

Visual Narratives in Waterton Lakes National Park 1874-2010

by

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University of Victoria

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I investigate photographs not only as images of something, or as objects we can hold, but I also investigate how they are acts grounded in place. That is, I consider the *photograph as event*. The backbone of my research is a hybrid social science and visual art undertaking in which I produce both academic texts and art installations through visual inquiry into the intensely imagined places that are Canadian national parks. I examine how the *myth of wilderness* is made concrete in visual images of Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta. I explore the situatedness of photography through ethnographic and archival research into the conditions that produced over four-hundred photographs of Waterton from the late 19th century to the present. This research advances understanding of how specific historical photographic events shape dominant systems of environmental knowledge in Canada. I explore the intertwined histories of place and representation in Waterton over the past 150 years and how they emerge in the present. To unravel the politics of representation in national parks in Canada I address three key questions: First, how do images that portray and represent wilderness in Canada affect not only our imagination about national parks, but our experiences in, and actions in, national parks? In particular, how are photographs not just representations of national parks but how do we form a relationship to space and place through them? Second, I carry out a visual investigation of Waterton Lakes National Park to study the photograph as event, and ask, how photographs, not just as images and objects, are acts grounded in place? Finally, I ask: What new approaches can be deployed to investigate existing visual collections and to bring them to bear on the history and present of the national park space? I describe how visual methods can generate new ways of thinking about photography and place.

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Cameron Lake, Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta, Canada

Photo by Kurz ©

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this dissertation I investigate photographs not only as images of something, or as objects we can hold, but I also investigate how they are acts grounded in place. That is, I consider the *photograph as event*. The backbone of my research is a hybrid social science and fine art undertaking in which I produce both academic texts and art installations through visual inquiry into the intensely imagined places that are Canadian national parks. I examine how the *myth of wilderness* is made concrete in visual images of Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta. I explore how photography is always situated and how it is a contingent event conditioned by cultural, historical, and bodily factors generated by people dwelling in the more-than-human world¹. Sold as a technology of reproduction and representation, the truth is that photography can never succeed at perfectly representing our always moving world. And for precisely the same reason, photographic events can never be reproduced. If photographs were able to represent the world 'as it is' then these photographs should theoretically be replicable. However, my research questions and plays with this impossibility. Formulated around re-enactment, my investigation of particular photographs attempts to repeat them. I take archival photographs on a walk as ethnographic investigation and visual art inquiry. My research is fuelled by the play between the attempt to replicate the photographic act as closely as possible (for example through spatial location, time of day, season, camera type, darkroom procedures) and the revelation that the more the attempt is refined, or the closer one gets, the more the distance is felt. However, to attempt to re-enact a photograph is a productive failure, one that provides a great deal of knowledge about the conditions surrounding the production of an historical photographic event. Moreover, I explore the situatedness of photography through ethnographic and archival research into the conditions that produced over four-hundred photographs of Waterton from the late 19th century to the present. This research advances understanding of how specific historical photographic events shape dominant systems of environmental knowledge in Canada.

The myth of wilderness

Photography and national parks in Canada both emerge near the end of the 19th century and co-develop over the course of the 20th century. Photography plays a key role in the production of national parks, and both photography and national parks play a key role in our understanding of nature. This entanglement can be seen in the breadth of visuals through which national parks are communicated in Canada, and these constitute a deeply embedded lexicon of nature and ongoing articulation of Canadian attitudes towards parks – from tourist snaps to government survey images. While not entirely uniform in their effect, visual representations have tended to support the nature—culture binary through a *myth of wilderness*: The idea that national parks are stable, unchanging spaces that exist outside of the effects of human activity. The co-production of photography and parks in Canada has contributed significantly to the *myth of wilderness*. Indeed, photographs and parks are similar in crucial ways: both are technologies of permanence that seek to fix the landscape.

1 David Abram used the term throughout his book *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in the more-than-human world* (1997) to signal the dependence of humans on the natural environment. While the term can be seen as separating humans outside of the rest of the world, I use the term throughout this dissertation as a way to encompass the complexity of relationships and interchange between humans and what we conceive of as everything else.



Cameron Lake, Waterton Lake National Park, Alberta, Canada (after Kurz) photo by Trudi Lynn Smith 2006

After Kurz, Waterton Lake National Park, Alberta, Canada, 2006

The *myth of wilderness* emerges out of what has always been central to Canadian experience: the conception of place as a commodity in the form of resources, and then the question of resource use. The myth of wilderness – nature as pristine – has been useful for purposes of development and resource extraction because it connotes unending wealth but also because it has historically legitimated occupation (emptying the landscape of its inhabitants). And the myth of wilderness connects Canadian capitalism to the discourse of Canadian conservation, one that is organized around desire for this pristine to be fixed into permanence. Canadian capitalism and conservationism both rely upon and further a myth of wilderness at odds with historical and ecological realities. Photography is a central tool for purposes of extraction and protection because it appears as if it is a simple representational technology that tells an objective truth about places. This perceived modesty is what gives photography its profound place-making and myth-making power. It is photography's recourse to objective truth that makes it such a powerful storyteller.

Alternative and more enabling relationships with the more-than-human world are marginalized by the myth of wilderness, despite an ongoing resistance to the myth. The shifting materiality of parks, found in changing human practices in the park space, anthropogenic climatic change causing glaciers to melt or tree line to rise, for example, resist the idea of an untouched wilderness. Yet despite increasing acknowledgement around the interconnectedness of humans and the rest of nature, there is a persistent tendency for both producers and consumers of visual images to emphasize certain views – those that appear pristine – while neglecting these other natures: Natures that are irregular and uncertain, ones that we are embedded within, and ones that are on the move. This results in a curious gap between what is represented and what exists in a place. Professional and amateur landscape and nature photography in Canada often depicts what is read as pristine wilderness. On the websites of major conservation groups in Canada, photographs play a prominent role: distant landscape views reflect the peaceful glow of sunset and charismatic megafauna are captured with telephoto lenses: Both are highly prized.

Yet photographs often generate and support a disjointed understanding of parks, and can create what geographer Rick Searle has called a “deadly mismatch between perception and reality” (2000:29). My research makes visible and noticeable this mismatch, often understood as a tension between the dual mandates of Parks Canada: protection of nature and human use. The myth is materially enacted through Parks Canada and I argue that the co-development of photography and national park space is an entanglement that produces and effects parks management and policy in Canada. Over a century of image-making has shaped ways of seeing and being in parks, and as such, visual documents provide a compelling and extensive way to track the mythical and multiple forms that nature takes in Canada. Studying photographs is a key way of deconstructing the myth of wilderness – and opening up new ways for people and place to relate – precisely because photography has played such an important role in constructing wilderness.

The enmeshment of parks and photography is made evident in the way that park space is inscribed with roadway pullouts and pathways leading to vistas for the purpose of looking and picture taking. And in part, photographs and their narrations have helped create a landscape in life that was only ever in a photograph: something that



Parks interpretive panel found in Waterton, 2004

appears frozen and immobile (Berland 1991). As Jody Berland writes, in national parks, mountains are maintained to imitate images (1991:16). We can liken much conservation policy to a photograph – an attempt to freeze an (always) imagined idea of place into policy. This tension is perfectly captured in the Parks Canada interpretation sign describing the park's goal to provide the space as a “living museum” for the future. Yet as I show in this dissertation, life is not a museum, rather, it is in flux, it is uncertain, and emergent, and this means that Parks Canada is forced to modify the always moving place to fit photographs. Thus, a powerful way of challenging the myth of wilderness – and the kinds of extraction and conservation it has legitimated – is to demonstrate the utter situatedness of photography. Challenging photography's effective representation of reality is one crucial way of opening up new ways for people to relate to each other and the more-than-human world.

Photograph as event: image, object, act

An icon is a likeness, a representation, and in this way, images render Canadian national parks landscapes iconic. Not only are such images saddled with the burden of representing the ongoing tension between imagination and reality produced by ideas about national parks and photography, they constitute that reality itself: they shape the way we understand parks. These photographs are not only relevant in a collective history but are often catalysts for present and future photographic acts, and in this way photographs are not just images of something, or objects you can hold, but they are acts that take place. Photographic moments of the past create the space (and common sense) for photographic moments of the present. In particular, visitors to national parks re-enact previous photographic events: A photograph or view they've already seen. This is not by accident.

A study of embodiment in the park – the practice of the body – works into the construction of identity as powerfully performed, subjective, and improvisational (Hayles 1999). Despite the distance that may emerge when returning to a place to re-take an historical photograph, re-enactment is a central way that we engage national park experience with the camera. Over time the enactment and continual re-enactment of photographs means that certain images form the lexicon of how we imagine iconic landscapes, and influence how we act in and manage national park spaces. As visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards writes, “re-enactment and performance are powerful social tools in many cultures, and mimesis is deeply embedded in the cognitive processes of the preservation of cultural elements and forms the basis of the incorporation of collective experience” (2001:173). This dissertation is based on the exploration of performance and re-enactment and the collective experience that produces the ground upon which we stand on to make photographs.

Taking pictures is a fundamental practice for experiencing national parks in Canada. It is an expressive practice that allows for the formation of a particular relationship to place. A complex choreography formed out of a relationship between imagination and embodiment goes into making a picture. To take a photograph brings together an idea of what the photograph will look like (including what counts as a photograph of a national park) and the physical position of being behind the camera. To make a picture is a physical act of looking through a lens, of crouching down or standing on tippy toes, backing up, leaning to the right or to the left. It is improvisational: an imaginative and creative act. During my fieldwork in Waterton, I was captivated by the repetition of this



A person stops and takes a picture of a tree in Waterton. C-print 2006.

choreography both my own in attempts to replicate an image, and the choreography I witnessed in other bodies in the park. I studied places that people return to over and over to take virtually the same photograph, as well as places they don't. As one part of that study, I focused my attention and my camera lens on the space of the Prince of Wales Hotel hill. I asked why it was that people wouldn't just buy a postcard of the view from the gift shop in the hotel behind them. How does the embodiment of these practices produce and reproduce space through performance? And what is the consequence of this performance? In the highly contested space of national parks in Canada, paths and routes are made because pictures get made there, and pictures get made there, because paths and routes are in place. It is crucial then, to study how this happens: That is, to show how the camera and photographs mix with the body to influence how we see and act in the park space.

Indeed, much has been written about our imagination and photography, our memories and photography, but what about our bodies and photography? How does photography captivate our imagination and our bodies and why? In this dissertation I contemplate the genesis of much-imitated views from my position in the present day, and I analyze the way that subsequent views are performed and enacted. I follow anthropologist Tim Ingold and others who take up an embodied approach to Geertzian thick description to "show how the 'webs of significance' in which people are undoubtedly caught up are comprised of trails that are trodden on the ground" (2006:83). While Ingold and Lee (2006) theorize walking itself, I use their comment as a departure point to ground my phenomenologically inspired fieldwork practice about the movement of bodies in place. I am particularly interested in how bodies move in conjunction with the camera, and how this movement creates pathways, views, and generates national parks as key sites of nature, the *myth of wilderness*, and sparks particular ideas about environment in Canada.

The body is key to the production of Canadian history and how it is communicated. This is an *embodied history*, one that John O'Neill describes as "biotextual because it alters our sensory and cognitive ratios but always in concert with the history of our land, its rivers and forests, its fish, fur and minerals" (O'Neill 2004:132). The production of photographs is thus a collective endeavor, and to study the making of photographs is to attempt to gain insight into the way that a photograph can be an event that is influenced by multiple agents, and to complicate the deceptively simple act of depressing the shutter.

To unravel the politics of representation in national parks in Canada I address three key questions: First, how do images that portray and represent wilderness in Canada affect not only our imagination about national parks, but our experiences in, and actions in, national parks? How are photographs not just representations of national parks but how do we form a relationship to space and place through them? More specifically: How do past photographic events shape Waterton's present? Second, I carry out a visual investigation of Waterton Lakes National Park to study the photograph as event and ask, how are photographs not just images and objects, but how are they acts grounded in place? Finally, I ask: What new approaches can be deployed to study existing photographic collections in order to investigate the history of the national park space?



Behind the lens, Waterton. C-print. 2004

Photographs can never perfectly represent, and neither can they ever be perfectly re-enacted. Recognizing these failures, the gap that always exists between referent and photograph, has the possibility to make photography a more representative technology. To recognize the impossibility of perfect representations can humble photographic vision and open it up to the complexity of possibilities that comprises it. And to recognize the unrepresentable can paradoxically clear the path for more effective representation of our complex, contingent, and fundamentally impermanent world.

Anthropology and art share ethnographic space through my approach and methods in this research: I engage in attempts to return to the ground of previous photographic events. I describe how an ironic play – which includes the production of new photographs, video, drawing, scholarly texts and exhibitions – opens up a space for analysis of, for conversation about, and for additions to, the meaning of iconic photographs in Canada and their relationship to place. This research is a way to bring awareness to the rich terrain we inhabit while making photographs. I examine the historical photographs of Waterton through a paradox that philosopher Jacques Derrida (2002) finds between the event (what is happening) and the calculable programming of automatic repetition (the machine): that is, the event as something singular and non-repeatable and how it comes up against inscription and the machine that is automatic, “It is easy to see the incompatibility of the two concepts: organic, living singularity (the event) and inorganic, dead universality (mechanical repetition)” (Lawlor 2010:np). I am interested in photography as an indexical technology – “an indifferent automaton” (Derrida 2002: 72) as it comes up against the impossibility of repetition and how this plays into truth². How can the acknowledgement of difference help to encourage an understanding of wilderness and experience in the geopolitical space of national parks as heterogeneous?

To study the situated quality of photographs can diminish their myth making and place making power in productive ways. My deconstructive analysis reveals the contingency and tensions alive in every photographic act. Even photographs taken for the purposes of colonial control can show appreciation and awe that exceeds the desire for material gain. Similarly they might evidence indigenous land management even as they attempt to portray a rich space devoid of human dwelling. Primarily, though, a deconstruction of photographs demonstrates the utter impermanence of the photographic moment. What aims for permanence is always contingent, is always an event. This means that the truths emerging from photographs are always contestable – they emerged out of a complex of possibilities and always could have been otherwise.

2 Derrida writes about photography and time and highlights the impossibility of repetition: “But if the ‘one single time’, if the single, first and last time of the take already includes a heterogeneous time, this presupposes a duration that postpones and differentiates... The reference proves complex, it is not simple, and within that time subevents can form, differentiations, micrological modifications, providing the occasion for possible compositions, disassociations and recompositions, ‘trick takes’ if you will, that make a definitive break with the presupposed phenomenological naturalism which saw in photography the miracle of a technology that obliterates itself as to give us natural purity, time itself, the unalterable and uniterable experience of a pre-technical perception (as if the like had ever existed)” (2005:220).

Post-wilderness

Contemporary scholarship in Canada leans towards counter narratives and counter images of a landscape and its social relations, what has recently been named a *post wilderness* (O’Brian and White 2007:5). Rather than showing empty, pristine landscape, a *terra nullius*, artists and scholars are trying to reanimate landscape with habituation and presence. While this dissertation is premised upon the production of counter narratives and counter images of landscape, I argue that it is crucial to study the genesis of photographic images of Canadian wilderness as they maintain a pervasive grip on how we understand and relate to national park space. Indeed, while contemporary artists and cultural theorists draw attention to the way that landscape is mobilized as a powerful political unifier, one that has helped “consolidate the drive towards national sovereignty as well as to contain prior aboriginal claims to the land” (O’Brian and White 2007:4), the mobilization of groups around what can be seen as classic wilderness images is becoming more and more intensive. National park space and other protected areas are key sites where the myth of wilderness plays out. The nature that groups are making and remaking as national parks space through images are flashpoints for ideas about nature and environment in Canada: whether accidental tourist photographs of scene stealing squirrels creating an effective and potentially lucrative ad campaign for tourism in Banff; or local environmental groups such as the Yellowstone to Yukon and the International League of Conservation Photographers (iLCP) mobilizing a Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition (R.A.V.E) to Waterton (fig 1.1) and the Flathead Valley in B.C. to produce photographs of charismatic megafauna, showing surveying views of majestic tree filled valleys and winding rivers in a visual bid to protect the area from coal bed methane; or UNESCO mounting a “fact finding mission” to Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park (A World Heritage Site designated in danger due to climate change) to “Evaluate and provide recommendations on the requirements for ensuring its protection.” Images from this mission will undoubtedly find representation in the IUCN database to be consumed on a global scale.

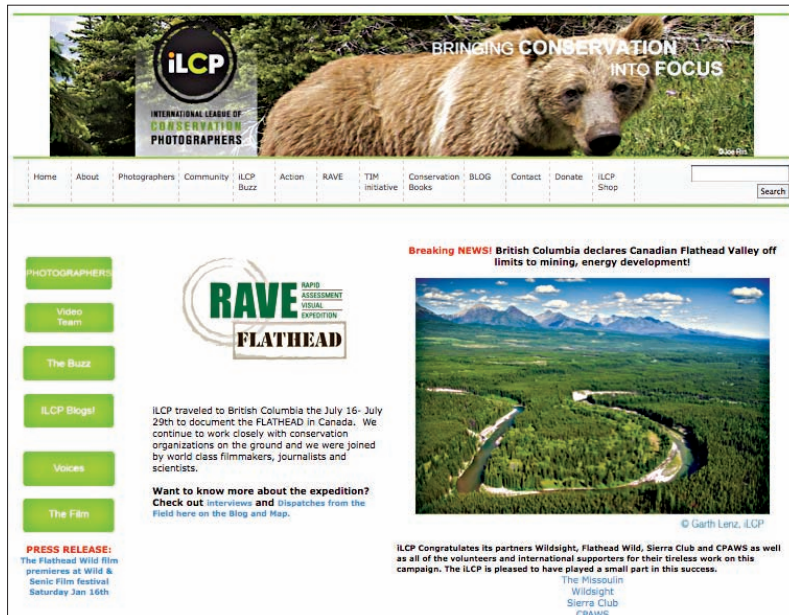


Figure 1.1 Flathead Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition (R.A.V.E.) website splash page. Courtesy International League of Conservation Photographers (iLCP).

Indeed, the practice of what can be considered a Canadian wilderness photography maintains a pervasive hold on the Canadian public. In summer 2010 as part of the 125th anniversary celebration, Parks Canada held an open job competition for “Canada’s Greatest Summer Job,” which was to visually document the park. They invited post-secondary students to submit their applications, and were evaluated on their knowledge of video technique and Canadian history. This job posting stimulated almost 900 applications in a period of less than 10 days. While this could be seen as a sign of economic hardship in Canada, Parks Canada sent around a press release announcing the flood of applications as a way to draw attention to the excitement that this posting generated. This year, Canada’s best summer job is to make visual images of parks.

But this isn’t the first time that generating visual images of parks has been a strategic activity. Artists and photographers in the late 19th century were central in generating what Canadian National Parks are – both as an imagined space and inscribed on the ground. Early survey photography in Canada produced views of areas that they saw as valuable and later these became protected areas (e.g. the International Boundary Survey of 1874 in Waterton). Beginning in 1884, William Notman was outfitted by the CPR with a rail car equipped with a darkroom, and he spent 15 years documenting Canada’s west to promote the views and the potential for travel (McCord Museum:n.d.). He helped produce a portrait of the west – in particular views of the newly formed Banff National Park – for an industry and for government who wanted to promote travel, and to a public who were already anticipating the wilderness views he produced. In 2005, tourism in Canada generated revenues of approximately 61.4 billion, over 2% of the GDP (Industry Canada:n.d.). Recently Canada slipped out of the top 10 tourist destinations and declining visitorship to Parks (ten percent in the last five years) has stimulated the Canadian government to invest more dollars into infrastructure and parks programming as a way to encourage parks visitation to a local and global market. The federal government is presently wielding powerful symbolic discourse to reach new (immigrant) Canadians to connect parks visibility, use and Canadian identity³. It seems that the investment into producing and promoting a particular visuality in parks – videos by students - is part of this government initiative to promote visibility of and use of national park space. Thirty-two students were placed at Parks Canada field units across the country to produce a series of videos portraying their experiences in national parks, historic sites and marine conservation area. The intent was to promote parks as “unique and exceptional places that represent the very essence of Canada. They tell its story and offer an unforgettable and unique experience for visitors who are looking to discover the real Canada” (Parks Canada 2010c). But what is the story that these young people will contribute? How will their images relate to the narratives of identity generated by past photographic events?

The government of Canada promotes national park space as key to identity: it is the location of the “real Canada”: its very essence. It is easy to feel cynical about this narrative in the face of a history of erasure of historical and ongoing indigenous dwelling

3 The *Globe and Mail* has recently reported that Parks Canada is delivering a class, ‘Camping 101’ that focuses on basic training such as how to set up a tent and build a campfire. Focused on drawing new (immigrant) Canadians into parks, this training allows access to what Jim Prentice, the minister responsible for Parks Canada, promotes as “an essential part of the Canadian experience.” It also marks a shift towards the idea that “people won’t value what’s out there if they don’t go and see it for themselves” (McGinn 2010:F1).

in and management of these areas; and in the problems that are widely acknowledged in contemporary ecosystem management literature. This includes the Parks Canada management plans of protection and prescription that imposed on the space a “living museum.” In a pursuit to order and catalogue the world through a regime of truth, parks policy has led to material effects of unhealthy and fragile forests, habitat fragmentation, the decline of certain species, and the treatment of wildness as pet or outlaw to be extirpated.

And yet perhaps Parks Canada is not wrong: The *real Canada* is produced out of a space of contest. Parks are ripe with competing ideas about nature and wilderness – as “a lived in, worked up place” or as a distant unknown space, and all the experiences in between (Bender 2001). The relationship generated between the various ideas about nature influence how we act in these spaces and the questions we might ask: How do we want to continue our relationship with the non-human nature found in national parks? Should parks be managed for wildlife corridors, ecotour destinations, helicopter tours, nostalgic townsite-focused experiences with ice cream and four wheeled bikes, recreational vehicle destinations with full service campsites or multi-day backpacking treks? Do we want parks managed by Parks Canada with an emphasis on ecological monitoring, trail building, interpretive programs, food harvesting, or something else? At a time when the issue of environment is at the forefront of many peoples daily encounter with the world – in the present form of narratives of climate change – national parks are an opportunity to work on envisioning and imagining the present and future of our relationship with the more-than-human world. What kind of care do we need from and in these spaces and what kind of care do we need to provide?

Through photographic events local, national, and international communities intersect with, transform, and re-invent protected areas in Canada and circulate them around the globe with profound social and ecological effects. Yet it is not only photographic events by conservation and government groups that influence the way we understand the myth of wilderness in national parks. At present, photography is a key way that visitors to national parks engage the park space. Photographs maintain a pervasive hold on our vision in national parks – we expressively engage place through the lens and body of the camera and generate a particular relationship to place through this stance. In this dissertation I show how it is a relationship between the myth of wilderness and a present act that generates a complex relationship in place. This dissertation looks in detail at the genesis of this photography – how landscapes of the Rocky Mountains in Canada come to be national and international space through photographs and what intersections – what *events* – that the myth of wilderness is generated out of. I connect them to the present through my re-enactment.

Approach: Summer 2004⁴: words of light⁵

On the northwest side of Upper Waterton Lake, on the verge of a pathway that runs along the shoreline, stands a single Limber pine tree (*pinus flexilis*). Characteristically small in stature and exhibiting a slight windswept lean to the north, the pine stands apart from the clusters of cottonwood and other species of pine more typically

4 This section is adapted from Smith 2007

5 “words of light” is a description of photography from Fox Talbot’s book *The Pencil of Nature* (1844), as well as the title of Eduardo Cadava’s (1997) theses on the photography of history, a meditation on the work of Walter Benjamin.



Pinus flexilis, pinhole b+w Polaroid, 2004

established around the lake. Late in a summer day in 2004, I stood close to the tree, poised with a pinhole camera with a Polaroid back attached to a tripod and aimed it towards the solitary tree. Typical of a pinhole, the camera was without viewfinder but I aimed it towards the tree, imagining the wide angle of the pinhole and long depth of field would construct a tree in the foreground centre of the image, bordered by the lake and mountains in the background. I checked to make sure the camera was well grounded on the tripod, slid the cover off of the pinhole, and gently slipped away from the camera to join friends on the beach and to wait for enough light to gather on the 4x5" black and white Polaroid positive. After about 45 minutes I returned to slide the pinhole cover back over the pinhole.

Pinhole photography is a particular kind of photography. The projection has a continuous depth and renders the image sharp from all distances. The compression of time on the emulsion makes for a different kind of photograph – one that brings up changes in light and exposes the trace of slow moving objects. In contrast to the long exposure of the pinhole camera, the instant nature of the Polaroid film I used to fix the image allowed for immediate results. I flipped the film holder back to move the rollers into the place for processing the film, firmly grasped the paper ends of the film and pulled the sheet through the back. There was a heightened tension around this act. My uncertainty around Polaroid, calls up the phrase *circumstances alter photographs* found in the 1885 Militia Gazette, a statement through which Canadian photo historians Ralph Greenhill and Andrew Birrell (1979:116) remind us of the uncertainty that characterized the understanding of photographs in the 1870s and 1880s. That uncertainty was also embedded in my process: Many of my pinhole Polaroid photographs would not work out due to problems with chemistry, weather, mechanics, or my misinterpretation of the actinic force of the sun's rays on the silver halides.

Hoping for the right set of circumstances, less than a minute later I peeled apart the film to see the accident that becomes a photograph. What shaping of the event had come into play in light, silver halides, dyes, plastic and paper of the photograph? The result is a picture that holds the characteristic central glow of pinhole photographs. The lake is smoothed out by the long exposure and holds the glow of the setting sun. Mountains rise from the lake centre to the edge of the image. The darkness of their looming figures anchor the dark silhouette of the tree at centre. A semi-translucent figure stilled for much - but evidently not for all - of the exposure sits on the shoreline, her body directed towards the vanishing point. The tree is distorted by the pinhole and stretches to the top of the frame, looming larger and longer than in the flesh. A line from the moon shoots across the sky recording our continual movement through space, and implicating the passage of time. In this way the landscape is brought into being by events. Because this moment is generated in the photograph and reprinted here, it counts.

I was living in Waterton for the summer working as a photographer for a repeat photography project with a focused interest in looking at the visible differences between two sets of photographs taken 90 years apart. It was through my involvement this project, the Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project (now the Mountain Legacy Project) as a master's student that I was introduced to the park space. I was part of a team that traveled around the park on foot and by helicopter to repeat hundreds of photographs originally taken by the Dominion Land Survey in the early 1900s to make the first detailed maps of the area. Over the course of three field seasons this



Pinus flexilis, b+w print, Kurt Seel (c. 1960s). In warden historical collection, courtesy Waterton Lakes National Park.

experience provided me with an introduction to and a particular education about both historical and contemporary photography used for scientific purposes in the place of Waterton. My involvement in photography in protected areas in Canada also included my analysis of the production, circulation, and consumption of photography by the Dominion Land Survey and by contemporary scientists in Jasper National Park. This research and a resulting museum exhibition formed the baseline of my interdisciplinary master's research in anthropology and environmental studies (see Smith 2004).

Through this experience and my artistic practice using photography, I brought a lot to thinking about taking pictures in national parks, and therefore I was not exactly a typical tourist to the area. Yet in the case of taking a pinhole photograph, I was not unlike many tourists who could be seen with their cameras around Waterton. I used photography to connect to place, to produce a narrative and record an impression of the space and place of the national park.

A few days after taking the photograph of the tree, a fellow researcher (himself looking for archival photographs to use as a baseline to track landscape change) was flipping through albums in the park archives and found a small black and white photograph dating from the late 1960s taken by Kurt Seel, a former Park Warden and Naturalist, of the same Limber pine, from almost the exact location. That Seel's photograph was located from almost the exact position in which I stood was an event that struck me, and not willing to resign myself to a faith in coincidence, I used it as a departure point for an investigation into why people visit and photograph the same places over time. Through this and other experiences I have come to understand not only the power of photographs as representations effecting how we understand and see place (Lury 1998), but the power of the embodied practice of revisiting points from which landscapes are commonly viewed. The act of returning to particular vantage points, shaped by a physical presence, and reoccupying locations by standing in the spot from which an historic image was photographed, becomes a ground to construct knowledge about place, environment and people's relationship in it. While in the end I worked in both directions, taking pictures and watching for the same views to surface during archival searches, and attempting to return to vantage points of historical photographs I had already located in archives, this experience starting my thinking about how photographs are events.

The narrative of the tree provides a good example of how a photograph is an event, yet subject matter is also of crucial importance: Where and why do photographs of windswept trees come into visual narratives of Waterton Lakes National Park?

Photography in Waterton Lakes National Park

In the present, Seel's tree photograph can be found in a binder that makes up part of the warden history collection accessioned and stored by the warden office, rather than part of the communications photographic collections in Waterton Lakes National Park. This is an interesting place to begin to look at the history of the park, as the rich assortment of images that were produced and circulated and used by the wardens and their employees illustrate and inform their understanding of – and communication of – the park space. The tree photograph is one of many created for illustrative purposes, a collection that includes surveillance of unsuitable park activities, events like floods, and the construction of roads and buildings. While in the 1960s the ideas of ecology are beginning to percolate, the documentation of species and types found in warden



Illegal camping, b+w print, Kurt Seel (c. 1960s) (top). In warden historical collection, courtesy Waterton Lakes National Park.
View of Vimy by the church camp, b+w print (2007) (bottom).

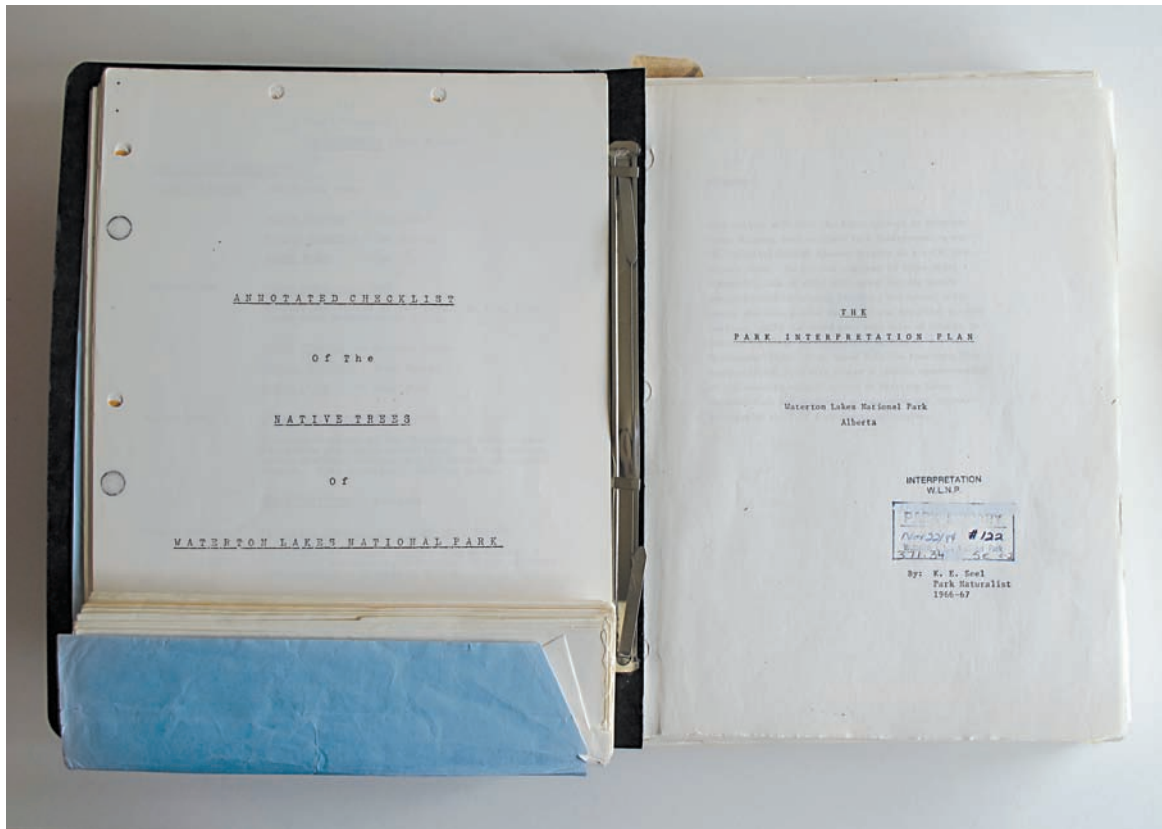
accounts also reflect 19th century collecting and ordering and perhaps suggests more about the desire towards demarcating more clearly the inventory of the park, at that time considered a “living museum” to be carefully preserved for future generations. Seel was instrumental in documenting the park during his years working in Waterton. Filling the role of warden included being a communications specialist and it was Seel’s job to communicate the park narrative to visitors, which included training other naturalists. He set up a darkroom in the basement of the warden station which accounts for the strong photographic documentation during his tenure in the park. His proliferate accounts include a 1966-67 Seasonal Naturalist Handbook, that “marks the first attempt in Waterton Lakes National Park to place Park Interpretation and the resulting Natural History Program on a solid preplanned base” (Seel 1966: n.p.). Seel wrote that he hoped that the plan would “foster a greater understanding of the valuable natural assets of Waterton Lakes National Park and stimulate an expansion and intensification of the Park Interpretation Program” (Seel 1966:n.p.). The thick folder is available in the park library and begins with an annotated checklist of the native trees of Waterton and the limber pine is described therein. There is little doubt that Seel’s photograph of the pine brought to attention in my research was first intended to serve as illustration to this sort of checklist. In this way, the photograph has interpretive and scientific value. The 8x10” glossy photograph shows the pine positioned slightly on the left hand side of the image, following the convention of good composition, the rule of thirds. Other elements in the photograph have been positioned so that they also reflect this compositional device. It is a sunny breezy day characterized by the waves rolling onto the beach. The mountains frame the lake disappearing through a channel. The tree was photographed low to the ground, indicating the use of a tripod or a waist-level finder rather than an SLR or rangefinder camera held at eye height. The effect, tree branches sitting above the horizon line is a composition that brings attention to the tree separate from its surrounds. While the image appears to be taken to inform scientific typology, it seems that an aesthetic approach, including the conventions of good composition, help to structure this account.

Yet there is more to this tree image: The single pine has a key place in Canadian identity, a deeply fostered symbol of the nation, a symbol that is attached to national park space. The tree produces a strong allusion to Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven, whose contributions to Canadian art explored and created a cultural iconography that formulated a sense of wilderness in Canada.

Canada: A Geography of Identity

In Canada, our geography is saddled with the burden of national identity (Loo 2006)⁶. What Brian Osborne (2001) calls a *geography of identity* percolates around ideas about nature, from the landscapes of the Group of Seven, to the idea of north, to the awe-inspiring landscapes of national parks. Each of these feed into the construction of Canada as a “national identity that is self-consciously aware of place” (Osborne 2001:2). There are two lines of thinking found in contemporary discussions of identity in Canada that form a conversation: place as imagined, and place as a lived-in community (Osborne 2001). Nowhere is this dialectical structure more strongly cast than in thinking about wilderness in Canada, as it is firmly entrenched in both cultural imaginary and a lived-in conception of nationhood (Francis 1997; Mackey 1999; MacLaren 1999). Yet as I will show in this dissertation wilderness is a hybrid, emergent geography premised on a relationship between these two lines of thinking.

6 Even the category of geography itself is, of course, a symbolic, scientific, political construction.



Kurt Seel's Park Interpretive Manual (c. 1960s). In warden historical collection, digital print (2010).

All nations are “imagined communities,” writes Benedict Anderson (1991:6), and the creation of an imagined community allows members to identify with something that allows them to distinguish themselves from other groups (Osborne 1995:265). Such thinking is influential to scholars who find that an emphasis on collective identity rather than individualism can explain how nations mythologize, how “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1991:6). It is through such images of communion as they are expressed in the stories we tell ourselves (Francis 1997) that we form a “consensual hallucination” in Canada (Gibson quoted in Francis 1997:10). To Daniel Francis, such stories form core myths that “with repetition come to form the mainstream memory of the culture, our national dreams...this is the story of Canada we say, the story which contains our ideals, which gives our experience continuity and purpose. This is who we are” (1997:10). One of the central stories in Canada is the myth of wilderness.

Our idea of wilderness landscapes – national parks being the key site of wilderness – exist as a deeply imagined experience of nature, one predicated upon understanding nature as a stage, an empty container, and a refuge. Wilderness in Canada is a stage for the playing out of imagined contents, including the widespread perception that it is nature without people (Higgs 2003). Osborne draws upon Anderson to argue that the past nurtures national identity. He finds that a mythic past can be located in “fabricated landscapes” that are “geographical prompts for, and actual constituents of, any distinctive group’s shared consciousness” (1995:266). It is this sort of imagination that Ian MacLaren might find in Jasper National Park that readily inspires awe of the mountains “in such a way as to exceed their own spatial dimension” (1999:9). Such awe crosses into how wilderness is imagined and created as continuous and ubiquitous, for example in the history of exploration and empire building, where it signifies an abundance of nature that offset a lack of “high culture” (Löfgren 1999:35). The distancing conception of wilderness “out there” results in a correlation to back in time, which is associated with primitive and pristine ideas of space “back then” (Fabian 1983). In this way, national parks invoke distance, imagination, and the unknown, and are often understood as pristine, untouched, virginal, wild nature. The word origin of wilderness, *wylde* *ness*; meant the nest or lair of a wild beast (Bender 1993:2), and, as Donna Haraway writes, “monsters have always defined the limits of community in Western imaginations” (2004:37).

Yet this is a wilderness that is visited, and communed within. While wilderness is at once a deeply imagined identity, it is also a lived-in experience. Critiques about the imagined nature of nationhood find that they make communities epiphenomenal, pulling nations out of the practice of everyday life (Amit 2002). Therefore, to make questions of imagination more concrete is an act of relocation that asks, who is imagining? In locating a lived-in wilderness in Canada, geographer Bruce Braun (2002) finds a community comprised of competing interests and diverging opinions: Wilderness is political and contested. To Braun and others who investigate notions of nature, wilderness, conservation, and geography in Canada, it is by drawing imagined, mythical forms of life into the every day that something can be gotten to. It is by drawing imagination into embodied practice that the importance of the “cumulative, secular, revisable, stuttering, reliable knowledge” (Haraway 2004:23) as it is situated, can be addressed.



The tree, pinhole Polaroid 667, 2005

The West Wind

Over the course of the first half of the 20th century nationalist painters Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven popularized the single, windswept tree (especially the pine) in Canada. It has found its place in the Canadian imaginary as a symbol of untamed and virtuous nature, articulating Canadian nationalism and identity as “a pioneering spirit crystallizing at the edge of an unknown space” (Tietelbaum 1991:71). Perhaps the most famous single tree image is the painting, *The West Wind* that Tom Thomson first sketched while in the midst of a storm (fig 1.2). As art historian Ross King explains, Thomson is a mythic figure in Canadian history, who could “hoist a heavily laden canoe to his shoulder ‘without help, and seemingly without effort’” (King 2009:80). Thomson spent much time in Algonquin park, and on that day, was with Group of Seven painter Lawren Harris. It is worth setting the scene with King’s narration:

Harris and Thomson were painting beside one of the lakes when a thunderstorm forced them to seek refuge in an abandoned lumber shack. Thomson, however, was often recklessly defiant of the elements, as if testing himself against the mythical vagabonds of the Canadian wilderness as much as voyageurs and coureurs de bois. Undaunted by the fierce conditions, he grabbed his sketching materials and rushed into the gale. He was squatting behind a stump and painting a trio of thrashing pines when the wind uprooted one of the trees. Harris at first thought Thomson had been killed by the galling pine, but “he soon sprang up, waved his hat to him and went on painting.” Later in the year...Thomson would turn this small sketch into one of his most famous paintings, *The West Wind*, in which the potent energies of nature are distilled into the whiplashing curves of the Jack pines. The painting is a scene of struggle, of an elemental tug-of-war between the dynamic and destructive forces that nearly killed him. If Canadians believed that what made them unique was their engagement with this hostile and unforgiving land that dictated the terms of human existence, then Thomson’s painting is an elegant image of this life and death encounter, a Canadian Laocoön set in the harsh, lonely wilderness (King 2009:81).

As King’s narration illuminates, through these conditions, the storm and Thomson co-construct *The West Wind*. Thomson constructs landscapes in his paintings that reinforce pristine, untouched land. This narrative has important implications that bring forward a colonial vision of space into the lexicon of an emergent Canadian art. These works reinforce ideas of the myth of wilderness and *terra nullius*: Land belonging to no-one, considered empty, desolate land: pristine and untouched by humans. This is, of course, despite the fact that the areas that Thomson and the Group of Seven depicted have always been lived in and worked upon. Not only were these landscapes produced out of relationships between indigenous people and the environment over a long timescale, but, at the same time that the painters were representing the space as rugged, seemingly untouched scenes, logging activities were radically transforming the landscape. Often highly visible impacts from intensive resource extraction fell just outside their canvases.

This imaginary is united with embodied practice. As King notes, Thomson’s struggle to produce *The West Wind* in the harsh conditions is the very thing that makes it an image a Canadian public can identify with: *Survival*. This theme is the organizing principle (and title) of Margaret Atwood’s (1973) volume in which she followed Northrop Frye’s



The tree, Mamiya c33. c-print, 2005

question, *where is here?*, to ask, *what is here? What is it about our literature that we could say is particular to Canada?*⁷ Through these place-based questions Atwood argues that Canadian novels were characterized by harsh environmental struggle, emotional reticence and a final climax that ends in failure. Just when the protagonist overcomes everything – he steps onto the porch to survey the lands that he cleared, with the girl he ‘won’ on his arm, he would suddenly be overtaken by the environment: A rogue tree would crush him. Of course, this is an interesting conception that fits with Thomson’s own history. While he escaped the falling tree, he would later be written into our mythology through his own fatal canoe accident. The notion of a struggle against nature fits both into the lexicon of Canadian art, literature, and identity and also fits the iconic personas of characters such as Tom Thomson and others such as geologist G.M. Dawson who are the subject of this dissertation.

Yet to consider this idea of survival not only draws on iconic narratives, it also calls up the body to ask, who is surviving against these elements? I argue that it is key to draw imagination together with embodied practice. It is an entanglement between imagination and the body that produces national park space in Canada in photographs. To draw attention to the body - even those that are powerfully imbued with myth - can allow for the complexities and the political and contested nature of wilderness to emerge. Certainly a key part of the iconic story of *The West Wind* is found in its co-creation, whereby Thomson struggles against the wind calling his body up and drawing it into the creation of place.



Figure 1.2. Tom Thomson. *The West Wind* 1917. Oil on Panel.

The Limber Pine

When I set my camera up on that night in July 2004, I didn’t realize the full implications of this act and how it was densely occupied territory. My photograph is part of a web, that is, related to all previous photographs seen and taken, all ideas about what constitutes a photograph and what does not, what may be photographed and what

7 As Edward Said is widely cited for writing, all nations are narrations. Artist Tacita Dean imaginatively plays with this in her work, *The Russian Ending* (2001). This work plays with the story of the Danish film industry in the early 1900s that made two endings for their films for two different audience desires: a happy one for the Americans and a Russian Ending whereby things ended in darkness, despair and tragedy.



The tree, 4x5 pinhole c-print, 2004

may not (Bourdieu 1977:24), or what a tree might signify, (art or science, aesthetics or ecology) and what a national park landscape is and could be as imagined as (a wilderness imaginary, a lived-in place). These conditions set the stage along with the multisensory conditions in that present - at that moment, conversations with friends, the calmness of the weather allowing for my camera to stand still, or stand at all, the clear night illuminating features, and having the time to sit for 45 minutes. All of this came together into the photograph as an event. Later I reflected on this act because I was a Ph.D. student, and it forms another key theme in this dissertation. For most, the charge of circumstances and accident that produce a photograph would simply be tacit knowledge and common sense. This is simply photography, the operator might think. Yet, for me, the act is deceptively simple. The tensions between ways of understanding photographs constitute a struggle for the meaning of national park space. Thinking about this act and everything that could be gathered together from it planted the seeds for more photographs and in some ways less photographs and more texts. It became the ground from which I pursued a study of the gap between photographs and the places they represent.

While Seel's photograph was made to represent a type – the species *pinus flexilis* – and was used to educate park interpreters, it nonetheless connects to art and to the single tree image in Canadian identity. By photographing the tree I created a relationship between the history of landscape art in Canada *and* to warden history, parks ecology and communications. This web of relations brought into view how science and art, the past and the present are infused into the photographic event to produce national parks in Canada. Seel's image that I unwittingly replicated in the pinhole photograph helped create the ground for this dissertation to show that parks are both a deeply imagined community, and a lived in place, subject to the flux and change that is present in all experience. What began as a visual investigation of Waterton that unconsciously perpetuated a particular view of a particular tree in the park became an active relationship between both archival records and the construction of new visual records. This in turn produced and reproduced a dominant, iconic view of nature in the Canadian imaginary.

In the present, nation building – and sustaining – narratives that join Canadian identity and wilderness also materially join the Group of Seven and Parks Canada. A flurry of news releases in the summer of 2010 by Parks Canada announcing the celebration of historical monuments included the announcement of a celebration for the historical significance of the Group of Seven Studio which helped generate a bond that would help “revolutionize Canadian Art”:

“Before the Group of Seven were able to gather and share their inspiration and creativity here in the Studio Building, the beauty of the Canadian landscape was not recognized. The artists who gathered here presented the magnificence of Canada to us and changed a vast empty wilderness into a stunning home – our home – that has foundations formed by the incredible and distinctly Canadian art created at this site, a home that is now the envy of the world,” said Minister Prentice when he unveiled a Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque (Parks Canada: 2010).

In this recent statement, it is clear the myth of wilderness is alive in environmental discourse in Canada.



The tree. Mamiya c33 b+w print, 2006

The Geopolitical Space of Waterton Lakes National Park

The geopolitical space of Waterton Lakes National Park is strongly narrated and demarcated. To the governmental body of Parks Canada, Waterton represents Canada's Southern Rocky Mountain Natural Region. A political space beginning in 1895 as a Forest Reserve, the boundary of Waterton has varied considerably over the years currently occupying 505 km² of diverse terrain. A small mountain park, it has always occupied the unique ecotone where the mountains meet the prairie. Waterton is perhaps the premier park for symbolic designations in Canada. These designations are local, national and transnational: In 1932, Waterton and Glacier National Park, Montana, formed the first International Peace Park; in 1979 Waterton was designated a biosphere reserve; and in 1995 the park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Part of the Yellowstone to Yukon lands, the surrounding region is a crucial section of the north-south Rocky Mountain wildlife corridor, often referred to as "The Crown of the Continent", the only location from where water flows to the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In spite of such acclaim Waterton is vulnerable to the crush of development on the eastern and northern boundaries, and to uncertain land management on the western boundary. In February 2006, eleven conservation groups successfully petitioned the World Heritage Committee to list Waterton-Glacier as a "World Heritage Site in Danger" due to climate change.



Figure 1.3. Map of Canada's National Parks with Waterton circled in red. Courtesy Parks Canada.



The tree, digital snap, 2006

Beginning even before Waterton Lakes National Park was formally established in 1909, the wilderness contained within it was photographed and produced by European colonial powers for an anticipating public in the form of traveler's tales (see 1881 Staveland-Hill), geological surveys (see 1874 G.M. Dawson), and popular publicity accounts (see 1909 Riggall). Today these same photographs are re-taken by many of the over 350,000 tourists who visit the park each year.

The photographic records I consulted for this project were some of the oldest images of the Canadian Rockies found in archives owing to Waterton's unique position on the boundaries of Canada and the U.S.A. and Alberta and British Columbia. The record begins with the International Boundary Commission (IBC) photographs of boundary markers in 1861, and some of the more persistent records that surface again and again in photographs are generated beginning in the 1870s. By the early 1900s, outfitters, local photography studios and photographs generated by the Park are being produced, circulated and consumed at a global scale. An interest in the park space by the American company Great Northern Rail meant that early on, international exposure of the park was generated both through promotional images and by tourists who made their way up via boats to take pictures of what one visitor typed into her album as, "The little town of Waterton with its Canadian colony."

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized around two overlapping themes that emerge out of my study of historical photographs of Waterton: encounter and re-enactment. I study the particular people whose photographs formulated dominant accounts of Waterton and investigate how their narratives become authored as a way to better understand how wilderness is an imaginative, invented act. I look at the construction of personal and national identities through photographic acts in Canadian landscape. I follow the scholarship of Donna Haraway, who argues that the *modest witness of history* creates the story of nature. The material practice produced by the modest witness becomes associated with truth: To be a modest witness is to produce an account that is constructed within the "culture of no culture" (Haraway 2004:223). This is a product of the "conspiracy of silence around colonial truth" that Homi Bhabha addresses (1994:123). Wilderness in Canada is made by the modest witness, produced as if unauthored and believed to be true, "he bears witness: he is 'objective' he guarantees the clarity and purity of objects" (2004:224). In this work I follow the modest witness of history into Waterton to show how taking a photograph is not at all ordinary, but rather, it is an exceptional and imaginative encounter with place. I investigate the conditions surrounding these encounters with place to show the construction of photographic accounts and knowledge. I consider their encounters and accounts performances, as are mine.

In Braun's study of the construction of the rainforest around Clayoquot Sound as a natural/national space, he follows Homi Bhabha's (1994) temporal concept of nation. This space

follows a performative logic: it is something achieved through specific material practices (mapping, discourses of scientific management, etc.) rather than given in advance. These practices, in turn, are iterative in character; they internalize and repeat earlier displacements, which over time take on the appearance of common sense (2002:43).



The tree, digital snap, 2006

While Braun formulates his account based upon reading the archive against the grain, I depart from reading to create an alternative encounter with place to expose some of the lived complexity of bodily experience – that is, to pay closer attention to what is a *common sense*. The idea of a common sense can be linked to Derrida’s idea of “the trace”, where “Repeatability contains what has passed away and is no longer present *and* what is about to come and is not yet present. The present therefore is always complicated by non-presence. Derrida calls this minimal repeatability found in every experience ‘the trace.’” (Stanford 2010: np). I engage in practice itself as key to studying how the physical processes of different photographs effect the meaning of the images represented. This is a key practice to build on scholarly work (including my own) that happens inside archives. In order to discuss material practice of photography, the experience of repeat photography produces an exploration of what is *common sense* and how one experiences a *common sense*.

There are three parts to this research program. First, I produced art works, gallery installations and an online blog (<http://www.trudilynnsmith.blogspot.com>). Second, I produced the analytical, anthropological analysis that makes up this document. Finally, I produced visual works that are printed alongside this text and can also be found on a database online (www.trudilynnsmith.com). While investigating historical photographs and producing photographs that are not equivalent to texts, I find their inclusion necessary to this project to bring other ways of knowing back to the fore. To render *uncertain* is to think about how images might have a quality that is not only uncertain in respect to occurrence or duration but also liable to accident or chance (OED 2009). The notion of accident is a key feature in the way that photography is understood and theorized. As Moyra Davey points out, the link between photography and accident is longstanding – captivating Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin and Janet Malcolm, theorists whose writing about photography “hover around the idea that accident is the lifeblood of photography” (2009:79). Accident ranges from Cartier Bresson’s “decisive moment” to Gary Winograd’s “photographing to see what something will look like photographed” (Davey 2009). Photography and accident form dense terrain, but one thing that is particular to this relationship is that it always contains some “tiny spark of accident” (Benjamin in Davey 2009:79) which is made up of incidental inclusions, the unpredictability of what will happen at the instant the shutter is tripped, the relationship between the depicted and the way that it signals historical truth. Accident and uncertainty are significant for my research. I bring my photographic accidents alongside this scholarly text in part to show my assumptions around photographs and their making that has influenced what I write. These accidents are then put up against the common sense of historical records. Early survey accounts became common sense – fixed – to use a photographic metaphor – into the lexicon of Canadian photography, and by extension wilderness and identity. They set limits and demarcate boundaries around what is photographable, and what comes to be a photograph of National Park space. The visual images and visual argument included here is intended to wedge open a space to encounter this boundary – and to push at the limits of what is photographable and what is a photograph.

This document weaves between theoretical accounting of photography and place, and representations of the ironic play that emerges from trying to represent knowledge itself. I include photographs and narratives that are in conversation with, promote and complicate the text I have written. Therefore, throughout this dissertation I take up



The tree. cropped Mamiya c33 b+w print, 2006

the primary theme - the problem of representation – through both texts and images. Ultimately, this act shows that narrative, image, and academic texts are not equivalents, and so all three work together. Critical to understanding the complexity of national parks space is to try to fill in the gap between representation and what is represented with alternative visions, sensations, narratives and experiences, not only those available through re-visioning history, but through the experiences I generate. This dissertation is not a comprehensive account of the history of photography in Waterton, but rather I take a problem-based approach to the material to explore my research questions.

I open **chapter 2** with an argument for the use of both methods from art and from anthropology to face the challenge of representing place. This discussion is at the heart of my research program and one of the major contributions of this work. In particular, this research program is interested in the non-discursive realities that exist beyond, or below, or through our classic forms of representation. Photography is one of the classic forms of representation to come out of the last 150 years and yet to study photography while thinking about the problem of representation leads to methodological challenges. In visual anthropology the problem of representation has brought attention to visual sense, or an embodied understanding of the visual domain. I review the ways that art and anthropology can work together to address the complexity of photographs as events – as images, objects and acts. In particular I address the complexity of the social meaning of photographs through the use of repeat photography and the examination of what happens when I try to re-enact a photographic act. I build upon my publication *Repeat Photography as Method in Visual Anthropology* (2007).

I begin **chapter 3** by addressing the way we form a relationship to place through photographs by investigating one common view of Waterton as it relates to the continual making and remaking of wilderness in Canada, by looking at the first of a set of photographs made at the locale presently named “The Prince of Wales Hill.” While I created a working collection of existing images of the park by mining archives and then tracked hundreds of photographs of Waterton over the course of my research, the significance of this research is the close attention I place upon certain records - to slow down and take a closer look at archival photographs, and by extension, place⁸. The earliest photograph from the Prince of Wales Hotel Hill that I located in archives was taken for the International Boundary Commission in 1874. I ask, what happens when G.M. Dawson and his men make a photograph in 1874 – how does this uncertain knowledge get made concrete when he points his camera and generates the place? How is he constituting what is present? Subsequent photographic accounts follow similar vantage points, and as I show, this is not by accident. The continual re-enactment of photographs are confirmed in materials I have found in local, national and international archives, as well as acts I observed.

I explore the structure of experience in Waterton through sites of persistent re-enactment to show how some places in Waterton become situated as identity markers in Canada through their continual presence in archives, which is a result of their continual re-enactment and incorporation as common sense (building on Hockings 1987 and Braun 2004). During my research the Prince of Wales Hotel hill locale emerged as a key site of photographic acts from the 1870s to present. I discuss how the initial

8 Allan Sekula articulates the importance of this position in 1978 producing artworks (*Meditations on a Triptych 1973/78*) that closely study one or two photographs.



The tree. pinhole Polaroid b+w print, 2004

photographic encounter and then persistent re-enactment from almost the same view is a way for people to generate a particular relationship to wilderness and national parks space. In **chapter 4** I explore how self and national park space are refigured in the process of encounter and performance. I am interested in bridging a gap in many accounts of photography, that is to ask, what effect do the *physical processes* of different photographic practices have on the meaning of the images represented? This marks a material turn emerging across the social science and humanities, where attention is being placed upon the role of *practice* in visual research. As Sabine Kriebel (2007) argues in a recent review of the history of theory in photography, missing from theoretical accounts of photography is an investigation into the ways in which politics and culture are imbricated into the very form of photography. I have selected and focused my attention in this chapter on what I have identified to be formative records in the photographic history of national parks in Canada as a way to provide a greater understanding of how we got to where we are today: To expose some of the roots of our contemporary understanding of the idea of nature and wilderness and the complexity that is found in all photographic accounts. In a parallel consideration, I argue that the national park space has made a profound influence on photography in Canada, and ask, what effect do the physical processes of place/ecological processes have on the photographs produced? How is the physical reality of the park space/ecology not only expressively engaged and inscribed by photography but imbricated in the form that photography takes? That is, how do wooden boxes, tripods, rectilinear lenses, silver emulsion coated on a glass plate, play a role in defining the relationship between people and place?

While the Prince of Wales hill dominates both the photographic record as well as these two chapters, I also pursue those accounts that aren't stabilized in the photographic record. This is the subject of **chapter 5**. Of interest in early photographs such as those in the IBC collection at the Library Archives Canada is that while they start their accounts in a variety of places in Waterton (e.g. Prince of Wales Hotel Hill, Red Rock Canyon, South Kootenay Pass, Belly River, Cameron Falls), only certain views are continually enacted and reenacted by other photographers. While I show how and why some places become situated as identity markers by their consistent re-enactment, this part of the chapter takes up what happens if they don't. While much photographic theory looks to dominant accounts to tell us something about ourselves, I look at photographs that are not dominant and in Homi Bhabha's (1994) words, are "colonial nonsense". Those dominant photographs and those that are no longer re-enacted are presented side by side in archives, yet they tell very different stories about the nature of vision and the uncertainty around photography and place in Waterton Lakes National Park. I also discuss how they verify the ongoing and everchanging relationship we have with nonhuman nature in national parks: As much as we might think of our influence and dominion over nature as moving in one direction, that *we* influence *it* (for better or worse), I show how the nonhuman nature of parks influences us.

Photographs of national parks are not always stable views continually re-enacted. Instead, this chapter is about the basic question of how photographs are fleeting, why is it that some views of national parks – a seemingly stable site of wilderness views – fall out of photographic favour. How does the way we read an image change over time? How does our relationship to a photograph as an event (image, object, act) change over time? How does the way we strike up a relationship with non-human nature



The tree. pinhole Polaroid b+w print, 2004

change over time? In this section I show how our relationship to a photograph changes over time and how human relationships to the more-than-human world are constantly shifting. Photographs and ideas about nature are each flexible. This gives us some room for maneuver, to acknowledge the material world as “bodies and fluids, selves and experiences, site of interwoven agency and alterity among plants and animals – link human corporeality with the other – than – human processes, experiences and entities in ways that profoundly challenge any neat nature culture divide” (Sandilands 2009:7). I examine how non-human nature has an active role in the formulation and stabilization or destabilization of relations in national parks.

I engage these themes to show the development of a photographic understanding of Waterton and the appearance of common sense. I investigate the construction of accounts by particular individuals as they produced images for government agencies, for parks promotion, tourism, and for the (at some point) private domain of family albums. I find complicated entanglements between art and science, the sublime and the vernacular, the extraordinary and the ordinary, and between the dual mandates of parks Canada: as a place for human use and as a protected area. It is in this productive friction that Waterton emerges.

This research program is interested in the non-discursive realities that exist beyond, or below, or through, our classic forms of representation – basically the unrepresentable. I am also interested in creating space and more conversation around implicate reality. Yet to study photography while thinking about the problem of representation leads to methodological challenges. Visual anthropology emphasizes the things between vision and language, vision and the invisible, the seen and the overlooked (Mitchell 2003). An attention to embodied vision examines what people do with the visual and how the visual field is created through use (Edwards 2008:3). But, as Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart write, it is difficult to track subjective, sensuous interactions and establish coherence in an object that is continually shifting in meaning, and “caught up between the conjuncture of a disappearing past and an emerging present” (2004:47). The challenge of how to understand and represent the visual is felt strongly within art practice as well. The fundamental impermanence of our more-than-human world is a crucial reason for why perfect photographic representation is impossible. Deconstructing photography helps reveal this impermanence. In **chapter 6** I take up how I produce more space around impermanence, flux and change. Art provides a toolkit to deal with the problem of representation – or the space between representation and the real – but representation is always an unfinished project. I explore the challenge of representation through two exhibitions I produced as part of my research into historical photographs of Waterton. My (art)work forms alternative proposals for what photographs of national park space are and could be.



Setting up camp, Waterton National Park 1934. Harold Long, Marjorie and Joan Oliver. W.J. Oliver. Courtesy Glenbow Museum.

Chapter 2: Shared Ethnographic Space. Anthropology, Art and Re-enactment in a Canadian National Park.

I will treat the eyes of insects, animals and men not as a pair of cameras at the ends of a pair of nerves but as an apparatus for detecting the variables of contour, texture, spectral composition, and transformation in light (J.J. Gibson 1966:54).

In this chapter I outline my approach to this research as well as my methods for undertaking this study. In the first part of this chapter I argue for the use of methods and theory from both anthropology and art to face the challenge of representation. In chapters 3, 4 and 5, I explore the challenge of representation through analysis of historical photographs, and in chapter 6, I explore the challenge of representation through two exhibitions I produced as part of my research into historical photographs of Waterton.

As I noted in the introduction, in this research program I am interested in the non-discursive realities that exist beyond, or below, or though, our classic forms of representation – both the unrepresented and unrepresentable. I am also interested in creating space and more conversation around what is represented. I focus on one of the classic forms of representation from the last one hundred and fifty years – photography. To study photography while thinking about the problem of representation leads to methodological challenges. In visual anthropology the problem of representation has brought attention to visual sense, or an embodied understanding of the visual domain, which takes as its starting point the exploration of vision and sight as something sensorially integrated, embodied and experienced. There is an emphasis on the things between vision and language, vision and the invisible, the seen and the overlooked (Mitchell 2003). An attention to embodied vision examines what people do with the visual and how the visual field is created through use (Edwards 2008). But, as Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (2004) write, it is difficult to track subjective, sensuous interactions and establish coherence in an object that is continually shifting in meaning. As stated in the introduction to this dissertation, the challenge of how to understand and represent the visual is felt strongly within art practice as well. In a recent exhibition catalogue, artists Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar write about the profound limitations of the visual to understand place, and argue that “surely nobody is more aware of the limitations of the visual than visual artists, just as poets are most sensitive to the inadequacies of language” (2005:25).

As a way to address an embodied understanding of the visual domain, my research is formulated around the investigation of particular photographic moments by trying to reenact them. I am interested in both the tangible and intangible aspects of experience of place as emphasized in the journey to repeat photographs, and think we need to provide more spaces for the non-discursive. The method and theory of visual art and anthropology together form the ground of my research into national parks in Canada.

By way of introduction in this chapter, I explore the ways in which photographs stand as both images of something (e.g. South Kootenay Pass) and objects you can hold (e.g. a postcard or 4x6” black and white fibre based print) and how this structures a particular understanding of photographs. This double consciousness is charged: it is



Waterton National Park 2006. After W.J. Oliver. b+w print.

one written about by Franz Boas (1927, 1955), developed by Roland Barthes (1982) and echoed recently by W.J.T. Mitchell (2005), who writes that even in the modern world, magical attitudes towards images are powerful and a deep and abiding feature of human responses to representation. While much of photography can be read through a dialectical arrangement between the photograph as an image of something or a material object, in this research I also argue that a photograph is an act that takes place, and show how photography can be studied as an *event*.

I discuss the recent turn in anthropology towards material qualities of the image, and I discuss the way that art has moved towards a focus upon the social. This movement is drawing the spheres of anthropology and art towards one another. As a result, artists and anthropologists are drawing on one another's working process. I describe why anthropologists are interested in art, and vice versa and discuss some of the challenges and some of the productive space that emerge out of the use of one another's tool kit.

In the second part of this chapter, I build on my publication, *Repeat photography as a method in Visual Anthropology* (2007) to show that attempts to re-enact a photograph is a novel method to uncover a great deal of information about both photographs, place, and places people take photographs from. I ask the question, what happens when one tries to re-enact a photograph? In answering this question, I build upon the method of repeat photography. It is not only a powerful tool in natural and social sciences but it can be used to structure art inquiry, and in this way can bring art and science together into one pursuit to create an embodied understanding of the visual that can be used to analyze the conditions of photographic production and resilience of views over time in spaces such as national parks. The effort to get back to these photographic views is documented and used as anthropological knowledge as well as for an art practice that begins to show the ways in which photographs define and constrain narratives of Canadian identity.

Thinking About Photography as Event: Image, Object, Act.

On his journey to learn what photography is "in itself," Barthes suggests that there are two ways to understand a photograph: "The Photograph belongs to that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both. The windowpane and the landscape..." (1981:6). If we imagine looking through Barthes' windowpane at the landscape, it seems that while both are present in our field of view, the eye needs to focus on one at a time. Using this metaphor to understand the history and theory of photography itself, the landscape can be likened to the subject of a photograph, the image, and the structure of the windowpane can be compared to the photograph as a material object. An analysis of the past 150 years of photographic history and theory reveals that both of these views speak the truth of photography, leading to a sort of double vision. The photograph as visual image is a signifier associated with an attention to objectivity, the mimetic powers of the camera, and iconography. It stands in a dialogical relationship with the photograph as a material object, which is associated with ideas about subjectivity, and the continuing process of production, exchange, usage, and meaning. Theorists continually try to work out the status of the photograph despite its contradictory messages: It is realized simultaneously as both objective and subjective; truth and illusion; science and art. This tension characterizes much of the photographic theory, and in her discussion of style and content in literature, Susan Sontag explains how the dialogical relationship of

photography might also be dissoluble, “it is not so easy, after all, to get unstuck from a distinction that practically holds together the fabric of critical discourse” (2001:15). To Abigail Solomon-Godeau the parameters of photography are ideological boundaries that limit and contain the kinds of questions that can be asked about photography (1991).

Thus a binary tension organizes photographic discourse. Structuring a discussion of the role of photography, for example, as truth, illusion, science, art, or social power, theorists continually formulate the same dualistic relationship between image and object to produce a meaning for photography (see, for example, Andrews 1999; Barthes 1982; Bolton 1999; Crary 1999; Hulick 1990; Jay 1993; Krauss 1999; Lury 1998; Mitchell 2006; Sekula 1981, 1986; Solomon-Godeau 1999; Sontag 1977). Allan Sekula clearly demonstrates such an approach. Upon critical reflection on the discourse of photography with regards to power, he finds a dialogical relationship between photographs, haunted by “two chattering ghosts”: that of bourgeois science and that of bourgeois art (1981:15). The first speaks of photography as optical truth, of a positivist belief in the objects depicted that reflects science, fact, technological determinism, and faith in the objective powers of the machine (image). The second speaks of photography as a commodity as it reflects ideas about art, self, auteurism, and a belief in subjective, imaginative capabilities of the artist.

Perhaps to underscore the boundaries limiting photographic history Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1991) divides photographic understanding along similar lines to Sekula, defining an axis of subjectivity, art, and beauty (icon), and an axis of science truth and objectivity (index). On the icon axis, she is concerned with the institutionalization of aesthetics and the impact of the forces of commodification upon photography. On the index axis, she finds the power (and danger) of images to “naturalize domination” and “displace history and memory” (1991:xxxiv). Like other image theorists in the 1980s, (e.g. Sekula, Owens), Solomon-Godeau’s solution to the problem of the two understandings of photography is to bring it “back to the dock” for interrogation (1991:xxxiv). Her politically charged approach intends to create counter-arguments, revise history, and to reform aesthetic debate and cultural politics (Owens 1992), but in doing so she reiterates the two sides of photography. It is clear that the dialogical relationship between the two truths of photography is prevalent across the disciplines that take up image theory.

Sekula suggests that the existence of both photographs as image and object caused a crisis at the centre of bourgeois culture. Sekula finds photographic meaning a “hybrid construction” (1981:16) between science and art, and he also recognizes that it produces a tension that he finds ambiguous, what he calls a photographic language (1981:17). Theorists find such a tension, or persistence, makes images resist meaning (Mitchell 2005:9): on one hand they create confusion, and on the other hand, they create mystery (Sontag 1977: 99). It seems theorists find photographs produce something more than two truths. When Sekula finds a photographic language he cannot entirely work out, he finds the “primitive infantile, aggressive – the imaginary discourse of the machine” (1981:23). He resigns his argument about the discourse of photography with the question, “can photography be anything else?” (1981:23). While the existence of the dialogic applies tension, it doesn’t collapse the strength and authority of either photograph. Instead, it seems clear that there is something about this tension that is of interest to theorists and historians of photography.



South Kootenay Pass. G.M. Dawson fonds. 1881. Courtesy Library Archives Canada.

Not entirely image, nor object, photography produces something else, what Mitchell identifies in the middle ground as a “magical relation” produced by a photograph (2005:8). To illustrate his point, Mitchell gives the example that when asked to cut the eyes out of a picture of their mother, the person asked will always hesitate due to a “magical relation” between the object and what is represented, the signified/subject (2005:9). Anthropologists also address this magical attitude towards images: Boas writes in the 1927 preface to *Primitive Art*: “And magic? I believe if a boy should observe someone spitting on his photograph and cutting it to pieces he would feel duly outraged” (1927:3). Boas writes that it requires only a dogmatic standardization to bring us back to magical attitudes. Mitchell finds this experience equivalent to Roland Barthes’ idea of *punctum*, which is “a detail that distracts or distresses” (1981:40), or in the words of Edwards, the “inexplicable point of invisible clarity” (2001:1) that happens when encountering certain photographs. Jean Baudrillard explains that “the *punctum*: that figure of nothingness, absence and unreality...stands opposed to the *studium*: the whole context of meaning and references” (1999:139). While for Barthes, *punctum* is activated by the details of the content (his mother as a child), Hal Foster (1996) finds that *punctum* can also be activated by technique, what he experiences in the “popping” of an image by Andy Warhol. Cecilia Lury investigates this mysteriousness of photographs (1998:76) and agrees with Barthes, finding *punctum*, is “neither that of an individual body (the viewer) nor that of a machine (the camera), but a combination of the two” (1998:99), it “radically disturbs the opposition between immediacy and mediation, presence and absence, subject and object...” (1998:88) and this opposition is in continual revision.

This is not, “photographic seeing” as described by Sontag in *On Photography*, a “kind of beauty that only the camera reveals – a corner of material reality that the eye doesn’t see at all or can’t normally isolate” (1977:81). Not aesthetic description, rather, it is a thickness, a relationship between the laminated parts of subject and object that produce a particular experience, what Lury labels *seeing photographically*:

For Barthes...intentionality and indexicality are not to be understood in isolation from each other; and they cannot be located either in the individual or the camera but only in seeing photographically (1998:99).

Jay makes the case that the power of visuality has survived the attack on representation and theory, surveillance and spectacle (1993:596). Accordingly, the power of visuality seems to lie in the possibility of seeing photographically – to theorists this is an inexplicable relationship cast as mystery, *punctum*, or magical attitudes towards images.

Punctum is widely used by theorists to account for the ambiguity of photographs. To learn what a photograph is, “in itself” (Barthes 1981:3), each of these theorists come up against something ineffable, and they often cast this ineffability as magic; a mysterious, even supernatural power. Barthes identifies a particular relationship produced between the past and presence that set the conditions for *punctum*. The relationship between the present and the trace of what a thing once was that is crucial to photographic meaning: it is a resurrection (Barthes 1977:32). Derrida, drawing on the ideas of Barthes writes that “it’s all about the return of the departed...the spectral is the essence of photography” (cited in Jay 1993:521). To Baudrillard, *punctum* is death or



South Kootenay Pass. After G.M. Dawson 2007 b+w print

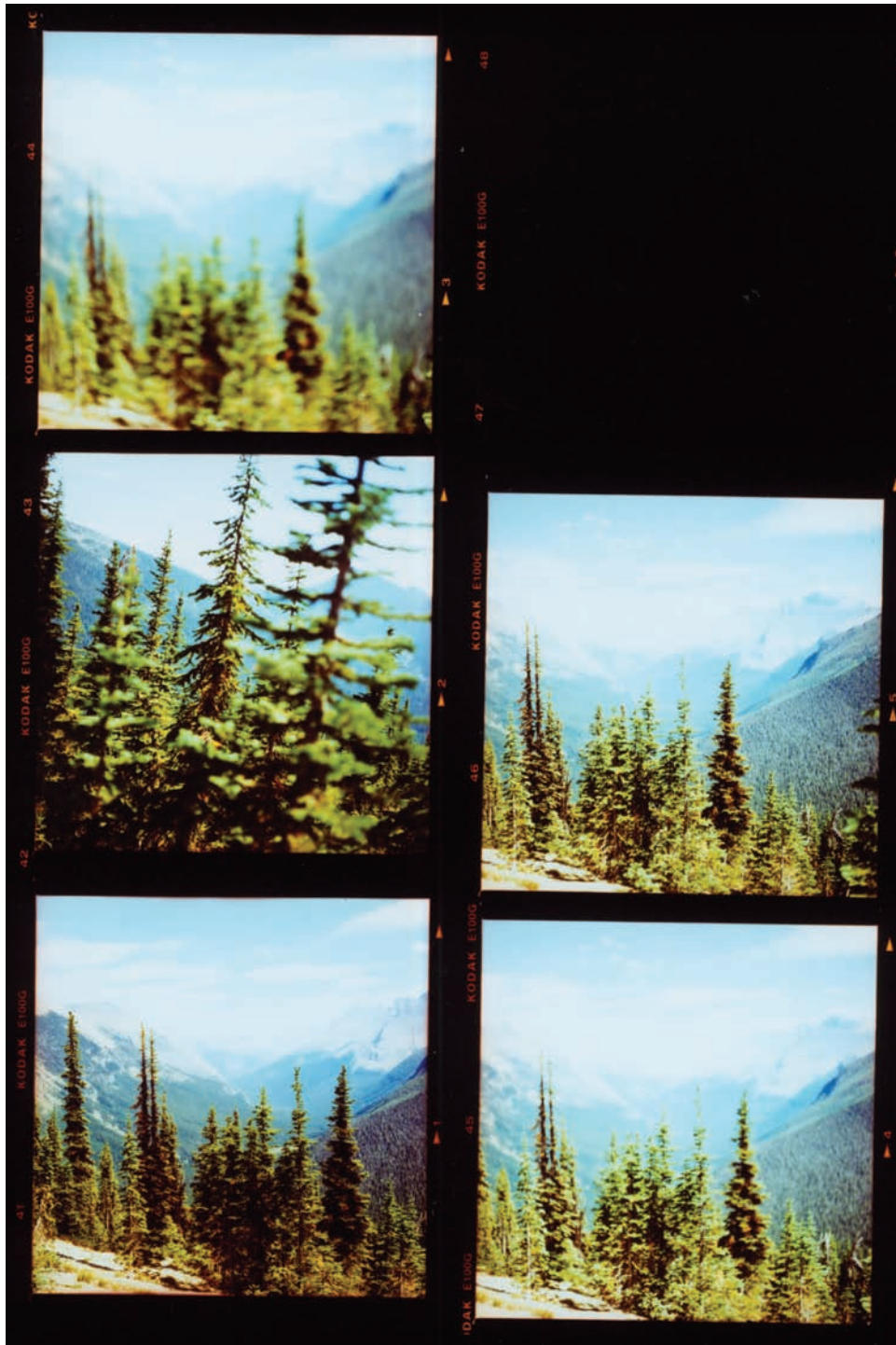
disappearance that is always present, it is “the nothingness at the heart of the images which lends its magic and its power and is most often driven out by significations” (1999:139). Seeing photographically is therefore produced by a contingent relationship between the past, historical event that is recorded – the image – as it comes up against the presence of the photograph in hand – the object. It is a matter of life and death, writes Baudrillard, a relationship between the powerful mobility of the lens and the corpse-like immobility of the object (1999:138). Or, as Barthes writes, the “there then” becomes the “here now”, and this sets the conditions for photographs to be imbued with the quality of dislocation and ambiguity (Edwards 2001:8). Christian Metz pushes the importance of presence, writing that *punctum* “depends more on the reader than on the photograph itself” (cited in Jones 2002:11). Therefore, this magical quality of photographs seems contingent upon the photograph’s relationship to the past in the present.

Identifying the complex relationship between the past and the present, Lury argues that photography

needs to be understood in relation to the specific contemporary spaces which the subject inhabits, what Barthes calls the ‘here and now’. These clearly include those not only of the family album and promotional culture but also of the scientific attitude (1998:99).

What this means to theorists is that subjects and practices of photography are mixed up together (Barthes 1981:16, Lury 1998:99), and “there then” picks up new meanings on the way to “here now” where it is encountered. Lury argues that photographs need to be understood through the present materiality of family albums, science, and culture, a post-modern analysis of “political, psychological and thus representational discursive practices and instrumental procedures” (Edwards 2001:7). Edwards argues, however, that such analyses miss how photographs might have operated within ideas of historically specific legitimation (2001:7). As such, attention to the institutional storehouses and structures as they co-develop with photography is key to getting the picture about pictures.

While it seems that a critical investigation of the limitations of this dualistic structure might also show the limitations with photographic theory, it seems theorists want to maintain the experience or quality that is particular to the complexities of the relationship between subject and object. Various complicated as *punctum*, magic, distress, distraction, invisible clarity, it is this experience that holds the key to the importance of the double vision in photographic history and theory. To reposition theory outside of the relationship between subject and object means missing this point of rupture, the prick or distress which may lead theorists to miss what “seeing photographically” can indicate about the “here and now.” Lury draws on Donna Haraway (2004) to find that photographic knowledge is situated. Situated knowledge in photography is complicated by the ties to the past – to the *noeme*, that which was and is no longer (Barthes 1982). To Baudrillard, photography is the “medium of absence” yet it is a way to “ban the disappearance of things into time” (2000:208). All of these conditions/experiences make reading photographs necessarily to do with a relationship between image (it was really real) and object (it is now here in my hand and means something different) with the possibility of photographic seeing: *punctum*, a magical quality that is not particular to every image but might be encountered in



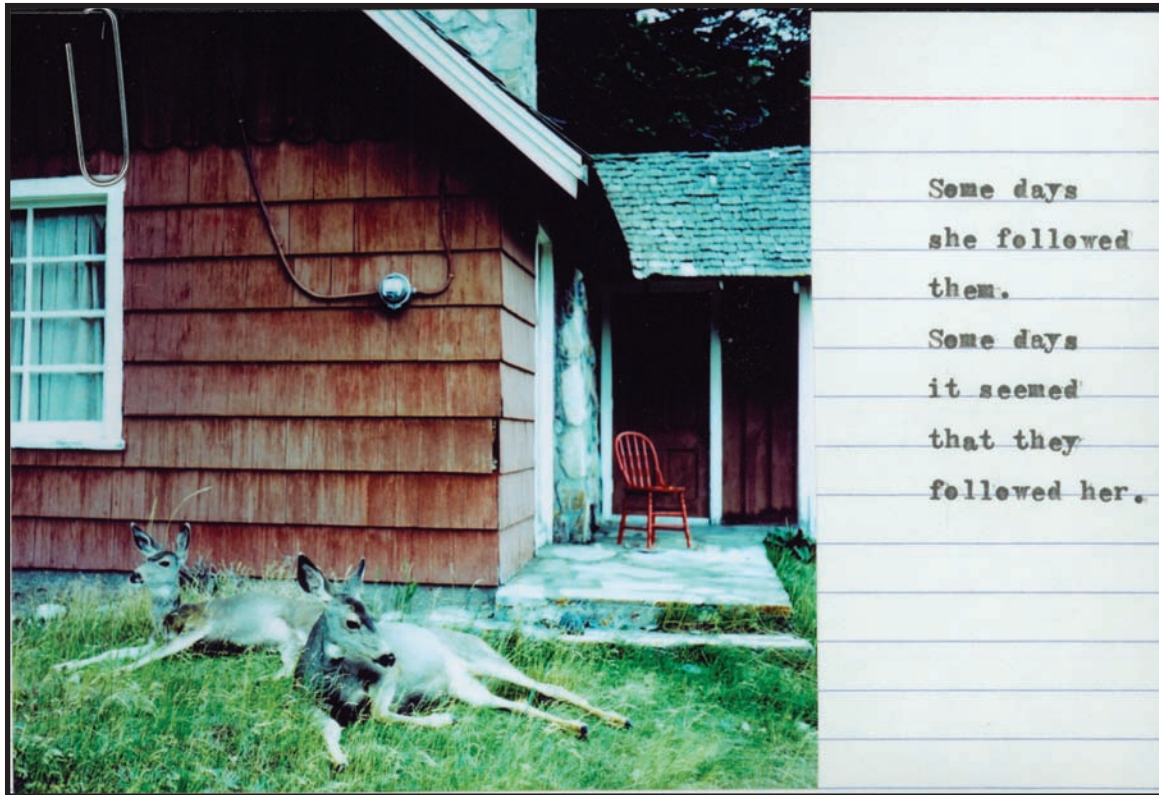
South Kootenay Pass. After G.M. Dawson 2006 c-print

some photographs. The power of photography therefore lies in between the two understandings – a real, fixed understanding of a subject that is no longer real (time passes – it was, it happened) and the subjective, shifting status that is the materiality of an object produce a magical relationship. It seems then, that the power of photography is a product of the contradictory but necessary dialogic of the photograph as subject – object, science – art, presence – absence and truth – illusion.

While photography can be read through a dialectical arrangement between the photograph as an image or an object, in this research I argue that a photograph is an act that takes place. To introduce this third way to understand the photograph frees the photograph from a dialectical hold, allowing it to be engaged in new ways, and as a result to allow for a broader set of readings and considerations. Perhaps this could create a space for the expression of the contents of this magical relationship between the photograph as an image and as an object. The photograph here is thought of as the outcome of a constellation of practice: this array of activities could include thinking about the identity of the photographer her or himself, the performative aspect of taking a photograph, considering the other people that would have been present, or not, and the role of the environment in this performance.¹ The photograph, in this thinking, can be considered an *event (or series of events)*. It is a political act: it is regulatory, it can be used to oppress, delimit and bound what wilderness in Canada is, and it can be liberating, too. It provides ground upon which to think about the technology of representation and its implication in geography, politics, and history, and in particular, to consider the intertwined creation of photography and place in national parks in Canada.

The importance of an event in tourist studies is suggested by Orvar Löfgren (1999). He finds that experience is a key part of tourism and finds that “experience structures expression and expression structures experience” and following anthropologist Allen Feldman (and presumably Derrida) he writes, “an event is not what happens but what can be narrated” (1999:95). While scholars have argued that there is an assumption of neutrality in photographic records produced by various agencies in Canada that naturalize the concept of nationhood and Canadian identity (Payne 2006; Sekula 1983, 1986), little work has been done to investigate how images have gained this autonomy. In particular, this research explores how photographs are not discreet objects but are entangled in subjective, sensorial exchanges on their way to becoming events. Yet what actually happens when the photograph is considered this way? The practice of thinking toward the event is something Derrida has drawn attention to, a practice of “letting thought unfold in response to occasions, invitations, demands, contexts, situation...” (Kamuf 2002:xii). The significance of an event is that it is “always artifactual; it is always something that is made, which is not to say it is always ‘made up’ in the sense of being opposed to whatever is regarded as actual or to what counts as a fact” (Lucy 2004:33). What experience emerges upon attempting to physically go to the ground of an imaged and imagined place? Following Löfgren, what is possible to express, how can it be expressed? To move beyond photographs as simply superficial representations of national parks this research explores some of the ways the photograph may have contributed to the configuration of the body in national park spaces. I focus upon bodily involvement with photographs in an to attempt to reflect upon the sticky webs of copy and contact, what Michael Taussig explains as mimesis:

1 It is a relational act, to look at the relationship between things that make up the thing we eventually call a photograph.



The house across the street from the Research House (113 Harebell Road), Waterton Lakes National Park 2005. C-print, paper clip and index card with text.

To ponder mimesis is to become sooner or later caught, like the police and the modern State with their fingerprinting devices, in sticky webs of copy *and* contact, image *and* bodily involvement of the perceiver in the image, a complexity we too easily elide as nonmysterious, with our facile use of terms such as identification, representation, expression, and so forth – terms which simultaneously depend upon and erase all that is powerful and obscure in the network of associations conjured by the notion of the mimetic (1993:21).

Through studying the photograph as event, the *complexity we too easily elide as nonmysterious* can emerge. This research is a way to embrace the gap between representation and that which it purports to represent.

The ties between photography and reality have always been tenuous. Yet photography, generally understood as an “absolute measure of optical truth” (Solomon-Godeau 1991:150) has been used, and continues to be used as proof. The most obvious way that photographs are understood to produce reality is by mimesis, whereby the camera makes contact with the world through the medium/chemistry of light, and this is copied onto a substrate, film, or a digital sensor. In this way, photography can be understood to communicate as an act of translation, inscribing the world “out there” into permanence: the photograph (or even the image it represents, as in, “the vista of Waterton”). Yet the trick of photography is between the translation of the photographed to the photograph, which activates a disjuncture, as Eduardo Cadava writes, one where “the relation between a photograph and the photographed corresponds to the caesura between a translation and an original” (Cadava 1997:15).

When Walter Benjamin wrote the introduction to his translation of Baudelaire’s *Tableaux parisiens* he explored the disjunction between a translation and an original. He wrote that “no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original” (1968:73). As Cadava explains, Benjamin claimed that a “translation remains faithful only to the extent that it holds an emancipation from sense” (1997:17). Benjamin acknowledges, then, that a translation must be “unfaithful.” A translation must pursue this unfaithfulness, Cadava explains that “the Benjaminian translator must give up the effort to reproduce the original faithfully...to be faithful to what is translatable in the original, the translator must depart from it, must seek the realization of his task in *something other than the original self*” (1997:15 emphasis added). I embrace “unfaithful translation” to produce *something other than* the same universal narratives about the myth of wilderness in Canada.

Anthropology and Photography: From Data to Sense

To think about a photograph as an event is to think about a photograph through the lens of an anthropologist. Indeed, the increasing importance of anthropological understandings of photography is evident in both the burgeoning literature in visual anthropology, but also in the consideration of anthropological scholarship about photography found in art theory, criticism and photographic history (see for example Batchen 2008; Foster 1996). While Brian Rusted notes ambivalence towards anthropology by visual culture studies (see Krauss and Foster 1996) as well as an awareness of the politically fraught nature of the discipline (Rusted 2005:256), anthropological approaches to photography are influencing criticism and theory to consider more broadly the practices of photography.



My desk at the research house, Waterton Lakes National Park 2007 b+w print

In part, this is due to a longstanding anthropological engagement with photography, especially in the making of space and place. Much has been written about the fate of the photograph in effecting how we understand and see place (Lury 2005). The association between travel and vision is a longstanding one (Pinney 2003), and photographs have been furnished as evidence of 'being there' and 'being out there'. From the moment photography was invented and presented to the Academy of Science in Paris in 1839, it began to travel² (Pinney 2003:205). As a tool of colonial obsession, it aided in classification, measurement and data collection (Edwards 1992), and in the 19th and early 20th centuries photography "was used extensively in the colonial effort to categorize, define, dominate and sometimes invent" (Scherer 1992:33). From the onset of modern anthropology -- starting with Haddon's 1898 Torres Straits expedition -- the camera has been harnessed as an integral tool of science, used to record faithfully the experiences of fieldwork (Grimshaw 2001). Haddon showed enthusiasm towards a camera, calling it an "indispensable piece of anthropological apparatus" (Haddon quoted in Grimshaw 2001:16) and it was a technology that the Cambridge team used alongside other methods of scientific data collection in order to produce a comprehensive study (2001:22). It brought distant things from far away up-close, and these were used to verify and legitimate anthropological constructions of reality. Photography was an instrumental technology in the making of distant space and place present in anthropological accounts. In this way photographs were attached to scientific ways of knowing and scientific methods of study of space and place. It is the supposed superficiality of photographs that, according to W.J.T. Mitchell, "gives them their potency and their virulence as icons of national and imperial destiny" (2002:263). This potency has carried forward in anthropological accounts, as John Collier writes in his seminal work *Visual Anthropology, photography as a research method*:

Sweeping photographs can set the stage for research. Long views establish relationships of ecology and community. They hold in place the broad view within which many levels and disciplines of abstraction can take place. When we use photography as a method and a source of orientation, we make use of its popular illustrative function. More important, we exploit photographs as independent specimens of data, not fully perceived until held in place by the camera record (1967:8-9).

Recent attention to the assumptions behind this sort of photography, (still widely practiced by many anthropologists³), has drawn attention to the power and danger of images to naturalize domination and displace history and memory (Solomon-Godeau 1991:xxxiv). Troubled by the reading of photographs as images reporting back surfaces, and troubled by reading photography's indexical qualities, visual anthropologists are becoming increasingly focused upon the experience of photographs as both aesthetic objects and as a part of a complex network of social meaning (see for example Edwards and Hart 2004, Walsh 2002). In particular, contemporary visual anthropology provides a framework to focus on embodied vision: what people do with the visual and how the visual is created through use, as sensorially integrated, embodied and experienced (Edwards and Bhaumik 2008; Edwards and Hart 2004; Pink 2006, Grimshaw and Ravetz

² For example, one of the first places photography traveled was to Central America and the Yucatán with architect Frederick Catherwood, who between 1838 and 1842, used a daguerreotype camera as a method of documentation, to portray the Mayan ruins "faithfully" (Rogers, Malde and Turner 1984: ix).

³ see for example the work of Sara Perry as critique on the use of the visual in archaeology



After South Kootenay Pass, Lone Lake, 12 minute swim, Polaroid 2004.

2005). This forms part of a pursuit emerging across the social science and humanities, whereby attention is being placed upon the role of *practice* in visual research. This marks a material turn. Engaging in practice itself is emerging as key to studying how the physical processes of different photographs effect the meaning of the images represented. This emerging field looks beyond models of vision where images are understood through political and cultural ideologies of the makers and readers of the images to consider the potential of sight as a part of an experiential whole where things are literally “made sensible” (Edwards and Bhaumik 2008:4). Anthropologists are particularly interested in exploring alternative strategies to think about the domains of contemporary anthropology and art (Schneider and Wright 2006). Recent volumes suggest anthropologists move beyond current disciplinary boundaries and either become involved in art practice or collaborate with artists (Pink 2004: 3-5; Grimshaw 2005:27-28). In writing about visual practice, scholars indicate a mounting interest in having anthropologists experiment with creative and aesthetic uses of film and still photography, and expand on their use of techniques of visual art, hypermedia, and digital video (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2005:6,13; Pink 2004:2-5,166-183). In the UK, a strong impulse by anthropologists and artists to rethink the visual has resulted in a move towards experimental collaborations. Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz (an anthropologist and an artist) have worked together to move towards a more broad consideration of the role of the body and the senses in image-based inquiry. Claiming a focus on text radically excludes ways of knowing that are specific to visual modes of representation, Grimshaw and Ravetz find the production of visual accounts essential for constructing a different way to know the world (2005:1-14). Following Barbara Stafford (1996), they ask the important question, “how can we study contemporary forms of visual culture without translating them into a different conceptual register?” (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2004:5).

What do Anthropologists Want from Artists?

Central to the process of ethnographic fieldwork is a personal immersion into ongoing social activities (Wolcott 2005:4). Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz propose that visual ethnography, as an embodied practice, allows the anthropologist to gain experiential knowledge from a “distinctive form of ethnographic encounter” (Grimshaw 2005:26) that comes from a position in the world that is constituted by and actively constitutes visual practice. This can be accomplished by holding a camera (Grimshaw 2005:23), sitting drawing, or sketching out a plan for a painting (also see Ramos 2004). These acts diverge from discursive approaches as “other sensed ways of knowing” (Grimshaw 2005:26); they evoke aspects of experience in a different way than text (Pink 2004:4). Arguing that bodily engagements are key in anthropology, yet difficult to incorporate due to a “history of apprehending objects and actions of all kinds as if they were texts” (Schneider and Wright 2006:5-6), Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright suggest that crossing the boundary into art practice allows for a specific encounter with sensual practice and for new possibilities in knowledge generation. This transgression however, is a challenge. While the *writing culture* critique opened up traditional ethnographic practices of anthropology to notions of “collaboration, polyphony, reflexive inquiry, and dialogue” (2006:95), George Marcus recently argued that most attempts to experiment and “touch upon the aesthetics of fieldwork” were largely unsuccessful due to regulation of the discipline from the 1990s to date. Marcus contends that it is artists who have been able to pursue an exploration of ethnography and show anthropologists “something important about their methods that they could not see as clearly for themselves” (2006:96).

Groundtruth Conditions		NAME > TRUDI SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER > Dawson COLLECTION > Library + Archives Canada	Date > JULY 29, 07 time start: 11:30 time end: 12:50
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> point <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transect		
IMAGE & LOCATION DESCRIPTION	Looking east down valley on South Kootenay Pass. Same location as last year on the side of the hill just off the trail (not the main one but the one that cuts more to the north. seems to be the right time of day. sitting in shade because of leaf		
WEATHER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sun <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cloud <i>cirrus</i> <input type="checkbox"/> rain <input type="checkbox"/> snow <input type="checkbox"/> other		
TIME OF YEAR	<input type="checkbox"/> spring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> summer <input type="checkbox"/> fall <input type="checkbox"/> winter		
CHANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> snow <input type="checkbox"/> water <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vegetation <i>fire in historic photo. Regrowth</i>		
AUDIBLE SOUNDS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> birds <input type="checkbox"/> people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wind <input type="checkbox"/> traffic		
VISIBLE FEATURES	<input type="checkbox"/> horses <input type="checkbox"/> machinery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> pathways/trails <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> people <i>Emily</i> <input type="checkbox"/> boats <input type="checkbox"/> roads <input type="checkbox"/> stream/river/creek <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mountain <input type="checkbox"/> lake <input type="checkbox"/> falls <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prairie/meadow <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> geology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> flora <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fauna <input type="checkbox"/> other <i>butterflies especially</i> <input type="checkbox"/> ruins <i>colour dominants</i>		
SPACE	<input type="checkbox"/> anterior space (the past) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> frontal space (the future) <i>surveying view.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> other		
OTHER PLACES I LOOKED; OTHER SENSES	<i>Heat. The smell of the trees.</i>		
POSTURE	(what kinds of postures does the landscape suggest or require from its viewers?) <input type="checkbox"/> standing <input type="checkbox"/> sitting <input type="checkbox"/> crouching <input type="checkbox"/> tippy toes <input type="checkbox"/> face to ground <input type="checkbox"/> prone <input type="checkbox"/> semi-prone <input type="checkbox"/> heights		
FEELS... (QUALITY)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> peaceful <input type="checkbox"/> busy <input type="checkbox"/> popular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> off the beaten track <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> trail - <i>pevidence of walking</i> <i>in use/unused</i> <input type="checkbox"/> commodified space <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> authentic encounter <input type="checkbox"/> daily activity <i>see no one.</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> awareness of environmental issues <i>(tree educational) regrowth</i>		
MOST IMPORTANT DETAIL FOR REPEAT	<input type="checkbox"/> Places people visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Places people don't visit (LANDSCAPE FEATURE MOST USEFUL FOR REPEAT) <i>height + RL determined by background ridges intersecting</i>		
WHY WAS KEYSTONE IMAGE-MAKER HERE?	<i>On his way over the pass.</i>		
GPS	<i>pt 346 11m acc 2153 m tele 110 0708012 / 5444077</i>		
BEARING	<i>80° east</i>		
MEDIA FOR REPEAT IMAGES AND NOTES	<i>digital photo.</i>		
GROUND TRUTHING RE-ENFORCES IMAGE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		

Conditions sheet, South Kootenay Pass, July 29, 2007

What do Artists Want From Anthropologists?

In art there is increasing momentum towards studying the social practices of everyday life. The role of the artist is reconfigured into “context providers” rather than “content providers” (Dunn in Kester 2004:1), or “cultural-artistic service provider rather than a producer of aesthetic objects” (Kwon 2002:4). In thinking about place-based art practices, this sort of work can trouble the construction and commodification of place based identities (Kwon 2002). Artists are increasingly interested in site specificity, community based practice and relational aesthetics, which often draw upon the traditional terrain of anthropology.

As I have shown, recent scholarship in anthropology embraces a material practice to working with visibility through such mediums as photography. Anthropologists have enthusiastically struck up relationships with artists and begun to produce art themselves. While I agree that this opens a space of possibility for new knowledge generation and understanding, I share some of Hal Foster’s (1996) trepidation about the translation of one register and set of practices into another. Where Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) has recently found new approaches to works exciting and liberating such as the editing and remixing of culture, Foster shows trepidation about the possibility of “superficial borrowing” (1996:181). In this section I outline some of his critique and then I suggest how anthropology might contribute to art practice and how art practice might contribute to anthropology: How can they serve to strengthen practice and knowledge?

In his widely cited work, *The Artist as Ethnographer* (1996) art theorist-critic Hal Foster identifies an interchange between anthropologists and artists. He finds connections between the two pursuits, including a shared interest in alterity, culture, self-critique and reflexivity. Foster addresses an emergence of a paradigm in considering the artist as ethnographer in advanced art on the left. Finding this trend structurally similar to Benjamin’s “Author as Producer” model where the object of contestation is the bourgeois-capitalist institution of art (the museum, the market and the media), and its “exclusionary definitions of art and artist, identity and community”, it digresses from economic relation to cultural identity, so rather than the proletariat, the subject the artist associates with is the cultural other (1996:173). Foster finds the relationship between artists and their subject is fraught with three assumptions, that “the site of political transformation is the site of artistic transformation as well” and that “political vanguards locate artistic vanguards and, under certain circumstances, substitute for them” and that the dominant culture can be subverted to the location of the other, somewhere else (1996:173). One of the main problems that Foster finds is in this third assumption, the automatic coding of apparent difference, “That the other, here postcolonial, there proletarian, is somehow in reality, in truth, not in ideology, because he or she is socially oppressed, politically transformative, and/or materially productive” (1996:174). He finds that the danger of quasi anthropological art emerges from a simplification, for example, “identity is not the same as identification” (1996:174). Self-othering can slip into self-absorption (1996:180), reflexivity can promote a masquerade of disturbances of subject-positions. To Foster that part of the problem is the move of this work from the context of anthropology to the context of art,

reflexivity...a vogue for pseudo ethnographic reports in art that are sometimes disguised travelogues from the world art market. Who in the academy or the art world has not witnessed these testimonies of the new empathetic intellectual or these *flâneries* of the new nomadic artist? (1996:180)



Lone Lake Warden Cabin, b+w print on Kodak Panoram no. 1

And what happens when anthropologists take up art practice as a part of their research program? To Foster, the artist is an ideal ego of the anthropologist: “a collagist, semiologist, avant-guardist” (1996:180) and Foster questions whether the anthropologist can do anything but envy the artist as the paradigm of self reflection who wish to be remade as an artistic interpreter of cultural text.

What Foster signals here is a crucial consideration in the coming together of anthropology and art. They are not easily transferrable registers. It is a challenge to translate between them, and, importantly, there is something to this translation. While I agree that similar methods, or process might underpin an investigation into something, in my work for example the same question, “what happens when I try to re-enact a photograph”, the challenge is in the specificity of the products that are produced out of that investigation. When I embarked on this research program I thought I would produce one hybrid document, or at least certainly a sort of transcendence of art and anthropology would emerge into the interdisciplinary space I had carved out. However, over the course of my research I found that while my methods – using art and social science to produce documents and knowledge about the world – brought the two together into one pursuit, the products – academic texts and visual art exhibitions are by no means interchangeable. They each have a world and they each have to do the work of anthropology or of art: To be what they are. Anthropological texts and artistic production must be considered critically and gain legitimacy within their own realms.

In the face of this, is there a possibility for an art that intersects with anthropology – one that is neither superficially borrowing, nor drawing on art only to show anthropologists something about their methods (Foster 1996:181)? Is there some way to embrace the entanglement of art and anthropology and to generate better forms of practice out of the “productive friction” between the two? Are they apt to be just an empty simulation of one another?

Archival art, relational aesthetics and community based art are each practices that are drawing much attention in the contemporary art world. These three practices are at the core of my art practice in this research program. Some of the key questions about community based practices are around ethics. Foster finds that “the quasi anthropological role set up for the artist can promote a presuming as much as a questioning of ethnographic authority, an evasion as often as an extension of institutional critique” (Foster 1996:196). Foster demands discursive breadth as well as historical depth in working with a community (e.g. to work on AIDS) (1996:202). A decade later, Grant Kester (2004) finds the same problem in community based art practice, citing that many artists simply drop into communities and ask for participation and conversation, but that they are “a serial imposition of fixed formal or spatial moments” rather than “coming into a given site or community characterized by its own unique constellation of social and economic faces, personalities and tradition” (2004:95) whereby both artist and the collaborators will have their existing perceptions challenged. To counter invasive projects, Kester demands that this kind of art practice must provide an ethics of community exchange. To my mind, this looks not unlike anthropological community engagement, and it is a starting point for how anthropology can make a serious contribution to contemporary art practice. First, an ethics of communicative exchange is one that is achieved by a deep immersion and inquiry. To Kester, artists need to “begin with an attempt to understand as thoroughly as possible the specific

nuances and conclusions of a given site...there must be a period of openness, of nonaction, of learning and of listening” (2006: 107).

This is not new territory for anthropology. Anthropology is a discipline that has been grappling with the relationship formed with an other community from the moment anthropology left the armchair and entered the field. The challenges of long term community engagement emerge in the responsibilities and relationships formed between the community and research, an author, local realities and power dynamics and so on. Anthropologists are also aware of the problem of ethnographic authority and recognize the power and control of the author/originator. At the same time to move research forward in an academic social science setting, ethics reviews are required by universities and so anthropologists have had to create a set of practices and promises for the communities they work in.

An education in research methods helps to answer questions about engagement from critics of community based art practice. Sullivan, who writes about art practice and social research, asks, how can artists, who have no training in how to approach communities, properly engage in community based practices? Sullivan cautions that much arts based research “remains embedded within modernist conceptions of art. As such, essentialist concepts are reified rather than contested, and perspectives are passive rather than critical. Consequently the quest to embrace more artistic forms of representation results in decorative research rather than deconstructive inquiry” (2005:60). He finds this can be broken with, when research practices fully investigate the contexts that surround complex human activities, ones that gain insight into “lived experience, subjectivity, and memory” as agents in knowledge construction, and strategies such as “self-study, collaborations, and textual critique”. While there is a desire to expand the representational language of research, Sullivan finds disquiet about the lack of critically reflexive attitude (2005:62). Here I see anthropologists have an opportunity to contribute to projects by drawing upon their education and approach to community based research.

Strengthening Practice: Relational Exchanges in Art and Anthropology

Despite trepidation amongst scholars about the limitations of drawing on a different conceptual register in thinking about archival art practice and relational aesthetics, it seems there are several strengths to bringing art and anthropology into a productive friction. The strength of art practice in anthropological research is that it provides a tool kit to drawing upon other sensed ways of knowing and helps provide strategies to address the sensorial turn in anthropology. In *Art Practice as Research*, Graham Sullivan (2009, 2005) argues that the imaginative and intellectual work undertaken by artists is a form of visual research that shares commonalities with other disciplines in the social sciences, humanities and physical sciences. Yet, as Sullivan writes in the preface to the 2009 edition, this is a unique and profound research method:

The meanings that artists make from their imaginative investigations are not only collected from their encounters with things around them but they are also created in response to their experiences. This is what is unique about the inquiring mind of artists, for they create new understandings from what we don't know, which profoundly changes what we do know (2009:np)

Sullivan argues against social science methods that focus on analysis and *critique* of a phenomenon. Rather, at the heart of Sullivan's comprehensive text is an emphasis upon *practice*: Visual arts research must be grounded in practices that come from art itself. That is, the methodological development of art practice as research must start with art. The studio, therefore, is the locus of action. The artist researcher moves beyond textual critique of a phenomena into the terrain of the creation of new knowledge undertaken within a research perspective (2005:xv). Sullivan argues that artist studios and other such places are "theoretically powerful and methodologically robust sites of inquiry" (2005:xix). In relational or conversational art practice the studio has an expanded conception: my studio was the terrain of Waterton Lakes National Park and archival institutions.

The art world can offer other venues for the dissemination of results and anthropologists can work beyond the academy to connect the products of their research to a community. This can also become a site for the generation of community participatory works. Art practice allows for other venues for ethnographic work to take place, and the anthropologist can create their own site for inquiry. For example in my MA work I produced a gallery show and analysed it⁴.

On the other hand, anthropology offers insight into an engaged and ethical approach to community based projects, including expertise and education in research methods. While art is an imaginative and open-ended process that cannot be predicted, it can draw awareness to ways to approach community engagement. Most important to my research is the long-term engagement with a community, one which allows for the emergence of a more complex relational space between people, places, things and thoughts. This model would break down the reproduction of the same relationship between the artist and the gallery that finds the solo artist out in the world reporting back what they find to an eagerly waiting curator and gallery public. Their experiments run the risk of perpetuating the modernist art institution that many of the artists wish to escape by working with community and conversation rather than art objects.

Art and anthropology can work together to strengthen practice and knowledge and go beyond what Hal Foster troubles as "quasi anthropological art" towards a truly anthropological art. As a starting point, art can contribute to anthropology by providing strategies to explore non-discursive ways of knowing and imaginative approaches to their subjects. Anthropology has the advantage of the ethnographic method, one which encourages long-term engagement with communities. This engagement comes with guiding principles (e.g. ethics reviews) to bring an awareness to the unevenness of power between ethnographer and subject. Both of these ways that they help one another are a focus on the *process* of art, and the *process* of anthropology, and I have placed less of a focus upon the *products* or objects of each discipline and knowledge

4 As I describe in the prologue to this dissertation, my interdisciplinary (visual anthropology, environmental studies) MA research revolved around the creation of an exhibition about scientific photography in Jasper National Park, Canada and brought historical Dominion Land Survey and Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project photographs together into the gallery space to explore the role of scientific photography in the construction of the Canadian cultural imaginary. The exhibition was treated as an "event, object, and interactive process at one and the same time" (Kratz 2002:91), as a field site to reveal how landscape is social process (Hirsch 1995: 1-30). Tracking experiences and responses in the gallery space revealed that values and beliefs about nature are produced as multiple narratives intertwined with social histories of a people(s), land, memory, space and time.



In the Waterton Lakes Park, Bert Riggall c. 1913. Image Courtesy Library Archives Canada/WLNP.

structure. This is in part formed out of my interest in relational practice, conversation, and intangibility, and in part an argument for a different approach than Foster has taken in thinking about how artists and anthropologists might work together, one that is not just an empty simulation, but instead an engaged *practice*.

This dissertation is a product of thinking about and engaging with the productive friction between anthropology and art, and in the next section I will outline how I approached a method to draw upon the strengths of both disciplines to answer my research questions. It is worth noting here the distinction between my method (the process) and products of my research. While the pursuit that brings them together, re-enactment, produces knowledge that informs one another, I have produced two distinct forms of output – a dissertation and art works.

The Practice of Re-enactment and Repeat Photography

Those who have experienced the excitement of finding the site of an old photograph after a century of time know the thrill of standing in the footsteps of a pioneer photographer, seeing the landscape he chose to photograph and trying to comprehend his impressions of the scene. The intellectual effort of seeking to understand the perception of an early photographer is often as scientifically rewarding as identifying how the landscape has changed (Rogers, Malde, Turner, 1984: xiii).

The practice of examining a photograph as an event illuminates the complexity of the social meaning of photographs: When I attempt to re-enact a photograph, I produce knowledge out of the tangible and intangible aspects of experience of place as emphasized in the journey to perfectly replicate photographs. This is a method to recognize the implications of how photographs can never perfectly represent, and neither can they ever be perfectly re-enacted. This serves to produce more space around the unrepresented and unrepresentable world.

Using my research in Waterton Lakes National Park as a case study, this section will describe how I used attempts to re-enact photographs as a way to provide new ways of thinking about space and place. Re-enactment is the central method I use to investigate my research questions and it guides my return over eight years (2002 to 2010) to over 400 photo-points that were used to make images from over the past 150 years inside the present day park boundary. First, I define what re-enactment is, and trace the history and uses of the method of repeat photography, which is central to my overall photographic re-enactment, and then I suggest new ways that re-enactment can be used in research about place.

Re-enactment forms the overall approach to trying to replicate an historical photograph, and within this I use the method of repeat photography to contribute insight into the historical photograph. In this chapter I argue, building on my publication, *Repeat photography as a method in Visual Anthropology* (2007) that repeat photography is a novel method to uncover a great deal of information about both place, and places people take photographs from. I ask the question, “what happens when one tries to re-enact a photographic moment?” In answering this question, I find that repeat photography is not only a powerful tool in natural and social sciences but it can be used to structure art inquiry, and in this way can bring art and science together into one pursuit to show both the certainty and uncertainty found in photographs.



Ground-truthing: 'In the Waterton Lakes Park', digital print 2007

When I first arrived in Waterton Lakes National Park, I sought order. I was working for the Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project (2002-2005) as a project photographer, and research assistant and worked with a crew to repeat a collection of photographs from the 1913 Dominion Land Survey. This work was to set the stage for my research. It provided the time and space to think about the act of trying to repeat a photograph and the attempt to get back to a place and time. I sought order by completing the work – to put a grid on the historical photograph, to take it out and try to relocate it, to take a repeat image and then to return with the data (we were shooting digital images) for post-processing and eventually to upload to a database. But eventually I realized I was tortured by the gulf that divided the historical and repeat image. I had to study this gulf – the disorder produced by photography. And so when the project moved out of Waterton and into other areas of Alberta and B.C., I stayed behind in Waterton to think alongside photographs. How do photographs construct place? Perhaps it is not so simple to return to the sight of a previous photographic event.

Repeat photography is a powerful method to produce knowledge about place. Used as a tool to monitor physical changes in landscapes or urban sites, repeat photography is a multidisciplinary strategy that uses existing images – usually historical photographic collections - to explore place. By locating the position from where an existing photograph was taken, adopting that photo-point, and taking a new photograph to create a photo-pair of the same scene, this technique allows for an analysis of the space over a period of time. Repeat photography is a significant and particular kind of engagement with both a subject and a photograph, usually beginning with locating relevant archival materials (such as photographs, paintings, and drawings) and culminating in taking a photograph of the same scene from the exact original location. Between these acts, the photographer tries to determine the historical conditions, such as weather, time of year and time of day as well as the historical technical setting, such as camera format and the lens focal length used to make the photograph. The repeat photographer may look at secondary documents (such as maps or historical accounts) and discuss the project with locals in an attempt to identify and refine the geographic or social context. Once in the field, accurate repeat photography is a study in generating a camera position, or photo-point, using the principle of parallax to match foreground, mid-ground and background features seen through the lens of the camera with those in the historical photograph (Smith 2007). Repeat photography is a useful tool to investigate archival images as a way to slow down and elaborate on understandings and misunderstandings of place and representation (Sekula 1981). Recent writing about art argues that better understandings of place emerge from an engagement with both the visible and things that remain invisible (Dean and Millar 2005). I am interested in intangible aspects of experience of place as emphasized in the journey to repeat a photograph.

Photography has always been used extensively in field documentation (see Rogers, Malde, Turner 1984). Characterized as “the final culmination of a Western quest for visibility and scrutiny” (Pinney 1992:74), photography “was used extensively in the colonial effort to categorize, define, dominate and sometimes invent” (Scherer 1992:33). Today the camera remains aligned with the discipline of natural science as a tool of precision for creating revealing records of the physical and biological world (Rogers, Malde, Turner, 1984:ix). Nowhere is this obsession with measurement more evident than



'In the Waterton Lakes Park', after Bert Riggall b+w print 2007

in repeat photography. The first systematic use of repeat photography as a method of observation began in the 1880s, when initiatives were undertaken in both the USA and Europe to study glacial advance and recession (Harrison 1974:469; Webb 1996:30; Malde 1973:193-194). Today the majority of North American repeat photography projects focus on qualitative and quantitative evaluation of landscape level change (Webb 1996:30; Rogers, Malde, Turner 1984:xiii; Malde 1973:194)⁵. Repeat photography, understood as a straight-forward, elegant tool for measuring transformations in environments such as vegetation change, allows scientists to create a new visual record of the landscape for future studies. These are considered benchmarks and as such provide valuable information for investigating particular places through time.

In addition to its uses in natural science, repeat photography defines but also invents space and place through art practice. Artist Mark Klett's repeat photography projects investigate human connection to place through time by looking at changes in the landscape. Since the 1970s, Klett has collaborated with photographic historians, photo theorists, visual arts and computer programmers to produce rephotographic surveys of famous American landscapes such as those created by William Henry Jackson. Jackson photographed Pulpit Rock in Echo Canyon, Utah in 1869. Widely circulated, the photograph shows a bluff on the right hand side, evidence of a highway and looming rock on which three people perch in the centre, and a rail line to the left. Klett visited and rephotographed the site in the summer of 1978 and then again in the summer of 1997. Comparing Klett's photographs to Jackson's, the unchanged appearance of the bluff on the right hand side is the only indicator that the image shows the same view: the view of Pulpit Rock has been replaced by a local road and a Union Pacific Railroad line while the middle of the frame is taken up by a highway sign which becomes the focus of the images. Here repeat photography's importance lies in the unique relationship it establishes between historical and contemporary photographic records as they are brought into a comparative setting where the two images together form a new whole. Questions about social or environmental history, or about what happened to the iconic Pulpit rock, arise from the pairing. This produces "a new context in which neither photo exists in its time alone" (Klett 2004:3) and the two images hint at a story linking a "moment in the past with intervening unseen events" (Rogers, Malde, Turner 1984: xiii). The pairing makes what is not seen in the modern photograph (i.e. Pulpit Rock, hanging over the road and rail lines was considered a threat and removed by explosives in the 1930s) (Klett 2004:56) as important, if not more important, than what can be seen.

Provoking a similar feeling of absence, artist Hai Bo makes repeat portraits of people and places of his home town in northeastern China. What appears to be a typical school photograph is reactivated by Bo's attempt at repeating it twenty years later. In the new portrait, the sitters occupy the same spot and stance as they did in the original portrait. While it is interesting to mark the changes and the effects of time on the individuals pictured in the two portraits, it is through the presence of now empty seats that the image becomes charged with the weight of absence.

And yet repeat photography is more than an illustration of glacial recession, vegetation

5 There are as well a number of projects charting urban change both in North America and Europe including "New York Changing" (<http://www.newyorkchanging.com/imagelist.html>) but in a bibliography of repeat photography from 1984, 90 percent of the 450 listed entries addressed changes in vegetation and the effects of geologic processes (Rogers, Malde, Turner 1984).



'In the Waterton Lakes Park', after Bert Riggall Polaroid b+w print 2007

change, the effect of cultural change on a landscape or the changing makeup of a group. Repeat photography can produce ethnographic knowledge; it is an embodied experience that allows the researcher to ask questions that can only be posed by identifying, as closely as possible, the original site, looking through the camera lens, and re-taking a photograph. It is a multi-layered and complex way to make the past present and to present the past, and through this intricate relationship it allows us to investigate historical and contemporary social realities. It engages the challenge of representation and to return to Grimshaw and Ravetz's words, this sort of visual work is an embodied practice, one that allows the anthropologist to gain experiential knowledge from a "distinctive form of ethnographic encounter" (2005:26) that comes from a position in the world that is constituted by and actively constitutes visual practice. My research not only focuses upon this generation of ethnographic knowledge from the position of a social scientist, but I also engage in the generation of knowledge from art practice.

At the heart of repeat photography is imagination and improvisation. This links to current thinking about the way that social or cultural life is experienced. In Ingold and Hallam's recent introduction to *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (2008), they neatly draw together dwelling and material practice together with the idea of improvisation:

First, it is *generative*, in the sense that it gives rise to the phenomenal forms of culture as experienced by those who live by them or in accord with them. Second it is *relational*, in that it is continually attuned and responsive to the performance of others. Third, it is *temporal*, meaning that it cannot be collapsed into an instant, or even a series of instants, but embodies a certain duration. Finally, improvisation is a *way we work*, not only in the ordinary conduct of everyday lives but also in our studied reflections on these in the fields of art, literature and science (2008:1).

Repeat photography is an imaginative, improvisational project, one that uses photographs as guides to try to gain insight into a previous event. The gap between photographs and representations provides a space for improvisation to guide my practice of putting together how photographs "work" and to see how they are a part of social life. This is part of a shift towards understanding social life through "how people give form to their activities" (Barber 2008:29), one that echoes Basso's 1996 call to recenter expressive instruments into analysis of what people make of their world, one that is necessary in anthropological studies. To study the photograph as an event through re-enactment and investigating the making of photographs – an expression that is made concrete in material form – is to pay attention to the emergent processes that fix photographs into objects.

Activating the Archive

In my work, re-enacting a photograph begins as an archival exercise. Most repeat photography projects define certain limitations within the archives such as a geographical area (i.e. the Canadian Rockies), a geographical or ecological feature (i.e. glacier movement or tree line change) or an historical collection (i.e. survey photographs or photographs of the American West by William Henry Jackson). Each of these strategies uses the archive as a source of data. I modify this archival search by treating repeat photography as an ethnographic project and turn the archive into a field site. Instead of functioning solely as a source for specific data (the existence of

which is often known before one even enters the archive) the archive becomes a place to initialize thoughts about the space and place of a particular landscape, to discover connections, to find similarities, and to draw together sets of photographs whose patterns can ultimately produce narratives about the landscape. I use the archive to determine dominant views and to see how the landscape has been represented. As certain views become more prominent in one archive or collection this affects the focus of research in other archives and collections and the process becomes recursive (Smith 2007).

As I describe in chapter 1, while searching the Parks Canada archives in Waterton, I encountered a large collection of photographs by Park Naturalist Kurt Seel. Dated from the 1960s, the collection is important both in terms of how Seel represented and documented the park and in showing how the interest and mandates of Parks Canada became evident through photographs. Seel's vision of the park shows the town site, the impact of visitors, landscape features (such as the Limber pine described at the onset of this dissertation), and park disasters such as floods, fires, windfalls, and automobile accidents. When visiting other archives, I began looking for images analogous to those of Seel, or images connected to Seel's presence in the park; the presence of his images in the Waterton archive affected my selection of subsequent images housed in other archives. By working back and forth in the matrix of the archive, this search component of repeat photography refines the image collections under study. Through this recursive process of archival research a more nuanced and specific view of park realities, as represented in archived photographs, emerges.

In approaching historical material in Waterton, the research also recognizes that the archive itself is a structure for investigation as it creates the place of Waterton through images and through the archive structure, practice, and history itself (Kiendl 2004:9). Archival research is not a source of raw, objective data but is its own particular kind of representation, one that is a way of seeing *now*, a way of knowing, and a symbol or form of power (Derrida 1996; Steedman 2002). The archive is itself part of the field site in providing a way to understand how a culture collects, narrates and circulates images. The archival collections themselves become part of the investigation into how Waterton is represented, and how archives construct this knowledge. I expand upon my process of archival research in chapter 3.

Using the archives is anthropological fieldwork insofar as they enable one to find specific information about a culture through immersion into - and analysis of - photographic collections. However this fieldwork is concurrently archival art practice, as it uses the archive to discover narratives. I use the archive to find connections and then create sets of images using coincidence (i.e. the coincidental discovery of the same tree image by Kurt Seel as my own has led to an increased prominence of this particular account). As a process, I return to the photo-locations to discover and create narratives and then produce a subsequent archive about particular photo-locations in Waterton (Smith 2007). This is a generative process and I describe the production of this artwork in chapter 6.

Locating a Vantage Point

In this research I argue that the co-development of photography and national park space is an entanglement that produces and effects parks management and policy



in Canada. Over a century of image-making has shaped ways of seeing and being in parks, and as such, visual documents provide a compelling and extensive way to track the mythical and multiple forms that nature takes in Canada. My method of tracking is to take archival photographs on a walk and treats them not only as images of something to look at, or objects we can hold, but also acts grounded in place. It is an ethnographic investigation and visual art inquiry fuelled by the play between the attempt to replicate the act as closely as possible (i.e. spatial location, time of day, season, camera type, darkroom procedures etc.) and the revelation that the more the attempt is refined, or the closer one gets, the more the distance is felt.

This ironic play opens up a space for analysis of, for conversation about, and for addition to, the meaning of iconic historical photographs in Canada. My inquiry into the conditions that produced over four-hundred photographs of Waterton from the late 19th century and early 20th century advance understanding of how specific historical photographic acts help shape dominant systems of environmental knowledge in Canada. Over time the enactment and continual re-enactment of photographic acts mean that certain images form the lexicon of how we imagine landscapes, and influence how we act in and manage national park spaces. Repeat photography can extend and focus the meaning of the photographs. It can generate some conditions for - and analyse - the production of photographs and reveals the ways in which Waterton was produced before being circulated to a Canadian public.

To begin the search for the photo-point of an historic image, I look at associated metadata, coordinate place names (often found on the photos), and talk to locals who may know the approximate location of the photograph. For example in Waterton, my research was deeply impacted by Robert Watt, a park warden and specialist in historical images in the park area. His interest in the cultural and ecological history of the park and how they could be understood through photography guided my own pursuit of photography. In certain areas, such as the Belly River, without his guidance and tracking ability, I would never have found the historical vantage point of the 1874 photographs in the massively flood altered landscape. Our collaborations produced the repeat photographs in this area.

As I describe in Smith 2007, to attempt to re-enact a photograph, I identify the approximate site location and then refine my reading by walking around the landscape with copies of the historic photographs. Once the vantage point is located within a few metres the camera is set up, beginning a process of comparison between what is in the photograph and what is seen through the camera lens. Most repeat photographers take advantage of parallax, the apparent motion of an object against a background due to a change in observer position, to site their cameras. Points move in relation to one another when the observer or camera moves, and much time in the landscape is spent lining up foreground boulders with one another and with distant ridgelines. During my work with the Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project (2002-2005), the method we developed to accurately locate the historic photo point begins before entering the landscape with the construction of a grid structure derived from the dimensions of the camera screen. This is then digitally placed on the archival photograph and a new copy is printed to bring into the field. The grid creates intersections in the photograph that allows the repeat photographer to see or create relationships between landscape features where none previously existed. Two features that only broadly related before,



such as a foreground rock and a distant ridgeline are brought into relationship by intersecting lines passing through them. The spatial structure of relationships between landscape features guides the photographer, enabling him or her to line up points in a landscape as seen through the camera viewfinder with those in the historical photograph on which the grid has been superimposed. Then a precise vantage point is refined through minor camera movements involving raising, lowering, and shifting right or left within centimeters if foreground features are present or within meters if only background features are visible.

The impossibility of seeing the same way twice has been acknowledged within the practice of repeat photography (Klett 2004). Even so, I make an exposure, I play along and enter into a game following rules someone else has laid out. This is a process of finding the physical location as closely as possible to reveal the material or immaterial things that are produced between the historical account and my account and this can provide a better understanding of place. At each photo-point, and each time I occupied the photo point (some locations I returned to multiple times) I filled out a conditions sheet. This was a standardized form that I filled out as a way to structure my fieldnotes including: GPS location, weather, time of day, date, audible sounds, smells, things outside the field of view, whether the spot was a popular tourist destination or not, the main colour dominants of the area and the main geological features in the area. It suggests the conditions report that is filled out upon accessioning artworks that are entered into museums and archives mixed with the scientific records of reporting back from the field.

While a comparative space emerges, re-enactment of previous photographic events is also a method to understand place and technologies of representation. By physically standing in the place from which the photograph was taken, I can look at the spatial orientation of and relationship between the photograph and photographer. The investigation of the physical properties that make up the visual— such as posture and position in viewing - reveal the way in which the maintenance and normalization of the arrangement of power is exerted through the physical properties that make up the visual. (Jokinen and Veijola 2004:259; Cray 1992). For example, photographs from heights reflect early surveyors' commitment to surveying views from whence they believed they could photographically capture and bound the entire scene, thereby as one of the surveyors of the Dominion Land Survey notes, "the photographs gathering all requisite topographical information more accurately than by actual investigation" (Wheeler 1920:81).

Repeat photography creates a particular type of looking. The act of using a photograph to try to locate a particular point in space, the act of working back and forth between a set of intersections (both in the landscape and using the grid), and the act of comparison derived from this endeavour, focuses the anthropologist's attention, fine tuning his or her perceptual skills and producing what Ingold, following Gibson calls an "education of attention" (Ingold 2000:23). Christina Grasseni describes the exercise of looking through the lens of a camera as a catalyst of her attention, as an education in better understanding her subjects while they were conducting skilled practice (Grasseni 2004:17, 21). Repeat photography, in re-enacting a spatial photographic moment, likewise facilitates a way into a perceptual environment.



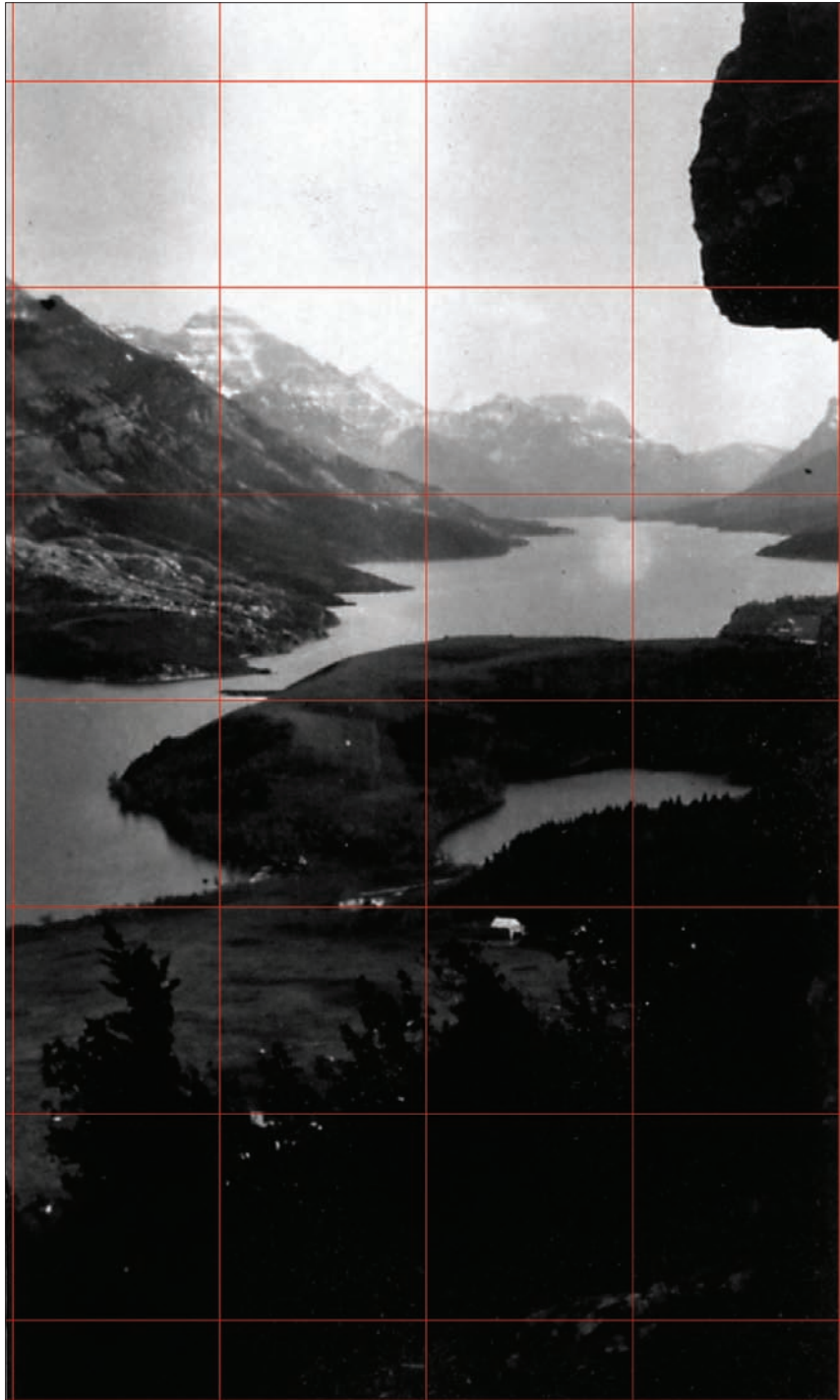
In my research I attempted to re-enact over 400 photographs in the area of Waterton. During the course of the consequent three field seasons, I was chased off peaks by lightning storms, bushwhacked my way out of locations in the dark, and was forced to return to the same peak day after day due either to bad weather, poor lighting, or an elusive camera location (Smith 2007). It became apparent that repetition manifested itself not only in the single repeating of a photograph but was inherent in the entire activity of the project. Tracking an original photograph produced knowledge of a particular relationship to the environment. Ingold would describe such activity as a *sensory education* insofar as it reflexively showed me how our perception of the world is guided by specific “orientations, dispositions and sensibilities that we have acquired through having had things pointed out or shown to us” (2000:23).

I struck up a particular relationship with one photographer, F.H. (Bert) Riggall and his historical views. Viewing the park from the vantage point from which the photographs had been taken and via similar or the same camera technology which had originally produced them provided access to historical conditions of photographic production. In certain cases I was able to gain access to the exact camera technology that made the photograph almost 100 years previously. For example, Riggall’s panoramic photography that I describe in chapter 4 was produced with a Kodak Panoram No. 1. Through a loan from family members I used his actual Panoram no. 1. I found that his panoramic view expressed a similar aim as survey photography whereby he stood at the edge of a hill from a height generating an unbroken view, panorama as “a complete and comprehensive survey or presentation of a subject” (OED online).

By mimicking the original photographers I gain access to the historical conditions of their photographic production. Re-occupying historic photo-points produced more refined information about the particular survey, such as the height and character of the tripod mounts and the sensitivity of the photographic film or paper. Problems that arose from trying to repeat views provided insight into how the photographers structured their original image. When I began attempts to re-enact Riggall’s panoramic view I was trying to use present day technology, and realized he had produced and circulated a view that wasn’t replicable. The Panoram No. 1 camera has a swing lens that allowed for a very wide angle view to be recorded with minimal distortion. This is highly specialized gear that produces a panoramic gaze that isn’t part of everyday experience. At present to take pictures from what has become a popular viewpoint is in part due to photographs like his that were widely circulated around North America as promotional materials for his outfitting business. To attempt to replicate the view generates data on the specialization and non-replicability of the view produced in photographs. Locating historic vantage points reveals how the view of Waterton was produced before being circulated to a Canadian public, and thus provides an access point to how Canadians understood and understand nature.

Ground Truthing

The attempt to find an historical photographic location, can be classified as an act of *ground truthing*, a strategy used in the natural sciences (most commonly physical geography) to confirm or validate directly data which has been derived indirectly. Ground truthing typically checks the reliability of remotely sensed information, verifying abstracted data or representations of space and place (such as aerial photographs). I see this as parallel to ethnographic practice. In Waterton, places are visited



Ground-truthing the tick trail, Bert Riggall photo with grid (early 20th century). Image courtesy Pincher Museum.

because they were photographed and places are photographed because they were photographed. A tourist may only visit a place as a result of seeing a photograph taken by a previous visitor, whether via a postcard, personal album, or travel guide. To some degree, therefore, photographic acts of the past direct park use. Archival searches tracking dominant views in Waterton turn up a set of photographs all taken from the side of Mt. Crandell which feature the town site and the hotel with the Lakes and mountains in the background. Taking such photographs into the park and re-locating their vantage points to produce repeat photographs, I was able to see how these views relate to the present park configuration. It became clear that in the archival photographs there were two popular locations for image making; an early batch of photographs shows that photographers hiked up the Tick Trail and took photos from the northeast side of the mountain while a later set is taken from Bear's Hump on its southeast side. Today, the top of Bear's Hump is one of the more popular destinations and is frequently the subject of photographic views; it is therefore easy to re-locate and repeat views from there⁶. By contrast the Tick Trail is no longer a prominent vista from which the casual visitor might make photographs (though the general trail area is still in use as a scramble). Re-occupying the historic location of images taken from the Tick Trail meant bushwhacking and often having views interrupted or totally obscured by tree growth. While this leads to questions about why the Tick Trail is no longer a popular vista, it also connects cultural and ecological histories. Questions arise such as "when did the tree succession obscure the view?" and "did tree growth influence the vista or did the trail popularity of the 'Bear's Hump' override use of the 'Tick Trail' so that the trees ended up filling in the vista?" Although repeat photography uses generalization and extrapolation to detect patterns about the world (i.e. to generate a theory about how nature is represented in Waterton), it also provides opportunities to collect representational data through attention to a small area. Closest to the location of an historic vantage point, the repeat photographer can verify the most specific information, and as the repeat photographer moves away from the point, information becomes broader and more general. Thus questions about the use of and abandonment of popular hikes and prominent vistas in the park can enable us in turn to map key sites of use through time and thus to understand the central locations through which wilderness is understood in Waterton. Thus repeat photography is the ethnography of a point.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ground truthing as "a fundamental truth influenced by sense" (OED online). A key aspect of locating an historical vantage point is that it is an embodied process which requires presence in, and engagement with, the world. Anthropologists studying embodied space attest to the role of body movement in the creation of place, and the significance of spatial orientation in the definition of events (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003:5). Repeat photography produces a non-homogenizing, specific and particular investigation of how a particular body in space formulates and produces the space of the national park. At the same time, the repeat photographer can explore the way the photograph may have contributed to the configuration of the body in national park spaces. By physically standing in the place from which the photograph was taken, i.e., by ground truthing, the person links to the

⁶ It is also a story about how the vista looks versus how it is photographed – the tick trail lines up the hotel, lakes and townsite into one image – thus professional photographers often try to take this shot (but it is less common in the present). The Bear's Hump is a good viewing spot, and good for taking pictures of people in the shots (commonly practiced). But the stacking of landscape features is not as simple – photographers seem to choose the mountain vista but leave out the hotel because it can't be framed in the view. To see the full panorama, the viewer must turn her head and look from the hotel to the lake.



The Tick Trail, after Bert Riggall
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past through connecting his or her body to an imagined body, and compounds the complexity of the relationship between “image and bodily involvement of the perceiver of the image” (Taussig 1993:21). The person holding the photograph, repeating the photograph, realigns her body, and re-aligns the past, and thus enables a new view of Waterton to emerge through a particular, specific and active engagement with a significant place. This event will necessarily contest the photograph in hand. The differences that emerge between the photograph and that present moment challenges the truth of photography and the possibility for what a national park can be or can look like. The act wedges open a space for disagreement.

The photographic record of Waterton is tied to a legacy of survey, beginning with the International Boundary Survey in the 1860s, and the images that were produced were intended to explore resources, delimit boundaries and lay claim to the wilderness within. As a result, contemporary photographs of the park, often taken from the same places, are part of the exploration and empire building of early surveyors and perpetuate colonialist ideologies and assumptions about wilderness. The photograph and the act of return translate place into a specific event, location and experience that enables the anthropologist to probe into the archive in a particular way, producing knowledge about a culture by utilizing the visual “to construct works that give a richer sense of how culture permeates and patterns social experience” (MacDougall 1997: 288). The specificity of ground truthing enables a re-imagination of the park space, one that has the power to dislodge what seems to be immobilized inactive photographs of wilderness. As Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga write about understanding space and place, “body experience and perception become material by considering how we transform experience to symbol and then make experience into an object, such as an artifact, a gesture, or a word” (2003: 5). The act of relocating historical vantage points is an act whereby I use my body and vision to understand how we transform experience into a photograph from a viewpoint. I return to the exact site from where these prominent records were initially created to assess and reassess place and perception of place. I ground truth, I confirm and validate, literally standing in the place from which the photograph was taken. From here I can ask: What is in place? What is out of place? From these spatially immediate questions I gain ideas about patterns and then can generate questions such as, what experience of nature is provided by scientific (or popular) destinations or photographic locations? How do particular conditions of production (i.e. biases towards particular lighting, weather or time of year) influence an understanding about wilderness in national parks?

The questions and the answers might be articulated by visual products, created out the experience of being in place. I may make a photograph of a scene outside the frame of the repeat photograph, providing an image of what might have been over the historical photographer’s shoulder, or behind him. I can ask questions that I wouldn’t otherwise be able to, such as what conditions were present in the production of this account? Are they typical conditions? In asking why did the photographer stand here? Ground-truthing allows the researcher to think, literally, as Judith Okely has written about site-specificity in her own research, “on the spot” (2004:124). I contend that ground-truthing via the act of locating historical photographic points is in accordance with a visual anthropology that “seeks to re-inscribe the body and senses into ethnographic practice” (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2004:7). It provides space to track a photograph as an event and it enables a narrative about Waterton to emerge through a particular and active

engagement spaces and places made significant through their presence as subject matter in photographs.

Producing New Photo-based Accounts of Waterton

This method of re-enactment is based in – and produces – two types of knowledge: anthropology and art. My attempt to re-enact an historical photograph illuminates the gap between a photograph and that which it claims to represent. This gap however, is a productive space, a place to fill in and illuminate some of the magic of photography.

I produce new accounts using conventional repeat photography aims, that is, to copy the original, historic photograph as closely as possible so as to illuminate the differences between accounts. This strategy produces the necessary conditions to measure both qualitatively and quantitatively changes in landscape or cultural features. This project is my hold to realist conventions in my attempt to objectively reflect the world in front of the lens, and often seek to record as much detail as possible. The photographs I re-engaged from the International Boundary Survey offer a detailed view of a space through time and generate an access point to consider values about nature and an understanding of landscape. The discourse surrounding the production of repeat photographs of national parks in Canada is typically about change and shows a contradiction between the idea of a pristine, unchanging wilderness and the changing space of the park. Parks Canada was interested in these images as they provide a portrait of the change in the area. The Belly River area has experienced radical landscape level change. Repeat pairs allow for an investigation into change. The impact of viewing such a set is significant and, as the Mountain Legacy Project principal investigator Eric Higgs asserts, “the mind’s eye is marked indelibly” (2003:139; see also MacLaren, Higgs and Zezulka-Mailloux 2005).

At the same time, I also produce alternative departure points from the vantage point. As I describe in chapter 6, I produce accounts that document my failed attempts to get back to the historical vantage point. I produce visual documents that emphasize the space between representations and the represented. I use other technologies to record space from the location of the vantage point: video, pinhole photography. I also make documents about trying to get back to place – written directions, narratives, photographs that create other spaces of visibility. These are visual data and writing that inform my research and provide the materials for exhibitions about photography and national parks. I have included many of these images in this dissertation. This work seeks to “recover” vision (Grimshaw 2001:51) by creating a new way of seeing which allows the viewer to know the world differently. Steven Feld, describing the filmmaking style of Jean Rouch, talks of Rouch’s attempts to “dissolve and obliterate parochial distinctions between fact and story, documentary and fiction, knowledge and feeling, improvisation and composition, observation and participation” (Feld 2003:50). I produce imaginative interpretive results that are a form of inquiry into the space that emphasize “experience as it is lived, felt, reconstructed, reinterpreted, and understood” (Sullivan 2005:96). Taking an exposure over the course of several hours produces a possibility to challenge perceptions of how space may be apprehended and experienced and as a result how it is recorded on film.

For example, some repeat photographs began with a pinhole camera because its system emphasizes process, time and unpredictable exposures. The result of a pinhole



View of the Prince of Wales Hotel, T.J. Hileman for Great Northern, b+w print courtesy Waterton Lakes National Park archives.

repeat is a creative depiction of Waterton that acknowledges and emphasizes some of the complexities of representation, hinted at by Rogers, Malde and Turner in their 1984 *Bibliography of Repeat Photography*

...a photograph may truly show the presence of a boat on a lake, but the boat may be grounded on the bottom. Hence, both the objective truth of a photograph and validity of what it may imply are matters of possible concern (XVIII).

The suggestion here is that photographs, imagined as objective, are somewhat unreliable records. This statement implicates some larger issues about the nature of repeat photographs as records. For instance, what happens when the realist structure of comparison breaks down? In the summer of 2004, I relocated a photo-point for an image of the popular and much-photographed Prince of Wales hotel. During the long exposure time, a storm came in and obscured the hotel. This, in combination with over-exposing the image, caused the hotel to disappear. While I created a structure of comparison by using archival records locating a historical vantage point, and producing a repeat view, the unpredictable nature of the pinhole camera (i.e. no viewfinder and exposure latitude issues) interrupts the comparative structure. What happens when an image doesn't deliver an objective repeat? Such images subvert realist assumptions in photography. Yet studying the complexity of archival photographic records through repeat photography as art is not cynical. Rather than undermine repeat photography as a practice, archival art and anthropological investigation come together to force a close look at the nature of records themselves. Repeat photography allows for this relationship, and as with Klett's Pulpit Rock, it is the structure of comparison that produces questions about repeat photography, the constructed nature of archives, and photographic views. From here, the ethnographer (or viewing public) can ask what counts as a repeat photograph, and by extension bring up questions of what counts as nature, as a scenic view, a national park. By pushing beyond realist conventions, the construction of accounts is made more visible and this sort of work "invites us to be self conscious about what we see, how we see, and how images trigger and shape our emotions and understanding of the world" (Cotton 2004:192).

Re-enactment moves from archives, to ground truthing in place, into the darkroom where I attempt to re-present the plasticity of the image. This means I analyse the material conditions of the photograph such as chemistry, paper stock, toning, presentational forms (postcard, family albums etc). As with the location, these sorts of conditions are not random and must be analysed to understand the intentions of the photographer. Akin to installation – based approaches in art that explore history by re-creating the setting of a possible history, I pursue the imaginative space of the originator, in place, and also I do this in the darkroom.

In the darkroom there is a struggle to replicate the series of conditions between the moment of the shutter release and the present. All of the traces of usage and time are carried forward in the object that I am trying to replicate (Edwards 2004). When I print the photograph to look like the original I fake aging, titles, and yellowing. Engaging in the darkroom refines my vision. This process draws attention towards the things I may not have noticed at the photo location (e.g. subtle weather characteristics) or when viewing the print (i.e. scratches, bent corners). In viewing the resulting image, the



View of the Prince of Wales Hotel, after T.J. Hileman, just before the storm, Polaroid 2004.

transparency of this fakery draws attention to the impossibility of exactly replicating the image and to the subjectivity of the photograph.

The Impossibility of Re-enactment and Productive Failure

When I attempt to re-enact a photographic moment I find out details about the historical photograph and present landscape. Yet re-enactment challenges the very possibility of re-enactment and so I document my failure to get back to place, to re-enact, re-present perfectly the historical photographic moment. This is a productive failure that becomes an archive that is mined for display in my art exhibition (e.g. *finding aid* 2010 Southern Alberta Art Gallery). At the Prince of Wales Hotel hill not only do I find the photographers producing the same image for different reasons (e.g. exploration and empire-building or as a part of a tourist experience) but the uncertainties of my journey reveal the uncertain social meaning of photographs.

Re-enactment is one way to create an embodied understanding of the visual that can be used to analyze the conditions of photographic production and resilience of views over time. The effort to get back to these photographic views is documented and used as anthropological knowledge as well as for an art practice that provides ground to ask, What are we doing re-enacting these photographic moments? How does re-enacting historical photographs link to the *myth of wilderness* – a myth central to Canadian identity and our relations with the more-than-human world (Abrams 1996)? Re-enactment also fits into a contemporary art whereby artists are repurposing and reusing photographs for something different than their initial purpose. Carrie Mae Weems enlivens historical records and reclaims them to invigorate and to reconsider their subjects. In her photographic work, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried* (1995) she appropriates a collection of daguerrotypes of black subjects (a family of slaves from North and South Carolina) from the Harvard Archives to think about the history of black subjects in photography and how the black body has been used photographically. She adds text etched on glass. “The text becomes important to how the audience is being asked to engage the photograph” (Weems 2009: Art 21 Season 5). When Harvard decided to sue her for appropriating the images, it created a space for her to contest the ownership and uses that these images fell under. She decided that maybe she should be sued, and maybe they should have the conversation in court, “artists that are engaged in the act of appropriation that think that there is a larger story to tell” (Weems 2009). While they never sued her, this art practice created a space for conversations that needed to happen and for the production of new narratives about the images.

Weems’ interest in the re-appropriation of archival photographs moved into an interest in re-enactment upon seeing an image of the Birmingham riots in the 1960s made by Charles Moore. Weems “decided to bring that photograph to life” (2009). She went to Birmingham and worked with students and did a series of actions. This moved her to think about a series around the idea of 1968. She had students re-enact famous photographs and moments, and photographed them.

Through this photography and performance Weems and her students explore how the moment would not be possible without the past moments. Weems and her students look at “the sadness and history of the last 100 years” with the idea that history sets the scene for today. Weems is interested in the construction of history, and for her students to engage in re-enactment of historical photographs in the studio setting is another

way of constructing history and embodying it. In talking to her students during a re-enactment, she declares:

It's about connecting to a story that is larger than you. It's not about you. It's not about you. We're using these bodies to talk about these bodies something that is much bigger than we are. So, find confidence in the historical story that we are going to use your body to express this historical story through (Art 21:2009).

For Weems, asking students to assume the roles of people in history, and photographs is a way to thereby embody and come to know something of history through documents and through the body. She uses re-enactment as a bridge to engage history in the present. Scholars have argued that photographs create a complex relationship between the past and the present, and for this reason photography needs to be understood in relation to the specific contemporary spaces which the subject inhabits. This can be extended to analyse what Barthes calls the “there then” and how it becomes the “here now” in photographic re-enactment. In my art work, *Portable Camera Obscura* (2009, 2010), I produce an experiential foundation for communication, one that the public and I work together to come to know something of history through documents and through the body. Together we install a walk-in room sized camera that projects an image of the outside view onto the back wall of the tent with a simple lens. Positioned at the vantage point of historical photographs during this event it projects the view from the same location and framing. Viewers then sit inside the tent. It forms part of my exploration of embodied experience and an engagement with social networks, interactivity and conversation. This work focuses on the re-enactment of historical photographs through an attempted return to place – to re-engage a vantage point. It is a way to connect with the way that photographs and history are made and to open up the constructions to a wider debate.

While attempting to re-enact a photograph can be understood as a way of providing knowledge for anthropological study or for a public anthropology that wishes to disseminate research beyond the discipline (such as producing a museum exhibition, art exhibitions, or providing data for Parks Canada), the great strength of repeat photography as method in visual anthropology is the process of doing it, rather than the product itself. The process of re-enactment, including archival work, finding and re-occupying an historic location, and ground truthing produces new ways of looking at and using images to understand not only how we look at images but also how we understand space and place. The emphasis on process in repeat photography draws together anthropology and art onto “shared ethnographic ground” (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2005:15). The use of repeat photography in art is, like anthropological research, driven by the study of existing social forms (historical photographs) and guided by the everyday activities of life (taking photographs). Documenting and investigating the “field of culture” (Foster 1995:305) results from re-tracing as closely as possible the original photographic moment and reproducing a document from that site.

To attempt to repeat a previous photographic act is related to an archival impulse in visual art practice. It draws on and produces archives and makes historical information physically present (Foster 2004:4). As a result, this re-enactment instigates a different way of knowing how we understand and see park spaces. Not only does it re-interpret the past through producing photographs, it also transforms the archival photograph by

generating a new relationship with the contemporary photograph. The active attempt to probe into the archive and the active production of a relationship between archival and contemporary records generates ethnographic knowledge. Attempts at re-enactment activate and re-activate the archive. I would suggest, using Scherer's conception of the study of archival records as the recovery of "forgotten worlds" (Scherer 1995:201), that the attempt to re-enact historical photographs transforms "forgotten worlds" into what Hal Foster might term "liberated worlds" (see Foster 2004 for a discussion of how archival art "liberates activity"). Living in a new context, the historic photograph is liberated; like our own and Klett's photographs of Pulpit Rock, neither photograph lives in its time alone. In this, re-enactment is an expressive practice that provides a reply to Anna Grimshaw's call to see visual culture translated into a different conceptual register. It can both produce and break down comparative structures; it can tell stories about the nature of landscape as well as the nature of photographic records in a different way than can words.

As I have shown, attempts to re-enact a photograph is a useful strategy to generate knowledge. It can be used to monitor change in landscapes; to monitor photo-points, or the locations from where the photograph was taken (ground-truthing); to produce new accounts about place; and it can be a form of elicitation and a participatory experience in a gallery or site-specific setting. In *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*, George E. Marcus argues that problems in ethnographic writing can only be solved by thinking about how fieldwork is conceived and designed. Marcus claims that what is lacking in ethnographic practices – in both process (fieldwork) and product (writing) – is a "research imaginary" (Marcus 1998:6), a sensibility that provokes to "alter or experiment" (ibid) with the orientations that govern existing ethnographic practices. In the next three chapters I harness re-enactment as a research imaginary to explore the photographic record of Waterton Lakes National Park. Re-enactment allows for an investigation into how the camera and photographs mix with the body to influence how we imagine and act in the park space.



'Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore. 4 miles North of Boundary line and 757 miles West of Red River (August 1874)' after Dawson and the International Boundary Commission b+w fibre based print, 2007

Chapter 3: The entwined histories of place and representation in Waterton Lakes National Park. G.M. Dawson, the 1874 Boundary Commission Survey and the making of a Canadian National Park.

The line between the reality that is photographed because it seems beautiful to us and the reality that seems beautiful because it has been photographed is very narrow
Italo Calvino – the Adventure of a Photographer (1983)

Circumstances alter photographs
The Canadian Militia Gazette 15 Dec 1885¹

“Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore”

It is mid morning on September 7, 2007 when I stop at the edge of a hill in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta. I face south. Mountains frame a large body of water that slips out of view into the distance. There is a light breeze from the south, forming ripples on the water, but it scarcely disturbs the knee-high grasses I am standing in. I set my camera on a tripod and bend slightly forward to look through the viewfinder. It feels more protected than what I had imagined. I compose a photograph and make an exposure. Nearby, up the gentle slope and to the west, there are several other people whom I don't know, but who also stand facing south. Mostly these people hold their cameras in front of their bodies and point them down the lake. Some frame other people in front of their cameras, and these people turn their back to the lake view. Others, like me, wait to make sure people aren't in the frame, and then make exposures. This is not the first time people have gathered together in this location to bear witness and to be part of a photographic event. A few meters behind us stands a multi-story hotel, a gift shop, several restaurants, a water tower and employee residences. Despite claims from the hotel company to be the most photographed hotel in the world since it was built in 1927, this view of the lake and mountains persists in the visual record. We are located in the centre of the park, overlooking the townsite at what is constructed as the most prominent vista in the park. From the main road, visitors drive up to the parking lot that stands less than a hundred meters behind me, visitors walk up trails from the main townsite. People sit inside the hotel, and gaze out the window at the view and at us engaging the viewpoint with our cameras. The ground upon which I stand is the vantage point for the historical record that entered into circulation in 1874. In 2005 I retrieved a photocopy of “Waterton Lake Alta, from the north shore. 4 miles North of Boundary line and 757 miles West of Red River (August 1874)” from a card index at the Library Archives Canada, almost three-thousand kilometers due east.

The pursuit of common sense

In this chapter I analyze the making of this photograph, “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore” and the conditions that surround its production, including its relationship to other photographs that are taken from this same location. I formulate this analysis around notions of common sense. *Common sense* is defined as average understanding, that is “the plain wisdom which is everyone's inheritance” (OED online: 2010). It is also an “internal sense which was regarded as the common bond or centre of the five senses, in which the various impressions received were reduced to the unity of a common consciousness” (OED online: 2010). To uncover this first common sense, I investigate the highly specific event of making a photograph and how it becomes

1 *In Greenhill and Birrell (1979:116)*



'Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore. 4 miles North of Boundary line and 757 miles West of Red River (August 1874)'
G.M. Dawons and the International Boundary Commission courtesy Library Archives Canada.

naturalized as knowledge in national parks. I look at how photographs of Waterton become common sense through their construction and inclusion into the photographic record by *someone*. I show how despite uncertain knowledge of both the technology of photography and of place, these photographs become scientific, colonial documents to make visible claims about truth, resources, and space and thereby create the geopolitical space of a national park. I ask, how does common sense emerge? That is, at what point does uncertainty firm into an account that holds authority, and what are the conditions that produce this (the why)? How does the material practice of photography fix common sense? In chapter 5 I invert this analysis to look at the emergence of a paradox in the survey photographic collection that “Waterton Lake” forms a part of.

“Waterton Lake” is one photograph that helps to make up the 1874 Boundary Commission survey photographic collection. I draw upon the part of the collection that was generated in the present-day park boundaries to argue three main points in this chapter. First, while the photographs are grouped into a logic read through colonial science and premised on photography’s evidential value, a search for commensurability means the photographers ground their images in the conventions of art, the picturesque, and an imaginary formed out of a relationship to other photographs, paintings, people and places. This entanglement is similar to what Elizabeth Edwards finds in survey photographs in England, whereby the position of “straightforwardness” is “threatened at every turn with the dissipation of such objectives through the ambiguities of photographic inscriptions and of style and through the desires of photographers themselves” (2009:4). I attempt to draw out the photograph as an event through taking a close look at some of the conditions that produced the account. Second, I discuss throughout this chapter and in the next how uncertainty and accident are at the centre of these photographic accounts. The meanings of photographs are contested as survey photographers in Canada worked to establish both the usefulness of their medium in producing knowledge and to create a consistency and structure for what survey photography would show. Third, through both my own experience and by tracking subsequent professional and tourist accounts, I begin to unpack some reasons for the continual re-enactment of key photographs in the 1874 survey. I discuss how the initial photographic encounter and then persistent re-enactment from almost the same view is a way for people to generate a particular relationship to wilderness and national parks space. I explore how self and national park space are refigured in the process of encounter and performance.

The second definition of common sense, that is, the commonality that comes out of experience, the impressions made upon the senses, is also the subject of this chapter. The material practice of photography grounds this investigation. As David Crouch and Nina Lubben acknowledge in their recent introduction to visual culture and tourism, the production of photographs is part of the process of tourism “it encompasses exploration, imagination, and exercise, in and of identity...visual images are constructed and constituted through walking, turning, bending and expressively engaging places” (2003:12). Paying attention to the body of the photographer is a way to track the maintenance and normalization of power as it is exerted through the properties that make up the visual (Jokinen and Veijola 2003; Crary 1992). I argue in this chapter that expressively engaging place with a camera is part of the process of identifying nature in Canada. I move between archives, photographs collected from archives, and the space



The Prince of Wales hotel hill, digital print 2008.

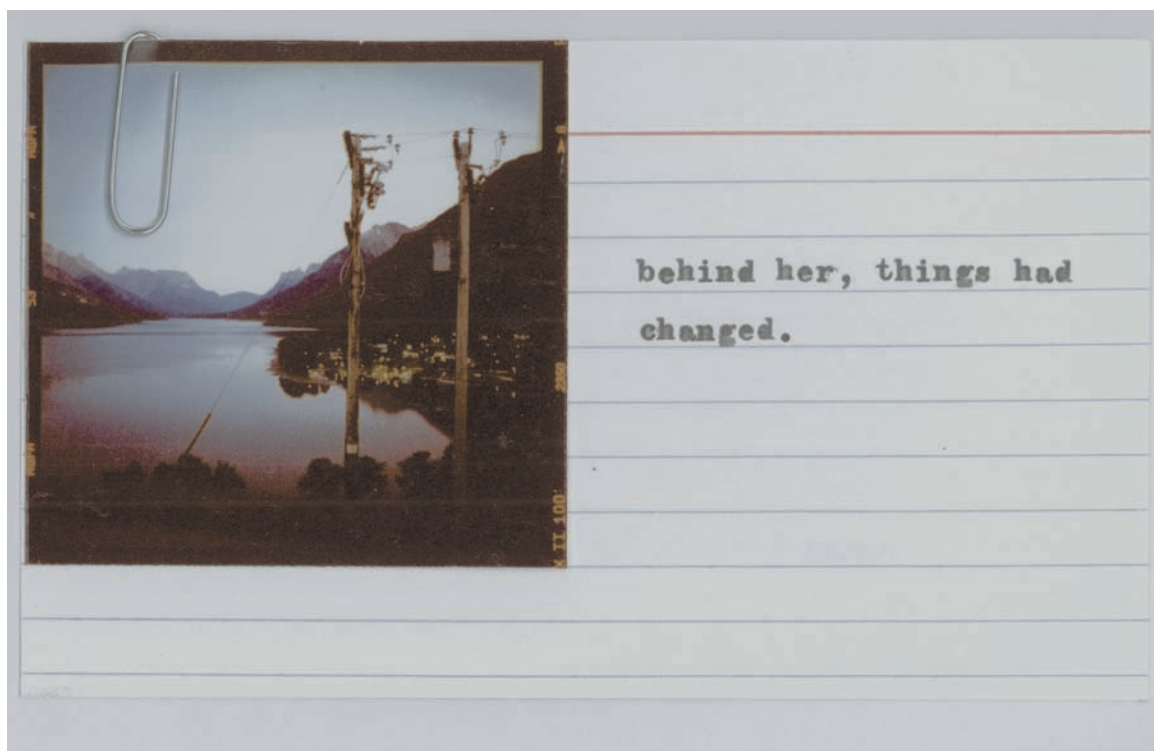
of Waterton to ask, what comes under Waterton in photographs/archives, and thus comes to be Waterton?² What does it mean to pursue these archives in the place that is now Waterton? To untangle these photographs from their common sense – that is, to figure what is common about this sense, I take the photographs for a walk back to visit the sites from where they were first photographed and weave together my experience – in the present – with historical documents and analysis of the photographic records. While I investigate what has become *common sense* (a sort of cultural given) through the pursuit of a *common sense* (a sensorial experience), this chapter, like my others, makes a visual case for the complexity of visual records alongside these texts. I include many of the images I generated to show some of the things that emerge in the pursuit of common sense that is not reducible to text.

The modest witness & the myth of wilderness in Canada

To show the development of common sense through photographs that produce a myth of wilderness in Canada, I build upon Donna Haraway's idea of the modest witness. Founded on the virtue of modernity, the modest witness is an invisible unmarked category, one that displays the "culture of no culture" (2004:223). Nowhere is this modesty and invisibility more apparent than in reading historical photographs of national parks. Photography is a product of a modern vision and is a material practice that signals a moment of historical truth. This approach is an entanglement between imagination and embodiment – or, *common sense*, and a *common sense*. While I locate particular historical figures in history – such as G.M. Dawson – it is ultimately the photograph that is investigated as the modest witness. I attempt to reconnect the photograph to the event that generated it, filled with agents: people, non-human nature, weather conditions, technology, subjective experience, and imagination. In this way I acknowledge that while there is a "culture of no culture" that generates these images, it is a collaboration that produces all photographic records and historical accounts.

In Canada, both historical landscapes made by the modest witness as well as their effect and maintenance in the present continue to influence our idea of - and action towards – what we categorize as and mythologize as wilderness. Wilderness is a premium category of nature, and it is mythologized and imagined in national park space. Photographs have tended to support a nature culture binary through a myth of wilderness: the idea that national parks are stable, unchanging spaces that exist outside of the effects of human activity. And yet, as I suggest in the introduction to this dissertation, there is an ongoing resistance to this dominant cultural myth. This can be found in the shifting materiality of parks, which resists the idea of an untouched, pristine wilderness. And despite increasing awareness around the interconnectedness of humans and the rest of nature, there is a persistent tendency for both producers and consumers of visual images to emphasize those that appear pristine while neglecting other natures, resulting in a curious gap between what is represented and what exists in a place. Such images often generate and support a disjointed understanding of parks and can create a "deadly mismatch between perception and reality" (Searle 2000). This dissertation makes visible this mismatch, often understood as a tension between the dual mandates of Parks Canada: protection of nature and human use. In this chapter I argue that the co-development of photography and national park space is an entanglement that produces and effects parks management and policy in Canada.

² e.g. the view from the hill –from the north shore, or the Prince of Wales Hotel, but not the prominent water tower.



The Prince of Wales hotel hill, c-print, paper clip, index card 2005.

Tina Loo emphasizes that wilderness in Canada is a “a literal bedrock for common identity. It is both natural and national: it transcends our differences because it seems to be outside of us, outside time, outside history” (2007:np). The problem with such ideas of wilderness is that they are imagined to be objective reality, while they are actually instrumental in sustaining and creating power structures, racism, colonialism, and sexism. Exclusion is built into the structure of representation, the narratives of history, politics, and science, and therefore determines what may count as knowledge (Haraway 2004:241). Haraway finds that nature cannot preexist its construction and asks the question, “what may count as nature?” (2004:64) I argue that the camera is a key component of this construction, and through photographic representation, it frames what counts. It is this technology that has the power to erase the complexity of experience, and limit the inclusion of other experiences. Waterton Lakes National Park was created as a forest park on May 30, 1895, on the hunting grounds, spiritual sites, and pathways of the Upper Kutenais and the Nitsitapii (Blackfoot), yet it is often presented in photographs in such a way that it appeared as *terra nullius*, so that the surveyors could easily lay claim to the territory and resources within. This sort of discourse remains embedded in contemporary Parks Canada discourse,

National parks protect natural environments representative of Canada’s natural heritage. These special places are gateways to nature, to adventure, to discovery, to solitude. They celebrate the beauty and infinite variety of our country. Protected and preserved for all Canadians and for the world, each is a sanctuary in which nature is allowed to evolve in its own way, as it has done since the dawn of time. Each provides a haven, not only for plants and animals, but also for the human spirit. A place to wander... to wonder... to discover yourself (Parks Canada 2010a:np).

It is as if nature’s agency is outside of human experience, and that protection itself is without material effect. The present Waterton Lakes National Park space that was encountered by Dawson and the surveyors in 1874 was crafted by both the care of first nations groups and by non-human nature (e.g. fire), a condition that generated a space to look the way it did when it was encountered by Dawson and the surveyors. The ensuing drive to maintain its order – protection and permanence – is now widely acknowledged as a misconception and a mismanagement (Reeves 2007). The current message from Allan Latourelle the CEO of Parks Canada on the agency’s website acknowledges the desire to present more than just a settler history, but one that includes “Aboriginal peoples and ethnocultural communities as well as the accomplishments of the many Canadians who shaped our country” (Parks Canada 2010:np). While the story of Canada is undergoing change, Parks Canada holds control of the storytelling and in their charter refer to themselves as “storytellers.” Parks Canada also presents Waterton as a gift to the rest of the world, and this is one premised upon perceived permanence and a history of a place *allowed* to evolve in its own way since the “dawn of time” (Parks Canada 2010a:np). This tension animates perception and management of parks.

My focus in this chapter is on the photograph as an event and the transformation of photography from object, to image and act: I situate this study on the body and how a particular relationship to place is formed through the technology of the camera. To investigate photography in this manner intends to draw in the complexity of experience



The Prince of Wales hotel hill, b+w print 2008

to complicate the vision that was produced by survey photography and ensuing ways that the photographs have been narrated and then frame the national park space as a sanctuary, a frozen and immobilized backdrop that forms the ground to, in the discourse of Parks Canada, “discover yourself” (Parks Canada 2010:np).

To follow Haraway’s focus on the body as a material practice, in this chapter and the next, I will show how the camera produces a *biasing embodiment* (Haraway 2004:224). That is, while photography is imagined to be a technical act of simply depressing the shutter, it is a deeply physical, embodied act. Despite the fact that the photograph separates operator and object, the body is configured a particular way in space while making a photographic exposure³. Picture a photographer in the late 19th century, crouched behind a large wooden box on a wooden tripod. Veiled by a black cloth, if he speaks during this act, his words emerge muffled, and sounds come to him muffled. He would see a bright image projected onto the ground glass of the camera, upside down and backwards. He would imagine what he wanted to show on the resulting glass plate. He would shift the camera to incorporate the view as he imagined it would look in the future, printed as part of a report, pasted into an album, or distributed amongst his co-workers as a memento. He would translate his imagination into an act: a move to the right, or a lowering of the tripod to include vegetation in the foreground of the photograph. Perhaps he works quickly as it heats up under the heavy darkcloth. He overhears his companions who compare the view to a lake they’ve seen before and he works to make his view commensurate with images he has seen before. He shoots the picture low to the ground to include a limber pine in the foreground, using a common pictorialist convention he would have seen in photographs back in his home in England. In the resulting glass plate, his crouching, sweaty figure is rendered invisible: he is hidden behind the view. The distance provided by the objectification of the space represented through the camera provides a space for scientific scrutiny. Yet while the image itself is the focus of scientific scrutiny, what is invisible in the resulting picture produces common sense as much as what is visible: not only what the camera is pointed towards, but the event produced through whose body, who else is present, the weather, what other species are alive in the struggle to produce knowledge, as well as the way that the photograph is imagined at the time, as well as - and distinct from - how it is later narrated, or *what counts*⁴. This event is compressed into the click of the shutter, and the resulting depiction becomes common sense – it both demarcates what counts as Waterton but makes it seem as if this were no great event after all, but a given.

Recent accounts of nature in Canada that are influenced by the work of Haraway track the modest witness through the politics and poetics of historical particulars (see Braun 2002; Loo 2006). Scholars attempt to de-stabilize the imagined, static idea of wilderness to reveal how nature, like other forms of power, is political, constructed and not outside of human history. Haraway explicitly draws language and experience together in her self-consciously provocative analysis of the micropolitics of knowing and experiencing nature (Crumley 2001). In order to reconceptualize realist and constructivist accounts that dominate the way nature is conceptualized, Haraway restages the discussion and

³ Nowhere does this become more obvious than in the attempt to re-occupy an historic vantage point.

⁴ For example, a photograph might start as something that looks like Switzerland and resources but read in the present it looks like Waterton and wilderness.



March 2006

She photographs the
water tower again,
wondering if he wanted
to as well.

asks, “what may count as nature?” While “nature,” Haraway argues “cannot preexist its construction” (2004:65) she is not content to reside herself to constructionist account of nature. She provocatively calls for embodied practice and “of responsibility for an imagined elsewhere that we may yet learn to see and build here” (2004:64). She brings “form and meaning, identity and specificity” into nature, “through these, not despite them, nature is “made to speak”” (Willems-Braun 1997:24). What Haraway finds counts in nature is always something attained rather than found, that “organisms emerge from a discursive process,” yet rather than ideological constructions, organisms are “always radically historically specific, always lively”: all knowledge is embodied knowledge.

In an attempt to confound the relationship between humans and nature, many scholars have joined Haraway to ask “what counts as reality?” (Borgmann 1995; Haraway 2004; Hayles 1996; Higgs 2003; Sheppard 1995; Wilson 1991). For example, Hayles insists that the interaction between simulation and nature (a blurry relationship at best), is located in the place of selfhood and suggests that the most productive place to rest the marker in distinguishing between simulation and nature – “is neither contracted inside the body nor unproblematically projected outside of it, but at the cusp between the beholder and the world” (1996:425). What she is making a case for, like Haraway, is a relational nature, one that can provoke re-thinking and create new geometries to consider the relations of difference (Haraway 2004:70). Lease argues that what counts in the struggle to define human and nature interface is the access to reality. Such access, the argument goes, is what grants control and power (Borgman 1995; Lease 1995). Therefore, “a contest over what is allowed to represent reality – and that is what intelligible access is all about – is a struggle over that reality itself” (Lease 1995:4). To Borgman, the close of the modern era is characterized by contingency, and “reality is far less controllable and predictable than we have thought” (1995:41).

I join Canadian scholars like Braun and Loo to locate the particular historical and political bodies that formed the Canadian wilderness as we understand it, and try to re-connect the “disarticulated bodies of history” (Haraway 2004:47) to make the modest witness accountable to the wilderness he invents. I investigate how the making of common sense leads to the making of a common sense – the way that we see and photograph in national parks. This act of photography makes up a significant piece of Canadian identity.

Osborne (1995) finds the mythic engagement with Nature, a “well-worn trope for Canadian identity”, found in an aesthetic-political imagined north, through literary metaphors, visual arts, and politicians. The inscriptive powers of photography are key to this mythic engagement. Waterton comes into being as an object of knowledge through this inscription grounded in material practice of photography by particular figures (or groups) of history. Investigating photography is crucial to see how reality, nature and land are brought into certainty. Important to my analysis is to emphasize Bruce Braun’s point that the descriptions of “reality” made by his modest witnesses are not trying to replicate a reality “out there” as closely as possible and then falling short, but that the representation is constitutive of the reality (nature, landscape, wilderness) they purport to represent. In this way, just as Tim Ingold conceives of the Pinupti Dreaming through a phenomenological cosmology, as “landscape is brought into being by events” (2000:57), so too is the space of Waterton Lakes National Park brought into being by events such as the imaginative and material practices of photography. In national park spaces such



as Waterton, the space was shaped by an emergent relationship between humans, wild fires, bison, and wind (to name a few), and this concert sets the conditions for a photograph. As Christopher Tilley argues, we need to think about places animistically, “as entities who can and do make a difference” (2004:31). This is a lively space encountered by the colonial eye – an eye embedded in his sweaty, hungry body – a space imagined and related to something he’d seen before, framed in photographs and narrated as pristine, resource rich space, and as awe inspiring views. Later visitors to the park engage many of these same views. Parks policy is directed towards shaping parks for particular experiences, for ecological integrity and for human use and enjoyment. As I will show, these experiences are ones to encounter with the camera, sometimes the very same as the original survey view. This makes sense, as these original views shaped Waterton and what a photograph of Waterton is and can be.

As I state in chapter 2 of this dissertation (and in Smith 2007), to *ground-truth* is a strategy used in the natural sciences to confirm and validate directly, that which has been derived indirectly (OED online:2010). I ground-truth photographs of national park space and engage in a multi sensory confirmation of how a photograph is framed. This allows not only for a validation of the photograph itself (both its truths and fictions), but also for the filling in of details about the construction of the category of nature in photographs. Ground-truthing privileges visual sense – the sensory experience of taking a photograph. I also consider it a practice in trying to find out what is common in visual sense in how we understand the space of Waterton. It is a way to extend thinking about what becomes a common sense in Canada (what is common in these photographs becomes linked to identity, to what the category of nature holds). This is part of considering a photograph and event, as I have written about in other places in this dissertation.

Archives, Institutional practices and the construction of photographic authority

The image I open this chapter with, that I confront and ground-truth on that day in 2007 with my back to the Prince of Wales hotel, is the first photograph from that location to circulate into the present brought into power by its inclusion in government reports, scientific documents, and eventually archives. In a different material form, this photograph is translated over time: First, the negative is printed by Notman and Sons, and these photographs are pasted into albums, printed as part of reports, rephotographed as copies, eventually the photograph is made into a digital file. As far as it is known, the negatives have been destroyed for this photograph.

Undoubtedly other photographs were taken around this time in this area (see Stavely Hill’s travels of 1861, for example⁵), as privileged travelers who had access to what was an elite technology, (and maybe even the few locals) deployed the camera to produce accounts that entered into the modernist global circulation of things. However, no images from this location prior to the 1874 photograph by the survey party are accessioned in the collections of Library Archives Canada, or in any of the many archives I consulted. Presumably the existence of these other images is true and they have been detached from their narration. I imagine that they rest in attics, they became

⁵ Possibility and fluke are emphasized in Stavely-Hill’s 1861 journals. He accounts for his failure to capture views because an oversight in film loading. While he thought that the film backs were loaded and made photographs, they were empty, and thus views that did not make it into his accounts, although his descriptions of the event of taking the photograph, do.

SURVEYING

Operations -1872-75

(N.A.B.C.) Waterton Lake,
TITLE Alta., from the North Shore.

4 miles North of Boundary line
and 757 miles West of Red
River [August, 1874.]

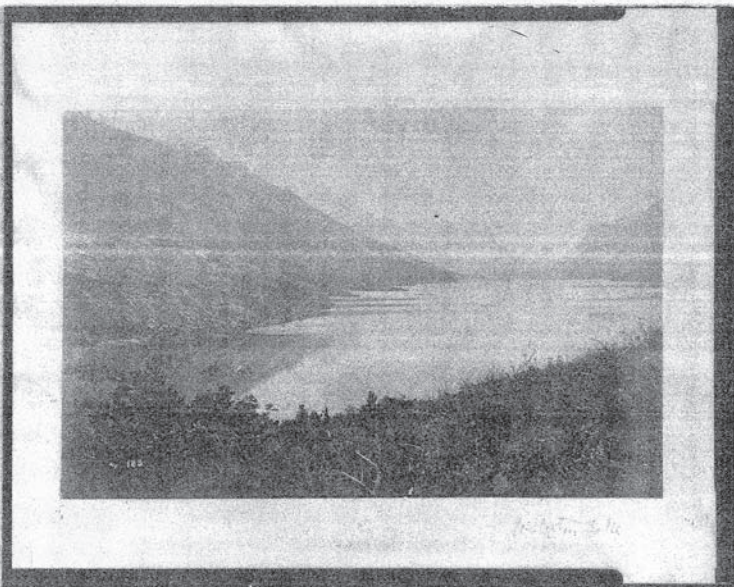
ACC. NO. 1975-122

COLL. Dawson, G.M.

NEG. NO.

LOC. Stone Case 42, No. 183,
p.42, album 2

C 79753

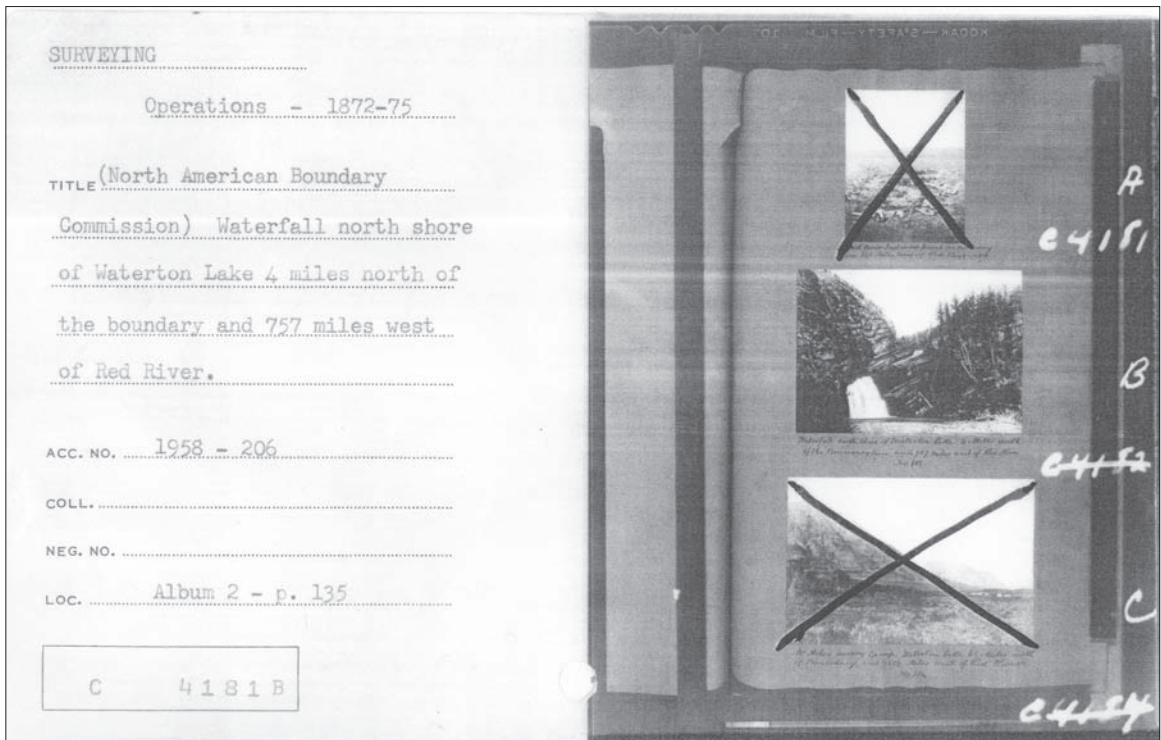


repurposed, used as window panes in 19th century houses, they are unlabeled and unidentified, and have long since passed through the hands that could story them or are otherwise detached from power and knowledge and without context. Perhaps even, they have become dust. To the managers of photographic records at the LAC, a photograph is only valuable to the institution if it is identifiable (LAC 1993:3) and so, to be identifiable – storied with names, dates, locations, and other descriptions, is key to the inclusion of a record into the archive.

The archive is necessarily involved in the making of Waterton Lakes National Park. Archives form the crucial link between memory and photography in modern western culture. Archives are understood to be the “accumulations and capitalization of memory on some substrate and in an exterior place” (Derrida 1996:12). As the practice of photography “visual incisions through time and space” (Edwards 2001:3) – inscribes and commemorates (Derrida 1996), it is archives that structure, classify and order this event. For, as Bruce Ferguson succinctly states, all images need a context to be political (2010:np). I would emphasize that all images that have a context *are* political. As Barthes explains, “photographic connotation, like every well-structured signification, is an institutional activity; its function is to integrate man, to reassure him” (1977:31). To Derrida, the archive is an economy: it is law and power, and a putting into order. He finds that “it keeps, it puts in reserve, it saves” (1996:7). It also has power, an archival economy is one that summons and it has the force of law. This can be witnessed in the National Archives of Canada Act (1987), which prohibits the destruction of government and ministerial records or their removal from the control of the government without the consent of the National Archivist (Managing Photographic Records 1993:3). In the 1980s scholars theorized the archive as monolithic, authoritative power that privileges the photograph as a source of knowledge. Sekula (1986) and Edwards (2001) tell a history of back and forth movement whereby the photograph creates the authority of the archive (a catalogue) and the archive creates the authority of the photograph (photographic realism). Both theorists have argued that the intertwined and contingent histories and meanings of photography and archives necessitate that photographic meaning cannot be understood without looking at archives. In Canada, survey photographs help to create material objects that were valuable through their indexical nature, a geography of Canada could be included in what would later become a national archive.

The materiality of archives

The photographs do not just index what was true, but their continual engagement in archives means they exist not in the past, but as “real visual objects engaged within social space and real time” (Edwards 2001:2). Indeed, archives are a primary source of data that researchers consult to construct ideas, critique and analyze what is on record, what is history. Elizabeth Edwards finds a need for an emphasis on detail to investigate the relationship between photographs and the way that pasts are made through both inscription and archiving (2001). Edwards finds that looking at “specific photographs and specific acts of photographic involvement, collecting, displaying, and intervening” produces a comprehensive view of the meaning of photographs, such “ambiguously dynamic” objects functioning in the real world (2001:3). In this approach Edwards shows support for the work of artist theorist Allan Sekula who suggests we slow down and investigate archives by focusing on just one photograph (1981). Sekula’s detailed history of photography and archives acknowledges the specificity of what we construct



Dawson's album indexed, photocopy from the Library Archives Canada.

as history. Such an approach reaches beyond analysis of the political, psychological and representational discursive practices to engage with “how photograph might have operated within ideas of historically specific legitimation” (Edwards 2001:7).

Recent attention to culture and cultural practices in art has meant that institutions like museums, libraries and archives have come under increasing scrutiny – by theorists and by artists alike (Kiendl 2004). While critiques of the discipline of archives gives attention to power and authority in practice and structure, Edwards argues that archives are also a place of potential, “open to new historical frames of references where photographs can interrupt dominant narratives” (Edwards 2001:4). Moreover Edwards warns that the critique of archives may reiterate stereotypes about archives and exaggerate the homogeneity of archival actions.

Anthropological approaches to the study of archives are linked to the reflexive turn of anthropology in the 1980s. The recognition that archives function as “terministic screens, simultaneously revealing and concealing “facts” at once enabling and constraining interpretation” (Finnegan 2006:118) means that investigating the shady business of archives fits neatly into anthropological interest in challenging the positivist legacy of knowledge production. The primary points of contact between the domains of anthropology and archives include the study of the place and history of photography and ethnographic film in anthropology and ethnography (Edwards 1992, 2006; Grimshaw 2004; Westermann 2005); to investigate the structure of archives – what the procedures are for compiling and ordering knowledge; how anthropology creates documents and knowledge (de Cunha 2006) and the exploration of new anthropological methods (Edwards 1992, 2006; Schneider and Wright 2006). What is interesting to Edwards – and to this research - is the presence of the material quality of photographs – the contexts and conditions of production and reception of photographs that form a crucial part of understanding photography. The material aspects of photographs are constantly re-worked, integral to human actions, social biography, and the continuing process of production, exchange, usage and meaning (Edwards and Hart 2004:4). This approach emphasizes knowledge production through embodied cultural narration (Jokinen and Veijola 2003; Haraway 2004).

From within the institution, Edwards and Hart (2004) challenge the indexical domination of writing about photographs. As a solution to critiques of images that recycle the content of images, Edwards and Hart investigate the material dimension of archival documents in a textual account to show the changing meanings of curatorial practice and meanings of material culture (see their study of *box 54* 2004: 60). Like Krauss’ earlier study of the architecture of archives, Edwards and Hart find that the material trajectories of museum classification and colonialism intersect discourses about knowledge and power (Krauss 1989; Edwards 2004). To curator Kiendl, “to look at how and why we select, accumulate, and order things”, reveals a new understanding in relation to the larger project of modernity (2004 9-11).

Yet to study archives is a challenge, as archives produce a fever, like Derrida’s (1996) account of archives as the impossibility of an original experience, what Carolyn Steedman describes as “the desire to recover moments of inception: to find and possess all sorts of beginnings” (2001:5). The archive is a relational experience: It is a fever that emerges in the “early hours of the morning, in the bed of a cheap hotel,



Sleep, the research house, Waterton Lakes National Park, Polaroid, 2006.

where the historian cannot get to sleep”, and the anxiety produced by knowing that “I shall never *get it done*” (2001:17). There will be details missed, peoples lives that cannot be done justice by the compiling, sorting and sifting of records. In real time it is a private act of relating to the material, physically handling, looking at photographs, reading diaries, all the while being captivated by some ideas and certain stories. While Steedman’s illumination of the anxieties of archival research conjure modernist associations with the pursuit of truth, discreet objects and facts, it is poststructuralist thought that is of interest here. To face the challenge of archives, it allows for the archive to be treated like a construction site rather than an excavation site (Foster 2004; see Smith 2007). Both Hal Foster (2004) and Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) have strongly articulated ideas about the way that this is found in artistic practice. The archival impulse in art emphasizes not only the act of drawing upon but also the production of archives in a way that “underscores the nature of all archival materials as found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private” (Foster 2004:5). The archive can be activated as a way to tell us about the nature of existence, rather than to associate itself with one truth.

The archival impulse points to the social life of photographs that do not end in the archive. In my work, the archive is just the beginning. My research moves out of the archive as a way to move beyond deconstruction of archival materials to create construction sites, photographs are treated as events that can be re examined to build upon iconic photographs of wilderness. In this way, I think about the *ecology* of the archive as a web of relations and social practices. I follow Ivakiv who writes about an ecology of the image as “an ethics and a politics which concerns the technologies by which images are made, the economics by which they are produced, circulated and consumed, the ecologies of the resources extracted and wastes left in their wake, and what we might call the ‘epistemologics’ by which these images affect our perception of the world and of ourselves” (Ivakhiv: 2004:np).

I mine these archives and I take the photograph for a walk in Waterton as a way to draw attention to the material quality of documents, and to the way this intersects with the experience of place. Photographs in archives are not only images of something, a subject, but they are material objects, glass, paper, silver, postcards with notes to friends, ordered, numbered, folded, they generate relationships as they pass through the hands of archivists, researchers, and then are ordered, and re-ordered. Once freed from the archive (via digital copies or photocopies⁶) photographs continue to be multi sensory acts. They become maps, they give clues to try to find the way back to the place they were made, to figure out the spatial orientation of and relationship between the photograph and photographer. At the same time they reveal the limits of this act, they show how, truly, you can’t step in the same river twice, nor can you ever get back to a previous photographic moment. My investigations situate past photographic moments actively in the present. Photographs are not frozen and immobile objects, but rather they are “active socially salient entities that exist and sometimes dramatically change over time” (Edwards and Hart 2004:2). Archives are embodied cultural narration (Haraway 2004). These photographs are relevant not just as history but also in the

6 The general practice of archives is to provide photocopies or digital scans. I also collected printed postcards and photocopies from eBay, which gave me access to actual objects that circulated. eBay is an online shopping platform that enables trade locally, nationally and internationally. I consider eBay the worlds largest private archive.



'View on Waterton Lake, [Alta.] looking East. [August 1874],' G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission.
Courtesy Library Archives Canada

present, in the way that photographic moments of the past create the space for photographic moments of the present.

The Library Archives Canada and the G.M. Dawson fonds

“Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore” is an example of how photographs are images and material objects that were powerfully contextualized and filled by the colonial body and imaginary. It is a survey photograph from the Library Archives Canada found in several locations including the diaries and albums of G.M. Dawson, a central figure that helped shape both government survey and academic institutions in Canada. The photograph was one of a set of 250 glass plate negatives produced over the course of three field seasons that was included with the commission’s official report. The images were both illustrations in the service of science as well as souvenirs, circulated to the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, the Canadian Department of the Interior, the Governor General and members of the expedition (Birrell 1996:120). When I consulted the archives in 2005, there were two similar copies of images from the survey collection in the Library Archives Canada: An accessioned set that were copies of an album located at the British Archives, and an album of Dawson’s that re-presents most of the same images. They are available at present as high resolution digital scans. The existence of these images in archives makes sense: The making of photographs is a key part of colonial survey projects in Canada and such photographs were supported by, and supported institutional authority. As narrated in documents produced by the Library Archives Canada for managing photographic records within the government, photography has been in the service of the Government of Canada since the 1850s, helping to fulfill the mandate to carry out institutional operations (Library Archives Canada 1993:1). Photography is a colonial pursuit and used to bring visibility to the emergence of Canada as a nation. This collection varies widely but the method of photography used by surveyors meant that isolated photographic statements are seen as inherently valuable through their indexical nature (Edwards 2001). Waterton is found entangled in history and representation through these archives.

The creation of Canada is helped by archives and archives hold images that support their authority, they are the National Archives of Canada, they generate and support the existence of something that can be encountered as Canada (as in survey reports that create geography) and the existence of historical figures that make Canada (as in the collecting and accessioning personal albums of G.M. Dawson). Not only does this support the back and forth movement whereby the photograph creates the authority of the archive and the archive creates the authority of the photograph, but this movement constructs a common sense history for Canada full of geography and historical figures. What counts as geography, photography, and historical figures are included in - and produced by - the archive: Waterton Lakes National Park, G.M. Dawson, the 1874 International Boundary Commission Survey, these are brought into being through this movement.

The common sense of archives

The constellation of seven archives I drew primarily upon to create a working collection of images of over 400 images each have a particular relationship to the space of Waterton Lakes National Park⁷. The Library Archives Canada in Ottawa is the most

7 The Library Archives Canada; The Glenbow Museum and Archives; eBay; The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies; The Pincher Museum and Archives; The Waterton Parks Canada Warden collection; The Glacier National Park Archives.



After 'View on Waterton Lake, [Alta.] looking East. [August 1874], b+w print, 2007

geographically distant from the park itself (excluding the location of certain eBay sellers), but the most institutionally authorized. It is the national archives, the storehouse of government documents, and Waterton is a federally managed space. By selecting the images found in the card catalogue in the reference room of the Library Archives Canada labeled “Waterton” and then cross referencing this with an online database (Archivianet) search, I generated a set of sixty-eight images that were in circulation. These images formed the selection requested by researchers or government agencies in the past, and formed only a fraction of total images of Waterton that exist in the LAC. Yet these were the ones in circulation that would come up in a search for visual images of the key word *Waterton*. These images form a dominant record about Waterton, and thereby come to be Waterton, and help to sustain the myth of wilderness as the contents therein. They are labeled and indexed in a wide range of contexts and by a wide range of government agencies: from survey and the Geological Survey of Canada, to the National Film Board of Canada still photography division, to images produced for promotion in the report of the Commissioner of Dominion parks, to images of industry and parks infrastructure, to images produced by well-known locals and well-known professionals photographing promotional images for the Great Northern Rail. The collection includes photographs for survey, national identity and things considered “Canadian” (NFB collection), to their association with nation building activities (parks reports), even those of other nations (Great Northern Rail in the USA) and those that signify resources. Together they form an array of intents for the space of Waterton – what can be organized into Landscapes (25); Dwellings, structures and roads (21) and Landscapes containing people (11)⁸. Many of these images are repeated in other archives I consulted, can be found as historical images on the walls of rustic lodgings in the park, form illustrations in books about Waterton, or are organized through their association with local and international photographers (A.E. Cross; F.H. (Bert) Riggall; W.J. Oliver; T.J. Hileman), and are found as postcards circulated widely in archives and on eBay. Most of the survey collection are included in this set of sixty-eight. Archives form a key part of the institution of national parks – they hold images used to confirm cultural and political ownership – defining and bounding national park space. Through these definitions and boundaries – particularly found through off site representations - photographs in government documents, parks reports, mapping and tourist accounts - Waterton comes into being as a place. Waterton’s genesis is in colonial photographic records that make a geography, one that is geologically valuable, resource rich, and sublime, setting the conditions for the establishment of the park in May 1895 as Kootenay Forest Park, less than 20 years after the International Boundary Commission Survey crew first moved through the area.

Re-inscription: from the 1874 Survey to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

In mid 19th century England, the War Department began training their Royal Engineers to take photographs while abroad. Part of what appears to be a very specific set of documentation including “all objects, either valuable in professional point of view, or interesting as illustrative of History, Ethnology, Natural History, Antiquities &c.” (Birrell 1996:113), these instructions can also be considered very open and vague, relying on a photographer’s common sense. Nonetheless, by the mid-1850s, the possibilities

⁸ The rest of the collection were images outside of the park, mislabeled and therefore considered outside of the study site (e.g. lakes that were not in the park and impossible for me or my informants to identify).



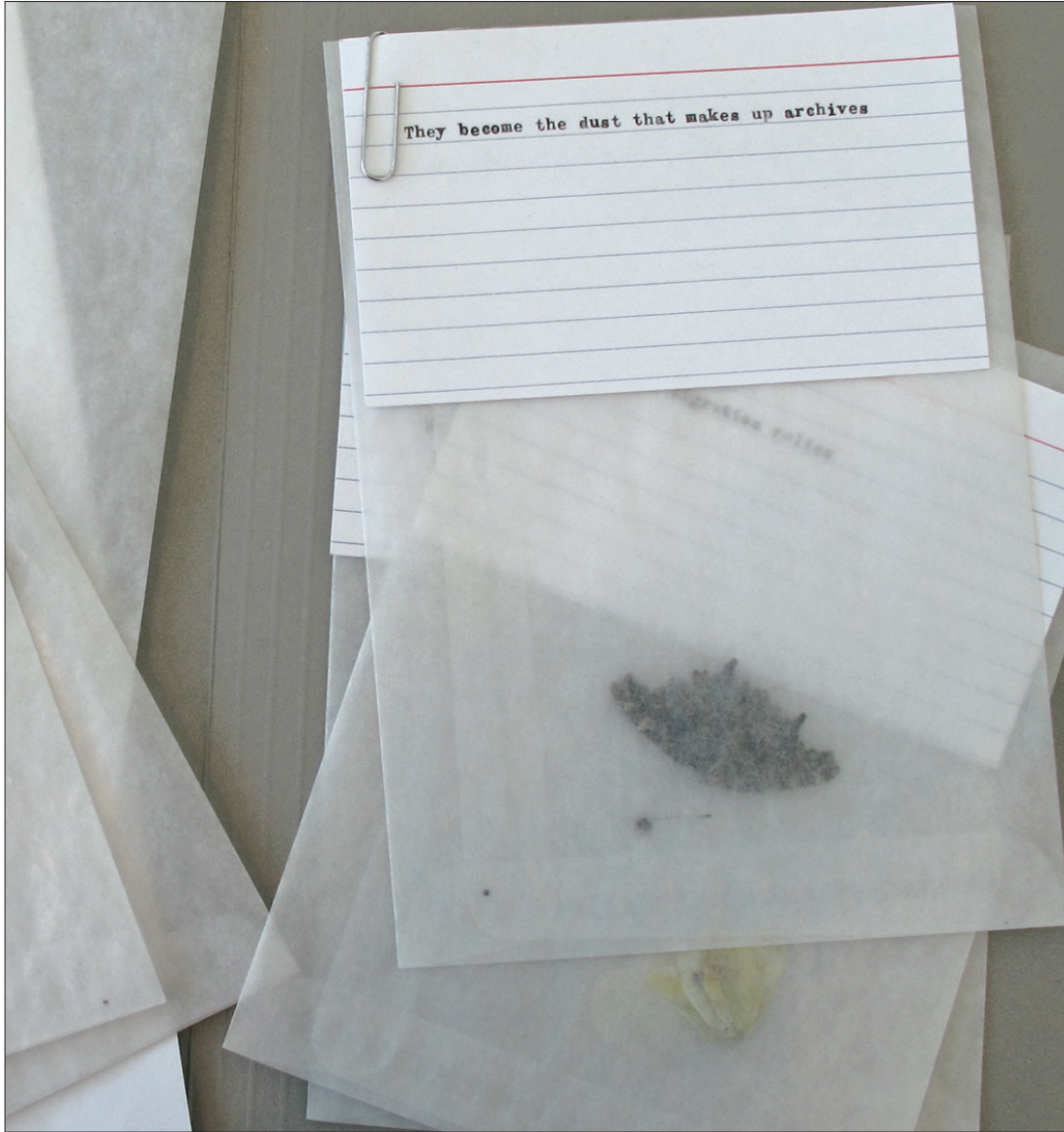
After 'View on Waterton Lake, [Alta.] looking East. [August 1874], 4x5 pinhole. C-print. 2004

of photography were entwined with the colonial effort to order and categorize and by extension, exert control over space, and there were plans for a “network of Photographic Stations spread all over the world, acting under systematic instructions and having its results permanently recorded at the War Department” (Birrell 1996:113)⁹. This institutionalization of photographic records serves to give a cohesive sense to their documentation. This is parallel to what Elizabeth Edwards names an externalized collective memory bank “through photography which would not only define the past in the present but also project a strong sense of identity into the future” (2009:4).

The consequence of this desire for photography to order the world can be found in national park space today, realized in contemporary acts of creating systematic networks such as the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) within which the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) maps the global phenomenon of parks and protected areas. The number of protected areas that fall under the heading of nature reserves has risen dramatically over the past three decades (Descola 2008:np). At present, the IUCN is a global environmental union that has more than 1000 government and NGO member organizations and over 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries. They form a network to help “develop conservation science, manage field projects all over the world, and bring together players from different domains and sectors to develop and implement policy, laws, and best practice” (IUCN website 2009; West, Igoe, and Brockington 2006). Underwritten with the same desire - to categorize and control space in a goal to set aside 10% of the world's land surface for protection - the IUCN database does not account for local interests, only state activity. As anthropologists West, Igoe and Brockington describe in their 2006 review of Parks and Protected areas, the IUCN are blind to informal, collective activity, private protected areas, and omit diverse forms of informal community conservation (2006:254). In a parallel practice to the War Department 150 years earlier, “the database becomes more interesting because they often transform the world into their own interests” (West Igoe Brockington 2006:255), and in looking at the why and how of this transformation, it reveals the way in which some people “see, understand, experience, and use the parts of the world that are often called nature and the environment” (1996:255). Used to write, re-write and modify protected area legislation (Bishop et. al 2004; West, Igoe and Brockington 2006), in the WDPA images form a key role in the way that these worlds are made. In thinking with images, the framework of the WDPA is dependent upon imaging networks and visualization technologies such as Google Earth: The uploading of data to this site is possible through four steps. Anthropologists and others then use it in research, in writing policy documents, and for policy development by the IUCN and governments. This feedback is of particular interest as “management categories intended to describe a park's status are now being used to prescribe and proscribe activities within it” (West, Igoe and Brockington 2006:255).

Yet while the database represents the order of reality they constitute, the activities in protected areas are often unknown or outside of environmental imagination about protected areas. Waterton, for example is represented in the mapping software Google Earth and includes a summary with a list of total occupants (2976), animals (2773), plants (82), other kingdoms (92). It also has overlays for Flickr pics, Panoramio pics, and Wikipedia info. Yet the numbers are difficult to reconcile with the narrative found in the

9 for further discussion and a discussion of how this relates to map-making in Canada, see my MA thesis, *Vantage Points* (2004), and Webb 2003.



Butterfly migration. Digital print from the exhibition *finding aid*, 2010.

2010 draft management plan produced by the park that cites:

More than 265 kinds of birds, 62 species of mammals, 20 fish species, 10 different reptiles and amphibians, and thousands of tiny insects and invertebrates live here. Birds found in Waterton are as common as American robins and yellow warblers, and as unique as Vaux's swifts and harlequin ducks. Bull trout, mountain whitefish and lake trout inhabit Waterton's rivers and lakes. Herptiles such as the boreal chorus frog, long-toed salamander and plains garter snakes also inhabit Waterton, and more recently, once common northern leopard frogs were reintroduced following their puzzling disappearance" (2010 draft unpub. n.p.)

While occupancy by humans, plants, animals or other kingdoms is counted and recorded, the database is a static approach to nature and does not account for all of the flux and flow of people, plants and other animals. The danger is that parks, in this imagined global form, will become emptied of their nuances and complexities. Descola argues that the "preservation of biodiversity can only become fully effective if it takes into account ... plurality in the understanding of nature" (2008:np). In Waterton, a 2008 presentation from biologists reported on their surprise tracking wolverines who scale the face of Mount Cleveland at an uncanny pace to travel between Glacier and Waterton. A butterfly migration fills the air while passing through the park in the summer of 2007. Many are left behind, disoriented, injured, or killed by the windshields and car grates of vehicles full of families on their way to their first visit of scenic, iconic Cameron Lake. In 2009 park ecologists report on a new fish study they are mounting on Upper Waterton Lake to clarify uncertainty around species makeup and population number inhabiting the deepest lake in the Canadian Rockies. Fleeting moments and emergent and uncertain knowledge are always at the centre of experience in the park.

While the constant shifting space of the national park is not well represented by the IUCN database, the question also arises, what counts as occupation of the park, and who counts? The database is formulated within the western imaginary of a separation of nature and culture and the "virtualizing vision" that orders the database does not account for the local space of contest that parks and protected areas inhabit (West Igoe and Brockington 2006: 255; Carrier and Miller 1998). In Waterton this can be seen in acts by the government that encourage certain behaviours, and that limit and control access to the space to both visitors (in the form of ecologically sensitive areas) and to local groups that have travelled through the area and interacted with the landscape in a broad variety of historical and ecological contexts. As the 2010 park plan illuminates, while the history of Parks Canada is 125 years, human presence has inscribed the land for over 10, 000 years:

Archaeological sites reflecting use by pre and post contact cultures are present throughout the area, including ancient bison jumps, drive lanes and tepee rings. Present day trails follow routes used by Aboriginal peoples over 10,000 years. These routes were also used by early explorers and settlers travelling through the Blakiston Valley (Parks Canada 2010b).

Especially problematic are those that are not counted and accounted for in the database whose present realities contradict the database and the IUCN creation of the

world. West, Igoe and Brockington find that nearly four million people face evictions from protected areas in India following amendments to policy resulting from information in the WDPA, and between one and 16 million people in Africa could become environmental refugees from protected areas (2006). In Waterton this is made clear by the limitations on use of the traditional hunting grounds of Ktunaxa (Upper Kutenais) and the Nitsitapii (Blackfeet). It is also found in the downplaying of the continuity of dwelling of Blackfeet in the area (in the form of a long term relationship with Chief Mountain, for example). A strong acknowledgement of the ongoing experience of indigenous groups would contest the 125-year occupation by Parks Canada. While West, Igoe and Brockington suggest that American environmentalism is the source of much of the thinking behind these protected areas, one that is centered upon a belief in the notion of pristine wilderness resulting in policies that inform how landscapes should be managed, it is a longstanding commitment to the visualization of protected areas that allows for these spaces to be constructed in the way that they are. Photographs by early survey parties are at the centre of this visualization.

Not only does the IUCN database transform the world into North American and European environmentalist interests, it makes it visible through photographs. The images – not just Google earth – but promotional environmentalist images form a powerful and persuasive vision for conservation. This tie between protected areas and photography dates back to the beginning of photography and conservation in Canada with these original survey parties. The framework connects photography and protected areas, and the 19th century aim of colonial survey projects – to document valuable objects and to systematically generate information about distant or unfamiliar places – is realized with the database. And the online database, a newly emergent technology, is becoming an archive itself well on their way to becoming common sense knowledge. And like 19th and 20th century archives, and despite claims to the contrary, they are not democratic or global phenomena. Only 35 of the 193 countries reported today have deep web penetration (Ferguson 2010).

The 1874 International Boundary Commission Survey

Since the 1850s Waterton has been charged ground for photographic acts, and since the survey of 1874, the location at the Prince of Wales Hotel hill has been active. Yet as I will show, these are composite visualities and not a singular cohesive vision. The images of Waterton that were produced at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries hold multiple imaginaries deployed in the service of colonialism. The representation of these worlds is produced out of aesthetic, technological, and experiential parameters. Biography and bodily involvement results in the production of photographs. Not merely a neutral observation, or surveillance, fixed on emulsion, it is a distinct imagination and imaginary that goes into the production of the photographs of Waterton. The way that the spaces are re-imagined and engaged in future is a consequence of the 1874 event. Photography plays an important role in defining the physical and perceptual relationship between human bodies and space. Unfolding events were narrated through these frames.

From 1873-1874 the Royal Engineers were assigned the responsibility to demarcate the 49th parallel and provide an examination and description of the 1300 km span from Lake of the Woods (ON) to Waterton (AB). This survey was intended to finish a process that began in 1861 to mark a line between the U.S.A and the territories that would eventually



become Canada. The discovery of gold on the Thompson River prompted the mapping of the border. During the 1873-1874 field seasons, two teams, a British/Canadian team¹⁰ and an American team leapfrogged one another to demarcate a fictional line on the ground across muskeg, grassland, mountains and glaciers. The camera was a key technology the Canadian team used in their construction of the space and to depict the value therein. A key figure involved in this survey was George Mercer (G.M.) Dawson. In addition to his training as a geologist, and his eventual role as the Surveyor General for the Geological Survey of Canada, G.M. Dawson is considered a precursor to professional anthropology in Canada (Darnell 1998). G.M. Dawson's father, John William Dawson, who was also a geologist, was the principal of McGill for more than 40 years, which positioned him as central in the development of academic institutions in Canada (Darnell 1998). During his long tenure at McGill he also worked on collecting specimens, a foundational activity of the GSC. Later these collections provide the materials for the construction of the Museum of Civilization under the direction of anthropologist Edward Sapir. Therefore, the GSC and the academic institution were intertwined, and the GSC – with a focus on demarcating boundaries, charting and claiming resources and collecting specimens using technological advances such as cameras – “provided an incipient framework for professional anthropology in Canada” (Darnell 1998:156)¹¹. The GSC accounts that were generated by G.M. Dawson that discipline and regulate the country were legitimated through both government and academic channels. The collections G.M. Dawson brings together stand in as scientific data, and eventually these construct the shape of museums and anthropology in Canada. Known for his photography, Dawson helps to form with his photographs what Mike Crang defines in a different context as an *academic gaze* (1997:368).

While Dawson was trained in England as a geologist and returned to Canada with the hopes of swiftly taking up a position doing fieldwork with the GSC, it was four years before he landed the coveted position from where he would eventually shape the space of Canada through an extensive 18 seasons of fieldwork. The connection between particular bodies and photographs is key to my analysis, and so it seems important to mention Dawson's extraordinary body that was altered by a fall into a river in 1859, at the age of 10, in which a chill led to the development of tubercular invasion of the spine, and this stunted his growth (Pott's disease). He is 4 feet tall, and endures a lifetime of pain. Despite this debilitating disease, or perhaps because of it, Dawson worked intensely on creating a powerful vision for the geology and geography of Canada. The narrative around Dawson fits a Canadian identity about survival, the notion of a particularly Canadian struggle against nature. Like Tom Thomson seventy-five years later, Dawson's persona fits the shape of iconic historical Canadian figures. At the same time, his interest in technologies such as the camera help him to apprehend the world - to create as objective and normal an eye as possible, one detached from the limitations of the body.

10 I will refer to them as the Canadian team.

11 By 1910, just a decade after both G.M. and his father's deaths, Franz Boas recommends German-Born Edward Sapir to head up the official anthropological division of the GCS, whose strong interest in the collection of ethnological data draws in a group of anthropologists to collect data in Canada.



After G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, (from the hill) b+w white print, 2007.



Figure 3.1 Map produced by the International Boundary Survey. Courtesy Library Archives Canada.

The geological desire of G.M. Dawson: an ethnographic sensibility

Dawson engages an ethnographic sensibility found in his descriptive fieldnotes, journals, reports, letters to family, sketches and photographs. His geological texts are technical descriptions and economic calculations that bring visibility and attention to generate a category of nature in the space of Canada. In the Waterton area, he describes the rocks:

which include the lowest observed in any part of the region. The lower beds are brought up by an irregular anticlinal fold, which crosses the lake near its north end, with a north-west and south-east direction. They consist of a series of impure dolomites, and an overlying limestone, which I did not elsewhere find exposed, but which are here well shown on both sides of the lake (1875:57).

This description is cleansed of the language of his journals, which show uncertainty and fear around the unknown nature of the nature they were encountering on the survey. In one of Dawson's evocative entries he writes about bison:

The appearance of the animal altogether nightmarish & weird, looking like a survivor of a bygone age or a reverified Tertiary monster. They stalk slowly along in lines one after another, or feed in little herds. Often lying down in groups in precisely the attitude assumed by a cow. When disturbed they break into a strange lumbering run, but withal make good time, & twirling their little pig like tails give a horse a good chase to get abreast of them. Their bellow has a hoarse hollow metallic sound & has a peculiarly eerie effect when heard coming across the prairie after dark. As I write a great herd are lowing & bellowing within earshot (1874:174).

In his journals, the meaning of nature is still emergent, frightening and dangerous, but it is through these representations he builds an object of study, one that he problem solves, one that holds his uncertainty and doubt about his imagination. These documents have purchase in the becoming of Canada. He is on a quest for intelligibility to what does not, until Dawson's generation of it, exist: that is, the natural history and geography of Canada. Yet other natural histories were at play. In Waterton, the geography that Dawson describes is only possible due to the land management practices that were in place by indigenous groups who used the present-day park space for dwelling. Historical campsites and routes are evident in the park space today and practices carry into the present, vision quest sites are located on Sofa Mountain inside the park. Chief Mountain, the prominent peak visible upon driving up to Waterton Lakes National Park is known as Ninaistákis (the Chief Mountain) by the Nitsitapii (Blackfoot). Found half within Glacier National Park and half within the Blackfeet reservation in Montana, "Ninaistákis has and continues to be a focus for traditional vision questing and other spiritual activities" (Reeves 1994:265). The Blood Timber Limit lands form a peninsula into the northeast side of the park. Indigenous approaches to landscape continue to shape, and have shaped the environment that was then encountered by Dawson and allowed for the creation of wilderness and a perception of boundless resources. It was a management and relationship that supplied the conditions that allowed Dawson to show up and to use the practice of photography to delimit the space (and to limit what national park space can be). As I will show in this chapter and the next, some of the photographs they make out of their experience is commensurate with previous experiences and fits into the nature/place the surveyors desire, and other photographs are marked with uncertainty and emergent knowledge of both the camera and the making of place.

Upon returning to Canada from England Dawson took up a position as lecturer at Morrin College in Quebec, (which was affiliated with McGill). In 1874, he left Morrin to work as the naturalist and botanist for the Canadian contingency of the International/North American Boundary Commission (IBC)¹². It is his work for the IBC that would contribute to his reputation and help to secure him his position as part of the GSC. In Dawson's preparatory note introducing the 1873-74 field season report he writes that he is single-handedly undertaking the Natural History work, and that in order not to become overwhelmed by the task at hand he decides to focus on working out a structure for the country and making illustrative collections rather than to amass large local collections (Dawson 1875). It is worth quoting at length his geographic and geologic desire:

In undertaking single-handed the care of the Natural History work in connection with the Boundary Commission, it was obvious that in attempting too much it might happen that nothing should be well done. I therefore decided to give the first place to geology; and in that field to endeavour to work out as far as possible the structure of the country, and to make illustrative collections of rocks and fossils, rather than to amass large local collections, at the expense of general information (Dawson 1875:iii).

12 Various names are ascribed to this: Royal Engineers (the people involved), the British North American Boundary Commission (the Canadian side), the International Boundary Commission (the Canadian and U.S. sides); the NABC (the North American Boundary Commission). I use the International Boundary Commission as both groups met in Waterton.



After Wilson, South Kootenay Pass, c-print 2006.

This entry displays a clear interest in illustration rather than collection to place particular emphasis on visual means of translation and knowledge generation in Canada and clearly reflects the interests of the Royal Engineers in creating permanent records using photographs¹³. Dawson's words belie a conviction that without visual illustration this undertaking would not have been possible. The visual provides a way for Dawson to perform geology. Technology – including that of the camera - was key to modernist pursuits to collect data. This performance that Dawson and the sappers (the engineer army corps that were sent from England – four of whom act as camera operators in the 1874 survey) make constructs the account and legitimates the geological project itself while the geological project of taking pictures makes photography itself necessary. Dawson was in the Waterton area three times (1874, 1881 and 1888) related to his work with the IBC and later the Geological Survey of Canada, and was involved each time in the production of a photographic record. In Canada, practicality and economics come into play in the use of photography as an integral method to structure the country¹⁴. This visual economy is a way to encounter the possibilities of the space through the science of geology and the techniques of European visuality. The recording of wilderness by modernity begins with the technology of the camera, a perfect way to bring the unknown into greater visibility. Yet of course, this is a particular and limited kind of visuality.

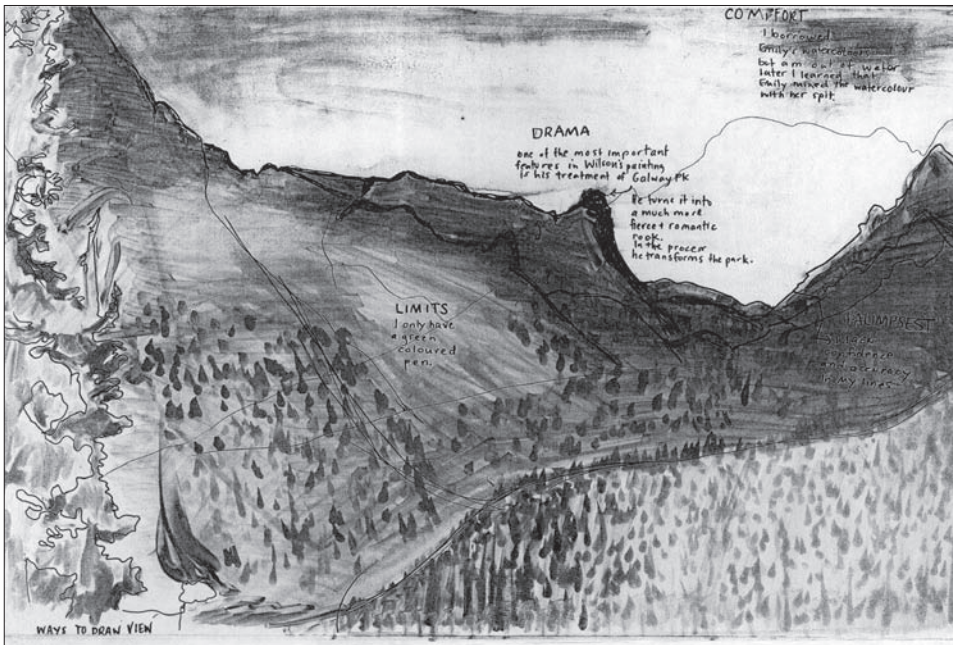
The promise of uncertainty in the International Boundary Commission Survey

While the possibilities of the visual figure prominently in Dawson's 1874 account as a key technology in record making, (and by 1881 the camera is fully incorporated into his work with the GSC), it is easy to find signs of the uncertainties and confusion around photography in the first field season of the same survey of 1860-61, where the camera is characterized in documents as cumbersome and inconvenient (Hawkins 1863 in Birrell 1996:113). The illusion of the camera as a reflection of nature is shattered by technical and conceptual problems (including literally in broken glass plates, to be sure). Even though the American counterpart of the Boundary Commission carried camera equipment on the 1860-61 survey, no training was provided for the men who were expected to use the gear in the field (Birrell 1996). It is the operator, then, failing to use the technology properly, (and failing to use common sense) who cannot simply *plagiarize nature through a lens*, to recite poet Alphonse da Lamaterine (1858) (Jay 1993:138). The tension produced out of a belief in the camera as a tool to perfectly reproduce nature and its failure to do so in the field can be understood as part of a struggle over the purpose and character of photography itself.

While much of the history of photography is couched in terms of progress towards an

13 In contrast, Archibald Campbell's 1874 boundary commission for the USA, does not use the technology of the camera and no mention is made of it (Birrell 1996). They use the highly ordered space of drawings by Sydney Prior Hall which I discuss in this chapter. As there were beautiful and clear images being made at the same time by war photographer Timothy O'Sullivan as part of Clarence King's 1867 geological survey of the 47th parallel, it is perhaps Campbell's frustrated from failed attempts in the 1860 and 1861 survey that lead him to turn his back on photography. Andrew Birrell (1996) argues it is likely due to the poor financing of the American Boundary Survey. While O'Sullivan was hired to take scientific and objective geological landscapes, The O'Sullivan photographs have since become cultural icons (see Krauss 1986) of the "direct experience of these desolate lands" (Goetzmann 1996: n.p.).

14 This is also evident in the development and use of phototopographical survey in Canada (see Smith 2004 ; Webb 2003; MacLaren, Higgs and Zezulka-Mailloux 2005).

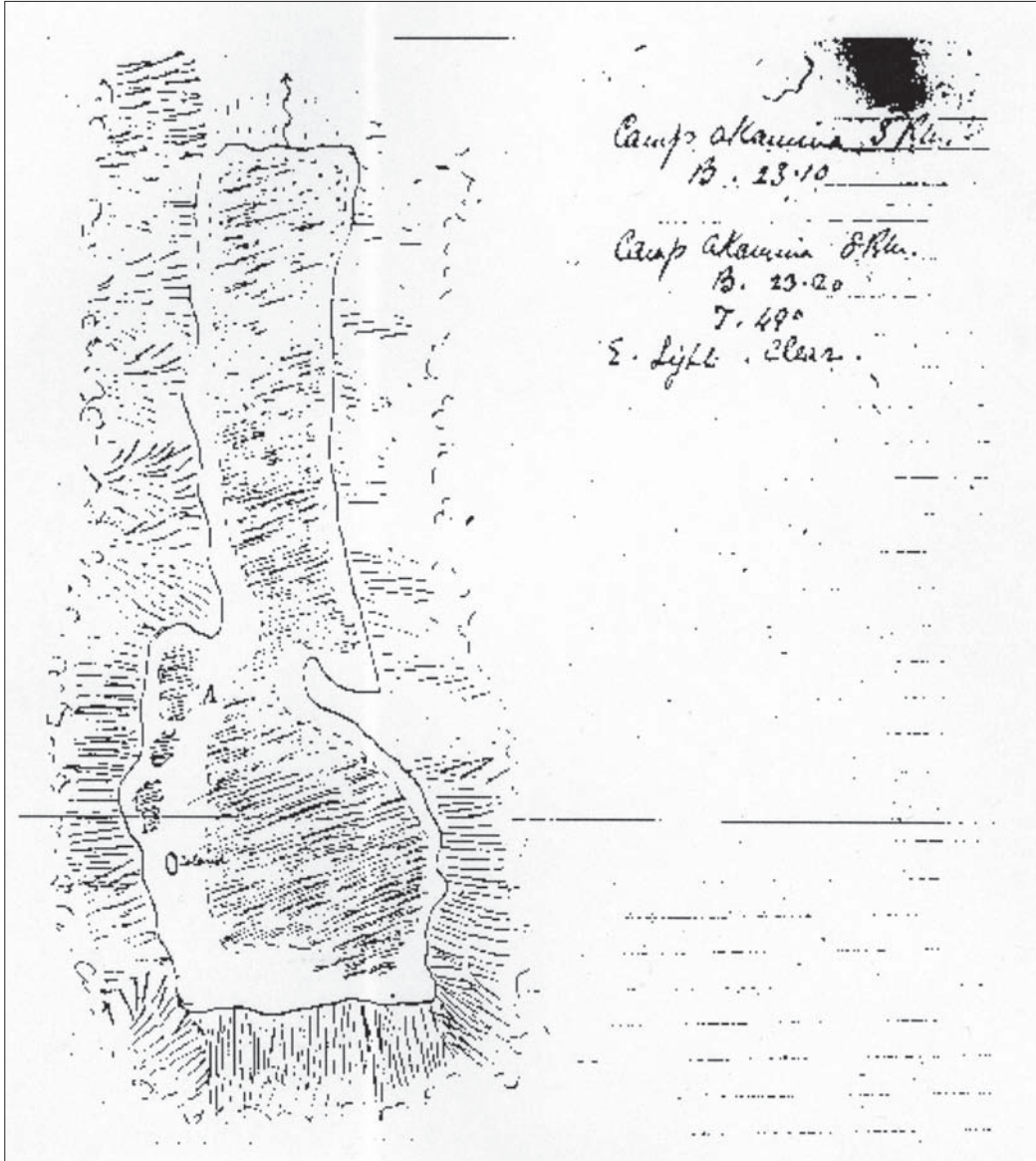


Boundary Pass; View from the Summit Looking East, Lieutenant Charles Wilson 1861 (top); and, After Wilson, field drawing, (bottom) watercolour and pencil on paper. 2006. Courtesy Royal BC Museum.

objective equivalent of a natural vision, I follow the work of Jonathan Crary and others who find that the camera is not a pursuit to close the gap between representation and referent but is an apparatus of political and social power (Crary 1992). Because of its relationship to political and social power, photography is narrated as regular and uniform no matter how heterogeneous and inconsistent it is. From this position it is easier to understand why there was continual slippage in the discourse of scientific accounts by Dawson and his men, allowing for the entrance of uncertainty and other registers for knowing and bearing witness to an event, such as art.

In *Techniques of the Body*, Crary finds the climate of the 19th century produced a radical reformulation of vision, one where power and vision become linked through the body. Crary locates the dominance of the Cartesian perspectivalist scopic regime in the removal of vision from the body, part of a modernist idea to “recode the eye, to heighten its productivity” (1992:24). The body, in this view, is crucial to mold a new subjectivity. The *camera obscura* became a dominant paradigm to explain human vision (Jay 1993). Literally a *dark room*, in the *camera obscura*, the viewer withdraws from the world, “isolated, enclosed and autonomous within its dark confines” (Crary 1992:39). A model of rationalist thought, such a device emphasizes individuation and self-observation. An image projected inside enters through a small hole that replicates one-point perspective, a particular construction of visuality. The naturalization of this vision is produced by the displacement of physical and sensory experience by a relationship between a mechanical apparatus and a “pre-given world of objective truth” (1992:39) that is learned by the body. The onus of seeing that world is on the subject and yet at the same time, as Martin Jay writes, “perspective is decorporealized” (1993:189). The creation of the “normal eye” based on perspective helps to secure the domination of the photograph, that reflects this same visual construction as truth.

In this thinking, the early survey photographs were embedded in the middle of a struggle not only to constitute and make claims about the space they colonized, but for what constitutes vision and what an observer is. And so uncertainty and ruptures in photographic records are the result of this. Yet at the same time, such a history firmly places photography and the body in the middle of what later became a naturalized way of seeing and representing space, to record nature “as she really is” (Jay 1993:150). As such, the 1861 Boundary Commissions in both Canada and the USA were surprised and frustrated when images proved difficult to fix. As Birrell uncovers in his 1996 article about the survey, the purpose of survey photographs was to provide information, and going into the 1860 survey, recommendations to use the technology were couched in terms of the potential for description, and that “photographs of a country gave a most truthful and accurate idea of it” (Donnelly in Birrell 1996:). Yet the final report of the British Boundary Commission, John Summerfield Hawkins, wrote that “I am inclined to think that a competent artist attached to such an expedition as that on which I have been engaged would command greater facilities for the production of numerous and interesting sketches of the scenery &c” (Hawkins 1873 in Birrell 1996:111). It is clear that the camera was considered a burden, the technology of photography full of discontinuity, mistakes and ruptures. Not only is the relationship between the body and photography uncertain, but also the place itself that the survey crew sought to demarcate was in constant flux as indicated in the surveyor’s diaries. Dawson describes how paths change, fires rage and how wars are fought. This was not an orderly, fixed space, and of course it never is.



Cameron Lake, G.M. Dawson, sketch from his 1874 journal

The certain hand: the sketches and paintings of Wilson, Hall and Dawson

In contrast to photographs produced during this same time period, the controlled pencil of artists skillfully order descriptions of the space. Three examples found in the area of the present-day park show how drawing brings certainty to the space they are depicting.

In 1861, Charles Wilson paints “Boundary Pass: View from the Summit looking East” during his tenure as the Secretary of the International Boundary Commission. Wilson’s painting shows a dramatically depicted peak in the distance, infused with the mysticism and melancholic style of his contemporaries, the German Romantic Landscape painters (especially the work of the well-known Casper David Friedrich (1774-1840)). In the summer of 2007 I attempted to relocate the spot from which Wilson painted or sketched “Boundary Pass.” My field assistant and I ground-truthed the painting, producing our own drawings and photographs from the location on the slope of South Kootenay Pass. We found that the rendering of Mt. Galway is a particular act: Returning to the location from which images were made, we found that early pictorial views exaggerated the height and drama of the landscape. Perhaps, as Rebecca Solnit writes, the description of the space is exaggerated because of an association between “altitude, ascent and height with power, virtue and status” (2000:137). Through such drawings, this emerging space was being authored as valuable.

In 1881, Sydney Prior Hall’s sketch of Chief Mountain from just outside of the park shows a perfectly ordered landscape, clearly influenced by formal garden design. Neatly laid out in planned symmetric lines, the image shows a hospitable, idyllic hilly mountain, trees positioned into rows ascending the mountain, a calm body of water in the foreground ringed by what appear to be exotic tree species. Hall’s drawings and watercolours were made when on a tour of Canada with the Marquis of Lorne in 1881. Widely circulated, the views by Hall were intended to promote settlement (LAC online:nd). Hall worked for the London Graphic as a journalist-artist, and numerous drawings were reproduced as wood engravings in media in England in 1878 and 1881 (LAC online:nd). Most importantly perhaps, it is this image and others by Hall rather than photographs that are used to illustrate the American counterpart to the survey, Archibald Campbell’s 1874 Report of the Boundary. This volume can still be found in circulation, most recently coming up on eBay for auction in May 2010 .

And finally, Dawson’s own drawings from 1874 show a sketch of Cameron Lake that he drew while checking the 1861 boundary monument in order to tie in the work of the two surveys (the monument that was constructed at the time of Wilson’s depiction of Mt. Galway) and depicts a bird’s eye view of the lake including an island (that is no longer there or never was). It would have been impossible to gain such a view through the lens of the camera from this vantage point that I located in 2007. Indeed, it was unlikely that Dawson brought the sappers and their cameras along on the arduous journey. He writes in his journal on the same page that holds the sketch of the lake:

On this trip food has consisted of bread and boiled beef cold, well enough as long as it lasts, but now grub of all kinds becoming scarce. Reduced to bread and tea and barely enough of that. Expect to meet beef tomorrow at noon on arriving at Camp no. 1. ...Aug 20 leave camp at 7:25 and travel back



After G.M. Dawson Cameron Lake. 4x5" Pinhole Polaroid Pro 100, 2007

by Kootenay Trail across the watershed to camp no. 1. Morning showers but cleared up about noon and became quite warm. Noting character and succession of rocks to form a general section....Just before reaching to old camp was surprised to meet a pack train coming west and found Major Twinning, Commissioner Campbell and Mr. Bangs on their way west to monument. Found Lieutenant Green camped at camping place no. 1 and had lunch with him. Found him luxuriating in fresh butter, ham, various sorts of bread and cakes...Evening made a couple of sketches, examined the rocks in brook etc. Geology. The hill which the trail passes below on the north side of the pass seems to be above the red sandstone, below the green slate-y beds. The highest peaks formed of limestone as already mentioned....etc. limestone, variegated sandstones and quartzite's" (Journals 1874).

While Dawson shapes Cameron Lake with his pencil, he is preoccupied by necessities such as food and travel. The sketch of Cameron Lake comes almost as an afterthought. The island, drawn with certainty was perhaps a trick of the light, or a jump of the pencil on the page, later incorporated into the description of the lake. This passage attests to the unevenness of description. While this sort of visual representation is crucial to the visualization of the park it is an act necessarily embedded in the uneven flow of everyday life.

These three examples of drawings from the area – the Chief, the view from South Kootenay Pass, and the view of Cameron Lake – each make the space of Waterton a part of the known: Romantic Landscapes, formal gardens and bird's eye views that would have been unavailable through the camera lens. Despite uncertainty around the places they were encountering, these men were drawing what they could not achieve by the technology of the camera: a certainty about the contents of their images, and an ability to order the landscapes pictured therein. By the 1870s the camera is in frequent use by survey teams and usurps drawing as a way of visualizing the west on geological expeditions. It is clear then, that photography is doing something fundamentally different than painting and drawing.

The 1874 Boundary Commission Survey in Waterton

By 1874, the camera is more firmly entrenched in the survey. The increased success with the camera is due to proper training (recommended by Hawkins), yet it is also likely that people were getting used to the uncertain nature of photography and the discord produced around the association of truth, vision and the technique of photography. In Canada, photography was beginning to make sense and individual photographs were beginning to pop up in appendices of publications despite their uncertain connection to truth. Their narration was key, as was their association to the survey, and to the survey report. While the camera itself was seen as very worthwhile for gathering data, the practice and purpose seems ambiguous and experimental – full of potential, like the landscape they were encountering, and not yet charted. In the 1870s it was purposed by surveyors for “general information, confined to points of scientific interest or such as may be usefully illustrative of the progress of the Commission” (Cameron in Birrell 1996:114).

The complexity and discontinuity of the visuality produced by the experience of the survey teams is reflected in the photographs that emerge in these early projects.

The realization about – and incorporation of – an unreliable technology indicates that photography was not understood as entirely indexical or mimetic. It was also a subjective act by the operator. As experienced in my own photographic acts, there is bodily engagement to produce these photographic records. And the body is not suspended in space, a detached eye, but rather the operator is acting in concert with place: plants, animals, humans and their technologies are all at play as the photograph is worked into an event. And all the things that constitute photography, for example, the cumbersome act of loading and developing film in portable dark tents and the sometimes unpredictable outcomes from the wet collodian method were incorporated into the surviving glass plates. That there were variable expectations (between perfect predictability and the unreliability) confirms more than one truth in photography: the photograph is an image of something, it is a material object for narrating, and it is an act that takes place. All three of these are at play in the subjective pursuit of survey photography and the making of space in Waterton Lakes National Park.

Twenty-eight photographs from the 1874 season of the Royal Engineers survey located in present-day Waterton Park have made their way into the collection of Library Archives Canada. While photography was central to Dawson's accounts of the geography of the west, he was not the camera operator in the 1874 survey. There were four qualified photographers – sappers (engineer/soldiers) – employed by the commission that made their way over from England to take on this work. It is likely however the men accompanied him on much of his survey of the park space, and Dawson certainly traveled with the survey team. Dawson's desires are narrated through the resulting images: he was interested in making intelligible what had been until then, in his words, "geographically unknown." Dawson writes

The main geological result arrived at is the examination and description of a section over 800 miles in length, across the central region of the continent, on a parallel of latitude which has heretofore been geologically touched upon at a few points only, and in the vicinity of which a space of over 300 miles in longitude has – till the operations of the present expedition – remained geographically unknown (1875:vi)

The camera was harnessed as a perfect way to satisfy his aims and construct new spaces of visibility. Yet the visibility was uneven and the accumulation of photographs was unsystematic. Within the group of twenty-eight photographs from the park area, some photographs become key to the making of national park space, and are continually enacted in the present, while others remain outside of common sense with vantage points that are no longer initiated (as I take up in Chapter Five). That there are differences between images suggests that these images as a group are not reducible to a singular ideology. The images signal uncertainty. As Bruce Braun aptly points out, to locate differences between images and ambivalences within images, "the relation between colonialism and visuality becomes seen as somewhat less stable or direct" and thus to imagine alternative visualities becomes possible (2002:170). To slacken the account of the colonial gaze gives room for manoeuvre whereby other things can come into play, such as the influence of the non-human world into accounts. It is not so simple that a colonialist imaginary depicts the world, but rather there are relationships formed between place (non-human world), the body and technology that produce an image. The convention of photography, still arguably in its infancy in 1874, was



'Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore. 4 miles North of Boundary line and 757 miles West of Red River (August 1874)'
G.M. Dawons and the International Boundary Commission courtesy Library Archives Canada.

steeped in the possibility – and actuality – to produce a different kind of vision (see the well-known portraits by Julia Margaret Cameron – *Girl with Hands Folded 1864*, for instance – that call up an example of ghostly possibility). This is an experimental space encountered with experimental technology that produces a range of visibilities and natures, and these are pictured side by side in archives.

Uncertainty and the notion that vision, place (the contents of which are nature and resources), the body and photography are all for debate, and this is played out in several ways. In the mid to late 1800s there is a global imperial struggle about the nature of photography itself. In England (where the sappers were trained), Elizabeth Edwards finds that the inscriptive powers of photography and their potential were not uncontested, and survey photography was embroiled in key debates about the role of the visual, the “very nature and purpose of photography itself,” and the interplay between “the document, and the aesthetic and social expectations which cluster around it” (2009:5). This debate is heightened in Canada. Not only were the aims of documentation somewhat uncertain, they were compounded in the pursuit to construct geography out of uncertain space between Lake of the Woods and Waterton. They had to assess what photograph would be taken to best represent their needs for illustrative collections of natural history and geological features, but as well, it was understood that “circumstances alter photographs” as one writer reports in the *Canadian Militia Gazette* in 1885 (Greenhill and Birrell 1979:116). These circumstances not only alter, but they shape (and are shaped by) the archival record.

This is made clear in Birrell’s 1996 exploration of survey photography. He explains that the hot summer months and drought like conditions meant that few photographs were taken in the plains region. By the time the men reached Waterton, the conditions had changed. Entering the mountains with the chain of lakes and rivers meant an abundance of water for their photographic needs. Probably the combined ease in locating water and a more comfortable experience overall as the field season wound down influenced the number of photographs taken (Birrell 1996:118). They could afford to use up supplies and generally relax more, perhaps this meant to take pictures. As Birrell notes, normally dry diary entries became lyrical (1996:118). In this way, both subjectivity (a relaxed end of the field season state) and the ecology of the area (the availability of water for the processing of glass plates) are accidental conditions that could not have been predicted. These conditions set the stage for the events that would produce twenty-eight photographs that would make their way into archives, books, personal collections, scientific reports, government documents. These images – and the consequences and accident of this imagination - would be in continual circulation over the course of the 136 years between the moment that the sapper tripped the shutter to the present moment, bringing the space of Waterton into a particular visibility.

The photograph as event: “Waterton Lake Alta, from the north shore. 4 miles North of Boundary line and 757 miles West of Red River (August 1874)”

In late August 1874 Dawson and his men record the view that now carries the name the Prince of Wales Hill, and produce the image titled, “Waterton Lake Alta, from the north shore. 4 miles North of Boundary line and 757 miles West of Red River (August 1874).” The photograph is the earliest from this location that can be found in archives and is one of five images that were taken that day from three vantage points on the hill area and recorded onto a wet collodian plate by a 7 1/2” x 5 camera with a 6x5” rapid rectilinear

Went with

Van to Sea is beautiful little waterfall. Found
 it - gully, over which a new series of rocks
 that. Lake to be seen was full tomorrow.
 One fisher, just caught a Salmon trout in the
 lake today weighing 18 pounds.
 Scenery wonderful the lake runs away S
 among magnificent mountains.

Camp Westerton Lake 1.30 A.M.
 B. 75.10 N.W. part
 74° cloudy.
 c. 8. P.M. B. 25.15 Cold cloudy.
 57°

lens. While the survey carried 8x10" and a 7 1/2 x 5" cameras, by the third year, 1874, the smaller size image dominates the record. Birrell notes that the 1874 photographs "lack the drama and sense of space found in the larger photographs. This is particularly telling in the views made near the mountains and at Waterton Lake....It can only be assumed that the photographers were not carrying their large cameras" (1996:119). The larger camera demanded more resources (notably water and silver), and would have proven more cumbersome in the challenging terrain of the survey.

While the team is situated 4 miles north of the boundary line, the camera in "Waterton Lake Alta." points due south and therefore what is pictured within is the geography of the USA. While the photographs formed part of a nation building effort on the part of Canada, and an effort to demarcate boundaries and lay claim to the resources within, this image crosses the line. This is a transgressive view that captures the always contested geography. It shows what has become a classic view of Canadian wilderness, yet a good deal of the contents pictured is geography that is located in the USA. The geography of Canada thus includes a visualized, distant view of America. If these photographs were to help devise a structure for the country perhaps something else is being shown in this view than simply the geological features within. Wilderness is the limits, and perhaps this image denotes the space that will never be fully known by the people of Canada.

The ongoing relationship between the two countries and the attention to this particular border is predicted in this image. While the surveyors leapfrogged one another and moved freely between the two countries, they were demarcating boundaries that would become more deeply inscribed over time. While it is not visible from the vantage point of "Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore", the line between the two countries became material in 1925 upon the clearing of a six-metre border swath between the two countries that is maintained to this day. Yet the image also predicts the permeability of the border. As Catriona Sandilands points out, despite the metaphoric weight of the border, the geology, pathways, large carnivores, and economic history link the two sides (Sandilands 2006:311). Photography plays into this: The border is permeable to the practice of photography and links the two countries into one image.

An entanglement of art and science

An entanglement of the categories of science and art and the embodiment of a particular vantage point through the subjectivity of the camera operator produces an emergent photography in Waterton. The photographers draw on both conventions of science and art as ways to produce knowledge and visibility through photography. These images are central to the creation and maintenance of the premier category of nature in Canada, understood as wilderness. In his notes Dawson describes a structure for the country. Likely standing on the prominent hill from where "Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore" was pictured, he works on his description of the surrounds with a panoramic gaze. After two days of clouds "clinging round the peaks", the weather cleared. It is calm and partly cloudy, and there are "Beautiful effects of light and shade on the mountains...The lake a magnificent sheet of water long and river-like and running South a long way bordered by almost precipitous mountains" (1874:120). Several days later he describes the scene again, "scenery is wonderful the lake running away south among magnificent mountains" (1874:149). While Dawson is attempting to lay down a structure for the country, he is also able to find scenery therein. The word magnificent



means “of an immaterial thing: imposing, exalted, sublime” (OED online: 2010). Sublime is a state on the edge of reason: This is an aesthetic vision.

Magnificent also means wealthy: “sumptuously constructed or decorated”, and Dawson is charged with looking for evidence of economic value to structure the geography of Canada. In this view of the lake and the mountains that signify wealth: Timber is visible as far as the eye can see, water is in abundance, and the geology is interesting and complex, the geologically interesting folds of the Lewis overthrust visible in the distortions of Crandell Mountain. Dawson’s records have continuing implications for resources in Canada, As Charles Smith points out in the publication for the Geological Society of America:

Much of Dawson’s exploratory work was directed toward the search for coal and for information of use in constructing the transcontinental railway. As a result, a fairly clear picture of western coal potential emerged. He applied knowledge gained at the RSM to assess the potential for other mineral deposits, particularly placer gold. He implemented a series of periodic reports on the economic minerals and mines of British Columbia (Smith 2002:17).

It is the two meanings of magnificent – beauty and wealth - that are at the centre of the way that Waterton was pictured and narrated by Dawson and his men. “Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore” shows a large and unknown landscape using a wealthy focal length – an expansive view, from an elevated viewpoint - constituting a visual depiction of wealthy geography, a way of picturing Canada that has become an important concept to Canadian identity (Berland 1991).

Magnificence – as beauty and wealth – are united in such views through the notion of pristine. Value and power are found in the untouched landscape (Berland 1991), and to be pristine is to be separate, something natural, “unspoilt by human interference” (OED online:2010) a definition found as early as 1910 in Encyclopedia Britannica, “This presence of the pure, the pristine, the virginal in the verse, this luminousness, spaciousness, serenity in the land” (OED online:2010). The pristine is a key component of the myth of wilderness and neither art, nor science nor their correlatives undermine this imaginative vision of the space of the park. And pristine is, “of or relating to the earliest period or state, original, former; primitive, ancient” (OED online:2010), fitting the myth of wilderness as primitive, distant, original. To be pristine is to be the Garden of Eden. Wilderness in Canada found in the construction of national parks has always been related to the Recovery of Eden story. As Carolyn Merchant has noted in her important work on nature myths, “it is perhaps the most important mythology humans have developed to make sense of their relationship to the earth” (2004:2). These narratives become enacted in the landscape and the reclamation of nature comes at a cost, “These Edenic spaces ostracized those ‘others’ of different classes and colors who did not fit into the story” and the middle class “appropriated wild nature at the expense of native peoples by carving national parks out of their homeland” (2004:2). It is a well-known narrative in contemporary scholarship on national parks in Canada that recognizes that to make the spaces empty, pristine *terra nullius* was to create the conditions for their designation as national parks. The enactment of that narrative on the landscape meant the eviction of indigenous people from the land that they



After G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, b+w print.

inhabited. And whether or not this eviction itself was true, it also became a narrative¹⁵. Likewise this entanglement between art and science that produces a notion of pristine in photographs, becomes a condition that becomes the baseline from which to judge national park landscape (and photography) in the present. The photograph of “Waterton Lake, Alta., from the North Shore” is a nexus of scientific intent that is structured by standards of aesthetics and beauty that come together in documents about Canadian geography, and later Canadian National Parks.

The value of aesthetic experience gave the surveyors another way to lay claim to the space. The space of Waterton is not only full of resources, but it is also high art: an aesthetic, magnificent asset (they can find value in the space because it is commensurate with value and high art –to be framed and put on the wall). This sort of thinking is later reflected in parks reports such as this statement by His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught, printed in the 1913 Department of Interior Report of the Commissioner of Dominion Parks:

I do not think that Canada realizes what an asset the nation possesses in the parks. These areas have been preserved from the vandal hand of the builder for the use and enjoyment of the public, who may take their holidays there and keep close to nature under the most comfortable conditions, amassing a store of health which will make them the better able to cope with the strenuous life to which they return after their vacation” (1913:5).

Scott Herring finds a similar rhetoric at play in national parks in the USA, finding that “if a landscape is defined as high art, then any change in that landscape must be an act of vandalism” (2004:22). The origin of thinking of parks this way comes into play in the way that the space is depicted in early survey accounts.

The possibility of Waterton as an area protected from the “vandal hand” arrived with the survey crew and their depiction and inscription of the space into photographs and the text that helps narrate them. In 1872, two years before Dawson and the surveyors arrive to render the geography of Waterton, the first National Park, Yellowstone, was set aside as a protected area in the USA. Dawson and the survey crew would most certainly have heard about the establishment of Yellowstone and their experience is commensurate with the way that Yellowstone is valued, as a nation building pursuit, and an area worth establishing and protecting as a common place. In their photographs and texts Dawson and the surveyors claim and protect the landscape as resources and as high art. Through this vision and imagination Waterton is turned into a “living museum”.

Yet in photographic discourse of the late 19th century, art and science appeared in direct opposition. Artistic photographic practices were pitted against scientific applications and to have an association with one meant rejecting the other. As Elizabeth Edwards points out, “it was not merely that these photographic practices had widely different intentions and applications. They stood for very different social and moral values” (2008:8). Dawson and the surveyors were purportedly interested in the objective

15 To complicate the narrative of park evictions, there are, of course, a range of experiences: in the creation of Yellowstone an army enforced the eviction of locals. In the Waterton area, there is regulation around the federally controlled landscape, *and* indigenous groups have experienced continuity in their relationship with Chief Mountain and Sofa Mountain, for example (see Reeves 1994, 2007).



Walking to the end of the lake, after Dawson, 4x5 Pinhole Poloroid, 2007.

rendering of the landscape onto the glass plates. The approach of surveyors was purportedly to suppress “individual, subjective, aesthetic responses in favour of collective vision...and uniformity of production” (Edwards 2009:8). To draw upon the devices of art was to move away from faithful depiction into more evocative and expressive photographs (Marien 2002:171). Instead of embracing the modern vision that photography promised, artists strove for aesthetic experience and expressions of nostalgia for nature and simpler times (Marien 2002). At the same time, both art and scientific photography drew upon the same relationship to truth. The negative confirmed something that was really there.

Imagination and Embodiment in the Production of “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore”

Imagination and embodiment is key to the production of “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore.” There are several ways the imagination is deployed in photography. Standing behind the camera to make an exposure is first an imaginative act: The photographer must deploy his imagination into the realm of art, always an imaginative project, and produce an experience drawing upon aesthetics and the experience of the sublime¹⁶. The photographer also deploys his imagination for a photographic intent. That is, Dawson and his men imagine what the photograph they take will show. Not only is this a practice of imagining what the outcome of pointing the camera at will be, and translating the space into a photographic form (e.g. black and white glass plates), but also how it will be interpreted once out of the field, once removed from the space of the referent. This also includes the imagined potential of the space, the imagined wealth and resources. It was both actual and imagined resources that led the boundary commissions in Canada and the USA to form and agree to delimit the boundary between Canada and the USA.

The photographs are not just an acceptable way to make the space, “geographically known” but using photography, Dawson and his men constituted what was an acceptable way to see what was present. And these views come to be Waterton as well as help form a Canadian photography of protected areas. For example, the Royal Engineers photographic collection is made up of middle and distant vistas rather than close up views of botanical, geological, or geographical detail. While some of the decision-making around photographing distant views rather than details might have been technological (e.g. the lens focusing range) it was certainly the most practical way to claim the most amount of space as geographically known.

Yet what are the limits of this geographic knowledge? The photograph from the hill shows smoky haze from forest fires in the area, atmospheric haze, or an effect from the printer’s touch in the darkroom. It is impossible to properly see the details of distant mountains, or even the end of the lake. This slippage in the possibility of photography as a way to make something known is reflected in Dawson’s accounts of his fieldwork and frustration at a close examination of the lakeshore represented in the Waterton Lake photograph. He writes in his report:

16 In aesthetics, the **sublime** is the quality of greatness or vast magnitude, whether physical, moral, intellectual, metaphysical, aesthetic, spiritual or artistic. The term refers to a greatness with which nothing else can be compared and which is beyond all possibility of calculation, measurement or imitation (OED online:2010).

The southern end of Waterton Lake, I was, however, unable to examine in any detail, from the precipitous and impassible nature of the mountains surrounding it, and the impossibility, in the short time at our disposal, of making a serviceable boat or raft (1875:58).

Dawson set off to circumnavigate the lake in pursuit of a structure for the country. After several improvisations - attempts by foot, horse, and raft, he gives up¹⁷. Through this act, Dawson admits that the general wilderness view that his men produce in “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore” is not verifiable, and that a close-up view of the terrain that the image captures is impossible. As he goes to inspect it he fails: There is something there, but is not legible in the photograph or locatable in the field. Wilderness is everywhere and nowhere at the same time. And in this act he shows not only a frustration but hints towards the fear and unknown – this survey was harder to do than it looked. And it was harder to image onto the glass plates than it looked (or was later narrated). The image appears like an effortless click of the shutter.

At the same time, his emphasis on this event, found in both his journal and his final report demonstrates that he is engaged with an experimental space whereby the possibilities of exploring and examining could end up in failure. Indeed it could be said that he is generating space out of uncertainty, but that the uncertainty is a necessary condition to the creation of place. Tangled in a bog, he is bewildered, but from this experience he is able to shape a narrative and path for a future photographic act. Dawson can deploy his imagination through the photograph “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore” later firming of the experimental and illegible account into the imaginative space of possibility. The survey collection was printed by Notman and Sons in Montreal the touch of the printer’s hand smoothing out and softening the image and then it was passed between the various party members while they were writing their reports. One can imagine Dawson sitting at his desk, remembering the frustration of the clumsy raft, the photograph conjuring and eliciting the memory of an inability to circumnavigate the lake. Despite the hazy distance, the photograph can be narrated by the boundary commission: that the space was evident within, the structure of the country recorded, the images were both included in reports (notably in the appendix) and later archived in the Geological Survey of Canada, as well as in the GM Dawson fonds at The Library and Archives Canada.

The Picturesque

“Waterton Lake, Alta., from the North Shore” shows an elevated prospect point in the foreground, “looking down on a sunken middle ground”, with a water course running through it, and “onto a rising background that encloses or contains the view.” Following this definition of the picturesque aesthetic (MacLaren 2007:45), it is clear that Dawson and his men adhered to a set of conventions associated with art and beauty to structure

17 Dawson’s 1874 journal contrasts the language and breadth of the final report
Aug 25: *Thinking that the E-side of lake S of camp best place to see the lower series of rocks seen yesterday at the Cascade &c, & East also wanting to go over there for survey purposes accompanied him. Attempted to go round to a narrow place N of this & cross on horseback. Found the way so tangled and boggy that came back determined to build a raft. Got on slowly till about 1/3 over when light breeze sprung up ahead & soon reduced progress to nil. The water washed nearly all over the raft its power application so small. The traverse about a mile. Obligated at last to turn back & give up attempt with so clumsy a raft. (1874: 153)*



this photograph.¹⁸ Notions of picturesque beauty emerge from a romantic sensibility in the 18th century in Western Europe that was in direct opposition to the scientific rationalization of nature placing emphasis on such emotions as awe and the sublime, especially in the face of what was imagined/viewed as “untamed nature.” Like the aims of survey photographs, the picturesque is a form of control. Moving from enclosed vistas of England’s topography to the wide-open spaces of Canada required self-imposed visual boundaries. The camera offered viewers a way to handle the landscape as a “series of pictures” (MacLaren 1985), and therefore “proponents of the picturesque saw their environments in terms not of their all-encompassing geographical areas, but of individually segregated or framed landscapes” (Zezulka-Mailloux 2007:252). Dawson frames the landscape in his written account, “A very perfect double lunar rainbow visible about 8.45 P.M. The colour of the inner very distinct. The whole placed in exact symmetry over one of the ranges of mountains and looking like a gigantic frame” (1874:155). Dawson sees a picturesque landscape, a representation, or decoration.

Photographs of Waterton are a way to manage the unknown and make it known. It seems that this photograph of Waterton, harnessed for scientific use to illustrate the geology, botany and geography of the country is also high art, created in a way that fits into an idea of the picturesque and that literally can fit into a frame ready for a museum or gallery. There is no question that aesthetics were a part of science. It was not that Dawson provides a faithful record of the surrounds, but instead he constitutes what was present out of an entanglement of science and art. Despite the appearance of a struggle over the meaning of photography as art *or* science since the rise of photography in the mid 19th c, it seems photographs are always tangled in both registers. Therefore, Dawson’s photographs could be variously configured as both a scientific reflection of a real world, and a view of an awe-inspiring landscape: at once science and art can define the meaning of place. Together they form a way of knowing nature in Canadian National Parks. The coming together of science and art in photographs through the conventions of science and the picturesque were built into the original photographic act. The conventions of science and art converge in issues of power and control. Both conventions are a part of the legacy of the power of controlling vision and the body that came out of the 19th century.

Dawson and the surveyors do not only embody place from some sort of detached colonial gaze. Dawson clearly felt rapture in the face of the landscape. To make domination the whole story of his vision means that it becomes the whole story. Yet there are always other things going on. There are rebellious things alive in his experience – there is beauty and magnificence, there are nightmarish and weird things. There is a desire to order and make sense and to provide common sense. As Edney writes, the tourist of the 19th century was in pursuit of the picturesque, but it was something that “was an ideal and could only be uncovered by art which is to say by human agency and the active creation of the Picturesque by the observer” (1997:58). Dawson and the surveyors actively create “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the north shore” by an event generated out of improvisation, experimentation, imagination and embodiment.

Commensurability

Dawson and the surveyors bring the two registers of art and science together to allow

18 Certainly his views were also influenced by the conventions of landscape painting, which were found reflected in what he included as his photographic subjects (e.g. distant views).



After G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, b+w print.

for multiple ways of bringing the space into the known. In a space of uncertainty, they used multiple strategies and knowledge structures to produce a view of Waterton that they could comprehend. They make Waterton commensurate with their previous experience. They search for commensurability in the nexus of experience, representations and place. In particular they draw upon the picturesque convention as it is “one that appreciates landscape so far as it resembles known works of art” (Andrews 1989:129). It makes different places seem like one another, and “encourages us to edit out diversity, eccentricity, startling departures from the standard” (Andrews1989:129).

The surveyors search for commensurability in places that they have experienced before. Featherstonhaugh, the head of one of the units of the Boundary Commission, compared Waterton Lake with Lake Lucerne in Switzerland. This comparison resonated with the men, and Dawson notes the comment in his notes. The photographer likely draws his knowledge of Lake Lucerne, and the way it might be pictured, into his imagination and composes the photograph accordingly – a move to the east, a step north away from the edge of the hill to dip down, effectively lowering the height of the vantage point. This is a good example to show how subjectivity was always entangled with the



Figure 3.2 postcards of Lake Lucerne, Switzerland.

intellectual validity of photography and how photographs become articulations of the photographers own “desires, assumptions and perceptions, again validated through the reality effects of photography” (Edwards 2001:160). The search for commensurability has to do with a relationship between how they feel and how they relate a sense of place in conversation and the working of that subjectivity through the lens of the camera. Featherstonhaugh’s subjective desires – his longing for Switzerland are being realized. In this act of feeling and relating a previous experience to the present experience, the space is generated as that thing.

Imaginary relationships between places – Waterton as Switzerland – eventually become common sense and material practice in more than photographs. In 1933, the Prince of Wales Hotel is built by Great Northern Rail. It was built on the spot where the surveyors were likely camped that day, and the present-day structure interrupts my ability to replicate another one of the survey views showing Crandell Mountain, the geological folds hidden behind a steep roof, dormers and rustic beams. The hotel, famous for its Swiss style chalet architecture imitates the architecture found in photographs and



postcards of towns such as Trieb, found on Lake Lucerne. Lake Lucerne, a popular destination for travel in the late 19th century, was greatly valued for its beauty¹⁹. Waterton comes to be through a relationship to Lake Lucerne, one to do with feelings and emotions – a subjective rendering of a memory related to through conversation in a group and translated by the camera operator into a representation of space focused through the camera for scientific scrutiny. They are feeling something and they are relating it to something they already know and then they make it in that image. They are thereby in a hybrid space between imagination and embodiment that they depict as Switzerland in the space of Canada “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore.” Therefore, conversation influences photographs. While reason (e.g. the object that one can know) is privileged over experience (e.g. conversation) as having cultural value, confirmation of the power of conversation in shaping relations to cultural experience and social transformation is found in Featherstonhaugh’s utterance about Lake Lucerne. The messy contingency of photography signals photography is more than an image, object, or act: It is an event. Indeed, it is not surprising that there was conversation and agreement at the site of the photograph. As Elizabeth Edwards argues, the emphasis of the surveys was on the collective and on shared experience. The individual was to be suppressed for a collective vision and collective endeavour (Edwards 2009:8).

To investigate the coming together of light on the glass plate at a point in time is to try to look more closely at what is a given, taken as common sense. To Derrida, an event is artifactual, it is always something that is made and something full of presence (Lucy 2004:33). In this way we can think of the event as generative. The transformation of Waterton into something realized: resources and the picturesque through photography is an event that produces the myth of wilderness in Canada. The objective image is always generated by an event.

This commensurability between Switzerland, a space they had seen before, and the space they were encountering is perhaps another reason that so many photographs from the Waterton area can be found in the record. While crossing the prairies was arduous, making taking pictures more difficult than in Waterton, perhaps they were not able to fit the space into something that they had seen before. Spaces of invisibility persist in places that are outside of experience. They could not apprehend the space – and so there are no records for it. It remains invisible. That the survey was given an uncertain task – to take photographs of interest was without a firm method to overcome the limitations around what was photographable. This method (phototopographical survey) came at the end of the 19th century with the Dominion Land Survey and the work of Edouard Deville. Fieldwork in Waterton is a subjective space and photography is part of the technical apparatus that instigates conversation, makes the space visible, seen, known and possessed. In Waterton, the space was understood: it connoted wealth – geology, water, timber, the picturesque, places they’d seen before that had value such as Lake Lucerne. The accounts that were made could fit into a commensurate reality. They had no language – photographic or otherwise – for the spaces that they couldn’t attribute value to. They lacked a method to gain knowledge about, comprehend, apprehend and inscribe other views. In the views that do surface – e.g. the Belly River images that I will discuss in subsequent chapters – the photographic style is experimental and difficult to read. It is unclear what is shown, possessed and

19 Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata derives its name from an 1832 description of the first movement by music critic Ludwig Rellstab, who compared it to moonlight shining upon Lake Lucerne.

comes to be known in these images.

Thus what is photographable is something that the men working with the Boundary Commission have a sense of, something that they've seen before. The ability to compare the experience to something experienced (or seen) before in conversation influences the photographic record. Dawson and his men re-imagine this space in relationship to something that has come before, and use technology to capture it this way. Through this event they create a collective vision for what the geography of Canada is, one that carries into the present as the "real Canada" in Parks Canada promotional literature (Parks Canada: 2010c).

What Counts? The Production of Common Sense through Photography

Dawson and the surveyors produce knowledge in these photographs that fits into the discourse of geography, wilderness and nature in the geopolitical space that was to be Canada. At the same time they produce what becomes wilderness, a common sense idea that emerges out of a particular relationship between place, imagination and the body. The myth of wilderness, as a particular idea about this place, emerges as a relationship between unknown and experienced, pristine and lived in, the picturesque and resources. For us, it is emergent, it crosses disciplines, interests and desires to serve on different stages at different moments and sometimes different stages at the same moment. In this space of contest, *what counts* structures what emerges as common sense from the photograph, "Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore." In the creation of a particular and distinct visuality out of the space of Waterton the surveyors authored and authorized difference and this would eventually set the conditions for the making of the space as a government controlled protected area.

The nature that counts is not just revealed by one form of knowledge, science or art, but lies at its intersection. While asking 'what counts?', many constructions of nature find their way into narratives of Canadian identity. The event of the photograph is produced by a camera that generates a Cartesian perspectivalist image, and its association with survey and authority meant it was read as a common sense. Dawson's sappers operate the camera in a specific moment condensing aesthetic reflection, scientific inquiry, and economic and political calculations onto a glass plate coated in photo-sensitive silver to shape a view. The nature that emerges in this photographic object is geography becoming known and claimed, it is potential, it is beautiful, inspires awe, and is something worth saving and caring about. It is a collective experience, one that predicts the making of Waterton Lakes National Park into a common place for Canadians (for some Canadians: the declining middle class who use the park space).

Past Events

Dawson creates both the geography as well as the aesthetic that counts and becomes the way that national parks in Canada are imaged and imagined in the present. Past acts give us a way to control the experience and measure our own. And they become our measure of our aesthetic. These acts control and limit what constitutes wilderness and suggest what does not. Wilderness is what is found in the archive: distant landscape forms encountered using the Cartesian perspectivalist scopic regime, it is the beautiful softness of silver halides on glass plates printed on photographic paper and placed into albums.

The surveyors experience a lived in place, rather than empty space, yet their interest



lies in the wealth and in charting what they make into *terra nullius*. Their photography shows both what wilderness is, and what it is not: Wilderness is not close-up views of geological detail, portraits of people you know, indigenous guides, or existing pathways²⁰. While their photography denied these possibilities through omission, the conditions present in the landscape that allowed explorers and settlers to encounter the space of Waterton in a certain way, were set by indigenous experience. Carrie Mae Weems notes about what has come before, “We’ve all had our paths widened for us. We can all walk in the way that we walk because someone has been there before us. Leading the way. Making it possible.” (Art 21: Weems). Dawson and his men, surveying, exploring, and making the space into geography, resources, the sublime, were no exception. For example, both Charles Wilson’s 1861 view of “Boundary Pass” and Dawson’s images located on the slope of South Kootenay Pass document the vistas provided by walking on pathways inscribed over time by indigenous groups. Yet the political implications of their photography act as denial to the very access points that made the views possible.

While presence of indigenous dwelling in the Waterton area is illuminated in parks documents (including the 2010 Waterton Park Management plan), until recently the ongoing dwelling and experience of indigenous groups has been ignored for powerful narratives of indigenous presence as something of the past, and part of a natural evolution of the park space (for exceptions see the work of Barney Reeves). These narrations surface in reports such as the 1939 publication from the “Department of Mines and Resources, Lands, Parks and Forests Branch, National Parks Bureau” publication on Waterton Lake National Park, Alberta is full of photographs (by WJ Oliver), including images from the Prince of Wales Hotel Hill, and the text is ripe with nostalgia:

The region surrounding the Waterton, or Kootenay Lakes, as they were once known, was at one time a rich hunting ground, the home of the Indian and the buffalo, where the exciting chase and the clashing between tribes were the order of the day. The valley of Pass Creek, as the old-timers still call Blakiston Brook, formed the gateway to four routes over the Great Divide of the Rockies, equally accessible on foot or on horseback. Along its forested slopes have passed in turn Indians, trappers and traders, in the great cavalcade of events gone by (1939:5).

This discourse spreads the way for the myth of wilderness to emerge out of a lived-in space as a pristine *carte blanche*, a perfect landscape that was waiting for the conservation turn to protect it from loss. The surveyors have a hand in this narrative through their production of photographs that shows an empty, resource rich, sublime view, one that is put into the care of government, regulating and protecting it. This wilderness is inscribed with the discourse of scientific photography, one that includes tourists hiking the same passes and slopes, and these tourist are encouraged to “take only pictures, and leave only footprints” as an ethics of care.

Absence

Despite the experience of flux evident in Dawson’s personal journal and some of the

²⁰ Within the overall survey there are group portraits and more of a range of views, but in Waterton the space won out as the subject of views.

SURVEYING

Operations 1872-75

TITLE (North American Boundary

Commission) Waterfall North

Shore of Waterton Lake - 4

miles North of Boundary Line

and 757 miles West of Red

River [August 1874]

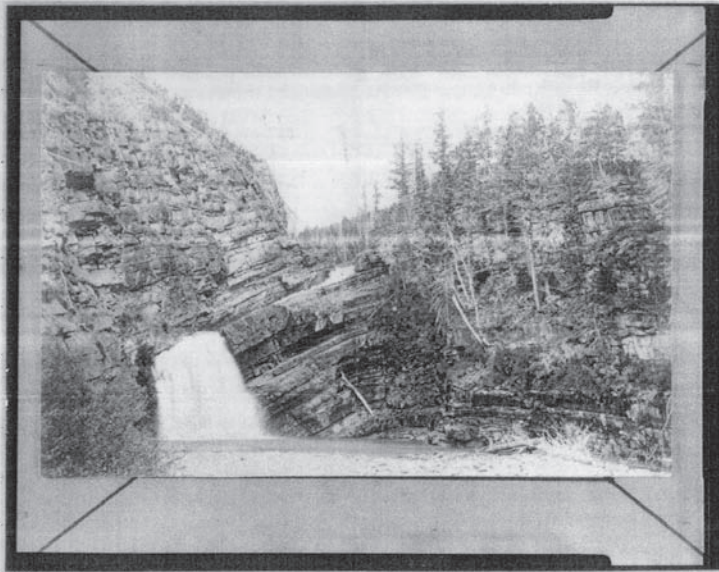
1974-66

ACC. NO.

North American Boundary
COLL. Commission)

NEG. NO.

LOC. Storage Case 17, No. 182



C 7089

C-142

more uncertain views (see chapter 4), it is views such as “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore,” that persist in the visual record. The absence of things counts as much as the presence – the negation of what might be there: dwelled in landscapes, a cultural history - is a powerful construction of the category of nature and protected areas in Canada. In this way the camera was being used for its instrumental potential “a silence that silences” (Sekula 1986:6). And to “establish and limit the terrain of the Other” through a generalized look (Sekula 1986:7). Thus “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore” is a construction that becomes the common sense of what landscape photography in Western Canada is, what photographs of national parks are. The photographs bring into existence uncharted territory that is empty and full of potential. At the same time, the sappers develop photography as a powerful practice to construct and experience nature in Canada. Over the years photography brings Waterton into fuller view, but this image constructs the logic for how places are made. The location that would define the space of Waterton is on a particular, specific hill, rather than a different promontory. Dawson and his men develop a practice of photography, and brought into view spaces that photographs can be made from. At present there are lines inscribed in the landscape that run east, west and north from the location of this photograph.

What Dawson narrated and the sappers pointed the camera at constitutes what is present in the park: their decisions continue to imbue/inscribe the geography of present-day Waterton. The photographs have inscribed the landscape and it has come into being through a relationship with the ensuing photographic moments: new photographs are made from the same locale, and these acts promote erosion on the hill, other pathways, the tracking of invasive species into the park that then shift the species composition in the area. More generally, the absence of photographs from other surveying locations – such as the prairies, and the sheer number of views that created Waterton as a resource-rich, geologically interesting, and picturesque place set the conditions for Waterton to become a protected area.

Multiple knowledge structures

How can the photograph still maintain legitimacy in the face of an entanglement between art and science and the associated dialect: subjective and objective, beauty and truth? If we consider the idea that nature is not bounded into “a discrete and separate object of aesthetic reflection, scientific inquiry, and economic and political calculation” but rather emerges as variously configured particular sites and specific historical moments (Braun 2002:12) then it is possible to have an emergent nature that is constantly crossing disciplines, interests and desires to serve on different stages at different moments. Dawson and the surveyors operate the camera in a specific historical moment where aesthetic reflection, scientific inquiry, and economic and political calculation touch down for an instant onto a photo-sensitive glass plate coated with silver halide chemicals that capture a spectral trace of the world using the technology that was part of the Cartesian perspectivalist scopic regime. Both art and science are linked responses to the same historical moment, and the same uncertainty, anxiety and desire.

The construction of nature is bound to a legacy of scientific and artistic ways of knowing, colonialist visions, practices and imagination, it is intensely political, always shifting, and embodied in the present. That the view is sustained in the same



Waterfall North Shore of Waterton Lake. G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission Survey, 1874, Courtesy Library Archives Canada.

photographic acts shows how photographic acts of the past affect photographic acts of the present and how over a century of image making has in fact shaped ways of seeing and being in Waterton Lakes National Park. The social practice of photography, including a continual legitimation of past photographic moments enacted in the present creates a system that transforms documents into monuments (Foucault 2001:6). What this history means to the structure of experience in national parks is that certain photographs, built out of colonial pasts continue to organize experience in the present (Braun 1997). The images that are associated with Dawson have been widely dispersed and circulated: While Andrew Birrell notes that they didn't have a prominent position in the final report, they have made their way into Dawson's reports, are bound in albums in several locations in the Library Archives Canada, and their inclusion can be found in memoirs written by biographers (see for example, Jenkins 2007). They were available for order by the men working on the survey as souvenirs, they were circulated unofficially as engravings, they are used by Parks Canada at present as qualitative information about the park ecology and cultural history, and in this research.

Ecological Integrity and Human Use and Enjoyment: The Dual Mandate of Parks Canada

Acts of control found in enacting place through photography become built into policy in the present. The result can be seen in acts of conservation that create and maintain the landscapes of national parks of "Canadian significance" premised upon a belief in the presence of wilderness, nature, and wonderful, magnificent scenery for visitors. The same acts of conservation emphasize ecological integrity, scientific study and investigation as a way to know the space. The Parks Canada Charter outlines this dual mandate of public understanding appreciation and enjoyment and ecological integrity:

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations (Parks Canada: 2010)

The dual mandate of parks Canada as ways to encounter and understand wilderness reflects the registers of art and science. This is a key point that emerged from this research program. The relationship between the dual mandate of parks Canada – that is, ecological integrity and human use and enjoyment, correspond to science and art. Just as science and art, they are entangled, in conflict, and are necessary to produce knowledge and understanding and experience of the world. It is through their entanglement, conflict and contest that meaning arises. Derrida finds that meaning making derives from a constant play of differences and issues from flux. Instability and difference characterize the world. Photography has always been entangled in debates around its status as truth or fiction and science or art. This uncertainty is what makes it such a charged ground for investigation. While it is useful to frame what counts and how knowledge is produced through these photographs, my fieldwork shows that the place of Waterton exceeds the interpretive frames we bring to it. National park space is more than science, and more than art, and both registers are necessarily drawn upon to begin to produce knowledge and to represent the complexity of place. This interaction creates a space of contest but also produces the possibility for multiple visions.

Tina Loo finds the modest witness haunts the present not just through representations



After Dawson and the International Boundary Commission Survey, 1874 Waterfall North Shore of Waterton b+w print 2006.

such as art, or writing, that we commonly draw upon when conjuring ideas of nature, but also in acts of conservation. The idea of wilderness preservation, found in spaces such as national parks, is a colonialist enterprise, one that places wilderness outside of history (Loo 2006; Cronon 1996). “Thanks to environmental action”, Loo writes, “art has become life” (2006:2). This focus on stillness and certainty of representations and place produced by the camera profoundly altered the space of national parks. The government produces a radical new and different space, what Eric Higgs (2003) has described in ecological and restoration terms as a “freak landscape.” The power of photography to produce this perception of stillness and fixity is produced out of a contested, uncertain and always shifting relationship.

Waterton is no exception. Like the Prince of Wales Hotel vista, Cameron Falls has been a prominent account in the photographic record starting in the survey of 1874. The waterfall is located in the present day townsite area and has remained a popular destination and photographic subject. After a major flood event in 1937 (the markings of the flood line still visibly inscribed on buildings), Cameron Falls lost its rapid flow of water over the cliff. The Park crew worked most of the summer reinforcing the north rock wall and building a diversion concrete dam (Goble 1976). The project involved dynamite to infill a large hole that was being dug by the churning waters, and drilling holes into the rock ledge, inserting steel rods and filling these holes with cement. As Frank Gobel (1976) describes in his history of the park, this one block of cement required the use of 1300 sacks of cement (1976:14-15). It took a great effort to maintain the sublime view, but this effort was hidden: The surface of the block of cement was covered with pieces of local rock and with the small flow of water going over it, the modification was rendered indistinguishable from the surrounds.

Because of these acts, and other prominent modifications such as fire suppression practices, the parks that are emergent today might look nothing like they ever have, and certainly not like they did at the beginning of the 20th century. They are distinctly and uniquely a product of a transformation of imagined wilderness into parks policy. Cameron Falls represents the attempt to still a picturesque view that could remain a place that people would go to and through taking photographs, provide a particular experience. Yet this experience is based on an understanding that the park was just waiting, latent, bounded in a state of “living museum”. Yet conservation and preservation are acts. They are purposeful management strategies that impose an ideology on the space that is Waterton Lakes National Park. Walking on a hiking trail just above the falls there is a view of the large cement dam in the canyon below visible through the trees. It is a confusing architecture to happen upon in a space that reads as pristine and enduring. Not only is the shifting materiality of the park space from non-human nature always at play, resisting the idea of an untouched wilderness but changing human practices in the park space, including these by Parks Canada dramatically alters the park space in concert with a host of other non-human nature. This undermines the idea of the myth of Eden as a perfect landscape. To be perfect is to be static, to be in a state that cannot be improved upon, one that is faultless. The expectation of what perfect is, and what it should look like, are at odds. Parks Canada’s idea to make the falls more vigorous is to fit pictures that people had seen before. The changing state of the park, as seen in photographs, is a deficiency, and undoes the expectations about looking.



Waterfall, North Shore of Waterton Lake, Polaroid c-print, 2005

Yet on the ground, these sorts of modifications make sense for the park. To protect some things means that other things will be destroyed, and at the same time, destruction of some things is necessary for the appreciation of other things. One of the most visible modifications on the landscape comes in the form of forests and the fire suppression policies of Parks Canada. Such practices have created an entirely different landscape than the one that was lived in during the turn of the century, or that was encountered by the surveyors and then depicted in photographs.²¹ Yet drawing attention to these changes is a way to show how the park is an emergent space, one that is emerging in concert with us.

To Löfgren, what the tourist in wilderness experiences is personal, subjective and mixed with historical and cultural understanding (Löfgren 1999). Problematizing wilderness in Canada, Higgs suggests that visitors have a predetermined, particular idea in mind of wilderness experience, and writes ironically that national parks in Canada might be more satisfying to visitors if they were imagineered, meaning bringing to wilderness in Canada “the distinctive Disney touch to vernacular experience” (2003:187). Suggesting it may seem that “Disney would do a better job of communicating park messages to a wider public”, than Parks Canada (2003:187) Higgs recognizes the hyperreality of wilderness spaces. The hyperreal is a product of the modest witness. In Braun’s discussion of how nature was authored by Dawson’s survey accounts, he describes how they were not translating a reality “out there” into text, drawings and photographs, but that these sorts of particular, political, historical, colonial, and scientific representations shaped a world. As such, our expectations of wilderness space are contingent on such representations. When our expectations are not what we are met with, we are left suspended between imagination and experience and representation.

This is the challenge of wilderness in Canada, what Baudrillard explains as the hyperreal, the simulation of something that never really existed (1983). Wilderness is simulation, to “feign to have what one hasn’t” (Baudrillard 1983:5). For Borgmann, the crucial distinction for nature and humans is not between the natural and the artificial but between the real and the hyperreal (1995:39). The hyperreal is “whatever is devoid of contextual bonds and hence freely, that is, instantaneously and ubiquitously, available is therefore subject to our whims and control and cannot command our respect in its own right” (1995:40). How can we live responsibly in a nature that does not command our respect, or even more, one that does not exist? While wilderness is a utopia and a dreamscape, it is one we visit (Löfgren 1999:65-70).

To study the particulars of history and to investigate the myth of wilderness as produced by particular people under particular circumstances is to return to a notion of embodiment. While re-articulating history to understand how wilderness in Canada is made, it is also crucial to identify ways that wilderness may be experienced. In a recent volume on the anthropology of tourism, Chambers finds that “tourism is one way in which people come to express their relationships with nature” (Chambers 2000:73).

When we follow our modestly witnessed accounts into the wilderness, it is impossible to find the wilderness Dawson and his men described, and so met with a disjuncture, a disappointment that wilderness is lost (it is no longer what Dawson and the sappers

21 Yet Dawson et al knew the landscape was in constant flux, and their diaries account for this – paths change, fires rage, wars are fought. It was not a sublime fixed moment.

Groundtruth Conditions		NAME > TRUDI SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER > DAWSON. IBC. PE COLLECTION > LAG / WLNPCd.	Date > August 29/07 time start: 7:15 time end: 7:46
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> point <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transect 183 / C-079753	
IMAGE & LOCATION DESCRIPTION	Dawson. A totally still day which I was hoping for but there's a breeze so these photos (#) will not be right. One I already have shot last year. I'll shoot but come back. This is on the edge of the hill at Row.		
WEATHER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sun <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cloud <input type="checkbox"/> rain <input type="checkbox"/> snow <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other breeze		
TIME OF YEAR	<input type="checkbox"/> spring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> summer <input type="checkbox"/> fall <input type="checkbox"/> winter		
CHANGE	<input type="checkbox"/> snow <input type="checkbox"/> water <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vegetation right here it's different.		
AUDIBLE SOUNDS	<input type="checkbox"/> birds <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wind <input type="checkbox"/> traffic		
VISIBLE FEATURES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other water lapping the shore		
	<input type="checkbox"/> horses <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> machinery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> pathways/trails		
	<input type="checkbox"/> people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> boats <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> roads <input type="checkbox"/> stream/river/creek town site		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mountain <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lake <input type="checkbox"/> falls <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prairie/meadow		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> geology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> flora <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fauna <input type="checkbox"/> other		
	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins colour dominants blue grey gold		
SPACE	<input type="checkbox"/> anterior space (the past) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> frontal space (the future) <input type="checkbox"/> other from heights.		
OTHER PLACES I LOOKED; OTHER SENSES	cold through my pants sitting on the ground.		
POSTURE	(what kinds of postures does the landscape suggest or require from its viewers?) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> standing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sitting <input type="checkbox"/> crouching <input type="checkbox"/> tippy toes <input type="checkbox"/> face to ground <input type="checkbox"/> prone <input type="checkbox"/> semi-prone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> heights		
FEELS... (QUALITY)	<input type="checkbox"/> peaceful <input type="checkbox"/> busy <input type="checkbox"/> popular <input type="checkbox"/> off the beaten track		
	<input type="checkbox"/> trail - in use/unused <input type="checkbox"/> commodified space <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> authentic encounter		
	<input type="checkbox"/> daily activity <input type="checkbox"/> awareness of environmental issues (educational)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Places people visit <input type="checkbox"/> Places people don't visit		
MOST IMPORTANT DETAIL FOR REPEAT	(LANDSCAPE FEATURE MOST USEFUL FOR REPEAT)		
WHY WAS KEYSTONE IMAGE-MAKER HERE?	hill slope (foreground) (although this hill has eroded).		
GPS	Surveying view? easy to get to, prominent point. 7mt acc pt 450 elev 1334mt 12602 x 7941 15437980.		
BEARING	174°S		
MEDIA FOR REPEAT IMAGES AND NOTES	digital, pentax b7, loc# 1587, 1586 shots: 1585, 1586		
GROUND TRUTHING RE-INFORCES IMAGE	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO weather, time of day are off enough so that it feels different.		

Ground-truth conditions, 'From the North Shore,' August 29, 2007

constructed, and of course it never was); we are compelled to modify wilderness to meet our desire for what we cannot have. Whether this modification manifests in behaviours that contrast “wild” with “mild” or “soft” resulting in an increased interest in extreme sports (Löfgren 1999) or in the hunt for the picturesque, or a sublime geography, or by making Cameron Falls flow faster, the discussion percolates over enhancing or diminishing the “greatness of the outdoors” (Löfgren 1999:66) - whether rock climbing, mountaineering, or finding new horizons in a car or train, with a “tingling restlessness” (Löfgren 1999:71). It seems that there is something about difference and the distance between representations and that which they purport to represent that creates a particular relationship with national park space.

Ground-truthing “Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore”: An investigation into the gap between representation and referent

To return to the photograph of “Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore”, Dawson and his men are not the only ones searching for commensurability. In my pursuit of these survey photographs, I am also looking for an imagined space. Their photographic event was infused with imagined ideas of Switzerland, the imagination of what an image might look like through the lens and on the glass plate. I come to this event with imagined ideas of the disembodied colonial eye, dualistic constructions of the world, the persona of Dawson.

I encounter “Waterton Lake, Alta., from the North Shore” first as a grainy photocopy, part of the catalogue collection from the LAC organized under Surveying>Operations – 1872-75. Accession number 1975-122, in the collection Dawson, G.M Located in Storage Case 42, No. 183, p. 42, album 2. Numbered as C-079753; and showing the number 183 in the lower left hand corner of the image. The copy shows a fuzzy landscape view of a calm lake bordered by mountains. It appeared to be shot from the top of a hill but from a low angle, owing to the detail of the foreground grasses and a squat, stocky tree. The lake disappears into the distance, owing to haze, the printer’s touch in the darkroom, or the poor quality of the reproduction. A short time later, I would secure a high quality digital copy of the image from the warden who I worked closely with during the time of this research, Rob Watt. The haze is still present, but owing to the common experience of haze I saw in the park over the years (from fire smoke, or water in the air), I imagine it is a record of atmospheric conditions. So that I could best locate the exact vantage point of the view, I printed a high quality version in black and white with a grid placed over top. The grid helped me feel certain – If I could just get the features and intersections in the right relationship, I would have the vantage point and be able to recapture place, to know something definitive about it. Where they stop on that day creates a view that makes Waterton common sense: standing in place with a copy of the historical photograph in hand, allows for the emergence of smaller scale knowledge and sensation about place and photography: In place, out of archives, and not in front of my computer. As Richard Sennet writes, “Simulation is an imperfect substitute for accounting the sensation of light, wind, and heat on site” (2008:43). He is making an argument for drawing, and thinks that the idea of “‘embodied knowledge’ is a currently fashionable phrase in the social sciences, but ‘thinking like a craftsman’ is more than a state of mind; it has a sharp social edge.” This thinking can be extended to think about studying photographs: “The tactile, the relational, and the incomplete are physical experiences that occur in the act of drawing. The difficult and the incomplete should be positive events in our understanding” (Sennet 2008:45).



Wind, Waterton Lake, 'Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore' Polaroid c-print, October 2004

This is a good description for the always unfinished pursuit of re-enacting an historical photograph, and the always unfinished pursuit to understand the emergence of place. My attempt at re-enactment generates a space between contact and copy (Taussig 1993). It is a sketch, a beginning, and necessarily partial. Indeed, the closer I refine my search, the more visible the gap between the present and the historical conditions. This filling in of detail is a product of the ironic play that emerges in a pursuit to get back to an historical photographic event.

August 29 2007 7:25-7:46

A comparative space always characterizes my encounter with place and photography in Waterton Lakes National Park. After three years and several tries to gain access to the view that Dawson and his men made into a photograph, it is early morning on August 29, 2007, when I arrive at what is now called the Prince of Wales Hill, owing to the Swiss style hotel that looms just behind me. It was early for a tourist space, just seven in the morning. It was a sunny day with light cloud, and although this is recorded in my notes, the clouds are barely visible in the photographs I made on that day. The vista was dominated by the blues and greys of the water, sky and mountains, and the golds of the grasses.

I had been there to re-enact this photograph several times before, sometimes alone and other times in groups. I had been watching the conditions over the course of two field seasons to try to get them as close to the original. On this day in August, dangerously near the end of my field season, I gave up on waiting. I wandered around on the hill, looking from a copy of the photograph to the landscape, sorting, sifting, walking, following pathways - both human and animal - and making my own. My complex choreography was guided by the commensurability between the copy and the original. This movement was visible to anyone on the east side of the hotel looking outside of their hotel window. I had a good general idea of the location of this image, owing to both my long term engagement with attempts to find this photo-point and the popularity of the vista in the photographic record.

I found a starting point to set my camera up. I bent over and looked from the image in hand and back through the lens. My attention brought out discrepancies - ridgelines that did not properly intersect - which forced me to move the camera slightly to the west. I lowered the tripod, as the image was taken from a low point. But these moves were not enough. It seemed things were out of place.

I stood up and gazed out at the lake. The most striking thing about this image is the weather. In the historical image, Vimy Mountain reflects in the calm waters of Waterton Lake, a reflection that is rarely sustained for long.

While I had rushed up to re-locate the vantage point of this image, I slowed down, disappointed. I sat down. I noted the cold of the ground through my pants. I could hear water lapping the shore and people talking, their voices carried on the wind. There was a light breeze from the south forming ripples on the water. I write fieldnotes, filling in the disjuncture. While it was unlikely that the camera operator had set a shutter speed faster than 1/25th of a second, (a speed which would cause the lake to appear smooth), the foreground vegetation shows only a small amount of motion blur, indicating a



Pathway up the hillside, b+w print 2008

particularly unique circumstance, a calm day. I had been waiting most of this summer, and the previous one, for an opportunity to capture this stillness.

I am interested in how the wind characterizes experience, but is largely absent from the visual record of Waterton. The weather is a social organizer: When it is windy, visitors stay inside. Likewise, in 1874, the wind prevented the survey crew from making a photograph. Dawson writes about cloud cover and wind, yet these do not show up in the photograph. One day he writes, “Lake under the influence of the strong and continuous south wind making a noise like the sea” (1875:155). And he and his men wait to make the photograph that makes its way into history.

As Tim Ingold points out, there is little scholarly literature that can be found on the question of how the weather impacts on practices of vision, “for the most part, you would think that there is no more weather in the world than in the studio, laboratory or seminar room” (2008:377). This is of little surprise. The legacy of the Cartesian perspectivalist scopic regime is the removal of vision from the body (Crary 1992). To Ingold, “weather is not what we have a perception *of*, it is rather what we perceive *in*” (2008:388). To consider that wind influences photographic event – the driving wind drives out picture taking, then it seems that photography, valued as direct and straightforward observation that emphasizes its unmediated inscriptive properties (Edwards 2009) actually indexes the *particularity* of experience. In Waterton, visitor experience is deeply influenced by the wind, and part of that influence is upon the movement to take a picture, or not.

Weather is unpredictable, despite the profusion of weather prediction information available. In Waterton, weather reports are important to the experience of the park’s mountain environment. Environment Canada’s weather report is found on the Parks Canada site, at the visitor information centre and at the various cafes and restaurants around town.

The photo location is found at a popular viewpoint in Waterton in the present, perhaps the most popular location that visitors encounter. Buses with loads of tourists stop at this spot, bike tours converge here, high tea is served in the hotel lobby affording a view of the viewpoint. Hotel guests can amble out of the hotel to this point and carry on down a rustic pathway to the main townsite. Standing at this promontory, more often than not the wind is the most important feature. Large groups of people stand to take in the scene and photograph it as a landscape or encourage family members to pose in front of it when it is relatively calm. Then the rise of the wind (which can happen quite quickly) visitors rush away, the location becomes empty. It is not unheard of for the small light pieces of reddish brown shale to lift off the ground in the wind, pelting viewers of the scene. I have witnessed the change in experience between stillness and the rise of the wind, and I have felt the sharp sting of shale hit my body. Wind mediates and influences our experience, our emotions, and our thoughts. The Prince of Wales hill is the wind and the relationship that people form to it at that time.

Wind is a shared event between visitors to the hill. It brings up an awareness of inside and outside, convenience and disruption: “Weather is the condition that mediates between our bodies and the landscape that (as it is so often claimed) defines Canada as a distinctive culture. In some weird way, we are our weather” (Berland 2009:212).



Ground-truthing 'Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore' digital snap

Locals and tourists alike complain and joke about the wind, and the biography about the Prince of Wales Hotel aptly named “High on a Windy Hill” (Djuff 1999), reports that the hotel sits at an angle owing to the driving wind causing the building to shift on its foundation. The whistle and moan of the wind through a more than two-hundred dollar per night room is part of the rustic charm and the experience of the vista. It is authentic wilderness experience. In this way a vista is produced, “a connection between the disparate material phenomena with which and through which we live, the plants and animals, landscapes and artefacts that surround us...” (Tilley 2004:31). The Prince of Wales hill vista is emergent, and conditions co-produce the place in highly specific ways. Keith Basso’s work with the Western Apache is useful to think about here. Basso finds that places are evoked through poetic meaning: utterances, stories that “animate the sensuality of place as both a landscape and a soundscape” (1997:9). Waterton is more than a landscape in terms of a silent view and representation, but is a multisensory *scape* – an impression.

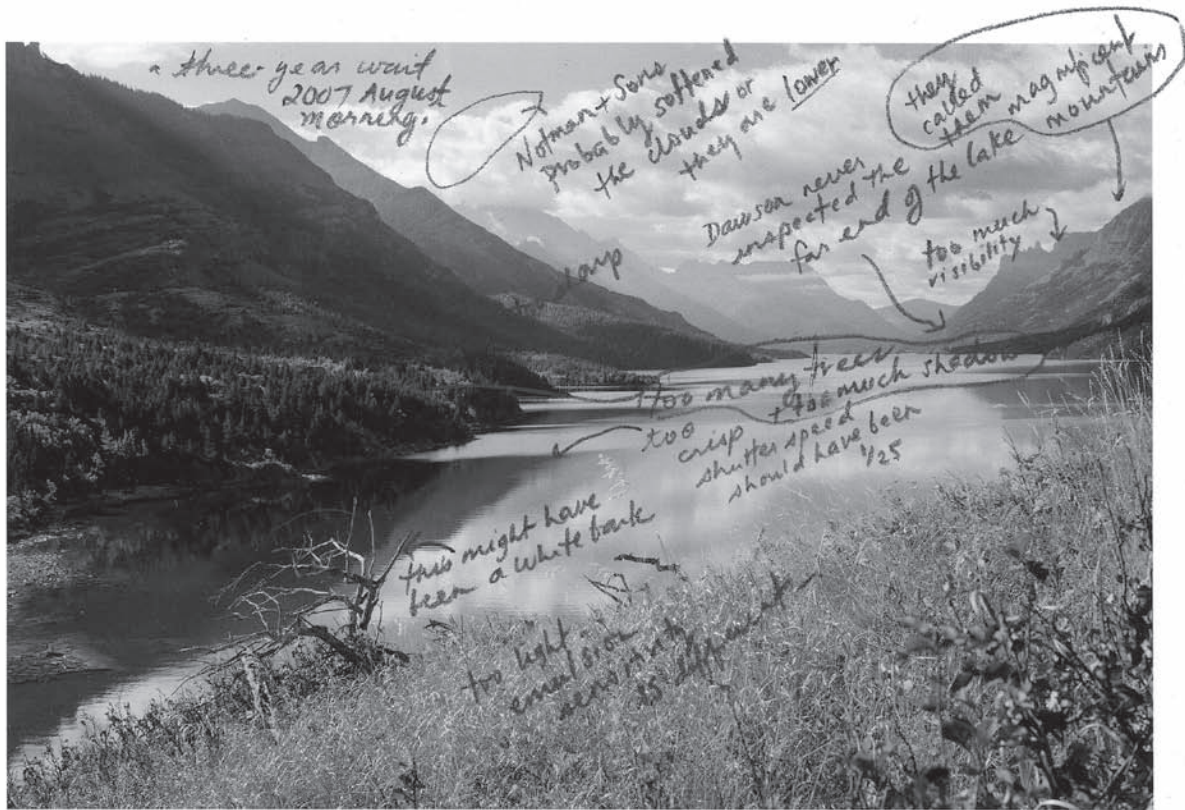
Photographs are linked to this multisensory scape. Photography in Waterton is produced in the summer months, on calm days. The hotel is closed in winter and the park experiences little visitation except for a few ice climbers and cross country skiers. There are only two lodges open offering cross country ski packages. Winter is not strongly represented in the archival record nor in the popular postcards circulating of the park.

On that day in August, I was focused on the minute conditions that did not match those in the photograph: disjuncture and uncertainty coloured my experience. I took pictures anyways, and the wind taunted me, rising over the time I placed my camera and looked through the lens. The Prince of Wales Hill vista was at once so similar and so different to what Dawson and his men produced: I packed up my gear and left.

September 6 2007 9:30-10:15

It wasn’t for another eight days that I would get to attempt this re-enactment again. I awoke to low cloud over the mountains, a heavy cloud that restricts visibility, yet it also marks a calm. The weather that Dawson experienced was much the same, as he describes the clouds concealed the mountains for days before lifting to show the space found in the photograph. As the cloud began to burn off I headed towards the hill. I walked out the back door of the Parks Canada research house I was staying in and headed through the town passing motels, restaurants and shops. I circumscribed the shoreline, past picnic areas and benches facing the lake, onto a path that passes the employee housing for the Hotel and arrived at the top of the hill just before 10 am. I attempted again to relocate “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore.” I didn’t immediately approach the vantage point I located a few days before, but rather started the process again, walking around, glancing from my gridded image in hand to the grasses, the hill slope, the sky, the mountains, the hotel, and the other people. I started again because something about this vantage point weighed on my mind.

Initially I was confused by the low to the ground position nestled back from the edge of the hill. If it was windy on that day, it seemed common sense to position the camera at that vantage point. The inclusion of foreground detail would then signify an incidental inclusion into a scientific account. However, the evident stillness of the day meant that the foreground vegetation signified something else.



After Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, 'Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore

Mark Klett writes about repeat photography: “surprising discrepancies between the place as we expect to see it from the 19th century photograph and our experience of the scene today are not always a function of time and change,” instead, as Klett goes on to note, it is also sometimes a case of angles rarely seen by most viewers (1984: 22). I tried in my research to hold onto some of the surprise and confusion of the encounter, to become bewildered and to highlight the discrepancies of place in order to illuminate and gain insight into the taken for granted or common sense elements of encounters between national parks and photographs. This was a productive way of thinking, as an attempt to stay bewildered provided a possible way out of these singular colonial representations that have circumscribed place. What other ways might these images be read?

And so I was surprised by my position, rather than on the edge of the hill, which I consider common sense, I was located a few steps back and nestled in brush. The most important detail for the repeat in terms of foreground detail was the shape of the hill slope. That the hill slope had eroded was a possibility. Yet the vegetation I stood in seemed more in line with the historical image. My fieldnotes for the day express that generally people are re-enacting this historical photographic event, but less often from this exact vantage point. Tourists stand to the west several meters, in a more prominent location. But for some reason, Dawson and his men stopped here. I set the camera on the tripod and looked through the viewfinder to draw together a relationship between imagination and practice, form and temporality. I leaned forward to look through the viewfinder and suddenly it snapped into view. The curve of the hill lined up, and through my viewfinder there was a dead tree on the right. It seemed I was at the vantage point.

Photography is an imaginative act and, like Dawson and his men, I had to imagine what would be recorded on the film and how light would play off of the surfaces. I tried to peel apart my common sense from a contemporary reading of these images which is ripe with all other readings of these images through time – by government, historians, theorists and tourists – the common sense that was generated through history. What sense is common to here? What common sense were the surveyors drawing on and how is it different? This position is crucial to illuminating the way that visuality and the visual field changes over time. This foreground detail was brought to my attention by its insistence – it is the problem of place out of place. It seems common sense is perhaps not so common. Like the wind, the inclusion by Dawson and his men of the foreground brush becomes key to understanding the way that ecology, visuality and photography have changed in the past 125 years, and how common sense is a shifting concept. To play with what goes beyond the colonial rationale for photographs allows for me to capture some of the contingency of accounts. The story that comes through history is not the only story, and perhaps not even the one intended at that time. There were other things going on.

On the left hand side of the 1874 photograph, a small, windswept tree was noticeable in the foreground. This foreground brush was most likely included because it created a picturesque view of the surrounds, generating a photograph that signified wealth not only through resources but also through artistic conventions. In the 2007 photograph, it was possible that the same tree was in the same location. It was dead. A park ecologist thought it might be a limber or even a whitebark pine, which signals something very



The Prince of Wales Hotel hill, b+w print, 2008

different today than in 1874. Recent attention to this species by Parks Canada has transformed the picturesque into an issue of ecological integrity. A species at risk, the white bark pine today is read as a keystone species and an important food source for bird species, notably the Clark's nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) which is thought to have co-evolved with the pine. In the subalpine the tree plays an important role in watershed protection, providing soil stability (Smith et al. 2008). As I have shown in previous research (Smith 2004), the way we read and narrate photographs changes over time. This narration is entangled in the registers of both art and science.

The foreground vegetation comes out in very dark tones owing to the sensitivity of emulsion of the period. Indeed, many of these emulsions were blue sensitive, thereby wiping out the sky detail, and photographers made use of "cloud negatives" to enhance their photographs (Birrell 1979:113). While it is evident that they didn't use a cloud negative on this image, or if they did it has faded, the sensitivity of the plate is clearly skewed towards red, thereby enhancing foliage in the foreground. The background is hazy, and although I attribute this at least in part to atmospheric haze, Andrew Birrell points out that Notman and sons were hired to print this collection. Operating for 78 years (1856-1936) and at its height employing over 40 photographers the studio was influential in the making of visuality in Canada. They created scenes that chronicled Canada for tourists as stereoviews, postcards and portfolios (McCord Museum:2010). There is little doubt that the techniques employed in the darkroom were the same techniques that they used to produce commercial portraits and landscapes and in this way enhanced the qualities of light and tone to help make the "Waterton Lake" photograph fit a particular visuality, one based on aesthetic views with a commodity value. The composition – an inclusion of foreground detail – signals an interest in pictorial conventions in the early 20th century as I discuss earlier in this chapter. It was this convention that made the location difficult to make commensurate with my expectation of survey photography. From a contemporary perspective, survey photography is understood to be an attempt to focus on mid and distant views, to gather as much information as possible and using a wealthy focal range. A more common sense view from my contemporary perspective would be to stand at the centre of the Prince of Wales Hill a view that affords a balanced view of the surrounds, and this is the view pictured in most contemporary photographs. Yet with a different aim this first view is based in pictorialist conventions and this influences its vantage point.

Looking from the image and through the lens my common sense around this view changed. Suddenly, as the vantage point snapped into place, and as the calm conditions brought a comparison between the representation and that which it represented, I had insight into the manipulation of this view to create a picturesque, beautiful, calm view. I no longer saw the image as a scientific survey record that attempted an impartial, objective eye, that easily recorded what was there, but rather through the lens, the sublime slipped into view, manipulated in time, by waiting for weather, in angle, by shooting from further back on the hill and low from the ground, manipulated by emulsions that lent drama to the foreground vegetation, and in the darkroom, printed by a commercial studio that aimed to make beautiful, award winning prints.

I gazed through the lens, lining up the way that features intersect one another so that my view through the lens was just as Dawson and the surveyors view. I could hear



Ground-truthing 'Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore'

crows and grasshoppers, sounds that could easily become drowned out by the wind. I heard an eerie voice float across the water. It was the voice of the boat tour operator amplified both by their system and by the acoustics of calm water. I hurried to make the image as the motorized boat was about to slice through the calm glass water of the lake. I pushed down on the shutter and the mirror lifted out of the way to make the exposure, obstructing my view through the lens for the duration.

The vista produced in the surveyor's photograph is found in the coming together of where they stood, calm, light, time of day, and time of year. Dawson and the surveyors waited for these conditions to coalesce and take it in such a way – mixing the structures of art – the picturesque – into their scientific accounts as a way to disavow the wildness around them. Indeed, the space Dawson encountered was unruly and in flux, and his diaries recount falling trees that reroute pathways and make travel difficult, painful and slow, the danger of raging fires that they or other travelers set and have to put out, the violence and death of wars that are being fought, sickness and accidents that injure. All of this is present in their experience in this landscape. Despite this unruliness, or because of it, "Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore" enters the archive and the landscape Dawson describes in his journal as "nightmarish & weird" is calmed and ordered and presented as if it was easy to do. But as I explore here, it is not so easy, to draw the conditions together. In images they tame the everpresent uncertainty and unruliness of the world to construct the geopolitical space of Canada.

And yet I am not alone re-enacting this previous photographic moment. To return to the beginning of this chapter, I am standing near a small group of people who each stand with cameras pointed down the lake. Like me, they re-enact a previous photographic event. Together, and for a moment, we form a community of practice: We bring our singular and non-repeatable experience up against the camera, a technology based in repetition. Derrida finds a paradox between event and repetition, one that emerges as *différance* which "refers to this relation in which machine-like repeatability is internal to irreplaceable singularity and yet the two remain heterogeneous to one another" (Lawlor:2010).

To attempt to re-enact "Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore" is about connecting to a story that is larger than one person (Weems 2009). It is not only that we expressively engage national park places through walking, reading guidebooks, comparing and contrasting experiences, searching and organizing, but we also come to know the history of photography through our bodies. We come to better understand the landscape we are a part of – that we have encountered, worked on and travelled through in a particular way with a camera over the course of the last 136 years. It is a way to come to know more about how images produce visibility, and what this visibility is premised upon. The 19th century model of vision naturalized via displacement of physical and sensory experience that was understood to capture "pre-given world of objective truth" (Crary 1992:39) can be usurped by attempts to reenact a photograph. It is up to that person reenacting a view to agree with the truth of the photograph, or not. In the next chapter I will show some of the complexity produced out of re-enactment and ask, what emerges out of the paradoxical tension between event and repetition? How does this act produce the myth of wilderness in Canada?



Chapter 4: Re-enacting historical photographs

In this chapter I explore how photographic accounts follow a similar vantage point and logic to the 1874 International Boundary Survey photograph, “Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore.” This is not an accident. The repetition of views and continual re-enactment of photographs is not only supported in materials I have found in local, national and international archives, but also in photographic events I observed by visitors to the park. The persistent re-enactment of photographs is a way for people to generate a particular relationship to wilderness and national parks space. Photography is a communicative act, it is a way to form a relationship with others (including non-human others) through technology.

There are two paths I attempt to trace through the re-enactment of photographs in this chapter: First, I focus upon photographs made by professional photographers from the Prince of Wales Hill during the early part of the 20th century. I am particularly interested in how the photographic imaginary of “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore” is appropriated and how it is reenacted for conflicting and contradictory purposes. I ask, what way do photographers re-enact the view and help make it permanent? What ways do they contest and contradict Dawson and the surveyor’s methods and views? How do the images made from almost the exact location speak very differently to the maker and their audience? That is, how do images from within a few feet of one another and within a few decades of one another have a material form that changes their meaning? I focus on the panoramic vision of Bert Riggall and the vernacular postcard style of AE Cross Studios who each produce their own sensibility of place from a similar vantage point on the present day Prince of Wales Hill. In this section I use my own re-enactment of these photographs to mark the incremental shifts that indicate incremental changes in vantage point and visibility in Waterton Lakes National Park. I am interested in bridging a gap in many accounts of photography, that is, to ask, what effect do the physical processes of different photographic practices have on the meaning of the images represented?

Second, I discuss how the initial photographic encounter and then persistent re-enactment from almost the same view is a way for visitors to the park space to generate a particular relationship to wilderness and national parks space. I explore how self and national park space are refigured in the process of encounter and performance with a camera. My research observing photographic acts taking place on the Prince of Wales Hotel hill as well as my own experience re-enacting a range of historical photographs from this locale found that the photograph contributes to the configuration of the body in national park space. I describe some of the reasons that people converge on a particular spot to take a photograph.

As I will show in this chapter, tourists, locals and professional photographers stabilize the view from the Prince of Wales Hotel hill in the photographic record. Most visitors arrive in the summer months and walk up to the photographic location within a few meters of the original International Boundary Survey photograph. They face south and view the surrounds using the technology of the camera. Many of the photographers stand within meters of one another, and from the height of the edge of the hill, gaze south and record the lake framed by the mountains. They take a photograph that re-enacts the surveyor’s image that was meant to make the world geographically known. This re-enactment includes composition that draws upon aesthetics and the production of knowledge of the world that were meant in direct opposition to the scientific



After The United States Geological Survey, b+w print, 2006

rationalization of nature. As these same ways of viewing continue into the present day, they are a part of the aims of the past – exploration, territory claiming and nation building. They bring all of these contradictory and contested meanings into a present action. The landscape is brought into being by events rather than a set of objective things out there waiting for us.

Beginnings: Survey Photography from Both Sides of the Border

The powerful performance that produced the survey photograph “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore” in 1874, was re-enacted by the United States Geological Survey in 1901, under the charge of Lieutenant Bailey Willis. As the USGS worked to fill in descriptions and surveys of the geology of present day Glacier National Park and surrounds in Montana, they traveled through the Waterton area to assess the economic potential. Willis is an important figure in the way geology was understood in the area and provided the first description of overthrust faulting. The prominent Lewis overthrust visible on Mt. Crandell on the north west side of the lake would have been of great interest to him. However, this geology is not what is pictured in this photograph. Instead, like Dawson and his men, Willis stood on the hill to describe the surrounds. And although the vantage point for this account is found more to the west side of the hill, Willis and his men re-enact Dawson’s account by constructing a classic picturesque view: Looking down on a calm lake that is framed by mountains. Perhaps this photograph – reenacting the 1874 surveyors view - was a way for the Americans to re-capture the gaze and re-possess the wilderness found in Dawson’s description.

The USGS re-enactment marks the beginning of the proliferation of photographic accounts from this locale. Within the first two decades of the 20th century, photographic accounts are circulating around the world and drawing visitors to the area into a particular relationship with Dawson and into re-enactment. Confirmed by searches in archives and on eBay, this is one of the most common views produced in postcards and photographs that can be found to come under “Waterton” and thus it is this view that produces a visuality of “Waterton.” This visuality becomes deeply entrenched in tourist photography as this view is in constant play and to visit and take photographs from the Prince of Wales hotel hill vista becomes part of tourist culture in Waterton.

Incremental Shifts: The Outfitter Sensibility of Bert Riggall

The hill locale is the site of a shift in visuality in the early 20th century. The first account to emerge that signals a clear move away from Dawson’s intent of geological description (but still haunted by it, and materialized in relationship to it) towards a more concrete tourist promotion is by Bert Riggall, whose panoramic picturing of the park is a vision grounded in the production of an outfitter identity. Bert Riggall’s photography in the Waterton Lakes area spans from the time before the park was formally demarcated in the early 1900s through to the early 1940s. He used photography extensively to document the area that became Waterton Lakes National Park. Riggall is a well-known figure in southern Alberta history and worked for a variety of government agencies, as a hired hand, as the co-owner of a tent camp business, but he was best known for his pack train, hunting and fishing business. His work as an outfitter guiding clients from local (Pincher Creek) and international (New York, Philadelphia) locations provided them with the experience of camping and hunting in the area including that of Waterton Lakes.



After The United States Upper Waterton Lake', Bert Riggall Kodak Panoram early 20th c Survey, b+w print, 2006. Courtesy Waterton Lakes National Park Archives.

Bert showed us the tiniest flower in the grass to the best view to be had from the high mountain peaks, we were saved from becoming as hard as the concrete canyons we live and work in by being shown the natural beauty he loved in the outdoors (tourist Morris Tyler in Burton 1990:66).

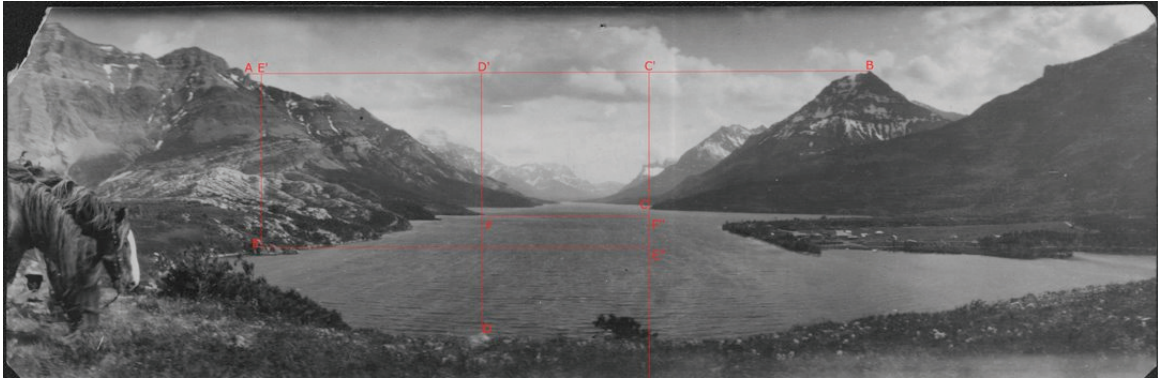
The exchange with his clients also benefitted Riggall as he advertised to hunting clubs and nature magazines and his business thrived through word of mouth. His clientele included prominent and powerful families in the east as well as artists such as Phillip R Goodwin who employed Riggall as a guide while in the area on a sketching tour for Ted Roosevelt's book about African Safari (Burton 1990:np). Undoubtedly the conversation between Riggall and his clients was generative to an understanding of the wilderness they inhabited. His son-in-law Andy Russell illustrates:

Bert Riggall was a great mountain guide, but I never thought of him as a teacher till after his death. Then I realized what a talented instructor he was and how fortunate I was to have shared the same fires, trails, mountains, and observations with him for ten years. He did more for me than just explain; he loaned me books to read from his sizeable private library during the long winter evenings, and afterward we often discussed what the authors had to say and whether or not their interpretations were correct. It was all very subtle... (1984:117).

Riggall's photographs embody a particular interest in vision, a vision that brought him to Canada from England in 1904 in a desire to, as he wrote in his diary, "see what the Ram sees" (Burton 1990:5). In his biography his daughter Doris illuminates how he would have brought the influence of European visuality to this space, his childhood holidays with his parents in Switzerland provokes his comparison upon seeing the Rockies from Calgary, "A Canadian Switzerland, I shall go no further" and then traveling through Waterton working on a land survey in 1905 he re-iterates, "A Canadian Switzerland, I will take up a homestead here" (Burton 1990:10).

Riggall was an avid photographer and produced a large number of images to promote his mountain business and to promote Waterton as a national park. He took pictures in the summers and worked in his darkroom during the winters (Burton 1990), and often printed the photographs onto photo card with print on the back to be circulated as postcards. He used numerous camera sizes and dimensions to produce his vision, and his commitment to photography while guiding stimulated the fixing of a tripod mount (a threaded screw) to his saddle horn for the ease of photographing using his panoramic cameras that required a tripod. His images were circulated widely – not only his images of outfitting camps, but both images and articles are published in magazines including a photo of his daughter that he takes which becomes the cover of the United Grain Growers Guide. His importance as an historical figure in southern Alberta has meant that his photographic collection and notes are archived at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies. The images remain important, and at the time of writing this text, a set of seven images from his Panoram no. 4 are up for auction eBay, by a seller located in Boston, U.S.A.

His photographs were used for promotion and as client souvenirs and his interest in recording the vistas predicts the vision of conservation that would move from outfitting



Ground-truthing 'Upper Waterton Lake', 2008

with guns to cameras. Eventually, his son in law Andy Russell would move from outfitting and hunting to take on this vision as a nature writer, filmmaker and powerful advocate for conservation and wilderness in Alberta. In the darkroom, Riggall produced numerous copies of his photographs and they are widely dispersed throughout North America and in Europe, especially in England where he had business ties. The production of his photographs varies and this is confirmed by his addition of a title (a darkroom addition) on some of the photographs, while the same photographs surface without titles.

His photography extended beyond the scope of his own business, into national affairs. The 1913 Report of the Commissioner of Dominion Parks aims to illustrate the significance and necessity of parks. Two photographs are produced for this publication by Riggall showing a rudimentary road with a horse and carriage and a view of Upper Waterton Lake framed by trees. They provide evidence for the written recommendations for improvements to the park by Riggall's friend, the legendary John George (Kootenai) Brown, who was the Forest Ranger in charge of Waterton Lake Park. They report the small park has infrastructure - roads and bridges and that it will "become the popular rendezvous of the people of Southern Alberta" given certain improvements (1913: 88). The images also form part of an appeal to extend the boundaries to include "a large portion of the Forest Reserve, which is lying dormant and adjacent to the United States Glacier National Park, thus converting the whole forest and park area into a game and bird sanctuary" (1913:30). While the regulation of the park into a sanctuary would limit Riggall's hunting and guiding activities in the park boundaries, the demarcation of a national park, and a more inscribed place to visit would certainly help draw clients: Through this demarcation, including the naming and boundaries, the government had the power to transform the land "lying dormant" into a something else, a "game and bird sanctuary".

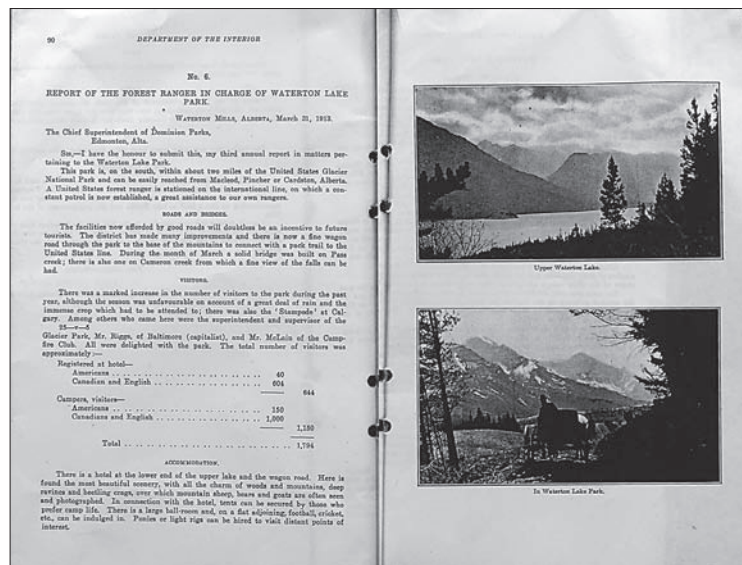


Figure 4.1 1913 Report to the Commissioner of Parks, photographs by Bert Riggall.



Ground-truthing 'Upper Waterton Lake' Polaroid, 2004

As an outfitter, Riggall tracked the Rocky Mountain Sheep, (and other charismatic megafauna) and I track Riggall. I attempted to re-enact numerous Riggall photographs that were produced by several camera types ranging from 4x5" press cameras to his folding medium format Kodak, but it is his panoramic vision and resulting images that are of interest here, and in particular, for the discussion in this chapter, his panoramic view from the present day Prince of Wales Hill. Riggall photographed numerous views from the Prince of Wales hill, before the hotel was in place, as well as after its construction beginning in the 1920s. The construction of the hotel by Great Northern Rail would draw more tourists from the U.S.A and would certainly make travel easier, but would signal a change in the way tourists traveled into the park space. While it might seem that Riggall's outfitting business would be lost in the transformation, his identity had a clear place in the commercial promotion of the park. In early advertisement for the hotel in Waterton by Great Northern, "The New Empire Builder" tourists could use the hotel as their stepping off ground to a wilderness experience:

This summer meet up with the Old West in this playground that straddles the Great Divide and the International Boundary – where scenery and sports are equally colorful! Go places in hiking boots, saddle, or bus and lunch – do things you've never done before. Ride, fish, climb, camp out, explore – and enjoy true Canadian hospitality! (In collection of author).

Riggall's business guiding would provide the horse trips and camping out experiences for the new travelers to the park. While he was known for carrying a folding Kodak slung around his neck and resting in his pocket (Russell 1984), Riggall's use of two styles of panoramic camera signals his commitment to panoramic views. The Panoram no. 1 (1900-1926) was the smaller of the two producing negatives just over 5.71 cm x 17.78 cm and a 112° angle the Panoram no. 4 (1900-26) at 8.89cm x 30.48 and a 142° angle. Both figure prominently in his visual legacy. Both cameras work on a lens system that swings on an arc.

Taken the same year that the Prince of Wales Hotel was built, Riggall's view from the hill can be found on some copies of the image with the title, "The Upper Lake, Waterton Lakes Park, S.W. Alta." It is photographed with the Panoram No. 1. The Panoram no. 1 promotes an impossible view to human vision. When I first attempted to re-enact this photograph I could not find the vantage point using the rather flat curve of the hill pictured in the long thin photograph. At the time, I didn't know what camera Riggall had used and thought he might have cropped the image in the darkroom. Moving around the hill, I photographed using several cameras to try to figure out how the distortion of the space could be replicated. I tried my pinhole camera with a very wide lens. It became clear that this photograph was not made with a typical contemporary camera, but with one of the panoramic cameras.

In 2007 I was lucky enough to be offered use of this camera from Riggall's family, who have saved the camera collection. In 2007 and 2008 I borrowed the Panoram no. 1 to embark upon re-enacting this photograph using the very camera that produced the original negative in the early 1900s. To be able to photograph the scene using the Panoram No. 1 would allow me to gain insight into the choreography of Riggall's photograph.



DAY 1

July 2007

After 'Upper Waterton Lake', Kodak Panoram 2007

Panoramic Perspective: “To See What the Ram Sees”

Unable to locate Riggall’s vantage point drew me to ask, “if Riggall wasn’t trying to replicate what we see when we stand and look out over the hill to the lake off in the distance, what was he trying to depict?” The challenge of answering this question was taken up by thinking like a tracker which “involves taking information from animal signs in order to determine what an animal was doing and where it was going” (Chamberlin in Banting 2009:37). While in part it is true he was making a surveying view of the surrounds, it seems like there is more going on.

Attempting to re-enact the photograph with the exact camera technology that Riggall used would theoretically allow for more precision in replicating his view. Yet the challenge in this pursuit emerged in trying to look through the lens. The viewfinder on the Panoram is a rudimentary waist level finder, acting as a general guide that Riggall probably didn’t even use, but rather, he likely pointed the camera towards his subject and predicted the outcome using general guides marked into the top of the camera. The image visible through the waist level finder was not refined enough to help with the re-location of this photograph, and so I devised a plan to proceed systematically.



Figure 4.2 Bert Riggall’s Panoram no.1

With no viewfinder to speak of, the challenge of a panoramic swing lens, and the extremely wide field of view, re-photographing an historical photograph with the Kodak Panoram no. 1 was not a straight forward task. My usual method to repeat a photograph is to use the grid method. In this method, I use a grid screen in the camera viewfinder, which I then duplicate in digital format to lay onto an historical scanned image. By working back and forth between the digital print out of the historical image with a grid laid over it, and the grid in the camera viewfinder, I would normally be able to make camera adjustments in the field. Without the viewfinder I had to change my methods. So at the beginning of each day I marked a location, made a series of exposures (three exposures easily fit on the 120mm film I was using), and then I developed the film, scanned it and overlaid it, compared the similarities and differences to the original, and then returned to make incremental adjustments, mark the next location, and take a photograph and then develop the film. I attempted to relocate this view for ten days making over forty exposures (see <http://trudilynnsmith.blogspot.com> for both images and texts of my results). The final day rather than drawing upon only the method and measurements that guided my position, I relied upon the common sense I had generated over the course of the ten days and improvised. I stepped into a vantage point, time of day, and weather conditions that qualitatively shows the closest



DAY 4

July 26 2008 16:45 - 17:35

hot, humid, sunny. cumulonimbus cloud. wind.

location 4

photo-point is 150 cm directly west of location 2 and north 100 cm (towards a good rock for sitting or putting gear down on)

1331 mt 12U 0287884 5437952 5 mt accuracy

bearing: 180 degrees

image no. 003

fast shutter

tmax 100 120mm

height to camera top 113 cm

After 'Upper Waterton Lake', Kodak Panoram July 26, 2008

201

relationship to the original. This attention to detail led me to get as close as I could to his vantage point. Located in the centre of the hill, near a sitting rock, several pathways including one that was probably an old horse trail lead to this spot.

The camera position is standing height. I decide that Riggall and I are not so far off in height and that he dismounted his horse to take the shot rather than taking it from the saddle. The image is located in the centre edge of the hill less than 100 metres west of International Boundary Survey photograph. A balanced composition, the lake and mountains disappear into a vanishing point at the exact centre of the photograph. No longer the idyllic stillness captured in Dawson and Willis' survey photographs, this photograph represents the presence of what has become the "Old West". On the left hand side of the photograph, Riggall records his two horses. Rather than the stillness that Dawson was captivated by, and waited for, Riggall allows the roughness of the water to show. It is the Wild West, not Switzerland, after all. Signs of early park infrastructure show in the townsite. The foreground vegetation is lush in the early 1900s panoram, evidencing the hundred years of erosion from the use of the premonitory by several generations of visitors to the park.

During my act of repeat photography I had time to think about what counted for Riggall. Perhaps Riggall was trying to reach for something with this panoramic perception, perhaps to translate this impossible view, and perhaps this was his experience of "what the ram sees." While the Prince of Wales Hill panorama is not in a location that sheep would be found, many of his other views were made during outfitting trips, where Riggall's work as a tracker would lead them to charismatic megafauna that he and his clients would then shoot. My act was to track the tracker, and this meant that it was the ram that was determining many of our locations and positions in the park space. Riggall and I adapt non-human nature into our own positions and translate their signs into our own signs. As Pamela Banting writes in a recent volume, the social construction of nature needs to be "re-thought in relation to the animal Others who precede and exceed us" (2009:36), and the way that they are communicating and practicing sign making and reading practices:

In order to adduce the texts of the natural world to a general science of signs, and to begin the process of examining how including animal calls, tracks and other forms of bio-, zoo- or eco-semiotics in our notion of text might reconfigure our notions of signature, event and habitat, as well as those of subjectivity, voice, writing, author and authority, setting metaphor and meaning (2009:36).

Banting takes up poststructuralist thought to think about texts. She follows Derrida to think about how there is nothing outside of the text, meaning that texts generate the world, rather than cloak it (Banting 2009). Banting goes on to argue that if there is nothing outside of the text, perhaps we need to expand our notion of the text to include those that are generated by animals – such as tracks, calls, and scents. In this she builds upon poststructuralist thinking to add to the possibilities for what a text can be and how it can extend to media beyond the covers of a book (2009:27). Banting cites poet Gary Snyder who suggest that "Animals' lives are vocal, textual and significant in the sense that they are rich in signs. We are not the only creatures who can read and make sense of cougar tracks, bear or coyote scat, the "clock, clock, clock" of ravens, or indications that the weather is about to change" (Banting 2009:30). Thinking



DAY 5

July 27 2008 16:33 - 17:11

*location #5
from location no. 4 50 cm back, 25 cm left, 5 cm down.
bearing 180 degrees
on level
image no 001
slower shutter (bottom spring)
Agfa APX 25
108 cm to camera top.*

After 'Upper Waterton Lake', Kodak Panoram July 27, 2008

about humans in the more-than-human world (Abram 1997), Riggall perhaps came to Canada not only to see what the Ram sees, but to learn *how to see* from the Ram. In this way the photographic event emerges as a nexus of the influence of previous ways of photographing the park (e.g. the influence on Riggall from survey and pictorialist structures of early photography) and Riggall's pursuit of what the Ram sees (that is, Riggall's pursuit of his vision, and what it is the Ram is looking at, seeing, or in pursuit of and tracking itself). I enter this event in pursuit of what Riggall was in pursuit of and by extension to begin to figure how animals make us human (Shepard in Banting 2009). This event is imaginative and influenced by texts of the more-than-human world.

In another way, Riggall's panoramic vision can be understood as *literally* about "seeing what the Ram sees". The Panoram is an aid for Riggall (and by extension the viewers of his photographs) "see what the Ram sees". The angle of view that the human eye is understood to be in focus ranges from about 40-60°. Thus the Panoram No. 1 with a 112° view emphasizes the inequivalence between photography and human vision. Perhaps the impossible view that Riggall produces with his Panoram camera is therefore about *something else* than mirroring what we would see upon standing on the centre edge of the present-day Prince of Wales hill. To investigate what visuality Riggall might have been producing in the park is to return to thinking about how what the Ram sees can be achieved. That is, through thinking about the way we understand the vision of sheep. Sheep have a field of vision between 191 – 306 degrees (Schoenian:2010). The angle of view of the camera is closer to the wide angle of view that a Bighorn Sheep would see. In this way, the camera acts as a prosthetic to this experience of vision, one that gets Riggall (and us) closer to some of the way that a Ram would see (and his Panoram no. 4 with a wider angle produces this view even more). To track a ram and shoot it would be to relate in a particular way to the non-human world – to choose a worthy adversary (the most charismatic of the group) and to successfully take him down was to become a bit of the ram. So too with vision, Riggall was learning from the more than human world/animals how to see. This has an experiential, practical act: the embodiment of a sheep would allow for Riggall to gain sensitivity and insight into survival in the challenging landscape in which he and his family homesteaded within and traveled throughout. The importance of the influence of the rest of nature on the way that we understand and inscribe the park space is taken up further in the next chapter.

Despite their many similarities, Riggall's panoramic photograph is constructed very differently than the Dawson image from 50 years before. The photograph lacks the close foreground detail of Dawson's photograph and shows a clear surveying view of the surrounds. At the edge of the photo the heads of two horses are included: Blaze patiently waits, while Clown is recorded in motion, grazing. Including the horses, Riggall acknowledges the other species that were so central to his experience in the park. At the same time, while it is possible that Riggall's panoramic vision is generated out of creating Other visions of place, it can also be argued that the panoramic mode of vision finds its root in the co-development of technologies in the 19th century. The panoramic view first gained international popularity in Europe and North American in the late 18th century. The term was first coined to describe a painted exhibition composed of a large 360-degree painted cylinder (Smith 2004; Hyde 1988). The spectator stood inside the cylinder and experienced the view, which was intended to mimic nature (Wilcox 1988). Panoramic views as they were used in photography were linked to both sensational popular subjects as well as to the exploration of places and collection of records.



DAY 7

July 29 2008 14:20 - 16:10

*9 shots taken moving forward (south) and left (east)
sunny and gusty wind with clouds*

Location #15

*The location is getting close to a trail that recedes northeast towards Linnet Lake
and the rolling hills beyond.*

from the sitting rock:

33 cm south & 18 cm east (location 7)

+ 50 cm forward

+ 6 metres left (east)

+ 1.5 metres forward (south)

bearing: 180 degrees

on level

camera height 108 cm

After 'Upper Waterton Lake', Kodak Panoram July 29, 2008

205

Considered the virtual reality experience of the day (Kirby 1997), the panorama provided a technology to report back the world they encountered: as survey and spectacle.

Panoramic Perspective: Great Northern Rail

A nexus of photography, the rail and the national park space has produced a particular kind of vision in protected areas in Canada. While Waterton is not serviced by train, the Great Northern Rail services Glacier National Park, and then specially built tour cars and boats travel north. The company sends photographers such as T.J. Hileman and Kabel to make promotional photographs from their hotel. Advertisements encourage travel to Waterton and during prohibition the Prince of Wales was the destination for American travelers who wished to refresh themselves at a bar.

As Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes in *The Railway Journey: Panoramic Travel*, the train compartment window influenced the perception of foreground objects, as the movement of the train blurs the foreground effectively rendering it imperceptible. This led to a change in the experience of the traveler in perceiving distant views (2008:293). In Waterton, the influence of this way of seeing is reflected in photographs beginning around the 1930s. These images show distant vistas without foreground details. As such, a change in relationship to the foreground in photographs contributes to a shift in the vantage point for photographic events that come later from the general Prince of Wales Hill locale. Tourists and professional photographers begin to take photographs from the centre edge of the hill where there was no foreground vegetation to perceive between the body and the expansive lake and mountains. This is the vantage point of Riggall's view from the late 1920s.

Subsequent views from the hill also suggest the influence of well known conservation images such as those photographs by Ansel Adams whose images begin to circulate widely in the 1920s. Through a "pure photography", Adams advocated for conservation of wilderness. Through Adams, f.64, a group who promoted straight photography over pictorialism, was joined with the Sierra Club, whose mission was to promote the protection of "wild places on earth". Adams work was promoted and worked to promote the Sierra Club, an organization that in the present claims the title of largest grassroots environmental organization in the USA with 1.3 million members. Founded by naturalist and conservationist John Muir, and established in 1892 in San Francisco, the group has worked to

explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives (Sierra Club 2010:n.p.).

The idea of the unmanipulated photographic print, one that depicted the world as real rather than constructed by the artistic hand of the photographer, fit neatly into the Sierra Club's mission. Like survey photography, conservation photography associates itself with objective truth that can be generated with the camera. As promoted on their website, many of the Sierra Club's 182 charter members were scientists, and scientific exploration of the Sierra "was vigorously pursued by the organization" (Sierra Club: 2010:n.p.). A straight photography fits neatly into their interests and belief in scientific



DAY 10

August 03 12:29 - 12:45 14:45 - 16:00

between the rain and storm.

13 shots taken

located between the good sitting rock and the pathway that leads north. At the end of the pathway.

image 003-013

located at the stake

attempt camera level

about 12 cm lower than 108 cm (96 cm) camera height

about 90 degree arm angle held against body

tmax 100 120

top loaded spring

16:00

a wedding party

After 'Upper Waterton Lake', Kodak Panoram August 3, 2008

approaches to understanding, dwelling in, and creating protected areas. I would argue that the powerful vision found in Adams photography was infused with moral values associated with the social role of photography to tell the truth. As such, conservation photography is embedded with the moral values of straight photography and generates a common sense that there are wild places of the earth that can be recorded on film to tell the objective truth of that place. Photography was the perfect tool to replicate this view in postcards, prints, posters that would circulate widely to a North American public. The images would describe and then circumscribe what wild places are and can be. This conservation visuality is carried on in the present in acts of photography that are generated by conservation groups in the Waterton area, notably the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) conservation initiative who recently joined forces with the International League of Conservation Photographers to document the Flathead River Valley (adjacent to Waterton Lakes National Park). This was work to “empower global conservation efforts through photography” (ILCP 2010: n.p). In July 2007, as they write on the Y2Y website:

The Flathead RAVE (Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition) achieved a full visual and media assessment of the Flathead River Valley in a short period of time by means of a multi-disciplinary team that includes several specialized ILCP photographers (landscape, wildlife, macro, camera trapping, portraiture), writers and cameramen. Their job was to bring back a comprehensive visual portrait of the conservation issues and threats in the Flathead in just over a week. The visual media obtained during the RAVE will be used in communication initiatives aimed at creating content and disseminating conservation messages to a wide variety of audiences to further the Flathead River Valley Conservation Campaign. The communication initiatives will include multimedia for Internet viral communications, fine art exhibitions, lectures, books, and magazine articles among others (2010:n.p.).

The common sense of science and photography to tell a truth about the world is a powerful vision that becomes visible in the photographs of early 20th century “Upper Waterton Lake” such as those by Riggall.

The entanglement of environmentalism and marketing opportunities is visible in the actions of the Great Northern Rail. At the site of the Prince of Wales hotel Great Northern promoted this conservation visuality in their inscription of the space with destination points on the hill. The hill is inscribed by walking. Paths lead from the hotel to points on the hill, towards town, and between the employee residences to the west and down the hill. The encouragement of the hotel to photograph in a certain place and in a certain way is found in their building of an interpretive architecture for travelers to the hotel. The hotel constructed handrail destination at the centre edge of the hill (now removed) which encouraged photographic events to take place from that locale. Riggall’s outfitter sensibility that produced the view of “Upper Waterton Lake” would predict the viewing rail, a view that reflects conservation visuality. This vantage point would promote the purity of views, the truth of “wilderness” without pictorialist ‘fakery’ or a polluting foreground to call up human perception and human presence in the park. A distant conservation visuality avoids polluting the pristine wilderness space with human activity. Yet this is not the only vision at play on the hill.



'Waterton Lakes Alberta', Cross Studios Photo No. 1. In collection of author.

Vernacular Visuality: the Postcards of A.E. Cross Studios

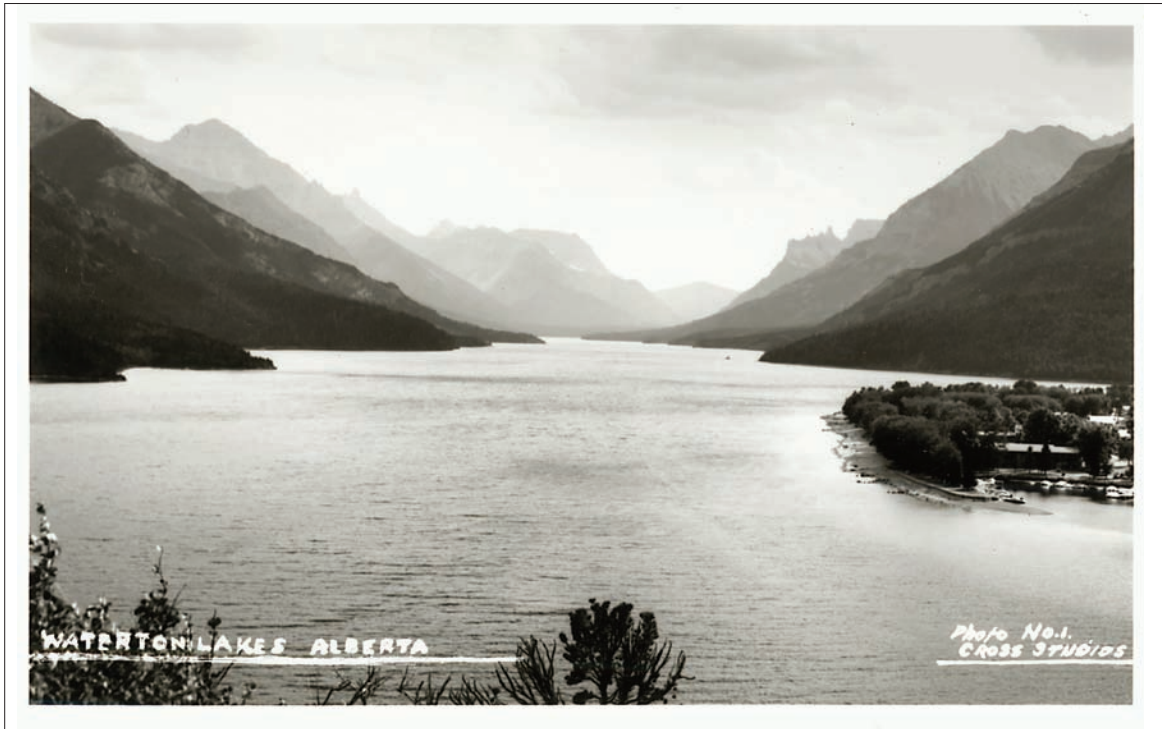
In the early 1920s A.E. Cross Studios, of Lethbridge Alberta begins to produce a wide range of views of Waterton as postcards. The view from the hill is number one in their series, produced out of a vernacular vision of the park. These images, like Riggall's were circulated widely and I purchased this postcard in 2006 from an eBay seller located in Sand Springs, Oklahoma, U.S.A. The postcard was not written on and mailed but was collected, as I found with many of the postcards I collected from eBay, The visuality promoted by this view is that of a tourist snap, one that is vernacular in that it seems that it could easily be produced by any one who walks up to the vantage point.

Arguably this is a typical snapshot, and this vernacular vision fits into the idea that photographs are about conformity, not innovation or subversion (Batchen 2008:125). As Geoffrey Batchen argues in *Snapshots*, the history of photography throughout the 20th century has been primarily constituted by a focus upon avant-guard practice and aesthetics, in both books and exhibitions (2008:125). Yet, as Batchen points out, such an history suppresses

those attributes that make photography such a distinctive element of modern culture – for example the reproducibility of the photograph and therefore the ability of any particular image to come in a variety of looks, sizes, and formats; the complication of authorship and origin that results; and the enmeshing of photographic practice within the tawdry commerce of consumer capitalism and mass production (2008:125).

This sort of postcard enmeshes vernacular vision into photographic practice to help give form to the narrative of being in the park space. The reproduction of the vista shows short trees in the foreground, a breezy day with ripples forming on the lake and the mountains and lake are bathed in sunlight. The photograph is in dialogue with tourists, and can be read as a snapshot: what you would get if you walked out of the hotel and around to the front of the hill. Rather than a location in the middle of the hill, as Riggall took up, this view is to the west a few meters. At present, this side of the hotel has the kitchen and staff parking and is not what I would consider tourist friendly. However to look back at views from the 1930s and more photographs are taken on that side of the hotel. The configuration of doorways and indoor and outdoor space has changed over the years. An overgrown patio is not in use nearby, but suggests previous ways that tourists engaged and interacted with the space.

While I have argued that there is a dropping out of the foreground from photographs from the Prince of Wales Hill over the years in the development of a conservation visuality, early views produced by commercial photographers from the hill often show foreground vegetation (e.g. Cross, Hileman). The inclusion of foreground in this view shows the influence of the picturesque and of Dawson's vantage point. I argue that this can be attributed to the attempt to make the view close and to bring a subjectivity into the experience of wilderness in Canada. The use of foreground detail in the image, while using the picturesque convention is also a locating act. This is not an imaginary distant picturesque, but a lived in, place you can stand and imagine yourself standing. These images are less like the lofty vision of Riggall's panoramic accounts and instead emerge as vernacular: Anyone could be there. This postcard embodies a relational practice of *I wish you were here, I was here*. It forms a travelogue, experience, proof, a narrative that can be shared.



After 'Waterton Lakes Alberta', Cross Studios Photo No. 1. b+w toned print.

To Cross Studios, this is a promotional vision, one that encourages tourists to purchase the card, mail it to a friend and then take out their Kodak Brownie cameras and snap a photograph themselves. The tourist postcard reinforces the experience. It is a postcard the visitor would buy because it reflects the everyday experience of being there.

Re-enactment and Photography: Engaged Material Practice Through Tourism

My research observing photographic acts taking place on the Prince of Wales hill as well as my own experience re-enacting a range of historical photographs from this locale found that the photograph contributes to the configuration of the body in national park space. It seems that tourists are controlling their experience in this place through picking up the camera. That visitors to the park travel to the same places, take up the same vantage point, and make the same images, illuminates the way that a century of image making has in fact shaped ways of seeing and being in Waterton. I ask, why might people taking photographs converge on a particular spot? Re-figuring the particular body with the photograph can open the generic, universal conception of the tourist in the wilderness, to reveal the contested terrain we inhabit as the body in nature. I believe that more is at play in national parks in Canada than a colonial vision controlling our experience with place. Instead, people are participating in making nature. The act of looking through a camera lens, framing a view (perhaps one that's been seen before) is an act that makes the category of nature and frames a relationship with place .

As Orvar Löfgren points out, in tourist spaces “there is a constant play between experience and technologies of mediation” (1999:93). In Waterton, photography plays a key role in movement, perception and sensing. Löfgren argues that activities like reading and music in the landscape in the middle of the last century were seen as confounding. Such activities were experimental (1999:93). At present, the landscape is transformed into a multimedia space through the use of ipods, iphones, gps, and cameras.

Taking photographs is a highly specific act that, as I have shown, configures the body in a particular way in Waterton. This is a ritual. It is to decide to take a photograph, and to walk up to a place and to use that place in a particular way, one that is premised around imagination and desire: To want something (a photograph) and to imagine what that will look like. To bend forward and look through the viewfinder and gaze down the lake brings attention to what is through the lens. At the Prince of Wales hill vantage point, the lake, the mountain forms, and the townsite are brought into attention. The colour dominants being apprehended through the lens are blue (the lake, the sky) green and grey (the mountains) and gold (the grasses). The sounds of people talking, the wind, bees, and cars become a soundtrack to this composition. The visitor pauses to look at the way that the forms fit into the viewfinder, using common sense to make adjustments before pressing the shutter. They might even hold their breath for an instant to steady and still the camera from the shake of being held. Once the shutter is depressed, the event is over. The visitor relaxes their body, probably adjusts their stance, and step out of the photographic act. Often I witnessed the acknowledgement passed between people about the event that had taken place. A question, “Are you finished,” or, “Did you get it?” An acknowledgement and assessment, “Yeah,” or, “Nah...the clouds are sitting too low on the mountains.”

In this way, taking photographs produces a specific knowledge about place, as Donna Haraway writes, “knowledge is always an engaged material practice and never a



'Waterton Lake', Kabel for Great Northern Rail. In collection of author.

disembodied set of ideas” (2004:68). With this, Haraway conjures up the particular, providing a clue for understanding and reworking the role of photographs of national park spaces. She provides a meaningful way to ask, how is photography an engaged material practice of national parks? Taking photographs is a re-iterative act, and as a material practice they “are iterative in character; they internalize and repeat earlier displacements which over time take on the appearance of common sense. It is this performative, temporal aspect of nation that Homi Bhabha argues introduces a space for political agency (Braun 1999:43).

In studies of place, nature is often relegated as a backdrop, a stage upon which a person (or culture) is positioned. Historically, anthropological writing about physical environment equated place with an ethnographic locale, and as Margaret Rodman points out, following Foucault, place was taken for granted, considered “the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile” (1992:640). The consequence of this approach is that nature is depreciated as it is separated into a neutral backdrop for the main event, rendering the environment invisible (Tilley 1994; see also Buell 1995 for a parallel discussion in literary criticism). Phenomenological ideas about change and movement have been integrated into anthropological theory (Tilley 1994; Bender 1993), arguing that nature (usually referred to as landscape or space and place) is more than iconographic symbols, but continually coming into being in the process of our lives, “we shape landscapes and they shape us” (Ingold 2000:20). To these anthropologists, nature is considered complex and powerful, created by people through active involvement in the world (Bender 1993). Proponents of this phenomenological view claim there is not one absolute landscape, but a collection of perspectives and “a landscape has ontological import because it is lived in and through, mediated, worked on and altered, replete with cultural meaning and symbolism – and not just something looked at or thought about, an object merely for contemplation, depiction, representation and aestheticization” (Tilley 1994:26). Parallel to such accounts in anthropology, Hayles describes social constructivism, (from the discipline of geography), is an act of recovery from realist views, “emphasizing interactions rather than disembodied observation, it insists that embodied experience constructs a world, not the world” (Hayles 1995:51).


How then, does photography fit into the way that we shape Waterton and the way that we are shaped by Waterton? How is photography embedded within the process of what we consider nature? The complex answer can be found in three ways in which Waterton viewpoints are encountered and created through images:

First, Waterton is imagined through images the visitor has seen before: They may have seen photographs in their own family albums, in publications, in popular media. They may see postcards in the gift shop. They may sit inside the Prince of Wales Hotel and gaze outside the window, their view broken by other visitors to the park standing on the edge of the hill holding cameras. Out of all the range of possibilities, in archives the same and similar photographs surface over and over. The Prince of Wales hill is a persistent vantage point found in the archival record. Present understanding is contingent on past accounts, the photograph teaches us to see, and the resulting act of vision constitutes what is present (Berger 1972). It seems reasonable that in Waterton, places are visited because they were photographed and places are photographed because they were photographed. As studies of tourism in anthropology have shown, symbols of identity must be standardized to be understood and certain photographs



Ground-truthing 'Waterton Lake', Kabel for Great Northern Rail, digital snap

form a mainstay of how we perceive wilderness in Canada. There is “unanimity in tourist attractions that are worth visiting” (Hockings 1987:639). A tourist may only visit a place as a result of seeing a photograph taken by a previous visitor, whether via a postcard, personal album, or travel guide. This photographic event on the Prince of Wales hill inscribes place and in turn it inscribes us. To some degree, therefore, photographic events of the past direct park use.



Prince of Wales Hotel, Waterton Lakes Park in Canada

The Old West goes international in Glacier and Waterton Lakes Parks

This summer meet up with the Old West in this playground that straddles the Great Divide and the International Boundary—where scenery and sports are equally colorful! Go places in hiking boots, saddle, or bus and launch—do things you've never done before. Ride, fish, climb, camp out, explore—and enjoy true Canadian hospitality! Write

Great Northern Vacations, St. Paul.


The New **EMPIRE BUILDER**  The Luxurious **ORIENTAL LIMITED**

Figure 4.3 Great Northern Magazine Advertisement 1930s.

To take a photograph in a park in the very spot it was photographed in the past, means that the spectator possesses a trace of the initial operator – they see because, in landscapes especially, “the photograph, more than merely representing, has taught us a way of seeing,” and “this way of seeing has transformed contemporary self-understanding” (Lury 2005:3). Therefore, the viewer translates the view vis-à-vis previous photographs they’ve seen – a relationship between looking and a frame (i.e. the 4 x 6 dimensions of a postcard). Key to these subsequent accounts is the performative aspect of photography. This act is worked through the body, through



After 'Waterton Lake', b+w print (contact sheet) 2007.

standing there in a spot forged by another body. The performance of the body in this particular space bridges universal and particular. Although it is true, as Barthes states, “what the photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once: ‘the photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially’” (Barthes 1984:4 in Edwards 1992:7), there is an existential convergence on place in the act of returning to photographed locations. The act of sitting in a place because the photograph was taken there in the first place is both close to an existential convergence on place, and yet distant, because the visitor can never reach the exact place.

At the Prince of Wales Hill, all later photographic events are embedded in the photographic practices of Dawson and his men - a practice that generates a truth based on two approaches to knowledge, geographic, scientific records and pictorialist, aesthetic reflections. Despite their apparent conflicting intents, they both advocate a sort of truth, making the world knowable through the lens. The ‘there then’ is brought into the ‘here now’ in the form of re-enactment. This new photographic event is a citational act, “referring back to social action” (Edwards 2001:57). The landscape is continually coming into being in an act that is reliant on a past photographic moment, or object coming through history. This citational act refers to the past – to Dawson’s photographic moment – a form of landscape experience, as well as all intervening social acts – by tourists, professional photographers, promotion. In this way it forms a collective act. This is a way that landscape experience is mediated by both an individual’s past history, a collective past and history and technologies of representation.

In Canada, photography and national park space co-construct one another. The view from the Prince of Wales hill becomes what wilderness and national parks space in Canada is, what comes under “Waterton” and then these photographs become what nature photography is in Canada: surveying views and aesthetic experience mixes into the landscape photograph. The photograph from the Prince of Wales hotel hill is one that was meant to make the world geographically known in the most practical and efficient way as well as part of a picturesque aesthetic standard meant in opposition to the scientific rationalization of nature. It is a reflection of -and contributes to- the uncomfortable status of wilderness itself as neither all reality “out there” nor all imagination “in here”. Wilderness, it seems, can be found in both physical features and cultural values. It is clear that national parks in Canada, spaces imagined and managed through the dual mandate of ecological integrity and a place for human use and enjoyment, align with realist and constructivist ideas of nature – nature is a stage, a museum, a laboratory, and it is also a lived in, worked upon place shaped by policy and mandates, people driving around, hiking, and scientists sampling water.

Second, standing at a viewpoint looking through the camera lens, we see things in a comparative manner. Previous views and expectations of what we have seen in the past tint our view and mediate our experience of Waterton. Recent studies of tourism have shown that “photographing concretizes experience and confirms the existence of anticipated place characteristics. Yet such practices produce highly politicized sites of struggle as anticipatory imaginings become infiltrated and obscured by the immanent and unfolding realities of place. Visual practice can become fuelled by frustration as gaps emerge between desired and actual images” (Scarles 2009:480). For instance, postcards of the Prince of Wales Hotel rarely contain within it the water tower that stands nearby. This disjuncture is noticed by visitors to the park. In 2006



The Water Tower, c-print 2005

while working on re-enacting a photograph from the shoreline of Upper Waterton Lake that framed the Prince of Wales Hotel on the hill, I was approached by two tourists who came to see what I had my camera pointed at and what I was framing through the lens. I showed them the historical image and they remarked that the reason they had come to talk to me is that I looked like a professional photographer and they wondered why no one included the obvious water tower that stands beside the hotel. The historical photograph I was retaking obscured a water tower behind a stand of trees. They commented that while looking online and at brochures, choosing their holiday destination, of the hundreds of photographs that they had seen of the hotel from various angles, they had never seen the water tower before visiting Waterton. I found the same thing in my research as I started to watch for it in images, and it is an unusual inclusion. The water tower is a prominent feature on the park skyline and stands just beside the hotel, yet this sort of infrastructure does not support the myth of wilderness as picturesque and as an idea of rustic simplicity that humans have little impact upon. We are burdened by the legacy of photography. While we go to places that are commensurate with places we've seen or been before, once there, things are out of place. Photos disguise, but seeing what is in place changes the shape of understanding park spaces and troubles our notions of what park spaces are, destabilizing wilderness, wild, aesthetic beauty. At the same time that photos disguise, the surprise of standing in the place where the photograph was 'taken' and seeing what is really around is an act that reveals the complexities of (translations of) place making.

The impossibility of repeating exactly an historical photograph emerges from this act and illuminates the truth behind photography – it is improvisational: it draws imagination and previous experience, the specific personal experience of seeing, remembering, and moving, into the social act of depressing the shutter while standing among other visitors to this spot. As Ingold and Hallam think about improvisation, as a part of social life, it is generative, relational, temporal and a way we work. National parks are constructions: both materially as protected areas and imaginatively as Other: other place and another time against which the city, the present, the inhabited, the rapid pace of global culture form an opposition. To draw attention to difference and change in the park setting is bewildering. Photographs confirm how you can never get back to that moment, to that place, and they produce a prime emotion associated with national parks and one strongly articulated in narratives and in architecture: one of nostalgia, a longing. Löfgren (1999) finds the nostalgia of return is a very active and creative part of cottage life. In this way, we can see that in national parks, disjuncture and nostalgia can be a generative space, one that is desired.

Third, to take a photograph that one has seen before is to participate in an *education of attention* (Gibson 1966; Ingold 2000). While tourists could simply buy a postcard of the view, they do not stop there. Recent attention to tourist practices as performative have found that “making postcard images has little appeal because they do not convey personal experiences and stories” (Larsen 2005:427). To take photographs from popular vantage points can be considered a distinct way tourists generate place. As Paul Hockings accounts, there is a great unanimity in tourist attractions that are worth visiting (1987:639). It is understood to be a way that people lay claim to experience by providing evidence that they were really there. To take a picture, as Orvar Löfgren writes, is a complex and contested behaviour: “The fact that a dangling camera...has become the sign of the vulgar tourist poses a problem for those who feel a need to



Figuring place, digital snap 2008

distance themselves: should they carry a camera at all? But otherwise, how can they bring back pictorial evidence of actually getting off the beaten track?” (1999:82). Taking photographs is also seen as a performance of tourism, one that signify the “forced repetition of norms that reproduce and cement – rather than destabilize cultural identity” (Larsen 2005:419).

What is distinctive about photography, after all, is its reproducibility. And yet it is this charge in these reproducible, vernacular experiences, through which we each form an intersubjective ground upon which we stand to better understand and imagine National Park space. It seems there is more at play in tourist re-enactments of previous photographs than reproducing cultural identity. As I described in my research methods, I see re-enactment as a form of knowledge generation about place. It incorporates norms into a specific, personal experience. Tim Ingold has drawn attention in the field of anthropology to the work of James Gibson, who presents the idea of an education of attention in perceptual systems. The classical senses (the five senses, looking, listening, touching, smelling and tasting) are not a given, but rather amenable to learning. In this perceptual system, “it would be expected that the individual, after practice, could orient more exactly, listen more carefully, touch more acutely, smell and taste more precisely, and look more perceptively than he could before practice” (1966:51). In this scheme the senses are not innate, not a given, but rather an improvement could be made of perceptual skill with training. To bend over the camera, to find the viewfinder through a little hole (or, as is becoming increasingly common now, to look at an LCD screen at arm’s length) and to look at the landscape from this position is a way to learn about nature. This hybridity produces nature. The bodily enactment of handling a camera in Waterton makes nature possible. Indeed one only need to recall the act of walking behind someone on a trail who stops to take pictures, thus halting ones own progress. At a stop, waiting, one lifts the gaze to the view. This forced reflection that comes out of the ritual of taking the photograph is actually a way of connecting to place. A repositioning of the body and of experience that is mediated through the camera and the event produced out of taking pictures.

As Ingold describes it, an “education of attention” is how people learn through a relational context of being shown something, “through this fine-tuning of perceptual skills, meanings immanent in the environment – that is in the relational contexts of the perceiver’s involvement in the world – are not so much constructed as discovered” (2000:22). Knowledge is “generated in the course of lived experience”, through a series of encounters with others that orient one’s attention through demonstration “along the same lines as their own, so that one can begin to apprehend the world for oneself in the ways, and from the positions, that they do” (Ingold 2000:145). Ingold argues that the growth and development of a person is through the negotiation of a path through the world, one that comes from participating in learning and collaborating with others (2000:146). Visitors gain knowledge of national parks in Canada through an education of attention that is engaged through the act of photography, and the act of relating to previous photographic moments by people that were themselves making photographs of park space. It could be argued that this expressive act is not only a way to learn about wilderness but is a performance of nature. Through the camera, a specific visuality intersects with the colonial visioning of Dawson and the surveyors to educate the viewer in seeing wilderness. Photographic conventions structure the way the body is in space. The viewer encounters the position of Dawson and the surveyors, the

distancing colonial eye that sees wilderness as uncharted potential, where “Mountains still remain Nature’s supreme achievement” in words echoed in 1936 written on the back of a postcard to Mrs. Polly L Weil of Stanfordville New York, from one visitor to the Canadian Rockies. It is also a position that sees the mountains running off into an imperceptible distance, the picturesque, the rush of feeling, the sublime, at sense of the limits: “the sensibility of the fading of the sensible” (Jean-Luc Nancy 1988 (2010:47)), or on the back of the same postcard to Mrs Polly L Weil, “Nothing you have heard about these parts can equal the overwhelming reality” (in collection of TL Smith). While this interplay between scientific narratives and the sublime can be understood to constrain our relationship to what we understand as wilderness (the space of national parks), the performance generates the space that is actually inhabited, a specific encounter that is at once a powerful and mysterious configuration of a body in national parks. This is a relational encounter that surfaces by looking through the lens: The dual sense of absence, a nostalgia for the past, a desire for rustic simplicity that is presented in parks through architecture such as the Prince of Wales Hotel, and presence, the brush of wind through the hair and a concentration looking through the lens of the camera at the mountains at a distance. It is seeing the clouds building to a storm and the rise of the wind becoming more vigorous. The working of a camera can produce nostalgia, and that instant of reflection can have the effect of bringing you into the present. In recognition that things are inherently impermanent, nostalgia is a desire to fix, to recognize what is happening now. To think about moving the camera up, down, to the right, or waiting for your sweetheart to smile and for his hair to ruffle in the wind, “just right”. To stop thinking about everything else and not so simply compose a photograph is a way to be present. This is the ritual of the “Kodak moment.”

Nostalgia, by the very fact that it harkens back to something different than is at present, allows for the possibility of how things might be (and were) different. Nostalgia produces room for manoeuvre and for imaginative contemplation of what wilderness is and could be. It is powerful, and as Eric Higgs points out in writing on ecological restoration, it can provide guides for landscape restoration, “the past offers a wide array of alternative models of ecological integrity” (2003:145).

The coming together of the body and the camera in the national park space is a complex way of encounter. If nature is a social construction produced out of a relationship between humans and the rest of the world, then handling the camera is part of the process of nature. The camera is not a distancing technology as we see many scholars positioning it (see for example, Braun 1999). Instead, it is one that incorporates improvisation, as the wind drives the camera operator to rush to get the picture, to crouch against the wind, to hear the sounds of voices that urge her to hurry and head inside the hotel or back to the car or back down the path to town. The steep hill edge is tested by children who run along and towards it and feared by parents whose panicking voices carry on the wind as they call out to their children to step away from the edge. The hill edge becomes sharper over the years as it erodes from foot traffic along the hill face to find a vantage point, from wind and driving rain and from deer populations inscribing trails along it that tourists sometimes follow. And so in contrast to the decisive moment that is pictured in images (and despite their own objectness, their aging and erosion) this place is in constant motion. Re-enactment of photographs mixes artificial and living, repetitive and unrepeatable. It seems that the visitor experience, widely cast as artificial and repetitive through the production of photographs in specific places in



'Dusk, the Upper Lake', b+w Polaroid, 2005

the park, actually materializes as something unrepeatable, and in that, authentic. This is an authentic moment of performance. There is something liberating in re-taking a photograph. This is a connecting of tangible and intangible in photography: It is a re-enactment and in this way the photographic event is re-lived because a tourist repeats an act that has a legacy. And it is an intangible act because it is their own moment in time. It is a fleeting moment that exists only for that person (a tourist) who seeks that experience because they have learned of a place through a photograph.

Thus, the specificity of Waterton is not erased in the global circulation of knowledge about it. Waterton and the views produced at the Prince of Wales hill produce more than an experience of a “Kodachrome still-life” (Botkin 1990:6). While Daniel Botkin argues that nature is more than “a Kodachrome still life... nature is a moving picture show” (Botkin 1990:6), I think that nature and ideas about nature and national park space are considerably more than that again. The search for the meaning of Waterton Lakes National Park through photographs is to think beyond photographs as embedded in a colonial process and nation forming motives, and instead to think about the disruptions to this vision that are presented upon taking a photograph.

Photographs not only act as a technology of representation mediating experience but provide a particular experience that has become the way that many engage with what we understand as nature or wilderness in Canada. Perhaps too, the experience is the souvenir (as both a trace and a memory). Rather than simply purchase a postcard, the photograph is an event whereby we connect the dialectical way the park is produced: presence and absence, culture and nature, science and art, global productions of national parks and local flows, the specificities to place, ecological integrity and human enjoyment. It is an awareness raising. It forms the experience of the quest: an inquiry, a pursuit, from where a mysterious and undefined scope of possibilities can emerge. To compose the photograph at the Prince of Wales Hotel is to bring the tangible and intangible together through experience: tangible in the re-enactment of a Dawson and the surveyors’ previous photographic event; and intangible because it is their own moment in time. The fleeting moment of photography is haunted by past photographic acts. The photograph is thus a prosthetic, a replacement for the original event (the photograph being ‘taken’). Photography in national parks is born out of colonial practice and therefore the view through the camera lens is inscribed by a colonial vision. Yet the subjective experience of the interface, one that incorporates and inscribes events, habitation, visitation patterns, the position of the body in the park, and the way of seeing the park, produces more than a limb of colonial fashioning. The performative aspects of the body in the park rely on and are enabled by, and are inseparable from the prosthetic.

Photographs are at once about death, the photograph is a “death dealing apparatus in its capacity to fetishize and congeal time” (Jones 2002:3). At the same time, to re-enact the photograph is a performative life-affirming act. It is a connection, not unlike Taussig’s conception of contact and copy, “a copying or imitation, and a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived” (1993:21). In this dual world, “enacted and represented bodies are brought into conjunction through the technology that connects them” (Hayles 1999:xiii). To work the national park through the body with a camera, is to find an “overlay between the enacted and represented bodies (which) is no longer a natural inevitability but a



After 'Dusk, the Upper Lake', b+w Polaroid, 2005

contingent production, mediated by a technology that has become so entwined with the production of identity that it can no longer meaningfully be separated from the human subject” (Hayles 1999:xiii).

Taking a photograph in the park is an embodied act, one which is “akin to articulation in that it is inherently performative, subject to individual enactments and therefore always to some extent improvisational” (Hayles 1999:197). The recognition that embodiment is a powerful performance, one that Hayles identifies as individually articulated, creating an “incipient tension between it and hegemonic cultural constructs” (1999:197), is key to a more accurate and less generic construction of national park spaces. So as parks are contested terrain – contested between expectation and actuality – the body in place, an enacted, embodied encounter can allow for a site of resistance to norms about national parks and wilderness, and generate a space for something more.

Thus as the camera works through the body to unite near and far, global and specific and influences where we travel to in the park, and how we stand once we get there, it seems that attention to the performative aspects of taking photographs of national parks can draw attention to the gap between representations and their referent. The death signified by the photograph, a colonial gaze that captured a static pristine wilderness is usurped by the dynamism of performance and other emergent relationships that become evident in that act. The death signified by the photograph is destabilized by the emergence of ghosts. Wilderness is activated by the act of comparison, by the haunting of differences between expectation and actuality, with the blend between them. The (unrepeatable) act of standing in place with a camera, whether haunted by things that are newly in place, things that are missing from the view, or what was over the original photographer’s shoulder - whether a water tower just outside the frame capturing your attention, power lines, or other bodies ‘in the way’ - all disrupt and destabilize understandings and representations of nature in the place of Waterton Lakes National Park. This performance generates the space that is actually inhabited, a specific encounter within and as part of nature that encompasses all that is powerful and mysterious in configurations of the body in national parks. It is Riggall’s experience to “see what the Ram sees” that hints at what matters in thinking about historical photographs that are continually re-enacted in Waterton. Not only do visitors participate in being part of the group, or gaining access through a particular relationship to the camera (a prosthetic to experience that allows for a certain way of being in the park, of engaging place and performing identity); but as well, there is a connection to history and engaging in their own journey to encounter wilderness and wildness within and through their own bodies. To recite historian Ian MacLaren, “wilderness is us” (1999:42).

As the past invents our contemporary postures and viewing, it influences our imagination and assumptions about wilderness. Yet as this past is articulated in the present, it diverges from the original goals, and therefore must be carefully thought out as part of a continually emerging idea of - and experience of - nature/wilderness in Canada. In this way not only the photographs, but the photographic moment is a “socially salient entity that exists within contexts that shift and sometimes change dramatically over time” (Edwards 2004:48). Photography is the coming together of individual experience and collective experience into an event. This is an important part of this research. To study the meaning of these photographs is to reveal their complexity in the way they generate, sustain, and outlive relationships we have with them, as well



as how they contest, undermine and bring uncertainty to them. I found in my research that the social functions and narrative functions of photographs produce multiple natures that are at play in the generation of the myth of wilderness. These don't neatly align into a dualistic construction of here—there, inside—outside, culture—nature, self—other but are necessarily produced out of the relationship between them. A study of uncertainty and how it produces multiple natures will be the focus of chapter 5. I begin with by groundtruing photographs that were taken during the same survey that produced “Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore” but that are not commensurate with what we might expect from a photograph of a national park. Using archival research and my re-enactment of historical photographs, I rework photography in Waterton from fixity and stability to pursue how photography records shifting visualities and fleeting photographic moments.



'The Belly River, Alta.,' Dawson and the International Boundary Commission August 1874, courtesy Library Archives Canada (top), and After 'The Belly River, Alta.,' Trudi Lynn Smith and Rob Watt July 2007 (bottom).

Chapter 5: Uncertainty and Impermanence in Waterton Lakes National Park

This chapter is about how photographs of national parks in Canada do not always form a sustained presence in photographic records, nor do they form the ground for stable views that are persistently acted out. Instead, I take up some basic questions about how photographs are fleeting, that is, why is it that some views of national parks – a space valued for its stability and unchanging nature – either never enter into – or fall out of – photographic favour. Key to understanding the social meaning of images of Waterton Lakes National Park is to investigate both why we return to the same places over and over to take virtually the same photograph, but also why we don't. How does our relationship with wilderness – imagined as a fixed and unchanging – actually change over time and how is this reflected in the photographic history and present acts in Waterton? How does our relationship with photography and imaging change over time and how is this represented in the park space? Recent scholarship argues for the stability of photographic views in National Parks and other vacation destinations and finds a constant set of representations of the park space (Lofgren 1999; Cronon 2004). While my analysis supports this finding, in part, I also find that upon a close investigation shifting visualities and fleeting photographic moments are present in archives and experience in the park. These other views form part of the record that comes to be Waterton and deserve attention and analysis.

My focus in this chapter is upon the knowledge produced through attempts to take key representations back to their origin to provide ground to narrate how this relationship between human and nonhuman species is in constant flux and change. My aims in this chapter are threefold. First I take up a discussion of the 1874 International Boundary Survey photographs that chapters three and four left out. I discuss how the archive has brought the collection into the present as a whole so that images that are not equivalent are placed side by side. This signals a precarious position between order and disorder, between organization and chaos, between the presence of the voice and the muteness of the objects found in archives (Speiker 2008:xiii). I show how upon investigation, rather than common sense, a significant part of the survey collection of the present-day Waterton area forms colonial non-sense (Bhabha 1994). A close look at photographic practices in this chapter will show how the construction of archives and photography is far from the authoritative monolithic representation of the world that we imagine (and were intended), rather, such accounts combine a range of scopic regimes, discourses, knowledges and signifying practices (Jay 1993).

In the second part of this chapter I move from survey photography into the early 20th century to discuss the postcard produced by Cross Studio, "Swimming Pool, Linnet Lake." I show how our relationship to a photograph changes over time and how human relationships to the more-than-human world are constantly shifting. Photographs and ideas about nature are each flexible. This gives us some room for maneuver, to acknowledge the material world from an ecocritical position which considers "bodies and fluids, selves and experiences, sites of interwoven agency and alterity among plants and animals" to "link human corporeality with the other – than – human processes, experiences and entities in ways that profoundly challenge any neat nature culture divide" (Sandilands 2009:7). In the process of people performing places and their lives, "the landscape is brought into being by events" (Ingold 2000), and this includes the multiple sensory experience of taking a photograph. What does it mean if re-enactment

finds that representations are malleable and disrupted by intervening events, if there is the acknowledgement of the co-construction of place by the rest of nature?

In the final part of this chapter I explore how there is an anxiety of permanence found in both photography and the national parks space that is key to the legacy of 19th century modernism and science. Yet the two case studies - the 1874 survey photographs from the Belly River area and the postcard of Linnet Lake – that I describe in this chapter offer alternatives to readings of place. The sorts of stories that emphasize impermanence and the fleeting nature of experience are available through re-working photography in Waterton. In chapter six I describe some approaches I have taken toward creating an affirmative experience of impermanence through drawing attention to the photograph as an event in art projects.

The Photograph as Event: “Belly River, Alta.”

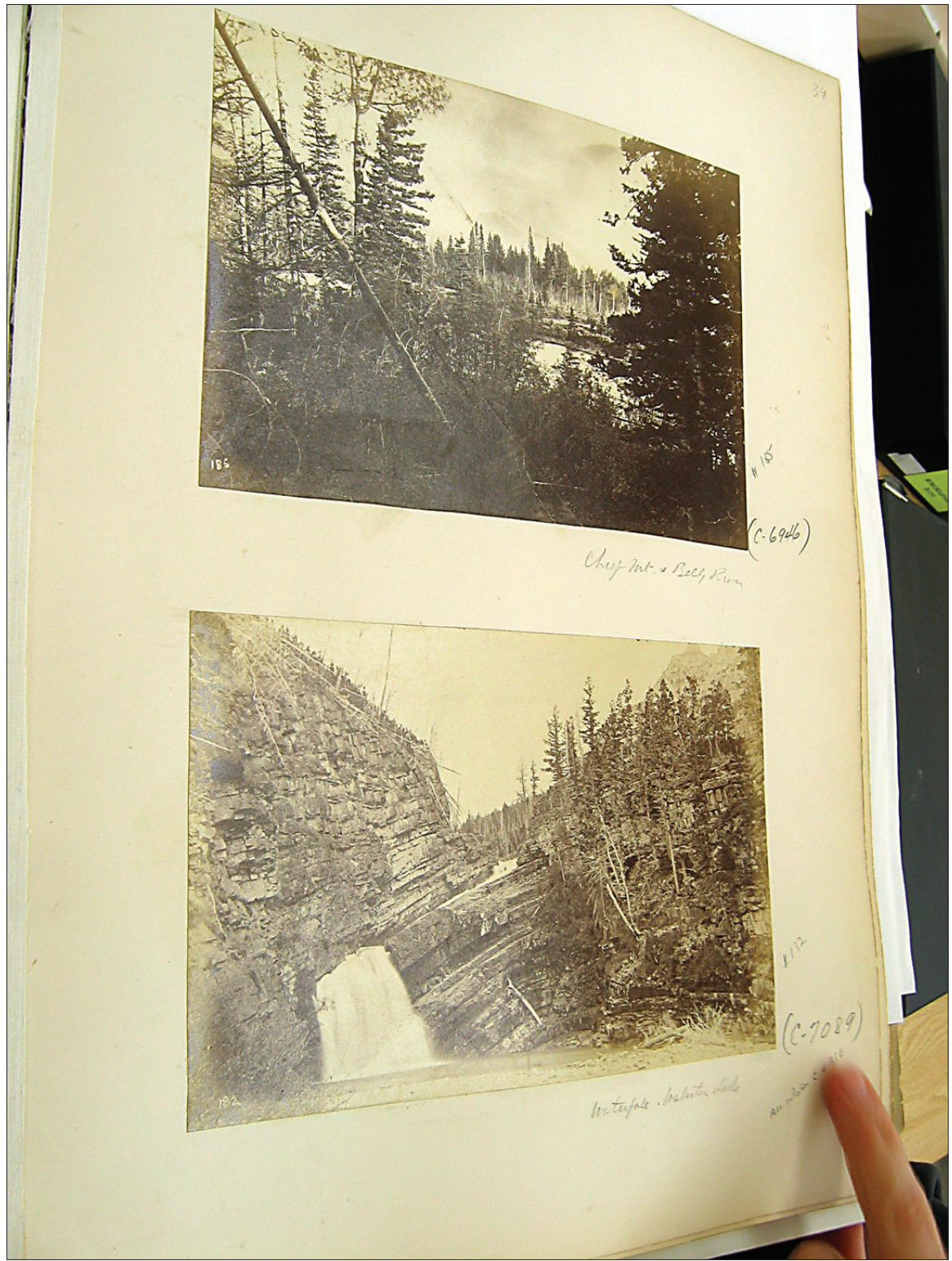
During their time in the Waterton area, and at the same time they were making images such as “Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore”, the surveyors were also making photographs a few kilometers away from their camp, in the Belly River valley. The location of the camp was the practical outcome of their travel with wagons. They were as close as they could get upstream to do their work at a boundary monument a couple of kilometers away on the west bank of the river in the present day Belly campground area. Of the sixty-eight photographs in the collection that the Library Archives Canada holds for Waterton that I mined in 2005, there are twenty images that are from the 1874 International Boundary Survey collection. Yet my calculations found in total twenty-nine survey photographs that at present can be located in both the LAC and other archives that were taken by the surveyors inside the present day park boundaries. Twelve of the surviving photographs from the survey were taken at the Royal Engineer’s Astronomical camp in August of 1874 which was located along the Belly River at the northeastern boundary of the present-day park. I am interested in this set of images from the Belly River area, as it is in this part of the survey collection that images drop out of the archive: Only four of the twelve photographs from Belly River were found under the Waterton search in the Library Archives Canada¹.

In this section I will discuss two ways this is of interest in thinking about wilderness, nature and national park space. I ask, what is the nature of the images that are included, and how do they relate to the rest of the collection. And second, what is the nature of the images that are not included as Waterton? I spend more time on the second question. Asking this question can show how archives are organized and how certain things in Waterton are made present then come to be Waterton. While the archive is about presence, the archive is also about absence, it reports about things that are really not there: in particular this could be a list of possibilities for photography that are not included in what comes under Waterton². In this section I will show how there are absences in the archive which later signal absences in place.

The Intersection of Archives, Photography and National Park Space in the 1874

1 While only four Belly River photographs show up in the search under Waterton, it is a search in the Library Archives Canada and the Glenbow Museum and Archives under the 1874 Survey that turns up the total twelve.

2 In part, my artistic practice draws attention to other possibilities in image making in parks, for example, the post card set “Field Guide” (2010).



Chap Mt. & Belly River
(C-6946)



Waterfalls - Belknap Falls
(C-7089)

Library Archives Canada, Dawson's album, digital snap showing Belly River and the Falls, 2006

International Boundary Commission Survey

At the intersection of archives and photography and national park space an ambiguity emerges. Images that are powerfully constructed and narrated and that continue to hold powerful sway in the way we take photographs in the park, such as “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore” are located in archives beside images that are no longer grounded by re-enactment. The process which brings photographs into the present – the initial event, the value attributed to the photograph, and the way it is made sense of (stored in reports and archives) contributes to how it is brought into common sense. In my analysis of archives I learned that documents are attributed meaning through relationships, not upon the truth or facts that they purport to hold. The archive structures an ordering and attributes value to images that means those readable and enactable images in the present bump up against images that are not. Archives iron out and reconfigure relationships. Out of this complicated relationality documents like the photograph “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore” come into the present. They are stored in archives with a value that can be narrated through contemporary national park discourse: This is the history of Canada, they say, it holds value as a representation of the “essence of Canada” (Parks Canada 2010c), one that is a picturesque, sublime view detailing magnificent mountains, and a wealth of resources. All of this is presented as if it is self-evident and was easy to capture on film. But what is the next image in the archive that comes under Waterton? The next image is simply titled “Belly River Alta.,” one of the four images from this location come into the archive under Waterton out of twelve images that can be located through the survey archive as part of the “Belly River., Alta” collection.

The images “Belly River., Alta” and “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the north shore” are vastly different in meaning and intent. Yet they hold together as a group, narrated and included in the Waterton archive as part of the 1874 International Boundary Survey collection. The way that documents gain authority through ordering (by Dawson and the rest of the surveyors, and by an archivist later on) is made visible upon attempting to re-enact the whole record. While they are on even ground – both spaces are brought into visibility and then the images are entered into archives – as I will show, at their vantage points they could not be further from one another’s truth.

As I have discussed in previous chapters of this dissertation, the making of Waterton is tied to a relationship with archives. The co-development of photography and archives in the climate of 19th century positivism function within a certain discursive regime of truth. In Canada, the Library and Archives Canada (formerly the National Archives) are part of a nation building pursuit and store government documents. At a more local level, archives store documents associated with important people or events. For example, significant collections about Waterton are found in the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies; the Glenbow Archives; the Pincher Creek Museum; the Waterton Lakes National Park Archives; and the Glacier National Park Archive. It is common that prominent images found in one archive were also found in others. The 1874 survey collection found in the Library Archives Canada is also found in the Glenbow Archives. They are both copies of copies, as the negatives are long since lost or destroyed. The photographs that Bert Riggall took that were included in reports can be found in the Library Archives Canada. Most of his photographs and texts are accessioned in the Whyte Museum and copies of these images are located in the Pincher Museum, the Waterton Lakes National Park Archives and have surfaced on eBay. What is important

SURVEYING

Operations - 1872-75

TITLE (North American Boundary
Commission) Waterfall north shore
of Waterton Lake 4 miles north of
the boundary and 757 miles west
of Red River.

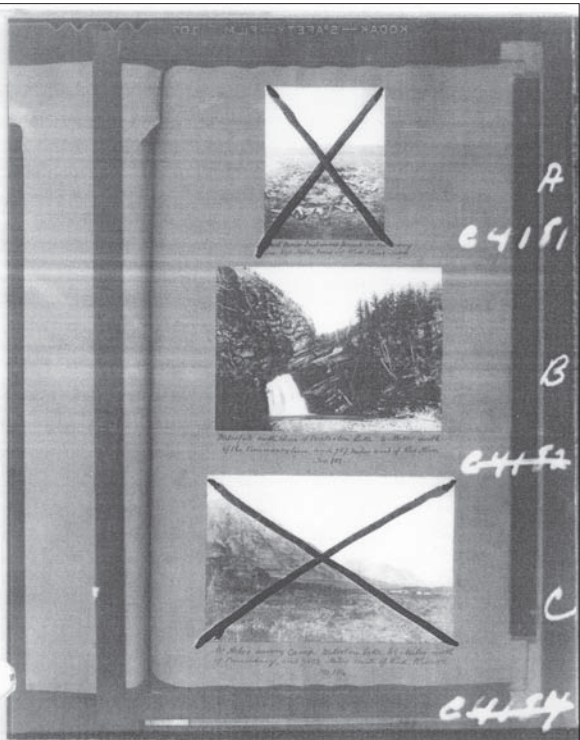
ACC. NO. 1958 - 206

COLL.

NEG. NO.

LOC. Album 2 - p. 135

C 4181B



about this is that the same sets of images are being archived, accessioned, circulated and reproduced by archives across Canada and in the U.S.A. The same images come to form Waterton: Widely circulated, published as the “essence of Canada” by Parks Canada and hotel and tour companies, they are images of the Prince of Wales Hotel; The Lakeshore; from the Prince of Wales Hotel Hill; Cameron Lake; Cameron Falls; Crypt Lake and Bertha Lake. While there are exceptions (some of which form the subject of this chapter) including some images in collection at Library Archives Canada that show infrastructure and maintenance of Waterton, most of those images included are scenic, aesthetic views. The photographs and archives together form a lexicon for what wilderness looks like.

Allan Sekula links photographs and archives in the telling of history with an “archival promise” that wants photographs to be a “vast substitution set, providing for a relation of general equivalence between images” (1986:17). Yet the archival promise was frustrated by the ambiguous nature of images. Sekula argues that the sheer number of images produced met with the circumstantial character of photography to produce a “messy contingency” that could only be tamed by creating a system – an archive that is typical or emblematic (1986:17). Such a history finds the inescapable subjectivity of images “at the heart of our construction as subjects, and perhaps for that reason, images are also impugned as imprecise, unscientific, unmanageable things in need for subordination and control” (Nicols 1991:9).

The failure of photography to create a comprehensive and exact history necessitated an archival structure that could order history. In his account of discourse, Foucault finds that the order of statements is crucial to the formation of historical events to:

Determine that all those things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintain or blurred in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same place in time, but shine, as it were, like stars, some that seem close to us shining brightly from afar off, while others that are in fact close to us are already growing pale (2001:129).

And so archives are constructed and ordered in part by photographic practice and in part to support photographic practice. Ultimately, the social practice of archives is a continual interplay between the unclassifiable nature of photography to create a comprehensive and exact history, and the classification system that supports photographic truth. It is for this reason that Sekula can find “plentiful evidence of a crisis of faith in optical empiricism,” while at the same time archives and photographs can maintain authority over history (1986:16). It is within archives that Waterton comes to be certain things, and not others.

Waterton has been grouped together into a *distinct figure* through the ordering principle of the archive and of survey. The shape that emerges from this survey is one that inscribes the values that shape conservation boundaries and practices over the course of the 20th century. Waterton emerges as valuable: full of resources and the experience of the sublime. It also emerges as uncertain and unknowable: bewildering and distant. All of these meanings tell the myth of wilderness in Canada, and it is the relationship

between them that help to animate the national park space. Certain photographs are continually re-enacted, predictable and manageable. And as I will discuss, other photographs are fleeting and unruly. In this way archives, photography and Waterton are entangled, together producing the myth of wilderness.

The Belly River photographs were first entered into the archive authorized as part of the survey collection. Later some of these are dropped out of the collection that is constructed as Waterton, but remain locatable by looking under other search terms: Those associated with G.M. Dawson and the 1874 survey. Thus, it is the relationship to survey that keeps the total collection of “Belly River” photographs locatable. That they can be found linked together through the survey collection brings difference together through the photographic event – as part of the 1874 survey. As for the four images of Belly River that are included in the Waterton collection, they remain of “national significance” in relationship to Waterton, held in archives because of their relationship to other survey photographs, and what have become more classic views of wilderness in Canada. That the entire set of Belly river photographs are not included shows that they are imbued with difference. Over the course of 150 years, the meaning and intent of the photographs and what they are evidence of, has shifted.

Much contemporary scholarship about archives generates from Foucault’s “question of the archive” that he raised in the 1960s in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and more recently found in Derrida’s *Archive Fever*. The two texts form an “intermittent dialogue” on the archive as a “way of seeing, or a way of knowing” (Steedman 2002:2). Derrida describes the archive as a representation of whatever power is being exercised *now*, anywhere, in any place or time (Steedman 2002). Such an attention to power in the process of inscription and commemoration is one way that theorists are disturbing assumptions about the truth of archives (Kaplan 2002:216).

Derrida finds that “the archive produces as much as it records an event” (1996:17), and the active role of the archivist as the co-creator of an historical record and the shaper of the future as well as of the past, means that archiving is a process of social creation. Discussions about contemporary archival practice finds that archives will always reflect power relationships, and that “archivists follow a script that has been naturalized by the routine repetition of past practice”(Cook and Schwartz 2002:171). Kaplan finds that archivists were long considered “objective and neutral, invisible and passive” and she explores this “surprisingly” positivist practice in light of the epistemological debate and turmoil found in other disciplines in the 20th century (notably anthropology’s self-analysis) (2002:215). In response to this, theorists call for attention to the role of the interpreter in institutional practice, where the central role of the archivist as mediator, interpreter and shaper of the record is acknowledged (Cook and Schwartz 2002). Key to Derrida and Foucault’s idea of power in archives is the *now* and in practice this takes the form of analyses that reflect the specific and local. Edwards points to the importance of approaching the history of the archive and photographs in a detailed and focused way and warns that a critique and investigation into archives and photography must be a series of “micro-intentions as much as a universalizing desire” (2001:7). Part of the activity of investigation must acknowledge the unruliness and subjectivity of photographs as a part of their make up. Not just a part of a historical creation of photographs, we are still in the process of making meaning about photographs (Edwards 2001).



The Belly River, Alta.,' G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, August 1874

My analysis of the survey collection shows that at some point four images from the Belly River area would be included into the record, while others would not. In the Belly River collection the Other nine images are found through searches into survey records. It is impossible to know the micro-intentions that led to the inclusion of four photographs of the Belly River area into the archive of Waterton, and the exclusion of ten others, but an analysis of the space depicted might help shed some light on their differences. This analysis is crucial to this research program. There are other narratives available – both visual and otherwise – that can be detected by a close look at the historical record. To only give way for the dominant narratives of national park space closes down the opportunity for other possibilities and other realities. There were and are photographs of other things being made, and these are crucial to investigate to wedge open even more space for a more complex terrain of imaging and imagination in, around, and about national parks. This is one point of Derrida's deconstruction, to look at the contradictions and tensions within photographs is to allow for the emergence of other realities and stories that might not exist within dominant reading of text. There is not one Waterton Lakes National Park, or one myth of wilderness.

While photography might be read contemporarily as an internally coherent object, the photographs of the survey in Waterton shows things that do not signal Cartier Bresson's (1952) infamous description of photography's "decisive moment". This moment is one of intent – a bringing together of something happening in front of the camera and the recognition of how visual forms will express a fact. In her study of 19th century photography, Martha Sandweiss argues that anachronistic readings of the photographs of the American West have cast them as either "richly symbolic equivalents of painting" or "meaning-laden precursors of photographic 'decisive moments'" (1991:99). To argue against this history, she shows that photographers of the American West considered their medium a narrative one, a storytelling medium that was helped by arrangement, groupings and multi-plate panoramic views rather than single decisive moments. Like American photographs of the West, survey photography in Canada cannot be read only as equivalents to paintings or precursors to photographic "decisive moments". And yet, in contrast to the photography Sandweiss describes, at this juncture in Canada, survey photographs diverge from the photographic record she describes. The survey images were not commodities for display and sale to the general public. While they were used with reports, and closely linked to economy and resources, the evidential nature of photography is still up for debate. The photographs are in the appendix, grouped together to provide confirmation of the truth found in front of the lens, narrated together to produce coherence. Taken on their own, many of these images do not signal a decisive moment, but perhaps form part of a different kind of document. Canadian survey photography can be read as an experimental space. This experimental space can be encountered through analysis of the differences *between* images and the uncertainty and conflict that can be found *within* individual images (see Braun 1999). As survey photography and as photography in national park space became more and more ingrained into a few views that have been agreed upon, other views have fallen out of photographic favour.

The Space and Place to Experiment with Photography in the 1874 Survey

The twelve surviving, locatable images of Belly River provide a clear view of how the range of what was photographable was still up for debate at that time. Read as single images, and read comparatively as a group, as we might through a contemporary lens,



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several of the Belly River photographs indicate that it is unclear what the sappers were trying to bring into existence. It is probable that the men were tasked to take pictures to describe the camp area. Reading the archive in the present, and read together, they show distant views of the mountains and river valley, the forest (including a large proportion burnt from a recent fire), several middle distance views of the river and river banks, views of the camp with tents in an open meadow, and a view from the camp of the shoulder of a hill show what reads as a fire plume in the distance. As a group they document the river valley and the camp. Almost certainly taken on the same day, the set of images support Dawson's aims to make the space "geographically known."

Four of the views show the river. It seems they were included as scientific documents because of their comprehensiveness and readability. They are the photographs that have the most aesthetic success: neatly winding rivers and banks show the order of the landscape. In one they hiked up a hill to generate a wide angle view. Upon investigation, this image adhered to what was to become the more classic surveying view showing the front range including the prominent Chief Mountain. In 2007 it was located after a short scramble up the most prominent hill in the area of the 1874 camp location. The location seemed to be one-third of the way down a slope, which due to recent erosion was quite steep and uncomfortable. In my notes I write that the change in landscape has influenced the experience of this photographic event. Now it is the feel of toes driving into the end of boots, and a precarious position for a tripod. It doesn't make sense as a location in the present. It is not the kind of place one stops to take a photograph. Looking out at the area, it was clear that the river course had changed dramatically. The sky was hazy from forest fires and/or humidity in the air. This is a classic survey view, capturing the geography of the area, but little about the geography can be related between the two photographs. We verify the location using the mid and distant ground in the images. We're on one of the only prominent hills in the river valley. The distant skyline is the same. But it is hard to find other shared characteristics between the 1874 photograph and the 2007 repeat. In the close midground, the river course shifts and widens, and tree growth infills the scene. In this way, the photograph emerges as a fiction. This image suggests that the archive too, as an enduring storing ground for records, is a fiction. Perhaps then, this image was included in the Waterton archive for its visual equivalence to the "Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore." Upon locating the image, it emerged that the image was taken from almost the same elevation, showing a surveying view, and contains many of the same general features: including a body of water in the foreground and distant mountains.

Yet the view this image constructs of the Belly River area is anomalous. The total collection of "Belly River Alta.," photographs show a visuality that dominates the ten other images: middle view distances of the river. Looking at these views, they imply an embeddedness of the operator in place, imaginable as tramping through the brush and stopping to set up his tripod to make an exposure on glass plate. The other three images from the survey that are included in the Waterton section are from this vantage point. As stated, it appears upon analysis that they are the most aesthetically and compositionally sound of the collection, and their inclusion to the Waterton collection was undoubtedly in part a mix of that and their connection to the other more aesthetic and prominent views from the survey such as "Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore."



'The Belly River, Alta.,' G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, August 1874, Courtesy Library Archives Canada (blurry tree)

While there could be others, my interest in this section is upon one photograph, one that doesn't come into the archive of Waterton but is part of this same collection of "Belly River, Alta" photographs. If we understand archives to have the primary purpose as a repository of data, what is the information that is presented? It is an image that foregrounds subjectivity through the movement of a tree or bush. The blurred movement forms the focal point of the image. This view of "Belly River Alta.," is taken close to the ground amongst the brush, and is unlike other surveying views from the collection that generate the space the surveyors brought into being in a (now) expected way. No longer the expansive view that includes a organized space with a tree framing the photograph using a pictorialist conventions as found in "Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore", this "Belly River Alta.," photograph depicts a cramped space, the image bordered on all sides by midground foliage. Broken branches and dead underbrush crowd the image. This image produces one idea of wilderness, that is, a particular kind of space, one of "wild or desolate character, or in which one wanders or loses one's way (OED online). The origin of the word wilderness, *wylder ness*; meant nest or lair of a wild beast (Bender 1993:2), and, as Donna Haraway writes, "monsters have always defined the limits of community in Western imaginations" (2004:37). This image depicts the limits of comprehension for the meaning of space. Its later exclusion from the record signals that it remained at the limits.

In the image, a forest fire, downed vegetation, and especially the movement of the foreground bush suggest an imaginative response to the idea of wilderness. This was not an illustration of a stable resource-rich pristine space imaged in the gaze of colonial spectacle, but rather reveals the quickly changing, confusing, awkward landscape that the survey was apprehending. The movement of foreground brush signals both the surprise and unruliness of place, but also the surprise and accident of photography. Perhaps a gust of wind came up. More likely someone disturbed the brush, perhaps by walking in front of the lens. This motion implies a fleetingness to the event, and conjures the body in place. Read in the present, with the expectations around photography that imbue my readings, this disturbance creates an image ripe with tension. If this image is intended to mark resources and make the space geographically known, it shows something different than what we have come to know of survey photography. Such a view can only persist in a moment whereby photography, place, geography and the relationship to the body was unfixed, and photography was an experimental technology.

Photography as a technology is both a distortion of reality as light brought onto a two-dimensional plane by a lens, and it is also unruly – bringing things up and bringing things into relationships that might not be intended or expected. The camera operator might point the camera at a distant mountain, imagining the outcome will describe the mountain, but other things show up in the image that change its reading and meaning. This is one way to think about Winograd's accident in photography – photographing to see what something looks like photographed – a distortion and a redirection of attention in the photograph becomes a new relationship formed out of objects. Over time, these relationships change the meaning of the photograph again. This can be seen in the recent interest by Parks Canada in the historical value of images to look at landscape level change (ecological and cultural) has sparked an interest in the Belly River collection. Park Warden Rob Watt found the entire known survey collection for Waterton, which made it possible for me to know about these other images that didn't fit into the dominant record of Waterton.



After 'The Belly River, Alta.,' G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, August 1874, Courtesy Library Archives Canada (blurry tree)

Ground-truthing the Belly River

The complexity of archival records and of the survey document becomes obvious upon the attempt to re-enact previous photographic moments. More is at play than just popular photographs as re-enacted inscriptions of place. That photographs and archives read multiple ways is a testament to their failure to memorize a history, and to their very ambiguity. In archival explorations, a recent turn towards de-coding archives has released the imagined singular authority of the photograph in the archive, with the result that new histories are being (re)coded into the archives.

I have described the alternative visuality that went into the making of the image of the moving tree in “Belly River Alta.,” but to better understand the alternative visuality at play in the set of “Belly River Alta.,” photographs, I set out to locate them. Nowhere is the unclassifiable nature of photography more obvious than through taking the 1874 survey located in the present day space of Waterton Lakes National Park, for a walk. The hold of photography as truth and the stability of the photographic object are brought into question upon entering the Belly River area. The Belly River area of Waterton Lakes National Park is found at the far north eastern side of the small park. Situated between a parcel of land that forms the Blood Timber Limit to the east and the Park Boundary to the west, the Belly River area sees significantly less human traffic than the Prince of Wales hill, the location of “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the North Shore.” The area is considered distinct from other areas in the park, and as the 2010 management plan for the park details, the area provides a particular experience:

The Belly River area is imbued with an atmosphere that feels as though one is in a landscape unchanged from the past. Wetlands soften the landscape, attracting abundant birds and wildlife to its healthy montane and subalpine environments. Mountain goats and bighorn sheep regularly traverse the mountain slopes in the subalpine and alpine and elk can be found in the side valleys. (Parks Canada 2010b:42)

I was surprised to see the signs of a trail crew clearing the main trail through the area in 2007. The only other people I saw in this area were one other group of researchers. Even within the control of Parks Canada, this area is vastly different than the Prince of Wales Hotel townsite,

The Chief Mountain Highway, the route for visitors from Glacier National Park, transects the area and the Blood Timber Limit is enveloped by the park on three sides. Highway signs from the south do not communicate to visitors that they are entering the park and the national park presence at the border crossing is not well defined. The Chief Mountain Highway closes seasonally and this limits access. (Parks Canada 2010b:43)

It is a site of large carnivores, including charismatic megafauna like wolf and bears. It is the space dominated by the calls of animals, and more often in my experience, an awareness in other species that we were there: The silent tension of being tracked. Sometimes there is even the outward knowledge of being tracked. In 2007 I experienced wolves tracking me after we came too close to their denning site – a site that has been in use off-and-on as a denning site and a rendez-vous point over time.



A place to lie in, c-print 2007

Our mistake (we didn't know that they were using the site) meant that the alpha male and female tracked us out of the area, one wolf on each side of us calling back and forth. We moved quickly to avoid further confrontation. They were not visible, but their howls caused bodily confusion – the hair standing up on my neck, the sound of my heart beat and the rush of the leaves seemed louder than usual as I pushed through the bushy trail. Not just fear, it felt like something else, something primal. I hurried down the path but instinctually held my calm. I was not in danger, and did not feel fear exactly, just a heightened awareness, adrenaline, and something else – something that reached beyond me. After about a kilometer the wolves stopped calling. Later I described my experience to a fellow researcher, Cristina Eisenberg, a wolf expert. We discussed the weightiness of the experience and she pointed out that over time we have co-existed with wolves, sometimes as the hunter, sometimes the hunted. A primal confusion could erupt in such an encounter, the feeling of something bigger than oneself, am I the hunted or hunter? These are wild acts that originate in these sorts of experiences: Walking, listening, scanning, thinking, breathing.

The place of Belly River resonates with Dawson's diary entry while camped in this area about the nightmarish and weird appearance of bison and their eerie calls across the prairie space (see chapter 3). In thinking about what Dawson might have meant, *weird* can mean "Having the power to control the fate or destiny of human beings, etc.; later, claiming the supernatural power of dealing with fate or destiny" (OED online). It is a word associated with magical power, enchantment, and fate. The Belly River area is, in this sense, weird. Dominated by the Chief (Ninaistakis), a mountain charged with spiritual significance by the Nitsitapii (Blackfoot). This is a relational place, between human and non-human species and entities.

To say that a specific place is a sacred place is not simply to describe a piece of land, or just locate it in a certain position in the landscape. What is known as a sacred site carries with it a whole range of rules and regulations regarding people's behaviour in relation to it, and implies a set of beliefs to do with the non-empirical world, often in relation to the spirits of the ancestors, as well as more remote or powerful gods or spirits" (Carmichael, Hubert and Reeves 1994:3)

The area is dense with sacredness, "for thousands of years, Ninaistakis has been and continues to be a focus for traditional vision questing and other spiritual activities" (Reeves 1994:265).

To Parks Canada and to tourists, the Belly River where the IBC survey photographs are located has remained an Other space, one geographically and ecologically less known and outside of most tourist experience. Yet it is not only unknown in the idea of everyday use, but it is a space that resists being known, even with the camera. As I will show in this section, the surveyors' photographs are weird and do not fit into common sense views of what national park space is. In contrast to "Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore", the images from "Belly River Alta.," are not easy to gain knowledge from. At the same time, the landscape resists being captured and stilled on film. Flooding of the Belly River in 1908, 1937, 1964, 1975 and most recently in June 1995 have, in the words of Park Warden Robert Watt, "rearranged the landscape." The most recent flood in June 1995 radically altered the channels of the river so that when Robert Watt and



Ground-truthing 'The Belly River, Alta.,' G.M. Dawson and the International Boundary Commission, August 1874, digital snap

I returned to relocate the photographs it no longer resembled the landscape that the surveyors captured on silver and glass plates.

August 9 2007 12:00-15:45

Despite Parks Canada's text that outlines a feeling of stability of the landscape whereby "one is in a landscape unchanged from the past" (Parks Canada 2010b:43), the attempt to re-occupy this vantage point in the present is a speculative act. There is little similarity between the image and life. As Park Warden Rob Watt and I headed into the Belly River area to re-locate the twelve views that Rob located at Library Archives Canada, (his research helped to fill in the archival images I had found under Waterton), I encountered a confusing space that I couldn't relate to the photographs I held in my hand. Rob became my guide to understanding the place through his long engagement working and living in the area. To re-locate the historical vantage points took several days of tracking in July and August 2007. It was a speculative event. We followed a trail in from the highway and then crossed the river to get to the general area that the photographs were taken from. We were low in a river valley for the most part, which made seeing orienting landscape forms difficult.

To re-locate the image of the IBC's blurry tree, we walked east from the 1874 camp location to the river's edge. As I previously stated, the geography of the area no longer holds the shape of the surveyors intent: The river's course is dramatically altered by flooding. The old river channel in the immediate foreground is now a hollow backwater for spring flooding and the channel has filled and has moved. We use aerial images and subjective, deductive reasoning to try to focus in on the vantage point. This image stands as evidence of flux and change. It is made up of downed wood, close ups views of tree stands, general glimpses of the river shoreline. Missing are the general landscape markers such as mountains, or boulders that help us re-locate vantage points with certainty. We engage in an imaginative, interpretive play – (an ironic play) - drawing upon deductive reasoning. I speculate in my fieldnotes that perhaps there was a good sitting log nearby in the historical event determining the surveyors location, as that is what guided our settling point for the repeat. It is this sort of grounded, physical materiality that influences photographs. I noted that this is an anterior space, a space that cannot be found, a space we find or make somewhere else in the present.

The landscape resists being known through modernist technology. The archive and the camera - technologies that were meant to order and make the world knowable - show that upon investigation, there is no truth to the images or locations that can be returned to. By returning with the camera to re-enact a previous photographic event, the relegation of national park space that we locate becomes unfixed. Movement and time, those features of our world that constantly rub against and wear down modernist objectivity become obvious at this scale. The specificity of being in Belly River is put against the non-specificity of photography (reproducible, truth, objective). Re-enactment generates a destabilization of these photographic objects.

If the use of drawing by survey and traveler accounts made certain the landscape pictured therein, made them common sense, then early survey photography such as this view that is "Belly River Alta.," can be understood to be tangled in "colonial confusion", to borrow the term from Homi Bhabha (1994). This colonial confusion is characterized by "colonial nonsense": all the things that cannot fit into the register of



'The Belly River, Alta.,' Dawson and the International Boundary Commission August 1874, courtesy Library Archives Canada
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common sense, a sense structured by dualities such as nature/culture and chaos/civility (1994:124). It is hard to figure what the surveyors found valuable in this point of view. While the views in the Belly River area signals the idea of unreadability as wilderness, the use of the camera is still part of the same intent, meant to bring these spaces into truth. The views of Belly River show that the camera (despite uncertainty around it) is a technology that gives the surveyors a way to interact with the space in a technological way – one whereby the body is perceiving a true world out there, while looking at the ground glass of the camera and this act shows a view disciplined and tamed by the technological apparatus. In this way, the camera helps to encounter the unknown. To have a task, something to do, is a way to investigate this place and interact with this space.

Key to the production of “colonial nonsense” is found in the unfixity of the nature and purpose of photography. The images from the Belly River area suggest that the sappers didn’t always know what a photograph would show. That is, their imagination and performance of photography in the space is experimental, as is their intent³. The images from Belly River, uncertain and awkward, do not fit into a duality of chaos or civility – the camera does lend order and authority to a space, and yet the space depicted signifies the same thing to a contemporary eye. The uncertainty around the space encountered and how it was to be represented by the camera, as well as uncertainty of the technology of the camera itself characterizes early survey projects. One could say that photography never quite fits into the dualities that structure colonial common sense, nature or culture, art or science. Indeed the tension that characterizes this account is the same for much of photographic history and theory – a relationship between truth and photography.

Through photography, the sappers experiment with what geography will look like. They are not all the epic views that we have come to expect from photographs of the space of national parks. At present, they can be read as things that are not photographable, what a photograph of wilderness is not. They have come through time to signal the every day moments that are not recorded, that have no place in the way that we understand photography at present. In this way, there were alternative visualities at play in the production of 19th century photographs produced for survey.

This uncertainty is supported by archival intentions. The four images that are included are probably the most easily readable of the group in the present. They depict more wide surveying views. Images such as the one of the tree moving never enter into certainty and are not included in the archival record. As Elizabeth Edwards points out, this signals the range of practice in all societies,

All societies create circles of exclusive access to certain kinds of knowledge and certain kinds of cultural capital. There is never, of course, one comprehensive or unified code of looking, rather a set of competing regimes which emerge, die and even lie dormant (2009:17).

3 Found in their charge to document “all objects, either valuable in professional point of view, or interesting as illustrative of History, Ethnology, Natural History, Antiquities &c” (Birrell 1996:113). As I state in chapter 3, these instructions can also be considered very open and vague, relying on a photographer’s common sense.



After 'The Belly River, Alta.,' Dawson and the International Boundary Commission August 1874. b+w print

Edwards echoes Martin Jay's 1994 exploration of visuality in his detailed work, *Downcast Eyes: the denigration of vision in the 19th century*. Edwards finds that survey photography is ripe with tensions over the social role of photography: between record photography and artistic practice and that this is a struggle between different forms of knowledge (2009:17). I agree and would emphasize that the experimental space for awhile had a form on film that later was left out of the archive – it no longer counted or fit into common sense. It was another kind of record of the weird experiential space that they were bringing into being. It is the tension between the unknown/undecidability and known/authority, between being and meaning. This colonial confusion is a space of potential a “recognition of an anxious contradictory place between the human and the not-human, between sense and non-sense” where things don't add up (Bhabha 1994:125).

Before the archive, photography in survey projects was still fairly open in the 1870s and the report provided a structure to put images that made sense next to colonial nonsense. What these images show however, remained uncertain and untranslatable and later all but four were dropped out of what would come under Waterton in the Library Archives Canada. It is, as Bhabha writes, “what becomes cultural identity, the ability to put the right word in the right place at the right time, is when it crosses the colonial non-sense” (1994:125). That only four of twelve of the images from Belly River made it into the Library Archives Canada under Waterton means that the other nine are perhaps relegated into non-sense. These images do not enter the lexicon of what wilderness photography is in Canada. While it is true that they found a (limited) place in reports, they only partially made it into the record for Waterton, and only through their relation to something else sensible, do they have an identity (the photograph “Waterton Lakes Alta., from the north shore” for example).

So cultural identity is to find a place for these photographs – to put them in the right place (in reports and archives). To find a space for these accounts and to relate them to something else that is already sensible. In this way, the use of photography in survey projects gave them an existing structure to fit their accounts in. What they would show, however, in these photographs, was still uncertain.

This uncertainty and experimentation with the space through the technology of the camera is important to acknowledge. As Tomas (2004) explains, there is fertile ground in these moments of contested space or *terra incognita*. Unlike the image “Waterton Lake Alta., from the North Shore” the spaces of instability “that are triggered by one's contact with the unknown in intercultural first contact situations can also be produced in the case of one's interaction with new scientific phenomena and images that are ‘new’ in the sense that they are the product of the most recent technologies of visualization” (2004:7). This was a productive space the sappers were in, one that they could produce images that were contained within the scope of what is a photographable subject at that time. The image of the moving tree suggesting their presence, or a ghost or trace that conjures up presence and weirdness gives weight to the weightiness of this space. It is also one that is gone: A space that exposes the constant flux and flow of the world, rearranged into a totally different river valley preventing the re-enactment or the ability to relate to the original moment. To attempt to invent a vantage point conjures futility and difference. To re-enact the photographic moment in the Belly River area is to capture the other space. The sappers were interacting with imagining systems, “as long as they are

eccentrically and strangely repositioned in space, time and history in a way that allows them to produce innovative experiences, information and models of the world” (Thomas 2004:7).

In this way the surveyors are positioned in time and space with the camera trying to figure out what image might produce the place they are in. They decide what to photograph in Waterton, and here it is strange blurry trees, cramped space downed wood and snags. To a contemporary eye, the survey photograph of Belly River looks more like what postmodern approaches to photography are returning to, than their counterparts in the survey such as “Waterton Lake Alta., from the north shore” or the photograph of “Cameron Falls” do. In what is cast as postmodern photographic practice artists work outside of the limits of what a photograph is and what a photograph of a landscape might be. Postmodern photographic practices ask, “what is a photographable subject?” (Cotton 2004). What could be perhaps cast as a pre-modern photography and post-modern photography have striking similarities.

The sappers in Waterton were embroiled in the struggle to define the geography, producing images that have an awkward feel, not fitting into what became the way an objective record was to be produced (including the incorporation of artistic practice) and not fitting into the ordered space artist rendering. In the struggle to re-define vision and the body that Crary describes, perhaps the photograph of Belly River is an attempt to put the onus on the viewer to find the meaning evident within. It is clear then, as Gilles Deleuze writes, “machines are social before being technical” (1987:504). Particular images are disciplined, brought into archives, re-enacted, and become common sense, fitting the civility/chaos and culture/nature dichotomies. And then particular images are colonial nonsense. The implication of this is that in the later half of the 19th century in Waterton, to cite Braun about the west coast, “vision and visibility is not a closed field” (2004:170). And it seems, according to this research, that they never are.

I now turn my attention away from the 1874 survey photographs that were made within the present day borders Waterton Lakes National Park to a postcard by Cross Studios of Lake Linnet to show the interconnectedness of humans and the rest of nature. This is a counter narrative to resist the idea of an untouched wilderness and to show in the shifting materiality of the park the rest of nature is far from a passive subject.

The Photograph as Event: “Swimming Pool Lake Linnet”

This section focuses on re-telling the story of a photograph of Linnet Lake. I hope to show how photographs have the power to bewilder⁴. To bewilder is to be lost on pathless places, and to be lost in the iconic wilderness of Canadian National Parks, can, I hope, create an elsewhere, a possibility for other readings of place. This is a strategy used by Donna Haraway who seeks to swerve from the colonialist epistemological dualisms “in a spirit of love and rage” (2004:3). She argues that “there can be an elsewhere” (2004:3) born outside the inherited dualism that run deep in Western cultures. Dualisms begin with Cartesian separation of mind from body and are represented in related and contingent splits between such areas as culture—biology, nature—biology, sameness—difference, individual—collection, human universal—cultural particular, life—death, performance—representation and between near and

4 For a separate discussion using this conception of bewilder, see my publication “Bewildering National Parks” (2006) in Cultural Reflections Vol. 8.



'Swimming Pool Lake Linnet. Waterton Lakes Park, Alberta' Cross Studios. In collection of author.

far. Considered problematic classifications as they exclude and generalize, they leave stories, people, non-human species, and histories out that can't fit into the either—or, and dualisms, according to Haraway, “escape philosophical confinement and religious ritual to find themselves built into weapons, states, economies, taxonomies, national parks, museum displays, intimate body practices and much else” (2004:2). The difficulty in usurping dualisms, elegantly put forth by anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret M. Lock, is that “we lack a precise vocabulary to deal with mind—body—society interactions so we are left suspended in hyphens, testifying to the disconnectedness of our thoughts” (1987:10). Haraway’s strategy is to ground herself in hybridities, in “naturecultures”. She practices “swerving and tripping over these bipartite, dualist traps rather than trying to reverse them or resolve them into supposedly larger wholes” (2004:2). Her strategy is to focus on figures, on lineages and wishes her work to “remold kin links to help make a kinder and unfamiliar world” (2004:2). I see the entanglement between the dualistic splits a productive space of inquiry. In this section I form new links between human and non-human nature by complicating a reading of a photograph of Lake Linnet. To do this is a way to reimagine the binaries upon which limited readings of national parks depend.

Ground-Truthing Lake Linnet

Swimming Pool Lake Linnet
Waterton Lakes Park, Alberta
Photo No 14
Cross Studios

It was the group crowding onto the float in the middle of the lake that caught my attention. The photographer, A.E. Cross, founder of Cross Studios in Lethbridge, AB, used a short depth of field to contain the lake with soft out-of-focus foreground vegetation and placed the group at centre of the rectangular postcard. The photographer set his camera on infinity thereby showing in sharp focus, an orderly skyline: the Prince of Wales Hotel on the left balanced by the water tower and the shoulder of Crandell and Bertha mountains on the right. Showing a clear sky, the sun shines from the west, throwing long shadows, telling that the photographer was there in the late afternoon. It is evident his intent is to depict Waterton as a sunny, warm, mountain playground. The 4 x 6” postcard, made after 1927 (probably the early 1930s), toned to a warm black and white, was titled on the front, *Swimming Pool Lake Linnet. Waterton Lakes Park Alberta*. It signifies leisure, belonging, health and peacefulness, which form part of the authentic tourist experience and expectation (Hockings 1987; Lofgren 2002). It can be assumed that Cross wants to sell postcards, ultimately, and have more tourists come and buy more postcards because photography is ultimately always about money – from Daguerre’s invention and promotion of the medium to Kodak’s widespread influence creating a market in snapshots with the Brownie camera in 1901.

Scenic views dominate Cross’s tourist postcards of Waterton Lakes National Park. Yet striking visual differences emerge in comparing the composition and content of *Swimming Pool Lake Linnet* (No. 14) with other popular postcards from the same studio from the 1920s to the 1950s, such as *Spring Cameron Bay* (No. 10), and *Waterton Lakes Alberta* (No. 1). While the same landscape features are found in the three



"Spring" Cameron Bay Waterton Lakes Cross Studios. In collection of author.

postcards (various configurations showing the mountain skyline of Crandell, Bertha and Cleveland), in each case, locations vary, the mountains and scenery are given a different treatment and are framed in the postcard differently⁵. Both *Waterton* and *Spring* frame the park as a pristine wilderness destination sans tourists. This composition fits neatly into a cultural imaginary where photographs form a stage that we imagine ourselves entering to find pristine untrammelled wilderness.

Waterton shows an aesthetic associated with survey, the sublime and the picturesque approach of landscape photographers, and Cross was likely influenced to make his postcard by past photographic acts generated from the same location in the park⁶. *Spring* however, is clearly awash in the dominant aesthetic of the day, pictorialism. Pictorialism, supplanted the older picturesque approach and is considered by historians the “most significant movement in Canadian photography after 1900” (Koltun 1984:32). Pictorialism moved the pursuit from a faithful depiction to more evocative and expressive compositions (Marian 2006). Cross was clearly influenced by the convention, and *Spring* is almost identical to early pictorialist works in Canada (for an example see the photography of Sidney Carter and compare *Spring* with Carter’s *Evening or Sunset on Black Creek* 1900-1901), wherein broad compositional design, atmospheric effect, soft focus, and impressionistic photography – a personal response to a subject (Marian 2006:173) are emphasized “so that they could be judged as works of art” (Koltun 1984:32).

Pictorialists were amateurs who associated themselves with art ⁷ and claimed a break from both science and professional photography. These photographers joined camera clubs and these became a key site for the dissemination of new visuality. Photo-historian Joan M. Schwartz credits the visibility of pictorialism in Canada to camera companies who sought to dominate the miniature camera market. To encourage picture taking they mounted competitions, for example, asking for amateur photographs by members of camera clubs of “Canadian scenery, particularly of those beauty spots less generally known” (MacLean’s ad in Schwartz 1984:90). As a result, in the 1930s camera clubs gained momentum across the country and influenced the spread of pictorialism (Schwarz 1984). And there was no better place to bring into visibility than national parks. While Cross would not likely have been interested in amateur pursuits, he would have been influenced by the images he saw and by the encouragement of particular traditions made visible.

Swimming Pool Lake Linnet however, departs from and is distinct from these postcard views. While drawing upon framing conventions (soft focus alder in the foreground makes a frame around the scene), missing in this photograph is the perspective found in the picturesque sublime of the *Waterton Lakes* image, and lacking the impressionistic photographic art of pictorialism, *Swimming Pool* is engaging yet another kind of visuality. In this image the photographer gets across something (else) in particular about Waterton, and authentic wilderness experience in Canada. In comparison with the other postcards, the swimmer’s postcard seems to step out of the traditions and engage something else - the everyday. Dropping the lofty ideals of picturesque and

5 Yet it is a co-creation. “Nature” is framed through photography, but it is the space of the national park that constitutes the contents of the photographs in Canada.

6 See chapters 3 and 4.

7 see for example the photo successionists in NY under the direction of Edward Steichen

pictorialism, Cross plays with the everyday. Like we saw in the Cross photograph on the Prince of Wales Hill, this is a Kodak moment that anyone could have. It suggests that simply, anyone could snap the photo, just as anyone could be there. Perhaps Cross is imagining the leisure class⁸ that might use the photographs, that anyone might have been the photographer. As such, the jarring composition – what I consider unaesthetic – is exactly what it is supposed to be: It intends to be accessible. This Kodak moment is not to be the sublime, but encourages the possibility that anyone who has a camera and can get to the park, can participate. This fits neatly with Canadian identity that links parks to a space for everyone.

The photographer depicts a swimming scene. Recreational activity such as swimming and the healthfulness of water have always been associated in Canadian National Parks, beginning with the creation of Banff National Park in 1883 around the Cave and Basin Hotsprings. This sort of activity perpetuates Parks Canada's mandate for human use and enjoyment. At the same time, the setting is appropriate for the wilderness encounter. The photograph is clearly unposed, and it gives a sense that the photographer happened upon the swimming group while strolling along or even possibly while out vigorously hiking, thereby discovering this wilderness paradise – replete with a quiet looking hotel to take comfort in, and a lounge to retire in. Considering the composition this way, the postcard is suggestive of an out of the ordinary experience, a scene magical and unique. Yet the composition of the photograph is that of a snap, that anyone could take, a snapshot anyone could take if holidaying there. Yet viewing the postcard in the present its power is invested not in the seduction of holiday, or authentic wilderness encounters, but in the resonance of the fleeting moment. It is a way to think of landscape or environment (or national park space) as a combination of cultural knowledge and bodily substance that “undergo continuous generation in the context of an ongoing engagement with the land and the beings that dwell therein” (Ingold 2000:12).

What Can My Body Know of a Postcard?

I returned to investigate this moment, long forgotten by maker and subject. After all, the man pictured in the right hand corner of the postcard who gazes on, hands on hips, may not have remembered this moment in his mind's eye. Yet for now, this postcard lives on, powerfully holding that moment. Produced by Cross Studios in Lethbridge (the closest city to Waterton, one and a half hours to the northeast), the postcard was circulated widely. It was labeled as #14 in the series (or the 14th image circulated by the studio)⁹. This card was collected or forgotten or saved, rather than written on and mailed to friends or family, and at some point it was included in a library collection, stamped on the back with the words “Art Room Free Public Library New Haven, Connecticut.” The content of the postcard was organized by two words, signifiers, hand written at the bottom “Canada – Alberta.” In 2006, I purchased the card from “fearliathmore” who placed it for sale on the world's largest private archive, eBay, for \$8.95. It is also a widely available view and forms part of the collection on the University of Alberta “Prairie Postcard” archive available online.

While postcards are considered a personal and personalized experience of wilderness

8 When Daguerre and others raced to make photographs, an aim was to create a sort of democratic tool.

9 Number 1 is from the Prince of Wales Hotel Hill, and the numbers go into the hundreds.



Ground-truthing 'Swimming Pool Lake Linnet. Waterton Lakes Park, Alberta' Cross Studios.

(see Lippard 1999; Osborne 2000; Kurti 2004), and form part of the tourist consumption of place as they are mailed to friends or family or stored in albums, they are also sometimes used for different ends, or re-circulated as they become ephemera and of historical significance (rather than resting forever in the keep of a receiver of a postcard). At some level, then many postcards continually circulate and generate new meaning. They are written upon, and provide confirmation of an experience (Löfgren 1999), they are mailed off to friends, who read it and share it. Perhaps they are stored, as mementos, in a box in the attic¹⁰, then sold in an estate sale, later recovered by a researcher who then uses them as the basis of research into national park space in Canada.

As a way to figure photography, Roland Barthes asks, “what does my body know of photography?” He finds that the operator’s emotion “has some relation to the little hole through which he looks, limits, frames, and perspectivizes what he wants to ‘take’ (to surprise)” (1982:9-10). Yet claiming he could not speak of the operator’s emotion, having never experienced the “surprise” of taking a photograph, Barthes writes, “I possessed only two experiences: that of the observed subject and that of the observing...” (1982:10). Yet to return to a place with a photograph, the spectator begins to converge on the operator, and there is a feeling of something like surprise. Barthes uses spectator to allude to spectre, or a haunting. The disjuncture that necessarily arises between the historical photograph and the present produces a new experience: It is a haunting. I returned to Linnet Lake in 2007 to investigate the postcard, asking, “What part of the postcard was left behind?” How is this postcard commensurate with what is in place? (and what is out of place?) What part of the scene at present is haunted by the sound of the shutter click, the laughs and calls of the swimmers? What was made invisible then, but has since become visible? What is now newly invisible? What can my body know of this postcard?

August 1, 2007¹¹ was a sunny day and I arrived at 3:15 pm at Linnet Lake. I located the historical photopoint on a popular walking path on the north shore of the small lake. It was a holiday weekend and people were on the move denoted by the audible busy traffic sounds filtering in from the nearby road. A few people were walking around the lake. The voice of someone calling their dog echoed across the lake. There was little indication that it had once been a popular swimming spot. I had passed the signs on the way in that warned away those who might find the small, shallow lake a warm alternative to the frigid waters of the rest of the lakes in the park. Among the birds, the sound of the breeze rustling the leaves of the aspen, I could hear an adult reading the interpretive panel aloud to a child. “Swimmer’s itch”: the sign and parent warned. Instead of swimming, Parks Canada suggested walking along the shoreline on the maintained path.

Throughout my act of standing in a spot, looking from the rectangular surface of the postcard to the view, disjuncture arose between the photographic translation and

10 The Glenbow has several significant collections of postcards and photographs of Waterton that come from the discovery of boxes in attics by new home owners.

11 Despite appearances to the contrary, not all of my research was conducted in August and September 2007, I was in the park taking pictures for this research beginning in 2005. It seems perhaps the photographs that I returned to numerous times, or avoided outright until the end of my fieldwork are the ones charged with the most analytical punch. It also goes to show that long term fieldwork is important to the understanding of place.




'Swimming Pool Lake Linnet. Waterton Lakes Park, Alberta' Cross Studios (top), and After 'Swimming Pool Lake Linnet,' (bottom) c-print.

the original. Looking at the postcard, and then peering through the alder towards the empty water, the missing human subjects put on view the fleeting nature of the moment. The postcard became a “death dealing apparatus in its capacity to fetishize and congeal time” (Jones 2002:3). Here, the decisive photographic moment is a sign not of an unmediated indexical image of the real, but is the sign of the passing of time, a certain but fugitive testimony to time (Barthes 1981:92), and a sign of loss and absence (Jones 2002). Change between the photograph and what is now in place, especially acknowledging what is missing, reminds us of our mortality. If the photograph in this case is a sign of our own mortality, the photograph also emerges here as a sign of death. Cadava, following Benjamin, writes that “the photograph, like the souvenir is the corpse of an experience. A photograph therefore speaks as death, as the trace of what passes into history,” it evokes what can no longer be there (1997:128). It is true, as Cadava writes, following Benjamin, that “translation demands the death of the original... if the task of translation belongs to that of photography, it is because both begin in the death of their subjects, both take place in the realm of ghosts and phantoms” (1997:18). If the photograph was originally taken to freeze or maintain the past in the present, the act of returning to place confuses this, becoming a sign of the passage of time. Just as the photograph is haunted by its referent, at the same time, what the viewer is standing in front of, (the world, the ground they find the truth in), is haunted by the photograph. The two create a new context in which neither exists in its time alone (Klett 2004). Found in historic photographs, time, one manifestation of Barthes’ *punctum*, “a detail that distracts or distresses me” (Barthes 1981:40), is one that has a “lacerating emphasis on the *noeme* (*that-has-been*), its pure representation” (Barthes 1981:96).

Barthes *punctum* in the case of standing, holding a photograph of national park space is perhaps a new context beyond “pure representation”: It is found in the relationship between image and bodily involvement, performance, and the return to place. By physically standing in the place the photograph was taken from, (by groundtruthing the spot), a person links to the past through the body or an imagined body. The complexity of the relationship between “image *and* bodily involvement of the perceiver of the image” (Taussig 1993:21) is compounded by being in the place the photograph was taken. The person holding the postcard realigns her body, and re-aligns the past, and this act enables a view of Waterton to emerge through a particular and active engagement with a significant place. It is an act of spatial orientation, Barthes *prick* of discovery (1981:96) through which the subject conceptualizes and defines the creation and maintenance of place meanings in the park. At Lake Linnet the things that stand in contrast to the postcard haunt: in particular, the missing people. Barthes is pricked by the defeat of time in the historic photograph, and in this he shudders, “over a catastrophe which has already occurred” (1981:96). For Barthes, the catastrophe is found in absence - the absence of his mother who is pictured in the photograph he is writing about. By holding a postcard standing in place, the feeling of something missing is manifest in the act of being there, in place, looking. We seek out what is missing, what has changed, what shows or doesn’t in the photograph. And in this way we are haunted by the original.

Yet this haunting is a place for re-assessment, to figure out what the traces might mean. Like nostalgia, it suggests the possibility of difference, of something else. Standing in the park, holding a postcard in the space it was taken is an act that can conjure ghosts. As a result, the subject is haunted by the problems of a colonial ideology, of the truth

Groundtruth Conditions		NAME> TRUDI PHOTOGRAPHER> COLLECTION>	Date> AUG 1 / 07 time start: 15:15 time end: 15:45
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> point <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transect	
IMAGE & LOCATION DESCRIPTION		Swimmers at Lake Linnet on the path part way around lake	
WEATHER		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sun <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cloud  <input type="checkbox"/> rain <input type="checkbox"/> snow <input type="checkbox"/> other	
TIME OF YEAR		<input type="checkbox"/> spring <input type="checkbox"/> summer <input type="checkbox"/> fall <input type="checkbox"/> winter	
CHANGE		<input type="checkbox"/> snow <input type="checkbox"/> water <input type="checkbox"/> vegetation	
AUDIBLE SOUNDS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> birds <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> people whistling ^{"come here"} <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wind breeze <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> traffic <input type="checkbox"/> other adult reading interpretive panel about to child	
VISIBLE FEATURES		<input type="checkbox"/> horses <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> machinery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> pathways/trails helicopter <input type="checkbox"/> people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> boats ^{over shoulder} _{in water} <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> roads parking _{lot} <input type="checkbox"/> stream/river/creek <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mountain <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lake <input type="checkbox"/> falls <input type="checkbox"/> prairie/meadow <input type="checkbox"/> geology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> flora <input type="checkbox"/> fauna <input type="checkbox"/> other <input type="checkbox"/> ruins colour dominants blue + green	
SPACE		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> anterior space (the past) _{nostalgia, now lost} <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> frontal space (the future) _{busy (road traffic: on the move)} <input type="checkbox"/> other	
OTHER PLACES I LOOKED; OTHER SENSES		retaining wall. parking lot path (paved) (for access) the shoulders ^{to} of traffic - dog whining distant.	
POSTURE		(what kinds of postures does the landscape suggest or require from its viewers?) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> standing on asphalt path <input type="checkbox"/> sitting <input type="checkbox"/> crouching <input type="checkbox"/> tippy toes <input type="checkbox"/> face to ground <input type="checkbox"/> prone <input type="checkbox"/> semi-prone <input type="checkbox"/> heights	
FEELS... (QUALITY)		<input type="checkbox"/> peaceful <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> busy around here - _{no one here but not here} <input type="checkbox"/> popular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> just slightly off the beaten track abandoned. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> trail - in use/unused <input type="checkbox"/> commodified space <input type="checkbox"/> authentic encounter <input type="checkbox"/> daily activity <input type="checkbox"/> awareness of environmental issues (educational)	
MOST IMPORTANT DETAIL FOR REPEAT		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Places people visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Places people don't visit used to visit (LANDSCAPE FEATURE MOST USEFUL FOR REPEAT)	
WHY WAS KEYSTONE IMAGE-MAKER HERE?		the centre line + the notch in background ridge the Prince of Wales hotel + water tower position It was a popular image - swimming at Linnet Lake Close to hotels. Interpretive. Idea of summer fun	
GPS		12 mt acc pt 358 1277m ele 1240287853/5438576	
BEARING		191° (S/SW)	
MEDIA FOR REPEAT IMAGES AND NOTES		100-0641+2(10c) 100-0643 - repeat-digital	
GROUND TRUTHING RE-INFORCES IMAGE		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO swimmer's itch means the place is quite deserted	

Ground-truthing 'Swimming Pool Lake Linnet, Waterton Lakes Park, Alberta' Cross Studios

of photographs. If Linnet Lake is no longer a swimming pool, then this disjuncture collapses conceptions of static pristine wilderness space, one that is conceived as a space that lacks human presence and impact, despite the fact that wilderness is us (MacLaren 1999:42). To recognize this space of contradiction and complexity, near and far, life and death, culture and nature, wilderness and civilization collapse into a space of possibility. To activate the imagination by the possibility produced by difference and to re-imagine the park space has the power to dislodge immobilized and seemingly inactive ideas of wilderness.

The postcard is no longer a map of the real. Not photographs nor representations of wilderness, nor simply images that perpetuate colonialist ideologies, in their place, the photograph and the act of return translate place into a specific event, location and experience. This event acknowledges that places, and photographs, are always on the move. The *punctum* of the Lake Linnet postcard is the passage of time and the hold the image has on a fleeting moment. This is made visible through the human subjects¹². The way that human subjects in photographs hold the moment produces nostalgia: their visibility captures an imagination, the splash of the kids jumping off the float into the lake, the echo of laughter. Nostalgia is perfectly sighted in parks through historical postcard, as both national parks and historical photographs are about yearning and ideals forms – the national park space is certainly managed as an ideal form of nature, at present made into a space of “ecological integrity.”

To return to Rogers, Malde and Turner’s provocative quote in their 1984 *Bibliography of Repeat Photography*:

...a photograph may truly show the presence of a boat on a lake, but the boat may be grounded on the bottom. Hence, both the objective truth of a photograph and validity of what it may imply are matters of possible concern [XVIII].

While I suggest that photographs, imagined as objective, are somewhat unreliable records, to hold an historical postcard at Linnet Lake speaks to what is not visible. Standing on the shoreline path, at the location of Cross’ postcard, it becomes clear that photographs disguise. Just as important to this reading of the archive is to consider why it is that the people are not there and to investigate associated implications. Photos disguise, but seeing what is in place changes the shape of understanding park spaces and troubles our notions of what park spaces are, destabilizing wilderness, wild, aesthetic beauty. At the same time that photos disguise, the surprise of standing in the place where the photograph was ‘taken’ and seeing what is really around is an act that reveals the complexities of (translations of) place making.

To return to the photopoint of an historical image and to investigate this postcard puts on view the interwoven relationship between humans and non-human nature. “Swimming Pool, Lake Linnet” provides a particularly good example of this. While Cross’ postcard seems to represent the peaceful human co-existence within the more-than-human world (Abram 1996), it actually is a sign of the turbulent and shifting human relationships with non-human nature that characterizes history. These relationships

12 The artwork *Portable Camera Obscura* (2009) brings us into an awareness of the fleeting moment without the need for the photograph.

are shaped in part by social, economic and political forces. The fleeting moment that is reflected in “Swimming Pool Lake Linnet” suggests a changing relationship with the ecology of the park that alters the use of Lake Linnet from a swimming pool to a circumferential walk.

From Swimming Pool to Swimmer’s Itch: Changing Practices of Protection

When I first heard about the presence of swimmer’s itch in the lake, I immediately wondered how we humans had tipped the balance of this body of water, making it uninhabitable. I had fallen into the same thinking of Edenic narratives that I describe in this chapter – the idea that pristine nature is lost through some “human culpable act” (Cronon 1996:27). Upon researching swimmer’s itch I found that it was the changing relationship between what we thought was an acceptable risk and the rise of public health practices and awareness that became an issue in the 1930s not long after the postcard was made. Swimmer’s itch is an inflammation of the skin caused by an immune reaction to water-borne trematode parasites that accidentally infect humans. The trematode parasite usually uses snails and waterfowl as their host. They can’t complete their life cycle in mammals but accidentally infect humans. They make our skin itchy at the site of penetration of a single parasite. Yet the parasite dies immediately and the skin returns to normal in about a week (Verbrugge 2004) . A recent article reported that:

The onset of swimmer’s itch depends on how humans interact with the lake. Exposures to shallow water and areas with onshore winds are key risks for swimmer’s itch. The more days a person used the lake in July, the higher his or her chances of having any episode. The underlying biological reasons relate to density of snails, movement of cercariae, and cumulative chances of encountering cercariae. In public health terms, people should avoid using shallow water and areas with persistent onshore winds. If they still choose such places, the less often, the better (Verbrugge 2004:740).

Swimmer’s itch has always been around and the factors that affect the impact from year to year include distribution and number of snails, or birds that can serve as hosts, wind direction, water currents, number of hours that people stay in the water, time of day, and sensitivity of the individual to the swimmer’s itch. Swimmer’s itch is produced out of the agency of the misguided parasites that mistake human skin for a useful host rather than snails and waterfowl. Yet swimmer’s itch is ultimately harmless for humans (although lethal to the trematode) and so what is revealed in “Swimming Pool Lake Linnet” is a changing relationship that humans have to non-human nature, and a changing level of acceptability of the experience of itchy skin or of hosting a parasite.

At the intersection of national park space and public health, Linnet Lake is shot through with common sense, one that underlies nation building in Canada. Part of the same logic of governmental control over bodies and space, public health and national park space come together in the issue of swimmer’s itch. In Canada, public health’s primary goal is “to strengthen Canada’s capacity to protect and improve the health of Canadians and to help reduce pressures on the health-care system” (Public Health Agency of Canada online: 2010). Through federal control, Waterton Lakes National Park is a space that that “On behalf of the people of Canada...protects and presents nationally significant examples of Canada’s natural and cultural Canada” (Parks Canada Mandate

online:2010). Both the Public Health Agency of Canada and Parks Canada are organized around a mandate of protection. To demonstrate protection there must be something to protect Canadians against.

Some Canadian National Parks do not discourage swimming but advise ways to combat contracting swimmer's itch, for example by coating your body in mineral oil (Parks Canada 2010e). At Lake Linnet the concern over swimmer's itch has meant that Parks Canada actively deters swimming in the lake with a prominent warning sign and on a separate sign, the suggestion to walk around the lake. Yet what is key is that swimming with trematodes *became* a risk. The welts and itchy feelings that swimmer's itch causes was first reported in 1928 in Michigan. While discomfort is minimal, the trouble with trematodes is also economic. It has been reported to have an association with economic loss as people vacation elsewhere (Verbrugge 2004). The story of swimmer's itch thus becomes a threat to the commodification of and visitation to Waterton. While the avoidance of the water was not uncontested – there were flare ups between locals in the area who had a longstanding relationship with the space and Parks Canada's strong encouragement to avoid the water - ultimately the "Swimming Pool" has become "Linnet Lake" with a pathway around it and benches for sitting on¹³.

Ultimately, while there are political/economic reasons for the protection of visitors from swimmer's itch in Waterton, I am interested in ways to acknowledge how it is that we are influenced by the agency of non-human nature. To return to the postcard of "Swimming Pool Lake Linnet," it is what we can't see that characterizes a changing relationship between ourselves and trematodes. The photograph would have documented a fun day at the beach and now references a nostalgic moment (looking at these photos is evocative of the mingling sounds of splashing water, the calls and laughing of children echoing across the water), and reveals a change in ideas about acceptable relationships with parasites. It is clear that trematodes that cause swimmer's itch were once considered acceptable risks for warm water swimming in the park (the reason it has swimmer's itch is because it is a warm water body: The rest of the park has very cold lakes and swimming is less commonly practiced). Ultimately, the trouble with trematodes implicates the interwoven relationship between humans and nature. It seems that photographs can illuminate an always emergent relationship with health, a constantly reshaping boundary and changing ideas of what an acceptable relationship with non-human nature might be.

This understanding of Lake Linnet shows how places are on the move. As anthropologist Margaret Rodman explains, place in Vanuatu is on the move as a result of the constant shifting of the materiality and particularity of place itself whether:

Rocks that grow, people turned to stone, spirits, ancestors and memories piled upon memories with scarcely a visible mark on the landscape to show that people lived there. Even islands move around. Two islands at the end of the beach...moved to their present location from somewhere else. Another

13 Reportedly the seating area is underused and the pathways that lead from the hotel to Lake Linnet that show up in historical photographs are beginning to fade through disuse. The change from the area from a popular swimming destination that brought hotel guests does not have the same draw for the sitting area. However, it has been suggested that an emphasis on these walking trails might increase use to Lake Linnet, a sheltered spot in the windy park, and also might increase walking traffic over driving.

island...used to be there too, but one day it moved off to a new location about fifty kilometers to the south. The moving island took some peoples' wives and other people's husbands along, much to the anger of the partners who were left behind (1992:651).

Eloquently stated by Rodman, place is memory and material reality, places can be moved by people and places can move people. Such a conception of nature allows for discontinuities and multiplicities of voice and action (Rodman 1992) and these bear the marks of contestation and power. The transition of "Swimming Pool Lake Linnet" puts on view the complexities of our relationship to other species and testifies to our embeddedness with them into places.

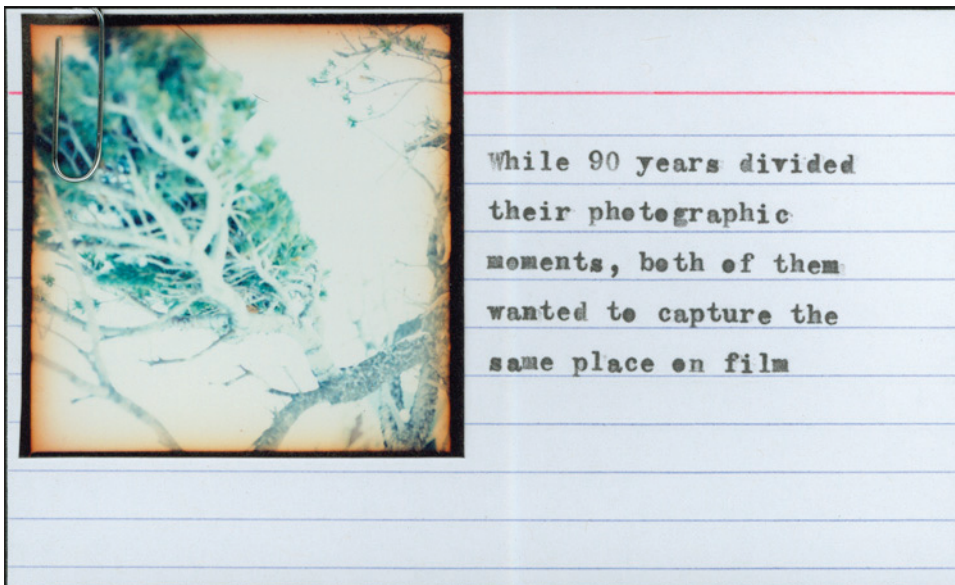
Fifteen years ago, William Cronon (1996) provocatively asserted that the time had come to rethink wilderness and with his call for recognition that values about nature are rooted in cultural projections (see also Higgs 2003; Lease 1995), scholars, environmentalists, and others are asked to evaluate the experience of nature: "As we gaze into the mirror it holds up for us, we too easily imagine that what we behold is Nature when in fact we see the reflection of our own unexamined longings and desires" (1996:69-70). Cronon, an historian, takes on cultural theory to investigate the historical construction of wilderness, finding that nature is not a thing to be discovered so much as it is a "profoundly human construction" (1996:25). Such views aim to dislodge the thinking of conservationists and environmentalists who think of nature in its healthy condition as independent and pristine, and untouched by humans (Borgmann 1995). Yet Cronon was not arguing that nature was simply a construction. There was something really there, yet it incorporates "those on the move, experiences that are always polysemic, contextual, and biographical" (Bender 2001:10).

The suggestion that place is on the move is also addressed in the work of Tim Ingold who finds that thinking about time is key to understanding human relationships in place. In *The Temporality of Landscape*, Ingold ties human environment relationships to movement, and this takes place in time. Ingold argues that rhythm is the basis of life, but that this is not limited to what we might consider living. Rhythms like night and day, ocean tides, and the seasons influence us:

We resonate to the cycles of light and darkness and to the cycles of vegetative growth and decay...moreover, these resonances are embodied, in the sense that they are not only historically incorporated into the enduring features of the landscape, but are also developmentally incorporated into our very constitution as biological organisms (1993:68).

Therefore we are made by rhythms. To Ingold, this means that the landscape must include the totality of rhythmic phenomena – animate or inanimate. Key to Ingold's argument is that we move along with the world, we dwell in it and we are part of the world transforming itself (1993). This rhythm is found in the whole world. If we broaden the timescale enough, every part of the world is moving. Ingold writes:

Imagine a film of the landscape, shot over years, centuries, even a millennia. Slightly speeded up, plants appear to engage in very animal-like movements, trees flex their limbs without any prompting from the winds. Speeded up rather



While 90 years divided
their photographic
moments, both of them
wanted to capture the
same place on film

more, glaciers flow like rivers and even the earth begins to move. At yet greater speeds solid rock bends, buckles and flows like molten metal. The world itself begins to breathe (1993:69)

Lake Linnet is on the move. According to Trailpeak.com, the lake gets its water from subsurface flows and this moves silt deposits into the lake. Without an outflow, the lake will eventually dry up (<http://www.trailpeak.com/trail-Linnet-Lake-near-Waterton-Park-Gate-AB-2495>). While the website encourages a visit “before it is too late”, key to the idea of time on the landscape, there is no finished form. The temporality of landscape is a focus on how landscape is lived in, worked up place (Bender 1997) that comes into being in the relationship between things and involves the passage of time. All parts of the world are coming into being and therefore all are considered agents in the making of a landscape. The contribution of Ingold’s theory is how it works to break down the nature—culture, animate—inanimate dichotomy using a long timescale as a guide. At Linnet Lake, to acknowledge the temporality, constantly shifting and emergent relationships that make up the world allows for an opening up of understandings of culture to more-than-human possibilities. The lake was a site for gathering and celebrating a particular relationship with non-human nature in the form of swimming and taking pictures. At present the way we engage with this place is by walking around the lake and sitting contemplatively on benches, watching waterfowl and by taking pictures.

When we see differences between the photograph and the present, it allows for an opening for difference, for change, and to illuminate a more complex experience with nature. The unrepeatable act of standing in a place might become more democratic space, one that is lived in and always happening, and always “on the move.” The “Swimming Pool” shows that national parks and Waterton especially is not just a frozen colonial encounter whereby we are stuck re-enacting previous moments, our “camera work ...heavily preprogrammed” (Lofgren 1999:77). They are also places where things that don’t fit our frames of reference, places that don’t look like the photographic imaginary we hold in our mind might allow for a more human, political, reflective consideration of what our relationship with place might be.

An Anxiety of Permanence: National Park Space and Photography.

In this chapter I have tracked two examples of how “place is on the move” (Rodman 1992). Yet to look at the way that Waterton Lakes National Parks is framed through photography illuminates a cultural anxiety of permanence found throughout the discourse of conservation and photography. As I have shown in this dissertation, they share space in the notion of preservation and both emerge in the 19th century from a modernist notion of order and ordering and collections and museums. Photographs enter archives to build a visuality that is “Canada” and national parks enter the geopolitical space of “Canada” understood and described as a “living museum.” Yet the cost of this ordering is an anxiety of permanence. It can be understood as a part of what scholars have addressed as Edenic narratives found throughout western culture where pristine nature is lost through some human culpable act (Cronon 1996:27). It is a worry about decay and destruction of some imagined and highly nostalgic past. There are several ways that Eden is narrated. In particular, national park space fits into what Candace Slater has described as an “after-Eden” story that “highlight nostalgia for a perfect past or deep fears about continuing loss” (1996:116). To Slater, the nostalgia for unspoiled origins are held in the myth of wilderness in the United States and in the

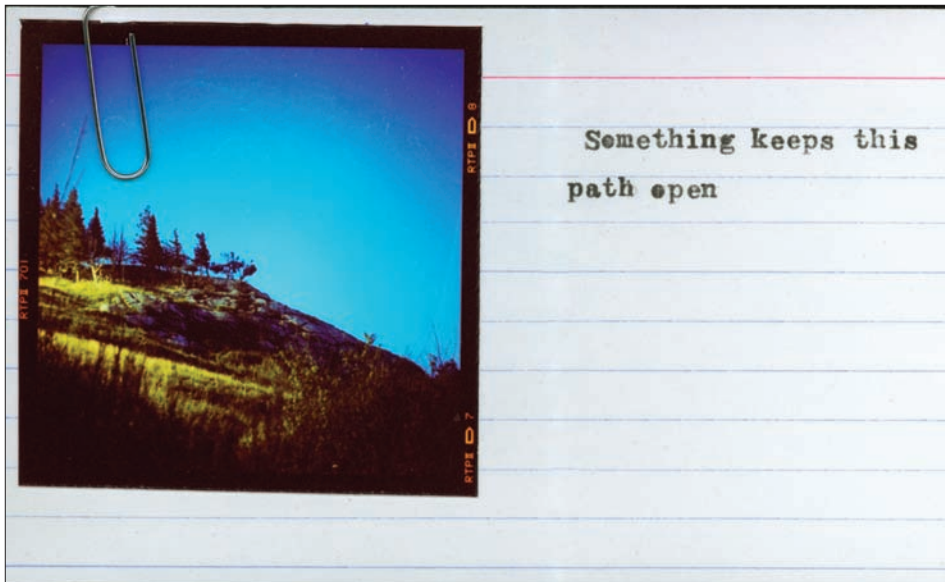
Amazon (1996). The difficulty with this of course, as Slater points out is not only that they are false, but that they tend to supplant something that already exists (1996:29). Likewise, in Canada, the development of photography and national parks is centered on a fear of loss of something that never was. This can be seen in early Parks Canada documents such as the aforementioned 1913 Report to the Commissioner:

As yet in Canada the people for the most part can reach, without great difficulty, many places where nature is still in its wild state, but Europe and the United States teach the lesson that time will soon change this unless precautions are taken now (1913:10).

It is here that photography fits – it co-produces an Edenic imagery that moves the viewer of these images to idealize and dehumanize wilderness (Slater 1996). Conservation narratives associate National Parks as pristine, untouched wilderness. It is the last chance or last space to protect charismatic megafauna, ecological integrity and biological diversity for future generations before they disappear forever. This sort of discourse reflects a value in the idea of saving: Park space must be saved from humans sullyng them. William Cronon points out that the problem with challenging the myth of Eden is that it “describes a perfect landscape, a place so benign and beautiful and good that the imperative to preserve or restore it could be questioned only by those who ally themselves with evil” (1996:37). This problem limits the possibilities for other management practices in parks.

Despite the changing relationship we have to photography and the value of certain vantage points in parks, photographs are being used to prove something about wilderness as never before. The circulation of conservation images on the internet and in publications is a key way that both Parks Canada and conservation groups such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) communicate their narrative. Indeed, the desire and the campaign to keep “half of Canada’s public land and water wild forever” (2010:n.p.) is powerfully argued with visual images. Similar to Parks Canada, their mission is to “protect Canada’s wild ecosystems in parks wilderness and similar natural areas, preserving the full diversity of habitats and their species” and to promote “awareness and understanding of ecological principles and the inherent values of wilderness through education, appreciation and experience” (2010:n.p.). The “wild ecosystem,” is a highly symbolic space that is chosen for its supposed inherent values of wilderness. Yet of course, there are many wild places - (wild as in “not domesticated” could really be anything as there is always something unknown and unruly in nature, just ask any gardener) - in Canada and elsewhere that deserve protection and ethical treatment. Waterton is not *inherently* more valuable than the wilderness outside my door, it is valued as a highly symbolic and iconic space. This essentializing discourse is the same that represents place as stable and fixed.

It is as if nature’s agency is outside of human experience, and that protection itself is without material effect. The present Waterton Lakes National Park space that was encountered by Dawson and the surveyors in 1874 was crafted by both the care of first nations groups and by non-human nature (e.g. fire, pathways, bison), a condition that generated a space to look the way it did when it was encountered by Dawson and the surveyors. The ensuing drive to maintain its order – protection and permanence – is now widely acknowledged as a misconception and a mismanagement (Reeves 2007). Yet at



Ground-truthing Waterton Lakes National Park, c-print, paper clip, index card, 2007

the same time, present day Parks Canada discourse presents Waterton as a gift to the rest of the world, but this is one premised upon perceived permanence and a history of a place unchanged since the “dawn of time” (Parks Canada 2010d:np) It is this tension that animates perception and management of parks.

To challenge conservation mandates and to ask questions about how photography is mobilized and perhaps limits narratives about nature is to align oneself with evil – someone who wants destruction. Yet to think about other natures is to consider alternatives to preservationist discourse, to the taken for granted, common sense behaviours such as “take only photographs, leave only footprints” – the defining strategy for parks engagement. The danger of this sort of behaviour, as it reinscribes the same pathways we’ve trodden for a hundred and twenty five years, is that it limits the relationship we can form with nature, as an act that perpetuates Western scientific knowledge and imperialist and colonialist structures and ideologies. These conceptual structures are inscribed by the camera¹⁴.

The anxiety of permanence that produces national parks space is always intertwined with photography. It is a dialectical play between presence and absence, the desire to still the space from change, and from our understandings of how we impact the world (e.g. urban vs. park, rural vs. park). In a recent publication, CPAWS draws upon the discourse of protection and purity writing “pristine wilderness makes Waterton-Glacier International Peace park a special place...threatened by British Columbia’s land use plan...” (CPAWS 2010b). It is not the case that areas shouldn’t be protected from strip mining, it is just that there needs to be a consideration of the way that the visual narratives generate and limit the kind of relationship we have and the way we dwell within the landscape under question and within the world at large. This can also be found in the example I provided in chapter four about the water tower that stands in a prominent position beside the Prince of Wales Hotel. Largely absent from the photographic record, the water tower symbolizes human impact in a way that a quaint Swiss-style hotel does not. The water tower is the infrastructure, like the garbage dump and waste treatment areas (notably the entrance point to the hike into the Belly River area was at one time an area to dump refuse), and there is not space in the myth of wilderness for the human footprint of the present. The immediate waste and impact of our everyday human existence is masked behind trees, and as I show in chapter four, this is noticed by visitors. To bring the everyday experience to the fore (such as consuming food, water, making waste) could provide other possibilities with how we engage with place: an awareness around the complexity of what is present in Waterton Lakes National Park.

In the flux and flow of the park space, photography has been used to create an ideal, a nostalgic image of yesteryear. While my research finds that photography frames and draws attention to movement, its social functioning produces certainty, permanence, stillness and fixity in Waterton Lakes National Park. Through the narration and ordering, views of the Prince of Wales Hotel are produced without making visible the water

14 Yet what other discourses might surface upon setting down the camera? What non-photographable subjects and experiences might come to the fore? This is not to suggest that there are not important experiences that we have through the camera lens and by holding a camera, one that is a connecting experience, but rather than to make photography in national parks the whole story, there could be a wedge opened to other visualities or even to include those Other unphotographable subjects.

tower and Cameron Falls is manipulated to look like pictures. These material acts of photography and management in the park produces a set of views, ones that creates an association with permanence, stillness and fixity. Of course it is not surprising that this discourse is represented in photographs. Photographs have always been privileged for their ability to still and fix reality.

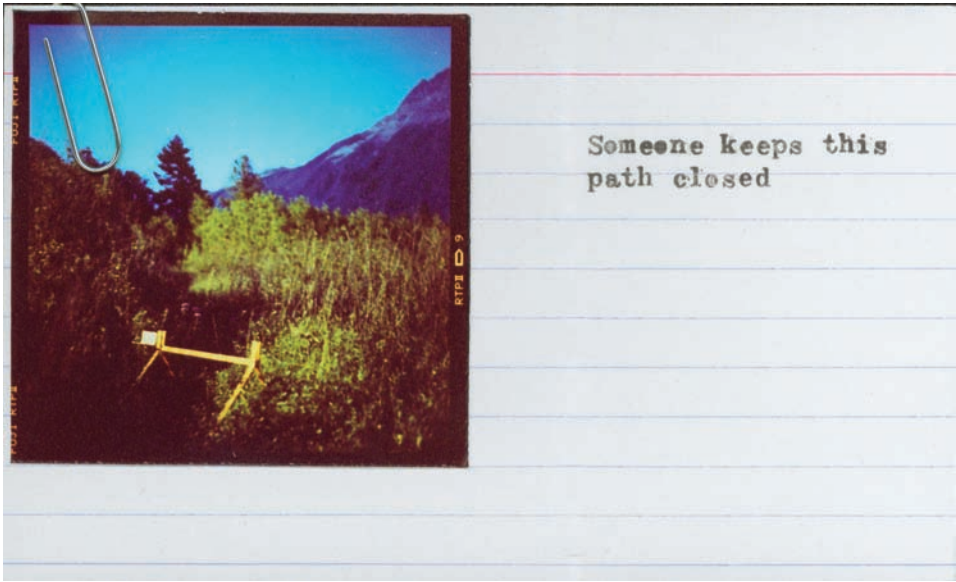
Yet photographs, seen as a way to record permanently a truth on film, are also a site of anxiety of permanence. Photography is rated through an idea of archival, the ability to last. With the relatively recent rise of digital processes, digital paper products that have usurped much of the traditional darkroom printing (especially fibre printing) are rated on their archival quality. Tests conducted by Ilford and Epson claim their papers are archival, lasting from one-hundred years to hundreds of years (Epson:n.d.). Stability is a key pursuit in manufacturers of digital imaging products.

However, this concern is just the latest consideration in the history of photography. A fear about the disappearance of the image characterizes the history of photography. The idea of photography's invention is rooted in a race to fix an image. Once the image was fixed, its permanence was of prime importance. An archival image was one that did not fade over time. The purity of the negative, one that was not going to fade over time was key to their usefulness as records. As Greenhill and Birrell (1979) recount in their history of Canadian photography, Dawson complained, frustrated, writing in his journals that the use of sensitized paper meant that ten years later, "prints...have since become useless." Greenhill and Birrell subscribe to Dawson's same outlook on the role of photography as permanent records, writing "Fortunately he did not continue to use the sensitized paper, for it deteriorated rapidly" (1979:117). At the same time, archives are seen as an act for the future – to show that what came before mattered, to leave a trace of our human existence in material documents.

A key component of survey photography, and by extension photographs of present-day Waterton Lakes National park and its usefulness is that it is always an act for the future. Preservation of the fleeting moment was the defining feature of photography. As Michael Di Giovine writes about the heritage-scape:

placemaking is a social and material process, one that is mediated by memory. It is a social process in that it actively draws upon previously held conceptions of customs, beliefs, values, and worldviews – those immaterial "webs of significance" spun by a society over time...yet for these intangible beliefs to be viable – for cultural systems to be meaningfully used, remembered and perpetuated by a society, they must be sedimented in concrete – that is, material and monumental – form (2009:26).

Di Giovine shows that authenticity is a prominent feature of the monumental media form. Photographs, with their association to truth and with their association with the past is a key form of authenticity in producing the Canadian heritage-scape: the myth of wilderness. Yet it is this very stability that constitutes problems for creating other visualities and experiences of places like Waterton. At the same time, to re-view historical photographs places on view the changing nature of the park and our relationship within it.



Ground-truthing Waterton Lakes National Park, c-print, paper clip, index card, 2007

What has emerged out of this research is thinking about permanence in contrast to the fleeting nature of national parks, or even the fleeting nature that characterizes our very experience. To think about the changing relationship that we have within nature – the repurposing of Linnet Lake from a Swimming Pool to a meditative walking and sitting area – is important to rethink the space as more than a “living museum”. Indeed, it might be helpful to let go of the anxiety of preservation to take up a new ethic, one that embraces the flux and flow in all of life.

As a way to begin to think about this flux and flow we can draw western notions of scientific conservation and preservation into Buddhist notions of impermanence. Research published in the *Journal of Social Archaeology* by Anna Karlstrom (2005) about her work in Laos on Heritage Preservation argues that the Western worldview that guides heritage management has preservation at its core. To open up space in the possibilities of heritage conservation she uses Buddhist approaches to “demonstrate considerations omitted from today’s heritage management debates” (2005:339). Karlstrom argues that in Buddhist ideology, premised on impermanence of matter, preservation is a contradiction in terms (2005:339). She argues for taking into consideration the existence of non-preservationist ideals:

According to Buddhist ideology, decay is a constant reminder of death and essential for any celebration of life. Thus decay is crucial for rebirth and finally enlightenment, the ultimate goal (2005:339).

This is a useful departure point to thinking about national park space in Canada. If there is no still, fixed, and pristine nature that was lost, but rather that it was always impermanent all the way down, perhaps we have simply lost our connection to the impermanent present. To think about Waterton as a site of impermanence and change allows for the possibility of imagining something new. We can ask, how do we want to embed ourselves within the more-than-human world (Abrams 1996)? What ways are we already doing this? To allow for a space of imagination and action would liberate us from an unceasing quest for permanence, from the guilt associated with a lost wilderness (that was never there in the first place), and the fall from grace associated with Edenic narratives. The fall was perhaps simply to deny life’s impermanence and disorder. Photography can help work on our limited idea of what wilderness is and can be. To bring uncertainty and flux to the fore helps to show how wilderness is more than pristine space awaiting a return to some previous impossible perfection.

To acknowledge the wide gap that emerges between representations and that which is purported to represent is a starting place to acknowledge the emergent world we inhabit. From there we can begin to ask questions about the way we want to engage with parks. We can think about limiting or promoting certain kinds of human use in protected areas. We can look at the influence of non-human nature and its active role in the formulation and stabilization or destabilization of relations in national parks: The always contested space between wildness and known would be premised on an acknowledgement of uncertainty *and* mutual care, one that sees the co-construction of place. To acknowledge that *wilderness is us* means that we can even cross the borders of parks into our own back yards to find wildness.

But what is photography’s role in this relationship? As I will show in the next chapter, to

produce more spaces around the intangible experience of place, ones that are premised around the ironic play with photography and impermanence might open up spaces for conversations about the fleetingness of experience and for more information around other ways that parks are held in our imagination and in our bodies. Perhaps more acknowledgement around the co-construction of place; the ongoing histories of national parks space, ones that, as Haraway writes, don't end; and to realities that embrace the flux and flow and the impermanence of life can offer new approaches to national park relationships and management practices. Perhaps this can provide more shared ground to join in with Parks Canada in their mandate to be storytellers for National Park space.



The tree, digital print 2009

Chapter 6: Situation and Event: two artworks

Irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true. Irony is about humor and serious play.

-Donna J Haraway *How Like a Leaf*

In this chapter I describe the approaches I have taken toward creating an affirmative experience of impermanence through drawing attention to the photograph as an event. As a way to conclude this dissertation, I argue for the need to create a space for more conversations about the enactment and re-enactment of photographs in national parks. Often, we look at the place the photograph was made of (the view), but little attention is placed upon the places we stand. In this research I lurked in the places haunted by people who stand with cameras, and in this dissertation I use that knowledge to make a case for the importance of producing a greater understanding of the photograph as an event. That is, to look at the photographic image, the object itself, and the always embodied experience of the photographic act. Through artworks I attempt to reproduce these events as a way to produce more spaces around the intangible and unrepresentable/unpresentable experience of place. I am interested in photographs as a way to draw attention to impermanence and to open up spaces for conversations about the fleetingness of experience, to produce more knowledge around other ways that parks are held in our imagination and in our bodies, and to acknowledge the co-construction of national park space by people in the more-than-human world (Abram 1996).

Relational Nature

As I described in the introduction to this dissertation, recently artists and theorists are calling into question pristine notions of wilderness and are instead proposing a *post-wilderness* in Canada by restaging wilderness to necessarily include inhabitation and presence. It is a counter narrative to the dominant and pervasive discourse of conservation groups, government and tourist companies situated in and around National Parks in Canada. Yet post-wilderness is always infused with the myth of wilderness that it (partially) works against. That is, post-wilderness necessarily includes all of the ideas of wilderness that it is attempting to complicate, contest, and destabilize and to rebuild into a different shape. Therefore, I have illuminated throughout this dissertation that it is crucial to study the genesis of photographic images of Canadian wilderness as they maintain a pervasive grip on how we understand and relate to national park space, a premier category of wilderness. My work produces a notion of post-wilderness that shows the social functions (as a technology that was part of the scientific project of survey, as memories, as nostalgia) and narrative functions (as a record of geology, as pristine wilderness, as resources, as tourist) of photography in national parks always begins with presence.

My artworks also find support in conversational art and relational aesthetics, which rather than focus on an art object, is art practice based on that which is produced out of human relations and their social context (Bourriaud 2002; Kester 2004). I use the process of artmaking to investigate photography and photographs, and I also produce site-specific installations to form an experiential foundation for communication about photographs of national parks in Canada. These installations privilege communicative

processes – such as conversations with community members that transpire in locations where historical photographs were made, or conversations with community members about historical photographs in the gallery setting, for example. These experiences are catalysts that can spark new knowledge about nature and representation in Canada. My artworks are intended to produce more space around the experience of place through photography, and to emphasize impermanence and the fleetingness of photographs. At play is a focus on relationality – for example, the relationships formed *between* one another, between presence and absence, between ideas of culture and nature, between civilization and wild, between science and art or science and culture. My works generate a space for experiencing the tensions produced by holding incompatible things together (Haraway 1996). To support this case, in this chapter I describe artworks I produced over the course of this research that create a place for the experience of (and conversation about) encountering the photographic history and present in Waterton. While working on this research and during my comprehensive exams I found that scholars consistently call for new ways of imagining and articulating our relationship within nature. I will outline that scholarly research below before embarking upon a discussion of the artworks I produced in answer to this call.

I found during my research and reading contemporary scholarship that the limitations in the dualism of realist and constructivist approaches to nature are driving many scholars towards new articulations of nature. Following Latour, Haraway explains, “all the interesting realities are no longer captured by the two extremes but are to be found in the substitution, cross over, translations, through which actants shift their competences” (2004:114). Haraway finds both members of the dualism collapse into one another into a black hole that is “not visible from the shared terrain of modernity, modernism, or postmodernism” (2004:114). It is in the “gravity well” that both Haraway and Latour find the relationships that create new vantage points to think about the role of national parks in Canada. To find the fertile ground from where to draw out points of rupture and alternative viewpoints, and to show nature is more a mingling of competing philosophies than a singular history, experimental connections are being forged that are guided by several themes, notably the relationship between nature, history and language (e.g. Oelschlaeger 1991); the relationship between nature and embodiment (e.g. Ingold 2000; Haraway 2004) and the role of imagination and intuition (e.g. Schama 1995; Basso 1997).

Environmental historian Max Oelschlaeger’s investigation into the idea of wilderness is meant to challenge works that separate nature from culture, “the divide between civilization and wilderness established by modernism” (1991:32). He focuses upon the writing of Thoreau, Muir, and Leopold, to show how they build an idea of wilderness that re-places humans into nature where humans are intuitive, sensing, sentient beings. While other scholars have identified the same early nature philosophers as ineffective in their tendency towards reductionism (nature as good, civilization as bad) and a failure to create a true politic for social change (Wilson 1991:41), Oelschlaeger finds their accounts resonate with “primal bonding” to nature (1991:244-280). The value of Oelschlaeger’s account is that it seeks to find alternative responses to the pervasive hold of modernism over the understanding of nature as an artefact. Oelschlaeger admits he cannot solve the problems in theory and practice that confront his account of the history of the idea of wilderness, and so “he wends his way towards a postmodern idea of wilderness, one that is necessarily fragmentary” (1991:319). At



Installation view, Portable Camera Obscura, Crane Arts, Philadelphia 2009

the same time, his account forms an alternative to constructivist accounts in literature and philosophy, and in postmodern critiques of the idea of wilderness. What stands between human consciousness and nature is the mediation/alienation of language, which in its teleological structure deceives/confuses us into believing it is the world, rather than symbolic of a world (Oelschlaeger 1991). For environmental critic Lawrence Buell, the human senses, like ideology, act as filters “through which literature sifts the environment it purports to represent” (1995:84). Buell argues that such filters - and then on top of that, art - are ways of removing ourselves from nature (1995:84), and yet for Oelschlaeger, art can reconnect humans and nature, in these “thinking poets and poetic thinkers” we can self-consciously escape “the strictures of language and re-establish contact with the ground that lies beneath our feet” (1991:350). Such thinking is important: Language in this treatment can produce a view from new vantage points (see Haraway 2004).

Like Oelschlaeger, Ingold suggests an intuitive knowledge of environments, one that gives form to human feeling, “consisting in the skills, sensitivities and orientations that have developed through the long experience of conducting one’s life in a particular environment” (2000:25). Yet he argues that those scholars that see language and art as blankets lying on top of a world are misguided. Instead he suggests that language, art and other ways of dwelling are constitutive of the world, that “stories help to open up the world, they do not cloak it” (1993:171). Although he suggests an intuitive strategy of “poetics of dwelling” to understand and gain knowledge about the world, it is difficult to discern what method Ingold would suggest to represent the world anthropologically. Ingold’s strategy is critiqued by Roy Ellen as he writes, “the possible alternative” to dichotomies, “the idea of the ‘total interconnectedness of things’ is not something which best organizes day-to-day information we need in order to act upon the world” (1996:29). As I described in chapter 2, it is “other sensed ways of knowing” (Grimshaw 2005) that is driving much scholarship in visual anthropology and beyond. This is found in an attention to non-discursive ways of knowing - drawing, holding a camera, painting - experiential knowledge that is produced by a “distinctive form of ethnographic encounter” (Grimshaw 2005:26).

In *Landscape and Memory* (1995), Simon Schama’s cultural and natural history are brought to the surface through memory. The significance of his work is that he shows that metaphor, representation and memory locates place as much as some stable reality out there (Said 1995). Schama writes:

Landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock....But it should also be acknowledged that once a certain idea of landscape, a myth, a vision, establishes itself in an actual place, it has a particular way of muddling categories, of making metaphors more real than their referents of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery” (1995:61).

Excavating layers of the commonplace to “recover the veins of myth and memory that lie beneath the surface”, such works draw together culture and nature to suggest that the links that bind them are strong (Schama 1995:14).

Other attempts to better understand humans relationship with the environment come



The Prince of Wales Hotel hill viewpoint, Portable Camera Obscura 2009

from questions raised by Ingold through his thinking and working with “hunters and gatherers” to better understand how they perceive the environment and the importance of temporality. He tells us that the landscape of the Pinuipi:

The world was created in the Dreaming, but the Dreaming is *transhistorical*, not *prehistorical*...and so the landscape brought into being in these events... stretched to encompass an eternity... “everwhen” (2000:57)

This understanding of landscape as a course to be followed could hardly be more different from the Western understanding of the natural environment as a resistance to be overcome, a physically given, material substrate that has first to be ‘humanised’, by imposing upon it forms whose origins lie in the imagination, before it can be inhabited (2000:58).

Likewise, Basso finds nature in looking at what people make of places. From a phenomenological perspective, he explores the implications of “what Western Apache have in mind when they say that their lives are ‘like a trail’” (Feld and Basso 1997:9). Like Ingold, Basso (1997) uses the concept of dwelling, or lived relationships (after Heidegger) to better understand how individuals perceive and apprehend space. Yet while Ingold struggles with how to represent this knowledge, Basso finds this sentient knowledge transmissible by the study of such representations, the discovery of *sense of place*, and the resulting chronological narratives that form his ethnographic work. He cures the problem of representation that Ingold identifies by making a case for description that recognizes that knowledge is situated in expressive instruments.

Connecting the above conceptions of nature are ideas about language and experience; whether Ingold’s idea of poetics of dwelling; Oelschlaeger’s intuition; Schama’s ties between landscape and memory; or Basso’s conceptual and expressive instruments. In his introduction to *Reinventing Nature?* Lease teases the same idea out of his account of nature, finding language and experience are the primary sources of human understanding (1995). Nature is neither illusionary as the constructivists might find, nor a direct access to reality. Lease finds language and experience is a neither self-evident nor unproblematic (1995:13), instead, such accounts are limited and mediational.

Hayles suggests that while embodiment is key to nature, a new approach needs to be a particular type of embodiment, “as it determines the nature of our interaction with the world” (1995:49). The point Hayles makes is very important. We are necessarily embodied and acting upon the world, although it is true that not all claims on experience are equally valid (Hayles 1995:5-52).

Borgmann draws together imagination and embodiment into a discussion of the contingency of reality to find that nature, like athletics, art, and religion, produce a community of presence, a “powerful presence and vigorous continuity with the world at large” (1995:42). Borgmann’s attention to forms of embodiment is manifest in his idea of focal practices. Higgs explains that to Borgmann, focal practices are all the things found in the bodily and social contexts that generate profound meaning in our lives (2003:190-195). If our focus is distracted by consumption, what Borgmann calls the device paradigm, we tend towards the general pattern of commodification, “whereby the context is stripped from a thing, leaving machinery and a commodity – or a mere means

POST CARD

50

CORRESPONDENCE

ADDRESS



July 25

26

We crossed from
U.S. into Canada
yesterday and had
a boat ride to the
head of this lake.
The mountains are
rougher and more
magnificent as we
go north.

Minna

Mrs. C. W. Johnson
Box 186
Yucca Valley
California.

and a mere ends” (Higgs 2003:185). The danger of such a paradigm is that it corrodes – “through the patterns of technological culture...engaged relationships between people and ecosystems” (Higgs 2003:186). Higgs explores such patterns through restoration of landscapes, particularly national parks landscapes. Higgs finds focal practices build communion between self, thing, and environment. This practice can be encountered through such actions as a restoration practice that emphasizes building communities in relation to natural processes and patterns (Higgs 2003).

Coming to a similar conclusion, Wilson writes that wilderness, in the form of untouchable nature parks cannot do the work of empowering, healing and connecting humans to the land, but that it must be worked in, to forge an intelligible connection (1991:17). Cronon finds that re-instating such a relationship would bring a position of wildness (unintelligible and) out there together with wildness (humane and) in here, to form a place we could live rightly (1996:90). To Braun this is a shift from external nature to social nature which can provide “resources for thinking about how to live responsibly in nature” (Braun 2002:13; also see Cronon 1995).

Evans and Spaul consider heritage landscapes a productive place to think about how to generate “embodied sentiment.” Here landscape forms like ruins can produce “strange juxtapositions” and can provide “insights into the past; not through sentimental evocation, but through a process of active recollection mindful of the limits of modern memory” (2003:216). Such a conception of landscape is meant to critique the opposition between spectacle (e.g. the gaze) and bodily engagement. What Evans and Spaul theorize is the incorporation of a museal encounter – “heritage landscapes approached in a Hegelian spirit of active recollection” (2003:217). The effect of such an active recollection serves to offer a new form of embodiment for practices and encounters in nature: This is relational embodiment.

History, language and embodiment form a politic and poetic of wilderness in Canada. It is interesting to see that in the struggle to position wilderness and identity, scholars provide both theories about the ways in which we live as well as the ways in which they wish us to live. To Braun, we need to build a radical ecological politic to “locate affinities, build coalitions and imagine other, better, ways of being together that do not reduce all of nature, and all of culture, to the logic of the commodity” (2002:6). Perhaps this would begin by “recognizing ourselves as ecotones, as rich mixtures of culture, nature, animal and technology” (Sandilands 2004:51). Like Haraway, Sandilands challenges us to recognize and investigate the “multiple threads of power that twist intricately in our interactions with non-human natures, that shape our cultural and biological minds and bodies, that organize and reorganize the world of the non-human creatures with whom we interact” (2005:51).

As I have described in this dissertation, the question of “what counts” structures the debate about wilderness in Canada. While asking such a question, many constructions of nature find their way into narratives of Canadian identity. Bound into the legacy of a scientific way of knowing, and colonialist visions, practices, and imagination, it is intensely political, always shifting, and always embodied. Wilderness is the outcome of these various constructions and a product of the ongoing relationship between making and remaking reality, and not only is nature constructed, but also it makes the world. The way wilderness in Canada is understood undergoes constant change, while



Installation view, finding aid, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, Alberta 2010.

simultaneously bearing the traces of its history.

Haraway's (2004) *modest witness* that observes in order to represent the world and make a history, is himself invisible and bodiless. This dislocated knowledge is a problem and so Haraway calls for refiguration and embodiment to empower and form a *mutated modest witness*. As Haraway argues, to locate objects and the subjects of knowledge is not to assign labels like race, sex and class. Instead, "location is the always partial, always finite, always fraught play of foreground and background, texts and context, that constitutes critical inquiry" (2004: 237). Above all, this requires at least a "mutated modest witness," and even, perhaps, if built upon a poetic and imaginative foundation, one that could be seen and heard outside of the wilderness as defined by nature/culture, scientific historical discourse. By following Oelschlaeger, Ingold, Basso, Rodman, Braun and others, we find that locating a multilocal and multivocal wilderness might be an imaginative project, one that is built upon politics and poetics. And this might entail a relational knowledge. Many scholars come to the same conclusion: We want to strive for an engaged practice with wilderness. We want to re-imagine history, the present, and find new ways to tell stories. This comes with the burden that we are already engaged, we are already practicing (i.e. creating, constructing, maintaining, imagining, and being in wilderness) and this has an influence on the earth and ourselves and each other. Borgmann asks us to admit to, and work on such a connection as a way to live better: it is "human contact that is invigorated by reality and devoted to excellence and celebration..." (Borgmann 1995:43).

It seems clear then, that imagination and embodiment are at the forefront of what scholars over the past fifteen years have been striving for in thinking about wilderness. It also seems that a focus on relationality is coming to the fore. My suggestion is that an *immodest witness* is needed, one that departs from the dominant language and form of scholarly work to begin to do the work of changing our relationship with wilderness. Taking this as my starting point for art practice, over the course of my research program I have created several art works that take up the challenge of both the myth of wilderness and the problem of representation. As I write about in chapter 2, I am interested in both the tangible and intangible aspects of experience of place as emphasized in the journey to repeat photographs, and think we need to produce more spaces around the non-discursive. Art provides a toolkit to deal with the problem of representation – or the space between representation and the real – while bearing in mind that representation is always an unfinished project.

In this chapter I explore the challenge of representation through two artworks I produced as part of my research into historical photographs of Waterton. First, I will describe the exhibition *finding aid* (2005, 2007, 2008, 2010), a gallery installation that starts with the method of repeat photography to act as a catalyst to new ways of thinking about photographs of national parks in Canada. Next I will describe the creation of *Portable Camera Obscura* (2009, 2010) a site-specific installation of a portable architecture in Waterton. Both *finding aid* and *Portable Camera Obscura* provide an arena, a kind of space that encourages conversations among a group of people. Curator—theorist Nicolas Bourriaud has recently identified a synthesis between modernism and post-colonialism in art:

Altermodernism can be defined as that moment when it became possible for us

west across street
to sidewalk
walk forward
pass under wires overhead
49 steps
the path changes material

the path ends at a fence

turn left
turn right
approach park benches

House to POW via Kilmoney - to POW Hillman

a large willow or alder with a moss and wood ladder attached to it

go back on right
Walk out of house
Down three steps to lawn
Walk across lawn pass picnic table on left
turn left at road
walk past
one group of trees on right

turn right
the sun comes out
walk past 2 stumps on the left

59 steps
turn left
walk

past a playground

to produce something that made sense starting from an assumed heterochrony, that is, from a vision of human history as constituted of multiple temporalities, distancing the nostalgia for the avant-garde and indeed for any era – a positive vision of chaos and complexity (2009:n.p.).

The notion of altermodernism fits well into discussions of how to widen the notion of what a photograph of a national park is, or to create an imaginative space for conversation around what other conceptions of national parks might be possible.

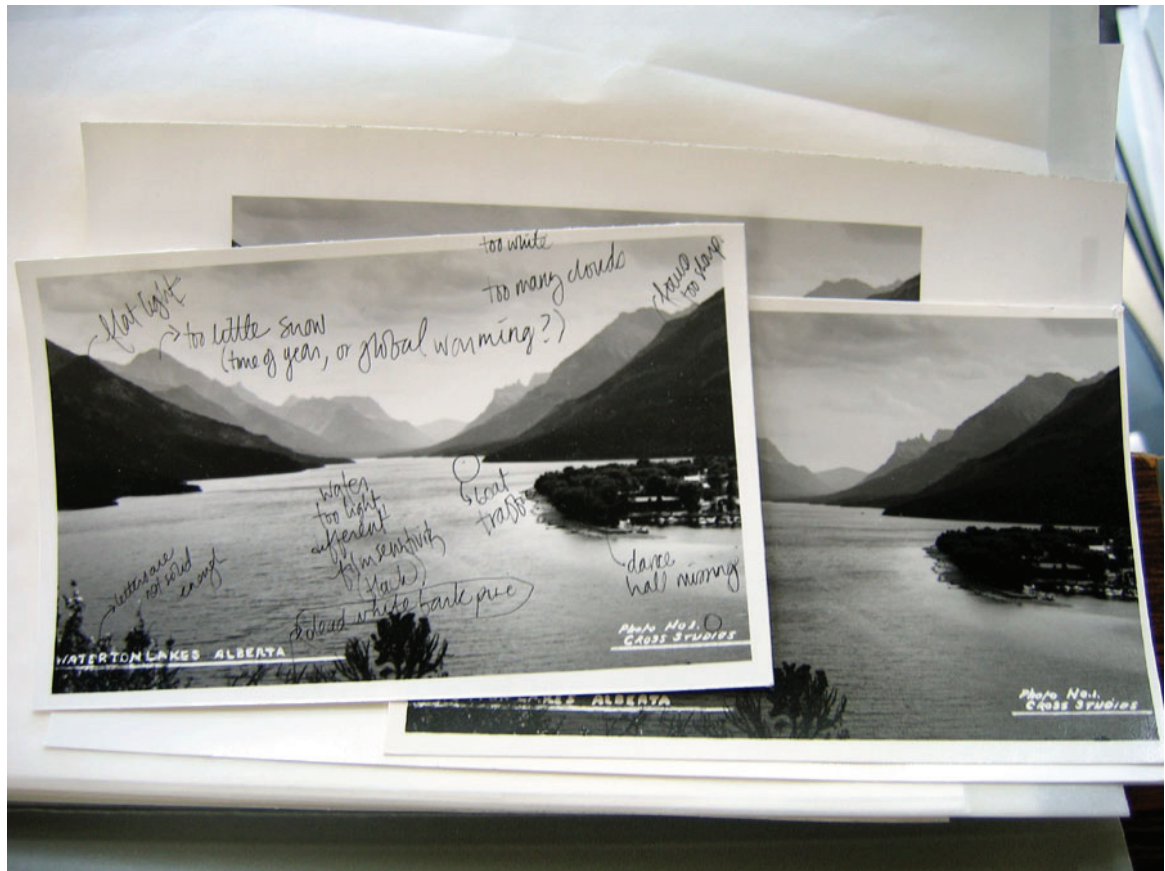
finding aid

The installation *finding aid* is an archive and social workspace on the subject of visual images of Waterton Lakes National Park. This installation is a perpetual work in response to the question: “what happens when I try to re-enact a previous photographic moment?” The outcome of this practice is an ongoing archive of documents including photographs, text, video, drawings, and ephemera that I mine for exhibition. The exhibition is based upon a tension between historical, iconic singular views of a place and my subjective, particular journey – a quest - to get back to that exact place, whereby I produce an excess of documents. I take the archival photographs out of storage to walk with them. Here archives are treated not just as something to read “along the archival grain” (Stoller 2009); or “against the grain” (Braun 2002) but as site of construction and reconstruction. Re-enactment of archives, by locating a position from where an existing photograph was taken, adopting that photo point, and taking a new photograph to create a photo-pair of the same scene, is an act that attempts to verify and explore the truth and to discover the fiction of the photograph through the action of repeating it. It calls into question the archive as a way of knowing. Re-enactment generates conditions for – and analyses the representation of – Waterton, and attempts to get closer to it. And through this act I learn a great deal about the distance between the historical and present photographic moment.

The work employs methods that weave together the art of the archive, ethnography, and installation to focus on landscape as a place of relationships, human interactions and social contexts (Bourriaud 1998). This work reports back my experience to the viewer of the exhibition as a hybrid installation, performance, and an archive (made up of photographs, text, video and field notes) as a way to converse with the history of landscape art in the 20th century.

In the late 1960s artists began to emphasize their own interaction and experience with place in the form of landscape walks (see the walks of Richard Long; Hamish Fulton). Considered a mix of landscape art, sculpture, and performance, these works emphasize an artists’ immersive, processual relationship with the environment (Campany 2003). *finding aid* is in direct conversation with such art that emphasizes interaction with and experience of place. Using repeat photography as an embodied practice and a performative work, I orient my journey using the photographs to explore place but also to try to return to past positions in the landscape. This act attempts to verify the truth (or discover the fiction) of the photograph through re-enactment.

As I explore in chapter 2, the impossibility of seeing the same way twice has been acknowledged within the practice of repeat photography (Klett 2004). Even so, I make an exposure. I play along and enter into a game following rules someone else has laid



Detail, finding aid, 2005

out. This is a process of finding the physical location as closely as possible to reveal the material or immaterial things that are produced between the historical account and my account. Likewise, there is a struggle in the darkroom to replicate the series of conditions between the moment of the shutter release and the present. I print the photograph to look like the original, which means I fake aging, titles and yellowing, a process that draws attention towards the things we don't notice at the photo location (i.e. weather, time of day) or when viewing the print (i.e. scratches, bent corners). In viewing the resulting image, the transparency of this fakery draws attention to the impossibility of exactly replicating the image, and to the subjectivity of the photograph. My own uncertainties while producing the account reveal the uncertain social meaning of archives, and of representations of place. An attempt at replicating the historical photograph draws on ethnography, archives, history, fact, and fiction to produce a work that explores the subjective understanding of place, whether the photographers were part of exploration and empire-building or a tourist experience. Akin to installation-based approaches to exploring history that re-create the setting of a possible history, I pursue the imaginative space of the originator, in place and in the darkroom (see Marc Dion's *Alexander Wilson-Studio*, 1999; and the works of Jimmie Durham).

finding aid is installed in the gallery as a social work space structured by my archive. Tables and stools – arranged as work spaces - hold the archival materials comprising historical documents I have collected (copies from national and local archives, original postcards and photographs collected from friends, second-hand stores and eBay) mixed with documents I have generated on my quest to re-enact historical photographs (the repeat photograph, photographic narratives, fieldnotes, maps, gps coordinates, contact sheets, text with directions, video), and archival storage containers and collection descriptions. Each table is organized around a singular iconic historical photograph that I am attempting to repeat in Waterton. The corresponding original historical photograph/postcard hangs on the wall above it.

Mining the structure and the objects of museums and archives has become a way for artists to expose the silent agenda of such institutions (see Andrea Fraser's guided tours of museums; Fred Wilson's *mining museums* in Corrin 1994:4). Such art works aim to "brush history against the grain and reveal the archive as a contestable site in the construction of social meaning" (Campany 2003:22). Given that photography is part of the same legacy of positivism as archives, it holds central importance in upholding the truth of the archive. For this reason photography is used by artists to explore the way in which archives assemble and tell histories (Campany 2003:22), and to problematize how the photograph is a stand-in for history and memory (see Allan Sekula, *Meditations on a Triptych*). *finding aid* brings together questions about archives. First, if archives are about truths and equivalents, can the corresponding place of the photograph's making be located or returned to, and, second, what can be discovered by slowing down and carefully investigating the social information available from a particular photograph?

finding aid mines existing archives and re-engages them with the world outside the archive to produce new materials and contexts. Like other artists constructing archives, this journey follows coincidence and formulates narratives to produce a new archive, structured with its own internal logic (Cooke 2006; see the work of Tacita Dean *Girl Stowaway* and *The Sinking of the SS Plympton* (2004)). Like Tacita Dean, I pursue coincidence as a structure of inquiry but I also intend to find patterns and themes of



Detail, finding aid, 2010
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the social world. On the search for such patterns in the original archive I produce texts outlining structures and particulars. During the hunt for the photographic location, I compose pinhole photographs, write field notes and directions, create photographic narratives, and film the trail. After the exposure, during time in the darkroom, I focus, time, dodge, burn scratch, colourize. To further search for connections between objects, I write interpretations of place, map spaces with pencil on paper, create versions, and write and re-write cursive to replicate someone else's body movements and message. These records are contained within the file structure of *finding aid*. The records work together to represent the journey to understand how I, and others, create history and travel through, and represent, place. It is an investigation into everyday cultural acts whether from the early 20th century, or the present. This sort of archiving of life is supported by art works that attempt to order mass imagery by mixing public history, autobiography, and social and private interests (see the work of Gerhart Richter).

The structure of the exhibition is supported by recent shifts in art from art reflecting objective knowledge towards an emphasis on subjective experience (de Oliveira, Oxley and Petri, 2003:14). In particular, recent work of installation artists is directed towards bringing the artist and viewer together to produce an environment (see works by Ilya Kabakov, Ann Hamilton, Janet Cardiff, Rirkrit Tiraviniija). The interactive space produced by the files on the tables acknowledges the viewer and asks her to interact – to browse and compare what she find inside the files to the three photographs on the wall – in a way that suggests her own active experience of archives. Acknowledging the subjectivity of archives and documents, and in a tentative solution to the problems of presenting place, *finding aid* creates a broader possibility for the discovery of new relationships between people and places. It not only forms a critique of archives but is a productive space.

As I investigate problems about representation in Waterton, the work traces the history of landscape art in the 20th century. Beginning with repetition of historical photographic views, *finding aid* acknowledges and investigates the legacy of early photographic ideology. The performative relocation of the historical photographs draws upon the process of landscape art that reports back an experience to a viewer. Finally the work arrives in a social space with an installation that intends to share my journey and create something together with the viewer through an interactive spatial encounter in the gallery space. This encounter is key to this work, which aims to acknowledge that place is about relationships, and representations are produced and reproduced by communities, not by single, heroic men traveling through space. The trail I create from the archive to support this idea begins inside, in papers, through dust (Steedman 2001). It meanders outside, through the town, the aspen, up hill, captures images, and returns a refigured paper trail through a dark room which emerges as an archive into the white space of the gallery. Along the way I collaborate, converse, commune, share, and ask questions. This process and the open-endedness of the subjectivity produced by the interactive and performative gallery space attempt to resist fixity and to create space to demonstrate the situatedness of photographs.

finding aid is a document of this journey, it is an account of the impossibility of seeing the same way twice, or as the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus would have it, the fact that you can not step into the same river twice. Even so, as I try to perfectly realign my vision to the past, I make exposures on my camera and play along, following the



Installation view, finding aid, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, Alberta 2010

rules someone else has laid out. This is a process of finding the physical location as closely as possible to reveal the material or immaterial things that are produced in friction between the historical account and my account with the aim of providing a better understanding of place, representations of place, and the messiness in between. As I describe in chapter 2, I use repeat photography not only to look comparatively at what is visible in the two photographs but as a method to better understand the space the photograph was taken from and the technology it was made with. By physically standing in the place from which the photograph was taken, I can look at the spatial orientation of and relationship between the photograph and photographer. The investigation of the physical properties that make up the visual— such as posture and position in viewing - reveal the ways power is exerted through the physical properties that make up the visual. (Jokinen and Veijola 2004:259; Crary 1992). For example, photographs from heights reflect early surveyors' commitment to surveying views from whence they claimed they could photographically capture the entire scene more accurately than by actual investigation (Wheeler 1920).

finding aid is an archive that documents my failure to get back to place, to re-enact, to re-present the historical moment. The uncertainties of my own journey reveal the uncertain social meanings of photograph. Archives are ultimately imagined to be about truths, they are the storehouses of history, and places that, as Foucault writes, “turn documents into monuments.” This work, while an archive, is about failure, not about truth – it is the humming line between reality and representations of reality: It is a failure to get to same place, failure to get same shot, failure to represent the picture, and a failure to represent reality. To return to chapter five, *finding aid* seeks to address the Edenic narratives found throughout western culture – ones that permeate and inscribe the park space and our imaginations – one where pristine nature is lost through some human culpable act (Cronon 1996:27). These narratives promote worry about decay and destruction of some imagined and highly nostalgic past. There are several ways that Eden is narrated. In particular, national park space fits into what Candace Slater has described as an “after-Eden” story that “highlight nostalgia for a perfect past or deep fears about continuing loss” (1996:116). Yet, what *finding aid* shows in its failure is that there is no past to get to. This means that indeed paradise was not lost, and thus it cannot be found. *finding aid* demonstrates it cannot be found.

I first installed *finding aid* in December 2005 at the *Main Gallery* in the University of Victoria Visual Arts Building. This work began with an investigation of three photographs located on the Prince of Wales Hotel Hill. The documents I produced while trying to perfectly repeat each photograph lie on three long thin tables that stand perpendicular to the gallery wall. Each set of archives builds towards the perfect replication, including darkroom work to perfectly print and reproduce the postcard or print. I trace the cursive greetings on the back of the cards as a way to try to gain insight into the person who made the print and the person who bought the print and circulated it across the globe. I attempt to replicate the typewritten photo album entry by the anonymous tourist. The act of trying to replicate cursive or type both builds an attention to the account as well as generates a sense of the gulf between the original account and the present.

Archival boxes act as false dividers to block the tables off and create an archival nook for the visitor to spend time – a space I reconstructed to mimic the feeling I know well from my own work in archives. I produced small photographs and so they require close

inspection and picking up and holding. They are indexes. The handling means the visitor is continually refiguring the file structure as they interact with them. In this way different fragments of the narrative come to the fore, and other fragments become buried and therefore that part of the story may recede. This echoes a subjective historical process of archives that selectively chooses its evidence from a vast arena of information, while the rest falls away. Archives are a subjective space. This work invites the viewer to browse, select and use, and therefore the audience is encouraged to choose their own interpretation. One person's interpretation or attention or careless browse will re-order the documents, and this will influence the next person's experience. In this way the narrative is an open-ended process. The great number of files, images, musing and information present might suggest the potential of all the things that could have been recorded about a place or time and brought through an archive into the present.

In the installation design, a fourth table holds a typewriter, files in various states of having been accessioned, and notes. I sit behind this table and participate in an ongoing process of archiving during gallery hours¹. A finding aid is a tool that is found in archives to describe records and is often found as a card index, an inventory or a register. In this work I am the finding aid. This means I am present in the work space to enable the continual generation of the archive. I work on the archive – a table will hold my typewriter and items not yet accessioned. I participate in an ongoing process of archiving during gallery hours, accessioning items as well as recording narratives produced out of the conversational drift between visitors and myself (invited figures such as park wardens and local historians as well as the general public).

I act as myself – a hybrid artist, anthropologist, archivist and gallery attendant. I became very interested in the social space produced by my ongoing participation in the gallery space. I continued work on the files, sometimes adding narratives and conversations I had with the visitors, but often I did not. The conversation was an end in itself. As each guest arrived in the archive, I became a sort of quasi tour guide, but also listened to stories that visitors told. It gave me an opportunity to collaborate with the visitor and gain insight. Together we built a narrative of the everyday – a coming together and mixing of memory, opinion, other history, hearsay – against the iconic singular view presented in the historical photograph on the wall. It became a solution to how I can create a collaborative social space with the viewer to open up the process of image-making and place to conversation, communicating anthropological knowledge to non-anthropologists, and as a way to generate new information about how photographs are understood. I seek to further explore historical photographs through conversations with people who visit the show.

While the study of archives brings anthropology and art into a shared space, an important facet of *finding aid* was the creation of a social space as a part of the artwork itself. To this end, it fits into relational practice and dialogical art practice. Nicolas Bourriaud defines relational aesthetics as “a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space” (2002:113). He sees

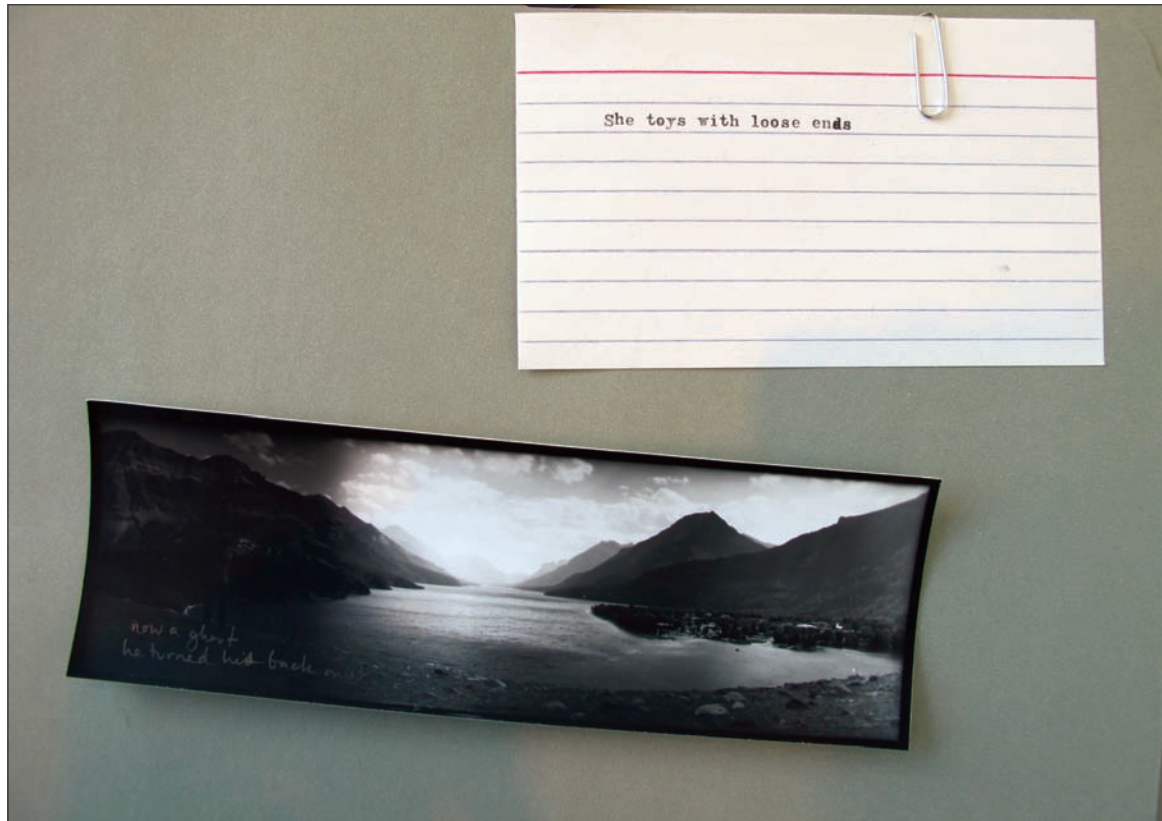
1 In the 2006 installation I was present for the entire installation. In 2007 I was present for a week over the course of the summer and then produced an off site performance in the park that invited visitors to the show to track online (trudilynnsmith.blogspot.com). In 2010 I was in the gallery for about a week, and in addition conducted a re-enactment of an historical photograph with the local community and an installation of Portable Camera Obscura.



artists as facilitators rather than makers of an object and regards art as information exchanged between the artist and the viewers. *finding aid* aims to acknowledge that place is about relationships and their social context. While the exhibition was titled *finding aid* to reference my attempt to find the truth of these historical photographs by finding them, it also referenced my presence in the gallery, acting as the finding aid or index to the work. I collaborate with people and create a space for what Donna Haraway calls, “ongoing histories rather than histories that end” (Haraway 2004:1). The end draws upon the idea of nostalgia, of loss, and of something fixed and true, back in time, but to re-activate the photographs in the present by creating something new – conversation and imagination – is to keep them in process, and in that way history can include new stories and other accounts. I keep the archive and history in an active state of generation by feeding back conversations into the archive that is never complete and not entirely my own, and this is one way that allows others to add in (though of course I have control of it in many ways).

What emerged during my research is a trend towards relational thinking. It can be found across the disciplines of visual art, critical theory, and anthropology in the recent writing of Bourriaud, Bhabha, Appadurai and MacDougall. Each of these scholars emphasizes the importance of audience and reception in the production of works. Meaning is not merely the outcome of a reflection upon experience but necessarily includes the experience (therefore, experience is the knowledge) (MacDougall 1998). As well, relational works change a relationship between the object and truth. The messy contingency of relational art unseats visuality as “reason’s mimetic measure” (Bhabha 1998:41). If experience, (e.g. conversation), rather than reason, (e.g. an object that one can know) is privileged as having cultural value, then important questions about the power of conversation in shaping relations to cultural experience and social transformation arise (Bhabha 1998:41). Following Bhabha, it seems that if a space is generated for conversation about photographs of national parks in Canada, then it allows for the possibility of change and exchange in terms of a relationship that we have, as a community, to wilderness. This is an affirmative and constructive act and becomes a way to take responsibility for how these images have been created and maintained, and to imagine these acts in a possible future. Appadurai writes provocatively about the link between “the production of locality and the idea of the imagination as a social practice” (1998: n.p) and the importance of imagination in the formation of locality. To Appadurai (1998), collective social experience is made up of rules, regulations and regularities as well as projects, visions, wishes, and so on. As a result the production of locality is created, “not from habit but from deliberate inclusive collective ideas of what is possible” (Appadurai 1998 n.p.). The relationship between the documents, the gallery visitors and myself helps to establish an imaginative space and a momentary coherence in the meaning of an object (the photograph in this case) that is continually shifting in meaning. It becomes a way to address Elizabeth Edwards’ concern about how to track the shifting meaning of photographs.

finding aid has since been installed at the Waterton Natural History Association in Waterton in 2007; in the Nanaimo Art Gallery in 2008 and the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in 2010. Accessioned objects are continually being added and the archive is continually growing. It is in the process of construction, and thus the most recent showing at the SAAG was a much more extensive archive than was first installed at the University of Victoria Gallery. This iteration of the work had larger tables, more files, and



Detail, finding aid, 2010

more historical photographs on the wall. The continual generation of the archive is a way to support the ongoing nature of history. At the Nanaimo Art Gallery in 2008, I was present in the gallery for a week and then produced an off-site performance in Waterton Lakes National Park that visitors to the gallery could track via a blog I updated each day. I attempted to perfectly re-enact an historical photograph – “to get back to a place not seen in over 90 years” – using the very camera that produced the original view in the early 1900s (Bert Riggall’s “Upper Waterton Lake” on the Kodak Panoram no. 1). In this performance, I attempted to relocate the image for ten days, each day producing two sets of images online. This material is now included in the archive.

The Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG) exhibition (June – September 2010) is a key site for an iteration of this archive as residents of the local community of Lethbridge are some of the primary users of the park space. Key photographic acts - embedded not only in tourist photographs but in professional photographs - such as the production and circulation of postcard views by Cross Studios of Lethbridge have influenced the way we see, understand, and act in Waterton. The archive examines such photographs and creates a space for conversations about such views and histories within the local community to be articulated and explored.

Finding aid was installed in at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in the project space of their temporary location. The project space was windowed – a storefront in downtown Lethbridge – and creates an experience of performance for both myself as well as visitors to the gallery. The space acted as a forum for performance that was described by one visitor as a “goldfish bowl” effect (McDonald, pers. comm). Passersby on the street could see in through the bank of windows, in to the project space and bear witness to the act of archiving taking place. When I was not present, the archive was still “in process” as visitors handled and rearranged the structure of the archive as they browsed and experienced the materials and the space. On view to those passing by on foot and in cars, visitors subsequently became performers in the subtle act of browsing and shuffling files, sitting and looking, as well as sorting and reading. In this way, the visitor was part of the performance that was only bounded by the opening hours of the gallery and the duration of the installation.

The act of entering the space and touching the archive was a powerful contrast to the way that art galleries are primarily set up around looking but not touching; I noted that visitors hesitated to handle the documents but once encouraged changed their behaviours. One visitor—performer noted that “I was leaving a trace on this work, by taking this file folder and reading it and shuffling the documents around...and my mom started straightening the file folders” (McDonald, pers. comm). This comment suggests that each person brings their own particularity and peculiarity to the archive structure, influencing the materiality of the archive, and by extension the narratives that surface. In turn, this event influences how the next visitor—performer experiences the archive left after the previous performance. My interest in the materiality of objects, in promoting touching and sorting and the way that objects are transformed through handling, is driven by my fascination with the material quality of images. I provide a setting to feel the weight of history: the weight and physical practice of archival research. For example, to handle silky double weight matte fibre prints is an experience that many people don’t have, but these are the photographic materials that make up our archives.

In the past few years, anthropologists are using exhibitions more often as a field site,



an “event, object, and interactive process at one and the same time” (Kratz 2002:91). My own experience using exhibitions has been to stimulate conversations in the gallery space that reveal the values and beliefs about nature, wilderness and national parks. These ideas about nature are produced as multiple narratives intertwined with social histories of a people(s), land, memory, space and time. While that material can be used as material for social research, at this juncture my work concentrates upon building a space for the flow of conversation as an end in itself.

As part of the exhibition I designed a set of twelve postcards that form an exhibition publication entitled, *field guide*. It activates the exhibition outside the gallery space and was designed to reflect ideas of art and community engagement that is a key part of my work. This exhibition publication is a box containing the postcards and a booklet and draws on the concepts of a backpackers’ field guide, the field notebook, and the postcard set. This publication for *finding aid* is an experiential initiation with narrative, text and images that will guide the person holding the box on a walk - a *quest* - to relocate an historical image via a mediated experience in Waterton. The purpose of the *field guide* is to further situate the way that people expressively engage with places like national parks through walking, taking pictures, reading guidebooks, comparing and contrasting experiences, searching, and organizing. The function of the *field guide* is that it acts as a navigational tool to a primary experience and it subsequently links the gallery experience at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery to the *en plein air* experience in Waterton.

The structure of the *field guide* allows for a one time experiential engagement with images. In this sense, the walk and the exhibition catalogue together generated a unique process of discovery to a specific place of primary encounter that is instigated by the installation at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery. This was an experience that heightened awareness of regional histories and the privilege of historical vantage point(s). The *field guide* is a phenomenological game consisting of an ironic play between the encounter with the truth of photography and the failure to ever get back to place. Therefore, the person using/holding the *field guide* brings their experience and knowledge into the play - the weather, their stride, memories, thoughts and history all come together to bear witness to the photograph as an event.

Rather than an exhibition catalogue that documents the installation of a work, the *field guide* accompanied *finding aid*; this exhibition publication formed a material link between the tangible exhibition and the intangible experience one has in Waterton National Park through historical images. The historical images, text, maps and drawings included in the publication are directly taken from the exhibition to anchor the narrative and walking experience.

The design contains (post)cards and a small booklet with the exhibition essay (written by Fiona P. McDonald) enclosed in a small, portable box. The cards and the booklet fit inside the sealed box so that it is apparent that the first opening is a unique experience—a prescribed experience if each person chooses to follow the instructions of discovery. The *field guide*, once open, can be refigured and changed as the cards are engaged and referenced during the course of the walk. The person using field guide becomes a sort of tracker, wandering along the Prince of Wales hill, joining in on the experience of tracking previous photographic events. The (post)cards each have a space on the back to write on so that they may be circulated as they are mailed



off to family and friends. An accompanying booklet with an essay provides space for fieldnotes and blank conditions sheets like those I use in my own attempts to re-enact photographic events.

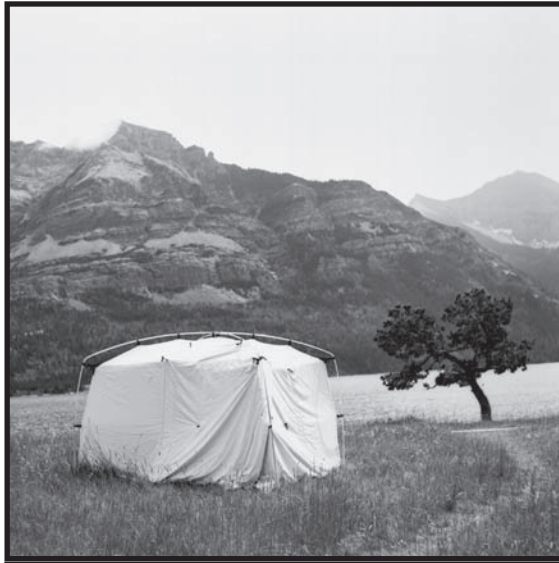
Historically, postcards and field guides are key ways that the Prince of Wales Hotel hill vista has been captured since the early 1900s by visitors and locals. Evidence in archives includes postcards generated by image makers such as Cross Studios of Lethbridge in the 1930s. The structure of this publication draws on the importance of this regional photographic history and how integral this dynamic is to the global circulation of postcards from Canadian Rocky Mountain National Parks. The structure of the exhibition catalogue publication is intended to highlight the moment of encounter and will be ephemeral so that the act of participating in the walk and using this publication is as fleeting as the moment of photography itself. Yet this encounter is also an exchange: it will provoke participation through physically taking apart the *field guide* and using it, mixing it, and circulating it. Postcards are a key way that images representing Canada and wilderness enter into global circulation and this publication weighs in on this: As these postcards are written on and sent or kept as souvenirs, they thereby enter into the experience of the *finding aid* exhibition at The Southern Alberta Art Gallery and enliven the global circulation and exchange of postcards and dialogue.

Portable Camera Obscura: a quest

The production of *finding aid* and my research that included producing photographs began to weigh on me. Why produce more photographs? I had jokingly nicknamed my fieldwork process, “to only go where other people have gone before” and over the course of my research I became less and less interested in the production of new accounts, and more interested in the reflective act of sitting or standing and having a multi-sensory experience of place at the location of historical photographs. Getting there, and reflecting once there, became more interesting than getting the photograph. And I wanted to share this experience, the impact of understanding the fleetingness of a photograph, all the things that intervene, and all the ways that a previous photographer made it look easy to get the photograph. I was interested in ways to dwell within and witness the radical disjunctures between the fixed photograph in hand and the teeming world that a viewer is embedded within.

I became interested in finding other ways to investigate the distance between representation and the represented. *finding aid* played with the distance that is increasingly evident the more closely you tune yourself to repeating photographs. The act of slowing down and investigating a photograph by placing closer attention upon a detail (what Ingold or Gibson might call an “education of attention”) placed on view the enormity of distance between the photograph and the *en plien air* experience, in exactly replicating the view. If I found the location – perhaps finding the vantage point within one inch because I had great foreground features – then I would have to look at time of year; then time of day, or ecological changes I have no hold over (considering that nature has agency too). Or the plasticity of the image would evade me – chemistry, paper stock, toning, presentational forms (postcards, tourist snaps), all of the traces of usage and time are carried forward in the image that I am trying to replicate.

My interest in conversational exchange and an interest in shrinking the distance between represented and representation led me to my next artwork, *Portable Camera*



Portable Camera Obscura installed at the tree 2009 (top) and on the Prince of Wales hotel hill (bottom) 2009
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Obscura. In exploration of vision and sight as something sensorially integrated, embodied, and experienced, the ground upon which we stand when we make photographs, and how we stand there, is important. I decided to return to significant locations and install a large site-specific tent structure, one that acts like a room sized camera.

The installation *Portable Camera Obscura* is a walk-in, room-sized camera. The tent structure is a lightproof environment that projects an image of the outside view onto the back wall and sides of the inside of the tent with a simple lens. First positioned in the exact location of popular photographic views in Waterton Lakes National Park, AB, in summer 2009, participants were able to enter the tent to see the landscape projected onto the wall of the structure. As the camera is a portable structure, the work extended from front to back country experiences and a key part of the work was an expedition style journey that was mounted into the backcountry of Waterton. This work is a site-specific, temporary (nomadic) architecture that both references the history of mobility in national parks (impermanent residences: tents, trailers) as well as the history of photography to offer an alternative view to the way that institutional authority (Parks Canada interpretation) makes the world comprehensible to the viewer. Viewers enter the tent to see the view and participate in that photographic moment. In this way I facilitated relationships beyond economic exchanges (Allen 2003), which is a key focus in relational artworks.

In August 2009, I first set up the tent in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta. Armed with a research permit, an events permit, and a field assistant, we embarked on a quest to relocate historical views. In the front country I set up the camera obscura at historic photographic locations including one from the Prince of Wales Hill and from the location of Kurt Seel's photograph of the Limber pine². I invited the general public to join me inside. The viewer entered the small room and is literally inside the camera. At times I was inside the camera as the operator and official photographer I collaborated on producing the view with the visitors: I opened and closed the various lenses to produce different visualities (close focus or long focal ranges) and the view included the viewer themselves as they partially block the image coming in, thereby rendering the viewer's trace part of the photographic event in a different way than is usually experienced from photographic viewpoints³. We also talked about the historical photograph.

I mounted an expedition into the backcountry of Waterton. I invited community members including environmental educators, people that work for environmental NGOs, wardens, artists, curators, writers and scientists – some of those who speak for nature – to journey into the backcountry of Waterton with me as their guide, to relocate

2 In 2010 as part of the SAAG exhibition we set up the Portable Camera Obscura at the tree site again. Upon seeing the photograph they were challenged to relocate, one participant immediately remarked about how much it reminded them of a Group of Seven painting.

3 I also installed the camera obscura at Crane Arts in Philadelphia as part of the exhibition "Ethnographic Terminalia" in November 2009. Rather than a site-specific journey, the camera was set up with a large print on an easel that is part of my collection of views from the Prince of Wales hotel hill. Because of this level of removal, the work became more about representation and viewing. In this installation did not act as operator but instead encouraged people to enter and hang out, sometimes manipulating the print outside. I put some throw pillows into the tent to create a space that people would want to sit in. I noticed at the opening that it was a very popular work to spend time inside. People inside were happy to play with the lenses themselves and create their own experience of viewing.



Portable Camera Obscura, a quest (photograph courtesy Lynette Hiebert and Jeff Wielki)

an historical photograph and install the camera. In summer 2009 we went on an epic journey into what is informally called “Riggall’s Meadow” along the Carthew Alderson trail. The historical photograph in hand, we took the archive out for a walk as a way to transform the historical photograph from a document (or monument) back into a located act. An overnight journey to relocate the panoramic photograph of “Riggall’s Meadow” feeds into notions of romantic quests for nature. The group was in pursuit of a particular nature experience, one that we had to work for. It was not an easy venture – participants were required to have a certain level of fitness, and be able to hike heavy weights in their packs for long periods of time. My role was as a tracker to help guide the group to the location of the historical photograph. I carried over 50lbs of gear to produce this particular experience of nature. We had to gain permission to enter the area and were not permitted to camp in the meadow overnight, but had to move on to the Alderson backcountry campground. While Parks Canada regulates human traffic into that part of the park, at one time this meadow was the site of a popular outfitting camp, and there are the ruins of corrals and old campsites.

Once the tent was set up on the relocated historical photographic site, it formed an experiential foundation for communication – conversations transpired from the tent – a site for loitering and for looking differently at a classic moment. Grant Kester describes this sort of practice as a dialogical art practice, one that “provides a way to decenter a fixed identity through interactions with others” (2004:77). Part of my exploration of embodied experience and an engagement with social networks, interactivity and conversation, this work focused on active and dynamic experiences as catalysts for generating communicative processes that can spark new knowledge about nature and representation in Canada.

To move from the bright meadow into a darkened tent to watch the movement of the image on the inside of the tent walls generated a particular experience. The camera drew attention to light, to focus, and to the constantly shifting world. In the tent the group talked about the way their sensitivity to what was going on became fine tuned. In some ways it was a removal from the world, and yet in others it heightened an awareness of it.

Like *finding aid*, the *Portable Camera Obscura* focuses upon re-enactment, and the way that nature is performed through photographic events. This is a way to study the relationship between people – the initial photographer to the present viewer. There is a flow of ideas, people and materials that converge in place. It is an investigation into past acts, which are conserved and reinforced and re-enacted. In this way it is a novel way to engage in discussion about what photographs of national parks mean and what nature means. While the tent is structured as a site of exchange between people, it is also a working structure that references the history of photography and vision. To get inside the tent means that you are inside the camera itself and not only are you on the ground of the historical photograph but literally present for the present photographic moment. Yet it is an ongoing moment, not fixed on photographic emulsion. As the viewer enters *Portable Camera Obscura*, they become witness to the space between the past photographic moment and the present. This connection becomes a tool to enliven the art of photography. At the core of this work is the creation of an experience that demonstrates the situatedness of photography, and from there, it is an exploration of the contingent and always moving world we are in. It is a productive space of



Installation view, Portable Camera Obscura in 'Riggall's Meadow' 2009

experience and of conversations with stakeholders and with the general public that transpire from the tent – a site for loitering and for looking differently at a view and a photographic moment. It is a way to collaborate with visitors to elaborate upon and generate new meanings about iconic sites of national parks in Canada. During the hike to Riggall's Meadow, I witnessed the cohesion of the group over the course of the two-day experience of hiking and having a series of intense moments together. This was a collaborative group experience.

Re-enactment is a powerful exploration that provides ground for storytelling, for an imaginative approach to historical records, and to try to figure out the mythical shape of wilderness in Canada. As part of the SAAG exhibition, I took community members on a repeat photography quest in Waterton. Immediately the group was trying to figure out why it was that the historical photographer stood where we positioned our repeat photograph. The place we located as the site of the historical photograph became imaginative ground for proposing what conditions were at play for the making of a photograph. The work of artist Carrie Mae Weems draws upon this same power of imagination and relation, and in her work she talks about the re-enactment of historical photographs as a way of constructing history and embodying it. As I describe in chapter 2, her work having students re-enact famous photographs in the history of the U.S.A. is a powerfully expressive practice that is a different way to answer Barthes question, "What does my body know of a photograph?"

Photography lives in the after effects of a 19th century model of rationalist thought that used it as a way to record nature "as she really is" (Jay 1993:150). In this thinking, there is no distance between the representation and the represented, between the photograph and nature. This camera vision imagined the camera as truth, an extension of the eye (Campany 2003:3). This vision freezes nature into a "pre-given world of objective truth", and, as Abigail Solomon-Godeau writes in her influential volume *Photography at the Dock*, such images have a power to "naturalize domination and displace history and memory" (1991:xxxiv). Solomon-Godeau favours bringing photography "back to the dock" for interrogation to create counter arguments, revise history and reform aesthetic debate and cultural politics (Owens 1992). I have found that strategies and practice in art and anthropology can act together to bring photography "back to the park" for investigation. Ultimately, the failure to get back to place is a charged ground for community. To come together to bear witness to the failure to return to an historical photograph is about allowing people to cozy up to a place (literally by lying in a subalpine meadow under shelter of the tent) we're most afraid of: impermanence. Art practice and production can point to ways to re-imagine nature and by extension ideas about environment and environmentalisms, to "forge a sense of community and connection so often missing from everyday life" (Dunaway 2009). Ultimately, *finding aid*, *Portable Camera Obscura* are undertaken as starting points to bring attention to the distance between represented and representation with the aim to create a space for those realities that are unrepresented or unrepresentable. The production of these works provides a way to be both involved in "learning and remembering the ways we might have been otherwise" (Goodeve and Haraway 1998:171), and to actively dwell in the spaces we create.

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