CINEMATOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TOWARDS THE ECO-SUBLIME LANDSCAPE –
A PRACTICE-LED ENQUIRY

ADAM D. J. LAITY

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ABSTRACT

CINEMATOGRAPHIC APPROACHES TOWARDS THE ECO-SUBLIME LANDSCAPE –
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This thesis investigates visual representations of the evolving nature of sublime landscapes through the practice of digital cinematography. The enquiry is contextualised through discussion of philosophical understandings of the sublime – Longinus, Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant – and analysis of historical visual representations of sublime landscapes, from painting (J.M.W. Turner, Caspar David Friedrich), photography (Edward Burtynsky, Chris Burkard) and cinematography (Andrei Tarkovsky, Werner Herzog, Emmanuel Lubezki). The thesis is specifically concerned with the temporal and physical dimensions that cinematography brings to the study of sublime landscapes.

The enquiry is based on detailed autoethnographic field-notes made during filming in various locations, principally Dartmoor and the Arctic. They make explicit the tacit or embodied knowledge drawn from my cinematographic practice by exploring the technological and practical aspects concerning how sublime landscapes might be captured (including the use of drones and camera stabilization) and my own emotional experiences of these landscapes, drawing on a turn towards affect.

The understanding gained from my cinematographic practice is explored through the construction of two essay films, whose blend of words and images offer the most appropriate way to represent the insights gained, and in the thesis artefact, the film-poem *A Short Film About Ice*. These practice elements contain the central argument of the thesis and its contribution to knowledge: that the global threat posed by anthropogenic climate change is now so pervasive that the contemporary sublime landscape must be reconceptualised as an eco-sublime landscape, representable most affectively through cinematography. Moreover, there is no affective distance, temporally or physically, between the eco-sublime moment and the representation of that moment.

The enquiry concludes that humans can no longer afford to think of ourselves as separate from landscapes and the nature they represent. This recognition, the thesis argues, must be reflected in how the eco-sublime is now visualised, which needs to encompass our interconnectivity with the natural world and a heightened sense of responsibility towards it.

'If we opened people up, we'd find landscapes.'

- **Agnès Varda,** *The Beaches of Agnès* **(Varda, 2008)**

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Seven years is a long time, and a few pages far too small a space to adequately thank all those who have supported me on this journey. Here are a few.

INTRODUCTION

We think by feeling. What is there to know?

I hear my being dance from ear to ear.

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do

To you and me; so take the lively air,

And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.

What falls away is always. And is near.

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

I learn by going where I have to go.

- *Excerpt from Theodore Roethke's 1953 poem 'The Waking'* (Roethke, 1975)

Journal language has lost its soul, and somehow this has become a badge of honor – that a creative text belongs with poetry and cannot be rigorously academic. For those of us in the arts and humanities we need to show that writing matters… writing with feeling and imagination.

- Tim Ingold (Ingold, 2015)

This enquiry explores historical and contemporary approaches towards representing profound human interactions with nature through the framing of landscapes and the concept of the sublime in particular. At a time when humans are starting to come to terms with the impacts of a world beset by climate breakdown, what can the artists of today learn from visual sublime landscapes of the past? How have different mediums altered approaches to the subject? What do modern digital image-making tools offer artists that they have never had before? And how can contemporary artists address the role of ecology and climate emergency in terms of contemporary eco-sublime landscapes?

This enquiry is addressed through three interrelated research questions:

• *RQ1: Artistic Traditions – Poetry, Painting and the Photographic Sublime Landscape:* *What can I, as a digital cinematographer, learn from the study of how sublime landscapes have been represented in art, from the approaches of previous artists in my own medium of cinematography and other mediums?*

• *RQ2: The Cinematographic Sublime Landscape: How did the advent of cinematography alter the capture and representation of the sublime landscape? And what is the impact of new digital technology – specifically looking at Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) or 'drone' technology for aerial cinematography; the impact on weight, affordability and increased accessibility of smaller sensor sizes; and the role of new compact camera stabilization systems – on contemporary representations of sublime landscapes cinematographically?*

• *RQ3: The Artistic, Cultural and Ethical Impact/ Affect of the Cinematographic Eco-Sublime Landscape: How is the contemporary cinematographic sublime landscape driven by themes of environmental and ecological disaster? And what role can the contemporary digital cinematographer play in affectively realising this 'eco-sublime'?*

Essentially concerned with heightened emotional responses – awe or wonder and terror – to human experiences that are too complex or unfathomable to express in words, the sublime is a term that attempts to describe the indescribable, both in real life and in artistic representations of such moments. A complex subject that has been the subject of philosophical, cultural and artistic debate for many hundreds of years, as a thing 'beyond reason' and hence driven by emotion the sublime is a deeply subjective concept. As such, it has been the focus of visual artists who have attempted to express the sublime through their painting, photography or cinematography, very often through the depiction of landscapes where natural phenomena threaten to overwhelm or destroy 'the human', as I will go on to explore in my first essay film, *A Contextual Review of the Sublime Landscape in Visual Art*.

The sublime experience can be set out schematically as the following, which develops Christine L. Oravec's definition of the historical sublime (Oravec, 1996, p.67) discussed further in the contextualising *Essay Film One*:

1. A human subject encounters an object or an occurrence that is larger and greater than the self. This is the initial perspective.
2. There is an emotional reaction – potentially awe, terror or a combination of the two – as the human subject recognizes the greatness of the object and the relative weakness or limits of the self.
3. There is a sense of revelation or exaltation, as the human subject identifies with the object's greatness and is conceptually or psychically enlarged through the experience. This gives a newly felt perspective.

In this way the sublime is a process encompassing a profound or even transcendent experience through which a human is forced to reposition her perspective, which may have shifted considerably depending on how acutely the sublime moment has affected her. It is an intensity of experience that can literally change the way she sees the world. Importantly, in historical terms, the sublime moment could transform from something terrible and life-threatening in the first-hand experience, to something beautiful, thrilling or even enjoyable in the experience of the representation of that sublime moment. This is fundamentally because of the temporal and physical distance between those two events, the proximity of the original and the remoteness of the representation.

Each renewed interest in the visual sublime over time has reflected a shift in the 'conditions of visuality' (Emmelhainz, 2015), i.e. the technology and systems by which we produce and disseminate images culturally. This thesis will consider key practitioners in painting, photography and cinema, arriving at contemporary, almost exclusively digital, visualisations of landscape through cinematography, reportage and social media. It will explore how any present-day iteration of the sublime landscape visually should be viewed in direct relation to the anthropogenic climate change that is directly affecting every aspect of the natural world, hence the emergence of an eco-sublime landscape.

I will argue that this eco-sublime landscape is already present in the public consciousness, but that it is predominantly linked to bombastic Hollywood spectacle found in disaster, superhero and post-apocalyptic movies, as well as sensational news footage, both of which are rooted in the classical sublime concept that references shock and awe, often followed by parity with or even mastery over nature. The effect that this has on the viewer is one of distance or separation from the object (human or non-human) or subject matter depicted, rather than immersion within or empathy for objects or subjects depicted or represented.

This thesis builds an argument that a more open, empathetic and inclusive approach to visualising the eco-sublime through cinematography can have a different affect on the image-makers in the field, and the subsequent viewers of such images. This argument is explored at length in the thesis artefact, the film-poem *A Short Film About Ice*[1], and further elucidated in the four-part *Essay Film Two: Walking on Ice and Other Field Studies*. The central argument of the thesis can be outlined through a reformulation of the classical sublime experience described by Oravec earlier:

1. A human subject encounters an object or an occurrence that is larger and greater than the self. This is the initial perspective.
2. There is an emotional reaction – potentially awe, terror or a combination of the two – as the human subject recognizes the greatness of the object and the relative weakness or limits of the self. Importantly, there is a letting go of ego and 'the self' as the human comprehends the vulnerability of her position.
3. There is a conscious conceptual shift away from the historically masculine sublime, seeking mastery over nature, towards a more open, empathetic and potentially feminine sublime. This new iteration of the concept seeks, with compassion and humility, a sense of inter-connectedness with nature. In this eco-sublime landscape moment, the vulnerable human realises a vital connection with

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[1] This film was shot on location on and around the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard in the High Arctic, on a residency over the summer of 2017. As I will go on to discuss, this was my major research trip and the culmination of a series of field studies in other locations.

the object and a conscious sense of responsibility for how the object is behaving, through a tacit ratiocinative understanding of anthropological climate change.

4. There is a revelation as the human identifies with the object on a transcendent / spiritual / metaphysical level and experiences a conceptual or psychic sense of equilibrium with the object. This gives a newly felt, relational perspective.

Importantly, stage three of this re-conceptualisation requires the deep emotional engagement of both the cinematographer in the field and the audience of the completed cinematic work: vulnerability, humility, openness and awareness, brought into the landscape and into the cinema, are all affective tools through which the eco-sublime can be experienced, felt and considered. Most vital to this argument, is the cinematographer's realisation through the medium of cinematography that there is now no distance between that which makes the landscape eco-sublime in actuality and the subsequent eco-sublime representation: climate change is everywhere and effects all things, albeit to a lesser or greater extent. In this way, the comfort and safety of temporal and physical distance is replaced with proximity and immediacy, and we are no longer spectators but active participants. This is the crux of Donna J. Haraway's vital work around the idea of *Staying with the Trouble* (Haraway, 2016) and the sense that a consistent, even constant, engagement with a problem that has the scale of the climate crisis, is preferable and potentially more effective than a position of settled or fixed 'understanding'.

This research also argues that this re-drawn compassionate eco-sublime experience is a process interfused with my approaching and representing the landscape cinematographically, a medium that provides new ways to engage visually with the impacts of anthropogenic climate change, specifically how 'we, the human' see ourselves in relation to the natural world so negatively impacted by the climate crisis. This indicates an important shift away from humans seeing ourselves, and therefore our actions, as being separate to nature or somehow distanced from it, as if landscape functions simply as a backdrop. To the contrary, this enquiry suggests that humans need to understand and visualise themselves as being within the landscape and as an intrinsic part of the natural world that landscape represents. Indeed, it will provide evidence of

cinematography being the medium best-suited to capturing and representing such an eco-sublime, specifically through its treatment of physical and temporal dimensions, i.e. whereas the mediums of painting and photography represent the sublime as a single moment in time and space, cinematography enables a physical and temporal movement towards, through and beyond a single eco-sublime moment of crisis in the landscape.

Furthermore, given the sublime as a concept is so subjective and difficult to pin down, cinematography as a research tool gives me the opportunity, and the challenge, of showing my journey at the same time as telling the viewer about *the process:* my thoughts, feelings and findings along the way. Vivian Sobchack argues that 'More than any other medium of human communication, the moving picture makes itself sensuously and sensibly manifest as the expression of experience by experience. The film is an act of seeing that makes itself seen, and act of hearing that makes itself heard, an act of physical and reflective movement that makes itself reflexively felt and understood.' (Sobchack 1992, p.3). This thesis considers how cinematography lends itself to subjective observations, specifically when it comes to understanding what the cinematographer[2] has learned through his approaches.

Alongside my cinematography I have collected evocative autoethnographic field notes, produced both on location and after the fact, which have fed into the practice elements of this thesis. I will go on to detail in the written Methodology chapter how evocative autoethnography is no one thing - it is dynamic, and its terms are negotiable. In this enquiry it is fundamentally autobiographical, deeply reflexive and self-consciously analytical, in terms of my critical writing but particularly when applied to my cinematography practice: it gives me the opportunity and the challenge to be expressive in how I talk about and represent my research in terms that are both intellectual and emotional.

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[2] I should note here the difference between the terms 'cinematographer' and 'director of photography' (DP) as far as I am concerned, namely that the former is concerned with everything relating to the cinematic image, whereas the latter is a head of the camera department on a film production concerned categorically with the control and capture of the image. I consider myself a cinematographer, in the Bressonian sense of someone 'writing with images in movement and with sounds', producing 'creative filmmaking which thoroughly exploits the nature of film' and is not to be confused solely with the work of the cameraman (Bresson, 1975, p.2).

These aspects are then combined with my theoretical reading and contextual examination[3] of other visual practices to culminate in two related but quite different audio / visual forms of work, namely the analytical and authorial voice of my two film essays, and the self-reflexive and lyrical tone of my film-poem, *A Short Film About Ice*. Both of these forms, the essay film and film-poem, do similar but separate things, just as written essays and poems do, but within this thesis both are designed to be simultaneously affecting and academically rigorous. What is more, they are critical and creative tools that use the practice itself as the medium. Following Sobchack, I contend that the best way to talk about cinematography is through cinematography itself.

To this end, this thesis represents a practice-led enquiry into cinematographic approaches towards the contemporary eco-sublime landscape, specifically concerned with the personal or tacit knowledge derived from the processes and experience of being a cinematographer on a journey through landscapes. Roethke's reflexive poem *The Waking* quoted in the epigraph, helps to initiate an understanding of the concept of such a journey, specifically through 'learning by going' which suggests an experience or process through which knowledge – 'what is there to know?' – can be found. This learning by going became the crux of my practice-led research, the opportunity to explore and express the affective and original knowledge that can derive from adopting such a practical approach towards a subject. Importantly, the 'approaches' of my thesis title speaks to both the physical or geographical approaches, with my camera through landscapes – variously definable as either beautiful, sublime, or eco-sublime landscapes, according to definitions laid out in *Essay Film One* – but also my intellectual, emotional and theoretical approaches towards a reconceptualization of a contemporary eco-sublime landscape, realisable only through my being a cinematographer.

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[3] My reading and analysis of practice over the seven years of this enquiry has been deep and wide-ranging. It feels important to note that I have tried to be as fastidious as I possibly can with referencing and attributing concepts, thinking, art works and writing to the correct authors and makers. For the record the finished thesis has been triple-checked against my notes and texts, and has also been thoroughly vetted through UWE's plagiarism checking software SafeAssign.

This plurality of approaches is also an acknowledgement of the multiplicity of routes that is at the heart of the turn towards affect[4] that my research has taken, so much so that I use it as a key methodological tool that empowers me to examine critically sensations and emotions when I am practicing cinematography, and so grounds my subjective feelings about my processes and experiences as sources of knowledge. Michael Hardt gets to the heart of the concept of affects by suggesting that 'they illuminate… both our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it, along with the relationship between these two powers'. (Hardt, 2007, p.ix). He extends this concept by drawing on the writing of philosopher Baruch De Spinoza: 'The greater our power to be affected, he posits, the greater our power to act.' (*Ibid.*, p.x).

If we consider affects within my various approaches of 'learning by going' – physical, geographical, emotional, intellectual, theoretical – they are concerned with the idea that at any point on a journey there is an almost limitless number of potential movements to make and directions to go in (see *Methodology* Chapter). Roethke's 'shaking', that keeps us steady, further alludes to the vibrational and resonant power of affect found in certain landscapes within my enquiry. Such affective potentiality is also at the heart of the editing process in cinematography (See *Essay Film Two: Part Three)*.

I interpret Roethke's 'thinking by feeling' as the idea of experience being led by the emotions but informed by an intellectual underpinning: the conceptual framework necessary to articulate that emotion. This concept is what Michael Polanyi refers to in his book on the subject as *Personal Knowledge* (Polanyi, 1958) and what Ingold calls 'tacit knowledge' (Ingold, 2015), the idea that a phenomenological approach towards a subject requires an awareness and understanding of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual, and how they work together to create experience. I included Tim Ingold's comment on academic writing in the epigraph of this introduction precisely because it has functioned as something of a provocation for my work: to research and communicate

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[4] Some writers in the field of affect theory offer the phrase 'the affective turn' or 'a turn towards affect' to suggest the widespread adoption of affect as a concept. This reflects the diversity of opinion on the concept, and points to no one clear or holistic 'theory' of affect. The methodology section on affect that follows is concerned with those aspects which are useful specifically to my enquiry.

on a concept as complex and subjective as the sublime, I need my writing to be creative, imaginative and poetic at the same time as being rigorously academic. This is the challenge of practice-led research.

'Thinking by feeling' also alludes to the idea that these approaches are led by an artistic practice. As mentioned, I will go on to demonstrate the predominant affective or emotional experience of a landscape as a cinematographer in the field, followed closely by a ratiocinative response and how this is mirrored in the experience of a viewer or audience of the subsequent representation of those initial experiences through cinema.

The Waking embodies these themes through its evocation of time, movement, affect, sensation, subjectivity, consciousness and mortality: these are all things that will be explored further in the following pages and in my films. Time and again I've revisited these stanzas that invoke some of the complexities of my subject, and practice-led research in general, which directly link to my research and provoke the deep questions that are at the heart of my enquiry.

How does one 'learn by going' and how does this reflect the importance of getting lost within the landscape? If we do 'think by feeling', what indeed 'is there to know' as we journey through landscape? To what degree do I think through my process as a cinematographer, or feel through it? How do the practical, affective, emotional and the intellectual interact in my research, and how equally are they weighted in terms of 'knowledge' or 'meaning'?

What *does* 'Great Nature' have to do to us, especially at this time when we as a species are doing so much damage to it? What can an exploration of the cinematographic eco-sublime landscape teach us and how can we learn to listen to nature through empathetic practical, creative and physical exploration of the environment and landscape? How essential is my subjective experience in terms of my understanding of place? And how does that understanding impact on how I then choose to interact with that place cinematographically? What is my responsibility to landscape, as a cinematographer and as a human? What is this 'shaking' that 'keeps me steady'? Is it the anticipation of this

eco-sublime moment in the landscape that I am searching for and moving towards? How do I keep myself mindful and open to such an elusive experience, aware that as I journey through the landscape it could occur at any moment? And how then do I extract knowledge from this profound experience, particularly through my practice, in order that it impacts on relevant critical discussions within cinematography, culture, ecology and activism, and especially the apex of where art meets science with the distinct aim of exploring and disseminating ideas on key aspects of human interaction with environment, particularly anthropogenic climate change?

I will end this introduction by returning to my key research questions, laying out briefly how I will be addressing them, and at what point in my thesis, addressing as I do so the mode through which each will be explored.

• *RQ1: Artistic Traditions- Poetry, Painting and the Photographic Sublime Landscape: What can I, as a digital cinematographer, learn from the study of how sublime landscapes have been represented in art, from the approaches of previous artists in my own medium of cinematography and other mediums?*

This question will be addressed primarily in *Essay Film One: A Contextual Review of the Sublime Landscape in Visual Art*. Starting with the philosophical foundations of the concept in the writings of Longinus (circa 1st century AD), Edmund Burke (1729-1797), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), this essay film goes on to examine the visual approaches to the subject by painters J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) and Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840); photographers Edward Burtynsky (1955-) and Chris Burkard (1986-); and the cinematography of Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986), Werner Herzog (1942-) and Emmanuel Lubezki (1964-). Within this essay film, I will develop an understanding of the medium specificity of these artforms in representing the sublime landscape, including those elements they share and those that are unique to each.

By analysing conditions of visuality, i.e., the impact of technology and culture on the representations of the sublime over time, as well as the difficulties inherent within the concept – namely its intrinsically subjective nature, as well as the overbearingly

masculine perspective associated with it historically – *Essay Film One* moves on to discuss the rise of the eco-sublime as 'entertainment' in mainstream cinema, as well as its place in reportage and critical writing.

• *RQ2: The Cinematographic Sublime Landscape: How did the advent of cinematography alter the capture and representation of the sublime landscape? And what is the impact of new digital technology- specifically looking at Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) or 'drone' technology for aerial cinematography; the impact on weight, affordability and increased accessibility of smaller sensor sizes; and the role of new compact camera stabilization systems- on contemporary representations of sublime landscapes cinematographically?*

In addition to the detailed discussion of Tarkovsky, Herzog and Lubezki in *Essay Film One*, this question is addressed most fully in my research artefact, the film-poem *A Short Film About Ice*. This represents the culmination of my field research, embodying the technological i.e., use of drones and camera gimbals, practical, conceptual and instinctual cinematographic approaches towards fragile Arctic landscapes. These approaches, alongside the tacit and embodied knowledge garnered through my practice, is deconstructed and examined in detail in the four parts of *Essay Film Two: Walking on Ice and Other Field Studies*, in which I start to draw out key points of understanding derived from the Arctic and other varied landscapes I've explored cinematographically in the course of my research.

• *RQ3: The Artistic, Cultural and Ethical Impact / Affect of the Cinematographic Eco-Sublime Landscape: Is the contemporary cinematographic sublime landscape driven by themes of environmental and ecological disaster? And what role can the contemporary digital cinematographer play in affectively realizing this 'eco-sublime'?*

This final research question is addressed in the last section of *Essay Film One* where I discuss contemporary sublime landscapes in mainstream culture (mainstream cinema, reportage and social media). It is also touched on in more detail throughout *Essay Film Two*, but is most directly represented in *A Short Film About Ice*. My exploration of the

cinematographic eco-sublime is summarised and reflected on in a written concluding chapter, which includes discussion of the next steps and future work within my research.

METHODOLOGY

My research focuses on cinematographic approaches towards, and subsequent representations, of my sublime landscape experiences, particularly the conceptual eco-sublime landscape experience. Therefore, I need a methodological framework that will enable me to explore the nature of that experience in multidimensional ways: as theory, as affect and as a reflective process of practice.

In *Essay Film Two* I will argue that my capacity to render a representation of this eco-sublime experience through my generative practice of cinematography in *A Short Film About Ice* was only possible through the triangulation of autoethnography, a turn towards affect and the modality of the essay film and film-poem. These methodologies enabled me to consider reflexively, contextualise and reconstitute such profound 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'[5] (Coleridge & Wordsworth, 1967, p.251) through editing footage and writing the narration, ultimately presenting both as evidence of tacit and accumulated personal knowledge conceived and rendered through practice.

In this chapter I will contextualise these three methodologies as productive approaches that enable me as a practice-led researcher to explore and discuss subjects, especially the eco-sublime landscape experience, which are at times deeply subjective and emotional. Such an approach requires the capacity to communicate themes of empathy, intersubjectivity and humility within an academic framework.

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[5] Line taken from William Wordsworth's 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.

METHODOLOGY 1: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Like many methodological tools, autoethnography is dynamic and evolving and can be inflected in various ways. One highly influential approach has been Leon Anderson's analytical autoethnography, several key features of which are relevant to my practice: 'analytic reflexivity, the capacity to reflect on and analyse not only outward observations but inward thoughts and feelings'; 'narrative visibility of the researcher's self, namely that the researcher plays a key role within the narrative of the writing, even to the extent of the writing being in the first person'; and 'commitment to theoretical analysis' (Anderson 2006, p.378). Although my own field notes and the subsequent essay films and film-poem that draw on them are written in the first person, include myself as the 'central character' and are written with theoretical and reflexive analysis at the forefront, other aspects of analytical autoethnography, which is more often used in conventional sociological analysis (*ibid.*, p.377) make it too rigid and formal to be of central use in writing about my arts practice.

My own autoethnographic note-taking has been much more influenced by Carolyn Ellis's concept of 'evocative autoethnography', which she defines as: 'research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political. Autoethnographic forms feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterisation and plot. Thus, autoethnography claims the conventions of literary writing.' (Ellis, 2004, p.xix). This leaning towards the evocative is primarily because it allows me direct access to creative storytelling skills that can deal most overtly with ideas of affect, subjectivity and emotion, specifically looking at the relationship and the differences between the three. Evocative autoethnography encourages taking the opportunity, and the challenge, to be expressive in how I communicate my practice-led research in terms that combine the intellectual and emotional which have become indistinguishable, especially when dealing with inherently subjective thoughts and feelings born of concepts of (eco)sublime and transcendent experiences, i.e., fear, terror, awe and wonder.

Ellis uses her autoethnographic writing practice to draw important connections from her personal experiences to a wider social context in order to illustrate tacit knowledge or a change in thinking / behaviour – something that is largely absent in Anderson's more formally analytic approach. Therefore, in my field notes I attempt to make connections between my experiences, my craft and the larger context of producing and viewing cinematographic images of eco-sublime landscape experiences at a time of climate crisis. In this way, the use of autoethnography in the reflexive and critical analysis of creative, socially considered, practice-led cinematography is highly appropriate, because it is my role as a cinematographer to deal with emotion, feelings, ethics, philosophy and a myriad of other topics in order to engage, provoke and challenge an audience. Emotion is, therefore, is an intrinsic part of the discussion if one is to analyse art, and especially if one is analysing ones' own art and artistic process.

Arguably the most vital trait of evocative autoethnography field notes in my research – where I am drawing on my own feelings of wonder, grief, anger, shame / guilt and joy – is the importance of eliciting questions, emotions and most importantly kindling empathy in the reader through these personal accounts of experiences in the field. My central aim is to use these notes as a source material, alongside my cinematic imagery, in order to encourage the viewer to feel that they are a part of my narrative, invested in my story and ultimately raise empathetic questions in the participant / viewer about how they might 'reflect on, understand, and cope with their own lives' (Ellis, 2004, p.46).

Jenefer Robinson touches on the importance of the autoethnographic approach within the experience of viewing art, something that has been a major part of my developing knowledge base and in the subsequent construction of my contextual review, when she states that 'It's not just that these works of art engage our emotions … but also - most importantly – they actively encourage us to reflect about our emotional responses and learn from them' (Robinson, 2005, p.413).

Evocative autoethnography establishes from the outset that I, as a thinking and feeling person, am the author of my experiences, and attempts to connect with the viewer / reader of my work in a way that accepts her as a thinking and feeling person too. It

recommends itself as the most productive approach to investigate and transcribe new knowledge, learned or inferred, from my cinematography practice to my practice-led research; it also enables my theoretical analysis to act as inspiration and feed into my practice, when critical references occur to me in the field and end up as a part of my notes and subsequent film essays and poems.

Ellis states (Ellis, 2004 p.116) that her own autoethnographic field note writing practice is always a selective narrative about the past, 'written from a particular point of view at a particular point in time for a particular purpose'.

> I start with my personal life and pay attention to physical feelings, thoughts and emotions. I use… 'emotional recall' to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a story. By exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life. (*Ibid*., p.xvii)

The 'particular life' I am hoping to understand is that of a cinematographer capturing the essence of an experience of an eco-sublime landscape in the time of the Anthropocene, that this footage might be subsequently shaped as a representative expression of that experience. Therefore, my own approach to making autoethnographic field notes, as a bridge between my practice and theory, as inspiration for practice outputs and in order to glean tacit or personal knowledge through my practice, was based on the following foundational statement:

> I am a cinematographer (artist) who will be examining my subjective experience of being a filmmaker within a given landscape by documenting my practice through autoethnographic notes written in the first person. Within these notes I will embrace the personal and the subjective – through a grounded understanding of affect – as well as the practical and the theoretical put into practice. These notes will go on to inform an analytic reflexivity and self-conscious introspection, within a rigorous theoretical framework, by editing the footage and my writing through the modes of the essay film and film-poem.

From this initial proposition, I have set myself some loose guidelines for keeping written notes in the field, ideally within the moment and in direct response to an occurrence, or directly after the experience, i.e., that evening or the following day:

- Always write in the first person
- Be as honest as possible, even if the emotions of the experience are uncomfortable: *stay with the trouble*
- Be as succinct as possible, with the knowledge that you can add to these notes later
- Try to explore whether the landscape you just experienced / captured is
    - beautiful?
    - sublime?
    - eco-sublime?

    (The differences / similarities between these terms are explored in *Essay Film One*).
- What did you observe of your experience? Consider the following elements:
    - What was your emotional reaction to the experience?
    - What was your physical (sensations) reaction to your experience?
    - Was there a 'spiritual' reaction to your experience?
    - How do these reactions – physical, emotional and spiritual – relate to each other?
    - What surprised you, or confounded / confirmed your expectations?
    - What worked cinematographically, in practical or conceptual terms?
    - What did not work cinematographically? And why?
    - How might these observations / findings change your subsequent approaches?
    - How and in what ways is your relationship to the landscape changed through your experience / observations / findings?

Patricia Leavy writes that a primary advantage of the autoethnographic method is the possibility it has to raise self-consciousness and thereby promote reflexivity, but offers a note of caution:

> placing oneself at the center of the research process carries its own set of considerations and burdens. Autoethnography requires the researcher to make him- or herself vulnerable... by opening up his or her personal life to the public, a researcher lets go of some privacies and invites possible criticism. (Leavy, 2015, p.50)

This vulnerability is something I touch on in *Essay Film Two: Part Two*, and I suggest that my poor mental and emotional state was at least partially due to the intense reflexive analysis I put myself under through my adoption of autoethnography as a methodology whilst on my Arctic research trip. As an artist in the field using autoethnography in my work and by placing myself at the centre of the research process, my notes were very honest and raw in their representation of my difficult mental and emotional health experiences while in the Arctic. I will go on to argue, in *Essay Film* Two, that it was my very sensitivity or openness to the things I experienced, and perhaps my embodied understanding of this exposure and intense vulnerability, that enabled me to experience my time in the landscape in the way that I did. Similarly, in *Essay Film Two: Part Three*, I argue that it was my attempts to understand or come to terms with my experiences and recover my mental and emotional welfare through developing and editing my words and footage, drawing on Ellis' 'emotional recall' by building on my initial autoethnographic notes much later on, that facilitated my capacity to create a piece of work as honestly drawn and affective as *A Short Film About Ice*, and the analysis of my practice as a whole in *Essay Film Two*.

This gives rise to the question: if my field notes are autoethnographic, and from them the writing and editing of *A Short Film About Ice* are also autoethnographic processes, is my cinematography itself autoethnographic?

I argue that the answer to this question, in the way that I am using the practice in my thesis, is yes: at no point am I capturing images to fulfil an existing script, or to someone else's storyboard; at no point am I capturing images that represent another human's experience or 'vision' or story. I am not a director of photography on a fictional film project – I am a cinematographer in a landscape, oftentimes being led by the camera and directed by my practice of cinematography. I am also referencing myself as cinematographer in the work, and specifically cinematographer as author of the images.

It could be argued that I have at times been 'too close' to the images I produced in the Arctic, or on Dartmoor or on Lofoten, Norway: they are often so subjective, and when combined with my narration become acutely personal. But, through documenting (in written notes) or capturing (through cinematography) affect experienced in the landscape – my physical connection to the camera; my sensations of being a cinematographer in a location; my focus on the subjective experience; my openness to the enquiry (see *Essay Film Two: Part Two*) – those words and images became saturated with affect and illustrative or representational of the deep, profound and sometimes troubling nature of my experience, and therefore autoethnographic. And so, as described in Ellis' exploration of a particular life in order to understand a way of life, my subsequent reflexive analysis of my experiences in my film-poem and essay films leads to a much wider understanding of the potential of such personal experiences on a larger social scale.

Ken Gale and Jonathan Wyatt describe the ' autoethnographic practice as always shifting, always about movement, intensity, and potentiality' (Gale and Wyatt, 2019, p.566). This is exactly what occurs with cinematography: the cinematographer, free of the shackles of generic 'film production' has the capacity for improvisation and reaction at any moment. If one is attentive to the landscape, aware of one's feelings and focussed on the physicality of being in a location, especially with the added focus of 'learning to read the inner essence of a landscape' (Herzog in Cronin, 2014, p. 411) in order to capture the experience cinematographically, and if one is open to the potential of the eco-sublime landscape moment, then this is resolutely an autoethnographic practice.

And this *potentiality* is a direct link between autoethnography and affect in my process, as I will now go on to address.

METHODOLOGY 2: AFFECT

Similar to autoethnography, affect is a dynamic and shifting concept, or variants of concepts – it can mean different things in different fields of study, as Sara Ahmed argues: 'the meaning of each of the crucial terms – sensation, emotion, affect, cognition and perception – is disputed both between disciplines and within disciplines' (Ahmed, 2004, p.17).

My reason to employ a *turn towards affect* as a methodology here is because, like evocative autoethnography, affect engages with personal and subjective experience as a valid and valuable source of knowledge, contextualising the act of being affected as a critical position. This way sensation, emotion and the sense of the 'in-betweenness' of things that I experience in my practical cinematographic approaches to landscape, and in my subsequent post-production work as an editor and writer, can be framed as forms of intellectual exploration within my enquiry. This is particularly important when investigating highly emotive and subjective themes such as the sublime and climate change, when dealing with creative 'instincts' or 'gut feelings' as a cinematographer, as well as in attempting to express the transcendental experiences that I have encountered in the course of my research.

In philosophy there are many jostling, inter-related and ephemeral theories that are constantly morphing and generating into new ideas and iterations of affect. One of the earliest such theories belongs to Dutch philosopher Baruch de Spinoza who offers the following in his treatise *Ethics* (1677):

> an affect or passion of the mind is a confused idea … by which the mind
> affirms of its body, or any part of it, a greater or less power of existence than
> before; and this increase of power being given, the mind itself is determined
> to one particular thought rather than another. (Spinoza, 1923 p.98)

Describing affect as 'a confused idea' – or perhaps an assemblage of ideas is preferable – is useful because it suggests a lot happening at once, which resonates with my own

affective experience as a cinematographer. This includes a communication between mind and body; an increase or decrease of power, that is to say a transference of power from one thing to another; a determining of one thought or activity rather than another thought or activity.

Affect, as Gilles Deleuze describes it, is an interval between the perceptive and the active, referencing it as something that occurs from 'the middle':

> There is an in-between. Affection is what occupies the interval, what occupies it without filling it in or filling it up. It surges in the centre of indetermination, that is to say in the subject, between a perception which is troubling in certain respects and a hesitant action. (Deleuze, 1986, p.65)

We can see from this argument that, as with definitions of the sublime explored in the introduction and *Essay Film One*, affect is a word that has been developed to describe the indescribable – it is *after perception* and *before (re)action*; it is an *in-between* thing that *surges*, elsewhere described by Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Brian Massumi and others as *vibrational*. A *confused idea* perhaps, and yet it is this confusion or indefinability that generates affect's most useful trait – potential. Affect is the potential to connect and contact; to move and be moved; to create; to empathise; and the potential to find hope, vitally rooted in the intensely-felt present and not longed or wished for in the future (Massumi in Zournazi, 2002, pp. 211-12). Affect occurs at any given moment within 'the speculative force and living potential of the always not yet known' (Gale, 2020, p.304).

Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth suggest that affects are 'forces of encounter' and they are shared between things / bodies both human (subjective) and non-human (objective):

> Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces – visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion – that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension… or that can even leave us

overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability. (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p.1)

These are words that have resonance within my enquiry and its key subject of the sublime and eco-sublime landscapes: *anthropomorphic*, *movement*, *overwhelmed, vital forces insisting beyond emotion*. What is important here is to understand affect as *subconscious knowing*, which speaks to the *tacit knowledge* generated through practice-led research. Crucially we have the phrase 'beyond emotion', which suggests the sublime itself as an awe-inspiring transcendent emotional state that affects the viewer in ways that cannot be readily quantified or defined.

Ahmed suggests that 'emotions are shaped by contact with objects' (Ahmed, 2004, p.18) and that these associations are *sticky*, referring not only to the complex and potentially messy nature of the concept, but importantly linking affect to a felt sense of touch or contact: 'Stickiness then is about what objects do to other objects - it involves a transference of affect' (*Ibid.*, p.91). An essential aspect of this transference of affective *stickiness* is that it is a two-way exchange: all objects / bodies have, to differing degrees, the capacity to affect and be affected, in the way that a sticky finger will leave a residue from everything it touches, at the same time as retaining an impression of what has been touched.

Seigworth offers his own first conscious engagement with affect, by way of reading American music critic Greil Marcus's writing in 1984, concerning an anecdote about French social theorist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre from the 1920s:

[Lefebvre] argued that social theorists had to examine not just institutions but moments – moments of love, poetry, justice, resignation, hate, desire… the rub was that no-one knew how to talk about such moments. (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p.20)

In the subsequent one hundred years, developing theories and frameworks around affect have produced a grammar through which we can attempt to discuss these

indescribable and oftentimes fleeting personal moments, or at least talk about how they make us feel or move us.

Mary Zournazi, in conversation with philosopher Brian Massumi, highlights the value of the idea of affect as the potential for movement:

> When you walk, each step is the body's movement against falling – each movement is felt in our potential for freedom as we move with the earth's gravitational pull. When we navigate our way through the world, there are different pulls, constraints and freedoms that move us forward and propel us into life. (Zournazi, 2002, p.210)

Massumi builds on this observation, suggesting that he uses 'the concept of affect as a way of talking about that margin of manoeuvrability, the "where we might be able to go and what we might be able to do" in every present situation' (Massumi in Zournazi, 2002, p.212).

This 'margin for manoeuvrability' stems from 'an encounter between the affecting body and a second, affecting, body' (Massumi in Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi) and refers to what Massumi calls 'a body's *capacity* to enter into a relationship of movement and rest. This capacity he (Spinoza) spoke of as a *power* (or potential) to affect or be affected'. (Massumi, 2002, p.15)

A part of this capacity or affectability that artists, and in particular I argue documentary cinematographers, have access to, is through what might be called 'instinct' or 'gut feeling'. Again, such terms attempt to define the undefinable – something intuitive, or 'on the inside' is 'telling you' to do one thing over another, choose one path over the other. Ahmed states that 'a gut has its own intelligence' (Ahmed, 2017, p.27). This feeling, she suggests, can begin with sensation: 'A sensation is often understood by what it is not: a sensation is not an organized or intentional response to something. And that is why sensation matters: you are left with an impression that is not clear or distinct.' (Ahmed, 2017, p.22)

This innate or intuitive intelligence is somewhere in-between or in the middle, as Deleuze suggests, of the interactions of sensation and emotion experienced subconsciously, and subsequently felt as personal feelings and potentially understood rationally. In psychology there is the concept of 'affect heuristic': largely subconscious and lightning-fast mental shortcuts to emotional experiences that give us information on something quickly so we can make split-second decisions; effectively these are instincts. This recognizes affect as an important component of human judgement and decision-making, specifically concerning the risks or benefits of a specific course of action (Finucane *et al.*, 2000).

Linda Åhäll states that 'affect generates questions about how the world works' (Åhäll, 2018, p.38). She goes on to reference how such 'discourse' – the term used here as 'social meaning-making, or signification, through visual, aural, and / or other sensory representations' – is delivered:

> Discourse as meaning-making is not only about words simply because the way we interpret the world is not limited to spoken or written words. It is also about how those words are delivered (e.g. through visual, aural and / or other sensory representations) and, crucially, it is about the gaps and silences involved in how we make sense of the world. (Åhäll, 2018, p.43)

Sean Cubitt, Salma, Monani and Stephen Rust offer cinema as a particularly affective medium: 'Images move—they affect their viewers and "take us places." Cinematic moving images, through their melding of temporally sequenced visual display and sound, move us all the more forcefully' (Cubitt, Monani and Rust, 2013, p.99).

Cinema theorist Anne Rutherford employs a suitably physical and tactile metaphor for the role of affect in the filmmaker / audience equation when she argues that 'cinema is not only about telling a story; it's about creating an affect, an event, a moment which lodges itself under the skin of the spectator' (Rutherford, 2003). Adrian J. Ivakhiv discusses in greater detail about how affect works from a cinema audience perspective, a point of view which is never far from my mind as a cinematographer:

> We are taken on a journey into a particular film-world… first, through an affective vibration alongside its immediate, spectacular texture; second, through a "sliding into" the sequentiality of its forward movement, its character as "one thing happening after another," which generates connections between events and therefore a kind of primary meaningfulness; and third, through a complex, productive, cognitive and emotional engagement with what we are watching, an engagement that generates meanings and affects according to the resemblances, references, and other connections made between the film and the world outside the film. (Ivakhiv, 2013, p.254)

This process was a large part of what I was trying to do with the writing and camera work in *A Short Film About Ice* – attempting to engage the audience cognitively and emotionally to inspire empathy through my understanding of affect, inviting the viewer to put themselves in my shoes and to make connections between their own lives and the life of the cinematographer in this film. Elsewhere Cubitt, Monani and Rust build on Ivakhiv's concept of the *world outside the film*: **'**we are affected by film, but the affect hinges upon how we recognize ourselves, our culture, and our society refracted in these films' (Cubitt, Monani and Rust, 2013, p.77).

One of the main themes within my research is that I, the cinematographer, am so much like you, the viewer, and the relationship 'we, the human' have to the natural world through our experiences of landscapes, actual / first-hand or represented / second-hand; our capacity for affectual connection between the human and nonhuman; and the affective potential that interconnectivity generates in the world. *This* is the definition of hope, as Spinoza or Massumi suggest it.

I was only able to shoot, write and edit affectively about experiences because my own capacity to be affected was so heightened in the Arctic.[6] This is why the *capacity* or *ability*

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[6] As touch on in *Essay Film Two: Part Two*, my 'affectability' in the Arctic – what I refer to in *A Short Film About Ice* as my 'openness to trembling' i.e., to interacting and inter-being with 'otherness' in the eco-sublime landscape – was heightened by my deteriorating mental and emotional health. What I have come

to affect or be affected – one's *affectability* – is really useful from my perspective as a cinematographer, because it frames the potential for *affectability* as a generative thing that will be present but different for every individual body, human or non-human. It also allows for the idea that the ability to be affected – if we consider ability to mean a human proficiency in a skill – by experiences can be trained, focussed or honed, i.e., one's ability to skateboard is enhanced by how much one practices skateboarding.

Similarly, the capacity to be affected by a subject and subsequently affect others, for example through one's subjective cinematographic representation of an experience, can be enhanced through creative practice and the development of artistic skills. This is why, before I went to Arctic in search of eco-sublime landscapes, I explored practising my cinematography approaching sublime and beautiful landscapes in Europe and closer to home in the UK and started relating the grammar of affect to my own practice and how I reflect on it.

A further important aspect of affect that relates to cinematography and the experience of cinema in general is that affective contact is indicative of both physical and sensory experiences: a viewed object *touches* the eye[7], for example. Thus, the cinematographer in the field is touched affectively by the physical presence of the mountain in front of her, but also by the image of the mountain in her viewfinder (as well as the feeling of cold air on their skin, the smell of heather, the sound from a waterfall and so on).

The cinema audience will likewise experience affect through what is seen through the eyes and heard through the ears, and the affective impact of the work will depend largely on the skill of the cinematographer, editor, sound editor or composer in rendering and representing the original experience as faithfully as possible. This is why, as I will go on to argue shortly, the modes of essay film and film-poem are so vital to both the affective and intellectual understanding of my practice.

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to regard as my high level of sensitivity now plays an important and ongoing role in my cinematography practice.

[7] In her book *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses* (2000) Laura Marks references art historian Stella Kramrisch, describing the traditional Hindu conception of vision as 'a going forth of the sight toward the object. Sight touches it and reveals its form. Touch is the ultimate connection by which the visible yields to being grasped.' (p.161).

This idea prompts a further key point concerning the issue of distance and affective resonance in both the first-hand experience of the cinematographer and the (eco) sublime object in the field, and the subsequent second-hand cinematic experience between the audience and the represented object.

In the first-hand or *active* experience of such a moment, the affect will resonate intensely within the subject; in the second-hand or *passive* experience through a painting, photograph or especially, as I am arguing in this thesis, moving images, the impact will be different. Potentially, the intensity of affect will be lessened due to the lack of immediacy of the sight / visual experience, both in terms of temporal and physical distance from the (eco-) sublime moment. However, there is also the potential for the affect to be better understood and more affective – *more sublime* – if the artist who is depicting the cinematographic representation of the original experience, the subject who was actually there in the landscape, has the control of the craft of cinematography, editing, writing, colour grading, the shaping of the soundscape etc. to produce something that can represent their original experience authentically and honestly, and so affect and move their audience. This is due in no small measure to the temporal and physical distance that cinema gives the audience, and how it is utilised by the filmmaker to create a stronger affective resonance than even the original experience.

Another vital aspect of affect that relates to my own cinematography practice is the value of *instinctual* or *gut feelings*. 'Shooting from the hip' is essential when lighting, weather, unwanted objects (human or nonhuman) get in the way of a shot. This is why I attempt to mitigate such things by doing so much research and prep for locations before I even set foot on them. However, very often a landscape can present you with things that you were unprepared for, and this is why gut feelings are so essential. Certainly, in the Arctic there was no real way of preparing because our course was charted based on the weather each day and we were guided through fjords or on treks or onto glaciers. There was therefore very little capacity for preparation, and so learning to listen to one's gut becomes a big part of any practice undertaken in the field.

Insomuch as it relates to my other methodological tools, affect as I have detailed in this chapter, when reflected on and recalled through the lens of autoethnography, enables me to ground the sensational, emotional and the personal in a way that can then be explored academically. As Jennifer Doyle suggests: 'Serious, complex, and rigorous criticism can be passionate and personal. Art can be hard and difficult and also saturated with feeling; this is true of writing about art as well.' (Doyle, 2013, p.72)

Through this autoethnographic filtering I can reflectively analyse myself as a creative and affective practitioner: a physical, moving and reactive human being in the world who is touched – physically, visually, sensorily – by many other beings or bodies, most of which are non-human. From that moment of touch or contact come other contacts, and more and more again. From each of these moments of contact I am affected, and I affect – at one and the same time. From this affect in me comes emotion, and from that flow feelings. Then comes thought, and cognition and processing of experience in a rational way. From all of these elements, through my craft of cinematography, I produce my films.

Donna Haraway stresses the importance of 'making kin' or 'sympoiesis' i.e., *making with* nonhuman forms in 'unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. Affectively, we become-with each other or not at all' (Haraway, 2016, p.4). This is at the heart of my practice, and in this way *A Short Film About Ice* is an articulated dialogue about the affect that ice had, and continues to have, on me in the Arctic, as well as the affect I had or continue to have on it. Through affect, viewed through the grounding lens of autoethnography and expressed through the openness of the film-poem and essay film forms form, I can start to understand and express my findings, in particular my thoughts and feelings about in-betweenness, inter-connectedness and human connection to the nonhuman.

METHODOLOGY 3: THE ESSAY FILM

The advantages of the essay film over written prose for me as a filmmaker and a practice-led doctoral student, lies in its capacity to provide critical reflection through a voice-over commentary at the same time as the viewer engages with selected visual images. The essay film, in the way I am using it, also enables the academic exploration of the emotional and affective impact of the medium of cinematography, at one and the same time, through presenting visually and critically on the concept of a cinematic eco-sublime landscape that engenders empathy and interconnectedness. For an enquiry that explores such cinematic representations of the sublime and in particular the eco-sublime, the value of the film essay mode, combining images and reflection simultaneously cannot be overstated.[8]

As with the two methodological approaches already discussed, the terms 'essay film' and 'film-poem' are the subject of debate and different inflections. The essay film has been described as an 'anti-genre' and conflated with other terms that do not quite fit into the generic category of documentary, such as 'avant-garde' and 'art film', or even 'intellectual poems' (Lukács, 1910, p.40). There is also a muddling of the label 'film

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[8] To gather experience for the construction of my thesis essay films, I have experimented with the essay film form to present academic 'video papers' at conferences around the UK during the early years of my PhD research: *Film and the Environment* conference (May, 2016) held at the School for Environmental Studies at the University of East Anglia; *Imagining Apocalypse* conference (June, 2016) involving *Romanticism and Eighteenth Century Studies Oxford* (RECSO), at Oxford University; and the inaugural *Landscape, Language and the Sublime* (June 2016) multidisciplinary conference at Dartington and Schumacher College in Devon. These were audio-visual essays merging my own cinematography field work and the visual material of others – painters, photographers and filmmakers – with reflexive and analytical texts that I would then narrate live at conference.

The most common feedback was how exciting it was to have the opportunity to discuss a research practice in academic terms by using that practice itself as the means of communication, and that the essay film form used at this level of research is a powerful methodological tool, particularly for the cinematographer / researcher.

The director of the *Language, Landscape and the Sublime* conference, Dr Richard Povall, found the 'video paper' very engaging, specifically as my ideas were immediately illustrated and the audience was immersed visually in my practice:

> So, in one sense you are subverting the conference format by becoming a voiceover to a visual presentation. However, this is very much more powerful - and compelling - than simply reproducing bullet points as so many power point presentations do. We are seeing something with a clear visual narrative and a level of sophistication in its presentation. (Povall, 2016)

poetry' with references to the 'lyric essay film' or 'film essay poem' or 'film diary' within this anti-genre, and extensive discussion about each of these terms.

Writing in in 1910 Georg Lukács suggests the literary essay is 'a conceptual re-ordering of life' (Lukács, 1910, p.21). Referring to its filmic equivalent, Nora M. Alter writes that 'the essay film disrespects traditional boundaries, is transgressive both structurally and conceptually, is self-reflective and self-reflexive' (Alter, 1996, p.139). She argues, 'It gives free reign to the imagination, with all its artistic potentiality. The term *essay* is used because it signifies a composition that is in between categories and as such is transgressive, digressive, playful, contradictory, and political.' (Alter, 2002, p.8)

Indeed, this very inability to categorize the form adequately is one point of general academic agreement. Laura Rascaroli argues that 'heresy and openness are among the essay film's key markers', alongside traits that can include the 'informal, sceptical, diverse, disjunctive, paradoxical, contradictory, heretical, open, free and formless' (Rascaroli, 2008, p.39). This category permeability can produce a structure that is formally 'deeply unstable' (Rascaroli, 2016, p.301). However, it is arguably this creative freedom and 'intellectual instability' (*Ibid.*) that makes it so appealing and potentially productive as something outside the normative documentary form. It is these qualities that attracts both artists and critics to play and experiment with images and text in this way.

Although aware of these complexities, a full exploration is beyond the scope of this thesis, and so I will confine myself to elucidating in what ways the essay film and film-poem have proved productive for my research enquiry, before discussing the essay film as a methodological tool in more depth.

Simply put, while they share similar grammar – cinematographically and in a written sense – I consider the film-poem a mode and the essay film a methodology, because the intention or motivation of the 'voice' or 'voices' in each is different; the former is expressive and the latter explanatory.

For example, my research artefact *A Short Film About Ice* is a cinematic film-poem that creatively explores emotional and personal subject matter through the practice of cinematography and employs a questioning, subjective, lyrical first-person voice in its narration. By contrast, my two essay films are contextualising and analytical tools that deconstruct my practice, and the practice of others, narrated by a more objective 'essayistic voice'. This is not to say that the poem does not engage in full with critical thinking, or that the essays are not creative or subjective. What I have tried to create in *A Short Film About Ice* is something that is felt first and considered afterward, but there is no distinction to be made as to what is emotional and what is intellectual within the work, they bleed into and feed off each other, hopefully in ways that enhance the affective resonance and arguments of both.

Timothy Corrigan suggests that 'essay films ask viewers to experience the world in the full intellectual and phenomenological sense of that word as the mediated encounter of thinking through the world, as a world experienced through a thinking mind' (Corrigan, 2011a, p.35). Rascaroli argues that part of what makes a film essay 'is its focus on an intellectual enquiry, it's lucid and concentrated exploration of an idea' (Rascaroli, 2016, p.303).

I wonder then if the film-poem might be considered a fully emotional and embodied experience of being in the world, as a world experienced through a feeling body? Again, this is not to suggest that the one form cannot feature elements of the other, but rather that the essay is predominantly cerebral, and the poem of the senses. In this way, *A Short Film About Ice* can be considered a true hybrid of the film-poem and essay film forms: it is a poem because of the way I have designed the cinematographic voice within the movement and composition of the camera, which suggests an elemental or 'other' character. (I build on this argument in *Essay Film Two: Part Two)*. But this poetic aspect is combined with a deeply personal and heartfelt essayistic human voiceover, drawing on academic references but more particularly on poetry.

Corrigan defines the essay film as '(1) a testing of expressive subjectivity through (2) experiential encounters in a public arena, (3) the product of which becomes the

figuration of thinking or thought as a cinematic address and a spectatorial response' (Corrigan 2011a, p.30). I understand Corrigan's 'testing of expressive subjectivity' as applying to my practice of cinematography and how I use it to represent my personal experience of landscape, specifically as a cinematographer. His 'experiential encounters' relates to the personal journey my practice-led research has taken me on, and if we employ an understanding of affect here then experiential encounters can suggest contact or connection with both human and nonhuman bodies. His key phrase 'the figuration of thinking or thought as a cinematic address and the spectatorial response' can be interpreted as the editing, writing, presentation and dissemination of this work as both art and research, as well as any resulting discussion or impact on my given field of cinematography, or towards a critical debate around the re-conception of a visual eco-sublime landscape. In her conception, Rascaroli adds that 'the essay is a field in which the author problematises and questions not only her subject matter, but also her authorship and her subjectivity' (Rascaroli, 2009, p.33). These traits of reflexivity and subjectivity start to strengthen links between the essay film form and my other two methodological tools, affect and autoethnography.

Philip Lopate attempts to formalise what an essay film 'definitively' is in structural terms. He argues that it 'must have words, in the form of a text either spoken, subtitled or inter-titled', which must represent a single voice… an attempt to work out some reasoned line of discourse on a problem'; and 'must impart more than information; it must have a strong, personal point of view' (Lopate, 1992, pp. 111-13). These aspects mesh with the autoethnographical nature of my thesis and the links between my field notes and *Essay Film Two*.

Although, as discussed below, I depart from Lopate's contention that essay film represent a *single* voice, he highlights further methodological similarities and connections: 'the essayist wears proudly the confusion of an independent soul trying to grope in isolation toward the truth' (Lopate, 1992, p.110). This contention chimes with Spinoza's conception of affect as a 'confused idea'. Lopate builds on this idea: 'An essay is a continual asking of questions – not necessarily finding "solutions," but enacting the struggle for truth in full view' (*Ibid.*, p. 111). Corrigan suggests that this key aspect of the

essayistic tradition 'demands both loss of the self and the rethinking and remaking of the self' (Corrigan, 2011a, p.17). These points resonate with my own experience in the field in search of elusive eco / sublime landscape moments, and the sense that what I am doing in my research is developing new questions based on my experiences, as much as answers. Corrigan's 'loss of the self' also touches on the letting go of the ego and the openness already highlighted as vital to the experience of eco-sublime.

Rascaroli builds on this sense of the 'openness' of the form and the importance of the essay film in generating a dialogue with the spectator:

> The essayist does not pretend to discover truths to which he [sic] holds the key, but allows the answers to emerge somewhere else, precisely in the position occupied by the embodied spectator. The meaning of the film is created via this dialogue, in which the spectator has an important part to play; meanings are presented by the speaking subject as a personal, subjective meditation, rather than as objective truths. It is this subjective move, this speaking in the first person that mobilises the subjectivity of the spectator. (Rascaroli, 2009, p.36)

This open dialogue is achieved formally through the use of the word 'I' in the essay film, which 'always clearly and strongly implicates a 'You'', who is thus 'called upon to participate and share the enunciator's reflections' (Rascaroli, 2008, p.35). Cinematographically this is corroborated by the fact that 'I' the cinematographer am never formally introduced and almost solely seen from behind in *A Short Film About Ice*, looking into the landscape. As I will touch on in *Essay Film One*, this Rückenfigur, a device often used by painter Caspar David Friedrich, serves to draw the viewer into the landscape image and encourages a subjective transference of the spectator into the subject's shoes.

These tacit connections between author and spectator / viewer are vital when dealing with complex emotional experiences that pertain to larger cultural or conceptual ideas, such as the eco-sublime. In this way, the tone of voice of the whole essay or poem must

be in some way accessible and provisional, as well as fallible and humble, which is a tone I strove for in *A Short Film About Ice*.

Corrigan attempts to formalize the nature of 'the essayistic voice' as an authorial persona exploring a world that is seen and experienced:

> In both its literary and cinematic practices, the essayistic voice is, as we have said, frequently the central measure of a subjective movement through experience: authorial persona or audio voice-overs describe, comment on, question, reflect on, and often subject themselves to the visual and intellectual relation between an observing eye and the world and spaces it sees and experiences. (Corrigan, 2011a, p.125)

This question of voice, and how a voice is constructed, seems to get to the heart of the essayistic film form. As with traditional documentary or narrative fiction, there may be a physical voiceover which can be a generic, nameless or omnipotent narrator, or from the perspective of a character who is commenting on the story. Very often the voiceover is an expositional tool to fill in narrative gaps. In the essay film the voiceover tends to express the thoughts, opinions and even feelings of the author/s of the essay (writer, director, cinematographer); this voice is formed from the written, spoken and even the textual word, which take the form of intertitles that interact directly with the image.

Using my research films as examples, the 'authorial voice' of the central voiceover is different in each. *Essay Film One*, which could be considered a documentary with an essayistic bent, has a more formal, semi-objective voice that enables me to talk in largely academic terms about my work within and alongside other people's work. It is still personal and questioning, but sober and somewhat reserved. *A Short Film About Ice* is narrated by a soul-searching, endlessly questioning, deeply subjective and emotionally expressive voice, resolutely lyrical and yet grounded in a deep contextualising knowledge of the conceptual and visual history that informs the subject. By contrast, the two voices of *Essay Film Two* represent a conversation between me and the camera concerning the process of approaching the eco/sublime landscape cinematographically. In this way I can

play with the format of the essay film, be creative with this analysis and reflection, with myself representing the subjective cinematographer and academic, and the camera being the voice of the objective, non-human, 'other'. In this way the camera and I can disagree, the camera can interrogate my personal feelings or perspectives, and I can do the same with the camera, in order to extract or refine new questions and contributions to knowledge from the work.

Additionally, there is the cinematographic voice, or more specifically the camera voice, which displays the craft and indirectly the thoughts and feelings of the cinematographer in the landscape. However, the openness and freedom of the essay film form means that the cinematographic voice is amplified, as Vivian Sobchack suggests: 'The spectator's perception of a world can also be amplified through an embodiment relation with the projection mechanisms. (These are, of course, constructed to complement the camera mechanisms…)' (Sobchack, 1992, p.185). That is to say that the camera voice is more central to the tone of the whole piece, through its playful, accentuated or experimental use. Certainly, in my experience of the essay film / film-poem forms, and specifically in terms of this research, the cinematographic voice is as 'loud' if not louder than the literary voice, particularly in *A Short Film About Ice*, which was 'written' cinematographically first with the camera, then again in the edit, through which process the textual / spoken words appeared (see *Essay Film Two: Part Three*).

In filming a drama, cinematography is used to develop character, action, tone and atmosphere. While the same is true in essay film, in this form the filmmaker can be freed from the shackles of a restrictive narrative or a conventional structure, and the filmmaking process un-anchored in a creatively effective manner. In this way cinematography was the fundamental tool and driver of my research process, which gave me the freedom to pay detailed attention to the experience of capturing the images. In the essay film, the meaning or sense or affective impact of the images is amplified, tempered or juxtaposed with other images in a sequence through editing in order to develop the cinematographic voice further. Beyond this cinematic grammar the written words can either focus or draw the attention toward or away from the images, adding

layers of analysis, criticism, subjective reflection or lyricism (see more on the process of creating *A Short Film About Ice* in *Essay Film Two: Part Two* and *Part Three*).

Many essay films contain found footage that make up the whole work, or otherwise supplement with footage shot by the filmmaker. However, I consider that this can detract from the personal or authorial voice, precisely what attracts me to the essay film. In several found-footage works – such as *One Man's War* (1982) by Edgardo Cozarinsky, which uses news reel footage juxtaposed with diary excerpts from Nazi officer Ernst Jünger; *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (2003) by Thom Andersen which draws on Hollywood movie images of LA; *How to Live in the German Federal Republic* (1990) by Harun Farocki that is built out of video-tapes of instructional training sessions – while they engage creatively with the form they lack the depth of other work where the author of the film is the instigator of the original images / footage.

-   Still from Edgardo Cozarinsky's *One Man's War* (1982)

- Still from Harun Farocki's *How to Live in the German Federal Republic* (1990)

In these films the voice is largely found in the editing and juxtaposition of texts that question or interrogate the image in some way. These films can tend to feel less personal, if no less authorial or affecting – they are more objective, or potentially subjective by-proxy, relying on the emotions, thoughts or actions of a third party rather than the development of an original voice through the personal experiences of the author.

I find myself more moved and engaged, emotionally and intellectually, by essay films that could be considered more wholly original cinematographic pieces in which filmmakers create their own images such as *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) by Dziga Vertov, which features his brother Mikhail Kauffman as the eponymous Man who carries his camera around Moscow, Kiev and Odessa documenting the urban and rural life of Soviet citizens. Another example is *The House is Black* (1963) by the Iranian poet Forough Farrokhzad, who mixes footage shot during a visit to a leper colony with her own poetry and the voices of some of the people she films. Further examples are *Araya* (1959) by Margot Benacerraf shot by her and a camera-person, an exploration of the work and lives of Venezuelan salt miners and *Slow Action* by Ben Rivers, a fictionalised, ethnographic documentary about islands.

- Still from Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929)

- Still from Margot Benacerraf's *Araya* (1959)

These films are concerned with the experience of going and being – which itself indicates seeing and listening – as much as their individual topics or inspirations. Thus, the affective resonance is often more keenly expressed through the textual or cinematographic voices that develop.

Chris Marker, considered along with Alan Resnais as a pioneer of the post-war essay film, developed several voice-related techniques that resonate with how I produced *A Short Film About Ice*. In the following quotation Lopate references the temporal distance that Marker tended to take between capturing or compiling his images and writing his text / creating his authorial voice-over textually:

one of Marker's key approaches as a film-essayist… is to meditate on the sound-track, after the fact, on the footage he has shot. In Marker there is often a pronounced time-lag between the quick eye and the slow, digesting mind, which tracks – months or even years later – the meaning of what it has seen. (Lopate, 1992, pp.115-16)

This distance, between the capturing of experience visually and the making sense of the images in both the edit (see *Essay Film Two: Part Three*), as well as the transcription of rough evocative field notes into a polished script, were at the heart of post-production work on my Arctic film. The long gaps between the shooting and subsequent reviewing, editing and writing allowed for deep layers of reflection and analysis of experience and process, as described in *Essay Film Two: Part Three*. Marker's technique in 'putting his comments in the third person has the distancing effect of giving a respect and weight to them they might not have commanded otherwise' (Lopate, 1992, p.116) is also a tool that I utilised. In my film-poem, I switched between first and third person in order to balance the subjective with my awareness of a more objective 'otherness' in the text. Using the third person enabled me to express my experience with some element of distance, specifically at moments of personal struggle that I found hard to write about in the first person. This technique is also applied to the *physical voice* of the camera throughout *Essay Film Two*.

Paul Arthur has analysed the complexities of the multiple discursive levels within the essay film structure:

since film operates simultaneously on multiple discursive levels – image, speech, titles, music – the literary essay's single determining voice is dispersed into cinema's multi-channel stew. The manifestation or location of a film author's "voice" can shift from moment to moment or surface expressively via montage, camera movement, and so on. (Arthur, 2003, p.163)

These reflections pinpoint the 'voice' of the camera itself in the essay film / film-poem forms. Gilberto Perez describes the nature of the camera as an 'autonomous mediating gaze' (Perez, 1998, p. 89). Lopate suggests that the camera has a 'somewhat intractable nature' with a 'tendency to provide its own thoughts, in the form of extraneous filmed background information, rather than always clearly expressing what is passing through the filmmakers mind' (Lopate, 1992, p.130). However, this 'promiscuously saturated image' (*Ibid.*) is not such a problem when examining and attempting to represent epic landscapes that fill every aspect of the frame. The *autonomous mediating gaze* of the camera is of potential use when using the cinematographic grammar of the camera to suggest the perspective of the post-human, elemental or 'other'. On the other hand, Sobchack suggests that 'for the filmmaker, the camera is an instrument that simultaneously can reduce and amplify perceptual experience of a world' (Sobchack, 1992, p.183). I read this statement as a description of a precise and expressive tool that can represent or 'vocalise' in the same moment a distilled and yet magnified idea or affect through the manipulation of imagery, i.e., composition, movement, lighting. In terms of the essay film form itself, this notion of a precision tool resonates with what Alexandre Astruc, writing in 1948, grandly announced as a new age of cinema, whose 'language is not that of fiction or news reports, but that of the essay' (Astruc, 1948b, p.96) which he named the age of the 'caméra-stylo' or 'camera-pen' (*Ibid.,* p.100):

> This metaphor has a very precise sense. By it I mean that the cinema will gradually break free from the tyranny of what is visual, from the image for its own sake, from the immediate and concrete demands of the narrative, to become a means of writing just as flexible and subtle as written language.' (Astruc, 1948a, p.604)

In my practical cinematographic approaches in the field, I absolutely recognise Astruc's sense of the camera as a tool that can be manipulated and wielded – I speak later about feeling led by the camera – much like a pen or a brush, in order to craft a 'voice' through the cinematography, which can be refined, to a variable degree, in the editing of those images.

Moving on from a consideration of voices, another central subject of my process and subsequent outputs, the theme of the journey, is a device often used in essayistic terms, specifically in forms of travelogues, excursive or journey essay films, as explored by Corrigan:

> Through this process of being elsewhere, that self becomes another and a different self, and the travel essay in particular has been a notable literary and cinematic practice that has discovered complex ideological and psychological significance through the journey, the walk, or the exploration. (Corrigan, 2011a, p.104)

Stella Bruzzi suggests that the film essay form is primarily concerned with 'narratives that are only superficially closed by their concluding images and words and are more preoccupied with charting moments of encounter and examining the act of journeying than of reaching a fixed destination' (Bruzzi 2006, p.83). Corrigan concurs, suggesting that the excursive essay film 'maps that incomplete journey in a way that also describes or suggests how the excursion has fundamentally altered and destabilized the traveling subject'. (Corrigan, 2011a, p.112)

As touched on in the introduction and elaborated upon in *Essay Film Two: Part Two*, my understanding is that one experiences a landscape not just from standing still and admiring it from a distance, but by moving forward and into it, changing and challenging one's relationship to it. Through this journey our perspective shifts and we learn more about the landscape and the subjects it contains. The same is true of a camera's journey through landscape, which moves to experience more of the landscape, constantly reframing natural objects, figures, light and shadow. I certainly don't feel that *A Short Film About Ice* ends when the images fade. My journey with those images and the subjects they represent continues, personally and professionally, and I hope that the metaphoric journey continues for those who experience the work, certainly in terms of the themes it touches on and the questions it asks of its audience.

It's important to briefly consider the links between *conditions of visuality* – a concept highlighted in *Essay Film One* as indicative of new mediums and new technology necessitating a re-conceptualising of the sublime, and the birth, resurgence or popularity of the essay film as a means of self-expression. Corrigan describes how the essay film form was

> made technologically viable with the arrival of portable lightweight camera technology, introduced as the Arriflex system in Germany in 1936 and as the Éclair 35mm Cameflex in France in 1947. Appropriately, these different 'caméra-stylos' would also feature reflex viewing systems linking the pragmatics of filmmaking with the conceptual reflexivity of the emerging essay film, its exploration of subjectivity, and its "idea of the cinema expressing ideas." (Corrigan, 2011b, p.212)

These technological advancements, specifically size and therefore portability, enabled essay film works by Marker and Resnais, and later Agnès Varda and Jean-Luc Godard. Corrigan suggests the next leap forwards technologically was the creation of 'the Portapak and videotape revolution after 1967' (*Ibid.*). This was followed later by the 'internet and digital convergences of today' that 'significantly encourage and underpin the active subjectivity and public mobility of the essay film that begin with the claims and practices of the essayistic in the 1940s' (Corrigan, 2011a, p.66). This leads us to the contemporary *conditions of visuality*, mentioned in the *Introduction* and explored further in *Essay Film One*, including the most recent chapter in the iteration of the essay film form that is found online and in academia in the modern videographic essay.

The term video essay primarily deals with medium specificity, i.e., a shift from film and cinema to digital and video. The essence of the concept of an essay film, as explored previously, remains essentially the same, except for the fact that digitisation has opened up the form to more people, and the advent of social media has meant that there is now an array of platforms, channels and festivals through which essay films can be viewed and more easily disseminated. This ubiquity has been particularly taken up by academics and film-scholars in terms of cutting up the films and images of others and re-editing

original or found film footage with their own academic narration in order to criticise, deconstruct and analyse films in a new way. This is only possible through modern editing and ripping software in which sequences can be removed from Blu-Rays, DVDs and VHS cassettes and turned into a digital format that can be re-edited. Catherine Grant, a key proponent of this approach, writes of her experience of manipulating and editing scenes from Claude Chabrol's film *La Bonnes Femmes* (1960):

> This (for me uncanny) experience of repeatedly handling the sequence in and out of its original context did indeed produce new affective knowledge about it regarding the film's exploration of temporality and temporal experience throughout the film. (Grant, 2014, p.54)

The notion of *handling* the footage, which has been digitised and is therefore no longer a physical entity, is interesting in terms of how it relates to affect and touch, and indeed Grant suggests that *new affective knowledge* revealed itself, specifically concerning temporality. Elsewhere, a new generation of 'digital native' film scholars and essayists – such as Kevin B. Lee and Chloé Galibert-Laîné – are using desktop and mobile digital technology to construct personal investigative stories by using 'the self' as both witness and source material. These films are often quite journalistic in nature, often centred around memory, the nature of watching or looking and the deconstruction, degradation or re-framing of the moving image. Lee's *Transformers: The Premake* (2014) is considered the first 'desktop documentary' and playfully examines the production of a Hollywood blockbuster that was shooting in his hometown of Chicago, through the hand-held amateur footage of by-standers who captured the filming process. In this way Lee creates a critical argument concerning the role of big-budget filmmaking.

- Still from Kevin B. Lee's *Transformers: The Premake* (2014)

Galibert-Laîné's *Watching the Pain of Others* (2018) is a much more personal film, shot entirely on her computer desktop and employs multiple 'windows' within that frame, including found footage from YouTube, Vimeo etc., .pdfs and .word docs, video-editing software, her own webcam footage and Skype interviews with others. The effect of this is a deeply subjective and fascinating descent into how people are affected by the 'rabbit-holes' of knowledge and experience online.

While these films are critically engaging and offer much in terms of intellectual enquiry, I personally find them less affecting than films mentioned before that are concerned with the act of 'learning by going' and the cinematographic process itself. The process here is largely concerned with editing, which is of course a very creative practice in and of itself. However, I find this limiting in some way, as if there might have been more to these video-based investigations if they had not been so rigidly anchored to their desktop canvas.
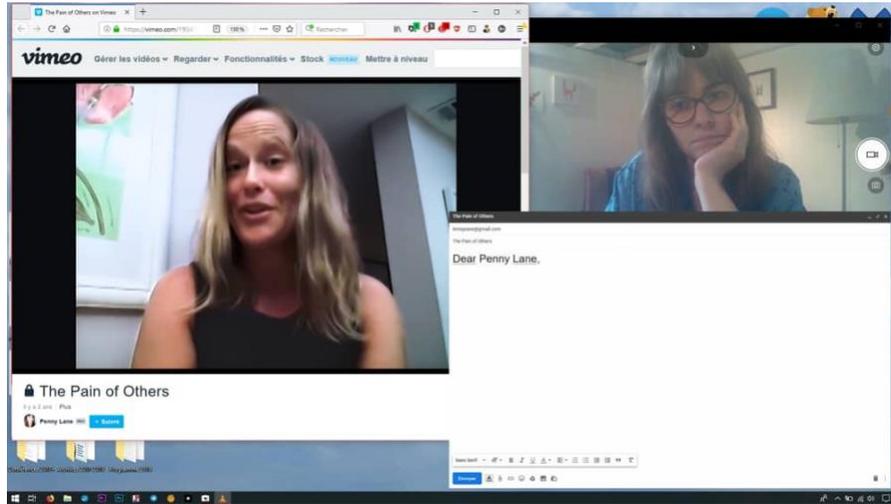
- Still from Chloé Galibert-Laîné's *Watching the Pain of Others* (2018)

I will draw this methodology chapter to a close by considering Laura Rascaroli's thoughts on the nature of affect in the essay film in *How the Essay Film Thinks* (2017), and in particular the role of the lyrical or poetic in generating affect, which she references as 'an important sphere of meaning-making that has often been neglected in relation to the essay film and one that must be explored further' (Rascaroli, 2017, pp. 117-118). To this end, she suggests 'a counternarrative mode: lyricism'.

> With its effects of textual fragmentation, incompleteness, and lacuna, and its emphasis on affect and sublimity, the lyric may be… seen as a powerful epistemological tool, and as a mode that runs contrary to the essay's scepticism, thus creating a dialectics that contributes to argument. (Rascaroli, 2020, p.77)

Rascaroli's writing importantly suggest that the film-poem has an affective power that the essay film often lacks, a 'potentiality' that 'does not just reside in the pleasure of the words, figures of speech, alliterations, images, and metaphors. The poetic text is filmically woven with images and sounds.' (Rascaroli, 2020, p.84)

NOTE TO EXAMINER:

Please experience the next practice elements of the thesis in the order the links are provided below. I ask that the pieces be viewed at 1080p on as high a resolution screen as possible, in a darkened space and listened to through good quality headphones for the best possible online experience.

• ESSAY FILM ONE: A CONTEXTUAL REVIEW OF THE SUBLIME LANDSCAPE IN VISUAL ART

https://vimeo.com/adamdjlaity/essayfilm1contextual   (pw: ice2021)

• RESEARCH ARTEFACT: A SHORT FILM ABOUT ICE

https://vimeo.com/adamdjlaity/ashortfilmaboutice   (pw: ice2021)

• ESSAY FILM TWO: OF WALKING ON ICE AND OTHER FIELD STUDIES

- *Part One: The Inner Essence of Landscape*

    https://vimeo.com/adamdjlaity/essayfilm2part1   (pw: walkingonice)

- *Part Two: Walking on Ice*

    https://vimeo.com/adamdjlaity/essayfilm2part2   (pw: walkingonice)

- **Part Three: Emotion Recollected in Tranquillity**

    https://vimeo.com/adamdjlaity/essayfilm2part3   (pw: walkingonice)

- *Part Four: The Nearness of Things*

    https://vimeo.com/adamdjlaity/essayfilm2part4   (pw: walkingonice)

CONCLUSION

My Grandfather, George E. Laity (1919-2010), and later my undergraduate supervisor, Alaric S.G. Sumner (1952-2000), both expressed to me on more than one occasion that there are no such things as answers, only new questions.[9] Although my PhD feels like a journey just begun rather than a journey ending, and while I find myself looking forwards to how I might start to explore the new questions that my research has thrown up, I appreciate this moment to reflect on what I have learned and how this thesis has contributed to new knowledge over the seven years it has taken to complete.

I am not a confident writer in academic terms. I find the blank page intimidating beyond words and the density and opacity of much academic writing a barrier to the excitement and vitality of ideas and creativity. I love the physical act of typing, but the connection between my brain and my fingers when I type can serve to block or impede any energy or spirit I want to communicate. Conversely, the connection between my hands and my eyes when working with a camera feels liberating and harmonious. Therefore, any true conclusion of this thesis can be most elegantly and succinctly comprehended through the experience of its practical elements. In particular, Part Four of Essay Film Two, I submit, most fully captures the essence of my main contributions to knowledge. However, the following written summation of points of learning evoked in this thesis as a whole, is designed to clarify what I believe this work contributes to knowledge: to discussions on cinematography, landscape, ecology, aesthetics and the sublime.

First, I have produced a body of visual work in my film-poem[10] and essay films that represent my experience of being a cinematographer in these various landscapes to the

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[9] This reflects Lopate's idea of the essay as 'a continual asking of questions – not necessarily finding "solutions"' (Lopate, 1992, p.111).

[10] At the time of writing *A Short Film About Ice* has screened in New York (25th February-3rd March 2018), Toronto (13th November, 2021), London (25th-27th March, 2021), Glasgow (12th October, 2021), Belgrade (26th October-4th November, 2020), Krakow (16th-23rd August, 2020), Athens (6th June, 2021), Armenia (14th-18th November, 2021) and the French Alps (4th-5th December 2020). It was nominated for four of the five categories in the 2020 Arts and Humanities Research Council's Research in Film Awards, winning the Best Climate Emergency Film Award; it won the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies' Practice Research Award 2021 for Best Audio-Visual Practice Research; Best Short Film at Green Fest Belgrade, Serbia (4th November, 2020) and Best Short / Medium Film at the Ecologos Water Docs Film Festival, Toronto. Canada 13th November, 2021). The film screened alongside Edward Burtynsky's

best of my ability. I have embodied my role as a cinematographer in these places, and I have used the methodologies I have deployed to express everything that goes into that role, from the academic and intellectual, the tacit and practical, to the emotional and spiritual. Fundamentally, I have framed myself centrally within this practice, specifically when approaching and capturing the eco-sublime landscape, with the honesty and vulnerability that I felt the subject matter and the process demanded. In this way I have demonstrated how affective and original knowledge can be derived from adopting a practical approach towards a subject.

Second, I believe that my use of the reflexive essay film and film-poem forms within this thesis breaks new ground in how practice-led research can be approached, constructed and new knowledge presented, specifically in terms of the practice and analysis of cinematography. My hope / ambition in this regard is that the substantial time that it has taken to not only research and write, but shoot and edit these essay films, will be repaid through inspiring other practice-led researchers, filmmakers and film scholars to demonstrate their own experiences and findings through the challenge of using the medium of film in order to discuss and represent what film can do, through essay films and film-poems. In this way I have risen to the challenge for academics set out by Tim Ingold in the epigraph by communicating a complex research subject in a creative, imaginative way that is both poetic and rigorously academic (Ingold, 2015).

Third, within this practice I have created work in which the affective and the intellectual are indistinct from each other, whereby knowledge is generated through the affective, and at times affect is generated from the academic. The gap between these two seemingly polarized perspectives collapses, specifically in *A Short Film About Ice*, so that the intellectual and affectual are no longer two separate categories. Within my work they

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Anthropocene: The Human Epoch (2018) at Watershed Cinema, Bristol (8th-10th October, 2021), and is due to screen alongside Werner Herzog's *Encounters at the End of the World* (2007) at BFI Southbank in January 2022. An excerpt from the film was screened as part of *Countdown to COP26: Mobilising People in the Year of Climate Action*, with the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Environment Research Council and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Climate Change, chaired by Green MP Caroline Lucas. The film was programmed in the Climate Crisis Film Festival (1st-14th November, 2021) shown at COP26, and also as part of the Resilience Hub (2nd and 6th November, 2021) available to COP26 delegates.

bear equal weight and are both vital to the process of making and experiencing these films.

Fourth, I have added a new practical and theoretical perspective into discussions about the nature of the sublime landscape and the need for its reconceptualization as the eco-sublime landscape in contemporary culture. I have exemplified that this complex theoretical shift can best be embodied through the experience of being a cinematographer in the field, or by the subsequent representation of that experience through cinema, because only the medium of cinema moves 'us' i.e. 'the cinematographer' and 'the viewer' temporally and physically towards, through and beyond an eco-sublime landscape moment in time. I have argued that artists must take on board and embody the ethical relationship that humans have with nature in the Anthropocene, and that this starts with how we approach landscape and see ourselves within it and as a part of it through visual art. Through my practice-led research, I have demonstrated the need for a new way of thinking about producing and disseminating contemporary visual art concerned with images of humans and landscape, specifically framing ecology and the role of the human as interconnected with nature, not separate from it.

Furthermore, I have produced works which show that the temporal and physical / geographical distance between the artist in the sublime landscape and the viewer of an artistic representation of that sublime landscape no longer applies in a world where the true ecological anthropogenic horror of our time is all around us, affecting every environment on earth. Consequently the eco-sublime image reflects a lack of distance and safety between 'we, the human' and the landscape, replacing it with proximity and urgency. Hence, such images become ethical as well as aesthetical.

As I argue in *A Short Film About* Ice, staying with, playing with and re-framing the trouble[11] are acts of hope and resilience, but it's not possible to have realistic and

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[11] Donna Haraway, whose impact, as mentioned in the Introduction, is felt tacitly in my cinematographic approaches and at the heart of this research, says that our 'task is to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick presence. Our task is to

tangible hope, grounded in the present moment, without accountability for our part as a protagonist, even the catalyst, of the trouble. This is a vital element of the humility and acknowledged vulnerability that is needed to experience the eco-sublime as explored in this thesis. We must actively seek to understand our own responsibility – personally, communally, nationally, universally – for our role in the trouble.

As I write this, world leaders are gathering in Glasgow, Scotland for the COP26 Climate Conference, which is being billed as the 'final hope' in what is seen as a battle against climate change. As 'we, the human' are responsible for the current ecological horror then such a battle becomes a fight between ourselves. Hopes are high that our governments will see sense, follow the science and make the necessary changes in policy by adopting binding resolutions that will reduce drastically our uses of fossil fuels and keep global temperatures below the 1.5°C increase scientists tell us we need to achieve in order to limit the effects of climate change. We are not on course to make the target of 1.5°C. In fact, we are on course to go well beyond that figure, and soon, if we continue living the way we are.

Moving forwards, my own hope is grounded in my practice of making films that engage, inspire and encourage people to feel and think through their own relationship to the natural world around them, specifically in terms of making connections with non-human entities. My hope is also invigorated by my (unintentional) development from artist to activist, which has really come about due to the impact of screening *A Short Film About Ice* in various places, perhaps none more importantly than at COP26. That the film has affected and spoken to people in the fields of politics, culture, arts and humanities, eco-criticism, eco-cinema and academic environmental activism, as well as filmmakers and film academics, speaks to the power of the piece and the research that underpins it. I would argue that the ongoing impacts of the film can be considered as the generation of new knowledge, by the activation of diverse audiences through the affective power of the moving image and the potential the medium has to effect change, in ways of thinking and potentially ways of being.

make trouble, to stir up potent response to devastating events, as well as to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places.' (Haraway, 2016, p.2)

I struggle a little with the idea of myself as an artist / activist, particularly because activism brings with it the complications of political or social action or change that are perhaps not the primary intentions or motivations of the artist as they produce work. My intention in making the film was to move people, and perhaps encourage them to see or feel as I see or feel, for a time. However, if I consider the journey of this enquiry as a whole, I am aware that I am changed in many ways from the person I was when I began my journey. If I consider the impact *A Short Film About Ice* has had, then I can see there is an argument that it is in part an activist film, because it is concerned with affecting people and provoking critical thinking on the subject of climate change, amongst other subjects. Is it in-escapable then, to be an activist in these times, particularly as an artist? In my case it is certainly fair to suggest that any journey from artist to artist / activist has taken place intertwined with my understanding that beyond my own personal feelings, there is an amorphous and unwieldly 'thing' that I have come to know as affect, that moves between me and my subject and my film and those who experience that film. And affect, given or received, changes things – emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, politically and socially.

In terms of my practice-led research, I feel clear that the next step for me in furthering the development the concept of an eco-sublime, is concerned with working against the macho and overwhelmingly masculine nature of how the sublime has been discussed and represented historically. As I have been writing up and editing my research, I have become aware that I often tend to engage more fully and deeply with the work of female practitioners and academics, particularly in the fields of affect and ecocriticism. I have also, rather late on in the journey of this thesis, discovered a group of female and feminist writers and practitioners who have argued for an acknowledged shift towards a feminine[12] sublime. That is to say the sublime as an experience grounded in 'radical

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[12] I am aware, specifically through conversation with one of my supervisors, Dr Clare Johnson, that the use of terms such as 'female' and 'feminist' around theoretical concepts such as *the female gaze* or *the feminine sublime* are currently problematised in terms of ongoing debates on non-binary identification and transgender theory. I believe that this is an important and fascinating area to be examining and working with moving forwards, particularly concerning the eco-sublime as I've been discussing it, namely as a concept grounded in an awareness of alterity. The idea of difference and acceptance of otherness relates to all spheres of humanity, as well as relationships with 'non-humans', and so a recognition of such a diversity of subjects is vital to any continuing development of the eco-sublime concept.

openness' (Economides, 2016, p.38), a 'willingness to find empathy with the natural world' (Haraway, 2016, p.163), and primarily concerned with alterity or an 'absolute and indescribable otherness' (Zylinska, 2001, p.4). Key works in this area range from Patricia Yeager's pioneering *Toward a Female Sublime* (1989), Barbara Claire Freeman's *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (1995), and Joanna Zylinska's *On Spiders, Cyborgs and Being Scared: the Feminine and the Sublime* (2001), among several others. To be clear, I do not see the exploration of this work as an after-thought to this thesis, but rather as an integral part of the next step of my journey with my practice-led research.

The exclusion of the feminine or female within the historical sublime is something that I have always felt uncomfortable about, and was latterly the catalyst for my digging deeper into the work of female and feminist academics and practitioners on the subject. In a conscious gesture to address this issue in the more recently produced *Essay Film Two* I made the choice to employ a female voice, albeit a slightly mechanised one, as the voice of my camera. This was designed to challenge the masculine nature of the sublime that had underpinned my earlier work and to problematise the masculine 'voice' that was overbearingly apparent in the first essay film. By introducing this sense of 'the feminine' or 'otherness' within my practice research, I am reflecting on the importance of alterity within the eco-sublime landscape as I conceive it through my work. Importantly, it was also a way of incorporating my wife's voice into the work, paying homage to the importance of our deep personal and academic conversations during the course of my research and illustrating how important her support had been throughout – it felt fitting that she was a part of the thesis in this way.

My *gut feeling* is that some of the ideas that I am reading about in this area suggest a missing link between the historically beautiful (female) and the sublime (male), i.e. a sublime that leans on affective aspects of the beautiful, maybe even functioning as something of a conceptual stepping stone from the historical sublime to the eco-sublime that I have been working with. Perhaps this feminine understanding of the sublime will reveal itself as a significant element of the third stage of my proposed eco-sublime

experience laid out in the introduction, that encourages a *newly felt, relational perspective*:

3. There is a conscious conceptual shift away from the historically masculine sublime, seeking mastery over nature, towards a more open, empathetic and potentially feminine sublime. This new iteration of the concept seeks, with compassion and humility, a sense of inter-connectedness with nature. In this eco-sublime landscape moment, the vulnerable human realises a vital connection with the object and a conscious sense of responsibility for how the object is behaving, through a tacit ratiocinative understanding of anthropological climate change.

In the words of Carolyn Pedwell and Anne Whitehead, 'feminist theory might most productively explore affects less for how they dominate, regulate or constrain individual subjects and more the possibilities they offer for thinking (and feeling) beyond what is already known and assumed' (Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p.117); I find great hope in that potential.

I feel that my future work will be concerned largely with problematising further the historical sublime as macho and too male-driven, at the expense of the female and other voices that must be represented within the concept of eco-sublime. At the forefront of this work must be the indigenous voices of people currently on the front-line of the climate crisis, those whose landscapes, traditions and lives are already being devastated by the impacts of anthropogenic climate change, largely in the Global South. At the same time as is suggests and tries to embody the 'voice' of non-human elements found in the eco-sublime landscape, *A Short Film About Ice* in part represents the experience and voice of a white male eco-tourist from the Global North, weighed down with various elements of privilege that often accompanies that demographic, alongside the complications of guilt and shame at being a part of the system that causes great suffering to others, human and non-human, particularly felt by those living in the Global South, who have contributed much less to the causes of crisis than we who live in the Northern Hemisphere.

As I have stated before, this enquiry was the only story I felt qualified to tell, within the constraints of my thesis, and so it is an expression, through cinematography, of coming to terms with the anxiety and feelings of helplessness that I felt in those fragile landscapes. The terms 'eco-anxiety', 'eco-grief' and 'eco-anger' are starting to be used and researched in terms of very rational and reasonable psychological responses to anthropogenic climate change, particularly in young people. If eco-anxiety is the Global North's response to the climate crisis, a feeling derived from what is to come and driven by what we are witnessing daily on our screens, then I suggest that what many in the Global South are experiencing is eco-grief and eco-anger for that which they have already lost or are currently losing. These are often people who live within and venerate the landscape itself, so when that landscape is destroyed it is a part of their dearly held belief-systems that are lost forever. I think it is very hard for us in the Global North to relate to that level of loss, especially because it is not yet affecting us so directly.

As I reach a transition from this enquiry into the next chapter of my research journey, I feel that my role moving forward is to use what I have learned and demonstrated here, in terms of cinematography and aesthetics, to represent the voices of those who are already losing everything to climate change. If, as I believe, the climate crisis is as much a crisis of culture and communication as it is of science or politics, then perhaps there is a way that I can empower voices and stories of those on the front-line of climate break-down to reach and affect those of us who are still relatively sheltered from or ignorant about the worst of the impacts.

I want to end this enquiry, as I began it, with poetry, and in particular with a strong female voice. Mary Oliver (1935-2019) found her muse in landscapes and nature and the way it made her feel about her place in the world. This is an excerpt from one of her most well-known poems, *The Summer Day*:

> I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
> I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
> into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

- (Oliver, 1990, p.78)

I find much hope in these words, not least because the poem's popularity suggests that there are many others 'out there' reading, learning and being affected by these words too. In particular I am struck by her question in the last two arresting lines, which recalls the line in *A Short Film About Ice*: 'What good are you, in this world?' The question of how to best use our 'one wild and precious life' must surely be at the fore of the hearts and minds of all artists and academics in the time of the Anthropocene. I conclude with Oliver's question as a provocation to the reader and as marching orders for myself, in all my work to come.

APPENDICES

NOTE TO EXAMINER:

The following appendices are transcripts of the screenplays for *Essay Film One*, *A Short Film About Ice* and the four parts of *Essay Film Two*. As such they have slightly different formatting and 'quirks' within the texts, although they are all referenced correctly. They are included here as an aid for the examiner to use if needed, subsequent to the viewing of the films.

APPENDIX 1: TRANSCRIPT OF ESSAY FILM ONE:

A CONTEXTUAL REVIEW OF THE SUBLIME LANDSCAPE IN VISUAL ART

Completed 7th October 2020.

It should be noted at this point that Essay Film One was constructed earlier on in the course of my research, and relies heavily on historic male theorists and practitioners, and is underpinned by the masculine, even macho, nature of the historical sublime. Furthermore, the quotations selected use the male pronouns universally, which I recognize, in contemporary terms, is an archaic and sexist way of writing. I have tried to address this elsewhere in my thesis: in my written introduction and methodology chapters I use the female pronoun; and in Essay Film Two I have attempted to introduce a partially synthesised female voice as the voice of my camera in order to reflect my growing understanding of the importance of female thinkers, writers and practitioners within my research topics.

INTRO/ ABSTRACT (length 5 mins/ Run Time 0-5 mins)

Visual Text: 'INTRO/ ABSTRACT'

First, what is an essay film? The essay film is a model that enables me to 'show' *and* 'tell' people about my research, using my own cinematography practice alongside films,

paintings and photographs by others, whilst, at the same time, using voiceover to critically analyse this work and explore other themes from my research.

Visual Text: 'essay film'; 'show & tell'; 'cinematography practice'; 'films, paintings and photographs'; 'voiceover to critically analyse'

Timothy Corrigan observes: 'In both its literary and cinematic practices, the essayistic voice is… frequently the central measure of a subjective movement through experience… the voiceover describes, comments on, questions, reflects on and often subjects itself to the visual and intellectual relationships between the observing eye and the world and spaces it sees and experiences.' (Corrigan, 2011a, p.125)

Visual Text: 'essayistic voice'; 'subjective movement through experience'; 'describes'; 'comments on'; 'questions'; 'reflects on'; 'visual and intellectual relationships between the observing eye and the world and spaces it sees and experiences'

This particular essay film is a contextual review of key thinkers, writers, painters, photographers and cinematographers that form a theoretical and practical framework that contextualises my research.

Visual Text: 'contextual review'; 'key thinkers, writers, painters, photographers and cinematographers'; 'theoretical and practical framework'

This is the first of two essay films, which frame my research artefact: *A Short Film About Ice*. This contextual review explores the background and influences on my research. The second essay film will deconstruct how I made *A Short Film About Ice* and what I learned. Together these three films make up the practical element of my PhD thesis.

Visuals: simple diagram- titles and images- of A Short Film About Ice straddled by the two essay films

The title of my PhD is ***Cinematographic Approaches Towards the Eco-sublime Landscape - A Practice-Led Enquiry***, which I'll unpack in this first essay film.

Visual Text: Cinematographic Approaches Towards the Eco-sublime Landscape- A Practice-Led Enquiry

For me, the term **practice-led** is best captured in the words of poet Theodore Roethke (Ret-kuh) (Roethke, 1975) from his poem *The Waking*:

> We think by feeling. What is there to know?
> I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
> I learn by going where I have to go.

'Thinking by feeling' and 'learning by going' embodies the idea of a practitioner being led by an emotional and aesthetic experience but, crucially, equipped with the conceptual framework necessary to articulate that emotion and its aesthetic embodiment.

Visual Text: 'practice-led'; full excerpt from poem; 'thinking by feeling'; 'learning by going'; 'practitioner'; 'emotional & aesthetic experience'; 'conceptual framework necessary to articulate that emotion'

This mode of enquiry is at the heart of practice-led research, which aims to generate 'personal knowledge' (Polanyi, 1958) or 'tacit knowledge' (Ingold, 2015); the idea being that a phenomenological approach towards a subject through practice requires an awareness and understanding of how the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual dimensions work together to create experience.

Visual Text: 'personal knowledge'; 'tacit knowledge'; 'phenomenological approach; 'physical'; 'emotional'; 'intellectual'; 'spiritual'; 'work together to create experience'

My own practice is **cinematography**, writing with images in movement and with sounds (Bresson, 1975, p.2). As Bresson suggests, when I am shooting, I am most often thinking about the images in relation to sounds, music, text, voiceover as much as I am thinking

about the lighting, colour and the shape, the movement and the framing of what I am filming.

Visual Text: 'cinematography'; 'writing with images in movement and with sounds'; 'sounds'; 'music';' text'; 'voiceover'; 'the big picture'; 'lighting'; 'colour'; 'shape'; 'movement'; 'framing'; 'conceptual'

Landscape. According to Howard et al. (2013, p.13) "the meaning of 'landscape' shifts according to the context and by the background of the user" and it can be "defined as primarily visual in nature as a particular 'way of seeing', framing and representing the world" (Wylie, 2013, p.57).

Important also to my thinking is anthropologist Tim Ingold's suggestion that "… in the landscape, the distance between two places, A and B, is experienced as a journey made, a bodily movement from one place to the other, and the gradually changing vistas along the route." (Ingold, 1993, p.154)

Landscape is thus a subjective, conceptual framework that divides into numerous modes such as pastoral, picturesque, suburban, industrial, beautiful, sublime and, as I will build a case for, eco-sublime.

Visual Text: 'context and background of the users'; 'primarily visual in nature'; 'way of seeing, framing and representing the world'; 'subjective, conceptual framework'; 'the distance between two places'; 'experienced as a journey made, a bodily movement from one place to another, and the gradually changing vistas along the route'; 'pastoral'; 'suburban'; 'industrial'; 'beautiful'; 'sublime'; the prefix eco- is added to 'sublime'

NOTES ON THE SUBLIME IN PHILOSOPHY AND CRITICAL WRITING (length 5 mins/ Run Time 5-10 mins)

Visual Text: 'NOTES ON THE SUBLIME IN PHILOSOPHY AND CRITICAL WRITING'

Which brings us to the key word of my title, **sublime -** which, with or without the eco-prefix, by its very nature is not something that can be adequately explained or expressed with words, however philosophically astute. Therefore, this contextual review is much more concerned with artists and their visual representations of the sublime, specifically sublime landscapes. The aim of my practice-led research is to present my own cinematographic interpretation of the sublime/eco-sublime, but it's important to briefly consider how the sublime has been defined philosophically.

Visual Text: 'the sublime is not something we can adequately explain or express with words'; 'artists and their visual representations'; 'sublime landscapes'; 'practice-led'; 'cinematographic interpretation'; sublime/ eco-sublime landscapes'

HOWEVER!

I am a cinematographer. I am not a philosopher. And so, my discussion of philosophical writing will be highly condensed.

Visual Text: 'I am a cinematographer'; 'I am not a philosopher'; '<u>highly</u> condensed'

To that end, I am going to draw on the fundamentals of the sublime in philosophy, whilst trying to reference what Irmgaard Emmelhainz refers to as 'conditions of visuality' (Emmelhainz, 2015, p.1), that is to say how we experience, share and disseminate images; the technology we use to produce and reproduce images; and how this affects how we feel about or understand images.

Visual Text: 'fundamentals of sublime in philosophy'; 'conditions of visuality'; 'experience, share and disseminate images'; 'technology'; 'produce'; 're-produce'; 'affects how we feel or understand images'

The sublime, philosophically, has little in common with its contemporary usage where it is used an intensifier to describe something that is really, really nice, or beautiful, or heavenly, or glorious.

The first use of the sublime occurs in **Longinus'** *On the Sublime* (100AD), which considers the concept *specifically* in terms of rhetoric, that is to say literature, poetry and oration: 'The sublime consists in a certain loftiness and excellence of language' which does not 'convince the reason of the reader, but takes him out of himself … a sublime thought, if happily timed, illuminates an entire subject with the vividness of a lightning-flash, and exhibits the whole power of the orator in a moment of time.' (Longinus, 1985 pp. 2-3)
Visual Text: 'Longinus' On the Sublime **(100AD)'**; *'loftiness and excellence of language'; 'takes the reader out of himself' 'vividness of a lightning flash'; 'whole power of the orator in a moment of time'*

Referencing the Ancient Greek poet Sappho, where she describes in the first person the frenzy of two persons in love, Longinus exalts in her sublime rhetoric:

> Is it not wonderful how at the same moment soul, body, ears, tongue, eyes, colour, all fail her, and are lost to her as completely as if they were not her own? Observe too how her sensations contradict one another- she freezes, she burns, she raves, she reasons, and all at the same instant. And this description is designed to show that she is assailed, not by any particular emotion, but by a tumult of different emotions. (Longinus 1985, p.22-23)

Visual Text: 'soul, body, tongue, eyes, colour, all fail her'; 'her sensations contradict one another... all in the same instant'; 'a tumult of different emotions'

For Longinus, the sublime expresses paradoxical sensations and complex emotions, which overwhelm the reader.

Visual Text: 'paradoxical sensations'; 'complex emotions'; 'overwhelm'

The next major milestone in defining the sublime was made in 1674 when **Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711)** translates the then relatively obscure work of Longinus from an incomplete Greek copy into French in his *Traité du Sublime* (1674). But most importantly, as Samuel Holt Monk argues, rather than a straight translation from the Greek, Boileau develops the text to offer an interpretation of Longinus's concept; to Boileau, the sublime is

> severed from rhetoric and becomes art, a matter of the revelation of a quality of thought and the emotions which that quality, vividly presented, evokes … Boileau's terms … indubitably tell us that the sublime… must be a great thought and that it must awaken strong emotions in the reader or the audience. (Monk, 1935 pp. 29-32)

Visual Text: 'Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711)'; 'Traité du Sublime (1674)'; 'severed from rhetoric and becomes art'; 'a quality of thought and the emotions which that quality, vividly presented, evokes'; 'a great thought'; 'awaken strong emotions in reader or audience'

Boileau's reconceptualising suggests a key distinction between the sublime 'expressed *in* or *through* art or language, rather than *belonging to* or *of* art or language' (Costelloe 2012, p.4), i.e. into aesthetics and thus needing the resources of visual forms as I shall discuss.

Visual Text: 'sublime expressed in or through art or language, rather than belonging to or of it'; 'aesthetics'

Edmund Burke's **(1729-1797)** *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) is considered a 'foundational text of modern aesthetics' (Doran 2015, p.141). Burke contends that 'the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.' (Burke, 1909, p.39) He offers terror as the 'ruling principle of the

sublime' (Burke, 1909, p.40) alongside a sense of amplitude: great heights, great depths, great amounts of light or darkness, but predominantly an unfathomable greatness beyond rational understanding, calculation or description.

Visual Text: 'Edmund Burke (1729-1797)'; 'A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756)'; 'passion'; 'nature'; 'astonishment'; 'state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended'; 'some degree of horror'; 'terror'; 'greatness' with 'height', 'depth', 'light', 'darkness'; 'unfathomable greatness'

Burke also develops the distinction between someone experiencing the sublime first-hand in reality, and someone experiencing it second-hand as a spectator through art, specifically painting; i.e. the difference between an actual experience and its aesthetic representation.

Visual Text: 'first-hand'; 'reality'; 'second-hand'; 'spectator'; 'actual experience'; 'aesthetic representation'

Burke attributes this difference in experiences to distance: - that is physical, geographical or temporal distance. He says that 'when danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight or pleasure, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are, delightful or pleasurable.' (Burke, 1909, p.21)

Visual Text: 'physical, geographic or temporal distance'; 'danger or pain'; 'simply terrible'; 'delightful or pleasurable'

You can't get much more distance from a genuinely dangerous experience such as witnessing an avalanche in a mountain range than viewing a painting of that experience in a gallery a long way away from the mountain range and a long time after the event. And Burke suggests that with that safety of distance, the sublime can become pleasurable, and that distinction is fundamental to my own enquiry.

Visual Text: 'safety of distance'; 'pleasurable'

In relation to my own cinematography, I have come to think of the former real experience as an 'active sublime', and the latter representational experience as a 'passive sublime'. Both are genuine experiences, but it is the distance from the viewer to the sublime object that changes the impact of sublimity.

Visual Text: 'active sublime'; 'passive sublime'; 'distance'; 'changes the impact of sublimity'

Burke also introduces the idea of 'sympathy,' in terms of what we might now call 'empathy', which is generated by the artist through the creation of an artistic representation of a sublime moment, 'for sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he [sic] is affected.' (Burke 1909, p.26)

Visual Text: 'sympathy' cross-fades to 'empathy'; 'we are put into the place of another human'; 'affected in many respects as he is affected.'

Thus, the level of sublime impact on a passive viewer or spectator of a representation of a sublime experience is also dependant on the artist's technical and conceptual artistic ability within their form to provoke empathy for the human who went through the active sublime experience first-hand.

Visual Text: 'artist's technical and conceptual artistic ability'; 'to provoke empathy'

Some eight years later Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrote *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1764), which became a foundational text for the European Romantic movement. Kant divides the sublime into three categories: first: the terrifying sublime, accompanied by a certain dread or even melancholy; second: the noble sublime, accompanied merely by a quiet wonder or admiration; third: a splendid or magnificent sublime having a beauty completely pervading a sublime plan (Goldthwait,

1960, pp.47-48), or accompanied by a beauty spread over a sublime prospect, which we can read as landscape. (Kant, 2011, p.16)

Visual Text: 'Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)'; 'Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime (1764)'; 'Romantic'; 'terrifying sublime'; 'dread'; 'melancholy'; 'noble sublime'; 'quiet wonder'; 'admiration'; 'splendid sublime'; 'magnificent sublime'; 'beauty'

Kant also echoes Burke's earlier assertion that the 'Beautiful and sublime are not the same. The latter swells the heart and makes the attention fixed and tense, therefore, it exhausts. The former lets the soul melt in a soft sensation, and, because it relaxes the nerves, it puts the feeling into a gentler emotion' (Kant, 2011, p.79). Kant therefore also emphasises the distance between the active sublime in nature and the passive sublime in a gallery (or movie theatre); the idea that the further away the spectator is, the more pleasurable or beautiful it becomes.

Visual Text: 'the beautiful and the sublime are not the same'

Crucially, Romantic theory was significantly influenced by 'Kant's attention to the ways in which subjectivity determines our apprehension of the world'. (Leitch et al. 2001, p. 12). Through Kant, the Romantics were able to develop the idea of transcendence and the sublime as a transformative experience, particularly through communion with nature, that impacted on their poetry and painting.

Visual Text: 'subjectivity determines our apprehension of the world'; 'transcendence'; 'transformative experience'; 'communion with nature'

With Kant, we have arrived at the moment in which the conditions of visuality shift considerably towards visual representation, which I shall explore through considering the work of two specific Romantic-era painters.

Before looking at their work, we need to summarise the sublime's conceptual basis derived from these philosophical writings.

Robert Doran states that the critical concept of sublimity is motivated by the tension between a literary-aesthetic theory and the experience of transcendence. He defines 'ecstasy, grandeur, terror, awe, astonishment, wonder' as associated notions of the sublime. (Doran, 2015, p.1)

Visual Text: 'motivated by a tension'; 'literary-aesthetic theory'; 'experience of transcendence'; 'ecstasy'; 'grandeur'; 'terror'; 'awe'; 'astonishment'; 'wonder'

Leitch et al. argue that the sublime

> connotes majesty, awe, nobility, and spiritual, moral, and intellectual excellence. In some discussions, it chiefly refers to something *in* natural scenes and landscapes; at the same time, the term often evokes the response of viewers – their sensations and feelings that Nature creates. (Leitch et al. 2001, p.418)

Visual Text: 'majesty'; 'awe'; 'spiritual'; 'intellectual'; 'excellence'; 'something in natural scenes and landscapes'; 'evokes the response of viewers'; 'sensations and feelings that Nature creates'

According to Philip Shaw, sublimity

> refers to the moment when the ability to apprehend, to know, and to express a thought or sensation is defeated. Yet through this very defeat, the mind gets a feeling for that which lies beyond thought and language'. (Shaw 2006. p.3).

Visual Text: 'moment'; 'ability to apprehend'; 'to know'; 'to express'; 'thought or sensation is defeated'; 'that which lies beyond thought and language'

However, it is an environmentalist, Christine L. Oravec, who constructs what I consider to be the most succinct yet comprehensive definition of the sublime as a deeply subjective, emotional and physical experience occurring in three stages:

> First, apprehension, in which the individual subject encounters an object larger and greater than the self; second, awe, oppression, or even depression- in some versions fear or potential fear- in which the individual recognizes the relative greatness of the object and the relative weakness or limits of the self; and, third, exaltation, in which the individual is conceptually or psychically enlarged as the greatness of the object is realized and the individual identities with that greatness. (Oravec, 1996, p.67)

Visual Text: 'apprehension'; 'object larger or greater than the self'; 'awe'; 'fear'; 'recognizes';' relative greatness of the object'; 'relative weakness of the self'; 'exaltation'; 'conceptually or psychically enlarged'; 'greatness of the object realized'; 'individual identifies with the greatness'

THE STATIC SUBLIME LANDSCAPE IN PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY (length 7.5 mins/ Run Time 10-17.5 mins)

Visual Text: **THE STATIC SUBLIME LANDSCAPE IN PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

Visual Text: PAINTING

Now we switch from words to pictures with words.

Images: An Avalanche in the Alps (P. J. de Loutherbourg, 1803); Aurora Borealis (F. E. Church, 1865); Gordale Scar (J. Ward, 1812); Storm in the Mountains (A. Bierstadt, 1870)

F. W. J. Schelling, in his book *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), describes a great painting coming into being

> as though the invisible curtain that separates the real from the ideal world is raised; it is merely the opening through which the characters and places of the world of fantasy, which shimmers only imperfectly through the real world, fully come upon the stage. Nature [to the artist] … is merely the imperfect reflection of a world that exists not outside but within him. (Schelling in Shaw, 2006, pp.91-92)

It's this transcendent act that the Romantics were looking for when they built on the prose of Kant and Burke with their poetry and their painting.

• Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840)

Visual Text: **Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840)**

Images: The Monk and the Sea (C. D. Friedrich, c.1810); Woman Before the Rising Sun (C. D. Friedrich, 1818); Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon (C. F. Friedrich, 1830); Winter Landscape with Church (C. D. Friedrich, 1811); Chalk Cliffs on Rügen (C. D. Friedrich, 1818); The Chasseur in the Forest (C. D. Friedrich, 1814); Newbrandenburg (C. D. Friedrich, c.1817); The Abbey in the Oakwood (C. D. Friedrich, 1809-10); The Sea of Ice / The Wreck of Hope (C. D. Friedrich, 1823-24)

- *Der Mönch am Meer* (*The Monk by the Sea)* (1808-1810)

William Vaughan suggests that Caspar David Friedrich's 'Monk in *Monk by the Sea* is not making a self-determining gesture … but instead peers into the landscape which we ourselves see. The vision that he is experiencing is thus subsumed into our own experience of the painting' (Vaughan, 1980, p.93)

This is the purpose of Friedrich's Rückenfigur, or 'figure seen from behind', an artistic device to encourage the spectator of his work to put himself or herself into the place of the figure within the landscape, in an effort to promote empathy and a shared sense of experience; the Rückenfigur 'infuses Friedrich's art with a heightened subjectivity' (Koerner, 2009, p.36). His Rückenfigur's '… dominate the natural scene with their presence, defining landscape as primarily the encounter of subject with world. They are the ubiquitous, almost obsessive, signatures of Friedrich's *Erlebnikunst*', or art that comes from experience (Koerner, 2009, p.193), which for Friedrich symbolised 'the artist's inner spiritual communication with nature.' (Friedrich in Hinz, 1974, p.116)

The Monk by the Sea establishes other key visual themes pertaining to the sublime: nature and 'the human' figure are the central protagonists within the landscape; compositionally there is a strong sense of balance between sky and land - in this case the sky is vast and becomes dark with clouds the closer it gets to the sea, suggesting a sense of weight pressing down on the human figure; the human is often physically dwarfed by

the scale of the nature it confronts, representing the spiritual, emotional or intellectual incomprehension suggested by Burke and Kant; and the human is often viewed in a position of isolation, desolation or jeopardy.
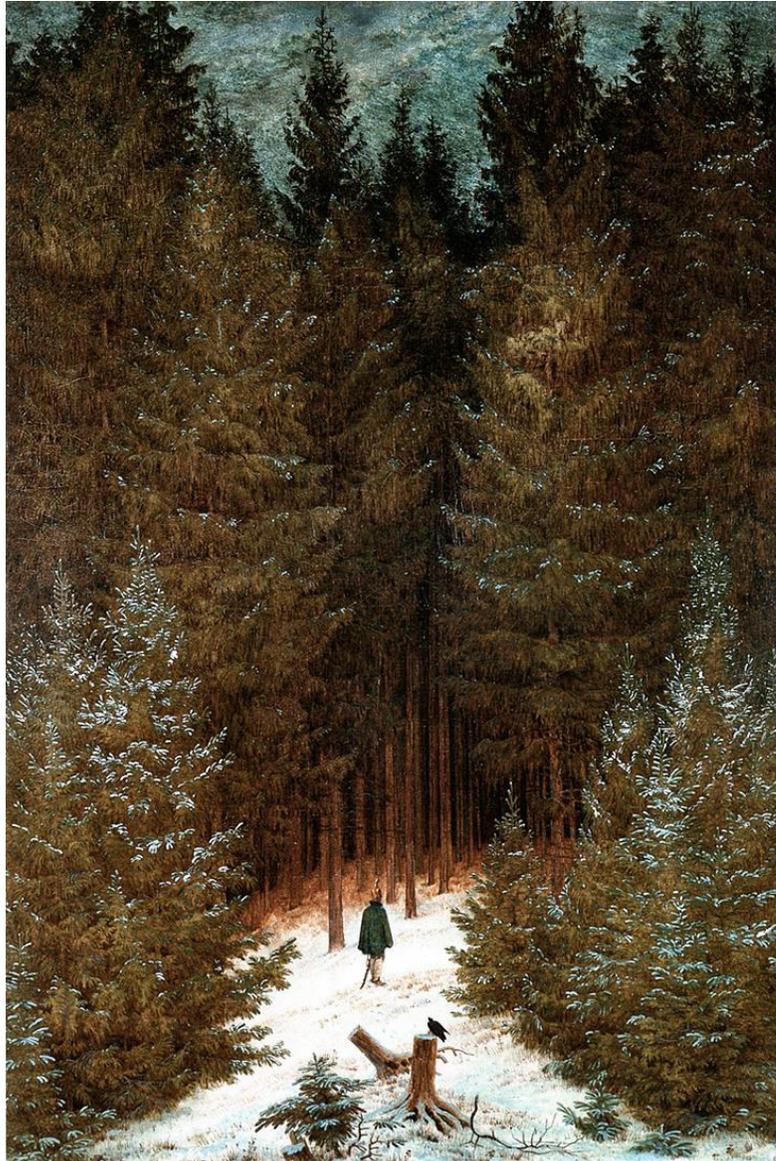
- *Der Chasseur im Walde (The Chasseur in the Forest)* (1814)

As in this image, the human is often making a journey, at a crossroads or at the moment of significant decision: i.e. whether to take the path forward and into the woods or to return in the directions of one's own footsteps. ~~This decision is important because it directly asks a question of the spectator - which direction might they choose, were they in the same position?~~

Friedrich's paintings are often set during the periods of twilight and sunset, the times of the day where the light is most dynamic and allows for the longest shadows and therefore definition on the landscape, especially in winter, the season he often chooses. Friedrich rarely uses weather directly in the content of his landscapes; rather he chooses to suggest devastation through his use of ruins and storm-ravaged trees, or by depicting the aftermath of the elemental catastrophe that drives the action of his landscapes, as in this picture:

Visual:

- *Das Eismeer* (*The Sea of Ice) or Die Gescheiterte Hoffnung (The Wreck of Hope)* (1823-1824)

This is a rare figureless landscape work by Friedrich, whose reference to 'the human' can be perceived in the form of the splintered mast and stern of a ship that has been trapped and shattered to destruction by pack ice, consumed by nature.

• J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851)

Visual Text: J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851)

Images: Fishermen at Sea (Turner, 1796); Rain, Steam and Speed – the Great Western Railway (Turner, 1844); Snow Storm – Steam-boat off a Harbour's Mouth (Turner, 1842); Shade and Darkness – The Evening of the Deluge (Turner, 1843); Rough Sea with Wreckage (Turner, c.1840-45); Light and Colour (Goethe's Theory) – The Morning After the Deluge (Turner, 1843); Seascape with Storm Coming On (Turner, 1840)

Visual:

- *Fishermen at Sea* (1796)

Fishermen at Sea exemplifies Turner's understanding and control of how to represent the sun or moon, very often reflected or re-shaped by water, as the key lighting source in his paintings, as well as demonstrating his manipulation of weather to focus or otherwise shape light.

Turner often makes much more of a play between the balance of shadow and light in his work than Friedrich does. This detailed use of contrast adds drama, gives directional focus to specific areas of a canvas, and also suggests that which is seen and that which cannot be seen i.e. the potential danger of what is shrouded in darkness, a theme raised by writers on the sublime since Longinus. Turner was a master of chiaroscuro, which

enabled him to either push light out of his paintings so as to physically affect and warm the spectators of his work, or to suck light out of the viewing environment and so to pull people into the centre of the work, such as the small, warm lantern in the central fishing boat of this picture.

Unlike Friedrich's *rückenfigur*, Turner rarely draws attention to human figures in this work, rather he alludes to the human in his use of boats, bridges, pathways of ruins. Where Friedrich's figures are caught in still moments of reflection or decision, potentially just *being*, Turner's are almost always in a state of motion, *doing* some action. Turner was often inspired by the mechanical and the inevitability of progress that came with the Industrial Revolution. Here the fire-powered black iron steam-train bears down relentlessly on a small and barely visible hare, an acknowledgement of the impact of the modern and man-made on the natural world.

Returning briefly to *Fishermen at Sea* the perspective on the storm-tossed ship is arguably that of a grounded third person point of view as seen from a spit of land, much like the one referenced in the background of the painting.

In this way Turner often places the spectator directly in the eye of the storm, which threatens the small and seemingly insignificant humans symbolised by the battered boat, so close and yet so far from the shore.

Visual:

- *Snow Storm- Steam-boat off a Harbour's Mouth…* (1842)

In this image, the spectator is much more immersed within the frame of the painting. There is no reference to land and there is no edge to which viewers can anchor themselves, no straight line with which to associate the man-made, other than the crooked mast of the vessel that draws our eye. This the famous mast that Turner allegedly had himself tied to 'because he wished to convey something of the immediacy and sensual impact of nature such as Burke describes' (Finley, 1979, p.165) The steamship is rendered little more than a toy in this picture, and the black smoke of the boiler is subsumed into the blackness of the sky; the 'viewer is enveloped by storm and drawn into the centre of natural paroxysms of wind and vapour' (*Ibid.*).

Turner's use of weather often drives the dramatic narrative of his work. The black clouds have just broken, bringing rain on the driving wind; or the image depicts the chaos of the eye of the storm, where monochromatic shapes are violently blurred, or they have just parted to allow the first ray of sunshine to bring colour back to the scene.

Visual:

- *Seascape with Storm Coming On* (c.1840)

This final seascape was created around a decade before Turner's death; a period where his cataracts were exacerbated by alcoholism and subsequent diabetes. His landscapes became more abstracted and arguably more grounded in the first-person point of view; within this perspective the artist and in turn the viewer are lost to the sea. The work is not framed and formally composed as a 'landscape painting', but rather an image made in and of the elements, and therefore deeply rooted within nature itself.

Finley suggests that in 'these paintings executed in the autumn of his life, Turner found an association between the physical and the transcendental which established not only a new level of artistic perception but provided a lucid revelation of that which cannot be readily depicted' (Finley, 1979, p.165).

Seascape with Storm Coming On can be read as an invitation to the viewer to adopt an eco-centric perspective of the seascape, in an effort to try to imagine how nature might see itself. Although the anthropocentric will be inherent in how we read the piece, the lack of 'the human' in this work is striking.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Images: View from the Window at Le Gras (J. N. Niépce, c.1826); The Tetons and the Snake River (A. Adams, 1942); Winter Sunrise, Sierra Nevada, from Lone Pine, California (A. Adams, 1944)

Visual:
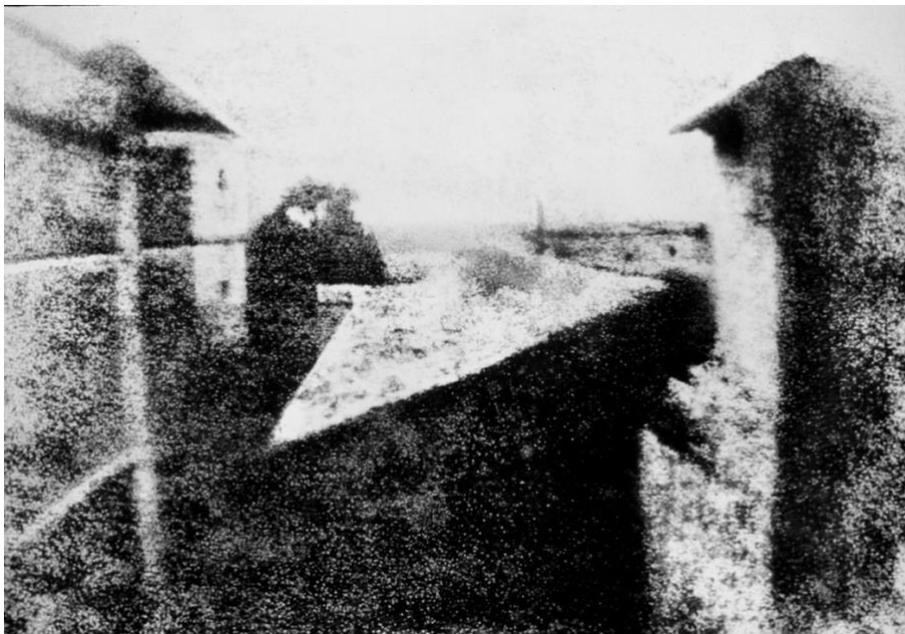
- *View from the Window at Le Gras* by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (1826-27)

-

'One might be tempted to say that paintings preserve a moment. Yet on reflection this is obviously untrue. For the moment of a painting, unlike a moment photographed, never existed as such.' (Berger, 1984, p.24)

This quote from Berger addresses the one thing that a photographer or cinematographer must do that a painter does not have to- they must be there within the landscape.

It was Joseph Nicéphore Niépce (1765-1833) who first preserved an 'actual' moment through heliographic photography in c.1826-27; revealingly it was a landscape! The process by which this image was produced was only possible through the experimental use of chemicals and practices associated with the early Industrial Revolution: this is a giant leap forwards in the conditions of visuality, i.e. the invention of photography.

Importantly, it occurred at the moment now widely considered to be the advent of the Anthropocene.

Although many notable photographers have practiced landscape photography, very few have engaged with concepts of the sublime. For example, Ansel Adams (1902-1984), whose work is certainly beautiful but is rarely sublime because the landscapes he documented were predominantly the relatively safe and 'managed wildernesses' of the American National Parks and very rarely feature 'the human' or the human impact on or engagement with nature.

Thus, my first example is relatively recent.

• **Edward Burtynsky** (1955-)

Visual Text: Edward Burtynsky (1955-)

Images: Shipbreaking #13 Chittagong, Bangladesh (E. Burtynsky, 2000); Shipbreaking #9a, Chittagong, Bangladesh (E. Burtynsky, 2000b); Nickel Tailings #30, Sudbury, Ontario (E. Burtynsky, 1996); Nickel Tailings #34, Sudbury, Ontario (E. Burtynsky, 1996b); Saw Mills #1, Lagos, Nigeria (E. Burtynsky, 2016); Xiaolangdi Dam #4 (E. Burtynsky, 2011); Oxford Tire Pile #1, Westley, California, USA (E. Burtynsky, 1999); Oil Bunkering #2, Niger Delta (E. Burtynsky, 2016a); Dandora Landfill #1, Nairobi, Kenya (E. Burtynsky, 2016a); Clearcut #1, Palm Oil Plantation, Borneo, Malaysia (E. Burtynsky, 2016a)

Visual:

- *Nickel Tailings #30 Sudbury, Ontario* (1996)

Edward Burtynsky describes his large format photography practice as 'working with one idea which is human's relationship with nature - and how we engage with that place we call nature. And the idea that we see nature [as being] outside of ourselves.' (Burtynsky in Galloway, 2014) He does this by rarely referencing the human figure directly in his work, focussing rather on the aftermath or impact of human behaviour on nature. Burtynsky suggests that his work provokes a sense of the sublime when he says:

> Through my photographs, I'm hoping to be able to engage the audiences of my work to come up to it and not immediately be rejected by the image. Not to say, "Oh my God, what is it?" but to be challenged by it -- to say, "Wow, this is beautiful," on one level, but on the other level, "This is scary. I shouldn't be enjoying it." Like a forbidden pleasure- and it's that forbidden pleasure that I think is what resonates out there. (Burtynsky, 2005)

His view is corroborated by T.R. Kover ~~in his essay Are the Oil Sands Sublime: Edward Burtynsky and Vicissitudes of the Sublime~~:

> The sublimity of the environmental crisis there-fore arises out of our inability to tangibly conceive of its underlying causes, scale, and scope. It is this sense

of the sublime, I would argue, that Burtynsky's work ultimately rests upon and evokes, by showing us the almost unimaginable scale of our consumption and impact upon this planet. (Kover, 2014, p.140)

Visual:

- *Xiaolangdi Dam #4, Yellow River, Henan Province, China* (2011)

Technological advances have often driven Burtynsky's approaches to his practice: his use of cranes and poles with remote controlled gyroscopes; fibre optic link ups to control his cameras; helicopters with their own lorries so that they can refuel in the middle of the desert; hot air balloons through to drones with which mounts his large-format digital cameras, specifically where there is no air space where he can fly a full-size helicopter. In this way, technology 'offers new ways of entering into places that you would never have considered going – or that you couldn't even go to – before.' (Manaugh, 2012)

Visual:

- *Shipbreaking #13 Chittagong, Bangladesh* (2000)

Burtynsky's core concept is that we live in fundamentally unsustainable ways, and that the negative impacts on the environments and landscapes he photographs are warnings: 'We come from nature… There is an importance to [having] a certain reverence for what nature is because we are connected to it… if we destroy nature, we destroy ourselves.' (Burtynsky, 2021)

• **Chris Burkard** (1986-)

Visual Text: Chris Burkard (1986-)

Images: Aleutian Island Volcano (C. Burkard, 2013); Backlit Chilean Pointbreak (C. Burkard, 2009); #LifeChangingPlaces – Lofoten (C. Burkard, no date a); California, Winter (C. Burkard, 2014); Iceland, Winter (C. Burkard, 2014b); Walking Through a Whiteout (C. Burkard, 2013b)

- *Aleutian Island Volcano* by Chris Burkard (2013)

Chris Burkard represents a new generation of photographers that market themselves as eco-adventurers, explorer, climbers, extreme sports fanatics and activists at the same time as functioning as life-style icons and social media pioneers, committed to photographing 'the last quiet spaces' on the planet (Burkard, 2015).

Working exclusively in digital photography and video, Burkard aims to 'capture stories that inspire humans to consider their relationship with nature, while promoting the preservation of wild places everywhere.' (Burkard, no date). This statement suggests a paradox that is also found in Burtynsky's practice, in that both travel the world to make art about ecological issues, and yet I can find little evidence that the issue of carbon footprint has been addressed by either photographer. This is more problematic in Burkard's work as he specifically markets himself as an activist.

Burkard's work is highly commercial, and he enjoys big name sponsorship and brand association in his photography and video work that enable him to travel. Although he produces conventional exhibitions and books of his photographs, it's his use of social media as a platform to share his work and the journeys he undertakes that illustrates another shift in our conditions of visuality: i.e. that we are now subject to such a vast proliferation of images on every possible subject.

Because most mobile phones now have the ability to shoot 4k video and high-quality images, we tend to capture more images than we will ever have the time to look at or use, which we store in remote data 'clouds' and which we share via social media.

Beyond the veiled environmental impacts of this process, it's this constant activity of visualising experience and the concomitant over-saturation of images that I suggest starts to detract from the process of making considered landscape art. Burkard's Instagram stories, shot in a 'selfie' format, suggests "Here I am, in front of the landscape!" which can feel egotistical rather than a deeper reflection about the landscape.

Visual:

- *Walking Through a White Out, Iceland* by Chris Burkard (2013)

There appears to be some understanding of the autoethnographic and subjective perspective in Burkard's work: he very often frames the human directly at the centre of his images, like Friedrich's Rückenfigur, although Burkard's figures are always male. Burkard states that his 'favourite things about these places was simply the challenge and the creativity it took just to get there…' (Burkard, 2015)- and yet there is never much sense of real jeopardy or inherent danger in his images, or in the documentation of his travels to acquire them.

I struggle with the idea touched on in his work that nature is somehow there for 'the human' to enjoy, which feels disingenuous, like a cynical marketing stunt aimed at millennials. For me there is a blurring of the lines in Burkard's work between the genuinely sublime and a beautiful aspirational image- a purely 'awesome!' moment where the awe is solely tied to enjoyment rather than terror. Does this suggest surf, adventure and travel culture's (mis)appropriation of the sublime landscape?

Visual:

- *Yosemite Sunset* by Chris Burkard (date unknown)

THE MOVING SUBLIME IN CINEMATOGRAPHY (length 7.5 mins/ Run Time 17.5-25 mins)

VISUALS: Lawrence of Arabia (D. Lean, 1962); Silent Light (C. Reygadas, 2007), Le Quattro Volte (M. Frammartino, 2010); The Turin Horse (B. Tarr, 2011); The Thin Red Line (T. Malick, 1998); Days of Heaven (T. Malick, 1978); Ratcatcher (L. Ramsay, 1999); Apocalypse Now (F. F. Coppola, 1979).

Cinematography brings two more elements into play that are crucially important to a shift in the conditions of visuality: movement and time.

As painting and photography have the capacity to represent a static sublime landscape moment in time, so cinematography is a medium that can even more fully capture the human experience of being in the landscape. This is because it can move the camera, cinematographer and ultimately the viewer physically and temporally towards, through and beyond a sublime landscape moment.

Dziga Vertov (1896-1954), one of the key pioneers of a revolutionary cinema for the new experiment in social living that was Communism, writes in 1923 of how the 'camera-eye' encapsulates this shift to movement and the potential it held as a story-telling medium:

> I am eye. I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, am showing you a world, the likes of which only I can see… I am in constant movement, I approach and draw away from objects, I crawl under them, I move alongside the mouth of a running horse… my road is towards the creation of a fresh perception of the world. Thus I decipher in a new way the world unknown to you. (Vertov, 1984, pp. 17-18)

Time is a theme that runs through the work of Andrei Tarkovsky like perhaps no other filmmaker, as I will go on to elaborate. In his book *Sculpting in Time* (1989) he suggests that

'what a person normally goes to the cinema for is time: for time lost or spent or not yet had. He [sic] goes there for living experience; for cinema, like no other art, widens, enhances and concentrates a person's experience—~~and not only enhances it but makes it longer, significantly longer.~~ That is the power of cinema:' (Tarkovsky, 1989, p. 62)

P. Adams Sitney notes that 'The use of sublime landscapes often coincides with spectacular meteorological displays. Cinema was the first art that could represent the temporality and rhythm of a storm.' (Sitney, 1993, p.112)

In his book *Nonindifferent* Nature (1945) Sergei Eisenstein suggests that

> *Landscape is the freest element of a film, the least burdened with servile, narrative tasks, and the most flexible in conveying moods, emotional states and spiritual experiences.* (Eisenstein, 1987, p.217)

In the following section I am going to reference the films of two directors, Andrei Tarkovsky and Werner Herzog, and the contemporary cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki, who have used cinematography to take us towards, through and beyond the sublime landscape.

• **Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986)**

Images: Ivan's Childhood (A Tarkovsky, 1962); Mirror (A. Tarkovsky, 1975); Stalker (A. Tarkovsky, 1979); Nostalgia (A. Tarkovsky, 1983); The Sacrifice (A. Tarkovsky, 1986).

Andrei Tarkovsky (1932-1986) was the son of a poet, and his work is perhaps best described as poetry made with images and sound. Indeed film critic Nick James says 'It is even arguable that Tarkovsky's whole approach to cinema comes from striving to find cinematic equivalents to the way written poetry makes use of nature, landscape and the elements.' (James, 2015)

While he references poetry, music and painting often in his writing, for Tarkovsky the search for a transcendent experience of art- for both the artist and the viewer, and especially concerning the relationship between the two- was only fully possible through cinema. His view of film equates to ongoing discussions on the sublime by the way it

> affects a person's emotions, not his reason. ~~Its function is, as it were, to turn and loosen the human soul, making it receptive to good.~~ When you see a good film… you are disarmed and entranced from the start—but not by an idea, not by a thought… The author cannot therefore reckon on his [sic] work being understood in one particular way and according to his [sic] own perception of it. All he [sic] can do is present his [sic] own image of the world, for people to be able to look at it through his [sic] eyes, and be filled with his [sic] feelings, doubts and thoughts . . .' (Tarkovsky, 1989, pp. 165-66)

Tarkovsky explores the concept of time in many of his films, specifically through slow, meticulously orchestrated tracking shots that take time to reveal the details of his landscapes.

These also enable him to focus in on his human subjects as they experience nature, sometimes lost in the landscape, and at other times seemingly becoming a part of it, touching on what Eisenstein describes as

> the miracle of a genuinely emotional landscape (and) the mutual interpenetration of nature and man with all the overflowing variety of his temperament. (Eisenstein, 1987, p.360)

Visuals: battered landscape at the end of the train-line in Stalker; Stalker and writer laying down in the matter of the landscape

Tarkovsky's tracking camera also explores the use of extreme close ups to cast a detailed eye over the matter that makes up his landscapes, often revealing abstract evidence of the landscape's past. Sometimes he creates landscapes in miniature, or infers landscapes

made from natural materials, playing with scale in order to draw attention to the power and interconnectivity of   nature. These miniatures are often juxtaposed with more formal, full-scale landscape compositions, in order to transfer the 'meaning' or 'energy' of the one 'landscape' on to the other.

Visuals: riverside macro to panorama in Stalker

~~He often leaves us in little doubt not only of the human impact on nature in his landscapes, but how nature affects our own behaviour within the landscape.~~

Visuals: war landscapes from Ivan's Childhood; ruins from Stalker; Stalker lays down in the long grass; Stalker throws the bandaged wrapped nuts

Tarkovsky often places his journeying human figures in landscapes that fill them with foreboding ~~and fear~~, and in which they struggle against nature and the mysterious, threatening powers that lurk unseen within the landscape. Beyond the physical dangers that he alludes to in his films- the grown-up war that child Ivan experiences, for example- it's important to note that much of the peril in Tarkovsky's sublime landscapes is existential. The internal soliloquies of his usually male lead characters reveal inner tortures of self-doubt or of self-inflicted peril, and often an existential terror of nature or of harm from memories, dreams or from one's own hand.

Visuals: first sunken forest sequence from Ivan's Childhood; Stalker crawling along the wall

On the landscapes in *Ivan's Childhood* (1962) Tarkovsky suggests that:

> If an author is moved by the landscape chosen, if it brings back memories
> to him and suggests poetic associations, even subjective ones, then this
> will in turn affect the audience with particular excitement. (Tarkovsky
> 1989, p.28)

Tarkovsky writes about filming with 'ever greater sincerity and conviction in each shot, using the immediate impressions made upon me by nature, in which time will have left its own trace':

> Nature exists in cinema in the naturalistic fidelity with which it is recorded; the greater the fidelity, the more we trust nature as we see it in the frame, and at the same time, the finer is the created image: in its authentically natural likeness, the inspiration of nature itself is brought into cinema. (Tarkovsky, 1989, p.212)

Visuals: birch wood from Ivan's Childhood, including forceful kiss over the trench; other various landscapes and 'nature shots' from films

Tarkovsky also draws heavily on the elements in his films: 'Rain, fire, water, snow, dew, the driving ground wind—all are part of the material setting in which we dwell; I would even say of the truth of our lives.' (Tarkovsky, 1989, p.212)

He uses these elements to 'create a particular aesthetic setting in which to steep the action of the film.' (*Ibid.*)

Visual:

- *Nostalgia* (1983) Dir: Andrei Tarkovsky DP: Giuseppe Lanci

Fire is used by Tarkovsky frequently as an element controlled by humans to destroy or otherwise erase memories or traces of the past. In this way it is a purging and unforgiving element. These burning structures are often surrounded with a seemingly indifferent or unaffected natural environment looking on, as illustrated by the line of trees on the right of this shot from *Sacrifice* (1986), which is the last that Tarkovsky ever filmed. ~~Until, that is, they are directly targeted or affected by the destructive impulses of humans.~~

Visuals: small campfire from Stalker; burning buildings from Mirror & The Sacrifice; tree being cut down in The Sacrifice

Visual:

- *Sacrifice* (1986) Dir: Andrei Tarkovsky DP: Sven Nykvist

Tarkovsky often frames his landscapes through doorways and windows, suggesting a clear separation of civilisation 'in here' and nature 'out there.' But he also plays with bringing his landscapes physically inside buildings, including the use of elements, specifically water as a force that destroys and washes away- are these then interiors overrun by nature, or landscapes constrained by human-made structures? For me they symbolise nature reclaiming the urban or industrial landscapes designed and managed by humans to impose order on nature: in this way buildings become ruins, human figures become ghosts, and human memories becomes monochromatic echoes of the past.

***Visuals: through window in Stalker; through doorway (?) in Mirror; interior rain scene
in Stalker; final shot from Nostalgia of house and landscape within the grounds of the
ruined abbey***
Visual:

- *Stalker* (1979) Dir: Andrei Tarkovsky Cinematography by Aleksandr Knyazhinskiy,
Georgi Rerberg & Leonid Kalashnikov

Stalker in particular explores the impact of industry and humanity's over-consumption
of the natural world. These images can be read as illustrations of eco-sublime
landscapes: where once we the human were fearful of nature- prior to the Industrial
Revolution, for example- then for approximately 250 years nature has had cause to be
fearful of us.

And yet now with anthropogenic climate change the balance shifts again as humanity is
faced with ecological disasters wrought by our own hands. This idea is frequently
evidenced in *Stalker*, where the deep impact of previous human behaviour on and
against the environment can be seen now directly affecting the vulnerable human
figures, struggling to survive within these now ruined landscapes.

***Visuals: final landscape shot from Stalker as he walks his family home in the shadow
of the large power station belching smoke***

~~• NOTE: mention use of colour, colour changing? i.e. stalker rail journey into the Zone in order to accentuate the green-ness of the Zone? Dream and memory are monochrome and real time or 'now' is colour~~

~~• NOTE: elaborate on his use of bringing nature inside buildings, and how this changes how he moves the camera, i.e. he starts to treat interiors like landscapes with sweeping tracking shots...~~

~~• NOTE: Perhaps argue, or at least suggest at some point, that the danger / jeopardy in Tarkovsky's sublime is often existential, where the inner monologue of his characters, usually male and usually spoken as soliloquy's, reveals an inner torture of self-doubt or sense of peril; an existential terror of nature or of harm from memories, dream or from one's own hand~~

• **Werner Herzog**

(1942-)

Images: Fata Morgana (W. Herzog, 1971); La Soufrière (W. Herzog, 1977); Fitzcarraldo (W. Herzog, 1982); Agirre, the Wrath of God (W. Herzog, 1972); Lessons of Darkness (W. Herzog, 1992); Into the Inferno (W. Herzog, 2016)

If everything within Tarkovsky's frame is a carefully designed reflection of the director's vision and moods, then the frame of Werner Herzog (1942-) is constantly moving, with a speculative, hand-held documentary approach seeking out the shots with which the director can build the worlds and landscapes of his stories.

Visual:

- *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) Dir: Werner Herzog DP: Thomas Mauch

Herzog draws no distinction between fiction films and documentaries; both are ways to approach landscape:

> For me a true landscape is not just a representation of a desert or a forest. It shows an inner state of mind, literally inner landscapes, and it is the human soul that is visible through the landscapes presented in my films, be it the jungle in *Aguirre*, the desert in *Fata Morgana*, or the burning oil fields of Kuwait in *Lessons of Darkness*. This is my real connection to Caspar David Friedrich, a man who never wanted to paint landscapes *per se*, but wanted to explore and show inner landscapes. (Herzog, 2002, p.136)

As Harper and Rayner argue, this was Herzog's innovative way of approaching the sublime:

> Herzog draws not merely upon specific, recurring icons of the sublime, but also upon Friedrich's characteristically romantic inclination to use the landscape as an external representation of the complexities of internal psychology. The aim of such work is to make the fog that dominates our inner

lives manifest upon the canvas, or in Herzog's case, upon the screen. (Harper and Rayner, 2010, p.94)

- *Aguirre, Wrath of God* (1972) Dir: Werner Herzog DP: Thomas Mauch

In Herzog's early films the landscape is often both the catalyst and protagonist for whole narratives or entire character arcs. His characteristic MO as a filmmaker was to plunge himself and his entire cast and crew into the wildest environments possible and to allow nature itself to determine the trajectory of the action.

Visuals: various clips from Aguirre, Wrath of God (1972) or Fitzcarraldo (1982)
Deleuze argues:

'In *Aguirre, Wrath of God* the heroic action, the descent of the rapids, is subordinated to the sublime action, the only one which is equal to the vast, virgin forest: Aguirre's plan to be the only Traitor, to betray everyone at once - God, the King, men - in order to found a pure race in an incestuous union with his daughter, in which History will become the 'opera' of Nature. And, in Fitzcarraldo the heroic is even more directly the means of the sublime (the

crossing of the mountain by the heavy boat); the whole virgin forest becomes the temple of Verdi's opera and Caruso's voice.' (Deleuze, 1986, p.184)

Visuals: Aguirre… raft sequence here

Herzog's documentary approach inspires my own use of autoethnography and the essay film: both his physical presence within the landscape of his documentaries, and particularly his reflection on his experiences that he weaves into his philosophical, darkly humorous and often personal voiceovers. It's this direct experience of being in these landscapes- learning to 'read the inner essence of a landscape' (Herzog in Cronin, 2014, p.411)- and specifically working with people who interact with or live within specific environments, that gives Herzog such authenticity as an author- in this way he uses film to document his journey through landscapes to get a greater understanding of his subjects, human or geological, that can be read as sublime in the ways I have been discussing it.

Herzog often uses evocative terms such as 'violated' or 'embarrassed' to describe the landscapes in his films: 'One must dig like an archaeologist and search our violated landscape to find anything new. It can sometimes be a struggle to find unprocessed and fresh images.' (Herzog 2002, p.66-67)

- *Into the Inferno* (2016) Dir: Werner Herzog DP: Peter Zeitlinger

He also considers that we are now in 'a very, very dramatic situation':

> 'Our civilization doesn't have adequate images, and I think a civilization is doomed or is going to die out like dinosaurs if it does not develop an adequate language or adequate images. For example, we have found out that there are serious problems facing our civilization, like energy problems, or environmental problems… or over-population of the world. But generally it is not understood yet that a problem of the same magnitude is that we do not have adequate images, and that's what I'm working on- a new grammar of images.' Taken from *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe* (Blank, 1980)

- *Lessons of Darkness* (1992) Dir: Werner Herzog Cinematography by Paul Berriff, Rainer Klausmann

Lessons of Darkness (1991), Herzog's documentation of the Kuwait oilfields left to burn in the wake of the Iraq War, can subsequently be viewed as a considered response to those ecological concerns. Herzog says 'the landscape you see in *Lessons of Darkness* is not just embarrassed, it is completely mutilated. The film plays out as… a requiem for a planet that we ourselves have destroyed'. (Herzog, 2002, pp. 248-249)

Herzog's use of aerial photography also highlights the central conceit of the film, playfully revealed in his voiceover, that the whole thing is effectively shot from the perspective of aliens coming to earth to discover these ravaged landscapes and strange creatures.

Visuals: "the first creature we met attempted to communicate with us…" sequence

Lessons of Darkness's significance is as the first film to focus solely on the eco-sublime landscape as I conceive it, i.e. a landscape where anthropogenic climate change has become the driving force in how that landscape behaves. This can be most effectively understood or felt through both the act or experience of witnessing the eco-sublime landscape, i.e. capturing it with a camera, and the subsequent analysis of that process and experience through editing and display of these images to an audience. In Herzog's own words:

> Only in this state of sublimity does something deeper become possible, a
> kind of truth that is the enemy of the merely factual. Ecstatic truth, I call it.'
> (Herzog and Weigel, 2010, p.1)

• Emmanuel 'Chivo' Lubezki (1964-)

Images: The Tree of Life (T. Malick, 2011); The New World (T. Malick, 2005); Gravity (A, Cuarón, 2013); Children of Men (A. Cuarón, 2006); The Revenant (A. Iñárritu, 2015)

- *The Tree of Life* (2011) Dir: Terrence Malick DP: Emmanuel Lubezki

• Emmanuel 'Chivo' Lubezki (1964-) is a contemporary cinematographer best known for his work with three directors: Terrence Malick (1943-) on *The New World* (2005) and *The Tree of Life* (2011) amongst others; Alfonso Cuaron [Quar-own] on *The Children of Men* (2006) and *Gravity* (2013); and with Alejandro González Iñárritu [In-yar-ee-too] on *Birdman* (2014) and *The Revenant* (2015). Many of these feature landscapes as protagonists and demonstrate Lubezki's tacit or instinctual understanding of how natural light behaves, and how to approach capturing human portraits and figures within the landscape.

Describing his experience of shooting *The New World*, his first film with Malick, Lubezki explains how he had to re-evaluate his approach to filming nature:

> When we were shooting, we were extra aware of how everything in nature
> is constantly shifting. We became aware of the earth moving, the shadows
> changing, the colour temperature constantly shifting, the rivers changing
> colour and the tide shifting, and all of that happens really fast. Shooting

studio movies, you tend to want to control the elements, but on this picture
we didn't – we wanted to capture life. (Lubezki in Page, 2016)

Visuals: nature etc. clips from The New World

Lubezki embraces the lack of control he has in shooting on location through meticulous planning- using local knowledge and technology to track weather and the movement of the sun- and most fundamentally through shot selection and camera movement: his use of wide angle prime lenses with small minimal focus distances means that he can capture both the human in close up (CU) and the surrounding landscape within the same frame; and his long, fluid Steadicam shots create a sense of weightlessness through which he can take time to investigate the relationship between the human and the landscape.

- *The Revenant* (2015) Dir: Alejandro G. Iñárritu DP: Emmanuel Lubezki

For Lubezki, this combination of shot selection and camera movement provides an elasticity of perspective, illustrated by this speeded up shot from Gravity, where the camera switches 'from being very objective to swinging around so you're seeing from the eyes of the character and then back again to the objective … You are confused, you are immersed, you are engaged.' (Lubezki in Desowitz, 2015)

Visuals: 'helmet shot' from Gravity here; then into the battle sequence from The Revenant

Beyond seeing things from an individual character's own subjective POV, Lubezki's wide lenses often get unsparingly close to humans, creating a landscape out of faces, hair, skin, hands and fabrics. This draws us in to an intimate and detailed world that we only ever experience in real life in a fundamentally subjective way, i.e. by having our own eyes close to a subject.

Lubezki builds on these intimate close ups by representing the subjective human experience of a character using variations on Friedrich's *Rückenfigur*, which encourages the viewer to look at 'the world' of the film from someone else's point of view, to literally imagine ourselves in another character's shoes, enabling an empathetic, connected response to the landscape and the humans inhabiting it.
Visuals: various Rückenfigur shots here

However, there is another form of subjectivity at play in Lubezki's approach to landscape in his cinematography. His use of fluid, sweeping Steadicam shots removes any trace of 'the human' from the movement of the camera and the frame; the graceful, omnipotent aerial cinematography that shows the human figure dwarfed by the landscape; and the macro-photographic textures of nature, such as tree bark, soil, sand, water and plants. These suggest an objective point of view, but they also offer a vision of nature reflecting on itself and the behaviour of the human within it. They can be read as giving nature an authentic 'voice' within the landscape.

This eco-centric subjective point of view (POV) encourages the viewer to consider landscape on its own terms. This perspective can be read as being resolutely post-human, but it sometimes balances with the anthropocentric elements of Lubezki's cinematography to offer a sense of symbiosis between the human and the landscape.

The anthropocentric facial landscapes take on the poetics of the wider natural landscapes, which, in turn, become steeped in the inner emotions that are shown in the characters expressions and actions. More-over these shots can suggest a characters considered and balanced relationship with and connection to nature, illustrating a

deeper interaction with the landscape rather than simply a human drama using landscape as a backdrop.

The landscapes of *The Revenant* can be considered sublime through the jeopardy and terror they instil in the characters and inspire in the viewers of the film. Although this story represents the survival of a human in a hostile environment, where endurance is found in the lead character's understanding of and respect for the wilderness, the film also details nature's survival against the destructive will of humans through depicting the frontier culture that director Iñárritu suggests 'is the seed… of the capitalism we live in now: completely inconsiderate of any consequences for nature.' (Ross, 2015)

Critic Jason John Horn elaborates further:

'In this sense, the film has distinct ecocritical overtones that are placed firmly in the traditions associated both with European Romanticism, as American Transcendentalism, framing Nature as an equalizing force and humanity as a flawed entity that is the source of its own conflicts.' (Horn, 2016)

Visuals: clips here of the skinning of the animal; the horse getting shot; the squalor of the trading post

- *The Revenant* (2015) Dir: Alejandro G. Iñárritu DP: Emmanuel Lubezki

SUGGESTIONS OF AN ECO-SUBLIME IN CONTEMPORARY MOVING IMAGES (length 7.5 mins/ Run Time 32.5-40 mins)

Visuals: a montage of reportage footage from around the world and from various sources depicting landscapes suffering the effects of anthropogenic climate change

> From the Greek *oikos*, eco (which roughly means "home"), joined with the word sublime, eco-sublime can be defined as the awe and terror of a heightened awareness of the ecological home. When does an awareness of home provoke terror and awe? When it's burning. (Rozelle, 2006 p.1)

If we look for the sublime landscape in contemporary moving images – as I will illustrate here in terms of both reportage and cinema - we find that it is incontrovertibly emanating from or concerned with the dire ecological catastrophes facing our planet in the era of the Anthropocene, 'the age of man that announces its own extinction.' (Emmelhainz, 2015 p.9)

Christopher Hitt connects his idea of an ecological sublime to the Anthropocene by suggesting that if the contemporary sublime is the

> condition of being overwhelmed by the threatening and bewildering effects of technology, then ecological catastrophe (as the result of technology) becomes a new source of the sublime. That is, the sublime in this case is evoked not by natural objects but by their devastation. Human beings still experience a humbling sense of fear and awe before nature, but in this case - in contradistinction to conventional accounts of the sublime - the threat is of their own making. And worse, the danger is all too real. (Hitt, 1999, p.619)

Adrian J. Ivakhiv builds on this idea of an ecological sublime by suggesting that

> a background awareness of present or future ecological calamities is arguably one of the persistent and widely shared psychological facts of our time. This awareness is fuelled by imagery: by photos and images of the Earth seen from space, of fires burning in the Amazon, of floods and hurricanes, of drought and famine, of oil spills and toxic chemical releases, of polar bears stranded on Arctic ice floes and islands of plastic spiralling in the middle of the Pacific ocean (Ivakhiv, 2013, p.256)

Crucially, the capturing and sharing of this eco-sublime imagery represents the biggest shift in our conditions of visuality in terms of moving images, greater even than the introduction of sound: the shift in capture and viewing technology from analogue to digital. Within the space of thirty years digital technology has enabled us to shoot more cheaply; to shoot with smaller and fewer pieces of equipment, and therefore enabling us to be faster and more responsive to 'the moment'; to capture in more detail and in harsher conditions than was possible with celluloid; and to capture for longer durations and in larger amounts, in terms of data.

The recorded images can be viewed and edited either on location or remotely; they can be collated and shared via the Internet and through Cloud computing systems; video sequences can then be streamed to televisions, computers and phones.

All of this is now possible with the technology that we carry in our pockets.

These moving images are hard to ignore – social media platforms and 24hr news cycles push them on us, posing

> challenges to received notions of selfhood and social reality that were previously unimaginable, in turn making different kinds of crises possible. (Beard and Gunn, 2000, p.271)

Whether we see these crises through a hand-held camera-phone in downtown Cairo; through drone footage over a bombed out Syrian town; or in the low-resolution footage, shot from a rescuer's head-mounted camera of a boatload of refugees capsizing in the Mediterranean ocean, these images are produced and shared because of their tragic and sensational nature and because they make us feel powerful sensations and emotions, among them fear, terror and to a certain extent empathy.

But the way they are presented and their very proliferation runs the risk of provoking 'psychic numbing' (Ivakhiv, 2013 p.262) or 'empty empathy - because of the transitory, fleeting nature of the empathic emotions that viewers often experience.' (Kaplan, 2008 p.4)

> Catastrophe images focusing on the pain of others who are strange to us, and with whom we share no socio-political context in which we might effectively respond, have the tendency to fragment our response-ability. 'Each catastrophe image cancels out or interferes with the impact of the prior image' (Ivakhiv, 2013 p. 262; Kaplan, 2008 p.9)

Responding to these issues, Irmgard Emmelhainz highlights the importance of how we develop and consider eco-sublime images as a way of communicating about and coming to terms with the scale and complexity of the ecological crises behind those images:

> The Anthropocene has meant not a new image of the world, but rather a radical change in the conditions of visuality and the subsequent transformation of the world into images. These developments have had epistemological as well as phenomenological consequences: while images now participate in forming worlds, they have become forms of thought constituting a new kind of knowledge - one that is grounded in visual communication, and thereby dependent on perception. (Emmelhainz, 2015, pp. 1-2)

Visuals: selected clips from 'Hollywood' disaster or post-apocalyptic movies, such as The Day After Tomorrow (R. Emmerich, 2004); The Road (J. Hillcoat, 2009); Children of Men (2006); Geostorm (D. Devlin, 2017); Mad Max: Fury Road (G. Miller, 2015); Interstellar (C. Nolan, 2014)

These 'real-world images' and the way we view them may be relatively new, but we've been thrilled by disasters and catastrophe at the cinema for decades, as Dr Catherine Wheatley argues:

> Since the advent of television, computers, mobile phones, etc, the image has lost its power to impact upon us… We're so used to seeing moving images everywhere we look – on the tube, in lifts, on our phones, in the shops, that we've ceased to marvel at them. And so cinema needs to find ways of restoring the image's power to itself, and one way of doing that is by creating these huge spectacles… so the image becomes overwhelming once more. (Wheatley in McMullen, 2015)

In contemporary cinema these spectacles are most often achieved through advancements in digital technology, specifically computer-generated images (CGI) to create mainstream 'Hollywood' eco-disaster movies such as *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) and *Geostorm* (2017), or to depict post-apocalyptic or eco-dystopian futures in films like *The Road* (2009) and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015).

Lee Rozelle elaborates on the popularity of such films in the 21st century:

> on a most primal level, the ecosublime occurs for movie viewers when ideological and political barriers are disturbed by the fright associated with real ecological monstrosities. (Rozelle, 2006 p.98)

Timothy Clark elaborates on this experience by invoking Kantian or Burkian concepts of pleasure

in which horror merges with a kind of gripping excitement. The more graphic the depiction of flooding or drought, the more it becomes a phantasmagoria, an unacknowledged indulgence in a pleasurable destructiveness (Clark, 2015 p.182).

Perhaps this pleasure is specifically afforded to the viewer because of the 'distance' of sitting in the comfort of an air-conditioned movie theatre, coupled with the fact of knowing that for the most part the high quality of the graphic image is down to the skill of digital artists in rendering these calamitous scenarios in computers, rather than something 'real'. Either way, the cinema screen acts as an affective shield:

> The unwieldy disasters we see in the real world are thereby represented in a contained fashion, allowing us the illusion of conceptual and emotional mastery. But at the same time, this process pacifies us, numbing us to, and distracting us from, reality. (Mattes, 2019)

This tallies with Emmelhainz's suggestion that 'Hollywood cinema… delivers pure sensation and intensities that have no meaning' (Emmelhainz, 2015, p.8). Ivakhiv formalises this:

> To the extent that ecological collapse is already in our midst, the question becomes how we might witness it: Is it sheer spectacle, to be consumed for its thrill, or is it something we might actively become involved in resisting, mitigating, or transforming? (Ivakhiv, 2013, p.294)

If resistance, mitigation or transformation is preferable to sheer spectacle, then there are other eco-sublime landscapes to explore in cinema.

Visuals: clips from socio-political eco-docs like An Inconvenient Truth (D. Gugenheim, 2006); Before the Flood (F. Stevens, 2016); Chasing Ice (J. Orlowski, 2012); Racing Extinction (L. Psihoyos, 2015); The Biggest Little Farm (2019) (J. Chester, 2018)

Films like *An Inconvenient Truth* (2009), *Before the Flood* (2016); *The Cove* (2009), *Chasing Ice* (2012), *Racing Extinction* (2015) and *The Biggest Little Farm* (2019) are socio-political eco-documentaries examining the work of scientists, artists, activists and technologists working directly with the impacts of anthropogenic climate change. In this way they have the weight of science woven into their narrative, often interposed with cutting edge cinematographic technology designed to generate awe and wonder on the 'big screen'.

Visuals: clips from ethnographic studies of human (subjective) and nature (objective) interaction like Baraka (R. Fricke, 1992); Koyaanisqatsi (G. Reggio, 1982) and the Qatsi Trilogy (1982-2002); The Salt of the Earth (J. Selgado and W. Wenders, 2015); plus a few clips from recent Blue-Chip nature programmes (BBC & Netflix): Our Planet – Episode 1. One Planet (A. Chapman, 2019); David Attenborough: A Life On Our Planet (A. Fothergill, J. Hughes and K. Scholey, 2020); Human Flow (A. Weiwei, 2017)

There are also more poetical non-fiction ethnographic studies of human (subjective) and nature (objective) interaction like *Baraka* (1992), the *Qatsi Trilogy* (1982-2002) and personal biopics of artists like Sebastião Salgado in *The Salt of the Earth* (2014).

Even the 'blue chip' natural history programmes of David Attenborough and the BBC's Natural History Unit (NHU) have started to build their high-end content around the impacts of anthropogenic climate change on the natural world, most of which have a theatrical release before appearing on the 'small screen'. Netflix is currently producing work with Attenborough that is solely concerned with the environmental crises and impacts on humans and other species, although powerful commercial pressures mean all of these shows tread a delicate balance of what sells – animals living in their natural habitats – and the difficult issues that need to be addressed, which specifically means showing these environments polluted and creatures in real jeopardy.

In attempting to draw a line under this brief contextualising section on the eco-sublime, before starting to explore my own cinematographic approaches to such landscapes in more detail, it appears clear that the question of visualisation and imaging the impacts

of anthropogenic climate change is an emotionally and politically complex and constantly shifting and developing practice across a variety of mediums and platforms, and one subject to powerful commercial pressures about what audiences 'want' as spectacle rather than provoking thought.

Rozelle believes that 'as the human relationship with nature has become increasingly mediated since the nineteenth century, a realization of ecological crisis can also be acquired through mediated or represented environments.' He goes on to suggest hopefully, if somewhat vaguely, that 'there is no affective difference between the natural sublime and the rhetorical ecosublime; both have the power to bring the viewer… to heightened awareness of real natural environments. Both can promote advocacy.' (Rozelle, 2006, p.3)

But in order to address eco-sublime landscapes beyond the rhetorical or philosophical we have to acknowledge the myriad ways of capturing, viewing and experiencing them. This points to the vital notion that technology is at the crux of the issues of both the initial causes of the Anthropocene itself – the start of which is variously suggested to be the Industrial Revolution, the Great Acceleration, or the birth of the Atomic Era - and subsequently the change in conditions of visuality from analogue to digital, i.e. how we explore this new image-based language that expresses representations of the impact of global warming etc.

Hitt engages with this key issue when he asserts that

> The rapidly increasing impact of technology on the world has only heightened the urgency of the need to reconsider the sublime. In an age in which humankind, in its moments of hubris, imagines that it can ensure its own survival through technological means - that it will ultimately win its war with nature - the sublime is more relevant than ever before. (Hitt, 1999, p.618)

So is there a chance for an eco-sublime image to shine as a beacon of hope in the darkness, an icon of the Anthropocene that frames a flickering opportunity of an 'age of responsibility, creativity, inventiveness and humility?' (Schwägerl, 2015)

If there is such a chance, beyond the ever-developing creative possibilities available through technology, there is an overarching sense that currently the 'environmental crisis involves a crisis of the imagination and the amelioration of which depends on finding better ways of imaging nature and humanity's relation to it.' (Buell, 1995 p.2) This ties in with Herzog's concerns about a lack of 'adequate images' and the need for a 'new grammar of images' on the subject of anthropogenic climate change.

This is not to suggest that aesthetic or creative 'solutions' will solve the problem of anthropogenic climate change, but rather that they might offer new ways of looking at and talking about the terrifying existential problems behind the climate breakdown we are currently facing, even if we struggle with looking at them directly. Timothy Morton believes that

> human beings are currently in the denial phase of grief regarding their role in
> the Anthropocene. It's too much to take in at once. Not only are we waking
> up inside of a gigantic object, like finding ourselves in the womb again, but a
> toxic womb – but we are responsible for it. (Morton, 2013, p.183)

So how do we face these issues when they are so complex, and complicated further by our own implicit guilt? Morton argues further that

> Art can help us, because it's a place in our culture that deals with intensity,
> shame, abjection, and loss. It also deals with reality and unreality, being and
> seeming. If ecology is about radical coexistence, then we must challenge our
> sense of what is real and what is unreal, what counts as existent and what
> counts as non-existent. (Morton, 2010, p.10)

The mention of 'coexistence' here is telling, as it will form a central aspect of the findings derived from my own practice. For this contextualising essay film, the final word should lie with Emmelhainz who addresses the central inadequacies of contemporary reportage, social media and mainstream cinema:

> In an era of ubiquitous, synthetic digital images dissociated from human vision and directly tied to power and capital, when images and aesthetic experience have been turned into cognition and thus into empty sensations or tautological truths about reality, the image of the Anthropocene is still to come. (Emmelhainz, 2015, pp. 8-9)

Completed 3ʳᵈ August 2020.

A SHORT FILM ABOUT ICE – SCREENPLAY

INTRO/ ARCTIC/ LANDSCAPE

<u>Narrator:</u>

Why did I come <u>here</u>? To immerse myself in a landscape? To in some way be a witness to the change that is happening here?

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
I hear my being dance from ear to ear/ I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
I learn by going where I have to go. (Roethke, 1975)

I <u>look</u> through my camera.

Landscape is how a cinematographer frames the world around them or the world of a story- it's a way of quantifying and handling space, relative to the camera and therefore the viewer.

Landscape is the freest element of a film, the least burdened with servile, narrative tasks, and the most flexible in conveying moods, emotional states and spiritual experiences. (Eisenstein, 1987, p.217)

The Artic is a landscape gouged and carved by ice. My senses are overwhelmed by the sheer scale and spectacle of the places I find myself in.

How does one approach a landscape that is disappearing in front of our eyes? How do I use my camera to tell that story?

If an artist is moved by a landscape- if it evokes memories and associations, even subjective ones- then this will in turn affect and move an audience. (Tarkovsky, 1989, p.28)

To be so moved by a landscape one has to be open to the potential for being truly vulnerable in the world- to be shaken by it.

WE, THE HUMAN/ SUBLIME LANDSCAPE

<u>Narrator:</u>

The sublime experience has three stages: first is apprehension, in which the individual subject encounters an object larger and greater than the self.

Second, awe, oppression, or even depression- in some versions fear or potential fear- in which the individual <u>recognizes</u> the relative greatness of the object and the relative weakness or limits of the self.

And, thirdly, is exaltation, in which the individual is conceptually or psychically enlarged as the greatness of the object is realized and the individual identifies with that greatness. (Oravec, 1996)

'Then suddenly the Mole felt a great Awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, held him, and rooted his feet to the ground… With difficulty he turned to look for his friend, and saw him at his side cowed, stricken, and trembling violently.'

Isn't that what we're all searching for here? An instance of emotional impact or a creative spark to hit us just from being in and witnessing the sublime landscape? A moment of trembling?

We 'take' our photographs; 'capture' images; 'shoot' footage.
Are we hunters, then?

Are we pilgrims or pornographers?
My own presence as a cinematographer here- the very act of my listening and watching, recording sounds and framing images- changes the meaning of the moment.

Why can't I just be <u>here</u>, <u>now</u>?

Can anything I make get even close to honouring the landscape for what I am taking from it now?

PYRAMIDEN/ ICONOGRAPHY FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE

<u>Narrator</u>*:*

'The Anthropocene has meant not a new image of the world, but rather a radical change in the conditions of visuality and the subsequent transformation of the world into images.'
(Emmelhainz, 2015, p.1)

Welcome to Pyramiden, an abandoned mining settlement and an icon of the Anthropocene in the middle of the Arctic. Welcome to the extract economy: we came, we took, we left. And once we're finished with a place, once we've taken what we want or need and it no longer has an economic value to us, then we abandon it. We leave our shit strewn across the tundra. And then we return as tourists to consume the landscape in new ways.

Is it this behaviour that best defines us as a species- by what we choose to leave behind as much as what we take away?

I snap pictures of a haunted landscape- ruined homes and broken amenities. Goose flesh. Ghost flesh. I try not to think about children mining cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is then turned into the lithium batteries in my phone and my cameras. Try not to think about Columbite-tantalite, or Cassiterite, or Wolframite and other blood minerals that contribute to the circuitry of the technology I use every day. I try not to think about my own children, and the challenges they will face in their lives.

I try not to think about words like 'home' or 'belonging' or 'loss' or 'grief'.

'Who can lie with this Consciousness
And not wake frightened at sunrise?' (Ginsberg, 2007, p.963)

UNTHINKABLE SHAPES AND FORMS

<u>Narrator:</u>

'… the events set in motion by global warming have a more intimate connection with humans than the climatic phenomena of the past because we have <u>all</u> contributed in some measure to their making. They are the mysterious work of our own hands returning to haunt us in unthinkable shapes and forms.' (Ghosh, 2016, p.59)

The cinematographer is unwell. The cinematographer cannot sleep. The cinematographer feels a suffocating weight of guilt. The cinematographer has lost his capacity for empathy, and all of his self-compassion is gone. The cinematographer lives in dread fear of his camera. The cinematographer has/ he's seen enough.

*The cinematographer is so fucking angry, in spite of all of the beautiful colours and shapes surrounding him. His very presence in this place disturbs him. (**Insert clip of ADJL here?**) He judges himself- as he judges others around him.*

He asks impossible questions of himself:

What good are you, in this world?

How do you stay with the trouble, when the trouble is you?

Why did I come here? I shouldn't have come.

It took me two planes to get here. It'll take another two to get me home.

The cinematographer cannot stop thinking about his children.

The cinematographer is so scared.

This is a moment of suffering. Suffering is a part of life.

'There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more…'

(Byron, 2004, p.231)

A KIND OF ONENESS/ INTER-BEING

<u>NARRATOR:</u>

Sometimes one hopeful gesture is all it takes to bring you back. A random act of kindness. An attempt to 'bring me out of myself'- a playful offer from one of the scientists on the ship to look at my blood under a microscope.

~~Ten years living with leukaemia and this is the first time I've ever looked at my blood up-close.~~

Every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you… Do I contradict myself? Very well I contradict myself. (I am large, I contain multitudes. (Whitman, 2009, pp. 23,103)

I spend the morning playing with my blood- adding ice water to it, changing it, watching the cells slowly swell and burst.

And in the afternoon I go outside.

CUT TO: aerial glacier footage

<u>NARRATOR:</u>

My tongue, my eyes, every atom of my blood, formed from this soil, this air, this ice. (Whitman, 2009, p.8)

Through my camera I look down on my blood; look down on the glacier- from the micro to the macro. I begin to feel a sense of 'in-between-ness' and interconnectivity. Once scale is removed then one can start to recognise experiences shared between all things, be they human or non-human, glacial or anthropological.

These 'forces of encounter…' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010, p.2) *illustrate that our very existence is relational to nature. 'We are fundamentally unseparate from each other, from all beings, and from the universe.'* (Eisenstein, 2013, p.13)

We 'inter-are'. We 'inter-be'.

There is not us and the landscape, but a kind of oneness. (Maitland, 2008, p.63)

BREATHING SEQUENCE

<u>**NOTE: Visuals of flower, mountain etc. play out**</u>

<u>Narrator:</u>

Breathing in I give thanks for my eyes… breathing out I smile to my eyes.

Breathing in I see myself as a flower… breathing out I feel fresh

Breathing in I see myself as a mountain… breathing out I feel solid.

Breathing in I see myself as still water… breathing out I feel calm.

Breathing in I see myself as a space… breathing out I feel free.

I see the whole world breathing.

CALVING SEQUENCE/ ECO-SUBLIME LANDSCAPE

NOTE: Start of calving sequence

<div align="center">Narrator:</div>

Staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between great or awful pasts and apocalyptic or hopeful futures, but as human beings entwined in places, times, matters and meanings. (Haraway, 2016, p.1)

I am here. Now.

I look through my camera. I am a cinematographer. A father, a husband. A son, a brother, a friend. In almost all ways I am so much like you. I am a subjective and unique human being, one of nearly 8 billion. Alone, and yet connected.

Actual CALVING begins- no dialogue until AFTERMATH.

Narrator:

We look through my camera, but we are not just spectators.

Within the framework of the Anthropocene, I believe that there is a fourth stage to the sublime experience. An instance of realisation; of being in the world; of letting go and acceptance of the inter-connectivity between the human and landscape- an eco-sublime moment.

Within the eco-sublime moment, as the ice begins to sheer and crack, I realise that I/ we have a direct responsibility in the changing behaviour of this glacier, in how often and how quickly it shifts and collapses.

*The way I/ we live **changes** this.*

As the glacier calves I feel wonder and loss.

As my camera takes us towards, through and beyond the eco-sublime moment I feel fear and empathy for this landscape.

I feel fear and empathy for myself.

As I take something from the landscape, so a part of me belongs to this place now. I am/feel bound to it.

ON LIVING/ CONCLUSION

Narrator:

The mythologies of our landscapes are changing- we need to re-write them with ourselves as an integrated part of the narrative and not as the main character.

If landscape is how we see the world 'out/ over there'; and the sublime landscape is how 'we, the human' see ourselves in front of and awed by nature; perhaps how we see ourselves within and as a part of eco-sublime landscapes- rather than in front of or otherwise removed/ separate from them- will start to inform how we think and feel about ourselves and our place within a world increasingly defined and limited by climate breakdown.

Wherever there are stories being told there is hope.

Loss, grief, resilience and responsibility: our work as artists in the time of the Anthropocene is to squarely stare these things in the face- to stay with, engage in and even play with the trouble.

As artists living in this time, I believe we must seek to find the balance of evoking pathos in the hearts of our audiences, and provoking empathy in their minds. We should strive to be brave enough to suggest that some ways of thinking, ways of seeing and ways of being need to be reconceptualised and nurtured afresh; we should embrace metaphor and not overuse abstraction in our work, but speak plainly and inclusively, always aiming to inspire and encourage discussion; and we have to be above all things passionate.

There will continue to be great beauty and sublime moments in the difficult and painful times ahead. As artists we must seek them out- to paint them, photograph them, write songs and tell stories about them, so that others may experience them and be inspired by them too.

We must prepare ourselves for heartbreak. We must learn to lean into it/ towards it when/as it hits us like an avalanche.

But there is hope in heartbreak, for it shows us what matters to us the most.

More than ever we must live, feel, love and engage with all of the seriousness and joy, the complexity and difficulty of living [for...]
Living is no laughing matter:
*you **must** live with great seriousness...*
... without looking for something beyond and above living...
... living must be your whole life.

... We must live as if we will never die...

This earth will grow cold,
a star among stars
and one of the smallest,
a gilded mote on blue velvet-
I mean this, our great earth.
This earth will grow cold one day,
not like a block of ice
or a dead cloud even
but like an empty walnut it will roll along in pitch-black space...

You must grieve for this right now

- you have to feel this sorrow now-

for the world must be loved this much

if you're going to say "I lived"… (Hikmet, 2002, pp. 132-134)

• **DEDICATION**

To Dora and Peggy - I made this film for you

PART ONE: THE INNER ESSENCE OF LANDSCAPE

Completed 19ᵗʰ November 2021.

TITLE: Essay Film Two: Of Walking on Ice and Other Field Studies

TITLE: Part One: The Inner Essence of Landscape

VISUALS: *ADJL sat at a desk, facing the camera and reading off a teleprompter*

ADJL (V/O): This is the third in a trilogy of films that make up the practical element of my PhD thesis. The first was my contextual review of the sublime landscape in visual art; the second was my research artefact, the film poem *A Short Film About Ice*. This final film is an exploration of what I have learned as a cinematographer throughout my field studies and in particular through the process of making *A Short Film About Ice*. It is essentially an illustrated conversation between myself and my camera, exploring and analysing the crux of my cinematographic approaches towards eco-sublime landscapes.

~~**TITLE: Location**~~

VISUALS: *montage of introductory shots from various locations*

ADJL (V/O): Each of the locations chosen for my field studies represent a landscape where I spent time driving, walking, sitting, sleeping, writing, breathing and simply being 'alone with myself' (Herzog, 1980, p.5). My end goal was always concerned with learning how to put myself in the right place, at the right time, pointing my camera in the right direction in order to capture moments in the landscape cinematographically, be they conventionally beautiful landscapes, the much rarer sublime landscapes, or the seldom realised eco-sublime landscapes.

These are places where I tested myself and my practical knowledge as a cinematographer, and where I learned things, tacitly and explicitly, which I will explore and analyse in this essay film.

VISUALS: *footage from Gordale Scar, plus Ward's painting*

ADJL (V/O): For these field studies, sometimes I had a specific goal for a location, such as when I travelled to Gordale Scar in Yorkshire, inspired by this painting by James Ward, hoping to capture something of its dramatic battle of shadow and light.

- *Gordale Scar* (1812-14) James Ward

ADJL (V/O): To do that I would have needed direct sunlight to create deep shadows, but it rained the whole time I was there. I've learned that it's quite rare that you get the weather that you're hoping for in a landscape. So, instead, I tried be playful within the landscape, filming through an old glass coffee jar lid and shooting at different frame-rates to enable the slowing down of the footage to capture the falling rain and storm water.

VISUALS: *footage of sunset at Chapel Porth, Cornwall*

ADJL (V/O): Other times I had a specific time-frame in mind, like filming during the 'magic hour' on the Cornish coast, close to where I grew up. The term 'magic hour' is a misnomer for filming during the periods of dawn or dusk when the colour of natural light is altered because the sun is low to the horizon. Very often it lasts little more than 5 or maybe 10 minutes, but when you film a sunset over the reflective sea the effects can last much longer. Here I learned the value of holding my nerve and being patient, and that when the sun does eventually disappear below the horizon-line, then that's often when things get really interesting, in terms of colour and shadows.

VISUALS: *footage from Carew Castle, Wales*

ADJL (V/O): Sometimes I just grabbed my camera when I was on family trips and we stumbled across a place that was exciting and inspired us all. These moments taught me the importance of improvising with human subjects in a landscape; how to get into decent positions to frame the human figures in relation to the surrounding landscape; and to let natural behaviour play out, instead of trying to direct or manage the subjects. Also, these personal moments of sharing landscapes with my family can give the images a distinctive charge: if an image has resonance personally for the maker then that will come across to other viewers of the image. (Tarkovsky, 1989, p.28)

VISUALS: *footage from Lofoten, Norway*

ADJL (V/O): Some landscape moments occurred when a professional assignment took me somewhere and I managed to grab a car and get lost for a few days. This is a vital theme that I keep coming across, in both my practice and my research (ref: *see Introduction*): the importance and value of the journey as a way of experiencing and being in landscape.

ADJL (V/O): In philosophy and in Romantic poetry and landscape painting the sublime is often defined as a single moment of crisis for 'the human' in nature. (sequence from *Long Way* Back (2021)) But in cinema, because of the physical movement of the camera and subjects, as well as the temporality that exists in and through cinematography, we

can start to talk about an approach or journey towards, through and beyond the sublime landscape moment. And that fundamentally changes how we anticipate initially and disseminate subsequently our experience of the sublime landscape moment, both as an original experience in the field, and as a viewer of a representation of that experience, i.e., through cinema. (*Wingmore* footage plays over this)

ADJL (V/O): These journeys and their associated cinematography practice – a practice that is informed by a research process of deep thinking, reading and reflection – have led to some of the most profound experiences of my life: transcendent moments in landscapes that I simply don't have the capacity to explain in words alone. But I can show you a representation of these journeys through my cinematography. I can talk about what it felt like to be there. And I can tell you what I learned as a cinematographer and cinematographic researcher in each moment.

TITLE: Camera Movement

VISUALS: *A CU shot looking straight down the lens of the camera as the aperture opens, with a landscape reflected in the glass. Static locked off shots, landscape framed as painting.*

CAMERA (V/O): I am an eye. I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, am both an independent witness and a transcendental instrument. I show you the world as only I can see it, objectively, and yet I can enable the representation of subjective experience. When I am static, I am a resolute frame for the moving landscape within me. I am definitively what the cinematographer wants you to see and experience: my frame is a formal boundary to the movement or action within the scene, and a barrier to everything outside of it. (Vertov, 1984, p.17)

VISUALS: *tbc for H/H…*

CAMERA (V/O): But I am never really static. I am always moving, physically and temporally. Sometimes I facilitate a hand-held movement that presupposes a point of

view, insinuating that you are seeing what a living character – human, animal, alien – is seeing. I place you in the thick of the action.

ADJL (V/O): Through my field studies I came to think of a static camera as too austere and formal a method of framing moving landscapes, and a hand-held camera as too suggestive of one specific person's point of view, rather than a more open or shared perspective. I wanted the camera to move in a controlled, considered way and with as little distraction as possible.

VISUALS: *selection of stabilised footage here, including a little non-Arctic aerial*

CAMERA (V/O): I am a gliding, floating, steady eye. I am confident, powerful. I am omnipotent, ethereal. I suggest a non-human, or even post-human perspective. I am other. I am elemental, tracking like driving rain; drifting like falling snow; rising and soaring like wind. I climb upwards like smoke and sparks. I am a dispassionate and impartial observer.

VISUALS: *very specific shots that illustrate the types of shot being spoken about*

CAMERA (V/O): Tracking forward, I move you towards the landscape, even to the point of being subsumed by or lost within it. As I track backwards, I slowly reveal more details of the landscape, more scale. Tracking parallel I signify the journey through landscape, writ large or in close up, revealing texture and shape, moving light and shadow (footage from *Sprig*).   As I pan left to right, right to left I work with the horizontal and panoramic axis of landscape (Lofoten lake shot). As I tilt up or down, I work vertical to the landscape, illustrating a great height or depth (Gordale Scar footage).

VISUALS: *two hands controlling a very simple 3-gimbal camera-rig, demonstrating the three types of movement.*

ADJL (V/O): In the past, to achieve this kind of camera movement would require large pieces of technology, big crews and long amounts of time in order to operate them. The contemporary cinematographer can make use of much simpler, smaller, lighter and

more affordable digital technology that enables them to move and shoot faster and more efficiently. With my small rig, what I see with my eyes, I can translate with my hands in a very responsive and immediate way: my right hand controls the camera movement; my left hand controls the focus and exposure of the image. In this way, physical sensations – cold, heat, wetness, tiredness, muscle tension or cramp – can all have an effect on the movement of the camera.

TITLE: Composition

VISUALS: footage from *Brown Willy*, and *Long Way Back; need to reflect how the frame is variable, i.e. aspect ratios (?), physical movement, lenses, focus.*

CAMERA V/O: Like the human eye, I am versatile. I frame the world, but my frame is variable. I tell a different story with each degree of movement – in one direction I reveal a road, a building, a telegraph-pole. Move me 90 degrees in either direction and I can present a wilderness, or a metropolis. What I frame out is as important as what is within the frame.

CAMERA (V/O): As I move through the landscape, there is movement from within the environment: from nature, human figures, shifting light, fluctuating shadow, the ever-changing elements. My focus can shift: it can be deep, keeping many things in focus; it can be shallow, to limit my focus to a specific distance; and I can switch focus, from one thing in the foreground to another in the background.

CAMERA (V/O): My perspective can be changed with lenses: I can stay wide and far away, or I can be 'long' and so closer to a landscape (illustrate visually with Lofoten mountain shot? Or Dartmoor?). Werner Herzog's 'inner essence of a landscape' (Herzog in Cronin, 2014, p.411) can be read in the panoramic or the macro. The essence can be found within the physical movement and duration of a single shot; or it is found in the relationship of one shot, placed next to another.

TITLE: Reading the Environment

VISUALS: *Dartmoor footage (previously shot); ADJL using mobile phone to track the sun*

CAMERA (V/O): The sun is everything in the landscape: it is light and shadow, time and motion, lens flare and reflection. As the earth turns, so the sun moves across the sky, causing everything within the landscape to shift and be re-drawn. Direct sunlight creates deep shadows and hard edges that can give the land definition and depth. The cinematographer learns to read the trajectory of the sun, to prepare for its journey and to be patient. But many things come between the camera and the sun to change the quality of the light.

VISUALS: *footage from Gordale Scar; Wingmore on Lofoten; consider capturing more specific moments of weather in Dartmoor? Might not have footage for all the moments, but can always cut back to ADJL talking head shot.*

ADJL (V/O): The ways that natural light can be changed by weather in a landscape are complex and nuanced. Rain can often produce incredible light before or directly after it falls. Rain, mizzle, hail and snow can diffuse the light; vapour like mist and fog can soften it. Clouds create changes in light according to their density, or by obscuring or revealing the sun, which when captured through time-lapse can dramatize the movement of light and shadow across a landscape, as well as illustrating the temporality of landscape. (*Lofoten mountain time-lapse here; plus, Dartmoor time-lapse*) The elements can also refract, reflect or reshape light and lens flare in interesting ways. In this way, a wet or watery landscape reacts to light very differently than to an arid landscape.

VISUALS: *black and white footage of DarkSky on iPhone or iPad; illustrated use of gaffer glass, with the reflection of clouds & sun in it*

CAMERA (V/O): The cinematographer attempts to read the weather using an array of tools and techniques. Much time is spent waiting for 'gaps' in the weather. Sometimes the cinematographer is forced to 'lean into' the conditions, and to shoot on regardless of the elements.

ADJL (V/O): My field studies often demonstrated that in landscapes the moments of change that come from the approach or departure of dramatic weather events are often the most exciting moments visually. I have come to think of them as indicators of sublime potential, because elemental changes with their dramatic scale and grand movement can bring a landscape to life.

ADJL (V/O): Through spending time in landscapes with my camera, I began to understand how cinematography as a form enables a fuller experience of a landscape, more than a painting or a still photograph, specifically because of its capacity to capture the passage of time through changes in weather and light.

VISUALS: *not sure for the next sequence… capture a thunder storm?! Stock footage?!*

CAMERA (V/O): I see the dark clouds drawing in from a distance; I see the lightning strike through the black sky as the clouds burst and rain sheets down sideways; I see the clearing of the clouds and the re-emergence of the sun. Cinema is the only medium that can represent the temporality and rhythm of a storm. (Sitney, 1993, p.112)

TITLE: ~~Magic Hour~~

VISUALS: *footage from Chapel Porth, Cornwall; also, Dartmoor sunset*

ADJL (V/O): Cinema was also the first medium that could fully represent the passing of day into night, and night into day. Filming in the magic hour is an exercise in meditation, patience and 'letting go'. Of waiting for the moment, then being fully in the moment. It serves to demonstrate that the craft of cinematography is as much about emotional and mental openness, receptivity and curiosity as it is about practical knowledge or the precise implementation of technology.

CAMERA (V/O): *'Erhabenheit'* (TITLE with word on) is a German word meaning grandeur, loftiness, sublimity, transcendence. Herzog argues that only in this state of sublimity

does something deeper become possible, a kind of truth that is the enemy of the merely factual. He calls this 'ecstatic truth.' (Herzog and Weigel, 2010, p.1)

ADJL (V/O): The air thickens, rich with colour; and the lengthening shadows give the landscape more depth. Forms within the landscape fade into silhouettes. Waiting with a camera in such landscapes can be frustrating, because everything looks so beautiful: it's important to hold one's nerve and to turn excitement into a focussed anticipation through precise shot composition. If I've read the sun and the weather right, then I'll be in the right place. ~~Breathe. Look through the camera.~~

CAMERA (V/O): The magic hour enables the cinematographer to capture the detail and complexity of the natural landscape in all its richness.

~~**TITLE: Affect**~~

VISUALS: *medium CU footage of ADJL working with his camera in the landscape (or just use the Dartmoor low-ground tracking footage…)*

ADJL (V/O): When I am working with the camera in a landscape, I become very aware of my physical movements: which muscles are held in tension or are at rest. My breathing becomes more deliberate, slows or is suspended entirely during a shot. My peripheral vision is always engaged, scoping out where I can move next, where the sun is, what's happening to the light, how conditions might be slowly shifting in the environment. I am conscious of pebbles and clumps of grass beneath my feet, as they adjust to the new terrain underfoot with each step.

ADJL (V/O): My movements are often based on intuition or instinct – there is a felt connection between the camera and my gut, my physical centre, and a lot of camera movement starts from there. Other times I experience a sense of being physically led by the camera itself, that is to say lead by my own eyes through the frame of the camera (MEDIUM CU on camera screen, maybe external monitor?).

ADJL (V/O): In the landscape, although my focus is concerned with the framed and moving images before me, I become so aware of my physical connection not only to the camera but to the objects around me, human and nonhuman. There is a sense of 'in-betweenness', or myself in relation to 'otherness', that feels heightened by the act of cinematography.

ADJL (V/O): Every moment with my camera there is a physical, intellectual or emotional movement, response or choice to be made. Within these moments there is an openness and abundance of creative potential; the hopefulness of a multiplicity of paths available to me from one moment, one second, one frame to the next. How I respond in these moments, as a cinematographer, is what makes me, *me*. This is what tacit knowledge means for me: expertise made up from affective practical, physical and emotional learning experiences, driven often through instinctual responses, as a practitioner over time through field work.

TITLE: The Aesthetic Moment / The Sublime Landscape

VISUALS: tbc… Carew Castle? Lofoten? *The Touch Diaries*?

CAMERA (V/O): Landscapes are not real environments. They are ideological constructs born of the affective, emotional and ratiocinative responses of humans to the world around them. Landscape is the way a cinematographer frames the world in order to represent the essence of a place, often in relationship to the human form. Within a landscape, the aesthetic moment is a condition often brought on by a sudden and uncanny rapport with an object, a moment when the human subject is captured in an intense illusion of being selected by the environment for some deeply reverential experience. (Bollas, 2017, p.21)

VISUALS: *Dartmoor ponies' footage here?*

ADJL (V/O): Illusions or not, these moments are part of my experience as a human. Often such moments begin subconsciously when I am consumed by the process of working

with my camera in the landscape and at my most 'open' or 'vulnerable', and thus receptive, to 'otherness' and the natural world around me. They are the rare instances where all the components that make up my cinematography practice align: a turn in the weather; a subtle change in light; the camera gently moving into a composition that feels balanced; the very atmosphere of an environment crackling with affective potential, somehow distilled within the frame of the viewfinder; and Herzog's 'inner essence of the landscape' reveals itself to me, in a way that would not be possible without the camera – without being a cinematographer in that moment.

CAMERA (V/O): The aesthetic experience lies in the relationship between the individual and the environment: this is a process, an interaction between the viewed and the viewer. Instead of a detachment from the environment there is a subtle diffusion into it. Categories – subjective and objective; human and non-human; living and inanimate – are revealed as merely abstractions, not reality. (Evernden, 1996, p.97)

ADJL (V/O): In this aesthetic moment, refined through the process of cinematography, there is a shift from the merely beautiful to the sublime. I feel a sense of uplift and deep humility. An increase in intensity of the awe and wonder I experience within the moment of connection between myself and the landscape through making art.

TITLE: An Emerging Eco-Sublime

VISUALS: *Dartmoor aerial; Dartmoor travelling footage*

CAMERA (V/O): I am a mechanical eye. I make the invisible, visible. My path leads to the creation of a fresh new perception of the world. I decipher in a new way a world unknown to you. (Vertov, 1984, pp. 17-18, 120)

ADJL (V/O): Early on in my field studies, as I was starting to get to grips with the complexities behind the historical framework of the sublime as a concept – in philosophy, poetry, painting, photography and cinema – I began to understand that while the emotional or affective potential of the sublime experience still applies to

contemporary humans and landscapes, some of the logic and reasoning behind the sublime feels archaic and exclusionary. Any modern usage necessitates an over-haul, a re-conceptualisation, because at its core the sublime is still valuable as a way of exploring those transcendent moments in nature and experiences of 'otherness' that we struggle to express in words.

CAMERA (V/O): Although the sublime is not without its ideological freight, it is not fundamentally or intrinsically maleficent. On the contrary, the concept of the sublime offers a unique opportunity for the realization of a new, more responsible perspective on the human relationship with the natural environment. (Hitt, 1999, p.605)

ADJL (V/O): There are three key things that I touch on elsewhere (ref: *see Essay Film One*) that are central to the re-thinking and re-conceptualising of the sublime:

- The sublime as a concept was developed and written about almost exclusively by men – women were consigned to the softer or gentler passion of the beautiful. A contemporary sublime must be a more inclusive, empathetic sublime.

- Our behaviour as a species has changed to such a degree through our development of and over-reliance on technology, that the scale of irreversible damage from anthropogenic climate change is impacting negatively on every environment on earth. And so there inherently needs to be a deep socio-ecological element to contemporary thinking on the sublime.

- And, in relation to technology, our 'conditions of visuality' (Emmelhainz, 2015) (ref: *see Essay Film One*) have shifted drastically. This is largely to do with the digitisation of the capture, manufacture, manipulation, distribution, proliferation and oversaturation of still and moving images. With new ways of seeing and being seen, and in order to stand out and be relevant, the sublime as a visual concept needs new development.

VISUALS: *Dartmoor swailing footage*

CAMERA (V/O): In an age of exploitation, commodification and domination, humans need awe, wonder and transcendence more than ever – to be confronted with the wild otherness of nature and to be astonished, enchanted, humbled by it. (Hitt, 1999, p.620)

CAMERA: (V/O) There are very few truly wild places left on the Earth. Hardly any landscapes that haven't changed or been affected through human behaviour, directly or indirectly, in ways both obvious and insidious. There is still nature, but little real wilderness where nature can exist without threat from human activity. National Parks reveal this paradox: where once a landscape was covered in wild forests, it is now demarcated, fenced, quantified and managed. The notion of 'wilderness' is fading.

ADJL: (V/O) When I saw a landscape on fire through my camera, something changed for me. Swailing is a process of controlled burning used to manage moorland for the purposes of grazing cattle and game, but when poorly managed these fires can become much larger, sweeping across the moors as fire fighters from miles around attempt to bring them under control. Hundreds of years ago these uplands would have been covered in trees. If our landscapes have changed so drastically, then surely how we think about them and how we approach producing images of them must change too?

VISUALS: *aerial quarry footage*

CAMERA: (V/O) From grasslands on fire to a subterranean lunar surface within the space of a few square miles, all within the confines of a 'protected' National Park.

CAMERA (V/O): 'The sublime, in all its theorizations, is marked by an event or encounter with something so vast that it escapes all attempts to apprehend it fully. Climate change

exceeds boundaries by forcing us to think of time beyond the human scale, to take seriously the agency of nonhuman actors, and by posing a direct and terrible threat to human livelihoods and lives.' (Kainulainen, 2013, p.111)

ADJL: (V/O) After two years of field studies, I experienced my first two overtly eco-sublime landscapes in the space of three days on Dartmoor. And I realised that the affective resonance of witnessing these landscapes was magnified by my approaching and capturing them as a cinematographer, and through trying to find a way to represent them as true to my initial experience of them as possible.

CAMERA: (V/O) Does awe and wonder transfer from the cinematographer to the camera, from the screen to you, the viewer? Can you be affected by the cinematographers 'aesthetic moment' in the eco-sublime landscape? Is it possible to re-evaluate and re-tune a millennia-old concept of profound human experiences which are beyond words, and is cinematography the right tool for that job in a time when humans need to re-think how they see themselves within the world? In a world so over-saturated with images, is it even possible to produce contemporary images that provoke the new debates and new ways of thinking that are needed at this time of crisis?

ADJL (V/O): My thoughts turned to landscapes that are commonly recognised as visual tropes of the climate crisis where I could test my ideas. Places that might offer me the most realistic chance of approaching the potentially eco-sublime landscapes with my camera. And I kept coming back to the same place.

Completed 21st November 2021.

TITLE: PART TWO: Walking on Ice

NOTE: everything from this point for has to be focussed on ASFAI as the representation of an exploration of eco-sublime landscape experience <u>through</u> my process of cinematography

VISUALS: *Montage of Arctic colours and textures*

CAMERA (V/O): 'This relationship with landscape, temporal and spatial as it is, can even form the basis of a rite of passage, in which the depth or breadth of what is known is enhanced or acquaintance made with that which was previously unknown.' (Harper and Rayner, 2010, pp. 15-16)

VISUALS: *everyone on deck taking pictures; gaudy snow-wear in full effect.*

CAMERA (V/O): The cinematographer is a tourist in this place. The shock of each new vista leaves him reeling. Too much awe and overwhelming wonder. In his panic he tries to capture everything, like a zombie with a camera, hungry for images. So many cameras, every one taking the same picture. 'Taking photographs … is a way of certifying experience, [but] also a way of refusing it – by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir … the very activity of taking pictures is soothing, and assuages general feelings of disorientation that are likely to be exacerbated by travel.' (Sontag, 1973, p.6)

VISUALS: *Ice floe at sea and everyone taking pictures*

ADJL (V/O): In *A Short Film About Ice,* the paradox of eco-tourism in the Arctic is abundantly clear: the problem is going there in the first place.

CAMERA (V/O): If the preservation of the natural world depends upon modern tourists' response to sublimity, that very preservation might depend upon tourists' being content to enjoy the scenery vicariously, through pictorial or cinematographic representation. At some point humans must recognise the difference between the sublime response and loving the landscape to death. (Oravec, 1996, p.68)

ADJL (V/O): Onboard our ship, the *Antigua*, it took nearly two weeks for us all to have a debate about how we felt about our own presence in these landscapes, and to acknowledge even the idea that our trip itself, even the technology most of us were using to capture images of the landscape, have deep ecological consequences. This was an open and honest conversation that was prompted in no small part by my breaking down and staying in my cabin for two days.

CAMERA (V/O): The act of 'being there' is a prerequisite for a photographer or cinematographer. And yet, what if the camera itself becomes a distraction to the experience? What if technology inhibits the human's capacity to truly 'be'?

ADJL (V/O): Doing nothing can be a creative act, perhaps an even a deeper one than striving to make something. Amongst our group there were only one or two people who weren't shooting video or taking pictures, certainly in the first week or so. These individuals were simply being – listening, watching, breathing, meditating, thinking, feeling in these landscapes. I started shooting medium format photographs as soon as I boarded the *Antigua*; but on reflection the camera at times felt like a weight around my neck, a barrier to my just 'being'. There was among most of us a sense of desperation, a pressure not to miss 'the moment' or fail to get 'the shot' that would somehow sum up our experiences. I feel in retrospect that I wasted a good deal of time glued to my viewfinder, rather than just looking with my own eyes. When I reached a visual 'saturation point', simply standing back from the viewfinder, stepping away from the camera, became a very freeing act.

CAMERA (V/O): The gaudy colours and shapes of the human is alien here: it 'gets in the way' of the Arctic aesthetic the cinematographer was hoping for. The human is a distraction – they are everywhere, and forever walking into shot. What the cinematographer frames out is almost as important as what is left within the frame: a censorship of real space and time.

ADJL (V/O): While the film was shot and cut to suggest isolation or being lost, in truth I was rarely physically alone. There were often people 'snapping' away just outside of the frame, desirous of keepsakes of each stunning place, as if to say in the future 'I was there, once', rather than saying 'I am here, now' in the present. Every one of us had their story to tell or mission to create art that might represent some deep truth about 'the moment' or 'the place'. I was constantly aware of figures just outside of the frame, in the periphery of my vision, aware of the space between bodies, human and non-human.

CAMERA (V/O): When a human figure is shown in *A Short Film About Ice* it is there for a reason: it represents or means something. Often the human is a *Rückenfigur* (ref: *Essay Film One*), turned away from the camera and drawing the viewers focus into the landscape beyond. Sometimes it will be to show scale within the environment; sometimes it will be to illustrate the role of the human or the artist within the landscape. On almost all occasions the human figure is used to highlight the human as separate to or set against the landscape, juxtaposed to nature.

ADJL (V/O): It is only through experiencing the film as a whole thing – that is to say the final composition of images, sound, music and voice-over – that one can truly understand the idea of interconnectivity between the human and environment that the film is designed to represent: 'not me and the landscape, but a kind of oneness.' (Maitland, 2008, p.63)

CAMERA (V/O): I focus on the landscape: I observe the fjords, the mountains, the rocky beaches and the open sea. And the many different types of ice. I look upon the landscape reflexively, dispassionately: as nature might look upon itself. But I do not, perhaps, see the landscape in its 'best light', because the cinematographer… 'miscalculated'.

ADJL (V/O): It's true, I 'kinda' messed up... My Arctic trip took place in the month of June, when the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard transforms into the 'Land of the Midnight Sun'. Twenty-four hours of daylight, for months on end. For the entire time I was there the sun came absolutely nowhere near the horizon: there was no dawn, no dusk, no magic hour. My previous experience of the midnight sun was on the Lofoten archipelago (ref Lofoten, Norway) closer to mainland Norway and much further South in the Arctic Circle, where the sun had indeed sunk close to the horizon and lent the sky colour for part of the day. However, because we were so much further North there was hardly any colour differential coming from the sun in the Arctic. And, of course, the shadows within the landscape were all relatively shallow and unimpressive too: there was sometimes a little noticeable contrast or depth within the landscapes, but the few time-lapse experiments I did were underwhelming (show first glacier time-lapse here). As you say, I messed up.

CAMERA (V/O): And yet, in this way, the landscapes were their true colours, lit by a constant sun that stayed high and circled. There were no pinks or oranges or golden light to transform them. Only changes in the weather – sleet, rain, snow, sea fog and cloud – had any real impact on the light, and then only in terms of diffusing it, never really altering the colour.

ADJL (V/O): These moments of elemental change were such a relief for me – I found the 24 hours of daylight, plus the high and often harsh sun overhead, oppressive and over-stimulating.

VISUALS: *tbc, perhaps the boat footage?*

ADJL (V/O): Pretty much every moment in the Arctic was a 'one take' situation and I had to be able to move fast and efficiently, especially when hiking and moving between the ship and the shore. The 'elemental' or 'post human' movement that I had developed with my stabilised camera rig in order to suggest the sense of 'otherness' I wanted to achieve was used almost exclusively. There is no hand-held footage in *A Short Film About Ice*: I wanted the footage to be meditative and evocative of the landscape without having the

sense that the camera was representing a human perspective. Similarly, there is no static footage in the film – I didn't want to compose the landscape like a painting. I wanted the frame to always be moving slowly around the landscape, enabling a curious but calm reflection of the landscape subjects, allowing the images to wash over the viewer.

VISUALS: ~~film the lens, the camera and the rig against green screen?~~*; might also include the diagrams or an animated element just to highlight what is being spoken about.*

ADJL (V/O): I predominantly used one lens, a 17.5mm Voigtländer, which on my cameras Micro Four Thirds sensor – smaller than a full frame camera – produces a field of view equivalent to a 35mm lens. That's wide but not so wide that the image starts to warp or barrel noticeably. It's roughly comparable to the 60° field of vision of a human eye (~~*diagram here*~~), which means that if I look at the mountain through my viewfinder, and then look at the mountain with my naked-eye, they are roughly the same size (~~*perhaps demonstrate this visually in some way?*~~). This has the potential to translate to the viewer of the work, albeit in a subconscious way: they are essentially the same distance away from the subject as I was when shooting, and this is an affectively immersive connection with the images.

VISUALS: use a ~~*Lofoten mountain or 'Hoven' as an example – but should really be Arctic… tbc*~~

ADJL (V/O): When shooting footage for *A Short Film About Ice,* I began to understand that if the camera is on a wide lens and I want to create an image that is closer to a landscape subject, for example a particular section of a mountain rather than the whole mountain, then I have to physically move the camera closer to it, instead of just changing lenses or zooming in closer. It requires a deliberate and conscious journey towards or away from the subject, which is time spent engaging with and being in the landscape. There were certainly moments that I was envious of a wildlife photographer ship-mate stood next to me with a 500mm lens, framing tight in on something that I could barely see with my naked eye, but moving the camera physically closer in order to capture something in more detail was a much more active and creative decision for me.

VISUALS: *'Antigua-cam' and 'Zodiac-cam' footage*

CAMERA (V/O): The only time a longer lens was used is also the only time the tripod was used in the Arctic. I am stood on the middeck of the *Antigua*, focussing on the face of the glacier through a 150mm lens. When at anchor the *Antigua* shifts slightly, first in a slow clockwise 'spin', and then turning in the other direction. As the ship drifts with the movement of the water, so I pan slowly left and then right, whilst rising and falling in an almost imperceptible fashion. In this way I represent a truly elemental perspective, driven by the movement of water. I am 'Antigua-cam'; just as here (switch to zodiac footage), with a wider lens and lower down in the water, I am 'Zodiac-cam'.

ADJL (V/O): My general reliance on wide shots in order to capture the large-scale, along with the fact that sometimes it was logistically difficult to get closer to landscape subjects, meant that at times in the edit I certainly felt a lack of detail and texture that can come with close up or extreme close-up shots to cut to, so this was a point of learning: a wide lens and deep focus is a good match for landscape, but not at the expense of exploring the minutiae of the environment. Fortuitously, it was my drone that supplied some of the most interesting close ups, demonstrating not only the happy accidents that can occur in the field, but also how a tool designed for one thing can achieve something completely unexpected.

VISUALS: *all onboard footage from the drone, the CAMERA now speaking from this perspective.*

CAMERA (V/O): In the moments after being switched on and before taking off, my super-wide lens, so close to the ground, captures brief moments of microcosmic landscapes revealing distance, behaviour, depth, and detail. And then, moments later, I ascend, slowly revealing even more layers within the landscape.

VISUALS: *aerial shots rising; aerial topographical;* [*Lark Ascending* playing under this section?]

ADJL (V/O): Full disclosure: I don't like drones or UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles): they're noisy, intimidating, invasive and in the wrong hands potentially dangerous. Like a lot of new technology, drone design and usage has been largely driven by the military sector. And like other aspects of digital technology discussed elsewhere in my research (ref: *Essay Film one*), the technology is often made commercially available before the ethical or legal aspects of the use of that technology have been properly considered. However, in terms of approaching the landscape cinematographically, and *A Short Film About Ice* specifically, the capacity of a drone to show us the world in exhilarating new ways is immense.

CAMERA (V/O): I am unshackled. As I hover, rising and falling gently on the wind, I offer the cinematographer a multiplicity of movement; an infinitude of new perspectives. This movement enables the composition of completely new ways of seeing and representing landscape, unknown and unattainable to ground-based mortals.

ADJL (V/O): Flying a drone in a landscape is thrilling and terrifying. It offers so much in terms of exploring landscapes visually, and the place of the human within them. In many ways it's overwhelming – there are too many options for framing, composition and movement! It's hard not to get carried away and lost in the operational or practical aspects and forget to 'embody' or 'direct' the camera in a way that is useful to the type of footage I want to capture.

ADJL (V/O): And flying time was short in the Arctic. I would wait behind with a guide after everyone else headed back to ship, in order not disturb anyone, but this meant that I only had snatches of 5 or 10 minutes in which to explore the landscape from the air, so there was a lot of pressure on those moments. Plus, at any point there was the risk that I could crash a piece of plastic and metal onto the pristine surface of a millennia old glacier, with no hope of ever retrieving it – an ultimate and unforgiveable act of littering.

CAMERA (V/O): From here I am truly alien or elemental; a bird's eye view or the spirit of nature itself, moving on and with the wind. Truly I am 'other'. There is the risk of arrogance and danger for humans in witnessing such an omnipotent perspective, as well

as the opportunity for creativity and inspiration. I show you new ways of looking at the world – with the flick of a switch, I shift from the horizontal landscape to the topographical. No sky, only land and sea; shadows of clouds pass over the surface below; buildings become blocks, mountains just blobs - the only signifier of their height and therefore depth comes when the sun is lower in the sky, creating shadows which accentuate the shapes of large forms like buildings or mountains; humans appear as insects from this height.

ADJL (V/O): I believe that aerial cinematography is overused, often gratuitously, in popular culture and mainstream cinema. It is easy to become infatuated with such a seductive and powerful creative tool, and often such technology is used in a way that has nothing to do with a specific story or the motivation of action or journey within a film. Although playfulness and experimentation with form is an important part of integrating such new technology within cinematography, the proliferation and affordability of UAV's has made their use pervasive in commercial and popular culture before we've really had the chance to develop a cinematographic grammar around being able to see this way.

CAMERA (V/O): Astronauts have often reported experiencing a cognitive shift termed the 'overview effect' which stems from seeing the whole earth against the backdrop of space. In 1968 William Anders captured this image (cut to *Earthrise* image) through the window of Apollo 8: image or *Earthrise* went on to be one of the most replicated images in history. Wilderness photographer Galen Rowell described it as "the most influential environment photograph ever taken." (Rowell in Sullivan, 2003, p.172) Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell said seeing earth from space gave him a profound 'understanding that all humans, animals and systems were a part of the same thing, a synergistic whole. It was an interconnected euphoria.' (O'Neill, 2008)

VISUALS: *blood and glacier aerial footage*

ADJL (V/O): This sense of interconnectedness is one of the central themes of *A Short Film About Ice,* specifically in the way that I present the microscopic images of my blood cells with the aerial footage looking directly down on the glacier. I wanted that moment to have a profound affective impact on the viewer of the work that echoed the way that it originally moved me. I believe that the capacity to produce such aerial material is a real privilege and carries a great deal of responsibility in how we handle and present such images. For example, I believe we need to give aerial cinematography more time than most shots in the edit, because we're still coming to terms with this other-worldly perspective. This is the reason I use it sparingly and with real consideration in *A Short Film About Ice*, and why I am ultimately grateful that I didn't have too much time to spend in capturing aerial work. I have wondered if this was one of the contributing factors of my poor mental health during the expedition – that I was seeing breath-taking landscapes from a perspective that my mind simply couldn't take in all at once, capturing images that I simply couldn't compute fast enough, because the grammar and understanding that would help to process them is under-developed.

ADJL (V/O): I struggle with aerial photography as a cinematographic tool, because it's noisy; because it's invasive; because of the issues around privacy and health and safety, and not least for potential negative impacts on wildlife and natural environments. Most importantly, the use of this technology changes the moment of capturing the landscape cinematographically – the aerial filmmaking experience is considerably different from land-based camera-work. Furthermore, its use raises a fundamental ethical consideration that perhaps isn't always on the mind of contemporary photographers and cinematographers: just because we can capture imagery from places that we were unable to reach before, it doesn't mean that we should.

ADJL (V/O): However, as my ship-mates packed up and headed back to the ship after an excursion, for short periods of time each day I was left alone with one other person, my camera and the landscape. These were some of the most valuable moments I had in the field. As scary and pressured as flying was in the Arctic, I feel so honoured to have had that time in those landscapes.

VISUALS: *(self-interview shots on location); Pyramiden; some aspects of the calving moment…*

CAMERA (V/O): You should talk about your mental health in the Arctic.

ADJL (V/O): I *should* talk about my mental health in the Arctic. In the summer of 2017 the record-breaking wild-fires in California, Europe and Australia were yet to happen, and Greta Thunberg was still a year away from beginning her remarkable activism work through school climate strikes, both of which can be credited with pushing awareness of the climate crisis considerably further into mainstream consciousness than it had been before. Over the three years leading up to my Arctic trip my PhD had brought me into contact with an extensive body of scientific environmental research which, taken as a whole, painted a necessarily bleak picture of what the future had in store for the planet in the short to medium term. Amongst this research was the ground-breaking scientific report 'The Anthropocene is Functionally and Stratigraphically Distinct from the Holocene' (Waters *et al.*, 2016), which to my lay-persons eyes seemed to lay out very clearly the harrowing scientific evidence detailing the climate crisis that is already clearly upon us.

CAMERA (V/O): Eco-Anxiety: 'A chronic fear of environmental doom' (Clayton et al., 2017, p. 68); 'the generalized sense that the ecological foundations of existence are in the process of collapse' (Albrecht, 2012)

ADJL (V/O): I don't think I've ever felt quite so alone as my research took me further and further into visual and scientific evidence of the contemporary climate crisis happening now and how the future is set to look for the generations to come. How could my own research hope to have any meaningful impact on this situation?

CAMERA (V/O): 'Solastalgia' is a neologism for the emotional or existential distress caused to humans by environmental change. 'It is the 'lived experience' of the loss of the present as manifest in a feeling or sense of dislocation; of being undermined by forces that destroy the potential for solace to be derived from the present.' It is the sense of

homesickness one gets when one is still at 'home.' (Albrecht et al., 2007, p.45) In this way, 'Place and homesickness are natural subjects for the essay-film.' (Lopate, 1992, p.116)

ADJL (V/O): While there were other contributing factors, in the run up to my trip I had the first in a series of mental and emotional breakdowns. I nearly called everything off, but somehow, I managed to get on the plane and made it up to Svalbard. I cannot explain how intense the trip was in terms of my deep anxiety, amongst feelings of guilt, shame and grief for my children's futures. *A Short Film About Ice* is dedicated to them because they, and the weight of their lives to come, have never been far from my mind throughout this research. I constantly came back to Donna Haraway's empowering yet onerous *staying with the trouble* (Haraway, 2016) as a mantra, tried to find ways of being with these difficult emotions within the landscape, instead of just distracting or reassuring myself.

CAMERA (V/O): Vital to the sublime landscape is a sense of terror or of being overwhelmed by nature, often illustrated by a human in peril or jeopardy. In this overwhelming moment there is a 'schism' in the mind of the human – a 'rupture' where reason is lost and the human is forced to question their mortality or existence, ultimately rebuilding and regaining some semblance of mastery over nature, in the case of the traditional or romantic sublime; or an equilibrium with nature, in the case of the eco-sublime depicted in *A Short Film About Ice*.[13]

ADJL (V/O): While I was in no direct physical danger in the Arctic, my struggle with my mental health on the trip, which included suicidal ideation, constituted a genuine existential jeopardy for me and was inevitably a fundamental part of my personal and creative experiences in the Arctic. And, as alluded to in *A Short Film About Ice*, the climate crisis represents a global threat and peril for many species, including our own.

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[13] 'Ideally, then, an ecological sublime would offer a new kind of transcendence which would resist the traditional re-inscription of humankind's supremacy over nature.' (Hitt, 1999 p.609)

ADJL (V/O): During my time in the Arctic, I had no conscious inclination that my mental and emotional vulnerability would prove to be so fundamental in creating an affective openness that would shape what I would go on to consider as my eco-sublime experiences within the Arctic landscapes.

ADJL (V/O): I turned to mindful meditation and controlled breathing in order to calm myself enough to at least be in and work with the landscape. Some of these meditative phrases (Hanh, 2000) found their way into the finished film, in a sequence that represents a moment of grounding for the viewer, before delving into the most profound and awe-inspiring sequence of the film, the glacier calving.

ADJL (V/O): So, when I returned from the Arctic, I had a large amount of footage, some very disjointed autoethnographic field notes and no real sense of what I could do with it all, or how it related to my PhD. To expand on that slightly, I had a gut-feeling that I had 'something', but I had no idea what that was or how it might end up looking. However, my first job was to work on what had become severe and debilitating mental health problems. I didn't even look at the footage for six months, and stepped away from my research entirely for the next two years.

VISUALS: *fade to black on this final phrase… in order to cut from black to the same image, or related, within the programme monitor of a Premiere Pro Project for the next section on 'Editing'.*

PART THREE: EMOTION RECOLLECTED IN TRANQUILLITY

Completed 22nd November 2021.

TITLE: PART THREE: Emotion Recollected in Tranquillity

VISUALS: *lots of the visuals for the following section will be screen / desktop-based and involve Arctic footage (and maybe a few specific other pieces) being manipulated through editing software; capturing all this might be quite a time-consuming process, but at least I know how to do it and I can be quite particular to what I need to illustrate from the text / voiceovers.*

ADJL (V/O): During my time in the Arctic, I was overwhelmed and running on instinct a lot of the time, on a personal level and in terms of my cinematography practice. I had no real understanding of the journey I was going through. Since that trip, I have learned to think of my experiences there as being shaped by two closely related emotions, both pertaining to the sublime: fear and wonder. How I responded to those emotions in the moment, and how I have subsequently shaped the footage of the experiences that provoked those emotions in *A Short Film About Ice*, represents my thoughts and feelings about the concept of a contemporary eco-sublime landscape and the role of the artist in the Anthropocene. Fear and wonder are precisely the emotions I want to provoke in others that experience the film. But, most crucially to this research, I was only able to produce the film with and through the time and distance that my editing process allowed me, in order to slowly and methodically review, compile, sculpt and script my footage and my notes.

VISUALS: *editing tbc*

CAMERA (V/O): A film gets 'written' three times: the first time on the page; the second time with the camera; and the third and final time in the edit. Each time the story or shape of the film is refined, re-worked and a million things can affect its progress, until

eventually it is 'read' by viewers watching and listening to the finished piece of work. This experience is then interpreted by them, potentially in completely unique or unexpected ways. *A Short Film About Ice* was different in that there was no script to start with – the first 'writing' stage was the camera and the cinematographer walking on ice in the Arctic.

ADJL (V/O): The second 'writing' stage was editing the footage, accompanied by the transcription of my rough autoethnographic field notes into more fully considered critical observations and eventually the third stage of a screenplay, of sorts. However, the sequencing and manipulation of the moving images always came before the writing, which is quite often the case in the essay film / film poem form.

VISUALS: editing *tbc; perhaps some macro work of rough hand-written notes from my note-books; also re-visit the macro blood and aerial glacier footage when referenced*

CAMERA (V/O): The ability to cut from one image to another, to draw a link between two separate images that occurred either in a different time or a different place, is unique to the art form of cinema. 'The cut' can juxtapose and draw comparison at the same time, for example the vivid red of the microscopic blood, where the pattern and shape of the subject directly references the shape and pattern of the glacier surface that follows, rendered in blue and white. Here 'the cut' enables a sense of this 'inbetweenness' and infers interconnectivity between the human and the landscape in a very clear and direct way. This realization was a big moment for the story of the film in the edit.

CAMERA (V/O): An extreme close up (ECU) shot of a piece of melting ice, cut with a WIDE panoramic shot of a glacier brings up the idea of scale, and also of time passing. The essence or affective impact of the one can be projected onto the other in the way they are cut together, even more so if the cut fades from one to the other. In this way, the sublime essence of a landscape can be transferred to the figure of a human, or in another context a human portrait.

(Landscape shot cross-fades with my face at desk)

ADJL (V/O): Gilles Deleuze argued that the cinematic image of the twentieth century is divided between two related but different types: pre-World War Two cinema – produced by notable directors such as Sergei Eisenstein and Carl Theodore Dryer, which was typified by the 'movement-image' driven by action and cause-and-effect within the narrative structure; and the post-war or modernist cinema – of Fellini, Hitchcock and Welles – regarded as that of the 'time-image', where cinema became freer to explore the nature of time itself, and memory in particular. (Deleuze in Ivakhiv, 2013 p.55)

VISUALS: *screen-captured footage illustrates the following passages, i.e. scrolling through the footage etc.*

CAMERA (V/O): The nonlinear editing timeline offers a simple illustration of how time works in cinema. If we take the 'playhead' as symbolizing 'now', we can move backwards and forwards through cinematic time. We can stop time in its tracks, or we can play it slower or faster than it was in 'real time'. 'The cut' can jump us forwards or backwards in time, and the layering of such cuts in a montage can present us with key moments representing time passing over a longer period. Time-lapse is an extreme version of this, where cinematography can reveal in moments changes that take place on glaciological or even cosmological temporal scales (*stock footage of satellite time-lapse of glaciers, stars in night time-lapse)*.

ADJL (V/O): When I first reviewed the arctic footage and looked through my notes, I found I was so close emotionally to the images and the words that I couldn't see or comprehend a lot of the connections between them, or even appreciate the affective scale of what I had managed to capture. Reviewing the footage was not an easy or a particularly pleasant experience to begin with, because of the overwhelming proximity of the eco-sublime landscape in the footage and my poor mental health at the time. In addition, the suffocating nearness of climate change in general, meant that the images were very deeply imbued with the weight of my personal experiences in the Arctic.

ADJL (V/O): Crucially, the editing part of the cinematographic process meant that I could choose to switch off and walk away from the images at any point, and this gave me a sense of freedom and personal control that I hadn't had on location. This freedom to choose when to look and when not to look was a big part of my recovery and the 'decompression' I needed to move on and express my experiences cinematographically.

ADJL (V/O): And so, editing became a way of sitting with the footage and meditating through the feelings, thoughts and memories that the images and words brought up in me. In this way, the impact of what I had witnessed and the profundity of my experience only really hit me in the edit. Taking, as examples, the calving sequence or the comparison of my blood on a molecular level and the glacier seen from above: these are large and complex visual concepts, difficult to formalise or place in reference to other ideas. It was only with the sense of temporal and physical distance and calm reflection in the edit – with some objectivity, but also with newly learned self-compassion and fostering a curious, empathetic subjectivity – that I was able to express this experience through video and sound and text.

ADJL (V/O): I find that there is great affective power in editing, especially in the non-linear digital realm that we edit in today. To a certain extent editing is a very instinctual, even playful, act. When a sequence of images or a 'scene' falls into place – very much like placing pieces in a jigsaw puzzle – it 'feels' right, as much as it rationally makes sense or works logically or narratively. The thing is that at every moment while editing you have an infinitude of choices to make, and an infinitude of directions in which to move: at the end of a jig-saw you have one whole image completed in front of you, but when editing (unless rigorously adhering to an original screenplay or storyboard) you have the potential to produce an infinite number of different final images.

ADJL (V/O): Importantly, when these specific sequences fell into place on the timeline for *A Short Film About Ice*, or when certain words and images simply 'clicked' together, I sensed and felt echoes of my original eco-sublime experiences created within the act of editing, as if this stage of the cinematographic process was connected to or generative of a similar affective resonance that I felt in the field. These were moments of great relief,

when I started to feel that I was 'on the right track' with the film. And from experiencing it in person with an audience, from the feedback and the comments made by people who have experienced the film, plus the comments from the various juries when the film has won awards, it appears that these resonating echoes of affect do come through the film for others.

VISUALS: *editing shots reflecting the words spoken, i.e., chapter headings on the time-line etc.*

ADJL (V/O): The structure of *A Short Film About Ice* started to build as visual 'chapters' on my timelines. I would construct sketches or rough sequences of images and then I would start to link to written notes, poems and academic references on a written page. It was about building connections between the affective and aesthetic themes coming from the footage and the memories of the experiences in my writing. And slowly these words started to fit together with the images, as if the two elements were already related and had just been waiting for me to shuffle the box and fish around for the right piece of text jigsaw to place with the right piece of image jigsaw.

ADJL (V/O): The way I used editing markers was something of a revelation in this visual, essayistic process. Markers are small coloured triangles that you 'stick' onto the timeline to indicate a note or piece of information about the shot or an editing decision, often a marker will represent a new scene, chapter or a thought about a sound effect or grading. But for *A Short Film About Ice,* I used them as a way of working out where the spoken text might go in relationship to the video sequences, and so the 'meter' of the text I was writing started to be a visual element on my timeline. This enabled me to see visually that there was adequate pacing of words, as well as space where the visuals 'demanded' no voiceover, and this helped me to control the rhythm and flow of each chapter.

VISUALS: *editing tbc, but refencing any specific sequences, moments or environments mentioned*

ADJL (V/O): In terms of grading *A Short Film About Ice*, colour is such a fundamental and subtle aspect of Arctic imagery, so I took a long time finding the right colour palette for each environment. I had taken a lot of still photographs in the Arctic, which I had colour-corrected onboard the *Antigua*, so these were reference points when it came to creating the right gamut of colours and tones, especially for the wide variety of blues and whites in the different types of ice. There were a few central sequences that I graded first: the build-up to the calving, the calving itself and the aftermath; the blood and the aerial over the glacier; and the final scene in the basketball court in Pyramiden. And from these sequences I worked through the other shots. The most complex to grade was the calving sequence because that had been shot on two different cameras, but after a lot of experimentation I was able to match their colours satisfactorily.

VISUALS & AUDIO: *need to make space in the following section to illustrate the sound and music referenced; show visual sound clips on timeline, plus sound fx tied to the sound graphs on the clips, audio meters rising and falling etc.; plus show the music clips and give space, with footage, to hear a selection from each piece*

ADJL (V/O): Aesthetically there are two further elements that add to the emotional depth of the sublime landscapes in my Arctic film poem – sound and score. Although these are non-visual, I would argue that both are vital to the cinematographic process and to the impact and generation of affect that cinematography as an art form produces. Although I cannot explore them in depth here, they were vital to the project in terms of relating my eco-sublime experiences through cinematographic means. A great deal of energy was expended to get both the music and the sound effects working in a way that added to the affective resonance of key moments, such as the calving sequence and the blood and aerial glacier sequence.

ADJL (V/O): I made no sound recordings in the Arctic. Sound is such an intrinsic part of the moving image experience that I knew I wouldn't have been able to concentrate on it to the degree I would want to as it would be too time consuming on location and would distract from my main purpose for being there, which was the cinematography. I understood that I was going to have to do everything sound-related in post, but I knew that this was possible from previous landscape projects where I had composed effective

soundscapes built from the remarkable 'free-to-use' online sound libraries and archives where professional sound recordists compile their incredible work for others to use 'rights free'.

ADJL (V/O): My solution was to complete a key eco-sublime section (the calving sequence, as the most complex and specific soundscape) out of graded footage, sound effects and music. This then served as an example for the high quality and detail that I wanted throughout the whole film. I was really fortunate to work with Jonathan Eve, a young sound editor and mixer (and also composer) whom I was able to give this key sequence to and say 'use this as an aesthetic guide for sound in these other sequences.' We then worked together really closely in building a soundscape for each chapter or section of the film, slowly refining it by degrees as the music and finally the voiceover were integrated into the work.

ADJL (V/O): I should also note that I set my sound designer the very specific challenge of finding the 'sound of inbetweenness', which felt important to have underscoring a few vital moments. In our conversations I described it as 'a vibrational sound that flows in-between all things, human and non-human'. I described it as an 'elemental choir' and the 'essence of the landscape'. I wanted this sound to float and rise and fall as if heard on the wind, drifting in and out of hearing or consciousness. Quite quickly Jonathan came up with a series of dry and long drone sounds made from scraping a bow slowly over cello strings. This was then layered and treated digitally to get the right sound. It's a very subtle rumbling effect that essentially happens underneath the main score, but it's designed to be felt in the chest as much as heard.

ADJL (V/O): For the score, I knew that I wanted to use music to create a sense of an inner voice or character for the eco-sublime landscapes of the film. When I was in the Arctic, and in the build-up to my trip, I listened to a lot of John Luther Adams music, specifically *In the White Silence* (2003) and *The Wind in High Places* (2015). His work is drawn from his experiences of nature and the elements, and so his compositions effectively served as a soundtrack to my Arctic experiences. I cut a few sequences early on that incorporated his music, and even managed to get permission to use two of his pieces for

a short period of time when a version of the completed calving sequence was exhibited in New York. Ultimately, though, it would have been impossible to finance the rights to this music, so I turned to musicians closer to home, whom I had worked with before.

ADJL (V/O): I used two piano pieces from Pete Judge which struck the right tone musically, but just didn't sound right until we added some reverb and a few very subtle effects, with the aim of making it sound like the piano was being played in a dusty old music room in the depths of Pyramiden (*insert actual piano footage here!*). And for the calving sequence I knew that I wanted something with drones that built into a cacophony before calming and staying constant during the aftermath sequence. For this I turned to composer Matt Thomason, who let me use two electronic compositions, that blended together well to create this effect.

ADJL (V/O): I'm not ordinarily a fan of voice-overs when they are used in an expositional way. I tend to feel that a film should be able to succeed in telling its story through images and sound alone, and for me that's the artistry of cinematography. However, I think that *A Short Film About Ice* demonstrates the affective power of the moving image and sound when combined with the human voice: again, there's no other medium where an artist can do this. I did not wish to feature 'the human' or 'the cinematographer' in much detail visually, and yet I had so much personal experience that I wanted to get across, and also these big ideas about the eco-sublime and interconnectivity, that I knew from early on that building 'the cinematographer' character was going to happen through memories expressed through spoken words. This is, after all, one of the most compelling elements of the essay film and film poetry form – the authorial and subjective voice speaking personally and directly about subjects from their own perspective.

ADJL (V/O): This felt doubly relevant when one understands that the sublime is traditionally considered to be an entity which defies language or description. Why not then use all the tools available to the cinematographer, including the written and spoken word, to get as close as possible to representing the complexities of my experiences of the eco-sublime?

CAMERA (V/O): What the cinematographer is trying to do in *A Short Film About Ice* is give the viewer an understanding of what a landscape would look like to them if they 'belonged' there, if it were 'their landscape'. The cinematographer gives us a vivid insight into the character of the landscape that would otherwise require a long experience to achieve. The cinematographer makes the landscape personal – known, loved, feared, hallowed. (Evernden, 1996, pp. 99-100)

ADJL (V/O): What *A Short Film About Ice* does most effectively, I contend, is show the possibilities inherent in looking at landscape from the perspective of being a part of it, not separate to it – belonging to it. There are certain moments touched on in the film: the calm build-up to the glacier calving; the intensity of the calving itself; the aftermath and realisation of my interconnection to the landscape and my sense of responsibility in that relationship; the visual juxtaposition of the brilliant red microscopic blood and the immenseness of the cool blue glacier shot from high above, which enabled me to start to understand them as interconnected. And there were other moments, not filmed and so not directly included in the film, but which are at the heart of my Arctic experiences– particularly meditating with a friend on a beach by a glacier, where my spirit seemed to ascend endlessly upwards and, for a short time, I forgot myself.

ADJL (V/O): These moments represent places that are full of affective atmosphere, the air positively crackling with potential, where I was wide open to a sense of vibration in-between all things: between myself and my ship-mates, and between us and the non-human aspects of the natural landscape, tiny and vast.

CAMERA (V/O):

<div align="center">

And I have felt

A Presence that disturbs me with the joy

of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean, and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,

</div>

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,

And rolls through all things.

(Coleridge and Wordsworth, 1967, p.113)

APPENDIX 6: TRANSCRIPT OF ESSAY FILM TWO:

PART FOUR: THE NEARNESS OF THINGS

Completed 24ᵗʰ November 2021.

TITLE: PART FOUR: The Nearness of Things

CAMERA (V/O): 'The really subversive element in Ecology rests not on any of its more sophisticated concepts, but upon its basic premise: inter-relatedness.' (Evernden, 1996, p.93) 'An involvement by the arts is vitally needed to emphasize that inter-relatedness, and the intimate and vital involvement of self with place... There is no such thing as an individual, only an individual-in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place.' (Evernden, 1996, p.103)

ADJL (V/O): These moments, offering a sense of interconnectivity – these were my own eco-sublime landscape moments. They were experiences that provoked humility and empathy in me and touched on Herzog's 'ecstatic truth' (Herzog and Weigel, 2010, p.1) and what Morton refers to as the 'ecological thought.' (Morton, 2010, p.1)

CAMERA (V/O): 'To think as big as the ecological thought demands, is to make conscious space for uncertainty, to accept uncomfortable interdependence with alien agents, human and nonhuman.' (Kainulainen, 2013, p.117) 'Thinking the ecological thought is difficult: it involves becoming open, radically open – open forever, without the possibility of closing again.' (Morton, 2010, p.8)

VISUALS: *Arctic misc. tbc…*

ADJL (V/O): While I understood through my early research and field studies that there was the potential for something that I was tentatively calling the eco-sublime landscape, I did not fully understand that what I was experiencing in the Arctic was what I had been theorising about. I certainly didn't know how to describe to others what I had gone through. It's only through being a cinematographer – writing with my camera, with 'the

cut' in the edit suite, and with my pen, using every element that cinematography gives me as an artform, that I was able to understand and express these eco-sublime moments in the landscape to others through my cinematography.

ADJL (V/O): To formalise this most important point: the iteration of the eco-sublime illustrated in *A Short Film About Ice*, built as it is on the foundations of a long-standing concept that is often defined by its resistance to representation, is most effectively possible and comprehensible through the process of approaching landscapes cinematographically, and subsequently representing these experiences though cinema. The eco-sublime then appears from a liminal space between my initial experience and the distance my practice gives me.

CAMERA (V/O): 'Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.' (Coleridge and Wordsworth, 1967, p.251)

ADJL (V/O): Hence the need for this reflexive and analytical essay film to explore further this complex phenomenon, by looking in much more detail at the knowledge and skills built up in my cinematographic practice that produced *A Short Film About Ice* using the practice itself within an essay film structure.

CAMERA (V/O): An affectively generative film has the capacity to elicit a heightened understanding of or orientation toward the socio-ecological, specifically expanding the viewers' perceptions of 'ecological ontology'. (Ivakhiv, 2013, p.299)

ADJL (V/O): Whether my own affective experience translates well or poorly to others depends primarily on my skill as a cinematographer and my understanding of the form. But it will also be influenced by the context in which the film is experienced (in a cinema, in a gallery, on a computer screen or on a mobile phone) and also depends on what viewers themselves bring to their own individual aesthetic experience of the film, or film in general. How open and invested they are in the moment of watching, listening to and simply 'being with' the work.

ADJL (V/O): Until quite recently in my research I believed that these two eco-sublime experiences – the first-hand experience of the practicing cinematographer on location, and the second-hand experience of the viewer of that cinematography when watching the film – represented an 'active experience' in the former and a 'passive experience' in the latter. This felt like a useful way of describing the difference between the act of 'going and being and making', and the act of 'being and watching and listening.' And yet, if we acknowledge the turn towards affect that my research has taken (see Methodology Chapter), an appreciation of which is central to the main themes of *A Short Film About Ice*, then we have to reach a perspective of there being no such thing as a 'passive spectator' (ref *Methodology Chapter*). The very act of looking and listening, specifically within the context of cinema, is an experience filled with movement and affect.[14]

CAMERA (V/O): But there is an even more pressing argument that disputes the notion of there being a conceptual difference between an active eco-sublime experience in the first-hand and a secondary or passive eco-sublime experience, and this is concerned with distance. If we return to one of the central tenets of the romantic sublime, it is the amount of physical (specifically geographical) and temporal distance from the original terrifying sublime event, that enables the viewer of a painting, photograph or moving images to transfer terror into some form of pleasure.

CAMERA (V/O): However, within the concept of a contemporary eco-sublime, as it is illustrated in *A Short Film About Ice*, there can be no real sense of physical distance between the maker and the viewer of such eco-sublime images because anthropogenic climate change is now so pervasive that there are no environments that aren't detrimentally affected by its impacts.

VISUALS: *a static aerial shot of myself standing beside the sea – the shot resembles 'The Monk by the Sea', with myself as the Rückenfigur facing the sea; the shot tracks slowly forward, over the head of the figure and out towards the sea; slowly the shot*

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[14] There is extensive literature on embodied affect, cinema viewing and spectatorship, a detailed analysis of which is beyond the scope of this thesis. In this area, I touch on Rutherford (2003), Ivakhiv (2013) and Cubitt et al. (2013) in the methodology section on affect (pp.33-34), but also see Marks (2000) and Jennifer M. Barker's *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (2009).

tilts down into a topographical shot of the water below; this shot then fades to another, microscopic shot of plastic in the water. This a reverse of the blood and ice shot in ASFAI.

ADJL (V/O): If we crudely re-stage the composition of Caspar David Friedrich's *The Monk by the Sea* (1808-1810), with the pensive Rückenfigur, or figure seen from behind, contemplating the ocean in the first quarter of the 21st century, then on the surface the metaphor and rationale of Friedrich's original landscape is arguably still intact, but its essence has changed. If we look at this contemporary landscape image with humility, openness and with even a basic grasp of climate data, this image can be read as a representation of an inherently eco-sublime landscape.

CAMERA (V/O): (the shot starts to track forwards) Scientists tell us that the very air that this figure is inhaling is potentially polluted with nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and fine particulate matter caused by anthropogenic behaviour. (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2021) Global sea levels are rising consistently year on year, due to a combination of meltwater from glaciers and ice sheets, and the thermal expansion of seawater as it warms. (Climate.gov, 2021) And from the 300 million tonnes of plastic produced globally each year, 10 million tonnes will enter the ocean (National Oceanography Centre, 2021), where it will break down into micro-plastics that can take thousands of years to decompose. (National Geographic, 2021)

ADJL (V/O): Beyond physical distance, there is little sense of temporal distance left either, as we must acknowledge, based on compelling evidence, that the climate crisis is already here and now. It is simply that these catastrophes haven't started affecting 'us, in the West', as drastically or as directly as they have those living in the Global South. But it's just a matter of time.

CAMERA (V/O): "Distance" is only a psychic and ideological construct designed to protect humans from the nearness of things. The very attempt to distance is not a

product of some true assessment of things, but is and was always a defence mechanism against a threatening proximity. (Morton, 2013, pp. 27-28)

CAMERA (V/O): To this extent, the gallery or the cinema can no longer be regarded as a 'safe' place, nor can the screen serve as a 'shield,'[15] whether in the cinema or on mobile devices. The spectator can no longer be passive in daily life because the eco-sublime is active for all in reportage, Hollywood movies and popular culture. But this is all too often an eco-sublime with the accent on fear and despair. Can the cinematographic eco-sublime give humans a new way to look at the climate crisis with hope, imagination and compassion for others, human and non-human?

VISUALS: *CUT TO MEDIUM / CU of the human figure looking out to sea*

ADJL (V/O): If in this moving image homage to Friedrich's painting, including the voiceover and the scientific data it provides, we understand the Rückenfigur as a proxy for ourselves as spectators – an avatar – then on some level, even subconsciously, 'we, the viewer' must begin to consider our own sense of responsibility towards the landscape within this emotional and intellectual interaction between spectator and artist through cinema. So, the image becomes ethical as well as aesthetical. I believe that living in the Anthropocene we need to learn to come to terms with every image and sequence of images in this way – to feel the weight of every image, and every frame.

VISUALS: *tbc; Johann Johannsson's Flight from the City plays us out from here…*

CAMERA (V/O): Humans have to think big, bigger than they know how, and bear witness to the deep interconnection and undecidability that climate change reveals. This revelation requires an encounter with climate change as a sublime object, the experience of which constitutes an ethical event. (Kainulainen, 2013, p.111) 'However, hyperobjects

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[15] Morton writes about human art in the time of ecological crisis where the 'glass screen' and the 'picture frame' start to melt and 'extrude itself toward you in a highly uncanny, scary way that violates the normal aesthetic propriety, which we know about from philosophers such as Kant—the propriety in which there should be a Goldilocks distance between you and the art object, not too close, not too far away.' (Morton, 2013, p.133)

(that is to say objects and systems of things that are so temporally or spatially immense that they are essentially beyond human comprehension[16]) like climate change are so vast that they cannot be known except through their representations. Thus a sublime encounter with the vastness of climate change is only possible through representations mediated by discourse.' (*Ibid.*, p.118)

ADJL (V/O): What I am suggesting with *A Short Film About Ice* is that there is still time – indeed I would argue there is a deep and urgent need – for a visual eco-sublime that brings us, the maker and the viewer, closer to the landscape. Not in fear or with a sense of somehow mastering our fright by situating ourselves in a dominant position to nature, but with understanding, humility, empathy and an open curiosity for that which is not human. An eco-sublime with the accent on wonder, interconnectivity and the whole-hearted embrace of 'otherness'.

CAMERA (V/O): If images are an invitation to pay attention, to reflect, to learn, then they are ethical. (Kaplan, 2008, p.14) Such images that revive humanity's belief in this world (Deleuze, 1989, pp. 181-182) would thus be images that revive its ability to take *this* world seriously, (Ivakhiv, 2013, pp. 294-295) potentially even galvanizing an 'age of responsibility, creativity, inventiveness and humility.' (Schwägerl, 2015)

ADJL (V/O): To sum this conversation up, I believe that cinematography's appropriateness as a process for expressing and representing such a compassionate eco-sublime landscape is signified by three main factors: time, movement and distance. These are also recognisable as the driving forces within the concept of the journey, as discussed in the written introduction to this thesis.

ADJL (V/O): With this in mind, I want to end by considering, for a final time, the predominant eco-sublime moment from *A Short Film About Ice*, where the ice cracks and calves from the glacier**.** The ice itself, compressed and pulverised under unimaginable pressure, has travelled for hundreds of years to reach that moment. Once the ice has sheared away from the glacier, it will drift as an iceberg, slowly melting, turning from

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[16] See page 130 of Morton's The Ecological Thought

blue to white, becoming a part of the ocean over time. The cinematographic eco-sublime in *A Short Film About Ice* is concerned with trying to express the temporality of ice from a glacial scale measured in centuries to a human scale of 30 minutes to experience a film. This journey of ice reflects my own experience in realising that eco-sublime moment through my cinematography: everything I brought with me, my whole life up until that moment; the exhilaration of the moment itself; and the fall-out, the aftermath, everything I take away and the rest of my life trying to come to terms with the implications of that moment, in order that I might carry the essence and the weight of that landscape forwards with me.

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