MICHAEL NOTT

PHOTOPOETRY 1845–2015

a Critical History

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Photopoetry 1845–2015,
a Critical History

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Michael Nott

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This may leave you without an all-embracing theory, or the conveniences of a creed, but to me that's the name of the game.

Tony Tanner

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Images for most of the photopoetry books discussed, and many more besides, from 1856 to 1921 can be viewed for free on the ‘Developing Photopoetry’ website, at arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/photopoetry/static/about.html.

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Introduction

Photopoetry: Forms, Theories, Practices

In the summer of 2007, photographer Norman McBeath met poet Paul Muldoon for lunch during the Edinburgh International Book Festival. They met to discuss an incipient collaborative project where Muldoon would respond to McBeath's photographs. Much of his work in the early 2000s, McBeath recalls, 'was social documentary, reportage, non-intervention, people just out there, black and white'.[1] As their discussion deepened, it dawned on Muldoon that *reportage* would not work as the photographic half of a collaboration. 'The reason that didn't work,' McBeath notes, 'was because Paul felt [the photographs] were too good! He said the story's been told, and so you have the frames there, it's all in there, so there's no room for evocation and story.'[2] The poems, in essence, would be derivative. It seemed as though they were back to square one.

As they were leaving the restaurant, McBeath gave Muldoon a gift – a box containing a small photogravure – and as he drove Muldoon and his wife back to their hotel, an argument developed in the back of the car. 'I was driving back up Leith Walk,' McBeath recalls,

> and Paul's saying, 'Oh, I'd like to open this, I'd like to see it', and his wife is saying 'No no no no no Paul, you should save it until we get back', and he's saying 'No, no, I'd really like to open it.' So there's this great big barney going on on our way up Leith Walk, and he opened it and he said, 'Great! That's it. That's what I can do with!'[3]

The photogravure showed a statue of Apollo wrapped in polythene, an image that became central to their eventual collaboration *Plan B* (2009). It appealed to McBeath and Muldoon because of Apollo's connection to light and poetry. 'That, for me, was a real revelation,' McBeath remembers, 'and because we'd known each other for a while, I could see what he was after. … I sent him stuff that would tie in with that, and that's how *Plan B* came about.'[4]

This is a book about how and why poets and photographers work together. The aim of the study is to demonstrate how the relationship between poem and photograph has always been one of disruption and serendipity, appropriation and exchange, evocation and metaphor. From the mid-nineteenth to the early twenty-first century, the book investigates how working practices between poets and photographers have changed, and situates the photopoetic medium within the contexts of economics, book history, and photo-history. In postulating the existence of 'photopoetry', I intend to examine how different working practices between poets and photographers inform and affect the resultant relationships between poem and photograph.

Defining photopoetry

What is photopoetry? Its neglect is such that the Oxford English Dictionary records no definitions of 'photopoetry' or 'photopoem', or comparable terms such as 'photoetry' or 'photoverse'. Such terms do exist, however, and the first use of the word 'photopoem' occurs in *Photopoems: A Group of Interpretations through Photographs* (1936), photographed and compiled by Constance Phillips. Pairings of poems and photographs in book form had existed for almost a century prior to *Photopoems*, though Phillips's anthology is important for its suggestion that the form deserved to be recognized and given a distinct name. In adopting the term, I do not mean to privilege photography over poetry in my conception of these collaborations; I choose it because, of the few terms used to define the relationship between poetry and photography – in both practice and criticism – it is the most common.

That said, critiques and theories of photopoetry are few and far between. In her article on Paul Éluard and Man Ray's *Facile* (1935), Nicole Boulestreau invented the term *photopoème* to describe the slim volume combining Éluard's poems and Man Ray's photographs. 'In the photopoem,' writes Boulestreau, 'meaning progresses in accordance with the reciprocity of writing and figures: reading becomes interwoven through alternating restitchings of the signifier into text and image.'[5] Poem and photograph encounter each other, and Boulestreau appears to suggest that the *photopoème* should be defined not by its production but its reception, as a practice of reading and looking that relies on the reader/viewer to make connections between, and create meaning from, text and image. Against these 'restitchings', Andy Stafford uses the term 'photo-poetry' to describe the

'tightly linked (though not fused)' images and texts of Philippe Tagli's *Paradis sans espoir* (1998), though he prefers 'photo-graffiti' as a conceptual label for Tagli's work.[6] Most recently, Robert Crawford and Norman McBeath have included 'Photopoetry: A Manifesto' in their collaboration *Chinese Makars* (2016). Their twelve points range from the dependence and interdependence of poems and photographs; the importance of 'revealing' in order to '[engage] the reader's imagination'; the need for a variety of connective strands between text and image; and, first and foremost, an assertion that 'Poems and photographs encourage each other's obliquity.'[7] Literal illustrations and descriptions are not engaging, according to Crawford and McBeath, and they suggest that the relationship between poetry and photography, at its deepest and most engaging, is serendipitous and requires the reader/viewer to reach, work, and imagine in order to make productive connections between text and image.

With these discussions in mind, I propose a generous definition of photopoetry as a form of photo-text that takes, for its primary components, poetry and photography. It is the product of some form of working practice between poet and photographer, be it retrospective or collaborative; or, on occasion, a sole poet-photographer or photographer-poet. Poems or photographs may precede the other, or be conceived in conjunction around a central topic or theme. I make no demands on the arrangement of poetry and photography in the photopoetic work: poems and photographs may form separate, discrete sequences; be entwined throughout the work in pairings or sections; or be in the form of collages or montages. Similarly, the number of poems or photographs may not be precisely equal, and while I make no strict demands on balance or proportion, I would argue that a photographic frontispiece of a poet would not, to my mind, make the subsequent six hundred pages of un-photographed poetry in any sense photopoetic. Likewise, I make no exclusions on the basis of photographic process (e.g. collotype, photogravure, inkjet) or style (e.g. fine art, documentary, snapshot), nor poetic form or school: this study engages with diverse forms and styles of poetry, from long narrative poems and translations to sonnets and haiku; from metre to free verse and back again. Format, too, is no prompt for exclusion: photopoetic works include photobooks, scrapbooks, combination prints with verse extracts as captions, artist's boxes, museum and gallery exhibitions, and stereographic sequences.[8] That poem and photograph interact is my sole demand.

I am hesitant to define photopoetry primarily by what it is not. On occasion, photopoetic works will also feature prose, captions, poetic prose, and other such

components not strictly poetry or photography. More often than not these are textual rather than visual. I have limited the inclusion of such works on account of space, since to privilege works such as the poetic prose of Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes's *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* (1955) and the jointly prose and verse work of Les Murray's *The Australian Year* (1985) would be to dilute the primarily photopoetic encounters on which this study focuses. More pertinently, however, I have distinguished between the photographing of visual material (i.e. paintings, drawings) for inclusion in a book, and images that maintain their photographic integrity. Only these latter images are photopoetic, as production rather than content defines the photographic image. This distinction includes, for example, *Hiding in Full View* (2011), a photobook collaboration between poet Don Paterson and painter Alison Watt, which combines photographic reproductions of Watt's paintings with a poem by Paterson, each inspired by the work of Francesca Woodman.

What, then, are the advantages of considering photopoetry as a distinct form of photo-literature? What does poetry bring to photography that prose, for example, does not? I would argue that, in most cases, poems and photographs function as self-contained realities. They are, at first, separate, whole. As John Fuller writes, a poem is 'gradually constructed in words and images that has to pass muster as an alternative reality. But the photographer is exploiting reality itself, almost directly.'[9] Both are concerned with images: the visual immediacy of the photographic image against the unravelling, modifying, accumulating verbal images that emerge from the poem. In conjunction, such visual and verbal images blend, clash, contradict, embolden, evoke, and resist each other, creating photopoetic images that seem, in Crawford and McBeath's terms, to encourage the 'obliquity' and 'serendipity' of text and image. Now, this is obviously not the case for certain types of poem. Walter Scott's long narrative poems, for example, are not image-based in the way that Paul Muldoon's lyric about a statue of Apollo wrapped in polythene and duct tape revolves around a central image. Indeed, there is perhaps a reason that long poems became less common in photopoetry once poets and photographers began to collaborate, when the immediate visual focus of photopoetry reduced in scale but let loose numerous thoughts, questions, and ideas beyond the photopoem itself. I engage with several photopoetic theorists across this study, from Crawford and McBeath to John Fuller, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes, and David Hurn, all of whom have practised photopoetic collaboration. Insofar as poetry differs to prose or captions in connection with photography, I would argue that captions, as their main function, tend to describe photographs and provide a source of

information. Prose, on the other hand, comes in numerous shapes and sizes: from novels and short stories to essays, tracts, and propaganda. Each relationship is different, just as, in conjunction with a photograph, we read a haiku differently to a long narrative poem in couplets. This is not to suggest that links between prose and photography are uninteresting or unworthy of critical discussion, only that poetry and photography seem uniquely suited as analogues to each other. Both, independently, deal with the seen and the unseen. The tightness and concision of the lyric poem, for example, reminds the reader of the photographic frame: What is happening just out of shot? One might argue the lyric poem is 'taken' in a way similar to the photograph. As Roland Barthes writes:

> We say 'to develop a photograph'; but what the chemical action develops is undevelopable, an essence (of a wound), what cannot be transformed but only repeated under the instances of insistence (of the insistent gaze). This brings the Photograph (certain photographs) close to the Haiku. For the notion of a haiku, too, is undevelopable: everything is given, without provoking the desire for or even the possibility of a rhetorical expansion. In both cases we might (we must) speak of an *intense immobility*.[10]

Barthes was not thinking specifically of poems and photographs in conjunction, and we must ask what happens to the 'intense immobility' when two 'undevelopable' poems and photographs engage in dialogue. Even in seemingly illustrative connections, for example, a poem may draw the reader/viewer beyond the frame of the photograph. A photograph, likewise, may challenge or confirm the reader/viewer's impression of a landscape found in the poem. Such challenges and difficulties, to paraphrase Barthes, only increase the desire for, and possibilities of, imagination, revelation, and rhetorical expansion when we consider poem and photograph to be analogous.

Photopoetry in context

While there is a growing body of work on the intersections of literature and photography, photopoetry represents a new field of study for scholars of text and image. In writing the first critical account of photopoetry, I intend to examine its history from beginnings in nineteenth-century photographic illustration to photobooks such as McBeath and Muldoon's *Plan B* (2009) that typify contemporary collaborative practice. In the absence of a distinct critical literature on photopoetry, it is necessary to situate photopoetry within several

existing fields of study: literature and photography, pertaining to photo-texts and photobooks; the history of collaborations between artists and writers more generally; and the history of relationships between visual and verbal representation.[11]

An indispensable resource in photo-textual studies is the three-volume *Photobook: A History* (2004–2014) by Martin Parr and Gerry Badger.[12] This work provides unrivalled exegesis on the most common format that poets and photographers have adopted in their collaborations, as well as the contiguous issue of photo-literary evolution. Indeed, Parr and Badger note that the photobook occupies an important place in photographic history, residing 'at a vital interstice between the art and the mass medium, between the journeyman and the artist, between the aesthetic and the contextual'.[13] They situate a number of early photopoetic books – though they are not called such – in the contexts of photobook history and practice, examining their cultural, editorial, and socio-economic circumstances, and articulating their relationship to the above-quoted parameters. Insofar as photopoetry is a type of photo-text that takes the photobook for its most common form, I have no desire to narrow an already narrow field of study by becoming entangled in issues of definition surrounding photo-texts that would delimit the photopoetic text as anything more specific or unique than that which includes – and is limited primarily to – poetry and photography. More pertinent to my study than the intricacies involved in defining the 'photo-text' are the currents of book history and photo history that inform the conception and production of photopoetry. Following Parr and Badger, my study will articulate the place of photopoetry in photo-literary history through close consideration of the technological advances in, and growing economic opportunities of, photography, and how these informed the conceptual and physical development of the photobook. The first photobooks were illustrated with original photographs, each laboriously pasted in by hand. Come the 1870s, attempts at combining photography with traditional graphic printing techniques were encountering some success, and soon 'the development of the halftone block and the rotogravure press made the cheap and seamless reproduction of actual photographs in ink a daily reality'.[14] An awareness of such labours allows us, for example, to understand better McBeath's emphasis on the photograph's materiality in *Plan B* (2009) and *Simonides* (2011), when he prints his photographs with light shone through the negative, leaving them uncropped, with marks around the edges: their 'unique thumbprint'.[15] These unique frames

were included in both photobooks and gesture towards the history of the format. I cite this example to demonstrate how practitioners have taken inspiration from the history of their form. Local examples abound throughout works of photopoetry, and my study will articulate the intersections and overlaps between histories of the book, photography, and photopoetry.

Exploring relationships between poems and photographs necessarily involves studying the working practices of poets and photographers in the creation of photopoetic texts. One key theoretical study concerning forms of working practice is Andy Stafford's *Photo-texts: Contemporary French Writing of the Photographic Image* (2010). While Stafford's study is much broader in photo-textual scope and takes the francophone rather than anglophone world for its focus, his typology of photo-texts has proved an important model for my own study. Stafford identifies 'three distinct types of photo-text' – collaborative, self-collaborative, and retrospective – that broadly mirror the types of photopoetry, insofar as photopoems are a type of photo-text.[16] These types are useful in that they enable us to understand better the kind of work photograph and poem do together, once we are aware if they have been conceived mutually (collaborative) or in isolation (retrospective).

Self-collaborative photopoetry is uncommon and, as a result, seldom features in this study. One of the most important self-collaborative works is T. R. Williams's stereographic sequence *Scenes in Our Village* (1857), which emphasizes both the visual and aural components of photopoetry. As Stafford notes, self-collaborative work is perhaps the 'trickiest' to discuss, given questions surrounding the sole artist's potential privileging of one medium over the other.[17] Given the problematic nature of self-collaboration, and its relative scarcity, I have omitted Anne Brigman's *Songs of a Pagan* (1949) and Janet Sternburg's *Optic Nerve* (2005), which would otherwise warrant inclusion in an encyclopaedic history of photopoetry.

The most common type of photopoetry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is retrospective. Here, photographers provide illustrations to poems that have already been written, and whose authors are usually no longer alive. Rarely does the reverse relationship occur, with poems written to accompany already existent photographs.[18] Retrospective photopoetry is also the most discussed, and the majority of identifiably photopoetic scholarship to date focuses on the nineteenth century. Scholars including Carol M. Armstrong, Helen Groth, and Lindsay Smith all examine, from a variety of perspectives, the relationship between Victorian poetry and photography.[19] In *Victorian*

Photography and Literary Nostalgia (2003), Groth examines how the desire to arrest time yoked together poetry (as an idealized concept of tradition) and early photography in a variety of commercial forms that illuminated the growing diversity of visual and literary experience. In *Victorian Photography, Painting and Poetry* (1995), Smith explores Victorian notions of seeing and perceiving, and the impact of the camera on nineteenth-century social, aesthetic, and philosophical concerns.[20] Absent from Smith's study are collaborative works between poets and photographers, although she is far from alone in this omission. Where analyses of collaborations between poets and photographs occur, they tend to focus on Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs of Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1875). Armstrong's *Scenes in a Library: Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843–1875* (1998) offers the most detailed and illuminating reading to date of Cameron's *Idylls*, demonstrating the importance of the volume in the context of photobook history. While Armstrong's work has prompted a raft of literature on Cameron's *Idylls* – which has become, by far, the most analysed photopoetic text – the overwhelming focus on this high-profile work has eclipsed other collaborations between poets and photographers.[21]

Collaborative photopoetry became the most common type of photopoetry from the mid-twentieth century. With the occasional exception of Cameron's *Idylls* and the Gunn brothers' *Positives*, few studies of literature and photography devote attention to these collaborations. François Brunet in *Photography and Literature* (2009) examines the shaping of photography by scientific and literary culture, and the development of the photo-text, all without recourse to collaborations between poets and photographers. Similarly, David Cunningham, Andrew Fisher, and Sas Mays's collection *Photography and Literature in the Twentieth Century* (2005) recognizes the growth of this interdisciplinary area of study, but photopoetic collaborations are again absent. Most recently, Karen Beckman and Liliane Weissberg's collection *On Writing with Photography* (2013), while breaking new ground in the interdisciplinary study of text and image, fails to engage with the rich history of photopoetic collaborations. Most discussions of literature and photography focus squarely on prose, from Marsha Bryant's edited collection *Photo-Textualities: Reading Photographs and Literature* (1996) and Jane M. Rabb's anthology *The Short Story and Photography, 1880's–1990's* (1998) to Nancy Armstrong's *Fiction in the Age of Photography* (1999) and Michael North's *Camera Works: Photography and the Twentieth-Century Word* (2005).

Traces exist elsewhere. Jefferson Hunter devotes a chapter of *Image and Word* (1987) to the study of poems about photographs. 'Going back and forth from photograph to poem,' Hunter writes, 'can be a destructive exercise.'[22] He compares the 'arbitrariness' of Aaron Siskind and John Logan's collaboration *Photographs and Poems* (1976) to the poems Seamus Heaney wrote in response to the photographs of P. V. Glob's *The Bog People* (1969): Heaney is called 'an extraordinary describer', a neat summary of Hunter's dismissive attitude towards the potential connections between poetry and photography. Though Hunter's discussion of Bertolt Brecht's *Kriegsfibel* (1955) and Yevgeny Yevtushenko's *Invisible Threads* (1981) attempts to lend nuance to his position, it is significant that he omits renowned photopoetic collaborations such as Godwin and Hughes's *Remains of Elmet* (1979), or pioneering American work like Rudy Burckhardt and Edwin Denby's *In Public, in Private* (1948). Of Yevtushenko's self-collaboration, for example, Hunter writes that the poet in his photographs 'offers an easily available reality'.[23] This kind of condescension, dismissive of the potential for metaphor, serendipity, and symbiosis, is common to most accounts of photopoetic work and has proven useful to my study in that such attitudes provide bases for more sophisticated analyses.

In his recent book *Poetry, Photography, Ekphrasis* (2015), Andrew Miller is the first scholar to consider the lyrical ekphrasis of photographs. He examines several texts that I would term 'photopoetic', most notably Thom and Ander Gunn's *Positives* (1966). Rather than considering photopoetic collaboration as a distinct form, Miller situates it as the 'ekphrastic calligram', one of nine 'subclasses' of the 'chronotype of the photograph'.[24] 'Such texts,' Miller writes,

> can therefore be seen as captioning the accompanying photographs and forming what Michel Foucault terms calligrams (*textimage* bonds). These bonds alter the function of the poems, shifting away from the work of description and allowing the speakers to address and even interact with the photographic subjects. Thus, such poems are the fullest manifestation of the chronotype of the photograph, in that text and image encounter one another.[25]

While I agree with Miller that connections more sophisticated than description and illustration are created in the encounter between poem and photograph, I would argue that this 'encounter' fundamentally alters the ekphrastic relationship between poem and photograph. When poem and photograph are seen side by side on the page, the verbal does not represent the visual, nor the

visual the verbal. This reverses Miller's position: photopoetry is not one example of ekphrasis, but ekphrasis can be one example of photopoetry.

Several important works of photopoetry do exhibit ekphrastic connections between poem and photograph, and I draw attention to these examples when appropriate. As a result, W. J. T. Mitchell's concept of 'iconology' and the study of ekphrasis from Murray Kreiger to Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux have a limited place in this book.[26] Loizeaux distances her own work from the study of photopoetry, suggesting that 'one might well write a book on photographic ekphrasis', a book in which she would like to see discussions of Ted Hughes's collaborations with Fay Godwin and Peter Keen.[27] While Miller has now written such a book (though Hughes's collaborations are curiously absent), my work argues that photographic ekphrasis is not the only 'encounter' photopoetry renders possible.

Ekphrasis is most relevant to photopoetry in its concerns with rivalry and symbiosis. James Heffernan's definition of ekphrasis as 'the verbal representation of visual representation' has long proven useful, but his ideas about the 'paragone' – the 'rivalry' between visual and verbal arts as a struggle for 'supremacy' – are currently being contested in contemporary ekphrastic theory.[28] Models of collaboration more symbiotic than hierarchical are being proposed and analysed. As David Kennedy writes, 'The idea of representation as a choice that produces a relationship between two things that, in effect, changes both is another point that has received little critical attention.'[29] The kind of symbiotic relationships that Kennedy posits are more applicable to photopoetry than ideas of rivalry: one need only look at the generosity of the collaborations throughout this study, particularly those between Fay Godwin and Ted Hughes, and George Mackay Brown and Gunnie Moberg, to perceive currents of exchange, not competition. Where conflict and rupture do occur, they are thematic concerns accentuated, for example, by antagonistic pairings of poem and photograph in Godwin and Hughes's *Remains of Elmet*, or the structural mischiefs of McBeath and Muldoon's *Plan B*. Each photopoetic text is shaped by the circumstances of its conception and production, and each raises its own unique questions as to how poems and photographs interact. This study pays acute attention to these nuances in order to plot the continuities and turning points of photopoetic history, in both products and practices.

One final thought. Parr and Badger quote the Dutch designer Ralph Prins, who writes, 'A photobook is an autonomous art form, comparable with a piece of sculpture, a play or a film. The photographs lose their own photographic character

as things "in themselves" and become parts, translated into printing ink, of a dramatic event called a book.'[30] Prin's language is provocative, and I would argue that the most sophisticated photopoetry retains the independence of both poems and photographs, while their interdependence creates something new and often divergent from what they signify in isolation. Having it both ways, in my study, means that attention will be paid, on the one hand, to the 'autonomous' forms of photopoetry and, on the other, the histories of photographic and poetic meaning.

Methodology and chapter outlines

It would be impossible to consider every photopoetic work of the last 170 years. Not only would an encyclopaedic approach produce an unwieldy volume, it would also not be useful for those encountering photopoetry for the first time. By eschewing this approach, this study examines key works that have shaped photopoetic history. While it would have been possible to proceed either geographically or thematically, a chronological approach is most appropriate for a foundational study of photopoetry. That said, it is not without potential pitfalls. It is not my intention, for example, to present a version of photopoetic history that parallels the evolutionary perspective of traditional photographic histories. Only comparatively recently has this evolutionary tradition begun to be exploded and the protean nature of photography incorporated into accounts of its history. 'Photographs can function as historical documents,' write Parr and Badger, 'as political propaganda, as pornography, as repositories for personal memories, as works of art, as fact, fiction, metaphor, poetry. The medium has such a diversity of aims and ambitions … that a single shared history would seem to be an impossible pursuit.'[31] Accounts such as Mary Warner Marien's *Photography: A Cultural History* (2002) and Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson's *Photography's Other Histories* (2003) began to decentre the narrative outlined by photography's first eminent historians, such as Beaumont Newhall and Helmut Gernsheim, by engaging with cultural, historical, and regional perspectives beyond the notion that photography is a Western technology centred around, and furthered by, individuals. By examining work from the United Kingdom, United States, India, and Ireland from a range of critical perspectives including ecological, queer, and urban that elucidate how and why poets and photographers have worked, and continue to work, together, this

study demonstrates how photopoetry, too, has a broad range of histories that defy the strictures of the traditional evolutionary framework.

On a related note, it is likewise not my intention to suggest that photopoetry comes to its perfection as a medium over time. In demonstrating how the relationship between poem and photograph has always been symbiotic and serendipitous, I hope to avoid the implication that works of the past are being judged by the standards of the present, or that photopoetry has undergone anything as trite as 'development' or 'improvement' towards a contemporary apotheosis. This study locates continuities and turning points across the histories of photopoetry, broadly defined, to demonstrate the various encounters of poem and photograph since they were first placed side by side on the pages of Victorian scrapbooks. To address the question of format, for example, the nuances of photopoetry across almost two centuries are to be found in the differing working relationships between practitioners, and the cultural, economic, and historical currents from which these photopoetic texts emerged. For example, many formats of photopoetry have been produced since 1845, among them scrapbooks, stereographs, postcards, and artists' boxes, but the most common has been, without question, the photobook. Experimentation in format occurred mostly in the early years of photopoetry, but Crawford and McBeath's *Light Box* (2015) demonstrates that the photobook is not the sole surviving format for photopoetic collaboration. There has been no progression towards the perfect format. The photobook is privileged in this study because it is the most common format, not because it is the perfect or only format. While discussion of other formats is limited primarily to the first and last chapters, I draw on pertinent examples where they illuminate important aspects of photopoetic history, and they are discussed on their own merits and in their appropriate historical contexts.

My central principles of selection are twofold. First, I have chosen photopoetic works on their cultural, formal, and historical significance, not on the artistic merit of the poems and photographs themselves. T. R. Williams, for example, was not an especially good poet, but his inclusion of verses on the back of his stereographic slides was formally innovative. The photographs of Constance Phillips have been all but forgotten, but her pairings of urban photography and romantic verse provide insight into the cultural and historical imaginations of early twentieth-century America. This principle has the benefit of reviving texts that are non-canonical in terms of both photography and poetry – with photographers and poets who are unknown and sometimes anonymous – thus

demonstrating that significant works of photopoetry – and, by extension, the photobook – are not necessarily the same thing as significant works of photography or poetry in isolation.

Second, I have restricted the scope of this study to work produced in the English language, primarily from the United Kingdom and United States. This is already ambitious in scope, though not without reason: my discussions of British and American material are integrated, given the dialogue between photopoetry on both sides of the Atlantic and how, in the twentieth century, changing cultural crosscurrents have prevented the development of insular traditions. It would be impossible to produce a one-volume critical history of worldwide photopoetry, similar in length to this study, without sacrificing detail to breadth. While reasons of scope have led me to exclude a wealth of worldwide material that would otherwise merit detailed discussion, I have attempted to imbue the book with a global flavour. Where appropriate I allude to European photopoetry and suggest points of overlap or connection with anglophone collaborations, most significantly pertaining to interwar surrealism with Paul Éluard and Man Ray's *Facile* (1935), a photo-text amply discussed elsewhere.[32] Likewise, many of the chosen texts focus on places beyond the United Kingdom and United States, from rural Ireland to Afghanistan, India, Italy, Kosovo, and Tibet. I am aware that the history of photopoetry is not monolingual either in its production or its networks of influence, nor is the field of photo-literary studies limited to English-language publications.

As I have suggested, this study of photopoetry will focus both on the interactions between poem and photograph, and the nature of working practices between poets and photographers, from retrospective and collaborative projects to their socio-economic and editorial conditions. For a critical history of the form, it would be impossible to marginalize, in Stafford's neat summary, the questions that surround the 'temporal, conceptual, political, ethical, rhetorical and even financial discrepancies between writer and photographer'.[33] Matters such as the evolving technical possibilities of photography, and its changing economic opportunities, are often as important to innovations in photopoetry as authorial intent. This study does not attempt to excavate authorial 'intentions' but to address different photopoetic practices in order to elucidate the encounter between poem and photograph. An awareness of method and practice often illuminates the work: a sense, for example, of how subjects and themes were conceived; whether poems or photographs came first or emerged concurrently; and how the order of poems and photographs was decided.

The first two chapters explore the beginnings of photopoetry in Britain and America. Chapter 1 examines the origins of British photopoetry, from vernacular forms such as scrapbooks and photograph albums to the enormously popular photographically illustrated poetry books of the late nineteenth century. Two key photopoetic themes quickly emerge: the 'theatrical' and the 'picturesque'. This chapter explores these themes, and demonstrates how they provided different challenges to photographers seeking to illustrate poetry. Through case studies including photographically illustrated editions of Walter Scott and William Wordsworth, Henry Peach Robinson's composite photographs, and a specifically photopoetic analysis of Cameron and Tennyson's *Idylls*, the chapter addresses the encounter between text and image when photographers illustrate already existing poems. Through the 'retrospective' work under discussion, I challenge the idea that 'photographic illustration' is literal and reductive, instead positioning it as a symbiotic combination of poem and photograph that places the reader/viewer at the centre of the work. I explore how the most engaging works of photographically illustrated poetry combine the visuality of photography and the textuality of poetry to create multisensory sites reliant upon the independence and interdependence of text and image.

Chapter 2 focuses on the emergence of American photopoetry, which did not proliferate as early in the nineteenth century as British work. Concerned, typically, with people rather than landscapes, American photographers tended to conceive of their photographs as visual 'translations' of existing poetic texts. Key work in this period includes the six photographically illustrated books of Paul Laurence Dunbar's poetry, and Adelaide Hanscom Leeson's pictorialist photographic translation of Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. Turn-of-the-century American photopoetry constructed and deconstructed representations of gendered and racialized identities, and I examine these representations through ideas of masks and masquerades, aspects of mythology and ethnography, and the tension created between photographic eye and poetic voice(s).

The third chapter continues to focus on American material. It investigates how American practitioners in the early twentieth century moved away from retrospective illustration and translation towards more reciprocal collaborative relationships between poets and photographers. Beginning with an analysis of Ezra Pound's imagist poetry, the chapter traces how analogues between photography and poetry in Pound's work shaped twentieth-century ideas about the connections between text and image. From this basis, the chapter