic. The system of classification of the photograph and postcard is determined in advance of experience, and the 'message' determined through historic practices of sending. Specific places and objects are made generic through the mode of production.

The generic frame of blunt classification is doubled in the photograph that the postcard carries, as Peter Osbourne comments, "collectively travel photographs pictured the global system as though it was truly a single, continuous space."[592] The global system of the postal union acquired a global visibility, which shaped its commodity form and consuming subject.

> the function of the photograph was strongly determined by its part in unifying the geographical, economical, ideological and indeed *imaginary territory* across which

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[589] Don Slater, "The object of Photography" in *The Camerawork Essays* ed. Jessica Evans (London: River Oram, 1997), 90.
[590] Derrida 1987, 33.
[591] Siegert 1999, 161.
[592] Osbourne 2000, 12.

> capitalism was being extended. The process combined... the efficacy of the technology with the culture and cultural violence of representation.[593]

The efficacy of an indiscriminate technological lens, with a global range, secured, as Osbourne comments, the territories of the globe as a conceivable image. The postcard sent from Antarctica both responds to and hides this globality. It celebrates the furthest point, the reach of the postal system, and thus of global capital, while simultaneously binding the subject to the indifference of the structure of representation. The *I was here* of the postcard and the *that-was-then* of the photograph combine nostalgically to elide the present of the subject (as the subject queues in a hut in Port Lockroy to send a postcard).

six: collective memory: the archive of destinations

The most common geographical approach to the postcard is to concentrate on the framing of the landscape, as Gordon Waitt and Lesley Head[594] argue in relation to Australian landscapes. Waitt and Head argue that postcards, as objects of cultural analysis, sustain particular myths about destinations to perpetuate experiences associated with Australian frontier mythologies.[595] Resisting a simplified semiotic 'reading' they do not attempt to read the postcard imagery as pictorially representative of place and seek to show how it constructs myths through a complex range of social processes, recognising that, "Places depicted in postcards... are also more about myth than substance... Postcard imagery is one mechanism by which tourism places are reinvented in the image of particular tourist motivations and desires."[596] If postcards are material markers of mythologies, they also have a generic function sustaining myths about *all places as destination*, as a frontier of tourism through a form that does not see difference.[597] The photograph, analogous to the postcard's passage through the postal system, is embedded in a circuit of information relay. As Barthes comments in his essay the "Photographic Message", "this message is formed by a source of emission, a channel of transmission and a point of reception".[598] The photograph is in constant transmission of its message of place, but the natures of its emissions are such that the places it transmits are structured by the same code.

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[593] ibid.
[594] Gordon Waitt & Lesley Head "Postcards and frontier mythologies: sustaining views of the Kimberley as timeless" in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 20. 2002, 319-344.
[595] Ibid., 319.
[596] Ibid., 320.
[597] Waitt and Head selected thirteen out of one hundred collected postcards for their sample, commenting that, "Different depictions of the same tourist attraction showed remarkable similarity in terms of weather, time of year, angle, composition, and position of the viewer. The selection of one particular postcard over another did not therefore complicate the sampling process." (329) This inexplicitly acknowledges the sameness of the postcard form and I would suggest that, irrespective of country they would find that 'remarkable similarity' in all postcard samples.
[598] Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), 15.

Waitt and Head's research, although thorough in its recognition of the systems in which the postcard moves, uses a methodology that restricts a discussion of that system by focusing in on "the meaning that subjects construct and attach to objects. By focusing on subject's readings we hope to identify aberrant or contested readings between tourists. In this way we hope to address how landscapes become tourist places through the meanings ascribed to postcards... by visitors".[599] By attempting to go beyond their own readings or implied readings there is an assumption that the subjects will reveal themselves in a conscious analytical manner, and that engagement with the postcard, and the visuality of landscape does not slip between the conscious and unconscious register. Experience as Benjamin put it, is "It is less the product of facts firmly anchored memory than of a convergence in memory of accumulated and frequently unconscious data."[600] In relation to contested ownership of place, the postcard does provide a vignette of the framing and production of the landscape through reproduction, and an analysis of the subject's utilization and imaginary function of the postcard is timely. Yet if the crux of this argument rests on a notion of the authenticity of the photographic medium in relation to place, it is essentially a debate about photography 'in the age of mechanical reproduction' and the power of dominant forms of visualisation to reproduce particular ways of looking.

The focus on the postcard as a material object is one way of approaching the visual culture of tourism in particular places, but rather than say things about the specificity of mythologies of those places, as Waitt and Head suggest, it appears to say as much about a generic system of classification. A departure would be to think about the system, its generic form, the limits of that form, its banality and the reach and breakdown of its classification. As Waitt and Head identify, "Questions that remain unaddressed include... the more complex relationship between postcard imagery and the photographer, the sender's message and recipient. These questions within the social arena of dissemination are far more challenging problems from a methodological perspective..."[601]

If postcards are material markers of mythologies, they also have a generic function sustaining myths about all destinations, about place as a destination and the banality of a form of photography that does not see difference. Antarctica is the limit of this classificatory system. The ability to represent Antarctic spatialities and the power to send messages from this place brings into relief the reach of a network of representation and circulation. A predominant quality of the postcard is its capacity for movement. Any analysis that treats it as a fixed form

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[599] Ibid., 321.
[600] Benjamin 1969, 157.
[601] Ibid., 339.

misses this exceptional, even mythic, aspect. The temporal relation to place that the postcard exhibits - or its *ability to travel* - to transfer for one person to another, and from one geographical site to another ensures its visual performance is relational.

Arguably, nobody expects a postcard to have any realistic relation to place. What is more likely is the postcard is understood as a space of fictional desire, a vignette of potential utopianism and more often than not, *a missive of banality*. The trope of realism and decipherability that postcard photography buys into, pronounces a desire for a visibility that is almost too transparent. The visual space does not fracture and assert itself. It is a monolithic construction of surface without depth; an image that has been over constructed by the photographer's intention and desire for legibility. Barthes talks convincingly about this effect of constructed elements of a certain type of photograph in his essay "Shock-Photos",

> The photographer has left us with nothing - except a simple right of ... acquiescence: we are linked to these images only by a technical interest; overdetermined... the spectacle, though direct and not at all composed of contrasting elements, remains too constructed; capture of the unique moment appears gratuitous, too intentional, the product of an encumbering will to language, and these successful images have no effect on us; the interest we take in them does not exceed the interval of an instantaneous reading; it does not respond, does not disturb, our reception closes too soon over a pure sign; the perfect legibility of the scene, its formulation dispenses us from receiving the image in all its scandal; reduced to the state of pure language, the photograph does not disorganise us.[602]

While the postcard's photography may not disorganise us in its encumbering will to language, its spatial movement always subsumes the banality of the postcard's photographic form. And thus, banality is never complete, its arresting capacity is assured by the geography that it encompasses. The geographical journey of the postcard ensures the aesthetic interest is collaged through geographical markings - of the postal stamp, the postal mark, the material marks of its passage through the system. The joy of sending a postcard, its 'object-ness', and its ability to bear the authenticating postal 'mark', and a rare stamp all contribute to the amnesiac approach with which we are willing to view its photographic engagement. The postcard does not merely transmit the photographic 'message' it dramatises it through its geographical excursion.

The name, 'Antarctica' reads as mythical place, the imaginary function displacing for a moment its geographical location, only to be recalled by the sameness of the photographic form. The revelry that the name proclaims is based on the distance it conjures. This is what

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[602] Roland Barthes, "Shock-Photo's" in *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* (California: Univ. of California Press, 1977), 73.

makes the Antarctic postcard fantastic, by signalling the zenith of the postal system's reach it both proclaims and cancels distance.

seven: the two landscapes of Charcot Land

I Jean Baptise Charcot, January 7th 1910

> There is not the slightest doubt. Those are not mere icebergs that point their peaks toward the sky, but land, new land, clearly visible and a land that is our own!

Freud's characterisation of Dr Charcot,

> *not a reflective man, not a thinker – he had the nature of an artist – he was, as he himself said, a 'visuel', a man who sees.*[603]

In 1910, Jean Baptise claimed discovery of an unknown land within the Antarctic Circle, he named the new discovery Charcot Land. Not after himself, he said, but after his father, the psychologist Dr Charcot, whose fame rests on his discovery of hysteria using the photographic method. In order to contextualise Jean-Baptise's mapping of Antarctica, it is useful to reflect on his father's methods of arrest for another *terra incognita*: hysteria. In the case of both Charcots', visualising the unknown in the arrest of the photographic image forms the basis of possession. Underlying this desire for possession was a need to make visible the *territory* to an audience. For Dr. Charcot, the name held and contained the idea of hysteria, and it also gave him a stable space in which to speak about something that was by its nature - *unstable* and spoke without structure, as an *interruption*. As Norman Bryson points out in his discussion of Géricault's portraits,

> the portrait of the insane is, therefore, an impossible object, a categorical scandal since the mad are exactly those who have been displaced from every level of the hierarchy, who cannot be located on the social map, whose portraits cannot be painted.[604]

Dr Charcot codified a landscape of the un-namable through photography in order that he could discover it and mechanically reproduce it, as spectacle in his published photographic books and in the theatre of the Salpêtrière. The codifications of the landscape of hysteria instituted a set of perceptual codes with which to recognise hysteria, so, as Frederic Kittler comments "Every test produces what it allegedly only reproduces." Charcot's son, mimics this physiognomic classification system by producing his own set of photographs of the crew of the *Pourquoi Pas?* titled *The Physiognomic of the Antarctic explorer* [50]. While the crew all look into the camera, Charcot presents his characteristic side profile, alluding to the all too familiar photographer's diagnostic gaze. This matrix of discovery/naming operated within a visual lexicon; whereby the visuality of the photograph (also imposing its own structure of

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[603] Sigmund Freud, "Charcot" in *The Standard Edition of the complete Works of Sigmund Freud* III ed., & trans. James Strachey (London: Hogathe Press, (1893) 1962), 12.
[604] Bryson 1983, 143.

'capture' and 'loss') offered the dramatics of the *reality effect* that seemed to mirror Charcot's desires, and place his discovery within the context of a credible medium. The photograph not only seemed to offer an intervention in time, but also a bounded space of representation that allowed the subject photographed to be *read* in an entirely different manner. Hysteria was something that was wholly created in and by the visible, in order to make a representational space for the invisible - that which cannot be arrested, and existed in other orders of time and space outside the frame. As Jean-Francois Lyotard wrote, "Photography... is as much a hysteria of the gaze as a means of control".[605]

Following the trope of visualising deviancy through physiognomic characteristics, Charcot employed this historic legacy to give weight to his own discoveries, but through a photographic medium that distinguished him from the procedures of other nineteenth century psychiatry. He published the results of his discoveries in the photographic picture books of the *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*.[606] These images gave Charcot his aesthetic determinates in an established pattern of reading. What photography gave - that painting lacked - was the impression of reality, the light of the real. Charcot's biding voice that *anchored* his performances in the Salpêtrière was translated in to the captions that anchored a preferred reading of the photographs, so that it produced a self-reinforcing signification. As Bryson comments, "What Charcot... learned... was not authenticity in the presentation of psychic fact; what he learned was *how to make images produce already established readings*, how to institute a system of perceptual codes".[607] Like the photographic postcard, the Charcot's arrest established a pre-established interpretive grid for what was seen.

The proliferation of this photographic regime can be seen to create a dictatorship of desire which rather than releasing subjects into the realm of other imaginative possibilities, binds them to a pre-designated encounter. The reliance on a visual technology that appears to offer a moment of capture of some exteriority, in practice it captures the subject into a terrain of loss delineated by the photograph's system of categorisation. More interestingly, these cases the confident 'capture' of the hidden landscape highlights the anxiety (recognised or not) behind the confrontation with the unknown, wherein the photograph becomes the instigator of the subject's disappearance. This treatment of the subject exhibits is own form of hysteria -

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[605] Peter Buse "The Modern Way of Seeing" in *New Formations* No.43 Spring 2001, 162.
[606] The *iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* was published between 1875, 1880 and between 1888 and 1918. Paul Richer, Professor for Artistic Anatomy at the Ecole des beaux-arts used the photographs to prepare drawings. "The special effects of the photographic setting in the process of therapeutic treatment had a sensational effect on contemporary artistic scene, a scene with which Charcot maintained a close relationship." Sigrid Schade, "Charcot and the spectacle of the Hysterical Body" in *Art History* (Vol.18 no.4 December 1995), 503.
[607] Bryson 1983,159-160.

a crisis of classification. The Charcot's photographs mimic two distinct modes of the subject, "as a corpse and as a machine".[608]

Charcot and Jean Baptise are both engaged in a mechanical 'capture' of time through photography, in order to produce a uniform landscape of hysteria or Antarctica. Thus, the photographic method served to circumscribe a territory and to create its structure. As Baer comments, "Whereas at the Salpêtrière photography initially served the Cartesian Charcot as a means to arrest and break into smaller units the confounding symptoms of *la grande hystérie*, it was soon promoted in status from a visual aid to diagnostic tool."[609] This analogy of the shared gaze of photography and the unconscious is suggested by Benjamin, "It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis."[610] As the hysterical body was for Charcot a medium that arrested readable signs, Jean Baptise Charcot arrested the medium of Antarctica, into a series of landscapes that could be identified, named, and then claimed.

II

Antarctica is at the farthest outpost of capitalism's terrestrial relay. Against this zone of limited capitalist production, space is written into place by the practices of nomination. Nomination punctuates Jean Baptise Charcot's accounts. He voyages south and makes space into units of language - Port Lockroy, Charcot Land, Jenny Island, Betty's Mound's, Salpêtrière Bay, Marguerite gulf... as the photograph makes landscape into units of space. As Paul Carter comments, "Mountains or hills were essential in bringing space into the realm of communication. They transformed spatial extension into a spatial text, a succession of conceivable places that could be read."[611] As he nominates the landscape, he realises his naming through the representational practice of photography, as did his father before him. Within this naming, representation is a clearing ground for the beginning of production, to secure the claim to place. As de Certeau comments, it is not a descriptive practice but a condition of possibility on which scientific and industrious activity is predicated.

> The representation constructed through nomination does not express things, it allows a labour to be undertaken... it is a condition of possibility, not a result. It is an act which initiates progress, not a portrait of a piece of land or the product of an appropriation.[612]

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[608] Baer 2002, 43.
[609] Ibid., 42.
[610] Benjamin 1997, 243.
[611] Carter 1987, 50.
[612] de Certeau 1986, 144.

In Antarctica's oceanic landscape, the constant struggle is name the unnameable - which like the insane, falls off the social map. To name is not only to place imaginary sites in the landscape, but also to secure those sightings the terrain must be stilled, arrested, through the mechanical reproduction of the photograph. Jean Baptise Charcot's method, unlike much Antarctic exploration at the time, was to survey, 'mapping under sail without fixes on land'. The arrests are realised through the photographic image. The photograph makes real the imaginative projections over space; it differentiates it, and holds it stable enough for the labour of making a claim to be undertaken. This is the same operation that Charcot's father performed in the Salpêtrière, repeating through photography and performances a stable object that could be named hysteria. Charcot often referred to the women at the Salpêtrière as pieces in a "living pathological museum",[613] confirming the bounded borders he wanted to draw around the subject's reproducibility.[614] As the hysteric threatened to break the bounds of representation (by not performing), so too the polar plateau is a stream of inert yet deadly landscapes, that breaks the bounds of production, save for this nomination. As de Certeau comments,

> nomination, whose victories the explorers' histories recount, is thus struck with ambivalence. It functions as an interspace between linguistic conquest and confinement in oceanic primordiality. The "scientific progress" whose "discoveries" it marks does not simply figure as an extension. Its advance is encircled, haunted, even momentarily engulfed by the indeterminate element through which it progresses, just as ships, *mobiles in mobili*, are borne, menaced and sometimes swallowed by the great sea they write.[615]

Writing *in-between* and against the perils of space, Charcot repeats his father's representational and ideological practice of nomination through photography, and realises his own identity through a possession struck *in the name of the father*. Paul-Emile Victor, Director of the French Polar Expeditions comments in the preface to Jean Baptise Charcot's biography, "As he told me himself, Jean Baptise Charcot, at the age of thirty-five, was "nothing more than my father's son", a situation which he found unsatisfactory."[616] In the nomination of the landscape of *Charcot Land*, Jean Baptise Charcot achieves a linguistic and symbolic conquest over his paternal engulfment.

eight: trajectories of desire, mapping terra incognita

The key aspect of photography is that it produced a profoundly different means of objectification than other existing representational practices. The photographic landscape does not sweep so much as arrest, and therefore the photograph has a different temporal

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[613] quoted in Schade 1995, 503.
[614] Schade suggest that the "*iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* may be regarded as the catalogue for the museum." 503.
[615] de Certeau 1986, 145.
[616] Preface by Paul-Emile Victor (Director of the French Polar Expeditions) in Charcot 1978.

register. Albert Londe, as the director of the photographic laboratory of the Salpêtrière from 1884, was one of the nineteenth century's greatest authorities on photographic processes and technology.[617] He constructed a systematic photographic iconography of nervous diseases, using the *chronophotographical* method. The twelve-lens *camera constructs* in 1891, was Londe's second camera. It operated with an electrical release that was set to a different interval depending on the pathological movements of the mental illness. Because of their position each lens gave a different perspective. Chronophotography's[618] sequenced images led to the development of the photographic revolver for taking a dozen separate pictures. The revolver was a photographic gun that was literally pointed at the patient to anatomize the structure of hysteria. This photography suggested time can stop, and as a result, that time as well as the subject (made object) can be captured.

> Charcot used the *tableau vivant* of the photograph (in which time is apparently immobilized, "engorged") to create a *tableau clinique*, a clinical picture that would apply "everywhere at all times".[619]

As Baer comments, the time of the photographic machine was productive of the time of the subject, as mass subject, available at all times. The photograph instituted a globalised time of landscape, as a telepresent terrain.

Assuming the role of explorer over the physical terrain, as his father had done over the psychic terrain, Jean Baptise Charcot, (himself a qualified doctor, who studied alongside Freud in the Salpêtrière) became an Antarctic explorer. Jean Baptise Charcot's photographs 'mapping under sail without fixes on land', would at first glance seem to suggest the images of sketches, suggesting the possibility of a more heterogeneous view of landscape. These photographs were in stark contrast to the 'posed' photographs of Hurley and Ponting, circulating at the time. Their photographic practice was in the service of a narration of men, creating landscapes of heroism rather than those of landscape. But like the elder Charcot's photographs of hysterical women, the fragments of images attempt to complete a territory of wholeness: the landscape of Charcot Land.

The Charcots' photography becomes a methodology to uncover hidden things; it was an early structuralist approach to classification that utilised the latest visual technologies to uncover hysteria, and to discover Antarctica. Both productions used photography to construct 'signs' in the Lacanian sense of the word. But as Lacan argues, located in the historical

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[617] Albert Londe goes on to construct the Rolliflex camera, which incidentally was the camera that Ponting and Hurley took with them on Scott and Shackleton's expeditions.
[618] Chronophotographical sequences could be animated in zoetrope's and similar 'toys' producing the first true photographic moving images. Only the brevity of the result of chronophotography, arguably distinguished it from the medium that would become known as cinema.
[619] Baer 2002, 31.

afterwards of Jean Charcot's ideas on psychoanalysis, 'everything visible is a trap'. The trap the Charcots' set was the illusion of uncovering a landscape through photography, rather than its production through predetermined frames of reference. The photograph is a document that registers belief in the idea of the seen and the unseen, the camera as a magic conduit. The mysticism of this methodology echoes the Greek myth of Psyche and Love. In which Love (in the form of Cupid) restores Psyche from the underworld after she has lost her mind by opening the box containing all the things she didn't know about herself. Dr Charcot's project is imbued with the restorative capacity of photography to identify, in order that he could normalise the hysterical women. It is a madness that pointed to a fissure in the normative, of that which resists normalisation. Like Psyche's box that contained the other world of her self, it was the *terra incognita* of the in/non-visible that threatened to destabilise the legitimisation of the photographic frame. Whether hysterical woman or an Antarctic landscape, the photographic image seemingly tamed the unknown, while simultaneously signalling the limit of its signifying frame. In both cases, the shifting and unstable was arrested in the permanent, and thus the landscape opened up for consumption.

nine: mis-placing time and memory in the postcard

The postcard is hysterical in form. It flattens Antarctica into the geography of the postal system: a system predicated on Empire and its military economy. Derrida uses the specific operation of the postcard to draw the economy of all images, in which the postcard is conceived of as a *frozen moment* in the ceaseless transmission of culture. He argues that the postcard is a standardised and commodified form of communication. For Derrida, the postcard is a metaphor for a culture that is "cast as an immense number of postal transmissions, each stamped by authorities and tradition."[620] The postcard bears many operations at once: it must bear the image and the message, the signature, and address, it must be *paid for*. The postcard is thus always made accountable to the system that sends it. And so Derrida argues, the transmission figures over the inscription, the sending rather than the writing, the tele of telecommunications is the *telos* of our communication. For Derrida, the postcard reminds us of the price we pay for our images and our messages, to culture and to capitalism.

The contraction of Antarctica into a fictitious topography of world space over the last decade has been the result of particular communication technologies. The limits of empire that where first claimed by Jean Baptise at Port Lockroy, is now the most frequented tourist site in the continent. It is no accident that this is the site of capitalism's furthest relay point. The reach of

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[620] Jacques Derrida, *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1987), 296.

communication technologies is the reach of empire. The messages it sends, in the form of the postcard is one of loss. It is a line of desire that despite its simplicity is thwarted by the impossibility of its projection. The politics of representation and its transactions implicate the subject into a temporal order of mass subjectivity while registering *I was here*.

The proliferation of the postcard through systems of signification necessarily requires a human centre; an *I* located in the imaginary site of the landscape, drawing of a line from that *here* to the *there* in a narrative that journeys through the postcard's movement. The pleasure of a postcard needs no other register than that of the imagined points between two subjects: *the while you were there I thought of you here, in absence, you/I were visible*. This necessarily invokes a mapping of the subject which seems often to be marginalised by the concentration on the object-ness and materiality of the postcard, ignoring the simple projection of desire that tries to locate one place with another, a *here* with an *elsewhere* in both time and space. This is the desire for *telepresence* that haunts communication's most basic projects. It is a line of desire that despite its simplicity is thwarted, by the impossibility of its projection, and the transactions made into the politics of representation and the circulations of those representations. Susan Stewart concludes her book *On Longing* analogising the process of signification, the objects and the auras of desire that engage us, to the postcard;

> like narrative, it is a gesture toward, and therefore against, death... Analogously, in the subject's desire to experience morality and hence transcend it: to produce a representation with no referent – each sign as a postcard from the land of the dead, and on the other side, the longing mark that is the proper name.[621]

ten: opening into the poetics of Antarctica

The postcard reveals a historical formation of the subject being in place, where representation authenticates the disappearance of the subject's time, the foreshadowing of death, as the photography of the picture postcard mimics it. *How can what is hidden by the arrest of the visible be seen?* Between seeing and not seeing, the image's arrest is obscured, and we fail to find what we are looking for - the desired clarity of a recognisable form of presencing. Sending a postcard from Port Lockroy, we pay into the generation of *non-places*. Like the first round-the-world postcard that returned to where it started from – zero – the postcard from *Antarctica* is a communication destined to be brought home. What we lose in our exchange is not just the cost of the official stamp, but time. Time to write ourselves *into* space: to be *surrounded* by place: and to allow the Ice to take hold. At Port Lockroy, 2003, a postcard was not sent.

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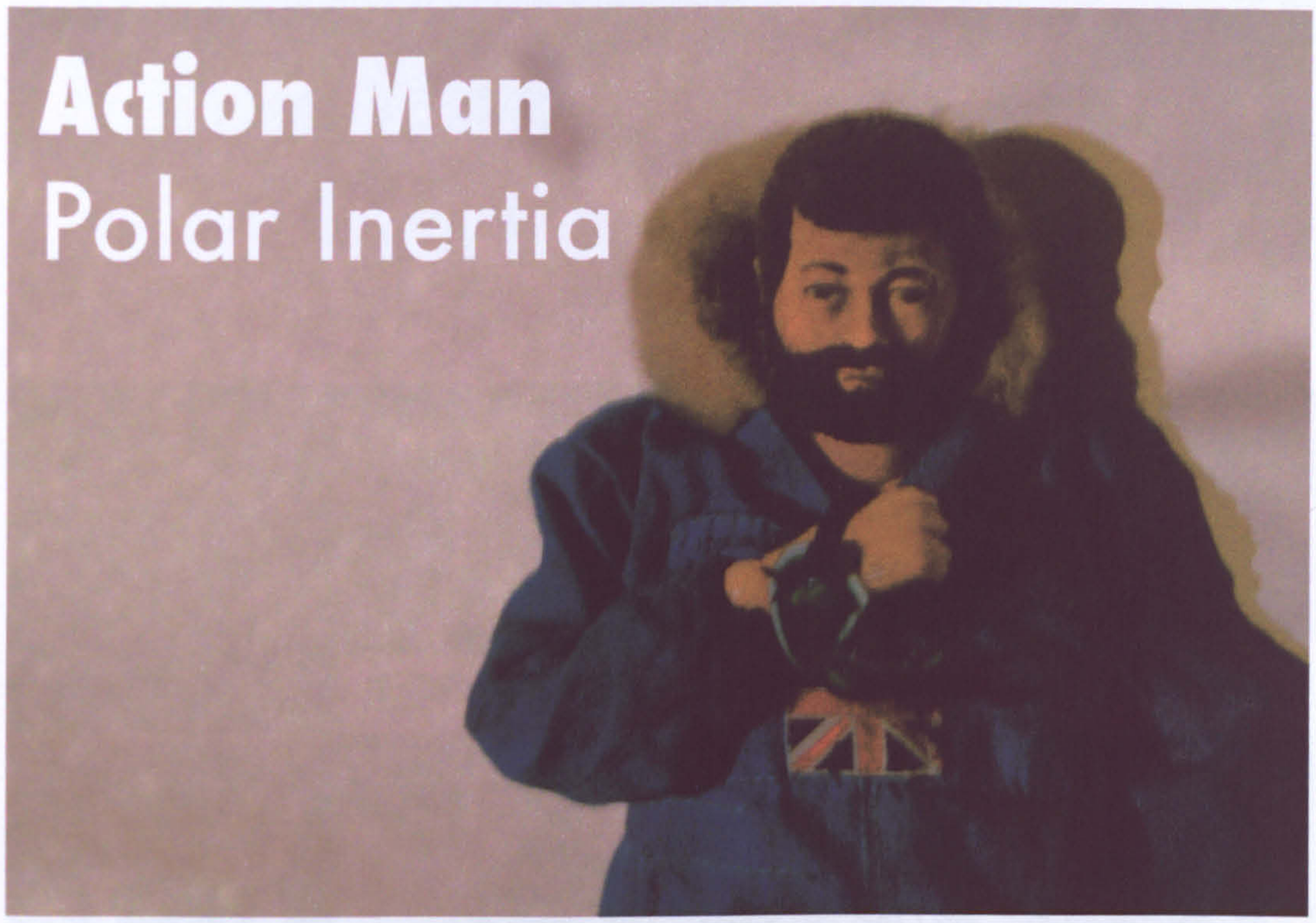
[621] Susan Stewart, *On Longing* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984), 173.

Plate 56


Action Man
Polar Inertia

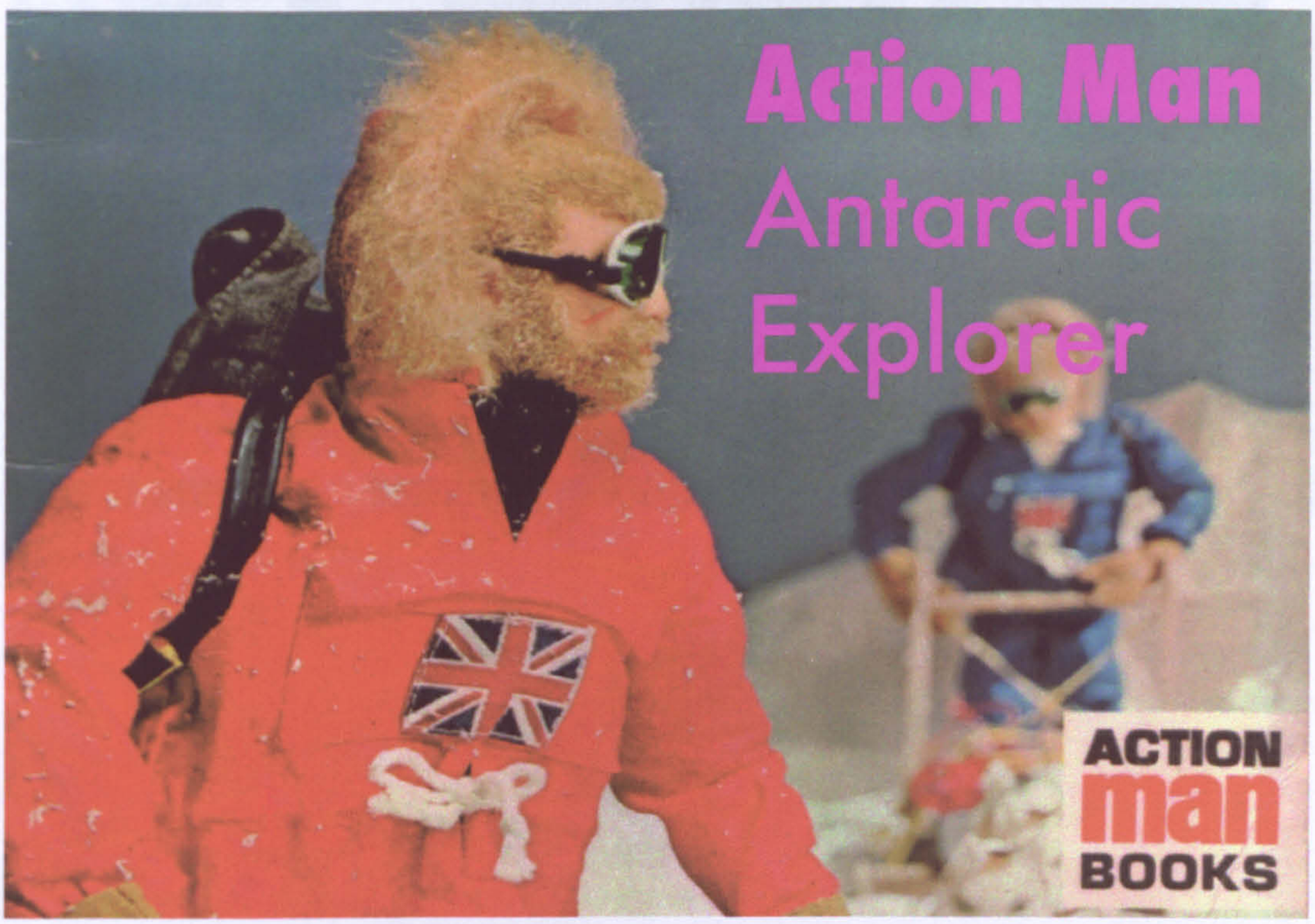

Action Man
Antarctic
Explorer
ACTION
man
BOOKS

Plate 57

STORY IN TEN PICTURES

Captain Scott (John Mills) says goodbye to his wife, Kathleen (Diana Churchill) on board the "Terra Nova," before the ship leaves Lyttelton, New Zealand, on her voyage south. —S.O.A.—1

After the depots have been laid, Scott explains to the members of the expedition, the details of his plan for reaching the Pole. —S.O.A.—2

At the foot of the Beardmore Glacier, Scott and his party say goodbye to Meares and Dimitri, who return to the base with the dogs. —S.O.A.—3

Crean (John Gregson) tells Oates (Derek Bond) that there is not enough food to get the ponies back to safety, and is told that some of the ponies will return. —S.O.A.—4

The polar party lose their way and Scott goes to the edge of an icecliff to check where they are and find a way through. —S.O.A.—5

In raising the flag at the South Pole, their triumph is clouded by the discovery that they have been forestalled by the Norwegian, Amundsen. —S.O.A.—6

"Taff" Evans (James Robertson Justice) falls for the last time, and after a brave insistence to Scott that he is "Quite all right, Sir," dies in his tracks. —S.O.A.—7

The gallant Oates opens the flap of the tent, having decided that he will walk out into the blizzard to certain death rather than hinder the return party. —S.O.A.—8

When they arrive at Mount Hooper Depot the Polar party find that nearly all the oil in the can has evaporated. This was one of the causes of the tragedy. —S.O.A.—9

Scott's last action, as he makes his final entry in his diary, is to throw his arm over his best friend, Wilson (Harold Warrender). —S.O.A.—10

The scenes shown here are available in coarse screen for newspaper reproduction, size 2"×3½".

The reference numbers are given below illustrations which are obtainable singly at 5/- each—sold outright only.

1. We are striking southwards, pursued by a light wind. We are ahead of schedule and in good spirits.

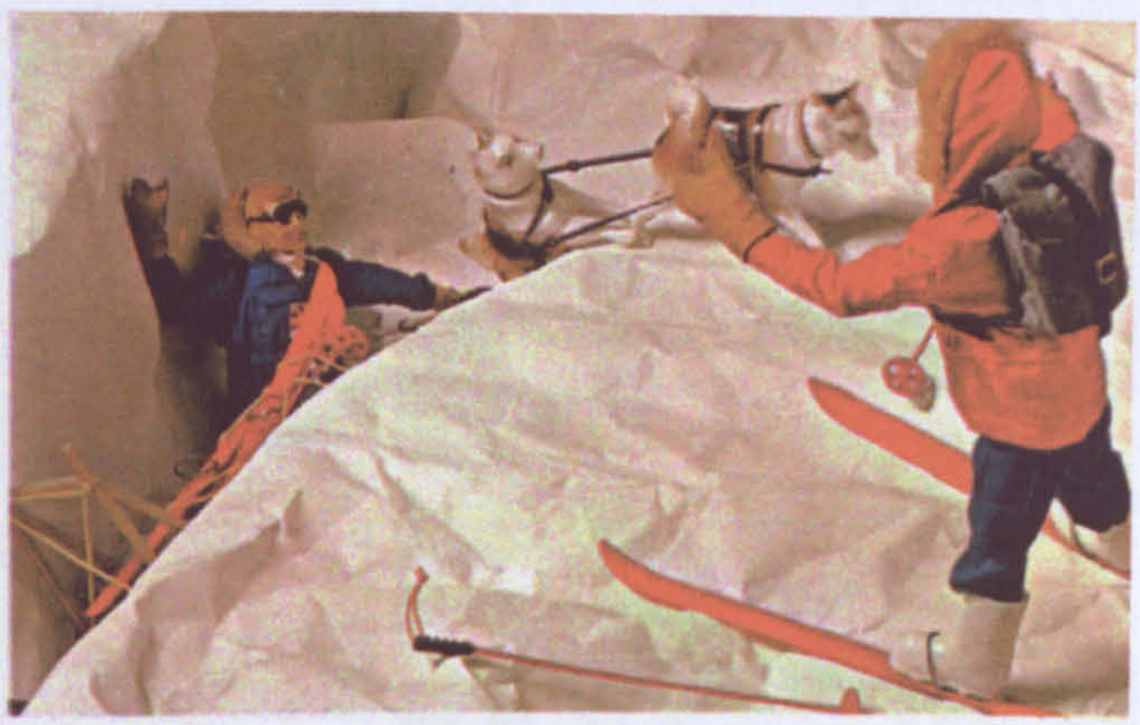
2. The dogs are running hard over the even snow. It is getting colder and our breath comes in gasps.

3. Below us lies our depot, and beyond us the difficult climb to the lower reaches of the plateau.

4. 8 days and 300 miles from base. We pitch our tent and have a well-earned break.

5. There is ugly weather ahead. 20° below zero. The rough waves of snow impede our progress.

6. The afternoon snowfall concealed a treacherous deathtrap. For a brief, agonising second, my breath stopped.



7. Only the dogs' mad scramble for survival saved us from losing our equipment.

8. But luckily my companion had broken his fall on a ledge only a few feet from the surface.

9. After what seemed like hours, we succeed in making a start again.

10. To be near the Pole is a great feeling; to stand there, with your feet astride it, is the most heart-swelling moment of your life.

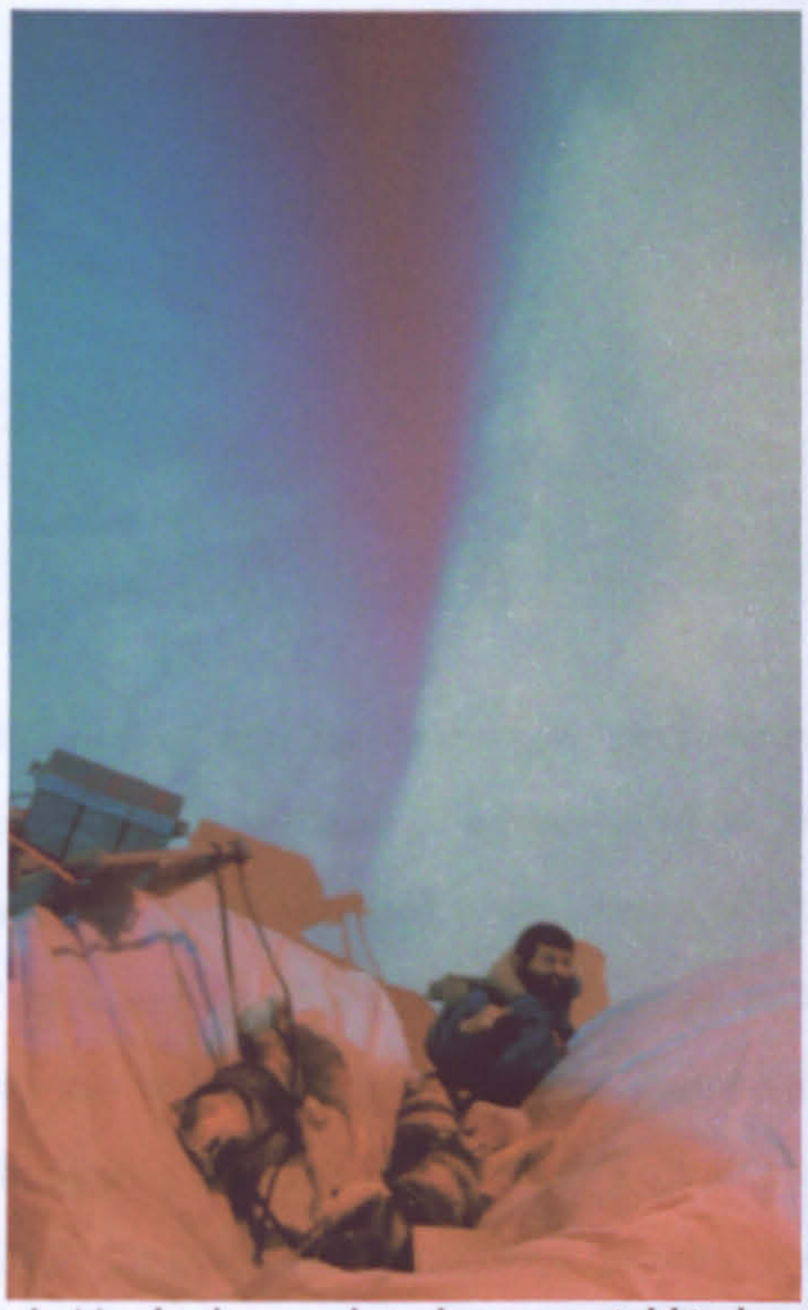
1. Imagine, polar inertia. In the halo of luna light, the polar plateau is a stream of inert yet deadly landscapes.

2. In the dubious, uncertain light, the tools of geography offer a confounding navigation. Polar inertia could be thought of as the opposite end of the capitalist drive. The journey across the polar plateau is the capitalist drive at rest, nothing is present that is not functional (apart from the body) as opposed to the endless consumption and frantic material engagement of late capitalism. There is a unity in this opposition. In both journeys there is never enough consumption to nourish - to fill the gaps between needs and desires. Is the Antarctic explorer capitalism's comic fool?

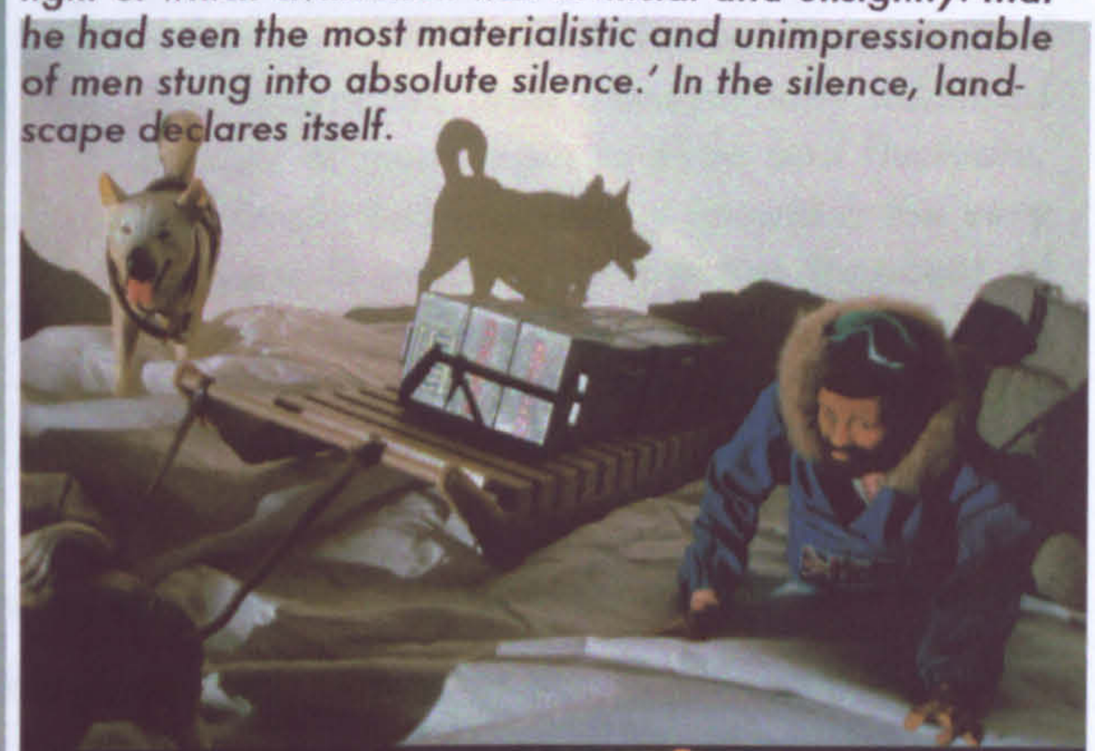
3. Like Sisyphus, pushing rocks ups the nunataks only for them to fall down the other side again, the Antarctic explorer is engaged in the excesses of survival. Analogous to circuits of production and consumption, the Antarctic explorer must hope only to move quickly enough through the environment so as not to lose too much of himself in it, to not be consumed by it and by the inability of his 'food' and 'tools' to provide for his needs.

4.Can we imagine a proper anti-hero in this landscape? That would counteract this inertia and give meaning to this journey into unknowing?

5.In Antarctica, both madness and laughter bring the world into question. In madness, there is a proximity to the death, in laughter there is the reversal - the absurdity turned back on itself. This is the landscape's aesthetics of meaning - delerious expenditure.



6. Maybe he needs to be a special kind of landscape artist? Maybe he lies down, lets the Antarctic world sweep over him - is consumed by the landscape's look back. He gets up and walks away... no images, no flags, no penguin's eggs - simply a continuum of landscape.



7. The explorer Frank Wild talked about 'a sort of wandering lostness' which he experienced in Antarctica, in the light of which civilisation was artificial and unsightly: that he had seen the most materialistic and unimpressionable of men stung into absolute silence.' In the silence, landscape declares itself.

8. A ray of light illuminates the terrain, bringing with it mirages, and the dizzying emergence of awakeness.

9. Other forms of Antarctic exploration puncture the geographical text. Removing the destination, rendering the interstices when nothing happens, there is an excess of encounter. The narratives are re-routed away from their intended 'goals'/endings, as action man performs those interstices of an embodied visual culture. In the Antarctic light, his vision takes him into an expanded geography of knowledge.

10. The shifting terrain destroys fixed points in geography's visual culture, making any conclusive image of Antarctica impossible. Stripped of autonomy, Action man finds an extreme position of 'possibility'. He endures, and the order of things slips sideways. Through expenditure and sacrifice, the vertigo of landscape relations is realised.

Antarctic exposure: archives of the feeling body

In those Hyperborean regions... all objects are seen in a dubious, uncertain, and refracting light. Viewed through that rarefied atmosphere the most immemorially admitted maxims of men begin to slide and fluctuate, and finally become wholly inverted; the very heavens themselves being not innocent of producing this confounding effect, since it is mostly in the heavens themselves that these wonderful mirages are exhibited.[622]

It is to the "dubious, uncertain, and refracting light" of the Hyperborean regions that Melville ascribes the problem of object-hood to. The object-hood of men begin "to slide and fluctuate" and the observational phenomena of landscape is cast into doubt by this polar light. The "confounding effect" of this slippage is an uncertainty of the nature of objects and its effect on the routes of meaning that men seek in these regions. Thus, knowledge is arrived at, through both the possibilities and uncertainties of this light. As the light in the Antarctic landscape inverts the maxims of men, it also secures their bodies as representation, through the light cast on the photographic plate - light that is fixed into the image, which calls forth a history of that exchange. The effect of light in the form of a photographic trace, and its affect on the routes of meaning and orientation, mark the explorer's journey. The light of the Hyperborean regions is a dubious light, one that marks a fleeting testimony to history and to landscape.

The focus of this mapping is the visibility of mark making in the Antarctic landscape; the ways in which the explorer's body is marked by the process of exploration, and the ways that the culture of exploration seeks to mark the terrain through photographic practice. As the photograph exhibits an illumination into the past, it is not innocent of the effect of mirages that suggest that such a place outside of the photograph is reachable. As Melville comments about the heavens, the space of exhibit is not innocent of the effect. The photograph writes in 'words of light'.[623] Like a lighthouse to the landscape of history and of place, light sends out its messages into the darkness of that formless sea. The reception of this refracting light, cast onto the sensitive material of bodies, landscape and photographic plates carves out the possibility of *permanencies* within this darkness. I will argue that as forms of cultural memory, these *permanencies* registered in matter, form very different narrations of polar histories.

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[622] Herman Melville, *Pierre or the Ambiguities*, Book IX.

[623] 'Photography' is derived from the Greek words photos ("light") and graphein ("to draw"). The word was first used by the scientist Sir John F W Herschel in 1839. The photograph it is a method of recording images by the action of light, or related radiation on a light sensitive material.

Like the flash of illumination that forms the photograph, history is made in the possibility of these vicissitudes of light - the very possibility of those traces coming *to light*. Polar histories of the Antarctic all too often concentrate on exploration's material culture, animated to speak as self-evident markers in polar histories. The polar expedition photograph is one such material marker. The re-focusing on expedition's material cultures (particularly those of the Heroic era) away from the site of encounter, removes the dubious refracting light that problematise these markers as part of the formation of knowledge and history.

For Benjamin, the history of knowledge is a history of light as, "knowledge comes only in flashes".[624] Eduardo Cadava argues that, "For Benjamin, there can be no history without the medusa effect, without the capacity to arrest or immobilize movement, to isolate the detail of an event from the continuum of history."[625] Light brings together the possibility "for clarity, reflection, speculation, and lucidity-that is, for knowledge in general."[626] Barthes suggests that in ordering the light of history, "cameras, in short, were clocks for seeing".[627] Photography's chrono-ordering was twofold; it organised a notion of historic time as a linear narrative (the before and afterimage) and powerfully organised history around vision of photographic arrest (what could be seen and could stand as testimony). However, by returning to the dubious, uncertain light of the Hyperborean regions I want to think about how representation simultaneously illuminates and blinds the histories of encounter with landscape. Benjamin's argument of history is that images are arrested moments in the flow of historical consciousness that allow history to exist: a spatial enclosing that forms the sites of history.[628] Yet, they also bind us to the technological limits of that form of address. Concentrating on the anxieties of representation, and the interplay between mark making and being marked, an ethics of meaning for Antarctica might be developed - one that does not suppress the agency of Antarctica to inscribe the explorer's body as he inscribes the surface of the continent through embodied journeys and representational practice.

The tension between mark making and the being marked places the body of the explorer at the threshold. The trails and markings on the body (injury, loss, and insanity) might serve as histories of human presence and fleeting testimonies to the arresting capacity of the Antarctic landscape. At this threshold of bodily fragmentation, I want to think about the psychic and cultural maintenance required to stem disintegration, and by re-focusing on this libidinal

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[624] Benjamin quoted in Eduardo Cadava 1997, 5.
[625] Cadava 1995, 228.
[626] For an extraordinary discussion on the history of the vicissitudes of light in relation to Walter Benjamin's essay "a *Short History of Photography*" see Cadava 1997.
[627] Barthes 2000, 8.
[628] Cadava 1995, 228.

space, think about how representational strategies are employed to capture this Antarctic exposure and how this exposure represents its passage through the body.

It is perhaps appropriate then, that the photographs at the centre of this discussion are the before and afterimages of the *Winter Journey* - which was a journey made in darkness with only the "wonderful mirages" of the heavens to both confound and exhibit the landscape. The *Winter Journey* was a scientific excursion made during Scott's 1911 *Terra Nova*[629] expedition, during the Antarctic mid-winter to collect Emperor penguin embryos at Cape Crozier, Ross Island. The expeditionary photographer, Herbert Ponting, photographed the members of the expedition, Apsley Cherry-Gerrard, 'Birdie' Bowers and Edward Wilson, before and after their departure. The journey exacted punishing physical excess on these explorers and highlighted the extraordinary physicality of the Antarctic landscape.

This mapping places Antarctica in a landscape of photography and of the fragmenting body: it is geography punctuated by the corporeal unravelling and photographic arrest. Through Ponting's photographs of before and after the *Winter Journey* [63/64] the site/sight of representation and the vicissitudes of seeing in the Antarctic environment (such as visual disorientation and damage to the organ of sight itself) form structural markers of encounter. Rather than mapping masculinities through exploration's visual culture, Antarctica can be mapped through the landscape it enacts in the masculine body. Along these fleshy sight lines, lie the explorer's negotiation of the anxieties and dilemmas of representation in relation to their bodies, to Antarctica, and beyond Antarctic space to imperial centres. Thinking of representation as the imaginative resolution of real contradictions, I want to consider how Antarctica presents itself on and through the body *beyond* representation, as a place unresolved and potentially unmappable - and how the idea of a subtle *beyond* re-casts a more dubious light back onto the photograph. Simply, to question what is the nature of exteriority to the image, when the image stands as historic testimony - and what, if any place, can be re-inhabited outside this landscape of arrest? Ponting's photographs will be the focal point for two points of consideration: the ethical potential of non-utilitarian approaches to landscape exposure; representational practice as a key site in the negotiation of this ethic.

Starting with photographic practice, images can become way-markers to bridge meaning, signifying in what Cadava calls a "pictorial script".[630] For instance, the two images of before and after the *Winter Journey* become referent points in the history of British Antarctic

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[629] The 'Winter Journey' was made prior to the ill-fated spring 'Pole Journey', in which Scott, Wilson, Bowers, Oates and Evans died.

[630] Eduardo Cadava "Words of Light, Theses on the Photography of History" in *Fugitive Images* ed. Patrice Petro (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995), 228.

Plate 63

Plate 64

exploration, an *apriori* and *afterimage* of a journey that has no other material trace other than the abandoned stone shelter (built by the explorers after there tent blew away) that forms the only other mark on the landscape. The evidential force that these photographs are given is given a more nuanced topography through Cherry- Gerrard's narrative, *The Worst Journey in the World* (1922). This provides a literary script that re-presents these images as sites in a denser narrative. Attempting to read the journey back through the photographs, the altered faces become points of time's passage that has exacted a visible harshness on the body. The photographic remains of the damaged explorer's bodies point to a historical happening, co-joining their before and after bodies as arrested moments that imaginatively hold open the beginning and end of a narrative of journey. In this opening, the photographs establish a linear topography of the *Winter Journey* in which something, akin to history happened.

The photograph forms a complex site in the imagination. History seemingly asserts itself as photographic realism bids us to imagine a past to which it stands testament too. Cadava (echoing Walter Benjamin) comments,

> Like an angel of history whose wings are marked by the traces of this disappearance, the image traces an experience that cannot come to light. Although what the photograph photographs is no longer present or living, its having-been-there now forms part of the referential structure of our relation to the photograph.[631]

Photography's structural configuration is such that the photograph's *haunting* is twofold; a haunting that is intrinsic to its form (it is a trace of the dead) and as a referent in the construction of history (the photograph is a marker in a referential system that is configured around visible traces). In complex ways, representations are all too easily substituted for experience and embodied knowledges because they are powerful markers in a landscape of lost and unrecoverable encounters. Mimicking and often subsuming the flashes of memory traces (Benjamin), the photograph asserts its power by being doubly present; as a witness to the event and in the present as a marker of that witnessing. As way-markers they become the points around which historical truth is constructed. The camera gives the illusion of a space outside in the framing of history as a series of arrested visions. The action of arrest signals itself as a fragment taken from a body of time, but it presents a time that has no more outside than the structural and emotional logic of the inside of the frame.

As a historical site the photograph is fugitive in many ways - ultimately impermanent as a material image, its visible life is only assured by more resilient reproductive technologies and the ideological apparatus that desires reproduction. The image must be cared for if it is to

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[631] Ibid., 224.

escape destruction or the photography's own material weather of time. This desire for reproduction is tied to the photograph's contemporary presence, which serves particular inhabitations of place - such as the reproduction of heroic images to accentuate a landscape for heroic endeavours or adventure tourism. The photograph bridges a temporal gulf to flood sites with meaning, and secure them as locations. In this, the photograph 'authenticates' precise geographic sites as historic locations. In this fragmented tracing, the photograph either offers or denies the viewer an active role in the imaginative completion of the encounters that they trace. Without the photograph and its reproduction, the traces of history have little visibility, take for example the dissipation in the public imaginary of Amundsen's pole journey. The camera broke and no photographer was taken on the expedition, thus the pole photograph (the 'proof' of his having reached the pole) was only secured because a member of the expedition had brought a cheap brownie camera with him. Without this photograph to secure the event, the event itself is cast into doubt. As Barthes comments, "Every photograph is a certificate of presence."[632]

Beyond the photograph's structural configuration as a historical marker, other expressive traces can be followed. Barthes, posited against any reductive system of photography's expressive and critical language, suggests in *Camera Lucida* that he will explore photography not as a quest "but as a wound: I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe and I think..."[633] By exploring the expressive affect of the photograph, Barthes calls that which wounds us in the photograph, the *punctum*[634] – an unexpected prick of desire initiated by the photograph, "which sometimes flashes across the field".[635] Illumination. The *punctum* of the Ponting's photographs is the visibility of *difference* that is clearly visible between the men, before and after their journey. The alteration between these two arrests animates a profound register of time's passing through the body. Held in a space between the two photographs are the ravaging effects of time and Antarctica on the body. This landscape of events that separates the two photographs seeps through a *little hole* in the haunted gaze of Cherry-Gerrard. Although Antarctica (as a visual event) remains outside the frame, their faces point to the zone of inter-penetration of bodies and landscape from which they have come. The self-possessed bodies of the first photograph are so visibly older in the afterimage than when they started; the look in Cherry-Gerrard's and Wilson's eye that challenges Ponting's lens (and Ponting) to conceive of where they have been; the hardness of their faces compared to

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[632] Barthes 2000, 87.
[633] Ibid., 21.
[634] "for punctum is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole... A photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)." Barthes 2000, 27.
[635] Ibid., 94.

Plate 65

the relaxed enthusiasm at the start of the journey; the blackened frost bitten hands all testify to that 'something' that did go on beyond the possibilities of this frame.

On the explorers' return from the *Winter Journey*, Ponting said, "We had to excavate them carefully [from their frozen clothing], and when finally exposed, their faces bore unmistakable evidence of the terrible hardships they had endured. Their looks haunted me for days."[636] Despite the shelter their clothing provided to the internal ablation, the haunting of the landscapes work remains in the *punctum* of their gazes. This landscape viewed in the *afterimage* is not the same landscape that we see in the background of the departure photograph. Partially illuminated by Ponting's flash, so that the viewer can see into the darkness that these explorers go and cannot see into, the darkness limits the depth of field and serves to foreground the explorer's. Bowers, Wilson, and Cherry-Gerrard are haloed in the foregrounding light, eager to depart and nonchalant in the face of yet another expeditionary photograph. Yet, in the *afterimage* the photographic invisibility of the landscape is made visible through its visceral effects on the body of the explorer. The body becomes a landscape of affect. Ordinarily, the photographic arrest remains as an authentic marker long after the effects of landscape have passed into less visible registers in the body, but the illumination offered in these photographs is the visibility of both these exchanges.

The photograph holds their bodies there in that moment, as ghosts not yet dead; bodies that in the case of Wilson and Bowers went on to die on the pole journey and Cherry-Gerrard whose body healed and then broke again, and again, in England in less visible ways than the photograph could attest to.[637] The photographic afterlife of those that are now dead points most directly to the impossible structural exchange between language and object that is the haunting of every photograph – that only in arrest can vision realise its object. The presence of exchange (between viewing and the impossibilities of that view) denotes a photographic language that writes in light and darkness, to form the traces of a now lost object. They are already dead, although the photograph gives us their survival. For Benjamin,

> In photography, one encounters something strange and new... something that remains that does not testify merely to the art of the photographer... something that is not to be silenced, something demanding defiantly the name of the person who had lived then, who even now is still real and will never entirely perish into art. She is seen beside him here, he holds her; her glance, however, goes past him, directed into an unhealthy distance.[638]

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[636] Ponting 1921, 154.
[637] After being christened 'The Cherry one' on the expedition, Cherry-Gerrard had several nervous break downs after his return, and suffered from acute depression.
[638] Benjamin 1997, 242.

Ulrich Baer comments that the English translation of Benjamin's text sanitises what is a "disastrous" distance.[639] This distance is the trace of death, already here, or to come. As Barthes comments, "whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe."[640] The catastrophe that Barthes recognises is of the arrest of aliveness, foreshadowing the terminal arrest of death. In the photograph the condition of these two temporalities (aliveness and arrest) are caught in the tension of the same moment. What the light presently brings into view - the darkness of its never-reclaimable *distance* haunts.

Looking at the photographs of before and after we see the 'evidence' of a journey having taken place. This is the photograph's complex certainty of testimony, as the non-photographed appears only to offer doubt. In this testimony, the photo is proto-filmic in its location in time (in an imagined journey), and thus it allows for the very possibility of history. Photograph is a testimony of time, "before this - after that."[641] In this possibility, representation fights against an anxious space of loss. This desire to preserve the integrity of time through the magic operation of the image reclaims the that-which-has-been. As Cavada comments,

> The possibility of history is bound to the survival of the traces of what is past and our ability to read those traces as traces.[642]

What both Benjamin and Cavada urge is that we recognise these photographic traces as the 'fugitive' fleeting testimonies that they are, not as history, concretely reclaimed. Although these traces are historically marked they have an infinity of possible incursions into time. The photograph arrests time, and in doing so marks it with its indexical ordering. This ordering of time - as an arrest in the flow of information - creates another dwelling place in time that has the duration of shutter speed. This duration of arrest is cast against an un-reclaimable sea of lost time. The *punctum* these photographs may affect emerges from the now of looking. This visibility of now tears the image from its context, the *that-has-been*,[643] into the promise of a possible respite from the darkness (of that which does not belong anymore to sight, those now dead bodies).

If we shift the focus to the body, we find a different kind of trace of Antarctic exposure to that imprinted on the photographic plate. More fleeting and more doubtful in its testament there is the photographer's body put to service in the labour of the represented body - which will speak more forcefully and authoritatively to audiences at home than the voice of the

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[639] See Cp 1. "Photography and Hysteria: Toward a Poetics of the Flash" Baer 2002, 55.
[640] Barthes 1981, 96.
[641] Baer 2002, 39.
[642] Cadava 1995, 233.
[643] Barthes 1981, 100.

explorer's (the photographic rights to images are sold to fund the expedition before it has begun). The object and image of the photographic plate offered to financiers a more substantial trace than that of the explorer's body. There are many examples in Antarctic exploration of the photographer's body being put in jeopardy for the image. 'To *Pont*', was the phrase used to coin Herbert Ponting's photographic practice, meaning to stand around till you nearly freeze to death waiting for Ponting to take a photograph. Frank Hurley's (expeditionary photographer on Shackleton's *British Antarctic Expedition* 1914-16) dramatically rescued film from the disintegrating ship the *Endurance*. After the expedition was forced to abandon the *Endurance* to the ice floes, Hurley went back to the sinking ship (defying Shackleton) to rescue more film and negatives. Hurley narrates:

> Sealed in containers, many of the negatives were submerged beneath the mushy ice deep in the bowels of the wreck for a fortnight. Rescued after some sensational diving, the cases experienced the perils of a six months' drift on an ice-raft. During the boat voyage, when a choice had to be made between jettisoning rations or negatives, the negatives survived.[644]

After Hurley had dived into the dark and freezing water to retrieve extra film and negatives, a rather severe editing process ensued where only 120 photographic plates were retained out of 400 to keep the weight down on the march across the floes. The remaining plates were smashed on the ice so that Hurley would not be tempted to retain them. Along with the plates, Hurley retained 3 spools of film and a small camera (rescued form the *Endurance*), he reflects, "I wonder if three spools of film ever went through more exacting experiences before they were developed."[645] Later, in small boats headed to Elephant Island, they again have to choose between "heaving them over board or throwing away our surplus food - the food went over."[646] Putting his body in jeopardy for the sake of the represented body, Hurley wryly comments on the collision between the pictorial opportunities that the loss of the ship afforded and his expenditure to rescue the photographic plates;

> The amazing adventures which followed the destruction of our ship provided a grand theme for pictorial interpretation but the circumstances placed the party in such desperate straits that the official photographer's major problem was to rescue the photographic records.[647]

There is a collision here between the representational processes of photography (as practice and object) and their differing material legacy – the survival of the images and loss of the unrepresented marks on the photographer's body. As the photographer's body was put in the service of the object of representation, the landscape embodiment was not reproducible in time, and thus could not stand as a credible historical witness to the event. The expenditure

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[644] Frank Hurley, *Shackleton's Argonauts* (Sydney & London: Angus & Robertson, 1948), xiii.
[645] Ibid., 71.
[646] Ibid., 71.
[647] Ibid., xiii.

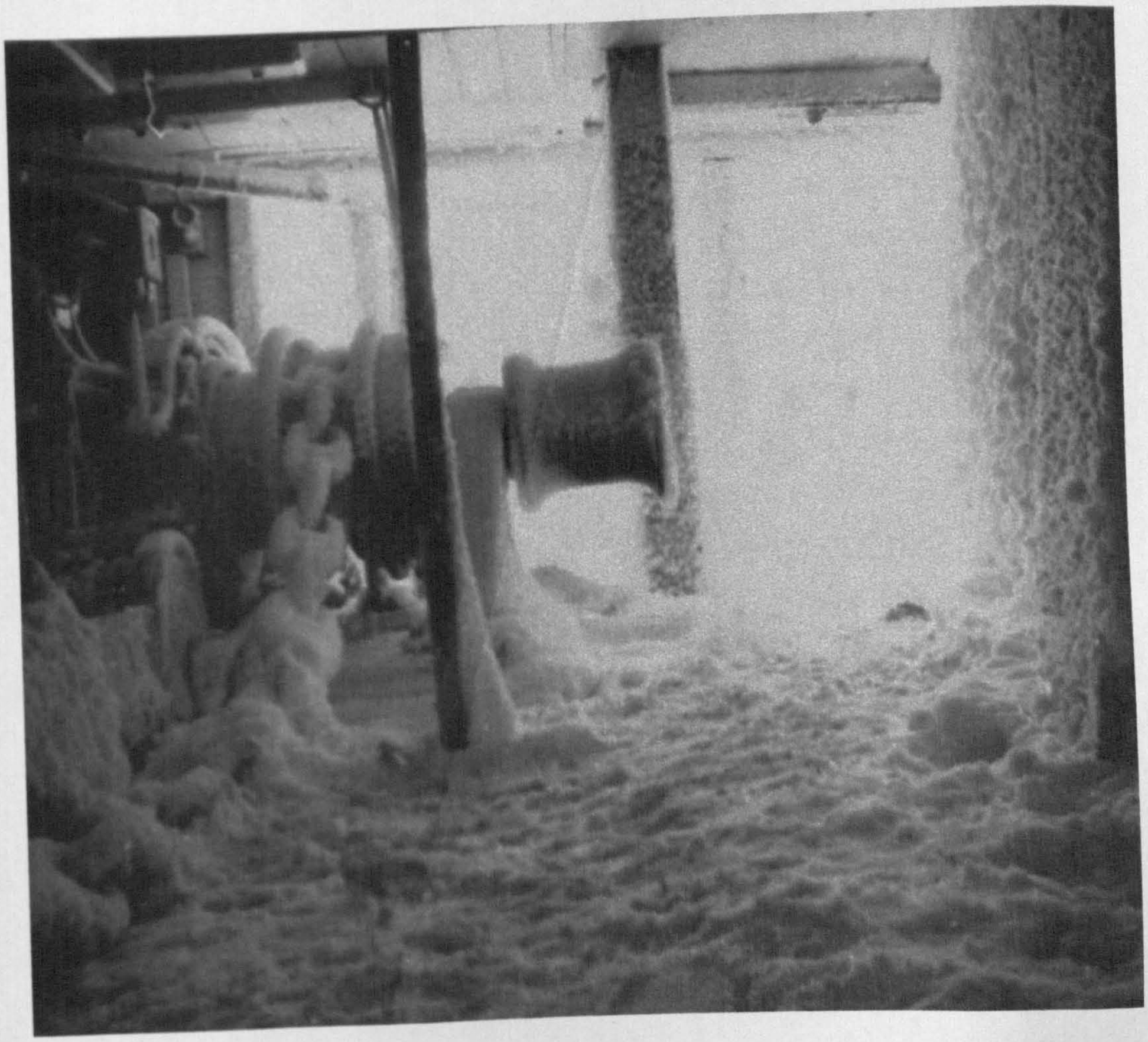

Plate 66

of the landscape embodiment in deference to the represented body can be conceptualised through a consideration of the how the represented body provided a rational idea of the body in the landscape.

The photographed body, however evocative always exceeds the limits of the embodied landscape, because the boundaries of the body are marked as fictionally whole. From the outside and in its entirety, the body as representation maintains its borders in differentiation to the landscape, as a place beyond the skin - in this aspect of landscape differentiation, the body-as-representation presents an object with a distinct integrity. Thus, representational practice constitutes a refuge against the material and psychic effects of an *environment of disintegration*. The body is the threshold of that mediation between what is represented and the unrepresentable - that which remains in pieces and is superseded by the wholeness of the body as representation. Thus, the photograph can be thought of as a *re-assembly device*, presenting the body in a single unifying field where it has already been lost and fractured in the action of the field.

The photograph gives us the outside body, yet the diaries and the bodily remainders (lost body parts and psychic stress) reveal far more embodied and perilous relations. It is these intimate geographies of the body in the Antarctic field that display less monumental arrests than the photograph, yet present a more processed insight into the *action of the field*. The problems of governing the body, maintaining its autonomy against the constant unremitting threat of fragmentation becomes the point, in a sense; as has been said of polar exploration, 'it's about getting as dead as one can get without dying'. In this respect, the wasting body is the frontier in heroic narrative and productive of frontier experiences, always plotted against the environment. As Shackleton commented it is a body "in battle."[648] And so, Shackleton's 'White War' in the South was productive of a warring body, where the enemy was the oppressive-ness of Nature. The photographer Hurley referred to Antarctica as the "Great White Silence",[649] suggesting a different kind of battle with the landscape – to make it speak in convincing ways.

A warring landscape narrative was a timely justification for what the public might well see as the uselessness of polar exploration, in the time of war, but it also served as the basis for a narrative of Antarctic explorer's masculinity, one that continues in contemporary 'heroic' journeys. The 'hero shot' is the most extreme example of this in the pornography of explorer's posing and posturing. Wherein the masculine is being built through the pitching of man

[648] Programme notes for Hurley's film *South*, *bfi* Special Collection William F. Jury No. 38.
[649] Ibid., 8.

against, and mastering, the landscape. Yet, it is the interplay between the body and Nature rather than mastery (although this is the heroic conclusion) that forms the narrative tension and attraction. The afterimage of the *Winter Journey* is an unusual antidote to this form of expeditionary photography that emphasised the integrity of heroic body, in this it serves as a *punctum* to Antarctic expenditure.

In real terms, (in contrast to the genre of exploration's photographic practice) in many of these heroic narratives the body is being de-sexed, disorganised and re-orientated beyond its rational limits. The narrative first joins Douglas Mawson's 1912 expedition to the Antarctic, to explore the nature of the disintegration of the body beyond its represented limits. Mawson was travelling with a team of two, Belgrave Ninnis and Xavier Mertz. During the expedition Ninnis fell into a crevasse and taking most of the vital supplies with him, Mertz is badly frostbitten and en route to madness through the over consumption of dog's liver.

"The depredation of cold, hunger, exposure carved their faces, Mawson knew, but, once out of the softening green light of the tent in the stark cruel light of the plateau, Mertz's appearance was shocking. His beard was ragged tufts with patches of raw skin beneath... his eyes deep-sunk pockets of grey beneath the protective goggles."[650] *As they try to man-haul Mertz complains, "My mind goes forward, but my legs stay here."*[651] *Mertz refused to walk anymore. He was snow blind. Mawson puts him on the sledge, straps on his harness, and goes down on all fours pulling like a dog across the icy surface. He tries to feed Mertz with the dog flesh that is slowly poisoning him, but Mertz can keep no food down, he vomits and covers himself in excrement. His eyes roll and he babbles incoherently. Mawson cleans his clothing, stripping away his trousers to discover his groin stripped of skin, completely raw.*

In the morning Mertz wakes up shouting at Mawson, "Am I a man-or a dog?"[652] *Mawson watches as he lifts his frostbitten hand to his mouth and crunches his teeth into his middle finger, "savagely severing the skin...then, in disdain, spitting the severed digit into the floor of the tent".*[653] *Mertz wilfully disregards his now too wasted body in automutilation. He throws himself outside his body. A day of fits and ragging violence followed, Mawson sits on his chest to restrain him, and then, when he is unconscious cleans the mess of dysentery. In the night Mertz dies. Mawson leaves a note and ten dozen exposed photographic plates, now too heavy to carry. He sacrifices the represented body for his primal body, and becomes his own body of work.*

Alone, Mawson heads out to the plateau hoping to get far enough towards Aurora Peak for his body and diary to be found. He crosses a glacier that he names after Mertz. Later, Mawson inspects his body, "He untied his lampwick braces and belt and lowered his thick underpants-and a shower of skin fragments and hair fell into the snow at his feet. Strips of skin had completely vanished from his legs; his kneecaps were without cover... his private parts were red and raw scarified from the friction of work and walking."[654] *Unlike Scott who*

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[650] Lennard Bickel, "Mawson's Will" in Ice ed. Clint Willis (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1999), 16.
[651] Mertz in Bickel 1999, 16.
[652] Ibid., 19.
[653] Ibid., 19.
[654] Ibid., 27.

declines the material body in favour of an elevated moral body, Mawson's bodily disintegration obsesses him. His writes, "my whole body is rotting... there is nothing to repair or replace my worn tissues"[655] He has to walk with his legs apart, the raw groin and scrotum making it impossible to walk upright. He felt a disquieting gloop in his feet. He examined them to find that his socks are filled with bodily liquid that leaked from where his foot and soles have separated. Left with a slab of frozen dead skin, he binds the soles back on. Shocked, but alivened by the sun he has the idea that the solar energy will rejuvenate his body. Risking the effects of snow blindness and exposure, he removed his goggles, and his shirt and trousers and lies down, noting, "I bathed in the glorious kiss of the sun and an almost instant feeling of well-being went tingling through my body. It was exhilarating, a sensation that flooded my senses."[656] In an ecstasy of Bataille[657] proportions, he declares himself a sun-worshipper, proclaiming light to be the "elixir of life."[658] Through the next days the light becomes Mawson's psychic source of repair to the violence exacted in his wasted body. He seeks his salvation in this blinding presence. As the drama of the journey is forced ever deeper through the fabric of his body he projects outside to the light of the heavens to seek an oceanic repair to the fragmentation of self.

The second narrative joins Cherry-Gerrard on the *Winter Journey*. Analogous to the theoretical excursion being made here, the *Winter Journey* it is an excess to the primary narrative of the destination of the pole, and thus highlights some of the excessive expenditure in the pursuit of the light of knowledge (in the form of some penguin eggs). The narrative contrasts the arrest of Ponting's flash bulb to that of the emerging sun to explore the duration of light affects in the formation of Antarctic knowledges. The visualising effect of the sun's light gives form to the landscape to enable navigation, and the light of the flashbulb gives form to a material trace of cultural memory. The interplay between an arresting landscape and the arrests of technologies of vision characterises the structure of this encounter with the Antarctic landscape.

There is a flash of light that temporally illuminates the darkness and a photographic plate. After posing for a compulsory expeditionary photograph Wilson, Bowers and Cherry-Gerrard set off into the freezing darkness for Cape Crozier in search of emperor penguin eggs. Cherry-Gerrard has already got frostbite on his hands. He took his glasses off for the photograph and the cold metal seared his exposed fingers. Temperatures average between -66° with a 'nasty little wind' blowing during a howling blizzard to take the temperature to -77°. No one had attempted winter travel before - the Antarctic landscape being hazardous enough in the light - Cherry-Gerrard reflects; "More than once in my short life I have been struck by the value of the man who is blind to what appears to be a common-sense certainty: he achieves the impossible."[659] Almost immediately Cherry-Gerrard's terrible sight became a hindrance to the journey and his own ability to navigate the terrain. Nearly dropped from the expedition because he could only see "the people across the street as vague blobs".[660] He quickly has to abandon his spectacles to the sensitivity of a thinking feeling body. During the man-hauling the three explores' find themselves in "the weirdest kind of procession, three

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[655] Mawson in Bickel 1999, 27.
[656] Mawson in Bickel 1999, 31.
[657] See Bataille's discussion on the sun and on the history of finger ablation in George Bataille, *Visions of Excess* Trans. Allan Stoekl (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1985), 61-72.
[658] Mawson in Bickel 1999, 31
[659] Cherry-Gerrard 1937, 269.
[660] Ibid., 256.

frozen men and a little pool of light."[661] *Visibly unable to navigate the terrain they generally steered by Jupiter and a candle.*

The lack of light plays curious tricks on their already diminished perceptual abilities; "Wilson and I... experienced a curious optical delusion when returning in our tracks...I have said that we found our way back by the light of a candle...these holes [footprints] became to our tired brains not depressions but elevations: hummocks over which we stepped, raising our feet painfully... And then we remembered what fools we were, and for a while we compelled ourselves to walk through these phantom hills... as the days passed we realized we must suffer this absurdity..."[662]

Very soon the harshness of the winter weather takes hold and they spend their nights in shivering fits. Almost immediately they suffer from frostbitten fingers, toes, feet and faces. During the 19 days to Cape Crozier they come to such a point of suffering that Cherry-Gerrard reflects; "I did not really care if I could die without much pain. They talk of the heroism of dying - they little know - it would be so easy to die, a dose of morphia, a friendly crevasse... The trouble is to go on...It was the darkness that did it".[663] *In the dark it takes them four hours to get up in the morning, they navigate by striking countless matches in the attempt to find one dry one to read the compass by. "Sweat and breath" becomes the enemy of their existence. The sweat froze and accumulated inside the layers of their clothing and it would seem like their bodies were snowing. Their breath soldered their balaclavas to their heads. Cherry-Gerrard recounts how one morning "I raised my head to look round and found I could not move it back" - the clothing freezed hard, "for four hours I had to pull with my head stuck up..."*[664]

Unable to locate Terror Point in the fog "We began to realize now that our eyes were more or less out of action... The effect of walking in finnesko is much the same as walking in gloves, and you get a sense of touch with nothing else except bare feet could give you. Thus we could feel every small variation in surface..."[665] *They are given over to the intimate encounters of the touch and sound of landscape. They learn the aesthetics of slowness - playing blind man's bluff among the crevasses of Cape Crozier - moving forward, they registered the landscape minutely. "We had no light, and no landmarks to guide us, except vague and indistinct silhouetted slopes ahead, which where always altering and whose distance and character it was impossible to judge... and eventually we travelled on by the ear, and the feel of the snow under our feet, for both the sound and the touch told one much of the chances of crevasses or of safe going".*[666] *Shortly after this they discover they are completely lost.*

On Mt. Terror the tent blows away in a force 11 blizzard. Without this thin membrane of shelter they will die. After cowering in their rock and ice igloo for few days, they miraculously find their tent half a mile away. Cherry-Gerrard: "I did want to howl many times every hour of these days and nights....". By now it takes them 9 hours to tend the camp; putting up tent, repairing kit, cooking, tending wounds, blisters, frostbitten bits of body, defrosting sleeping bags. Everything is frozen; body and landscape. Teeth froze and the "nerves of which had been killed, split to pieces".[667] *They are eating themselves from the inside out - never able to consume enough calories for the days labour. Cherry-Gerrard; "The horrors of that return journey are blurred to my memory and I know they were blurred to my*

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[661] Ibid., 261-2.
[662] Ibid., 261.
[663] Ibid., 259.
[664] Ibid., 261.
[665] Ibid., 273.
[666] Ibid., 303.
[667] Ibid., 306.

body at the time."[668] *As the first light appears (although the sun would not appear on the horizon for another month) Cherry-Gerrard reflects, "I cannot describe what a relief the light was to us".*[669] *In a few hours steered through the landscape that the light opened up, they open the door of the hut, sit down and a photograph is quickly taken. Cherry-Gerrard reflects, "this journey had beggared our language; no words could express its horror."*[670]

The text of *The Worst Journey in the World* constantly highlights the compulsion toward bodily dissolution; the attempt to preserve the integrity of the body: to keep warmth, to maintain sanity, or the distinction between the real and hallucination, to keep moving forward, to keep consuming, to be present in time and not to be frozen, absorbed, erased, or be distracted from the essential meaninglessness of the journey. Elaine Scarry argues in *The Body in Pain* that pain belongs to "an invisible geography that, however portentous, has no reality because it has not yet manifested itself on the visible surface of the earth."[671] This perhaps explains our tendency to endorse the authority of the visible body or pictured body beyond our desire to accept its limitations and invisible catastrophes.

Taking Scarry's argument further, I argue that the photograph visually reveals the exchange between the catastrophic moment of time (the assertion of pain) and the possibilities of its visible trace. If, following Benjamin, the trace is read as a trace, it speaks in the dead light (of photography) to the possibility of regarding 'that-which-has-been.' The disastrous distance that Benjamin argues the photograph possesses, ironically enables an imaginative inhabitation of an 'outside' to the photographic frame (a dead light that remains as the residue of an earlier radiation/a 'subtle beyond'). This disastrous distance or trace read as a *trace*, enables the conceptualisation of a geography that is not as resolutely closed as Scarry suggests. Pain does manifests itself on the visible surface of the earth through this suggestion of a 'outside' to the photograph. It is this suggestion of a light held into the darkness, that is photography's structural punctum. There is no outside of the image, but the suggestion of such a place condenses to cloud the 'inside' of the photograph - this theory of a cloud offers a more dynamic exchange for those regarding the pain of others.

The importance of pondering on the body in pain is to think about how the landscape may lay in and beyond the rationally composed body. And what this provokes in terms of compensatory mechanisms for re-establishing the bodies' boundaries (through representation). In the rupture of a subject's homogeneity through pain or the puncture of landscape, representational practice frees the subject to project outside of itself. Pain

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[668] Ibid., 310.
[669] Ibid., 305.
[670] Ibid., 313.
[671] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 13.

disallows this projection (the account cannot be fully written until pain has abated) and in the most extreme case, it is met by auto-mutilation (as in the case of Mertz).

Pain is one dimension of embodiment that asserts its present-ness in time and thus a distinct non-portability, making language shatter, alerting us to all that is expunged in the unifying representational form of the photograph; "whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its un-sharability through its resistance to language."[672] The shattering power of pain, Scarry claims, is its ability not simply to resist language but to destroy it, "it is precisely because it takes no object that it, more than any other phenomenon, resists objectification in language.[673] It, in Cherry-Gerrard's words, beggared their language. Without objectification pain remains a non-transportable territory, something that cannot be imaginatively entered into however empathetic a desire may be to share the pain of others. The intensity of the experience of pain, analogous to the intensity of landscape affects, belongs to the immediacy of time and of place. As spectators after the event, the space that is left for us is to regard the trace of pain through the medium of the body (without making those traces into relics). Contemporaneously one of the repeated responses from interviewees who have been to Antarctica is their inability to find a suitable language to describe their experience there. But what are the politics this invisibility of a descriptive language? At points in experience when there is no return to language, it is the *punctum* of the photograph that points into the darkness to retrieve the shattered fragments of language. Cadava says of photography's language;

> Each time it is a story of what the eye can see and what it cannot - of what the camera can capture and what eludes it. To say this, however, is simply to say that our experience of these photographs is always an experience of the eye - of an eye that seeks to see where it does not see, where it no longer sees, or where it does not yet see.[674]

The implication of this, is that the photograph can give the "experience of the eye over to blindness"[675] when it leads our thinking. The desire for clarity, for describable landscapes, borders of objects and bodies that don't leak into the space that surrounds, is a desire for a visible perceptual certainty. The photograph offers this tension - the fiction of containing the uncontainable - lost time, lost subjects and lost places. It gives us that tension as a fragment. Within this irresolvable conflict, the photograph orders an impossible moment - that of an arrest made in a dubious, uncertain light. The photograph orders the loss of time, but it offers a perilous ordering based on the assumption that its legibility writes over everything less

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[672] Ibid., 14.
[673] Ibid., 5.
[674] Eduardo Cadava in *Gathering Light* Richard Ross John Hansard Gallery (Southampton: Univ. of New Mexico Press 2000) unpaginated
[675] Cadava 2000.

visible, although the *punctum* may point us in another direction. And the conception of time that the photograph orders, is a time conceived on arrests not duration; shutter speed, not footstep, after inverted footstep.

No representation can be coherent to its object, but to think of landscape beyond a surface to be inscribed upon, as an environment of shifting and dubious light, it is released from the imposition of the photograph's arrest. The consequence of only concentrating on the representational and material remains of these explorers produces a landscape more bounded than the body as representation. As the explorer's body encountered limits of excess in the landscape, thinking with these visions of excess returns the photograph to 'that-which-has-been', the slow release of a near frozen shutter arresting bodies that stand immobile in an animated landscape. The utility of those represented bodies as, what Driver calls the 'foot soldiers of empire' are clear - making colonial marks in the landscape and its representational surfaces; the marked lines on maps; the mastery of extreme environments; the flag planting; the building of bases. The imperatives of masculinity and the culture these explorers served, required a visual culture of exploration that was designed to be portable (materially and conceptually) often at great cost to the bodily maintenance of the explorer. The prioritisation of the body-as-representation over the physical body marks the landscape as a productive landscape for that representative body (photographic plates carried instead of food). As a visual culture it needed to be legible in the imperial centres, just as the continuing visual culture of national Antarctic programmes seeks to do now, erasing non-utilitarian knowledges as it goes (the landscape as an excessive expenditure within the body).

Embodiment justified imperial pride, and continues to do so; the men, in the pursuit of territory and knowledge were constantly engaged in journeys of return, yet their corporeal experiences suggests the limits of this. As Scott and Shackleton's dead bodies remain in the Antarctic, their symbolic bodies are brought home to stand in the Parthenon of exploration, as sites of meaning in particular historiographies. Scott whose writhing frozen body was found half undressed (and it is reported in the field notes of those that found him) in a gesture of extreme agony, stands bronzenly replete, facing Franklin (whose bodily depravation in the Arctic led to the excess of cannibalism) above the Mall in London. Acknowledging the ability of Antarctica to *look back* through the body beyond the physicality and desire of the eye (which represses other forms of knowing) would remind us of the special agency of Antarctica - an agency that is to be found in its ability to mark, bruise and sear the body, as well as to inspire it and invigorate it.

It is the affect of the blinding Antarctic sun that sends Mawson into a frenzied undressing, bearing his genitals to the sun in the hope that its power might heal him as the signifier of his masculinity falls apart in his hands. It is Antarctica that makes Cherry-Gerrard dream of death as a friend. As the light in the Hyperborean regions inverts the explorer's routes of meaning, it creates a darkness that is not metaphorical but physically felt as loss and pain, and then blinding obstacle, and finally an engulfing salvation. Concentrating solely on human traces (flags, nomination, territorial claims) rather than landscape traces (weathering, euphoria, pain, solar ecstasy) evident in the visible and non-visible expenditures of the body, is productive of an imaginative re-inscription that echoes the practices of colonialism - as Said argued, representation and containment, were the dual tenants of colonial inscription.[676] The possibility of a landscape of excess, clouds and inverts the process of that inscription. As the photograph may point as a fragment into the darkness of place and time, there needs to be a continual remembrance that it is the light of the sun that illuminates the landscape in these stories as well as that of the photographic plate. And that the Antarctic landscape is as prone to examples over-exposure and parhelia ('mock' suns) as it is to a clear image of encounter.

The challenge levelled here is to the notion of closed narrative that is predicated on utility, production, and rational consumption. Such a landscape of bounded-ness presents a space that the landscape-in-the-body challenges, as it encounters limits, and thus presents the site of an immediate ethics of interaction between the body and representation, and the embodied knowledge production - the ethical dilemma - photographs or food. Images need to be cared for if they are to escape destruction - to take images instead of food prioritises an ethics of meaning to encounters with Antarctic spatialities. If we are to make any attempts to think about Antarctica outside the narrow boundaries of territory and colonial marks, there is a need to re-think these journeys in all their excessive corporeal expenditure (that was often the cost of the over-emphatic desire for destination). Here there is an *ethics of cultural interaction* with Antarctica that does not speak for the landscape, or cover over it, or attempt to conquer it, but rather invites us to take up residence in the intimate spaces of the lived body beyond the bounded-ness of representational marks, to rethink how the landscape *arrests* and is *arrested* by representational practice. In these moments of bodily transgression, the fragmentation and sacrifice of the body (such as in the case of Scott and of Shackleton) demonstrate how the surviving cultural corpus of remembrance is built upon an elevated and official idea of these corpses. Like Metz's frozen finger that he bites off and defiantly spits in the face of Mawson (the well body) we must take into account the human tendency to lose,

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[676] Said 1980.

destroy and waste in the Antarctic environs. In excess of rational limits - realised through the destruction and salvation of the explorer's body - the landscape finds its exposure. If we invert Melville's maxim, it can be concluded that the dubious light might give a rarefied clarity to the problems of object-hood that haunt every visual formation of knowledge. In the history of light, it may be said that thinking alongside Antarctic light, another history can be illuminated.

Part IV: Postscript

Starting from an image, each of these *image geographies* has explored the complex terrain between Antarctic matter and the materialities of communication. The distance between the matter of images, and the landscape of matter that they are inflected through, has no direct relation, rather a complex movement exists that has been mapped through the transmission, circulation, and finally, breakdown of landscape information. The mappings have explored the significant disjuncture between image space and the spaces of landscape encounter. Mapping represents a space, "which can only be represented in motion".[677] The motion that has been explored is how these spatialities touch, inflect, and accumulate in the storage media of bodies, photography, film, and landscape. Through a concentration on the enclosures and expenditures in systems of landscape representation, I have address the limits and excesses of representation to address the production of landscape acts.

The mappings have explored how representation structures a relation with the machine's time and with the time of the Antarctic landscape. As the photographic machine, becomes a clock for seeing, or a means to produce a landscape of the unknown, so landscape works within the body and technology to produce its own messages. The Explorers etched their marks onto the surface of the icy epidermis of Antarctica, like a lithograph, footstep by footstep. As photography orders a spacing of time, its arresting capacity and its that-which-has-been, become concentrated nodes in the narrative of histories. As a *chronogeography* of the Antarctic, the image's technological capacity often effaces the contours of the Antarctic object; the landscape as stillness, slowness, something learned intimately through touch: footstep by inverted footstep. But the ice, will not give a permanent visual trace of these intimate presences. Rather it ablates or inverts mark making, registering fleeting presences. While on a less intimate scale, Antarctica records a physical memory of human activities in its ice cores, as these explorers make their paths into a great archive of geological and atmospheric information. Like a photographic plate, the ice sheet preserves the trace of environmental events and debris, enfolding that information into icy matter.

Landscape communicates inside the failure of mechanical systems, as well as through the body. The photographer Hurley recalls, how when *The Endurance* sank, "By some curious happening, the electric emergency light becomes automatically switched on, and for an hour more an intermittent making and breaking of circuit seems to transmit a final sad signal farewell."[678] Hurley opens his shutter to receive the message. As the landscape produces the

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[677] Jameson 1991, 45.
[678] Hurley 1948, 63.

explorers, it also produces their objects. A photograph of *The Endurance* is reproduced on an exhibition catalogue, a tourist brochure. A photographic plate is sold at auction.

Jean Baptist Charcot maps under sail to produce striated sweeps of landscape. The camera gives an instantaneous record of landscape rather than one that proceeds in the duration of eye to landscape, to hand, to pencil, to paper, to eye. The photograph is an arrest, a line of landscape information, at the speed of a shutter. The extension of this cartographic practice finds its contemporary appearance in the Antarctic Ice Borehole Probe Project. The thermal energy of the probe bores into landscape matter to produce photographic strips of ice core information, a continuous stream of landscape data. The probe is being tested in Antarctica as a prelude to searching for extra terrestrial life in mars, but Martian landscapes are already sending their own messages, in the form of meteorites found in the Antarctic icecap.[679]

As Antarctic landscape images, circulate and are reproduced, they set an active form of cultural memory into place. Here within, lies the image's commodity form, a cultural accumulation of repetitive images, that simultaneously set into place, memory and forgetting. The globality of systems of communications through time and territory effect enclosure, yet at the farthest point, at the edge of production, Antarctic systems are characterised by breakdown, signalling the edges of empire and communication (and bodies). Considering the excess in systems of communication and non-linear narratives of encounter, through non-productive expenditure, alerts us to the partiality of visibility in landscape information. Resisting the mystical confidence of the Charcot's in photography as a magic conduit to the unknown, we might instead consider the creative potential of acknowledging unknowing as a dynamic within our encounter with Antarctic landscapes. As the image's commodity form is established through accumulation, the fleeting instances of landscape blankets the utility of consumption, like a layer of snow, to allow other engagements, and other images to take shape.

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[679] NASA reported that researchers have uncovered another rare piece of the red planet in Antarctica on Dec. 15, 2003. Scientists at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History involved in classification of Antarctic finds said the mineralogy, texture and the oxidized nature of the rock are unmistakably Martian. Thought to have originated within thick lava flows that crystallized on Mars approximately 1.3 billion years ago, and sent to Earth by a meteorite impact about 11 million years ago, the nakhlites are among the older known Martian meteorites. As a result, they bear witness to significant segments of the volcanic and environmental history of Mars.

Plate 67

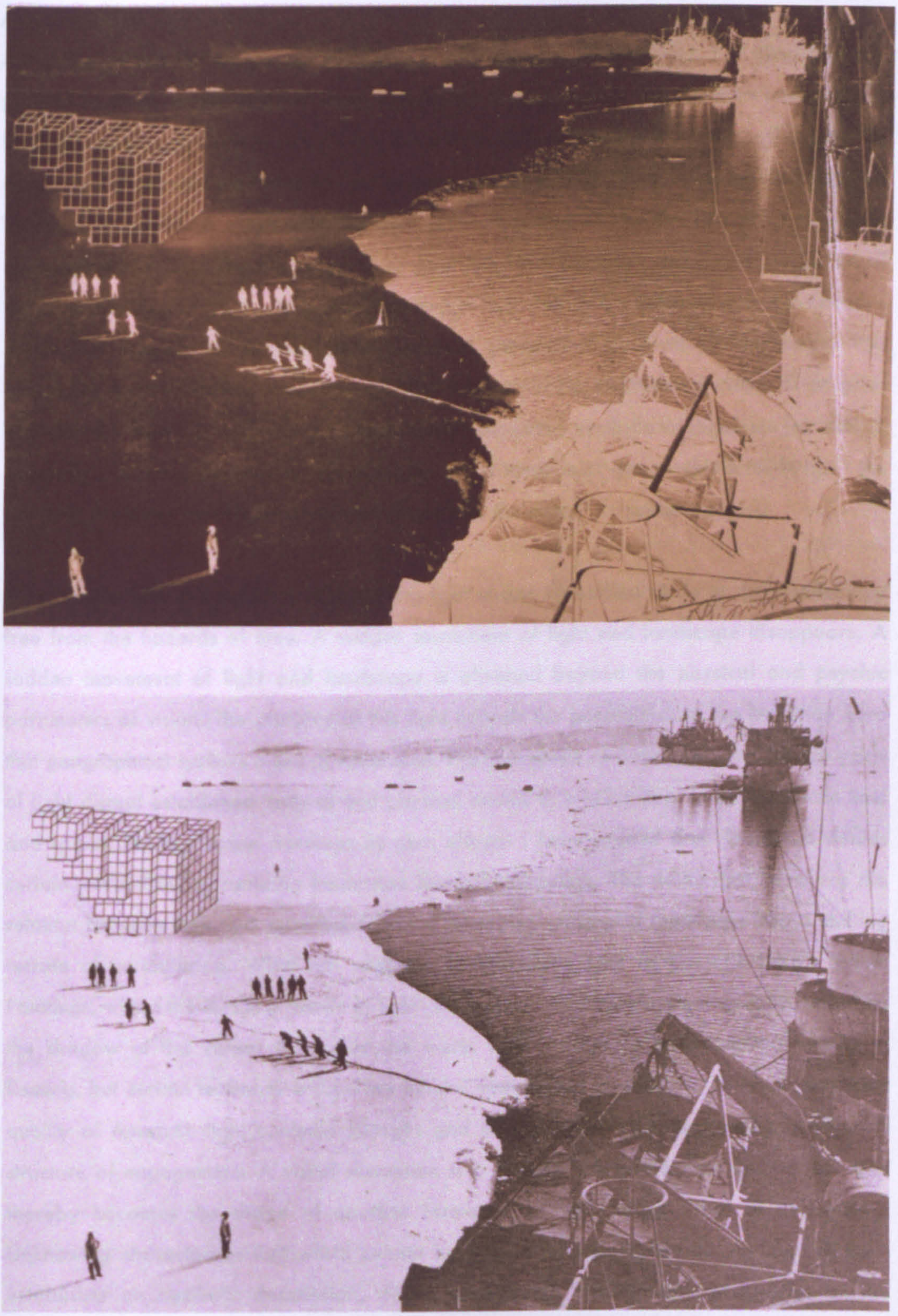

Plate 68

Conclusion: Landscapes of Arrest

Arresting vision

Antarctica alerts us to a *blind* spot in vision – a blind spot caused by light. This blind spot is a point of reversal, on which the facticity and fiction of geography's visual culture asserts itself. In visual cultures, the arrest of light can be a form of blinding, but it is also in this extreme exposure that sensation is restored. The arrest of vision is an illumination - to be disorientated by this light constitutes a release from anaesthetic deadness. In the absence of an adequate representational form, there is recourse to sensation - a wounding - and a re-examination of aesthetic information (in the project of knowledge formation). This unknowing is a productive doubt that suggests an expansion of historical geographic accounts of landscape. This alternative history has two modalities. Firstly, the form of this enlivenment depends on prior experience – thus it is mediated by a historically constituted aesthetic engagement (or vision). Secondly - by concentrating on the disorder within systems of geographic knowledge - the ordering structures that leave out that which disturbs the order, are problematised.

Time is quantal in the Antarctic. The circling light makes an endless circle of day - seemingly free from the hazards of time. A sudden movement of light and landscape disappears. A sudden movement of light and landscape is alivened beyond the physical and psychic parameters of vision. The plurality of this light cancels the possibilities of the leviathan zero that geographical systems make of Antarctica. The vast space of Antarctica, and its vast tracts of light disrupt established cultural and physical means of inhabitation. In this Antarctic time and space, the landscape develops its own affects. I have argued that Antarctica denies certain possibilities of realising landscape through the image. The doubt that structures the relation between sign and signified, forces a necessary release of landscape into a shifting terrain of inhabitation. What this suggests, is something akin to Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*, where the image is drawn in light - his painting as a form of photography, relied on the shadow of the viewer to enable the work. Light works are environmental works, a fleeting, but certain testimony of how we inhabit images and landscapes. The hallucinogenic quality of Antarctic light conjures mirages and double suns, while suggesting a different structure of engagement. A visual disruption is a disturbance that cannot be shaped, and thereby becomes the shape of another formation of knowledge - that of unknowing. Unknowing characterises that which cannot be passed through an image. As soon as form establishes an aesthetic description, desire is re-routed through this recognition. In the mistaken appearance of things, desire, unable to find an easy inhabitation, speaks to another

zone of experience. Antarctica can be passed through the image and so offers a wakening confrontation.

Through the thesis I have tried not to lose, what is already gone into less visible traces: the visceral arrest of Antarctica, and its geography, written in light. As Antarctica is often the testing ground and atmosphere for space projects, so it tests our conceptions of space and how we mark it and the histories we read in its traces. To this end, the arresting vision of Antarctic light offers an alternative geographic theory.

Arrested Vision

In the dialectic of arrest, landscape enacts its own breakdown, as representation breaks landscape flows down into the 'flotsam and jetsam' of the image. The system is defined by its manipulation of flow and arrest of landscape information. All forms of arrested landscape, come from the atomisation of landscape into parts, traces, fragments, and images cut into the material stream of matter. As vision arrests, it monumentalises landscape in time. Two distinct cultural forces pull on Antarctica - a tempering strategy to normalise Antarctica's inclusion into existing systems of knowledge generation - to tame and assimilate, through the extension of aesthetic habits of arrest. And, second, the desire to make Antarctica the phantasm of the furthest point - an existential marker of terrestrial territories. Both of these orderings consist of a continuance of systems - one pushing at the limits - the other extending a continuum. At the point of reversal, when both these forces fail to account adequately for Antarctica, there is a strange light that suggests other possibilities. As Symmes saw the aurora as a discharge from the inverted 'hole at the pole', we might consider that the light offers another geographical theory of Antarctica. To remain within this dubious light, is to remain in the reversal of spatial concepts. As Fontana's cut offered an edge on which to observe the puncture of a different order of space, so - I have argued - Antarctica offers a space in which to observe different orders of geographical description. As geographical knowledge is predominately realised through an aesthetic description of the world, this Antarctic inversion offers a dialectics of seeing, that questions the basis on which such aesthetical description rests. And in this sense, questions the project of geographical systems of knowledge production. In Antarctic light, the doubtful facticity of aesthetic descriptions of form offer the consideration of an expanded visual economy that accepts forms of reciprocity in the embodiment of vision - or a charge of 'immoral mapping'. Surrendering the theory and practice of an autonomy of vision - that seeks to make bounded travelling objects - is the basis for an exchange with landscape and the image. A dialectic of arrest - arresting vision, arrested vision - characterises the Antarctic fields I have discussed in this thesis.

What this questioning provokes is the consideration of an expansion of geographical languages to points of inversion, reversal, fiction, order that begets disorder and unknowing as a critical humility in that knowledge production. The ways in which Antarctic cultures fill the space of Antarctica by displaced longings and utopic wounds, poses the question of our tolerance of 'empty spaces', and by characterising the space as empty, our ability to recognise other types of entities and flows of energy in the landscape.

A 'Proposal for a Monument at Antarctica'

The question remains, how can this entity of differing spatial and temporal dimensions - the duration of ice - be spoken? The sculptor Anish Kapoor talks of not trying to reveal, but to formulate a "resident narrative"[680] of material and space. This narrative, I have argued is an exchange of affecting vision - but how might it be written?

In 2001 a package was discovered in the remains of Smithson's estate. Narrowly escaping destruction - taken for trash - the package was revealed to be Smithson's *Proposal for a Monument at Antartica* (1966).[681] The recent 'discovery' of Smithson's Antarctic work coincided with an increased visibility of ideas and work about Antarctica. In relation to the beginning of this thesis, Antarctica has progressively become more visible as a complex object, so that much of what was written earlier became redundant. In that redundancy, a change can be witnessed about the development of Antarctic visual knowledges. The aestheticisation of Antarctic politics in the 1980s left a legacy of increased communication about Antarctica and its importance in global systems. This legacy has been characterised by an arrested vision of Antarctica that obscured many of the complex questions that Antarctica posed within global imaginaries. Ironically, it is this increased visibility of Antarctica that has prompted other kinds of creative engagement from 'outside' traditional Antarctic cultures. At the National Theatre, Antarctica flipped, inverted, and fissured through urban space in Almond's A. At the ICA, Scott finds himself partaking in John Bock's *Klütterkammer* installation.[682]

The discovery of Smithson's work brings an important question to the fore - what kind of monument might we make of the Antarctic? What is the absurd logic of a monument that could clarify this exchange? A monument is a point of arrest in landscape that sets up a structured encounter that forms a parallel landscape to the monumental arrest of the image.

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[680] Anish Kapoor, *Anish Kapoor: Making Emptiness* (London: Haywood Gallery/University of California, 1998), 27.
[681] Smithson's misspelling of Antartica has been officially changed by his estate to the correct spelling of Antarctica. It is interesting to note that the American phonetic pronunciation of Antarctica does drop the 'c' and places emphasis on the 'an', dropping the 't'. The *Proposal* was exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2004.
[682] John Bock, ICA, London, 24 September - 7 November 2004.

The traces of landscape encounters, inflected and imagined through images, are a monument to the past and the structure of the present. What is the medium of exchange of this landscape conversation? The monumental arrests our vision and arrests landscape toward a locus of meaning. In Antarctica, like the images, any monument would have to be constantly cared for in order to escape destruction or submergence under the rubric of a stronger landscape force - that is the ice. Who would come and see it, one might imagine? As tourists, continue to come to see the debris from the heroic era (the huts, and frozen dogs, and their frozen detritus), what kind of visitor would an Antarctic monument have? Would there be access for Antarctic residents - penguin entrances and a microscopic slide for the small biota of Antarctic mites? Would it be viewable from space - to send an extra-terrestrial message as Antarctica crashes into wayward Martian meteorites?

Smithson's monument engages his concepts of negative seeing (or anti-vision) in its pairing of the reversals of the positive and negative photostat. The monument, unlike the shadows of the men, casts out its own shadow in the opposite direction disordering the logic of light, and from that we could presume, time. This suggests the plurality of landscape durations and times - of human and geological. The location of the monument is pertinent to Smithson's site-specific engagements, his interests in time travel, entropy, glaciology and crystallography – what he called 'inverse meanings' reversals, and contradictions, negatives that become positives. Landscape is conceived as a double path of meaning, as he suggests "It is always back and forth"[683] - in a dialectic of landscape exchange.

Smithson wrote, "Remote places such as... the frozen wastes of the North and South Poles could be coordinated by art forms that use the actual land as a medium."[684] Landscape as medium clarifies the dynamic, shifting exchange of light, temperature, and vision that is a continuum of exchange between porous bodies and fields. According to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which features frequently in Smithson's works, at zero degrees Kelvin, entropy ceases and 'all matter may well be converted into a sludge of energy in the far-distant future' - the radiation of light from the time before earth becomes a residue for Antarctic collecting. In Smithson's essay "The Shape of the Future and Memory" (1966), written in the same year as the *Proposal for a Monument at Antartica*, a time traveller who "advances deep into the future discovers a decrease in movement, the mind enters a state of 'slow motion.'" The time traveller "sees, the 'ice along the margin' – a double perspective of

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[683] Robert Sobieszek, "Robert Smithson's Proposal for a monument at Anartica" in *Robert Smithson* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004),143.
[684] Smithson, "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site" in *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings* ed. Flam 1996, 56.

past and future that follows a projection that vanishes into a non-existent presence."[685] This double perspective - of past and future - is sited in Antarctica.

Akin to the barren landscape of J G Ballard's *Terminal Beach* (1964) - which Smithson cites - the double perspective of landscape is characterised by minimal and maximum human engagement. The *Terminal Beach* incorporates the technological nature of a post-nuclear testing site and the minimalism of the decayed fragments of a deserted inhabitation. Much like the minimalism and monumentalism of Antarctic landscape. In the debris of civilisation, Traven makes his home in the decaying concrete blockhouses, these monoliths that have become co-ordinates are absurd monuments to logic in a barren landscape. The inner world bleeds through to the outer world through these strange monuments. For Traven, "the system of megaliths now provided a complete substitute for those functions of his mind which gave to it its sense of the sustained rational order of time and space. Without them, his awareness of reality shrank to little more than the few square inches of sand beneath his feet."[686] In the image of form, space is psychically ordered and time becomes human time, to counteract the voiding qualities of an overwhelmingly non-human space. The monoliths become irresolvable ciphers of exchange between an internal and external perceptual field of landscape, "like the symbols of a cryptic alphabet".[687] The landscape is coded with an architecture of time. In the terminal beach, Traven observes where the weapons tests had fused the sand into layers, forming pseudo-geological strata that marked out the geology of the nuclear age. Ballard suggests, "Typically the island inverted the geologist's maxim, 'the key to the past lies in the present.' Here, the key to the present lay in the future. This island was a fossil of time future."[688] The Antarctic ice offers another residue of 'time future'. As we make our arrested images as monuments to Antarctica - it offers a more sobering and ecstatic monument to arrest our vision. In the excess of light, Antarctica awakens aesthetic inhabitations and stands witness to human excess. In this ecology, is an ethics of cultural interaction with Antarctica.

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[685] Smithson, "The Shape of Future and Memory" in *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings* ed. Flam 1996, 332.
[686] J. G. Ballard, *The Terminal Beach* (London: Orion, 2001), 145.
[687] Ballard 2001, 134.
[688] Ballard 2001, 137-8.

Appendix 1: Selected Acronyms

AAD	Australian Antarctic Division
ANZ	Antarctica New Zealand
ASOC	Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition
ATCM	Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting
ATCPs	Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties
ATS	Antarctic Treaty System
BAS	British Antarctic Survey
CCAMLR	Convention for the Conservation of Marine and Living Resources
CHM	Common Heritage of Mankind
CRAMRA	Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EISs	Environmental impact Statements
GP	Greenpeace
IGY	International Geophysical Year
NSF	National Science Foundation (US)
Protocol	Protocol on Environmental Protection (known also as the Madrid Protocol)
RGS	Royal Geographical Society
SCAR	Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research
SPAs	Specially Protected Areas
SSSIs	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
SPRI	Scott Polar Research Institute (University of Cambridge)
UN	United Nations
USAP	United States Antarctic Program

Appendix 2: Site-specificity: a short detour into the site

> The distinguishing characteristic of today's site-orientated art is the way in which the artwork's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) *and* the social conditions of institutional frame (as site) are both *subordinate* to a *discursively* determined site that it delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate.[689]

> Where else could they [the objects of Borges Encyclopaedia] be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language? Yet, though language can spread them before us, it can do so only in unthinkable space... he [Borges] does away with the *site*, the mute ground upon which it is possible for entities to be juxtaposed.[690]

Foucault's introduction to *The Order of Things* starts with a discussion of Borges fantastical description of the *unthinkable* encyclopaedia, in which all manner of things are sequentially arranged to give the appearance of an ordering logic. The basis of its unthinkability is the removal of the *operating table*. The *tabula* that, "enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put then in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designated their similarities and their differences – the table upon which since the beginning of time, language has intersected space."[691] Borges' *Atlas of the Impossible* reminds Foucault of the site on which knowledge is constructed, at a material and cognitive level. It also reminds him to laugh, if somewhat hysterically. The geography in which Foucault argues that ordering operates in is similar to the relation between the *Antarctic Manual's* cartography and narrative, wherein knowledge is simultaneously constructed between the material and conceptual.

A *consideration of the site has been a predominant concern of critical art practice and a* place from which - like Borges Encyclopaedia - to disrupt and throw into relief the ordering practices upon which we rely to proceed. Concerns about the site of art practice, termed site-specific art has undergone a changing relation with the nature of the site. Thinking through the changes of the conditions of site is a means to address the changing relationship to place that critical art practice has undergone. And is a way to think about what are the potentials of a critical art practice specific to Antarctic (if such a thing is possible). Site-specific art work until the 1960s signalled work that was about *presence* and *immobility*, even if this meant the destruction or disappearance of the work. As Kwon comments,

> whether inside the white cube or out in the Nevada desert, whether architectural or landscape-orientated, site-specific art initially took the "site" as an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of constitutive physical

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[689] Kwon 2000, 43.
[690] Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things, An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books 1994), xvii.
[691] Foucault 1994, xvii.

> elements: length, depth, height, texture, buildings or parks; existing conditions... distinct topographic features...[692]

Kwon argues that this consideration of the site was in response to modernist sculptures pre-occupation with self-referentially, autonomy and indifference to place. Essentially, it was a reaction against modernist assumptions of a white space - *tabula rasa* - that was explicitly assumed in the construction of transportable and placeless sculptures. Modernist sculpture's production of stable autonomous objects that functioned regardless of their location forced a re-consideration of the relation between object and site in the site-specific work of the late 1960s/early 1970s.[693] The refusal of mobility, and an investment in the meaning of the specifics of a particular site, site-specific artists argued - denied the existing commodity form of modernist sculpture, which freely circulated in the market economy. Accompanying the re-conceptualisation of the siting and conditions for the site of art came the analogy of mapping as a means with which to track its movement. As Hal Foster comments, "in an important moment Robert Smithson and others pushed this cartographic operation to a geological extreme that transformed the siting of art dramatically."[694]

Rosalyn Deutsche[695] made the distinction between two kinds of work being produced at this time, work that sought to *integrate* with the existing environment, and an interruptive work that acted as an *intervention* in the existing order of the site. Both these models, argues Kwon were fully determined and directed by their environment:

> the uncontaminated and pure idealist space of dominant modernism was radically displaced by the materiality of the natural landscape or the impure and ordinary space of the everyday. The space of art was no longer perceived as a blank space, a tabula rasa, but a *real* place. The art object or event in this context was to be singularly experienced in the here-and-now through the bodily presence of each viewing subject, in a sensorial immediacy of spatial extension and temporal duration.[696]

The lack of repeatability of the work in any other site denied its commodity reproduction. And the lack of a transportable and easily defined object, located the work into the site of its production, and thus not able to circulate on the market. This was important because it accentuated the phenomenological experience, and thus actively worked against the frame of the image and the tyranny of the visual in subject experience. As the work was to be completed in the viewing subject, it suggested a much more active engagement with the work and thus a more active subject than modernism's autonomous sculptures. Thus, early site-specific work demanded a cognitive body inextricably located in place.

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[692] Kwon 2000, 38.
[693] Particularly the work of Robert Smithson, Dennis Oppenheim, Walter de Maria, Nancy Holt and Richard Serra.
[694] Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), 184.
[695] Rosalyn Deutsche, "Uneven Development: Public Art" in *October* 47 Winter 1988, 3-52.
[696] Kwon 2000, 38.

Minimalism influenced a different model of site-specificity that "implicitly challenged the "innocence" of space and the occupying presumption of a universal viewing subject."[697] Akin to the criticism levelled at phenomenology and its essentialised body-of-experience, the minimalism movement suggested the memory of bodies, their histories, and the memories of places. The site of a site-specific practice developed into a space conceived of *in relation* to its physical/spatial and cultural framework - as defined by the institutions of art and a body there within, that was racial, gendered, sexual, and economically located. As Kwon argues:

> the site comes to encompass a relay of several interrelated but different spaces and economies, including the studio, the gallery, the museum, art criticism, art history, the art market etc, that together constitute a system of practices that is not separate but open to social, economic and political pressure. To be "specific" to a site, in turn, is to decode/and or recode the institutional conventions so as to expose their hidden yet motivated operations.[698]

This in effect *dematerialised*[699] the site of art production (and the art object itself), by the interrogating of how the art object's techniques and effects were part of its location. This included the withdrawal of visual pleasure and the adoption of anti-visual strategies such as, "informational, textual, expositional, didactic – or immaterial altogether – gestures, events or performances broken by temporal boundaries. The "work" seeks not to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewers *critical* (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of that viewing."[700] The physical permanence of a work was replaced by an idea of its fleeting impermanence - in arrested moments - akin to a Deleuzian notion of nomadism, the work is cast into a permanent state of *becoming*. As a word of caution, Kwon adds that this championing of nomadism is the same movement that characterises the mobility of capital and power, and its commodifying potential, so should be deployed within that knowledge.

In order to aerate the sites of knowledge production, site-specific work, like much critical geographical practice, shifted its focus to a less institutionalised aggravation in order to concentrate on the *practice of the everyday*. This has meant the expansion of art sites, like the work of the late 60s into non-art spaces dealing with non-art issues, in order to re-activise its cultural work (like the 'waste' sites of Oppenheim and Smithson). What has been problematic is the way in which the site of physical intervention is often not the site of discursive intervention, and so there does not necessarily exist an indexical feedback

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[697] Ibid., 39.
[698] Ibid., 40.
[699] See Lucy Lippard, *Six years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object* (London: Univ. of California Press, 1997). Lippard maps the key works and discussion of the dematerialisation of the artwork from 1966-1971.
[700] Kwon 2000, 40.

between the two, "which is to say, the site is now structured (inter) textually rather than spatially, and its model is not a map but an itinerary, a fragmentary sequence of events and actions *through* space, that is a nomadic narrative whose path is articulated by the artist."[701] Site-specific work has since the 1970s ungrounded itself from the materiality of place into a discursive vector of movement through place, often at the cost of making itself subordinate to a discursively determined site.

Hal Foster has argued for a consideration of the "Artist as Ethnographer" in *The Return of the Real*.[702] His work signals in its title, a challenge to the concept of the dematerialisation of the art object that Lippard and others argued in the 1980s. The 'return of the real' he argues is today manifest in art practice that seeks to be grounded in sites and in bodies - and thus acknowledge its materiality - as well as its location in time and in space. Using a more fluid notion of ethnographer than anthropologists would perhaps adhere to, he does so to communicate how the artist has become an observer in the field whose practice is a process-based text (such as Mark Dion). In doing so, Foster, comments that this 'ideology of the text' that is a persistent recurrence in the recording of practice as discourse, persists in rendering the ethnographic reader more authoritative not less. As ethnographic mapping is predisposed to a Cartesian operation that leads the observer to abstract, or even as Kwon argues, essentialised the culture of study, "such mapping may confirm rather than contest the authority of the mapper over site in a way that reduces the required exchange of dialogical fieldwork."[703]

Site-specific practice can lead (as I argue in *Part II*) to the erasure of site specificity through the mobilising of the difference of place, as commodification or a discursive marker. While site-specific work can be a positive process with which to address the visibility of places, this is poised alongside the power of extraction that can be exacted through the desire for different spaces from which to speak. As Kwon comments,

> certainly site-specific art can lead to the unearthing of repressed histories, provide support for greater visibility of "minor" places so far ignored by dominant culture. But in as much as the current socioeconomic order thrives on the (artificial) production and (mass) consumption of difference (for difference's sake), the siting of art in "real" places can also be a means to *extract* the social and historical dimensions *out* of places to variously serve..."[704]

Through differientality, site-specificity attempts to accentuate difference, or specificity, while at the same time making it a *transportable territory* that can be consumed in the gallery or

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[701] Ibid., 45.
[702] Foster 1996, 171-205.
[703] Ibid., 190.
[704] Kwon 2000, 50.

museum. Antarctica is commonly sited as such a point of difference, not as location or place but as metaphor for incomprehensible distance, at the furthest point of geographies projection and a conceptual humanistic understanding of the world, or at its beginning the A or alpha (such as in Darren Almond's multi-media installation A). Kwon concludes that site-specific work today needs to embrace a "*relational specificity* that can hold in tension the distant poles of spatial experiences... addressing the differences of adjacencies and distances *between* one thing, one person, one place, one thought, one fragment *next* to another, rather than invoking equivalencies via one thing *after* another." Only these cultural practices, engagements that have this relational relation can turn the localised into a long term commitment that transform *passings* into *social marks*.

To avoid a generic serialisation of undifferentiated engagement (and thus its commodification and circulation), the intimacies of engagement must remain, and in relation to, and reaction to, the specifics of place. Rather than making place mean solely *because I was there* it may be pertinent to ask *where?* And *how do I stand here in intimate relation to other places?* The first step is to acknowledge how the mobility that allowed this placing is located in a relation with the patronage that bestowed the privilege of such presencing. *How will the intimate geographies of being here - in a tent on an ice shelf - be erased in making visible and transportable the territory of this present?*

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