TIME AND PLACE IN THE BOOKS OF SOPHIE CALLE

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ABSTRACT

Sophie Calle (1953 - ) is a contemporary visual artist. She produces photographic, film and written works, often all three in combination. The first incarnation of her work is usually for exhibition in gallery or museum spaces but, because of its narrative component, it naturally lends itself to publication. In this thesis it is her published work that is of primary interest.

Calle structures her work by means of a constraint that often includes a specific place in which she situates her work. For this reason it seems apparent that place would play a part in shaping the development of her work. It is however acknowledged that place does not occur in isolation as a means of structuring narrative; Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) considers it as just one element of the influence of the chronotope, the pairing of place and time, and the more minor influence of the two. It was found, however, that place is more influential than time in the development of Calle’s narrative, consistent with the so-called ‘spatial turn’ of the chronotope as defined by Paul Smethurst (2000).

Place is thus considered pre-eminently influential. While it may exist as background in such works as Suite vénitienne (1998) the choice of place allows a number of extratextual references that recall traditions in narrative writing. In the series entitled Où et quand? (2008-9), comprising three volumes, place is essential foreground to each instalment. Calle also introduces the art museum as a place of inherent interest to the artist, exploring its influence on making and viewing alike.

In moving from the exhibition space to books Calle creates another kind of place for her work. Her work is often presented in series and, in order to do so, strategies are employed that allow her work to be associated and grouped together. The concept of parergon, as defined by Jacques Derrida in La vérité en peinture (1978), is shown to be precisely relevant to the way in which Calle assembles her volumes of collected work.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

I. The thesis comprises only my original work towards the masters except where indicated in the Preface,

II. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

III. The thesis is approximately 50,000 words long
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INTRODUCTION: JE VOUS PRÉSENTE SOPHIE CALLE...

Aussitôt la femme leva la tête vers moi et ses yeux étaient francs et rieurs et une mèche collait à son front et elle semblait excitée comme une petite fille et ne plus savoir où donner de la tête et rien ne pouvait m’apparaître à cet instant plus inaccessible et étranger et finalement intolérable que cette enthousiasme et cette euphorie...

-Grégoire Bouillier meets Sophie Calle for the first time

-L’Invité mystère, 54.

Sophie Calle is a writer, still photographer and filmmaker born in France in 1953 and working currently. Her work, inspired by personal experiences or organised by a constraint that defines and then develops her practice, tells stories. It flouts generic conventions and is therefore difficult to classify, nonetheless it demonstrates some features congruent with those of other photographic or visual art genres. She is, for example, sometimes aligned with performance artists, as her work is, indeed, performative. Performance artists often employ photographers to produce images or films of their work, “…in the 1960s and 70s the experience of a live performance usually did include watching a photographer moving in tandem with the artist. Performance artists quickly realized that they relied on the
documentation of their work to disseminate their ideas and actions to a wider audience.” (Karen Irvine, 2004, no page number) Being a photographer, Calle has no need of another. Personal experience is the element of her work that she shares with performance artists, “Direct experience was what the performance artists valued most...Many artists spoke of ‘intervening’ in real life...” (ibid). This includes reflecting on her experience as an artist, although unlike Performance Art that may protest “...against the objectification and commercialization of the art work...” (ibid) Calle’s work is personal rather than political.

Calle is also sometimes grouped with ‘plasticiens’, Canadian and French artists who use diverse media and materials including photography to create pluridisciplinary or hybrid art works. Eaton and Perez characterise this group by its diversity, “...”plasticiens”...is too flexible and limiting to apply to all of the artists in this exhibition...” (1995, 11) These artists are linked more by the temporal proximity of their work than by the existence of a common project or style. Other ‘members’ include Christian Boltanski, David Boeno and Annette Messager. Calle appears as a member of this group by virtue of her choice of photography as a medium.

Calle’s work is exhibited in galleries and museums but, because much of it employs writing as well as still photography, it is suited to publication as books, artists’ books designed with careful attention to visual presentation. Books are the subject of my attention in this thesis rather than Calle’s exhibited work. She also uses film; she has a feature film, No sex last night, and includes short films on videodiscs within some of her books. Calle’s
projects are carefully planned, documented and recorded and her photographs and films are evidence of the veracity of the material she presents. Writing ensures her narrative is told coherently and without ambiguity. She rarely describes her images but instead positions them in a narrative context that focuses on the actions, emotions and events around them; each modality thus gives the reader/viewer different information so that the final result is a coherent whole, “Je vois ce que je ne dis pas et je dis ce que je ne vois pas” (M’as-tu vue, 21).

The aim of this thesis is to examine the interplay between the elements of time and place in Sophie Calle’s work. Time is pertinent to photography because “...photographs depict a fraction of time...” (Steve Edwards, 2006, 118) Since photography focuses on moments or episodes\(^1\) it is the photographic aspect of her work that determines both her choice of subject and the style of its presentation. Photography inadvertently records place even if it is not the central focus of the photograph but I aim to show that place has far greater significance to the development and presentation of Calle’s work than just as background to her activities. In *Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel* (1981) Mikhail Bakhtin defines time as the primary ordering element of narrative but I suggest that time is less strategic in the narrative development of Calle’s work and, while it has an important role in the development of her projects, place is the dominant chronotopical element in determining the narrative content of her work.

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\(^1\) Indeed the French word for snapshot, instantanée, refers to an image that is made instantaneously.
I. Defining terms: Autobiography and Narrative

These are two potentially contentious terms that require definition and clarification in relation to Calle’s work. As the central figure in many of her projects it seems reasonable to consider Calle’s work as autobiographical, but closer inspection shows that she does not adhere to the conventions of autobiography and, rather than producing work that sheds light on her life, motivations and personality, these elements remain unclearly drawn. The second element, narrative, must be defined as Calle’s methods of story telling make reference to both fiction and non-fiction genres through their internal structure and extratextual references.

In *Le pacte autobiographique* (1975) Philippe Lejeune defines autobiography as a "Récit rétrospectif en prose qu’une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu’elle met l’accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l’histoire de sa personnalité." (14) Lejeune’s definition may be succinct but nonetheless includes a number of relevant points. The first is that of retrospective narration. Calle’s documentary style work deals with her own experiences as a presentation of facts rather than offering a retrospective view that would include reflection and analysis. Whether she writes in the present or in the past tense her style is largely determined by the use of photography that structures her work as a series of incidents, while the writing presents facts and observations about the project. The second aspect to be questioned is whether her focus is actually on her own life; while it may be her starting point she frequently defers to the experiences of others so that her story becomes one among many, an
example of a situation rather than the focus of it. As Shirley Jordan points out, “Critical reception of Calle often reconnects women’s autofiction and narcissism, ignoring how, as Véronique Montémont and Françoise Simonet-Tenant\(^2\) argue, her capacious, polyphonically-structured works make ample space for others.” (2013, 83) Finally, there is the issue of whether Calle’s work is really an examination of her personality. While Calle’s projects are derived from her own life and experiences it would be misleading to claim they are a way of constructing a personal history as within her work Calle is present yet paradoxically absent. Olivier Rolin, in a short introductory essay in *M’as-tu vue* states, "Au fond, je dirais qu’elle ne travaille pas autant sur elle-même que sur la disparition, la dissimulation, d’elle-même.” (2003, 139)

Some photographers, such as Denis Roche and his contemporaries in the *photobiographique* movement, specialise in finding inventive methods to create self-portraits, a subject that can be technically difficult. The more usual position of a photographer is to be present but remain unseen and undetected, since the focal point is generally away from the self and towards another subject. Calle’s work as a photographer is thus an appropriate metaphor for the position she occupies within her work and extends to her narratives so that she is present but unseen, absent before the camera, yet behind it there to perceive, and then report on, the focus of her project. This simultaneous presence and absence makes it difficult for her work to be autobiographical in the manner defined by Lejeune.

The front cover to the catalogue of her Centre Pompidou retrospective exhibition, *M’as-tu vue* (2003) is illustrative of this simultaneous presence and absence. The photographer is Jean-Baptiste Mondino, one of Calle’s frequent collaborators.

[Photograph removed]
It gives clues to the ways in which Calle engineers her dissembling as well as being a metaphor for the thwarting of audience expectation. The exhibition’s title is ambiguous; it could be an order or invitation, a question or even a self-deprecating insult and suggests two subjects that are constant in Calle’s work, thwarted desire and absence. A lack of clarity about her position in her work is introduced by titles in the form of a visual acuity test; both the title of the catalogue and a subtitle that acknowledges her collaborators on an inside title page, similarly arranged, are presented in this form. Calle signals obscurity in her puzzles that have no solution, a reflection of the complex nature of her work. Polysemic words introduce ambiguity with more serious intent; “voir” (the past participle, “vue” is used here) is one such word: is Calle inviting the audience to see her, judge her, understand her, or all three?

There are Freudian resonances in Calle’s appearance as simultaneously there (da) and not there or gone (fort). The photograph suggests the fort-da game in which Sigmund Freud noted the method of a young child’s mastery of his emotions that led to a reduction in the distress caused by the repeated absences of his parents. The child displaced his emotions related to his parents’ comings and goings, which he could not control, to an inanimate object over which he had complete ascendancy by inventing a game of da (presence) and fort (absence). This game even allowed him to find pleasure in the absence/presence cycle because it was he who commanded appearance and disappearance. (Freud, 1920, 52-5) In a similar manner Calle manages aspects of her emotional world through her camera, displacing and

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3 Johnnie Gratton points out that “M’as-tu vu(e)” is an idiomatic expression that refers to a vain or pretentious person. (164, endnote 6)
objectifying events, confining them to their visual and narrative dimensions and managing those elements that stimulate her interest by reconstructing them as art works, creating beautiful and pleasurable objects from them. The hand over her eyes suggests the habitual position of a camera held to her face⁴, mimicking the one in which her framing of the world occurs, documenting what she sees while avoiding the camera’s gaze. In *Specters of Marx* (2006) Jacques Derrida points to this position as one of immense power, “...perhaps the supreme insignia of power: the power to see without being seen.” (8). While power does not appear overtly as a theme of Calle’s work she exercises the choice of concealing or revealing, maintaining a position of intrigue and mystery in regard to details of her own stories while extracting very personal anecdotes from others.

The cover also alludes to a game of hide-and-seek (*cache-cache*); the French name suggesting this game is more about hiding than finding. Hiding requires purpose and deliberation: the image of Calle’s partially uncovered face coupled with the exhibition’s title signals her intention to keep some of herself hidden from view. As Robert Storr comments, “…it is unsurprising if some people approach her work, and particularly that in which she seems to play the part of herself, as if it were a contemporary *feuilleton* or *roman à clef* notwithstanding the fact that Calle is careful to keep the keys just out of the reader/spectator’s reach.” (2009, 105) Once again photography plays its part in the aesthetics of the combined photographic/narrative project in creating episodic, disjointed portraits rather than integrated narratives that, “…met l’accent sur…l’histoire de sa personnalité.” (Lejeune, 14) *Des histories*

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⁴ The fact of seeing is reversed; she would of course see through the eye that is covered by the camera.
vraies (2002) (titled Autobiographies in its exhibited form) is just such a series of apparently unconnected, elliptical vignettes. Photographs determine the structure of the work as a series of instanțanées and the narrative structure follows this pattern. In the autobiographical triad of auteur-narrateur-personnage the narrator who structures a coherent story from disparate elements seems absent. It lacks the contextual meaning that would render the vignettes essentially autobiographical; the episodes Calle recounts are snapshots at both written and visual levels.

Sophie Calle began her career as an artist by secretly observing others, “Je suivais des inconnus dans la rue. Pour le plaisir de les suivre et non parce qu’ils m’intéressaient. Je les photographiais...notais leurs déplacements, puis finalement les perdais de vue...” (Extraits d’un journal intime : premières filatures de Sophie Calle à Paris, 1978 – 1979, M’as-tu vue, 59) She has maintained an interest in other people’s experiences throughout her career, deflecting attention from herself and directing it elsewhere, even in works that are largely about herself. Attention may be diverted by introducing accounts of others’ experiences to show her own is but one among many; Douleur exquise (2003) is a case in point. The first part of the book belongs to Calle but in the second, Après la douleur, she interviews other people to collect narratives of emotional and physical pain that are even more profound than her own. The contrast between her repeated reliving of her jilting and the other intensely personal stories is to diminish the pain of her experience in comparison to the suffering of others.
In her introductory essay to the *M’as-tu vue* retrospective (2003), *La question de l’auteur dans l’œuvre de Sophie Calle*, Christine Macel states that Calle’s work is not autofiction because she fulfills a three-cornered model of the autobiographical subject, “A l’évidence, Sophie Calle ne prétend pas renoncer à la vérité de ses recits et revendique bien qu’il s’agît d’elle, l’auteur-narrateur-personnage Sophie Calle, ce qui...signe plutôt le genre de l’autobiographie.” (21) It is the “fiction” in the term to which she objects. As *auteur* and *narrateur* Calle has a tangible presence, if not in the narrative, then in the determination of the project’s limits and the final production of the work. Of interest here is *personnage*, as the *auteur/narrateur* determines which aspect(s) of self to present. Calle often chooses to limit her portrayals of self to the situations defined by her constraint; she thus presents limited narratives that may, as implied by the use of photography, be called snapshots. This is no more autobiography than it is autofiction. Calle’s most elaborately drawn autobiographical subject may be her vocation as artist, a subject that is narrow-ranging, referring to and questioning the artist’s steadfastness and lingering uncertainties about his or her role and performance. This is one of the principle themes of *Suite vénitienne*, *Où et quand?*, *Douleur exquise* and *Unfinished*, among others. In choosing to make a *mise-en-scène* of her vocation Calle deflects attention from more personal matters. However the question remains as to whether such selective thematic strategies do indeed fulfill Lejeune’s parameters of autobiography.

Even when Calle’s preoccupations appear to be with the first person singular, the second (*tu/vous*) and third person (*il/elle/on*) often command equal status in her narratives as she adopts the position of
observer/photographer. Yet there is perhaps another reason why Calle seems so elusive as an autobiographical subject. In Problèmes de linguistique générale (1966 and 1974) Emile Benveniste writes about the complex grammatical and narrative implications of the grammar of subjectivity with ‘je’ as subject. ‘Je’, “…est l’individu qui énonce la présente instance de discours contenant l’instance linguistique ‘je’.” (Vol 1, 252). For Benveniste this ‘je’ is present only at the moment of enunciation, because “…le pronom ‘je’, d’élément d’un paradigme, est transmué en désignation unique et produit, chaque fois, une personne nouvelle...” (Vol 2, 67) In other words, each time ‘je’ is pronounced the subject is positioned at a different moment in which the circumstances of discourse have changed and have influenced that subject to make changes to how they are presented. This is particularly true of Calle whose work is based around a series of episodes that are, in general, non-continuous. Each time she begins a new project “je” has a unique perspective, a different outlook and a new project with different preoccupations, desires and influences.

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The second problem is to clarify to the distinction between narrative and fiction. Calle’s writing is not fiction but is narrative although, as recent research by Johnnie Gratton demonstrates, this statement is complex. Calle’s work, especially her early work that is based on following others, is bold and daring to the point where it appears it could only be conceived as a work of fiction because it transgresses personal boundaries. Whether trailing a man totally unaware of her presence in Suite vénitienne (1998) or
(unsuccessfully) filming her mother’s death in *Couldn’t Capture Death* (2007) she documents situations that are considered taboo. Sometimes, as in *Les Dormeurs* (2000), in which she invites others to sleep in her bed, it may be that the subject has never been considered of any great general interest or artistic merit. “In the disguise of the first person narrator the artist who calls herself Sophie Calle has given herself the license to do many things. Most of them are a question of slyly transgressing the norms of bourgeois conduct…” (Storr, 2009, 104) However, a distinction must be made between fiction and invention. Calle’s work is troublesome because it seems implausible that anyone would engage in the situations Calle does. The alternative to the situations being ‘real’ is that she has created a fictional situation in which she puts herself in a central role. However the photographic component of her work that communicates the actuality of events confirms them as non-fictitious. There is invention in Calle’s work, most often in its initial stages when she creates a constraint, but otherwise her work is documentary in nature.

The aura of invention is further compounded by the fact that Calle references genres that belong to fiction writing: detective fiction in *Suite vénitienne*, fortune telling in *Où et quand?*, romantic comedy or drama *No Sex Last Night*, the Thousand and One Nights *Chambre avec vue* and picaresque journeys, *Douleur exquise*. Calle’s adoption of the tropes and structures of fiction aligns her texts with those genres they resemble. Of course she also makes reference to non-fiction themes and genres such as the travel narrative, the autobiography and the photographic essay and may make reference to tropes of a number of literary genres, fiction and non-
fiction, in one work. *Suite vénitienne* is one such example that will be discussed in its own chapter; much of the complexity of this narrative is derived from the extratextual references it makes that play with generic conventions and blur the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction.

The single most important evidence disputing the fictional status of Calle’s texts is photography because, more than any other form of artistic expression, photography testifies to the presence of the artist. Steve Edwards points out that an early conception was that photography “…represents an unmediated, faithful, re-presentation of things...some of the earliest conceptions of the process were based on this sense of automatic recording…” (2006, 69). Calle’s early works exploit this style of automatic, unrefined use of the camera in taking multiple photographs in series. In *Suite vénitienne* and *La filature* her images appear ill defined with the subject at a distance and apparently on the move. Yet Johnnie Gratton has shown that the photographs in *Suite vénitienne* fabricate their documentary appearance; the published photographs are not those Calle took when she was engaged in the project and are illustrations of her text, taken with actors, at a later time. Gratton explains his way to this discovery:

A short fragment from Baudrillard’s *Cool Memories*...mentions the “hero” of *Suite vénitienne* as having “slipped away” with the result that “il a fallu refaire toutes les photos sans lui”...Baudrillard...reminds us that in Venice the followed man did eventually rumble Calle’s game, and with it her identity. This meant that he was both alerted and opposed to any published
form of Calle’s project… “pour publier le livre, elle a été forcée de retourner à Venise avec un couple d’amis qu’elle connaissait, et de reprendre toutes les photos dans les mêmes décors avec quelqu’un d’autre.” …the two friends who accompanied her to Venice in 1980 were actors…it was not a question of reshooting all the photos but only those featuring her quarry, alone or with his partner. We are dealing with a set of images that postdate the 1979 project and that were probably taken between the dates given in the published book, 11-24 February 1980…The later photos are therefore staged photos… (2011, 153-4)

In some ways this really doesn’t matter: the narrative Calle has produced is the same whether or not the photographs are the originals. And yet, because the entire scenario of Suite vénitienne is implausibly transgressive, to recognise that fabrication of the photographic evidence of Calle’s practice has taken place can only subvert the reader’s perception of the project as documentary in nature.

Many critics comment on the difficulty in separating fiction from non-fiction in Calle’s work, and to this she has replied, “If I am asked, I say it is all true – I am not able to invent. Afterwards it is other people’s problem, not mine, if truth or fiction is a necessary criteria for them.” (Louise Neri, 153) In the light of Gratton’s chapter this quotation becomes telling: Calle is clear in stating that the question arises because of the values others impose and that the distinction between truth and fiction is not a creative issue for her. It must be acknowledged that inventing scenarios that are played out as art
works is quite different from fabricating material that is by nature documentary and reliant on a perception of truth or reality. Since Calle’s documentary works are also art works they are representations of the documentary style rather than documentaries. Since the material she represents is usually personal – and therefore subjective – layers of representation are detectable and so it seems appropriate to take photographs that allow this representational ruse to play out. Invention, subjectivity, truth and reality all have roles to play in Calle’s work, but even if it makes a claim to authenticity and is reliant on acceptance of that authenticity, it is art and does not need to be perceived as true.

Calle’s appearance as a character or actor in other writers’ work compounds the complexity of her relationship with different genres of writing, not in terms of output, but in terms of perception. Grégoire Bouillier in his novella *L’Invité mystère* (2004) is the mysterious or unknown guest invited to one of Calle’s birthday parties; this scenario is based on her work entitled *Le rituel d’anniversaire* (1998), book II of *double-jeux*. In Hervé Guibert’s AIDS memoir *À l’ami qui ne m’as pas sauvé la vie* (1990) she is Anna; her name is changed, as is that of many of the other people to whom he refers. Most importantly she is also the model for the fictional character of Maria Turner in Paul Auster’s novel *Leviathan* (1992). Calle references all three works in her own, making for a kind of literary interfertility that creates references between fiction and non-fiction works. Grégoire Bouillier is the

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5 The rules for this project are simple: in fear of being forgotten on her birthday, Calle ensured her birthday was celebrated. From 1980 until 1993 she threw a party and invited the same number of guests as her age in years. One of the guests, “l’invité mystère”, was someone she had never met before. Any gifts that were given were not used, but instead arranged in cabinets and photographed.
author of the email that is the catalyst for the book *Prenez soin de vous*...(2008). In *Douleur exquise* (2003) Calle recalls making Guibert’s acquaintance for a second time in Tokyo and she includes his entries about Anna as representative of their previous relationship, reproducing pages 122-125 of his book within the pages of her own, accompanied by a number of photographs of Guibert. In *doubles-jeux* (1998) Calle uses the existence of Auster’s fictional character Maria as the means of making a place for a diverse series of works, correcting those aspects of her work Auster has fictionalised and thus reappropriating her authorship.

It may be that the most succinct and accurate assessment of Calle’s work appears in Auster’s *Leviathan* (1992) and it is of note that in *doubles jeux* she does not amend this depiction of Maria:

Maria was an artist, but the work she did had nothing to do with creating objects commonly defined as art. Some people called her a photographer, others referred to her as a conceptualist, still others considered her a writer, but none of these descriptions was accurate, and in the end I don’t think she can be pigeon-holed in any way. Her work was too nutty for that, too idiosyncratic, too personal to be thought of as belonging to any particular medium or discipline. Ideas would take hold of her, she would work on projects, there would be concrete results that could be shown in galleries, but this activity didn’t stem from a desire to make art so much as from a need to indulge her obsessions... (60)
Later in the novel Auster adds further details to the nature of Maria Turner’s work, this time in the character’s own voice,

What he [Benjamin Sachs, another character in the novel] especially seemed to like was the combination of documentary and play... He understood that all my pieces were stories and even if they were true stories, they were also invented. Or, even if they were invented, they were also true. (127-8)

In using the word invention Auster points to the constructed elements of Calle’s work which we have labelled constraint. The constraint allows her to play with perceived boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, to combine the serious and the frivolous, the banal and the daring, the familiar and the unfamiliar and to transgress personal boundaries usually accepted as inviolate. While her work is ostensibly non-fiction, there are elements of fantasy and imagination in the constraints that define her projects and to which invention and creativity are central.

In summary, although Calle’s work is autobiographical she uses a number of devices to deflect attention from what is essentially personal and in so doing is able to remain central to her work yet retain an air of unknowability. It has been established that her work is structured with the integrity of her project in mind; externally imposed expectations of truthfulness or integrity are unimportant to her so that the question of fiction or reality becomes moot. In reference to her story telling, the neutral term narrative will be used as it avoids having to choose a label that implies something about the genre of the work. There should be no further need to
discuss the autobiographical or fictional nature of Calle’s work in the course of this thesis.

II. Calle’s documents

Photographs are considered to belong to one of two broad classes: documentary photographs and art photographs. In the early days of photography images were thought of as without artistic potential, “Much [sic] of the arguments against photography as a legitimate art material were based in no small part on its mechanical nature and the precedents set by its capability as a tool for documentation.” (Eaton, 1995, 16) With the passage of time, photography developed its own, ever-changing aesthetic language and thence acquired the status of art but Steve Edwards, who outlines the differences between the classes of art and documentary photography, emphasises that the classification is problematic, “The photographic document...is typically perceived to be a neutral, styleless, and objective record of information. The document is usually thought to be devoid of subjective intervention, even of human will...Photographic art, in contrast, lays claim to intention, subjective expression, spiritual uplift, and aesthetic effect.” (2006, 12) The main problem is a substantial overlap between the classes, admitting that even those photographs taken as documents have an aesthetic dimension that borrows from other representational visual art, “The language of art was available to photography’s first viewers; it shaped what could be imagined and what could be done.” (Steve Edwards, 2006, 13)
The notion of a photographic moment that produces a snapshot (*une instantanée*) has changed over time. Early photographs that appeared to have captured a moment in time were in reality very time-consuming to produce, “Preparation of a single daguerreotype plate might consume as much as thirty minutes. Exposure of the plate in the camera required subjects to remain motionless for several more minutes lest the final image be blurred...” (Curtis, 2003, 2) Thus early in the history of photography the photographic moment was illusory yet appearances dictated that an apparent moment had been captured. For a long time now the *instantanée* has been a mechanical possibility, improvements in film and camera design ensuring that a simple click is all that is required for an image to be recorded. It is the only visual art form that is instantaneous, not necessarily in its planning, but in its execution, and this is what separates it from other genres of visual art, including film, which has mechanical similarities but is characterised by its duration. For Steve Edwards “…photographs show us what happened in front of the lens at a particular time in a specific place.” (2006, 84) For Denis Roche they are the “*laps*”, "Au-dedans un laps de temps s’est trouvé pris; tout autour c’est l’ellipse." (1991, 9) In other words, all photographs capture a moment frozen in time but at the same time make reference to a wider narrative, understood or summarised within the image. For Susan Sontag the photograph is something absolutely real, “…not only an image...but a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.” (2002, 153)

Calle’s work is both artistic and documentary; once again her work makes the definition between two apparently opposing concepts indistinct.
Her photographs appear purely illustrative but this is deceptive as many of them stand alone, adding to, rather than simply complementing, her narrative. The photographs from her early work give structure to her narratives by highlighting the co-incidence of time and place and documenting it; these photographs are *instantanées* captured in sequential series on film. These photographs could almost have been produced automatically, such as by surveillance camera, supplying evidence of the process in which she has been engaged and illustrating its unfolding, a photographic disclosure of her actions and method. Even photographs that are shown to be staged, such as those in *Suite vénitienne*, are taken in this documentary style without apparent artistry; a sense of artistry is reserved for the conception and execution of the project. James Curtis states that the photographic series is one of the tools of the documentary photographer “Documentary photographers...usually take a series of pictures and later select the one image that best relates their sense of the scene.” (2003, 12) Calle does not always make choices: pages 100 - 101 of *Suite vénitienne* feature a series of still photographs published apparently unedited and many of the photographs in this book take this form:
Other aspects of the photographs in *Suite vénitienne* testify to their documentary nature: their indistinctness because they have a moving subject who is at quite a distance from the camera, as well as backgrounds that are
repeated over and again as if the photographs are taken in quick succession from the same vantage point. The attention to producing a single photograph expressive of an idea, emotion, place or concept comes later in Calle’s work and with it she becomes more selective, no longer printing these apparently unedited series, but choosing single images to illustrate discrete moments in her narratives and using DVDs to represent lengthy events or encounters, such as with Mémé in *Où et quand? Berck*.

Calle’s documentary photography appears somewhat at odds with what would usually be considered the purpose of this style of photograph. Martha Rosler states that documentary photography “…has come to represent the social conscience of liberal sensibility presented in visual imagery…Photo documentary as a public genre had its moments in the ideological climate of developing state liberalism and the attendant reform movements of the early twentieth century…” (2011, 304) This genre of photograph is usually produced with an aim and is about substantiating events by providing concrete visual evidence of them. The possibility of documentation by photography coincided with events that demanded it. As an example, photographs produced and archived by the Farm Security Administration (FSA) that feature impoverished and itinerant seasonal farm workers and their families during the Great Depression in America became evidence of the need for social reform, although there are suggestions that some photographs were manipulated to suggest certain scenarios and that liberties were taken with the presented information. James Curtis shows how this was done in describing Robert Lee’s photograph of a poor family’s meagre Christmas festivities at which only children seem to be present,
suggesting parental abandonment, although their father appears in other photographs. Lee claimed the father was a widower, however still more photographs that remained on file showed the existence of the farmer’s wife. She did not appear in the Christmas Day images because her presence “...would have undercut the dramatic scene Lee had in mind.” (Curtis, 2003, 12-13) Lee’s photographs told the story he wished to tell rather than the actual one.

Thus it can be inferred that there is in fact no great difference between documentary photography and art photography other than that the images are put to different uses. For Calle’s series of photographs in *Suite vénitienne* to be successfully accepted as documentary the style she uses to suggest their function is of paramount importance. But what is Calle documenting? This comment about her *Rituel d’anniversaire* gives a clue to the nature of her documentary making: “Je craignais d’être oubliée le jour de mon anniversaire. J'avais donc pris, en 1980, la décision d’inviter tous les ans un nombre de convives équivalent à mon nombre d’années et de ne pas utiliser les cadeaux reçus… je les ai photographiés pour garder une trace. J’ai trouvé le résultat plaisant, je l’ai exposé...” (*M’as-tu vue*, 78) Thus she produces documents that are a record of a personal event that reveals her obsessions, agonies or interests and, importantly, the process of her work. Her photographs and writing may also have a wider focus to show how her own experiences relate to those of other people.

Making art is a major subject of her work. Projects are given the weight of a Sisyphean task as she grapples with their conception and
execution. There is tension in the creating of artwork, in the omnipresent possibility of sequential failure and reconfiguration that a project such as *En finir* demonstrates. Photography instantaneously records moments on the way to a finished project; Calle’s photographs are documents of the realities of her situation are evidence of her presence and show where her work takes place. The written text provides the narrative, giving context to the photographs, as she documents her work’s progress. Calle’s presence is never in doubt because the photographic artist, as Roland Barthes reminds us, is always a witness to the subject that is photographed,

La peinture, elle, peut feindre la réalité sans l’avoir vue. Le discours combine des signes qui ont certes des référents...Au contraire de ces imitations, dans la Photographie, je ne puis jamais nier que *la chose a été là*...Ce que j’intentionnalise dans une photo...c’est la Référence, qui est l’ordre fondateur de la Photographie. (2007, 120)

Through her work Calle’s readers are also made aware of her performance as artist from tentative exploration in the early works to a more assured performance as she assumes the role. Interviews and critical texts reveal that Calle’s early forays into art were accidental or coincidental and not at that time destined for public display:

...il fallait trouver quelque chose à faire. J’ai commencé par suivre les gens dans la rue...C’était une manière de me laisser porter par l’énergie des autres, de les laisser décider mes trajets pour moi. Circuler, découvrir ma ville. Comme le marché que j’avais conclu
avec mon père portait sur l’apprentissage de la photographie, j’ai commencé par prendre des clichés des gens de dos. J’ai ensuite noté leurs déplacements. Tout s’est mis en place sans que je le réalise vraiment. Il y avait des photos, les textes – contrôler, perdre le contrôle, combler un manque d’émotions, en m’attachant ne serait-ce qu’une demie heure à quelqu’un… (M’as-tu vue, 77)

The art critic and photographer Bernard Lamarche-Vadel is credited with recognising the artistic potential of Calle’s work; she dedicates Les dormeurs to him:

À Bernard Lamarche-Vadel…compagnon de la septième dormeuse.
Elle lui raconta sa nuit. Il vint me voir, et me proposa de montrer…ce qui n’était pas encore un projet artistique mais plutôt un jeu. Ce fut ma première exposition. En fait c’est lui qui décida que j’étais une artiste. (7)

Sophie Calle’s father Robert Calle, an art collector, was, as she attests above, another influence on her choice of vocation. She would certainly have been aware that, in order to define oneself as an artist, acts of production and exhibition are required. Calle documents this process and, in so doing, has become a photographic artist. Judith Butler uses the term “performative” to write about the acting out of behaviours that define gender roles, “…acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance…Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative…” (2006, 185). The interplay of performance and the
subsequent adoption of behaviour may be applied to Calle’s vocation as an artist from first tentative steps, trying these “…acts, gestures and enactments…” until her practice or performance becomes an occupation and part of her identity.

III. Constraint

Sophie Calle frequently employs a constraint for her projects. The idea of a constraint was probably made formal by the OuLiPo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle) group, but has links to earlier literary projects such as those of the Surrealist movement. Raymond Queneau, a writer associated with both groups, was intrigued by both language and mathematics and the potential for using mathematical principles to stimulate literary composition. He helped define the notion of a constraint, a paradigm that gives a formal generative framework for writing. This definition, based on the work of Queneau and François le Lionnais, is by Jacques Roubaud in the OuLiPo handbook:

Le premier manifeste de l’OULIPO introduit, en opposition à l’inspiration, le concept oulipien opératoire de contrainte: « Toute oeuvre littéraire se construit à partir d’une inspiration…qui est tenue tant bien que mal d’une série de contraintes et de procédures qui rentrent les unes dans les autres…Contraintes du vocabulaire et de la grammaire, contraintes des règles du roman…ou de la tragédie classique…contraintes de la versification générale, contraintes des formes fixes (comme dans le cas du
Constraint in this sense has produced many literary texts; writers who found constraints stimulated their literary output include Georges Perec, Italo Calvino and Queneau. Poetry, short prose works and even novels were produced employing these principles. Calle does not use these types of constraint or traditional literary structures, such as poetic forms, yet she uses constraint to generate and shape her projects, to structure the form and the content.

The most common constraint that Calle uses is that of defining the time and place in which her project will occur; Suite vénitienne is an example of a chronotopically-defined project. Calle established a method following people at random, clandestinely, collecting photographs and archiving them in personal notebooks. A chance meeting with one of her followed subjects leads to the discovery that he is travelling to Venice and the dates he will be there. Calle decides that she will attempt to find him and, once found, that she will follow him until his departure; Suite vénitienne is thus conceived as a project with two boundaries defining the constraint, the physical limits of the city of Venice (place) and the length of Henri B’s sojourn (time).

A la fin du mois de janvier 1980, dans les rues de Paris, j’ai suivi un homme dont j’ai perdu les traces quelques minutes plus tard dans la foule. Le soir même, tout à fait par hasard, lors d’une réception, il me fut présenté. Au cours de la conversation il me fit part de son
projet, imminent, de voyage à Venise. Je décidai alors de m’attacher à ses pas, de le suivre. (1998, 38)

Calle’s narrative recounts what happens during the course of the project, from her arrival in Venice until the moment Henri B leaves his train at the Gare de Lyon⁶ at its conclusion. In her writing Calle digresses as little as possible from the narrative related to her constraint although it is clear that this is not all that occupies her; there are references to other encounters and activities, for example on page 93 she mentions taking part in the carnavale, but it remains a passing reference as it does not involve Henri B. Calle’s simple constraint gives her a framework for her writing and photography.

Les Dormeurs (2009) uses a different chronotopic constraint that is even more restricted because time and place have very confined limits:

J’ai demandé à des gens de m’accorder quelques heures de leur sommeil. De venir dormir dans mon lit. De s’y laisser photographier, regarder. De répondre à quelques questions. J’ai proposé à chacun un séjour de huit heures...Ma chambre devait devenir un espace constamment occupé pendant huit jours, les dormeurs s’y succédant à intervalles réguliers...L’occupation du lit a commencé le dimanche 1ᵉʳ avril à 17 heures et s’est terminée le lundi 9 avril à 10 heures...Je posais quelques questions à ceux qui s’y prêtaient. Il ne s’agissait pas de savoir, d’enquêter, mais d’établir un contact neutre et distant. Je prenais des

⁶ Necessity assumes that the project has internal integrity and that the writing and photographs are taken as Calle reports in the text. We know from Gratton’s article that is not the case, and yet this does not affect the initial setting of a constraint or its integrity because the photographs are apparently repetitions not alterations.
photographies à toutes les heures. Je regardais dormir mes hôtes. (10-11)

Place is strictly defined as Sophie Calle’s bed and time is similarly limited in terms of both the length of the project (a week) and the eight hours each participant spends in the bed. There is no problem to solve, as in Suite vénitienne, in which she needs to track down her subject; she is strictly an observer in this context. This constraint does not produce a narrative as that of Suite vénitienne does; it reads as a series of interviews or encounters as Calle discovers much about the desires, fears, expectations and personal habits of her interviewees. Like Suite vénitienne it is also a meditation on the nature of surveillance and invasion into the most personal aspects of people’s lives.

The Où et quand? series of three books, as the title suggests, also uses a chronotopic constraint that is explained thus in the first volume, Berck:

J’avais proposé à Maud Kristen, voyante, de prédire mon futur afin d’aller à sa rencontre, de le prendre de vitesse.

Où ? Quand ? Quoi?


Elle précisa: « La préservation de votre libre arbitre me semble essentielle...je ne fais pas une consultation, je tente un jeu créateur. Proposer à l’aide de visions et de ma connaissance des
arts divinatoires, des pistes, des directions, que vous choisirez librement...à travers votre travail d’artiste. » Cela étant dit, elle a consulté les cartes. (83)

This constraint is designed to give the appearance that Calle is not in control of her project and that Maud Kristen, using tarot cards and a divinatory force called l’Intelligence, is at the helm. Calle enjoys such a scenario that mimics Suite vénitienne, in which the presence of Henri B allowed her to relinquish control of her wandering. Kristen, who advises Calle by divination where normally a constraint would produce the same effect, takes over the role of inspiration to the series. Indeed, in setting this constraint Calle has devised a mise-en-abyme in which her constraint demands that she operates according to a further and externally imposed constraint. Calle allows Kristen to determine where she will go, how long she will stay, as well as what she will do while she is there. Each episode of this narrative is relatively short but the whole series operates over several years, rather than several days or weeks as the others do, and therefore charts the changes time, circumstance, mood and place can make to a subject.

Thus it can be seen how chronotopic constraints serve to structure a work. The constraint is always part of the initial conception of Calle’s projects and it directs each of them from its beginning until its completion. An essential element of the constraint is that Calle remains faithful to its demands throughout; within the confines of time and place Calle pursues and documents those experiences she undergoes as a result of engaging with
the constraint and it thus provides her with creative impetus, a spatial and
temporal scope for the project.

IV. The Chronotope

The main contention of this thesis is that the elements of the chronotope – time and place – are the primary elements Calle uses to compose many of her works. These are not her personal narratives, such as *Douleur exquise* (2008) and *Prenez soin de vous* (2008), although the chronotope does have its part to play even in these works. The chronotope is of most influence in those books in which Calle uses a constraint so that time and place produce the necessary material for realisation of her work. Time and place define the scope and setting of these projects and provide substance to her narratives by creating events within them. Beginnings and ends are essential moments, defined in detail by the times and dates of her arrivals in, and subsequent departures from, places. Calle makes precise reference to real time by including photographs of clocks, referring to timetables and reprinting diary entries that feature date, day and hour. This short extract from page 107 of *Suite vénitienne*, at the point at which the narrative ends, illustrates how precise Calle can be with these details:

*Dimanche 24 février 1980.*

10 heures. Le train de Bologne entre en Gare de Lyon, voie J, à
l’heure prévue…Sur ma gauche un train qui entre en gare voie H
me dépasse…les panneaux indiquent Venise comme gare de
départ.
10h 08. LUI. La femme le suit. Ils portent tous deux les bagages encombrants…Je le photographie une dernière fois alors qu’il franchit l’enceinte de la gare. Je n’irai pas plus loin. Il s’éloigne, je le perds de vue. *Après ces treize jours passés avec lui, notre histoire s’achève.*

10h 10. Je cesse de suivre Henri B.

Time is defined to the very minute and is a tool for determining the limits of a project; with the end of pre-determined time comes the end of the narrative.

Place does not determine beginnings and endings but provides a setting imbued with character that allows Calle to come into contact with people and things that influence narrative development. The winding pedestrian streets of Venice, the wide beachfront of Berck and the strongly Catholic presence of Lourdes are background but also determine mood and atmosphere and in turn contribute to the content of her narratives. This extract from page 15 of *Où et quand? Lourdes*, in which Calle and Maud Kristen are planning the next leg of the journey, is an example of the potential that place provides, hinting at its character and what it may mean to visit:

Je demande : Où et quand ?


Lourdes’ religious purpose is made clear from the outset by the choice of words: pélerinage, solitude, la Vierge Marie. Its remoteness and coldness are also suggested here; two qualities borne out in the contacts Calle makes. Calle’s reluctance is also foreshadowed.

Mikhail Bakhtin, in his essay *Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel* (1981) describes the chronotope as the essential coexistence of time and place, “…the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied.” (250) He applies the principle of the chronotope to an examination of fictional forms in which time and place each play a role in the evolution of literary genre. The chronotope is “…the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature.” (84) Bakhtin defines time as the major driver of generic change, “…it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time.” (85) Bakhtin considers that variations in the scale of time, rather than of place, account for many of the changes he defines, from the Greek romance, to the early modernist period. However, in the postmodern period, which Bakhtin predeceased, there is a change. In his book *The Postmodern Chronotope* (2000) Paul Smethurst
reexamines the idea and shows differences in the way the chronotope works in more recent writing, labelling the most important change “The Spatial Turn” as primacy is no longer with time and that place is the instrument of generic variation. Smethurst notes:

To summarise the properties of place, we can say that it has subjective, cultural and physical dimensions, and is associated with individual and cultural identity not only in terms of the physical occupation of a given locality, but as ‘a focus where we experience the meaningful events of our existence’ ...In the imagination we use a spatial ‘syntax’ to read the environmental world, construct value systems, and conceptualise. Place is the foundation of our experience of the world. (61)

The spatial turn and its associated meanings are relevant for Calle’s form of representation because place is the foundation of her narrative. Photographs, more tangible and concrete than writing, make place visible and identifiable. Place is specific to particular events that she documents and then links to create narrative. For example, in L’Erouv she is interested in the geographical markers that define the quartiers of Jerusalem:

Toutefois, si l’on se réfère à la Torah, une ville, un village, entourés d’un mur d’enceinte avec des portes, sont considérés comme des domaines privés, et dans ces villages, ces villes, chacun peut transporter des objets de chez soi à la rue, de la rue à chez soi...Somme toute, la ville devient le domicile. Mais, à notre époque, peu de cités modernes sont entourées de remparts et par
conséquent chacun devrait contenir ses activités dans sa maison s’il n’était accepté que...des erouvim ne soient construits. Ils consistent en fils (ou cordes) formant un mur imaginaire...Alors le périmètre entouré par l’erouv devient un espace privé... (M’as-tu vue, 337)

The significance of place determines the structure and themes of the work: this book is about the way in which public places take on personal and private meaning. The written text adds further information to her photographs, situates them and elaborates on them, and together the two media form an artistic unity, “…ces images ne suffisaient pas à elles-mêmes. Le texte manquait. Ce texte qui me colle à la peau. Ma marque de fabrique: image et texte.” (En finir, 2005, 55) Many of the events from which Calle constructs meaningful narratives have a specific, named place as a focus. The place appears in her photographs as well as in her writing and provides context, background, material and inspiration for the resulting narratives.

The spatial turn to which Smethurst refers could be as relevant for photographic representation as it is for writing. Whether foregrounded or backgrounded a visual component to storytelling gives greater symbolic significance to place. Consider Calle’s encounter with Mémé in Où et quand? Berck. Calle finds Berck difficult to define, she can’t find anything suitable on which to focus her attention, the hotels are poor and it is difficult to find someone with whom she can talk freely about the place or ask the questions demanded by Maud Kristen; her photographs illustrate this with vast open spaces, decrepit buildings, dingy hotel rooms and a town that is faded and
uninteresting, yet oppressive. She then meets Mémé who sweeps Calle up in her incessant activity and storytelling while taking her on a walking tour of the town. Although Mémé’s monologue makes little logical sense the background scenery of Berck grounds her monologue in a recognisable reality and shows that this is a real person in a real place. The pallid emptiness that Calle reveals in her photographs finds a parallel in Mémé who comes to represent the essence of Berck. The general title of the series conjoins the two elements of the chronotope and ensures its importance to the books’ structural framework. Place, as noted by Smethurst, is of greater symbolic significance because it defines the method and directions, literal and metaphorical, that Calle takes in the unravelling of her project. Place ensures that each work has internal integrity across the forms of Calle’s representation, whether visual or written, and this integrity is essential to each of her books that use the chronotopic elements in the constraint.

Place is not just defined geographically and there are many kinds of places in Calle’s work that have narrative impetus and character. Each chapter will elaborate these different concepts of place that include towns, cities and countries, but also objects, such as beds and books, that are imbued with the same qualities that place brings to her work. *Suite vénitienne* is the subject of the first chapter and follows Calle the flâneur as she walks Venice, seemingly in search of a man she hardly knows, in reality in search of a story. The second series of books, *Où et quand?* shows how time and place work together to produce the illusion of coincidence. The third chapter is about *l’Absence* series and is about the influence of memory in representing absence. The concluding chapter will draw these themes
together around the methods Calle uses to assemble texts and suggest they belong together, the recontextualisation of images and events. Time and place not only provide structures for Calle’s narrative but are also starting points for some of the major themes in her work that allow discussion of generic influences, of coincidence, and of absence, memory and forgetting.

2 PAR OÙ COMMENCER?

Je me vois aux portes d’un labyrinthe, prête à me perdre dans cette ville et cette histoire.

Suite vénitienne, 44

What better place for a flâneur than a labyrinth, an endless series of paths without beginning or end, offering the potential to walk endlessly and observe at will? And yet the flâneur needs occupation and stimulation, not so much to find a way out, but perhaps a way in. The labyrinth offers modes of navigation, the help of others and most of all the chance to discover, not what lies within the city, but what lies within Sophie Calle, her motivations, her capacity for suffering, her ability to follow something through to its end. This flâneur is not so much occupied with the joys of life but its inherent ennui, after all, few things are less interesting than an unknown,
unremarkable stranger whose only real role is as facilitator to one’s constraint. Outside the set task Henri B seems without fascination and Calle does not embellish the experience. She doggedly follows in his footsteps, but this requires detachment and disinterest in all else that happens outside the constraint. Nothing makes him interesting to the reader because nothing makes him interesting to Calle.

The real focus of Suite vénitienne is the performance of the constraint and, as appropriate to the flâneur, Calle’s wandering begets a creative process. This is the primary reason to claim her as flâneur, the nineteenth century artist who wandered the streets of Europe turning his observations into drawings, paintings and writings that are revelations of the life of the city and its inhabitants. Calle returns to the possibilities offered by this more recently disregarded trope, creating a realist document with photographic evidence of her participation and writing that demonstrates her power of observation. Yet there is tension within Calle’s writing and this is a major source of interest in the work, a tension between the flâneur of old, whose nature was of dandyesque, apparent carelessness, and Calle’s search for purpose. There is tension, too, in the narrative Calle creates around the possibility of nothing happening against the possibility of discoveries: hers of him and his of her. Calle’s flâneur, a century or more removed from Constantin Guys and Edgar Allen Poe, has a different sensibility but her motive, to observe and document, remains the same.

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7 The flâneur of the nineteenth century was invariably male.
Suite vénitienne is Sophie Calle’s first project “...mon premier projet a été la Suite vénitienne...” (M’as-tu vue, 78). In it she goes to Venice in pursuit of a man she simply calls Henri B. “Je ne dois pas oublier que je n’éprouve aucun sentiment amoureux pour Henri B. Ces symptômes, l’impatience avec laquelle j’attends sa venue, la peur de cette rencontre, ne m’appartiennent pas en propre.” (Suite vénitienne, 57) For this project Calle’s constraint is limited spatially by the boundaries of Venice, and temporally by the time Henri B. will be in the city. Calle engages in a game of detection that responds to the parameters set by the city: assembling lists of street names and hotels, wandering and endlessly searching, gathering information and, from all she finds, finally constructing a narrative. She faces labyrinthine dilemmas: where to begin? Where to look? Where can he be? At the outset both her task and the unfamiliar city appear enormous, hence the labyrinth that announces her arrival but does not remain a constant reference. Obvious from the outset is that her main interest is in the success of the project, the realisation of its premise and its artistic potential: her photographs document this process. Calle’s published version of this project is, according to Johnnie Gratton, not a document but an illustrated narrative. This does not concern us here: of more importance is to look at the published book in terms of its employment of the chronotope and to examine the implications that time and place have for consideration of this narrative.

The boundaries of time and place are complicated by the nature of the city, the endless twists and turns of roads and bridges entwined between the canals and buildings, the countless numbers of places to visit and be found. In his short story The Garden of Forking Paths (1998) Jorge Luis Borges
imagines a labyrinth without end: “...I pictured it as infinite – a labyrinth...of rivers and provinces and kingdoms...a labyrinth of labyrinths, a maze of mazes, a twisting, turning, ever-widening labyrinth that contained both past and future and somehow implied the stars.” (122) At Calle’s approach it is possible to imagine Venice as Borges’ labyrinth, a city that exists across an expanse of place and time, impossibly complex and perilously unknown. Calle avoids description and elaboration in her writing; her conception of Venice is as a series of names that she recites as she walks the apparently vast and winding city; this motif of the labyrinth seems to be a perfect fit for the intricacy she announces.

Calle frequently refers to her fear and uncertainty in this situation, “A cette évocation si concrète des habitudes d’Henri B. la peur me saisit de nouveau. J’ai peur de le rencontrer, j’ai peur que la rencontre ne soit médiocre.” (Suite vénitienne, 61) At first she is afraid that she will not find Henri B, afraid afterwards that she will be discovered: this fear is one of the sources of tension in the work. A second source of tension is by implication. The labyrinth is a source of fear, fear of the unknown, fear of encountering terrifying situations. By using the word “labyrinth” in her opening paragraphs Calle communicates a sense of fear and uncertainty of the unknown without needing to be explicit about its nature or origin. Following her constraint is one way of managing her fear, organising the unknown environment by means within her own control: her way out of, or into, the labyrinth. In order to carry this through, Calle employs many strategies, when a planned strategy doesn’t work she revises it and tries again, or enlists the help of others more appropriately skilled than she, “Emu par mon apparente timidité
I. Sophie Calle, flâneur.

Calle has produced a work that captures the spirit of the flâneur in its pairing of writing and images, as the following quotation from Benjamin’s The Arcades Project [M2, 2, 419] suggests, “Category of illustrative seeing – fundamental for the flâneur. Like Kubin when he wrote Andere Seite, he composes his reverie as text to accompany the images.” Her text has two distinct forms: unitalicised, for reporting what she does and italicised for expressing her feelings, fears and fantasies about her situation and her work, showing she is often beset by doubt, fear and uncertainty, “Midi. J’erre place Saint-Marc. Durant l’après-midi, je photographie la rue Traghetto, segment par segment, sur les deux côtés...Ce soir, je n’essaierai pas de me rapprocher de lui. Je me reposerais, je l’oublierai un peu. Ma journée s’est déroulée dans l’égarement. Suis-je en train de renoncer?” (Suite vénitienne, 98) The photographs and two different styles of writing mean that, despite its relative brevity, Suite vénitienne presents as a complex work. The text and images are complementary but each gives the reader different information; photographs add to, rather than illustrate, passages of writing. While Suite vénitienne recalls the practice of the flâneur there are important differences to note between her contemporary incarnation of the figure and tradition.
Edgar Allen Poe’s The Man of the Crowd (1845) is perhaps the first representation of the flâneur in writing. His story has a narrator greeting life with new enthusiasm after recovery from illness, entranced by the movement of people around him. So taken is he with one face he perceives through a window that he decides to take off and follow it,

...suddenly there came into my view a countenance...which at once arrested and absorbed my attention, on account of the absolute idiosyncracy of its expression. Any thing even remotely resembling that expression I had never seen before...Retzch, had he viewed it, would have greatly preferred it to his own pictiral incarnations of the fiend...there arose confusedly and paradoxically within my mind the ideas of vast mental power, of caution, of penuriousness, of avarice, of coolness, of malice, of blood thirstiness, of triumph, of merriment, of excessive terror, of intense – of supreme despair...Then came the craving desire to keep the man in view...(235-6)

This situation has become a key trope of modernism. It involves a person who is noticed by chance among the swirling maelstrom of a city’s human habitation. He or she stimulates the interest of another to such a point where the other takes off in pursuit. Charles Baudelaire celebrated the flâneur in his essay on the painter Constantin Guys, Le Peintre de la vie moderne:

...la curiosité peut être considérée comme le point de départ de son génie...La foule est son domaine...Sa passion et sa profession est
d’

épouser la foule. Pour le parfait flâneur, pour l’observateur passionné, c’est une immense jouissance que d’élire domicile dans le nombre, dans l’ondoyant, dans le mouvement...Être hors de chez soi et pourtant se sentir partout chez soi ; voir le monde, être centre du monde et rester caché au monde, tels sont quelques uns des moindres plaisirs de ces esprits indépendants, passionnés...L’observateur est un prince qui jouit partout de son incognito...

The crowd is seen as key to the flâneur’s existence, sustenance and stimulation. The flâneur is a dandy, another trope associated with the nineteenth century that describes a man with a keen sense of fashion and a certain air of detachment and superiority. The flâneur-dandy was perfectly adapted to wandering the newly Haussmanised boulevards of nineteenth century Paris, dressed to be seen, out to observe others, his observations providing new subjects for art such as Guys’ paintings and portraits of contemporary urban life.

In his homage to late nineteenth century Paris, The Arcades Project (1999) Walter Benjamin includes a sustained reflection on the flâneur; a complex portrait of the figure emerges. The flâneur inhabits labyrinthine cities like Paris and London. Not just a construct of fiction or romantic fancy, Benjamin mentions many famous artists that can be considered flâneurs in their approach to their work, inspired by the cities in which they live. He attests, for example, to Charles Dickens’ inability to work way from London, “Dickens...could not remain in Lausanne because, in order to write his novels,
he needed the immense labyrinth of London streets...” [M9a, 5, 436] Other flâneurs-artists whom he mentions are Baudelaire [M5, 2, 426] Beethoven [M20a, 1, 453-4] and Musset [M5, 5, 427]. He also makes reference to the detective [M11a, 6, 439] and the traveller [M7, 1, 430] as derivatives of the flâneur figure. Benjamin’s writings reveal that the flâneur’s nature is strongly associated with the vocation of artist. Proust, although a little later than the nineteenth century writers, notes the artist’s romantic attachment to features of the cityscape, “...without definite attachment to anything, suddenly a roof, a gleam of sunlight reflected from a stone, the smell of a road would make me stop still, to enjoy the special pleasure that each one of them gave me...” [M2a, 1, 420]

Yet the flâneur figure is now contested, if not forgotten. Since city life has become fast-paced and walking outmoded, Stefan Morawski has labelled the figure “...useless and out-of date...” (1994, 196). Nowadays the urban landscape is more likely to flash past, rendering lengthy and detailed observation difficult. Nevertheless the derivative forms of the flâneur that Benjamin mentions are still widely found in literature. The detective, a purposeful observer, and the traveller, a wanderer in distant places, are popular and accessible literary figures that owe some debt to the flâneur’s documentation of his personal observations, taking note of people and places as he engages with urban life. Thus it is proposed that the flâneur has not altogether disappeared. Sophie Calle wanders Venice, follows others, makes random encounters, allows those she meets shape her itinerary and documents all this in written and visual form. Yet her incarnation of the flâneur is different from that of the nineteenth century. Firstly, she shows a
distinct lack of passion in her surrounds. That she is female also works against the traditionally male incarnation of the \textit{flâneur}. Calle suffers from the demands her constraint imposes; she does not have the joyous free and easy mien of her nineteenth century counterpart. Perhaps the most evident difference is that, in setting a constraint, she is no aimless wanderer but has purpose that works against the \textit{flâneur’s} traditional \textit{modus operandi} that was apparently free and aimless.

Poe’s narrator of \textit{The Man of the Crowd} discovers nothing tangible about his mysterious subject, he is nevertheless impressed by the discovery of new corners of the city, “As the night deepened, so deepened to me the interest of the scene...” (2004, 235). Poe’s grubby, dangerous view of London is brought to life for the reader and is as prominent in the narrative as the pursuit of the interesting man. Calle, on the other hand, shows no overt interest in the place in which she finds herself. She shows herself to be completely absorbed in the singular aim of \textit{Suite vénitienne} and her aim of following Henri B. This comes as a surprise after her apparent anticipation, “\textit{Demain je verrai Venise pour la première fois.”} (43). Venice, instantly recognisable, eternally beautiful and fascinating, is never more than background to the narrative. Of course Calle’s photographs show the city but it is rarely the primary focus so that, unlike London for Poe, it never becomes a featured element of the narrative.

Another problem in considering Calle’s adoption of the \textit{flâneur} is, as this next quotation from \textit{The Man of the Crowd} suggests, that the figure is traditionally male, “An intoxication comes over the man who walks long and
aimlessly through the streets.” (417) It was considered unacceptable in the late nineteenth century for women to wander alone in the streets; those who did were considered marginal to society since the street was a site of danger to the reputation of any respectable woman. Deborah Parsons, in her book Streetwalking the Metropolis (2000) states that a woman unaccompanied by a man on a city street in the nineteenth century city would likely be a prostitute, a widow, an old woman or a lesbian (24). Calle has infinitely more freedom than her forbears and is free to wander the streets and follow people as she pleases without damage to her reputation, “J’ai commencé par suivre des gens dans la rue. Je me suis aperçue que cela donnait une direction à mes promenades...” (M’as-tu vue, 77) Parsons notes that women artists who work with themes of urban observation “...seem to have increased access to the city as the male artist withdraws from it.” (2000, 41) She lists Jean Rhys, Anaïs Nin, Doris Lessing and Virginia Woolf (2000, 15) as writers who claimed the flâneur’s role for female artists, changing the direction of the work of the flâneur; “…flânerie parallels with the idea of the search, and in the abstract wandering in the city this search would seem to be not for place but for self or identity...” (2000, 15) This certainly applies to Calle who seems to be assessing whether she can abide inconvenience and discomfort to pursue her work as an artist, “J’ai froid...Je pourrais m’en aller...mais je reste. Je ne veux pas devoir imaginer, supposer.” (Suite vénitienne, 76) Calle’s commitment to her project is a test of her identity as an artist, in which the stubborn adherence to, and subsequent fulfillment of, her constraint is a necessary component. While the city may not be the focus of the search, it facilitates it.
Calle’s experience mirrors the conclusion of Poe’s short story as she discovers that observation is not a key to knowledge, that following someone at a distance reveals only the superficial without any chance of reaching complete understanding. Poe concludes,

“This old man,” I said at length, “is the type and the genius of deep crime. He refuses to be alone. *He is the man of the crowd.* It will be in vain to follow; for I shall learn no more of him, nor of his deeds. The worst heart in the world is a grosser book than the ‘Hortulus Anima’ and perhaps it is but one of the greatest mercies of God that ‘er lässt sich nicht lesen.’” (2004, 239)

Neither Poe’s *flâneur* nor Calle know more about their subject at the end of the narrative than they did at the outset. Calle finally admits, “*Henri B. n’a rien fait, je n’ai rien découvert. Il fallait une fin banale à cette histoire banale.*” *(Suite vénitienne, 93)* The *flâneur’s* perspective is necessarily superficial since he or she eschews interaction in favour of observation so that truth, or essence, remains elusive, “*Les sentiments d’Henri B. ne font pas partie de mon histoire.*” *(Suite vénitienne, 61)* One of the themes of Mya Mangawang’s thesis on Calle is the limitations of observation, showing that Calle’s method is one of only partial surveillance so that *Suite vénitienne* offers a critique of the omniscient point of view and its subsequent totalising knowledge (2008, 14-15). Unlike an omniscient narrator Calle shows that Henri B. remains an unknowable protagonist, “*J’aurais pu découvrir une chose grave sur Henri B., une chose intime, au cours de ma filature...Je ne cesse de penser à cette hypothèse.*” *(Suite vénitienne, 104)* Mangawang also
states that Calle’s failure to discover anything about Henri B is illustrated by the kinds of images she publishes of him; rear and side views that do not show his face, leaving him unidentifiable. Her observations and photographs also fail to reveal anything distinctive in terms of his actions (2008, 24). For the reader Henri B remains a mysterious man in the crowd.

Calle suffers for her art, as her use of the verb errer to describe her activity shows, “Midi. J’erre place Saint-Marc.” (Suite vénitienne, 98) This verb has two meanings: the act of displacement (flâner is given as one of its synonyms in the Petit Robert dictionary) and making a mistake or diverting from the truth. The choice of this word signals that Calle’s flânerie may be dangerous and lead to unexpected, even undesirable, possibilities. Baudelaire suggests that the act of flânerie is joyous and creative but this would not appear to be true for Calle whose tortured take on the trope is a variation in mood from tradition. She is simultaneously consumed by her project and ambivalent and irresolute about it, “Je refuse de réfléchir à ma présence dans ces lieux. Je ne dois pas y penser. Je dois cesser d’imaginer les issues possibles et me demander où me mène cette histoire. Je la suivrai jusqu’à sa fin.” (Suite vénitienne, 57). The Arcades Project [M4, 3, 425] also notes this trait, “The peculiar irresolution of the flâneur. Just as waiting seems to be the proper state of the impassive thinker, doubt seems to be that of the flâneur. An elegy by Schiller contains the phrase: ‘the hesitant wing of the butterfly.’ This points to that association of wingedness with the feeling of indecision...” Calle’s project is contingent on a participant totally unaware of his role over whom she has no control. Since she has no idea what direction her project will take it is dominated by feelings of uncertainty
and apprehension, the potential for failure looming at every unexpected turn.

The final aspect of Calle’s practice to reconcile with the activities of the flâneur is that she is not an aimless wanderer. The flâneur of old has time available to engage in activities that are considered the product of leisure rather than industrious employment. Time on one’s hands is a stimulant to creativity: passage [M20a, 1, 453-4] in The Arcades Project (1999) is concerned with the activity of walking that is a means of facilitating the creative process: “Basic to flânerie...is the idea that the fruits of idleness are more precious than the fruits of labour. The flâneur, as is well known, makes “studies”...Often it is when the artist and the poet seem least occupied with their work that they are most profoundly absorbed in it...” For Calle time is precious since it is limited, thus the initial urgency in locating Henri B. Time spent waiting and observing and subsequent discomfort and doubt give the impression of time wasted, “Ils sont toujours à l’intérieur, et moi dehors. J’ai perdu toute méfiance. Je suis appuyée contre la porte. L’absurde durée de cette visite. C’est comme s’il me disait: ‘Vous pouvez m’attendre, je ne viendrai pas.’” (Suite vénitienne, 75) Later in the narrative, when Calle is no longer able to pursue her project, Venice alone offers no incentive to activity without the guiding principle of the constraint of which Henri B is the centre, “Que faire à Venise sans lui? Je pense qu’il faut partir, mais j’envisage aussi de reprendre sa chambre, de dormir dans son lit.” (Suite vénitienne, 105) Calle has apparent freedom of movement and apparent lack of occupation but she is not an ostensible aimless idler like the flâneur of the nineteenth century.
She has a plan to work to and a set project, and, while its content may be formed by chance events, she engages fully with the work of her constraint.

II. Venice

When Henri B finally discovers that Calle is following him they walk together and board the vaporetto, “Chemin faisant, il me demande ce que j’ai vu de Venise. Je ne trouve pas de réponse...” (92). It is not Venice that Calle has been observing.

Venice has been a subject of landscape paintings and photographs for centuries yet Calle does not explore its unique nature as might be expected of a visual artist. No matter how distinctive and revealing of place her photographs are they are accidental and part of her visual account of what is simply there. Calle’s black and white photographs produce an anonymity or non-specificity; street scenes and passers-by are captured while she completely ignores the well-known Venetian “sights” that may be readily identifiable. She produces photographs of Venice that are comprised mainly of exteriors, taken as she walks; the perspective and movement of the flâneur are evident in these photographs snapped without attention to framing or perspective because following her subject and gathering evidence are of far greater importance than noting features of place. Yet she hints at events in her trip that are not relevant to her project but that show she has privately engaged with the city of Venice, for example, on the 16th of February at 8.00 pm Calle says, “Il ne viendra pas. Je quitte mon banc. J’ai rendez-vous avec Luciana C au bal masqué organisé à l’Arsenal. Je
photographie le maire de Venise, qui me sourit.” (58) This photograph does not appear in the book, nor do any others that represent a digression to her task. Calle documents at length only what is relevant to her project so that it maintains its integrity.

Robert Dessaix’s account of his residence in Venice, told in his book Night Letters, is very different, as his sojourn comes to have both personal and professional significance. Like Calle, he professes a sense of anticipation at arriving in Venice and seeing it for the first time. Unlike Calle, this excitement is sustained in his writing. It is of interest to contrast Robert Dessaix’s immediate desire to see St Mark’s Square, with Calle’s first mention of this central landmark:

On the first night I couldn’t resist following that zigzagging route from the station across the Rialto Bridge and then on to St Mark’s Square. Do you know what it reminded me of at night? Those enchanted mazes I used to be taken to at Christmas as a child in one or other of the big department stores – all those brightly coloured displays of dolls and masks, everything glinting and gleaming in the beautiful menacing darkness, I couldn’t bear to come out. Then, with the wave of some wand – boom! you’re out of the maze and in to St Mark’s Square, vast and magnificent to the point of absurdity…No other city in the world gathers you to itself, to its very heart, quite so abruptly, surely. (1996,4)

This is Sophie Calle’s first reference to the same place in Suite vénitienne: “Arrivée Place St-Marc, je m’assieds contre une colonne. Je regarde.” (44)
And the following day, “13 h 30. Place Saint-Marc. Durant les heures j’attends, assise sur un banc du palais des Doges, cachée par une colonne. Je guette sa silhouette.” (46) Neither repeats the expectant tone of her initial, although comparatively measured, declaration of, “Demain je verrai Venise pour la première fois.” (43) Calle’s ennui is not the response Venice habitually stimulates but she reinforces it by not giving her impressions, interpretations and sentiments about the city: her lack of wonder is in itself intriguing. Her refusal to write about anything that may distract from her work underlines her commitment; she refrains from digressing from her task and noting what would otherwise be irrelevant to her constraint. The Atlas de littérature potentielle defines one of the many reasons for choosing a constraint as: “La caractère intentionnel, volontaire, de la contrainte…est indissolublement lié…à ce vif refus du hasard…” (1997, 56) Leaving little to chance, it provides a framework for a coherent, complete work. Calle’s writing and photography are proof of her determination to remain within her defined task. While chance has its role to play in the material Calle collects (she has no idea where Henri B is, then where he will go and what will happen while she follows…) it has no place in the constraint and thus no place in her writing.

The act of walking is common to both the tourist and the flâneur but Stefan Morawski points out that flânerie is not the same as tourism and that the responses to place are quite different. For the flâneur walking is life itself while for the tourist it is simply a means of exploring. Morawski describes the flâneur as a “...partially homeless native...” (1994, 184) for whom the street is never foreign territory. Wherever there is the possibility of wandering a city the flâneur becomes easily attached to the social
environment of a new place. In contrast, the tourist always remains a visitor with ‘home’ as the point of comparison. Calle’s approach to Venice is certainly more as flâneur than tourist, avoiding any act that may be considered tourism, any place that would attract tourist crowds. Only once in the book does she make a concession to Venice’s tourist culture and is ashamed of the result, “11h20. Place Saint-Marc. Je me fais photographier devant l’église par un photographe local. En perruque blonde, la main tendue, remplie de graines pour les pigeons, à la merci des regards : j’ai honte. S’il me voyait...” (Suite vénitienne, 103)

Maps show Calle’s mastery of the Venetian labyrinth; Suite vénitienne displays maps that illustrate the path she has followed, traced upon them. A tourist would use the maps for planning, for drawing up the day’s potential routes and stops, ensuring no site is omitted, according to the guidebook. Calle retraces her path through the Venetian labyrinth of streets and alleyways, after she has followed them, in black ink, and recites her itinerary in writing:

Notre parcours commence: campo San Angelo, calle del Speizer, ponte de la Cortesia – il tend son doigt vers le canal comme pour signaler quelque chose à la femme...campo San Luca, calle delle Balanze, calle dei Fabri, calle del Teatro o de la Comedia, campo San Salvador -, il hésite devant le Credito Italiano, jette un regard vers le canal, repart – calle Mazziarreta Due Aprile... [and so on]... (83)
List making is a refrain of *Suite vénitienne* with rhythm created from the city’s place names. One of Calle’s poetic lists occupies an entire page and underlines, through its length and repetition, the enormity of the task with which she is faced in finding Henri B:

La liste des hôtels vénitiens...compte cent quatre-vingt-un noms, divisés en plusieurs catégories: de luxe, première, deuxième, troisième, quatrième catégorie; pensions première, deuxième, troisième catégorie; auberges. Je les appellerai tous en respectant l’ordre indiqué.

Je compose donc les numéros des hôtels Bauer Grünwald, Cipriani, Gritti, Carlton Executive, Europa & Britannia, Gabrielli, Londra, Luna, Metropole...[et de suite] (52-3)

Michel de Certeau likens walking in the city to a speech act so that, as the walker moves from one proper noun (place) to the next, s/he engages in creating meaning, “In the spaces brutally lit by an alien reason, proper names carve out pockets of hidden and familiar meanings...they are the impetus of movements...that turn or divert an itinerary by giving it meaning.” (1984, 104) This function is echoed in Calle tracing lines on a map, joining up places names with a black pen. Venice is to Calle what Certeau calls a “...suspended symbolic order...”(1984, 106), a list of names largely without social, historic, cultural or personal meaning because they are not in her own language. Despite this Calle maintains a feeling for their rhythm and poetry and, even if their original meanings are lost, unknown or unreferenced, they come to give Calle’s activity context and poetic rhythm. Of course there is one word that
must hold particular significance for Calle: calle. She never makes overt reference to this Venetian word for ‘a narrow street’ but its existence means that she constantly encounters her own name, as if she is meant to be in Venice, as if the city welcomes her and her project.

III. J’y reconnais quelque chose...

*Suite vénitienne* is comprised of fewer than a hundred pages yet it is a complex work, a labyrinth of words and ideas, demonstrating that intricacy is not just the result of narrative length. *Suite vénitienne* has two narrative streams, one to tell and the other to reflect, and combines visual and written representation. There is yet another level of complexity introduced by intertextual reference. *Suite vénitienne* makes reference to a number of literary and artistic genres and each of these enlarges Calle’s narrative, complicates it and toys with the reader’s expectations. This section looks at the way in which these extratextual references interact with *Suite vénitienne* to produce a narrative that reaches beyond what Calle has written.

In his book *Genre* (2006) John Frow states that this “...is...amongst other things, a matter of discrimination and taxonomy: of organising things into recognisable classes.” (51). Classes of literary genre are not discrete and consistent as are, for example, scientific classes, nor do they form a complete system in the same way as, say, chemical elements or species of flora and fauna might. On page 53 of *Genre* Frow quotes Rick Altman from his book

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8 The word calle exists only in the Venetian dialect. The usual Italian word for narrow street is ‘via’.

Film/Genre “...not only are all genres interfertile, they may at any time be crossed with any genre that ever existed.” In reading Suite vénitienne the reader is aware of such interfertility. In Calle’s work the reader may be conscious of the flâneur and the kind of writing and visual art this figure recalls but there are also similarities to journalism, documentary photography, personal diary and travel diary writing as well as influences of other constraint-driven literary works. Reference is often made to the unclassifiable nature of Calle’s work (see Introduction, pages 16-18) and this pastiche of diverse generic elements contributes to both Suite vénitienne’s complexity and its difficulty. The difference genre makes here is not a claim to classification, but rather an acknowledgement that the references to different types of writing and visual art make Suite vénitienne a far more complex narrative than it initially appears, that the referenced genres add unexpected layers to the meaning of the text. The elements to which Calle refers make for a completely individual approach to genre that allows diverse generic elements to sit side-by-side in a text that alludes to, even integrates them, but does not properly fulfill the expectations the reader may attach to them.

Suite vénitienne is not a traditional fictional narrative that has a plot or characters or maintains a narrative trajectory. If narrative “...involves the raising of questions, the implied promise of an answer, and, in traditional narrative at least, the provision of that answer in time...” (Dennis Porter, 1981, 51) then this book has no questions to ask and no answers to give, working against fulfilling any anticipation a reader may feel because of the other genres it recalls. Yet it is a narrative with an identifiable beginning and
end and, in between, a narrative that is coherent and complete although not teleological in nature. Its photographs clearly show that it is a story grounded in reality. Calle is insistent about dates and times because they are the elements that contain the narrative and give it its beginning and end. It could be called a non-traditional narrative, but this is not particularly enlightening, as it tells nothing about the form the work takes.

In its opening stages *Suite vénitienne* suggests a detective novel. As a derivative of the *flâneur* the detective behaves similarly, following those who stimulate his or her interest in order to find out more through detailed and systematic observation, uncovering secrets the subject does not wish to reveal. Calle employs the tools of the detective to find Henri B: she makes lists of possible locations and investigates the possibilities one by one. She works in disguise, “Dans ma valise : un nécessaire de maquillage qui m’aidera à modifier ma physionomie, une perruque blonde…des chapeaux, voilettes, gants, lunettes noires…” (*Suite vénitienne*, 43) She falsifies the reasons she has to look for Henri B, “Je raconte que j’ai perdu un ami. Il dit qu’il m’aidera à le retrouver.” (*Suite vénitienne*, 46) She remains constantly observant and alert, searching and considering every possibility until he is found. Prolonged and detailed observation and interrogation are tools employed by the detective and, if the narrative follows the usual course, the detective comes to a resolution through his or her rigorous investigation. This is the expectation the reader attaches to *Suite vénitienne*, that something is bound to happen that will carry the narrative to an expected conclusion. In fact the opposite occurs and Calle discovers nothing at all: her effort has not allowed her a single insight into Henri B’s life, “J’aurais pu découvrir une chose grave
In *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (1981) Dennis Porter states that Edgar Allan Poe set the precedent for detective fiction in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841). Porter asserts that the detective novel requires two essential elements. The first is that the denouement determines the order and causality of all that precedes it, including a crime that may be antecedent to the text. The second is that the steps taken to unravel the mystery are calculated to generate suspense so that the reader has an emotional investment in the resolution of the narrative’s problem (1981, 24-29). Later twentieth century detective fiction has changed the rules; Porter states that it has a tendency to, “...stimulate in order not to satisfy...” (1981, 246) as “The end brings neither the revelation and the relief of a concluded sequence nor...the return of order...” (1981, 246) This statement has relevance to *Suite vénitienne* in that the ending is defined by the temporal element of Calle’s constraint rather than by narrative resolution: the book ends but it does not conclude, at least in the sense that a traditional narrative would. Meanwhile, Kathleen Belin Owen (1997) writes that postmodernism requires innovation in order to overcome what was considered the standard formula of the detective novel because “...the "formula" - of the detective tradition calls for a grounding in epistemological inquiry that postmodernism has abandoned to modernism's realm in favor of ontological pursuits." (73) Thus the postmodern detective narrative is less about the process of deduction to reach a conclusion and
more about the nature of the characters involved; there may be no
traditional resolution. In this manner Suite vénitienne is not a conclusive
narrative but its interest lies in Calle’s story, in her audacity, in her suffering
as she tries to put her work together. Calle plays the detective but as Suite
vénitienne progresses it becomes evident that her narrative is not about
Henri B, who is an unknowable subject, but about herself and the process of
creativity.

The second element of the detective story to which Porter refers is its
inherent tension, the creation of suspense that contributes to the pleasure
the reader feels when reading this kind of story. This pleasure is vicarious,
“...derived from exposure to risk in one of its many guises [it] is central to an
understanding of the appeal of the detective story...” (1981, 101). One of the
sources of pleasure is that the reader confronts threatening situations in a
buffer zone of safety which is distance from the action, “...in the imaginative
transpositions of literature a war and a rape may be represented in ways
which compel our excited attention.” (1981, 101) Suite vénitienne is of course
not a real detective story, it simply makes use of the genre’s tropes. There is
no crime but, in stalking her subject and recording the act for publication,
Calle maintains tension and fear for the reader that sustains the book until its
final moments. The fact that the narrative is real heightens the tension, the
fear the reader carries of Calle’s discovery and the possible implications this
holds for her are a legitimate source of suspense that mirrors the suspense of
the fictional detective story because of its transgressive nature. Calle’s own
fear is also a source of suspense; tension builds around the possible discovery
of her by Henri B or his partner, “Elle s’est retournée la première. Elle me fait
peur, plus que lui.” (Suite vénitienne, 77) Once she is discovered there is a shift in the nature of suspense as she tries to find ever more surreptitious methods of observation that will not draw Henri B’s attention, determined to stick to her constraint and follow it through to the ending that has been defined for it. The italicised written passages that express the fear of discovery and its undefined consequences ensure the reader is constantly made aware of any risks inherent in the situation in which she is immersed. Calle also expresses other fears: fear of failure, fear of not knowing, of not being in control and then, paradoxically, of having to take control and the fear of not being able to follow the project to some satisfying conclusion: the building of tension is thus the result of accumulation and the reader feels compelled to follow the narrative to its end. Only the final arrival in Paris, as defined temporally by her constraint, can put an end to Suite vénitienne.

Calle remains faithful to the act of reporting and so cannot manipulate elements of her narrative to contrive a mystery because this genre requires that she only record what she sees and notices; invention would contravene the generic conventions of reportage that requires dispassionate observation and eschews opinion and fabrication. Yet Calle also subverts this genre by making herself the focus of the narrative rather than what she has observed; it is the detective element of her narrative that allows her to do this. Porter states that the detective narrative will often tell two stories: the hidden story of the crime and that of the process of detection, in which the detective/investigator is of course implicated and elements of his or her character are revealed. (1981, 29) In Suite vénitienne Calle, her process of detection and her pursuit of Henri B are central to the narrative while the
target of her observation is of little narrative importance (although of primary structural importance); there is nothing to be revealed and thus there is no surprise for the reader in Calle’s summation, “Henri B n’a rien fait et je n’ai rien découvert.” (93)

Suite vénitienne is written in the form of a personal diary, using dates and times and chronological order to organise the text, appropriating the stylistic tropes of this genre and confirming Calle’s position as the central subject of Suite vénitienne. Genre once again influences how the book is anticipated; the personal diary form is read to give insight into the life and personality of its writer yet Calle’s focus is narrow and only yields details that are relevant to this narrative and to the process of producing this work. Suite vénitienne has a narrow focus that is scarcely autobiographical or intimate; the resemblance to a diary is more about form than content. This is not to say that the book does not portray Calle as unfailingly human: there are moments of high emotion, self-doubt and an evident but omitted story of Calle’s other activities in Venice, it is just that these elements take a second place to the portrayal of her persistence in performing her constraint.

In Suite vénitienne elements of the photographic essay may be discerned. The photographic essay is a mode of documentary photography that uses both photographs and a written text to investigate a defined area of interest, often targeted to a particular audience. Written in ostensibly objective and unopinionated style with photographs that are selected for the significance of the information they provide rather than their aesthetic value, it purports to be “...an objective, unmediated record of facts. Documentary is said to provide its viewers with direct access to the truth.” (Steve Edwards,
The resemblance of *Suite vénitienne* to the photographic essay is formal and suggested by the pairing of photography and writing with Calle’s photographs presented as evidence of her experience. However, this evidence has a tenuous relationship with the truth; as already discussed Gratton tells us that the photographs in the published edition of *Suite vénitienne* are not the original ones and Calle herself acknowledges in the catalogue to her retrospective exhibition that other elements of the published work are not entirely authentic “...la *Suite vénitienne*, qui est datée ‘1980’, se déroule en 1979. Parce que, quand on a voulu publier le livre, un avocat a pensé que l’homme que j’avais suivi pouvait porter plainte. On a...gardé les dates exactes, les jours, les mois, mais on a change l’année.” (*M’as-tu vue*, 78) The knowledge that changes were made introduces an element of doubt and detracts from the work’s status as a document: if the dates and photographs are changed, what else may have been fabricated? Doubt is cast on the veracity of the document that is no longer read as a “...neutral, styleless, and objective record of information.” (Steve Edwards, 2006, 12)

Steve Edwards distinguishes between documentary photography and documentary style and claims that documentary photography is not without style but has its own “...aesthetic mode or...style...” (2006, 28). He maintains that documentary photography is “...an approach to photography; a mode of representation predicated on the form of the document. This style is characterised by two closely related factors: anti-subjectivism and a gaze that looks outwards towards the world.” (2006, 28) Calle adapts this style to *Suite vénitienne*: her photographs accompany the narrative to provide verification
of its content and, where possible, photographs are aligned with their associated written passages (here we see Henri B taking a photograph of a masked Venetian, here he is entering the antique shop, etc...). The writing marks reporting from opinion in its adoption of two fonts that signal two kinds of text: documentation and commentary. The style of *Suite vénitienne* thus demands the reader accept this work as an authentic record of Calle’s Venetian project, no matter how implausible the scenario may seem.

Many of Calle’s photographs have at once the detachment of the documentary and an apparent subjectivity or emotivity as, despite her apparent disengagement with her surroundings, Calle captures Venice’s wintery pallor in a manner that is evocative and moving. Patrick Frey writes, “Photographs are always stories...they do not impart disinterested detachment; instead they gossip, they are drenched in emotional intent.” (2009, 69) No photograph is more telling of the failure of emotional detachment than one Calle did not take but of which she is the subject and that appears on page 102. In her hat, blond wig and trench coat Calle is shown feeding pigeons in St. Mark’s Square. There is a distinct melancholy in this photograph as it underlines her solitariness and the shame that she refers to in the accompanying text.

Another genre to which *Suite vénitienne* makes reference is the travel diary. Once again Calle appropriates some of the tropes of the genre, especially in her visual material, but then subverts them because her journey has nothing to do with tourism and everything to do with making art. *Suite vénitienne* never foregrounds the act of travel, despite Calle’s apparent initial anticipation “*Demain je verrai Venise pour la première fois.*” (43) If the name
of the work leads the reader to expect that Venice may be a focal point then this is erroneous, *suite* is the more important element of the title in terms of defining the narrative. Some of Calle’s photographs stray from her main focus when something of interest crosses her path, displaying evidence of Calle’s sensitivity to her surroundings, as if Venice, although confined to the background, must make its mark on her project in some manner.

Calle writes, "Durant quelques instants, pour me changer les idées, je suis distraitement un livreur de fleurs – comme s’il devait me mener à lui." (*Suite*
This photograph is evidence of one of the few occasions that Calle is distracted from her search; this is perhaps *Suite vénitienne*'s most dramatic photograph that reminds the reader of the interest a *flâneur* might show in his or her surroundings.

With this assembly of generic features the reader may be uncertain about the kind of book s/he is reading but, as Luc Sante says, this is an essential aspect of the perception of information, “Uncertainty...is the footprint of truth. It is the only aspect of any piece of information that can always be relied upon...” (2009, 74) Firstly, Calle creates uncertainty in her transgression of the generic conventions from which she borrows: there is little on which the reader can rely to make inferences and predictions because the outcomes do not fall in line with usual expectations of genre. She creates further uncertainty with her *mélange* of genres: they prove unsettling to the reader because the foundation of her text is constantly shifting from one genre to another. There is also the issue of authenticity due to the fudging of dates and even photographs that have been changed so that a narrative that already lies on an uncertain foundation becomes even more suspect in its presentation of intentions and facts.

The *flâneur* has remained a tangible presence throughout *Suite vénitienne*. No single genre discussed here (documentary photography, diary writing, detective fiction, travel writing) is exemplary of a *flâneur* text yet the *flâneur* relates in some way to all of them. Across Calle’s appropriated genres the *flâneur* remains the single constant making connections between them despite their differences. Calle has embraced the *flâneur* role, allowing it to engage appropriately with elements of different genres as she carries
out her project. It is the flâneur that makes connections, bridges gaps, visits styles. “Genre guides interpretation because it is a constraint on semiosis, the production of meaning; it specifies which types of meaning are relevant and appropriate in a particular context...” (Frow, 2006, 101) The shifting references to various literary genres in Suite vénitienne are adapted to the situations Calle encounters and each genre provides its own resonances and constraints on the reader’s approach. At the same time as there is an addition of genres through the figure of the flâneur there is also a deconstruction of genre as none of them are realised quite in the way the reader anticipates; there is no resolution to the detective’s quest, no actual story for the photojournalist, no travel advice for the traveller and the diarist’s daily preoccupations are limited to a single subject: the pursuit of Henri B. Postmodern literature tends to “...display its own artificiality and contradictions, which play with GENRE and its convention...” (David Macey, 2001, 306) and postmodern writing has a tendency to “...stimulate in order not to satisfy...” (Porter, 1981, 246) In playing with the conventions of genre the reader’s expectations of the usual outcomes related to tropes and structures are disappointed: Calle’s work has an undeniably postmodern sensibility that embraces contradictions and dissatisfaction and pastiches genre. This creates confusion: the reader has little or no premise on which to rest predictions and expected outcomes of the narrative so that the Venetian Labyrinth echoes a textual one.

It seems fitting to leave the final word on the flâneur and, by implication, Suite vénitienne, to Baudelaire, repeating the quotation from Le peintre de la vie moderne (1863), at the beginning of this chapter:
La foule est son domaine, comme l’air est celui de l’oiseau, comme l’eau celui du poisson. Sa passion et sa profession, c’est d’épouser la foule. Pour le parfait flâneur, pour l’observateur passionné, c’est une immense jouissance que d’élire domicile dans le nombre, dans l’ondoyant, dans le mouvement, dans le fugitif et l’infini. Être hors de chez soi, et pourtant se sentir partout chez soi...

This description of the flâneur is in contrast to Calle’s solitary figure on the periphery of the Venetian crowds, the lone artist struggling with new possibilities, a new way of working and an unknown future path. At times she ‘sees’ the crowd with her camera which further reinforces her distance from it, yet it is obvious that she has also set herself apart from it and the camera plays no small part in this: the photographer must physically set him/her self apart in order to take a photograph, present but not part of the action. It is inevitable that the flâneur will have changed since Baudelaire’s time and a literary trope like the flâneur will not survive unless it is adaptable, unless it can accommodate and integrate new ideas and sensibilities. Calle is a flâneur for a different sensibility: in Suite vénitienne the flâneur is female, the flâneur is bored, the flâneur is alone.
Suite vénitienne is but one example of Sophie Calle’s projects produced with the use of a chronotopic constraint. While these constraints structure and define her work they also allow for unpredictability, randomness and coincidence. Calle’s projects need to be personally relevant or they create difficulties for her, as she recounts in En finir, a commissioned project for which she could never find an appropriate ending: “Le texte manquait, ce texte qui me colle à la peau...En montrant des documents trouvés, sans apport vécu de ma part, je ne collais pas à mon propre style.” (55) The chronotopic constraint is one that allows her to define subjects of personal relevance that stimulate her work and prove successful for many projects. However doubt pervades the Où et Quand? series, as expressed in the title that is formulated as a question, including doubt about the implementation of a constraint. Ostensibly about several short journeys, this series is also an examination of growing disillusionment with a system that has previously been productive, introducing a constraint that works structurally but that ultimately fails to generate meaning. Absence or failure of meaning is present from the first book of the series, Berck, in which a meaningless coincidence becomes the raison d’être of the project. Calle’s growing disaffection is linked to the narrative she develops from visiting different places and the portraits of people, places and self that she collects.
I. The books

The three books in this series are *Où et Quand? Berck*, *Où et Quand? Lourdes* and *Où et Quand? Nulle Part* (published as a series in 2009). Despite the title that gives equal weight to both chronotopic elements, place takes precedence in determining the structure of each book, its upshot and the internal relationship of the series. Berck and Lourdes, two provincial French towns, lend their names to two of the books. The third book, *Nulle part*, suggests a representational impossibility and is the point of rupture at which everything is thrown into question from the meaning of the task she has set to the meaning of the language that is used, to the validity of the relationship she has with her collaborator Maud Kristen.

The stated aim of the project is to predict Calle’s future, “...afin d’aller à sa rencontre, de le prendre de vitesse.” (*Berck*, 83) This statement becomes the refrain of the entire project, repeated on each back cover and inside each book. In order to search for indications of her future Kristen sends Calle to Berck, a northern seaside town, and Lourdes, a centre of religious pilgrimage. As the title implies she is not sent anywhere for *Nulle part* but a planned journey to the Arctic Circle is central to the book’s narrative, thus all three volumes are centred on excursions, actual or potential. Calle is no more in control of what happens in the course of these books than she is following Henri B in *Suite vénitienne*, although this time she follows verbal instructions from Maud Kristen who directs her to carry out
activities in each location by using tarot card readings. Calle yields to “L’obéissance aux règles, l’errance sous contrôle, le soulagement de ne pas avoir à juger les événements...” (Berck, 117)

Each book has its own mood; Berck is comical and eccentric; a sense of despair pervades Lourdes. Berck and Lourdes share a similar narrative of departure, discovery and return. Nulle part is distinctly different but a link to the other books is provided by the presence of Maud Kristen as collaborative partner. However, there are significant departures: Nulle part is still while the other books emphasise movement, it is solitary while the others concentrate on Calle’s interactions with other people and, where the other books are colourful, Nulle part is monochrome. This episode takes place entirely in “…the non-place of language...” (Foucault, xvi) and is focused on sentences that are selected from a variety of unrelated books. Calle photographs her ‘nowhere’ with a background that is dark, featureless and unadorned, the hands and books depicted suspended as if in a void.

This series unites the two parameters of the chronotope, place and time, où and quand, in its title. The chronotope, as discussed in the introduction on pages 39-45, expresses a relationship between place and time in art and literature, a relationship that is not fixed and responds to the ever-changing balance between these two elements to create new genres. In Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel (1981) Mikhael Bakhtin describes the influence of the chronotope:

A literary work’s artistic unity...is defined by its chronotope...In literature and art itself, temporal and spatial determinations are
inseparable from one another...Abstract thought can, of course, think time and space as separate entities and conceive them as things apart from the emotions and values that attach to them. But living artistic perception...seizes on the chronotope in all its wholeness and fullness. Art and literature are shot through with *chronotopic values*... (243)

Bakhtin claims dominance for time: “...in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time.” (85) Yet the titles of the three books that belong to *Où et quand?* signal the preeminence of place; this is in keeping with Paul Smethurst’s recognition of the chronotope’s spatial turn in postmodern writing, “To summarise the properties of place, we can say that it has subjective, cultural and physical dimensions...Place is the foundation of our experience of the world.” (2000, 61) In books such as *Suite vénitienne* and the *Où et quand?* series, in which place names form part of the title of a work, place is very obviously foregrounded. Geographical limits define the experiences about which Calle writes; they are the source of the narrative. In the *Où et quand?* series the role of time is further diminished in comparison to *Suite vénitienne* because the attentive recordings of dates and times and the temporal definition of the beginning and end of the project are no longer part of the constraint; Maud Kristen takes over the defining role of time in initiating and closing down the individual parts of the project. Yet time continues to have a role because it is instrumental in stimulating and recognising coincidences that are a narrative necessity. Furthermore the three episodes of this project take place over a number of years, rather than
days or hours, so that a sense of elapsed time is also important to the series’ narrative structure.

There are two common elements that bind the books together as a coherent series: the presence of Maud Kristen and a focus on language and meaning. Maud Kristen, a clairvoyant, appears in several of Calle’s works, including *En finir* (2005) and *Prenez soin de vous* (2008), but *Où et Quand?* is their only extended collaboration. In *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal*, Carl Jung states that the skills of the clairvoyant are ill-defined: “People...talk of clairvoyance, telepathy...without...being able to explain what these faculties consist of or what means of transmission they use in order to render events distant in space and time accessible to our perception...” (1997, 95) Yet Kristen is forthright, authoritative and certain in her direction of Calle’s activity. Calle states that her reason for working with Kristen is related to language, “I went to see her one day long, long ago, and I loved her vocabulary. I loved the way she talked.” (Jill Magid, 2009, 146) It is thus of no surprise that the second common element in the books is the role of language since it is at the foundation of their relationship. Words are more than just tools of narrative, Calle presents them as items of visual interest; they become pictorial elements, the focal point of photographs and part of the design of the books as puzzles and captions. The result is that the *Où et quand?* series is structured around complex use of language, culminating in *Nulle part* in which written words are objectified to assume pictorial status as books are photographed with their pages open. Thus, in *Où et Quand?* language exists at different levels and with different functions that are
communicative but also illustrative and symbolic. In this way Calle uses language to create meaning but also, paradoxically, meaninglessness.

Conversation constitutes much of the written content of these books. Calle remains the dominant voice, but hers is not alone; she has retained the individual qualities of other voices that feature in her project. Maud Kristen is more voluble than Calle in her explanations, gives interpretations rather than simply offering information and gives orders in the imperative, a mood Calle does not use. The contrast between Calle’s apparent diffidence and Kristen’s assured tone is strong, even in reported speech, “Pas de téléphone dans les chambres...Maud me demande de déménager sur-le-champ.” (Berck, 99) Just as distinctly individual in Où et quand? are other voices: that of Mémé, which is heard as well as read, those of the priests of Lourdes and its off-season pilgrims, and that of Jack Lang’s paternalistic concern. In Discourse in the Novel (1981) Bakhtin points out that dialogue, with its varied and individualised use of language, is essential to novelistic structure that “...is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice...with several heterogeneous stylistic unities...” one of which is “…the stylistically individualized speech of characters.” (261-2) Calle’s retention of individual modes of speech has an echo of the authenticity of voices in the novel: her participants thus retain their status as individuals and are not subsumed to her narrator’s voice.

Calle’s photographs of Berck and Lourdes are more evocative of place than those of Venice in Suite vénitienne. No longer hurriedly shot in black and white without attention to detail, these are colour photographs, selected
to add detail to the written text and carefully composed. These places are more than background and have individual characteristics that can be defined and illustrated; the photographs contribute to the definition of the natures of these towns. Calle pays attention to composition and atmosphere so that the photographs move beyond mere illustration to explore the visual character of Berck and Lourdes.

II. Disobedience?

The status of rules is interesting in Calle’s work because those she devises (her constraint) are productive yet often transgressive of external rules of privacy, respect and politeness. Acceptability of her apparent flouting of social conventions may, as Robert Storr points out, be the result of her linguistic style of carefully selected words and the use of literary, rather than conversational, tenses that mean the impact of her behaviour is mediated by the elegance of her writing:

In the disguise of the first person narrator the artist who calls herself Sophie Calle has given herself the license to do many things. Most of them are a question of slyly transgressing the norms of bourgeois conduct, in which context her elegant choice of tenses and her other little refinements are subtle acts of verbal sabotage that accent the violation of the essential rules of the game by assiduously adhering to linguistic properties...it is...the “memoires d’une jeune fille rangée en poursuite de la [sic] dérèglement
systématique de toutes les sensibilités” to simultaneously appropriate de Beauvoir and Rimbaud…(2009, 104)

In *Où et quand?* Berck Calle welcomes the opportunity to once again follow rules, “C’est reposant. L’obéissance aux règles, l’errance sous contrôle, le soulagement de ne pas avoir à juger les événements...” (117) She adopts a position that has previously been both creative and satisfying, “J’aime contrôler et j’aime perdre le contrôle. L’obéissance à un rituel est une manière de fixer les règles et ensuite de se laisser porter...je rêve toujours de situations dans lesquelles je n’aurais rien à décider." (*M’as-tu vue*, 75). Her constraints are a form of obedience, providing a framework within which to work, allowing her to be directed by others who make decisions for her. However the status of her collaborator in *Où et quand?*, Maud Kristen, is very different from that of Henri B in *Suite vénitienne* because Kristen is clearly aware of the implications her directions may hold. She approaches the project with deference,

> J’avais proposé à Maud Kristen, voyante, de prédire mon futur afin d’aller à sa rencontre, de le prendre de vitesse.

> Où ? Quand ? Quoi?


Maud Kristen implements the constraint that Calle follows; Kristen is the proxy of inspiration and the agent of the constraint. The constraint works
when Calle directs her focus externally, as she does in *Berck*. In *Lourdes* the focus of the constraint is ostensibly external but circumstances compel Calle to self-reflection that is unexpected and painful; avoiding this by taking control of the project would break the rules she has accepted to follow under Kristen’s guidance. This situation highlights the difference between constraint and inspiration. Inspiration allows for movement and change, while a constraint that applies to a project from beginning to end does not respond well to any necessity for change as this would render it invalid and potentially unworkable. Calle follows the rules, all the while becoming aware of what it means in this project to limit one’s choices in deference to another’s, to relinquish the power of autonomy to a construct over which one has no control. In *Berck* Calle includes signs that foreshadow impending disaster, despite the benign and even pleasant nature of this episode. One such photograph appears on page 149; this dead-end is a metaphor both for Calle’s constraint and the series and clearly depicts the direction in which both are heading. Its inclusion looks forward to *Nulle part*, foreshadowing the constraint’s ultimate collapse.
[photograph removed]
III. Coincidence

The use of clairvoyance as a device of the constraint inspires both fascination and scepticism because it is a product of mysticism, secrecy and superstition. It is a subject of interest to the psychologist Carl Jung who notes frequent occurrences of meaningful coincidences. He writes that,

People...talk of clairvoyance, telepathy...without...being able to explain what these faculties consist of or what means of transmission they use in order to render events distant in space and time accessible to our perception. All these ideas are mere names; they are not scientific concepts which could be taken as statements of principle, for no-one has yet succeeded in constructing a causal bridge between the elements making up a meaningful coincidence. (1997, 95)

As this suggests Jung’s studies do throw some light, not on the practice of clairvoyance, but on the perception of meaningful coincidences (synchronous events). As a psycholgist Jung is aware of the perception of certain events as meaningful to those who experience them and that some people interpret such events as having been influenced or even caused by supernatural forces because no immediate rational explanation can be found to connect or associate disparate phenomena. In Synchronicity, chapter 5 of a collection of Jung’s writings on the paranormal, he states that two or more apparently unconnected events appear to be associated because of thematic or material links between them. He calls the perception of coincidences and the
construction of meaning around them synchronicity. He describes its workings thus:

The Rhine experiments\(^{10}\) have demonstrated that space and time, and hence causality, are factors that can be eliminated with the result that...miracles appear possible. All natural phenomena of this kind are unique and exceedingly curious combinations of chance, held together by the common meaning of their parts to form an unmistakable whole. Although meaningful coincidences are infinitely varied in their phenomenology, as acausal events they nevertheless form an element that is part of the scientific picture of the world. Causality is the way we explain the link between two successive events. Synchronicity designates the parallelism of time and meaning between psychic and psychophysical events...The term explains nothing, it simply formulates the occurrence of meaningful coincidences which...are chance happenings but so improbable that we must assume them to be based on some kind of principle, or...property of the empirical world...Synchronicity is a modern differentiation of the obsolete concept of correspondence, sympathy and harmony...based...on...empirical experience and observations. (1997, 100-101)

\(^{10}\) These experiments were carried out by J.B. Rhine at Duke University in 1932. They are quoted in the article Jung writes on synchronicity “On Synchronicity” (93-102) in *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal* (1997). The book’s editor, Roderick Main, claims “These experiments appeared to give statistical, that is scientifically respectable, confirmation of both the reality of both extrasensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK).” (15)
It is thus principally time but also place that are instrumental in the occurrence and perception of synchronous events and Roderick Main, in his introduction to *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal*, states that it is the relationship between time and place that creates the opportunity for synchronicity:

Jung concluded that ‘in relation to the psyche space and time are...”elastic” and can apparently be reduced almost to vanishing point’...Another of the ways Jung came to characterize synchronicity was...as a ‘psychically conditioned relativity of time and space’...as though space and time ‘did not exist in themselves but were only “postulated” by the conscious mind...Knowledge of events at a distance or in the future is possible because, within the unconscious mind, all events co-exist timelessly and spacelessly...
(Main, 1997, 15)

Although both Bakhtin and Jung base their theories on modern physics the two applications of the possibilities of time and place have very different purposes and qualities. Bakhtin’s conception of time and place is as entities that exist in a relationship that is changeable and reciprocal. In Jung’s work time and place are presented as abstract concepts that are relative and elastic in nature; for these ideas Jung owes a particular debt to the work of Albert Einstein who, “When...working in Zurich in 1909 and 1912...was Jung’s dinner guest on several occasions...” (Main, 16) This conception of time and place means that the relationships between past, present and future are relativised so that the notion of sequential time is irrelevant to the
possibilities posed by synchronicity. In a therapeutic context, this means that Jung often notes synchronous episodes in his discourse with patients and is able to interpret them according to, “...the meaning which coincidences have for their subject, including their attendant emotional charge or numinosity, [which] seems to stem from the underlying presence of an archetype, activated usually in response to the person having reached some kind of psychological impasse...” (Main, 9) Jung sees synchronicity as a force that is as valid as causality, “It is ‘equal in rank’...in the sense of being complementary to the principle of causality: causality accounts for...‘constant connection through effect’...and synchronicity accounts for...‘instant connection through contingency, equivalence, or “meaning”...” (Main, 1997, 17)

Main, the editor of Jung’s work on the paranormal, reports that Jung notes three different kinds of synchronous event. Time and place are the important variables in the representation of each kind of event. They are as follows:

The first category...[is]...where a psychic event...and a physical event...occur at the same time and in the same place. Here there is simultaneity...The second category includes...a psychic event and a corresponding physical event [that] take place more or less simultaneously but at a distance so that the approximate simultaneity can only be established afterwards...The third category includes happenings where a psychic event occurs and a
corresponding physical event takes place in the future. Here there is not even approximate simultaneity. (1997, 20-1)

In summary the categories are: simultaneity of time and place, simultaneity of time but not place and then no simultaneity in either dimension. According to the constraint that has been set Calle and Kristen are searching for events that belong to the third category but really only encounter aspects of the first. In this category time and place coincide: they are true coincidences and are attributed meaning according to context and as personal signs and symbols. These are the signs for which Calle and Kristen are searching, the coincidences that Kristen wishes to admire. It is clear that, because the relationship between time and place is different for each kind of psychic perception, concentrating on one kind of perception may mean that others are not acknowledged or perceived. Therefore a focus on coincidence that does not hold any relationship to the future may mean that other kinds of information are ignored or overlooked.

In the context of this series it is, of course, Calle’s interpretation that is most essential as she reads signs, attaching meaning to them where she perceives connections. One coincidence, perhaps the most important of all to the series because it is recognised as sufficient to signal the potential for continuation, is Calle’s receipt of a text message from friends named Berque while she is in the town of Berck. The coincidence of Berck-Berque lies in the fact that the words are homophones but there is no other apparent level of meaning that might demonstrate that this coincidence has fulfilled the
promise of the series’ motto. Kristen responds, "Il me semble que le cosmos accepte cette partie avec nous. J’attendais des signes pour être approuvée et pouvoir continuer...je ne voulais pas vous commander...Je voulais juste admirer les coïncidences." (Berck, 147) For the reader it is not in the recognition of a coincidence that difficulty lays but in attributing meaning to it: its significance to Calle’s future is impossible to define, being either untold or unexplainable. Thus it is from the outset that meaning begins to break down.

Calle and Kristen construe the reception of the Berck-Berque text message as portentous, “…les cartes m’envoyaient à Berck. L’expérience était convaincante.” (Lourdes, 9) Further confirmation comes from the sourcing of a sweet produced in Berck, les succès berckois, “Dans la rue Carnot, une passante m’indique la confiserie qui confectionne la spécialité locale: des bonbons, les succès berckois. Confirmation.” (Berck, 151) Kristen interprets this apparent indication of success as a sign of the future validity of the project: “Il me semble que le cosmos accepte cette partie avec nous. J’attendais des signes pour être approuvée et pouvoir continuer..." (Berck, 147) It is clear that the conditions of the constraint are altered after Berck-Berque: the project changes its focus to the perception of coincidences and is no longer about Calle’s future. Yet the series mantra of the discovery of the future continues to be present on the publications’ covers and in Calle’s introductions to each volume.

11 “J’ai propose à Maud Kristen, voyante, de prédire mon future, afin d’aller à sa rencontre, de le prendre de vitesse.” This phrase is repeated in each volume.
The “success” of Berck means that Calle is sent to Lourdes where coincidences abound but these are either meaningless or misrepresent what she sees as the reality of her life. She comes across her name on an advertising hoarding but it name is attached to something that holds no personal meaning for her, “Au loin, du sommet d’un immeuble...mon prénom m’attire. SOPHIE. Tout pour l’enfant. Je n’ai jamais voulu d’enfants.” (109) In Lourdes her greatest desire is to disappear : “J’entrevois ce que je suis venue chercher. La disparition.” (p. 101) This is impossible because the narrative of Lourdes is so closely tied to her experiences and perceptions. The signs she recognises are a constant reminder of her presence, her history and her preoccupations; in this context disappearance is impossible. However reluctantly, she becomes the central figure in the narrative. Jung writes that the emotional state of the person perceiving coincidences may influence the recognition and interpretation of synchronous events, “The falling off in the number of hits scored was connected with the mood of the subject. An initial mood of faith and optimism makes for good results. Scepticism and resistance have the opposite effect...” (1997, 96) While Calle is open, receptive and relatively relaxed in Berck, in Lourdes the conditions for a positive interpretation of a synchronous event are not present.

Main writes that signs and symbols are shared culturally and may evoke synchronicities that have not only individual, but also shared, relevance “...the expression of archetypal meaning which is transcendental to human consciousness...” (1997, 28) Yet some symbols once considered universal have evolved different meanings to communities and individuals; such is the nature of religious symbols. Kristen and Calle, for example,
interpret the symbols of the Catholic Church quite differently. Kristen instructs Calle: “Confier votre mère à Marie. Lui demander de vous consoler. Utiliser un symbole universel pour régler un problème personnel.” (Lourdes, 97) Yet Calle does not share Kristen’s understanding of what Marie means in terms of religious devotion and these instructions remain meaningless and ultimately damaging, initiating the breakdown of Calle’s faith in her constraint. Calle approaches her tasks in Lourdes dispassionately, even negatively, and this supports Jung’s proposition of the necessity of a mood of faith and optimism required for the recognition of felicitous coincidences.

It is not until Nulle part that the future truly becomes the focus of the constraint but everything that occurs during this part of the project points to the future as uncertain and unknowable. At the end of Nulle part Calle rejects the constraint and decides, “J’irai quand-même au Pôle. Seule. Sans l’Intelligence.” (79). This final rejection is the culminating point of the nature of the coincidences that occur throughout Où et Quand?, coincidences that push Calle to emotional lows. She completes a project in which the constraint, rather than act as facilitator, becomes an antagonist.

IV. Portraits

Calle draws different kinds of portraits in Où et Quand? that are differentiated under a series of subheadings: Portraits of self, Portraits of place and Portrait of nowhere. Calle makes portraits of place in words and photographs. Photographs perform an illustrative function but writing in
each of the three books has a status that varies, appearing in different forms with changing functions; this is an unexpected aspect of these presentations of place. The written passages of the books in which Calle tells the story of each of her journeys maintain their narrative function but she also uses writing as a graphic element, a symbolic device to transmit meaning in much the same way as a visual image does. Words are objectified, aestheticised and pictorialised; they lose their conventional linguistic function and become pictures, photographs or images.

This use of writing is present from the beginning of the series and is influenced by what Calle finds in each of the places she visits. Berck is portrayed as a place characterised by conundrums; the book adopts the appearance of a collection of word puzzles and games and Calle uses both colour (of the photography and of the choice of coloured pages) and the arrangement of words on the page to this end. The narrative of Berck is restrained and minimalist; most of the written passages comprise just one or two sentences. The exception to this brevity is the script of the DVD of Calle’s encounter with an elderly woman, Mémé, which is included in full. It is typed on transparent aqua paper and is thus almost illegible without manipulation of the layers of text. This arrangement demonstrates both the concrete and metaphorical difficulties of the script, rendering its puzzling content manifest within the form in which it is presented. Another word puzzle is also printed on the same transparent pale aqua paper, resembling word puzzles that alter one letter at a time so that one word becomes another; Berck transforms into Berque. The words not only transform but disappear, a manifestation of the ephemeral and equivocal nature of the
words and their associated meanings in the context of the coincidence found in Berck. In *Berck* Calle also creates puzzles from her photographs, such as the series that occupies the first seventy pages and becomes a moving image when the pages are flipped. Images, colour and writing follow each other in a way that introduces visual resonance and complexity. The book uses two different coloured papers for its pages: white and transparent aqua. This latter suggests the seafront on which Berck is situated. An aqua page may precede or follow a photograph that features the same colour so that colour resonates from one page or image to the next.

If *Berck* is configured as a puzzling excursion, *Lourdes* feels like a complete journey because it mirrors a concurrent emotional one. In no other book, except perhaps *Douleur exquise*, does Calle create such a feeling of loneliness and isolation, despite the presence of a collaborator and meetings with a number of people. These meetings dominate Calle’s time in *Lourdes*; her contact with its inhabitants is both unpleasant and absurd. The story she has to tell about her visit to Lourdes is complex, requiring detailed explanation that is uncharacteristic of her usual concise style of writing; in *Lourdes* these written passages may occupy an entire page and cover many details and episodes. Almost every photograph in *Lourdes* focuses on words that are either the subject of the image or inscribed across them in publication. *Lourdes* reinforces the position of language as essential to, not just the narrative content of the series, but to the messages the series communicates through unconventional employment of linguistic elements.
Finally, in *Nulle part* language becomes meaningless as written passages are extracted from their context to be reincorporated into a text without meaning. Words are pictorialised and objectified; they are presented as objects, not to be read, but to be simply looked at. In each book language moves progressively further away from its expected narrative function to become objectified and symbolic.

**IV.a. Portraits of self**

It is in *Lourdes* that difficulties with the constraint become evident because, unlike in *Berck* in which she has no emotional involvement in events, the activities Calle undertakes and the signs she reads in Lourdes have an impact on her well being. In *Lourdes* it is impossible for Calle to maintain her status as object\(^\text{12}\) of the constraint. Her emotional engagement demands that subjectivity take over; the focus is necessarily on Calle and for this reason there are five portraits of her in *Lourdes* that represent key moments in the narrative and that highlight her gradually mounting distress. The photograph on page 21 shows Calle standing on the Garigliano Bridge in Paris. There is a tiny portrait taken by Maud Kristen on a Polaroid camera on page 99 and on pages and 103 and 143 there are two self-portraits: in one of them Calle is reflected in the window of the train and the second is taken on her mobile telephone. Jean-Baptiste Mondino, a fashion and celebrity

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\(^{12}\)“Je veux me laisser, manipuler, téléguider. Aller vers un avenir que je n’ai pas imaginé et, même si Maude refuse de me donner des ordres, devenir la femme-objet de mon destin à travers ses visions. M’abandonner. Renoncer.” (*Où est quand? Lourdes*, 11)
Photograph self-portraits require the use of specialised equipment or the exploitation of shadows and reflections, as Hubert Damisch describes in his introduction to Denis Roche’s *Ellipse et laps*, "Le photographe peut être présent dans l’image sous l’espèce, qu’on dira indicielle, de son propre reflet, saisi dans un miroir ou une vitre...ou de son ombre telle qu’elle s’étend devant lui sur le sol ou se projette sur le mur... " (1991, 18) Since Calle does not consider herself to be a photographer of great technique, “I can delegate photography because I’m not a good photographer...” (Hans-Ulrich Orbist, 2009, 136), she often has others take her portraits. “Jean-Baptiste Mondino, for example, made dozens of photos for my autobiography...and that doesn’t present a problem for me at all.” (Orbist, 2009, 136) However, turning over all her portraits to a studio photographer would mean that the important documentary aspect of her photography would be lost, “The image that results is by and large the right one, it’s right in relation to the idea...I don’t go back to make photos, I don’t improve them. They are like records...” (Orbist, 2009, 136) The evidence Johnnie Gratton presents about the reproduction of photographs in *Suite vénitienne* demonstrates that this statement is not entirely true however it is indisputable that Calle’s choice of photographs and the texts they illustrate form a complete artistic entity as a record of her experiences. In *Lourdes* some of the portraits of Calle are not technically self-portraits but they are illustrations of self at various stages of

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13 The “autobiography” to which Calle refers is *Des histoires vraies* (2002). Mondino is credited with the cover photograph and as the “…auteur discret et généreux de certaines photographies de ce livre.” (copyright page).
the journey and remain self-portraits in the context of the narrative, no matter by whom they were taken. These self-portraits place emphasis on Calle’s solitude and emotional vulnerability as well as on her search for disappearance “J’entrevois ce que je suis venue chercher. La disparition.” (Lourdes, 101) They illustrate her reticence unequivocally and proclaim her as an entirely solitary central presence in the narrative, travelling alone to a place that feels hostile.

The photograph taken on the Garigliano Bridge shows Calle standing alone on a cold, windy morning. She does this to provoke a meeting, imitating the chance encounter of her friend who met a man in this same place “…j’ai attendu de croiser, comme c’était arrivé à Jeanne, trois ans auparavant…un homme vêtu d’un blouson de cuir, un bel homme âgé de quarante-deux ans…un homme qui venait de passer une nuit blanche et rentrer se coucher par cette matinée venteuse.” (19) Unfortunately the same good fortune does not occur and Calle’s encounters are rather less romantic, “Hier il y avait du vent mais personne ne m’a souri. Deux mendians qui poussaient un chariot de supermarché sont passés…A 9 heures, j’ai renoncé. Pas de miracle…” (19) The photograph and the episode it illustrates are almost inconsequential to the narrative except that the name of the town is introduced with no small degree of irony, “Il aurait souri, ralenti son pas, il m’aurait demandé si j’étais bien cette femme dont il connaissait lui aussi l’existence…Si ce projet se concrétisait je l’intitulerais Lourdes.” (19) Calle does in fact seem to set her immediate future in motion by introducing the name “Lourdes” and associating it with the word “miracle”.

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A tiny Polaroid photograph on page 97 confirms that Lourdes is indeed where Calle will go. Kristen sees her surrounded by a halo, an introduction of religious imagery and an apparent sign. Calle is sceptical, "Une loupe est nécessaire, mais on peut voir un petit quelque chose sur l’image, autour de mon visage...avec beaucoup de bonne volonté, un halo doré." (97) She can’t see herself going to Lourdes, “La voyante a choisi de m’envoyer d’abord dans une station médicale, Berck. Et maintenant, une cité mariale. Quelle faute dois-je expier?” (23) Calle is not Catholic but these quotations demonstrate that she is conversant with the kind of language used in the practice of Catholicism, a vocabulary that attaches her experience to Lourdes. Kristen, too, integrates the vocabulary of religious observance into her directions to Calle, “Aller à Lourdes, c’est un devoir. J’ai le devoir de vous envoyer là où je vois.” (97) The inescapability of this visit is signalled by the confluence of place, an image that suggests the significance of religious experience and the choice of vocabulary.

The next photograph (103) is an illustration of Calle’s desire for disappearance. In photographing the countryside passing through the window of the train she also captures her reflection in the window. One image almost cancels the other so that she is barely visible and looks as if she is disappearing into the landscape, a physical manifestation of her desire.

The final photograph of Calle, in which she looks despairing (143), is an admission of the failure of the constraint, “Ça ne fonctionne pas comme on voudrait, ça ne synchronise pas...ça manque des signes. On reste dans la disparition...” (141) It is an illustration of the effect of maintaining the
process of the constraint when it is clear that it is provoking undesirable consequences. These photographs demonstrate the significance of images that add meaning rather than simply reflecting what is written; these photographs show what Calle is unable to say in describing the way she has reacted to her experiences. She maintains distance in her writing that does not show the depth of her despair; it is the photographs that communicate the strength of feeling in the narrative, including the book’s main portrait.

[photograph removed]

The Mondino portrait sets the tone for Lourdes. It does not represent a specific moment in the narrative but is rather evocative of the mood of the book and incidents that occur within it. Calle is portrayed in the style of a traditional image of a Saint as the following reproduction of a stained glass
window that shows Bernadette Soubiros’ vision of the Virgin Mary, demonstrates:

![Image of a stained glass window showing Bernadette Soubiros and the Virgin Mary.]

Several aspects of the image are repeated in the photograph of Calle; of note are the roses, veil and a pale halo of light that echoes the image that Kristen uses to send her to Lourdes. Some features of the image are symbolic and make reference to elements of the narrative: the neon sign is a direct
reference to the spectacle of religious observance that defines Lourdes as well as a reference to the street signs that define Calle’s experience there. Red roses (although they are more pink than red) symbolise martyrdom and in Lourdes Calle is a martyr suffering to make art. This is a necessary condition for portrayal as a saint, as is evident in the traces of her tears. Despite its reference to moments of apparently real despair the portrait nevertheless hits an ironic deadpan comedic tone in its pastiche of the tropes of portraits of Catholic saints and the performance of religious observance as well as in its summary of Calle’s visit to Lourdes.

IV.b. Portraits of place

The people Calle meets give characterise place; her portraits of place are thus essentially human portraits, whether meeting Mémé in Berck or the priests and nuns in Lourdes. Many of the experiences Calle recounts in Berck and Lourdes are everyday, even banal: walking the streets, finding hotels, eating in hotel restaurants, yet these ordinary occurrences are configured as strange, difficult, unexpected, even bizarre; accumulated events create impressions of place that are exceptional in their eccentricity. Both towns are associated with institutions, Berck with medical, psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities and Lourdes with the Catholic Church. While the portraits she makes refer to these institutions she creates personal, rather than information-based or objective, portraits of place.

14 In Catholic symbolism the red rose is a symbol of Martyrdom while the white rose is a symbol of purity...In Renaissance Art, a garland of roses is often an allusion to the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin. (Catholictradition.org/signsandsymbols)
Calle hopes that her trip to a seaside destination will be exciting, “Le début était prometteur. Je prenais le train en direction d’une station balnéaire. Les cartes ont vu le Nord, des falaises, l’océan.” (87) The accompanying monochrome photograph showing a grey sky, a lonely lighthouse perched on a cliff-top and a stormy sea, the archetype of an atmospheric seascape promising mystery, adventure and perhaps romance, evokes an atmospheric destination. She discovers with disappointment that her destination is to be Berck, “Ensuite ça s’est dégradé. Du désœuvrement, un déclin…Ce serait Berck. Et bien qu’il n’y ait pas de falaises…Aller voir. Sans désir et sans nécessité.” (91) Yet, because of Mémé, the assuagement of the constraint and the task’s apparent success, Calle grows comfortable there, “C’est reposant, l’obéissance aux règles, l’errance sous contrôle, le soulagement de ne pas avoir à juger les événements.” (117) In contrast, Calle’s initial negative feelings about her visit to Lourdes are reinforced because of the hostility, confrontation and confusion she finds there. In Lourdes she is also forced to question her standard working practices, finding that the constraint that allows her to be guided by the activities of another means that she becomes subject to direction that is ill contrived.

The subject of Calle’s first photograph of Berck features the imposing buildings of the Institut Calot located along the shorefront; Calle depicts it as decayed, flanked by long grass and worn picket fences; this is one of a number of Berck’s hospitals that specialise in brain injury and that leads to a significant population of people in wheelchairs. Calle claims to see people in wheelchairs along the shorefront “A perte de vue…” (103) and therefore has no choice but to refuse when Kristen asks her to approach someone to ask
what they have lost, “Demander aux handicapés ce qu’ils ont perdu? Impossible.” (103) This is the first moment of doubt in regard to the integrity of the constraint but meeting Mémé, who provides Calle with the material she requires to form an impression of Berck and to fulfill the requirements demanded of her, means that she delays further questioning of the constraint’s validity and settles into a familiar pattern, “Il n’est pas nécessaire de s’amuser. Être là suffit...Je pourrais rester ici à ne rien attendre. Le temps passerait.” (117)

Berck contains a short film on DVD, an edited extract of approximately five minutes of Calle’s portrait of Mémé, the elderly woman whom she encounters by chance and who leads her on a walking tour of the town. This tour forms the impression that Calle presents artistically; the absurdity and eccentricity of Mémé’s tour is reflected in the finished style of Berck. Mémé leads Calle through a series of activities that demonstrate a relationship to place that is distinctly individual and superstitious. She leads Calle to perform a series of rituals that have the quality of invented observances but that are specific to Mémé’s habitual walking route. For example, she bids Calle to look carefully where she walks, to use water from a stagnant puddle to cure a (non-existent) cold, to breathe deeply, to use carrots to cure poor circulation and to find the sea air is different in quality at one end of a two-metre long fence than at the other. Mémé talks volubly, instructing and suggesting; her use of language is literal so that she is unaware of double meanings that she uses innocently, for example “On fait le trottoir” (113) is, for her, about walking; she seems unaware that it is a euphemism for prostitution.
The inclusion of a DVD within *Berck* demonstrates the superiority of film for presenting the veracity of certain events. A DVD is concrete evidence of Mémé’s eccentricities and better proof than either still photographs or writing, underlining the authenticity of the episode. This is in part because, since film records things as they happen, it has a temporal equivalence to real time that neither photographs nor writing do. Mémé’s tour of Berck is fast-paced, she does not stop moving or talking "...je courais toujours derrière elle..." (115). The film is only a few minutes long so it is subject to ruthless editing, given that Calle avowedly spent two hours or so with her. It shows they have barely a moment of repose for the camera to capture anything other than the indications of movement; there are very few still shots that focus on anything that either she or Mémé does. The camera concentrates on clothing, feet and shadows, but no details. There are some diversions that catch Calle’s eye that are perhaps indicative of a sense of place that occurs alongside of Mémé’s patter: dogs walking along the beach or people encumbered with chairs and bags as they make their way to sit on the sand, reminding us that Mémé’s extraordinary conception of place exists within one that is familiar and ordinary. The only apparent pause occurs at the end of the short film and is poignant. After two hours of filming Mémé gives in to curiosity and appears suddenly confused, bewildered and vulnerable. She asks, "...qu’est-ce que tu fais? Mais combien de portraits...T’es en train de tirer mon portrait?" (*Berck*, 115) Thus the portrait of Mémé becomes a portrait of Berck.

This meeting is a *mise-en-abyme* of the constraint. While it is Kristen who initially directs Calle to approach one of Berck’s inhabitants, it is Mémé
who becomes the eventual driver of the constraint when she takes over the role of directing Calle’s visit. Calle and Kristen’s collaboration is based on method and restraint but Mémé’s behaviour has neither of these qualities and so, through contact with her, the constraint takes on a questionable, absurd quality. Mémé and Kristen operate with a different temporal focus: the constraint, as interpreted by Kristen, directs Calle to react to things that occur in the present but with a view to the future. Mémé’s instructions to Calle are centred entirely on the present as things happen and are noticed; there is no past (Mémé does not even give her name and no indications of her personal history) and no future in Mémé’s discourse. The *mise-en-abyme* submits the idea of a constraint to question for the first time: just what does it mean? The appearance of Mémé compounds the unlikelihood that the constraint will reveal anything coherent and comprehensible. Mémé shows that Calle’s bid to reveal the future and search for certainty can never be more than the imitation of an activity that will always be about improbability.

In its use of puzzle-like images and language the style of *Berck* suggests the quality of oddness that Calle attributes to this place that is, at least partially, formed from Mémé’s commentary. Calle’s images reinforce this impression: a road runs straight into the water, massive buildings dominate the shoreline and obscure any view, a bunch of red roses stands in the sand, dogs are leashed together without apparent attachment to a person and Berck’s war memorial is situated in front of a dilapidated apartment building that overshadows and diminishes it. Her photographs of the gigantic, dark, windowless buildings, institutional building on a grand scale, set in a wild landscape, make Berck look like a wasteland and a place where humanity is
diminished and thus it feels like a non-place. Marc Augé coined the term non-place in Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity but his non-places are buildings such as airport terminals and fast food restaurants that are generic places fulfilling the same functions and built in the same style no matter where in the world they exist. Local architectural customs, materials and traditions are not considered in their construction. Therefore Augé’s model does not quite describe the kind of inhospitality Calle finds in Berck since she depicts it as having identity and singularity. Edward Relph (1980) talks about placelessness rather than non-place and points to three elements that may furnish place with an identity: its physical features or appearance, observable activities and meanings or symbols (61). Relph suggests that the possible elements that constitute identity are infinitely diverse and that an outsider such as Calle is only able to pay attention to a small number of them. Mémé’s role is to give an insider’s broader perspective, “...full with meanings for us that are known and experienced...” (61) If Mémé’s experience of Berck is one of alienation – and we do not know that is the case, although it is the impression she communicates with her interpretation that creates a kind of fantasy of place – then her account of Berck will be influenced by this experience and will yield an impression of placelessness that Relph describes thus, “At its most profound it consists of a pervasive and perhaps irreversible alienation from places as the homes of men...” (143) The reader has no way of knowing whether the sites Mémé identifies for Calle are imbued with meaning of her own invention or are collective urban myths yet they feel like personal inventions, a way to express “...the intensity of experience of a place.” (Relph, 141) Since the meanings Mémé gives to the
landmarks of Berck are so highly individualised it would seem that there is an attempt to attribute significance where otherwise there may be none and make place personally relevant:

Nous sommes arrivées devant une barrière qui mesurait deux mètres et elle me fait admettre que l’air était totalement différent selon que l’on respirait du côté gauche ou du côté droit.

-Viens ici, viens ici, appuie-toi là…Et respire. Mais fort ! Tu te rends compte, la différence ?

-Oui, hein, la différence qu’il y a…C’est pas croyable, hein, la différence qu’il y a… (115)

Like Calle in Suite vénitienne Mémé is a flâneur creating meaning through the practice of walking that, according to Michel de Certeau, is “…a long poem...” (101) that creates a language that is specifically related to place, associating places in a structure that is both syntactic (joined together) and semantic (that creates meaning). In Mémé’s words the poem of Berck is a confused and ill-defined nonsense poem, stranger than any by Lear or Bellocq. Her association with Berck is defined only by the content of Calle’s recording, the only evidence of her existence in Berck and what it means to her is what is presented in this book as a disassociative discourse about a place that requires invention and storytelling to develop character and meaning. Berck is thus a place that, in terms Relph describes, has “…few significances and symbols...The overall result is the undermining of place for both individuals and cultures...” (143) Berck thus comes to be characterised as a place of
puzzles and, once the constraint seems to work, a place of puzzles apparently solved. Calle is resigned to Berck’s dullness and oddness yet it has given her that for which she is searching, “Être là suffit...tout fait signe et s’en trouve auréolé de grace. Je pourrais rester ici à ne rien attendre. Le temps passerait.” (117) While the town of Berck seems to disappear behind Mémé’s discourse it is in fact the town itself that allows this meeting to take place and what Calle finds there contributes both style and narrative to the book as well as clues about the direction the constraint will follow in future volumes.

After the experience of Berck, so puzzling yet so apparently satisfying, Calle is encouraged to look at the future of this project as a game. Unfortunately the mood of innocent good humour is soon lost and any sense of the artist at play disappears. When Calle sets out for Lourdes her personal situation has changed; she is faced with the unavoidable but still future death of her mother, “Je pars sans ma mère. Il est trop tard pour elle. Elle voulait, avant de mourir, revoir New York, trop lointain, la montagne, trop épuisant, la mer...Nous irons regarder la mer.” (101) The journey to Lourdes becomes intensely personal and emotional; Calle’s altered mood influences the tone of the book, which is far graver than the playful Berck. Gone are the games, puzzles and openness to random encounters, the change marked by the increased number of portraits of Calle who places herself in a position more central to this book’s narrative. Berck portrays a series of incidents to which Calle is witness but Lourdes is about what happens to Calle in that place.

Calle develops her portrait of place through the people she meets although here there is no sustained, single encounter but rather a number of
people who contribute to a cumulative portrait of place. Kristen sends Calle on what she sees will be a spiritual journey;

Ce que vous allez cherchez à Lourdes est d’ordre guerrier. Une façon de faire votre deuil en grand…Confier votre mère à Marie. Lui demander de vous consoler. Utiliser un symbole universel pour régler un problème personnel. Lourdes sera facilitante. Allez à Lourdes rencontrer la vierge, mère pleine d’amour, pour renouer le fil de votre histoire. (97)

Kristen instructs Calle to visit people and places associated with the Catholic Church, the cave where Bernadette Soubirous is said to have seen the Virgin Mary, Bernadette’s house, a certain Father Doze and the priest (unnamed) who had written to Calle’s friend Florence Aubenas, a journalist kidnapped in Iraq. Calle finds herself unable to carry out Kristen’s instructions; she cannot engage in practices of religious observance or communicate with the people she meets. Kristen sees Lourdes as a place that could be helpful emotionally and spiritually, yet Calle finds it hostile, its inhabitants focused on reciting their religious convictions without attempts at real communication. After the atmosphere created by Calle’s mood, this is the second source of tension and conflict in Lourdes. The third comes from the lack of felicitous coincidences. Every sign that Calle recognises has a meaning that is in opposition to her usual conception of the word: Saint paired with Monique (her mother’s name), Sophie paired with children that she has never wanted. These mixed associations mean that Lourdes appears alien.
Lourdes is a portrait of two opposing conceptions of place: Kristen’s ideal view and the reality of place for Calle. Calle discovers a place that opposes, rather than supports, idealised notions of pilgrimage, solace and recovery. She portrays those she meets as insensitive and closed-minded. Calle is unfamiliar with the rituals and gestures that compose religious observance, “M’agenouiller? Ça va être difficile. Je regarde comment s’y prennent les autres. Il y en a une...qui murmure en effleurant l’eau qui suinte le long de la paroi. C’est envisageable et d’ailleurs je ne connais personne dans le coin.” (135) At Mass she is unable to swallow the host “...je la porte à ma bouche mais, plus loin, je recrache. Je ne peux pas. Je ne sais pas pourquoi. Ça bloque.” (117) Although everyone she meets and speaks to behaves with the idea of a common belief in mind Calle does not share a common language with them because she cannot relate to the practice of religious observance, finding the methods of communication unfamiliar. Furthermore the religion as she experiences it appears to have a dogmatic and unfeeling nature; sermons are given in lieu of replies. For example, at Bernadette Soubirou’s house, Kristen directs Calle to ask a series of questions: no matter what the question she receives the same standard answer:

À toutes les questions proposées par les cartes la gardienne répond de façon identique. Quelle relation entretenez-vous avec la vierge? "J’ai toujours aimé la vierge." Des millions de gens vous rendent visite. Le méritez-vous ? "J’ai toujours aimé la vierge." Qu’est-ce que ça fait d’être singulier ? "J’ai toujours aimé la vierge." Que se
passe-t-il dans votre imaginaire ? "J’ai toujours aimé la vierge."

(129)

Calle is adrift in alien territory in a place that feels like a place of open hostility, of dogma and insensitivity; her subjectivity is not recognised or acknowledged and her status as an individual being is erased. She does disappear as she is not able to be present, as herself, to the people she meets but this is not the kind of disappearance for which she is searching that is more a withdrawal from suffering. This disappearance is in response to the neglect of others and their failure to recognise her singularity and respond appropriately. There is a strange irony in the fact that her presence in her work is most clearly tangible in Lourdes yet it is also a book that chronicles a disappearance of sorts.

The most significant aspect of the photographs Calle takes of Lourdes is that they all focus on language; many of them are images of words, mainly signs that reflect the nature of the city. Others that are not focused on words are overwritten with words that are presented, not as mere legends at the margins, but as integral to the images; this tells the reader that her experience in Lourdes is dominated by language. The people she meets use language in different ways and to different purposes; some mouth monologues and slogans but there are those with whom she can converse. Across her images she prints those uttered slogans, phrases and sentences that sound borrowed, rehearsed or packaged. They are also included in the book’s narrative. For example, there are three photographs on page 119 which already have a focus on words: images of the Hôtel la Solitude, la
confession and the sign of the Saint Sauveur hotel. Across them she has inscribed a quintessentially Catholic phrase that associates both fortune and suffering: “Comment avez-vous eu de la chance dans votre malheur?” This superposition of one phrase across the others reinforces the way the logic of Catholicism has penetrated place, from simple labelling to existential questioning. The images bring solitude, confession and salvation together as partners in the process of the observance, in the recognition of misfortune and the possibility that it may be enlightening. Each one of these words and phrases has an association with the process of spiritual enlightenment within this faith: solitude for reflection, confession for cleansing the soul and le Sauveur for redemption. Thus Calle introduces layers of meaning to the images: dark, gloomy hotels and city streets become sites for potential revelation and healing, working against their visual appearance. Alas, this for others and not for Calle and the legend inscribed across her own portrait, “rentrez vite” is testament, for her, to the failure of Lourdes.

Calle’s portraits of place imbue both destinations with a character that is related to her conception of their status as places. If, in Calle’s mind, Berck seems like a destination that can only prove to be disappointing, a non-place devoid of interest, it grows into its status as she discovers it, taking on an identity and an atmosphere through her activities and the people she meets. Lourdes, on the other hand, with an identity that is as transparent as it is famous, a city known for its functions, becomes a non-place of meaningless landmarks and symbols. In the search for answers it is a dead end, a place of confrontation and confusion and shrill and contradictory voices, a place where language is used symbolically rather than communicatively. Both
books exist in contrast to the third in the series that reinforces the idea that Calle’s journey is away from place and towards words. In *Nulle part* the markers of place are minimal and the narrative of this book takes place entirely within the realm of language.

**IV.c. A portrait of nowhere: *Nulle part***

After the tenuous coincidence of Berck, going to Lourdes where everything goes awry and the death of her mother (extratextual but still of significance to the content of *Où et quand?*) Calle arrives at the setting of her last book in the series: nowhere. All hope is dashed: there is to be no final revelation of Calle’s future direction because “nowhere” is a metaphor for failure, a sign that a point of culmination does not exist. The mood of optimistic expectation with which Calle began her series of journeys is transformed through conflict and confrontation, yet Calle retains a wry sense of the absurd to arrive at this end. Along the way she has developed a calm appreciation of the power of words to do nothing and reveal nothing, and yet to be contained within objects (books) that tell stories. This final text is written in a non-place that makes non-sense.

The final volume finds its place in words; language is thus not a secondary element that is the result of being in another place, *Nulle part* takes place in language. The book reports words, makes pictures of words and creates text from words at random, putting words together that were

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15 A further addition to the perception that there is nothing to discover here: the dedication of the book is: “…à personne forcément…” (5)
never meant to be side-by-side. This, according to Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things*, is something that language is able to do:

We are all familiar with the disconcerting effects of the proximity of extremes, or, quite simply, with the sudden vicinity of things which have no relation to each other; the mere act of enumeration has a power of enchantment all of its own...What is impossible is not the propinquity of the things listed, but the very site on which their propinquity would be possible...- where could they ever meet, except in the immaterial sound of the voice pronouncing their enumeration, or on the page transcribing it? Where else could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language? (1989, xvi)

Mémé is the first in this series to demonstrate that language is as much a tool of nonsense and the absurd as of the comprehensible. What Foucault describes as the juxtaposition of “...the proximity of extremes...” is exactly the process that language undergoes with Mémé, with the priests of *Lourdes* and in *Nulle part*. The text that is formed from the sequential, accumulated citations of *l’Intelligence*, printed on page 72\(^{16}\) of *Nulle part*, is

\(^{16}\) Maria? Mais tu te déconnes, elle ne s’appelle pas Maria ! / C’est à peu près ici qu’avait jadis coulé le Mulvelven, depuis la Skredderdalen jusqu’à son embouchure dans le fjord. / Là aussi, du fait de leurs dimensions et de leur longévité les plantes réalisent collectivement les paysages qui servent de cadre de vie à la plupart des constituants de la faune, homme compris. / La vieille dut faire encore deux voyages, de l’une à l’autre, pour bien régler les points de l’entrevue. / Puis, il y eut encore des salutations. La belle Lisa, dépassant même les amabilités réglées à l’avance, voulut accompagner la belle Normande jusque sur le trottoir. / Il incline poliment la tête en remerciement pour les achat, puis s’en va. / Mais comment as-tu pu me faire une chose pareille... / Le corps d’Octave Parango n’a jamais été formellement identifié. / Tout seul, le pauvre inutile dont on s’est débarrassé aussi dans la terre, n’ayant pour compagnie que les files parallèles de ses muets collègues, ces étendues régiments de silencieux qui furent vifs, tout seul dans le noir silence, le crevé, rigolant avec sa tête de l’autre monde. / Une pensée douce, c’est que maintenant et morte, elle n’est pas juive et qu’ils ne peuvent plus rien contre elle, plus lui faire peur. / Qu’est-ce que je ferais moi, pour survivre ? Marsden pense : Koggelmander je jonglerai et tu feras le gigolo. / Les doigts de Jake me transmirent un nouvel avertissement. / La créature est abjecte. Que faire d’autre que la détruire ou lui
completely incoherent. Because of its varied origins, different styles, variations in place and character names, lack of transition between sentences and constant change in subjects, the language of Nulle part is disjointed and poorly connected but, acknowledging its origins, it could not be otherwise. The text reveals the status of a narrative in which a coherent chronotope – consistency of time and/or place – does not exist. Yet Kristen, who is most invested in ensuring her revelations make sense, manages to find meaning:

Dans la première partie du texte, l’Intelligence reformule la question en évoquant votre projet Où et Quand ?...Puis le texte bascule. La vraie réponse commence lorsqu’« il incline poliment la tête en remerciement...puis s’en va ». Ensuite l’Intelligence développe une idée claire...Elle juge notre jeu mort, stérile, abject...Enfin, dans la dernière partie du texte, elle s’indigne de notre insistance... (73)

Kristen’s summation of the meaning of the text of is not sufficiently convincing for Calle who has already rejected the premise of the constraint in order to avoid a second Lourdes; she makes a decision to act as she wishes rather than as the constraint dictates. In rejecting the constraint she
consequently accepts that she is free to behave as she sees fit, “J’irai quand même au Pôle. Seule. Sans l’Intelligence.” (79) Calle is liberated.

Calle’s Nulle part is a place because it is tangible, it can be photographed and there are things, books and people, to be found there, yet as a place it is elusive with no landscape, no perspective, no features and no views. This points to the paradox that is the idea of nowhere; it is at once a place and not a place. Its name defines it as a place, a place that is the opposite of “somewhere”, so that it has attributes congruent with place but creates a sense of nothingness. Conceptions of “nowhere” vary considerably; one such example is that of Samuel Butler’s Erewhon, (1921) in which nowhere is shown in opposition to established, named places. It is a place without those features that would give it the status of place, features defined by a Eurocentric world in which places are attributed names, have populated towns and cities; order is made of the wild landscape. Photographs of open pages of books dominate Calle’s vision of “nowhere” that is defined by language; it is a place where words and pictures are found. This third volume gives support to the conception of the particularity of place that is represented in Berck and Lourdes. Nulle part is a different kind of place, but a place nonetheless, that has its own practices; it is here that Kristen’s l’Intelligence is made manifest. In Nulle part books are used but not read; the words selected from books are of instrumental, rather than literary or informative, value.

The photographic images in Nulle part present a strong contrast to the sense of place rendered in its companion volumes, Berck and Lourdes. The
photographs are not quite monochromatic but feature a minimalist palette set against a featureless dark background. This very restrained use of colour is only in the photographs, there are no coloured pages or other insertions. Only the bright green cover echoes the use of colour that is a feature of the series. Gone too are the towns through which Calle wanders. Only books exist in *Nulle part* that is shown as absence of background, colour, movement, other people and the relative absence of variation in the photographic images since the camera focuses on the same repeated activity. That is not to say there is no variation but it is slight; the angle and proximity of the camera changes, giving a slightly altered aspect each time, some of the selected books are illustrated, or written for the theatre, or the font style and size changes, but the overall impression is of the uniformity of subject. Of course the books are not chosen for their visual diversity but, by Kristen, “...pour la richesse de leur vocabulaire et pour la diversité des champs sémantiques de leurs récits...” (11)

The action of *Nulle part* is a charade because, even before the session commences, Calle is committed to a trip to the North Pole, “Dans huit jours, le 25 septembre exactement, je traverse les fjords de Groenland.” (15) Calle wishes to go to the Arctic Circle to complete an unfulfilled desire of her mother’s, “Ma mère avait toujours projeté d’aller un jour au pôle Nord. Elle est morte...sans accomplir ce rêve. Invitée à naviguer dans l’Arctique, j’ai accepté pour elle.” (15). She does go and the eventual journey is documented on the website [www.capefarewell.com/diskobay/using-the-words-climate-change/](http://www.capefarewell.com/diskobay/using-the-words-climate-change/)
The mechanics of the use of *l’Intelligence* are simple but the resulting text is not. The session is structured by a series of questions and answers, “Je pose une question que je formule clairement. J’ouvre un premier livre à deux mains. Les phrases qui se trouvent sous mes pouces gauche et droit [sic] constituent des réponses…je recommence l’opération avec d’autres livres que j’ouvre l’un après l’autre…” (11) The questions are straightforward, “Acceptes-tu de travailler avec nous?” (42) Calle documents the consultation as a three-way conversation between her, Kristen and *l’Intelligence* and the text maintains this diversity of voices and purpose as varied language with questions, answers and commentaries. Some of the language feels spontaneous, other parts pre-prepared while on yet another level some language feels entirely out of place in the context of conversation as it is literary, not spoken. Finally language is shown as absurd when it is cobbled together. Time seems to be suspended because Calle does not draw attention to it; dates are recorded but passing time is not. The absence of place and apparent suspension of time deny the normal working of the chronotope. This is remarkable given that Bakhtin defines place and time as essential for the structure of narrative but further scrutiny shows that *Nulle part*, with its text that displays an absence of any structures defined as narrative (character, plot, setting, teleology) may be said to lack narrative, perhaps proving through these absences that Bakhtin’s claims are true. Such potential narrative elements as Calle’s mother’s death and the journey to the Pole are extratextual and do not initiate narrative development. *Nulle part* is not structured around the derivation of meaning, but around the deployment of language to a task that defies meaning because it wrests language from its
context. Footnote 15 repeats the finished text comprised of perfectly structured sentences without meaning because they have no semantic relationship to each other. In this culminating passage of *Où et quand?* meaninglessness is underscored, suggesting, since everything that has gone before leads here, that meaning throughout the series is compromised and that Calle’s initial premise of searching for the future is a quest devoid of sense.

*Où et Quand?* is a perfect illustration of Paul Smethurst’s assertion that postmodern writing has taken a spatial turn. Place is a stable influence and is instrumental, not just in the development of narrative, but also in the introduction of characters, situations and style; each change in place represents a corresponding change in the qualities and elements that construct narrative and that are individualised to the influence place provides. Time, meanwhile, tends to be extratextual because each time Calle starts a new stage of the project she is at a different moment in her life that influences her approach but does not construct narrative. The project that begins as a search for meaning finishes with the discovery that there really is none as illustrated by the illusion of coincidence that begins in Berck, that is shattered in Lourdes and finally rendered meaningless in the context of a system that has creation of meaning at its centre: the *nulle part* of language.

And yet there is an unsettling conclusion to this trilogy of books because it questions any assumptions the reader has made before the final moments of the narrative (which by this point are mostly negative) about the utility of such a constraint based on practices that are superstitious and
unverifiable and the place of meaning in the context of the paranormal. Before the conclusion to *Nulle part* Kristen may be judged harshly, her practice as a clairvoyant looks inept, she has not only failed to lead Calle towards her destiny but, in attempting to do so, has failed to detect the difficulties that have been created by her “guidance” that have caused Calle evident emotional distress. “Serait-ce Maud qui tente de se débarrasser de moi, en douceur, par cette mise en abyme de la confiance ? Je lui confie ma vie et elle me remet entre les mains son *Guide* qui refuse de m’aider.” (*Nulle part*, 75) It seems that, at every point, there has a constant refusal to engage with the parameters demanded by the constraint’s purpose. Yet the final conclusion to the series suggests that Kristen may have the competence and sensitivity required of her vocation. She has asked Calle to bring a piece of jewelry with her:

Avant de partir je dépose au creux de sa main la chaîne en or ornée d’un diamant miniature...Ma mère portait à sa mort une chaîne identique. Quand ils ont emmené le corps, les thanatopracteurs la lui ont ôtée, par crainte d’une indélicatesse alors qu’elle reposait dans la chambre funéraire.

De peur de la perdre j’ai acheté la même. L’original reste à la maison. Moi aussi j’ai mis au coffre le vrai bijou.

Ma copie n’est pas fausse mais elle n’a pas d’histoire.
Maud ne ressent rien. Elle me demande la généalogie de la chaîne.

« C’est un faux, c’est normal. Toute l’histoire est dans l’autre. »

(75)

In the final moments of the collaboration, when there is nothing more to say, no directions to give, no decisions to be made, the “clair” of “clairvoyant” is apparent, perhaps for the first time. With this final twist the collaboration between Kristen and Calle ends. When they next meet, Calle is advised, “... je devrai venir libre.” (79)

4 CALLE’S LIEUX DE MÉMOIRE

“Son cœur était ouvert comme un livre...” (Rapport du chirurgien)

Disparitions, 7

This chapter is centred on both a series and a pair of books that take memory as their subject. The series is composed of three books under the
general title *L’absence* with individual titles *Disparitions*, *Fantômes* and *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est*. The second is a pair of books associated by their content, *Des histoires vraies* and *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*. The content of these books is ostensibly the same, but in the second it is subject to recontextualisation since a relationship is formed between Calle’s work and the exhibition space of the Freud Museum in London. Calle makes *lieux de mémoire* of her books, places “…where memory crystallizes and secretes itself…” (Pierre Nora, 1989, 7) In them she finds places for her own memories and also presents places devoted to the act of remembering, principally museums, but also cities like East Berlin, where the past has been removed so that the entire city has become a *lieu de mémoire* to its inhabitants.

In his article *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire* Pierre Nora discusses the difference between memory and history:

Memory is life…It remains in permanent evolution…unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History…is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic…History…calls for analysis and criticism…Memory takes root…in spaces, gestures, images and
objects; history binds itself to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. (8-9)

Calle’s books are not histories; they acknowledge the potency of memory so that all its features, as noted by Nora, are celebrated: its deformations, its vulnerability to the vagaries of time and recall, its relationship to the present, its magical and emotional qualities, but most importantly the way it relates to the objects and images that stimulate its activity. Nora sees the creation of lieu de mémoire as a necessity that accompanies the passing of real acts of memory that he defines as part of a society’s collective consciousness of its values and rituals, ideologies and practices (8). Archivisation is one way of creating a lieu de mémoire because contemporary practices of memory “...[rely] entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image.” (13) Calle’s material is a kind of archive, not one built on the collection of material that is an objective record of her intended subject, but rather a collection that is more personal, relying on accounts that highlight equally the emotional and magical and the indifferent and banal.

I. An archive of absence

Both sets of books are posited as archives; L’absence is an archive of missing art and the Des histoires vraies pair is a personal archive that has its field of reference enlarged in its association with the Freud museum. Memory is stored in images and words; these modalities have different formal implications for the material that Calle stores.
The subject of the *L’absence* group is temporary and permanent disappearance of works of art. It archives missing art works across a number of contexts; each book has its own method of representation that is reflected in its title. Calle uses words and images to create installations for those art works that have been stolen, damaged, loaned or removed and, in reporting on the disappearances, Calle turns two sites into *lieux de mémoire*: the places from which the art works have disappeared and then the books she makes about their disappearance. She creates her archive by collecting memories of the art works from which she writes a text that is assembled from quotations of those interviewed; it has qualities of both personal and collective memory.

Calle’s archive employs language as its dominant semiotic modality. The archive of absence consists of both writing and images but the photographs are almost purely illustrative; they do not add information as they do in *Où et quand?* or *Suite vénitienne*. The photographs are records of her installations\(^\text{17}\) and are thus an additional mode of making the art works present to the reader. These are three separate projects gathered under the general title *L’absence* in which Calle collects memories that include descriptions of physical aspects of the art works, the impressions they create for the viewer as well as the relationship each person interviewed has with the work in question. Her method recalls Sigmund Freud’s *A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad*; he states that writing is an essential instrument for

\(^{17}\)Calle’s installations are used to illustrate *Disparitions* and *Fantômes* but not *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est*. They are composed of her collected commentaries on, or memories of, the art works, and assembled to create an installation that occupies the position of the original piece. The installations are qualitatively different in each book; in *Disparitions* they are heavily framed, sombre pieces and in *Fantômes* they are self-adhesive, transparent transfers that are stuck to the walls. They contain the written text and reference visual elements of the original work.
keeping records since it can be readily accessed, “If I distrust my memory...I am able to supplement and guarantee its working by making a note in writing. In that case the surface upon which the note is preserved...is as it were a materialized portion of my mnemonic apparatus, which I otherwise carry about with me invisible.” (1961, 227)

In Archive Fever Jacques Derrida writes about the nature of the archive and the influence different modalities of recording have on the archival content, “...the technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the archivable content...The archivization produces as much as it records the event.” (1995, 17) Calle’s archive of L’absence is composed of the modalities she uses to record her information – personal memories recorded in writing, archival photographs, rough sketches that suggest the works’ compositions and photographs of the spaces left empty by the works’ disappearances – her replacement installation is then fashioned from this collected material to give an impression of the object that is missing. A process of circularity determines that this collected material and the books created from it are also potentially collectable and archivable items. Writing and photography are thus not just means of assembling an archive but in turn become archivable objects that have value in their own right.

It is difficult now to imagine an archive that does not have a photographic component. As a record, photography has limitations because photographs may be manipulated to be other than accurate, either at the time they are taken, or if they are interpreted according to changing social values, “...memory is an active process, constructing the past in the present,
selecting and reshaping it according to current preoccupations...Sometimes photographs are set up in order to deliberately mislead...often they are posed, or rearranged...” (Steve Edwards, 2006, 127-8) As a visual medium photography lacks a narrative dimension; John Svarkowski states “...photography has never been successful as narrative...” (1980, 9) The function of photography is not to tell stories but to show moments that are perceived as true because “…a photograph evokes the tangible presence of reality.” (Szarkowski, 1980, 12) He continues, “The function of these pictures [of the American Civil War] was not to make the story clear, it was to make it real.” (9) Roland Barthes attributes the certainty of the reality of a photograph, the limitations of its interpretation, to the fact that it has nothing more to reveal than its apparent content:

Si la Photographie ne peut être approfondie, c’est à cause de sa force d’évidence. Dans l’image l’objet se livre en bloc et la vue en est certaine – au contraire du texte ou d’autres perceptions qui me donnent l’objet de façon floue, discutable et m’incite de la sorte à me méfier de ce que je crois voir. C’est précisément dans cet arrêt de l’interprétation qu’est la certitude de la Photo… (2007, 165)

Thus the certainty of the photograph lies in its inability to be made more complex or profound; its truth lies in its surface, in the image itself. This justifies Calle’s use of language as a primary modality to tell the stories of these missing art works; photographs alone are too literal for a work that focuses on memory and requires narrative to make its meaning explicit. Photography has a place in these books, especially in the marking of absence,
but it is the narrative of the missing artwork that is necessary for the books to reveal their relationship to memory.

The archive is not only for storing memories but is also a place from which to retrieve them. In *A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad* Freud states,

I have only to bear in mind the place where this ‘memory’ has been deposited and then I can ‘reproduce’ it at any time I like, with the certainty that it will have remained unaltered and so have escaped the possible distortions to which it might have been subjected in my actual memory. (227)

Memory is unreliable and Calle includes misapprehensions, inaccuracies and obliquities in her accounts as these are traces of its mechanism; Calle’s subjects’ responses reflect the influence of nostalgia, emotion and even indifference, showing that memory can be far from accurate.

Absence is a stimulus for memory. Nora defines the dimensions of *lieux de mémoire* as material, functional and symbolic; sites may be portable\(^{18}\), topographic or monumental in nature. Functional *lieux* are institutions (including museums) and symbolic *lieux* are events such as official ceremonies of commemoration and places of sanctuary and refuge. Calle’s books are portable material sites that mark disappearance and the absence left in its wake, particularly in *Disparitions* in which Calle creates an

\(^{18}\) This may seem incompatible with the notion of place but Nora gives a concrete example of a portable *lieu de mémoire* in the Jewish Tablets of the Law (1989, 22). These fit Nora’s definition of a *lieu de mémoire* as “…material, symbolic and functional…an apparently…material site…becomes a *lieu de mémoire* only if imagination invests it with a symbolic aura. A purely functional site, like a classroom manual…belongs to the category only inasmuch as it is also the object of a ritual. And the observance of a minute of silence, an extreme example of a strictly symbolic action, serves as a concentrated appeal to memory by literally breaking a temporal continuity. Moreover, the three aspects always coexist.” (1989, 19)
association between disappearance and death, and in *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est* in which she associates the disappearance of cultural artifacts with the institutionalised erasure of a way of life. In the latter the objects and institutions she includes may be of questionable merit and represent outmoded ideas yet they show continued significance to the city’s inhabitants, not for their institutional value, but because of the way in which they marked their personal lives.

Calle’s archive of absence comprises a number of parts; a photograph that marks absence showing by a once-occupied empty space, a photograph of her replacement work and a narrative of the absent work assembled from interviewed sources. Each book of *L’absence* takes a different point of view on absence. *Disparitions* records works of art that have been stolen or damaged; Calle’s dedication of this book to three friends (who died prematurely, violently in some cases) casts the disappearance of the art works in this context. The densely worded, darkly framed objects that Calle creates as replacements are sombre, serious monuments. In contrast *Fantômes* is a lighter work of humour and whimsy. These works have not disappeared completely; they are on loan and so temporarily removed. Calle creates playful replacements, large, colourful transfers with cartoon-like drawings made by the observers, integrating style markers of colour, visual symbols (dots, question marks) and dimension. *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est* is a book with political and social subtext that documents a changing society within the confines of a narrow focus: removal of the public signs and symbols of a previous regime. It is the only book that uses archival material to show the position of the art works before they were taken away. Thus the
reader better understands the dimensions of the works, the way they dominated the spaces in which they were located and the emptiness created by their removal.

The second group of books, *Des histories vraies* and *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, are associated by material that is common to both; they differ from the series previously discussed because the content is not developed by a constraint or common practice, it is largely identical. *Des histoires vraies* is an archive of personal memories, put together because, “...j’ai un grave problème de mémoire...je garde toujours trace de tout.” (*M’as-tu vue*, 73) In *Appointment* the narratives of *Des histories vraies* are relocated to the Freud Museum in London. There are both thematic and material links between these two books and *L’Absence*, most notably the theme of memory and reference made to the museum as a site for remembering. Absence is also marked in both sets of books and *Disparitions* and *Des histoires vraies* share a narrative of death that is found in the introduction to *Disparitions* (7) and called *Torero* in *Des histoires vraies*. (49) This story that is pivotal to the mood and purpose of the *Disparitions* volume but occupies a less prominent position in *Des histories vraies*, links between death and memory19 as common themes.

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19 The story in question is the one that opens this chapter and the quotation “Son coeur était ouvert en deux comme un livre...” appears in the two texts. In *Des histories vraies* Calle creates a grave site in the absence of a tangible one (her friend’s ashes were scattered) that she can visit to mourn: she photographs a marble plaque that has “Torero” inscribed on it placed at the exact site of his death.
II. L’Absence and memory

Absence is a theme central to Calle’s work and is pivotal in those books in which Calle is the focus of the narrative. Situations of absence vary; they may refer to the sudden and unexpected break-up of a relationship (Douleur exquise and Prenez soin de vous), the absence of inspiration, as in the Où et quand? series, the absence of desire to engage in or to struggle to structure her work, (Suite vénitienne, Unfinished) or the absence of physical contact and its subsequent hindrance to a relationship (No Sex Last Night). Death is also a prominent subject and Calle has documented death from the most intimate and personal perspective possible: in Pas pu saisir la mort (2007) Calle attempts to film her mother’s death, finding that the precise moment of her passing is unable to be perceived; the film is thus an account of double absence, firstly of the imperceptible moment in which death occurs and then of death itself.

The series title L’absence insists on this central theme. As interviewer and archivist Calle figures minimally in the narrative of these books, yet she is not unengaged. She is less personally involved in the situations of these books yet her commentaries show that art has the potential to be of great importance to those familiar with it and can evoke personal, even emotional, reactions. Calle’s own contribution to the books is minimal but not without influence as she guides the reader’s perceptions with her introductions, her choice of titles and commentaries. The scenario of disappearance differs across the three volumes from permanent (Disparitions) to temporary removal (Fantômes) to permanent removal for ideological/political reasons.
(Souvenirs de Berlin-Est). The choice of introductory material, the selection of interviews and the presentation of her memorial pieces contribute to the mood of each book as Calle creates narrative memorials from the memories of those art works\textsuperscript{20}.

The series title - L’absence - situates the books in a wider context. Individually they are a series of interviews with their own focus but together they have a broader meaning and function, forming a memorial to lost art, examining levels and qualities of loss and giving meaning to absence. Memory is instrumental in all three and is all the more poignant in the context of art that reflects, according to Calle’s introductory notes, the memory of absent friends or the systematic expunging of another way of life or another time. Calle’s introductions to the absences suggest the situation that has caused the art works’ removal and give context for the interviews collected. The installations depicted\textsuperscript{21} are not intended as accurate replacements; they are impressions suggesting that memory is the preferable, even if at times inaccurate, tool of memorialisation. Individual titles give character to each book by suggesting an element of absence, disappearance, a ghost of the object, or its memory. The visual and textual aspects of each book then reflect the chosen quality of absence.

\textsuperscript{20} It should be noted that the items referred to in Souvenirs de Berlin-Est cannot all be classified as art works; the book has an institutional as well as an artistic focus but, for the sake of brevity, and because many of the objects are sculptural they will be referred to as such in general discussion and will be more clearly defined as necessary.

\textsuperscript{21} Only Souvenirs de Berlin-Est does not show pictures of Calle’s installations; the others show the replacement images she creates and puts in place of the missing art works in the museums in which she worked for this project. These installations are only one aspect of Calle’s finished work; the
Photographs testify at once to presence and absence, life and death and memory and they reference the past, present and future.

Je lis en même temps: cela sera et cela a été; j’observe avec horreur un futur antérieur dont la mort est l’enjeu...la photographie me dit la mort au futur...Devant la photo de ma mère enfant, je me dis : elle va mourir : je frémis, tel que le psychotique de Winnicott, d’une catastrophe qui a déjà eu lieu...toute photographie est cette catastrophe. (Barthes, 2007, 150)

Disparitions makes death part of the book’s narrative. Calle does not include images of the works before they were removed and thus it is their absence that is emphasised. She uses photographs to signal absence by showing an empty place on the wall, a painting slashed and burnt in its frame, an empty pedestal, holes in a wall from which a mural was removed or a blank space where a painting once hung. The photographs illustrate sites that are the source of memory; these places, the photographs and, eventually, the books, become the lieux de mémoire. Her books are no less lieux de mémoire than permanent, monumental, locatable places;

...if one keeps in mind the broad categories of the genre – anything pertaining to the cult of the dead, anything relating to the patrimony, anything administering the presence of the past in the present – it is clear that some seemingly improbable objects can be legitimately considered lieux de mémoire... (Nora, 1989, 20)
Calle’s books fulfill an important criterion for a *lieu de mémoire*: they demonstrate a strong “...will to remember...” (Nora, 1989, 19) This principle is fundamental to them.

Museums are *lieux de mémoire* dedicated to art, its development over time, its preservation and its display. The establishment and maintenance of institutions such as museums and art galleries suggests that art works housed therein have achieved a status that is a sign of worthiness, collectability and cultural relevance. At the same time art has an ephemeral quality because it is made from materials that are subject to change over time. Difficulties in conservation, its responsiveness to changes in social structures, taste, cultural environment, themes and techniques all mean that works deteriorate and sometimes even disappear. Calle’s representation goes beyond simple remembrance to the memorialisation of an object that is also a recollection of the past to which it is tied through its style, subject and technique. She makes the act of remembering art an emotional experience by associating it with death and makes relationships to art personal, a position not entirely unexpected in an artist, but which surprises in the intensity with which she frames her books, the titles all recalling themes of mourning and disappearance.
Calle imbues Disparitions with the greatest emotional load. The cover shows a fragment of the painting *L’exécution du major Davel* by Gleyre (1846) and features a weeping soldier, the only remaining fragment of a painting burnt in its frame, as shown above in Calle’s installation. She then introduces death as an opening theme; the first line on page 7 is “Trois morts, trois absences”. This is followed by, “…Son coeur était ouvert comme un livre.” (Rapport du chirurgien).” The book thus stands for the materiality of death. She then continues to detail the deaths of three friends, Manolo, Hervé and Jean-Marie. On page 9 she dedicates the book to the same three friends, the repetition further reinforcing that death and
disappearance are to be aligned. This association with death signals the permanence of absence, dominating the reading of the rest of the book and implying that the loss of the art works is also devastating, personal and permanent. The style of this book reinforces this mood with solemn, dark and simple framed images and a dense text that suggests solemnity, a eulogy perhaps. Memorialisation is foregrounded by showing empty spaces that were once occupied, the lieux de mémoire of these objects. Calle’s installed objects have the dimensions of the original or, if this is impossible, she uses a shadow of the object’s form superimposed over the framed rectangular text.

In his essay *Mourning and Melancholia* Freud states that the disappearance of objects and even of abstract concepts may be a catalyst for feelings of grief that are as strong as those felt for the death of people, “Mourning is commonly the reaction to loss of a beloved person or an abstraction taking the place of a person, such as fatherland, freedom, an ideal and so on.” (2005, 203) The emotional impact of Disparitions rests on such a possibility. Calle’s interviewees are “…conservateurs…gardiens et…autres permanents du musée…” (11) Calle makes mourning the dominant mood of this book but the prevailing mood is at times at variance with this as feelings expressed about the art works vary with each interviewee. Some of her subjects speak tenderly of the art works, “Je travaille ici depuis quinze ans, je l’ai vu des milliers de fois sans jamais y toucher, mais j’avais l’habitude d’épousseter délicatement son cadre avec un plumeau. Il était magnifique…” (Disparitions, 84), others disparagingly, “…il ne s’inscrivait pas dans ma mémoire. Je ne voyais en lui qu’un énième morceau de christianisme.” (Disparitions, 84) Others give a neutral assessment, “Il ne représentait rien de
spécial dans ma vie, mais il faisait partie de la collection et, lorsque je traversais cette pièce, je sentais toujours la présence de mon Titien.” (Disparitions, 85)

In Marking Time in the Culture of Amnesia Andreas Huyssen states: “It does not require much theoretical sophistication to see that all representation – whether in language, narrative, image or recorded sound – is based on memory.” (1995, 2) Memory defines the balance of chronotopical elements in L’absence; the chronotope of memory is about time, especially the relationship between the past and present. Place interacts with time to produce lieux de mémoire. While time appears to be the dominant chronotopic element of L’absence place is also critically important as the site both of loss and remembrance, suggesting a balance rather than dominance of one element over another. Souvenirs de Berlin-Est makes this relationship clear as the book defines the city according to its art works and the memories they evoke of a different era.

III. Museums as lieux de mémoire

Museums are are places that have a direct relationship with time; their narratives are dependent on both chronotopic elements. A museum incarnates cultural values of both the past and those held at the time at which they were founded and the choices made about the value of items and the worthiness of their preservation, thus their relationship to time is more complex than simply looking backwards. Even museums with a specific focus that may be considered current or ongoing (science and art museums, for
example) have a strong relationship to the past in that they do not separate past from present; ideas and styles are shown in development and continuity even if the museum uses historical perspective to frame the relevance of works.

There are genres of museums as there are genres of any cultural objects. Art museums are specialised institutions that collect material appreciated for its aesthetic, rather than social or historic, value, although these parameters are neither discrete nor unrelated. One function of the art museum is to define what is considered to be art even though such definitions are subject to constant change. Two museums figure prominently among these works of Calle: The Freud Museum in Appointment with Sigmund Freud and The Isabella Stewart-Gardner Museum in Disparitions.

To have one’s work become part of a museum’s permanent collection signifies that the artist’s work belongs to what is called the patrimoine in French. André Chastel, in his chapter La notion de patrimoine, outlines the development of museums in France, the reasons for their establishment and the kinds of objects they choose to archive and display as well as the growth of the idea of a national heritage. These collected items would likely disappear if they were not put in museums since one of the roles of the museum is preservation; implied is that these items lack cultural relevance in the present and that their inherent interest is as representations of the past. Artists who are collected and exhibited, especially in retrospective displays, may fear loss of relevance as this quotation from the Linda Michael’s catalogue of Callum Morton’s Heide retrosopective shows, “Morton has a
few laughs in staging this exhibition; playing on the fear of artists that survey exhibitions will somehow kill them off...Morton’s siting of a large Le Pine Funerals sign...labels the museum a mausoleum, a “cemetery of wasted effort”...” (2011, 3) Yet art museums do not exclusively represent the past. In them, the past remains present, informing its cultural and aesthetic values. Michaelangelo’s statue of David, for example, is no less an object of beauty now than when it was first made.

Artists may be critical of the methods and principles of art collection; this is formally called institutional critique\(^\text{22}\). The installation of an artwork within a museum space may inadvertently or with purpose draw attention to the nature and method of collection in a manner that critiques this process. Calle is no stranger to referencing the nature of the institutions in which she exhibits her work, as Natalie Edwards points out in her essay on the staging of Calle’s *Prenez soin de vous* exhibition in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, rue Richelieu, “Calle is clearly intent on performing the undoing of an edifice - standing on it, sitting on it, introducing new media, new material, and new voices into it. She firstly calls on authority figures themselves ...and performs this undoing of the master’s tools within the master’s house.” (2014, 3) While Calle’s primary purpose in *Disparitions* seems to be to honour the missing works of art she also draws attention to the practices of the

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\(^{22}\) Institutional critique may take a number of forms: it may draw attention to materials that would not be considered of artistic value because those items are mass produced or were not intended to have artistic, aesthetic or high cultural value in their original incarnation. Kirsi Peltomäki suggests that some of Calle’s work falls into this category and that it aims to “...transcend art’s relationships with some institutions and sublate art into everyday life.” (11) The material to which Peltomäki is referring is that of Calle’s *Autobiographies* exhibition, later published in book form as *Des histoires vraies*. This exhibition exists in a number of different forms that variously use photographs or concrete everyday objects to represent selected episodes from Calle’s life.
Gardner museum and the way in which its curatorial practices contributed to the disappearance of several artworks and subsequent marking of their absence; central to this critique is this museum’s dual status as a memorial to its founder and a collection of art. Isabella Stewart-Gardner did not collect art for its aesthetic or cultural value alone but for its value as a potential perpetual memorial to her own memory, marking her capacity to collect and her distinctive interests. In a reversal of the expected purpose of such a museum, art serves the institution that displays it. After the memorials to absent friends Disparitions continues with a transcript of Gardner’s will that configures this institution as an unalterable private lieu de mémoire that includes the building and the art works. The official museum website (www.gardnermuseum.org) situates the museum building and collection in the context of a life spent travelling and acquiring. There are at least two versions of Gardner’s legacy; one is presented on the official museum website and the other in Disparitions. The official site is circumspect about Gardner’s wishes, minimising the extent of her legacy, “Isabella Stewart Gardner’s will states that her collection be permanently exhibited according to her aesthetic vision and intent.” (www.gardnermuseum.org/the_museum/overview). Calle, however, gives more detail about the will:

Si, à un moment quelconque, les curateurs nommés ci-dessus placent dans le but de les exposer dans le musée établi par ce testament tout autre tableau ou œuvre d’art ... ou si à un moment quelconque ils modifient la disposition générale et l’arrangement des articles qui auront été placés dans les premier, deuxième et
Problems with the arrangement of the artworks arose, not because of issues of curatorship, but an episode of theft; in 1990 six paintings by Rembrandt, Manet, Flinck and Vermeer, five Degas drawings, a Chinese vase and a Napoleonic Eagle finial were stolen from the museum and have never been recovered. Since the spaces left by the stolen works are unable to be reused the art works continue to be represented by the blank spaces they once occupied.

Calle shows that the practices of the Gardner Museum, as dictated by Stewart-Gardner’s legacy, mean that absence continues to be marked long after the art works’ disappearance; this absence is not about acknowledging the value of the art works but instead about honouring Stewart-Gardner. The empty spaces are an accidental memorial but do nothing to recall what is no longer there. Calle’s installation restores this balance, acknowledging the importance of what has gone missing, she introduces a tangible memorial that defies the principles of collection of the museum and gives recognition to the missing works.

With its important art collection, status as a personal memorial and, more latterly, an unintended memorial to stolen art, the Gardner Museum has a complex narrative as a lieu de mémoire. Time is the mutable element
of the chronotope that defines the museum’s narrative while place remains invariable, yet it is place that marks absence because of the empty spaces on the walls. Calle’s photographs show absence by the focus on empty spaces marked with printed white tickets, “A la suite du vol, les espaces que les tableaux et les objets occupaient sont...restés vides. J’ai photographié cette mise en scène involontaire de l’absence...” (11) Yet the Gardner museum display is so crowded that the marking of absence is barely noticeable; every possible surface is employed in exhibition, even the backs of doors. The aim is not to display objects to advantage but simply to find them a place. This is the Salon Style of exhibition, fashionable in Gardner’s time, now replaced by the Museum Style that allows space around individual items for contemplation. The stolen objects were perched on tables and dressers, between and beneath other paintings, in front of windows and doors and there is a strong sense that some of them were already lost to viewing before the theft, “Je me souviendrai toujours de ce tableau parce que je ne pouvais pas le voir. Il était exposé à la hauteur de taille, derrière une chaise, avec un sous-verre mais près de la fenêtre, de sorte que le reflet dérangeait la vision...” (Disparitions, 43). Calle’s memorial installations give them more than a position; they imply a validation of their status as art.

Both the Freud and Gardner museums function as memorials to the people whose names they carry as well as housing objects of cultural value. In Gardner’s case the museum that carries her name is a memorial to her cultural activity and since that activity was art collection her occupation and the museum that bears her name are as one. In Freud’s case the museum acknowledges a number of Freud’s activities; either his status as a scientist,
his collection of antiquities or his extensive library would have been sufficient to establish a museum.

The Freud Museum in London at 20 Maresfield Gardens is also a previously domestic space converted into a museum. This house was home to Sigmund Freud and his family, exiled from Vienna in 1938. Freud only remained there for a few months, dying in 1939, but it remained a family home until 1982 when Freud’s youngest daughter Anna, also a psychoanalyst, died, at which time it became a museum; “The museum engages actively with Sigmund and Anna’s psychoanalytic legacy in contemporary ideas, art, and culture, while caring for the house and its collections.” (www.freud.org.uk/about/). Unlike the Gardner museum there is no caveat on changes to the house but significant rooms such as Freud’s library and study, have been preserved as they were originally. In 1999 Calle held her Autobiographies (Des histories vraies) exhibition here, integrating it into Freud’s home, installing her own objects into the study, dining room, entrance hall, bedrooms and so on and using some of Freud’s belongings to stand in for her own narratives.

In the Freud museum time is multilayered, referencing a number of periods and events. The first layer is ancient: Freud was an avid collector of antiquities that he was fortunately able to bring into England from Austria. According to the museum website (www.freud.org.uk/about/) there are almost 2,000 of these items that originate from a number of ancient cultures and regions: Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Oriental. These artifacts were an inspiration for Freud as he made connections with the ancient past and used
the associated stories as inspiration for his work in psychoanalysis. The black figure vase that portrays the story of Oedipus is perhaps the best known of them but is certainly not the only one. The next era that is referenced is from the second half of the nineteenth century until 1939, the period of Freud’s active working life. This period marks the growth of scientific exploration with particular reference to medical science and psychology. Items in Freud’s collection, other than his own writing, attest to his long period of research and involvement from the earliest awareness of scientific investigation of the mind, such as the painting “The Lesson of Dr. Charcot”, that shows a group of doctors involved in early studies in psychology, Freud included, at one of the famous doctor’s lectures on hysteria. The advances Freud made have not only been of importance medically and scientifically, but also culturally, as his work allowed artists and writers to better understand the types and characters they developed, their motivations and behaviour. The third period that is marked is the rise of Nazism and The Holocaust through Freud’s own story of escape and exile. Freud’s life cannot be considered without reference to the Holocaust: it is the reason for the Freud Museum’s location in London for it was to here that he and his family escaped in 1938. Finally, contemporary views on all three areas of Freud’s life (collection, psychoanalysis and The Holocaust) are expressed in the museum’s exhibition program as it shows the work of contemporary artists.

As part of the narrative of the rise of Nazism the story of Freud’s relocation to London in order to escape the strengthening and spreading regime shows that the house is a memorial to a past life that was no longer available to Freud and his family. The house itself fulfilled the practice of
remembering, of creating an association to the recent but inaccessible past because it is, as closely as practicable, a reproduction of the Berggasse apartment in Vienna where the Freud family lived before escaping the Nazi occupation. It remains essentially a domestic space as the rooms are arranged and named to reflect their private functions, (hall, study, library, dining room...). The personal memorial is manifest in the great care that was taken to relocate the family’s possessions in a manner faithful to their previous life, to resemble as closely as possible the place from which they had come. This is especially true of Freud’s study. James Putnam in his afterword to *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, states that photographs were commissioned to ensure that “…he arranged furniture and treasured possessions to reconstruct as faithfully as possible his original study.” (2005, 154). Memory alone, without documentary support, also proved a useful tool: Forbes Morlock quotes from Detlef Bertelstein’s interview with Freud’s maid, Paula Fichtl, “Paula knew the place for each little thing...from the professor’s chair everything looked as it had in Berggasse.” (2007, 142) This London house is thus a *lieu de mémoire*, not just in its status as a museum, but also in its faithful reproduction of a personal past. The story of the Freud family’s relocation is a reminder of countless Holocaust narratives, of the privations and danger suffered and of the many victims who were not so fortunate as to find a new home.

By contrast, the narrative of the Gardner museum is not about significant personal or historic events or scientific advances. The Gardner Museum is a celebration of the ego of its collector, illustrated most pertinently by the fact that, among all the other art works, there are no
fewer than ten portraits of Isabella Stewart Gardner (www.gardnermuseum.org/about/history_and_architecture). The contents of her will, ensuring her memory be preserved by her aesthetic choices and arrangements, further demonstrates the importance she placed on creating a personal lieu de mémoire. While the value of her cultural legacy is undisputed, since her museum houses some important art works, her story is not so much about personal greatness but about immense wealth and the ability to acquire:

Isabella Stewart Gardner amassed the bulk of her collection in a remarkably short period of time...In the 1880s, Isabella Stewart Gardner attended lectures on art history and readings of Dante given by Charles Eliot Norton at Harvard College. This sparked a passion for Dante, and Isabella Gardner began to buy rare editions by the writer. She became a serious collector of Dutch and Italian pictures in the 1890s. Beginning in 1894, Bernard Berenson, then a young art historian, started to recommend Italian paintings for acquisition...within two years he had guided her towards a collection that included Botticelli’s Lucretia, Titian's Europa, Vermeer's The Concert, and Rembrandt's Self-Portrait. Berenson acted as a conduit for paintings that Colnaghi, a London dealer, had for sale...

(www.gardnermuseum.org/about/history_and_architecture)

While Gardner collected art works from many periods and of many genres, there is no apparent equivalent to the intellectual stimulation these provided
for Freud, nor does her life mirror, in the way Freud’s does, grand narratives of intellectual advances or the political turmoil of wartime Europe.

The narratives that define the nature of the lieux de mémoire of the Freud and Gardner museums are essential in defining the differences between them. The Gardner Museum is prevented from any interaction with the present. Calle’s installations are designed to disappear into the space and be as unobtrusive as possible. In this context they appear subversive, contravening the edict that forbids them. In contrast, as a lieu de mémoire the Freud Museum both admits and enjoys the acknowledgement that Freud’s work continues to influence artists, scientists and thinkers and thus to evolve: it is a museum alive to the concepts it embodies and Calle’s installation is able to integrate itself into the fabric of the museum. The photographs (in colour, to distinguish them from Calle’s black and white exhibition photographs) show the objects from Calle’s exhibition displayed alongside the Freud family’s own belongings: Calle’s and Freud’s respective wedding photographs side-by-side (64), letters strewn under a chair on the landing (68) and a slashed sketch of a naked Calle hung on the wall amid Anna Freud’s degrees and honours (104). In addition some of Freud’s objects stand in for Calle’s photographs: a Mexican antiquity illustrates the narrative entitled “Breasts” (28) and a figure of Freud illustrates the narrative entitled “Bad Breath”23 (42), counterreferencing Calle’s original illustration of this episode that is of Freud’s study and analytic couch. In using a photograph of

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23 The narrative is about how, on the pretext of sending her to a GP to be treated for bad breath, Calle’s father actually sent her to a psychoanalyst for treatment.
Freud’s study to illustrate this “chapter” of her original work she had long previously set up a relationship between the museum and this exhibition.

IV. Representing memory

Calle’s own voice is rarely heard in L’absence because the narrative content of the series is generated by interviews. Two of the three books do not contain photographs of the missing objects (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est is the exception) but represent the missing works through made objects comprised of text, transcriptions of the memories people hold of them. This overcomes the apparent impossibility of making a visual representation of an object that is no longer tangible. In Disparitions Calle creates two images for the missing objects, one of the empty spaces left by the works and then her installation in their place. In Fantômes each of the six missing objects has three illustrations: a photograph of Calle’s transfer in its place on the wall, a close-up reproduction of the transfer and a sketch that one of her interviewees has provided. It is only in Souvenirs de Berlin-Est that Calle pairs black and white archival photographs of the original work with her colour photographs of the subsequent empty space. There are no replacement installations in this book, it is text of the recorded memories that form Calle’s memorial, “J’ai remplacé les monuments manquants par les souvenirs qu’ils ont laissés...” (11) The transcribed texts are made into replacement objects that recall the original in size, form, in the narrative that stands for their content and in indications of the original style of the work. Her replacement objects are framed pictures (Disparitions) or large transfers adhered to the wall
(Fantômes). No matter what form they take they perform a true memorial function by giving an impression of the missing objects rather than imitating them.

*Des histoires vraies* presents a very different record of memory. Calle calls the book “...my autobiography...” (Orbist, 136) but it is not a conventional one being a short and highly selective series of thirty-eight episodes. Each narrative in the book is a brief paragraph or two with a photographic illustration. They are presented in apparent chronological order, although some episodes represent more than one time period in Calle’s life, “*Le strip-tease*”, for example, refers to events at ages six and twenty-six. As an exhibition or installation (*Autobiographies*) the narratives are attached to objects rather than photographs; this allows for the use of photographs or exhibition of the original materials, as in *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*. Most of the entries relate to either sexual awakening or the awareness of the inevitability of death; since it concentrates on particular aspects of Calle’s existential development it could be termed a “selective autobiography”.

Photography ensures the short narratives are perceived as true but these photographs have an interesting relationship to the text. Firstly, many of them are not Calle’s but are studio portraits taken by Jean-Baptiste Mondino, credited as the “...auteur discret et généreux de certaines photographies dans ce livre.” (*Des histoires vraies*, 2) The photographs are seldom records, taken at the time of the episodes recounted, but represent events symbolically. That they are illustrations rather than evidence does not
lessen their attachment to the narratives. Photographs of everyday items such as sheets, scarves, dice, pets or meals are used throughout so that these items take on iconic significance in relation to the event each one explains and encapsulates. The apparently simple and candid presentation of these vignettes belies their emotional intensity. An example:

La visite médicale

J’ai passé une visite médicale. Il m’a fallu remplir un questionnaire de six pages, près de trois cents questions. A toutes, sauf une, j’ai répondu NON. Avais-je déjà contracté la rubéole, la variole, la varicelle, le choléra, le tétanos, la tuberculose, la fièvre jaune, la scarlatine ou le typhus...Etais-je sujette aux vertiges, avais-je du cholestérol, du diabète, de la tension, des maux de tête, de cœur, de ventre, des enfants, des allergies, des calculs, des palpitations, des bouffées de chaleur, des problèmes cardiaques, dentaires, auditifs, des crises de tétanie, d’épilepsie, des douleurs lombaires, des étourdissements, des évanouissements, des éblouissements, des embarras gastriques, des désordres intestinaux, des troubles visuels? Et soudain, comme si rien n’était, perdue dans le flot, cette interrogation, "Etes-vous triste?" (79)

This extract is illustrated with a paper tablecloth stained with the imprints of coffee cups and “Etes-vous triste?” scrawled across it. Calle finds many ways to reveal sadness throughout her autobiography and does it here with a simple question; the impact of the ellipsis is profound. In practical terms the photograph may be set up as a representation of this subject but it, too, has
implications for the emotions it expresses. It references Jacques Prévert’s *Déjeuner du matin*, a poem of isolation and despair, in its insistence on the traces of the coffee cup. Writing down the question demonstrates how it stands out and the need for, and process of, further reflection.

The recontextualisation of Calle’s *Des histoires vraies* in the Freud Museum seems an inevitable pairing given the subjects on which Calle concentrates: sex, death, family dysfunction, marital disharmony, desire and unfulfillment. The photograph of Freud’s analysis couch that accompanies *La mauvaise haleine* on pages 32-3 signals that Freud is present in Calle’s narrative, although unacknowledged, before this exhibition. *Appointment with Sigmund Freud* opens and closes with photographs of Calle wearing Freud’s overcoat, the first in the garden, after a photograph of Freud, the other posed at his front door. In these photographs Sophie Calle takes on Freud’s mantle, she becomes a version of Freud and engages in a similar activity with herself as subject even though, with her emphasis on female sexuality, it is true that she is working in an area that was difficult and mysterious for Freud, uncomfortable with female sexuality, as described by Joan Raphael-Leff in *Freud’s Dark Continent*, “…despite devoting his professional life to studying the psychic vicissitudes of female sexuality, this…remains ‘veiled in impenetrable obscurity’ and thirty years into his clinical practice he notes, ‘[…] after all, the sexual life of adult women is a dark continent for psychology.’” (2007, 41) Calle is introduced into Freud’s space in a manner that associates their similar preoccupations, “Sophie’s texts, which reveal her compulsive rituals, obsessions and fantasies have inevitable parallels with a psychoanalyst’s case book…” (Putnam, 2005, 155)
She inhabits the space in a manner that underscores her femininity and sets her apart from Freud, “Sophie’s collection of personal keepsakes are her memory triggers and they seem naturally to cohabit Freud’s essentially masculine domain. Presented with 30 concise narratives printed on feminine pink cards, they entered into an immediate dialogue with the psychoanalyst’s powerful aura.” (Putnam, 154)

Of further interest is the way changing the place of Calle’s exhibition sets up resonances with other places and times; this underscores the fact that her narratives have more than simply personal relevance. As an autobiographical text Des histoires vraies looks no further than the development, explanation or analysis of Calle’s personality, relocated to the Freud Museum it takes on a more universal aspect. Calle’s writing becomes “...a psychoanalyst’s case book where memory, imagination, emotion, desire and loss are interwoven.” (Putnam, 155) The photograph of Calle’s wedding dress “...strewn across the sacred couch, becomes a phantom Sophie as Freud’s patient, revealing her innermost secrets in an appointment with the father of psychoanalysis.” (Putnam, 155) A wedding dress is intrinsically linked with sexuality; we are reminded not only of Calle but also of the phantoms of countless other women consulting Freud who occupied this same position, revealing intimate details of their lives and whose memory and memories are perpetuated through Freud’s writing.

On page 27 of Des histoires vraies Calle is shown supporting her breasts in her cupped hands; the statuette she chooses to represent “The Breasts” in the exhibition, a Mexican kneeling figure that dates from between
100 BC to 250 AD, repeats this gesture almost exactly. That there are almost 2,000 years between such images speaks for a long tradition of artistic representation of female bodies centred on the breast. Similarly Calle inserts her card that refers to “L’érection” (Des histoires vraies 64-5) among the phallic figures that appear on page 90 of Appointment with Sigmund Freud; this is a significant departure from the coy image that accompanied this narrative of a bed showing slight indentations and the position it finds in the Freud museum among objects that are more directly illustrative. Continuity of subject matter over the history of artistic representation is underlined suggesting a patrimoine perpetuel, a continuum in the subjects that stimulate artistic representation, “If we were able to live within memory...Each gesture, down to the most everyday, would be experienced as the ritual repetition of a timeless practice...” (Nora, 1989, 8) Art and memory link ancient and contemporary in just such a manner.

V. Absence, memory and ghosts

Calle’s form of representation is ekphrastic since the primary mode of artistic expression is transferred from visual to written; her representations do not in any way attempt to imitate the originals, they describe them. This is the way she ensures these works are not forgotten and that a permanent trace remains of them. The accounts are not perfect and are subject to the vagaries of memory since the works are no longer in front of the interviewees as they discuss them. For each work she gathers a range of responses that develop an impression of it but cannot render it fully. In this
way she also makes reference to the nature of memory as an instrument of partial representation. Of note in her recording of memory are the individual differences in the perception and appreciation of the art works and the limitations of ekphrastic representation.

Writing is the dominant form of representation in these books and reflects differing views on absence. In Disparitions Calle emphasises the absence of art works rather than the creation of a replacement: “A la suite du vol, les espaces que les tableaux et les objets occupés [sont] restés vides. J’ai photographié cette mise en scène involontaire de l’absence...” (11) There are photographs of empty spaces as well as any fragments or reproductions of the vanished works. In the introductory notes to the other two books she insists more strongly on her replacement works and their relationship as memorials to the missing pieces of art. She clearly defines the substance of those replacements as memories of them, "J’ai remplacé les tableaux manquants par ces souvenirs." (Fantômes, 15) and "J’ai remplacé les monuments manquants par le souvenir qu’ils ont laissé." (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 11) Calle’s replacement images imitate visual aspects of the original art works and are hung as paintings based on features of them; she uses sketches, shape, size, colour and suggestions of style to frame, punctuate, construct and suggest. She also finds ways to integrate the shadows and shapes of the original works, their fantômes, creating an installation that is entirely constructed from the memory of an absent object.

The word fantôme suggests incompleteness. In the same way that ghosts lack the substance of the previously living person, a reproduction or
an ekphrastic representation of an image or work of art can only ever partially represent the substance of the original. In *Specters of Marx* Jacques Derrida writes about the incompleteness of the ghost:

"...the specter is a paradoxical incorporation...a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes...some “thing” that is difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other. For it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition, in the very coming of the revenant or the return of the specter. There is something disappeared, departed in the apparition itself as reapparition of the departed." (5)

Calle’s partially transparent installations in *Fantômes* are ghost-like images, a suggestive rather than conclusive presence. Derrida’s quotation describes the nature of this partial representation, that a ghost is something that is incomplete. In the translation from the visual to the written it is impossible to capture every aspect of the original, confirming the replacement’s ghost-like quality, its status as a partial representation. Ekphrastic representation is a translation of sorts, not from one language to another, but a change in the modality of expression and it is in the nature of translation to be inexact. Derrida has the following to say about the nature of translation:

"...the translations themselves are put “out of joint”. However correct and legitimate they may be...they are all disadjusted, as it were unjust in the gap that affects them. This gap is within them...because their meanings remain necessarily equivocal; next it
is in the relation among them and thus in their multiplicity, and finally...in the irreducible inadequation to the other language...The excellence of the translation can do nothing about it. Worse yet...it can only aggravate or seal the inaccessibility of the other language. 

(Specters of Marx, 21)

The lingering absence to which Derrida points is inherent in the act of translation since no language or modality is able to fully express the concepts and qualities of another. The absence of the original works for comparison in Calle’s books only serves to heighten awareness of the void that Derrida names as a feature of translation. Despite the collected diversity of memories elements of the missing artworks are lost and the idea of absence is further deepened by descriptions that are never quite complete.

A paradox exists in this marking of absence because, while Calle’s installations aim to put something in place of the artwork, they also draw attention, perhaps even more than a blank wall might, to the object’s absence. Calle interviews between 7 and 16 people for each artwork and such is the diversity of responses, it is difficult to believe her interviewees are all speaking about the same object. These accounts give rise to questions about the nature of memory, its reliability and individual diversity. Calle’s work is not about assessments of the artworks in terms of opinion or variations in taste but concentrates on the materiality of the image and its personal significance. Individual variation related to the meaning of the work is to be expected but on more objective parameters such as content, colour and style, the range of variation is surprising. The diverse, and at times even
inaccurate, descriptions ensure that Calle’s memorials in all three volumes retain the elusive qualities of the *fantôme*. To illustrate this phenomenon, selected responses to two of the paintings from *Fantômes* are discussed with reproductions offered as a point of comparison.

This first painting is Bonnard’s *Nu dans le bain*. The following selection of quotations from *Fantômes* has been chosen with colour as the dominant subject since, in my view, it is the use of colour that is this painting’s most dramatic and salient aspect: Bonnard’s nude is almost lost against the vivid blues and golds shown in the reproduced image.

1. "J’ai vu des bleus, des jaunes, des oranges, des verts et cette femme un peu floue, comme une sirène. Le reste je ne m’en souviens plus du tout." (8)
2. "Je vois surtout de la couleur : de l’orange, du parme..." (8)
3. "Je vois des tâches de couleurs: du rose, du bleu, du mauve. Une femme trop à plat, longue et filiforme..." (9)
4. "La femme est étalée, couchée, dans ces gris, ces
marrons. Je me souviens surtout du gris et du corps plus blanc." (9) 5. "Une femme est allongée dans l’eau. Elle a l’air molle...Elle rêve tête baissée. Son corps n’a pas de couleur normale.” (12) 6. “Un jeu de lumières comme de petits électrons qui se baladent. C’est velouté comme de la poussière d’or...Je vois de l’or, de l’ivoire, une musique de Ravel, un parfum poudreux." (12) Most observers mention colour in their memory of the painting, acknowledging this aspect as important. However, there is little consistent agreement as to the colour palette used. Colour is difficult to describe accurately and some differences may be attributed to varying perceptions and individual variations in vocabulary for colour names. However, this painting is very predominantly blue and gold and so failure to mention these colours and to concentrate instead on greens and reds is indeed surprising.
The second painting is Magritte’s *L’assassin menacé*. This time the emphasis of the descriptions is on the narrative content of the painting. This painting is characterised by its straight lines and geometric shapes, its choice of uniform colour and its restrained detail. It is a narrative painting that presents a clearly female person lying on the day bed and six men, some with undetermined involvement. There is a threat of impending violence and of capture from the men entering the room that contrasts strongly with the static, almost operatic murder scene. The first description is precise and accurate, given by someone who knows this painting well; the others show considerable variation in their content. 

1. “En voilà un dont il est facile de se souvenir. On dirait une chambre d’hôtel. Au centre il y a un lit étroit avec
The evidence suggested by these extracts is that, despite its clear narrative, some observers have difficulty in recalling and describing it. This is interesting because the narrative focus requires less specialised vocabulary than for the previous image that has colour as its focus; referring to its content would be like relating a story.

These quotations show that memory is not always reliable and can be influenced by a number of factors. The first is that it is subject to change, “...our mental apparatus...has an unlimited receptive capacity for new perceptions and...lays down permanent – even though not unalterable – memory traces of them.” (Freud, A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad, 1961, 228) Memories fade and detail becomes lost or distorted. Memory may also be influenced by the attention paid at the moment of observation and whether that observation is diligent or partial. The detail with which a
person recalls an event or object is influenced by his or her knowledge of, and expertise in, the subject in question and the degree of specificity of the language they use for description. Bourdieu and Darbel note, “An agent’s degree of artistic competence is measured by the degree to which he or she can master...the interpretative schemata which are the condition of appropriation of artistic capital, that is, the condition of deciphering works of art supplied to a given society at a given time.” (39) Thus the observer’s knowledge of the subject will influence his or her capacity to remember, discuss and interpret it. The vocabulary of art appreciation may be specialised as it refers to periods, techniques, styles and precise terms for colour; this discursive code is not common to all who appreciate art. Calle’s interviewees are of varying backgrounds and expertise; she receives both specialist and untutored responses. For example, she includes cleaners as part of her group of interviewees, as shown in Response 3 to L’assassin menacé: “C’est une peinture...facile à nettoyer.” (22) Colour can require knowledge and familiarity for precise descriptive terms but there are general terms available to all; to get it completely wrong as in responses 2 and 4 is somewhat surprising. Differences can be attributed to the failure of individual memory due to inattentiveness, fading with the passage of time, a limited vocabulary for expressing ideas about a specialised subject or different types of experience of the work in question.

L’Absence suggests that memory is mutable and that nothing can be remembered fully. In the light of the framing of books that draws a parallel between the loss of art works and the loss of a friend or loved one this is almost tragic because it demonstrates that nothing can be remembered as it
was and that even the presence of memory triggers, *lieux de mémoire*, is not sufficient to ensure recall is complete and unwavering.

**VI. Common memory**

The types of memories collected in *L’absence* are neither individual nor collective; the suggestion made here is that they are common memories because they share a common object. Each reaction and description has its part in adding to the detail of the missing object. Individual responses suggest aspects of the original work but do not come close to imitating it. A portrait of the original artwork emerges in words and sketches and representations that suggest and imitate the original in shape and size. This approach is very different from using a reproduction, as was the chosen means of representation of Titian’s *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*, one of the stolen paintings mentioned in *Disparitions* (79-87) that, for the duration of its absence (it was recovered in 2002), was replaced by a print, “Cette photocopie est pathétique…elle donne aux visiteurs une idée du tableau mais il manque quelque chose…Cette sérénité, cette profondeur, cette communication entre l’artiste et vous…” (86). Calle’s installations do not attempt to replicate the artist’s direct communication with his or her audience but they do show how a select group responded to the works,

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24 The concept of collective memory was defined by Maurice Halbwachs in *The Social Framework of Memory* (1925). He proposed that memory was a product of the way in which minds worked together within social groups. He separated the notions of history and collective memory based on their respective relevance of the past to the present: he defined history as “dead” and collective memory as “living”; collective memory requires an active engagement with the past. (Lowenthal, 1985, 7-8) Pierre Nora’s conception of memory and history in “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire” makes a similar distinction.

showing the significance of the paintings and other *objets d’art* in this context. The commonality of memory is reflected in the organisation of the texts with a “chapter” and installation devoted to the collected memories of each work of art. The format of presentation of the memory text varies according to the mood of each book; *Disparitions* is in keeping with a sombre mood while the *Fantômes* transfers are adorned with cartoon-like sketches and elements of design that recall dimension, structure and form.

While *Disparitions* and *Fantômes* show Calle’s installations, *Souvenirs de Berlin Est* does not. This book does not focus on Calle’s memorial works but on the presentation of testimonies by Berliners. In this book the absence of artwork is truly personal to those interviewed because the objects were in public places and part of their daily lives. Disappearance also marks the changing of social circumstances so that the objects are symbols of a past that grows less accessible as physical signs of it are removed. The objects to which Calle refers are not only artworks; there is public art, mainly sculpture, but she includes other symbols of the communist regime such as a simple street sign, a memorial plaque and the guards that stood at the entrance of the Neue Wache, Berlin’s war memorial. Some of these were instruments of propaganda rather than of aesthetic value; the aim in their positioning was for them to be as visible as possible. The common appreciation of these objects has little to do with either cultural value or the representation of political ideology: their value lies in the way they interacted in the lives of those who viewed them every day.
The signs and symbols of two shameful events in twentieth century German history, the Nazi and communist eras, are being removed. In *Stasiland* Anna Funder describes them as one horrific time succeeded by another:

I think about the feeling I’ve developed for the former German Democratic Republic. It is a country which no longer exists...I can only describe it as a horror-romance...The romance comes from the dream of a better world the German Communists wanted to build on the ashes of their Nazi past...The horror comes from what they did in its name. (2002, 4)

Calle shows that memory is being manipulated in order to deny distasteful or unpleasant aspects of the past, "Des lors qu’un système de gouvernement se dissout ou se fait renverser, ses monuments – du moins ceux qui servaient à légitimer et à maintenir son emprise – n’ont plus raison d’être. (Citation tirée d’une annonce faite par la Chambre des députés, Berlin, juin 1992, *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est*, 7)” The removal of monumental friezes and sculptures celebrating the communist state is planned, institutional and permanent, an organised wiping out of a past regime. Their removal is equally the result of political manipulation; renewal is as much about creating a new Berlin as it is about denying the existence of the history of the post-war city.

While this book is structured using exactly the same methods as the other two volumes of *L’absence*, in terms of content a different relationship to the art works exists, one that is more personal because of the art’s public nature. Calle’s collected accounts reveal that people were attached to these
works in a manner that transcended the political message the art works represented. This book takes as its subject a system that works in opposition to the function of the museum because the past is subject to deliberate effacement. It is significant that it is the only book in which Calle uses archival photographs in order to show how the objects were integrated into and belonged to the cityscape, echoing the testimonies of her interviewees. The sites in which these art works were found function as lieux de mémoire, marking absence because traces of them remain, a mount on a wall that held a plaque, a pedestal empty of the statue that stood upon it or a depression in the ground on which the Berlin Wall once stood. Such traces mean that the memory of the object and the past experiences associated with it are constantly stimulated by its very absence.

Andreas Huyssen, in Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory, notes that “Berlin as text remains first and foremost historical text, marked as much, if not more, by absences as by the visible presence of its past, from prominent ruins...to World War II bullet and shrapnel marks...” (2003, 52) He calls the dismantling of the city’s monuments and the renaming of places “…a strategy of power and humiliation, a final burst of Cold War ideology...” (2003, 54) Life under a communist regime is not the subject of Calle’s interviews although a few comments, like this one, recall its difficulties, "...je prends plaisir à m’imaginer qu’en choisissant comme nom ‘rue de la Porte’, l’intention était, par une référence aux portes de l’Enfer, de nous rappeler les maux du passé." (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 63) The information that Calle has collected is more personal than political, "Quand je passe par là, je remarque qu’il n’y a plus personne. Il me manque..."
The removal of art works has created empty spaces and her subjects talk about this void, "...quand je passe par là et que je vois cet engin, la couronne bizarrement suspendue à cet endroit...La structure, ce cadre vide, ne fait que rendre l’absurdité encore plus manifeste..." (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 44) These objects filled and defined spaces and came to hold personal meanings for the people of Berlin, "C’était équilibré. C’était logique. C’était allemand. Nous l’avions vu si souvent que nous ne le remettions même pas en question..." (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 44) Removal of some of these art works has a greater personal impact than those to which Calle refers in the other books. The political and social change that has caused the removal has, for some Berliners, left a feeling of emptiness and an absence of cultural symbolism, "Il y avait un compas. Un compas pour faire des cercles: la forme parfaite. Les instruments de l’utopie n’existent plus. Il ne reste que l’utopie, mais une utopie vide. Nous ne voyons plus que le vide." (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 44) Another interviewee says, "Globalement, le cadre vide résume la situation actuelle...On pourrait très bien laisser les choses telles quelles. Comme des traces." (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 44), and another "On ne peut pas vraiment dire qu’il manque quelque chose, mais l’effet que produit maintenant ce lieu, avec ses marches qui vont nulle part, est stérile, vide, mort." (Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 31) Berlin has undergone a process of systematic erasure of living cultural memory. In creating a public record of the existence of these objects, formally acknowledging them without suggestion that their presence relates to a situation that was ideologically compromised, Calle’s book gives the objects a different meaning that is about the personal lives of Berlin’s inhabitants.
This systematic erasure is creating Berlin as a city for the future but the future is characterised by absence and uncertainty because it is yet to be lived and defined. In her book *The Future of Nostalgia* Svetlana Boym calls Berlin a virtual city because of its status as transitional due to this search for a new identity, “...the involuntary memorializations are material embodiments of this transitional present and are themselves transitory.” (2001, 180) It is a city caught between two uncertainties: a recent past that has become inaccessible and invalidated through destruction of its physical evidence and the future. Paul Connerton, in his book *How Modernity Forgets*, points out that place is instrumental in allowing memories to be ongoing, “Cultural memory is eroded...because the building blocks of the city have been broken down. The district, the square, and the street were the basic building blocks of the city, and it is their breakdown which generates a diffuse cultural amnesia.” (2009, 120) Where lieux de mémoire are removed there is a subsequent erosion of memory and it could be that Berliners are also now without milieux de mémoire, “…real environments of memory...” (Nora, 7) since so much has been removed by a succession of historical facts that have served to sever links with the past of Nazism, war, the communist régime and radical, rapid democratisation. Only the more distant past provides any sense of certainty and it seems Berliners are unsure of whether to revive it or erase it and move on.

Boym asserts, “At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood – the slower rhythms of our dreams.” (xv) Nostalgia implies a romanticisation of elements of the past that in turn do not represent its realities, “The heated
controversies around the urban sites reveal many vital anxieties and allow one to speak about the unspoken. They are also symptomatic of wider cultural dreams, divisive frameworks of memory, fantasies of the past and future that have not yet been worked through.” (180) Evidence of the past evokes its realities and makes it possible that memories true to reality prevail, that its horror will not be diluted and replaced with nostalgic sentiment. In *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est* many of Calle’s interviewees show that memory dissipates without something to which to attach it, "Je ne sais plus." (*Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 13*) or, "Je n’ai que de vagues souvenirs" (*Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 22*) or even, "Je n’en ai gardé aucun souvenir." (*Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 41*) One of them even comments on the inextricable link between memory and the physical environment, "Ce devait être un lundi matin à l’aube. Ils l’ont démoli avec un pied-de-biche. A présent il s’est évanoui et peut-être avec lui, la possibilité de se souvenir." (*Souvenirs de Berlin-Est, 43*)

Memory marks absence. Calle’s books fulfill the purpose of *lieux de mémoire*, places in which memories are stored and revisited. Pierre Nora distinguishes *lieux de mémoire* from the action of memory itself and suggests these would not be of great importance but for a rupture with living memory, the sense that things may disappear forever:

The remnants of experience still lived in the warmth of tradition, in the silence of custom, in the repetition of the ancestral, have been displaced under the pressure of a fundamentally historical
sensibility...We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left.

Our interest in *lieux de mémoire*...has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn – but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. (1989, 7)

Calle’s books dwell on that sense of continuity and stress the importance of memory for friends, for lost and stolen works of art, for lost ways of life. She shows that memories can be attached to objects that facilitate recall and that those objects are missed when they are no longer present. In *Disparitions* absence is permanent and, although it is looked at through the folly of acquisition and the impossibility of retaining the appearance of unchangeability, this does not diminish the act of remembering, especially in its association with permanent personal loss. *Fantômes* is a visual representation of what remains in absence, the immateriality of the physical, the loss of the substantial and the intangibility of memory. It has a lighter side that presents the aesthetic possibilities of the no-longer-there, the delicate wisp of the visual approximation. *Souvenirs de Berlin-Est* remembers the sites of Communist Eastern Europe and treats them as legitimate *lieux de mémoire* despite their original functions as Communist propaganda and monumentalism.
Neither *Des histories vraies* nor *Appointment with Sigmund Freud* could be labelled *lieux de mémoire* in the same way as these other books devoted to the collection of memory. Yet, in its relocation to the Freud Museum Calle’s work comes into contact with a kind of historical continuity that comes close to embodying qualities that Nora aligns with real memory, “…linking the history of its ancestors to the undifferentiated time of heroes, origins, and myth…” (8) As Calle’s narratives make thematic and visual links to objects that represent the continuity of the past of humanity, from recent to ancient, her work becomes part of a *patrimoine perpétuel* of artistic representation.

If a statue of Lenin, carved in Siberian granite, at between 15 and 26 metres tall, can be removed “…comme si on vous réaménageait votre maison…” (*Souvenirs de Berlin-Est*, 19), fragile memories, as Freud reminded us, are subject to distortions and alterations, losing their sharp focus with the passing of time. While Calle’s books fulfill a memorial practice they also comment on this practice, its inability to completely grasp its subject no matter how detailed and wide-ranging the research, the way memory fades and at times fails.
CONCLUSION: IF THE COAT FITS...

In February 1988, I was invited by James Putnam to create an exhibition in London at 20 Maresfield Gardens, where Dr. Sigmund Freud had lived...After a vision of my wedding dress laid across Freud’s couch, I accepted...

Appointment with Sigmund Freud, 9

This quotation once again puts place to the forefront in decisions of how Calle’s projects will be developed and exhibited. This exhibition that places Calle’s *Des histoires vraies* in Freud’s former family home makes for intriguing parallels between her work and the psychoanalyst’s. An imaginary dialogue is instituted and Freud’s presence is tangible, all the more so since the image of his analytic couch that is present among Calle’s photographs from the original exhibition, foreshadowing his role as ‘collaborator’. (*Des histoires vraies*, 32-3) In addition, the frontispiece of *Appointment* shows Calle dressed in Freud’s overcoat and depicts a merging of identities so that, in and for the moment in which it was taken, Freud and Calle seem to become a single person with parallel preoccupations that is both male and female, united by a place that allows a merging of personal belongings and memories. The objects on display are not just complementary; they seem destined to be displayed together. Just as Freud’s coat envel...
suggests Freudian overtones to her work as an artist so his final home contains and displays Des histoires vraies in a way that transforms its meanings by association with his own.

Memory is a prominent common theme of this merging of artist and theorist. Calle suggests that her desire to record aspects of her life is due to a faulty memory. Many of Calle’s rituals and obsessions have fear at their source: fear of forgetting but also of being forgotten. Pierre Nora points out that one of the functions of a lieu de mémoire such as Des histoires vraies or The Freud Museum is to prevent the failure of memory, “...to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial...all of this in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs...” (1989, 19) Like Calle, Freud understood the mutability of memory, “I have only to bear in mind the place where this memory has been deposited and I can then ‘reproduce’ it at any time I like, with the certainty that it will have remained unaltered and so have escaped the possible distortions to which it might have been subjected in my actual memory.” (A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad, 1961, 227)

The association between the two is externally imposed, the idea of James Putnam, curator of The Freud Museum, who noted an affinity between Calle’s and Freud’s preoccupations. Usually Calle creates her own relationships between narratives and the question arises: How are these associations made? There is a physical association, the equivalent of Freud’s

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26 Le jour de mon anniversaire je crains d’être oubliée. Dans le but de me délivrer de cette inquiétude, j’ai pris...la décision d’inviter tous les ans...un nombre de convives équivalent à mon nombre d’années...Je n’ai pas utilisé les cadeaux reçus...Je les ai conservés, afin de garder à portée de main les preuves d’affection qu’ils constituaient...
coat, boxes that envelope the series and present the books together, signalling belonging, association and commonality. Other strategies may be formal, conceptual or visual; in *L’absence*, for example, the books are linked by both the idea of absence and the form of the interview around which each text is constructed. All three books share a similar structure because a constraint defines the method Calle adopts to assemble the memories she collects. In *Où et quand?* there is strong visual continuity as well as an omnipresent collaborator and method so that each volume forms a chapter or installment that advances a narrative. Despite the varied strategies at work and different impressions created by those groupings, these collections are the result of continuous and homogenous narrative elements.

There is, however, an important exception to this ‘method’ of collection that does not rely on the continuity or homogeneity of the collected works. *Doubles-jeux* is a collection of disparate projects that are thematically unrelated and are associated by means of an extratextual narrative derived from a borrowed fictional source, the novel *Leviathan* by Paul Auster. The organising principle of *doubles-jeux*, therefore, is external to its individual elements. Thus the problem of boundaries and criteria arises, especially the manner in which Calle organises the framing of her works. In *La vérité en peinture* Derrida writes the following on the problem of distinguishing what is external to a work of art,

...la représentation n’est pas structurellement représentative ou bien l’est à travers des détours dont la complication déconcerterait sans doute celui qui voudrait discerner...le dedans du dehors, la
Derrida is writing about the problem of the separation of “work” (*ergon*) from certain contextual elements that appear at once external and integral and are therefore inseparable from the work itself; a pertinent example is Calle dressed in Freud’s overcoat. This problem is precisely relevant to the way in which Calle organises her work when she creates a series from individual projects. When she collects volumes together that have a common constraint, theme, visual motif, or all three, then her choice is made according to elements that are integral to the works in question. These choices determine whether that constraint becomes part of the collection of work she makes – *ergon* or *parergon*? – or, if it does not, what the status of

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27 *Ergon* refers to the art work itself and *parergon* refers to something exterior to the work itself that, “...comes against, beside and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done...the fact...the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside.” (Derrida, 1987, p. 54)
an externally imposed framework, such as the one that governs the *doubles-jeux* collection, might be in relation to the works thus collected. This problem has even greater complexity when it is considered that there may be more than one constraint at work.

In Derrida’s terms the constraint implemented in the three volumes of *L’absence* is *parergal* in nature, apparently external to the work but also integral to its content, defining and shaping it. “Un parergon vient contre, à côté et en plus de l’ergon, du travail fait, du fait, de l’œuvre mais il ne tombe pas à côté, il touche et coopère, depuis un certain dehors, au-dedans de l’opération. Ni simplement dehors ni simplement dedans.” (*La vérité en peinture*, 1978, 63) The three volumes of *L’absence* employ the same constraint throughout and although these books are characterised by a diversity of narratives, and therefore content, as well as variations in the *raisons d’être* and moods of the individual projects, they retain an internal integrity so that their similarity is easily defined. Despite changes in subject and location (diversity of place contributing to diversity of narrative) the constraint remains immutable and determinant across all three volumes, defining the relationships between the books. An additional conceptual framework is the central idea of absence, “J’ai photographié cette mise-en-scène involontaire de l’absence et demandé aux conservateurs...et à d’autres permanents du musée de me décrire les objets disparus.” (*Disparitions*, 11) or, “J’ai photographié cette absence et interrogé les passants.” (*Souvenirs de Berlin-Est*, 11) Through the application of the same constraint Calle achieves diversity of situation, content and narrative. The integrity of the work as a collection is represented in the visual consistency of its typeset, layout and
cover design. Nevertheless a tiny detail is symbolic of the way similarity and diversity co-exist: in each book the different interviewees’ accounts, written in a single long paragraph for each work of art described, are separated by a red mark. This red mark is individualised for each volume: it is a star in _Souvenirs de Berlin-Est_, a square in _Fantômes_ and a diamond in _Disparitions_. The red mark both links and separates, attributing to each volume its own identity at the same time as it ensures continuity in visual style.

The constraint that drives _Où et quand?_ works in a very different way to _L’absence_ but still remains instrumental in determining the individual narratives of each book as well as their relationship to each other. While it is not necessary to read all three volumes of _L’absence_ to understand the function of the constraint it is essential to read all three parts of _Où et quand?_ in order to fully understand the entire series. The constraint that is used to direct Calle’s activity defines each book as individual but the material it generates becomes of minor importance compared to changes in Calle’s personal situation28. Thus the constraint is subordinated to a second organisational device or frame that is imposed by chance not by design. This second aspect of the narrative of _Où et quand?_ does not direct the activity of any individual book in the series but works instead as pure narrative, a continuing story developed across all three books that has stages in its telling so that each book presents a new chapter in an overarching metanarrative. The result is that the internal narratives of the three volumes of _Où et quand?_, unlike _L’absence_, are not just variations on a theme. Volumes one and two, _Berck_ and _Lourdes_, initially sold as single books, stand alone but the

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28 This situation refers to the terminal illness and eventual death of Calle’s mother, Monique Sindler.
third, *Nulle part*, is only available as part of a boxed set that includes all three volumes; implied in this method of packaging is that *Nulle part* cannot stand alone and may only be read with *Berck* and *Lourdes*. It is clear, then, that this narrative trajectory is not just background but has a more instrumental function in the definition of this series. Like the constraint that governs *Où et quand?* it provides a link from one volume of the series to the next and thus becomes more than just a frame, “Le cadre parergonal se détache, lui, sur deux fonds, mais par rapport à chacun de ces deux fonds, il se fond dans l’autre...Toujours une forme sur un fond mais le *parergon* est une forme qui a pour détermination traditionnelle non pas de se détacher mais de disparaître, de s’enfoncer, de s’effacer, de se fondre...” (Derrida, 1978, 71-3). Thus this externally imposed narrative element, like the constraint, can be defined and determined but cannot be separated from the work at hand.

Yet the constraint is still instrumental in defining the series since it leads to the recognition of a series and establishes the cohesive visual elements that signal the three books are related. The constraint is the common, unchanging component that sits at the centre of a narrative that shifts considerably across the three volumes. The cover design signals the existence of a series by its presentation in a standard format that includes the size and placement of the cover photograph, positioning and wording of the title and the repeated text29 that is inscribed on the back of each book. This cover design is defined by the constraint since it introduces Maud Kristen’s involvement, is named for each place she sends Calle, and presents

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29 “J’ai proposé à Maude Kristen, voyante, de prédire mon futur, afin d’aller à sa rencontre, de le prendre de vitesse.”
a significant image that reflects the content of the narrative contained therein. Yet there is much that changes between the three volumes. The photographs in Où et quand? vary considerably in style and subject, reflecting the influence of place. Design elements, also specific to each volume, are easily defined: *Berck’s* visual puns, *Lourdes’* self portraits and *Nulle part’s* monotone repetition are all part of the individual vocabularies that signal that, because of their differences, each book may be considered separate with its own set of circumstances although simultaneously part of a series.

In summary there are a number of individual elements that work together to define this series as a unified group: the constraint provides the situation, time provides the potential for coincidence, events occur because Sophie Calle finds herself in certain places, a progressive narrative continues across the three volumes and there are design elements of colour, texture of paper and the cover designs. It is impossible to detach any of them from the finished work as they all work to produce it, “Le cadre travaille en effet. Lieu de travail, origine structurellement bordée du plus de valeur, c’est-à-dire débordée sur les deux bords par ce qu’elle déborde, il travaille en effet...Il craque, se détraque, se disloque alors même qu’il coopère à la production du produit, le déborde et s’en déduit.” (Derrida, 1978, 87) Although the constraint of Où et quand? is undermined by the intrusion of a metanarrative, and so appears less intrinsically essential than it does in other works, the books would not tell the same story without the constraint to drive Calle’s activity and to interact with other elements to produce narrative. In the same way the different design elements superficially appear
as embellishment but in fact work to ensure a series that is perceived as cohesive and integrated.

Not all of Calle’s collections have the same internal integrity. One group of books, *doubles-jeux*, is characterised by the diversity of its content and projects, by the implementation of a number of constraints across different works that results in a collection that is heterogeneous rather than unified. Thus the questions arise: do these books fit together as a series and, if so, how? How does an apparently random collection of projects find a *fil conducteur* that groups them together as a series? How does Calle create a place for a number of varied projects governed by various constraints that produce varied narrative and visual outcomes?

This group of books is Calle’s first collection and associates individual works that were not devised to share a common place of presentation. The extremely complex organisational strategy it employs only partially has the status of *parergon* because the guiding principle for the collection is imposed from outside almost all of the individual texts. Yet, once again, this simplifies the situation because some of the projects are developed in response to the application of this unifying constraint at a point after the completion of many of the separate works. It comprises twelve individual projects, published in the French edition as eight books in a boxed set, in the English translation as a single volume with thirteen ‘chapters’. Calle’s early projects, *Suite vénitienne, L’hôtel, Le rituel d’anniversaire, La garde-robe, Les panoplies, Le carnet d’adresse, Préambule* and *La filature* were initially produced (as far as one can say with work made by the same artist) without intended reference
to each other. The strategy Calle uses to assemble this set of books is drawn from Leviathan, the novel by Paul Auster; in it he creates a character called Maria Turner, modelled on Calle. In the novel he makes reference to several of the projects she had already undertaken at the time of its writing, those listed above; these are the original projects that Calle gathers under the title doubles-jeux. The others included in the set, Le régime chromatique, Des journées entières sous le signe du B, du C, du W\textsuperscript{30} and New York, mode d’emploi are enacted by Calle according to fictional traits devised by Auster for the character of Maria Turner.

Dans le livre Léviathan...l’auteur, Paul Auster, me remercie de l’avoir autorisé à mêler la réalité à la fiction. Il s’est en effet servi de certains épisodes de ma vie pour créer...un personnage de fiction prénommé Maria qui ensuite me quitte pour vivre son propre histoire. Séduite par ce double j’ai décidé de jouer avec le roman de Paul Auster et de mêler, à mon tour et à ma façon, réalité et fiction. (De l’obéissance, Livre 1, doubles-jeux, 4)

Most of the projects gathered under the title of doubles-jeux are subject to individual constraints in their conception and execution since Calle sets up the rules of her game and follows them to create her work. However what is most interesting here is the superimposed constraint that has a

\textsuperscript{30} Some weeks she would indulge in what she called ‘the chromatic diet’, restricting herself to foods of a single colour on any given day. Monday orange: carrots, cantaloupe, boiled shrimp. Tuesday red: tomatoes, persimmons, steak tartare. Wednesday, white: flounder, potatoes, cottage cheese. Thursday green: cucumbers, broccoli, spinach – and so on, all the way through to the last meal on Sunday. At other times, she would make similar divisions based on letters of the alphabet. Whole days would be spent under the spell of b, c or w and then, just as suddenly as she had started it, she would abandon the game and go on to something else. (Auster, 60-61)
status that varies in relation to different parts of the collection. In respect of the first group of titles listed above it is entirely external to their original conception and has no influence on their structure or on the way their narratives are written and presented. Yet in respect to the second group it has the same ordering or structuring strategy, in relation to the work it generates, as the constraints do for L’absence and Où et quand? In this second group of projects, defined by the character of Maria Turner in Leviathan, the general constraint is the driving principle of the individual projects. But there is further complexity in that the volume entitled Gotham Handbook: New York mode d’emploi is a direct result of a new collaboration between Paul Auster and Calle, but in it Calle is not assuming a relationship to Maria Turner. The intention Calle had for this project was for Auster to write her a fictional character and some scenarios to enact as if she were that character. Auster, like Maude Kristen some years later, refused to participate in a project that may have had unforeseen consequences;

Je lui ai demandé d’inventer un personnage de fiction auquel je m’efforcerais de ressembler...pendant une période d’un an maximum. Il objecta qu’il ne souhaitait pas assumer la responsabilité de ce qui pourrait advenir alors que j’obéirais au scénario qu’il avait créé pour moi. Il a préféré m’envoyer des Instructions personnelles pour Sophie Calle afin d’améliorer la vie à New York... (Gotham Handbook, Livre VII, doubles-jeux, 7)

The publication of Auster’s novel in 1992 presented the possibility of publishing Calle’s earlier completed work in book form because Auster
devised a manner in which these diverse projects could be attributed fittingly to a single, albeit fictional, artist. Calle collected these projects under the title of *doubles-jeux* in 1998. An upshot of making this collection, having assembled it in relation to the work of a fictional character, is that it adds fuel to the debate over the perceived fictional nature of Calle’s work (see *Introduction*, 11-17). Calle, in her introduction to each volume, ‘corrects’ the sections that she sees as invented but she also plays with the character of Maria Turner, turning herself into a version of Auster’s character by eating a chromatic diet (a different colour for each day of the week) or spending days guided by certain letters of the alphabet (B, C and W). This adds ambivalence to Calle’s relationship to the character of Maria Turner: is she rejecting the idea that her work may be appropriated and attributed to a fictional representation or is she embracing the character and all that is implied in its existence? Does Calle control Turner or the reverse? By appropriating Auster’s character and adding to her output the intricate relationship is clearly heightened. Further complexity to the interaction between fiction and reality is added by Auster’s rule book for improving life in New York which, although devised for Sophie Calle and not Maria Turner, nevertheless cements the relationship between a novelistic scenario and an improbable activity realised in reality, “A mon avis celui qui a fait ça est un foutu taré et sans doute au chômage.” (*Gotham Handbook*, 52) There is an element of contagion that influences the reading of Calle’s work especially those texts that predate *Leviathan*. The reader tends to suspend disbelief as if reading fiction, a combination of the suggestion that the texts may be the result of a
fictitious author and the apparent flouting of social convention and boundaries of privacy that allow Calle to engage in her early work.

Thus the status of the constraint is mutable in this series: the status of the strategy is sometimes that of a constraint when it acts to determine the structure and content of those parts of doubles-jeux that are defined by Auster’s invention of the character of Maria Turner, at other times not. For those projects completed before Leviathan the constraint of collection is independent of the works collected. Calle, with red ink, circles, crossings out and annotations, reclaims the work as her own yet the improbability of her scenarios is tainted by the relationship to fiction and the unlikelihood and daring of her projects is underscored by this connection.

The strategy that assembles this collection implies a variation of the chronotope that has not yet been discussed: the possibility that time may determine place. For Calle this chronotopic scenario is generally, as it was in Où et quand?, about coincidence, a felicitous situation that gives meaning to previously unassociated circumstances. Throughout the work that has been discussed the reverse has been acknowledged as more certain: place has been considered determinate, the spatial turn of postmodernism providing evidence that the balance in the chronotope has veered to the spatial away from the temporal. Doubles–jeux shows evidence, not only of a change in the status of the constraint (it is possible for it to bear different relationships to different parts of a collection) but also to the balance of the chronotope. The chronotope’s spatial turn has been upset in favour of a temporal preeminence that arises from this felicitous coincidence. The publication of
*Leviathan* opened up possibilities for the creation of place (of exhibition, display or serialisation) because it created, through narrative, a way to associate these otherwise unrelated texts that was as individual and unexpected as the texts themselves. It also created the possibility for an extension of Calle’s practice into the realms of fiction and almost-fiction. It meant that Calle’s early and previously unpublished, previously unassociated short works had a strategy that united them but did not alter them internally, but that also allowed her to create new projects using a number of new constraints. Any alteration in the perception of the situation of the work or its status in relationship to reality is quite a different matter and is a direct result of its apposition to a constraint that is derived from a fictional source. Calle exploits this maximally in reappropriating the work as her own and ensuring the reader is aware of the differences between fiction and her reality. This process frames the published works and, as previously acknowledged, influences their reading with Auster’s fictional character paired with the improbability of Calle’s activity that allows her to become, if not a fictional character, then an actor in a number of scenarios derived fictionally. In her dedication of the work to Auster she acknowledges, “L’auteur remercie tout spécialement Paul Auster de l’avoir autorisée à meler la fiction à la réalité.” (Calle, *De l’obéissance, Livre I, doubles-jeux*, 6)

Calle’s series are immediately perceived as such because of a concrete device that defines them as collected works, a device shared by *l’Absence, Où et quand?* and *doubles-jeux*: the use of a box in which to store the volumes. The box serves both to protect the books and to gather them together, requires they be recognised as belonging together and then provides the
means to keep them that way, creating a tangible place for the presentation of her work. The English edition of *doubles-jeux (Double Game)* does not come boxed but as a single volume tied with a satin ribbon that suggests the whole is provisional and precarious. Without the box or the ribbon to associate the individual elements the detail and richness that comes from reading a series may be lost because the relationship would not be evident. Whether that detail refers to an extended narrative, to an intertextual reference, to an extended meditation on a theme or to the interplay and exploitation of the purely visual aspect matters little; the reader’s experience would be weakened. The bow and the box also recall a gift, wrapped so that its precious contents remain unsullied until such time as it is received. The gift echoes the subject of one of *double-jeux’s* component volumes, *Le rituel d’anniversaire*; themes are echoed in the very packaging of the texts. Another way to look at the box or the beribboned book is as a *parergon* although it is a constraint that is non-textual in its manifestation, a sign rather than an explanation, like the elements of design that create a relationship between different volumes of the *Où et quand?* series. It binds, holds or gathers a series of objects together and invites the reader to seek or invent a relationship between the component parts.

In making places for her work Calle repeats narratives and subjects, recontextualising some of them to change their significance; this is an important result of the places Calle makes to display her work. At times she locates the same event in different contexts, for example the story of Manolo Montolíu, Calle’s *torero*, dead in the bullring in Seville, is found in both *Disparitions (7)*, a volume of *L’absence*, and *Des histoires vraies* (48-9) In the
former it is one of three events that define absence for Calle. In the second, accompanied by a photograph of a memorial plaque, it becomes a significant memory but without emphasis on the absence created, rather it is a testament to friendship. In each instance the work acts as parergon to the repeated item.

Another form of repetition arises from recurrent images, with subsequent changes to meaning creating a pattern of comparisons and contrast across Calle’s body of work. Images of beds appear in almost every book or project, often they are of incidental or minor importance but are occasionally the major focus of a project. She presents pictures of beds as if some significant experience is written there. Were this motif present only in the written text it would be absorbed as detail but the fact that Calle photographs the beds draws attention to them. Beds are places because they are revisited, but what do they signify?

While beds may not seem to be an interesting subject for the photographer, being too familiar, too ordinary and too repetitious, Calle makes much of the introduction to this private place; it follows that photographs of beds communicate a sense of intimacy or attempted intimacy. At times beds are the main focus of a project; Les dormeurs and L’hôtel are two such works in which Calle is observing others and trying to get to know her subjects through observation. She has greater success in the former work. Calle also takes photographs of beds in which she has slept in places she has visited; these images are not the main focus of her work but the beds add detail to the qualities she discovers in place. For example, the
bed in *Douleur exquise* is unequivocally identified as the site of emotional pain. In the *Où et quand?* series she photographs beds in both Berck and Lourdes. They are further suggestive of the qualities Calle discovers in each place: the bed in Berck has a kitsch and colourful cover and the bed cover in Lourdes has a pattern of interlocking Celtic crosses, an extension of the all pervasive nature of Lourde’s religiosity.

Beds signal change, whether it is within a series or book, as Calle moves from place to place, or between series, as these items change function and are thus perceived differently. It does not matter whether the beds are single photographs or repeated images; nuance is added to events through the changes in meaning that is represented by the beds. This is not just a process of repetition but of recontextualisation; a narrative located in a different place and responding to the demands of that place means that the photographic images of objects, including beds, will reflect these differences. Beds have a synecdochical relationship to the text; as the text determines the meaning attributed to the beds, the images of beds are in turn representative of elements of the text.

It is no accident that Calle includes beds in almost every one of her projects any more than that her reuse of material is accidental, furthermore these are just two examples of which there are many more. Derrida poses the problem thus:

*Kant semble donc vouloir dire deux choses contradictoires à la fois: qu’il faut dégager le membre moyen comme partie détachable, opérer la partition de la partie mais aussi qu’il faut remembrer le*
tout en reformant le nexus, la connexion, la réannexion de la partie...(1978, 46)

Individual elements may appear to be detachable and recognisable as individual entities, but they must finally be judged as part of the work in which they appear, not as individual elements. The function of beds in the context of the work in which they appear is significant but alone they do not carry the same meaning; when isolated from the context in which they appear meaning is lost or changed. Similarly, when Calle gathers together books as a collection it is with the creation of meaning in mind so that the same principle applies to the individual members of a series, even if, like the books in *Où et quand?* they have elements that distinguish the part from the whole. It is the whole that determines their place and, eventually, contributes to their meaning. Even *doubles-jeux* is subject to this principle since, although the projects were once separate, once gathered together the applied frame cannot be undone. New work that extends the relationship only further reinforces the function of the *parergon*.

Sophie Calle uses places in her work and makes places for her work in the transition from works of visual art, exhibited in galleries and museums, to narratives that are located in books. What does it mean for an artist’s work to be bound in a book? Calle’s work is not necessarily made more accessible by this transition; her books are luxury items and her work does not always fulfill the promise of accessibility that a book suggests. Calle’s books are complex because every part of them speaks of something of the whole and
contributes to meaning. That which, at exhibition, may have been expressed
in material or texture, position or size, movement or stillness, is translated to
an inflexible object: books differ only marginally in size and are not easily
adapted to accommodate things that move cinematically; they are limited by
the materials used to construct them. Calle uses her work as a resource that
defines the book as a visual object. Sometimes the transition is relatively
simple: a collection of photographs presented with the texts that relate to
them. At others the transition is elaborate and includes elements that are
inhabitually found as part of a written work: not just images but the inclusion
of short films on discs, embroidered covers, silk ribbons and, more recently,
books that barely contain any words, in which the image alone expresses all
Calle wishes to say (Voir la mer). As places themselves these collections
underscore the importance of place in Calle’s work, from the stylistic
influence of the flâneur because Venice was the site chosen for Suite
vénitienne, to the museums of L’absence that lead to a meditation on the
meaning and cultural context of art and its relationship to its audience, to the
petits voyages of Où et quand? that reveal more about self and Calle’s artistic
practice than they do about the places she visits. As collections, they build
on the notion that place is of primary importance with several variations on
the idea of place across the volumes. Thus place is shown to be instrumental
in the conception and execution of her work. Although time has its part to
play it does not have the influence of place in the definition of Calle’s
narratives.

This is what we must conclude from this study of Calle’s work: more
than any other single element place defines her work. It is parergonal in
nature because, while apparently exterior, it makes a distinct impression on the final result of that work and cannot finally be considered separate from it. We might leave the last word to Derrida from *La vérité en peinture*:

Le *parergon* inscrit quelque chose qui vient en plus, *extérieur* au champ propre...mais dont l’*extériorité* transcendance ne vient jouer, jouxter, frôler, frotter, presser la limite elle-même et intervenir dans le dedans...Il manque *de* quelque chose et *se* manque à lui-même. Parce-que la raison est “consciente de son impuissance à satisfaire son besoin moral”, elle recourt au *parergon*, à la grâce, au mystère, au miracle. (65)
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