THE TRUTH AND DEATH OF INDEXICALITY
PHOTOGRAPHY, PHILOSOPHY AND CINEMA

By

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B.F.A., Simon Fraser University, 1998
Diploma in Film Production,
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

In
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Theatre, Film and Creative Writing—Film Program)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September 2002
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Vancouver, Canada

Date October 8, 2002

DE-6 (2/88)
This thesis traces the complicated and contradictory historical ontology of photography by examining the myths of truth and death that surround the medium. Multiple examples from contemporary narrative cinema of diverse nations, time periods and genres are used to elucidate the theoretical and philosophical issues that photography attracts.

In the first half of this thesis, the "truth" of photography's indexicality is evaluated. In Chapter 1, the myth of truth is discussed within the context of the historical development of realism. Realism and "truth" are shown to be mythical constructions, which is demonstrated by the selected films that focus on the personal use of photography. Chapter 2 examines the use of photography as an institutional tool of power. The films of this chapter show that power and corruption can be synonymous. In Chapter 3, the multiple associations of death that surround photography are discussed. The indexicality of photography is shown to occupy a temporal death. In Chapter 4, the structural differences and similarities between photography and film are raised within the context of spectatorship. Finally, Chapter 5 examines the representation of death in photographic content. The Victorian craze for spirit and post-mortem photography reveals the strong preoccupation in that society with immortality. In sum, it is
the integral characteristic of indexicality that both prevents photography from possessing an autonomous and singular identity while permitting the medium to have multiple meanings in diverse contexts.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction. The Truth and Death of Indexicality

Chapter I. Photography as it Concerns Truth, Realism and Self-Authentication

Chapter II. The Ethics of the Archive

Chapter III. Photography's Multiple Associations With Death

Chapter IV. Narrative Death

Chapter V. Metamorphic Death: Post-mortem and Spirit Photography in Narrative Cinema

Epitaph

Filmography

Bibliography
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not have been either begun or finished without the inspiration and intellectual and emotional support of the following people. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Karen Benbassat, Zosia Dorcey, the Edwards family, Dr. Mark Harris, Gwen Haworth, Mark Juric, Ranko and Agica Juric, Professor E. Ann Kaplan, Sharon McGowan, Professor Brian McIlroy, Professor John O’Brien, Heather O’Hagan, Gail Oelkers, Andrew Pettit, Iaian Pettit, and Ridley. You have all played invaluable roles that contributed to the completion of this thesis. I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother and father.
Introduction. The Truth and Death of Indexicality

My initial dual interest in photography and film occurred while I was completing the fourth year of my Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. We were instructed to develop one project for the entire year, and thus a significant topic or issue had to be selected. I decided to explore the topic, "the ethics of representation", in response to my trip to Africa the previous summer. On my trip, we visited many remote tribes that were slowly integrating into modern society. The traditions and customs of these smaller tribes were becoming lost to urbanization. As a photographer, I felt compelled to photograph the people due to their unique and quickly disappearing traditional cultures. At the same time, I felt that as a Western tourist, I had the power of mobility. In other words, I had the ability to enter and leave a country, while some tribes were experiencing extreme destitution, partly due to their limited options. On the one hand, I felt that I had a responsibility as a photographer and artist to capture archival images of declining tribal traditions, so that some time in the future, after their customs had disappeared, their cultures would live on through my images. On the other hand, I felt that I was objectifying the people because I had the power and privilege to photograph them when and where I chose. I was
participating in "the salvage paradigm", yet ethically troubled by representing the "Other".

I expressed my concerns regarding the ethics of representation in the film *Kenya*. For this project, I filmed the still images that I took in Kenya, and wrote a voice-over narration expressing these issues. I "married" the voice-over with the still images, and created a film. This project allowed me to realize the intrinsic relationship between photography and film. At the most basic level, film is twenty-four still photographs per second. Even though film would not exist without photography, there are differences between the two mediums. Photographs are taken from time, and movies take time. It is the narrative sweep of motion that allows us to forget the intrinsic and dependent relationship between film and photography. But what happens when a film is about photography, or photographs are used within the film? Suddenly, a self-reflexive moment occurs, where the film pays homage to its basic form of being, the photographic still image.

When I began my research on the topic of photography in film, it was difficult to find writing on the role photography played when used in the context of a motion picture. I found two sources that directly addressed this topic, Garrett Stewart’s *Between Film and Screen* and an issue of *Wide Angle,*
called "On Photography and Film". Other well-known photography and film theorists such as Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag and Christain Metz briefly compare and evaluate the two mediums. But their texts are for the most part focused on photography or film, not both. With little film research to draw on, I approached my topic by delving into photographic theory. I applied the issues and concepts of this discourse to films that incorporate photographic stills. I have provided analysis of the photographic theorists such as John Tagg, Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag, Allan Sekula and Geoffrey Batchen and used their concepts as a springboard for my interpretation and analysis of films that use photography.

These theorists take diverse standpoints in their ideological approaches; for example, Tagg aligns himself with the Marxist perspective as it concerns photography, while Barthes takes a contradictory phenomenological approach. Tagg is primarily concerned with the social responsibility and ethics of the capitalist system as it engages photography in an exchange of power. Barthes negotiates the individual interpretive process of the photographic viewer. While the ideological camps of these two theorists could be considered diametrically opposed, their ideas can still be applied to articulate the central point that photography has a multi-
faceted identity and this slippery identity allows the medium to be used in diverse ways for numerous purposes.

Without combining photographic and filmic discourse, I would not be able to adequately and comprehensively discuss the complicated medium of photography. Film is a combination of multiple art forms—combining drama, landscape, music and philosophy into one cultural product. For this reason, narrative film is the ideal medium to demonstrate the multiple uses of photography. While there are other film genres besides the narrative film that could be incorporated into my thesis, such as documentary and experimental cinema, these genres alone cannot demonstrate the complex use of photography as a medium. The documentary film form is limited in its use of photography, which is usually for historical truth claim purposes, whereby black and white photographic inserts are used to authenticate past events. Experimental films often challenge dominant cultural myths, but there are very few experimental films that incorporate the use of photography, the availability of these films is limited, and again there is very little critical writing in this field. By relying on the diversity of narrative films to demonstrate the various theoretical issues that surround photography, I am able to tangibly argue the impact and cultural reception of photography's multiple identities.
I have used theorists with contradictory perspectives to discuss a contradictory medium, and I have crossbred photographic and filmic discourse to demonstrate the power and influence of the philosophical issues of the truth and death of indexicality. I have tried to reconsider the concepts of photography and film theorists by unifying the two discourses under the philosophical umbrella of Truth and Death.

To demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between photography and film, we can examine a narrative film that concerns the construction of a film from photographs. In Brian De Palma's *Blow-Out* (1981), a sound designer, Jack Terri, makes his living by recording sound effects for horror movies. When he accidentally records an automobile crash that kills a presidential candidate, Jack quickly discovers a political conspiracy. While Jack is listening to the sound tape that recorded the accident, he thinks that he hears two loud shots. The first sound is a gunshot and the second sound is the blowout of the tire. There is no way of confirming his suspicions until he watches the news headlines that state that a photographer was at the scene of the accident. The photographer was there late that night, and took a series of pictures as the car swerved off the bridge into the river. The photographs were sold and publicly printed in a magazine.
Jack buys the magazine and cuts out each individual frame of every photograph. Initially, he makes a flipbook of the images, thumbing through them to create a crude illusion of motion. He then records each photographic still image on film with an animation camera. When the film is processed, he synchronizes the soundtrack recorded from the time of the accident with the photographic stills of the accident that are now in film form. When he synchronizes the two mediums, his suspicions are confirmed. At the sound of the first shot, which Jack thought sounded like a gunshot, there is a flash of light in one frame. In the next frame, the flash of light disappears. The flash of light is in synchronization with the sound of the first loud shot. This leads Jack to believe that the flash of light is gunfire, aimed at the wheel of the car, which caused the car to crash. Jack discovers a political conspiracy by recreating the accident scene from photographic stills and recording sound into a film form. This example demonstrates how the photographic still was re-contextualized.

This re-contextualization of the photographic still into a film form demonstrates the integral relationship between photography and film. However, this example also demonstrates how the indexical power of photography and its rhetoric of truth are carried over into the film form to prove a political conspiracy. Photography, here, serves a dual purpose. As John
Tagg explains, it is photography's lack of a singular identity that allows the medium to be used in diverse and contradictory ways. He writes: "Photography as such has no identity. Its status as a technology varies with the power relations which invest it. Its nature as a practice depends on the institutions and agents which define it and set it to work" (63). Tagg takes on a Marxist perspective to demonstrate how the institutional use of photography functions as a tool for unethical power displays. While it is not my intention to entirely take on such an ideological approach, I do agree with Tagg's premise regarding photography's lack of a singular, "true" meaning. While Tagg's concept is a central premise in my thesis, I agree more with the tone of Geoffrey Batchen's less dogmatic perambulations. He writes that there is no neutral ground where photography can speak for itself, where it can emit some essential, underlying "true" meaning. With no fixed identity or historical unity, photography potentially belongs to every institution and discipline but its own (6). According to Allan Sekula, "Because of this indexical property, photographs are fundamentally grounded in contingency" (Batchen 9). In other words, as an index, the photograph is never itself, but always by its very nature, a tracing of something else. As my thesis will demonstrate, photography occupies many functions and purposes and it is used in diverse and contradictory ways.
The status of photography’s multiple identities is due to the medium’s inescapable characteristic of indexicality. Photography’s indexicality allowed the medium to be associated with the two philosophically contradictory categories of truth and death. In this thesis, Chapter 1: “Photography as it Concerns Truth, Realism and Self-Authentication” traces how, historically, associations of truth were attached to photography. Photography’s characteristics of mechanical indexicality rendered images of realism. Realism was considered objective and, therefore, true. However, the rhetoric of objective truth that surrounds photography is easily deflated when the subjective qualities of photography are acknowledged. The three films that I have chosen for this chapter, Proof (1991), directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse, Memento (2000), directed by Christopher Nolan, and Blade Runner (1982), directed by Ridley Scott, demonstrate how the protagonists, in order to overcome their perceived inadequacies, use the evidential force of photographic truth. However, in all three films, the "truth" claims of photography prove to be fictional and elusive.

While Chapter 1 explores the myth of truth and how this myth has had influences in the private sphere, Chapter 2: “The Ethics of the Archive” examines how the myth of truth is used in conjunction with photography in the public sphere. Chapter 2
looks at the role of photography in the disciplinary institution. At the time of the birth of photography, a changing social demographic brought on the need for the institutional police force. The unethical power display of the privileged over the Other is demonstrated by the way photography was used to ensure order and control. Photography was used to identify criminals and the archived images created an information system of surveillance which strengthened the power of the institution. Ironically, the films I have chosen for this section, Peter Weir's *Witness* (1985), Paul Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct* (1992) and Spike Lee's *Clockers* (1995), reveal that photography worked to identify criminals who were not outside the institution but within the institution.

Both Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the myth of truth that rests in photography's quality of indexicality. While some equated indexicality with truth, others equated it with death. Photography's ability to replicate reality, or to create a double, caused the cultural reception of the process to associate it with mortality, the occult and the supernatural. In Chapter 3: "Photography's Multiple Associations With Death," I outline the seminal essays that concern photographic theory. I discuss the metaphysical death presented by photography due to the medium's unique relationship to time and space. This tenuous representational quality of temporal indexicality
causes the photographic viewer to experience mortal vulnerability. The three films I discuss here, Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966), and Roger Spottiswoode's *Under Fire* (1983), demonstrate the metaphysical death of photography and its components of temporality, memento mori and spectator phenomenology.

Chapter 4: "Narrative Death" examines the structural differences and similarities between photography and film as they relate to time, space and history. When the two mediums are placed together, as in the case of a mini-photographic narrative within the meta-filmic narrative, there is a process of spectator recoil that occurs. In all three films, Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1973), Alan J. Pakula's *Parallax View* (1974), and Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run* (1998), I demonstrate that the mini-photographic narrative echoes the philosophical content of the meta-filmic narrative, which is concerned with a prevalent death drive.

In Chapter 5: "Metamorphic Death: Postmortem and Spirit Photography in Narrative Cinema," I discuss the material qualities of photographic death work. The Victorian phenomenon of posthumous photography and supernatural photography reveal the prevalent need in that society to achieve immortality via the image. Photography's mechanical and indexical characteristics lead to the uncanny associations of the double.
The technology of the camera was thought to possess supernatural powers. The immortal drive of death in photographic content is shown in *The Others* (2000) directed by Alejandro Amenabar, *The Asphyx* (1973) directed by Peter Newbrook, and *Ring* (1999), directed by Dong-gin Kim.

Finally, I conclude with an epitaph on photography's growing status as a dying medium due to the rapid development of digitalization. The proliferation of digital imaging and its process of manufacture that does not depend on a referent questions photography's associations with truth and raises epistemological concerns on ethics, knowledge and culture. The film that I use to demonstrate the complex interweave of truth and death of digital imaging is *RoboCop* (1987), directed by Paul Verhoeven.

Photography's quality of indexicality allowed for the medium to be associated with the contradictory qualities of Truth and Death. The films that I have chosen demonstrate the diverse uses of the photographic image. As John Tagg writes, we cannot go through a day without seeing a photograph (34). Advertising hoardings, news photographs, magazine covers, window displays and posters of all kinds surround us. We carry photographs in our wallets, collect them in albums, and stick them in our passports, bus passes or student cards. They are images of ourselves, our family, and our friends - portraits
with meanings and values that lie in numerous social exchanges and rituals, which would now seem incomplete without photography. These various social practices are comprehensively enriched by photography. The diverse circumstances in which photography is used demonstrates the medium's multiple identities. With multiple identities that carry diverse meanings, photography can be used in powerfully contradictory ways and it can take on many different meanings.

Perhaps the film that most overtly and poignantly articulates the multiple uses of photography and the medium's importance in our everyday lives is the very recent One Hour Photo (2002), directed by Mark Romanek. The central protagonist, “Sy, the photo guy”, works in a small one-hour photographic processing lab in a suburban mall. He has worked as a photographic processing clerk and technician for over ten years, and he has taken his job of processing, developing, and printing negatives for his customers very seriously. The roles of film his customers bring to him to be developed form an integral part of his identity, so much so, that his fantasies are fostered by observing the family photographs of one young family of three: mother, father and son. He keeps track of the young family's growth and development over the course of ten years by obsessively pinning copies of all of their prints on
his living room wall at home and creating a voyeuristic mural into their personal lives.

The importance of the role photography plays in the rituals of our everyday lives, as Tagg notes, is reiterated in Sy's voice over narration. He sentimentally states:

Family photographs depict smiling faces, births, weddings, holidays, kids' birthday parties. People take photographs of the happy moments in their lives. Someone looking through our family photo albums would conclude that we live joyous happy lives. No one takes a photograph of something they want to forget.

Even though Sy realizes that people are creating a fictive illusion of family happiness by selectively photographing positive moments, he persistently imagines himself as a member of the young family and desperately wants to be a participant in the moments they choose to capture. Sy further expresses the importance of his career by providing the logical argument that "When people's houses are on fire, what is the first thing they save after their family and pets? Their family photographs". Thus, Sy has observed that photography is highly valued and treasured in society.

Sy also articulates the prolific use of photography in society by noting the diversity of people who regularly require his services. There is one woman who brings in a role of film every week of her cats. There is the insurance adjuster who consistently brings in roles of film that contain images of car
accidents. There are the parents of a newborn baby who drop off dozens of rolls of film after every weekend. There is the nurse from the cosmetic clinic down the street, who brings in before and after shots of cosmetic surgery. And, of course, there is always the amateur pornographic artist.

Sy's observations of the types of photographs people take and the diversity of people who take photographs demonstrates that photography crosses many socially constructed boundaries, such as class, race and gender. It is photography's slippery quality of indexicality that permits the medium to be used across opposing contexts. The wide scope of functions and purposes that photography occupies, then, suggests as Tagg has theorized, that photography has a complicated and multifaceted identity.
Chapter I. Photography as it Concerns Truth, Realism and Self-Authentication

"The photo gives a little truth" (Barthes 103).

The historical ontology of photography is complicated and contradictory. In this chapter, I will investigate the myth of truth that has been attached to photography from its earliest beginnings. I will deconstruct the realist myth of truth that surrounds photography by locating the historical ontology of the still photograph in the nineteenth century. I will then demonstrate how these myths of truth are still associated with photography and are presently employed in contemporary narrative cinema. Specifically, in this chapter, I will examine how the photograph is used within the private, rather than the public realm.

The contradictory myth of the historical ontology of photography has been carried forward to the beliefs about photography in contemporary Western culture. Since cinema is a cultural product and an accumulation of diverse mediums and ideas, it works very well to demonstrate current notions that surround the photographic image. In the three films that I have chosen - Proof, Memento, and Blade Runner - the protagonists of interest share a commonality of personal impairment. In Proof, Martin is a blind photographer; therefore, he never sees the photographs he takes. But via the act of photographing, he
feels that he is participating in the visual world of truth, and this is an attempt to bypass his feelings of inadequacy for being blind. In Memento, Shelby suffers from anterograde amnesia. He has no short-term memory, so he takes Polaroids of everyone he meets and every place he travels. He takes notes on the photographs in order to construct his own private archive - an external memory of sorts. In Blade Runner, Rebecca provides family photographs for Deckard to prove that she is human. In all three films, the protagonists use the myth of the truth of photography for self-authentication due to their uncertainty of their own identities.

The aura of truth that surrounds the photographic image can be understood by looking to Western systems of ideas and the ways knowledge and experience are ordered. The origin of equating veracity to the photographic image can be considered in a historical and sociological context (Lister 10-14). As John Tagg asserts in The Burden of Representation (1985), the photograph came to stand as evidence by a social, semiotic process, not by any natural or existential fact of the medium (4). To understand the ascribed evidential force of photography, we must first look at the desire for achieving "realism" in painting, a style which was most notable during the Renaissance with the invention of the camera obscura. Victor Burgin observes that the representational system of
photography is identical with that of classical painting because both depend on the camera obscura (qtd. in Batchen 19). As Andre Bazin writes, in the fifteenth century, Western painting shifted from privileging spiritual expressionism to wanting to achieve a complete imitation of the world. The objective of total "imitation" was realized with the camera obscura, the first scientific, mechanical system of visual reproduction. The camera obscura provided the painter with the ability to render subject matter in the three-point perspective of Albertian optics, thus approaching a more accurate and realistic likeness to the outside world. The illusion of three-dimensional space on a two dimensional plane appeared as our eyes perceive the world (10-11). Thus, the replication of our own perception was considered more realistic and "truthful" when compared to the two-point perspective rendered in Western painting up until the fifteenth century.

Barthes writes that Renaissance painters have often been given credit for inventing photography, as the photograph utilizes Renaissance framing, three-point perspective and the optics of the camera obscura (80). However, Barthes disagrees with this linkage, as does John Berger, who attaches the ideology of positivism and the development of the camera together, due to their simultaneous births in the nineteenth century (Barthes 80; qtd. in Robins 33). Kevin Robins notes
Berger's point that when the camera was invented in 1839, Auguste Comte was completing his Cours de Philosophie Positive (33). Positivism and the camera grew up together, and what sustained them as practices "was the belief that observable, quantifiable facts, recorded by scientists and experts, would one day offer man such a total knowledge about nature and society that he would be able to order them both" (33). Robins continues by stating that photography represented a privileged means for understanding the "truth" about the world, its nature and its properties (34). He references Mitchell, who notes that the camera has been regarded as "an ideal Cartesian instrument - a device for use by observing subjects to record supremely accurate traces of the objects before them" (28). With the removal of human intervention in the process of registering and recording an accurate image, photography was considered to be objectively neutral. As Mitchell states, "The photographic procedure, like...scientific procedures, seems to provide a guaranteed way of overcoming subjectivity and getting at the real truth" (28). Positivism can be seen as an attempt to rationalize the image.

Aided by the camera obscura, Western painters were driven to "imitate" the world. Science and art appeared to coalesce. The philosophy of positivism determined the ideology of objectivity, which fueled the merger of empiricism with
photography, and its myth of truth. With the scientific origins of photography, objectivity was assumed due to the mechanical rendering of space and of detail. Hulick quotes William Ivins: "The nineteenth-century began by believing what was reasonable was true and it wound up by believing that what it saw a photograph of was also true" (420). The myth of truth is elucidated by Bazin and reiterated by Hulick, who both state that the French word for lens is objectif, suggesting that the eye of the camera, or lens, sees objectively (Bazin 13; Hulick 420). Moreover, it is instructive to note, as Hulick points out, that visually interesting subject matter in nineteenth-century photography was scientific in nature (425). The idea of photographic documents as truthful reports may be seen as functional to the culture that invented it: "Chemical photography's temporary standardization and stabilization of the process of image making effectively served the purposes of an era dominated by science, exploration and industrialization" (Mitchell 49).

Diana Hulick evaluates the discourse on realism and the aesthetics equated with truth. She writes that photography's ability to reproduce telling details was a hallmark of the Victorian age (419). She notes that Jerome Bump writes: "This love of literal realism" was part of the scientific consciousness of the age (420). In painting, Realism,
Symbolism and Pre-Raphaelitism convince the viewer of the reality of a particular vision through detail. Realism, as exemplified by the work of Gustave Courbet and Edouard Manet, was at its height during the first generation of photographic production. The aesthetics of objective, empirical truth are manifest in the form of nineteenth-century Victorian realism. As Tagg writes, Realism offers a fixity in which the signifier is treated as if it were identical to a pre-existent signified and in which the reader's role is purely that of consumer (99). It is this realist mode with which we are confronted when we look at the photograph as evidence.

Further, the camera's mechanical and scientific qualities allowed the image it reproduced to occupy a special veracity and evidential force. Martin Lister writes that realist theories gave priority to the mechanical origins of the photographic image (10). The mechanical arrangement of the photographic camera means that "Physical objects themselves print their image by means of the optical and chemical action of light" (qtd. in Lister 10). Photos are spoken of as "co-substantial with the objects they represent", "perfect analogons", "stencils off the real", "traces", or as "records" of objects or of "images" of objects (qtd. in Lister 10). As Barthes writes, "that has been" was possible only on the day when a scientific circumstance (the discovery that silver
halogens were sensitive to light) made it possible to recover and directly print the luminous rays emitted by a light object (80). Thus, a guaranteed causal link with the physical world is strongly asserted; photographic images are automatically produced and are passive in the face of reality. It is this quality of the photographic image that Barthes calls its "this-has-been" (107). This is the indexical source of the photographic image's special force as evidence (Lister 10).

Realism contends that the indexical characteristic of photography provides the accuracy of veracity. However, realist truth claims can be deconstructed with great facility. Susan Sontag reveals many qualities that contradict the realist assertion of photographic truth. She writes: "The camera's ability to transform reality into something beautiful derives from its relative weakness as a means of conveying truth" (112). The presence of subjective interpretation thus destabilizes the grasp of objectivity. Barthes also acknowledges that photography is both a limitless technique for appropriating the objective world and an unavoidable expression of the self (103). Every portrait of another person is a "self-portrait" of the photographer. Once the subjectivity of the photographer is recognized, the mechanics of the camera can be seen to occupy non-objectivity.
Hulick writes that the unquestioning acceptance of a photographic reality ignores the selectivity of the lens. She notes that the availability of diverse focal lengths of lenses can render very different images of the world. Also, the optics are based on Renaissance perspective theory. As well, the random distribution of the silver halides on the film negative varies with changing chemistry and light. She further states that analog photography is neither a true, nor an unchanging facsimile of the world. A true facsimile would reproduce all the visually apprehensible qualities of the object photographed, creating a complete one-to-one reproduction (421-22). Furthermore, Geoffrey Batchen similarly notes that every photograph involves intervention and manipulation. He states that photography is a manipulation of light levels, exposure times, chemical concentrations, and tonal ranges. Therefore, artificiality of one kind or another is an inescapable part of photographic life (212).

Photographic Realists maintain a singular objective illusion of truth by attaching evidential force to the reproduced image. Yet, objective truth can easily be destabilized by the acknowledgement of the subjectivity of the photographer and the many choices the camera has available in rendering diverse perspectives. But perhaps the fault of the Realist lies in generalizations of photographic indexicality.
While subjectivity must be accepted as a dominant presence in the photographic process, the characteristic of photography's objectivity cannot be completely denied. The photograph must be said to reference a reality, rather than the reality. The boundary of indexicality can be found temporally. In fact, the photograph does not depict the truth of an object in the world, but a truth of a time in the world. Barthes writes: "the photograph possesses an evidential force, and that its testimony bears not on the object but on time" (89). The photographic print projects a temporal truth, rather than an objective truth.

In On Photography, Susan Sontag puts forth that "all photographs", because they underline their subject's mortality (or temporality) by momentarily freezing it, "are memento mori", and she later claims, "This link between photography and death haunts all photographs of people" (70). Additionally, Bazin is echoed by Sontag's reference to the photographic image as "a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask" (154). Barthes gives great importance to the topic of photography and death in Camera Lucida, writing that the photographic referent, or Spectrum, retains "that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead" (9). Barthes evaluates the qualities of photographic reproduction to be unique. He writes
that the referent of the photograph is not the same as other systems of representation, but rather, it is the real entity that has been in front of the lens. Without the referent there would be no photograph. In photography, it cannot be denied that the thing "has been there". Barthes' writings on temporal truth will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

For the time being, it is important to note the duality of truth and death that occupies photography due to its unique ontology of indexicality. The Victorian realists asserted that this indexical characteristic of photography gave the medium a special status of truth and veracity. As Barthes has pointed out, there is indeed a quality of truth to the photographic image; however, the truth of photography is temporal, not material. The myth of truth and its powerful influence within the private realm is demonstrated in the three films that I have chosen.

In *Proof*, Martin is a photographer who has been blind from birth. He meets Andy, who is a short order chef at a restaurant where Martin frequently dines. The two men meet coincidentally by way of an alley cat. It seems that Martin, while walking down an alley, knocked over garbage that fell on the cat. When Andy sees Martin again, he shows Martin the cat and then they take it to a vet together. At this point in the film, the audience is first introduced to Martin's hobby of photography.
He takes a picture of Andy in the vet's waiting room where, as a backdrop, there is a wall of photographs of the veterinarian's clients and their pets. Andy instructs Martin to point the camera down and to the left so that he is in the frame. After this photograph is taken, there is a montage of snapshots created of Andy with the cat, Andy with the cat and other pet owners with their pets, and the cat with the vet who is examining the animal. The photographs are all in focus, as Martin is using an automatic camera, but the framing is always crooked, with horizontal lines askew, and the compositions present the subject either in the bottom of the frame or too far to the side.

In the next scene, Andy and Martin drive home from the veterinarian clinic. Andy remarks that it's great that Martin is productive and has a hobby, rather than being unproductive and feeling sorry for himself. Martin explains that his mother gave him a camera when he was a young boy. Andy thinks that this is cruel, but Martin states: "I thought it would help me to see." Perhaps by engaging in an act that requires vision, Martin's blindness did not seem as dismally terminal.

In the next scene, the audience learns why Martin takes the photographs and what he does with them. Martin enters the restaurant to show Andy the recently developed prints from the day at the veterinarian clinic. He asks Andy to describe the
photographs in less than ten words. Together, they formulate a descriptive sentence of each image, for example, “Andy holding limp cat in waiting room at vet.” Martin then uses a brail machine to punch in the words and then sticks the sentence to the back of the print to label it. Andy is surprised and confused and asks Martin why he labels his photographs. Martin bluntly replies: “Proof.” Andy retorts: “Of what?” Martin explains: “That...what’s in the photograph, is what was there...I was there Andy. I probably know more about what was in that vet’s waiting room than you would...but this is proof that what I sensed is what you saw. The truth.”

Thus, by creating his own personal archive of labeled images, Martin believes that he is accessing the visual world of truth, despite his blindness. Yet, he must trust that Andy is telling the truth. This later becomes an issue when Martin photographs Celia, Martin’s wicked housekeeper, and Andy together in the park. Martin does not know that Andy and Celia are sleeping together, so when Andy must describe the incriminating image to Martin, he lies. Martin later finds out about the deception, but forgives Andy when he realizes that truth is not a stable, singular entity. There is no objective truth, as the realists mythologized, but multiple meanings and interpretations of the world. Taking photographs does not allow
Martin to know the truth about the visual world. Martin realizes that it is not truth that he is seeking; it is trust.

Martin’s original motivation in taking photographs was to prove that his mother lied to him, “because she can.” Martin felt that his mother lied to him because she was ashamed of having a blind son. Perhaps, he also wanted to take photographs to prove that he could do the same things that sighted children could do. In one key flashback moment, Martin’s mother is describing the gardener and the garden to him. Martin declares that there is no gardener, and accuses his mother of lying to him. She insists that Martin listen closely, and he will hear the gardener raking the leaves. Martin does not believe her. In another flashback scene, Martin’s mother says that she is sick and that she will die soon. Martin thinks that she is lying so that she doesn’t have to look after her visually impaired son anymore. Even when she is dead, he knocks on the coffin with his cane, and sadly says: “It’s hollow.” In the end, Martin asks Andy to describe the first photograph that he ever took. He simply states that there is a man raking leaves in a garden.

The myth of truth rings true - Martin’s mother was telling Martin the truth, and the photograph proves it. Yet, the image, which we do not see, does not prove that there is a singular objective visual truth, which Martin so desperately seeks. The
photograph proves that Martin’s mother loved him. Here, a meaningless image of a gardener deflated Martin’s suspicions about his mother’s love for him. Thus, the image did not authenticate the visual reality of truth; instead it authenticated Martin’s search for trust.

In Christopher Nolan’s Memento, Shelby has anterograde amnesia. He suffered a head injury while trying to defend his wife. He remembers everything up until the accident, and his mission is to avenge the murder of his wife. His amnesiac state questions the stability of memory and identity. The confused state of his identity is suggested by the narrative structure of the film. The movie begins with a man being killed by a point-blank pistol shot, with the violent action moving backwards. It is preceded by a Polaroid photograph in reverse motion, displaying an image of the killing before fading to blankness and retreating back into the camera that took it. The narrative is structured in reverse, so that the audience learns the clues of the past experiences of the protagonist in the ignorance mimicked by his memory loss.

Shelby relies on photographs and tattoos to discover the truth about his wife’s murderer. The realism of photography is denied, as his Polaroids work to confuse him more than help him. Every time he learns something new, he documents it, but what he learns may not be the truth. He takes Polaroids of
people and places and writes either facts or misinformation on the back of each snapshot. The photographic clues and tattoos clutter his reality, perpetuating his state of confusion. In the end, it is revealed that he has killed his wife's murderer many times over, but cannot remember because he has forgotten to document the key event. Thus, photography is asserted to be only a partial truth, vulnerable to interpretation.

The photographs of people and places that Shelby relies on are fragments of a past reality, but they are dead clues in that he cannot contextualize or interpret their truths. As he references each photograph in order to cling to a past truth, his own mortality in the present becomes more vulnerable. He continues to confuse truth and fiction by relying on the "realism" of photography, which prevents him from constructing a stable self-identity. With the juxtaposition of amnesia and photography, Memento suggests the impossibility of consistent identity construction, a linear past and a singular truth.

While the myth of the truth of photography is employed by the protagonists in Proof and Memento to compensate for their personal impairments of blindness and memory respectively, Rachael, in Blade Runner, uses the family snapshot to authenticate her personal memories and thus, her "human" identity. In Blade Runner, bounty hunters are employed to find and kill "replicants" in the techno-environment of futuristic
Los Angeles. "Replicants" are artificial humanoids engineered to be indistinguishable from natural human beings. They have been manufactured to serve as slaves on space stations and are considered to be dangerous if they escape to earth. Replicants are programmed to have a life span of four years and are given memories, language, and intellectual skills. The replicant, Rachael, realizes slowly and painfully that she is an android, and this realization occurs when the myth of the truth of photography collapses.

Rebecca visits the apartment of Deckard, the Blade Runner who is assigned to "retire" four replicants who have escaped to Earth. Rebecca asks Deckard: "You think I'm a replicant, don't you?" She then presents Deckard with a photograph of a little girl and a woman sitting together on the porch steps of a house. She says: "Look, it's me with my mother." Deckard's reply is a description of the specific details of Rebecca's childhood memories, from "playing doctor" with her brother to watching a nest of spiders being born and subsequently eating their mother. Rebecca concurs with the details that Deckard has described. He continues by stating: "Implants, those aren't your memories, they're somebody else's. Their Tyrell's niece's." Rebecca cries with the realization that she is not human. When she leaves, Deckard looks once more at the snapshot of "Rebecca with her mother." He proceeds to peruse through his
own family photos. With the realization that photographs had been used as authentication for Rebecca’s artificial memories, it is suggested that perhaps Deckard’s family photographs are also inauthentic. The myth of truth associated with photography had convinced Rebecca that she was human. When Deckard states that her memories are implants, so too are the photographs implants. The photographs are props to construct an artificial memory archive that worked to shape Rebecca’s identity as a human. Her lack of awareness of being a replicant suggests that perhaps Deckard, too, is a replicant, as he has memories and photographs just like Rebecca. Thus, demonstrating that the photographs are artificial constructions using the myth of truth for self-authentication, raises larger metaphysical issues regarding what it means to be human. If personal family photographs are not authentic, then what is? The boundaries of the reality of nature versus artificiality are thrown into question. Perhaps we are all replicants, supplied with generic memories and fake photographs to support the illusion of being human, with qualities of individuality, originality, and uniqueness.

As it is my thesis to examine the multiple and contradictory ontologies of photography, it is hoped that the three films discussed have specifically elucidated that concerning the Victorian ideology of realism, there are varying
degrees of truth that can be applied to the use of the photographic image. In *Proof*, photography does not provide Martin access to the singular truth of vision that he so desperately tries to participate in. But photography, in conjunction with the trust of his friend, allows Martin to realize that he must find the truth within himself. In *Memento*, Shelby uses photography in collaboration with hand written notes and tattoos to construct an external archival memory to compensate for the impairment of his short-term memory. However, his photographs and notes create an archive of confusion, rather than clarity. He does not know if what he documents is true or false, but he thinks the mere act of documentation will bring him the truth. Instead, he creates an archive of half-truths, and relentlessly carries on with his search for the killer of his wife. The myth of truth complicates Shelby's life, due to the high level of credibility he gives to photography's authenticity. Finally, in *Blade Runner*, Rebecca has memories and family photographs to verify them, just like any other human being. Yet, when Deckard declares the artificiality of her memories, the photographs lose their status of authentication as valid documentation. The artificiality of the photographs changes Rebecca's identity from human to cyborg. The myth of truth propelled her to believe that she was human, and when the power of the
authentication of photography was deflated, Rebecca learned that she was not who she thought she was.
Chapter II. The Ethics of the Archive

In the previous chapter, I outlined the historical ontology of photography that shaped the modern myth of truth that surrounds the medium. I demonstrated that the Victorian ideology of Realism attaches photography's indexical characteristics to the empirical Truth claims of objectivity. The films I selected to elucidate the use of the photograph for authentication demonstrated personal or private methods of overcoming self-perceived impairment. In this chapter, I will extend the discussion of Truth into the public realm of institutional power. In the last chapter, it was shown how the protagonists of the films used photography for self-authentication, but what happens when one group objectifies another? Questions of power, privilege and ethics immediately come into place. The photograph has been used as a tool of power to manipulate and oppress diverse underprivileged groups—the colonized, the insane, women and criminals have all been exploited subjects of empirical scientific voyeurism. Specifically, in this chapter, I will examine the history of the development of the criminal body to discuss the unethical power hierarchies that are at play with the use of photography. The three crime genre films that I will be using as examples to examine the institutionalization of photography are: Witness, Basic Instinct, and Clockers.
John Tagg insists that to discuss the use of photography by any particular institution, the institution must first be evaluated. In the nineteenth century, there was a proliferation of institutional practices of professionalised discourses in the social sciences, such as anthropology, criminology, medical anatomy, psychiatry, public health, urban planning, and sanitation. These disciplines and institutions used photography for its privileged status of evidential force. Tagg writes that, like the state, the camera is never neutral. It produces highly coded representations to wield power by those who use it. The photograph's indexical characteristic lends it the power of authority to record and surveil (11).

Tagg builds on Foucault's idea that power is productive (87). In the case of photography, institutions use the medium as an instrument or tool to facilitate the imposition of power. Those in power, such as agents of the state, use it on those without power, such as marginalized groups. Photography serves as a conduit to allow powerless subjects to be represented and oppressed by powerful subjects as objects of knowledge, analysis and control. The working classes, colonized peoples, the criminal, poor, ill housed, sick or insane became the objects of knowledge because they were considered passive and powerless. Underprivileged groups were subjected to the scrutinizing gaze of surveillance and observation. Their bodies
were pathologized and measured and calculated to preserve the security of the authority of state power. The Other provided the data for the positivist continuum. The oppression that occurs due to the institutional employment of photographic representation goes unnoticed due to the empirical truth-values of positivism. With the photograph, objectification is naturalized because of its status as neutral machinery (Batchen 8).

It follows then, that if the photograph was considered to be neutral and true, the intention for these images was to create a master archive, a total categorization of visual data, an extension of the positivist agenda. But as I previously mentioned, the photograph’s strong associations with positivism allowed the photograph to be used “neutrally,” even though there was a severe hierarchical power imbalance at work between those who photographed and those who were photographed. This visual oppression, or the ethics of representation, becomes painfully clear when it is recognized who has created the archive and why. As Tagg states: “the coupling of evidence and photography in the second half of the nineteenth century was bound up with the emergence of new institutions and new practices of observation and record-keeping [...]” (5). New techniques of representation were developed with the growth of disciplinary institutions—the police, prisons, asylums,
hospitals, and departments of public health, schools and the modern factory system. The new techniques of surveillance and recording served as a new strategy of governance for the disciplinary institution.

Power can be the central issue when considering photographic representation on class, race or gender hierarchies. The disciplinary institution used the power and authority granted to the status of the documentary photograph's truth effects to mobilize a hierarchy of domination and subordination (Tagg 12). This is why it is so critical to recognize that the documentary photograph is not objective and neutral, as its users claim it to be. Neutrality is, in fact, value-laden. The power granted to the documentary photograph was a function of social administration (Tagg 21). The development of a new social body generated new kinds of knowledge via means of power and control. The body of the Other produced data with the aim of gaining knowledge for the privileged. Foucault calls this the political technology of the body (Tagg 70).

It has been established that the photograph was a tool used by the state to serve a positivist agenda of collecting data to obtain a singular truth of the world, and that this practice involved serious ethical issues. We can now turn our attention to the development of a specific disciplinary
institution. In the eighteenth century, the growth of a police force was integral to the process of change in the shift of power from the monarch to the state. The institution of the police force offered a means of control. Surveillance served as a strategy of power to maintain control over the unruly masses.

In the atmosphere of panic that followed the French Revolution of 1789, there was a felt need in Britain for a more effective police force. There was a call for order, submissiveness and the eradication of vice. Reformers pushed for a more effective preventive police force to guard over private property. The common law understanding of a social responsibility for keeping the peace in the community was no longer functioning in the new urban industrial centers. The industrial revolution created a new architecture of life and work and caused the disintegration of old social patterns. The idea developed that "man" was the true object of the state, rather than the monarch. Thus, there were demands for new kinds of regimentation to establish order and control (Tagg 72).

In 1829, the Metropolitan Police Force, by Act of Parliament, was established in London. Under the Act, three thousand blue-uniformed men, inspectors and sergeants were given jurisdiction over the area of a seven-mile radius around Charing Cross. In 1835, the police force expanded to all urban
areas of England and Wales. In 1856, an Act of Parliament appointed police to the rural areas. By this same Act, the central government took on provisions to provide one quarter of the cost of pay and equipment, and a regular inspector was set up to report on the efficiency of the dispersed constabularies. The hierarchy of the police force was derived from the ancient common law of England. The police constable was a member of a discipline force, subject to strict codes of conduct and a hierarchy of inspection and supervision (Tagg, 72).

The rapid growth of rural and urban communities, due to the Industrial Revolution, demanded a complex system of observation and surveillance by the police force. As a result, a system of documentary organization was developed to maintain strict control. Until 1832, in France, the method of identifying criminals was to brand them with a red-hot iron. In 1840, photographs were first used to identify criminals. This immense police text that began to take shape was different from the traditional methods of administrative writing. A permanent account of individuals' behavior was registered—everything from forms of conduct to attitudes and suspicions (Tagg 73).

Furthermore, the early development of the photographic process took place at approximately the same time as the introduction of the police service in America. For more than one hundred years, both progressed in tandem. The photograph
played a complicit role in the growth of the police force with the information it produced to amass an archive of data. The police realized that the photograph could be very useful for identification purposes. From 1840 onwards, the police employed civilian photographers to provide portraits of criminals. Not only did the photographs carry the assumption of accuracy, due to the realist myth of truth, but they also offered a process that was both quick and cheap (Tagg 73).

Between 1880 and 1910, the archive became the dominant institutional basis for photographic meaning. Photographic archives were seen as central to a range of empirical sciences, especially for police purposes (Sekula 55). Photography became paramount for the identification process after 1901, when Sir Edward Henry introduced an identification system by means of fingerprints at New Scotland Yard. The only way to record finger impressions found at the scene of the crime was to photograph them. This system of filing photographic identification pictures with fingerprints is still used today. In fact, governors of prisons and detention centers are required by the Criminal Justice Act of 1948 to register and photograph all persons convicted of a crime (Tagg 75).

It was not until 1938 that the Committee of Crime Detection Report established an aesthetic standardized format for photographic identification. Photographs of criminals were
to be full-length, full-face and profile views. This was seen as an effort to improve the quality of prisoners' photographs so that identification could be made more easily. As Tagg observes, the standardization of the image is more than a picture to identify a criminal:

It is a portrait of the product of disciplinary method: the body made object; divided and studied; enclosed in a cellular structure of space whose architecture is the file index; made docile and forced to yield up its truth; separated and individuated; subjected and made subject (75).

The standardized aesthetics of photographing the criminal body allowed for a more efficient image cataloguing system. Photography's evidential force served as a tool to map out the typology of deviance and social pathology as the body of the criminal became a newly defined social phenomenon. However, the standardization of photographic aesthetics intended for archival purposes was not randomly assigned. These aesthetic choices were heavily influenced by the ideologies of physiognomy and phrenology. Both shared the assumption that the surface of the body, especially the head and the face, outwardly indicated signs of the inner being. Phrenology, which emerged in the first decade of the nineteenth century in the research of Franze Gall, sought to discern correspondences between the topography of the skull and what were thought to be specific, localized mental faculties seated within the brain (Lalvani 48). Phrenology proposed a map of the brain, which
identified specific psychic functions. For example, H. Lauvergne devoted his study to examining the cranial protuberances of convicted criminals in order to verify whether they displayed a predisposition to crime (Lalvani 48). Also, in his Essays in Physiognomy, published in 1789, Johann Kaspar Lavater asserted that there was a correspondence between external, visible superficies and the internal, invisible contents of the person (qtd. in Lalvani 48). The moral interpretation of physiognomy relied on facial features, while the science of phrenology relied on the correlation between behavioral traits and cranial shape. In general, physiognomy and more specifically, phrenology, linked everyday non-specialist empiricism with increasingly authoritative attempts to "medicalize" the study of the mind. Both sciences sought to order hierarchically the social realm according to class and moral groupings (Lalvani 48). From these new social sciences, eugenics was born, whereby the imaginary Other was seen to be genetically threatening to the white purity of a "lost Athens". The Other constituted any marginalized or underprivileged group, but Galton classified "criminals, semi-criminals, loafers" as the worst of the eugenically unfit, residing at the bottom one percent of the urban hierarchy (qtd. in Sekula 50). The intention was to visually prove a pathological type.
The images of the archived are of an aesthetic of objective empiricism. Alphonse Bertillon, another photographic practitioner who helped establish a typology of Otherness, realized that the semantic value of the photograph lay in its function as conclusive proof of identification, and therefore, aimed to create a representation of the criminal's body that was "neutral". The headshot of a criminal portrayed blunt frontality. The focal length of the camera lens was standardized and the body of the criminal was exposed under even and consistent lighting. Furthermore, the problems posed by criminals distorting their faces for a portrait so that they were later unidentifiable, were avoided by the addition of the profile view. The result was that while the profile view served its purpose in thwarting an individual criminal's expressivity, the frontal view enabled both ease of identification and detection on the streets by patrolling policemen (Lalvani 109-13).

This representational system signified bluntness and "naturalness" of an uncultured class, but the standardization of the image in conjunction with statistical and physiognomic methods helped to categorize the criminal body as a clearly defined and identifiable text (Lalvani 66). Bertillon developed "anthropometrical signalment", which involved subjecting the criminal body to eleven measurements. The parts of the body
that he measured were: the length and breadth of the head and of the right ear; the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger and that of the middle and ring fingers; the length of the left foot and the subject's height; the length of the torso and that of the outstretched arms from the middle to the middle finger-end. Using the statistical methods of Quetelet, Bertillon deduced that the probability of two individuals sharing the same eleven measurements was one in four. The series of measurements in the "anthropometrical signalment" were also accompanied by a brief description of identifying marks, such as scars or warts and by a pair of photographs, one of which provided a frontal view and the other, a profile of the criminal's head. (Lalvani 109).

Finally, the standard for classification of the large number of criminal photographs depended on Quetelet's average man. Bertillon invented a filing system whereby the "anthropometrical signalment" of each criminal was placed on individual cards. The cards were organized according to below average, average, and above average measurements. This effective system of classification allowed the science of identification to be practically applied. This filing system, as a technology of knowledge and surveillance, provides a powerful means for monitoring and classifying the criminal body. The criminal body with all of its manifestations of
pathologies and violence against the social body, is seen with a heightened view of visibility. The criminal body becomes an easy target for rationalist and disciplinary practices (Lalvani 113-15).

The birth of the Industrial Revolution brought on changes in the organization of social demographics. Post-Industrial surveillance reflected the belief that the punished criminal represented a continuing danger to the new social body. Motivated by the desire to separate the dangerous classes from the working class, the system of surveillance prevented former criminals from living in industrial and manufacturing sectors, where they would likely find work. As a result of the rigid residence requirement, the former criminal was forced into a life of crime in order to survive. Thus, the penitentiary became a penal quarantine rather than an institution of reformation. The system of surveillance, in effect, encouraged the crime it was trying to eliminate (Lalvani 119).

Foucault argues that with the emergence of the modern social sciences, such as criminology, demographics, and statistics, the human being occupies two binary positions: an object of knowledge and a subject that creates knowledge. Human beings are either isolated objects made visible by the ocularcentric discourses of the sciences, or neutral metasubjects of knowledge engaging the visible field of the
social (qtd. in Lalvani 197). Human animals became subjects and objects of knowledge and visibility. For the first time in history, social science practices made the new social order visible through the isolation and categorization of bodies, but also produced subjects who had privileged access to new levels of visibility (qtd. in Lalvani 197). In the positivist, empirical agenda, producing knowledge and power that resulted from making the underprivileged of the new social order visible would not have been possible without photography.

The integral role of photographic discourse within the disciplinary institution of police enforcement is demonstrated in many crime genre films. Of particular interest are Witness, Basic Instinct, and Clockers, not only because photography is shown to be a basic component of police detective work, but because photography in these three films reveals the crime and corruption that occurs within the police institution. Photography is a powerful tool used to identify criminals, but in these three films, photography works against the institution by serving as a means to identify police corruption. The power of photography that was generated by the institution turned inward on itself. This demonstrates photography's status as a medium with multiple identities, which allows the medium to be applied in contradictory contexts.
Witness opens with an Amish country funeral. Rachel, newly widowed, is a young woman now forced to raise her eight-year-old son, Samuel, alone. They leave the farm to visit her sister and to try to recover from their grief. While in the Philadelphia train station men's washroom, Samuel unwittingly witnesses the brutal murder of an undercover police officer. When the police forces arrive at the scene of the crime, detective John Book requests that he bring Samuel to the police station for questioning. This is the moment when photography plays a key role in the film. First, Samuel observes a police lineup of suspects, but he does not recognize any of them as the killer. Then, Book takes Samuel to his desk, where they look at a binder of mug shots, both profile and frontal views. While Book momentarily takes a phone call, Samuel wanders around the office. He talks to Book's colleague, who has criminal photographs mounted on his desk in the background. A handcuffed criminal beckons the little boy over, only to rattle his cuffs and scare him. Samuel wanders away and looks at a glass case with trophies commemorating the high achievement of police service. The critical moment occurs when he notices the newspaper clipping that is pinned up, with a headline that reads, "Narcotics Officer McFee Honored for Youth Project". It includes a head shot of McFee—not unlike the standardized police mug shots, except here, he is smiling. As Samuel studies
the image, the camera slowly zooms in. Book notices that Samuel is preoccupied with something, and as he approaches the boy, Samuel points to the image of McFee. Book lowers Samuel's hand, and nods in recognition that McFee is the killer Samuel saw in the Philadelphia train station washroom. It turns out that this police officer has a record of suspected crime and corruption. When Book tells another colleague about McFee, he suddenly finds himself in serious personal danger due to a proliferation of police corruption, and he must flee to Amish country for safety.

The surveillance and proliferation of images of the body serve the purposes of identification, which was the original intention of police photography. In Witness, it is ironic that the standardized police photographs of criminals were deemed useless for identifying the perpetrator of this murder. Although the identifying image was not a police photograph, it was an archived image on visual display. Not only did the photograph work to identify the corruption of one police officer, as Book soon found out, it also led to the knowledge that a number of officers were involved in the scandal. Photography, which is used by an institution to ensure power and control, in this case, worked to display the corruption of disciplinary power.
A similar scenario occurs in *Basic Instinct*. Set in San Francisco, the story begins with coital murder. The victim turns out to be a retired rock star and the prime suspect is his girlfriend, Catherine, a rich and beautiful novelist. Her latest book, *Love Hurts*, happens to be about a woman who murders a retired rock star with an ice pick. Nick, the detective in charge of the investigation, realizes that her novel's blueprint for the murder both implicates her and gives her an alibi - no killer would be that obvious. He speculates that perhaps the killing was a copycat crime inspired by the book. Soon, other suspects emerge: Roxy, Catherine's jealous lesbian lover, and Beth, a police psychiatrist trying to reignite her romance with Nick.

As Nick investigates Catherine, Catherine investigates Nick. She blithely informs him that she is writing her next book "about a detective who falls for the wrong woman." Without his knowledge, she pries into his dark past, which includes episodes of alcohol, cocaine—and an eager trigger finger that earned him the nickname "Shooter." It is at this point in the story that photography enters the scene. By finding newspaper clippings scattered on her living room table, Nick realizes that Catherine is investigating him. The various headlines with his juxtaposed image read: "Tourist Killed by Cop," "Killer Cop Faces Police Review," "Cop Cleared of Tourist Shooting." The
inclusion of these photographs communicates Nick's tumultuous past and the fact that Catherine has meticulously dredged it up, places him in a vulnerable position with a suspected murderer. These archived images and headlines move the plot forward and add to the character development of both Catherine and Nick.

The next photographic episode occurs when Nick investigates the recently deceased Roxy, Catherine's lesbian lover, who jealously attempted to run Nick off the road while driving late one night. At the office, he discovers concealed and haunting information about Roxy. The first photographs are the standardized police images of the profile and frontal view of Roxy, who at age sixteen murdered her twin brothers. Nick then reviews eight by ten black and white and color forensic photographs of the murder scene. Two boys are lying in a grassy field, drenched in blood, due to numerous stab wounds to their bodies. It is a gruesome murder with a weak motive: "She just sort of did it on impulse. The razor just happened to be there" reports one policewoman who retrieved the sealed off, archived file.

Not only do the photographs reveal that Roxy was a dangerous and disturbed character, but they cause Catherine to lose credibility, as Roxy was her lesbian lover. It is slowly revealed that Catherine's friends were all murderers at one
point in their lives, as Nick’s partner provocatively asks:
"Have you ever met a friend of hers that hasn’t killed anybody?"

The next occurrence of photography concerns Beth, the police psychiatrist. While in bed with Nick, Catherine tells him about Lisa Hoberman, a girl from university who stalked her. Nick investigates the woman and, as it turns out, the driver’s license picture that appears on the screen under the Lisa Hoberman file name is of Beth, the police psychiatrist and Nick's former lover. When Nick confronts Beth, she tells him that it was Catherine who stalked her at university. When Nick angrily leaves her apartment, it seems like he believes Catherine’s version of the story.

Finally, in the last murder of the film, Nick finds his partner’s murdered body at the police station head office. The office is deserted, but Beth mysteriously appears, wearing a trench coat, and her hand is suspiciously groping what looks like a weapon. Nick commands her to stop and to put up her hands, but she persists on moving toward him. He shoots and kills her, only to find that she was holding a set of keys. However, when the police arrive on the scene they find a wig, a San Francisco Police Department raincoat and a bloody ice pick. Photographs further indicate that Beth is the suspected killer. The police detectives investigate Beth’s apartment where they
find numerous photographs taken during her university years. There is an eight by ten graduation photograph, which shows Catherine standing in the first row of students and Beth standing behind her in the second row, over Catherine's left shoulder. The next photograph is an eight by ten blow-up of the same photograph, but the image is a close-up of Catherine's face, and Beth's face behind her. This blow-up reveals that perhaps Beth had obsessive tendencies directed towards Catherine. This would validate everything that Catherine has said about Beth, giving her credibility.

Thus, all three instances of photography—the photos of Nick that were in Catherine's possession, those of Roxy concerning the murder of her brothers, and those of Beth, including her driver license identification photograph and university graduation photographs, maintain the ambiguity of the film narrative. The use of the first photographs suggested that Catherine had obsessive tendencies in researching and investigating Nick's past. The forensic photographs of the brutal killings of Roxy's brothers indicated Roxy's destructive nature and homicidal tendencies, making her a suspect for the murders. But finally, it is the driver's license identification photograph of Beth that indicates that, not only did she change her name, but perhaps she had another identity. Her photographs of Catherine confirm the suspicions of Beth's
culpability. She obsessed over Catherine at university and is now imitating the murders detailed in Catherine's book in order to frame her. These archived images all serve the purpose of complicating an ambiguous plot and adding a deeper dimension to the character development. And much like in Witness, the identifying photographs in police possession incriminate its own members, in this case, the in-house psychiatrist.

Finally, Clockers is about young, low-level drug dealers plying their trade in an inner city housing project. Spike Lee uses photography in an ironical way to suggest the corruption of the police force. The film begins with a plethora of images of forensic photography of bloody corpses, including close-ups of the bullet entry wounds. All the victims in the photographs are African-Americans who have been shot and murdered, either on the street or in their homes. The photographs have a cool, objective aesthetic, as the bodies are anonymous and nameless. The opening montage includes other urban iconography of memorial murals for murdered adolescents and tabloid headlines read: "Toy Gun, Real Bullets". The opening montage evokes an inner city world where violence and desperation are the norm. Living in the Projects is like being under constant siege, and escaping it demands luck and will power. The sheer number of dead bodies displayed in the montage of multiple images suggests the frequent randomness of street murder. "Why?" is
the question left to ask. Why are so many nameless black men dead on the street?

The objective gaze put forth by the forensic photographs is further perpetuated by the following live action sequence. A number of African-American youths are gathered in the park. As they casually “hang out” they are surprised by an aggressive police inspection. The youths receive a verbal and physical interrogation. They are harassed by the police and are forced to undress in the street, so that every part of their bodies can be examined for hidden drugs. The police are cynical, contemptuous, casually racist, and have no concern at all for the people they serve. They believe that the Projects should be dynamited and that wanton killing actually serves the community because it is like a “self-cleaning oven”. The juxtaposition of clinical forensic photography with the oppressive power practices of the police clearly states institutional disciplinary corruption.

In conclusion, I have discussed the institutionalization of photography by disciplinary forces and photography being used as a tool to facilitate the practice and oppression of power. More specifically, the police force used photography to identify criminals, and later developed information systems to archive the images. The standardization of the image and its archive has strong influences from the positivist ideologies of
phrenology and physiognomy. It is important to note that while photography was used for its supposed neutrality, there was a hidden agenda of oppression by the privileged over the underprivileged. I have used the three crime genre films of \textit{Witness}, \textit{Basic Instinct}, and \textit{Clockers} to demonstrate that photography is a tool with a multifaceted identity and when equipped with power it can serve diverse means. In all three films, photography is used to demonstrate that disciplinary institutional force created and perpetuated the crime it intended to prevent. Here, photography works to demonstrate that where there is power, corruption soon follows.
Chapter III. Photography's Multiple Associations with Death

In his book on the ontology of the photographic image, Geoffrey Batchen cites the many authors, and their influential schools of thought, who have written on the diverse themes which surround photographic discourse. Of particular interest is John Tagg's writing on the identity of the photographic image. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Tagg suggests that photography does not occupy a static identity or single cultural status (Tagg 63). The topic of photography's identity and its lack of a singular true meaning is particularly relevant here, as it is my intent to demonstrate the multiple meanings and uses of photography in narrative cinema. It is my observation that due to photography's lack of a stable identity, it is possible for photography to be used in many ways to serve various ideological purposes in film. The multiple uses of photography can be categorized under the two central unifying philosophical categories of truth and death. Within each realm, photography is used to serve different purposes. Under the category of truth, I have discussed how photography's myth of truth serves private personal purposes and public institutional power. Under the category of death, I will argue that photography is used in three main ways: as a metaphysical death, a temporal narrative death, and as a
metamorphic supernatural death. In this chapter, I will focus on the foundations of metaphysical death, which, more specifically, include: temporal indexical death, sociological memento mori and phenomenologically perceived mortality. I use the term metaphysical death because the writings on the theory of photography that I summarize focus on the affective mortal vulnerability that occurs in the photographic viewer due to the medium's unique relationship to time and space. This area of research has most significantly been influenced by the writings of Roland Barthes, Susan Sontag and Christian Metz. Their discussions on photography and death will be outlined here, and the three films, La Jetée, Blow-Up and Under Fire will elucidate their points.

Initially, Barthes wrote on death and photography in his article "Rhetoric of the Image", where he semiologically demonstrates the multiple meanings that the photographic image carries in differing contexts. He segregates the meanings of photography into two categories, that of denotation and connotation. The connotated message is the social meaning attributed to the interpretation of the image. Photographs carry different connotations according to the surrounding context, as can be seen by contrasting the press photograph with the advertisement photograph. The denotated message is the analogon, or the index to which the photographic image
refers. In the realm of denotation, the photograph always carries one underlying consciousness, that is, the "having-been-there" (Barthes 17-19).

Barthes relates the concept of "having-been-there," to the process of viewership. It is perceived that the photograph occupies an unprecedented space-time category. The viewer has an awareness of "having-been-there", due to photography's ontology of spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority. The photograph has an illogical conjunction between the "here-now" and the "there-then." Thus, the photograph occupies a real unreality. The unreal is the "here-now" because the photograph is not experienced as an illusion, but as evidence of a time that once existed. The real is that of the "having-been-there," as every photograph carries the evidential force of "this is how it was." The reality offered by the photograph is not that of truth-to-appearance, but rather of truth-to-presence, a matter of being, rather than resemblance (Barthes 44-45).

The idea of "having-been-there," that surrounds all photographic images, is further elaborated on and developed in Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1977). The topic of death surrounds this book in multiple ways, as Barthes not only discusses the qualities of death in photography, but he was inspired to discuss the topic after discovering a "true" photographic image
of his dead mother. The book was written shortly before Barthes' own death in 1981.

Barthes discusses the philosophy of photographic death in more detail in the latter publication by describing his own subjectivity in relation to photography. He writes that when he is photographed, a certain kind of death is experienced due to the limbo created from feeling like a subject that is in the process of becoming an object. As a spectator, too, death is experienced, but in different terms. As a viewer of the photograph, Barthes discusses the sentimentality and pathos he feels. As a wound, the photograph allows him to become aware of himself, "I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe, and I think" (Barthes 14). The powerful affective drive of some photographic images causes Barthes to be aware of the vulnerability of being human.

Barthes categorizes the feeling that arises from photographic death into the "studium" and the "punctum." The "studium" is what is culturally connoted by the photograph, which carries with it emotions of general interest and liking. The "punctum" is what jumps out and pierces the viewer. The punctum provokes the viewer into associating the image with what is not there. It may "launch desire beyond what it permits us to see" (Barthes 59). The punctum is what the viewer adds to the photograph, due to a personal history and
subjectivity. The personal punctum disrupts the stability of the social studium.

In an effort to find a photograph to remember his mother after she died, Barthes evaluated photography's relationship to the referent. After sorting through family archives he writes:

These photos, which phenomenology would call "ordinary" objects, were merely analogical, provoking only her identity, not her truth; but the Winter Garden photograph was indeed essential, it achieved for me, utopically, the impossible science of the unique being. (qtd. in Sontag 14)

Then, why is it that if every photograph occupies the same relationship with its referent, one photograph renders the subject with more truth and sensitivity than another? This question provoked Barthes to revisit the term "having-been-there."

As I briefly discussed in Chapter 1, it cannot be denied that the photographic referent existed at one point in time and space. The referent is that real thing which resided in front of the camera lens, without which there would be no photograph. It is the process of viewing a past referent in the present, a superimposition of reality and the past, that creates the phenomenon of "having-been-there." By immobilizing the referent, photography creates a temporal shift between the past and present. The referent is testimony to reality, causing connotations of life and living. But by immobilizing the life
of reality, or the referent, the photograph suggests death (Barthes 78-79).

The photographic punctum of death provokes the viewer to ponder the instability of mortality. Associations with death are caused by the immobilization of the referent, a thing of the past that is viewed in the present. Barthes writes that the date belongs to the photograph, because when viewing a referent of the distant past, the next logical association is to question whether that referent (person or thing) still exists today. Now, if an image is what solely remains of the analogon, one then thinks, "Will I only exist as image one hundred years from now?" Thus, the photograph provokes its viewers to question their own mortality, or as Barthes writes: "Why is it that I am alive here and now"(84)? When pondering an 1865 portrait of a condemned man, Barthes observes that the subject depicted there is both dead and going to die:

I read at the same time: this will be and this has been [...]. The photograph tells me death in the future [...]. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe (Batchen 193).

With every photograph, the perceiver's own death is inscribed. It is the implicitness of personal perception that denotes death and mortality within the broader realm of metaphysics (Barthes 85).

Thus, the punctum of the photograph is not necessarily death, but time. Due to an awareness of the past in the
present, the death of the future becomes painfully obvious. The strength of the "this-has-been" pronounces that "this-will-be." If the "this-has-been" is dead, either temporally or materially, then it is only a matter of time for death in the future to occur. As a consequence of photography's peculiar articulation of time, every individual photograph is a chilling reminder of human mortality. This is especially poignant in photographs of Barthes himself. Barthes states, "Ultimately, what I am seeking in the photograph taken of me is Death [...]" (qtd. in Batchen 210). Every photograph is the catastrophe of the anterior future of death. Each photograph challenges the viewer by presenting the inescapable fate of mortality (Barthes 96-99).

Paradoxically, as the photograph taints the present and future life with death, due to the punctum of the "that-has-been," the photograph gives life to that which is dead. The immediate certainty of the truth of a past temporal reality permits the past to live on in the present and the future. Thus, the philosophical death of the temporal truth of photography brings both death to the present and the future and life to the past by existing in the present and future. For Barthes, photography's identity lies in the photograph's simultaneous presentation of life and death (Batchen 212).
While Barthes takes the philosophical approach of phenomenology to discuss photography and death, Sontag aligns herself with a more sociological perspective. Also, in the last chapter I discussed Tagg’s and Foucault’s perspectives on the larger relationship of power and how photography was used as a tool to aid in the growth of power of the privileged by oppressing and objectifying the Other. Sontag provides a more specific analysis of the personal ethical process of taking a photograph. Her first allusions to death and photography occur during the discussion on the unethical power relationship between the photographer and the subject. Sontag writes that there is a predatory nature in the act of photographing:

To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed (14).

This idea carries validity as the photographic image does exist as an object, as a memento mori product. The photograph as memento mori is used for sentimental reasons, remembering a past “magical” moment. This could be interpreted as an effort to lay claim or own another reality. Sontag writes: “Each still photograph is a privileged moment, turned into a slim object that one can keep and look at again” (18). In this regard, photographs conserve a vanishing past, and pronounce the vulnerability of lives heading toward their own
destruction. The above statements are reminiscent of Barthes' discussion on the phenomenon of the "that-has-been", except Sontag contributes an ethical interpretation to the concept by taking into consideration that there is a power negotiation between the photographer and subject. The process of photography is voyeuristic and the end result can be a product of possession and obsession. Thus, there is a certain degree of trust that the subject must have in the photographer, and if those boundaries are violated, there are ethical issues of representation at stake, as they concern power and responsibility.

In his article, "Photography and Fetish," Christian Metz takes a psychoanalytic approach in discussing the phenomenon of photography. Metz allocates some space in the article to evaluating photography's relationship to death. Metz writes that photography shares two central characteristics with death: immobility and silence. But photography is linked to death in other ways, as well. Metz notes that photographs are used as social practice, for, as Sontag mentioned, photographs are memento mori. Photographs are kept to remember loved ones who are no longer alive. Metz also mentions Barthes' noted phenomenon of "that-has-been", by writing: "Even when the person photographed is still living, that moment when she or he was has forever vanished" (84).
As mentioned above, Metz has observed that photography shares material characteristics with death and is used in death-like social practices. Metz notes a third characteristic shared between photography and death, which is very similar to Sontag's writings on the ethical negotiation of power in photographic practice between the objectifier and objectified. Metz takes interest in the snapshot, noting that like death, it is an instantaneous abduction of the object from the present into the past. Photography is able to "cut inside the referent, it cuts off a piece of it, a fragment, a part object, for a long immobile travel of no return" (84). Thus, by giving your image, you are giving a piece of yourself. This third point also carries similar associations with spirit photography, where it was believed, particularly by Balzac, that every photograph removed a layer of essence from the subject. So if photographed too many times, it was believed that the camera's vampire characteristics could eventually kill its subject. This topic will be discussed further in chapter 5.

Photography and its associations with death, as put forth by Barthes, Sontag and Metz, can be found in narrative cinema. The three authors note three characteristics of metaphysical photographic death: temporal indexical death, sociological memento mori, and the perceived mortality of the viewer. Three
films that elucidate these characteristics of photography are: La Jetée, Blow-Up and Under Fire.

Chris Marker’s film, La Jetée is a half-hour science fiction meditation created almost entirely of black and white still photographs. In the post-nuclear society of La Jetée, the survivors live in the underground of Paris, where they are exposed to prison-like conditions and are subjected to experiments in time travel by camp doctors. The central figure in the film is chosen for his fixation on an image of the past. It is hoped that this fixation will help him travel to that moment in the past. This skill will then allow him to travel to the future to obtain survival supplies for the present. The traveller’s image of fixation is the result of a traumatic childhood memory of a woman’s face seen just prior to the death of an unknown man. The traveller’s image exists so powerfully in his mind that he is successful at temporal projection into the past. The camp doctors then send him into the future, where he encounters occupants who offer to look after him. He refuses and instead returns to the image of fixation. Upon his arrival, he is killed by a camp assassin who followed him through time, while realizing that the death he had seen as a child had been that of his adult self (Hillicker 5).

Within the context of the writings of Barthes, Sontag and Metz, in content and form, La Jetée exhibits firstly the
metaphysical death of temporal indexicality. As Barthes notes the metaphysical slippage of time that the photograph occupies, it is quite relevant that *La Jetée* is a science fiction film centrally preoccupied with post-nuclear society and time travel to both the past and the future. Photographic stills are the ideal medium for articulating such concepts. The narrative content of the film coalesces with its formal qualities of the photographic stills that covertly convey associations of death in all tenses. The memento mori quality of the photographic still can be demonstrated in the narrative set-up for time travel. The time traveller is chosen because of his image of fixation from childhood, which the viewer also witnesses via a photographic still. The traveller's memory of a moment in the past is manifest as a photographic still. He revisits this memory as if it were a photograph — which it is, to the viewer. Finally, human mortality is suggested by the time traveller's childhood memory of the murder and through the realization that the murder of the man was himself. Thus, mortality is inescapable by the trauma of this memory and the event of death.

Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* concerns a fashion photographer working in "swinging" London who inadvertently photographed a murder while taking random shots of an anonymous woman in a park (Cook 614). After the woman has visited his
apartment to retrieve the roll of film, he "blows up" the
telltale prints to greater and greater scale, so that a human
corpse is visible, barely decipherable beneath the grain of the
image. The photographer then goes to the park, finds a body,
returns again to find that it is gone, and subsequently
participates in a game of mime tennis.

The process of blowing-up the photographic print to
magnify a portion of the image that barely reveals a human
corpse demonstrates the temporal death of "that-has-been". As
this paradoxical metaphysical state of the photograph reveals,
death resides in the present and the future, while bringing
life from the past to the present. The photographer's act of
investigating the murder at the park demonstrates how the
photograph has the ability to bring life into the present, for
if the photographer did not find the corpse in the image, he
would not have discovered the body in the park. Thus, a murder
could have been solved. Simultaneously, the power of the
punctum of death and the "that-has-been" provokes the
photographer into believing that there is, in fact, a body.
However, upon revisiting the murder site, the corpse has
vanished. Although it's barely decipherable in the photograph,
the corpse has disappeared, throwing the photographer's tenuous
relationship to reality into question.
The memento mori quality of photography is suggested by the anonymous woman's need to attain the roll of film that latently carries ambiguous incriminating evidence. Why she needs the film, the audience does not know, but she is desperate to possess the film that has the potential of producing photographic images. Both Sontag and Metz note this desire and practice to possess the image. In Blow-up, the unethical power practice of the photographer is displayed by his unwillingness to give the woman, whom he photographed without permission, the unprocessed film. He gives the woman a dummy role of film to trick her, so he can keep the pictures. Finally, the photographer's mortality and sense of reality is questioned when he finds that the body is missing in the park and then later, meets a parade of mimes who engage in a game of tennis. This sequence of events suggests that the photographer's dependence on photography has altered his sense of reality. His ease in participating with the mimes demonstrates that he has been residing in a world of illusion. He wonders if perhaps there never was a corpse in either the image or the park. It is his own sense of mortal vulnerability that has caused him to perceive death in his environment.

In Under Fire, a photographer, Russell Price, takes an assignment in Central America, where he is kidnapped and ordered by Nicaraguan guerrillas to simulate a "life"
photograph of their recently gunned-down leader, Rafael, in order to keep the revolution alive. Up until this point in time, the rebel leader "has never been photographed," so no one knows exactly what he looks like (Stewart 43). Thus, Barthes’ notion regarding the simultaneity of the life and death of photography is articulated here. Paradoxically, the medium that brings associations of a dead past to the present, in this instance, hides the truth of death and provides life in the present for the future maintenance of the revolution. After this first irony occurs, that of photographing a dead body to appear alive and in the present, a second photographic irony takes place via the utilization of photography as memento mori. Many of the photos of guerrillas taken by Price have fallen into the hands of government forces. The photographs are used by them as a kind of visual hit list (Stewart 46). This second irony of photographic death involves using photographs of people who are alive, so that they can be killed. Finally, the photographer's own sense of mortality is challenged when he witnesses the spontaneous assassination of his friend and fellow journalist by the military police. Multiple rapid-fire photographs taken at the site of his assassination are spliced together and broadcast on the news. The inherent stasis-in-motion of film permits the illusion of murder in action (Stewart 46). The life that is brought to the photographs by
presenting them in an animated series makes the photographer relive the experience of the death of his friend, allowing Price to realize the vulnerability of his own mortality.

The three theoretical photographic deaths, as outlined by Barthes, Sontag and Metz can be clearly demonstrated in films from different time periods, genres and countries. _La Jetée_ is a French New Wave film from the 1960s, _Blow-Up_ is an Italian film also from the 1960s, and _Under Fire_ is an American political thriller of the 1980s. By using films of diverse origins that demonstrate similar theoretical uses of photography, it can be concluded that such theories carry significant meaning, weight and validity. Sigmund Freud helps to provide an explanation for the universal use of photography and its associations to death. Freud wrote on the instinctual death drive of Thanatos, stating that the goal of life is to return to the original state of being, as inorganic matter. The organism follows its own path to death, wishing to die only on its own terms. In other words, the purpose of the process of living is to die (Monte 128-29). Perhaps Freud's Thanatos theory can be used to explain the desire to perceive the prevalence of theoretical death. Death is present in the form that we interpret it to exist. As in _Blow-Up_, the photographer's immersion in his own reality of death and murder revealed his own sense of mortality. Thus, as perceivers and
interpreters of the world, it is our own awareness of vulnerability and mortality that allows associations of death with photography to exist tangibly.
Chapter IV. Narrative Death

For Death must be somewhere in a society; if it is no longer (or less intensely) in religion, it must be elsewhere; perhaps in this image which produces Death while trying to preserve life. Contemporary with the withdrawal of rites, Photography may correspond to the intrusion, in our modern society, of an asymbolic Death, outside of religion, outside of ritual, a kind of abrupt dive into literal Death (Barthes 92).

Catherine Russell begins her book, *Narrative Mortality* (1993), with the above quote by Barthes, to introduce the sociological placement of death. She takes note of the contradictory relationship of death in society by demonstrating that death is feared, denied and hidden in our everyday lives, yet death has omnipresence in the culturally produced images of today (1). As I discussed in the previous chapter, through the analysis of Barthes' writings, photographic images are themselves seen as a form of mortality. From the various texts of cultural theorists, I argued that there are three ontological photographic death trends used in narrative cinema: temporal indexical demise, sociological memento mori, and phenomenological mortality.

In this chapter, I will approach photography taxonomically within the context of the cinematic narrative structure as it relates to the phenomenology of the spectator. The three shared categories of analysis concerning photography and film
narrative are: tempo-material structural differences that create different viewing experiences, material-historical similarities as they relate to the construction of the role of the spectator, and the synthesis of the stasis of the photograph within the context of the progression of the narrative with regard to its influence on the process of spectator interpretation. Within the final category, I will look at the phenomenological process of spectatorship that occurs in narrative films that use photographic stills. The mini-photographic narrative within the meta-filmic narrative causes stasis and recoil within the spectator, which works to heighten and deepen the death drive of the meta-filmic narrative. I have chosen three films that exemplify these three categories of spectatorship: Badlands, The Parallax View and Run Lola Run.

Of the three theorists discussed in the previous chapter, Christian Metz provides the most detailed analysis on the differing qualities of photography and film. The first difference of note is the spatio-temporal size of the lexis. The Danish semiotician, Louis Hjelmslev, defined the term "lexis" as the socialized unit of reading, or reception. The space of the lexis as it applies to photography can be defined as a silent rectangle of paper. The cinematographic lexis not only includes the huge rectangular image plane of the theatre.
screen, but also the sounds and movements of the film image. In the realm of the auditory, which is absent from photography, there is phonic sound in the cinema. One of the qualities of sound is expansion through space, whereas images construct themselves in space. The spatial differences between photography and cinema are immobility and silence with the former, thus causing the photographic lexis to be much smaller than the cinematic lexis.

Furthermore, the temporal difference between photography and film concerns the aspect of spectatorship. The photographic lexis does not provide a fixed temporal size, as the spectator determines the duration of the viewing time. On the other hand, the temporal size of the cinematic lexis is determined by the filmmaker in post-production (Metz 81). Whereas the viewing time of a photograph is controlled by the viewer, the filmmaker sets the viewing time of a film, and the images are perceived only as quickly or as slowly as the editing permits. A still photograph, which allows one to linger over a single moment as long as one likes, contradicts the very form of film (Sontag 81).

Photography and film differ in spatio-temporal terms due to cinema's structural movement across frames and the sounds that accompany the images and in the temporal fixity that determines viewership duration. A third difference concerns
the perceptive differences between photography and film. Film includes photography, as film is essentially a series of photographic images that are projected at twenty-four frames per second. Film is founded on a series of sequential pauses (Wolfe 5). Cinema is the result of perceptive features that are not used in photography due to its quality of stasis. The additional element of movement in the cinema, which is an illusion, requires the effect of the phi phenomenon (Metz 83).

Psychologist Max Wertheimer used the discovery of the phi phenomenon to demonstrate the Gestalt contention that perception is holistic. As applied to the cinema, there is holistic movement perceived between each frame, so that each frame is continuous, blending with the one before it. The illusion of an image of movement is created. Without the phi phenomenon, we would accurately perceive each of the individual twenty-four frames projected per second (Benjafield 172).

In addition to the three distinct spatio-temporal material differences of movement and sound, viewership temporality and the psychological perception process of the phi phenomenon, material-historical structural differences and similarities exist between photography and narrative with respect to spectatorship. Again, there is the spatio-temporal category, where photography and narrative utilize different time structures, but share a similarity with the construction of
space in the manner that the role of the spectator is constructed. Gilberto Perez outlines the temporal difference between the two in *The Material Ghost* (1993), stating that the spectatorship of photography is simultaneous, while in the narrative, it is sequential. Photography may present a story within the frame, such as an ongoing event, but the story is presented in simultaneous form. According to Perez, the art of narrative resides in the arrangement of sequences and the process of recounting the events of the story (51).

Photography and narrative share similarities in material structural construction. A photograph depends on the referent. A material object or subject must be exposed on the film plane to create the latent image. The photographic image is a partial view; it is only a section of space captured at a certain time from a certain perspective. For both photography and narrative film, the dependency on the referent provides an incomplete presentation to the viewer. But the photograph is not constructed from a sequence of events as the narrative is; it is a fragment of a potential sequence. The photograph invites the possibility of continuation, which has led to the art of the cinema, that is, twenty-four frames per second (Perez 52).

While photography and narrative cinema share spatial similarities by presenting partial views of the world, both
have also been shaped by common historical constructions. Western perspectivism has greatly influenced the development of photography and narrative, by placing the viewer in a privileged and centralized position.

Jonathan Crary argues that the model of vision operating at the time of the Renaissance offered a centered human subjectivity for viewing. Thus, the viewer was given the perceiving privilege of being positioned in the center of the world. Perspective principles shaped the organization of Renaissance image space and the conception of the spectator. For example, entire theatres were built around the vantage-point of the duke’s or cardinal’s seat; the sight lines of other seats were correspondingly distorted (Bordwell 6). The illusion of centrality was the ideal spectator position (Heath 386). The camera is the culminating realization of that projected utopia. The images it produced became the currency of that vision, just as the mathematical convention of Western perspective had been in painting before the invention of photography. Pervasive beliefs about the construction of "real" space within an image were formulated by these codes of vision (Heath 387). The public believed that geometrical perspective, so long as it did not involve unfamiliar points of view, was "true", just as in the past, it believed that the old geometry of Euclid was "the truth". The majority of photographs
today are still constructed by the rules of central perspective (Heath 387).

In *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985), David Bordwell outlines a similar history of centralized Western perspective as it relates to narrative construction. He notes that there are three different ways to study storytelling: representation, structure, and process (4). Of interest here is the representational or mimetic theory of narration, as its historical time frame correlates to the optical development of painting that influenced the rules of image formation in photography.

Mimetic theories utilize the act of vision as a model: an object of perception is presented to the eye of the beholder. This model underlies the changes in representational practice introduced by Greek theatre and painting and, later, in several Renaissance arts. The Greek Theatre raised and confronted the central problems that surround the mimetic tradition: How is the space of the story to be presented, and where is the spectator in relation to it (Bordwell 4)? The term "perspective" means "seeing through", which acknowledges that both the object (the depicted world) and the subject (the viewer) are bound together through the picture plane (Bordwell 4).
It has been demonstrated that photography and narrative cinema have similarities and differences within the spatio-temporal and material-historical categories of analysis. It is hoped that these points of contrast and comparison will help explain the process of viewership that occurs when a series of photographs is placed within the context of the narrative film.

In an issue of Wide Angle, Raymond Bellour writes extensively on the process of spectatorship that occurs when photographs are used in narrative cinema. Bellour claims that the photograph is much like any other object within the mise-en-scène within the film, but as the photograph holds filmic time, the film seems to freeze, achieving the quality of stasis that occupies photography. Further, photography carries its foundations and associations of death into the context of the cinema, causing the spectator to recoil from the progression of narrative sequence. This causes a second temporal condition to be born, a past of the past, which interrupts the film's unfolding narrative. Thus, within the meta-filmic narrative of film narration, a mini-photographic narrative comes forth. This causes the viewer to recoil from the meta-filmic narrative, but usually the mini-photographic narrative thematically echoes its predecessor. The mini-photographic narrative may initially seem to be disruptive by interrupting the flow and progression of the meta-filmic narrative, but it
is thematically parallel, thus enhancing and enriching the cinematic viewing experience on multiple levels (8). Bellour describes this phenomenon as a process of subtraction. Contact with the photograph allows leisure in order to indulge in retrospection and add to the meaning of the film. The photograph subtracts the viewer from the film, but adds to its interpretation. I would prefer to label this viewing process as a distancing effect that allows the viewer to reflect on the cinema and thus invest more freely in the meaning of its content. Or, as Bellour metaphorically writes: "It helps me to close my eyes, yet keep them wide open" (7).

The photograph haunts the film, playing with the truth of the cinema. The "reality effect" that the temporal progression of the cinema works to erase is brought to the forefront by photography, temporarily shattering the meta-filmic narrative fantasy. Its stillness disrupts the foreword moving progression of the film narration. This swerve of spectatorship of the meta-filmic narration allows for a momentary pause where the viewer is also able to reflect on the cinema. This uncoupling of the spectator from the image allows the hurried spectator to pensively evaluate the layers of diverse images that make up the meta-filmic narrative and mini-photographic narrative (Bellour 9-10).
Garrett Stewart also writes explicitly on the process of spectatorship within the context of meta-filmic narratives that incorporate mini-photographic narratives. Stewart defines the key difference between photography and film to be motion or lack of it. He quotes Stanley Cavell: "stillness emphasizes the death in mortal existence while motion emphasizes the life of it" (Stewart 11). As was discussed in the previous chapter, photography has philosophical deaths that concern temporal-indexicality, sociological memento mori and perceived existential phenomenology. As Bellour points out, the power of photography’s stillness is brought forward in the meta-filmic narration, interrupting its progression and positive forward moving sequences of living and fantasy (7). While Bellour is concerned with how the process of spectatorship halts and changes due to the motionlessness of the still image, Stewart directly address how photography’s associations with death are brought forward in the narrative. He writes: “The immediate difference of stillness from motion in these two media may therefore serve in the end merely to specify death’s relation to both” (12). Metz insists, like Barthes, on “the selective kinship of photography (not film) with death,” since film “gives back to the dead a semblance of life”--at least, that motion associated with life (qtd. in Batchen 37). Photographic stasis exposes by association the cinematic system as a series
of photographic frames of which it is comprised. Whereas photography engraves the death it resembles, cinema defers the death whose escape it simulates. The isolated photograph or photogram is the still work of death; cinema is death always still at work (Stewart Between xi).

If the photograph manifests death and film is a manifestation of photographs, then films manifest death. This syllogism seems tempting, but as discussed earlier, the phi phenomenon allows film to carry the illusion of movement and thus, life. More importantly, the holding of action of photographic stasis against narrative progression frequently motivates it within the plot as a metaphorical correlative of the meta-filmic narrative (Stewart Between xi).

General mainstream cinema attempts to naturalize its storytelling according to the tenets of the realist code. Beneath the blandishments of the naturalistic illusion of the meta-filmic narrative, there may run a mini-photographic narrative which functions as a para-narrative counterplot. It is from this counterplot that the event of stasis is usually folded back into the current of mainstream plotting as a virtual metaphor for death (Stewart Between 28). The mini-filmic generates meta-filmic ramifications. Three films that demonstrate a mini-photographic narrative echoing the meta-filmic death thematic are: Badlands, The Parallax View and Run
Lola Run. All three films demonstrate meta-filmic narrative stasis, spectatorship recoil, and mini-photographic death doubling of the meta-filmic narrative.

Badlands is a fiction film narrative about an antihero's doomed venture in memorializing the self and a girl's awakening consciousness of fatality. In the film, Kit is on a murdering rampage with his girlfriend, who blindly follows him across South Dakota and Montana in order to escape criminal punishment. They live in a romantic fantasy as two-love struck felons on the run. The more they kill, the more they have to run from, propelling them into a vicious cycle of murder.

Narrative stasis, spectatorship recoil and meta-filmic echoing occur in Badlands when Kit's girlfriend, Holly, views stereographic prints, while hiding out in the forest with Kit after he murdered her father. In this scene, which is midway through the plot, all moving images are displaced by the still images seen through a stereographic slide viewer. Holly reaches at random for a series of double-plated, three-dimensional pictures and then studies them in the old-fashioned apparatus. Due to the vintage quality and technological apparatus to view the images, these photographs link the viewer to the distant past of the turn-of-the-century. Holly re-contextualizes the images of the past into her own present. Her voice-over narration within the mini-photographic narrative articulates:
While taking a look at some vistas in Dad's stereopticon, it hit me that I was just a little girl, born in Texas [...] and that I had just so many years to live.

Holly's insight references the Barthesian idea that was discussed at length in the previous chapter—a phenomenological existentialism perceived by the spectator:

I am the reference of every photograph, and this is what generates my astonishment in addressing myself to the fundamental question: why is it that I am alive here and now? (Barthes 84)

Holly's encounter with images of the past demonstrates Barthes' sense, again, of how the "that-has-been" of a photograph is transferred to "this imperious sign of my future death," the point at which I will be only a photograph (Stewart Between 51). Psychologically, Holly removes herself from the gritty reality of murder and destitution. This results in a halt to the meta-filmic narrative, and entices the viewer into the new reality of the mini-photographic narrative. All photographs are, in this sense, posthumous and potentially mortifying; telling of death that was, they warn of the coming of death. In Holly's mind, these images inscribe the assurance of her own doom. The mini-photographic narrative triggers her to question time, mortality, and fate. Without representing a corpse, violence, or pain, these photos collectively raise the question of death. Holly closes the sequences: "For days after I lived in dread." Death of the past invoked by the
photographs exaggerates her fears of her future fate. Here, the mini-photographic narrative is a compressed sequential emblem of the death drive of the meta-filmic narrative.

The Parallax View exhibits a meta-filmic death drive as a paranoid fantasy. It is an abstract story of an assassination-for-hire-conspiracy. Joe Frady is an obsessive newspaper reporter who is investigating the death of several witnesses of the assassination of a Senator who was a candidate for President. Frady discovers promotional material for the Parallax Corporation, which is screening for potential assassins. Frady passes several tests and is accepted into the Corporation. When he is found at the location of the assassination of another Senator, he is accused of being the killer and is subsequently murdered by the Parallax Corporation. The film concludes, as it began, with the statement of a committee investigating an assassination: no evidence of conspiracy; the killer acted alone.

In the film, circular meta-filmic narrative structure advances paranoid conspiracy theories, beginning and ending with violent murders. The mini-photographic narrative echoes this death drive in a scene where Frady is given a screening test at the Parallax offices. Frady is isolated in a stark and sterile room, where he must view a five-minute slide montage while his physiological responses are monitored. The montage
uses still projected slide images under the inter-title headings of Love, Mother, Father, Me, Home, Country, God and Enemy. The mini-photographic narrative begins with conventional imagery reflecting the ideals of the American dream. Under each heading, stereotypical images follow. After the inter-title of Mother, a woman changes the diaper of her newborn baby. After Father, a man looks into the eyes of his son, his hand paternalistically resting on his son's shoulder. After Country, images of American iconography are shown, such as The Lincoln Memorial, Mount Rushmore and the White House. After Enemy, there are images of Hitler, Fidel Castro and Chairman Mao—communism is the antithesis of American democracy. But as the headings repeat cyclically, the imagery becomes more disturbing and violent. The images that were shown under the heading of Father now follow the heading of Enemy. There are shots of the Vietnam War, destitute children, and criminals in jail under the heading of Country. The American flag waving in front of the White House moves to the Ku Klux Klan waving the same flag. This mini-photographic narrative at the screening test is used to discriminate against candidates who do not have the potential to become assassins. If the candidate does not evoke a physiological response to the progression of conventional, stereotypical imagery of the American utopia to a complete reversal of imagery showing
corruption, crime and greed, then the candidate has the necessary insensitivity to kill without regret. Thus begins the process of training violent, amoral human beings.

This mini-photographic narrative sequence exhibits the three categories of narrative stasis, spectator recoil and meta-filmic echoing. Frady is isolated and physiologically monitored in order to be under the full influence of the Corporation's screening test. Frady's seclusion and bizarre exposure to the mini-photographic narrative causes an abrupt removal from the meta-filmic narrative. The spectator's identification with Frady's isolation and vulnerability to the sadistic mini-photographic narrative causes an experience of recoil. As it is Frady's determination in the meta-filmic narrative to discover the conspiracy behind the Parallax Corporation's assassination of political figures, the psychological complexity of amorality that is evoked in the mini-photographic narrative deepens the recesses of death thematics.

While Badlands and The Parallax View both exhibit evidential themes of death in the mini and meta narratives, Run Lola Run explores the broader philosophical themes of fate, determinism and chance. Manni, a courier for a big gangster, loses a plastic bag with 100,000 marks in drug money on a Berlin subway, and a bum absconds with it. Manni phones his
girlfriend, Lola, in a panic. If he is to survive the wrath of his gangster boss, she must bring him a replacement sum in 20 minutes. The same story is told three times, with some particulars changed, and with different endings.

Within each of the three meta-filmic narratives, there are three mini-photographic narratives, except in the third meta-filmic narrative, where there are only two. The tripartite structure of the meta-film narrative forms a dialectic. In the first (thesis) Lola dies; in the second (antithesis), Manni dies; in the third (synthesis), both Manni and Lola live. The mini-photographic narratives echo this dialectic. While Lola is running on her quest to find money to save Manni, she encounters, and nearly runs down, pedestrians and cyclists. The first pedestrian is a bad-tempered woman with a baby carriage. Lola then crosses paths with a cyclist who wants to sell his bicycle. Finally, in her father's downtown office, Lola glares at a woman in the hallway. As Lola is temporarily in the presence of each character, there are rapid-fire flash forwards. These mini-photographic narratives are composed of a series of still photographs that are accompanied by the shutter, click, and whir of a still camera motor drive. The mini-photographic narratives reveal the future life of each minor character. As each meta-filmic narrative ends differently, due to the chaos theory's tenet that the slightest
variation can produce enormous changes in the future, each mini-photographic narrative appropriately reveals different endings. For example, the three mini-photographic narrative sequences of a bad-tempered woman echo the changes in the fate of Lola and Manni in the meta-filmic narrative. In the first round, the bad-tempered woman becomes a social welfare case, loses her child, steals another in a park and is last seen being chased by the father and two other people. In the second round, she buys a lotto ticket and wins, purchases a new car, and is last seen in a lounge chair sitting beside her baby asleep in a crib as she and her husband share a toast in the front yard of her new mansion. In the third round, she encounters a Jehovah's Witness on the street and later prays in a church, her husband takes communion, and she is last seen with another woman on the street offering copies of the Jehovah's Witness publications Awake and Watchtower.

Each of the three rounds of this particular mini-photographic narrative sequence demonstrates the three categories of narrative stasis, spectator recoil and meta-photographic narrative echo. Meta-filmic narrative stasis occurs very obviously, as the mini-photographic narrative is presented abruptly and without pretense. It is totally unexpected that a minor character would suddenly be given significant screen time by seeing their lives flash before our
eyes. Spectator recoil is particularly significant because the mini-photographic narrative occurs during a period of urgency in the meta-filmic narrative. There is no smooth transition between Lola's urgency and the bad-tempered woman's fate. The mini-photographic narrative echoes the tenets of chaos theory put forth in the culmination of the three meta-filmic narrative rounds that compose the film. Each mini-narrative and meta-narrative proposes an existential dialectical drive on the multiple possibilities of life, which is expressed by their diverse and oppositional endings. It is suggested that either chance or fate will determine whether we live or die. While Badlands and The Parallax View propose an explicit death drive via the existential crises of the central protagonists, Lola's changing fate in Run Lola Run asserts that death still remains a mystery.

In sum, the change in the process of spectatorship that occurs with a mini-photographic narrative within a meta-film narrative is clearly revealed by the synthesis that occurs due to the various differences and similarities of photography and narrative film that concern the categories of the spatial-temporal, the material-historical, and existential spectator phenomenology. Within the category of the spatial-temporal, I have argued that photography differs from film in three ways. The filmic lexis is larger than the photographic lexis because
of the qualities of movement and sound. As well, photography and film differ in the role of temporal spectator construction. In photography, the duration of the look of observation by the spectator is not fixed, but in the cinema, the perceptual process of spectatorship requires the phi phenomenon. Within the material-historical category, photography and narrative film share the similarities of dependence on a referent, which restricts them to present only a partial view of the world. They both share historical similarities in the construction of the position of the spectator due to centralized Western perspective. These spatial-temporal and material-historical differences and similarities significantly contribute to the phenomenological spectatorship that occurs when a mini-photographic narrative is contextualized within a meta-filmic narrative. The meta-filmic narrative is temporarily halted, causing the spectator to recoil from the text. This pause allows the viewer to contextually contemplate both the mini- and meta-text, which works to enrich the overall meaning of death in the meta-filmic narrative. Thus, as Barthes' quote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, death is in the image that preserves life (photography) and the film form works to erase death, via the narrative progression of life. Death cannot be erased, perhaps because, as Freud theorized about Thanatos, there is a death drive in every organism to return to
the original state of inorganic matter. This psychological and physical determinism must have an outlet in some cultural form. Sociologically, as Barthes writes, death must be somewhere in society (92). If it is not in religion, or the societal rituals that no longer appear in contemporary society, it resides in the highly valued and consumed cultural products of the still image and the moving image.
Chapter V. Metamorphic Death: Post-mortem and Spirit Photography in Narrative Cinema

It seems only fitting, when discussing the ironic nature of photography, to end my thesis with a chapter on the analysis of the early beginnings of the medium. In my first chapter on death, I discussed the multiple associations of death that envelop photography. In the previous chapter, I compared the various similarities and differences between photography and film. In this chapter, I will trace the shifting ideological lineage of death as manifest in the content of photographs in the nineteenth century. I have observed two central portrayals of death: post-mortem photography and spirit photography. I will demonstrate how cultural attitudes towards material death, spiritualism, and technology are expressed in the representational content of the cultural products of photography. Three films that I have chosen that use post-mortem photography, spirit photography, and technological supernaturalism are The Others, The Asphyx, and Ring.

As Geoffrey Batchen (1999) writes, photography has been associated with death since its inception. In stopping time, each individual photograph embodies the interweave of life and death. All photographs bear the work of death due to the temporal-material quality of freezing, mummifying or corpsifying the captured body. This temporal-material stasis is
particularly manifest in the early beginnings of photographic technological development. Due to slow exposure times, the subject had to remain completely still for many seconds and even minutes to prevent the image from being blurred. The strain of motionlessness caused the subject's face to look sombre and morose. However, a solution became available for removing the physical strain from the subject. Special prosthetic devices were developed to constrain the subject. A neck and back brace was secured to the subject to ensure stillness and guarantee a detailed and clear image. Garrett Stewart observes that it was as if the body had to become a sarcophagus before it became a photographic effigy (44). This device transformed the live body into the stasis of an embalmed effigy. In order to appear lifelike, the technology of photography demanded that the subject act as if deceased (Batchen 208).

Portrait photographers took this corpse-like association with photography a step further and developed a lucrative trade in producing post-mortem photographs. Grieving parents could console themselves with a photograph of their departed child. The irony of photography becomes apparent again, as an image of the dead, as dead, somehow worked to sustain the living (Batchen 208). Jay Ruby (1995) writes extensively on the cultural phenomenon of post-mortem photography that began in
the mid-nineteenth century and is still practiced today. Ruby's sociological project is to outline the shifting cultural attitudes toward death over the past one hundred and sixty years in America.

Ruby writes that death was a topic of polite conversation in the nineteenth century (7). The grieving process was considered normal, as is demonstrated by widowhood and its visual manifestation of wearing black in public, which was a lifelong social expectation for many women. Additionally, cemeteries were used as recreational sites. But this open and accepting attitude towards death became a forbidden topic for the American middle-class at the beginning of the twentieth century. The public display of mourning and distress over the death of a family member was considered to be pathological. However, Ruby writes that this repressed view of death is changing, due to the proliferation of grief counselling and death education in public schools. Grief counsellors often use photography as a tool for facilitating the healing process, as Judith Stillion reveals:

This often helps clients to re-live the circumstances of a particular period and can result in re-gaining or attaining objectivity concerning their actions and decisions of that period. When clients re-live the period with the help of photographs, they frequently can let go of feelings of guilt and regret over actions taken or not taken during that particular time (qtd. in Ruby 8).
Freud wrote that the mourning period is a process in which the subject learns that his or her loved one is now gone forever. In order to survive and heal, the person must direct his or her attention towards someone or something else. Substitutive objects, such as belongings of the deceased, or an image of the deceased, can help ease the grieving process (qtd. in de Duve 123). Due to its indexical nature, a photographic image may be more useful than a drawing or a painting. Moreover, the indexicality of the photograph causes a mourning process to occur with every image. More specifically, as Barthes suggests with the "that-has-been," the viewer is always aware that the subject or the object of the image once existed in a certain time and place, but it does not exist in the same way at the time of viewing the photograph. The temporal death of photography brings awareness to both the mortality of the content of the photograph, and a sense of mortality to the viewer of the image. Whether a post-mortem photograph or not, the viewer is always engaged in a process of mourning. As Sontag writes: "All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's mortality, vulnerability, mutability" (15). In short, the mourning process of the photograph facilitates the healing process of grieving (de Duve 123).
Photographs of death have a social purpose (Ruby 9-11). Due to photography's connection to memory, and memory's connection to grief, a photograph of a dead loved one (either alive or posthumous) works as a therapeutic tool for the grieving process. The important social use of the photograph in the nineteenth century exemplifies Sontag's writings on the photograph as memento mori. The image of a loved one or a friend could be preserved and treasured as a memorial keepsake. The photograph offered the promise of a materialist realization of eternity. So, not only did photography aid in the grieving process, but it gave mourners tangibility for remembering the deceased.

The popularity of post-mortem photography is simply explained by an increase in death rates in the mid-nineteenth century. This was a time of social, demographic, and cultural upheaval in America. The population of the country tripled between 1790 and 1830 and would triple again by 1860. As cities grew, communities left the city for more space. Death rates due to tuberculosis were extremely high in areas that were crowded or over-populated. Tuberculosis became identified with the evils of urban life, while the rural lifestyle became a refuge from the disease and pollution of the city. A polarity between public and private life developed, with increasing importance being placed on the family unit. A new Victorian
ideology arose that sentimentalized the family and its rituals, from birth to death (Stannard 84-87).

Most photographs taken of the dead were of children, reflecting their high mortality rate. Tuberculosis had the largest impact on women and the young. Babies and children under age five were the highest risk-group for not surviving. Therefore, many of the photographs of this time were of dead children. There was the Victorian belief that the dead child was blessed with eternal youth and innocence, and the archival capabilities of photography facilitated that belief (Stannard 73-74).

There are three styles of post-mortem family photography that are evident from 1840 to 1880. The first two styles attempt to portray the deceased as not dead, and the third style portrays the deceased with mourners. The first style can be labeled as "the last sleep". The association of death with sleep can be traced back to classical Greece. The mythical sons of the night were Hypnos, god of sleep, and his twin, Thanatos, god of death. Thus, in the ideology of the late nineteenth century, people did not die; they embarked on the journey of eternal rest (Ruby 72).

The second style of post-mortem photography can be labeled as "alive, but dead", portraying an attempt to conceal the notion of death or sleep. The body was not lying horizontally,
but placed in an upright position, often in a chair. The eyes were open or painted on as if open, in an attempt to create the illusion that the subject was alive. The subject may have been photographed as lying horizontally, and then the photograph would have been turned and mounted on a ninety-degree angle so that the body appeared upright (Ruby 72).

The aesthetic qualities of the first two styles of post-mortem photography usually concentrated on the facial features of the deceased, but a minority of photographs showed the entire body. The body rested on domestic furniture, such as a sofa draped with a sheet or coverlet. The setting was usually in the living room or the parlor of a private home. Sometimes, a dead child would be displayed as if asleep in a buggy. There are practical explanations for the popularity of close-up images of the deceased seated on a sofa in the parlor. Funeral parlors were nonexistent, and coffins were not readily available. Thus, "the last sleep" and "alive, but dead" poses demonstrate how technology and ideology coalesce. A body photographed in a coffin would have disrupted the illusion that the subject was alive (Ruby 72).

The third style of post-mortem photography depicts the deceased in the company of mourners, usually family members. The centrality of the nuclear and extended family in middle-class America was highly valued. Photographs functioned to
memorialize and idealize this social institution. Often, no photographs would have been taken before a family member, such as a young child, died. So, parents were depicted mourning their dead child—an attempt to create a final family image. When the subject was a child, it was held in the arms or the lap of the parent(s), as if the child were asleep. When looking at these images, it is often difficult to determine whether the child is asleep or dead. The display of grief on the face of the parents does not indicate the status of the child, as all photographs of this era portray sombre looking people due to the slow technology of exposure times. As was discussed earlier, people were placed in restraints to ensure a clear, unblurred image. The result was an image of a person without facial emotion with a rigid, expressionless posture (Ruby 88-90).

Thus, the multiple associations of photography with death can first be seen in the earliest photographs, where the slow technology demanded that the subject be as still as a corpse. Then, real corpses were actually photographed, which served a social purpose in aiding the healing process of mourning. So photographers started with photographing live people who looked like they were dead, and ended by photographing the truly dead. The next step was to photograph the dead in the state of the afterlife, otherwise known as ghosts. However, photographing
the dead was not the only preliminary step that led to photographing ghosts. Cultural attitudes towards the technology of the camera allowed the process of photography to embody a powerful mysticism.

There is one central characteristic of photography that brings associations of black magic, the occult and supernatural power: the double. While photography carried positivist associations of truth, the medium was also experienced as an uncanny phenomenon. The mechanical reproduction capabilities of photography were interpreted as an ability to create a parallel world of phantasmatic doubles. The new mythology welcomed the dissolving effects of modernity into the core of metaphysics. Tom Gunning provocatively suggests that the uncanny ability of photography to produce a double of the subject allowed it to embody associations of the supernatural (43). Therefore, I will examine the lineage of multi-cultural thinking on the double, as outlined by Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank.

Gunning recounts Freud's writing from The Uncanny (1919), stating that a fascination with repetition led Freud to go beyond the pleasure principle to a confrontation with the death drive and the conflict between Eros and Thanatos (43-44). Otto Rank also writes on the theme of the double, which was inspired by German uncanny cinema, in particular The Student of Prague
(1912), where the trickery of double exposure was employed. Both Freud and Rank demonstrate that the double has a long lineage, from archaic beliefs to the romantic Doppelganger. Photography worked as a new technology to furnish already existing beliefs regarding the uncanny.

Rank's classic essays in *The Double* (1971) provide a detailed account on the multi-cultural forms of the double and the beliefs that are associated with it. Rank posits that humankind's need for self-perpetuation or self-immortalization, which is partly achieved with the photographic image, led to the development of civilization and spiritual values. Rank outlines the diverse beliefs in the need to protect one's shadow, which is a form of a double of oneself. Another form of the double is in the reflection, reproduced in glass or in water. Many tribal peoples believed that the soul is embodied in the image. This was then carried over to permanent reproductive technologies, such as photography. Historically, there has been a prolific dread of one's own portrait or photograph found across many cultures, such as the First Nations, the American Indian, and tribes in Central Africa, as well as in Asia, East India, and Europe. It was thought that the individual's soul was manifest in the image of the subject, and it was feared that the foreign possessor of this figurative
representation could lead the subject to harmful or deadly consequences (Rank 52-65).

When the daguerreotype was invented in 1839, this fear of the uncanny double was expressed by an uncertain public reception to the new technology. A decade after Daguerre's successful experiments, Balzac's writings indicate a deathly fear of the reproductive qualities of photography. A photographer of the time, Nadar, wrote: "The lowliest to the most high [...] trembled before the daguerreotype [...]. More than a few of our most brilliant intellects shrank back as if from a disease" (Nadar 9). He continues by noting the response of his friend, Balzac, who expressed uneasiness about the photographic process. Nadar summarizes Balzac's "Theory of the Specters":

According to Balzac's theory, all physical bodies are made up entirely of layers of ghostlike images, an infinite number of leaflike skins laid one on top of the other. Since Balzac believed man was incapable of making something material from an apparition, from something impalpable - that is, creating something from nothing - he concluded that every time someone had his photograph taken, one of the spectral layers was removed from the body and transferred to the photograph. Repeated exposures entailed the unavoidable loss of subsequent ghostly layers, that is, the very essence of life. (9)

Rosalind Krauss writes in the relatively contemporary essay, "Tracing Nadar", that Balzac's theory expressed the dual identity of photography. The quality of the double was equally shared in the positivist's absolutism of matter and the metaphysician's existential link to the original source. Balzac
wrote: "The external life is a kind of organized system which represents a man as exactly as the colors by which the snail reproduces itself on its shell" (qtd. in Krauss 35). The connections to biology of this model were meant to carry the authority of Science, while the notion of man as a series of exfoliating, self-depiction images is the model of the snail in a poetic and whimsical form.

Also around the time of Balzac's writing, there was a new cultural development in the United States—the metaphysical system of Spiritualism. The Spiritualist movement related its worldview to the modern changes in technology and science, such as electricity, telegraphy and new advances in chemistry and biology. Photography's quality of the double is what attracted the Spiritualists to the medium. Of particular interest was the trick photography of the double exposure, a kind of double within the double. Again, it was the ironic quality of photography's indexicality and simultaneous uncanniness that attracted Balzac to write about the medium and also the Spiritualists to it. Photographic likeness and the transparency of ghosts demonstrated the uncanny quality of photography, or, in other words, its capture of a spectre-like double (Gunning 47).

Photography substantiated Spiritualism. All claims of spirit photography as evidence of an afterlife rest on the
indexical claim that ghosts, invisible to the human eye, are picked up by the more sensitive capacity of photography. Spirit photographers denied they knew how their photographs of ghosts were created. It was pointed out by skeptics of spirit photography that the ghosts that appeared in such photographs were often the exact duplications of existing photographs. While this observation indicates the method of photographing photographs to create the spirit image, the Spiritualists claimed that this did not rule out supernatural influences. Spirit photographs were thought to be produced by spiritual forces that used images of the dead as a way of communicating to the living (Gunning 64).

While Spirit photography often worked to substantiate the supernatural claims of the Spiritualist movement, these images also served a social purpose very similar to that of the post-mortem photographs. Spirit photographs were produced for the mourners to ease their healing process. Photographs of the dead were given to photographers to superimpose over the photographs of the mourners. These photographs were not used to claim evidence of an afterlife, but to create a consoling image. The only indexical claim of these photographs is that the image of the family lives on, even after the subjects have died. Furthermore, viewing these images today as cultural products, gives the contemporary observer a tangible understanding of the
ideologies of immortality that were operating in the mid-nineteenth century.

The aesthetic tendencies of post-mortem, spirit photography and technological uncanniness are demonstrated in three films that I have chosen: The Others, The Asphyx, and Ring. The Others utilizes two of the three styles regarding post-mortem photography—"the eternal sleep" and "alive, but dead." The Asphyx expresses the Victorian Spiritualism that empowered the camera with supernatural capabilities. Ring presents a contemporary view of Victorian Spiritualism, using the haunting power of the technologies of video, the telephone and the camera.

In The Others, Grace lives in a mansion with her two children and three servants. Her husband is missing in action due to his participation as a soldier in World War Two. Grace's son and daughter are chronically allergic to light, and cannot leave the house. They must reside in complete darkness, and therefore all the windows are covered with thick drapery. In one scene, Grace is sorting through clutter in the attic when she finds a box of photographs. She comes across a black photo album, where all the subjects of the images are either sitting upright in a chair or wooden bench, or lying down in bed. They are all wearing black and their eyes are closed. Grace asks her servant, Mrs. Mills, why everyone in the photographs is
sleeping. Mrs. Mills tells her that what she is looking at is a "Book of the Dead." Later in the film, Grace finds a post-mortem photograph in her room, showing all three of her servants sitting on a couch, wearing black and displaying closed eyes. Grace realizes that her servants are ghosts. At the same time, the children find the servants' three graves in the garden and also realize that the domestics are ghosts. Later, the ghostly servants warn Grace that "the others" have her children. Grace enters a room where the children are hiding to discover a séance in progress. Grace is told that she and her children are ghosts, too. In fact, when Grace's husband did not return from the war, she smothered her children with pillows and shot herself.

The use of post-mortem photography is key to the plot structure, as it is the discovery of the post-mortem photographs of the servants that leads Grace to realize that she and her children are also ghosts. And Grace would not have realized that the servants were dead in the final post-mortem photograph if she had not discovered the black photo album earlier in the story, when Mrs. Mills explained to her that the subjects in the photographs were not asleep. There are nine photographs displayed in the "Book of the Dead." The images range from medium shots to long shots and from the elderly to infants. The corpses are either lying in bed to portray the
first stylistic of post-mortem photography, "the eternal sleep", or the subjects are placed upright in wicker chairs or wooden benches, portraying the second stylistic of "alive, but dead." The subjects are meant to look as if they are alive and posing for a photographic portrait. The Others does not depict post-mortem photographs of the deceased with mourners, the third stylistic of post-mortem photography. Some of the images depict more than one subject in the image, though. For example, in one photograph, there are two children seated on a wooden bench, holding hands. There is also an image of three young men lying together in one bed. The film is not only accurately referencing two of the three stylistics of post-mortem photography, but it is also demonstrating the frequency to which people died due to the tuberculosis epidemic during the middle and late nineteenth century. All three servants, Mrs. Mills, Mr. Tuttle and Lydia are shown to have died at the same time, as the three of them are shown seated together. The photograph is dated December 1891, which was, in fact, during the tuberculosis epidemic.

It is interesting to note that not only are the photographs depicted with historical accuracy, but the dialogue between Grace and Mrs. Mills also acknowledges the cultural attitudes of the time. While Grace is looking through the black book with Mrs. Mills, she finds the image of the two children
together. Grace distraughtly expresses that she finds such a practice to be macabre, and does not understand how "these people could be so superstitious." Mrs. Mills had earlier explained that: "In the last century, I believe they took photographs of the dead in the hopes that their souls would go on living through the portraits." This references Otto Rank’s discussion on the double and the fact that some tribal people believed that the image possessed the soul.

Achieving immortality through mechanical reproduction is further expanded on in The Asphyx. The Asphyx sketches the ideologies of immortality and Victorian Spiritualism in photographic experiments and their impact at the end of the nineteenth century. Sir Victor Hugo is a scientist who photographs people at the moment they die. In photographing the sufferers, he is repeatedly able to capture a certain smear on the picture near the head of the dying. In one scene, he projects slide images of individuals who are at the point of death, to a society of amateurs. He points out that in every image there is a black smear near the head of the nearly deceased. In order to determine the direction in which the smear is travelling, he develops an apparatus, whereby he can record moving objects. He must try to discover if the black smear represents the soul leaving the body, or if it is a death
spirit coming to take the soul away. Thus, he invents the motion picture camera.

In this film, the Victorian craze for spirit photography has been upgraded to produce the image of ghosts in the making, or death in process. What Sir Hugo discovers in action is that the puzzling smudge he has been studying is an ectoplasmic phantom, captured as it arrives on the scene of death. This is the Greek spirit of death, the Asphyx (derived from the term asphyxiation) (Stewart iv). It is the technology of the camera, which is more sensitive than the human eye that can capture the asphyx in action. The Asphyx accurately expresses the Victorian Spiritualist indexicality claim of the precision of the technology of the camera. The detail and instantaneous quality of mechanical reproduction is more faithful in reproducing reality than any human agency, so therefore the content depicted in the image must be truthful, and it is the weakness of the human sensory system that cannot perceive what the camera records. Furthermore, the camera is empowered with mystical strength, as its indexical ability allows the user of the technology to capture the death spirit for eternity, and thus achieve immortality. Without the sensitivity of the camera, the Asphyx could never be detected and therefore, never be caught.
Finally, the contemporary Japanese film, *Ring*, expresses a reversal of the Victorian beliefs regarding the immortality that is linked to the image as expressed in *The Others* and *The Asphyx*. *Ring* proposes the notion of impending doom that Barthes put forth in *Camera Lucida* and which was most notably expressed in *Badlands*, discussed in the previous chapter. The idea is that viewing an image of the past, in the present, complicates the viewer's sense of mortality. Or, as Sontag writes, the photograph draws attention to the relentless melt of time, announcing an inescapable dismal fate for the viewer (15). In *Ring*, the power of the technology of the camera visually manifests this impending death of the subject by distorting the representation of the subject.

*Ring* links the technological apparatus to the supernatural. The story rests on the urban myth that a teenage girl, Tomoko, watched a video, and then received a phone call that she would die in a week. A television reporter, Reiko, investigates the story. She finds a picture of the teenage girl and her friends. She is provoked into investigating the story further, when she sees the nightmarish image of the blurred and distorted faces of the four teenagers. Reiko travels to the place where the teenage girl saw the tape. She watches the video and also receives the phone call. Her ex-husband takes a Polaroid picture of her, and as the picture
develops on the spot, Reiko’s face is revealed to be contorted and out of proportion. The Polaroid confirms her fate; she will die in one week, as did Tomoko, so she must solve the mystery to ensure her own survival.

The photograph is essential in pushing the plot forward, as it is used to confirm a dismal future, which motivates Reiko to solve the story. By contrast, in The Others and The Asphyx, the use of photography and the camera are manifestations of the Victorian beliefs of immortality and Spiritualism, linking mystic power to technology. But in Ring, the camera does not play an active role in changing a mortal’s fate; the photograph’s indexicality reveals a doom that is already present. However, there is the dualism of positivism and the double, as the technology of the camera is still powerful enough to reveal the impending death that mere mortals cannot perceive. The light-sensitive, detailed image is rendered via the camera, which has the capacity to duplicate a reality that is unseen by the average person. The evidence of the image allows Reiko to take matters into her own hands, and change her fate herself.

In conclusion, all three films accurately portray the shifting methods in representing death in photography in the nineteenth century. From posthumous photography to Spirit photography, there is a strong drive towards attempting
immortality. Posthumous photography served as memento mori for the mourning, allowing the deceased to live on in the present in the form of an image. Spirit photography portrays the dualism that embodies the photograph. It is considered truthful due to its indexicality, yet the ghostly trace or double can also reveal information in reality that is not perceived by the human eye. The Spiritualists were striving to provide evidence that life does exist after death. The power of the technology of the camera brings immortality through preservation of the image, and thus the soul, as is demonstrated in The Others. Or the camera reveals the unperceivable ghost of death, which can then be captured to achieve immortality, as in The Asphyx. Or the camera reveals a distorted image that implies impending doom, and thus gives the subject a view of a dismal fate, but this fate can be changed via human agency, as in Ring. All three films suggest and replicate the Victorian ideology that the supernatural power of the technology of the camera can bring immortality in one form or another.
To follow a discussion on photography's associations of death, it is only logical to end my thesis on the debates that concern the death of photography entirely. As Geoffrey Batchen notes, the outburst of debates on photographic morbidity stems from two related anxieties. The first is a result of the widespread introductions of computer driven imaging processes that allow "fake" photographs to be passed off as real ones. The fateful prospect is that viewers will discard their faith in the photograph’s ability to deliver objective truth if they are unable to distinguish the fake images from the real images. So there are two crises that photography faces—one, technological (digital imaging) and the other, epistemological (changes in ethics, knowledge and culture). Together, these crises propose the death of photography with the "end" of photography and the culture it sustains (207).

But photography has been associated with death since the beginning. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the aesthetics of realism borrowed from Renaissance painting gave shape to the influential rhetoric of truth that standardized photographic imaging. Under the category of Death, I outlined Barthes discussion on photography's chilling insistence on human mortality due to the process's particular articulation of time. And, of course, there are the material manifestations of
photographic death in posthumous and spirit photography. Epistemologically, the death of truth that surrounds photographic practice has been negotiated since the beginning. For while the positivists were asserting that realism was the aesthetic of truth, other photographic practitioners were blatantly manipulating the image to produce spirit imagery.

But given that death has been integral to photography's life, what does it mean now to consider the terminal displacement of photography by digital imaging? The main difference between the ontology of photography and digital imaging is that photography still occupies a temporal indexicality, while digital imaging remains an overtly fictional process. Digitization abandons the rhetoric of truth that has been such an important part of photography's cultural success. As the name suggests, digital process actually returns the production of photographic images to the whim of the creative human hand (to the digits). For this reason, digital images are closer to art and fiction than they are to documentation and fact. But again, as I discussed the subjective qualities of the photographic process, photographs are no more or no less "true" to the facts than digital images are (Batchen 212).

This argument brings us to the dilemma of photography's ontology, and to the analogical operations that give
photography its identity as a medium. Remember that Barthes has already discounted resemblance to reality as a way of defining photography. In his terms, the photograph may not represent the subject exactly, but we are sure that he or she was once there in front of the camera. We can be sure he or she, at some point, was present in time and space due to photography's temporal indexicality. Reality may have been transcribed, manipulated, or enhanced, but photography doesn't cast doubt on reality's actual existence (Batchen 212).

Photography's plausibility has rested on the uniqueness of its indexical relation to the world it images, a relation regarded as fundamental to its operation as a system of representation. As a footprint is to a foot, so is a photograph to its referent. For this reason, a photograph of something has generally been considered to be evidence of that thing's being, even if it is not entirely truthful (Batchen 212). On the other hand, computer visualization can produce photographic aesthetic-like images with no direct referent in an outside world. It is this photographic-like aesthetic product that digital images create, but without the process of depending on a referent, that is threatening to photography (Batchen 213).

Contemporary philosophy raises serious questions about the conceptual stability of the index on which photography's identity depends. Photographs are privileged over digital
images because they are indexical signs, images inscribed by the very objects to which they refer. This is taken to mean that, whatever degrees of mediation may be introduced, photographs are ultimately direct imprints of reality itself. But as Derrida points out, in Peirce's writing "the thing itself is a sign [...] from the moment there is meaning there are nothing but signs" (qtd. in Batchen 215). In other words, the very Peircian semiotics upon which photography's analogical stability is founded would have us rewrite photography as a signing of signs, recognizing that it is at the same time a digital process (Batchen 215).

Perhaps the film that best articulates the duality of photography in the context of digitalization and computer imaging is RoboCop. The science-fiction futuristic film features a resurrected and roboticized police officer. Alex J. Murphy has a new, supercharged cyborg body and it is his mission to reclaim his memory and avenge his own death. The pivotal moment in the film occurs when he learns that he has already died and that he was once human.

Murphy marches into the computer records room of the police station. He uses his robotic arm to bypass the computer security system of the Criminal Identification Division. The first criminal appears on the screen, and to identify him, the computer scans the database of faces. First, the mouth is
matched while random noses and eyes are scrolling by. Then the nose is matched, followed by the eyes to make the complete face of the criminal. This patchwork of scrolling and scanning reveals the potential fictionalization of digital imaging. Any body part can be removed and replaced by another to either match a face or create a fictional face. The ease and seamless facility of creating fiction with digital imaging is what causes the process to be under serious scrutiny. Anybody can be fooled.

In this instance, the computer imaging is used to access criminal record files, efficiently and quickly. And although the digital process carries the rhetoric of fiction, here, the strength of truth of the police institutional photographic records overcomes these associations. As Murphy scans the database, standardized police photographs of the frontal and profile views of criminal accomplices appear. Finally, Murphy's photographic identification appears, and as he recognizes his own self-image, red letters flash on the screen--"Deceased." The digital images have proven that he is dead. This example demonstrates the facility of manipulation of the image due to the random image scanning of the criminal database, but it also shows that the myth of truth that surrounds photography is persistently attached to the referential quality of the digital image. Perhaps it is because the digital image is an archived
image, that Murphy gives the authority of truth to his findings.

Philosophy gives us one way to think about the complication that is photography’s identity. Photography is a logic that continually returns to haunt itself. The enigmatic quality of photography’s indexicality raises philosophic questions about the social construction of Truth and Death. The blurred boundaries of photography’s philosophical underpinnings prevent the medium from occupying a stable and unifying identity. As my many film examples from different time periods, genres, and countries have proven, without a single and consistent meaning, photography can be used, manipulated and recontextualized for diverse and contradictory purposes.
Filmography

Blade Runner. Dir.Ridley Scott, 1982
One Hour Photo. Dir.Mark Romanek, 2002.
Bibliography


