

ADAA7000 Coexistent Perspectives Module

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- Please ensure you follow the AI guidance on the assessment brief and note when and how you are able to use AI.
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Coexistent Perspectives

Question 3. Space and Place: How do contemporary creative practices engage with the politics and poetics of space, including questions of displacement, postcolonial geography, affective architectures, or the uncanny? What critical frameworks can be used to analyse these spatial imaginaries?

Introduction

This Essay will be looking at two renowned Photographers, the late British documentary photographer Martin Parr and American photographer Gregory Crewdson within the themes of space and place, mainly looking at relational geography. Both photographers capture people within spaces. Parr captures people in real time in a natural, flawed, real space. While on the other hand, Crewdson creates his own reality with high budget sets and large crews to create images that are beautiful, full of melancholy but have a sense of the uncanny within them. Furthermore, I will be accompanying the works of these artists with theorists like, Yi-Fu Tuan, Gaston Bachelard, Jean Baudrillard, Stuart Hall, Giles Deleuze and Mark Fisher.

Theory

When understanding the fundamentals of Space and Place one theorist stands out. Yi-Fu Tuan and his book *Space and Place the Perspective of Experience*.

Martin Parr



Martin Parr, who recently passed on the 6th December, was a photographer, mainly working in the field of documentary and photojournalist style of photography. He was introduced to photography by his late grandfather George Parr. His interest in photography led him to studying the subject at Manchester Polytechnic in 1970-1973. When reading about his time in studying in Manchester, he claims on the FAQ part on his website, that they only taught him the basics studio techniques- he had a drive in him to learn and achieve more so he started his own projects. This rebellious need to look outside the box is clearly shown in his work throughout his career. His aim as a photographer was to capture the peculiarities of society, mainly British. Before he got his signature look of bright and colourful images, he used to photograph in black and white. He states in an interview on the 'Louisiana Channel' on YouTube Parr states that he started documenting communities in North England, he wanted to capture the community he did not have back home in Surrey. He captured these communities in black and white and on the YouTube channel that he views his black and white work celebrating the traditions of working-class life as soft and gentle. in his images and capturing the British public in not the most glamorous way highlighted his views on the social

classes in the UK. He also ventured into documentary filmmaking and has made many books about his photography.

On his website, Parr also answers a question about his influences for photography, one being English photographer Tony Ray-Jones. Jones' work heavily focuses on capturing the British public at the beach, which we see in Parr's work as well.



(Ray-Jones, 1966)



(Parr, 1977)

You can see Jones' influence in Parr's earlier work. Huxley Parlour (2018) notes that in the first 15 years of his career he only took pictures in black and white. These images are not as well-known as his coloured images. His coloured images gave him his signature look that instantly allows everyone to know that is Parr's work. Comparing his black and white work to his coloured work, there is a tone change. Without his use of bright colours to evoke a satirical tone to his work his images may be taken in a more serious tone. The work Parr is known for is holding a mirror to society, and its consumerism and taking society's judgments in his images and showcasing how ridiculous everything is.

In a video interview for Noods Level, Parr shares that he started his own foundation to showcase and archive his own work, but he also wanted to help other documentary photographers in Britain. As he was such a famous documentary photographer, he wanted to help others in his field of work. In the interview he says that documentary photographer and photographers are "underrepresented" and "underappreciate". Additionally, In this interview he talks more about his technique on getting the 'right' image. He states that there is "no such thing as a perfect photo" and that when he finds the 'right' image it is a "intuitive feel". Martin also said in the interview that he was inspired by the "world" as it was "crazy". He liked

capturing the quirkiness of society, showcasing flaws and the imperfections that makes us human.

Moving on, in another interview for *My French Stories* alongside director Lee Shuman who made a documentary film about Martin Parr. Shuman states the film is "unifying" and that "Martin brings everyone together... from different class systems..."

Furthermore, in this interview Parr also discusses when he first joined Magnum, a photography company that has members worldwide showcasing their work. Parr explains that many members of Magnum did not want him to join the cooperative. They thought his work was too unserious. They did not like his bright colourful style, as black and white were thought to be better for documentary photography and that documentary photography should only be viewed in a serious tone. Parr says his work is serious, his images are bright and colourful to draw people in, it is up to the individual to see the deeper meaning within the image.

On the YouTube channel "Louisiana Channel", Parr explains why he wants to do documentary photography, he says in the interview that most images we see are a form of propaganda and that he wants to show us the reality of society, he takes the close-up, unflattering, raw shots of people, buildings etc. He states he likes to "try and find the humour in the world we see". His images are his personal interpretation on society, he adds his iconic 'exaggerated' touch by using his flash.

Martin Parr- The Last Resort



In an interview for the Tate Museum on their YouTube channel 'Tateshots' Parr explains his relationship with taking pictures of the British public. He states that he has a "love hate relationship from the country I am from". In an interview for 'My French Stories', Parr explains why he wanted to capture seaside cities in the UK. He called the British seaside "Shabby", when going to the beach is supposed to be "Fun" and "Glorious". In his most famous portfolio of work, 'The Last Resort' he captures the seaside city of Brighton you can see in his images that there is a lot of litter across the beach, but many people still sunbathe and enjoy the summer heat.



“The unchoreographed reciprocal gaze is a rare occurrence in a Martin Parr photograph” (Sheers, 2019)

Gregory Crewdson

From looking at Parrs work, a photographer that has a bright optimistic look to his work but when you look closer you see the flaws and reality of society, we then have the works of American photographer Gregory Crewdson, where his work looks dark and mysterious but in his interview with American reader he “finds his work essentially “optimistic.” Loh and Vescovi.

On the Gagosian Gallery website (Website owned and directed by Larry Gagosian) exhibits famous artists of the 20th and 21st century. They have a page dedicated to Crewdson where it shares that Gregory Crewdson was born in Brooklyn, New York and when he started his education into photographer, he studied at SUNY Purchase and the Yale University School of Art.

The ICP says that Crewdson is highly known for his “...elaborately staged scenes of small town American life” Mathies.



The Independent Photographer website does a focus article on Crewdson. “Crewdson has justified his attraction to the uncanny by claiming *“ultimately, probably what scares me most is reality. When it’s a representation, when it’s separate from the world, it more effortlessly becomes poetic or beautiful.”* Torres, 2019.

“What I am interested in is that moment of transcendence, where one is transported into another place, into a perfect, still world.” Crewdson, 2021

When comparing Crewdson to Parr, Crewdson works on a might higher budget with a large team and sets looking like they could be for a movie production. Crewdson completely transforms the space he is working in. Parr was capturing reality while it was happening, Crewdson has made up a narrative on a large scale. For Parr, he is just one man and a camera who relies on his camera settings to get his high saturation images without postproduction editing.



Conclusion