

British Art Studies

February 2020



TOO BRIGHT, MANDATORY SEARCHING
CONCRETE
STANDING
OUT OF
THE FEELS
FROM FROM
ON THE EAST
DIANS
TO PLACE MORE RESOURCES IN
AN OTHER THAT ACTING
IN 1978 - DANCING
UP THE STAIRS, KITE
WIRE WORKERS - THE
PEEZED IT IN HAPPEN
A SILENT SINGING INTO
FUSERS WITH A
WHITE HOT MUSTANG
CARRIAGES - A WHOLE
SAY SOME LIPS ON
BY THE SEA SPAINING
DO NOT BE
THE FIRST ONE
CHURCH STREET
PAVING FOR
STAGNANT
PAPA

THAT FACE, VIOLET IN THE HALF LIGHT, THE RUSH OF THE RAIN, IN THE
YOU SEE WITH CLARITY - HE RUSHES OUT + WALES BESIDE YOU.
YOU GET OUT OF BED + MAKE STRAIGHT OFFER, BOYA + DINCAN, SEEBE
IN THE MICHIGAN, IT'S GOOD HAVING THEM HERE TO SHARF YOU OUT OF IT! THE LIVER
IT MAKES YOU FEEL BOLD. YOU STAND ON THE BALCONY + HODDING A WHOLE
+ THE MARKET FACING UP. THE SKY IS POWER PINK, IT'S MAKING YOU HEAVY
THERE SOMEWHERE IN THAT WAD OF PUBS SO CLOSE.
HE'D TEXTED TO SAY THAT WERE LOADS OF THEM SMOKING ROUND CHURCH
EDGWARE ROAD. THERE'D BEEN AN ATTEMPT TO SALVAGE THE BARREN WEA
WE'D BEEN GETTING THATS ALL WORK ABOUT THE

THE OLD BUILDING...
YOU ARE MEAVENS + YOU ARE SLOO
THE OTHERS ARE COMING WITH YOU, BOYA, DINCAN,
A DE AFM, ICH - BOO CRENS CONVERGING - EVER SINCE
THE LINDS OF FLIGHT - WESTMINSTER COUNCIL SENDING
PEOPLE OUT TO ROMFORD + ICARD, TO...
DELIRIOUS HEAT - 30 DEGREES - CAN HARDLY SEE PEOPLE
WALKING TOWARDS YOU, CAN HARDLY BREATHE
WHITE SHIRT, RED DRESS, SANDALWOOD, VETIVER, TON-OTS
OF JASMINE - THE EUPHORIA + INTENSITY OF THAT
FRAGRANCE, A CAS... WHITE FLOWERS...
THE SCENTS OF LEATHER, WOODSMOKE, VETIVER,
THE PAVEMENT, HEAT IN THE CONCRETE WALLS -
ING PINK, A DEEP, DUSKY HEFT.

ALL OVER
EVEN ON
ON THE
HERE BE
PUSHING
WELL HIT
LINES SO
IN
JUSTIFIED
IN QUEEN
WE KNEW
THAT
WAS NOT
THEIR SIGHTS, THE
THE SECURITY IN THE
REMOVES CAMERA
RACER WIRE, BUT IT WAS
WAS OPEN - PARTS OPENING
IN THE SURFACE, BLASTS OF AIR
CONDITIONING, SLEEPING CHANNEL
PRACTISING.
THERE HAD BEEN SPORADIC
OUTBREAKS EARLIER IN THE SUMMER
MOMENTS IN HYDE PARK, DUNGEON PARK,
IN THE ESTATES ROAD CARPARK + GARDEN
DESIRE FOR AN UNREQUITED PARTY
THE CITY - YOU'D OBSERVED
THEY COULD...

British Art Studies

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Cover image: Laura Grace Ford, Alpha, Isis, Eden, installation photograph, 1 February – 18 March 2017, multi-media installation made in collaboration with sound engineer Jack Latham.. Digital image courtesy of Laura Grace Ford.

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Bert Hardy: Exercises with Photography and Film

Lynda Nead and John Wyver

Abstract

The two short films and essay published here come out of a collaborative research project on the aesthetic and historical qualities of Bert Hardy's wartime and post-war photography for Picture Post. Developing the methodologies being explored in the field of videographic criticism, we use moving images to produce a visual exploration of the material and formal qualities of Bert Hardy's photographs in the 1940s. Digital moving images and sound, we suggest, expand our potential understanding and analysis of Hardy's work, in ways in which traditional written modes of criticism cannot. We use the poetic and expressive possibilities of our medium to highlight and examine those material qualities, along with the historical atmosphere of post-war visual media. The two films each explore a particular Hardy photo-story: Fire-Fighters! focuses on the themes of grain in the printed image, the facial close-up as an affective form of national expression, narrative sequence, and the move in the story from figuration to abstraction. The second film, Life in the Elephant develops the concept of narrative and photographic sequence and facial/emotional expression. It also considers the ways in which the photo-story expresses a sense of historical place. The accompanying article develops the historical contexts for the two photo-stories, the theoretical ideas motivating the project, and the technical processes and collaborative partnerships involved in making the films.

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Everywhere I look, and most of the time I look, I see photographs.
- Bert Hardy.¹

...moments of emotion and something ineffable, beyond what can actually be said, [inhabit] the image and [overwhelm] it.
- Laura Mulvey²

...the video is ... a work of material thinking, one that [brings] to the surface of its production new knowledge both about [the object of study] and about this method of re-handling it.
- Catherine Grant.³

The three quotes that introduce and frame this essay specify both its object and its methodology. The first is taken from the autobiography of the British photojournalist, Bert Hardy (1913–1995), published towards the end of a long career in news and commercial photography. It is a well-known statement, often quoted, about a way of seeing the world photographically, that is to say, in which the conventions of photojournalism have become entirely naturalised and internalised. It is a claim to comprehending and representing life in visual terms.

The other quotes are taken from two film theorists who have been working recently in the medium of the video essay. In an interview, Laura Mulvey describes how new digital technologies have enabled her to develop an experimental form of audio-visual criticism. She calls this method “delayed cinema”, in which she slows down, freezes, and repeats a short sequence from a classic feature film and, in so doing, reveals or releases a set of aesthetic qualities and affects that are an intrinsic part of the film but that might otherwise be elusive or overlooked by conventional viewing and written analysis. In a detailed reflection on her own practice in videographic criticism, Catherine Grant describes her video essays as acts of “material thinking”, which produce new ways of understanding both the filmic object of study and the research method itself.⁴ There is, then, a certain synergy between Hardy’s claim to a visual mode of understanding the world and Mulvey and Grant’s use of audio-visual technologies to explore the aesthetic and expressive qualities of film. The purpose of this project is to engage in “material thinking” about Hardy’s photography through the method of the video essay. Its aim is to uncover the “ineffable” qualities of his work—those aspects that Mulvey writes about so evocatively and that create its affect and historical atmosphere.

[View this illustration online](#)

Figure 1.

Lynda Nead and John Wyver, *Fire-Fighters!*, 2020, film, 14 minutes, 35 seconds. Collection of Getty Images Hulton Archive. Digital image courtesy of Getty Images, Hulton Archive (photographs), Hal Halifax (song), and Lynda Nead and John Wyver (film) (All rights reserved)

[View this illustration online](#)

Figure 2.

Lynda Nead and John Wyver, *Life in the Elephant*, 2020, film, 13 minutes, 24 seconds. Digital image courtesy of Getty Images, Hulton Archive (photographs), Hal Halifax (song), and Lynda Nead and John Wyver (film) (All rights reserved).

The two short films (Figs. 1 and 2) and essay published here come out of a collaboration between art and cultural historian Lynda Nead and writer and media producer John Wyver. We share a fascination with the art and visual culture of Britain in the 1940s and 1950s and, most particularly, we are drawn to the atmosphere and historical materiality of visual media in this period. Developing the methodologies set out by Mulvey and Grant (and others in a rapidly expanding field of scholarship), we wanted to work with moving images and the possibilities suggested by videographic criticism to produce a visual exploration of the material and aesthetic qualities of Bert Hardy's photographs in the 1940s for the illustrated weekly newspaper, *Picture Post*. We both felt that the medium of film (or, more precisely, digital moving images and sounds) would expand our potential understanding and representation of these issues in a way that the usual ekphrastic modes of criticism would not. As Christian Keathley and Jason Mittell, two key exponents of this form, have written:

...when working with moving images and sounds, the poetic force of the source materials cannot be ignored or avoided. Many videographic works adopt the rhetorical mode most typical for scholars, offering an illustrated lecture or written essay being narrated, an approach that we term the "explanatory" mode. The most effective videographic works, however—those which produce the most potent knowledge effect—employ their audiovisual source materials in a poetic imaginative way.⁵

Our aim was to deploy the poetic and expressive possibilities of our medium and to ensure that our films (a shorthand designation that is as inevitable as it is imprecise) were responsive to Hardy's photography and to the look of *Picture Post*. The films do not seek to explain or straightforwardly contextualise Hardy's images and the photo-stories built from them. Rather

they attempt to highlight and explore those aesthetic qualities that we had both come to admire in our previous work on post-war visual media.⁶ These qualities have to do with *mise en scène*, with the staging and framing of the photographs, with light and shadow, the figures and the locations and, always, we felt, with a set of affects that was more than the form and the content as conventionally understood, something in excess of what the images show or are “about”. There is an ambiance, a richness, in Hardy’s images and in the sheer physical presence of those photographed and their survival through the war and its aftermath. This visual atmosphere of the images is, in part, a product of their constitutive formal elements, but it is also ineffable and overwhelming, as Mulvey puts it; imaginative and poetic, to use the words of Keathley and Mittell.

In recent decades, many scholars in both art history and film studies have shied away from approaches to which ideas like tone and atmosphere are central. They smack of connoisseurship and a patrician style of criticism that were forcefully and justifiably rejected in the wake of Marxist, post-structuralist, and feminist revisions of the arts and humanities. After decades of caution about aesthetic significance, however, there is a new interest in the distinctive characteristics of visual images and a reassessment of close visual analysis as a methodology. This is not to reassert the conservative values of aesthetic judgement but it is to acknowledge the importance of visual atmosphere. Atmosphere may be staged and manipulated; it is culturally highly expressive and addresses collective emotional, political, and social feelings. To overlook these elements of images is to discount a key and defining characteristic of their nature and whilst written criticism can certainly address these matters, we were interested to explore whether the audio-visual method can do this more effectively. And in developing this address, we wanted to produce innovative and creative works that acknowledged the affective power of Hardy’s images and their presentation on the pages of *Picture Post*, and that might, perhaps, prompt complementary emotional responses as well as intellectual engagement. In this, our practice followed the ideas of Catherine Grant, who has written,

The sensuous and affective methodologies of videographic material-thinkers mean that the latter often immerse themselves differently, more completely, in the audio-visual forms of the medium they research and can move around to form new (scholarly and other) objects. In this kind of environment, the critical aspects of the work are inseparable from the creative, affective ones, and lend themselves so well, then, to the kind of exploration that Susan Sontag might have been calling for when she wrote: “In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art”.

Inevitably, the shift from a written to an audio-visual form of research output brings about a change of attention to the objects of study. Old habits die hard; nevertheless, as we worked together, we found ourselves moving away from verbal description, analysis, and context, towards finding audio-visual methods of engaging with Hardy's photo-essays. The key research question became how to find filmic methods of working with the underlying visual qualities of Hardy's photography and the pages of *Picture Post*. How to convey the significance of the dematerialisation of the figures in an image of firefighters in the Blitz: the vast expanse of dark, almost black, space in a photograph of a burning building? What was the most appropriate way to show how faces "work" in a story about a poor area of post-war London, or the visual choices made by the photographer, photo editor, art editor, and editor in the final look and atmosphere of the story? Our shared conversations moved from contextualisation to expression, from illustration to allusion. Yet, we recognise that these films are initial and tentative exercises, which we think of primarily as "experiments". As Catherine Grant has said, "I may not always call my work 'essays' but I do see what I do as *essaying*. In other words trying things out ... I think *lots of experimenting must be done.*" ⁸

The viability of this method of research is made possible by online journal publication. Whilst we could use platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo to upload our films, or we could show them at academic conferences or documentary film festivals, *British Art Studies* and other online publications allow us to upload high-resolution films with the accompanying essay (or, entirely free from commentary) and to contribute to ongoing dialogues within and between our disciplines about digital technologies, visual media, and critical discourse.

Videographic Criticism

Audio-visual film criticism in the form of digital videographic essays has developed rapidly over the past two decades. As Michael Witt has noted,

This phenomenon has been fuelled by a number of interrelated developments: easier access to copies of films; increased availability of domestic computers and digital editing software; the spread of the internet and rise in popularity of video-sharing websites; and the ensuing proliferation of online audiovisual sampling, mash-up, and remix practices. ⁹

The approach developed from, and retains close links with, the practices of the essay film, which has been identified from the mid-twentieth century onwards as a form of self-reflective film that embraces both documentary and experimental or poetic methods.¹⁰ Timothy Corrigan has identified the deep links between literary essays and essay films, which he characterises in part as follows:

Straddling fiction and non-fiction, news reports and confessional autobiography, documentaries and experimental film, they are, first, practices that undo and redo film form, visual perspectives, public geographies, temporal organizations, and notions of truth and judgement within the complexity of experience.¹¹

The expansive tradition of the essay film embraces works since the 1920s by Dziga Vertov, Jean-Luc Godard, Humphrey Jennings, Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and many others.¹² In common with the practitioners of the videographic essay, many of these film-makers have developed essay films as highly personal responses to or dialogues with sequences of moving images, as notably Godard has done with his series *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988–1998) and Chris Marker in *Sans Soleil* (1983), which begins with a voice-over reflection about a home movie shot of three children on a road in Iceland. Nearly all of the significant videographic essays have similarly employed and engaged with moving image sequences: films on film; and time-based work on time-based objects. Thus, it has been possible for Christian Keathley to comment: “the full range of digital video technologies enables film scholars to *write* using the very materials that constitute their object of study: moving images and sounds.”¹³

Such synergy is not the case, however, with moving images about still photography. Here, the two media might be said to compromise as much as to complement each other. Compared to the significant body of videographic work on film, it is relatively undeveloped on photography and other still images and many of the challenges that we have faced during this project have been in terms of the relationship between the film tool and the photographic object. Of course experimental film-makers, notably Marker and Varda again, have worked with and continue to work with the creative tensions between still and moving images, but nevertheless much of the best current analytical work has been engaged with film.¹⁴ We see our focus on and concern with photography as one of the main contributions of our work to current debates on audio-visual criticism.

There is an extensive literature on the many and varied connections between the moving images of the cinema and the still images of photography. Reflecting on the centrality of photographs within numerous mainstream and experimental films, David Company writes:

it begs the question of whether film might in fact be fascinated by, or need something from the photograph. Perhaps film sees photography as something it had to give up in order to become what it did. Is it the photograph's stillness that film finds so compelling? Its clarity? Its uncertainty? Its privileged status as record or memory? Its stoicism? Its inscrutability? ¹⁵

Yet, despite this rich legacy, including the highly distinctive use of photographs in films such as Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), Godard's *Les Carabiniers* (1963) and his collaboration with Jean-Pierre Gorin, *Letter to Jane: An Investigation about a Still* (1972), and Hollis Frampton's (*nostalgia*) (1972), as well as more mainstream features such as Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) and Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000), the presentation of still images in documentaries about individual photographers and "the art of" photography has rarely been more than illustrative. In Peter West's 1987 Third Eye/Channel 4 documentary *Bert Hardy's World: A Portrait*, for example, the photographer's images are featured on screen throughout, shown sometimes by respecting their original framing and sometimes as details, and both without movement and within a moving frame. They are integrated into and used to illustrate a narrative about subjects in immigrant communities in Britain in the 1940s, who were photographed by Hardy, and about those people and their descendants at the time the documentary was made. The "documentary" nature of the images is unquestioned, as is the direct, largely unmediated, access they are assumed to give to a historical moment. Nor are either the aesthetic or the material qualities of the photographs engaged with; they are images without size, texture, or tone integrated into and sustaining an anecdotal history. And in using photographs in a primarily illustrative manner, *Bert Hardy's World* is typical of the dominant presentation of still images in mainstream documentaries about photography.

Our exercises set out to question the presentation conventions of photographs in documentary films, and to work towards alternatives that employ and interrogate such images in new ways, highlighting their materialities and recognising their circulation on contact sheets and within the layouts of *Picture Post*. Our own handling of the contact sheets, of prints, and of archival copies of the magazine, and the specific tasks—undertaken in close collaboration with the film-maker Todd MacDonald—of filming these elements, and subsequently editing and post-producing the recordings, have

also led us to new understandings about the ways in which photographs are and might be shown in moving image sequences. One central aspect of this is that we have come to understand that many of the conventional orthodoxies about film as the time-based medium and photography as the art of the frozen “significant moment” do not stand up to the close analysis of the audio-visual form. Film allows the spectator to explore the temporalities of the photograph, the shadows and lights, the character and narrative traces that give it a temporality and, most especially, when it is part of a photo-sequence or news story.¹⁶ These ideas are explored in more detail below in the detailed discussions of the two exercises, but one question that we returned to frequently throughout the production was what the appropriate or “right” duration was to hold a photograph on screen. How did our understandings of an image change throughout the duration of a single shot? What elements of an image might an extended duration reveal—or obscure? How long could an image be held on screen, and how might a spectator’s response change throughout an extended period? How, then, were the temporalities of the photograph shaped by the temporality of the moving image—and what were the differences between the camera being immobile versus when it is moving across an image? Such questions are rarely foregrounded in documentary production, although implicit answers are contributed by the skills and experience of editors and directors, who make decisions intuitively on the basis of what “feels right”. In the production of the exercises, we were interested in surfacing such questions, at least implicitly, and in considering what new knowledge might be revealed by sequences that might, in conventional terms, “feel wrong”.

Looking at *Picture Post*

Collaboration on this project has been painstaking and we both acknowledge the time spent going down blind alleys and the lessons learned as we shifted from our own specialisms to a disciplinary and methodological give-and-take. The most straightforward stage was identifying our object of study. Although we began by discussing a project on Humphrey Jennings, we moved easily to Bert Hardy and *Picture Post*, driven, as it was, by our shared “photophilia” and care for these images.¹⁷ Laura Mulvey has spoken most forcefully about the importance of “cinophilia”, the love of cinema, for her “delayed cinema” work; “photophilia” is a neologism, formulated to define that fascination with these images which has been one of the driving motivations of the project.

No.	STORY	Vol.	Photographer	C	R	W
4690	Why Rain Stops Up So Late	Vol 42104	Hulton	G	18	38
4691	Birds' Scisselles - what they do	Vol 42103	Hulton	G	3	3
4692	Ballet of the Ugly Sisters	Vol 42103	Han	G	6	6
4693	A Discovery that opens Africa	Vol 42103	Keaton	G	5	5
4694	Life in the Elephant	Vol 42102	Hardy	G	31	31
4695	Annie got your gun	Vol 42102	Keaton	G	4	4
4696	How Jay got the Dick	Vol 42102	Keaton	G	4	4
4697	Lincoln Boys at Home	Vol 42101	Hulton	G	4	4
4698	The young Vice leading lady	Vol 42101	Hardy	G	6	6
4699	A glimpse into the future	Vol 42101	Keaton	G	1	1
4700	A Housewife argues with Howard Wilson	Vol 42101	Hardy	G	3	3
4701	How Stern and speaking	Vol 42103	Hague	G	3	7
4702	Spirit of Christmas	Vol 42103	Hulton	G	9	9
4703	Why they like Rugby League	Vol 42102	Pruce	G	1	1
4704	A Village in France	Vol 42102	Hardy	G	24	24
4705	Shoes for the Party	Vol 42102	Hulton	G	3	3
4706	At the banquet of Order of Christmas	Vol 42102	Hulton	G	7	7
4707	Here's an odd kind of fish in this aquarium	Vol 42102	Hague	G	6	8
4708	Howe leaves Road Race	Vol 42106	Hunt	G	14	16
4709	It's the Hailberg mystery	Vol 42106	Hunt	G	6	6
4710	You Meet Everyone Under Awaken	Vol 42106	Hague	G	8	13
4711	The new record of Mrs. Eastman	Vol 42106	Hague	G	4	9
4712	Britain's roughest mine	Vol 42106	Hunt	G	4	4
4713	Right's eye on at London airport	Vol 42106	Keaton	G	2	2
4714	The Bartlett Brothers take their reputation	Vol 42106	Hardy	G	3	3
4715	A hot down to Jane	Vol 42107	Hulton	G	13	13
4716	A flight of five takes the air	Vol 42107	Keaton	G	1	1
4717	But what was on that display?	Vol 42107	Hardy	G	3	3
4718	So this city soldiers back down?	Vol 42107	Hulton	G	3	3
4719	Our last two film	Vol 42108	Hague	G	4	3
4720	Franklin of Stoke City	Vol 42108	Hague	G	6	4
4721	The first Professor of Fashion	Vol 42108	Hulton	G	14	16
4722	People who write your books	Vol 42108	Hulton	G	12	14
4723	Bank site sculptors	Vol 42109	Keaton	G	2	2

Figure 3.

Page from the *Picture Post* day book, including no. 4694, 'Life in the Elephant', 1949. Collection of Getty Images Hulton Archive. Digital image courtesy of Getty Images, Hulton Archive (All rights reserved).

Our discussions moved at an early stage to identifying which stories or images we should focus on. We began, as seemed appropriate, in the photographic archive. Edward Hulton, publisher and owner of *Picture Post*, understood the importance of picture and photo libraries and established the Hulton Picture Library in the late 1940s. The archive was purchased by the BBC in 1958, becoming part of the *Radio Times* photo library; in 1996, the Hulton Picture Collection was acquired by Getty Images, who continue to own and preserve the *Picture Post* archive.¹⁸ The history of this photo archive is relevant to our research; working in the well-appointed rooms of Getty Images and looking at the rows of shelves and storage boxes, there is a palpable sense of the importance and richness of this collection—of prints and negatives catalogued, filed, and awaiting recovery. As well as photographic negatives, contact sheets, and prints, all bearing the marks of

successive editors and curators, Getty Images also has the *Picture Post* day book, which logs each story, the name of the photographer, and every roll of film and negatives that they submitted to the paper (Fig. 3). Our first stage of research was to identify and create a database of every story that Bert Hardy worked on, when it was published, or whether or not it was “killed”, as the day book puts it. With this comprehensive list of his work, we began to narrow down which stories we would focus on for the films.

We knew that one of the subjects we wanted to explore was the material qualities of the images created for and reproduced in *Picture Post*. In an age of digital newspaper media, it is difficult to comprehend how time-consuming, labour-intensive, and skilful the mechanical printing processes were; and we recognised that the physicality of the technologies of making *Picture Post* was fundamental to the subsequent look of the printed photographs and pages.¹⁹ The photogravure process used to reproduce the monochrome images in the pages of *Picture Post* is particularly good at producing rich effects from dark, contrasting subjects. The darker tones are made up of thicker layers of ink than the lighter tones; the highlights are very sharp and the strongest darks are deep and well defined. Furthermore, in the hands of the highly skilled printers at Sun Printers Ltd, where *Picture Post* was published, the range of greyscale tones is incredibly varied and subtle. And these qualities can still be appreciated some eighty years later as one handles the thin, light pages of archival copies and scrutinises the individual images and their placing in narrativised sequences, on both light and dark grounds, with photographs bounded by frames or on occasions bled to the edges of pages. The integration of the text, headlines, and the captions can also be recognised as integral to the impact and meanings of the stories, and it is these and comparable aspects of the photographs that are lost when they are divorced from the page for presentation in a documentary or hung on a gallery wall as conventional art objects. In our exercises, we wanted to retain the “thing-ness” of the magazine copies and the particular images that they carried and circulated.

Along with research in the archive of Getty Images, we also used the published memoirs of staff who worked on *Picture Post* in the 1940s and newsreel from the period.²⁰ In addition, there were a small number of television films about *Picture Post*, made when Hardy was alive and which are available through the BFI Viewing Service.²¹ When the stories had been chosen, we also did extensive research on their historical contexts. To some degree, such work may have been more appropriate to a written study of Hardy’s work; nevertheless, this research informs and underpins the films and is part of their texture and tone. As we came to understand, however, there is a critical difference between the conceptualisation of a written essay and the “material thinking” of the videographic work.²² The latter involves framing and thinking through research questions in visual and aural terms

and through the methods of film rather than rhetoric. It is also an insistently practical process, implicated in and impossible to separate from the operations of digital cameras, editing software, and audio mixing systems, and—at least for ourselves as neophytes at videographic production—in collaboration with those experienced with such technologies. In addition to Todd MacDonald, who filmed and edited both exercises, we also worked on *Life in the Elephant* with the audio producer, Steve Lewinson.

We finally determined to work on two of Bert Hardy's *Picture Post* stories, both of which have a London setting. Born in 1913 in south London, Hardy was a Londoner in every sense of that early twentieth-century identification. He was a cockney; his colleague at *Picture Post*, Anne Scott-James, described him as having the: "ready wit and powers of improvisation of Sam Weller."²³ He was companionable and chatty, a persona that he took advantage of throughout his working life. He started his photographic career at the age of fourteen, collecting and delivering photographic films for the Central Photographic Service, with a more lucrative sideline in "naughty pictures". He began taking his own photographs, focusing at first on cycling clubs, which he sent to a magazine called *The Bicycle*, and bought a second-hand Leica, the camera that is now synonymous with twentieth-century photojournalism. Hardy was always directly involved in the material processes of photography, experimenting with developers, playing with exposure times, and doctoring the standard Leica flash unit to meet the needs of his subjects.

By the 1930s, German photographers and editors were beginning to have a significant impact on the British illustrated press, an influence that would lead directly to the look and style of *Picture Post*. Its creator and first editor, Stefan Lorant, was a Hungarian Jew who came to England in the 1930s as a refugee from Hitler's Germany, where he had produced silent films and had been chief editor of the *Münchner Illustrierte Presse*. Lorant, who was joined by German photographers like Kurt Hutton and Felix Mann, brought with him the new layout and style of continental photojournalism that became a part of the look of *Picture Post* from the beginning. In 1940, fearing a German invasion, Lorant went to the USA and was replaced as editor by Tom Hopkinson, who remained in this role until 1950.

Stuart Hall has described the distinctive quality of *Picture Post* as a result of the combination of two "distinctive journalistic traditions": a tradition of English documentary reportage and a revolutionary visual style that came from avant-garde groups on the Continent.²⁴ Certainly, *Picture Post*, with its simple, direct layouts and its emphasis on a varied use of horizontal and vertical images and bold captions, looked different from its rival British illustrated papers. Photographs dictated the appearance of the stories. Tradition has it that the format was based on the proportions of a Leica

35mm negative and staff working on the magazine claimed that: “It reported the news through ... the eye of the camera ... the pictures mattered more than the words.” ²⁵

The histories of *Picture Post* and Bert Hardy converge in 1940. ²⁶ Hardy started working for *Picture Post* on a freelance basis; he had left the Central Photographic Service and with a colleague set up Criterion Press, which he pulled out of after a financial disagreement. He spent the later war years with the Army Film and Photographic Unit and, at the end of the war, he returned to *Picture Post* as a staff photographer. Hardy worked on an enormous range of subjects for the paper, from serious studies of post-war deprivation, to the most frivolous of “girlie” topics. Some of his stories won photographic awards; others are forgettable. In 1950, Hopkinson commissioned Hardy to accompany the journalist James Cameron on a story about the Korean War. They came back with a report on the treatment of North Korean political prisoners by South Korean forces; Hopkinson planned to publish the story but was stopped by the proprietor, Edward Hulton. Hopkinson was sacked as editor and a number of his staff resigned in support. Hardy continued to work for *Picture Post* until, with falling circulation figures, the magazine ceased publication in 1957.

There are many histories embedded in these brief facts: histories of the war and of the politics of wartime and post-war Britain; histories of the press; and histories of the business and practice of photography. All of these combine in the photography of Bert Hardy; they are part of its grain and atmosphere. The two stories that are the subjects of our films represent key moments in these narratives, in which the elements are at their most concentrated and pivotal. The first is “Fire-Fighters!”, which was published on 1 February 1941. This was one of the most significant assignments in Hardy’s *Picture Post* career and marked a turning point in his professional status as a photojournalist. Hardy was still involved in Criterion Press and was commissioned to do a story on the London Fire Brigade as it dealt with the Luftwaffe’s heaviest period of night bombing. He returned with an astonishing range of images of the firemen working on warehouse blazes, some are almost abstract in parts, a compound of fire, water, silhouetted buildings, and figures and, as published on the pages of *Picture Post*, they reach a crescendo of growing threat and pictorial illegibility. For the first time, the paper departed from its habit of anonymity and acknowledged the name of their photographer:

For a fortnight one of our photographers slept every night at a fire station ... Out all night, in one blazing building after another, he lost a £50 camera, a tripod, a pair of trousers. In return, he got a

burned leg—and these pictures ... From our rule of anonymity we except these pictures. They were taken by A. Hardy, one of our cameramen. ²⁷

The anonymous cameraman becomes the named wartime photographer/hero: “A. Hardy, one of our cameramen”.

The second story is “Life in the Elephant”, published 8 January 1949, a six-page photo-story of everyday life in the Elephant and Castle, a poor and then bomb-damaged neighbourhood of south London. It was the kind of humanist story at which the paper excelled while Hopkinson was editor. With words by the journalist Albert Lloyd, who, like Hardy, was born in this part of London and was very much a local boy, it evokes the people and places of the area in every area of shadow and highlight, in every face, street, and room. “Life in the Elephant” has an almost mythic status in the history of twentieth-century British photojournalism. It won Hardy his second Encyclopaedia Britannica Award and has, ever since, been used to illustrate social histories of post-war Britain.

These are our two stories; we might have chosen others and made different films but, without question, they represent Hardy’s photography and *Picture Post* at their most powerful and expressive. Hardy and *Picture Post*, photographs and printed pages; it was this combination that we were most drawn to and interested in. For this reason, our originals, the objects that we filmed, are the photographs at their grainiest, as printed on the pages of the magazine. In both films, we also use the original contact sheets that were made from Hardy’s rolls of film, traces of the genesis of the story, and Hardy’s working process. We did not use subsequent prints of Hardy’s photographs or digital images because our focus was on the look of the photographs and their consumption by readers of *Picture Post*. The *mise en page*, the design of the printed pages, and the layout of text and images frame Hardy’s photographs and give them their sense of place and time.

Producing *Fire-Fighters!*

In making the films, we have concentrated on a small number of research themes in each case. In *Fire-Fighters!*, we consider the grain of the photographs both in terms of its poetic and its historical expression. We focus on the facial close-up as it is used in Hardy’s cover photograph and the face as it becomes a symbol of a moral, wartime nation. Finally, we look at the sequence of photographs as they are published in the magazine and their move from figurative composition towards increasing abstraction and formal dissolution, with a single photograph published on the page and given

over to large, negative spaces of grainy black. These final images may be seen as an articulation of the psychic impact of bombing, as much as its physical effects.

Once we had determined that *Fire-Fighters!* would be the subject of one of our two exercises, Lynda Nead wrote an expository script. This included substantial extracts from the text of the story, as are featured in the final version, but there was also a narrator's voice detailing the historical background of the Blitz, the Auxiliary Fire Service, and the covers of *Picture Post*. A broader range of images was also envisaged, including a selection by other artists, and the key quotations from William Sansom and the scholar Leo Mellor were identified; the latter survived, while the former did not. We used a modestly revised version of this script for our two main filming sessions at Getty Images, which themselves followed initial research visits by Lynda during which she undertook some low resolution reference photography. Todd MacDonald's digital filming in the archive for both *Fire-Fighters!* and *Life in the Elephant* aimed to produce a wide variety of both still and moving images. Vintage prints, contact sheets, and the photographs as reproduced in the *Picture Post* spreads were shot as stills with a Sony mirror-less full-frame stills camera. Digital video of the images was recorded with a Super 35 4K video camera filming in S-Log so as to be able to take full advantage of the dynamic range of the camera—although this feature had significant implications for the final stages of post-production, as is noted below.

Over a period of months, Todd used Premiere editing software to prepare cuts of both films. Responding to a developing script, Todd employed processes of selection, montaging, re-framing, and layering as well as the introduction of digitally created movement, and in doing so, he offered many suggestions about form and style. Some of these were rejected by us, but a significant number contribute to the distinctiveness of the completed exercises. Both of us viewed these cuts online and provided detailed feedback in note form. The final structures of the two exercises emerged in this fundamentally collaborative process, the concluding stages of which included a small number of detailed editing sessions during which the three of us sat by the editing desk trying out final variants. While we could verbalise why we approved of or dismissed aspects of what was on the screen, there were other moments that had a visceral effect that perhaps escaped explicit justification. Once we had a more or less final version, Todd then graded each of the selected S-Log shots, removing colour to knock them back to more or less greyscale tones, and changing the saturation and contrast of every image. He also added digital film grain emulation, in part to achieve a consistent "look" to each of the exercises. And he used masking to create a digital simulation of a page turn to move from one spread to

another. All of these devices contribute significantly to the complexification of debates about the ontology of the photographic image, fundamentally challenging the long-established binary of “still” and “moving” images.

Turning back to “Fire-Fighters!” on the pages of *Picture Post*, the publication of the story in the issue of 1 February 1941 was highly significant. The German bombing offensive, known as the Blitz, took place during 1940 and 1941. From September 1940, London and other British cities were systematically attacked by the Luftwaffe and by mid-November more than 12,000 tons of high explosive had fallen on the capital. Sunday 29 December 1940 witnessed one of the most destructive attacks on the City of London, later referred to as the Second Great Fire of London. Bad weather in January 1941 limited the bombings and offered some respite, but on 29 January conditions changed and there was another heavy attack.²⁸ This was the precise moment of the publication of Hardy’s story; two weeks of relative calm and then the storm of renewed bombing. Readers of the issue of *Picture Post* may well have been caught up in this raid, and would probably have been affected, one way or another, by its violent and traumatic consequences.

Consider, in this context, the cover of the issue, a detail of which fades in from black as our opening shot in the film exercise (Fig. 4). The contact sheets show a number of different shots of this subject, with subtle differences, a slight shift in the angle of a face or hand, as the photographer moves around his subject taking a series of photographs (Fig. 5). It is a bold, arresting, and brilliant cover. The red of the background on the title and banner offsets the deep chiaroscuro of the black and white portraits. Our attention is drawn immediately and deeply to the faces of the men: their eyes, focused on the blaze in front of them, their expressions, concentrated and unwavering. Is it a composite? The direction of their gaze does not follow that of the water from the hose, and the stream of water is not visible on the contact sheet. Our sense is that it has been collaged from two negatives in order to enhance its visual power, and the water flow has been drawn in. These are ordinary faces, those of working men and somehow they are also the faces of wartime Britain, with a look and style that evokes the 1940s. They look like Tommy Trinder and other actors who played the ordinary protagonists of British films in these years.²⁹ This cover moved people; it had an emotional impact. Readers wrote to *Picture Post* and asked for it to be turned into a print or a poster.³⁰ These faces, and those of their colleagues, haunt our film.



Figure 4.

Picture Post (cover), 1 February 1941, featuring photograph by Bert Hardy. Collection of Getty Images Hulton Archive. Digital image courtesy of Getty Images Hulton Archive (All rights reserved).



Figure 5.

Bert Hardy, Contact sheet with versions of the cover image of “Picture Post”, 1 February 1941, photographic contact sheet. Collection of Getty Images Hulton Archive. Digital image courtesy of Getty Images Hulton Archive (All rights reserved).

The firefighters were not a professional service at this point in the war. The National Fire Service was established in autumn 1941, but in February, the fires were being fought by local fire brigades augmented by the volunteers of the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS). The AFS came from “all walks of life” and they were the “front line of defence” between London and the Luftwaffe.³¹ They were ordinary heroes, everyday men and women showing extraordinary courage; they were individuals and they were the nation. These are the faces on the cover of *Picture Post*, which are focused on in our extended opening shot. And these are the bodies in Hardy’s photo-story, which fade in as silhouettes after the title frames, before being revealed as set within a complex layout that includes a headline, text and a full-page advertisement for “The Wisdom Toothbrush”.

The story runs in *Picture Post* across pages 9 to 15. The first single page has a half-page photograph of roof spotters; then there is a double-page with six images of a control room and a fire station. The voice-over, drawn from the *Picture Post* text and spoken across a dark screen introduces the narrative and, initially without identification, Hardy as the photographer. Camera moves underline the insistent horizontality, and the normalcy, the

groundedness of the spread, before Hardy is named and pictured in a contact sheet image clearly taken by another, in this case, an anonymous image-maker. Next to him, inverted, is one of the images collaged for the cover.

On the next double page, after one of the film's structuring titles (drawn from the captions), there is a change of style; in "The Height of the Blaze", we see dark, shadowy images of broken streets, fires, and firefighters set against a black ground (heightened in the film by a further red surround). The figures are silhouetted and abstracted, faces either in deep shadow or being reproduced at the edge of representation. The grain of the photographs is strong here. And the film contributes a further level of abstraction, with fragments of photography set in a moving frame resonating with and echoing, but never quite illustrating, a 1942 quotation from AFS fireman and writer, William Sansom.

The final opening is extraordinary: two full-page photographs, with only captions and a few lines of small text at the bottom to supplement the images. The first, on the left-hand page, is a man at the top of a turntable ladder, with the dark street illuminated only by the glow of the fire. The camera underlines the perilous verticality of this world, such a contrast to the earlier spread. Then, before we turn to the facing page, the film interjects with another quotation, this time as text, and from a much later period. We wanted to suggest how fire creates uncanny time and space; how it disorients and dissolves form. In his book, *Reading the Ruins*, the literary historian Leo Mellor, puts it this way, as we have on screen: "fire allows disorientation to be part of the material subject ... Issues concerning representation, readability and verisimilitude ... become problematic." ³² This unmooring of space, form, and subjectivity is also seen in the prose of Sansom, who is quoted for a second time and who evoked this experience in his published stories in the 1940s: "one is encompassed by disintegration ... enclosed by material that is warping, blistering, weakening, sagging and falling". ³³

Above this swamp a fireman seems to float in mid-mist. If you had stood below and looked up, you would have thought he was actually riding the steam ... straddling with the grip of his oil-skinned knees the white cloud itself. ³⁴

The second Sansom quote accompanies our first encounter with the facing page and the black outline of a firefighter, set against the almost abstract forms of a blazing roof (Fig. 6). This image fascinated us. Nearly half of the page is in darkness; large areas of deep, black ink that make the space difficult to read. Where is this man standing and where is the photographer

positioned? The impetus towards abstraction from the beginning to the end of this photo-sequence is so striking, as the narrative is overtaken by shadows and silhouettes, formlessness, and negative space. It is an image not so much of humanity and heroism, as of the night, the fire, and destruction. The outline of the torso of the firefighter could be a corpse, with its strange withered hand. The edges of the figure are blurred and grainy against the lights of the flames; photographic documentation has given way to a poetic and deeply expressive visual language.



Figure 6.

Bert Hardy, The Man on the Ladder, from "Fire-Fighters!", *Picture Post*, 1 February 1941, 15, photographs. Collection of Getty Images Hulton Archive. Digital image courtesy of Getty Images Hulton Archive (All rights reserved).

This final photograph is a dream image in which blackness and negative space create meaning and feeling. Hardy transforms the weight of this destruction into the sublime. As media critic Sharon Sliwinski has commented in relation to Lee Miller's wartime photography: "Through such

images spectators can glimpse not only all that air war seeks to destroy, but simultaneously a means to preserve human imagination, and with it, life.”³⁵ The story’s momentum from figuration towards abstraction and dematerialisation was one of our key research questions: how could the camera film the blackness of that final photograph; how long could we hold a shot of its dark, grainy foreground? How, through duration, movement, and focus, and a near-obsessive attention to the grain of the image, could we suggest and represent its richness and complexity? Our aim was to show how Hardy’s photography worked through the trauma of air war, but also to make the spectator *feel* this. Hence, the combination of the photographic sublime with a heroic stoicism from the song referenced in the article’s text: “Keep Your Thumbs Up and Say It’s Ticketty Boo”. From which, eventually and with relief, we return to the faces of firefighters. To dozens and dozens of faces, individual and full of character, packed tightly together in a collective image of wartime resilience. This was not taken by Hardy and was not part of the photo-story, but was captured by an unknown photographer and featured in a contemporary publication. Here, Todd’s subtle, distant audio mix of song and found sounds comes to the fore, with an affective force of considerable and concluding intensity. And in the use of this song, the distinctive materiality of post-war British photojournalism is matched by the period grain of music, sound, and voices. The contemporary recording of this song by the British actor Jack Warner, uncovers a register of accent, melody, tonality, and attitude that is as expressive as its photographic counterpart.

After the War was Over

Bert Hardy was a storyteller and one of his favourite stories from the *Picture Post* days was about the making of his photo-story “Life in the Elephant”. He tells it in his autobiography and it is retold in an article in the *Listener* and in a BBC documentary.³⁶ Hardy describes how he and Bert Lloyd arrived in the Elephant and Castle on a dreary November day and wandered around trying to get an idea for the story: “We walked around, and I did a few shots—nothing that meant anything, but sort of using the camera.”³⁷ This style of ambulatory photojournalism reiterates Hardy’s view of seeing the world through the camera lens, surveying and getting a feel of the place by taking photographs. They wander around the back streets until they hear the voice of a woman asking to have her photograph taken. She becomes their guide to the Elephant, taking them through narrow passageways and yards, telling them where to find things and giving them ideas. “After that,” Hardy says “it was just smooth; it went so smooth, it was unbelievable.”

Life in the Elephant as a film essay explores the sense of time and place, as it is evoked in the relationship between text and image. Historical maps and materials from Southwark Local History Library and Archive are collaged with

Hardy's photographs, together with a short section of footage shot in the area for the film, to create a topographic framing for this highly spatialised story. The atmospheres of the images are interrogated, and the faces are scrutinised. But the strongest theme of the film is narrative.

Hardy's award for this story was in the "Photo-Sequence" category; it was commended for its command of storytelling as well as its aesthetic qualities. There are, however, many layers and styles of narrative in relation to this story that we explore in the film. Primarily, it is a story about a place and the people who live there, and many of the photographs focus on faces, character, and clothes. On the first page, there is a photograph of people queuing for eels. The camera is positioned inside the shop, looking out towards the street. Hardy captures the sturdy resilience of these people in their overcoats and hats; these are atmospheric portraits, for example, the woman at the head of the queue, with her headscarf resolutely knotted under her chin, with her basket and National Health spectacles. This is the atmosphere of post-war austerity, caught in the resigned and no-nonsense expressions: a mixture of patience, greed, and hunger that makes them ogle the eels and scrutinise the weighing scales. Faces, again, are so expressive. Take the horse dealers on the following page. As usual, Hardy took a number of shots of the crowd of men at the Elephant & Castle Horse Repository. The one that is selected frames and composes the two men, catches them as they bargain, tussle, over the prices of horses. Heavy overcoats faded and worn at the seams, a trilby pushed back on the head at an angle, a stray lock of hair, a neckerchief, and a quizzical expression begin to construct this world of street trading, and of banter that could, at any moment, switch to aggression. The caption acknowledges the power of these faces: "Faces to laugh at. Faces to wink at. Faces that hit you like a blow." ³⁸

The story is established in a register of black, white, and greytone; this, the text tells us, is the distinctive colour of the Elephant and Castle: "a rich grey-black. The backstreet bricks are sooted by the wash and drift of railway smoke; and in the centre ... a jungle of black iron railings." Greyscale is here a tone and an atmosphere that both the text and the photography draw on to create a unifying theme. Photographs dominate the pages and create a visual rhythm in each of the openings and across the article.

Contact sheets tell part of the story of Hardy's work on this piece. The sheets contain multiple images of all the photographs from the shoot, arranged horizontally across the page and are part of the practice of small-format cameras (Leica and Rolleiflex) and flexible film, enabling a sequence of consecutive shots. With this technology, photographers:

no longer discovered their photographs one at a time, but always in the form of a chain from which a selection could be made—the strip of the sheet then being no more than the collection of attempts arranged in the chronological order of their production.

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Now the photograph is not the “only” but the “best” of many and the images reproduced in *Picture Post* can be seen as part of a sequence of photographs of the subject recorded on the contact sheets. Photography, thus, has another temporal dimension, the unfolding time of the shoot and the movement, in this instance, of Hardy through the spaces of the Elephant. ⁴⁰

In our film of the Elephant, we wanted to work with the images left on the contact sheet and the act of judgement involved in choosing the “one” to reproduce. Contact sheets record the dud photographs as well as the good ones; the blanks and the overexposed shots that Henri Cartier-Bresson described as “erasures ... detritus”. ⁴¹ In the film, we work with contact sheets relating to two of the published photographs. The first is a small image in the bottom left corner of page 13, showing two women sharing a magazine at a news-stand. “Life is real, life is earnest. But there’s always sports books, dream books, books of true confessions.” We used the familiar, although anachronistic sound of a camera shutter and filmed the sequence of photographs at a speed which gives it a movement and demonstrates the number of pictures that Hardy took of the women and the subtle differences between each shot. ⁴² The second image is well known and frequently reproduced. Within Hardy’s narrative of the genesis of the story, it plays an important role; he describes how, through a window, he sees a couple sitting on a sofa and goes into the room and asks to photograph them: “and, somehow or other, took this picture, which became a famous picture.” ⁴³ The contact sheets fill in the absences contained in that phrase “somehow or other”. What they show is a large number of shots, working on slight changes in the pose of the couple and then Hardy turns his camera lens around the room and registers two additional figures: another woman and a small child, sitting at a nearby table. The addition of these two figures has a radical effect on the meaning of the subject and its subsequent historiography. The caption reads: “In Thousands of Similar Basements Live Tens of Thousands of Similar Folk: Yet Each is Different” and the couple, in their embrace and illuminated by the shaft of light from the window on the right, seem to represent an intense and private relationship. In his autobiography, Hardy endorsed this reading by identifying the woman as a prostitute and the man as a Canadian who had been released from prison the night before. But the woman and baby shift this mood of post-coital reverie

and the room becomes cluttered and overcrowded. The contact sheets give a temporal depth to Hardy's work, complicating the layers of narrative and Hardy's claim that: "it was just smooth; it went so smooth."

Conclusion

The making of these two films seems to us like the very beginning of the work rather than the end. We feel that we have just started to explore the many aspects of Hardy's photography through the methods of videographic criticism. We have worked across film, photography, and criticism and, in this way, our work could be described as intermedial, or even multimedia. Its purpose has been to incorporate still and moving images, sound, and text in order to create a new knowledge of Bert Hardy's *Picture Post* photography, and also to explore the possibilities of this method for our disciplines of art and media history. We are both convinced of the significance of videographic work in the production of new and vivid explorations of visual media in their historical settings. We have looked closely at the photographic archive, more closely, we are certain, than if we were writing only and have reached an increased understanding and admiration of the photographs and their use in *Picture Post*. The production of art/media history in a multimedia form is one which changes the relationship between the object of study and the language of inquiry.

Footnotes

- ¹ Bert Hardy, *Bert Hardy: My Life* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1985), 185.
- ² Laura Mulvey, "Delaying Cinema: An Interview with Laura Mulvey", *Aniki: Portuguese Journal of the Moving Image* 1, no. 1 (2014): 90. doi:[10.14591/aniki.v1n1.58](https://doi.org/10.14591/aniki.v1n1.58).
- ³ Catherine Grant, "Dissolves of Passion: Materially Thinking Through Editing in Videographic Compilation", in Christian Keathley and Jason Mittell (eds), *The Videographic Essay: Criticism in Sound and Image*, Kino-Agora, 9 (Montreal: Caboose, 2016), 46.
- ⁴ On videographic criticism, see Christian Keathley, Jason Mittell and Catherine Grant (eds), *The Videographic Essay: Practice and Pedagogy* (Montreal: Caboose/Rutgers University Press, 2016).
- ⁵ Christian Keathley and Jason Mittell, "The Videographic Essay: Criticism in Sound and Image", in Christian Keathley and Jason Mittell (eds), *The Videographic Essay*, 8.
- ⁶ See, for example, *Flames of Passion: The Other Side of British Cinema* (UK, 2007, *Arena*; dir. Mick Conefrey, prods. Michael Jackson, John Wyver); and Lynda Nead, *The Tiger in the Smoke: Art and Culture in Post-War Britain* (New Haven, CT: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2017).
- ⁷ Grant, "Dissolves of Passion", 47-48, quoting Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation", in Susan Sontag (ed.) *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001), 14.
- ⁸ Catherine Grant, "How Long is a Piece of String? On the Practice, Scope and Value of Videographic Film Studies and Criticism", [emphases in the original], presentation given in Frankfurt, 23-24 November 2013, online at: <http://reframe.sussex.ac.uk/audiovisualexamples/frankfurt-papers/catherine-grant/>.
- ⁹ Michael Witt, "Taking Stock: Two Decades of Teaching the History, Theory, and Practice of Audiovisual Film Criticism", *NECSUS: European Journal of Media Studies* (Spring 2017), online at: <https://necsus-ejms.org/taking-stock-two-decades-of-teaching-the-history-theory-and-practice-of-audiovisual-film-criticism/>.
- ¹⁰ For a useful definition, see Essay Film Festival website, <http://www.essayfilmfestival.com/>.
- ¹¹ Timothy Corrigan, *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, after Marker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.
- ¹² In addition to Corrigan, *The Essay Film*, see also Laura Rascaroli, *How the Essay Film Thinks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Nora M. Alter and Timothy Corrigan (eds), *Essays on the Essay Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

- 13 Christian Keathley, "La camera-stylo: Notes on Video Criticism and Cinephilia", in Andrew Klevan and Alex Clayton (eds), *The Language and Style of Film Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2011), 179.
- 14 Both film-makers have made a considerable number of films, but for well-known examples of their work with still images, see *La Jetée* (France, 1962; dir. Chris Marker); and *Salut les Cubains* (France/Cuba, 1971; dir. Agnès Varda).
- 15 David Company, "Introduction // When to be Fast? When to be Slow?", in David Company (ed.), *The Cinematic* (London: Whitechapel, 2007), 12; see also David Green and Joanna Lowry (eds), *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image* (Manchester: Cornerhouse, 2006); David Company, *Photography and Cinema* (London: Reaktion, 2008); and Karen Beckman and Jean Ma (eds), *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).
- 16 For a reflection on time and the opposition of photography and film, see Peter Wollen, "Fire and Ice", in David Company (ed.), *The Cinematic*, 1st edn (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 1984), 108–113.
- 17 See Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second* (London: Reaktion, 2006).
- 18 See Tom Hopkinson, *Of This Our Time: A Journalist's Story 1905–1950* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 239–242.
- 19 See "How *Picture Post* is Produced", *Picture Post*, 24 December 1938, 44–52; this reveals the extraordinary complexity of the production process of photogravure images, which included hand-drawn layouts, re-photographing and retouching of negatives, the production of gelatine copies, and their transfer to copper cylinders for the creation of the gravure surface.
- 20 See, for example, Hardy, *Bert Hardy*; Hopkinson, *Of This Our Time*; and Anne Scott-James, *Sketches From A Life* (London: Michael Joseph, 1993).
- 21 See, for example, *The Life and Death of Picture Post* (1977; BBC Wales, dir. John Ormond); *Bert Hardy's World A Portrait* (1987; Third Eye Productions, dir. Peter West); *Great Picture Chase* (1987; BBC, dir. Hannah Rothschild).
- 22 Catherine Grant's formulation remains the most useful statement of this methodology, see "Dissolves of Passion".
- 23 Scott-James, *Sketches*, 105. She adds: "On his travels, Bert left many bruised hearts behind, so great was his skill in the art of chatting up girls" (106). The gender dynamics of work for *Picture Post* are a fascinating and overlooked aspect of its history. Juliet Gardner, *"Picture Post" Women* (London: Collins and Brown, 1993) offers an initial examination of women as producers and subjects of *Picture Post*. For details of his biography, see Hardy, *Bert Hardy*. Sam Weller is a street-wise Cockney character in Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*.
- 24 Stuart Hall, "The Social Eye of *Picture Post*", *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* no. 2 (Spring 1972): 72. See also "The Life and Death of *Picture Post*", *Cambridge Review* no. 91/92 (19 February 1971): 140–144.
- 25 Scott-James, *Sketches*, 79. Hardy, *Bert Hardy*, 25.
- 26 His first published story was "East End at War", *Picture Post*, 28 September 1940.
- 27 "Fire-Fighters!", 9 and 15.
- 28 See Maureen Hall, *The London Blitz September 1940–May 1941* (London: Chapman, 1990). *Picture Post* frames the beginning of the article in terms of the timing of the recent raids: "For a fortnight one of our photographers slept every night at a fire station. Nothing happened The Nazis were laying off London. Then came the storm..."
- 29 See the cast of the Ealing Studios film about the Fire Service in the Blitz, *The Bells Go Down* (UK, 1943; dir. Basil Dearden), and the uses of facial close-ups in Humphrey Jennings' *I Was a Fireman* (UK, 1943), the original cut of *Fires Were Started* (UK, 1943; dir. Humphrey Jennings).
- 30 See Readers' Letter, *Picture Post*, 15 February 1941, 3. For example, "Your cover is most inspiring. It would make a remarkable coloured picture. Could it not be used to portray the unflinching spirit of the Fire Brigade and British people?"
- 31 Anon., *Fire Over London 1940–41* (London: Hutchinson and Co. for the London County Council, 1941), 4 and 5; and Brian Winston, *Fires Were Started* (London: British Film Institute, 1999).
- 32 Leo Mellor, *Reading the Ruins: Modernism, Bombsites and British Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 50.
- 33 William Sansom, "Journey Into Smoke", in *Something Terrible, Something Lovely* (London: Hogarth Press, 1948), 201.
- 34 William Sansom, "The Witnesses", in *Fireman Flower and Other Stories* (London: Hogarth Press, 1944), 82.
- 35 Sharon Sliwinski, "Air War and Dream: Photographing the London Blitz", *American Imago* 68, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 513.
- 36 Hardy, *Bert Hardy*, 104–106; "How Hulton and the Hungarian Made Picture History", *Listener*, 1 September 1977, 262; and *The Life and Death of Picture Post* (1977; BBC Wales, dir. John Ormond).
- 37 Hardy, "How Hulton and the Hungarian Made Picture History", 262.
- 38 "Life in the Elephant", *Picture Post*, 8 January 1949, 11.
- 39 Olivier Lugon and Laurent Guido, "Introduction", in Laurent Guido and Olivier Lugon (eds), *Between Still and Moving Images* (New Barnet: John Libbey, 2012), 323. They quote Andreas Feininger, *Fotografische Gestaltung* (Harzburg: Dr Walther Heering Verlag, 1937), who describes the ability to shoot multiple photographs in quick succession of the same subject as "a truly revolutionary breakthrough" (324).
- 40 For an excellent account of contact sheets, see Kristen Lubben, *Magnum Contact Sheets* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2017).
- 41 As cited in Lubben, *Magnum Contact Sheets*, 18.

- 42 For a fascinating example of a film-maker using contact sheets, see Raymond Depardon, *Contacts*, 1990, www.youtube.com/watch?v=luGuHXgbHVs, in which the horizontal strip of contact prints moves at a continuous speed in front of the camera, with an accompanying voice-over.
- 43 Hardy, "How Hulton and the Hungarian Made Picture History", 262.

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