Made to Be Seen

Perspectives on the History
of Visual Anthropology

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Contents

Tracing Photography

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Setting the Focus

This essay explores the uneasy history of photography in anthropological practice as a series of cross-cultural interactions, agencies, reengagements, and evidential potentials. I shall present three thematic "snapshots" of moments of entanglement, which chart the shifting anthropological relationship with the medium. For as Pinney has argued (1992a), there is an historical confluence of the parallel yet intersecting and mutually supporting histories of anthropology and photography in a complex matrix of mechanical inscription, desire, power, authority, and agency. My "snapshots" might be summarized as questions of evidence, questions of power, and questions of agency. They are not mutually exclusive—they both overlap and merge at various points—but they do constitute moments of focus. Further, although there is a broad chronological drift—circa 1890–1970s, mid-1970s–late 1990s, mid-1990s to present—that doubles back on itself too often to constitute a linear history. Reflecting anthropology's multifaceted histories, I consider photographs with which anthropologists have engaged, not only those that they have made.

There is necessarily much that is left out. I am concentrating here on the historical record and research responses to it rather than presenting a history of methodology, although again, the two are far from mutually exclusive. Contemporary developments in the latter can be tracked in volumes

such as Pink (2001) and Banks (2001) and in the pages of the subdiscipline's journals. I shall also, given the limitations of a short essay, restrict myself largely to the English-speaking world, although such a history and commentary could be written equally, with overlaps on one hand and specific inflections on the other, to imaging practices in the anthropologies produced by, for instance, the French-, German-, or Dutch-speaking worlds (see, e.g., Dias 1994, 1997; Blanchard et al. 1995; Theye 1989; Schindlbeck 1989; Zimmerman 2001; Roodenberg 2002) and elsewhere in the application of anthropological method in many parts of the world.

In the first snapshot, on questions of evidence, I address the ways in which photography and photographs have been used to establish anthropological fact. I shall track the shifting responses to realism and truth values of photography through the set of socio-aesthetic propositions that cluster around the discourse of "pose," with all its implications for the nonnatural, the unreal, and anthropological "naturalism."[1] These questions are integrally associated with ideas of observation, evidence, truth, and cultural integrity, the moral weight of which are at the core of the anthropological project.

Second, I look at the way in which the representational practices of photography become a forceful presence in the cultural politics of representation within the discipline and without. Photography, especially its role in the production of the colonial body as an anthropological object, became a key site of cultural critique in the "crisis of representation" that began in the 1970s. Haunted by anthropology's colonial past and uncertain of its role in a postcolonial and increasingly global environment, the discipline found in the visual legacy of its past a rich prism through which to explore the construction of anthropological knowledge.

Finally, I shall explore the revitalized and reimagined role of photography within anthropology, namely the emergence of ethnographies of photographic practices, on one hand, and historical reengagement with anthropology's visual legacy, on the other. Such studies have not only opened up the possibility of agency in the cultural historical domain but also destabilized the authority of both anthropology and its photographic production. This has enabled the emergence of critical, reflexive, and collaborative microhistories of visual, cross-cultural encounters and photography's relation with the material and sensory. These studies reveal complex orders of photography, but more significantly, they use photography not only to record according to the best practice of the moment but as a prism through which to think through other areas of anthropological endeavor.

Thus, overall, this essay looks at how photography might be positioned, not only in visual anthropology, but in the discipline more broadly. Through the fluid circulation of images and representational strategies across the shifting boundaries of disciplinary practice, through the multivalency and recodability of the photograph itself, is constituted a complex web of influences, ideologies, and theoretical and methodological approaches to photographs, to the extent that disciplinary contemporary practices and the visual legacies of anthropology's past cannot necessarily be disentangled. Implicit in such a history is the shifting dynamic of how anthropology makes its evidence, how it arrives at its truths, and how it positions its objectivity, handles its subjectivities, and understands its intersubjectivities (Pink 2001, 19–21).

Evidential Strategies

The mechanical and indexical nature of photographs as apparently unmediated inscriptions made them central to the establishment and articulation of objective method and desire across a wide range of disciplines. However, while the photograph might be the realist tool par excellence, evidential validity has, for over a century, been vested in the quality of observation. This was increasingly embodied in fieldworkers' presence, to the extent that the body became a sort of camera, absorbing data through scientifically controlled observation of the trained analytical eye (Grimshaw 2001, 53; Grasseni, this volume). Thus the source of the photograph, the anthropologically creating eye, became as significant as the mechanically inscribed content, encompassing therefore both empirical reliability and procedural correctness (Daston and Galison 1992, 82) in order to create an authoritative anthropological realism.

Of course realism, and its empiricism as politically complicit, hegemonic, and appropriating, has come under particular scrutiny in film and photography over the last thirty years or so (for instance Krauss 1982; Nichols 1991; Roberts 1998), and this is not the place to revisit those arguments. What is significant here is the way in which photography's forceful realist effect and transparency gave authority to the ethnographic account, at least until the 1960s, and gave concrete form to the illusionism of anthropological representation, proclaiming, "This is what you would see had you been there with me—observing" and "You are there . . . because I was there" (Clifford 1988, 22). Thus photographs become privileged sites for communicating a feeling of cultural immersion,

a sort of substitute for the personal experience of fieldwork, presenting authoritatively what could have been seen.

It was for precisely these reasons that the statement of the parameters of the image became so important. Photography had to not only record but to preserve evidential authority and illusion. The photographic act itself had to be inconspicuous and transparent: as late as 1951 the handbook *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* advised against the use of the 35-millimeter camera, held to the eye and thus masking the face, as "undesirably obtrusive" (RAI 1951, 354), and throughout the twentieth century the same handbook urged the sense of the spontaneous and the invisible camera, for "many photographs . . . are spoiled because the subject is looking at the photographer" (BAAS 1912, 271), advice repeated in the 1929 edition. Looking into the camera, in self-conscious representation, marks the presence of the subject, the author, and the viewer, challenging the authority of the anthropologist as it disrupts the sense of immediacy, spontaneity, and naturalism on which observational validity and illusionistic re-presentation is grounded.

Pose is thus presumed to be "unnatural," whereas anthropology is concerned with the natural flow of culture, unmediated and direct. These values are clearly articulated by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, whose seminal work on child development, socialization, and personality in Bali between 1936 and 1938, resulted in a tour de force of observational translation in the social sciences as they attempted to use the camera as a new systematic methodology of precision and integrity.[2] Over 750 of the photographs were published as *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis* (1942), arranged as a series of scientific "photo-essays" that demonstrate their thesis, under such rubrics as "Stages of Childhood," "Autocosmic Play," and "Boys' Tantrums" (Jacknis 1988, 168–70).

It is worth considering Mead and Bateson's method because it articulates a culmination of a specific set of relations between field anthropology, photography, and the construction of its object, especially in relation to the pose and the "natural." Could pose, intervention, or reenactment constitute an anthropological truth? They state, "We tried to shoot what happened normally and spontaneously rather than to decide upon norms and then get the Balinese to go through these behaviors in suitable lighting" (Bateson and Mead 1942, 49). In other words the dominant values of the immediate translation of vision and experience shaped both the photographic methodology and subsequent analysis (figure 6.1).

However, the situation is not clear-cut. Despite their concern for "the normal" in "natural space and time," they write, "In a great many instances, we created the *context* in which the notes and photographs were

6.1 Men Karma breastfeeding one of her children, August 19, 1937. Photo: Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. Margaret Mead Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (container P39, negative #LC-MSS-32441-559-33, digital ID #10961).

taken for example, by paying for the dance or asking the mother to delay bathing of her child until the sun was high," but, they stress, "this is very different from posing photographs" (1942, 50). The interventionist creation of contexts was justified as an extension of the accepted parameters of participation, and thus disciplinary truth, in that payment was indeed the economic basis for theatrical performance or that a delayed bath served to focus a natural attention on the baby, diminishing the problematic awareness of being photographed that might destabilize the key concept of disciplinary validation—the normal and spontaneous.

But at the same time Bateson and Mead locate anthropological truth in the unmediated chemical inscription on the negative. Bateson is at pains to stress that any intervention in the photographs was within "scrupulously respected . . . scientific conventions" (1942, 51), that nothing was added to the photographs, and that any darkroom manipulation of the negative/print translation served merely to "mak[e] it possible for the paper to give a more complete rendering of what is present in the negative" (1942, 52). In negatives that were enhanced, the process was carefully recorded, making the parameters of the statement clear. Equally the parameters of the selection and presentation of the photographs in the book were made clear, again articulating the quality and form of evidential value: "Each single photograph may be regarded as almost purely objective, but juxtaposition of two different or contrasting photographs is already a step toward scientific generalization" (Bateson and Mead 1942, 53). In this one sees the moral values around the articulation of an anthropological truth emerge, premised not merely on truth to nature (the normal and spontaneous) but on the morality of scientific self-restraint. This excluded the destabilizing potential of "the pose" and created a scientific framework in which subjectivities might be controlled.

If one can see in Bateson and Mead's work an anticipation of later debates on photography and the making of anthropological authority, one can also find resonances of those concerns much earlier. The values that clustered around photography, and the crystallization of observational truth as articulated through the camera, emerge from the beginning of the twentieth century. As the practices of fieldwork became more strongly articulated, so the truth values around photography shifted. Again we can see this reflected in attitudes toward pose. Despite Malinowski's uneasy relationship with the medium and its implications (1935, 461–62; Young 1998, 5–6), he was an active and competent photographer. He used photographs extensively, with careful placement and cross-referencing, throughout his publications (Samian 1995). His attention to the nature of his photographic evidence belies his overt stance. However, Malinowski,

like Mead and Bateson, was careful to position his photographs in current practices of realism and ethnographic authority. This is most marked in the caption to plate 100 in *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*, where he is careful to stress the observational basis of the fieldworker's authority: "This picture is not posed, it was taken during the actual *gibuviyake* rite, and shows the concentration of the magician at work" (1935, opposite 280). That is, it may look posed but it is not. Nonetheless, despite his stress on immediate observation, he was not averse to using carefully controlled pose or reenactment to make images that could not be obtained "naturally," such as war magic or sexual intercourse (Malinowski 1935, 461–62; Young 1998, 17). In drawing attention to the parameters of the photograph, Malinowski is also defining the parameters of participant field observation and thus the anthropological validity of his evidence and the role of the photograph within this.

Similarly, in his classic ethnography *Witchcraft Oracles and Magic* (1937), Evans-Pritchard specifically draws attention to the parameters of plate 13, "Kamanga Blowing a Magic Whistle (Posed)." He is mindful of exactly the same questions of evidential status and authority as Malinowski. However, Evans-Pritchard's photograph carries a visual mark of its status. Not only do Kamanga's lips not actually touch the whistle (the low camera angle shows this clearly), the close framing of the uncropped photograph is stylistically different from the "no-style style" and the embodied immediacy of observation that informs most of his photographs (Morton 2005).[3] It is as if he is stating visually that evidentially this photography is of another order (figure 6.2).

It can, of course, be argued that the need for pose or reconstruction is dependent on the technologies available. Certainly this is part of the equation. Technical possibilities shift the social expectations that cluster around photography, as what was technically possible is integrally entangled with what is thinkable at a given historical moment (Winston 1998, 120–23). However, we cannot reduce the relations between the natural and the posed, the real and the "untrue," to technologically determined absolutes; rather, as I have suggested, we must consider shifting parameters of objectivity and their associated visual statements.[4]

In the early period, pose and reenactment have to be understood as a form of scientific demonstration in which replication is itself part of the evidential system. For instance, responding to the first edition of *Notes and Queries* (1874), E. H. Man inscribed on one photographic plate a cultural tableau, "Andamanese Shooting, Dancing, Sleeping and Greeting," which was reproduced as demonstrational evidence in the pages of the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (figure 6.3).

6.2 Kamanga blowing a magic whistle, reenacted for Evans-Pritchard's camera. Photo: E. Evans-Pritchard. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (PRM 1998.341.282.2).

6.3   Cultural tableau: hunting, sleeping, greeting and dancing, Andaman Island, ca. 1874.
Photo: E. H. Man. Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (PRM 1998.230.4.1).

The concept of the scientific demonstration of method and evidence, and its associated concept of "virtual witnessing," resonates through the work of many scientifically trained anthropologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Haddon, for instance, uses pose and re-enactment to verify and clarify his data to demonstrate a scientific point (Edwards 1998). In a similar vein, Boas not only produced "posed photographs" to demonstrate his data (Jacknis 1984) but himself posed for photographs in order to demonstrate the exact form of the Hamat'sa ceremony to make scientifically accurate representations for the American Museum of Natural History (Glass 2006).

The concept of demonstration in the sense of the performative statement of evidence and scienticity, while coming from nineteenth-century science, arguably remained central to the establishment of anthropological authority through publication; Bateson and Mead, for instance, "intended us to view the photographs as a *demonstration* of how the various habits of the Balinese form their character" (Sullivan 1992, 29; emphasis added).

The relation between anthropology and photography was haunted, however, by the impossibility of containing the medium's random inclusivity. All evidential strategies are attempting, in their different ways, to

control the excess of meaning in photographs (Pinney 1992b, 27; Poole 2005), for their inherent instability threatened to destabilize not only anthropological data but anthropological authority itself. Scientific intervention and pose constituted a way of controlling photographic excess by arranging data and focusing attention. However, if photographs could not be contained at the inscriptive level they could be so contained through the rhetorics of the disciplinary eye. In the nineteenth century it was argued that a scientifically trained "eye" would suppress some categories of visual information while privileging others, creating scientific evidence. This was crucial given that in the period little "anthropological photography" was made with specific scientific intent but, rather, became "anthropological" through categories of consumption as images were often negotiated between the competing scopic regimes of popular voyeurism and science (Edwards 2001, 27–50; Zimmerman 2001, 174–75).

However, the appropriation of images into science became increasingly problematic for anthropologists by the end of the nineteenth century. Concepts of scientific rigor and objectivity could no longer be vested in the recoding of the indexical trace alone, but through, as I have suggested, the quality of observation. Modes of visual evidence production that presumed a level of intervention sat uncomfortably with the "naturalistic" mode of anthropology as it emerged in the early twentieth century. That naturalism, as we have seen, privileged the direct experience of the fieldworker rather than the development of scientific data skills (Grimshaw 2001, 52). Not only did pose and intervention have uncomfortable resonances with the photographic mapping of race and material culture of the previous generation (which Malinowski described as "scientifically sterile"; 1935, 460). It was also understood as lacking the intellectual and moral values of immediacy, closeness, and observation. Indeed, by the time Collier published *Visual Anthropology* in 1967, questions of pose were not discussed—unmediated realism translating the experience of participant observation for the interrelated purposes of recording, photo-interviewing, synthesis, and analysis had became the assumed value of photography.

We cannot, however, see this process of evidential refinement in disciplinary isolation. Grimshaw has pointed to the fluid boundaries between anthropology and other visualizing practices, and if excesses made photography difficult to control within anthropology itself, they also connected anthropology to other photographic practices and discourses (Ruby 1976; Becker 1981; Edwards 1997; Grimshaw 2001). Anthropology had always been mindful of its "photographic other"—a more creative

inscription of actuality of arts and documentary practices.[5] I turn now to explore briefly evidential status on that boundary.

Becker defined the difference between social sciences and photography, casting "one as the discovery of the truth about the world and the other as the aesthetic expression of someone's unique vision," but he also suggested that the two strands were inextricably entangled (1981, 9). Connections can be made, for instance, between Malinowski's arrangement of photographs in *Coral Gardens and Their Magic* and Bateson and Mead's sequencing in *Balinese Character* and the emergent photo-essay form in magazines such as *Life* and *Picture Post*. And there are clear stylistic parallels between unmediated verisimilitude of anthropological field photography and other amateur snapshot practices.

A good example of this cross-fertilization between anthropology and documentary photography is the work of Tim Asch at Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, a project of rural documentation that ran for a number of years starting in 1952 (Harper 1994). Although the importance of the project was not recognized by anthropologists at the time, it is interesting because it dates from the period after World War II, when visual anthropology as a fully articulated subdiscipline emerged from a number of different visualizing skills and experiences, notably studies in visual communication, while at the same time drawing on a self-consciously photographic style to create a sense of immediacy and solidity of observation rather than an anthropological "no-style style."

Although better known as an ethnographic filmmaker, Asch had a photographic background that was rich and eclectic. He had worked with modernist photographers such as Minor White, Edward Weston, and Ansel Adams and been influenced by others such as Eugene Smith (Nordström 1994, 97). On the Cape Breton project Asch worked closely with John Collier, who at this period was shaping his ideas about photography as a research method in anthropology. Yet Collier's own inspiration came not only from anthropology but also from Roy Stryker and the work of the Farm Security Administration. [6] Stryker had employed photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, whose photographs of agrarian distress in the 1930s United States have become classics of the humanist and progressivist documentary canon.[7] Consequently, while the Cape Breton photographs are grounded in observational tenets of anthropology—"the little things of life" (Harper 1994, 13), which resonates with Malinowski's "imponderabilia"—they nonetheless demonstrate the classic modernist articulation of the character of the medium. The impact of ostensibly ethnographic detail rests for its effect on compositional elements (Nordström 1994).

Nevertheless, despite the potential for an extended base for photographic work in anthropology, the emergence of increasingly focused methodological volumes such as Collier's *Visual Anthropology* (1967), and continuing concerns about evidential method (Ruby 1976; Harper 1987; Larson 1981; Caldarola 1998; Grady 1991; Pauwels 1993; Simoni 1996), there appears to have been a simultaneous systemic denial of the potential of photographs to add to anthropological understanding. This systemic iconophobia is demonstrated by another book on the boundaries of anthropology and photographic practice. *Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (1982) was half ethnography, half photo-essay, and featured anthropologist Loring Danforth responding to a set of photographs by Alexander Tsiaras. The narratives of each section, interspersed with verse from funeral laments, effectively mirror one another. The authors' intention was precisely to "communicate both an intellectual and emotional response" and to "collapse the distance between Self and Other" (1982, 7). Tsiaras's photographs, in a humanistic documentary tradition, supply a sense of emotion and affect through a strong sense of personal engagement.

However, when the volume was reviewed in the anthropological journals, it was as a text. Danforth's routes through Van Gennep, Hertz, and Geertz in relationship to ritual, death, and the everyday were dissected with little or no reference to the photographs.[8] Was it that the photographs, with their strong visual geometry and humanistic documentary credentials, could not constitute an anthropological authority? That their evidential force engaged emotional responses to the subject matter rather than rational description? Or that the image itself was simply "invisible," marginalized in the intellectual debate? Maybe Geddes summed up the dilemma when reviewing another photographic book, Robert Gardner's *Gardens of War* (1968), in *American Anthropologist*: while it could be seen as "unduly subjective," he wrote, "cross-cultural interpretations however, must necessarily go beyond fact. The final test as to whether they should be regarded as merely subjective or truly insightful must be the degree of conviction they carry for the individual reader, viewer and listener" (1971, 347). We are back with questions of too many meanings and the control of evidential possibility.

The result appears to be a photography that, despite methodological struggles, was effectively marginalized, at least intellectually, in anthropological debate. Indeed, photographs had all but disappeared from serious anthropological texts by the 1960s (de Heusch quoted in Poole 2005, 690), apart from the authentication of fieldworkers' observations and scene-setting. Further, the advent of easier and more accessible film technologies offered ways of recording that appeared more fitting to the anthropo-

logical project. More importantly, the continuing distrust of academic anthropology in the visual, especially the fragmenting and reifying qualities of the still photograph, made it not merely problematic but intellectually sterile, a tool perhaps of an old anthropology that remained the delineator of surfaces, not the revealer of the deep truths of human experience.

The Power of Representation

Mead's preface to Hocking's *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (1975), lamenting the condition of the visual in the discipline of words, effectively constitutes a final statement of realist confidence and salvage concern before a radical shift in the profile of photography burst on the scene. As in other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, the poststructuralist turn in anthropology looked at the construction of disciplinary knowledge and its associated representational practices and institutions, from fieldwork to the museum.[9] Despite the iconophobia of the discipline, debates about photography entangled with broader critiques of anthropology's occularcentrism and anxieties about vision, especially in the contexts of anthropology's collapsing scientific paradigm (Grimshaw 2001, 6–7). Photography became central in the shift from the visual as field methodology for data gathering and analysis (albeit an increasingly reflexive one) to an anthropology of visual systems. This latter, especially in attending to the socially and politically constructivist nature of imaging practices, has perhaps been photography's most signficant contribution to anthropological thinking more broadly. For concepts of abstract anthropological concern, such as ethnicity, gender, and identity, as well as the discipline's own history of colonial entanglement and self-definition, came to be explored increasingly through the prism of photography. This moment, when photography effectively became a metaphor for anthropological knowledge and its power structures, constitutes my second snapshot.

Photography and its signifying practices were the focus of an analysis of increasing theoretical sophistication and complexity in the context of a ferment of cultural and identity politics that challenged Western hegemony. Following Foucault's work on the framings of power, discipline, surveillance, and the complex politics of knowledge, it became integral to discursive regimes of truth that defined, appropriated, constructed, and objectified the subject of anthropology. While the arguments and their theoretical tools were strongly informed by literary theory, postcolonial theory, and cultural studies, the theory of photography itself provided the

specific critical tools. Anthropologists engaged with not only Foucault but with a range of poststructuralist and Marxist-inspired debates. Especially influential were Tagg's constructivist approaches to photography (1988); Burgin's semiotic and psychoanalytical account (1986); photographic applications of the semiotics of Charles Peirce and the linguistic models of Saussure, most notably in the work of Roland Barthes (1977); Sekula's Foucauldian analysis of the archive and taxonomic desire (1989); and new readings of Walter Benjamin. It was the very nature of the photograph, as the mechanical and chemical trace of the body of the subject, that made it so powerful a metaphor and rhetorical force. Objectification was understood as inherent in the very stillness and fragmentation of the medium, allowing the gaze to linger, to desire, and to appropriate the subject, constructing categories of race, class, and gender, which were normalized through the transparency and discursive practices of photography itself and legitimated through anthropological concepts of race and hierarchy (Green 1984; Alloula 1986; Corbey 1988; Lalvani 1996).

The spatial and temporal ambiguities of the medium and its reifying propensities sat alongside critiques in anthropology. For instance, Fabian's (1983, 32) analysis of the visualist metaphors of anthropology and his critique of the construction of the atemporal anthropological object, resonates with Barthes's famous description of photography as the "there-then becoming here-now," reproducing to infinity that which could not be reproduced existentially (1977, 44; 1984, 4) and reinforcing the different temporalities involved in the "fleeting immediacy of the encounter and the stabilising permanency of fact" (Poole 2005, 172).

These features of photography also mapped onto theories of the gaze and of the construction of stereotype through the semiotic structure of images, especially dichotomous models of white/black, clothed/unclothed, civilized/primitive, dominant/dominated, and their associated hierarchical significations. The instability of the signifier and the infinite recodability of photographs enabled the reproduction and performance of such tropes even in the face of the inherent ambiguity of forms. Ideas such as Sontag's violent metaphors for the camera's voracious visual appropriations—hunting, shooting, taking (1979, 14–15)—became metaphors of colonial oppression, the Western gaze, and the disempowerment of the subject. The combination of capture and trace in the contexts of a specifically focused cultural politics become symbolic of the space between the collector and the collected, the photographer and the photographed, the community and the institutional structures of anthropology—the asymmetries of power and the spaces in which indigenous communities

are locked, dispossessed, disenfranchised, silenced, marginalized, and appropriated (Harlan 1995, 20).

Photographs thus presented a mine of a century of disciplinary assumptions and asymmetrical power relations to be excavated. In this pose in particular, the arranged and manipulated body stood as a signifier of the power relations between "white science and black bodies" (Wallis 1995), over a wide range of material: Zealy's slave daguerreotypes, made for Louis Agassiz (Wallis 1995); the anthropometric work of Lamprey, Huxley, or, in France, Broca and Topinard; or the removal of clothing to expose the body, especially women's bodies (Peterson 2003, 124–25; Edwards 2001, 145). The racialized and sometimes pathologized body was thus made visible, laid out for somatic mapping, mathematicized for the gaze (Pinney 1992a; Green 1984, 1986; Dias 1994).[10]

It is significant that much of this debate focused on nineteenth-century and colonial imaging that had been absorbed, and indeed legitimated, as scientific data in the nineteenth century, rather than the mass of photographs produced within anthropology after about 1910. Such early images assumed the character of a political and ideological marker of the colonialized body, controlled under the appropriating gaze of the camera. Alloula, for instance, writes: "The model is a figure of the symbolic appropriation of the body (of the Algerian woman), the studio is a figure of the symbolic appropriation of space. . . . This double movement of appropriation is nothing more than the expression of violence conveyed by the colonial postcard" (1986, 21).

The concept of the ideological instrumentality of the archive was an important part of this critique. Influenced by Foucauldian works such as Alan Sekula's "The Body and the Archive" (1989) and Tagg's analysis of the instrumentality of photography (1988), the anthropological archive became a double trope of postmodern fixation, photography, and taxonomy, through which the objectified body of "the Other" was produced. The archive was analyzed as an articulation of encyclopaedic desire, knowledge production, and taxonomic certainty, reproducing dominant hierarchical values (e.g., Green 1984, 1985).

This can only be a summary of a labyrinthine and far-reaching set of interconnecting arguments. However, the strands and nuances of this position became increasingly conflated, while within the discipline the possibility of photographic representation became increasingly paralyzed. For, while they addressed the broader ideological frameworks that made certain kinds of photographic practices thinkable at any given historical moment, such critiques nonetheless slipped almost too comfortably into

a series of overdetermined, reductionist, ahistorical, and reifying interpretations (Spyer 2001, 182).

While much of this debate was happening outside of anthropology itself, there were similar critiques from within the discipline as anthropologists engaged increasingly with the concept of the "archive," as in Corbey's exploration of African postcards (1988). Photographs were also part of the wider debates on the politics of the production of ethnographic text and ethnographic authority. For instance, both Hutnyk (1994) and Wolpert (2000) analyze Evans-Pritchard's photographs as integral to appropriating discourse practices of fieldwork and its dissemination of observation, raising more general questions about the nature of that observation and the relations for which it stood. Perhaps the most extensive and unforgiving is Faris's discussion of the cultures of imaging and imagining the Navajo people. In *The Navajo and Photography* he explores the systemic and "predatory success" (1996, 301) of the politics of appropriation that render the Navajo powerless and passive before the camera as an instrument of Western oppression.[11]

While this process, and its articulation of power structures, is indisputable and its political impact equally so, it was also a critique that denied anthropological photography, and indeed anthropology, its own shifting and critical dynamic.[12] It reductively posited all anthropological photographs and all cross-cultural photographic encounters as operating "immovably within a 'truth' that simplistically reflects a set of cultural and political dispositions held by the makers of those images" (Pinney and Peterson 2003, 2). One of the first volumes to explore this was *Anthropology and Photography* (Edwards 1992). Perhaps I am not the right person to be discussing the legacy of this volume, aimed at anthropological and non-anthropological readers alike, which attempted to give a critical framing of practice, history, and institutional structures articulated through short case studies of specific images as historical statements, framed by a series of methodological and theoretical essays. While not unproblematic (I now feel some of the argument was overdetermined in the manner I have just outlined), the volume nonetheless opened up a range of debate about the imaging history of anthropology, its strategies, and its relevance to contemporary anthropological concerns.

While profoundly informed by the debates outlined here, anthropologists working on photography increasingly challenged the reductive and often presentist readings and instead explored photographs as "a productive site for rethinking the particular forms of presence, uncertainty and contingency that characterizes both ethnographic and visual accounts of the world" (Poole 2005, 159). They approached the subject matter

as a culture of imaging that itself could be explored anthropologically, complicating the asymmetries of power, the processes of stereotyping, objectification, and appropriation (see, e.g., Poignant 1992a, 1992b; Pinney 1997; Edwards 2001; Jacknis 1984; Scherer 1988), to "create whole new arenas of inquiry" (Scherer 1995, 201).[13]

A further concern about reductive analyses was their denial of agency to the Other. There was a very real sense in which homogenizing models of overt power relations, while recognizing these tropes and ideological formations, did not destabilize or displace them but merely reproduced the power relations they were intended to critique.[14] The Other, the photographic subject rendered as Object, remained powerless, passive, voiceless, and objectified. Such an analytical position allowed little space for an indigenous voice, for while it undoubtedly forwarded a form of radical politics, it also "disempower[ed] tribal people who see their ancestors in these photographs, oversimplifying specific and often complex human relations, or simply shutting down discussion" (Dubin 1999, 71).

By the mid-1990s Foucaultian approaches to anthropological photography were looking "hopelessly bleak, a vision of total social control in which a mysterious force, 'power,' holds absolute sway" (Banks 2001, 112). To counter this, anthropologists engaged in a trenchant critique and reappraisal that embraced the potential of the new critical reflexivity and multivocality in order to excavate the complex historical relations from which were constituted photographic encounters (Poole 1997; Pinney 1997). Such positions had begun to emerge in *Anthropology and Photography*, especially the essays by Salmond, Binney, and Hamouda (1992), and in work on indigenous responses to photographs, such as, *Partial Recall* (Lippard 1992), which presented a series of Native American readings of photographs.

The late 1980s and 1990s, in particular, saw the maturing of a range of ethnographies. There were detailed studies of the image worlds and work of specific anthropologists, for instance, Boas (Jacknis 1984), Baldwin Spencer (Walker and Vanderwal 1982),[15] Mooney (Jacknis 1992), Malinowski (Young 1998), Haddon and the Torres Strait expedition (Edwards 1998), and Mead and Bateson (Jackinis 1988; Sullivan 1992). Expeditions such as the 1927 Denver African expedition to Namibia (Gordon 1997) and the Jesup North Pacific expedition of 1897–1902 (Kendall, Ross-Miller, and Mathé 1997) were explored as cultures entities. There were also regional studies such as Pinney's *Camera Indica* (1997), which explored continuities, contestations, and dreamworlds around photography in India; an examination a wide range of colonial imaging and its legacy in Namibia (Hartmann, Silvester, and Hayes 1998); and detailed

analysis of the complex cross-cultural photographic dynamics between missionaries and local elites in the Cameroon Grassfields (Geary 1988). These were supplemented by studies of institutional and collecting practices, both generally (Edwards 2001) and in specific institutions, such as the Peabody Museum, Harvard (Banta and Hinsley1986), the Royal Anthropological Institute, London (Poignant 1992a), and the Musée de l'Homme (Dias 1994).[16]

What emerged was a more complex reading of photographic dynamics in cross-cultural encounters. Power was certainly a central element, but its workings emerged as discursively complex. Photographs were not merely the overt instruments of surveillance, discipline, and political control but sites of intersecting and contested histories, intentions, and inscriptions. Even the production of the most overtly oppressive of images, anthropometric photographs, revealed points of fracture and resistance, which worked to restore the humanity of the subject (Edwards 2001, 144–47). In closing the distance between the viewer and the objectified body, the oppressive nature of such imaging practice was brought into even sharper focus.

These studies constituted a dense, critical, theoretically weighted base of historical ethnographies that addressed the question "What vision of the anthropological project animates the work of particular individuals?" (Grimshaw 2001, 7). Collectively they not only mapped the contexts of the photograph in detail but complicated the dominant models of power relations between observer and observed, self and other, subject and object, and thus the problematics of transparency and truth, which had characterized much of the postcolonial and poststructuralist writing on photography.

An influential model to emerge from this was Deborah Poole's "visual economy," developed in relation to the imaging traditions, assumptions, and performances of photographs of and in the Peruvian Andes. Poole argued that photographs operate in political, economic, and social matrices that are not reducible to semiotic codes alone; rather, one must consider the whole pattern of their production, circulation, consumption, possession, and preservation, encompassing both the broad modes of production and the microlevels of individual usage (1997, 9–13). While still working within a broad Foucauldian frame, of the "mundane practices of inscription, registration and inspection" and their "representational machineries" (Poole 1997, 15), the model pointed to the fluidity of images and the social relations that gave them meaning.
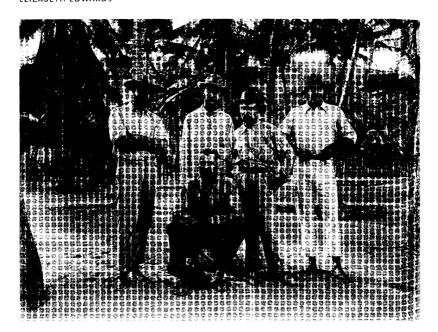
Such an approach was linked conceptually with work in material culture studies on the sociability of objects, especially that of Appadurai

(1986) and Kopytoff (1986) on the social biography of objects. This work argued that objects could not be understood as having stable identities and meanings but rather that they assumed and accrued meaning as they moved through different interpretative spaces. Whatever its constraints, this model has proved especially relevant for photography, with its multiple originals, various performances, and unstable, context-dependent signifiers. For instance, Morton (2005) discusses the transformation of Evans-Pritichard's photographs from field to publication, complicating ideas of field relations and authority. While this model resonates with the recodability of the image, it also displays a concern for the possibility of materially generated meaning. Pinney's *Camera Indica* (1997), for instance, tracked photography across the intersecting cultural and historical landscapes of India. Linking historical and contemporary practices in terms of both continuity and contestation, he argues for the transformation of the medium through three different historical moments: the colonial, the establishment of the modern nation-state of India, and the contemporary everyday practices of imaginative engagement with photography. While coming from a strong and eclectic theoretical base, these studies overall increasingly characterized photography not as an abstract discourse but as situated in real, materially constituted encounters between people in space and time.

The density, and sometimes nearly paralyzing nature, of debate on the politics of representation and the symbolic status of photography in cross-cultural relations has, it can be argued, enabled it to make a substantial contribution to theoretical thinking within anthropology. Emerging from the refigured politics of knowledge as it affected the relationship between anthropology and photography, it is part of a larger shift in the production of knowledge that is "simultaneously collaborative, critical, and interventionist" (Poole 2005, 170). The way in which photographs have become very real sites of contestation and symbols of the yawning void in power relations, of the control of history and voice and thus of power in the world, particularly among peoples subjected to settler colonialism, is a register of their significance beyond the merely representational. Anthropological responses to this constitute some of the most significant current work in visual anthropology.

Reexperiencing and Repositioning

My third "snapshot" is therefore of two contemporary strands that have their roots in the debates just discussed. First, I look at refigured questions

6.4   Cambridge Torres Strait expedition members. Reproduced by permission of University of
Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (N.23035.ACH2).

and methodologies that reengaged with anthropology's historical depos-
its and made them the focus of contemporary field research.[17] Second,
I explore the ethnography of photographic practice as it has recently
emerged within visual anthropology. The two strands are linked concep-
tually in that not only are both concerned with voice and agency, but
both address culturally specific usages of photographs in everyday life.

First, I am going to consider the reassessment of colonial practices,
cross-cultural relations, and multiple agencies as they are played out
through photographs and photography. In detailed analyses of cross-
cultural encounters, some of the visual deposits of anthropology's history
begin to take on a different complexion (figure 6.4).

While there is a danger that a simplistic overvalorization of this ap-
proach elides the very real asymmetries of power relations and the power
of interpretation and re-presentation, nevertheless the intellectual and
political frameworks of such research stress the multivalency of photo-
graphs and the histories inscribed within them. Poignant, for instance,
demonstrated how, even in a situation of political appropriation and eco-
nomic control, the arrangement of Aboriginal subjects in a group pho-
tograph from the 1880s, taken to publicize their music hall act, reflects

their kin relations, not an order imposed by the photographer (1992a, 58). Scherer (2006) has explored the cross-cultural relations of a photographic studio in Idaho that was frequented by people from the local Shoshone-Bannock reservation at Fort Hall.

While the resulting images might be read as stereotypes, and have been used as such, they also reveal the extent to which active commissioning of images was integral to the negotiation of local indigenous identities. Lydon, in examining the imaging of Coranderrk station in Victoria, Australia, demonstrates how, through an understanding of the role of images in colonial society, Aboriginal people attempted to exert influence on representational practice within the complex and shifting relations of the colonial situation (2005). What all these studies demonstrate is the possibility of excavating the dialogic space of photography and thus complicating the view of cross-cultural relations, indigenous agency, and the density of photographic inscription.

Much of this work is now happening collaboratively and involves both the reengagement with historical material in contemporary situations and the production of new material in collaborative and community projects (e.g., Hubbard 1994; Rohde 1998; Kratz 2002). Importantly, indigenous communities have reappropriated, reengaged with, and effectively reauthored anthropological photographs, as photographs themselves have become symptomatic and symbolic of people's desire to control their own histories and their own destinies (e.g., Harlan 1995, 1998; Rickard 1995; Tsinhnahjinnie 1998; Hill 1998; Vizenor 1998; Chaat Smith 1992; Aird 1993, 2003):

It was a beautiful day when the scales fell from my eyes and I first encountered photographic sovereignty. A beautiful day when I decided that I would take responsibility to reinterpret images of Native peoples. My mind was ready, primed with stories of survival. My views of these images are aboriginally based—an indigenous perspective—not a scientific Godly order, but philosophically Native. (Tsinhnahjinnie 1998, 42)

"Photographic sovereignty" is a concept that has been developed, especially in the Native American context, to define the right to reclaim photographs and to tell one's own history (Rickard 1995; Tsinnahjinnie 1998). It is in these contexts that the random inclusiveness of photographs, and their recodability, provides alternative routes for making meaning. Visual reappropriation and reengagement is, in many ways, about finding a present for historical photographs, realizing their "potential to seed a number of narratives" (Poignant 1994–1995, 55) through which to make sense of that past and make it fulfill the needs of the present.

As Binney and Chaplin (1991) have demonstrated in writing about the response to photographs in the Tuhoe Maori community at Urewera, photographs confirmed and cohered a reality that lived in individual experience but had been suppressed in colonial historiography, thus enabling the active articulation of those histories.

Thus "looking past" the colonial and scientific surface of the photograph could allow the articulation of multiple pasts (Pinney and Peterson 2003, 4–5; Aird 2003, 25). "The dehumanizing aspect of portrait photographs as mere inventory is undermined by the irreducible presence of a self" (Lippard 1992, 16). Photographs that started as anthropological or colonial documents become family or clan histories. However painful those histories may be,

images intended to refer to issues of race and acculturation, with all the implications of colonial control these interests implied, could be used today to address not only the nature of revisionist history but also the need . . . to articulate to themselves their experiences of the past and, ultimately, to speak to their children about the strength of their community. (Brown and Peers 2006, 5–6)

The term "visual repatriation" has been used increasingly for such collaborative and restitutive agendas involving anthropologists (Fienup-Riordan 1998; Brown and Peers 2006, 101–3). Perhaps the fullest working out by to date is by Peers and Brown (2006), who worked with Kainai Nation (Alberta, Canada) to facilitate access and historical reengagement with photographs taken by anthropologist Beatrice Blackwood in the 1920s. The project was set up as a collaboration with a wide range of people, from tribal elders to schoolchildren, the anthropologists working under the community's guidance and toward its goals, "reorient[ing] their work to facilitate and allow community input into research design and the research process itself" (Brown and Peers 2006, 101) (figure 6.5).

While such research relations increasingly typify anthropological work, they take the relation between anthropology and photography beyond the merely reflexive into a new collaborative order. This has substantial methodological implications, not only reshaping the negotiation of field access and the establishment of joint research protocols but, in visual anthropology, refiguring of the idea of photo-elicitation. Collier, in his classic methodological account, acknowledged a dialogic quality to the photographic encounter—it afforded a "gratifying sense of self-expression" (1967, 48). However, it was constituted as a one-way flow of information, from the subject to the ethnographer, with the aim of enhancing the latter's understanding (see Edwards 2004, 87–88). Refig-

6.5   Rosie Red Crow, Kainai Nation, Alberta, Canada, looking at photographs. Photo: Alison
       Brown, November 21, 2001.

ured, the process of "elicitation" constitutes a shift in power relations
and anthropological authority, wherein the anthropologist lets go of
photographic meanings in the traditional forensic, or even structured
semiotic, sense. The anthropological focus becomes, instead, the way in
which the photographs assume their own dynamics of sociability within
communities. For as Niessen has argued, such a position also challenges
ethnographic authority in the way I discussed in the first snapshot, for
this expectation of photographic control "is an aspect of our own my-
thology about who we are in relation to 'the other.' Photographs do not
perpetuate this relationship but are manipulated in its service and as such
act as an extension of ethnographic authority" (1991, 429). Conversely
work on the sociability of photographs has raised questions about the
photograph as an historical or cultural source within an environment of
intersecting historical forms and traditions. What, for instance, is the link

between the visual and the oral? What is the role of photographs in the processes through which history, memory, and identity are reproduced and transmitted?

Nonetheless, these are not uncontested practices. They constitute complex and sometimes contradictory contexts within communities, as narratives inflected with age, gender, or lineage, for instance, are woven with and around photographs. As Niessen found, using photographs of museum textiles in photo-elicitation in Sumatra, photographs brought into focus the gendered relations of history telling (1991, 421), as well as tensions between the community and the anthropologist. Similarly, Bell (2004, 115) and Poignant (1992b, 73) report on how photographs became absorbed and controlled through local social structures, reflecting the right to "tell stories."

Yet in such cases, it is precisely the shape of such social dynamics and the flow of images within them that is anthropologically revealing. This reflexive turn, and questions of voice and the politics of representational practices, have also had an impact on field practice, especially in relation to image ethics. Ethical issues are central not only in the making of images, around culturally specific ideas of private and public space, for instance (Michaels 1991; Kratz 2002; Gross, Katz, and Ruby 1988, 2003), but in the institutional practices around images. The realization that the family photographs of many peoples are effectively locked away in anthropology's institutions (Dubin 1999, 72) has had a profound effect on practices about ownership of and access to images, on rights regarding knowledge, and on ideas of evidence and value (Holman 1996; Powers 1996; Isaac 2007; Peterson 2003; Brown 2003; Edwards 2004). This has been perhaps most marked in North America and Australia, where indigenous and traditionally "subject" people of anthropology have reclaimed images of anthropology's past as their own history and demanded an institutional voice in their control, management, and dissemination. Images that anthropologists forty years ago would have assumed a right to use with impunity to demonstrate their ethnography, are now restricted, requiring negotiation and permissions from the communities involved, as they reclaim the cultural knowledge inscribed in photographs (Peterson 2003). For instance, the Hopi "feel they have to adopt a political position against photography" to protect their privacy (Fredericks, quoted in Lippard 1992, 22) but also as a local position expressing disquiet about the broader disposition of cultural heritage (Brown 2003, 15).
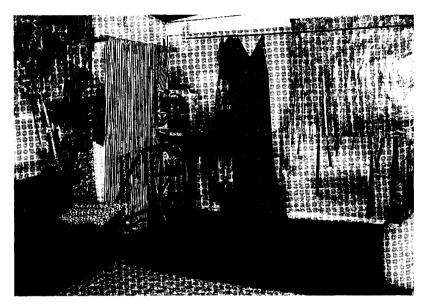
Brown and Peers's project, for one, necessitated a shift in museum policy to enable Kaiani people to use collected images free of legalistic encumbrances (2006, 175–94). In New Zealand in 2001, a group of Maori

activists blocked the sale of three hundred rare nineteenth-century photographs of Maori people, claiming them as *taonga* (cultural treasure). Their concern was not simply with the images, but with the *mauri* (life force) materially invested within the photographic trace, which was threatened with dissipation through the use and reproduction of the photographs (Dudding 2003).

In Australia, reparations for the Stolen Generation have included a radical shift in the accessibility of archives and in the way anthropological photographs can be engaged with by both indigenous peoples and anthropologists (Fourmile 1990; Smallacombe 1999; Peterson 2003; Stanton 2004). These shifts respond not only to the sensitivities of Aboriginal people over access to their images but to debates around photography as a tool to substantiate and communicate cultural claims on issues such as land rights, housing, and education, as well as to revive and maintain cultural practices (Stanton 2004, 150).

This brings us to my second strand, the ethnography of photographic practices. If engagement with the refigured historical image suggests that the Western theoretical circumscriptions of visual history are too narrow to accommodate what is actually emerging from field studies, ethnographies of photographic practice in relation to images made by and for people in Kenya, Peru, or Malaysia, for instance, are pointing the same way. Pinney and Peterson's volume *Photography's Other Histories* (2003), as its title suggests, attempts to move the critical debate on photography away from the dominant Euro-American model to look at the way in which the understanding of photographic practices in other cultural spaces might illuminate and rebalance understanding of the medium. It includes essays on photography and memory practices by Dreissens and Aird, and reprints Sprague's foundational 1978 paper "How the Yoruba See Themselves." Although still entrenched in two key framings of Western analysis, the "vernacular" (in relation to what, one might ask?) and the "modern," the book reveals as profoundly ethnocentric the canons of photographic theory and its classic tropes, which were so influential in the 1970s and 1980s. It argues also that global and local photographic practices have necessarily been understood in terms of simplistic models of the absorption of a technology and advocates instead an understanding that embraces not only culturally specific articulations of the nature of the photograph but its connection with the specifics of emotion, imagination, history, and politics.

It raises questions, for example, about the nature of the indexical trace and, for instance, material intervention and additive practices at the surface of the image in relation to concepts of realistic representation in

6.6   Studio interior, New Millennium Image Hunters, Brikama. Photo: Liam Buckley, 2000.

India (Pinney 1997, 2004). It raises questions too about photography's relation with other cultural practices, such as Gambian studio photography, that relate directly to the aesthetic discourse of the social surface and particularly the molding and tailoring, specifically cutting, of that surface: "the sound of the shutter making its slice sounds . . . like the snip of scissors, cutting out people, clarifying their edges, and making them cutting edge. Cameras, in The Gambia, are scissors for seeing" (Buckley 2000–2001, 72) (figure 6.6).

There are studies of the relations between migrant identities and the fleeting world of the photographic studio on the Mombassa dockside in Kenya (Behrend 2000), in middle-class Senegal (Mustafa 2002), in the Fijian Indian diaspora (Chandra 2000), in the memorializing albums of AIDS victims in Uganda (Vokes 2008); of photography, materiality, and the coeval ancestor in Papua New Guinea (Halvaksz 2008) or, in that same country, photography and disco culture (Hirsch 2004). Other studies have looked specifically at the interpenetration of photography, materiality, and memory in the Solomon Islands, (Wright 2004) or the use of historical and contemporary photographs in Australian Aboriginal communities (Poignant 1992b, 1996; MacDonald 2003; Smith 2003). *Visual Anthropology* devoted a whole issue to studio practices in Africa, including case studies from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Uganda (Behrend and Wer-

ner 2001); another issue was dedicated to changing practices of wedding photography in Southeast Asia (Cheung 2005), and yet another explored interrelated and affective practices of photography and the spirit cross-culturally (Smith and Vokes 2008).[18]

What these detailed ethnographies of photographic practice have in common is an explication of local photographic practices, specific social expectations of the medium, and the exploration of indigenously gener-ated aesthetic and social categories in and of themselves, which cannot be reduced to a mimicking of Western practice or an asymmetrical ab-sorption of Western technologies. While the social functions to which photographs are put may be similar in most parts of the world—expres-sion, identity, remembrance—the cultural premises upon which these functions are built are profoundly different. They require new sets of analytical and conceptual tools to liberate photographic thinking from the demands of a Western canon, and at the same time to allow practices their own identities. They raise questions about what a photograph, as an image and as a material object, actually *is*, challenging assumptions about the nature of realism, the perception of the value of the indexical-ity, authorship, pose, and "portrait"; the role of photographs in negoti-ating identities and presentation of the self to the camera; the material affects of photographs; and the social expectation of the medium and the kinds of relations with the past for which it stands—concerns that cannot necessarily be accommodated within a Benjaminesque configuration of photography/past/memory (Poignant 1992b; Wright 2007).

An important strand of these reformulations is the recent emergence of a more material and sensory approach to thinking about photographs in anthropology—a phenomenological turn that privileges the experien-tial rather than the semiotic (Pinney 2004; Wright 2004; Edwards 2006). For instance, working with photographs in an Aborignal community in Queensland, Smith has argued that through their indexicality and repro-ducible form, photographs can appear as "distributed objects," which in turn can be seen as initiating and acting on social relations. Photographs are a form of extended personhood in that they constitute a sum of rela-tions over time. In this, "the effect of images is not simply symbolic or the result of social relations"; rather, images "can themselves imitate and act in social relations" (Smith 2003, 11). While the specifics of such relations are profoundly cultural, Smith's argument appears indicative of a broader pattern that is emerging through detailed ethnographies.

Also concerned with materiality and "affect," Pinney has coined the term "corpothetics" to refer to "the sensory embrace of images, the bodily engagement that most people . . . have with artworks" (2001, 158). His

intent is to offer "a critique of conventional approaches to aesthetics and argue for a notion of corpothetics—embodied corporeal aesthetics—as opposed to 'disinterested' representation which over-cerebralises and textualizes the image" (2004, 8). But his argument can also stand as a critique of an approach couched solely in the visual semiotics or technological determinates of the photograph or the film, an approach that separates visual anthropology from its correlates, such as material culture studies and anthropology of the senses. Such ideas are having a profound effect on the way anthropologists write about visual systems and photography. For instance, Harris (2004) has demonstrated the way in which the bodily engagement with photographs in Tibet is used as a form of political resistance under Chinese rule. Buckley (2006, 62) has explored the relation between body and photograph, not in terms of gaze and surveillance, but as a form of embrace, a visceral sense of being "cherished" and a sense of "elegance" that can be linked to civic and political identities in the modern nation-state of the Gambia.

The anthropological attention given to different cultural parameters of the production and use of photographs has revealed again the inadequacy of the dominant Western models of photographic analyses, with their stress on semiotic structures and their linguistic translation (Pinney 2001; Edwards 2006; Wright 2007). These new critical approaches emerge not only from the concerns with the occularcentricism that have haunted anthropology but from an increasingly strongly articulated sense, coming out of material culture studies, that even as an anthropologically informed understanding of photographic practices expands, photographic meaning cannot necessarily be explained through the visual alone.

A Tentative Conclusion

The examples I have cited, and there a many others, demonstrate the claim that I made at the beginning of this essay, that work with photographs is becoming a fruitful route through which to explore other areas of theoretical disciplinary concerns. As such it can be said to be making a substantive and conscious contribution to the production of anthropological knowledge in a way that has not, perhaps, been experienced since the positivist certainties of the late nineteenth century. The potential for an expanded theory of photography that extends or even destabilizes the theoretical canon, and at the same time connects to major anthropological concerns such as memory, identity, ethnicity, nationalism, and glob-

alization, is one of the most exciting possibilities for visual anthropology today.

This must not be read as a triumphalist progress toward an enlightened reading of images, a march toward some representational nirvana, or a teleological unfolding of visual anthropological method. Elements of modern practice with photographs—the sharing of images, collaborations between anthropologists and local people, the use of photography in establishing social relations in the field[19]—are evident already in the late nineteenth century, just as there remain traces of nineteenth-century attitudes in today's institutional structures. Further, in many ways, while the publication of photographs as integral to ethnographic analysis remains more limited than it should be, work on photography is becoming more diffuse and dispersed across the anthropological field, no longer confined within visual anthropology. It is becoming one methodological and theoretical strand or one element of social practice, informing and informed by a broader ethnography. One finds, for instance, the use of photographs to excavate the relations between Dutch colonialists and local servants in Dutch East Indies (Stoler and Strassler 2000), a detailed forensic analysis of missionary photographs as integral to a study of ritual change in northern Cameroon (Fardon 2006), and a radical phenomenological analysis of photographs in a cult of Buddhist meditation on corporeal decay in Thailand (Klima 2002). Such work indicates not the disintegrating focus of photography within visual anthropology but rather its centrality as a theoretical and discursive prism. It is the sheer ubiquity of photography and photographs, their global reach, their mass circulation and explosion into the blanket visuality of the digital age, yet their quiet, largely unremarked, banal qualities in terms of everyday experience and material practices that makes them so potent as a focus of anthropological investigation (Spyer 2001, 181).

Further, while new political emphases might emerge highlighting different readings of photographs and different dynamic foci in anthropology, the problematic of the uncontrollable semiotic energy and institutionalized power relations that embed photographs and their historical deposits remain a contested space. The shifts that I have presented—rather than being absolute or irreversible paradigm shifts in a Kuhnian sense—should be seen as the opening up of layered meanings, a process that will surely continue. Photographs will always be used to great effect as field records, as sites of cross-cultural social interaction, as sources for analysis, as objects of study, and as visual and sensory systems that raise key anthropological questions. Yet photography and photographs will

also remain problematic in anthropology. In many ways this is precisely why they can contribute to the debate. Maybe they are the sand in the anthropological oyster—they become a metaphor for the whole project, standing in for the fluid, dynamic, unpredictable confusion and creativity of human relations.

Notes

1. I do this to keep some sort of frame on this part of the story—a massive, messy, and sprawling domain of the emerging discipline. Other grids, such as intentionality, subjectivity, or selectivity, could equally well have been used.
2. Mead and Bateson shot over twenty-five thousand still photographs and twenty-two thousand feet of film. Despite Mead's photographic experience in her earlier fieldwork in Samoa, Bateson took most of the pictures, devised the documentation methods for them, and undertook most of the analysis (Jacknis 1988, 161–62).
3. I am grateful to Chris Morton for discussing this image with me. I term the image's style "no-style" because whatever the parameters of objectivity, stylistic nullity is, of course, impossible; the articulation of a lack of mediation and stylistic suppression are unavoidably styles in themselves.
4. This is admirably demonstrated in two key papers on anthropological photography that appeared in the pages of the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* in 1893 and 1896, respectively. Im Thurn, drawing on his experience of British Guiana, argued that in addition to the photographs for anthropometric reference, more naturalistic or spontaneous photographs of people "as living beings" should be taken (1893, 184; Tayler 1992). Conversely, M. V. Portman, a colonial administrator and ethnographer in the Andaman Islands, argued that scientific knowledge could be controlled only when carefully posed photographs that demonstrated observed fact (for instance, the making of an adze) provided primary evidence (1896, 76).
5. The boundary between anthropology and arts practice is beyond the scope of this paper, but see, e.g., Schneider and Wright (2006) and Schneider (this volume).
6. Collier dedicated *Visual Anthropology* (1967) to Stryker.
7. Significantly, the work of the Farm Security Administration started at precisely the same time as Mead and Bateson were in working in Bali (Larson 1993, 15).
8. For instance James M. Redfield *American Ethnologist* 1984 (1193): 617–18; Ruth Gruber Fredman in *Anthropological Quarterly* 1983 56 (4): 119–200, who described the "touching photos" and a "coda to the text." Only Peter

Metcalf in *American Anthropologist* 1984 88(1):208 engages with the photographs which "upstage the text."

9. For a useful summary of the broader politics of representation in relation to photographs see Kratz 2002, 219–23.

10. Particular analytical focus was given to the anthropometric images produced in early anthropology, the most extreme and dehumanizing form of pose and scientific control. Outside anthropology in particular, anthropometric photography came to stand for all forms of anthropological imaging regardless of the specific historicities of the photographic encounter. The photographs made to demonstrate John Lamprey's anthropometric system, published in the *Journal of the Ethnological Society* (1869), for instance, have become signature images for all anthropological photography over a hundred-year period in visual culture studies and have been reproduced endlessly (see, e.g., Green 1984, 34; Sturken and Cartwright 2001, 285; Ryan 1997, 150; S. Edwards 2006, 25).

11. For a review that highlights the methodological problems in this approach see Jay Ruby, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 2 (1998): 369–70.

12. As Pink has pointed out, many of these discussions of anthropological imaging entail a "disregard [for] any work that has been done since 1942" (the date of Mead and Bateson's publication) (2003, 185) and hence a failure to situate anthropological work either historically or theoretically, or to engage with much of the critical work coming out of anthropology itself.

13. The significance of this departure is marked by the inclusion of a review essay on the subject by Scherer in the second edition of *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (Hockings 1995).

14. See, e.g., Mieke Bal's critique of Corbey (1996, 195–96).

15. A new edition, with greatly extended analytical content, appeared as Batty, Allen, and Morton 2005.

16. High-profile exhibitions such as *From Site to Sight* (Banta and Hinsley 1986), *Observers of Man* (Poignant 1990), and *Der Geraubte Schatten* (Theye 1989) also raised critical awareness of anthropology's photographic legacy.

17. It should be noted that research increasingly brought together the archive and the field. See, e.g., Pinney 1997; Wright 2004; Bell 2004; and Geismar, 2010.

18. There are three notable ethnographic films on the social practices of photography: David MacDougall's *Photowallahs* (1991) explores the many layers of photographic engagement in a north Indian hill town (see also MacDougall 1992b), Tobias Wendl and Nancy de Plessis's *Future Remembrance* (1998) examines photographic studio practice in Ghana in relation to other memorializing graphic practices, and Judith MacDougall's *The Art of Regret* (2006) focuses on photographic practices in China.

19. For instance, the complex cross-cultural social relations of photography in the Cambridge Torres Strait expedition, 1898 (see Edwards 1998).