

Three Perspectives on Raymond Moore

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Fletcher town, 1977, by Raymond Moore

Introduction

In this dissertation I approach the photography of Raymond Moore, photographer and artist, from three perspectives: his positioning in Britain's photographic history, the perspective of Moore himself, and the perspective of a viewer engaging with one of his photographs. The title of my dissertation is one that refers to an exhibition, entitled *Three Perspectives on Photography*, held in 1979 at the Hayward Gallery in London. This exhibition was a cornerstone for British art photography signalling the beginning of an era with a photographic infrastructure worthy of an internationally accredited artistic medium. The exhibition took Britain into the 1980s with three distinct photographic strands. These were 'creative-personal/art photography, photography as a means of raising political awareness, and the feminist perspective'.¹ Whilst the exhibition heralded a change in the attitudes of the British Arts Council, from one that viewed photography as a second rate artistic medium to one that at least accepted its growing international credibility, it marked the decline of the more subjective photography with which Moore's work falls.

By 1979 Moore was nearing the end of his career having spent the best part of his life a pariah, pursuing amorphous moments of poetic lyricism and rhythmic unity, in landscapes often as bleak and desolate as the opportunities were for his work to be exhibited both then and now. His photographs offer a personal vision that thematically and joyously pursue kinetic plays of light and geometric forms scattered in landscapes most other photographer's choose to ignore or blindly pass through. There is present a deep-rooted melancholy in Moore and his images, an acute poetic voice that leaves us with highly emotive but often intangible subject matter. I feel that I'm 'looking at something which affects his life', writes Ian Jeffrey, 'how his heart beats, how he sees things, how his rhythms and the rhythms of the world coincide'.²

¹ William Bishop, *Realising Personal Truths in Photography* (London: Inscape, 1997), p. 67.

² Ian Jeffrey, 'Articulating the Commonplace', *History of Photography*, 1997, p. 332.

For the past decade contemporary photographic practice has concerned itself largely with a fragmentary and marginal approach to image making that has been refined by the likes of Andreas Gursky's structurally ordered photographs and the theoretical complexities of Jeff Wall's constructions. Whereas the reading of these images often demands an erudite contribution from the viewer to achieve a comprehensive understanding, a Raymond Moore photograph is a self-contained entity that rewards the viewer by his or her sensitivity to its poignancy. Through the personal frustrations I have felt towards the clinical photographic practices that have been the custom for so long, I have directed my attentions towards imagery from an era that perhaps photographically, concerned itself more with life in its entirety.³ To focus this research I have explored the psychoanalytic theory of the uncanny and the aesthetics of the sublime to determine our relationship to a Raymond Moore photograph and the responses that it facilitates. At the same time I consider the career of a photographer that has for the time being at least, seemingly ended as it began, lost 'in the wilderness'.

A Positioning

In the Wilderness was the title of a lecture Moore gave in 1974 to his students at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham. Referring to the late 1950s and 1960s he said he 'felt often very alone' and that 'there seemed to be nothing in this country in the way of groups or organisations concerned with photography as an art'.⁴ Moore's decision in 1956 to give up painting to pursue an artistic career in photography was at the time almost unheard of in Britain; a post-war nation that offered little infrastructure to promote contemporary artistic photographic practice. It was not until the late 60s and early 70s that a group of like-minded individuals began to distinguish between the amateur photography clubs of the past and the professional careers of the future. In 1968 Sue

³ Ibid., p. 332.

⁴ Raymond Moore quoted by Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 11.

Davies ‘was so impressed’, after curating the exhibition *Four Photographers in Contrast*, ‘with the public response and demand for exhibitions of photography that she determined to set up a specialist photography gallery herself’.⁵ In 1971 she achieved her goal founding the Photographers Gallery, now a long-standing focal point for any aspiring photographer. In the late 60s Bill Jay, a practising photographer, returned from a trip to America full of enthusiasm for the photography which he had encountered at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.⁶ In 1968 he took over as editor/director of *Camera Owner*, a technical and practical magazine aimed at the amateur photographer, and in the same year helped evolve, transform and finally launch this magazine as the acclaimed photographic publication we now know as *Creative Camera* – this was sixteen years after Minor White co-founded the equivalent American publication, *Aperture*.

Momentum was gathering pace for British photography at the end of the 60s, and the 70s proved a turning point as the medium edged closer to long awaited artistic credibility. In 1970 the Serpentine Gallery opened. At this time it ‘had a favourable policy towards photography’ and ‘after 1973 it was financially supporting the new specialist photography centres including the Photographers Gallery, the Half Moon photography workshop in East London, Impressions Gallery in York, and the Photographic Gallery in Southampton and others which arrived later in the decade’.⁷ ‘In 1971 the Trent Diploma in Creative Photography was launched as a joint course operating a fine art option at Nottingham and a creative-commercial option at Derby’.⁸ The course, headed by Bill Gaskins, promoted photography in the spirit of their newfound American contemporaries and friends and it attempted to adhere to the ‘balanced’ pursuits of intellectual and individual photographic image making. Up until this point British photographic education

⁵ William Bishop, *Realising Personal Truths in Photography* (London: Inscape, 1997), p. 29.

⁶ Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore’s Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 20.

⁷ William Bishop, *Realising Personal Truths in Photography* (London: Inscape, 1997), p. 31.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

‘had in general, been confined to matters of technique and photographic students had been trained with the intention of equipping them to apply their skills commercially’.⁹ With the tutoring of photographers John Blakemore, Paul Hill, the American Thomas-Joshua Cooper and in 1974, Raymond Moore, the course quickly gained a reputation of almost mythical proportions. The apparent success of the course encouraged other institutions and individuals to set up similar courses all around the country.

By the end of the 70s the multitude of opportunities available for aspiring photographers, to collectively harness and develop their photographic pursuits, must have seemed both a luxury and a salve to the indomitable spirit that carried Moore through the earlier years. Moore, too, played a role in developing Britain’s photographic infrastructure. His touring 1968 retrospective, organised by the Welsh Arts Council and comprising 64 prints, was the first exhibition dedicated to a living photographer by any of the Arts Councils of Great Britain. Yet it was perhaps Bill Brandt who was the crowning glory, marking the conclusive arrival of contemporary photography in Britain with a retrospective at the Hayward Gallery in 1970. This was the first time that the Arts Council of Great Britain had mounted a retrospective show by a British photographer at its principal exhibiting arena. However, care should be taken not to excessively aggrandise the Arts Council’s courage as Brandt’s exhibition was actually touring from the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and thus presented the Arts Council with few administrative problems.¹⁰

During this era the American influence on British photography cannot be ignored. The Derby-Trent course structure and philosophy stemmed from the department of photography at Albuquerque in New Mexico.¹¹ Photographers, artists and curators returned from New York, the centre of the international art world, refreshed and exulted

⁹ Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore’s Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 24.

¹⁰ Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore’s Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 21.

¹¹ William Bishop, *Realising Personal Truths in Photography* (London: Inscape, 1997), p. 36.

by America's contrasting appreciation of photography. Naturally London's new gallery scene was keen to attract interest from overseas. Sue Davies, director and founder of the Photographers Gallery describes her policy as one that aimed to strike a balance between 'international and local heroes'. However, despite perceiving Moore as a 'local hero' she admits his success in America did influence her decision to exhibit his work in 1973.¹²

Moore managed to avoid both the prevalent British traditions of social reporting and romantic landscape art and the American subjectivist photography, widely distributed and publicised throughout this period.¹³ This made his work difficult to pigeonhole, encouraging curators to see his photographs as problematic and expendable. Unfortunately Moore's reluctance to promote his own work did little to improve the situation. 'I think he always found it very difficult to "sell" himself or his work', says friend and colleague Paul Hill in an interview with Simon Stahli. 'He always wanted other people to come and find him'.¹⁴ In 1962 exactly this happened at the Artist's International Association Gallery in London. Moore was exhibiting a number of nature photographs and abstractions that caught the eye of the 'great historian and critic Helmut Gernsheim'.¹⁵ Gernsheim, also a collector, showed an interest in Moore's work, subsequently buying several prints for his own collection and becoming 'a source of encouragement for many years'.¹⁶ The following year Gernsheim introduced the American photographic community to Moore's work with a block of ten prints in his

¹² Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 22.

¹³ Ian Jeffrey, *Photography: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), p. 220.

¹⁴ Simon Stahli, *Raymond Moore: A Positioning* (unpublished Under-Graduate dissertation, University of Art and Design Zürich, 2001), p. 23.

¹⁵ Mark Haworth –Booth, *Murmurs at Every Turn: The Photographs of Raymond Moore* (London: Travelling Light, 1981), p. 12.

¹⁶ Raymond Moore quoted by Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 5.

exhibition *Creative Photography 1926 to the Present* at the Detroit Institute of Art. This was to mark the beginnings of a fruitful career in America.

Moore's visit to America in 1970 proved to be a significant moment in his career. It is unclear from my research whether his exhibitions in America between 1970 and 1971 were arranged prior to his arrival or as a consequence of it.¹⁷ Nonetheless in 1970 he had a one-man show at the prestigious George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. This exhibition was followed by a retrospective at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1971, and then another one-man show at the Carl Siembab Gallery, Boston, also in 1971. During his stay Moore met photographers Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind and Minor White, with whom he taught with briefly at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. In America, Moore realised his position in the international photography scene. Like those, who had visited America before him, he was amazed by the serious and professional attitudes to photography. This was truly a photographic 'New World', a homecoming almost, a place where people would actually take time to look at his prints.¹⁸ 'In this country (Britain)', said Moore in his 1974 lecture at Trent, 'apart from a few exceptional occasions my prints were treated like a pack of playing cards, just photographs, not under any circumstances to be lingered over or taken too seriously'.¹⁹ A little unsure of Minor White's Gurdjieff mysticism, 'the major influence *really* in terms of the type of approach Ray took would be Harry Callahan'.²⁰ But despite Moore's personal melancholic empathy and affiliations with Siskind, White and Callahan they offered only

¹⁷ The dissertations of Simon Stahli, *Raymond Moore: A Positioning* (unpublished Under-Graduate dissertation, University of Art and Design Zurich, 2001), p. 4, and Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 23, offer contrasting views.

¹⁸ Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 24.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁰ Paul Hill in an interview with Simon Stahli, *Raymond Moore: A Positioning* (unpublished Under-Graduate dissertation, University of Art and Design Zurich, 2001), p. 23.

the misgivings of chimeric hope; his wilderness years yielded a style that was bereft of categorisation.

On his return to Britain, Moore might no longer have considered himself the photographic pariah he once was once but the British establishment had not changed. One can imagine curators such as Sue Davies trying desperately to place his work in some sort of British context and to justify exhibiting his work, before finally resorting to the security of his international status. Moore really was placed in a no-mans-land.

In 1981 the Arts Council of Great Britain mounted a retrospective exhibition of Raymond Moore at the Hayward Gallery. This was the second and last occasion the Arts Council was to honour a living British photographer in this way.²¹ At the time it was the Arts Council's policy to exhibit established artists from other media in tandem with photographic exhibitions and it was the sculptor Philip King who helped ensure a more substantial audience. Moore received mixed reviews with many critics voicing annoyance and irritation at his presentation and layout. Even those who admired his work felt he had been allowed too much freedom and that the exhibition required more curatorial input.²² Others simply found the exhibition dull. All the prints were for sale but not one was bought. Not all critics were dismissive, however the overall response seemed befitting for a career that had never been in the mainstream. One successful aspect of the exhibition was the accompanying publication, *Murmurs at Every Turn*; the first book of Moore's work to be published on any notable scale. Up until then 'Moore's admirers', Mark Haworth-Booth noted in the book's introduction, 'had to be content with a little exhibition catalogue of his photographs published by the Welsh Arts Council in 1968'.²³

In 1983 BBC North published the slim monograph *Every So Often* in conjunction with a documentary, of the same name. Since his death in 1987 'the publication of a

²¹ Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²³ Raymond Moore, *Murmurs at Every Turn* (London: Travelling Light, 1981), p. 11.

comprehensive monograph of his photographic output has been talked about but so far nothing has materialised'.²⁴ The last major exhibition of Moore's work was on tour in Wales in 1990.

On the opening page of Janet Hall's unpublished dissertation, *In the Wilderness*, she writes that 'together with Bill Brandt, Raymond Moore was internationally acclaimed by most respected authorities in photography as one of the two greatest photographers of the 20th century, but unlike Brandt, Moore always remained on the sidelines of mainstream photography and never achieved the recognition of the public at large'.²⁵ Simon Stahli begins his also unpublished dissertation, *Raymond Moore: A Positioning*, in similar fashion.

'Moore's work deserves to be better known. There is a striking discrepancy between the enthusiastic reception of his work by eminent critics, contemporaries and photographic historians and the present situation, when it is actually threatened by oblivion. The few (rather slim and inappropriate) books of Moore's photographs, published during his life time, have all long gone out of print and large parts of his work are inaccessible to the public, neatly tucked away in an archive held by Sotheby's of London'.²⁶

During my research I learned from Duncan Forbes, Senior Curator of Photography at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, that of all their archives, there were more requests, usually by practising photographers, to view Moore's work, than any other photographic archive. A glance into the annals of British photography offers a less than

²⁴ Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 40.

²⁵ Janet Hall, *In the Wilderness: Raymond Moore's Career as a Photographic Artist* (unpublished Post-Graduate dissertation, The London Institute, 1995), p. 2.

²⁶ Stahli, Simon, *Raymond Moore: A Positioning* (unpublished Under-Graduate dissertation, University of Art and Design Zurich, 2001), p. 1. This archive comprises of all of Moore's negatives, contact sheets, around 700-1000 prints, drawings, correspondence, and publications; it was estimated at £440,000 in 1990 (source: The Guardian, Monday September 17, 1990), for further information contact Philippe Garner, Head of the Applied Arts Department at Sotheby's.

satisfactory insight into the context, importance and originality of Moore's images, sometimes as understated as Moore's own elfin landscapes and since his death fifteen years ago there has been little published or exhibited to redress this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Moreover throughout my own photographic education I am unable to recall an occasion when a tutor showed or even discussed a Raymond Moore photograph. This is not to place judgement on the quality of my education but instead to inform the reader that Moore's career appears to have been repressed beneath the recesses of our cultural psyche. Moore's moment in British photographic history is as elusive as the moments his eye pursued. The issue is now one of regression.

The Sublime

My research has made it clear that a large number of those involved in photography, or those receptive to the arts during Moore's lifetime, struggled to acknowledge or appreciate the amorphous spirit of a place his sensitivity sought. His approach was uncompromisingly personal and his photographs reflect this. The fact that his images are often so intangible, that they cannot easily sit beside the work of others, particularly British photographers of his time, may have been reason to dismiss their relevance and importance. His own commentaries do little to clarify his photographic concerns:

'Confronted by the myriad relationships between objects in the visual world, I am impelled to choose or select those happenings that most accurately reflect or mirror a state of being at that one moment in time. This choice is governed by an instinctive awareness of the medium's essential power of translating and recreating in photographic terms. A new world is magically presented in the form of marks made by the optical-chemical process, related to the world of everyday visual contact and yet quite apart from it. From this map of experience, hopefully something of value may be revealed'.²⁷

²⁷ Moore, Raymond, *Murmurs at Every Turn* (London: Travelling Light, 1981,) p. 9.

Often interwoven with the influences of transcendental metaphysics, ‘a kind of Zen photography’²⁸, his words are as vague as those of his critics. Moore ‘stresses the interdependence’ writes Robert Claxton, ‘highlighting the unconscious energy that impels transition. Space and time, light and form separate only to merge. Life is seen as a weave of momentary occurrence in which all things are inextricably linked, each taking its part in the mystery of universal continuum’.²⁹ ‘Ray’s vision was the kind that got me completely, something I felt deep in the bone’,³⁰ writes Russ Anderson of Weston Gallery, California, in an obituary to Moore. ‘In all of Moore’s imagery’, writes Robert D. McClelland, ‘there is seen a tendency to affirm the presence of forces which are unnamed. Thus, highlighting the areas of existence about which we know little, these works act upon us as a release from the spiritual responsibilities of autonomous existence. It is as though Moore were saying ‘Look... we are not alone after all’.³¹

We are told that ‘the art of Raymond Moore requires a lot of participation from the viewer. It requires also a certain visual maturity and sensitivity, to be capable of appraising and enjoying all the subtleties of Moore’s prints’.³² But we are not told why this is. Nowhere is light shed on the function of these intricacies. Nowhere are we proffered a comprehensive analysis of any single image. If a photograph is said to be about ‘the state of being’,³³ how can we explain why this is?

²⁸ Ibid., p. 704.

²⁹ Robert Claxton, ‘A Weave of Momentary Occurrence’, *The Photographic Journal*, September 1993, p. 283.

³⁰ Russ Anderson, ‘Remembering Raymond Moore’, *Creative Camera*, January 1998, p. 24.

³¹ Robert D. McClelland, ‘The Light and the Vision: The Work of Raymond Moore’, *British Journal of Photography*, 29 August 1969, p. 824.

³² J. S. Lewinski, ‘Raymond Moore’, *Creative Camera*, June 1969, p. 83.

³³ William Bishop, ‘Raymond Moore’, *British Journal of Photography*, 19 June 1987, p. 705.

To address this issue, to understand fully our psychoanalytic responses to a Raymond Moore photograph, I have selected *Fletchertown* (1977). I contend that the ambivalence of Moore's imagery, which *Fletchertown* typifies, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the intimate and the strange, is cast in the framework of Freud's essay on the uncanny. I will also analyse the properties of *Fletchertown* using the spatial theories of Yi-fu Tuan and the environmental perceptions of Ian C. Laurie. But first I refer my discussion to Edward Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, written in 1759.

The foundations of the sublime, which traditionally are associated with the picturesque, lie in the relationship between fear and awe attaching itself to the viewer's emotional state. Burke's theory was of the negative sublime, in which the participating viewer is mentally forlorn, overwhelmed by a threatening and immeasurable force. Other 18th century philosophers such as Kant and the poet/artist William Blake theorised a positive sublime that opens into an 'abyss of idealism' rather than into the 'apocalyptic loss of external reality'.³⁴ However for the purpose of this essay I will refer only to Burke's theory, one that restlessly oscillates between reverence and dread, between calm and terror; a dynamic process that I believe lays the foundations to Freud's sensation of the uncanny.

Burke states that 'the passion caused by the great and the sublime in nature [...] is astonishment: and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all of its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it'.³⁵ I now consider how this response is facilitated in *Fletchertown* through the

³⁴ Tom Stoppard, *The Picturesque and the Sublime*, www.honors.unr.edu/~fenimore/wt202/pruitt/

³⁵ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry Into The Origins of The Sublime*, 1759 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 53.

four privations; vacuity, darkness, solitude and silence, that Burke says ‘are great, because they are all terrible’.³⁶

At first glance the scene is simple. We are at a crossroads in the countryside. There is a signpost offering the names of four available destinations including the name of the place we appear to be travelling from. However we only see one road and this lies opposite us. Just before this road disappears on the horizon line, we can see a small building on the right hand side. Smoke rises from the chimney and we sense it may be someone’s home.

The image has been cropped low to the horizon line. This has opened up the immediate space of the crossroad; the ground that lies before our feet. The tarmac is heavily marked. The stark light of a falling sun brings to our attention a multitude of markings on the tarmac. We identify road markings, tyre marks, repair works, surface irregularities, indentations, scratches and numerous unnatural linear incisions that criss-cross chaotically before us. The back lighting, and pronounced reflective surface quality of the foreground defines a distinct border between the crossroad and the road opposite.

There are two children cycling to the left of the crossroad blocking our route in that direction. Both are wearing dark hooded jackets that partially obscure their faces from us. The hovering sun veils their countenances with shadow whilst a hint of motion offers a transient presence free from physical restraints. Moore has photographed them cycling close to each other. The front wheel of the nearest cyclist is deliberately and acutely pointing inwards towards the rear tyre of the other cyclist indicating a circular course. On either side of the opposite road are barren fenced off fields. Vegetation is sparse and the landscape is naked and remorseless in the winter light. Little comfort comes from this image.

When we have looked at the title and the landscape, we cannot help but ask ourselves, where is it? Where is *Fletchertown*? What kind of a town is this? Is the small house on the horizon all that is left of civilisation? *Fletchertown* seems to have vanished, dissipated in the wilderness.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 65.

After studying this scene we are immediately prompted by a set of negative responses. According to Ian C. Laurie, a writer on environmental perception, we assess natural landscapes in three ways: by utility preference, associational reactions, and formal aesthetics. *Fletchertown* is unnerving on all three levels.

Utility preference, as defined by Laurie, is ‘the response to what is seen through recognition of existing or potential use of an object(s) for a functional purpose or activity’.³⁷ Just as we have walked up to the photograph and our body and eyes have paused to take in the image, Raymond Moore has moved towards the crossroad, paused, observed the moment, fired the shutter and moved on. The function of this space is one of transient function both mentally and physically. When we arrive at the landscape we pause, view the scene, and on the basis of our observations and interests, make a decision and move on to our chosen destination. Our response encourages us to hurry this decision and move quickly on. We feel the cold winter landscape will soon be cloaked in darkness leaving us even more isolated.

This type of assessment is closely related to what is known as the Habitat theory of landscape aesthetics.³⁸ Geographer Jay Appleton explains the theory claiming ‘that human beings are born with a tendency to be immediately and spontaneously aware of their physical environment [...] they experience pleasure and satisfaction from such an environment when it seems to be conducive to the realization of their biological needs and a sense of anxiety and dissatisfaction when it does not’.³⁹

Habitat theory clearly confirms *Fletchertown* to be ‘inhospitable, antagonistic to human comfort and thus psychically disconcerting’.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ian C. Laurie quoted by Nicholas J. Capasso, ‘Salvador Dali and The Barren Plain: A Phenomenological Analysis of a Surrealist Landscape Environment’, *Arts Magazine*, Summer 1986, p. 75.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³⁹ Jay Appleton, *Experience of Landscape* (London: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 68.

⁴⁰ Nicholas J. Capasso describes the landscape of a Salvador Dali painting, ‘Salvador Dali and The Barren Plain: A Phenomenological Analysis of a Surrealist Landscape Environment’, *Arts Magazine*, Summer 1986, p. 75.

The environment *Flechertown* presents immediately conjures up memories of similar places. There is nothing spectacular in the photograph. Scattered across the mundane landscape are a few commonplace elements of almost marginal existence. However the backlit crossroad surface, the circling hooded cyclists and the prospect of imminent darkness direct our focus towards the small house in the distance. We consider the scene in terms of time: past present and future. We do not know where we have come from (the signpost is pointing directly at us) - the past, then we become aware of the positive connotations and significance of the house on the horizon - the future. Thus we are aware of the negative associational reactions of the present, at the crossroads.

We are also encouraged to seek solace in the house. Moore has cropped the right exit from view and the two cyclists block our exit to the left. Two strong black linear forms cut across the foreground guiding our eyes to the road in front. Horizontally the road is divided into three distinct strata. A plain and featureless sky: the background has been cropped tightly to the horizon. The middle ground offers a thin strip of land upon which our future lies. The road and house in this stratum allow us to identify with it but either side of the road the land is fenced off and so even here we are still isolated. The low skyline cropping has placed greater emphasis on the crossroads large surface area in the foreground. The scarred backlit surface allows this space to physically dominate the scene, inducing a mental malaise in the viewer. It is as if menace has surfaced from hell-like depths with such a force and penetration that only a small strip of 'physical' land is left. As the sun falls we feel that darkness will provoke a catastrophic cosmic clash between heaven and hell leaving our solitary presence to survive the inquietude of 'no-mans land'.

We pause at the crossroad.

The sun vacillates on the horizon and a quality of aesthetic, subtlety of light and form presents a fleeting moment of a predominantly empty space. Both photographer and image require us to consider the scene timeless, as if at all hours a crepuscular gloaming prevails. Tantalisingly the light hangs upon the landscape ready to recede beyond the

peripheries of our vision. ‘A quick transition’, says Burke, ‘from light to dark’ is conducive to the sensation of the sublime. ‘But darkness is more productive of sublime ideas than light’.⁴¹ Despairingly melancholy awaits as darkness crawls amongst the shadows. ‘In twilight, darkness or fog’, says Erwin Straus:

‘I am still in the landscape. My present location is still determined by the next adjacent location; I can still move. But I no longer know *where* I am. I can no longer determine my position in a panoramic whole. Geography can no longer be developed from the landscape; we are off the path; as human beings, we feel “lost”. “A man is lost” therefore has the metaphoric sense: he has fallen from the systematically co-ordinated context of social space, he has, in sociological sense, no longer a place’.⁴²

This interim condition, twilight, cloaks the end of the day and onset of night in disenchantment. Sociologically lost, time and place slowly fade from the physical, the real, revealing a ‘human world that is no longer in a state of innocence but has not yet reached the point of self destruction’.⁴³ ‘I’m a loner’, whispers Raymond Moore, ‘a reflective pessimist, and I look for signs of finality and the end of time, impending departure and desperation...’.⁴⁴ His words trail off into the anticipation of darkness.

The hooded cyclists continue to circle. They pedal deliberately and repetitively to the ‘murmurs’ of Raymond Moore’s heartbeat. Momentarily their actions and our gaze, seem rhythmically aware of the cycles of time, whilst our senses are overwhelmed by a sense of foreboding. The cyclists are mysterious and haunting creatures, circling, waiting like ‘nighthawks’ for a prey.

⁴¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry Into The Origins of The Sublime*, 1759 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 73.

⁴² Erwin W. M. Straus, *Primary World of Senses: A vindication of sensory experience*, translated from the German by Jacob Needleman (New York and London, 1963), p. 319.

⁴³ Ivo Kranzfelder, *Edward Hopper, 1882-1967: Vision of Reality* (Köln; London: Taschen, 1998), p. 75.

⁴⁴ Raymond Moore, ‘Ray Moore Talking’, *Creative Camera*, March/April 1981, no. 195/6, p. 22.

Formal devices in *Fletchertown* encourage a sense of vulnerability and anxiety that increase our psychological involvement with the photograph. Moore asks us to unravel the image as if it were a strange mystery we must solve to rid ourselves of an unpleasantness permeating our mind. The visual nuances and compositional play warrant careful attention that requires space and quietness.

Moore's photographs are best seen in an exhibition format. The prints are neither excessively small, as is the trend today, nor excessively large. At first glance the print quality seems un-noteworthy. 'The type of print I strive for', said Moore, 'is a good print that is not ostentatiously good; the point being [...] I want people to go right through it'.⁴⁵ Moore's photographs are stamped by an aesthetic quality that allows us to concern ourselves with magical details and visual nuances. In a sense the smooth and even tonalities make the image appear calculated and more unnatural. We become bewitched by a carefully crafted subtle play of light and form that confirms the presence of a photographer who clearly loves the act of seeing.

In *Fletchertown* our eye is allowed to roam freely in the bleak landscape. Only when we become aware of Moore's own attentive eye do we take a closer look; the chimney smoke is more prominent, the names on the signposts are barely legible and the cyclist's faces elude recognition. A reproduction could never do justice to the severity and number of markings that chaotically scar the pavement and crossroad surface.

Moore's vista, scale of print and facture point agonisingly to a truth beyond the physical. These minute details facilitate a process that draws us into the image. Gaston Bachelard, who explored the phenomenology of the miniature says that 'in looking at a miniature, unflagging attention is required to integrate all the detail... to have experienced miniature sincerely detaches me from the surrounding world'.⁴⁶ Burke suggests this puts us in a larger place but unable to distinguish this extreme of littleness

⁴⁵ Raymond Moore in an interview with David Brittain, 'Moore Land', *Amateur Photographer*, 15 September 1984, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Gaston Bachelard quoted by Nicholas J. Capasso, 'Salvador Dali and The Barren Plain: A Phenomenological Analysis of a Surrealist Landscape Environment', *Arts Magazine*, Summer 1986, p. 78.

from the vastness itself.⁴⁷ Laura U. Marks confirms this role of miniature but as a facet of haptic imagery; ‘a haptic work may create an image of such detail, sometimes through miniaturism, that it evades a distanced view, instead pulling the viewer in close’.⁴⁸ Marks describes haptic images as a subset of what Deleuze referred to as optical images: those images that are so ‘thin’ and unclipped that the viewer must bring his or her resources of memory and imagination to contemplate the image itself, instead of being pulled into narrative.⁴⁹ In other words haptic images are not viewed from the safety and distance of optical vision but instead actively invite a ‘dynamic subjectivity between looker and image’.⁵⁰ Here our mental concentration, time and physical proximity to the image allow us to actively participate freed from the constraints of vision. I will discuss later how Moore brings us in close evoking memory.

When we look at a Raymond Moore print we are confronted by subtleties of understated microscopic details that surface as myriad shades of grey. The calibre of print and surface details are of a quality that leaves them particularly vulnerable to reproduction and thus as Mark Haworth-Booth points out, Moore’s photographs are ‘intended precisely for viewing in the special conditions offered by a first class gallery’.⁵¹

The microscopic clarity of detail that defines *Flechertown* is a trait of hypnagogic imagery. The term hypnagogic derives from the Greek words *hypno* meaning sleep and *agagos* meaning induce. A hypnagogic image ‘is one that occurs in the twilight state

⁴⁷ Burke quoted by Nicholas J. Capasso, ‘Salvador Dali and The Barren Plain: A Phenomenological Analysis of a Surrealist Landscape Environment’, *Arts Magazine*, Summer 1986, p. 75.

⁴⁸ Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 163.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁵¹ Mark Haworth-Booth, ‘Remembering Raymond Moore’, *Creative Camera*, January 1988, p. 26.

between wakefulness and sleep'.⁵² The autonomy, vividness and detail (realism) of these images separates them from dreams and encourages some psychologists to refer to them as hypnagogic hallucinations. The interim nature of the image and the hallucinatory quality continue to confuse our understanding with ephemeral axioms. The monotony of *Fletchertown* relaxes our senses preparing our entry into a hypnagogic state. Suddenly 'faces appear in the dark'.⁵³

'A radical distinction must be drawn between the way a face appears in perception and the manner the same face appears in hypnagogic vision in the former case something appears which is then identified as a face... consciousness must focus on the object... In hypnagogic vision the discrepancy does not exist. There is no focusing. Suddenly knowledge appears, as vivid as a sensory manifestation: one becomes aware of *being in the act* of seeing a face'.⁵⁴

In this way we can compare haptic imagery with hypnagogic imagery.

The painterly surface of *Fletchertown* is one that initially appears to us as being 'affectively flat',⁵⁵ a trait of hypnagogic imagery. But by considering the photograph as either a haptic or hypnagogic image, we find in *Fletchertown*, a space of rapturous possibility. Both approaches, which I will discuss later, infer a relationship to the image that is no longer restricted to a distanced optical experience.

During this particular twilight state of progression, associated with hypnagogic imagery, psychologist Rapaport 'noted that his reflective self-awareness decreased, the ability to exert effort decreased, logical thinking decreased and visual images increased in

⁵² Mardi J. Horowitz, *Image Formation and Cognition* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1978), p. 11.

⁵³ Maury quoted by D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 459.

⁵⁴ J. P. Sartre quoted by D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 459.

⁵⁵ D. Foulkes and G. Vogel quoted by D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 462.

frequency and vividness'.⁵⁶ Rapaport's observations offer further support to the viewing requirements that Mark Haworth-Booth deems necessary for a Raymond Moore print. Only in a gallery offering first class viewing conditions could we quietly detach ourselves from the physical and confront our solitary vulnerabilities in a landscape that over time reveals a vivid and interactive experiential relationship. As Yi-fu Tuan explains: 'Solitude is a condition for acquiring a sense of immensity. Alone one's thoughts wander freely over space. In the presence of others they are pulled back by an awareness of their personalities who project their own worlds into the same area'.⁵⁷

Solitude allows us time to consider our relationship with the surrounding environment giving us space to absorb ourselves fully in the landscape. Often this immersion will serve to emphasize our diminutive figure in an expansive physical and/or mental plane.

Fletchertown, an oddly named landscape of little geographical value located off the beaten track, in 'no-mans land', somewhere between the city and country. The house in the distance offers no promise of a nearby settlement or even another solitary house yet we hold on to a whisper of hope. There is little physical substance to this landscape and our eye is allowed to wander from element to element. The space is empty and barren yet mentally the image resonates with an almost undeserved structural strength. Its simple structure suggests a limpid crystal clear state of being and presence that fluctuates from moment to moment, from the physical to the mental. This is a temporal space offering clues to the past, hinting at a future. There is no point upon which to fix our gaze or presence and no point of action or emotional release. The image responds to a two-way flow of information that guides us in certain directions. As a haptic image open to our subjective interpretation we are required to mentally replenish this void of ambiguity and emptiness. Our sensory responses fall between fact and fiction, the mysterious and the

⁵⁶ Mardi J. Horowitz, *Image Formation and Cognition* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1978), p. 36.

⁵⁷ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective on Experience* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 59.

marvellous. The vacuity of *Fletchertown* becomes a space accessible to exploration, boundless, limitless, and restricted only by fear.

The fear in *Fletchertown* lies hidden by its own stealth. A blithe glance offers only a scene of torpor; smoke gently wafts into the sky, the fiends pedal mechanically and the sun stands still and morose. The pedantic pace of the cyclists and the casual awareness of the other infer a well-established bond. Brethren in exile perhaps? Their impetuous deed subjecting them to serve eternally as minions of *Fletchertown*. On the surface *Fletchertown* is sheathed by a poignant silence that inspires in us a sense of pathos. Void of precipitation or signs of wind the atmospheric clarity appears unnaturally still for a winters evening. As we look closer the landscape slowly opens like a sarcophagus, bequeathing to us the unsuspecting victim, a morbid silence. Again we are confronted by greatness. For ‘silence’, says Max Picard ‘has greatness simply because it is. It *is*, and that is its greatness, its pure existence’.⁵⁸ By definition and natural law, ‘pure existence’ dictates an equilibrium of forces are at play. Picard confirms this; ‘In silence there is present not only the power of healing and friendship but also the power of darkness and terror, that can erupt from the underground silence, the power of death and evil’.⁵⁹ Both the terror of silence’s greatness and the powers of the underworld that it harnesses consume us. We wait, palsied and vulnerable, listening for the screams of a necromantic force to unsheathe the word and lacerate the silence. ‘Silence calls forth sadness in man, for it reminds him of the state in which the fall caused by the word had not yet taken place and at the same time it makes him anxious, for in the silence it is as though at any moment the word may suddenly appear and with the word the first fall into sin takes place again’.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Max Picard, *The World of Silence*, translated by Stanley Godman (London, 1952), p. 17.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

The four privations I have described; darkness, solitude, vacuity and silence, impress upon us a sense of the infinite and thus the sublime. However these formal edifices clearly force our investigations of the sublime to consider this theory inadequate and unsatisfactory in explaining the interactions facilitated by the tenuous viewer-image experiential relationship. It is obvious that Burke's sublime becomes ineffective when we are unable to maintain a distance from which to passively enjoy the source of our terror. In *Fletchertown* our relationship to the image, whether we consider it a haptic or hypnagogic image, is one that requires our participation. Some of these responses, as I have shown through the structuring of the sublime in this analysis, confirm the presence of menacing properties that are both mystifying and disturbing. However it is I believe, through an analysis of Freud's uncanny that we can understand, in its entirety, the process by which the viewer concludes *Fletchertown's* unnerving disposition.

The Uncanny

Freud's uncanny relates 'to what is frightening' or 'to what excites fear in general'.⁶¹ More precisely it is 'that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar'.⁶² Freud's essay does not conclude with one single definitive explanation of the uncanny but describes the modalities of numerous circumstances that may induce in us the sensation of the uncanny. Nonetheless, two of these scenarios, the *unheimlich* and the double, are central to his argument.

The *unheimlich*, meaning the unhomely or the unfamiliar, is the opposite of the word *heimlich*. However, *heimlich* not only refers to a sense of belonging and security that one would attach to the intimacies of one's own home, but it also refers to that which is concealed and kept out of sight, i.e. something that is withheld from others. The very linguistics that attempts to root the uncanny in a definitive term, inform us of our tenuous

⁶¹ Sigmund Freud, *Art and Literature: The 'Uncanny'*, 1919 (London: Penguin Books, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 14, 1990), p. 339.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 340.

relationship to it. The meaning of *heimlich* develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*. Thus *unheimlich* is in some way or other a sub-species of *heimlich*.⁶³ It is this ambivalence between the familiar and the unfamiliar that is the very hallmark of the Freudian uncanny.

The double, on the other hand, refers to the ‘doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self’.⁶⁴ It is a theme Otto Rank (1914) investigated thoroughly, connecting the double ‘with reflections in mirrors, with shadows, with guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and with the fear of death’.⁶⁵ In *Fletchertown* we can consider the photograph as reality’s double, a fossilised doppelganger. Freud expands on Rank’s theory explaining ‘that the double is uncanny because in infancy, primary narcissism, part of Eros, creates a double as an insurance against the destruction of the ego which later, once it has been repressed, returns and reverses its aspect becoming “an uncanny harbinger of death”’.⁶⁶

Both approaches to the uncanny lead us to the foundations of our psyche determined by our early childhood experiences. Again Freud scrutinises this further, claiming the belief systems of our primitive forefathers, that accepted ‘the prompt fulfilment of wishes, [...] secret injurious powers and [...] the return of the dead’, still exist within us.⁶⁷ Despite having surmounted these modes of thought they are all too ‘ready to seize upon any confirmation (and thus) as soon as something actually happens in our lives, which confirms the old discarded beliefs, we get a feeling of the uncanny’.⁶⁸

⁶³ Ibid., p. 347.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 356.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 356.

⁶⁶ Margaret Iverson, ‘In the Blind Field: Hopper and the Uncanny’, *Art History*, Vol. 21, no. 3, September 1998, p. 419.

⁶⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Art and Literature: The ‘Uncanny’*, 1919 (London: Penguin Books, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 14, 1990), p. 370.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 370.

Freud's uncanny 'involves the return of something that was very familiar in infancy or childhood, (or even in the lives of our primitive ancestors), but made strange, distorted, by repression and the return of the repressed'.⁶⁹ In his book *Compulsive Beauty*, Hal Foster discusses the process of regression, claiming that 'once repressed, the past, however blessed, cannot return so benignly, so auratically – precisely because it is damaged by repression. The daemonic aspect of this recovered past is then a sign of this repression, of this estrangement from the blessed state of unity'.⁷⁰ Freud ends by saying that the 'uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old established in the mind and which has become alienated from it through the process of repression'.⁷¹

We can consider Freud's uncanny as a multi-layered sensation offering a form of unification where death is ever present. The privations of Burke's sublime; silence, solitude and darkness, offer first an experience of the uncanny because they are elements 'in the production of the infantile anxiety from which the majority of human beings have never become quite free'.⁷² Our repressed desires for our *heimlich*, take us to the maternal warmth and unification of the womb but at the same time, belief systems, long discarded, may suddenly be regressed.

Freud's theory of the uncanny is particularly relevant to Moore's photographs. His move to Carlisle in 1978 was a conscious decision to seek out places that resonated with his childhood memories, a home coming of sorts. Paul Nash, Neo-Romanticist painter and influence on Moore, also did this. Both artists concerned themselves with a heartfelt sense of place or 'genius loci', as Nash described it. Using Yi-fu Tuan's cultural analysis

⁶⁹ Margaret Iverson, 'In the Blind Field: Hopper and the Uncanny', *Art History*, Vol. 21, no. 3, September 1998, p. 413.

⁷⁰ Hal Foster quoted by Margaret Iverson, 'In the Blind Field: Hopper and the Uncanny', *Art History*, Vol. 21, no. 3, September 1998, pp. 411-2.

⁷¹ Sigmund Freud, *Art and Literature: The 'Uncanny'*, 1919 (London: Penguin Books, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 14, 1990), pp. 363-4.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 376.

of space and place, I will confirm Moore's uncannily acute sensitivity to the spirit of *Fletchertown* and develop further the theories of haptic and hypnagogic imagery with respect to Freud's theory of the uncanny.

Three years after moving to Carlisle, Moore said, 'I suppose that in recent photographs I have been making some kind of a return to Wallsey ("the bedroom of Liverpool") where I grew up in the 30s. Whole tracts of the Cumbrian coast where I work nowadays remind me of those childhood areas'.⁷³ Moore clearly held Wallsey, 'the bedroom of Liverpool', close to his heart. As children the bedroom is the one room in our home that we consider our own, where we can immerse ourselves in childhood reverie. It is a space that is entwined with our own being.

Moore's childhood in the Wirral and summer holidays on the island of Skomer encouraged in him a sensitivity to these places. His photographs mark these landscapes with a prescient awareness that often perplexes the viewer. Moore never intended to produce an image of supreme clarity, one that can easily be forgotten but instead he proffered an intimate glimpse to the pathos of childhood memories.

The cyclists in *Fletchertown* are oblivious to Moore's presence. There is a sense of power in their demeanour, an arrogance that sits with discerning comfort in the purgatory of *Fletchertown*. This is their backyard, land they have carefully explored and 'discovered' and which they know better than anyone else. This is their territory, a place that will always be a part of them. Through these figures Moore depicts his own awareness of place. 'Since childhood', said Moore, 'I've been especially conscious of place [...] more conscious of place than of people'.⁷⁴ In this way the funereal landscape of *Fletchertown* acts as a portal into the recesses of Moore's memories and the cyclists are seamlessly interwoven with his awareness of place. While we cannot directly apply

⁷³ Raymond Moore, 'Ray Moore Talking', *Creative Camera*, March/April 1981, no. 195/6, p. 22.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

the photographer's experiences to the scene it begins to register with an axiomatic resonance.

'In nearly all the cultures for which information is available,' says Yi-Fu Tuan, 'the right side is regarded as far superior to the left [...]. In essence, the right is perceived to signify sacred power, the principle of all effective activity, and the source of everything that is good and legitimate'. In *Fletchertown* the house, the future, our safety and focus of hope lies on the horizon to the right of the central axis. 'The left is its antithesis; it signifies the profane, the impure, the ambivalent and the feeble, which is maleficent and to be dreaded'. Left of the central axis roam the mysterious hooded cyclists. 'For the Toradja people of the central Celebes the right side is that of the living, a world of daylight; the left side is the dark underworld of the dead'.⁷⁵ Yi-Fu Tuan's dualism confirms, with eerie clarity, Moore's prevailing sense of place. In a sense Moore is trying to access the mindset of the cyclists. 'An empty self', he says, 'childlike and uninhabited is far more likely to make a truly original statement'.⁷⁶ In *Fletchertown*, Moore searches for the truth of its autonomy, an explanation for its dissipation and abeyance. He stands back from the scene, supinely content, awaiting *Fletchertown's* spirit; the truly original statement he speaks of.

The 'genius loci' played an important role in the paintings, and later photographs, of Paul Nash. If we compare the approaches of Moore with Nash to their artistic endeavours we find many similarities. Describing his childhood years Nash claims like Moore that he was 'concerned mainly with my encounters with places rather than people'.⁷⁷ He speaks of Kensington Gardens, a park he frequented in his childhood, as 'more than our (Nash and his siblings) first playground. It was the first place where we

⁷⁵ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective on Experience* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 43, for further information on right and left see Marcel Granet, *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 49, for the Toradja people see A. C. Kruyt, *Right and Left: Right and Left in Central Celebes*, Needham (eds.), pp. 74-5.

⁷⁶ Raymond Moore, 'Raymond Moore', *Creative Camera*, November 1968, p. 395.

⁷⁷ Paul Nash quoted by Clare Colvin, *Paul Nash: Places* (London: The South Bank Centre, 1989), p. 4.

could make our escape... I remember that sense of freedom. It was an escape not only from others, but in some queer way from oneself'.⁷⁸ The acute awareness of both artists to their childhood memories and perceptive awareness of place is perhaps indicative of the Neo-Romanticism movement that Ian Jeffrey says was 'engendered by fear of ruin and loss of cultural identity'.⁷⁹

During the 40s, when Moore was studying painting Neo-Romanticism prevailed and established itself as the contemporary art movement in Britain. Essentially this was 'a wartime movement, a highly emotional response to the tortured and severe conditions of war'.⁸⁰ It was a movement, that represented the melancholy and darkness attached to the British psyche represented by the shadows in Bill Brandt's photographs or the dark cinematography of Carol Reed and Alfred Hitchcock.⁸¹ In *Flechertown* the vacillating sun will imminently make way for the finality of nightfall. David Mellor confirms the pathos of a British public contemplating their value, and their nation's positioning in a new, re-ordered, global hierarchy:

'Surely the major fact of the period between 1940 and the mid 1960s is that Britain divested itself of the most extensive empire the world had ever seen, and with that came our corresponding decline in our status and all the resonance's that that had for our culture. Maybe there is a kind of melancholia in the culture at large but it has been particularly evident and accelerated since 1940, coping with the idea of relegation, with the fact that Britain's importance in the world has diminished very drastically indeed and it is a fact that the British have had a great difficulty in coming to terms with'.⁸²

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁹ Ian Jeffrey quoted by Nicholas Sinclair, 'A Paradise Lost', *British Journal of Photography*, 19 June 1987, p. 716.

⁸⁰ Nicholas Sinclair, 'A Paradise Lost', *British Journal of Photography*, 19 June 1987, p. 716.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 716.

⁸² David Mellor interviewed by Nicholas Sinclair, 'A Paradise Lost', *British Journal of Photography*, 19 June 1987, p. 716.

To suggest that Moore and Nash's pursuit of the security of childhood memories is representative of a nation seeking to escape the dilemmas of cultural identity is to over simplify. But this period of Britain's history must clearly be interwoven into the frameworks of their psychological make-up.

'The great secret of modern man', says Gerald Woods, 'is not so much to gain possession of the world, than to find a means of escaping from it. Is our nostalgia for landscape,' she goes on to say, 'merely a form of escapism?'⁸³ When we consider *Fletchertown* in terms of escapism we begin to realise that Moore's escape to the peripheries of civilisation is an act detrimental to his pursuit of looking, not an egression from that which is 'real' and thus confrontational. Moore seeks out the amorphous truths of a place or the 'genius loci' that Nash speaks of, but the transience characterising *Fletchertown* is perhaps reflective of an insidious path that edges towards a future, rather than one that seeks refuge in the past. When we approach *Fletchertown* and arrive at the crossroad we do not consider turning back. 'What *is* back there'? We may ask ourselves but it seems inevitable that we must gather our nerve and continue our journey forward. 'Only the rootless' clarifies Margaret Iverson 'can be nostalgic'.⁸⁴ Now we can consider *Fletchertown* as an image representative of Moore's quest for something in the future that has been safely lost to the past.

The condition of Moore's migratory state, or 'homelessness' is what Peter Berger and his colleagues argue, is the deepening condition of modern man.⁸⁵ To be modern writes Marshall Berman:

⁸³ Gerald Woods, 'The Beauty Within: Reflections on Landscape', *The Artist*, January 1989, Issue no. 695, p. 22.

⁸⁴ Margaret Iverson, 'In the Blind Field: Hopper and the Uncanny', *Art History*, Vol. 21, no. 3, September 1998, p. 411.

⁸⁵ Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner quoted by David Morley and Kevin Robins, 'Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location' in Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires (eds.), *No Place Like Heimat* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), p. 4.

‘Is to find ourselves in an environment that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology; in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity; it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish’.⁸⁶

Fletchertown clearly adheres to Berman’s definition of ‘modern’. The house on the horizon offers the coveted rewards of a future secured by the four walls and roof that we call ‘home’ or *heimat*. However the pernicious forces lurking in the miasma of *Fletchertown* dominate the scene, permeating our thoughts. The increasing terror seems to push the house further and further away forcing us to concentrate on it with a greater intensity. ‘It seems to me’, says film director Edgar Reitz, ‘that one has a more precise idea of *heimat* the further one is away from it’.⁸⁷ The house, however small it may appear, offers us only chimeric hope, but hope nonetheless.

The scale of vastness and greatness that we established through the formal edifices of Burke’s four privations offer a landscape of ‘expanding horizons and dissolving boundaries’.⁸⁸ But as we know, our propinquity to the menace of *Fletchertown* and the delight that it excites in us, is one of ambiguous positioning. The unity and wholeness, that Moore encourages us to seek, and that Berger’s modern man pursues,

⁸⁶ Marshall Berman quoted by David Morley and Kevin Robins, ‘Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location’ in Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires (eds.), *No Place Like Heimat* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), p. 4.

⁸⁷ Franz Birgil quoted by David Morley and Kevin Robins, ‘Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location’ in Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires (eds.), *No Place Like Heimat* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), p. 7.

⁸⁸ Morely and Robins describing ‘home’ in a modern world, ‘Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location’ in Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires (eds.), *No Place Like Heimat* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), p. 5.

becomes threatened by the very framework that offers unification. Death's presence in modern life, and thus in *Fletchertown*, it seems, has become ever more salient.

Fletchertown has been transformed from a place of insignificance, a terrain hostile and alienating, to a place representative of our quest for wholeness. It has bizarrely and rather unexpectedly come to mean home! The prospect of returning home to *Fletchertown* is a bewildering conclusion. However, Yi-fu Tuan suggests otherwise. 'Hometown', he says, 'is an intimate place. It may be plain, lacking in architectural distinction and historical glamour, yet we resent an outsider's criticism of it. Its ugliness does not matter; it did not matter when we were children, climbed its trees, paddled our bikes on the cracked pavements, and swam in its pond'.⁸⁹ *Fletchertown* typifies a place, isolated and execrable to outsiders, but a poignant leitmotiv to those whose childhood home it brings to mind. We are still forced to ask the question, if we do not belong in *Fletchertown* where *do* we belong? Irit Rogoff, in the opening chapter of her book *Terra Infirma*, poses the same question quickly answering by telling us that it is naïve to assume 'that there might be some coherent site of absolute belonging'. 'Identity', she says, 'is permanently in flux'.⁹⁰

If we return to *Fletchertown* we realise that Moore is clearly at home, not with the place i.e. the physical space, but instead with the transitory nature of the moment. Moore stands back, hovering before the crossroads, awaiting the presence of a 'rhythmic unity' that will come to reflect the moment in its entirety. 'Rhythmic unity' is a term Andre Breton characterises as 'the absence of contradiction, the relaxation of emotional tensions due to repression, a lack of sense of time, and the replacement of external reality obeying the pleasure principle alone'.⁹¹ It is a term Breton used to describe the process of automatism; one of a number of practices the Surrealists employed to access their

⁸⁹ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective on Experience* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 154.

⁹⁰ Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 14.

⁹¹ Andre Breton quoted by Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1985), p. 95.

unconscious. Clearly Moore finds refuge amidst this unity. This fleeting glimpse of ephemeral harmony is a salve for Moore's aporetic soul. For in this moment, as the shutter clicks, Moore finds himself within the arms of the *heimlich*, and allows us this opportunity as well. This, however, I will discuss later.

The idea of a transitory or 'mobile' home is one that Wim Wenders argues is routed in the American dream. He compares the American term 'home' to its German counterpart *heimat*. 'They have that in America', says Wenders, "'Mobile Homes'". "Mobile" is said with pride and means the opposite of "bogged down"... (or) "stuck". Home means "at home", "where you belong"... (whereas)... what *makes* it at home in the German language is the fact that it is fixed somewhere'.⁹² Moore's new world outlook is trapped, it would appear, in the structures of an old world hierarchy. This may help to explain why the American public accepted Moore's photographs more easily than the British. Wenders digresses further allowing us to clearly cast Moore in the role of one of his heroes:

'The idea is that, not being at home (my heroes) are nevertheless at home with themselves. In other words, not being at home means being more at home than anywhere else... Maybe the idea of being more oneself when one is away is a very personal idea... Identity means not having to have a home. Awareness for me has something to do with not being at home. Awareness of anything'.⁹³

In *Fletchertown* Moore is lead by his childhood nostalgia to the *heimlich*. However the comforts of the *heimlich*, the maternal home, are now crossed by repression, primarily represented by the crossroads, but reiterated by the other transitory elements in the image. It is this repression that nefariously transforms the intimate, the *heimlich*, into

⁹² Wim Wenders quoted by David Morley and Kevin Robins, 'Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location' in Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires (eds.), *No Place Like Heimat* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993),p. 14.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 25.

the strange, the *unheimlich*, and it is through the close proximity of the *heimlich* that the death drive in life surfaces determining us to render the image malignant.

However, the *unheimlich* is just one of the modalities of the uncanny. The double, ‘harbinger of death’, is another process that facilitates, in *Fletchertown*, the sensation of the uncanny.

The landscape of *Fletchertown* sinks comfortably into the banalities of the commonplace and a glance leaves our expectations bemused. Slowly, Moore begins to beguile us with his peripatetic insights. Film theorist Pascal Bonitzer’s analysis of Hitchcockian narrative helps to explain why this may be so. ‘Hitchcockian narrative’, he says, ‘obeys the law that the more a situation... is familiar or conventional, the more it is liable to become disturbing or uncanny’.⁹⁴ Whilst this points again towards the close proximity of the familiar and the unfamiliar, the multitude of film techniques available to Hitchcock allow us to consider that the context and presentation of the familiar, may fuel our thoughts with the anticipation of the unfamiliar. Edward Hopper’s famous painting *Nighthawks*, a title apt to the cyclists in *Fletchertown*, also obeys Bonitzer’s conclusions.

Using techniques similar to the mechanical terrors of *Fletchertown*, which Gail Leven observes, ‘derives from its dramatic spatial configuration and evocative lighting, which create an atmosphere conveying the vulnerability of anyone out in the disquieting night’.⁹⁵ She goes on to claim that ‘there is something in both the setting and mood of *Nighthawks* that evokes *The Killers*, an Ernest Hemingway short story that is set late in the day in a lunch room: “Outside it was getting dark. The streetlight came on outside the window. The two men at the counter read the menu. From the other side of the counter Nick Adams watched them”’.⁹⁶ The scene is very familiar to us. Set in the commonplace, awaiting darkness, two characters are being watched amidst ‘the suspense of impending

⁹⁴ Pascal Bonitzer quoted by Margaret Iverson, ‘In the Blind Field: Hopper and the Uncanny’, *Art History*, Vol. 21, no. 3, September 1998, p. 413.

⁹⁵ Gail Levin, *Edward Hopper* (Vaduz: Bonfini Press Corporation, 1984), pp. 68-9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

violence that never takes place'.⁹⁷ Our imaginations bring alive the scene edging the narrative towards a more conclusive, and thus more satisfactory end. In our minds we begin to animate the inanimate.

The theory of animism is one Jentsch (1906) explores in his own analysis of the uncanny. Jentsch believed 'that a particularly favourable condition for awakening uncanny feelings is created when there is intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one'.⁹⁸ He refers 'in this connection, to the impression made by waxworks figures, ingeniously constructed dolls and automata'.⁹⁹ Of dolls, Freud reminds us that they are 'closely connected with childhood life' explaining that 'in their early games children do not distinguish at all sharply between living and inanimate objects, and that they are especially fond of treating their dolls like live people'.¹⁰⁰ It is also at this very early mental stage that our primary narcissism creates a double as an insurance against the destruction of the ego. However, over time, we surmount our fear of death and replace animism, magic and sorcery, with logic and reason. Thus when confronted by something that comprises one of these factors, our experience of it changes from something that is frightening to something that is uncanny.

When we linger in the landscape of *Fletchertown*, our animation of it brings forth not only a sudden activation of life, but also the regression of childhood memories and a death drive that has both long been repressed in our subconscious. In this way we begin to efface the distinction between imagination and reality, yet another modality of Freud's uncanny. Amidst this confusion, the uncanny, Freud claims, is often easily produced 'when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

⁹⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Art and Literature: The 'Uncanny'*, 1919 (London: Penguin Books, Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 14, 1990), p. 354.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 347.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 354.

or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolises'.¹⁰¹ In *Fletchertown* the boundaries are muddled by the animation of a fossilised doppelganger that has subverted the normal experiential relationship between viewer and image, drawing us in to a scene that we are now actively engaged with. *Fletchertown* is not an image we can view from the safety of optical detachment. Both haptically and hypnagogically *Fletchertown* consumes our senses substantiating its reality.

Hypnagogic images are intricately entwined with our childhood experiences. They are images that 'appear often in childhood, and decline in frequency as a function of age'.¹⁰² In hypnagogic images, 'faces', says D. L. Schacter in his review of the hypnagogic state, 'are, almost without exception, reported as being unrecognisable to the observer'.¹⁰³ In *Fletchertown* the countenances of the cyclists are veiled in shadow and blurred by motion. They become mysterious because we cannot recognise them but they are also shrouded in menace. As a hypnagogic image, this can be explained. For whilst 'faces reported in the hypnagogic interval are notorious for their vividness, detail and novelty [...] It has been noted [...] that the quality of lifelikeness combined with the tendency for hypnagogic faces to assume a grotesque appearance often results in children's experience of fear in reaction to their hypnagogic imagery'.¹⁰⁴ Therefore when we cast our eyes on the cyclists in *Fletchertown*, our regressed childhood memories distort their innocence to a feeling of discomfort. In fact, Schacter's conclusions allow us to consider the miasma of *Fletchertown* as a condition of the hypnagogic state. 'Several sources', he says, 'found that childhood memories not accessible in dreams surface in the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 367.

¹⁰² D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 454.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 461.

¹⁰⁴ McKellar referred to by D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 461.

hypnagogic state implying a state of regression'.¹⁰⁵ Thus 'the appearance of archaic childhood memories (in) experimental hypnagogic states' clearly places the imagery in the realm of the uncanny.¹⁰⁶

As we linger in *Fletchertown* we feel menace and the regression of childhood memories register's the scene uncanny. The oblique road to *Fletchertown* is a sinuous journey that demands patience and concentration. Returning again to hypnagogic imagery, research found that 'subjects did hallucinate their activity in hypnagogic episodes and that participation increased as the subjects moved deeper into the hypnagogic state'.¹⁰⁷ As reality becomes more remote our imagination takes control of our senses. Auditory, tactile and kinaesthetic associations follow the 'visual nuances' of hypnagogic imagery.¹⁰⁸ The tactile and kinaesthetic associations are also a feature of haptic imagery.

'Haptic perception', writes Laura U. Marks, 'is usually defined by psychologists as the combination of tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies. In haptic visuality the eyes themselves function like organs of touch'.¹⁰⁹ When *Fletchertown* invites us to move our eyes, eyes that now operate like touch, towards the surface of the photograph our auditory senses, a trait of hypnagogic imagery, are suddenly awoken. Mephitic terror erupts from beneath the asphalt. The sarcophagus stirs, beckoning us, calling to us with deceitful murmurs that hang in the decaying fug of *Fletchertown*. We want to escape from this

¹⁰⁵ D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 476.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

¹⁰⁷ G. Vogel and D. Foulkes quoted by D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 462.

¹⁰⁸ D. L. Schacter, 'The Hypnagogic State: A Critical Review of the Literature', *Psychological Bulletin*, 1976, Vol. 83, no. 3, p. 459.

¹⁰⁹ Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 162.

insidious place but our wan and abating spirit lies acceptingly on the cracks of a pavement, cracks Moore may once have cycled upon. We lie, awaiting the stench to seep into our pores and carry us between the fractures that scar the ground underfoot. ‘When vision is like touch’, says Mark’s, ‘the object’s touch back may be like a caress, though it may be violent’.¹¹⁰

The abrupt shift from the optical to the haptic makes us vulnerable to the menace that lurks in the shadows of *Fletchertown*. By engaging with *Fletchertown* in this way we come to the surface of ourselves, losing ourselves ‘in the intensified relation with an other that cannot be possessed’.¹¹¹ In psychoanalytic terms Marks claims haptics draw on a ‘relationship between mother and infant’, whereby ‘the subject (the infant) comes into being through the dynamic play between the appearance of wholeness with the other (the mother)’.¹¹² When our eyes perambulate the landscape of *Fletchertown* we construct an intersubjective relationship that calls upon us to replenish the void with regressed memories and to engage with the traces left behind. Narrative is never palpable as meanings float loosely from objects, merging seamlessly as we dissolve into the surface, relinquishing our ‘own sense of separateness from the image’.¹¹³ This process implies a fundamental mourning for something lost or absent. It implies we are somehow incomplete, that we are aporetic and that our quest for wholeness drives our eyes ever nearer to the surface. ‘Haptic visuality’, says Mark’s, ‘in its effort to touch the image, may represent the difficulty of remembering the loved one, be it a person or a homeland’.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 184.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 184.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 188.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 183.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 193.

When we stand before *Fletchertown* we see in Moore a photographic pariah who scoured the wilderness for amorphous and ephemeral moments, moments that bequeath a cache of antiques and curios once lost to the recesses of memory. We pursue Moore's motives and feel comforted by his sensitivity and acute awareness of the moment and the place. These moments are a salve to Moore, and like a tryst his presence sinks contently into a landscape that welcomes him with open arms. United by the evanescent nature of *Fletchertown*, Moore finds the *heimat* of Wenders' heroes and the *heimlich* of Freud's uncanny. And through his eyes we ourselves are rewarded with an intangible element, a thought, a memory, a glimpse of a long forgotten sense of wholeness that appears unwittingly in the commonplace of *Fletchertown*. This unity we find veiled in the mystery and discomfiting menace of the uncanny.

Conclusion

Fletchertown is a highly emotive image despite its mundane subject matter. Our response is one that is perhaps more appropriate to the quality of a painting than to that of a photograph but it is unsurprising that this is so. Moore initially trained as a painter, and painting, the dominant mode of expression before and during his wilderness years, was the established art medium of that time. *Fletchertown's* ability to 'stimulate the tactile consciousness', a trait Bernard Berenson claims essential to the Florentine paintings of the Renaissance, confirms for us its painterly quality. Berenson argues that 'through retinal impressions, a painting can stimulate perceptions of volume and movement in the imagination, even the body of the viewer'.¹¹⁵ *Fletchertown* clearly does this and Moore's work evades the grasps of some tangible photographic context.

¹¹⁵ Berenson referred to by Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 165.

There is, in the public's reception to his work, a certain irony surrounding Moore's career. Originally overlooked by the art establishment because of the mechanical processes at work, he is later pushed to one side for not being photographic enough. It is also ironic that Moore, a photographer who preferred others to promote his work, has bequeathed to us an archive that has for over a decade been held by Sotheby's awaiting a renewed interest. It is uncanny that this work, some of which the public has never seen, is locked away in a warehouse like the perfidious eddies of *Flechertown*. Moore's legacy, it seems, still hovers on the horizon and hopefully, in the not too distant future, a cache of photographic curios, will be released.

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