Global Photographies: Memory - History - Archives

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[transcript]

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Preface

At the beginning of a journey you are never the same person as at the end. A stimulating conference held in Frankfurt/M. in 2012 set the stage for this project – at the time we were interested in the question "How does memory enter photography?" From the start there was a strong international presence and interest in the global dimensions of photography – including papers contributed from scholars and curators from Africa. The dialogue continued and intensified in joint research seminars in Vienna, Frankfurt and Heidelberg. These were followed by other collaborative efforts, including a workshop in Dakar in 2014 organized by Kokou Azamede and Sissy Helff and a student-led joint research project on colonial photography in Togo by Kokou Azamede and Stefanie Michels, with an exhibition in Lomé in 2016.

Ideas are not enough to produce a book – it needs dedicated work and funds. Our many thanks therefore go to the contributors for whom it proved a much longer road than initially intended – thank you for bearing with us. The assistance of Tatjana Poletajew and, in the final phase of the project, of Yagmur Karakis was most valuable. Their patience and meticulous work with the ordering, formatting and referencing of the manuscripts and photographs were fundamental to completing the book. Yagmur Karakis also added valuable comments on the content. We also appreciate the suggestions of Frank Jones regarding English language usage, structure and style.

Annika Linnemann of transcript supported the project in all its phases. Funding was provided by the *Anton-Betz-Stiftung*, Düsseldorf and the ZIAF *(Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Afrikaforschung, Frankfurt/M.)*. The initial conference and subsequent meetings were also funded by ZIAF as well as by the *Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer der Universität Frankfurt* and the

Kelm-Stiftung, Frankfurt, the Cluster of Excellence *Normative Orders* at the University of Frankfurt. It was co-organized by Astrid Erll, Sissy Helff, Stefanie Michels and John Nassari and supported by the *Frankfurt Memory Studies* of the *Forschungszentrum Historische Geisteswissenschaften* and the Chair *New English Literatures and Cultures* at the University of Frankfurt.

Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, Frankfurt and Düsseldorf, November 2017

Re-framing Photography – Some Thoughts

STEFANIE MICHELS

Conventional historiography on photography stresses its evolution as a story of technological progress. Histories of photography, even "world histories of photography", have long lacked a global perspective. A global narrative of photography would thus have to not only include these neglected regions but would also alter the conventional narratives. Research in this area is currently booming and what is being uncovered are stories of connection beyond western exceptionalism. Central in this research is the discovery and use of photographic archives outside of Europe (Morton/Newbury 2015; Lydon 2005; Pinney/Peterson 2003). Photography never belonged solely to the West nor was the idea of creating a likeness of a thing or person an exclusively western or modern notion. As a technology photography was easily integrated into visual practices that had preceded it in all world regions. In nineteenth century Cameroon grassfields, for example, the idea of the portrait of an important person – male or female – was realized in three dimensional portraits (Brain 1971). In time photography was added to funerary practices and co-existed for several decades until solely assuming this social function. In East Asia photography entered a visual culture in which "dissonant seeing" (Fukuoka 2011) was practiced long before photography came about. In Meiji Japan, older Tokugawa visual practices and photography were easily integrated (cf. ibid.). In 1925 a camera was developed in China that could create photographs in the pictorial tradition of panorama paintings and thus integrated bi-ocular visual practices with photography (cf. ibid.; Gu 2015: 165 f.).

Only a couple of months after the announcement of the technical process of daguerreotyping in Paris in 1839, the ottoman-egyptian Pasha Mehmet Ali

decided to portray the ancient port of Alexandria with this technique, thus making a strong claim as to the role Egypt was to play in the geopolitical situation of the time. France and Britain were getting more and more involved in military campaigns against opponents to their vision of world order in which markets were open to their products and industries in other countries than their own should remain unprotected (Haney 2010). By the 1850s there were professional photographers and photographic studios operational on all continents – including black American, Chinese, Japanese, West African or Armenian photographers, to name but a few to illustrate their diverse backgrounds (cf. Sheehan/Zervigón 2015). The customers of these photographers were just as diverse and this draws attention to the fact that the histories of photographies within world regions and of the colonial gaze are intertwined. In West Africa for example, African or black photographers, served the wishes of African customers as well as European ones and vice versa (also Geary 2004; Tatsitsa 2015). At no point was photography only the privilege of Europeans. This point is empirically and forcefully argued by Jürg Schneider in this volume. Schneider's point on African professional photographers working for heterogeneous customers – West African families and individuals as well as European colonial officials – is enforced by Hans Hahn and his contribution on the photographic work of the African photographer Acolatse in Togo. Acolatse knew how to produce pictures suitable for the colonial needs of the German colonial commanders and used his skill for the promotion of his business as a professional photographer. In China and Japan similar processes have been described (cf. Gu 2015).[1] It took only five years until the production of tourist photographs from Japan had been taken over by Japanese photographers (Hight 2002). The histories of these photographers also remind us how productive and concrete Latour's ideas of connections are in producing a global history that is more than diffuse flows.

What historians are unearthing in the archives are stories that need to be added to the history of photography. While the way this history was told was not wrong, it was incomplete, to borrow from Chimamanda Adichies famed speech of 2009.[2] By being incomplete it constructed a hegemonic story of

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1   The Chinese Photographer Afong Lei is even mentioned in Naomi Rosenblum (2008: 73).

2   Retrievable here: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story (last download, 09.06.2017).

the West and reduced all other world regions to objects of western gazes. Not to say that there was no colonial gaze, yes, there was, but it was not the only way photography was used, it was never uncontested and it was never stable. To start telling the origins of photography from visual practices within the regions produces an inclusive narrative in which Asian, African and American origins of photography enter on equal terms (cf. Sheehan/Zervigón 2015).

Photographic archives in the West are not monolithic themselves. With Bourdieu we should be very aware of this and not artificially essentialize Europeans, and their photographic practices and archives (Bourdieu 1990). Complicating the story and the archive within Europe is a fundamental in countering the tendency of conventional histories of photography to over discuss the relation between photography and art and thus center on discourses on the leading social classes in Europe. In overcoming this paradigm and focusing on the broader social functions of photography in Europe new archives are considered. Bourdieu himself worked with private archives and interviews with rural French people in the 1960s. Through the use of their archives he added their story to the story of photography.

The archiving process takes center stage in research on a global history of photography.

How many photographs are deleted every day in today's age of digital photography? Most of us are ourselves photographers using our mobile phone as a camera that is constantly with us. We may take many photographs of a certain scene, say a birthday party of our children, and instantly discard all those pictures that we do not want to be preserved. This selection process is done by us intuitively and is possibly quite difficult to theorize – both aesthetic and social criteria probably taking center stage here. What we do, however, is to create our own personal image archive. Such private archives are often passed on within the family with the selection criteria being inaccessible for the descendants.

Questions about the materiality of photography become pertinent in institutional archival practices, where the physical reality of the photographs is a visible fact and necessity for the professional archivist. The ways in which to deal with visual archives, especially those containing a colonial legacy, unsettles all considerations about the construction, positionality and ambivalence of historic photographs. Archival practices ask for a pragmatic organ-

ization which fundamentally counters mere aesthetic approaches to photography. Moral questions follow if photographs are released online without comments, inviting everyone to put them into new contexts. Richard Kuba and Margrit Prussat in their contributions address these issues.

The archiving process and the decisions taken in it thus fundamentally determine Memory – and this is not only the case with personal memory but also with archival memory. As David Zeitlyn has recently argued Archives represent the liminal phase between memory and forgetting (Zeitlyn 2012). In the personal memory there might be very good reasons to forget painful memories or just bad hair days. Such photographs speak of a reality that we wish to forget. Jens Ruchatz in his chapter on wedding photography and the changing criteria for it underlines this point. In our everyday experience photographs are evidence to the real, although semiotically they only index reality. Jens Jäger in this volume gives a genealogy of the "reality effect" of photography and the complex relationship of the academic discipline of History and Photography in the German case.[3]

When my four-year-old daughter asked me when the world stopped being black and white, this difference seemed too academic for the way she made sense of the world. Photographs make claims on being faithful to reality – which is why photography is a strong tool in the hand of politicians – be they colonial or anticolonial. In South Africa Black and White Photographers documented the anti-apartheid struggle. Some of their pictures, like the one of Hector Pieterson in the students' rising of Soweto in 1976 became iconic in the international campaign against Apartheid and remain so in present South Africa. In this volume, Marie-Hélène Gutberlet recalls the important work of South African photographer Thabiso Sekgala in this respect.

History – a construct – seems again naturalized through photographic "evidence", since it is impossible to disconnect the signifier and the signified. The viewer takes in both at the same time. However, authors of photographs are the photographer, the subject, the viewer and the corpus (archive) in which it is found.

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3 Cf. more general on the way Photography was constructed as being 'authentic' and 'objective' in the 19th century also Sheehan/Zervigón (2015) and Burke (2003).

When confronted with these photographs the descendants are often puzzled in trying to unravel the relationship of the photograph to the real: a burdensome and controversial task. Marianne Hirsch has in an exercise shown us how painful and in the end impossible it was to fix the real in a photograph of herself (Hirsch 1997; cf. also Barthes 2000). Sally Waterman in this volume undertakes such an endeavour with regard to her family album. If it was impossible for Roland Barthes to "find" his deceased mother in her photographs, how do people engage with photographs of their ancestors when photographed in colonial moments?[4] Michael Aird has developed the concept of "Looking Past" for the way indigenous Australians relate to such photographs. In "Looking Past" the humiliating aspects of the photographs – for example neck chains – they instead resurrect the historical and social person depicted (Aird 2003; also Lydon 2005). Similar practices can be found in West Africa – the iconic picture of Amadou Bamba of Senegal and its mass produced revisionings being the most prominent example (Haney 2010: 139–142). Alf Lüdtke has developed the term *Augensinn* (meaning of the eyes) with regard to photographic practices of workers in the German Democratic Republic. Lüdtke questions whether it is ever possible to limit the meaning of a photograph to a controlling subject and rather calls for a disparate reception, where each individual act of looking at a photograph creates a zone of new possibilities that might or might not be independent or in opposition to the intended reading by the producers of the image (Lüdtke 2004).

Recent research about the production and reception of photography around the globe questions the stability and dominance of the colonial gaze. Edward Said's seminal work on visual representations of the Orient in paintings ushered in a wave of research on the "imperial eyes" (Pratt 2008) of the Europeans of the late eighteenth century and the "colonizing camera" (Hartmann/Hayes/Silvester 1999; cf. also Bate 2003; Young 1990) of the late nineteenth century. Due to its indexical and iconic nature, the message of a photograph is never fixed. Therefore, even photographs that were used by pro-colonial associations like the German colonial society have the potential of a variety of readings. The colonial codes might be sidelined by African audiences – as Kokou Azamede shows in this volume. Azamede's project is to re-appropriate the photographs in the archive from the German colonial

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4   Cf. a very convincing argument for the use of "colonial moment" instead of a totalizing "colonial situation" Kuster (2016).

society as documents for the history of Togo. Reconstructing the colonial gaze inherent in the pictures clashes with the interests of African audiences. When we presented photographs from the German colonial society under the heading "colonial photography" at the Goethe-Institute in Lomé in 2016 a heated dispute arose from a visitor – probably a prominent person from Southern Togo – who fiercely resisted Togo be called "colonial" or a "colony" at any time. His reaction was a strong indicator of the dichotomous and hierarchical space proposed by the colonial paradigm and the ambivalence and heterogeneity of it being acted out in a non-linear process.

The images that were shown in Imperial Germany made the colonial project appear much stronger and successful than it really was (cf. Comaroff/Comaroff 1992; Cooper 2005; Ballantyne/Burton 2012). To assess the difference between reality and its representation in the European archives, one has to understand the archives and multiply them (cf. Stoler 2001). On the basis of these findings History is made by Historians (cf. de Certeau 1991). The term history – as a past reality thus has to differentiated from History as the narrative produced (on the problem of reality cf. ibid.: 52 f.; Landwehr 2016).[5] The quest for completeness of (past) reality has been proved an impossibility. Historiography is therefore a specific genre of memory production (cf. Erll 2005). In the paradigm of a global history of photography the positionality of conventional historiography becomes visible. As new actor-networks (Latour) are being added, the size of the other networks and their places is re-calibrated.[6] This volume thus seeks to re-frame photography as a social function of heterogeneous actors in many parts of the world in the past and present.

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5   Who defines the real as: "an infinite mass of unidentified objects" (Landwehr 2016: 95).

6   cf. the productive relationship of Latour and global history: Epple 2012; Glasmann/Gerstenberger 2016.

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African Photography
in the Atlantic Visualscape

Moving Photographers – Circulating Images

JÜRG SCHNEIDER

African photographers have been actively involved in writing and shaping the visual history of their continent since the mid-19th century. If we attempt to trace and comprehend the history of how photography, the first truly global visual medium, was adopted in West and Central Africa, we must do this within the wider context of the ever increasing concentration of economic, social and political connections across the space of the Atlantic Ocean. In the process of Africa's adoption of photography, the production and consumption of photographic images are closely linked to one another, at least in the sense in which the French cultural theorist Michel de Certeau refers to a form of consumption which is, in fact, a form of production. This "other" production, as he writes, "does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products" (de Certeau 1984: xii–xiii). Therefore, in the following paper, we will pay particular attention not only to the photographers themselves, the producers of photographs, but also to the ways in which photographs are used in terms of social practice and the way in which they are integrated into everyday life. We will also pay attention to the ways in which photographs are circulated in time, space and in and between different types of media. These are the key elements required to understand the long process by which photography became a ubiquitous visual medium throughout the African continent.

According to Anthony Giddens' analysis of the dynamics of modernity, within the "Atlantic Visualscape" (Schneider 2010, idem 2011), a landscape

both physically tangible and imaginary located at the "*Schnittstelle von Ma-
terialität und Diskursivität*"[1] (Geppert/Jensen/Weinhold 2005:18), photo-
graphs can be classed as "disembedding mechanisms" (Giddens 1991:18, see
also Cassel 1993: 84–87). According to Giddens, "disembedding" means
"the `lifting out' [deterritorialisation[2]] of social relations from local contexts
and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space." (Giddens 1991:
18) This clearly has implications for interpersonal relationships, which must
be repeatedly re-established as part of their practice. Disembedding mecha-
nisms include both symbolic media ("symbolic tokens"), such as money, and
expert systems. Giddens groups both together using the term "abstract sys-
tems" (Giddens 1991: 18), "codified forms of expert knowledge which have
been lifted out of their local context" (Giddens 1992: 26). The central thesis
of this paper is that the establishment of a wider transcontinental socio-polit-
ical and economic area spanning Europe, West and Central Africa and North
and South America was, if not exclusively then in some crucial regards, a
process mediated by visual images. This is true whether it developed as a
result of European colonial expansion or as a result of complex migratory
processes; under duress as part of the slave trade or freely through remigra-
tion to and internal migration within Africa. Images, and photographs in par-
ticular, when seen (as with money) as symbolic media in the light of Bour-
dieu's "economy of practices" (Bourdieu 1986: 242) and given the changes
to and expansion of possibilities in communication across wider areas (as a
direct consequence of the process of globalisation) played a central and inte-
grative role in this process (for a detailed discussion of this theory see Schnei-
der 2011). It can also be demonstrated that photography represents an expert
system, again in terms of Giddens' "abstract systems", which functions in
terms of trust, not in people, but rather in an abstract system (Giddens 1990:
79–100).

The history of African photography began at a point in time when the
transatlantic slave trade was coming to an end and was being replaced by
"legitimate" trade in the context of the "commercial transition" (Law 1995,
Lynn 1997, Mann 2007: 1–12). It is also closely linked to transcontinental
migratory movements and migratory movements within Africa, Christian
missionary work, the ever greater exploration of the African continent, the

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1   "interface between materiality and discursivity" (translation: SC).
2   Deleuze/Guatarri (1972); Deleuze/Parnet (1980: 144–158).

transition to colonialism and the growth of towns and cities along the coast. These phenomena resulted in intensive economic and social contact between the coastal cities of West and Central Africa, Europe and the Americas.

Against this backdrop, and assuming that in order to work as a photographer a minimum level of Western education and knowledge of the Western world and, of course, access to Western markets was required, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of the first African photographers we are able to identify in our sources is Francis W. Joaque, whose grandfather had been resettled in Sierra Leone as a freed slave, whose father was an esteemed member of the Krio society in Freetown, and who himself had attended schools there run by the Church Mission Society and retained his links with the protestant mission throughout his life (Schneider 2010). In her study of the role of migrants from Sierra Leone in the early history of modern Nigeria, Jean Herskowits Kopytoff notes (in perfect keeping with Joaque's family background) "[a]s the century wore on, liberated Africans, especially from Freetown, became prominent in aiding the spread of European influence – direct or indirect; political, religious, or economic – from the Gambia to the Cameroons." (Kopytoff 1965, see also Ajayi 1965, Aderibigbe 1975) The cultural proximity of early African photographers to Europe is evident not least in their names – Grant, Decker, Holm, Lutterodt, Sawyer and, of course, Joaque.

MOBILE PHOTOGRAPHERS

If we disregard the photographer Augustus Washington,[3] who emigrated from America to Liberia in the early 1850s, then we can say with certainty that there were a number of photographers born in Africa working across the continent from 1866 onwards. A photograph taken by John Parkes Decker in Gorée, Senegal originates from this period. As the historian Christopher Fyfe wrote, Decker, who was originally from the The Gambia (Fyfe 1963: 362),

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3 After August Washington was first mentioned by Vera Viditz-Ward in the early 1980s with a note that his daguerreotypes had most probably been lost (something which later proved to be false), a series of essays were published which shone new light on the life and works of Washington. Viditz-Ward (1985: 46, incl. fn 2); Viditz-Ward (1987: 511); Shumard (1999); Johnson (1996); Dinius (2012).

moved between Sierra Leone and Fernando Pó in his work as a photographer over the following years. Indeed in his logo, he always put his place of work as the "West Coast [of] Africa". The last known photographs by Decker are of the Polish explorer Etienne de Szolc-Rogozinski and his wife taken on Fernando Pó in 1890.[4]

Decker's mobility as a photographer was typical for early African photographers, who in many cases did not just work from one location but rather, following clients and seasons, covered wider areas. It was common for photographers to advertise in local newspapers that they would be available for work for a given period, generally for several weeks, in a certain place (usually in the most important coastal cities such as Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast etc.). We know that Augustus Washington not only worked in Liberia, which was his main place of residence and business, but also in Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Senegal. On 29th June 1857, he put an advertisement in the newspaper *New Era* (Freetown, Sierra Leone), which closed with the following words: "Mrs. Washington will be in attendance to receive ladies, and assist in arranging their toilet." (Shumard 1999: 14, 22, fn 45)[5] Francis W. Joaque emigrated from Sierra Leone to Fernando Pó, where he worked for some years, only to then establish himself in Libreville in the mid-1870s and finally return to Sierra Leone in the 1890s. Members of the Lutterodt dynasty worked in Cameroon, Fernando Pó and in the Gold Coast. Neils Walwin Holm, who was born in Accra around 1865 and who became a member of the *Royal Photographic Society* in 1895, worked in his place of birth for many years before moving his business to Lagos in 1886.

The steamers which sailed regularly between Great Britain and West and Central Africa from 1852 onwards played a central role in the development and dynamics of both transatlantic travel and travel within Africa. They made it possible to draw up timetables, even if these could not always be adhered to fully (something often complained about by travellers) (Osterhammel 2009: 1014). The historian Martin Lynn, who sadly died prematurely, characterised the rise of steam travel in West and Central Africa in the early

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4   Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cartes et Plans WE, 141, Société de Géographie de Paris; La Ilustracion Española, año XXXV, Núm. XI, 22. March 1891, 189.

5   Vera Viditz-Ward already made a reference to this advertisement in the 1980s: Viditz-Ward (1985: 46, incl. fn 2); Viditz-Ward (1987: 511).

1850s as a "radical break in the history of the region's external commerce" (Lynn 1992, see also Dike 1956, Lynn 2002: 182–183). It was not only white traders and missionaries who used this means of transport to travel back and forth between Africa and Europe, but Africans too. The photographer N. Walvin Holm took the steamer several times between 1890 and 1910 to travel to England. For instance, in 1900 he made the trip in order to participate in the first *Pan-African Conference* organised by Henry Sylvester Williams in his role as the secretary to the Lagos branch's *Pan-African Association* (Lara 2000: 273).

There is no definitive answer to the question of how the first African photographers came into contact with photography as a technical process and from whom they learnt their profession, as there are very few written sources dating from this period. In the photographer (and cabinetmaker) John McCarthy Blair's obituary, we are told that he learnt photography without the aid of a teacher.[6] However, this can hardly be the norm as, during the 1880s, advertisements appeared in local newspapers throughout West Africa offering photography courses and seeking apprentices (Grant 1884: 1; Messrs. Lutterodt & Sons 1893: 13; also a.u. 1885, October 17: 1). Even before this, there were opportunities to observe (European) photographers at work. A few examples should illustrate this point.

The first reference to a photographer in West Africa dates from the year 1840. It referred to the French naval captain Louis Édouard Bouët-Willaumez, who in 1840, while sailing up the West African coast, put briefly into harbour at Elmina (in present day Ghana) and set up his camera (Yarak 1995: 8, see also Haney 2004). The Briton John Holt described in his journal how E.I. Smith, who, like Holt, worked as a trader on the island of Fernando Pó in the Gulf of Guinea, had a portrait taken of himself in November 1864 aboard the Royal Navy ship the *Vindictive* at just off the island's capital city Clarence, following his wedding to one Chin Cherry (Nassau 1874: 92). Between 1861 and 1864, the French naval officers Paul Serval and Griffon du Bellay reconnoitred the West and Central African coast. One of their journeys took them up a tributary of the Ogooué River to Lake Onague in Gabon (Société 1889, Mitchell 1989). In 1865 Griffon du Bellay published a detailed account of this journey in *Le Tour du Monde.* It was illustrated with numerous images based on photographs taken by the officer Houzé

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6   Sierra Leone Weekly News, March 16, 1889, p. 3.

d'Aulnoit, which du Bellay described as "faithful reproductions of the photographs" (du Bellay 1865: 273). In March or April of 1862, at exactly the same time as Serval and Griffon du Bellay were exploring the Ogowe, both the British consul to Fernando Pó, Richard F. Burton, and the hunter and adventurer Henry Leveson reported how a French naval officer (most probably the aforementioned Houzé d'Aulnoit) photographed a young gorilla sitting on the lap of the trader Robert Bruce Napoléon Walker (Leveson 1867: 468, Burton 1876: cpt. 1). Numerous other examples demonstrate that cameras were certainly taken on many expeditions from the 1860s onwards; as the historian James Ryan suggests quoting an anonymous source from 1864 "[f]or the purpose of science, an explorer and a photographer should be convertible terms".[7]

Some of the white traders in West and Central Africa already owned and used cameras in the 1860s. Some, as the British trader J.F. Napier Hewett writes, to "astonish the natives" (Hewett 1862: 18–19). The ranks of the missionary societies operating in West and Central Africa also brought with them cameras and provided their mother house with visual material of their missionary work, sometimes also buying photographs on the local market or swapping them with colleagues. During the 1850s, the *Basler Mission* (Basel Mission Society) offered photography courses to those who were preparing for work overseas. In 1860, the missionary Wilhelm Locher travelled with his camera to the Gold Coast and subsequently sent several dozen photographs back to Basel between 1860 and 1867. Another missionary who worked as a photographer in West Africa was the Scotsman Daniel West. In 1856 while working on the Gold Coast, he produced a series of daguerreotypes or ambrotypes (also known as collodion positives) which has unfortunately been lost. However, they have survived as reproductions in the memoirs which his brother dedicated to him in 1857 after his death (West 1857). The *Norddeutsche Mission* (North German Mission Society) also equipped its workers with cameras in the early 1860s (Jenkins 1993, idem 2006). Therefore there were plenty of opportunities for Africans to observe photographers at work, to ask them questions and perhaps to gain an introduction

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7   A.u.: Art. VII. The Quarterly Review (October 1864), 498–499. As cited by Nassau 1904: 21, fn 37.

into the art of photography. The necessary materials could be readily ordered from Europe, as numerous advertisements in the local papers demonstrate.[8]

"Accepting and appropriating the new technology [of photography]", as Christraud Geary remarks, "was, of course, a complex process that unfolded in distinct ways in different milieus, regions and time periods." (Geary 2002: 103) In this respect, a range of sources show both fear of and enthusiasm for the new medium, but also demonstrate the various ways in which photography spread, both socially and geographically. But even in the early 1880s, Max Buchner, the first governor of Cameroon and the later director of the *Münchner Ethnografisches Museum* (Munich Ethnographical Museum), wrote that even in the hinterland of Luanda, „die Photographie bereits in Mode [sei]"[9] (Buchner 1880–81: 175–176). And Chris Geary notes, "[a]t the end of the 19th century, taking pictures in Africa had become commonplace." (Geary 1997: 93) By this time, the competition between photographers, at least in certain areas, must have been so great that it was no longer enough to be simply able to take a photograph. In an advertisement in the *Gold Coast Times* in 1883, the photographer John M. Blair stated that "[i]n common with other departments of arts, photography has had additional 'BOON' conferred upon it during the last few years, so now no common-place photos can find a place within the range of its circle."[10]

Both the consumption of photographs and the practice of accumulating them as cultural, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1983, Jurt 2007) caught on more quickly in the coastal regions (particularly the main coastal cities) than in the hinterland. Similarly, Africans living in the economic and political centres along the coast were faster to integrate photographs into their everyday practice, perhaps because of their contact with Europeans and access to Western consumer goods and Western consumer practices, including photographs and the practice of displaying them in their homes.

There were many descriptions of the adoption of a European lifestyle by the local African elites (something often referred to disparagingly as "mimicry" in European sources), also in reference to the use of photographs. For example, in his book "Dahomey as it is", published in 1874 in London, the

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8   Sierra Leone Weekly News, July 17, 1886, 1; Gold Coast Times. December 03, 1881, p. 4.

9   "photography is already in fashion" (translation: SC).

10 Gold Coast Times, December 28, 1883, p. 6.

Englishman J.A. Skertchly describes "abundant evidences of the owner's [Quinun, the king's, Gele's, agent] mimicry of European customs". Amongst other things, he describes the walls of a living room as being "decorated with gaudy-coloured German prints, vile even for them – and last, but by no means least, was a yellow, sun-spoilt photograph of Quinun in his war paint." (Skertchly 1874: 13) Max Buchner reports how a large photograph of King Akwa's father hung in his state rooms (in Douala, Cameroon) (Buchner 1887: 54). In his memoirs, the British trader John Witford describes a visit to King Eyo in the Niger Delta, "[In his] principal audience room is a likeness of the Queen, cut from the Graphic, and gummed against the wall in a good light, and it is the best 'old master' in Eyo's gallery. He shows with pride a photographic album and then kindly invites us down-stairs to the other palace, where in the courtyard a band of rude music plays" (Whitford 1877: 299).

Flora S. Kaplan's assessment that photographs in the modern culture of Benin reinforce and pay tribute to existing relationships, but also are used to create new relationships is also true for the 19th century and, in general terms, for many African societies (Kaplan 1990: 323, 326–327). Photographs were accumulated, in the terms of Bourdieu's theory of forms of capital, as cultural capital in both objectified and embodied states and as symbolic capital in order to create, expand and sustain "a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." (Bourdieu 1986: 248) In his essay on the history and practices of indigenous photography among the Fante in Ghana, Tobias Wendl argues that the practice of using photographs was to "sie in die allgemeine Bildzirkulation einzuschleusen: also sie zu verschenken oder zu tauschen. Man gibt Bilder von sich gerne weg, um anderswo in Form eines fotografischen Substituts präsent zu sein; und man nimmt – aus dem gleichen Grund – die Bilder anderer entgegen."[11] (Wendl 1999: 292) In the context of migration and mobility in Fante society, he described photographs as "symbolic dams holding back the increasing loss of social cohesion." (Ibidem)

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11 "introduce them into the mass of images in general circulation: to present them as gifts or to exchange them. People like giving away pictures of themselves as they enable them to be present somewhere else in the form of a photographic substitute, and – for the same reasons – they enjoy receiving pictures of others." (translation: SC)

Sources from the 19th century in which such acts of exchanging and presenting photographs are named explicitly are extremely rare. Adolph Burdo, a member of the Belgian *societé géographique* (geographical association), who visited the *Roi de Dakar* in 1878 (a common tourist attraction for the period), reported,

"Cela lui vaut, [visits by tourists], dit-on, une rente assez rondelette, nombre de steamers y faisant escale, et ayant toujours à bord beaucoup de passagers, qui s'en vont au Brésil ou en reviennent. [...] Je laisse à deviner ce qu'il me présenta en echange. Ce ne fut ni du vin de palme, ni un gri-gri, ni une amulette; ce fut…son portrait, son portrait photographié par un vrai photographe, M. Bonnevide, qui habita quelque temps le Sénégal." (Burdo 1880: 16)[12]

This portrait was widely circulated and was displayed in the collection of the *Mittelschweizerische Geographisch-Commerzielle Gesellschaft* in Aarau as a gift from one of the very travellers Burdo mentioned (Schneider 2006, a photograph of the "King of Dakar" is printed on page 119). The Swiss traveller Wilhelm Bolliger also made a stopover in Dakar on his journey from Europe to Brazil (where he lived) and visited the king who was clearly a tourist attraction. Another source in which such an exchange is described was published in 1899 in the German periodical *Globus*. In the article "Ihre Majestät, die Königin von Alt-Calabar" (Her Majesty, the Queen of Old Calabar), a certain H.T. describes himself as being surprised when, after his visit to the Queen, he was presented with a photograph as a parting gift. "Als ich mich verabschiedete, beschenkte mich zu meinem Erstaunen die Königin mit ihrer

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12 "These [visits by tourists] bring in a tidy little sum for him, as many ships carrying tourists to or from Brazil often stop off in Dakar [...] I will leave it to the readers to guess what the King presented me with in exchange for my gift to him. It was neither palm wine nor a gri-gri or amulet. No, it was his portrait, his photographic portrait, taken by a real photographer, Monsieur Bonnevide, who had resided for some time in Senegal." (translation: SC) A reproduction of the photograph can be found on page 14; also in Hickling (2014, 342). An advertisement in the Sierra Leone Weekly News on 2nd January 1886 announced Bonnevide's presence in Freetown for the month.

Photographie, auf welcher sie in voller königlicher Tracht steht" (H.T./Globus 1899: 75).[13]

In their article published in 2005 on self-portrayal and local adoption of photography in the Niger Delta, Martha Anderson and Lisa Aronson work on the assumption that during the late 19th century at least some of the photographs of local elites such as Oko Jumbo, Jaja, Adda Allison, Cookey Gam and William Brown came to be in the possession of the Swiss adventurer Carl Passavant from Basel by means of such exchanges (Anderson 2005). William Brown, who like John Jumbo (Oko Jumbo's son) and King George Pepple and his brother went to school in Sierra Leone and England, seems to have been particularly proactive in giving photographs. Photographs showing him and his family and entourage in a variety of outfits and against different backgrounds can be found in a number of different collections (Tasie 1978: 42).

Fig. 1: William Brown with his entourage

Photographer unknown. 1880s, Courtesy Christraud M. Geary.

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13 "To my astonishment, as I bade farewell, the Queen presented me with a gift in the form of a photograph of her in which she was shown in full royal attire." (translation: SC)

It can also be deduced, at least implicitly, from the photograph albums belonging to white traders and travellers that at least some of the photographs were gifts. For example, the estate of the late English palm oil trader Graceus Abraham Reece included numerous photographs of Africans in carte-de-visite format, not least the photograph of a certain Walter A. Jackman from Demarara (British Guiana).[14]

CIRCULATING PHOTOGRAPHS

Pictures of all kinds have circulated throughout the Atlantic Visualscape since the 16th century. They moved between individuals and institutions, were bought and sold, presented as gifts and incorporated into academic and private collections. They travelled from continent to continent and, especially since the rise of photography, have often been reproduced numerous times in a variety of different media and in different materials. These patterns of movement can be accurately traced over long periods of time by following the journeys of individual photographs.

In this context, the significance of Christian missions should not go unmentioned. Both Catholic and Protestant missions used images in their work "in the field" not least "to challenge rival gods as well as to conceive of new forms of community and experience of the divine" (Morgan 2005: 147). On the other hand, missionaries sent home photographs of their experiences in order to secure continued support for their work. Many of these pictures helped to create a "visual lexicon of the faith" in the Western world from where the Christian missions had set out (Morgan 2005: 150–151). Nonetheless, it is clear that, even as late as the 19th century, there was very little visual knowledge of sub-Saharan Africa in the Western world (Jäger 2006: 137). "[T]he civilized world still knew little and cared less about Central Africa," as the Finnish historian Leila Koivunen wrote, citing the political scientist Alain Cairns (Cairns 1965, Koivunen 2009: 2). It is only against the context of this absence of visual information that the enormous significance of the rise of a veritable flood of images which occurred in the 19th century becomes apparent (Jäger 2006: 137).

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14 http://africaphotography.org/collections/sue-taylor-collection/gallery

A number of different factors contributed to the widespread distribution and circulation of photographs. On a technical level this is predominantly thanks to the fact that photographs are easily reproduced. One negative can create an almost unlimited number of prints. The carte-de-visite format introduced in the early 1850s is an excellent example of this. In the 1860s at the height of "cardomania", several million of these small-format portrait photographs were in circulation worldwide. Photographs were also published in books, magazines and newspapers, first as wood engravings and then, from 1880s onwards, using the halftone technique, allowing them to be disseminated very widely indeed.

To meet the demand from a growing number of people for current news, information and entertainment, a large number of illustrated magazines were founded in Europe and in North and South America between 1840 and 1875. These did not play a major role in the reproduction of photographs from Africa as, in general, the African continent was reported on sparingly in them. Nonetheless, because of their large circulations, they should not be ignored. Photographs by Francis W. Joaque were published in 1876 in *Illustracion Espanola y Americana*, in 1884 in *Über Land und Meer* and in 1886 in *Globus*. John Parkes Decker's photographs were printed in 1873 in *The Graphic* and *The Illustrated London News* and finally W.J. Sawyer's photographs appeared in 1883 in *La Ilustracion Española y Americana*.

Fig. 2: "Houssa Troops Trained at Lagos"
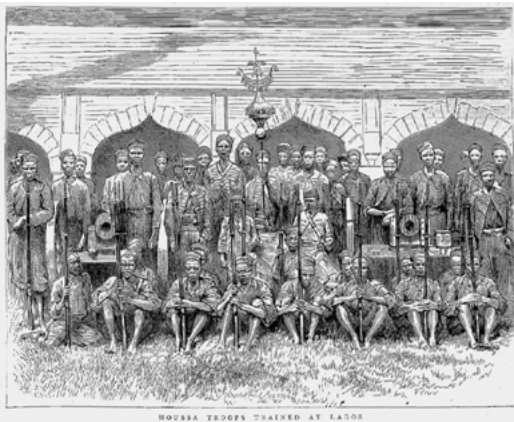
The Graphic, 6th December 1873, p. 528.

Photographs or wood engravings based on photographs were not only circulated in illustrated magazines, but also in a great many books, missionary magazines and also in private photograph albums. The Marquis of Compiègne illustrated his two-volume report of his journey to Gabon published in 1875 with numerous photographs by Francis W. Joaque, "un noir qui reside habituelement au Gabon"[15] (Compiègne 1875a, idem 1875b). The missionary Henry Roe also used photographs by Joaque to illustrate his report on the first few years of the "Primitive Methodist Mission" in Fernando Pó (Roe 1874). As for private photograph albums, those belonging to the Swiss adventurer Carl Passavant are a good example.[16] A comparison of these albums with other photograph collections in which many of the Passavant photographs also feature gives us a good impression of just how far and over what long periods of time certain photographs travelled.

The role of Christian missionary societies in the circulation and reproduction of photographs from Africa and, in many cases, taken by African photographers has already been mentioned and is illustrated here once again by the example of the British Missionary Leaves Association (MLA). The MLA was founded in 1869 "[to] assist Church Missionary Society missionaries and indigenous clergy in the CMS mission areas".[17] This "assistance" included the MLA providing local branches of the CMS in Great Britain or interested media outlets with photographs from their missions in West Africa. A photograph specimen book served as an order catalogue from which prints of portraits of European and African missionaries (such as the very high-profile Bishop Samuel A. Crowther) as well as pictures of schools and churches in Sierra Leone and Nigeria could be ordered. Then the album was packaged up extremely carefully in order to "be sent back as soon as possible".[18] To what extent the local missionary societies made use of this service would require further research. What is certain is that the CMS itself used photographs from the photograph specimen book to illustrate its own maga-

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15 "a black man who normally resides in Gabon" (translation: SC).

16 http://africaphotography.org/collections/carl-passavant-grey-album/gallery
    http://africaphotography.org/collections/carl-passavant-red-album/gallery

17 http://www.mundus.ac.uk/cats/44/1239.htm [March 2013].

18 Missionary Leaves Association. Photo Specimen Book. Church Mission Society Archives, Oxford, UK.

zines (for example the *Gleaner*), and that many photographs from it also feature in other collections and publications. However, that does not necessarily mean that the photograph specimen book was the source of the photographs in other albums and collections. Instead, it was – just like other albums and collections – one of the many places in which different photographs – some of them bought, some received as gifts, some commissioned – were collected and sometimes shared with others.

Fig. 3: Page from the Missionary Leaves Association photograph specimen book
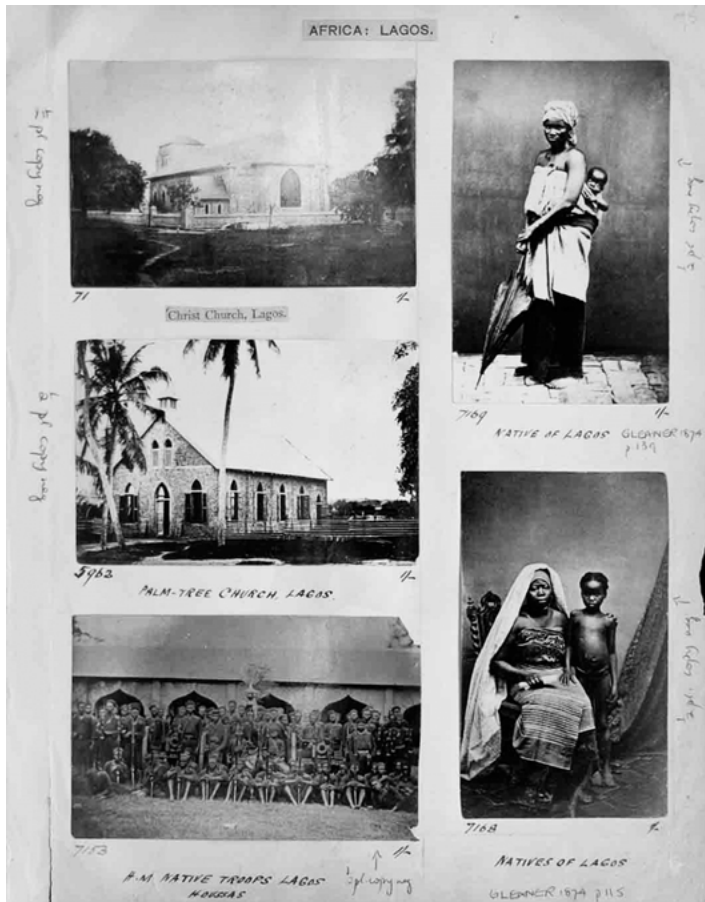
African photographers worked in a market where they were subject to the laws of supply and demand, but which they nonetheless attempted to influence by meeting and anticipating the demands of a heterogeneous clientele. Clearly supply and demand changed over time. If in the 1860s and 1870s there was only a small group of photographers, who rarely ran their own studio from one single location but instead travelled along the coast, advertising their services in the largest coastal towns and cities, in the late 19th century the number of photographers increased significantly. In this period photographers often sought and trained apprentices, and there were increasing numbers of advertisements in local papers for photographic studios and their services. Their customer base also grew and became more diverse, thereby increasing the demand for photographs. Portraits were always good business. These were often commissioned by white traders, explorers and missionaries such as Grecius Abraham Reece, Savorgnan de Brazza or Robert H. Nassau and also by the local African elites. The former also had a penchant for "typical" scenes and landscapes. These were meant to offer family and friends back home an impression of "Africa" and were kept in stock by local photographic studios. Missionary societies, the colonial administration and traders also commissioned photographs of buildings, ports and other aspects of the urban infrastructure. With the rise of the picture postcard at the start of the 20th century, the range of photographic images and their circulation increased even further. Photographers, their clients and not least the photographs themselves were therefore integrated into a practice of displaying, buying and selling, exchanging and giving of photographs as gifts. They all served, as did the various print media, as vehicles and motors for the circulation of photographic images within the Atlantic Visualscape over considerable distances and periods of time.

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Elective Affinities?

History and Photography

Jens Jäger

The conceptual history of the term "elective affinity" refers to the "force" that causes chemical reactions. A broad definition of chemical affinity is when substances enter into or resist decomposition. Since the late eighteenth century it has become less and less common to use the term "elective affinity" in chemistry. Soon after 1800 the phrase was adapted in literature, and in 1809 Johann Wolfgang Goethe chose the term as a title for one of his classic novels, *Wahlverwandschaften* (Elective Affinities). He thus used the expression as an organizing metaphor for the conflict between responsibility (culture) and passion (nature). In the novel, not only reason, but society and its norms effectively inhibit the "natural" matchmaking of the protagonists.

Thirty years later, another "natural" couple entered the stage: photography and historiography. How would the protagonists perform? Would anyone inhibit this match? When Daguerre and Talbot announced their respective discoveries in 1839, it was taken for granted that photography would become an important means with which to document objects, people and – when technically possible – events. To many contemporary observers the new technology promised to offer exactly what was expected of historiography: truthful documents of people, events and nature. In 1821 the Prussian philosopher and politician Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) wrote the following in his essay, whose English title is "On the Historian's Task":

"The historian's task is to present what actually happened. The more purely and completely he achieves this, the more perfectly has he solved this problem. A simple presentation is at the same time the primary, indispensable condition of his work and the highest achievement he will be able to attain. Regarded in this way, he seems to be merely receptive and productive, not active and creative." (von Humboldt 1967: 59)

Only three years later, in 1824, the German historian Leopold von Ranke wrote his famous programmatic dictum: The aim of the historian is "merely to show how it actually was" (Ranke 1824).[1] Fifteen years after that, when photography had emerged, did it not finally provide the means with which to "show how it actually was"? This was what its early advocates claimed. Most of them were scientists, such as the physicist Dominique Francois Arago (1786–1853); the geographer, naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), the brother of Wilhelm von Humboldt; and the mathematician and astronomer John Frederick William Herschel (1792–1871). Journalists also welcomed the new invention with enthusiasm. They all agreed that photographs were exact documents, undistorted by human perception. As one of the inventors of photography, the mathematician and scientist William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), asserted, photographic images were made by the "pencil of nature" and not by human hands.[2] Historians were less enthusiastic about the new technology. They were not convinced that photography could have any use as an actual source for historical enquiry. More importantly, they regarded themselves as readers of documents, not beholders of images. They had always been authors, interpreters and creators of texts based on written evidence. They were philologists (and were becoming more so every day). Their main field of research, broadly speaking, was usually written accounts of who did what and why. Written evidence was envisioned as the best available trace of thoughts and intentions. Historians had thus moved away from "the historian's task" as described by Wilhelm von Humboldt in the first decades of the nineteenth century. To most historians in the nineteenth century, photographs did not reflect what people thought. Photographs were thus denied the status of subjective statements (reserved for works of art) that required the interpretive powers of a historian. As the renowned German historian Johann Gustav Droysen claimed in 1857, "photographic resemblance is the dreariest" (Droysen 1977: 87). He believed there was no truth in photographic images because they

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1   Preface, vf. Original: "Man hat der Historie das Amt, die Vergangenheit zu richten, die Mitwelt zum Nutzen zukünftiger Jahre zu belehren, beygemessen: so hoher Aemter unterwindet sich gegenwartiger Versuch nicht: er will bloss sagen, wie es eigentlich gewesen." (My translation)

2   'Pencil of Nature' was the title of the first book to be illustrated with photographs. It was published by William Fox Talbot (1844–1846).

were mechanically produced, and they presented only the surface of a person or object.

Throughout the nineteenth century, historians stressed their interpretive and creative powers because they were struggling to advance their own profession and did not want to be seen as simply documenting facts and deeds. There were several professional and political reasons for this, such as the organization of university departments and the role of historians in the process of nation – building, etc. (for the sake of space this topic will not be discussed in detail here).[3] With the advent of photography, photographic documents had the potential to undermine this position. However, they did not do this directly, but subtly. The combination of history and photography highlighted the reproductive qualities of historians' work, not the creative aspects. Although historians did not want to be seen as mere "photographers of the past", the German contemporary encyclopaedia Brockhaus from 1894–6 still referred to the primary or natural type of historiography as the *chronological record of events*.[4] Historians in the nineteenth century were eager to stress that their task went beyond this mandate.

Thus, historiography resisted the elective affinity that seems so "natural" when one reads the quotes from Ranke and Humboldt. From the historian's point of view, there was an affinity to text, which was seen as their "natural" ally. All types of images – paintings, engravings and photographs – were

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3 For a more detailed discussion see Jordan (2011: 111–122); Körner (2008: 23–28); Tschopp (2012: 135–166).

4 Definition for Geschichte in the encyclopaedia 'Brockhaus Konversations-Lexikon': "Es gibt zwei Arten der Geschichtschreibung, die referierende und die pragmatische. Erstere, welche die ursprüngliche ist, berichtet nur die Thatsachen, ohne deren Verknüpfung und Erklärung zu versuchen; sie hat sich noch erhalten in den Zeittafeln (Synchronismus), welche dem Leser oder Lehrer die Ergänzung des ursächlichen Zusammenhangs der mitgeteilten Ereignisse überlassen, und in den Regesten- und Annalenwerken, welche bloße Vorarbeiten für den Geschichtschreiber im eigentlichen Sinne fein wollen, für welchen sie die Überlieferung sammeln und läutern. Die pragmatische Geschichtschreibung, die heute als die eigentliche gilt, befaßt sich mit der Erforschung und Darlegung des ursächlichen Zusammenhangs der Ereignisse, der Wirkung der Verhältnisse auf die maßgebenden Persönlichkeiten und der Rückwirkung dieser an die Verhältnisse." (U.a. 1894: 889)

rarely used, if at all. But Pandora's box had been opened, and the evils un-leashed.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many scholars (most of whom were not from the field of history, however) suggested the affinity of photography with history, time and again. The meteorologist James Glaisher, who was one of the jurors in the Great Exhibition in 1851, said the same year: "Great service, too, will the plain and truthful records of Photography afford to the historian of future ages." (Great Britain 1852: 244) He thus became one of a long line of scientists who challenged the partial and voluntary blind-ness of historians toward photographs. According to Glaisher, it would be the historians of future ages (and not his own) who would finally look at photographs as more than "plain and truthful records", and not merely as historical evidence in need of all interpretive forces. It was thus Siegfried Kracauer who redrafted the relation between photography and history in his posthumously published *History: The Last Things before the Last* (Kracauer 2009) (although he was not the first to do so). In it, he wrote that neither photography nor history simply copy "reality"; nor is this their primary task.

Today, it is beyond doubt that historiography and photography mould and model their respective objects. To cut a long story short, it was not until after the subjective and creative potential of photography was acknowledged in the 1970s and the "historian's task" had undergone a re-evaluation that using photographs as a source became a possibility within the discipline of history. Not only influences from within the discipline, but also the critical reception of methods and theories from sociology, anthropology, economics, literature studies, philosophy and art history supported the reorientation of historiography. Visual sources became more important and were acknowl-edged as subjective interpretations of reality and no longer as mere plain rec-ords. Still, the documentary value of photographs as evidence of material conditions continued to loom in the background. In the words of the historian Susan Crane, "In some quite ordinary and useful ways, we still assume that photographs are the most accessible, unmediated forms of representation." (Crane 2008: 310) Photographs thus came to be seen as subjective statements and objective evidence at the same time. Since the last decades of the twen-tieth century, research has shifted its attention from a picture's content to its context. In contrast to the nineteenth century, the "raw" documentary value of a photograph (in other words, the picture and its subject matter) is taken

less into account now as a reliable source in studies of history. In the following, I will present an interpretation of a contemporary photograph (taken in 2005) to demonstrate a recent approach toward this form of historical evidence. It is important to note, however, that the subject matter as well as the photograph as an object contain valuable information that plays a more minor role in contemporary historiographical studies than could ever have been expected by those in the nineteenth century pondering the potential of photographic evidence.

A GEORGIAN VILLAGER:

One Image, Many Messages

The ways historians look at photographs have profoundly changed since the days of Humboldt, Droysen and Glaisher. Although it is an over-simplifying assumption, nineteenth-and early twentieth-century historians were likely to scrutinize a photograph's subject matter and the resemblance between the image and the object being photographed. Their approach toward portraits could be termed physical and psychological. Typical questions were: Is this how X looked? What can we learn about the character of this person? Does this corroborate with what was written about them? In contrast, contemporary historiography (to put it simply) stresses the potential of the medium of photography itself as well as its distribution channels and reasons why the photograph was taken. It also raises questions about the cultural meaning of a photograph, its significance in discourses on race, class and gender and its political use (which will be highlighted in the following analysis). It is important to note that the photograph as evidence supports both approaches.

I will exemplify how content and context shape the history of a photograph and its meaning by analysing a photograph taken and published in 2005 (fig. 1).

Fig. 1: AGeorgian Villager

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NEWS/Images/YM-GEC020.jpg (accessed 14th February 2013).

The photograph depicts a person: an elderly man looking straight into the camera lens. The focus is on the face (and bust) of the man. The background is blurred, but we can recognize a group of people there. The man must have been aware of being photographed. The photographer, Yuri Mechitov (*1950), seems to have used a telephoto lens. The reproduction of the image is slightly tinted in sepia tones.

As a "naked" document, the story of the image is as follows. This is an elderly man who was alive in 2005. He represents a Georgian peasant. We can deduce that he is probably not a rich man. We can ponder his gaze and his condition. The group in the background may indicate that there was some sort of gathering the photographer attended. End of story. This reminds us of a text written in 1858 about photography:

"Posterity, by the agency of Photography, will view the faithful image of our times; the future student, in turning the page of history, may at the same time look on the very skin into the very eyes of those, long since mouldered to dust, whose lives and deeds he traces in the text." (The American Journal of Photography 1858: 148)

We indeed look into the very eyes of the man. But what is the context in which this photograph was taken and published? Who took this photograph for what purpose? Anyone can download the photograph from the website of the World Bank.[5] It was published online for the first time on 12 October 2005 as part of the "photo gallery" that the World Bank features regularly on its website. The title of the gallery in which the image was published is "Growth, Poverty, and Inequality: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union".[6]

The caption provided by the World Bank reads: "A villager, hoping to earn some money, is still unemployed. Georgia." The photograph was re-released in another of its photo galleries with the title "Enhancing Job Opportunities in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union" published on 1 November 2005. Although the caption remained the same, it is clearly not the "message" of the photograph to claim that the man had not found any employment between mid-October and early November 2005.

The Georgian photographer, Yuri Mechitov, also has his own website where he presents himself and his work. He is a professional photographer who is active in different fields of photography, including advertising, portraiture and documentary photography. He claims "now I find I like to shoot people" and that he is "happy to get in the art-world". The latter is an indicator that his images should also be read as "art" and not merely as records.

What we know from the photographer and the caption corroborates with the evidence provided by the photograph and what our gaze can easily decode. We have no reason to distrust the photographer and no reason not to believe what the photograph does not actually show, and no media can directly represent: that the man is a villager, that he is unemployed or rather "hoping to earn some money" and that the whole scene took place in Georgia and that the photograph was probably taken in 2005.

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5   The World Bank is an institution which was established in 1944. It has over 185 member countries and employs more than 10,000 people. Its main goal is to "reduce global poverty". The World Bank's policy and actions are highly visible and closely monitored by its opponents.

6   The photograph can be downloaded from the following website: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NEWS/Images/YM-GEC020.jpg (accessed 14 February 2013).

In such a photograph, the difference between what it shows and what it communicates in a specific context is evident. This observation touches on several central points in the debate surrounding photography as historical evidence. What are the themes of photography? What visual strategies are employed? How can we conceive the relation between local and global? What constitutes a "historic moment"? What are the emotional qualities of photographic images? How do social realities translate into visual representations? To answer these questions, we have to consider, for example, the social biography of a photograph and its potential audiences, intended function, the aesthetics applied as well as its wider historical and cultural context.

But first we have to ask: Why would the World Bank publish such an image? Its photo galleries are part of the World Bank's "News Section" on its website and, as such they belong to the domain of public relations. Journalists are "encouraged to use the photographs" presented there, which are free of charge. The purpose of the images in this section of the World Bank's website is not to document people or events; they are used to cast a positive image on the whole institution and its activities. What the World Bank wants to document is its concern for people in areas of economic distress. That the photo is free to download emphasizes that the World Bank is generous and open.

The portrait of the man lends a "face" and an emotional quality to an abstract process, according to Western viewing patterns. It is all about the economic and social development in Eastern Europe, were the World Bank was (and is) engaged.

As a portrait, it centres our attention on people and opens up the social or human dimension of economic distress. What happens to the economy will have impact on ordinary people on the street. In short: The World Bank programme is for the common people, like the villager in Georgia looking for a job.

How does the picture relate to the titles of the photo galleries it forms a part of, "Growth, Poverty, and Inequality: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union" and "Enhancing Job Opportunities in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union"? The image is situated in Eastern Europe. The man is labelled "Georgian" and as such a member of a troubled minority. Many people, so the titles suggests, are still suffering from the breakdown of the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union. The West is not indicated, neither is the policy of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, both of which have

been important players in the reorganization of the economies of the Eastern European countries. However, the photograph is linked to the possibility of a brighter future (economic growth will reduce poverty, the man will find a job, opportunities will be enhanced).

Aside from the World Bank and its intentions, the photograph transports another set of meanings: The image belongs to an iconographic tradition of depicting the unemployed and poverty (old man equals old age equals poverty), and its aesthetic form is also rooted in older traditions of recording social conditions. Early examples are photographs by Thomas Annan (1829–1887), who recorded the housing conditions of the poor in Glasgow in the 1860s, or Jacob Riis (1849–1914), who pointed his camera at slums in New York in the late 1880s. The efforts of the Farm Security Administration (1935–1944) to support the reform agenda of the Roosevelt administration from the mid-1930s onward are another case in point. In all these cases a sober form of representation based on facts guided the photographers. They all strove to highlight the misery of the poor without exposing them as mere victims. However, the images did not just record facts; they followed the aesthetic principles of "good" photographs, meaning they were technically perfect and constructed an intelligible representation of poverty and misery fit for middle-class audiences. Documentary photography in this sense is more than recording; it creates a political statement through aesthetic means. This, however, connects documentary photography with art photography.

In this photograph, Mechitov applied the mode of documentary photography as it was elaborated Europe and North America in the 1920s and 1930s. The sepia tones are a strong indicator of two quite different meanings: Tinting today usually denotes "artistic" in popular discourse while it also denotes "historic" because modern photographs look different and old photographs are often slightly faded and, due to chemical processes, partly discoloured, often giving them a sepia tone. "Historic" means that this form allows the contemporary Western beholder to interpret this picture of poverty and unemployment as a relic from a bygone age in (Western) Europe. Attention is shifted toward the formal and aesthetic qualities of the image. What then can we learn from the creation, distribution and use of such photographs/images as Mechitov's in the specific context of the World Bank? There are at least three stories to consider here. First, the photograph indicates the forms and functions of the World Bank's press relations. Second, the aesthetic form of the image denotes the photographer's effort and offers a reading of the image

as "art". Third, images such as this one embody the iconographic traditions of representing poverty, unemployment and economic distress and, as such, form part of a larger discourse on these topics.

This brings us back to the basic question, which can be reformulated as follows: Are photographs truthful records, and is there something like an elective affinity between photography and history? We could argue that they are "truthful" in a superficial way, because they show what the person behind the camera actually saw and, as records, they are indeed "natural" materials used for historical inquiry.

In the example here, I have treated the image as historical evidence proper. It is important to show what it factually represents, and how. I have also included an evaluation of who produced it, where and for what purpose. The institutional background is of special interest in this respect. In short: The photograph as an object has been contextualized and its content and form analysed. The simple idea of "seeing" has emerged as an active process involving the producer, distributor and beholder. This process follows rules that vary according to time and place. Symbols, signs and objects in an image can carry different meanings – in a Russian context, for example, a Georgian villager may very well be associated with crime and vice, but not usually with misery and poverty. Seeing is a form of organizing knowledge and of weaving a net of signification. I therefore propose that combining iconographic with historical analysis can reveal the most probable intended meaning of the photograph in a given historical situation. This is the realm of meaning and significance in the historical process to which an image as a piece of visual evidence belongs.

This is not an elaborate analysis of a photograph that includes an in-depth investigation of the formal and aesthetic qualities of the picture alongside a more complex consideration of the specific as well as more general political and cultural context. I merely illustrate how important the context of an image is. There are different stories that can originate from a single photograph. Two avenues of research have been sketched here: the PR strategy of an institution, and the history of an iconographic tradition. The story of the subject of the image, the "Georgian villager", remains untold, although this would have been expected by the nineteenth-century observer quoted above: "the future student, in turning the page of history, may at the same time look on the very skin into the very eyes of those, long since mouldered to dust."(Price

1973: 4) This illustrates the massive change in the way historians work with photographs.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND HISTORY: OBJECTIVITY VS. SUBJECTIVITY

At this point, it is important to sketch the development in the way historians work with photographs, as already indicated in the introductory remarks. The past twenty years have witnessed a notable increase in research on visual culture in general.

Most of these studies on visual sources can be attributed to the broad field of cultural studies. A great variety of methodological and theoretical approaches are currently applied in historical analyses of photographic images. While iconographic approaches are very important here, structuralist and post-structuralist theory are prominent in cultural studies. Semiotics has informed critical photo-historical studies alongside feminist, colonial and post-colonial theories (for a summary of the recent theoretical discussion see Wells 2009). Although even so-called "mainstream" historians in the twentieth century never completely dismissed visual evidence, pictures were mainly used to illustrate arguments or to add a specific dimension. Images were rarely the starting point of an investigation, and they seldom played more than a supporting role. This changed with the shift in research mentioned above. The more media (especially visual media) came to be seen as an important factor in the historical process, the more the structure, content and context of the images were scrutinized. Since then, images have thus become acknowledged as equal to textual evidence.

Social history, to which the photograph analysed here may be attributed, was a late adopter of the iconic, visual and cultural turns. These turns mark a departure in the humanities toward non-written sources. The insight that (modern) societies heavily depend on media and symbolic communication also plays a key role in this issue. However, in the German case, a type of social history, *Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (history of society), put forward by Hans-Ulrich Wehler and others, has been especially slow in adapting new currents of research (Jäger 2009: 7–23). The main focuses of this type of historical investigation have been basic structures, large social formations (classes) and socio-economic conditions. Photographic images have been

and still are conceived as documents according to this line of thought – in other words, they provide evidence of the material conditions of everyday life. There is a greater interest in the actual subject matter than in the discursive practice to which the images belong.

However, images play an active part in forming the ways we interpret reality. Individuals, organizations and institutions such as governments act according to the data they collect and interpret. The medium used is not a neutral system of transmitting information. To some people, an image of an Eastern European man may be picturesque; to others, it may be a call for immediate political action. There is some tension between the truthful status bestowed upon photographs (or images) by historians and what these images might actually be doing. In other words, the images, just like the historians, act as interlocutors between the viewer/reader and the event. The choices made in the depiction of history are as subjective as those made by historians when they formulate their own narratives. However, we must distinguish between the different kinds of images used by historians: the visual records taken from the period under discussion, or the depictions of historical events produced at a later date. In addition, that some historians subjugate images to illustrative ephemera, putting them on the margins of "true" history, denies the fact that images have their own history, with their own dynamics, and do not merely serve other narratives (Arnold 2004, 2009).

Of the many "mainstream" historians who have used images, it is perhaps the work of Peter Burke and Francis Haskell that relates most closely to our concerns here. In his book *Eyewitnessing*: *The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, Peter Burke argues that images have the same historical value as texts and oral testimony, for they record acts of eyewitnessing (Burke 2001: 14). His attention is on pictures – especially prints, photographs and so forth – that are contemporary with the events they describe. The popularity and accessibility of these mass-produced images may reduce their status as artworks, but it does not detract from their value as historical evidence. What is often lost in the interpretive process is the intrinsic history and analysis of the images themselves. Instead, they are taken at face value in order to provide eyewitness accounts of the past. Thus, for a social historian, the photograph with the caption "A villager, hoping to earn some money, is still unemployed. Georgia" might present evidence of the social conditions of peas-

ants in Georgia in the early twenty-first century. The intrinsic history of social and documentary photography, with its own rules, would thus be excluded from consideration.

Most of the photographs social historians use as evidence are classified in three categories: 1) records of social conditions, 2) documentary photography and 3) industrial photography. To the contemporary observer, photographic images of social conditions have always been seen as a kind of document; these documents are accompanied by explanations (description, publication information, commentary, and other images referring to them). The point I am trying to make is that these images shape what was, and is, considered to be "reality". They take part in the processes that configure how people conceive of themselves and society with the consequence that people (politicians included) tend to assume that images have an influence on other people. Thus, photographs influence not only what we see literally, but also what we see metaphorically – or what we believe others might see, which, consequentially, influences their behaviour.

In conclusion, there are two fundamental approaches to using photographs as historical evidence in history. The first is through interest in the subject of a photograph. This seems to be a nineteenth-century approach. The focus of more recent investigations of photography is less material culture, customs and conditions and more meaning in terms of class, gender and race relations. However, photographs still provide information about material culture, objects and specific ways of presenting social status, which other sources rarely procure. In these cases, we need to know exactly what is represented. It is therefore necessary to reconstruct the situation in which a photograph was taken (when, why and how) in order to understand the interaction between the photographer and the subject. It is our purpose to collect as much evidence of the people involved as possible and of the historic circumstances in which the picture was taken. It is vital to establish whether or not the image is an original, or whether it has been tempered with.

The second approach explores the socio-cultural meaning of the photograph for a specific situation. Why an image was taken and published and what clues are available to the contemporary beholder about the text, context and media are important questions. It is unnecessary in this case to determine whether or not a person depicted is really what or who the caption suggests they are. Hence, the "villager" might actually live in a city, or be an actor,

etc. Although secondary, it still important to reconstruct the exact circumstances of the image's production. More important is the distribution (or use) of the image. Thus, the process in which a specific meaning was achieved can be reconstructed, and the specific impact of visual communication on certain discourses (race, gender, class, identity, alterity, etc.) can be evaluated. This does not mean we should ignore the process of taking a photograph or neglect the role of the photographer or technical restrictions, etc. Instead, it shifts our attention from the subject of a photograph to its uses, emphasizing its cultural and social meaning. These concerns have been highlighted frequently since the 1980s by photography and cultural historians, including Alan Trachtenberg (2008) and John Tagg (2009).

Here and now, it seems obvious that we should approach photographs with all the analytical instruments that have emerged over the past few decades. By the same token, it seemed natural to nineteenth-century observers that photographs were simply documents of what happened. Photography entered history through a wide-open and popular door. Professional historians shied away from this door, preferring a side entrance instead.
Attributions assigned to photography in the first half of the nineteenth century made it difficult to conceive of photography as anything other than a mere soulless (and reduced) reproduction of reality. Attributions in recent research are quite different. The link between the design, production and distribution of an image is taken as instilling a specific meaning into a photograph. The ambiguity of "meaning" is often stressed by cultural historians. However, our own practice of research results in bringing out one certain meaning based on the questions asked and theories applied. What cultural historians sometimes tend to forget is the actual subject of a photograph and its story. Like Horst Bredekamp says, we also tend to forget the specific dynamics of an image, its aesthetic history and communication with other images (Bredekamp 2010).

An 'elective affinity' leaves its imprints on all parties within a process. One could even say that it changes them and that it generates new tasks, challenges and opportunities that none of the partners could have imagined before in the years of interaction. Photographs were first excluded from historical analysis, then they were reluctantly accepted as a "window to the past" or as appropriate illustrations. Finally, they were recognized as a rich source with which to analyse various processes of subjectivation. Images, especially photographs, are no longer seen as 'raw' or 'natural' sources that merely

show what was there. It is generally accepted that they transmit values and creeds; they are recognized as important elements in social, political and cultural discourses and can no longer be ignored. The inclusion of visual evidence has opened up new avenues of research in historiography and has changed approaches towards topics such as gender, race, class and colonialism. Recent general textbooks on historical methodology include large sections on images, something which would have been unthinkable thirty or forty years ago (Lengwiler 2011).[7] The potential of visual evidence seems unfathomable.

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How to use Colonial Photography in Sub-Saharan Africa for Educational and Academic Purposes

The Case of Togo

KOKOU AZAMEDE

From 1884 to 1914 Togo was under German colonial rule. An essential part of the country's colonial history is illustrated through photographs, which can be accessed online in German archives[1]. In colonial times, photography was used for propaganda and other activities by presenting and interpreting photographs only according to colonial ideology. Even today, despite debates, they are most often presented only from a European cultural perspective, because most pictures are archived without any comments on the cultural realities that they illustrate. Consequently several cultural and pedagogical aspects reflected in the colonial photography escape generations years after political independences in Africa. This situation is an obstacle in intercultural relations between Europe and Africa. Because today's fast pace of globalization leads to increasing contact between cultures, it has become necessary for African youths to have varied perspective on their own cultural history. Therefore, these pictures need to be critically interpreted according to the cultural and social contexts in which they were taken, so that the African written history may be completed. This chapter presents such an ap-

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1   http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/;
    https://www.bild.bundesarchiv.de/;
    http://www.staatsarchiv-bremen.findbuch.net/

proach to interpreting colonial photography about Togo from the online database of the German colonial society. Furthermore it will also be discussed how photographs may be used in educational and academic contexts. This chapter can also be seen as a contribution to the visual anthropology in Africa.[2]

THE CONTEXT OF THE COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHY TODAY

It is not possible to consider the present and the future of Africa without reflecting on African-European colonialism. Colonialism–an ideology of modernity–used media like photography to transmit its propaganda. Despite the available corpus, which consists of colonial pictures, postcards, drawings, photographs, movies etc., school activities in Togo generally do not include these kinds of sources for critically approaching Togolese history. At the same time, the history of former colonies becomes a more and more important resource to determine one's own national location.

Political movements which are going through Africa today need a historical consciousness and therefore must take a close look at colonial history in order to aim for a better future. Togo, for example, went through German and French colonial periods. Today there are still many passionate and emotional debates about these eras in Togo, just because they do not seem to have been overcome (Oloukpona-Yinnon 1992: 143). The reason for this fact is that the antagonistic nature of colonial presence is not known enough by many people. My experience with students of the Department of German studies at the University of Lomé in Togo confirms that: By introducing a course of master study on German colonialism in Togo in March 2012, I let students talk about a picture of native railway builders from German colonial

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2   As a research fellow of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation about the project: Perspective and deconstruction of the imperial eye. German colonial photography as a source of African history, the case of Togo (from October 2012 to September 2013), I worked on the description and interpretation of colonial photography from Togo for their academic and pedagogical use. This paper is considered as a contribution based on this research.

Togo. When I asked the class to comment on the image as they see and understand it, some of the students began to laugh. The students disassociated themselves from the images in their comments. It was as if they had neither relationships with the people in the image, nor a shared history. Only few students saw a connection between themselves and the subjects of the photograph, who might be their own ancestors. There are certainly several reasons why these students reacted the way they did; it is likely the students simply knew too little about their own history. Moreover, the history books used in Togolese classrooms introduce a European perspective, which has been the standard view (Azamede 2010: 26). In recent years, research led by the historian Nicoué Lodjou Gayibor developed a more complete and correct history of Togo. Therefore, new history books published by Togolese researchers are taught in schools (cf. Gayibor 2011). When pedagogical books and scientific publications visually introduce colonial history, images are mainly used in order to clarify facts about history. In many cases the images are also used in order to point out the unequal treatment of the people in this period. But one can notice that the treatment of the photograph often does not refer to the cultural and social contexts of colonized people. This deficiency could be corrected, if the images used related not only to the historical, but also to the cultural and social realities of those pictured, especially the indigenous people. This is why it is high time to consider the critical use of colonial photography as a way to clarify many aspects of colonial relations.

To use the colonial picture only for illustration misses an important requirement for critical writing of history. Pictures appear in these cases as evidence of something which appears as fact, and without due consideration to their ideologically driven origins. In these interpretations, forms of appearances are reproduced which are familiar to the European public and thus meet their aesthetic ideas. Such perceptions are necessarily limiting. The German historian Jens Jäger recognizes this fact when he states that „[d]ie Rezeption ist in den Bildern vorgeprägt, vornehmlich in Richtung Unterhaltung und Bildung." (the reception is pre-determined in the images, especially in the direction of entertainment and education) (Jäger 2008, 2). At best, such illustrations succeed in excavating the logic of the former European colonial rule.

PROBLEMATIC AND VALUE OF COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHY TODAY IN TOGO

I think photographs from the colonial period are more than just illustrations. Besides, the photographs from the archives of the German Colonial Society are not exclusive German properties but are now a common heritage. A lasting criticism which is supposed to lead to a discussion about colonial rule and ideology has to approach the images differently.

The Frankfurt colonial archive contain photographs showing Europeans and Africans who are on duty in the colonial administration. For those pictures we often find a one-sided description in the colonial archives/publications in Europe. If, for example, the "colonial master" and the African employee (the colonized) were photographed together, most of the time only the first person was named, and the second person was either just described in general or presented with stereotypes. Missing explanations for many images reveals the colonial discrimination from which the picture originated.
Pictures of Africans taken by Europeans show moreover the colonial exotic. The way African people are named or described in general served the propaganda and justified what is used to be called the civilizing mission ("Kulturaufgabe"); that is, the cultural aggression in the colonies. This refers to the semantic figure of colonialism "Weiß auf Schwarz" i.e. Black Domination by White (Hinz u.a. 1984).

A history book containing illustrations often has a more stimulating effect on the reader. It may be asked in which way the illustrations in a history book corresponds to the purpose of showing the person pictured. When we are describing pictures as evidence of a meeting with the foreign culture, how can the idea of a general representation be enforced? To what extent do the colonial photographs interpret the "reality"? Whom does the picture serve: the one who took it or the one who has been taken / shown? Moreover: how does the imagined past influence the present perception of the person who is depicted in the photograph? While pictures capture the location and the period in the memory of the people, the person who saved them in his memory continues to dream about them and extends their effect, if one has no other alternative. Therefore all the contexts appear arbitrary in a photographic world. A critical analysis of colonial illustrations aims to find out the different realities that are reflected in the colonial archives.

However we notice that many books, even some recent publications, which build on archival material, do not succeed in going beyond the perspective which were constructed through colonial photographs, especially the camera of the colonialist (Klein-Arend 1996, Meurillon 1996, Schmidt und Wolcke 2001, Frelih 2007). That is why it is high time to search for strategies that challenge such an affirmative position in the domain of the interpretation of pictures. Jens Jäger provides an entry point in such a critical reading when he states in an article discussing of a photograph of a police station in German Togo, that photographs could not be reduced to only one meaning (Jäger 2006, 145). In his assessment of this picture Jäger asks the following question: "How would the African person who appears on the picture of the police station have interpreted the photo or how he would have used it?" (Jäger 2006, 145). This gap of not knowing needs to be filled since the answer to this question could help in considering and perceiving the photo in a different light. But since the photographed policemen can no longer be asked, at least they might be described from their local social, political, cultural and religious perspective. The interpretation will refer to historic ethnographies (Spieth 1906 & 1911, Westermann 1935 & 1970) and interviews of elders in the areas, where the photographs were taken. This methodology shall help to go beyond the imperial gaze by stressing African agency and experiences.

HOW TO USE COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHY?

This essay will refer to one photograph from Togo as presented in the online-database of the former German colonial society by the University Library of Frankfurt/M.[3] The description and interpretation suggested in this essay emphasizes clearly the context of historical Anthropology (van Dülmen 2000). Colonial photographs often present a complex experimental field of emotions of concerned people in different domains. An interpretation of a photo is supposed to clarify the roles of each of the people. For instance: what does the person who is shown in the picture strive for, when he or she let take a picture of him or herself by force or voluntarily? What is the photographer achieving, when he is setting up the camera towards the "colonized"? Is each

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3   Accessible at http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de.

one of the actors realizing the expectations or the consequences for their ac-
tions? Through these questions, the imperial eye of the photographer towards
the colonial photographs will be examined and verified by referring to a new
perspective which is a critical point of view showing both sides of the coin.
The effect is that borders and frames shift, and other social and cultural fields
are appearing.

The collection of the German colonial society (called DKG: Deutsche
Kolonialgesellschaft) from 1887 to 1937 includes about 55.000 pictures. 530
pictures of them are from Togo. The selected picture from the online data-
base of the German colonial society shows Africans carrying a man who is
likely white in a hammock.

Fig. 1: Travelling in the hammock

Koloniales Bildarchiv / Frankfurt: StuUB, Photo n°101,3-3502-25

The little information about the image on the online database is: the name of the photographer, the year and the occasion when the picture has been taken.[4] By drawing on the online database information and after describing the image by filling a scheme of categories[5], we can come up with the following interpretation and analysis:

The picture was taken before the founding of the DKG and before Togo formally became a German colony. August Vogt, the photographer or the camera's owner, was a merchant and commercial agent of the company Friedrich M. Vietor in West Africa from 1873 to 1877 (cp. Sebald 1988, 765). Vietor was a founding member of the North German Mission Society and supported the Mission work through his company, which was founded in 1856 in the coastal town of Keta.

The company had its main factory at Keta, but, in order to escape the effects of Ashanti war, gradually opened up branch factories in the eastern coastal areas, first in December 1873 at Little Popo, later in the intervening coastal villages Denu, Bagida Beach and Bè Beach. Twelve European employees worked in the factories of this company in the year 1884 (Sebald 1988: 32). Already in December 1873 August Vogt had asked the King of Bè for permission to set up on a place about four kilometres from the beach. He probably had taken the picture on one of his trading journeys since he was mentioned as the author of the picture.

By interpreting the activities of the depicted Africans there are two hypotheses to analyse:

Hypothesis 1: The local workers are employed by the Europeans, and their job was to escort the merchant on the hard, bushy path. They could at the

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4 Fotograf: Vogt, A.?; Bildnummer: 101,3-3502-25; CD-Code: CD/5202/1614/ 0402/5202_1614_0402_0005; Text auf der Hülle: Togo / Reise in der Hängematte 1873; Format Bildträger: 9x12; Material: Glasplatte-Negativ; Anomalie: Repro; Entstehungsjahr Vorlage: 1873 -/- Region: Togo; Schlagwörter: Hängematte Kleidung Palme; Bildbeschreibung: Togo / Reise in der Hängematte 1873. (cp. http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bild-
projekt/frames/hauptframe.html; http://www.ilissafrica.de/vk/#vkCatHits-dkg).

5 The scheme of categories has varied cultural elements facilitating a detailed description of the image. It refers to the method of interpretation of images presented on the website www.kolonialforografie.com.

same time during the travel act as interpreters, and earned money with this work.

Hypothesis 2: The illustrated locals were ordered by the local cultural conditions to accompany the agent Vogt on his journey. The chief of the village ordered people according to the local tradition of hospitality to accompany the European who came to the village.[6] They carried him in a hammock to the village boundary. The head of the next village had ordered other carriers to accompany him further.

By analysing the social positions of people in the image, i.e. the interactions between the two actors (Africans and Europeans), and the hard conditions of trips in the area, which entailed walking many hours or many days from one place to the other one through the bush and sometimes in the dark evening, we may conclude that the European could not walk or travel through the bush without help of a local. That could be the reason why the colonial or missionary expeditions in German Togo had been done with help of Africans, who could escort Europeans through the bush (Sebald 1988: 179, 181, 191).

The Africans, as far as they were concerned, sought through their contact with the Europeans an alternative for earning their living. The trade between Europeans and Africans along the coast produced workers of all kinds. Africans did not necessarily consider working for Europeans to be demeaning because they knew that they had the necessary experience with the dangerous paths and were the only people who could help Europeans get to other places through the bush. They also handled the tropical climate better and did business utilizing this experience (Sebald 1988: 288). To determine whether these people were representative of their society, the story of the North German Mission (NGM) can be illuminating. The first students of the NGM were called ransomed children (Akakpo-Numado 2005:70). The first Mission members were persons who, for various reasons, were on the fringes of society and were looking for an alternative by being in the service of the Europeans.

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6   John Otsyokpo, Ewe from Ghana explained in my interview with him, that at the colonial time, at the end of an official visit by a European in a village, the traditional chief of the town ordered some of his officers to carry the host to the boundary of the village.

Based on interviews with old people in the Ewe side of the Volta Region in Ghana and in Lomé (Togo), one can describe the usefulness and the meaning of the hammock in the Ewe society as follows:

The use of the hammock was not a new phenomenon in society. In fact, the power holders like kings or "chiefs" were also carried in a seat or in hammocks either at festivals or ritual occasions through the city or on travel. In the past, slaves or servants carried the hammock, but now volunteers among young strong people do it (Obianim 1976: 25–26).

However, the Europeans were not carried in hammocks for the same reason as the kings and chiefs were carried. The fact that Europeans were carried in hammocks was due more to the power of their capital than the Africans favourable regard. The European traders and missionaries used to be treated by their African employees like the traditional power holders had been treated, because their employees owed them their new social status. Labour, trade, capital, Christianity, and school were the focus of this power.

The hammock was used, depending on its material, for various functions in the traditional society:

- Woven hammocks were used for carrying kings at festivals, rituals, travelling. But, in explaining the use of the royal hammock, the Ewe author Sam Obianim, claimed that great Ewe kings did not get into the hammock most of the time. They had representative kings, who did it especially in their place, when the time had come to lay in it (Obianim 1976: 25).
- Hammocks from cotton were used for carrying corpses on the way to the burial place.
- Hammocks made of cotton were also used for carrying European missionaries, traders and colonizers.

The two examples have shown that adding historical and ethnological context to colonial photographs allows one to widen its readings and to focus on the agency of the African people and their activities. Without such context the imperial eye cannot be deconstructed.

CONCLUSION

Photographs tell stories and can be used to illustrate history. But the use of colonial photographs in the post-colonial time can become problematic if people do not take new perspectives into account. Often influenced by ideological ideas, historical photographs are today presented on databases hosted in Europe in such ambitious ways that these digitalised images could mislead people. Interpreting and analysing photographs in their local cultural contexts helps to get more information about the social and cultural history of the formerly colonized societies. A close historical and ethnological reading allows viewers to probe a variety of perspectives on the same photograph which take into account the specific world of the individuals depicted, i.e. their desires, resentments, values, and expectations. Utilizing such an approach might prevent the danger that a stereotype that has just been detected may be replaced by yet another. Heintze reminds us that human understanding often takes the form of a continual process of standardization (cp. Heintze 1990: 132). Moreover such an approach allows the depicted individuals to revisit history and social and cultural values. This knowledge of how to use and read photography then might add a new reading to the visual history of globalization.

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    ford: Oxford University Press.

INTERVIEWS WITH FOLLOWING EWE PEOPLE DURING MY INVESTIGATIONS IN GHANA AND TOGO:

Joseph Otsyokpo (80 years old): retired educator, in Ho, Ghana, January 5,
    2013.

Ida Yawa Otsyokpo (70 years old): retired teacher, in Ho, Ghana, January 6,
    2013.

Beatrice Otsyokpo Azamede (83 years old): housewife in Amedzope, January
    7, 2013.

Prof. Samuel Adiku: board member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Univer-
    sity College (EPUC), Head of the Department of Soil Science, University
    of Ghana, Legon, January 8, 2013.

Prof. Gilbert Ansre (80 years old): linguist, anthropologist and expert in the
    history of mission in retirement. Former Research Fellow of the "Institute
    for African Studies" of the University of Ghana, Legon, January 9, 2013.

Presentness, Memory and History:
Thabiso Sekgala, "Homeland"

MARIE-HÉLÈNE GUTBERLET

South African photography has developed out of the relationship between both the socio-political history and the culture of remembrance of South Africa and the history of documentary photography. The photographs that have emerged in this geo-political context have been disseminated throughout the world and have become a part of the collective global memory in an unparalleled way, giving us reason to believe that it is these pictures, and not historical facts, that define how we see South Africa's history. Against the backdrop of the conference How History Enters Photography, it thus seems appropriate to investigate contemporary South African photography in relation to both the history of photography and the history of remembrance through photography.[1] In this essay, I will describe this relation by focusing on the body of work "Homeland" by the young South African artist photographer Thabiso Sekgala, who died violently in October 2014 and to whom this essay is dedicated.

I came to know Thabiso 2010 while preparing the exhibition project Shoe Shop held in Johannesburg in 2012. I was quite familiar with South African photography, but it was only while being in the country that I became sensitive to its dimensions and conditions for remembering apartheid and the eventual reconciliation after 1994. I learned to see pictures not only for what

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1 The conference was held in June 2012 at the University of Frankfurt. See: http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=4400 (accessed 6 April 2013).

they depict but also for the impact of their visibility, accessibility, distribution, the general disregard for, and the separation of audiences. Whilst there was a general but diffuse acknowledgement of apartheid and resistance movements in Europe and the United States – triggered by images –, public audiences in South Africa were missing, as South Africa became more and more isolated politically and culturally. I came to see the work by South African photographers which, if not directly referring to the history of the country, as nonetheless characterized by the idea of an entanglement of aesthetics and politics, beauty and violence. As a curator and scholar living in Germany and working abroad, I profited a great deal from my discussions with artists and cultural workers and their generosity in sharing their views and beliefs. I would like express my gratitude to Jodi Bieber, Doung Anwar Jahangeer, Rangoato Hlasane, Thenjiwe Nkosi, Cedric Nunn Musa Nxumalo, late Lesley Perkes, Jürgen Schadeberg, Thabiso Sekgala, Samantha Simons, Penny Siopis, Cara Snyman (to name but them), who allowed me to see so much more.

The question of how history enters photography implies first and foremost that photography is a kind of vessel (or a surface, or mirror) for history in which something is captured that can be visually substantialized. Photography is thus conceived as a medium for recording visual facts, whether staged or otherwise; it produces a visual document. Viewed from this angle, history becomes accessible in a setting where real circumstances, events, currents, upheavals and so forth are recorded and stored in the medium of photography.

The reverse question, how photography enters history, is much easier to answer than the first. With the passing of time – in other words, with the growing distance in time and space between the context in which the picture originated and the moment of beholding – virtually every photographic image becomes a historical document of an event, an aesthetic attitude, a world of objects and technology. Not only does this distance continue to grow, it helps us to realize that a picture is a historical time-image as well as an object-image. Because the question of how history enters photography is much more complicated, we should first clarify a number of terms that may seem convenient, but whose meaning remains vague. I am talking about "event", "incident" and "document". Not only do we need to discuss them, we also need to explore who defines when an incident becomes a historical event and when a photograph becomes a document. Before we do this, we should

acknowledge that not only the meaning of the terms "photography" and "history" are in constant flux, so is the substance denoted by these terms. But how are these two things interconnected? In my opinion, the relation between photography and history is defined by a decisive element that we have not mentioned so far: the resonance of photography in history and vice versa.

In his methodological text Archaeology of Knowledge (Archéologie du Savoir, 1969; English translation by Edgar Allan, 1972), Michel Foucault distinguishes between "document" and "monument". For our analysis of the quality of relations between history and photography, this distinction could prove useful for describing the transformation that documents (and for me, photographs belong to this category) undergo, which has far-reaching consequences for the meaning of the content within the document. The hermeneutic potential of transformation is thus carried over in the distinction between material and content, between apperception and object and between designed form and found form. We also find it in the shift in what is visually perceived both over the course of time and in accordance with the changes in historical understanding – something which Stephen Greenblatt describes as "resonance". Greenblatt states, "By resonance I mean the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand." (Greenblatt 1990: 11, Karp/Lavine 1991)

According to Greenblatt, resonance refers to the transfer of perspectives from or beyond the individual work on display, that is the transfer of a specific photograph into a social context where it can then be reinterpreted and renewed, again and again.

Both Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt associate a specific document with a social perspective and with possibilities of interpretation that depend on changes in society. They also argue that, within an extended interpretative context, the specific work exhibited – the object in this case is the specific photograph and the medium of photography as a category – is fundamentally adaptable in a historiographic sense. This history of adaptation thus informs the understanding of photography within its own history, while it also informs the history of remembrance in the form of photographic substitutes.

WITNESSES, ICONS AND MONUMENTS

The history of South African photography and its stylistic developments are remarkably closely tied to the country's political history. To this day, the pictures of South African history play a prominent role in how the country sees itself and how it is seen abroad. Borrowing from Greenblatt, we can sense the resonance beyond formal boundaries that makes the complex cultural dynamic in which the picture was taken palpable and that charges the picture with a kind of energy that is still perceivable in the moment of viewing.

The history of South African photography begins in the middle of the nineteenth century, with studio portraits of a new colonial upper class, with documentary pictures and, as John Peffer expresses it in his book Art at the End of Apartheid (2009), with "pseudo-ethnographic images of 'natives' for the commercial market" (Peffer 2009: 242). To this, Peffer adds, "photography was part of Europe's new arsenal of technological advancements during the age of empire." (ibidem) It was in the 1960s that serial photography – journalistic/documentary as well as artistic – evolved in South Africa in reaction to the increasing spatial, social and political stabilization of the apartheid regime (ibidem: 251). During this time, Jürgen Schadeberg, Peter Magubane, Bob Gosani, G.R. Naidoo, David Goldblatt and other photographers took pictures of everyday life. Their motifs showed apartheid's hair-raising rhetoric and politics as well as the harsh reality of its conditions, unmasking the official propaganda-oriented media through their photographs (Weinberg 1989). They thus worked on two fronts because "they were critical of systematic oppression, and they redefined the basis for imagining a different South Africa" (Peffer 2009: 262).[2]

Schadeberg and Goldblatt, especially, had a decisive influence on the educational development of the next generation of photographers – Schadeberg in the context of the magazine DRUM in the 1950s and 1960s

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2   Peffer refers here to the work of the agency Afrapix, which was founded on the model of the Magnum Photos Cooperative. See also ibid., p. 254, among others. Also: http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/afrapix-timeline-1978-1991 (accessed 28th January 2013).

(Schadeberg/Humann 1991), and Goldblatt as a founder of the highly respected photography school Market Photo Workshop 1989[3] (MPW), where the technical know-how of photography was taught and exhibitions were organized in its show room. Internationally well-known photographers such as Jodi Bieber, Zanele Muholi, Lolo Veleko, and Guy Tillim went to the MPW, along with Thabiso Sekgala, who had his first major exhibition at MPW in 2011. As a member of the younger post-apartheid generation, Thabiso was not only connected with the photography scene through the MPW, he also knew the history of South African photography and was personally acquainted with older photographers and their works.

The scope of resonance of Sekgala's photographs becomes evident by looking at a group of pictures that have a high level of resonance and that could be categorized as "struggle photography" (Peffer 2009: 254). My goal is to show the relevance of the photographic image as a historical document and to discuss its transformation from a "document" to a "monument" (Foucault).

In the mid-1970s, Masana Sam Nzima was a journalist and amateur photographer for the paper The World in Soweto. On 16 June 1976, he took a picture of twelve-year-old Hector Pieterson, who had been shot on the sidelines of a demonstration of secondary school students against the Bantu Education Act in Soweto.[4] Altogether Nzima took six pictures showing Mbuyisa Makhubu, an older fellow student, carrying the fatally wounded Hector Pieterson accompanied by Hector's sister Antoinette (fig. 1). Whereas Hector Pieterson may not have been the first young person to die in this strike, he was the first to be in a photograph that became well-known around the globe (Peffer (2009: 55).

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3   See: http://www.marketphotoworkshop.co.za/ (accessed 1 January 2013).

4   For more on the Bantu Education Act from 1953, respectively the "segregation law" later called Black Education Act, see Clark/Worger (2004); Byrnes (1996); Giliomee (2009).

Fig. 1: Hector Pieterson Memorial; on the right: Sam Nzima's picture of Mbuyisa Makhubu carrying Hector Pieterson accompanied by Hector's sister Antoinette, Soweto, June 16, 1976.

In contrast to the photographs of the student strikes taken by Peter Magubane, which show the political slogans and the militant anti-apartheid attitude of "To Hell with Afrikaans!" Nzima's photographs concentrate on the drama of the dying child. The distraught faces and dramatic gestures of Antoinette and Mbuyisa create an iconic image of the Black people's fight for freedom. I believe it is important to stress that the more explicitly political pictures have less resonance without this emotional intensification, although they are more aligned with the justified demands of the Black Consciousness Movement founded in the late 1960s.[5] According to Peffer, these pictures have entered history as snapshots of the fight against racism and segregation and have thus become icons of the resistance movement. Because they were published, however, they also served the South African security police as a resource to identify and arrest political activists (see Peffer 2009: 259). After the publication of his photograph in The World, Nzima was questioned by

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[5]   The Black Consciousness Movement can be compared to the Black Power Movement in the US; see here especially the writings by Biko (2002); Gibson (1988). See also Ndlovu (1999).

the security police. He left Soweto, only to be harassed by the police again in Bushbucksridge, where he lived (in today's Northern province of Limpopo). In 1978, the newspaper The World was banned, and it was not until 1998 that Nzima reacquired the copyright for his pictures of Hector Pieterson.[6] According to a wall text in the Hector Pieterson Museum, Mbuyisa Makhubu (who carried the wounded Hector) also had to flee. He went first to Botswana then Nigeria, where his trail was lost.

The subject of the photograph is immortalized by the Hector Pieterson Memorial, the first of its kind to be dedicated to the student uprising. Erected in the late 1990's on Khumalo Street, Orlando Soweto, it stands only a few hundred metres from where he died. Hector did not belong to the core group of politically active young people. As such, he may not be representative of those involved in the struggle, but over time, he has become synonymous with the 566 people killed during the 1976 uprising. In 2001 the Hector Pieterson Museum was built directly next to the Memorial. It has housed a permanent exhibition since 2003, and one room is devoted to the victims of 16 June 1976, where the names of those who were killed that day are listed (see here Hlongwane 2008).

Today, many tourists from South Africa and abroad come to visit the memorial. They walk through the grounds, look at Masana Sam Nzima's photograph of Hector Pieterson, contemplate the flowing water that represents tears, and take pictures. Many selfies taken at the Hector Pieterson Memorial can be found online. They say "I was here", "I know about it", "I am a witness of this place". The image of Hector Pieterson represents an attitude toward and a transformation of the meaning of this photograph. It enables today's visitors to enter history. In the process, the picture itself also undergoes a significant change. The picture that once transformed viewers all over the world into witnesses of a historic event – while also unintentionally feeding information to the security service – is becoming less of a visual stimulant to memories and more a means for viewers to link themselves with events of the past, thereby using photography to stage a post-apartheid reality

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6   For more on this, see http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/masana-sam-nzima and Helena Pohlandt-McCormick, Story of a Photograph – Sam Nzima, http://www.gutenberg-e.org/pohlandt-mccormick/pmh01a.html (both accessed 18 January 2013).

that in turn monumentalizes the earlier struggles. History enters this particular picture precisely in the moment when the document – where the intensity of the visible past can still be felt – becomes part of visitors' self-portrayal today. In the course of monumentalization, traces going back to the historical core of the document are wiped out, and it becomes not much more than a decorative accessory of post-history.

There are many of these iconic, highly symbolic "struggle pictures" in South African photography. This picture genre fits well with a specific kind of contemporary politics and with a kind of aesthetics of memory and memorials; it also serves the needs of a post-apartheid national and international middle class. It is significant that the exhibition courses in museums like Robben Island and District 6 in Cape Town, the Apartheid Museum, Museum Africa and Constitution Hill in Johannesburg (see Combes 2003), as well as the Hector Pieterson Museum in Soweto rely primarily on photography. The walls of all these museums, inside and out, display large black and white prints that virtually jump out at the viewer.

Photography plays an important role in the context of post-apartheid exhibitions for several reasons. First, we can argue that photography, including private photography, was the most prominent medium in South Africa during the twentieth century and thus one of the most important visual sources of the past.[7] One project in particular, the Black Photo Album/Look at Me 1890:1950 by the photographer Santu Mofokeng for example, testifies a systematically repressed and ignored pre-apartheid black middle class. Thanks to Mofokeng's project, it is now finding its way into public consciousness again.[8]

The style of South African photojournalism can also be described as being rich in symbolism, full of contrasts and having the tendency to address the viewer directly. The style reflects the political extremes found in the apartheid situation and living conditions. Its simple and crude ideology was free of any nuances and produced an unequivocal symbolic pictorial language to

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7   See the exhibition "Aufstieg und Fall der Apartheid: Fotografie und Bürokratie des täglichen Lebens", Haus der Kunst, Munich, 15 February – 26 May 2013.

8   A series of 80 plates is available on Santu Mofokeng's webpage at: http://cargocollective.com/santumofokeng/black-photo-album (accessed 29 January 2013). This is probably the largest collection of private photographs in South Africa. For more on this, see Peffer (2009: 248,275).

catch the viewers' attention. The harsh political contrasts nourished a way to see things in hard black and white contrasts – with not much space for in-betweens, ambiguities and complexities. The aesthetics of contrast then is enhanced by the light conditions found in South Africa due to its southern location and slanted sunlight. Sunlight does not come directly from above, so everything photographed seems illuminated from the side and glowing from within, giving all motifs a three-dimensional almost sculptural character.

In the context of South African apartheid, photography has represented a specifically political and aesthetical image of history from the start, in so far as the historical event is already a part of history. Any given pictorial motif and any given scene is inherently contaminated by the mise en scene of apartheid, and in its own way, by the particular quality of light in South Africa.

After the apartheid regime collapsed in 1994, what consequences did this have on the historical content of photography? What is happening with these events in photography today? How do our experiences in today's historical constellations enter contemporary photography?

The prominent use of historical photography can be understood as exposing and distancing while simultaneously monumentalizing. Current references to the history of apartheid are more likely to be based on our relationship to pictures than to the historical events that they depict. Thabiso Sekgala, in his photographic body of work "Homeland" proposes an alternative, which is to trace our current relationship back to the places where historical events occurred, thus allowing us to look closely and see not only the change that has taken place, but also to sense the temporal dimension of this change.

LANDSCAPES AND INTERIORS

Thabiso Sekgala created "Homeland" between 2008 and 2011. The series is rooted in the current spaces and landscapes of a country that is immersed in its history. Although an untrained eye may not be able to notice or realize this, it should be obvious that the major impact of colonialism and of "grand apartheid" on all areas of life cannot just dissolve into thin air in 20 years. The term "grand apartheid" describes the most intense phase in the 1960s and 1970s, when racial separation, the separation of places of residence and the founding of homelands have been enforced. Sekgala turns his camera on

simple, direct scenes – solitary buildings, objects and people he captures on location – people and things that at first glance seem to lack any particular relevance, but whose picture makes their existence acknowledgeable. His view is comparable to the films and photographic works of William Kentridge, Jo Ractliffe, Claude Lanzmann, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Abderrahmane Sissako or Hartmut Bitomsky[9] and is directed at details beneath the immediacy of the landscape, in which we presume a hidden historical dimension. These artists and filmmakers see themselves as "archaeologists of a knowledge" of which landscape is a part. They strive to address the invisible past under the visible surface. Sekgala's photographs show a similar motivation. They transform the viewers into detectives who question both the motif, the motivation to take the picture and themselves.

Why are the roads in South Africa in such a good condition?

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9 See, for instance, the films William Kentridge's Felix in Exile (1993); Claude Lanzmann's Shoah (1985) and Sobibor, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures (2001); Straub and Huillet's Trop Tôt, Trop Tard (1982); Abderrahmane Sissako's En attendant le bonheur (1995); Hartmut Bitomsky's VW Komplex (1989); and Jo Ractliffe's exhibition and book project As Terras Do Fim do Mundo/ Lands of the End of the World.

Fig.2: Thabiso Sekgala, Road to Pankop, former Bophuthatswana

From the series "Homeland" (2010), courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

What is the story behind these strange landscapes that look like abandoned industrial ruins, or parched land that was hastily abandoned? As in the works by the artists and filmmakers mentioned above, the landscapes Sekgala captures are neither innocent nor natural; they are historical crimes scenes in transformation.

Fig.3: Thabiso Sekgala, Landmark, Troya, former KwaNdebele

From the series "Homeland" (2009), courtesy of the artist's estate and
the Goodman Gallery.

Sekgala lifts away their indefinable surface appearance and reveals the polit-
ical landscape and map of the past that lies beneath: the stones marking the
border of the former homeland (KNG: KwaNdebele Government).

Or a bus stop from a past public transportation system (fig. 4).

*Fig. 4: Thabiso Sekgala, Erasmus Busstop, former Bophuthat-
swana, from the series "Homeland" (2011)*

Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Sekgala documents the rural areas of South Africa, the new provinces of
Northwest Province and Mpumalanga and the former homelands of Bophu-
thatswana and KwaNdebele. The homelands were introduced in 1958 as part
of the apartheid regime's strategy to force the non-white South African pop-
ulation out of the cities by relocating them to rural areas. Urban life was to
be exclusively reserved for whites; non-whites were expected to identify with
the land and were only meant to enter the cities to work. This system forced
the migrant workers to travel weekly, if not daily, to work in the cities and
then return to their artificial living areas. Some were forced to travel up to
eight hours one way. The homelands and the pass system through which peo-
ple's movement was controlled may have been abandoned when apartheid
was abolished, but they are still inscribed in the landscape and in people's
lives as a territorial order and system of reference. David Goldblatt's The
Transported of KwaNdebele, A South African Odyssey (1989) is a particu-
larly important photographic series in this context. It shows people in a bus

on their several-hour journey from Pretoria to KwaNdebele after work (see Goldblatt 2013)[10].

Sekgala's Erasmus Busstop appears to be a direct reference to Goldblatt's Transported. In this picture, Sekgala picks up the trace of the travelling workers and gives them a potential place of arrival and departure, thus connecting different places and bridging the twenty years between Goldblatt's work and his own. Although the homelands stand for forced mobility and forced labour, over the decades they have become reality. Despite their roots in apartheid, people of all ages refer to them as "home-home". The transformation in the territorial understanding has been inevitably inscribed in reality, radiating like pathological symptoms into the present.[11] Sekgala writes, "At

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10 In the publisher's announcement, it says: "After On the Mines, The Transported of KwaNdebele is the second of David Goldblatt's books re-designed and expanded by the artist for Steidl Publishers. Dating originally from 1989, it talks about the workers of an apartheid tribal homeland for blacks, KwaNdebele, which has no industry, very few opportunities for jobs, and is a long way from the nearest industrial- commercial activity of white-controlled Pretoria. Workers from KwaNdebele catch buses in the very early morning, some as early as 2:45 am, in order to be at their workplaces in Pretoria by 7:00. At the end of the day they repeat the journey in the other direction, to get home at between 8 and 10 pm. Goldblatt takes us on their bone-jarring journeys through the night, which is a metaphor for their arduous struggle toward freedom itself. In photographs devoid of sentimentality and artifice, the grim determination of these people to survive and overcome emerges in almost heroic terms. Brenda Goldblatt, filmmaker and writer, interviewed some of the bus-riding workers who endured not only these journeys but a civil war precipitated by the apartheid government's attempt to foist a kind of independence on KwaNdebele; a condition which would have made the workers foreigners in the land of their birth, South Africa, and thus deprived them of their limited right to work there. Interviews with contemporary (2012) bus-riders fill out the account. Phillip van Niekerk, former editor of the Mail & Guardian, provides an essay on KwaNdebele, its place in the logic of 'grand apartheid' and its half-life in post-apartheid South Africa. See: http://www.steidl.de/ flycms/de/Buecher/The-Transported-of-KwaNdebele/2833345258.html?SID=L Duj55H1cbb8 (accessed 19 February 2013).

11 See Jo Ractliffe's term "landscape as pathology" in her work on the Angolan-South African border territory: Kathleen MacQueen/Ractliffe (2012:184). See

Easter time and Christmas, but even in ordinary conversation they (the peo-
ple) make a direct connection to a rural 'origin' even if never having been
born there and situating themselves firmly in contemporary urbanism."[12]

The "Homeland" series includes several portraits and photographs of in-
teriors in addition to public spaces, buildings and landscapes. The interiors –
with their small old-fashioned furniture, fabrics and washed-out colours –
have an air of charity shops and flea markets.

*Fig. 5: Thabiso Sekgala, Johanna Mthombeni, Londing, former
KwaNdebele, from the series "Homeland" (2009)*

Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Sekgala notes:

"The photograph of the girl and the lampshade […] made me think of how my grand-
mother came with furniture given by her employers in the city. My grandmother used

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also Santu Mofokeng series of 17 photographs called "Poisoned Landscapes"
(2008), http://cargocollective.com/santumofokeng/poisoned-landscapes (acces-
sed 3 February 2013).

12 See press release from 29 March 2011 in The South African Art Times.

to work a lot in the suburbs of Johannesburg – we call it 'the kitchens' – like for a white madam, whatever, in the city. They would always bring things that they would get from their work places, the leftovers from Missus and Baas. When people renovate their houses, there are always these things that they get. For me this image talks about how items from the urban areas came to the rural areas" (Sekgala 2012:202).

The practice of white employers giving their old clothes and household goods, including furniture and drapes, to their black employees is one of the narrative elements that, once we become aware of it, can easily be found in films, books, everyday life and interiors everywhere. J.M. Coetzee, for example, describes this practice of giving old things away in his novel *Life and Times of Micheal K* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1983). In Coetzee's story, the recipients are not interested in the old junk given to them by the whites, and they toss it in the ditch. We do not have to search far to find traces of things in movement from a white to a black/coloured context of use, and from an urban to a rural context, while arts and craftworks travel in the other direction and find their way into cities, museums and modern kitchens.

The art historian Walter Grasskamp writes in his article "Ohne Worte" (Without Words, 1980) about the objects depicted in documentary photography:

"Of course, the history of these objects is not in these pictures; it lays inherently beyond the reach of a snapshot. However, for the perception of historicity and historical change, photographs (such as these) are valuable, because they – and here the mixing of media is allowed – are able to talk about history in a much more accessible way than many a historian." (Grasskamp 1980:23 – my translation)

Fig.6: Thabiso Sekgala, Semotlase, former Bophuthatswana, from the "Homeland" series (2009)

Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Fig.7: Dodo, Londing, former KwaNdebele, from the "Homeland" series (2009).

Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

Landscapes changed by history, interiors furnished by past practices with moving objects, houses functioning as homes in the artificial context of the homelands, young people living in these rural areas of South Africa today – Sekgala situates his pictures as interfaces between the pictorial world of the half-deserted areas of the present and the self-portrayal of a youth that de-fines itself through its mediatized global attitude toward life.

Fig.8: Thabiso Sekgala, Road divide Gauteng and Northwest Province, Hammanskraal, from the series "Homeland" (2011)

Courtesy of the artist's estate and the Goodman Gallery.

History rises to the surface in photographed objects and details – such as the British-looking school uniforms, which are reminders of the colonial past and the apartheid education system, or the faded lamp shade or a t-shirt. It is a light contemporary surface that requires a sense of history regarding the era depicted, combined with a knowledge of the history of photography, to let its complexity emerge.

Sekgala's photographs are silent time-images. They neither monumentalize their motifs, nor do they create a distance toward them; they "make the historicity of the world of objects palpable" (Grasskamp) and make the case for their awareness. Unlike the loud and sensational photographic portraits of the times that denounce the inhumane living conditions of a bureaucratic apparatus of hate, Sekgala's photographs display conditions that are inwardly directed, sunken and given over to a slow forgetting. As such, they act as intersections where nostalgia and remembering intermingle with moments of struggle and a longing for the future. The traces of the past are embedded within them, and it is up to us, the beholders of the historical resonances they catalyze, to become detectives in the game of appearance and disappearance, the visible and the invisible, and to determine how this relates to our knowledge making.

Thanks

The series "Homeland" consists of approximately 40 pictures.
My gratitude goes to Thabiso for the time and work spent together.
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On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures

Polyphony and Fragmentation

Hans Peter Hahn

INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORY AND CURRENT RELEVANCE OF COLONIAL PICTURE ARCHIVES

In the last few years, an increasing number of picture collections from the colonial era have surfaced. Apparently, the era of colonial appropriation was also a phase of intensive mediatization of the politics of expansion. While the presence of these old pictures from all over the world grows more obvious, the intensity of the connection between politics, ideology and new media is just now becoming apparent (Kundrus 2003). And although their presence may remind us of a neglected, even suppressed, chapter of global history and are thus perhaps an impossible burden, they also offer an opportunity for historical research and an investigation into the ambivalences of this era.

There is a surprising temporal congruency between the development of photography and the establishment of colonial structures. Already in the early years of photography, photographers were commissioned to document colonial infrastructures. For example, in Ghana (at the time the Gold Coast) a project was launched in the 1870s to compile a photographic collection of all colonial administration buildings (Haney 2010). Such early photo projects commissioned by the state are an indication of the unique expressive quality of the new medium, something which was widely appreciated at the time and which will be the primary focus of this essay.

To this day, we are still not able to gain a precise overview of the unexpected flood of pictures from the former colonies, nor are we able to systematically

catalogue them. Although these pictures were used extensively during the time they were taken – for instance, as a means of making colonial ideology plausible in the metropolis – their existence was soon forgotten.[1] Digitalization and virtual access via the Internet have now made it possible to assess just how many pictures are still languishing in various archives, waiting to become accessible for the first time in the next few years through exhibitions, online databases, catalogues and books.[2] As Christopher Pinney (2007) has stressed, a phenomenology of such photographs must first come to terms with the fact that they do not have a genuine "message". Their openness to different interpretations is, of course, the main reason why these pictures were able to be used primarily for colonial propaganda at the time. These colonial images were therefore a special variation of the "world as image" that contributed significantly to the imagination of the colonies as being associated with fear and desire.

And yet, the content of these photographs is still a challenge. The messages within them are far from evident. Many of the current projects designed to investigate such pictures tend to overlook one basic feature of the photograph as a medium – that is, there is no clear assessment of these documents. This lack of evidence aggravates those interpreting them as well as historians, in spite of the rapidly growing access to archives in the last years. The pictures now accessible on the Internet, which can be said to be circulating at an ever increasing speed, are, in a sense, not only "raw material" for colonial apologists; they are also the basis for a comprehensive, critical, postcolonial analysis of the contradictions of the era from which they originated. The scientific investment in producing virtual accessibility is enormous, and recent digitalization projects supported by the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*) have exhausted sizeable funds in the

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1   I would like to mention only two popular magazines in the nineteenth century that today are veritable "quarries" for postcolonial research: Kolonie und Heimat (Walgenbach 2003) and Die Gartenlaube (Belgum 1998).

2   Prime examples of books using pictures that have "re-emerged" are those by Reinhard Klein-Arend (1996) and Marko Frelih (2007). Astonishingly, these documents suggest present quite idiosyncratic interpretations of the hitherto unknown pictures.

last few years.[3] Despite this, they have not been able to make evident what these pictures mean, and what effect they have on the present day. Because they are accessible to everyone via the Internet, they can be used not only by researchers and critical historians for investigating contradictions of the colonial era, but by colonial apologists for painting an ideal colonial world as well.

This fateful openness – also to interpretations that contradict scholarly insights – is the reason why it is so important to define the range of acceptable interpretations and identify arguments to support them. The basis for this must be the pictures themselves – after all, they have been made accessible and available for use and abuse (in the sense of reconstructing an "ideal world" and thus denying colonial injustice). The social sciences – from history to anthropology – have an obligation to provide well-argued interpretations that clearly demarcate the possible range of plausible readings.

One of the models I shall discuss here is an idea proposed by Pinney that he refers to as "contextual phenomenology". This model revolves around the position of the beholder and less on the pictures themselves. It inspires us to ask the question: What position are these pictures taken from? Pinney demonstrates this model by referring to pictures that reveal the "event of portraying", in other words the moment in which a photograph is created. The idea is to reconstruct what we assume was the approach of, and the associations presented by, the photographer in that moment. According to Pinney, contextual phenomenology provides a basis for deconstructing previous contexts and for creating a critical distance (Jäger 2006, Axster, Jäger and Kusser 2006) through which new contexts can be established, thus exposing these pictures as documents of a regime of injustice.

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3   An example of such an investigation is the digitalization and publication of the Deutsche Koloniale Bildarchiv (German Colonial Image Archive) found online at: http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/. See also Schmidt and Wolcke-Renk (2001). Because technical questions were in the foreground, the problems of interpretation were hardly discussed (Jäschke 2004). The photography archive of the Frobenius Institute (http://www.frobenius-institut.de/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=189&Itemid=230) is also similar, as are other archives that have made attempts in the same direction, such as the Basler Mission: http://www.mission-21.org/de/forschung-und-wissenschaft/archiv/, http://www.bmpix.org
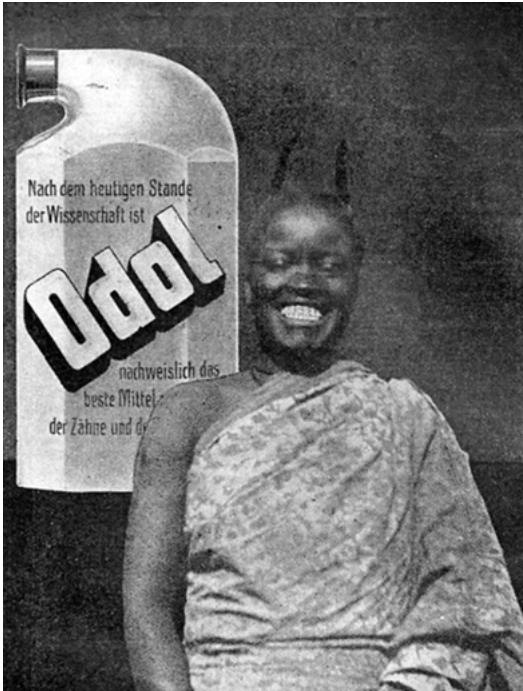
Figure 1: This is an advertisement for Odol mouthwash from around 1912. By this time, it had already been printed several times in different media (such as calendars and weekly magazines). More recently, Gabriele König (1993) discussed its several variations, and Thomas Held (1984) included it in his study.

Criticism directed at this photograph (of the idea that Africans need oral hygiene products to become civilized) is justified, but it is still unable to outweigh the inherent humorous association of the image. In order to evaluate the picture appropriately, we should thus strive to consider both 1) the colonial appropriation that defines European hygiene as the future of Africans as well as 2) the successful communication taking place that makes the humour and irony obvious concerning the person depicted and the beholder.

SUSAN SONTAG: PICTURES ALWAYS LIE

One of the greatest narratives of the second half of the nineteenth century is the discovery of photography as a widely accessible mediatized means of documenting historical facts. While the pioneers of photography still had to work hard to convince people of the practical applicability of their new technology in the mid nineteenth century (Talbot 1844), the use of photographic illustrations was already a common and widely accepted means of self-portrayal by 1900. Its trajectory of roughly half a century toward acquiring an authoritative character had to do with the technical development of photography itself: The long exposure times in the early days meant that it was difficult to take pictures of people, while it was even more difficult to take pictures of moving scenes. Although we know today that motifs were at first defined by this technical coincidence, at that time the early pictures of buildings, monuments and streets radiated a factual power that made a vital contribution to the role of the new medium as a means for the "documentation of facts". In their more recent review of the literature on the subject, Coombes and Edwards (1989: 510) take this a step further by referring to the "seductive quality" of the pictures that have been lent a witnessing potential by more recent publications. Books on photography from the 1980s also succumb to this seductive narrative by confirming the myth of the picture as a public witness instead of undermining it, thus propagating the view that pictures show "how it really was".

The particular logic of technical restraints and the appearance of a "documentation of facts" also applies, of course, to how the colonies were represented in the photographs. These images arrived in the metropolises in a steady stream and were almost always understood as propaganda for the idea of colonialism (Mirzoeff 1998). These documents were also collected in elaborate volumes, such as *Eine Reise durch die deutschen Kolonien* (A Journey through the German Colonies) published by the magazine *Kolonie und Heimat* (1909–13), or *Togo unter deutscher Flagge* (Togo under the German Flag) by Heinrich Klose (1899).[4] The popularity of these photographs can also be seen in the success of postcards (Meurillon 1996), world expositions

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4   Early pictures of missions also belong to this field. It is possible that the interest in using pictures as evidence was even greater here than in the national context (Alsheimer 2004; Jenkins 1994, 2006; Kittel 1996).

(Bayerdörfer and Hellmuth 2003, Maxwell 1999), posters (Schmidt-Linsen-hoff 1986) and advertisements (Zeller 2008).

Klaus Scherpe (2010) places the extensive use of these pictures in a broader perspective, regarding them as part of a "colonial imaginarium" that, at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century, resulted in surprisingly inflexible European ideas about other parts of the world. According to Scherpe, photographs played an outstanding role in this imagination. Alongside literature, furniture and ethnographical objects, photographs were used as resources for the increasingly stabilizing image of exotic societies in the colonies.[5] Clearly, pictures and objects from the colonies "conveniently" served the purpose of exoneration. This reflected a certain aesthetic in which cultures were sought out in other parts of the world that were thought of as completely separate from one's own. The construction of alterity during this era was thus driven by distinction and self-assurance (Nederveen Pieterse 1992). An important but often overlooked aspect of early photography is the rapid acceptance of this new technology within the colonies themselves. Many travelling photographers spent several months in the capitals of the colonies – for example, on the West African coast – offering their services as portrait photographers to wealthy businessmen (Schneider 2010). Many African photographers were also successful and had their own studios. They recorded everyday life in the service of the colonial rulers and took representative pictures of public life in the colonies. Nonetheless, figures such as the Togolese photographer Alex Acolatse have played only a minor role in the postcolonial discourse, perhaps because they saw themselves primarily as service providers for Europeans in Africa. It can be said with certainty, however, that the pictures taken by Acolatse (fig. 4), in fact, fail to provide evidence for interpretations critical of colonialism (David 1992).

With the emergence and development of postcolonial research, the photographs of colonial propaganda have been readdressed, reprinted and critically discussed (Timm 1981, Honke 1990). The trust postcolonial studies has placed in the recognizable message of these pictures is essential for the following argument. That a photograph is a pictorial document is never questioned in these studies. While these pictures were seen in the old context of

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5   Deroo and Lemaire (2005) call this a "colonial illusion" in their history of the propagandistic effect of pictures. Along with reproducing historical pictures, they also talk about the "seduction" and the intensification of prejudices and so forth.

propaganda as providing arguments in favour of colonialism, in the context of postcolonial studies they are seen as evident portrayals of the manifestations of injustice and oppression.

Although the contradiction between these two interpretations may be obvious, authors of postcolonial studies still claim that they have found the only objective way of interpreting the photographs. Their method of interpretation is to search for contexts that can be used to identify the prejudices expressed within the pictures serving as propaganda messages. By contradicting earlier interpretations and speaking out in favour of their own, they argue that, while the truth may still be hidden in the pictures, an extensive knowledge is required to be able to recognize the "correct truth".

In her famous work On Photography (1980), Susan Sontag strongly criticized (more than most) the claims about the objectivity of the photograph, which had dominated for more than one hundred years. Sontag argues that what we see in a picture is, after all, only a statement about a particular moment in time that is now no longer accessible in the same density and intensity. Photography, in other words, is not a window to the past, but an interpretation of this past. Thus, the question emerges as to who decides the criteria for the selection, and who has the power to define a picture as a historical document and to readdress it (regarding the quickly growing availability of pictures today)? According to Sontag's argument, a photograph is not a "document"; it is merely a step toward a universe of interpretations, all of which refer to one another.[6] The choice of motif, the perspective, the time frame and the light conditions are all arguments used by someone interpreting a picture – someone who, instead of acting as an individual, can only argue within the context of the picture's accepted readability.

Sontag's work has been, and still is, an important argument for overcoming the narrative of the photograph as an objective document. This fundamental criticism also departed from the idea that there is only one legitimate interpretation of a picture. While it certainly would be an exaggeration to follow William Mitchell's argument and call the current time a "post-photographic era" (1994), the impulse behind this polemic is not unjustified, as Mitchell argues against searching for the evidence in favour of polyphony.

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6   This is the basic assumption of the so-called visual (or visualistic) turn (Gerhard 2006, Sachs-Hombach 2009).

The phenomena of retouching, deconstructing and reinterpreting thus move from the margins to the centre of the analysis. Although this does not necessarily make it easier for us to read photographs, it does make it possible for us to consider the dynamics of the allocations of meaning generated by the images without having to provide the only "valid" hegemonic interpretation.[7] Photographs do not deliver a privileged way of accessing "how it really was"; they are themselves interpretations whose intention and effect should be subjected to constant reassessment.

An important step in the direction of a polyphonic interpretation is Mary Louise Pratt's much-quoted study Imperial Eyes (1992). Pratt uses these provocative ideas about colonial pictures for a different understanding of the colonial encounter. While nothing seems more plausible than regarding colonial images as ever-fixated "imperial eyes", Pratt goes beyond this by focusing her analysis on "transculturation" (the next point in our discussion), arguing as I have already that it would be incorrect to reduce photographs to documents of colonialism, whether for apologetic or critical reasons. Pratt insists instead that the correct method to regard these pictures would be to see them as located in a transitional, transcultural zone. Within this transcultural zone, several cultural perspectives are connected with one another: They are not only instruments of colonial propaganda (quite effective at the time); seen from today's perspective and after being deconstructed, they are also convincing indicators of the prejudices and mistakes of colonialist ideology. Pratt's concept of transculturation allows both interpretations to exist simultaneously, making it possible to consider two contradicting interpretations at the same time while understanding both as layers of meaning. The picture as an instrument of interpretation thus works in two directions that are weighted differently, depending on the beholder.

One example of how transculturation can be used in the interpretation of pictures has been provided by Emmanuel Akyeampong through an online publication of his studies in the Basel Mission archive. His interpretation of colonial pictures is grounded in an openness to different points of view. He organizes the pictures of missionaries in the former British Gold Coast colony according to very specific and carefully chosen criteria. These not only

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7   It is, of course, legitimate here to recognize a post-structuralist view along the lines of Roland Barthes' polysemy (1973).

represent the facts, they also refer to the cultural contexts of the host socie-
ties. In one picture, we see not just female teachers and pupils, but also the
process of learning, which is depicted as an impulse for changing women's
roles. This picture has a double message: on the one hand, it bears witness to
the existence of schools for girls; on the other, it is a provocation within a
society in which education is an obstacle for girls' eligibility for marriage.
Akyeampong has managed a groundbreaking feat with "visual interpreta-
tions" of this kind.[8] And yet, even his work also cannot overcome this sig-
nificant openness of interpretation sometimes, because he is not always able
to reconstruct definite contexts and thus make the interpretations of the pic-
ture plausible. Thus, the pictures from the Basel Mission archive cannot be
seen solely in the context of missions, but also as a comment on social change
in the former Gold Coast colony; in a larger sense, these pictures are about
moments of transculturation. As Frank Heidemann (2005) points out, we
must overcome photography's apparent indexicality. A picture is not just "an
indicator of something", but is itself a means of identifying and allocating
new meanings. Pictures thus enable a double interpretation, thereby referring
to a third space.

There are also arguments against this model of having two or more inter-
pretations, however. After all, the different interpretations within these pic-
tures cannot simply "coexist". They have the ability to contradict and con-
front one another; it is impossible to build a direct link between different
ways of reading these photographs. Pictures from the colonial era can be an
affront. They can shock, and in many cases they simply provoke rejection.
Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Sylvester and Wolfram Hartmann (2002) describe
these effects as "fragmentation". According to them, this "energy that can be
released by picture archives" (Hayes/Silvester/Hartmann 2002: 124) can also
lead to disturbances and negative reactions. These absolutely plausible sce-
narios fit well with the idea of the photograph as an interpretation; however,
they reach far beyond Pratt's concept of transculturation.

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8   See http://lib-app5-2.usc.edu/bmpix/visip_emmanuel/chapter_18_2.htmp

Figure 2: This picture belongs to the private collection of Dr. Rudolf Simon, who was a government physician in Togo 1910–14. His primary responsibility was taking care of the "compulsory workers" (Pflichtarbeiter) during the construction of the Togo railway (Hahn 2004d, 2007). His collection of photographs, today housed in the museum of local history (Heimatmuseum) in Zusmarshausen, comprises mostly private photographs that more or less represent the non-official side of everyday colonial life. The scene depicted here – the beating of a Togolese man with short segments of heavy rope – apparently required the presence of the public health officer. In other words, witnessing these punishments was part of his official duty. And yet, the picture is not an official self-portrayal. The intensity of the violence depicted causes the picture to contradict the self-defined image of Togo as an ideal colony. It is actually a very rare picture.

Chaudhary (2005) calls this a "phantasmagoric aesthetics" – a fascination for horror that is able to portray boundless violence in such a cool and distanced manner only because it is attributed to the "other", the colonial subject. Total control of the body belongs to this phantasmagoric idea of control. The emotions on the people's faces reflect an absolute distance from the scene. Coombes (1994) discusses similar reproductions, including a scene photographed immediately after the destruction of the palace in Benin City. In the middle of the ruins, a colonial officer sits in a casual pose. In front of him are the palace's art treasures that soon will be confiscated as war booty.

Chaudhary (2005:77) describes this photograph as part of the substitution of the gun: in the language of violence, the camera replaces the firearm. For this particular photograph represented here, it implies a readiness to use violence, or at least the approval of violence, also by the photographer.

The use of corporeal punishment was already disputed in Togo at the time and was notorious as an arbitrary act in the neighbouring colonies. We cannot help but get the impression that the drastic representation of violence in the picture is both an approval (in the sense of the already mentioned phantasmagoric idea) as well as a criticism of this practice. We should also consider the presence of the camera, which was set up and dismantled during the punishment most certainly without the consent of the person being punished. This action shows the photographer's inner distance to the event, which he may have justified with the desire to take a picture. Raising the camera to the status of the middleman of documentation contributes to the "self-alienation" of the colonist (Chaudhary 2005: 89).

TOWARD AN EMOTIONAL HISTORY OF PICTURES

For this reason, it is important to venture yet another step toward a phenomenology of colonial pictures by concentrating on deconstruction, which calls for an "interpretation against the grain" with the help of contextual information and politically informed approaches. We should also concentrate on the idea of colonial images as manifestations of a transcultural space. Unfortunately, however, both of these approaches suffer from a problematic lack of reach that does not do justice to the spontaneous perception and assessment of many pictures. Additionally, these models do not account for why "simple" interpretations persist despite knowledge to the contrary (fig. 1).

In an attempt to not fall back on the "photographs-are-documentation" narrative, I would like to suggest a complementary principle of categorization based on three levels of emotions: first, the immediate emotions of the beholders; second, the emotions that can be read on the faces of those depicted in photographs; and third, the emotions of the photographer – in other words, we must ask ourselves if it is possible to assess the photographer's emotions through interpretation. I believe that these three levels are connected in a certain way, and all of them should be taken into consideration. This would enable us to subvert the apparent objectivity of photographs while taking care

to remember that such emotionality does not necessary result in a coherent interpretation.
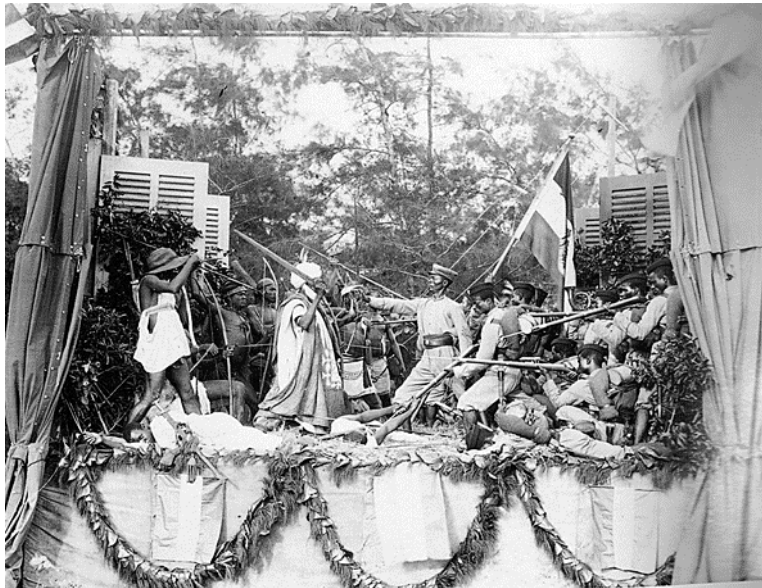
Figure 3: This picture, entitled *Lebendes Bild Christentum - Muhamedanismus (Pferdesportlicher Verein Togo)* (Tableau vivant: Christianity – Islam (Togo Equestrian Club)), from the Leschin collection (private collection of Peter Sebald), represents a popular nineteenth-century theatrical mis-en-scene. This pictorial idea has a more prominent staged character (which every picture has, in principle) than other documents. Each gesture is, of course, controlled and the protagonists adhere to the logic of dramaturgy, even before the picture was taken. By bringing performativity to the fore (Jeschke/Zedelmaier 2005), this picture becomes an argument. We would thus not interpret it as a document of colonial culture but rather as an outcome of transcultural interaction.

A broad range of emotions can be recognized in pictures – from grief, earnestness, anger and despair to pride and superiority. At the other end of the emotional scale, we find happiness, amusement, merriment and perhaps even

irony. Emotions are almost always relational expressions, referring to a certain occasion – even if this often cannot be immediately derived from the content of the picture. The relational character of these forms of expression also includes gestures of superiority or inferiority, both of which play a central role in the colonial context. Approaching colonial pictures through the emotions that can be detected within them privileges those pictures that include discernable people. While this may seem obvious, it is still worth pointing out in order to avoid the temptation to regard these pictures as merely the "documentation of facts".

Because emotions are revealed through communication and interpretation, this approach highlights the aspect of pictures as a means of interpretation. In this context, we must keep the fragmentation we discussed earlier in mind, as it is very possible that the perception of contradicting emotions can be the core of an image's interpretation. Especially in moments when the photographer's emotions cannot be clearly recognized in the faces of the people photographed, the attentive beholder will notice a perceptible distance, which leads us to look more closely at how the picture was created rather than at the actual content.

According to Chaudhary (2005), it would certainly be plausible here to speak of "self-alienation", not to mention the imagined horror that must have played a role in the production of photographs such as in figure 2. Although not all colonial pictures evoke such obvious emotions as this one, by reflecting on the emotions that can be detected in pictures, we gain access to the intentions behind the pictures' creation.

Figure 4: Few pictures incorporate the "colonial idea" more thoroughly than this photograph from the Simon Collection. Unlike the greater part of this corpus of pictures on glass plates, this picture is contained in a small album and only exists as a paper print. Judging from the other pictures in the album, we can estimate that it was not taken by Simon himself, but was bought from Alex Acolatse's studio (David 1992). Part of Acolatse's business was to sell photographs of the colony to the Germans before they returned to the homeland. These were readymade as prints on paper and arranged in an album. The habitus of brevity represents the affirmative attitude toward the iconographically composed pictorial elements: the steaming train in the background as a sign of modernism, the distribution of money (the compulsory workers received a so-called "food allowance"), the police violence in the background (on the very left side in the picture) and the dress code, showing the Europeans in white clothing and the Africans mostly half-naked. The only detail that disturbs this affirmative harmony is the bored gesture of the seated European, who obviously has no active part in this scene. Presumably, it is Simon himself.

CONCLUSION: POLYPHONY AND FRAGMENTATION

Colonial pictures are a virtually inexhaustible resource whose presence is becoming more and more a pressing fact. The logic of these hundreds of thousands of pictures – namely, supporting the propaganda for the colonial expansion of European countries – is without doubt a result of the simultaneous development of photographic technologies and the control of overseas territories. The dominant, but questionable, idea that photographs are "objective documents" is inseparably connected to this logic. In this essay, however, I contradict this idea by arguing that photographs are interpretations to begin with.

In the light of these contradictions, it becomes all the more urgent that we develop a broad range of methods of interpretation. Postcolonial research has been able to demonstrate new ways of reading these pictures by expanding their contextualization. This has resulted in a multitude of alternative interpretations that present colonialism as an unjust regime while revealing representational practices as "exoticizing" the colonized.

Transculturation is thus a further step on our way toward making the polyphony of these pictures more comprehensible. Colonial pictures are not simply documents of colonialism, and they should not be understood naively as documents of those cultures in which they were taken. Following the conceptional framework of transculturation, colonial pictures create a "third space". This space represents the indissoluble connection between two cultures; it is the foundation of their polyphony. And yet, this polyphony reaches its limits when interpretations contradict one another and we are compelled to make a decision. For this, postcolonial scholars have proposed the term fragmentation. While pictures may allow different interpretations, their incompatibility is rather an expression of the contradictions that can be found already in the colonial system itself.

In an extension of this concept, I thus propose utilizing the emotions within pictures as a resource, according to the concept of a phenomenological approach based on immediate perception. Emotions can be found on least three levels: the emotions of the people being photographed, the emotions of the photographer and of the emotions of the beholder of the picture. All three levels are interrelated. The aim of this approach, however, would not be simply to establish a new way of interpreting pictures. Instead, this approach would make it possible to successfully describe how to access the relevance

of these images, both in terms of their high historical and propagandist value as well as the effects they can still have today. In place of one or more interpretations, we would thus have an approach that would focus more on their emerging significance for the beholder (fig. 3). Furthermore, the suggested approach would overcome the problematic objective of stressing the "truth of the pictures", which anyway cannot be the same for colonial subject, colonialists and current day observers. Perceptions are not only polyphonic, but also so immensely different, that it is legitimate to speak about the fragmentation of understandings of these pictures.

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Portraits of Distant Worlds

Frobenius' Pictorial Archive and its Legacy[1]

RICHARD KUBA

THE ETHNOGRAPHER

Germany's most famous anthropologist in the first half of the 20th century was an ambiguous figure.[2] An academic outsider who would get a professorship only at the very end of his career, Leo Frobenius was extremely prolific, publishing over 50 books, many for the general public and best sellers. Having started his career in ethnographic museums, he became convinced about the necessity for field research and so between 1904 and 1935 he undertook 12 expeditions to Africa. He was thus among the first trained anthropologists to leave his armchair to do field research in Africa. Some of these expeditions took up to two years, such as the ones to the Congo in 1904–1906, to French West Africa in 1907–1909 and to Nigeria and the Cameroons in 1910–1912. Impulsive, passionate, often improvising and not always open about his sources, he drew together what is likely a unique documentation of objects and customs, folk tales and myths, as well as images of everyday scenes, portraits, material culture, crafts and architecture.

As an "entrepreneur-anthropologist" (Barkan 1994:185) he created the "Institute for Cultural Morphology" which, in spite of its highly devoted staff,

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was constantly on the brink of bankruptcy. An exceptionally gifted PR talent, he had good connections to the highest social circles and even befriended the exiled German Kaiser (Franzen/Kohl/Recker 2012).

His attitude towards Africa was ambiguous, paternalistic and at the same time valorizing. As a true romantic, he was looking for ancient origins and the "old original African warm-blooded culture" (Frobenius 1933: 15) and felt that African cultures were doomed to extinction by, above all, the onslaught of modernity and colonialism. He saw himself as perhaps the last outsider to see the remains of "old Africa" with his own eyes. And he regarded it as his duty – as a 'rescue archaeologist' – to document as much as possible of this cultural legacy on the eve of its ultimate extinction. In Frobenius' eyes, the cultural expressions of non-literate peoples were no less part of an archive of humanity than those of the classical antique civilisations. His ambition was thus to record African cultural expressions on a continental scale and to preserve them in museums, archives and monographs.

The valorizing of African cultures was quite unusual at a time when any significant cultural achievement in Africa was at best ascribed to the civilizing influence of Islam or other foreign influences. Frobenius' appreciation of Africa's past nevertheless tended to blind him to the condition of the people he actually met in Africa. Apprehending them against the background of the continent's magnificent cultural history, as he had imagined it, he saw only ruins left from the noble and ancient civilisations that he enthusiastically linked to those of Atlantis and Byzantium. As a product of his age, his early writings contain a number of shocking stereotypes about the "flattening, corruptive, and 'negrofying' tendency of African civilizations" (Frobenius 1913: 321). However these go along with a glorification of Africans especially in his later writings. For example, his appraisal of Africans as being "civilized to the marrow of their bones"[3], was an expression which the poet Léopold Sédar Senghor, one of the founders of the Négritude movement and later on first president of independent Senegal, found especially inspiring (Senghor 1980).

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3 "Civilisés jusqu'à la moelle des os" (Frobenius 1933b: 14). The German original actually talks about culture instead of civilization: "Kultur bis auf die Knochen" (Frobenius 1933a: 13).

INTO THE FIELD

Leo Frobenius was comparatively well qualified for his expeditions, considering he had unparalleled knowledge of the great span of literature on Africa of his time and of the masses of ethnographic objects that had already been accumulated in ethnographic museums over the course of the 19th century. In the field, his major shortcoming was probably his lack of language skills. He could speak French quite well, but his English remained rudimentary all his life. While he collected vocabularies of about 900 African languages, he spoke none of them beyond a few words.[4] This meant that he was usually dependant on translators and often on whole interpreter chains, translating, for example, from Jukun to Hausa, then from Hausa into English and finally into German.

Another problem in assessing the documentation produced during the expeditions concerns Frobenius' travel style. Unlike later generations of anthropologists, Frobenius never stayed very long in one place, but was constantly on the move trying to "cover" and document as many societies and regions as possible. Furthermore, several German ethnographic museums were the main sponsors of the early expeditions prior to WW I (Zwernemann 1987). Thus he and his German staff travelled with a caravan of carriers, always on the lookout to buy or barter for spectacular objects.

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[4] His claim to have learned the Luba language within a few month during his Kongo expedition 1904–06 (Frobenius 1907: 225) appears rather doubtful.

Fig. 1: Frobenius' expedition camp in Bamako, Mali, 1908

Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

Fig. 2: Caravan crossing the Oti river in northern Togo, 1909

Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

Like other travellers before him, Frobenius could not avoid the problems inherent in this form of travel (Spittler 1987, Heintze 2007: 52–60, Fabian 2000: 23–33). Counting all the porters, servants, boys, cooks, washer men, guides and interpreters, such a caravan could number several dozen or even hundreds of individuals and was mostly busy with its own organisation. This impeded the travellers' view on the surrounding world: staff had to be recruited, paid and dismissed; sufficient supplies, shelter and food had to be organised. When further away from larger settlements, such a caravan had to be permanently on the move in order to ensure an adequate food and water supply. When longer stops were taken, it was necessary to open the bundles and boxes to air out the valuable contents. The packages were repeatedly subject to rain or getting wet during river crossings. There was a constant threat that the collected objects would rot if they were not dried and repacked properly. Apart the fact that much time was spent with such organisational tasks, there was the intimidating effect that the unheralded arrival of such a caravan would have on a local population (Kuba 2010). Particularly during Frobenius' early travel to the Congo (1904–06), the violent aspects characterizing many African travel in the 19th century were still manifest (Fabian 2000: 149–150, Ackermann 1984: 19–20, cf. Heintze 2007: 72–75).

Surprisingly enough, Frobenius was still able to obtain an amazingly rich collection of historical and ethnographic information as well as oral traditions – also testifying to the strength of his financial resources – even if, due to the translation issue and a rather sketchy documentation, their quality can often be questioned. On the other hand, he hardly ever stayed long enough to establish real relationships with the local population and, especially during his first expeditions, we have some evidence that the collection of ethnographic material and the production of images was done against their consent (Frobenius 1907: 100, 169, cf. Kuba 2010: 52).

Frobenius was very much of the view that only the thorough visual documentation of African cultural expressions could counter the effects of time and transience. On his expeditions he always took some professionally trained draughtspersons and sometimes even renowned artists, such as the painters Hans Martin Lemme, Carl Arriens or Alf Bayrle.

Fig. 3: Carl Arriens painting in a Tiv village, Nigeria 1911

Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

An expedition thus could yield several thousand images, photographs as well as drawings, covering vast regions and showing a large variety of motifs, from landscape and everyday scenes, cultural displays such as mask dances or wrestling scenes, to portraits, architecture and ethnographic objects. However, linking these images to a precise place and date is not always an easy task, as the available metadata are often sketchy and frequently consist of a few brief bits of information amongst some 50 voluminous photo-catalogues or – for the drawings – in handwritten registers.

DRAWINGS VS. PHOTOGRAPHS

As the Frobenius' expeditions yielded drawings as well photographs, we should look into the relationship between the two means of visual documentation in ethnographic contexts. Up until the late 1920s, when the compact camera came into wider use, photography in the tropics was a complex and time-consuming business: exposure times were relatively long, the equipment was heavy, awkward to manoeuvre and technically unreliable. The transportation of the fragile emulsion-coated glass plates used in this process posed an additional challenge during the often extremely arduous journey to the traveller's destination. And it was only when the hoped-for treasure trove of images was being developed after the traveller's return that he might discover that all his efforts had been in vain (Frobenius 1907: 450). Thus, for all that technology had to offer, for a long time hand-done documentation remained the most reliable way of making records, with the result that in the second half of the nineteenth century and even into the early twentieth century, European painters still played a key part in the visual documentation and imaging of distant lands. However, the question of which was a better means of documenting those distant worlds, photography or drawings, was not decided based on technological arguments alone but also on the question of authenticity. Two quite diverging attitudes towards photography as a seemingly authentic means of documentation were expressed by Leo Frobenius and another German traveller, Paul Güssfeldt.

In his report on the Loango expedition he led in 1873–76, Güssfeldt deliberated on the two main methods of documentation – drawing and photography – and came to a conclusion quite typical for his positivistic age: "Drawing rarely manages to keep itself entirely free of idealisation, and if it does indeed do so, the beholder can never quite suppress his doubts as to whether this illustration is faithful to the original; he is reluctant to be persuaded that all which appears strange to him in the drawing, is a faithful likeness. Not so photography, which – unconstrained by the rules of beauty and aesthetics – objectively reproduces merits and blemishes and thus seems most suited to advance the lucid contemplation of foreign realms." (Güssfeldt 1879: 53 – my translation)

A very different view was taken by Frobenius some 60 years later. For him "a drawing that comes to life little by little, in many cases captures more of the 'essence' than a mechanical photograph", which is in reality "endlessly

deceptive" (Frobenius 1936: 12 – my translation). Frobenius was seeking to discover the intrinsic nature of the cultural practices of foreign peoples and believed in the power of human intuition. He thus was keen to take advantage of the complementary functions of drawing and photography (Stappert 1996: 15).

Fig. 4: Photograph of a trumpeter in Bida, Nigeria, 1911

Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

Fig. 5: watercolour by Carl Arriens, 1911

Image archive of the Frobenius Institute.

As the more abstract form, he mainly used drawing for studies of ornamentation and architectural forms and for objects. At the same time, hand-done illustrations were regarded as one of the special strengths of anthropological reporting when it came to conveying colours and decorative minutiae or documenting dark interiors. Particularly in the case of architectural structures, but also with regard to local artefacts and their uses, Frobenius also used photographs as the basis for later drawings. Compared to a photograph, the drawn image could be more detailed, more sharply defined and especially, it could be made in color.

Most of the photographs seem to have been taken by Frobenius himself, who was an able photographer. However, the professional draughts men and women who joined his expeditions also used the photographic equipment.[5] This equipment was usually state of the art, as Frobenius had a great talent for involving numerous sponsors in financing his expeditions. Among them were companies such as Goerz, Anschütz, Zeiss, Leitz and Agfa. The photographic archive thus reflects the advancement of photographic technology in the first decades of the 20th century. It contains, among vintage prints, different kinds of negatives, from silver gelatine glass plates to nitrate or acetate base sheet films in different formats such as 9x12 and 13x18 cm, to 35 mm and 60 mm roll films, which came into use in the late 1920s and 1930s. On his first expedition into the Kongo 1904–1906 he even carried a stereo camera (Steigerwald 2005), which he actually wanted to use for commercial purposes (Zwernemann 1987: 112).

THE ARCHIVE

While the images produced in the field during expeditions form the bulk of the visual material, there are also some smaller collections not produced by Frobenius and his staff which found their way into the archive. In 1894, ten years before he went to the field, Frobenius had already founded his "Afrika-Archiv",where he collected all kinds of Africa related material such as excerpts, publications, maps and images as "an illustrative complement to the collection of excerpts" (Frobenius 1925: 4 – my translation; cf. Zerries 1950: 363). Among the oldest photographic material in his archive number some

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5   Unfortunately the authorship of a photograph wasn't recorded in most cases.

300 postcards from West Africa, mostly from the "Collection Générale Fortier" (David 1980). Later, as the archive grew more prestigious, Frobenius was offered several smaller collections by colonial officials (Stappert 1996: 18–19) or other travellers, such as the paintings of Hyacinthe Hecquard (Mark 1990) or the sketches of Georg Schweinfurth (Beck 1940). Upon his death in 1938, Frobenius left a huge visual legacy that was expanded, with the addition of pictorial material from the ethnographic research carried out in the 1950s and 1960s by the Institute bearing his name, to about 65,000 photographs and negatives and some 40,000 drawings and paintings. In the 1970s and 1980s some 4,500 diapositives, mainly from Ethiopia, were added and in the past years some further collections of historical photographs were donated to the Frobenius Institute, such as a collection of about 1,000 b/w prints and negatives by the German engineer Walther Kühme, who in the early twentieth century had spent several years in the Cameroons and in China. The entire collection of photographic material is taken care of by a professional photographer specialized in dealing with historical negatives and who has an adequate lab at his disposal (Steigerwald 1995).

In the past decade the Frobenius Institute's image collection has been accessed with the help of a database and has been digitized to a great extent. Starting in 2010, the image data base has been available online.[6] Since then, the image archive records some 60000 clicks every month by 800–1000 different visitors, resulting in a much higher visibility than ever before. I will talk about the way this proved to be a watershed event in the use of the collection after a few comments on the images' content.

IMAGES AND MESSAGES

What is almost entirely missing in Frobenius' corpus of images is any hint to modernity.[7] In this aspect the image corpus left by Frobenius stands out from contemporary photographs produced in Africa by colonial officials, which abound with railways, plantations, bridges and western architecture. In many ways it also differs from official photographs taken by missionaries (Geary

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6   http://bildarchiv.frobenius-katalog.de/

7   Streck (2001:121) speaks of „kulturmorphologische Ruinenromantik", the romantic inclination for ruins.

1991: 49–50) and thus forms an image cosmos of its own. Although the constricted focus on "traditional" life was not uncommon in ethnographic photographs (Heintze 1999: 5), the anthropometric images of physical anthropology frequently found in contemporary collections of ethnographic photographs (Theye 1989: 92–94) are missing entirely in Frobenius' photographs. This is certainly related to the fact that race wasn't a concept compatible with his cultural theories and his idea of culture being somewhat independent from the individuals. He thus could claim that the "Paideuma", the "cultural soul" of West African peasants (Äthiopen) is similar to the one of Germans, whereas the one of the African pastoralists (Hamiten) could be equated with the "Paideuma" of the British and the French (Frobenius 1932: 110).

Putting aside the fact that any hint to modernity has been excluded in the pictures so as to show only "traditional" culture, the degree in which the images seem to have been posed seems much less than in comparable collections.[8] This might be related to the fact that Frobenius went to the field as an anthropologist who wanted to document local cultures "in situ" rather than to stage indigenous people with traditional wear together with "typical" objects in ways it could have been done in a diorama or in a studio situation.[9] However, the contemporary scientific context with its predilection for "*Typen- und Trachtenbilder*" (images of types and traditional costumes) or "*Rasseköpfe*" (race heads) (Schindelbeck 1989: 17–18) could be sensed in the way the images were ordered and registered as they were integrated into the Institute's pictorial archive. Some of them were tagged as "types" – by whom is unclear – which meant that the photographed persons were not depicted as individuals but as specimens standing in for an entire ethnic group (Theye 1989: 61–62, 92–97, Heintze 1999: 4, 9 and 2016). Who introduced this category and when it was introduced is not clear but it was certainly pre WW II.

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8   For example the photographs of Henri Labouret in today's southern Burkina Faso (Kambou-Ferrand 1993: 79–80) those of Egon von Eichstett in India (Müller 2013: 6) or of Paul Ehrenreich in Peru (Kraus 2013: 14), cf. also Pinney 2011: 81–85.

9   See for example Carl Passavant's photographs from the West African coast (Schneider/Röschenthaler/Gardi 2005).

From a post-colonial perspective inspired by Foucault and Derrida, an archive such as the one left by Leo Frobenius could well be seen as an instrument of hegemony (Zeitlyn 2012: 462). The way the material is ordered, indexed, described and presented can in itself perpetuate powerful Eurocentric narratives about the "Other". We therefore tried to index the images with more appropriate terms, changing particularly the historical hierarchical thesaurus of keywords: What used to be indexed as "types" became mostly "portrait" and degrading terms such as "dwelling" (Behausung) became "building" (Gebäude). Also the former geographical order according to cultural areas (Kulturprovinzen) based on Ankermann's and Frobenius' cultural circles (Kulturkreise) and elaborated later by Hermann Baumann (1975) was dropped in favour of more neutral terms such as countries and geographical regions. While the old indexing system only retained the names of expedition members under the category "depicted persons", we also integrated the names of the depicted "natives" whenever such a name was passed down in the records, thus connecting the photographs to the lives of their subjects (Zeytlin 2012: 465). Along with the new indexing system we kept the records of the historical indexing system in order to document an older scientific approach to the images, as we believe that such layers of scientific contextualization can be crucial in understanding the origin of the images as well as their historical uses.

AFTER GOING ONLINE

The image database going online in early 2010 had a number of effects: Frobenius' image cosmos, which hitherto had been known only to a handful of specialists, suddenly became visible worldwide, wherever internet is available and thus connected the collection with numerous and multi-disciplinary research and exhibition activities. Although we had hoped that digitization would reduce the negative conservatory effects of handling the originals, this was only partly true, as the demands to see the originals and display them in exhibitions also grew.

While the collection became increasingly relevant for academic research, it also became relevant for private individuals researching their family history. An example of this was the late Afro-Danish free jazz saxophonist and composer John Tchicai (1936–2012). A young Loango man named Tschikaja

was Frobenius' boy during his Congo trip 1904–1906 and was subsequently taken to Berlin by the German ethnographer (Frobenius 1924: 169–108). He later married a Danish lady and their son John, born in 1936 in Copenhagen, thus found the earliest images of his father.[10]

Other uses of the digital image archive are less innocent and suggest that a certain amount of control over the pictures would be useful. Shortly after going online, a selection of images was taken without written consent from the online database by the biggest German tabloid, the Bild-Zeitung. As might be expected, the choice of images presented under the header "This is how Africa looked 100 years ago" was a compilation of common Africa stereotypes and certainly not the kind of use we would have wished. Furthermore the copyright watermark on the images was skilfully photo-shopped away.

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10 See the interview with John Tchicai at http://christophwagnermusic.blogspot.de/ 2012/09/john-tchicai-ein-interview-mit-dem.html (last accessed 21 March 2017).

Fig. 6: "That's how Africa looked 100 years ago"

Bild-Zeitung, Frankfurt, 3 march 2010, p. 6.

While this kind of misuse can hardly be prevented once a digital image is out on the web, the question remains how could pictures produced in colonial contexts ideally be used without reproducing obsolete hegemonic structures and stereotypes? One answer could be to involve the people whose forbearers are depicted on the pictures and give them a voice.

Great examples for this are "visual interpreters", such as the ones contextualizing a selection of photographs from the Basel Mission Image Archive. Two renowned Harvard based scholars engaged in this initiative, the Ghana born historian Emmanuel Acheampong and the India born urban designer Rahul Mehrotra, helped by the late Sharada Dwivedi, a Mumbai based conservator.[11] Taking this approach further beyond the ivory tower, the London based charity Autograph ABP works internationally in photography, cultural identity, race, representation and human rights by advocating the "inclusion of historically marginalised photographic practices".[12]

In the case of Frobenius' image archive, we tried to bring the pictures back to the countries where they were produced. In 2008 we were invited to Ouagadougou by a local NGO to organize the exhibition "Leo Frobenius à Ouagadougou: Les images du Faso il y a cent ans" at the Musée National. During this event, printouts and digital copies of over 600 images produced in 1908 by Frobenius' second expedition on the territory of today's Burkina Faso were handed over to the Museum as well as to the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique et Technique.

Two years later a similar project was conceived and carried out together with the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments. Five exhibitions took place in Abuja, Ife, Makurdi, Minna and Yola, each of them displaying regionally relevant images under the general title "Nigeria 100 years ago through the eyes of Leo Frobenius and his expedition team" (Kuba/Hambolu 2010, Müller 2011).

In 2011 parts of the huge photographic material taken during the 1950–51 expedition to southern Ethiopia headed by Frobenius' successor Adolf Ellegard Jensen were displayed in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, as well as in the South Omo Research Center in Jinka (Zühlke 2011) and finally we organized a conference and an exhibition in Dakar, Senegal, in collaboration with the University Cheikh Anta Diop and

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11 http://basel.bmpix.org/visips.htm (last accessed 21 March 2017).

12 http://autograph-abp.co.uk/ (last accessed 21 March 2017).

the Musée Thédore Monod de l'IFAN/Ch. A. Diop (Kuba/Ivanoff/Kassé 2017).

Fig 7: Invitation by the Nigerian Commission for Museums and Monuments, October 2010

The overview of the image corpus and the choice of images selected for display would have hardly been possible without a database containing the digital images that was accessible to our partners in Africa. For them, the photographs, aquarelles and pencil, pen and ink drawings were of considerable historical value as rare visual representations of their countries' past, casting a bright light onto an epoch from which only very few pictures have survived to date (Hambolu 2010).

However, not everybody is happy to see historical pictures produced in colonial contexts on display, as can be exemplified in the case of Australian Aboriginal people and images they would classify as "secret-sacred" (Peterson 2003). Being aware of the sensitive issue of publicly displaying photographs of certain ceremonies intended only for the eyes of initiated men etc., we decided not to publish them online; instead a dummy appears with the message "restricted material, not to be published". The determination of sensitivity was made by Britta Duelke, an anthropologist who had worked for

many years in north-western Australia and had been involved as a consultant in Aboriginal land rights cases. Taking such precautions was, however, not a perfect answer to this kind of question, as we recently received a delegation from the Ngariniyin Aboriginal Cooperation (NAC) requesting further images be taken off the web. Among these images was rock art, which was copied on canvass by German artists during an expedition to the Kimberly in 1938–39 and depicts motifs for which certain Ngarinyin groups claim copyright. In the memorandum of understanding concluded after negotiations with the NAC, we tried to find a balance between legitimate indigenous rights[13] and our *raison d'être* as a research institution to provide historical sources and promote knowledge. We finally agreed on the principle of the Ngarinyin elders having the final say on how the Ngarinyin cultural material found within the Frobenius archive should be used. It was agreed that the final decision on how to handle this material will be determined through consultations and face-to-face meetings with the elders, to be held in the Kimberley. Taking into account the considerable financial and logistical constraints going along with such an approach, this probably means that this specific corpus of about 400 images will be more or less effectively removed from the public as well scientific sphere.

This case illustrates some of the complexities which can be involved in running an archive containing images produced in colonial contexts. The attitudes which different societies may have towards these images may widely vary. Having such an image archive online thus requires seeking a balance that allows for responsible use of the images while minimizing occurrences that some may find offensive. Once an image archive is in this sense understood as a visual heritage shared between the country of deposit and the countries the images once were produced, a number of most rewarding cooperation possibilities may come up and there are good chances to find uses and interpretations much better adapted to a postcolonial world.

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13 Taking into account especially article 12 and 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/un-pfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf) as well as the ICOM Code of Ethnics (http://icom.museum/the-vision/code-of-ethics) and the Australian Government's Policy on indigenous repatriation (https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1761/f/australian-government-policy-on-indigenous-repatriation-august2011.pdf) (all last accessed on 30 March 2017).

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Reflexions on the Photographic Archive in the Humanities

MARGRIT PRUSSAT

PHOTOGRAPHY IN ACADEMIA

Photography has been used in academia as a recording device, analytical instrument, historical source material, note-taking method and mere illustration for research, teaching and publication since its beginnings in the midst of the 19th century. As early as 1844, Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), one of the inventors of photography, predicted many of the later scientific uses of the medium in his path breaking conceptual work "The Pencil of Nature" (Talbot 1844). Widely known are, for example, the notorious programs of anthropometry and racial typology which followed the realistic and objectivist paradigm in humanities and sciences of the time. The visual products of these endeavors now serve as historical evidence of a specific mentality of the photographers rather than being interpreted as adequate representation of the photographed. Cultural "traits", "customs" and "beliefs", popular topics in anthropology since the 19th century, also became objects of the camera, no matter if they were taken in their context of origin or staged off context (for example Krech 1984, Theye 1989, Wiener 1990, Edwards 1992, Hanke 2007). All sorts of travel photography, with or without academic impetus, became possible (Neumayer 1875). In the (natural) sciences, photography served as a research tool from 19th century onwards. For example, around 1860 the physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach (1838–1916) verified his the-

ory of the phenomenon of shock waves, which became crucial for the development of aeronautics, with experimental photographs of bullets (Hoffmann/Berz 2001).[1]

These few and arbitrary examples can only sketch the tip of the iceberg of academic usages of photography in the early days of the medium. The list of examples could be greatly extended and the visual product of these activities is huge. Archives and photographic collections around the world hold visual evidence of these experiments. Glass-plates and other negatives, prints of photographs, slides in diverse material forms and published versions of the images like picture postcards are stored, described, reproduced, digitized and made available to the users of the archives or the world wide web. The value of these early photographs as historical source material is, now, rarely questioned.[2] But this has not always been the case and the fact that photography has long been neglected as an adequate historical source has led to a very fragmentary documentation structure compared to other archival objects (Jäger/Knauer 2009).

Whereas the archival value of the experimental and academic photographs of 19th and early 20th century seems to be beyond question today, the abundance of photographs that arose due to technical developments like the 35-mm camera and later digital photography poses new challenges. Strictly speaking, the production of images was no longer bound to skilled or professional photographers with the invention of the dry-plate negative process early in the 1870's and the first "box-camera" with flexible film in 1888 by Kodak[3]. But the spread of amateur photography reached a new dimension with the introduction of the 35-mm camera at the onset of the twentieth century. The new technical equipment and the photographic processes became

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1   The glass-plate negatives and slides from the personal papers of Mach were digitized and are available online at the Archive of Deutsches Museum: http://www.deutsches-museum.de/archiv/archiv-online/ernst-mach/

2   The genealogy of the ambivalent relationship between history and photography Jäger in this volume.

3   Their slogan "You press the button, we do the rest!" became programme for photography.

easy to handle and the costs were low, facts that led to a vast accumulation of photographs, as it did in the broad field of research related photography.[4]

This essay begins at the question of what happens to research related photographs after their intended purpose had been served? To what extent could they be made accessible for future re-use? This is a subject that became even more relevant with the demand for open access availability of publicly funded research data.[5] Questions of how to take care of this visual legacy and how and where to store and process these images are highly debated. Online image databases or local storing of the originals are only two extremes that span a wide range of alternatives. A further possibility is offered by the archives of universities and other research facilities. The following thoughts represent an archivist's perspective and discuss suggestions for the formation of academic photographic archives.

THE VISUAL LEGACY IN THE HUMANITIES

Within the vast field of photography, I will concentrate on the branch of humanities and will take into focus one special format and materiality of photography, namely the 35-mm slide. The period of active use of the 35-mm slide, whose golden age started in the 1930's, seems to be essentially over and we are now confronted with a huge visual legacy of 35-mm slides.[6] Many institutions store cupboards full of slides in their basements or attics and are struggling with how to deal with them.[7] The stocks of images are sometimes

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4 It has to be questioned if the flood of images is even rising with the invention of digital photography or if, on the contrary, the decision of deleting images that were regarded as not adequate is made easier.

5 Cf. Berlin declaration on Open Access: http://oa.mpg.de/lang/de/berlin-prozess/ berliner-erklarung/

6 This should not deny that photographers still are working with the 35-mm slide for diverse reasons. But the low quantity and relevance to the topic in question here allows to leave them out of the discussion.

7 The empirical basis for this description is the situation at some Universities in Germany. A comparison of my own experiences in Goettingen, Munich, Bayreuth

in a good state of preservation and systematic order, sometimes they come with formal and content description and metadata, but sometimes they exist without nearly any context information and are, even worse, showing severe chemical and mechanical damages. This is a typical situation in academic institutions and many of the above mentioned questions about the handling of scientific photographs in general[8] are greatly applicable to the 35-mm slide.

Decisions have to be made about the future of the images as material objects and as information carriers. Questions about preservation and restoration, selection, description, digitization, accessibility and rights management have to be addressed. The principle tasks of archiving should merge into a practice that meets the academic requirements of the humanities.

Fig. 1: Slide collection

and Bamberg with information by colleagues and literature offered in many aspects comparable situations. Nevertheless, this description is based on singular cases and does not claim to be a general valid statement.

8   This topic was also subject at the conference "*Über den Wert der Fotografie. Wissenschaftliche Kriterien für die Bewahrung von Fotosammlungen*" (March 2012, Aarau, Switzerland).

THE ERA OF THE 35-MM SLIDE FORMAT

The 35-mm slide has some special characteristics as a medium, object and part of social interaction which also influence its value as historical source material. Flexible 35-mm film has been used in both negative and positive film format. It was invented at the end of the 19ᵗʰ century and served first as recording material for cinematographic films. At the beginning of the 20ᵗʰ century, Oskar Barnack experimented with the basis of the filming process and in 1913 invented the Leica camera. It was mass-produced by Leitz beginning in 1924 and became the first successful and widespread 35-mm camera (Kisselbach 2008). The small and handy cameras allowed "fast" photography, because the emulsion was very light-sensitive and rich in contrast and thus facilitated taking photographs by hand instead of using a tripod. Moreover, it became possible to take a series of images at frequent intervals and to take photographs in new situations, like indoors. Starting in the 1920's, these effects also influenced the development of photo journalism as well as popular and travel photography.

One of the most important reasons for the acceptance and spread of the format was the possibility, beginning around 1936, to produce color photos with brilliant quality and sustainability at low costs. For decades, the 35-mm slide format was regarded as the best for color photography at a reasonable price.[9] The richness in contrast could not be reached by other processes and the brilliance of projected slides could hardly be reached by other media. Slides served also as a basis for the printing of colored images. Other slide formats, such as the medium 6x6 cm (or larger) formats, of course increased the effects of the small scale slide, but they were used mainly in the professional or the skilled amateur sector and did not reach the same distribution as the 35-mm slide. Costs for medium format photography were much higher, which led to a different usage of the format in select cases, after thorough preparation. The 35-mm color format responded to a need that existed since the beginnings of photography. The lack of color in photographs was often viewed as a shortfall, leading to experiments with diverse methods to

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9   Alternative film types like Kodachrome will not be discussed here.

add color, especially to the "death-like" black & white portraits. There existed, for example, diverse forms of painting positives and producing color images by combination of different filters (Henisch/Henisch 1996).[10]

The purposes of slide production and usage can be categorized into three main areas, which need to be distinguished in the archiving process. The most common usage is, of course, to create an original image with the positive effects of the 35-mm slide. In many cases, 35-mm slides are unique, in contrast to the negative-positive process, which often leads to the development of diverse prints out of one negative. The question of uniqueness is relevant for decisions about archiving, because the aim is to compose singular fonds and not mere duplications of collections.

Second, slides were often duplicated for distribution. This was common in the commercial sector, where distributors and publishing houses offered slide collections of specific regions, subjects or other focuses. Commercial series of images are often related to tourism and are easy to recognize, as they usually have the publishers name on the frame. Moreover, private persons duplicated slides and distributed them among academic colleagues, friends and family. In many of the latter cases it is difficult to determine whether one has the original or the duplicate in hand.

Finally, slides (originals and reproductions) are frequently used for presentations. Especially in teaching, it was common to reproduce a great number of images from other sources, like books, maps, drawings or artwork, and project them in the classroom and lecture hall. While the numerous reproductions of other sources are not of interest to the archive, the complete sets of slide shows, instead, may offer different historical approaches, as they can shed light on the famous medium of public slide lectures that have existed since the 19th century (Barber 1993). If there is accompanying documentation with the slides shows, they become an especially important historical source for the life-cycle of the images and forms of social interaction by the medium.

To sum up, as we near the end of the era of the 35-mm slide production, we have an abundance of slide collections, many steming from field research, travel photography and photo journalism. Slides are often regarded as bulky because they cannot be viewed adequately without technical devices like a

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10 Diverse methods of adding colour to early photographic formats since the daguerreotype gives evidence of this demand for colour in photography.

light box, a projector or other means of enlargement. Therefore, they are often neglected and denied acceptance in collections, in contrast to printed photographs. The characteristics of the slides and their special forms of usage reveal the need for clear strategies of evaluation, selection and recording of this important visual legacy in the humanities.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND ARCHIVAL ATTENDANCE

If images were academic original data, if they played a significant part in theory formation or if they helped to visualize academic results, there is a need to preserve them and make them accessible, at least within academia. Even apart from the demands since the Open Access initiative, many images are regarded as valuable sources within their own field of origin, as well as for historical inquiry for a variety of approaches and contexts, now and in future.

Archives, in the strict sense of the word,[11] come into service when documents are no longer needed in their original context. This context may be an administrative or academic one. Many administrative documents have to be archived due to statutory provisions, whereas this obligation does not exist for a lot of academic documents. Nevertheless, their preservation may be highly desired for historical reasons. When documents enter the realm of the archive, they should have passed a certain period of safekeeping and evaluation since only some of them can be kept. As total (long-term) archiving simply cannot be accomplished and would not make sense, one has to be selective in order to build a significant historical tradition.[12]

The tasks of university archives, concretely, are twofold: in the first instance they have to assure the long-term preservation and accessibility of relevant documents of the academic self-administration, in the second instance they are building samples and documentation about the academic life

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11 This means archives as institution, with a clear policy and statuary and not the commonly used term of the archive as any form of storage.

12 On the main tasks of archiving cf. Reimann 2008, Menne-Haritz 2006; with special respect to university archives cf. Becker 2009, Brübach and Karl Murk 2003, Moritz 2006.

and research activities (Becker 2009, Universität des Saarlandes 2007). The formation of photographic archives is mostly related to the second field of action. As university archives function as service oriented institutions, the formation of their stock takes into account the specific requirements, the history and the visions of their university. With respect to the building of photographic archives, collaboration with the academic branches of the university is highly recommended. What special needs exist on the academic side? What services do they expect from the archive? And what kind of services can the archive deliver?

PRINCIPLE OF PROVENANCE

One of the most important methods and organization principles in archiving is the principle of provenance, which supports academic research as well as practical archiving issues. The principle means, generally speaking, that documents should be kept in their original context as long as possible. This "original context" may be the context of the production of the image, for example the works of a photographer, or it may be the context of a collection on a specific topic, by a specific person or institution. Thus the term is relative and not bound to a fixed category.

To keep the provenance of an object not only helps to identify missing metadata, like time, place or photographer, but it is also significant for the interpretation of an image and the broader context of the photographs, as well as the history of the collection and the archive. It opens up new perspectives on the construction and the intention of the image that the photographer may have had in mind. Critical historical research profits greatly if collections are organized by their provenance and not mixed up according to the photographed objects or places.

The principle of provenance, moreover, helps to present archival documents in their place- and time-dependent context, for example in highly politicized or contested fields. Original, rude colonialist's descriptions may be documented with an image and thus offer an entrance point for historical research, which could be hidden by a later added, politically correct nomination in the archive. It is, of course, necessary to declare the sources of any description of the documents. In reality, due to the long neglect of photographs as an adequate historical source material, there are items or whole

collections within archives without any contextual information about their origin. But with the help of further documentation, from within or outside the archive, provenances can be reconstructed by critical research.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SELECTION

The flood of all kinds of data like written documents, images or other media needs clear strategies of evaluation in order to preserve cultural heritage. Thus, evaluation is one of the most important tasks of the archivist, who has to select and build historically significant samples (Tiemann 2008). Evaluation criteria are developed in collaboration (four-eye-principle at least) to minimize personal prejudice. Photographs enter the archive from diverse sources, sometimes as part of personal papers, sometimes as complete collections or personal remains, sometimes without context. Therefore, the criteria for evaluation of photographs differ in some aspects from the general criteria for evaluation of other documents. In any case it is necessary to install specific criteria for evaluation and to document and communicate them in order to make the history of the archive transparent.

Evaluation criteria

First of all, the singularity and uniqueness of the images is an important aspect, as one tries to avoid redundancy and duplication of archival stocks while creating unique collections. For example, it does not make much sense to archive photographic prints of a renowned photographer if the complete photographic legacy, including negatives and prints, are stored in another public archive. A parallel archiving of photographs incurs high costs without having, probably, the right to publish and make accessible the image in question. Singularity, with respect to the informational value as well as the aesthetic value, and the quality of the photograph are leading principles for evaluation. Within academic archives, the aesthetic value may be interpreted differently than in the realm of fine arts and different aspects of singularity may be competing. As a result, evaluation is a process of deliberation and cannot strictly follow general rules, rather it depends on the focus of the special institutions.

The aspect of the prominence of the photographer or the photographed subject is related to the uniqueness of the images. Within academic collections, this aspect is closely connected to the specific main academic focuses of the respective university, but the decision of integration of photographs is not necessarily bound to the main academic fields.

A third criterion is the state of preservation of the images. Storage conditions might have led to chemical or material damages, which may be irreversible. Faded colors can be processed, but this may also cause severe damage. Special care is needed if fungus or mold have attacked the images because, apart from destroying the infected image, they can spread to other fonds. Therefore infected images should be handled with care if they are to be integrated into a collection.

Cost and available resources are not only an important consideration for questions of restoration, but also for preservation, digitization, description and storage in general, as these tasks are labor-intensive. The expense of high quality digital storage should not be underestimated, nor the costs for the adequate physical storage of original photographs, negatives or slides. The ideal conditions for storage of color images and slides are, for example, different from the conditions for paper documents, thus it could be necessary to organize different archiving rooms. Moreover, resources for ongoing tasks like data management, control and migration need to be secured (Glauert/Walberg 2011).

Items that could easily be removed in the evaluation process are reproductions of other sources, like books, maps, other photographs etc. Especially in academia, these kinds of reproductions are very widespread as they were needed for presentations or lectures. This material may also be subject to copyright restrictions and often the quality of the reproduction is poor or the images exist in good quality at other institutions.

RE-CONTEXTUALIZATION AND DESCRIPTION

Scholarly work with photographic sources relies, to a certain degree, on the contextualization and description of images. Likewise, it also adds new layers of knowledge and interpretation to the pictorial sources and helps, at least, to identify new metadata of the images. Photographic archives therefore welcome scholarly research that uses their photographic stock. If images are available for research there is a good chance to gather some data from the academic community, for example by social media or crowdsourcing projects.

As is true for other source material, photographs should also be archived including metadata about their time and place of production, about the photographer and the purpose of the image and other information. Forms of archival classification and description follow national or international standards as the integration into gateways is made easier and the user has easier access to archival descriptions that follow comparable standards and customary layout. Archives offer diverse starting points for systematic approaches to their stock and information retrieval systems normally allow full text searching (Nimz 2008).

However, one has to take into account that the content and structure of an archive influences the perception and interpretation of the pictures and with this the "images" of history, no matter how "objective" the classification and description of the sources is intended to be. The corpora of images may be built by strategy, by mere chance, or by both, but the history of the fonds itself is never irrelevant to interpretation and should be reflected in archiving strategies (Sekula 1989, McQuire 1998, Edwards/Hart 2004). It is the task of the archive to find forms of description which are not misleading but offer the sources as openly as possible. A wrong or undeclared uncertain status of a description can cause more damage than a missing one.

Contextual information may be detached from accompanying archival or published documents if it is not delivered with the images themselves. As images are sometimes archived without related personal papers or other documentation, their contextualization is made difficult. But if the depositories of images, as well as of related documents, are known, a combined research of the respective archival groups of the archives in which parts of the collection are held promises meaningful results and may lead to a virtual reunification of disconnected fonds.

Photographic Archive of Otto Friedrich Raum

The archiving process of the photographic collection of Otto Friedrich Raum (1903–2002) may serve as a striking example. Friedrich Raum was an internationally renowned German anthropologist and educator who was born in East Africa and later lived and worked in Eastern and Southern Africa. After his death, his personal papers were donated to the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* (Bavarian State Library), which also took over some albums containing photographs. The collection of 35-mm slides, however, was donated to the University of Bayreuth and stored at the digital archive of African Studies (DEVA).[13]

The slides stem from the period of 1938 to 1968 and were taken mainly in Eastern and Southern Africa. They contained only few metadata and content information, the only texts accompanying them were a few handwritten entries on the frames of the slides themselves. The state of conservation was sometimes poor, colors were fading, and there were images of objects that apparently belong to an (unknown) museum. Apparently, the images were not arranged in a chronological, spatial or obviously systematic order, but following a hitherto undeciphered order which did not make it easy to access the collection. From an expert opinion we[14] knew that the field research photographs were of extraordinary value and rareness for the time and region of their production. They showed, for example, diverse rituals and festivities, but also everyday life activities of the Zulu and other people in Southern Africa. Hence, it was reasonable to take some efforts toward the recontextualization of the images.

One possibility to gather context information was the consultation of the personal papers of Otto Friedrich Raum. Potentially, they contain some kind of "shooting-lists", entries in diaries or letters or other information about the slides. But as the papers were not yet recorded, it was difficult to estimate if there would be any information on the images at all. To get access to the

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13 http://www.deva.uni-bayreuth.de

14 This report is based on a description project which I conducted in 2011 at DEVA together with Prof. Achim von Oppen, then director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Bayreuth, and Tabea Köster, student assistant of the project, who did the consultation of the papers and the alignment with the slides. The project was funded by a grant of the Oberfrankenstiftung.

papers, we started a collaboration project with Johannes W. Raum[15] (the son of O.F. Raum) and the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* with the aim of (virtually) putting together the photographic archive and the personal papers.

Fig. 2: Füße auf Holz

Nachlass O.F. Raum.

One visual example may reveal how helpful and important the consultation of the papers was for the description of the photographic archive. The image shows human feet on an unidentified ground and any meaningful description was hard to discern from the image itself. But in the personal papers we found a manuscript of a lecture by O.F. Raum with the title „*Dias Vortrag Ostafrika*" (Slides for lecture East Africa") from 1983 (*Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Nachlass O.F. Raum*). It contains the following description for this image "*Der Motor: Muskelkraft der Füße (Salzpflanzen!)*" ("The motor. Ferry powered by muscular strength" – my translation). And a local hint to the Kilombero river in southern Tanzania. Thus one could conclude that this is an image of the famous ferry over the river Kilombero in Southern Tanzania, which is powered by people.

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15 Prof. Dr. Johannes W. Raum was an important partner in the project and shared a lot of information with us. We mourn his passing in 2014.

Apart from this example, it became possible to identify many portraits with the help of the personal papers. Also, the correct order of a series of images showing rituals has been made possible by the consultation of the papers. These few examples may illustrate that the project was very efficient for the description and (re-)contextualization of the photographic archive. And it is a vivid example of the significance of the principle of provenance, even if the provenance was split to two institutions. Only by bringing together the photos with the papers did it become possible to identify the images and reveal important parts of their meaning.

The example of the ferry illustrates that accompanying documentation for slide shows may reveal important hints for historical research. Apparently, many slides of the collection of Raum had been sorted according to lectures and for publication in books. Moreover, slides often served as part of social interaction for lectures, public events and presentations in public and private realms. Thus the search for contextual material and information on the life-cycle of the image, for example the history of its presentation and publication, can offer significant results.

DIGITIZATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

The most common access to archival documents is still performed in the reading room of the archive, where interested persons work with the original documents. Working with original documents offers a different range of access points and research methods than working with secondary and/or digital forms. For example, relevant questions of historical source criticism, especially with regard to the external aspects of the items, can be better examined by looking at original documents rather than their digitized form. Also, the materiality of diverse archival objects simply cannot be presented through digitization.

But digitization and preparatory tasks for (open) access to archival material are core activities of archivists in a technical and organizational respect. Both ways, working with original or with digital objects are complementary and not exclusive. The availability of digital formats allows easy access to the archival documents for a broad and large audience which would in many cases not be able to visit the archive personally. Academic research profits

from the digitization of archival documents and from offering (open or restricted) access to digital data and metadata. Moreover, the possibilities for interactive and collaborative work are enhanced widely by the offering of digitized material.[16]

Archives, libraries and other research institutions are called by leading national institutions to enhance their digital research infrastructures and the possibilities for funding are growing (*Wissenschaftsrat 2012*). Nevertheless, it is still a problem of capacity for many archives to respond appropriately to the requirements of the digital era in great parts of academic, public and private life. Actually, it is one of the main tasks of the archives to enhance the needed capacity in the realms of personnel, finances and technical supplies for the modernization in the direction of digital archiving. This modernization, which is taking place, is the presupposition if the archives want to stay an adequate partner for academic research in the future.

A project of the *Bundesarchiv* (National Archives, Germany) shall be summarized briefly as an example for making available open access photographic collections. The *Bundesarchiv* started a collaborative project with Wikimedia and made accessible parts of its photographic collections. The responses were immense, especially students came into contact for the first time with the stock of the *Bundesarchiv* via this collaboration and were impressed about the wealth of images and the open access policy of the *Bundesarchiv*.[17] Unfortunately, the *Bundesarchiv* stopped the collaboration with the argument that they were not able to respond to the flood of requests that arose out of the accessibility of their photographs.

A second example illustrates a social media project by the Library of the University of Zürich (ETH Zürich). They conducted a project for the description of the photographic archive of SwissAir which was donated to them. A selected group of former employees of the SwissAir, thus a limited group,

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16 The digital availability of archival documents seems to be, especially for students and younger researchers (digital natives in the widest sense), rather the normal and expected way than the work with original documents and explanation is often needed that there is much more valuable material in the archive than can be found (at the moment) via google & co.

17 Cf. for example the works of the photographer Walther Dobbertin of East Africa, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Photographs_by_Walther_Dobbertin?uselang=de.

described the photographs in detail. Subsequent workflows in alignment of data and corrections according to international standards in description had to be undertaken by the library, but the positive effect was that they gathered an immense wealth of information and metadata in a very short time and were thus able to present the photographic archive within a short period of time.[18]

THE BLANK POSITION IN THE ARCHIVE

To a certain extent, the holdings of an archive are contingent on what has been offered and what could be acquired. But besides these outer limitations, the archivists are also actively contributing to the composition of their stock, as was explained with respect to the necessity of evaluation and selection. Historical approaches to the archival material can also include research about the institution of the archive itself, whose results may be linked back to the history of the documents.[19] Ideally, the archive itself offers relevant documents about its own origin, its development, its structure and its policy of collecting.

A different starting point for research on the archive, its stock and its collections would be to ask for the "blank positions"[20] in the archive. More concretely, this approach can pose the following questions to the archive: Which images do not exist in an images collection? Are there significant motives that do not occur though they were highly expected? Is it possible to detect more general lines in the blank positions? And can substantial conclusions be drawn and proved about the reasons for the blank positions? What insights does the archive offer into its history while reading and interpreting the blank positions? Are they significant, maybe for specific time- or space-bound reasons or do they stem from the active evaluation process by the archivist or maybe, earlier, the photographer?

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18 Cf. the presentation by Michael Gasser, Library of ETH Zürich, 82. Deutschen Archivtag 2012, 27.09.2012.

19 Philosophical and theoretical critiques about the archive are offered for example by Foucault (1994) and Ernst (2002).

20 To adopt a term by Wolfgang Iser (1976), who discusses the "Leerstelle" in literature.

This approach proved to be very fruitful for a study on the photography of slavery in Brazil, where it became obvious that certain public and visible aspects of the system of slavery obviously did not exist on photographs though they were very present on other forms of visual arts like engravings or drawings. These blank positions centered mainly on images of cruelty and punishment against slaves. One interpretation of this significant blank position was the so-called realistic effect of photography which seemed to have banned objects from the camera which did not seem to fit with hegemonic interests (Prussat 2008). On the contrary, the photographs have underlined the myth of harmonious slavery in Brazil which was revealed by Gilberto Freyre (Freyre 1933).

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES. FROM HIDDEN SECRETS TO OPEN ACCESS?

The connections between academia and the archive are manifold. The archive offers historical source material for research, initiates research about its holdings, conducts research itself and becomes the subject of critical historical research itself. Also with respect to photographs, the archive evaluates, takes over, classifies, describes and makes available the images for further research, which will extend the initial purpose of the images within their research context. Thus the images enter a new context which is no longer bound to their former usage. And in many cases, only now do they become accessible to a broader audience. If no legal restrictions, such as personal rights or copyrights, stand against it, this access is intended to be as open as possible, whereas access rights management is of high priority. Though the development of criteria of evaluation is the duty and responsibility of the archivist, it is very helpful, especially in academic fields, to collaborate with the institutions and branches that produced and will utilize the images. Also with respect to classification and description, the aid of factual know-how is recommended and makes archiving as well as the use of the archive more efficient. Another aspect of the archive as service provider can be the allocation of pre-structured photographic archiving database for researchers, so that they can use international standardized archiving forms without having to create and administer them by themselves.

In the humanities, there are huge, highly significant and unique collections of 35-mm slides which afford clear strategies in storage, digitization and description. They are part of a valuable cultural heritage that has long been neglected, because of the "moderate" aesthetic and technical value that has been ascribed to this mass-media format.

Nevertheless, mere digitization of all holdings and storage of millions of digital images without a clear evaluation strategy would not lead to a useable archive because the capacity needed for the classification, description and administration of the photographs and the data can hardly be afforded. Social media applications or crowdsourcing models are helpful methods to integrate the academic (and non-academic) community into the process of describing the images. Thereby the principle of provenance proves to be crucial for the composition of photographic archives as well as for archives in general. It facilitates the reconstruction of contexts of origin of the images and artifacts and thus the (re-)contextualization of images.

Now and in future, new branches and new methods of research are posing challenges also to the archiving of photographs and other documents and media. New types of images will arise and new requirements for research are expected which afford permanent development of the services of the archive. A promising path into the digital future of the university archive is to closely network with the academic branches, with the relevant producers, consumers and interpreters of archival data.

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Re-imagining the Family Album through Literary Adaptation

Sally Waterman

As an artist, I create autobiographical still and moving image works that explore memory, place and familial relationships, drawing upon writers such as Henry James, Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf. In contrast to the conventional forms of film adaptation, I interpret literature emotionally and selectively, in order to produce an ambiguous form of self-portraiture. I therefore allow the text to function as a mediating tool, for the recollection of difficult, yet universal experiences, such as illness, loss and separation. As both artist and subject, my interdisciplinary, self-reflexive practice is concerned with the staging of the self as a subjective performance, operating within a confessional mode.

This alternative method is firmly positioned within a fine art context, and aims to adopt a therapeutic stance, utilizing adaptation as autobiography, realised through a re-scripting process of fragmentary extraction, based upon personal identification. Indeed, I re-invent the source material, seeking associations with certain images, themes, characters or concepts. My doctoral research used T.S Eliot's 1922 poem, *The Waste Land* as a framework to investigate my elusive self-representational strategies, and interpretative methods, which culminated in a collection of photographic and video installations, made between 2005 and 2010. Through the employment of constructed narratives, metaphorical landscapes and performative re-enactments, the *Waste*

Land project became an attempt to work through the marital breakdown and divorce of my parents, and my subsequent estrangement from my father.[1]

The Waste Land was published the same year as James Joyce's *Ulysses,* and, was in part, a response to the First World War. It is a pessimistic vision of the beginning of the twentieth century, relayed by a journey through a modern waste land, depicted by five individual sections that draws upon a rich tapestry of both historical, and contemporary references, sourced from literature, mythology and popular culture. The poem deals with universal themes, such as loss of faith, broken relationships and human alienation, and is delivered by a multitude of unidentified voices, and cinematic episodes, that seem to suggest that history inevitably repeats itself, through a continual juxtaposition between past and present.

This chapter will consider how the adaptation of T.S Eliot's poem, allowed me to re-interpret the text as a visual autobiography and reconsider my personal history, informed by the close examination of the family album. This notion will be addressed through three photographic and video works from the *Waste Land* project; *PastPresent* (2005), *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007), and *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009)*, which all enabled me to re-evaluate my childhood memories and familial relationships through literary adaptation.

PastPresent (2005) was the first resolved work I produced for the *Waste Land* project, and marked the shift towards creating an autobiographical interpretation of the poem. This set of six photographs was initiated by the reference to Marie's sledge ride in part one, of Eliot's poem, *The Burial of the Dead*. The transferral of emotions from, "I was frightened" (l.15) to, "In the mountains, there you feel free" (l.17), activated a compelling childhood memory of learning to ride a bicycle, and prompted a consideration of why the past is either inadvertently romanticised, or perceived with a trusted nostalgia, as a time where fears were overcome.

This compelling emotional connection between the literary text, which is chosen for its empathetic quality, and myself, the reader, is what Susan Suleiman identifies as "*strong* autobiographical reading" (Suleiman 1993: 200). As an artist, this term pertinently describes my method of drawing upon literary texts that have autobiographical resonance. In this sense, I allow myself

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1 Works from the 'Waste Land' project can be viewed at: http://www.sallywaterman.com/projects.php

to 'speak' through the text, in order to unlock and re-imagine past memories, so that some kind of transformation can take place. This form of identification with literature is something that Suleiman explains through her own encounters with Jewish stories about the Second World War, "that could have been my own" (Suleiman 1993: 204). Marianne Hirsch takes on board Suleiman's concept in *Family Frames*: *Photography, Narrative and Postmemory,* to describe her own experience of reading Eva Hoffman's novel, 'Lost in Translation', an autobiographical story of her migration from Poland to Canada at the age of thirteen. Associating herself with the author, due to their shared experience, she reveals how, after reading:

"I can no longer see the page. Tears are flowing down my face, I realize I am sobbing. These sentences have released a loss, whose depths I had never, until that moment, allowed myself to feel or remember." (Hirsch 1997: 218)

Having elicited this pertinent childhood memory, triggered by the description of Marie's sledge ride, I managed to locate a photograph of myself, aged six or seven years old, and my older brother on Christmas Day, posing on our new bicycles on the driveway of the family home on the Isle of Wight, UK, where my Mother still lives on her own. Whilst my brother is looking towards the camera, smiling and self-assured, I am concentrating, eyes cast downwards, my hands clutching onto the handlebars and my feet firmly resting on the pedals. However, I quickly realise upon closer inspection that the camera provided an inaccurate illusion of the event, as the bicycle's stand was still down, since I was not able to ride at that point in time. Consequently, this particular photograph captures the moment before I achieved this childhood rite of passage. I specifically remember trying out this balancing act and being a little fearful of the tremendous task ahead of me, in learning to ride this shiny new bicycle. Informed by Eliot's poem, this photograph brought back distinctive memories of the glorious sensation of freedom that had I felt when I realised that I was speeding down the road on my own, without my father holding onto the back of the bicycle. I remember my eagerness to replicate the experience and to try again, in the knowledge that, not only I had really achieved something, but also to repeat the same physical sensation I had so readily identified with in Eliot's poem.

From this initial family snapshot, I then rediscovered other photographs from my childhood that were all taken around the exterior of the family

home. I then edited together six photographs, which documented group portraits shot on special occasions, such as my birthday party tea on the patio, or playing in the paddling pool with friends in the back garden in the long, hot summer holidays. The series also included a posed group family photograph of my mother, father, brother and myself, pictured in the back garden of the new house in 1976, when I was only two years old. It depicts a tightly knit family group, bodies held close to one another, with arms embracing, emulating a sense of togetherness and contentment.

After my parent's divorced, soon after my university graduation, I took some comfort in this image, despite feeling a sense of loss with the dramatic irony of knowing how the future unfolded. Representing the promise of family unity, it provided evidence that my family were indeed 'happy' until their relationship started to unravel by the time I became a teenager. In terms of Eliot's poem, this harmonious family snapshot epitomised the unquestioning nature of Marie's childhood recollections of a carefree past, out sledging with her cousins.

However, Eliot associates the arrival of spring as cruel and painful, rather than restorative, since any subsequent memories had been tarnished by the horrors of the First World War. By contrast, winter becomes comforting, allowing these recent memories to be buried by "forgetful snow". Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley describe how despite the fact that Marie overcame her childhood fears in the past, "remembering the past and intuiting the future, she is left in a vacuum in the present moment, an absence in the middle of her life" (Brooker/Bentley 1992: 62).

A year or so after my parent's divorce, secrets were revealed that undermined this illusion of the happy family depicted in this family snapshot. I discovered then, that even at this early stage of my parent's marriage, just after I was born, my father was involved in extra martial affairs, which my mother, at that time was oblivious too. Therefore, I identified with this desire to escape the natural seasonal cycles of time and remembrance in 'The Waste Land', recounting the way in which I had been caught up within this 'vacuum' of not-knowing, attempting on one hand to remember, whilst of the other, trying fruitlessly to forget the trauma of my discovery. As a result, this particular image, taken before I can remember, is especially poignant since the closeness that is implied here, is tainted by the subsequent knowledge of my father's infidelity.

In 'Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination' (1995), Annette Kuhn acknowledges the existence of family secrets, whose narratives are commonly forgotten or repressed. Relating what she terms, 'Memory Work', with that of archaeology or detective investigations, she states:

"The past is like the scene of a crime: if the deed itself is irrecoverable, its traces may still remain. From these traces, markers that point toward a past presence, to something that has happened in this place, a (re) construction…of the event can be pieced together." (Kuhn 1995: 4)

Viewing this old group photograph, whilst actually being present at the family home on the Isle of Wight at the time of shooting in 2005, I was acutely aware of the fact that the vegetation and trees in the garden had since become fully established, and that the present scene was vastly different from that represented in the original family snapshot. Having re-evaluated the family albums kept within my mother's wardrobe, in the light of this literary connection, I was immediately drawn towards the potentiality of a comparison between past and present. I felt a need to literally hold up the physical artefact in front of the same scene twenty-five years later, in order to make an instant comparison, and to uncover the hidden 'traces' or meanings behind this archetypal family image.

I had originally envisaged *PastPresent* as a digital video piece, beginning with an extreme close-up of the family snapshot, which would then gradually pan out to reveal the whole photograph within its present day context. However, at the same time, I also took some black and white photographs of my hand holding the snapshots within the same photographic frame, as I was still uncertain of my recent transition to working with digital video. This subjective perspective, with the appearance of my hand holding the snapshot within the photograph, not only highlights the time lapse between the initial childhood event and the photographic re-enactment, but also invites the audience to participate in my self-reflexive exercise. Operating as an effective distancing tool, this re-appropriation of the past through the act of re-photography suggests a tension between a carefree past, with a present day absence.

Fig.1: PastPresent

Sally Waterman, PastPresent No.6, 2005, Courtesy of the artist

Upon reflection, I found that the duration and continuous movement of the moving image was a barrier to an emotional engagement with the subject. Conversely, the stillness of the photograph allowed time and space for the necessary contemplation of the comparative process to take place. The black and white photographic images themselves were also more symptomatic of memory and appropriate for the subject matter. Gen Doy observes how monochrome images give "an impression of nostalgia, pastness and [...] of death" (Doy 2005: 147). This association reminds us of the substantial and familiar scholarship on the relationship between photography and death. Most notably, it was Susan Sontag, who famously claimed, "All photographs are *memento mori.* To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability" (Sontag 1979: 3–24, 15).

The analogue family snapshots that I sourced for both the *PastPresent* (2005) photographs, and for the later video work, *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007), which I will discuss later on, were not only a reminder of my own mortality, but signified a wider, collective human experience. In this respect, the series is also concerned with our ability to re-assess our own perceptions of past events, places, people and emotions, as well as a sense of knowingness that arises from an apparently idyllic family portrait. I sought to question

the very concept of a photographic truth, in terms of portraying a faithful representation in a pre-digital age, realising that these photographs could only offer a constructed version of the past. Indeed, Sontag reminds us that photography has, "multiple meanings" with "inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy" (Sontag 1979: 23).

During the production of this series, I was struck by the similarity of the family grouping in *PastPresent,* No.6, with that of Duane Michels' 1974 photograph, *This Photograph Is My Proof*. This work depicts a couple seated on a bed, looking directly towards camera in the same reassuring fashion. The woman embraces the man, draping herself around his back, her head resting on his shoulder. The accompanying narrative, handwritten underneath his photograph seeks to reaffirm our understanding of the image, stating:

"This photograph is my proof. There was that afternoon, when things were still good between us, and she embraced me, and we were so happy. It did happen, she did love me. Look, see for yourself!" (Livingstone 1997: 201)

The image is offered as a testimony to the state of their relationship at the time. In this sense it draws upon Roland Barthes' assertion that "The photograph does not necessarily say *what is no longer*, but only and for certain *what has been*" (Barthes 2000: 85). However, whilst Michals photograph certainly documents '*what has been'*, with regard to his subjects positioned in front of the camera, this work also questions the deceptive nature of photography. Issues surrounding posing and performance within family snapshots are relevant to this form of visual representation. As a sitter, I am conscious that I perform for the camera and adopt a particular pose or the same, positive expression that becomes a kind of unrepresentative 'mask', that I see endlessly repeated within the family album over time. This experience correlates with Barthes' assertion that "I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object" (Barthes 2000: 13–14).

Consequently, it is important to acknowledge the way in which photographic images are constructed, together with the way in which their meaning can be construed from different contexts or individual perceptions. As a result, this particular image from the *PastPresent* series became an important benchmark, in recognising that my own re-interpretation of the family album,

translated through the lines of T.S Eliot's poem, was only one of four per-spectives on this family history, and that alternative versions or forgotten narratives could have been remembered by other members of my family. The realisation that literature is used as a means of displacement for visualising past traumatic experience in my practice, led to the increasing recognition of the poem as a therapeutic tool, for 'working through' the breakdown of my parents marriage, and my subsequent estrangement from my father. In his 1914 essay, 'Remembering, Repeating and Working Through', Freud iden-tifies how repressed memory operates:

"The forgetting of impressions, scenes, experiences comes down in most cases to a process of 'shutting out' such things. When a patient speaks of these 'forgotten' things, he rarely fails to add I've known that really, I've just never thought about it." (Freud 2003: 34)

By confronting these 'resistances' (Freud 2003: 33), and recognising the ca-thartic nature of my autobiographical practice, I was able to identify its mean-ing in a more open, honest fashion. Ann Kaplan in *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (2005), argues that art can offer a role in dealing with traumatic experience, through an act of trans-ferral:

"I show the increasing importance of 'translating' trauma – that is of finding ways to making meaning out of, and to communicate...Trauma can never be 'healed'…but if the wound of trauma remains open, its pain may be worked through in the process of its being 'translated' via art." (Kaplan 2005: 19)

Kaplan refers to major catastrophes such as the Holocaust, Hiroshima and 9/11, together with what she classifies as, "'family' trauma that is trauma of loss, abandonment, rejection, betrayal". This concept of 'family' trauma is applicable to my own work, which signifies a need to confront these haunting memories and recurring issues by translating them through my interpretive arts practice. Indeed, the *PastPresent* series encourages the recollection of childhood memories, but also represents an exploration into the tension be-tween the remembering of the event and the actual remembering of the emo-tional response, now that the reality of the situation is known. This realisation is emotionally embodied in the work through what I term, the 'Subjective

Perspective' strategy of my hand holding the photograph within the frame, in an active reassessment of my personal experience.

The British photographer, Jo Spence described how in phototherapy, "Trying to recall one's own history is a painful process of selective remembering and selective forgetting. Of knowing and not knowing" (Spence 1986: 85). In *Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political, Personal and Photographic Autobiography* (1986), Spence closely re-examined her family album and realised that they provided no record of her troubled schooling, ill health, broken marriage or unfulfilling employment as a secretary due to implicit dominant ideology, which meant that we only consider photographing the "harmony in our lives" at times of leisure, consumption or ownership, particularly in the pre-digital era in which she was writing (Spence 1986: 82).[2] This practice-led research, carried out in the 1980's was developed from Spence's previous politicised documentary photography experience and collaborations, which aimed to subvert existing photographic genres and expose unrepresented subjects (Spence 1986: 48–121).[3] Spence's transformative method later developed into a creative collaboration with the photographer, Rosy Martin from the mid 1980's, whereby they took turns to physically re-stage significant scenarios from their past, becoming other family members, or recollecting their former selves, as well as re-living traumatic experiences, in order to allow acceptance to take place, through re-enactment phototherapy (Spence 1986, Martin/Spence 1986, Spence/Holland 1991, Spence/Salomon 1995, Martin 2001).[4]

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2   Spence recounts how the 'Beyond the Family Album' exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in 1979 was an autobiographical investigation into her family and class background.

3   Such as the 'Women and Work' and 'Who's Holding the Baby' project with the Hackney Flashers Collective in the mid-1970s and her collaboration with Terry Dennett which founded the independent educational photography workshops and led to the 'Remodelling Photo-History' project (1981–1982).

4   Rosy Martin (2001: 20) notes how they devised the term "re-enactment phototherapy" to distinguish themselves from the way in which therapists in the United States and Canada used 'phototherapy', since their work employed "psychodramatic techniques" to produce new photographs, within a "therapeutic relationship".

My close analysis of the family album and the confrontation of the past through the means of a therapeutic reconstruction process was informed by Spence and Martin's method of "visual reframing" (Spence 1986: 172). However, there is also an established scholarship that utilises the family snapshot as a tool, not only for visual arts practice, but also for autobiographical writing that encourages the remembrance and the recording of undocumented personal histories (Doy 2005, Kuhn 1995, Stanley 1995). Having reinterpreted the family photographs within the *PastPresent* series in the light of parental divorce, I was keen to investigate Marianne Hirsch's observation that, "photographs locate themselves precisely in the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life" (Hirsch 1997: 8). This renewed understanding of vernacular photography, framed by the concept of performed and repeated cultural behaviour prompted me to develop this self-examination of the family album in more depth, and led to the production of two autobiographical video works, *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007) and *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009).

For the *Fortune-Telling/Re-Telling* (2007) video,[5] I sourced fifty-two photographs, (to replicate the number of playing cards in a pack) from my mother's collection of family albums, that featured key moments in my life, from when I was born, until my brother's wedding in October 2006. The work was based on Madame Sosostris's tarot card reading in part one of *The Waste Land,* where she introduces key characters, such as the drowned Phoenician sailor, Phlebas, and attempts to decipher the ambiguous meanings of each card, warning of the potential dangers that lie ahead. Assuming Madame Sosostris's interpretive role, the video documents my solitary performance of looking through this set of physical images, which was shot in one continuous take, against the grey carpet of my childhood bedroom on the Isle of Wight. Each of the photographs are placed on top of one another in an arbitrary fashion, discarded after being held and remembered, as I reflect, trying to understand the story behind each one. Certain photographs that capture my imagination, or 'prick me', to identify with Roland Barthes' definition of the *punctum* (Barthes 2000: 27), such as a Polaroid of my scarred body after my kidney operation, are singled out, and paused upon for a moment longer. It is also important to note that for exhibition, the work was

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5   The 'Fortune-telling/Re-telling' video can be viewed at: https://vimeo.com/ 195088203

installed at table height, with the screen facing upwards at life size, to simulate my performance to camera, so that the audience shared my own viewing experience.

The process of selecting appropriate photographs for *Fortune-telling/Retelling* was quite traumatic in one way, since having laid out the images in order on the floor, I saw my whole life unfolded in front of me, in this condensed, visual autobiography. The decision to use the grey carpet as a backdrop arose from this activity, since they were initially reviewed and edited on my bedroom floor of my home on the Isle of Wight, and I aimed to replicate the original assessment, with its domestic associations. During the pre-production stage, I considered how representative my selection of photographs actually was, since I could not include everything.[6] The first observation was that of the ageing process, and the fact that despite my changing appearance over time, I still recognised my multiple selves presented in the later images. However, I felt a distinctive sense of detachment and misrecognition from early photographs of myself as a young child. Liz Stanley in *The Auto/Biographical Eye I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography* (1995) identifies this problem regarding the formation of memory, referring to an early photograph of herself as a two year-old girl:

"The child is me – or so she is said to be, so I am told. But I do not know her. My memory cannot reach this child: she sits alone looking out and I look back into her eyes and see and feel nothing." (Stanley 1995: 45)[7]

The problem of being unable to connect with this kind of family photograph as a later viewer in the act of looking, raises poststructuralist debates of subjectivity surrounding unknowingness and fluidity, recalling Barthes' difficulty in 'finding' his mother within his family album, in *Camera Lucida* (Barthes 2000: 63–73, 109).

Despite this barrier to memory, the family album provided fruitful material in terms of phototherapy, since it emphasized the fact that despite the traumatic events in my life and my family breakdown, there was 'evidence'

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6   Since I was thirty-two at the time of pre-production, this calculated at 1.6 images per year to match the number of cards in a pack.

7   This use of photographs as a prompt is most famously used by Annette Kuhn in 'Family Secrets' (1995).

of positive memories. The photographic collection, documented family bonds, the people I knew and the relationships I had, as well as charting the given rituals of Christmases, birthdays, weddings and graduations.[8] However, apart from the Polaroid of my scar from my kidney operation, the archive did not portray the troubled experiences of my personal history, although viewers could detect the distinctive absence of my father in the later family group portraits taken on Christmas Day, around the festive dining table. By carefully reviewing these family snapshots, I was able to decipher hidden meanings within particular images, for instance, a photograph of me resisting the arms of my father at a time when I was experiencing the imminent breakup of my parents' marriage as a twenty year old. However, we are reminded by Marianne Hirsch that; "Photographs are fragments of stories, never stories in themselves" (Hirsch 1997: 83).

Therefore, it is significant that *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* employs superimposition in order to replicate not only the fragmentary nature of memory and of photographic representation, but also to partially obscure this unveiling of personal, family history, as a means of self-protection. The piece assembles three video streams together; first, the assessment of family snapshots to signify the past; second, a game of patience to signify the present, and lastly, my own tarot card reading, to signify the future. These different layers are woven together with varying levels of opacity to imitate the unreliable act of remembering, so that sometimes the work is trebled, whilst at other times each layer is fully visible to the viewer. This constantly shifting viewpoint represents my thought processes at the time of re-enactment, as my consciousness wavered between reminiscence, comparison with the present, and anticipating the future.

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8   MoMA's 1955 landmark touring exhibition, 'The Family of Man', curated by director, Edward Steichen was the first show to make distinctive connections between family and photography. The show was curated thematically under headings of love, marriage, birth, childhood, courtship, adulthood, leisure, religion, death, war and politics (Hirsch 1997: 50–53).

Fig.2: Fortune-Telling/Re-telling

Sally Waterman, Fortune-Telling/Re-telling, 2007, Film still, Courtesy of the artist

Consequently, the superimposition of these childhood photographs with the playing cards and tarot reading, makes a distinction between what is known, (the past), and what is unknown, (the future), insinuating a need for a re-evaluation of the past, together with an attempt to acknowledge life's unpredictability and randomness. The pace at which the narrative unfolds, means that the audience who are unfamiliar with these photographs, are only able to quickly grasp its content, before the other two layers of the game of patience, and the tarot reading, intervene and clouds their vision. In this sense, *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* presents a chaotic representation, consisting of competing narratives, whereby the viewer can only apprehend what I term, 'Traces of the Self' within the family snapshots, which, in turn, become generic significations of shared human experience.

The repetition of some of the childhood photographs, that appear in the earlier *PastPresent* series, operate in a similar fashion to the cinematic montage of recurring motifs, multiple voices and filmic episodes that exist within *The Waste Land* poem itself. Indeed, T.S Eliot embraced the experimental form of avant-garde film, art and literature through his imaginative juxtapositions; from the "Shadow under this red rock", to the hyacinth girl who "could not speak"; from the clairvoyant's ominous prediction of "fear death

by water", to the condemned commuters in the "Unreal City", all within part one of the poem. I was interested in responding to the Modernist context of the work, together with the connection Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley make between Eliot's re-organisation of time in the poem, with the re-organisation of space in cubist painting:

"Perspective in cubism is not only multiplied, but destabilized as the viewer is put into motion. The relation between the subject and object goes from fixity to fluidity. And in *The Wasteland* there is a continuous instability in which images dissolve, re-form, melt, and overlap." (Brooker/Bentley 1992: 31)

I recognised that this cubist preoccupation with multiplicity, which is manifested in Eliot's poem, could be represented through certain visual techniques, to re-affirm my elusive form of self-portraiture, (whereby I typically appear as an anonymous figure, a disembodied self or as a ghostly trace), as well as acting as a masking strategy for this traumatic experience. During the production of the *Waste Land* project (2005–2010), I established a distinctive relationship between the stylistic methods used within Eliot's modernist poem, and my own employment of re-photography and superimposition, to signify not only the layering of time and space, but also the transient nature of memory itself.

Indeed, this notion of multiplicity and fluidity also characterized the variable and competing nature of the memories that were recalled from my exploratory encounter with the family album. An example of this, is the creation of visual echoes throughout the body of work, first depicted by the initial appearance of this family group snapshot pictured in the back garden, re-photographed in the same scene in *PastPresent, No.6* (2005). It is this image which later re-emerges within the sequence of snapshots in the *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007) video, before resurfacing yet again as a ghostly apparition, rising from beneath the waves in *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) floor projection.

However, this re-evaluation of my childhood memories and familial relationships through the family album can also be compared with another type of interpretation that took place during the production stage. *The Waste Land* is saturated with cultural allusions that underpin and reinforce the poem's central meaning, providing a deeper level of intellectual engagement that I needed to comprehend to a certain degree. Although my prior knowledge of

metaphysical poetry and Shakespeare was not imperative for appreciating the work as a whole, I did recognise their thematic contributions, which allowed for a better understanding of the poem. In his accompanying 'Notes', Eliot acknowledges the influence of Jessie L. Weston's book, *From Ritual to Romance* (1920) about the Grail legend and James Frazer's study, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (3 Editions: 1890/1900/1906–15), about fertility ceremonies, alongside literary texts by Baudelaire, Dante, Marvell, Shakespeare and references from popular culture, historical events, Christianity, Buddhism and Greek mythology.

In his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), Eliot claimed that appreciation of new work exists in relation to those produced by "dead poets and artists" (Eliot 1975: 38), and that "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (ibidem: 39). Therefore, since a comparative exercise is inevitable, Eliot employs these contextual influences to renew our readings of them, creating an interwoven tapestry of allusions that comment upon each other, and assert a sense of circularity through the notion that history repeats itself, through this "mythical method" (Eliot 1975: 178). This concept of circularity can be applied to the family album as a visual document of a passing lifetime, as certain rituals, rites of passage and celebrations are played out and family traits are inherited and re-enacted, all set against the inevitability of the changing seasons.

Maud Ellmann highlights the fact that literary critics who are pre-occupied with tracking Eliot's references; "treat the text as if it were a photographic negative, tracing the shadows of a lost or forbidden body" (Ellmann 1987: 32). This metaphor is quite apt, in that whilst these sources provided the foundation of *The Waste Land*, as readers, it is the final photographic print, or, in this case, the poem, that we interpret. Parallels can be drawn between the deciphering of Eliot's cultural allusions and the close analysis of these vernacular family photographs, and the memories that they evoked, which allowed me to re-interpret the poem as a visual autobiography. Indeed, it is the narratives behind each of the family snapshots, or what Martha Langford identifies as the "oral-photographic framework" (Langford 2006: 225), that give them their sense of worth through performance, storytelling and repetition. Significantly, Langford acknowledges the fact that "The album is a meeting place, not an encyclopedia" (Langford 2006: 226), since some images and their associated narratives are ignored, whilst others are contemplated and openly shared.

Whilst re-discovering, and consequently remembering the events, or cir-cumstances of each photograph chosen for the *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* video, the variation regarding the clarity of memories that were generated became apparent, together with the differences between my own recollec-tions, and those of my mother. I found it frustrating when I could not remem-ber much more than what the photograph offered to me, or when there were competing memories of a certain event. However, Liz Stanley reminds us that memory is a mixture of fact and fiction. She states that: "we inevitably remember selectively" and, only, "through the limited and partial evidence available to us – half hints of memory, photographs, memorabilia, other peo-ple's remembrances" (Stanley 1995: 62).

I was also acutely aware of looking back at these images through the benefit of dramatic irony, and the contextual framework of parental divorce, as well as through the lines of *The Waste Land*, to make sense of my family history. In this regard, Stanley's assertion of the limits of photographic rep-resentation, and of the family album's inaccessibility to outsiders became relevant to my understanding of the work. She highlights the fact that:

"With benefit of hindsight, from a subsequent 'moment' to that of the photograph, I can see this innocent lack of knowledge. What came after was my father's death, that of my lover's father and those of two friends, then my mother's devastating stroke. The photograph holds, but does not reveal to any outsider, pain, death and loss." (Stan-ley 1995: 52)

This barrier to interpretation corresponds with what is seen as the elitist na-ture of Eliot's appropriation. James Longenbach warns that, "Teasing out the allusions, we, as readers, become part of that difficult process of transmis-sion. If we do not know the references, we may feel excluded" (Longenbach 1994: 177). I also deliberated the extent of my audience's prior experience of *The Waste Land* and, if their lack of knowledge would prevent them from gaining a full appreciation of my work. However, it was important to realise that the literary texts I chose to interpret served an important function, ena-bling the recall of autobiographical experience, as well as providing a rele-vant thematic, psychological and conceptual framework. This chosen inter-pretive method meant that whilst the works I created are traceable to the source material, they are also able to stand alone, appealing to un-informed

audiences through their universality. This collective appeal is also true of the family album as a form of visual representation that is instantly recognisable.

It is worth noting that this video was primarily made as a private meditation upon my personal history, and functions as an empowering form of phototherapy, rather than as a purely nostalgic exercise. Through the process of making, I was able to rediscover positive childhood memories by reflecting upon key events and relationships, acknowledge the time spent with my father, and most importantly, confront painful experiences through the actual physical procedure of looking through these carefully chosen photographs in an act of re-assessment. This therapeutic method was further developed for *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) video,[9] which was the last piece of work from the *Waste Land* project that drew upon the family album, and is preoccupied by my estrangement from my father after my parent's divorce.

Literary critics have interpreted the meaning of Phlebas, the Phoenician's death in part four of Eliot's poem, 'Death by Water', on which this video is based, in two different ways. First, as a signification of death by water without resurrection, and, second, to symbolize the sacrificial death that precedes rebirth (Abrams 1993: 2157, Brooker/Bentley 1992: 159, Gordon 2000: 182). *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009), applies these conflicting interpretations to my own fluctuating emotions regarding the separation from my father, through the creation of a visual metaphor that embodies the struggle between a haunting resurfacing of past memories, and the cathartic process of burial or acceptance. Aligning the character of Phlebas, with that of my father, the ghostly layering of past and present is communicated by the slow emergence of the now recognisable family group photograph, first seen in *PastPresent No.6*, appearing against the surface of a mesmerising seascape. The photograph moves slowly upwards towards the viewer, shifting from side to side by the motion of the sea. We then watch as the image enlarges to fill the whole frame, finally focusing upon the face of my father, before it disappears from sight, overcome by the waves.

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9   'The Deep Sea Swell' video can be viewed at: http://vimeo.com/24838945

Fig. 3: The Deep Sea Swell
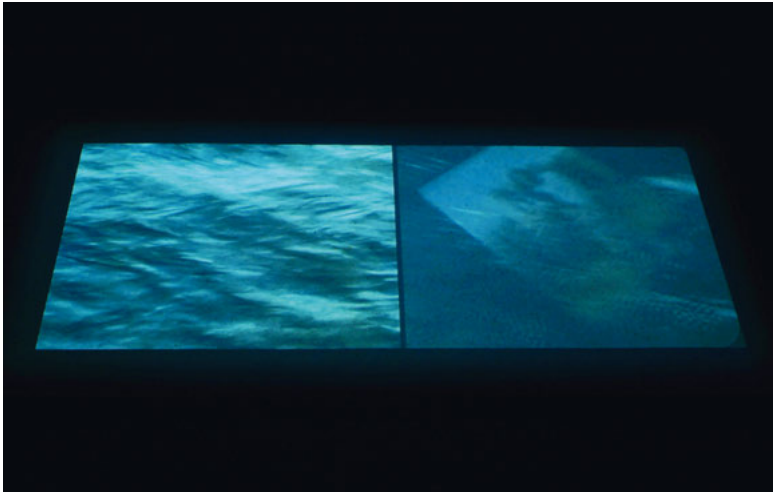
Sally Waterman, The Deep Sea Swell, 2009, Film still, Courtesy of the artist

This split-screen video work, which is suggestive of my divided self, features two, abstract, moving images of the sea, filmed from above to imply a recurring re-visitation of the same, persistent memory. However, each shot presents a slightly different perspective; a wide shot and a closer viewpoint, as well as being slowed down to slightly different speeds, creating a disjuncture or barrier, yet also a point of comparison. The piece begins with the sound of my agitated breath against a black screen, which signifies coming to terms with the trauma from the past, as it slowly calms down to resemble the lulling appearance of the rise and fall of the waves, which fade into view. The background sound of the seascape is accompanied by a whispered voiceover, consisting of an edited script taken from this section of the poem. As we watch the gradual surfacing of the family photograph from the depths of memory, we hear my spoken words, "Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell/And the profit and loss' (l.313–14)", "Entering the whirlpool" (l.318), implying a renewed consideration of the past, having previously suppressed these traumatic memories.

The Deep Sea Swell video also spatialized *The Waste Land* into an emotional, experiential encounter since it was installed as a floor projection in a darkened gallery space. This installation method allowed the audience to immerse themselves more physically into the work, standing on the edge of the

frame and peering downwards as they witnessed the eerie rising of the family photograph from beneath them. Consequently, this perspective heightened the rhythmic movement of the waves, allowing the spectator to feel as if they were almost falling into the frame, before being plunged into darkness and the deep breathing resumed in this short, looping sequence.

The very procedure of undertaking this phototherapy work, derived from the family album and literary adaptation prompted a series of questions that I had previously evaded. Had I accepted the past revelations and resulting separation from my father, or could it mean that I was still troubled by my family history? Whilst a sense of closure and resolution is evident within the mesmerising quality of *The Deep Sea Swell,* and offers some form of respite, it also summons suppressed emotions from its murky depths, heightened by the unsettling rasping breath at the beginning of the video, which indicates the psychological nature of this seemingly unthreatening work.

In his essay, 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917), Freud proposes that these two maladies share inherent qualities, such as dejection, and loss of interest in the outside world from the loss of a love object. Nevertheless, he recognises that mourning is more accepted as a painful experience because, "when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" (Freud 1991: 253). In retrospect, I would suggest that this personal experience occupied both mourning and melancholia at the time, but this work was an endeavour to lay the lost object of the father to rest, in order to become 'free'. In this sense, I was moved by Lyndall Gordon's spiritual view in her biography of Eliot that, "The drowning at the end of 'Death by Water' is not seen to be a disaster, but a stage of purification and metamorphosis" (Gordon 2000: 182).

In conclusion, my empathy with the poem in relation to these three works from the *Waste Land* series, centred upon characterisation, together with appropriating the stylistic techniques, poetic language and symbolic resonance of T.S Eliot's modernist text. The *PastPresent* photographs reclaimed Marie's sledge ride and the sensation of freedom, to represent my memory of learning to ride a bicycle, as well as other key childhood events, whereas I adopted Madame Sosostris' interpretive role for my own assessment of the family album in the *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* video. The ghost of Phlebas came to signify the haunting memory of my father in *The Deep Sea Swell*, along with the thematic associations of sacrifice and burial attributed to that part of the poem.

The retrieval of childhood memories was also prompted by corresponding the interpretation of Eliot's cultural allusions, with the process of discovering the meaning behind each of the family snapshots. Therefore, the literary text provided a way of accessing these difficult experiences through Suleiman's "*strong* autobiographical reading" (Suleiman 1993: 200), allowing me to view these familiar snapshots in a new light. In this respect, my experience of re-examining the family album through literary adaptation acted as a powerful channelling device for the recollection and re-imagining of repressed family memories.

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Public Rites/Private Memories

Reconciling the Social and Individual

in Wedding Photography

JENS RUCHATZ

In a small book entitled *Family Secrets* film historian Annette Kuhn presents a number of unspectacular yet puzzling images. One of them shows a little girl standing in the shade and looking at the camera, obviously posed by the photographer, pressing her lips together as if to signal that she doesn't want to be photographed. An irritating detail might be the handkerchief tied to the child's wrist. From the fact that the print is in black and white, together with the old-fashioned look of the dress, one can conclude that this photograph was taken several decades ago. In the end there is hardly more to observe. Who the little girl is, where and why the picture was taken and what it may mean, remains open to speculation. The title of the book hints to secrets that are connected to this particular picture, these, however, are kept in the dark since they are not visible.

Annette Kuhn reminiscing about a childhood photograph
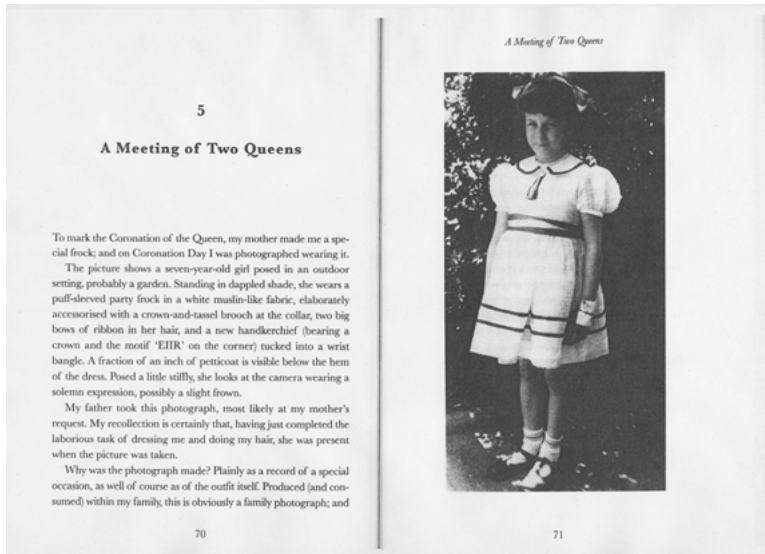
Kuhn (2002:70–71).

Kuhn devotes a whole chapter of her book to this single picture that she has culled from her own family album and starts off with her own description of the content:

"To mark the Coronation of the Queen, my mother made me a special frock; and on Coronation Day I was photographed wearing it. The picture shows a seven-year old girl posed in an outdoor setting, probably a garden. Standing in dappled shade, she wears a puff-sleeved party frock in a white muslin-like fabric, [...] a new handkerchief (bearing a crown and the motif EIIR on the corner) tucked into a wrist bangle. […] Posed a little stiffly, she looks at the camera wearing a solemn expression, possibly a light frown." (Kuhn 2002: 70)

By switching from first person to third person Kuhn, in her narration, distances herself from her past self that is visible in the photograph, trying to look at herself from the outside, with the eyes of a stranger (Kuhn 2002: 8)[1].

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1 Kuhn justifies this switch of perspective as first step of her method of picture analysis.

Still, a few 'secrets' are imminently disclosed: We learn the occasion of the photograph (the Coronation of Elizabeth II, which allows to date the picture exactly to June 6th 1953), the reason for the dress up as well as the significance of the strange handkerchief. The surface of the photograph begins to become part of a personal narration that transcends the visible in order to imbue the picture with meaning.

The scrutiny of what is visible on the surface of the picture leads Kuhn to relive more and more of the feelings of that very day. The photograph becomes the starting point for an imaginary return to her past. Kuhn recounts how her mother decided to celebrate the exceptional event by sewing a festive dress and by posing the girl for a photo, for this purpose adjusting her daughter to the eye of the father's camera. Kuhn interprets her facial expression as a sign of resistance against the expectations and the pressure put upon the young girl by her mother (cf. Kuhn 2002: 76)[2]. If for the mother the picture might have stood for her attachment to her daughter, for the daughter it carries memories of the tension in the family:

"My mother's investment in my appearance; her gift to me of this would-be uniform, a Coronation dress; her desire to commemorate a special day, a day of national significance, with a ceremonial costume and a photograph of her daughter wearing it: all these things are compressed into the layer upon layer of meaning in this image." (Kuhn 2002: 78)

Kuhn goes on to show that this photo testifies to more than a family drama. Her being dressed up and photographed forms part of a celebration to which the whole nation was invited – particularly because the newly established mass medium television broadcast the event live into British homes so that everybody who had access to a television set could take part in the ceremony as it happened:[3]

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2   Cf. Kuhn (2002: 76): "Already at the age of seven, I knew how little girls were supposed to feel about new frocks and being dressed up; about how they are supposed to respond to being put in front of a camera, Daddy's camera. It is equally clear that […], I was refusing to wear it, almost literally."

3   For television's capacity to produce national and even global participation in events cf. Dayan/Katz 1992. The Coronation was indeed a seminal media event of European scale because it was broadcast to all the countries that took part in

"[T]he dress in the photograph has been made to commemorate a ritual which, being an occasion for national celebration, goes beyond the dynamics of the mother-daughter dyad. On this day, by virtue of the nation's participation in the Coronation, the ordinary, the everyday, will become imbued with the extraordinary, the special. Everyone will be touched by the aura of the event. My dress and the photograph are a tiny part of a grand ceremony of affirmation, of commitment to a larger identity: a sense of national belonging." (Kuhn 2002: 79)

Kuhn's associations of the personal to the national do not stop there, as when she looks at a photograph of the Royal Family taken on the same day and discovers that on it men look marginalized like in her own family. From the Royal Family she goes on to the metaphorical family of the then recently established Commonwealth as family of nations. Kuhn continuously oscillates between memories that connect the childhood photograph to her family history and her personal biography on the one hand and to her generation, class and nation on the other hand. In this respect it is apt for her to conclude with the fundamental question "What has all this have to do with a photograph of a little girl in white, a little girl in a dress made especially for the Coronation?"

"Both scenes – the larger one of popular memory of the Coronation and its social and cultural significance; the smaller one of my own memories, the Coronation frock, and the photograph – are packed with layer upon layer of cultural and psychical meaning. [...] In the smaller story, the little girl's frock and its commemoration in a photograph can be read both as a statement of attachment – to a community, a nation – through participation in a ritual; and also a visible expression of an Oedipal drama that is both personal (its cast of very ordinary characters consisting of myself and my immediate family) and collective (the feeling tone, if not the detail, of the story will undoubtedly strike a chord of recognition in others)." (Kuhn 2002: 97–98)

Kuhn charges the photograph with meanings that are not only invisible, but not even signified in the picture itself. "Cultural and psychical meaning" alike stem from the contextual knowledge that Kuhn brings to the picture. Her associations are triggered by the occasion that, as she 'knows', initiated

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the Eurovision program exchange. Kuhn herself mentions the fact that the event was broadcast live (Kuhn 2002: 80, 86–89).

taking the photograph in the first place but that is still not depicted in it. Family photographs do, as Kuhn points out, "evoke memories that might have little or nothing to do what is actually in the picture", it merely serving as "a prop, a prompt, a pre-text" that "sets the scene for recollection" (Kuhn 2002: 13). Kuhn does not restrict herself to stating this fact, but tries to prove her point by an introspective recording of her own process of association. She thus demonstrates how acts of remembering can be initiated by photographic pictures.

The strategy of Kuhn's book consists of reflecting on the relation of memory and pictures by following her personal associations brought about by a comparatively small number of pictures. By stating what these particular pictures mean to her she tries to work out how photographs relate to memory in general. This approach to a theory of photography likens her project to the more prominent one Roland Barthes pursued in *La Chambre Claire* (1981). When trying to tie down the essence of photography, Barthes likewise starts out from specific pictures and tries to figure out how and what they mean to him. He records the idiosyncratic associations that spring to his mind when he looks at certain photographs – yet, he chooses journalistic and art photographs by renowned photographers, not photographs from his own past culled from his private family album. Still, in stark contrast to Kuhn, Barthes insists on the absolute individuality of his associations. He cherishes photography precisely because it permits him to leave his cultural background behind, since the photographic image itself refers to reality without any intervention of psychology or culture. Exempt from the generalizations of cultural coding, photography, he contends, may lay the foundations for a science of the absolutely singular (cf. Barthes 1981: 6–9). This appears in particular in the second part of *Camera Lucida* which is haunted by a photograph of the author's recently deceased mother as a little girl. Strangely enough it is this picture that in Barthes' eyes captures his mother's essence, her complete personality, finally showing "the truth of the face I had loved" (Barthes 1981: 67).[4] To signal that this recognition is purely personal the photo itself is expressly omitted from the book: "It exists only for me. For you it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the

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4   A startling parallel is that Kuhn also decides to take up the project of reflecting on the relation of images and (family) memory after the death of her mother. Moreover she quotes Barthes' book (Kuhn 2002: vii, 18).

'ordinary'." (Barthes 1981: 73) The ordinariness arises for those who are thrown back on cultural codes because they don't have access to the individuality of the pictured subject. Still, only photographic representation (as long as it is regarded as emanating from the pictured situation itself) can potentially bypass the cultural intervention of codes and refer immediately to a specific reality instead of to culture as the institution governing the representation. Whereas for Barthes the specific quality of photography thus resides in the capacity to evoke the absolutely singular and individual, Kuhn insists on the "collective nature of the activity of remembering". Even "if the memories are one individual's," Kuhn qualifies, "their associations extend far beyond the personal" (Kuhn 2002: 5–6).[5] Acts of memory cannot but align to the directions and habits established by the social groups one belongs to, from the family to the nation. From this point of view, the cultural and semiotic void that is suspected to be at the core of photographic representation could even strengthen the hold of culture since it is culture that offers the remedy to the threat of meaninglessness: "memories evoked by a photo do not simply spring out of the image itself, but are generated in a network, an intertext of discourses that shift between past and present, spectator and image, and between all these and cultural contexts, historical moments" (Kuhn 2002: 14). Making sense of a photographic image would, in this respect, always require the work of 'enculturating' the technologically produced picture.

Even though Kuhn never refers explicitly to Maurice Halbwachs' concept of collective memory her approach does concur with his fundamental and highly influential insight that remembering is a social activity through and through. As is generally known, Halbwachs argues that even the seemingly most personal memories can only be retained if they have been fitted into a socially established frame of reference that invests fleeting impressions with a lasting meaning (cf. Halbwachs 1994: particularly p. 79, for a brief introduction on the "social construction of individual memory" cf. also Marcel/Mucchielli 2008: 141–149). Therefore, acts of remembering are always highly selective reconstructions of the past which are undertaken on the ground of the respective present and from the vantage point of the social

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5   Cf. also Kuhn (2002: 6): "Clearly, if in a way my memories belong to me, I am not their sole owner."

groups which furnish their members with the frames that they need to make sense of the past.

If Halbwachs has shaped memory theory up to this day, his theory of collective memory has always been at odds with media studies because he was considered to exclude any objectifications of the past from collective *memory* and relegate them to the realm of *history* (Assmann 2001: 247–249). His distinction between history and memory is defined as the opposition of *lived* memory, which forms at the intersection of personal experience and – oral – group interaction, and *written* history, which comprises any accounts of the past that are laid down and fixed with the aid of storage media. Halbwachs insisted that the notion of memory should only pertain to personal experiences which are reconstructed from the group's point of view, supplemented by memories that are narrated by group members with which one interacts, typically parents and grand-parents. History, by contrast, is based on non-personal, materialized forms of storage that enable the invariant presentation of the same account of the past to a diffuse public. Even the most popular media productions – Halbwachs gave films and theatre pieces on Jeanne d'Arc as examples – remain abstract and foreign to collective memory, because they do not connect to lived experience, because "I cannot go beyond these word heard or read by me", because "these symbols passed down through time are all that comes to me from that past" (Halbwachs 1980: 52). Whereas memory presupposes the continuity of past and present, history marks a rupture. This point is stretched to the extreme when the simple fact of putting the past into writing is taken to indicate that it has lost its value for group memories: "General history starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up. So long as a remembrance continues to exist, it is useless to set it down in writing or otherwise fix it in memory." (Halbwachs 1980: 78) Accordingly the society addressed by historiography will never be the group that experienced the events in the past.

The distinction between history and memory is conceived as the differrence between the mediated and the – seemingly – immediate retrieval of the past. This opposition has been criticized as being too rigid. The concept of cultural memory has been developed by Aleida and Jan Assmann in order to account for the importance the distant past may have for the social construction of identities (cf. e.g. Assmann 2008). Joanne Garde-Hansen's recent introductory book *Media and Memory* argues that in order to appraise the sig-

nificance of mediation for memory Halbwachs' momentous concept of collective memory needs to "divorce itself from personal remembering in the context of a face-to-face group encounter" (Garde-Hansen 2011: 38).[6] With regard to the memorial function of media it seems, however, more important to reconsider how Halbwachs conceives of the relation of storage to remembrance. He declined to see history as a practice of memory because it delivers closed and static narrative representations of the past that replace memory's infinite processes of meaning construction. In this perspective written records may be judged as curtailing the dynamics of ongoing *re*-construction which may successively integrate the same remembered event into changing frames. Still, the concept of collective memory does not rule out mediated storage per se. As long as records of the past have not lost connection to lived experience they can play a crucial part in the social construction of memory and personal identity.

If Halbwachs had considered the private usage of photography worthy of interest (which he apparently did not), he might have been stimulated to qualify his observations on the merits of material testimonies of the past.[7] On the one hand photography is instrumental to the social fashioning of family memory because the family is the object as well as the subject of the pictures.

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6   Halbwachs largely underestimated the role that media would play in 20th century everyday experience. As an element of the everyday they themselves form relevant social frames or at least contribute to the frames of groups. Beginning with the symbiosis of telegraphy and the newspaper, even more so with the advent of television a media environment has been created that has been aptly termed 'global village' by Marshall McLuhan. Mediated events like the moon landing, the terror acts on 9–11, major sports events or the Coronation have – even on a global scale – become part of actual, personal and lived experience.

7   The chapter on 'family memories' in Halbwachs (1994) lacks any reference to the function of material objects and storage media. If he does refer to 'images', he always means imaginary, never materialized ones. To be correct one should note that in Halbwachs' theory books, newspapers or diaries do not solely appear as antagonists of memory but are frequently cited as elements that can – under certain circumstances – contribute to the social framing and even complement a group's memory – as long as the link to lived memory has not been cut off (cf. e.g. Halbwachs 1980: 22–23, 44, 56–57, 64–66).

Family and personal photographs are produced expressly as future invitations to revive past events and thus support *living* memory. The chronological collection of photographs in an album offers a sequentially ordered choice of pictures that can serve as a material basis to retell one's own experiences or the story of one's family. "In the process of using – producing, selecting, ordering, displaying – photographs, the family is actually in the process of making itself", Kuhn says (2002: 19).[8] On the other hand the family's usage of photography shows that, if mediated records of the past do structure what and how we remember, they do not substitute for lived memory but rather figure as starting points that put memory in motion.[9] Photographs in general and personal photographs in particular do not appear as self-sufficient memory content but as fragments in dire need of contextualization. So they initiate active memory work instead of replacing it. Kuhn's interest in this particular branch of photographic practice (…in this aspect of photography?) resides not the least in the constant remaking of the meaning of the pictures: "Family photography may affect to show us our past, but what we do with them – how we use them – is really about today, not yesterday. These traces of our former lives are pressed into service in a never-ending process of making, re-making, making sense of, our selves – now." (Kuhn 2002: 19) It must be conceded that any historical record – like any text, by the way – may give rise to an ongoing re-negotiation of meaning. Because photographs connect to the past primarily as traces, as sign fragments, that are quite often only marginally, if at all integrated into a textual frames that could secure a standard 'reading', they present a particular challenge to interpretation and thus stimulate evolving meanings (Kuhn 2002: 14)[10]. In general, a photograph does not function as a self-sufficient and closed memory but rather as an incomplete aide-mémoire.

How personal photographs function as signs can be cast theoretically by applying the useful distinction of users and readers that Patricia Holland has

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8   Kuhn (2002: 166–168) even takes the family and its treatment of 'memory texts' as "perhaps […] the model for every other memory-community".

9   When browsing a photo album together or watching a slide show the remembering can be even performed as a collective and communicative practice in the strictest sense.

10 Also see Kuhn (2002: 14): "the image itself figures largely as a trace, a clue: necessary, but not sufficient, to the activity of meaning making".

suggested. *Users* are the intended addressees – and thus generally as well the 'authors' – of private photographs: They know to what – to which person, to which place, to which occasion – a photograph is meant to refer because they know when, why and under which circumstances it was taken. Quality and even the visible content of the print become secondary to this context that users anchor in the picture: "Users bring to the images a wealth of surrounding knowledge. Their own private pictures are part of the complex network of memories and meanings with which they make sense of their daily lives." (Holland 1997: 107) By contrast, *readers* cannot penetrate the surface of the private photograph, because they lack access to this contextual knowledge and therefore try to make up for it by identifying the social codes that are present. As Holland puts it, readers must "tease out" the meaning of personal photographs "in an act of decoding or historical detective work", they "must translate those private meanings into a more public realm" (Holland 1997: 107)[11]. I would rather put it differently. Readers can see more than users when they point to ideological subtexts or cultural conventions and access strata of meaning that users generally are not aware of, whereas they see less because they are completely excluded from the personal significance of photographs. Readers can only access the social aspects, i.e. those traits, that are common among different sets of personal photographs, but they are usually incapable of grasping how the users' memories set their own personal photographs apart from those of others. The Austrian historian of photography Timm Starl may take things a bit far, when he argues that only the snapshooter, whose decision to release the shutter lies at the origin of the pictures, has full access to the relevant contexts and meanings (Starl 1995: 23). Nonetheless it must be granted that the position of the knowing user will remain inaccessible to others, unless there is a personal communicative exchange.[12]

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11 Reading is an awkward term when it refers to pictures, still it suitably denotes the activity of breaking down the complex and continuous information of the image into a set of cultural, decodable signs.

12 Also see Chalfen (1987): "Snapshot collections […] reveal most photographer's reluctance to create visual stories or visual narratives. The narrative remains in the head of the picturemakers and on-camera participants for verbal telling and re-telling during exhibition events. […] Home mode imagery provides an example of how pictures don't literally 'say' anything – people do the talking."

These two positions regarding personal photographs can be related to two different modes of treating signs: associating and contextualizing for the user and, of course, reading for the reader.[13] One and the same photograph will not only mean different things to different people, but it takes on various meanings in semiotically differing ways. Users, on the one hand, regard a photograph as an index – as a trace, that has been brought into being by the very event it refers to.[14] When a trace refers to the past not as its representation but as its product, it functions more as a reminder, a memento, that triggers or guides remembering than as memory in itself. Knowing the 'context of production' (Ruchatz 2012: 19–28), i.e. the circumstances that brought the picture into being, is therefore vital to probing the meaning of a private photograph. This knowledge restricts its use to those who were present at the event depicted, including at the most those, who know about it from conversation. Readers, on the other hand, look out for symbols. Since private photographs taken by snapshooters[15] seem to lack an aesthetic or even a vocabulary of forms that would be capable of generating symbols, they could be called semantically deficient. If a picture is not accompanied by a caption, readers are usually set back to demarcating symbols in the pictures displayed content, may it be poses, clothing, landmarks, any signs of the times that lend themselves to identifying occasion, time and place.[16] Both users and readers

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13 To be correct, reading does naturally rely on practices of contextualization and the relation of signifiers to meaning can be regarded as a form of association. In the context of my argument these concepts are used in a specific sense which should become clear subsequently.

14 For a thorough application of Charles Sanders Peirce's typology of index, icon, symbol to photography cf. Dubois (1990). With regard to photography's mnemonic function I have suggested the distinction of externalization and trace which draws on this terminology (cf. Ruchatz 2008: 367–378).

15 With regard to signification it is important to tell the snapshots taken by the users themselves apart from those photographs taken by professionals for private purposes which often show a highly conventionalized aesthetics and the snapshots taken by private photographers; (cf. Starl 1991: 49–80).

16 Seen as an index a photograph picture, produced automatically all at once and without recourse to symbolic codes, is a continuous sign. Consequently it cannot be read, that means broken down into discrete signs that combine to form a meaning. The choice of the object, frame or the moment of exposure can be taken as

profit from the iconic quality of the photographic images that refers to objects by way of similarity. It is similarity that makes it easier for the user to go back to events and places, but it is by no means the precondition. Even photographs that are failed by standards of sharpness or similarity may be kept because they are the only indexical links to the 'desired' event (cf. Starl 1995: 23, 150–151). For the reader similarity is a prerequisite for identifying objects that can then be transformed into symbols.

For Barthes the indexical aspect of photography guarantees absolute singularity because any photograph refers to an event that is not repeatable. The particular potential of photography to evoke the singular – instead of signifying it symbolically – prompts Barthes to believe that photographic pictures render possible a purely individual access to reality. Even if Kuhn grants that there is an element in her childhood pictures that goes beyond coding (Kuhn 2002: 18), on the whole she prefers to downplay the privacy and individuality of her associations and to stress the social foundations of her seemingly personal emotions. When Kuhn insists, as I have quoted before, that her family drama is also "collective", that "the feeling tone" would "undoubtedly strike a chord of recognition in others", this sounds a bit like a conjuring-up which is grounded in a theoretical preference (cf. Kuhn 2002: 14)[17].

I want to follow Kuhn in her conviction that private photographs like the one she uses to adorn her book are a locus where individual and collective memory intersect and interact. That sets of private photographs generally look very similar, that they tend to be taken on comparable occasions, that they often picture the same sort of subjects in a similar manner, testifies to photography as a social practice that is structured by collective conventions. When we regard a photograph showing a tourist in front of the Eiffel Tower we can perceive the repetition of the social rite of producing proofs of where one has travelled. Yet, only hardcore cultural critics will deny, that the experiences will differ in many ways for any tourist, depending on their age, their

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meaningful selections – even if there are barely any codes a photographer can make use of; cf. Barthes (1977: 15–31).

17 Cf. Kuhn (2002: 14): "Cultural theory tells us there is little that is really personal or private about either family photographs or the memories they evoke: they can mean only culturally." In Barthes' terminology she sides with the studium, neglecting the punctum, even if she alludes to it (18). For this distinction cf. Barthes (1981: 25–28).

co-travellers, their knowledge of French, whether it's a repeat visit etc. For the users themselves the personal character of the experience is linked to the photograph, even if it is not visibly inscribed into the picture. As Starl has put it perfectly, a personal photograph can remind one of things that are visible on it as well as of things that are not, and finally of the photograph itself (it's taking and viewing) (Starl 1995: 149).

The objective for photographic memory studies should be, in my opinion, to analyse the collective modes that set the stage for the affirmation of individuality. The concept of the collective memory will serve as a theoretical point of reference since it insists that the social framing is inscribed into the individual memories. Private photographs are the prime examples to elaborate on the function of media for the building and disseminating of collective memories. My approach will differ from Barthes' and Kuhn's since I will neither focus on individual pictures and their significance for me nor particularly on the use of private photographs. In taking an exemplary look at the practice of wedding photography I want to work with a particular genre and find out how the social framing is embodied in specific forms and practices.

PRIVATE LOVES/PUBLIC VOWS

"Love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage," goes the chorus of a song first recorded by Frank Sinatra in 1955 and more recently popularized as title song of the television series *Married... with children*. "This I tell you, brother," the lyrics continue, "you can't have one without the other". If this popular wisdom may already sound rather dated today,[18] put in a historical perspective this idea still is comparatively fresh. For the longest time in cultural history love and marriage had little common ground to share. As late as the 18th century the emotion of love and the institution of marriage were even considered a contradiction (cf. Luhmann 1982: 89). Whereas love was associated with passion and transience, marriage was bound by duty, a stable union based mainly on legal and economic considerations with the aim of creating offspring. If things turned out well marriage could lead to compani-

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18 The 1950s can be considered as a decade where the typically modern crisis of marriage is temporarily interrupted; cf. Shumway (2003: 134–135).

onship, but love was never a precondition or the logical outcome of this union. It took a lot of changes in social semantics to reconcile love and marriage into the modern concept of romantic love that encompasses passion and duration, the devotion to the loved other with the perfection of the loving individual. In the 19th century love finally became the exclusive and only socially accepted basis for the choice of the life partner. Romantic love itself does not allow for rational consideration nor can it be justified by commonly accessible features like beauty. Love is to be grounded – self-referentially – in love and nothing else (Luhmann 1982: 163–196, also cf. Coontz 2005: 4f). Based on romantic love marriage becomes something personal and imminently private.

To merge love and marriage is a risky move, though, because an irrationally grounded emotion is now supposed to stand the test of time. The demand to stabilize passionate love puts all the pressure on the affective fundament of the relationship and in the end leads to the destabilization of the institution of marriage itself. The massive increase in divorces led to the talk of a 'marriage crisis' from the 1920s on (cf. Shumway 2003: 22–23, 68). Another tension in the concept of love-based marriage stems from the paradoxical combination of the intimate seclusion of romantic love on the one hand and the institutional, legal as well as social, status of marriage on the other. As the main source of the modern semantics of romantic love the novels of the 18th and 19th century prefer to locate the mingling of the loving souls apart from society (cf. Reinhardt-Becker 2005: 60–73). Social conventions are frequently represented as barriers that have to be overcome to realize the union of the souls. However, society as well as the state insist on their right to sanctify and control these individual love relations. In her study *Public vows* Nancy F. Cott points out:

"At the same time that any marriage represents personal love and commitment, it participates in the public order. Marital status is just as important to one's standing in the community and state as it is to self-understanding. […] To be marriage, the institution requires public affirmation. It requires public knowledge – at least some publicity beyond the couple themselves; that is why witnesses are required for the ceremony and why wedding bells ring." (Cott 2000: 1–2)

To be sanctified love needs to become public and the wedding ceremony is the ritual site where the intimate, private love relationship is confronted with

an observing public. Therefore, the ceremony addresses not only the couple but is designed to demonstrate its commitment at least to family and friends, if not the community at large. "The wedding ceremony was probably the most public of private rites," Antoine Prost points out in *The History of Private Life*. "Everything in it was codified: the composition and the order of the procession, the number and the selection of bridal attendants, the costumes of bride and groom […], and the gestures of consent." (in Perrot 1990: 317) Private photography and weddings have in common the encompassing of private as well as public, highly individual as well as collective aspects.

It should therefore be only logical that wedding pictures are visibly more conventionalized than other branches of personal photography. This can be at least partly attributed to the fact that it is very often professional photographers who carry out the task of producing the photographic testimonies. The importance of the event seems to call for a professional even as camera ownership tended to become universal in the course of the 20th century. In one of the very few scientific pieces published on the subject Robin Lenman calls it paradoxical "that wedding photography developed into a lucrative and heavily marketed industry" at the same time that every household owned their own camera (cf. Lenman 2005: 674). This remark holds true even more for the contemporary practices of digital image production. Today more than ever, the professionally photographed wedding album is meant to stand out against a steady flow of generally unremarkable photographic images of the everyday.[19] Whereas mobile phone cameras have stimulated the urge to document individual lives more and more continuously as they happen – and more for the sake of short-term sharing than for the sake of future remembering – introductory manuals to wedding photography as a professional practice abound. "From being the record of an event," Lenman contends, wedding photography "became a major lifestyle statement, at a cost to match: in early 21st century, photography may absorb 10 to 15 per cent of an American wedding budget." (Lenman 2005: 674) Even fees that may exceed 10,000 $ do not seem to deter customers (Johnson 2011: 27).

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19 In general the professional pictures will not replace but only complement photos taken by the guests – many of the manuals for professional photography address the problem how to deal with the presence of the snapshooters.

On the one hand, professional wedding photographers are employed to display economic status by conspicuous consumption, actually an important aspect of the consumerist model of the lavish wedding that started to become the norm – at least in the US – from the 1950s on (Jellison 2008: 3; Otness/Pleck 2003: 25–54). Moreover, the lavishness may be considered an investment in the future of the relationship insofar it underlines that the spending is not meant to be repeated. On the other hand, as an outside observer the wedding photographer is ideally suited to generate a public image of the loving married couple. The professional is invited as expert for wedding imagery, for the conventional and cultural aspect of the wedding, as specialist in turning photograph traces into symbolic messages. Even if wedding pictures do in fact form a sub'genre' of personal photography (because they are produced for the sake of personal or familial remembrance), they at the same time make a prime example of the overlapping of individual and social memory. Wedding photographs have always included pictures that were meant to either share memories of the celebration (for those who were present) or to communicate that the wedding had in fact taken place and the loving couple was now bound in marriage (for those who were not) (Mary 1993: 150). The pictures are meant to carry a clear and univocal message – the confirmation: We love each other and will – or at least intend to – stay together for all time. Even if the couple may *use* their wedding photographs as traces of a very personal event, the pictures must, at the same time, be readable.

Fig. 2: A compilation of photos of 'dipping the bride'

Taken from Aarsman/de Cleen/Germain et al (2011: n.p.).

This social function is apparently the main reason why wedding photographs look largely alike and are so easily identifiable as such. The artistic project *Useful Photography* by which the Dutch communications agency Kesselscramer attempts to explore neglected fields of photographic practice recently produced a stunning collection of wedding photographs that was sorted according to thematically and formally identifiable picture types: "As always, we collect overlooked and underwhelming images created for practical purposes. This time, the usefulness of an age-old ritual is explored: marriage. Inside, it becomes evident, that everyone documents their big day in the same way. Same dresses, same locations, same post-wedding kiss." (Aarsman/de Cleen/Germain et al 2011) In these strings of photographs of 'first' kisses, lined-up bridesmaids, bouquet tosses, dipped brides or cake cuttings, that are culled from international sources, the conventionality of wedding photography – and probably weddings themselves – become apparent. Along with this standardization goes an effort to create a symbolic message by capturing telling poses and including meaningful artifacts. According to guidebooks to wedding photography the putting on of the wedding gown, for example, is to be 'read' as the decisive moment that transforms the

bride from "the woman she is every day to a bride" (Morgan 2010: 43)[20],
thus foreshadowing the metamorphosis that is implied by entering into a mar-
riage.[21]

From this point of view the wedding ceremony and the ensuing celebra-
tions appear as a string of stereotypical picture occasions. The only existing
historical survey of wedding photography – in America – shows that this has
not always been the case. If wedding pictures were scarce in the early days
of photography, from the 1870s on it became a standard procedure to go to a
photographer's studio sometime after the ceremony in order to produce a
formal wedding portrait.[22] In line with the conventions of the studio portrait
the couple, sometimes accompanied by family, dressed in their wedding
habit and posed in the studio setting looking frontally at the camera. In most
cases it was just the dress of the bride along with the bouquet that made the
difference to a customary portrait photograph.

The relation of photography and the ritual of the wedding got closer when
light press cameras were introduced into wedding photography around 1940.
These made it possible to take so-called 'candids' that were shot on location
as the wedding progressed and not arranged ex post in the studio: "The pho-
tographer captured the fragmented acts of the wedding day: he moved, cam-
era in hand, from bedroom to church to reception to departure. There were
always a few stock shots, but the best photographers developed a great ability
to recognize an opportunity for an original view of the wedding scene." (Nor-
fleet 1979: n.p.) Posed photographs that were taken to idealize and eternalize

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20 For readings of the presupposed symbolism of certain motifs of wedding photo-
    graphy like the bride in front of a mirror cf. Otness/Pleck (2003: 115–116) and
    Glasenapp (2002: 136).

21 Today this transformation is generally curtailed to mere symbolism as the wed-
    ding has generally lost its significance as the crucial 'rite of passage' that leads
    from adolescence to adulthood. Instead in most cases it does 'only' confirm a
    relationship that is already practically lived. Glasenapp (2002: 123) strikingly
    calls wedding "a rite without passage". Otness/Pleck (2003: 15) insist, however,
    that the couples themselves usually consider the wedding as an "originating
    event".

22 Norfleet (1979: n.p.) notes that wealthier customers could afford to hire photo-
    graphers to come to their home.

the married couple or the beautifully dressed bride were, of course, still included, even if they were now arranged more casually on the spot. But the wedding became visible as an extended ritual and was no longer photographically reduced to its result: the married couple.

During the last two decades the label of a 'photojournalistic' or 'documentary' approach to wedding photography has come to the fore. Whereas the look and the content of the photographs have remained largely in the vein of the established candid photography, the approach to the ceremony is supposed to have changed fundamentally. Despite the designation 'candid' the production of the photographs had notoriously come to play an important part in the course of the wedding day. In some way the photographers acted as directors that controlled the sequence of the events, claiming a lot of time and advising the wedding party when and how to pose for the camera (cf. Lewis 1998). In contrast, the photojournalistic practitioners pride themselves not to interfere with the celebration: "Documentary wedding photography is about capturing the day, as the events unfold with minimal interference or instruction from the photographer." (Morgan 2010: 6)[23] The photojournalistic wedding photographers claim to behave like the proverbial 'fly on the wall' which confines itself to passively registering what is happening.[24] This renunciation of intervention from the part of the photographer is supposed to

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23 This mode is set explicitly against a presumed traditional practice which had the photographer "shouting orders at the couple and their guests" while missing out on the moments of the wedding itself (Morgan 2010: 7). Otness and Pleck (2003:117–118) trace this new mode back to Denis Reggie's coverage of JFK Jr.'s wedding in 1996 in order to give yet another example how the form of the contemporary wedding ritual has been shaped by mass media and commercially motivated patterns. The stark contrast of the candid to the documentary approach seems exaggerated, though. This shows when Lenman (2005: 675) understands the photojournalistic approach differently: "since the 1970s, young, affluent, and socially competitive couples have favoured a more fluid, 'photojournalistic' approach, in which the photographer's task is less to record an event than to direct – or observe – a narrative".

24 The digital mode of image production does contribute to this project insofar the number of photographs taken can be significantly increased – at no further cost. The shots that are used for the final album can be chosen from a vast selection of pictures that easily cover the whole course of events.

liberate the wedding proceedings not only from interventions, but also from conventions and thus produce more varied pictures.

Still, the numerous manuals on this presumably new practice betray that standardization remains its stable foundation. The advice given confirms that – like any other rite and ritual – a wedding consists of a standard sequence of essential stages – and photo opportunities. One manual criticizes that earlier on "the pictures generally followed the same sequence", that "the results from one event looked much like another" producing a "predictable collection of matted prints", in order to contrast that with "the photojournalistic style of wedding coverage […] the old list is being augmented by new 'standard images.'" (Karney 2007: 6, 177) Still, one principal object of most introductions to wedding photography remains enumerating the 'must haves' or 'standard pictures', not to be missed in any case (cf. Sammon 2009: 9)[25]. The signing of the register, for example, is considered to be a motif which "has been taken so many times by wedding photographers that it's become as ingrained into the fabric of wedding tradition as the cake cutting or first dance, and is not something you can leave out." (Morgan 2010: 80)[26] According to wedding photographer James Karney all that has recently changed is that if the "list has still a place", it is merely "a starting point – and open to creative interpretation. […] There's still a list, it's just more fluid and has room for lots of personal additions." (Karney 2007: 172)

It is only natural for manuals to promote conventions, as they are meant to give general guidelines for a successful practice: On the other hand 'photojournalism' allows if not calls for an approach that acknowledges the singularity of any wedding. As Kerry Morgan's *Guide to Photojournalism* reminds: "All weddings follow a similar formula by and large – there are preparations, a ceremony and a party – but the moments at each and every wedding

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25 Cf. Sammon (2009: 9): "Don't miss the key ceremony shots. Sure, be creative and take photographs that perhaps not every wedding photographer on the planet would take. But don't miss those all-important shots, especially the first kiss. Make a shot list with the bride and groom before the big day, so that no one is disappointed during the photo-review session." For extensive "shot lists" cf. eg. Kim (2010, 256–262); idem (2011, 181–190); Ziser (2010).

26 Cf. in the same vein Johnson (2011: 22): "a small number of group shots are usually still included because they are so ingrained in the tradition in wedding tradition that it's almost impossible to bypass them."

are unique." (Morgan 2010: 10) The general and socially endorsed plan for the wedding has therefore to be merged with the preferences of the individual couple. That's why manuals present it as a rule, that "[n]o two weddings are alike" (cf. Johnson 2011: 4; cf. as well Karney 2007: 195[27]) or that "[d]epicting a wedding in an authentic way means you can't predict or repeat things that happen. Every wedding day is unique, with different personalities…" (Morgan 2010: 6)

The photojournalistic observer is given the task of extracting the essence of the event, which may have evaded even the married couple themselves: The wedding album should "give the viewer an overall feel of what the ceremony was like and show the bride and groom what they may have missed" (ibidem: 75; cf. also ibidem: 65[28]). If this is granted, the photographer becomes more than a simple chronicler of the wedding. He acts as a privileged observer whose task it is to record the events in such a way that they not only revive memories but present the course of events with the addition of a story line. The photojournalistic wedding album deviates from merely fixing traces that are prone to trigger memories and aims to transform the wedding into a meaningful text.

In order to personalise the representation Morgan advises the photographer to look for "personal detail", for "finer detail", that will "add to the story and act as a reminder of those little touches that might otherwise fade in the memory", for "small glances that tell the story", for "subtle glances that will tell so much of what they are feeling" etc. etc. (Morgan 2010: 32, 129, 43, 68)[29]. The individuality does not reside in the overall ritual that carries the cultural meaning but in the marginalia that refer to the actual history

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27 Cf. Karney (2007: 195): "In the early days of 'candid wedding photograph', it was easy to work wedding coverage. There were few variations in the ceremony within a given religious tradition. Today there are many variations in the way the couple exchanges vows and in the order of service. Many couples write their own ceremonies."

28 Cf. Morgan (2010: 65): "Be aware of what the groom is doing as you shoot – he will often turn back around to face the front if his emotions get the better of him. If he does, this is a great moment to capture as it gives the bride an insight into the groom's feelings she would otherwise have missed."

29 For another example see Karney (2007: 180): "Keep an eye out for interactions and activities that are unique and that show the relationships between the people."

of the couple. This sort of detail does not come unpredicted, though, but is presumed to be found regularly at certain stages of the wedding. "When the bride and groom hop inside their carriage," Morgan advises, "it will be another moment to themselves to enjoy the feeling of having just been married, and their interactions with each other and with those waving goodbye on the pavement are all things to look out for." (Morgan 2010: 89) And another manual points out that "as the last note is played, the father and the bride will hug each other tightly, maybe kiss, or maybe he'll dip his daughter, and they hold each other for a moment or two. Don't miss this – it's a wonderful opportunity to capture some treasured moments." (Ziser 2010: 223) Wedding photographers are hence taught to expect the unexpected, to pay attention to particular events or certain kinds of mementos that appear in the course of the wedding. At the same time that the need to respect and reflect the singularity of the particular wedding is underlined, there is a tendency to normalize what can figure as individual in the first place. Photo manuals tend to paradoxically forge singularity into a new norm.

The practice of wedding photography that relates individual memories and typical, socially generalized elements may be perfectly understood with Halbwachs. The frames that shape the selection and construction of the photographic records are apt to structure the individual memories of the couple. If wedding photographs follow conventions that make them instantly recognisable and readable as such, they relate indexically to the past as well. They remind their users, who were present at the wedding, of events and emotions that may or may not be visibly represented in the picture. Today's professional wedding photography, however, strives increasingly not to leave the individual meanings to the imagination of the users, but to express and even highlight the singularity of the wedding in the photo album that is created as the final result of the effort.

The professional wedding pictures are supposed to capture more than random instants that evoke the observers' memories. In the spirit of Henry Cartier-Bresson's credo that journalistic photography should quest for the perfect, the 'decisive' moment (Cartier-Bresson 1952), that captures the essence of an event. Morgan states as the "ultimate goal for any documentary photographer […] to strive for an image that tells a story on its own"(Morgan 2010: 114)[30]. One could say that the wedded couple is not simply addressed

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30 For literal references to Cartier-Bresson cf. Morgan (2010: 50, 166–167).

as users but as readers at the same time. There's not just a story that can be freely associated to a string of photographic traces of the past, but there is a story to be 'read'. In the 1970s, Bradford Bachrach, the owner of several prestigious photo studios, put the basic difference of the traditional wedding portrait to the more recent candid photography nicely: "Candids are for the moment but portraits are for all the time." (Bradford Bachrach, quoted in Norfleet 1979: n.p.) To Bachrach the picture that will remain in memory is the photograph that is posed and composed with regard to a reading, an idealized representation that "is not just a map of the face", but "goes beyond a flat record" in order to give "a person at his best – an exaltation" (ibidem). The photojournalistic approach promises to bridge the gap by scanning the course of events for moments that can be symbolically framed, thus blurring the distinction of using and reading. The poses are now made available by 'reality itself' and the only way the photographer intervenes is by cutting into the flow at the appropriate moment.[31]

One could say that photography is so deeply ingrained in the wedding day that the photographer no longer needs to step up as the director of the ceremony. It is hard to tell to what extent photography follows the ritual and to what extent photographic practice regulates the ritual. At least the ritual seems to be arranged in a photographer friendly manner: The modification that "[b]y the 1960s, brides were turning their backs and tossing their bouquets over their shoulders" may render "a more interesting picture" (Otness/Pleck 2003: 130). If weddings are now from the beginning organised with respect to their photographic recording, the impulse to interfere is rightly reduced. The interdependence of photography and the wedding celebrations becomes obvious in a statement from the jacket of a photography manual: "for future brides, the book's lush pages will provide visual inspiration on the must-have photography they want for their big day." (Cantrell/Cohen 2000: jacket) It must be assumed that the production of photographic records of the wedding is not necessarily secondary to the ritual. The production of memories is a vital function of the wedding celebration and photography figures as the technological agent that is capable of ensuring that the memories endure. Photography renders the investment in the

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31 For a theoretical discussion of photography's two diverging time regimes cf. de Duve (2007).

fleeting once-in-a-lifetime event worthwhile because it presupposes imagi-
nary repetitions in the future.[32]

Photography has come to not only document but to form an integral ele-
ment of many social rites (cf. Köstlin 1995: 399). To state, that "[t]he pre-
sence of a photographer is accepted as the presence of a minister, priest, or
rabbi" (Chalfen 1987: 86), sounds like understatement, today. Indeed, the
presence of a professional or semi-professional photographer, even if he is
not perceivably interrupting the proceedings, has become an essential part of
the ceremony without which a contemporary wedding would hardly be com-
plete. Without a photographer a wedding might just as well not have taken
place. The visible taking of photographs stands for the will to remember the
wedding and hence implies the lasting commitment of the couple. In the face
of the undeniable danger of divorce rates photography comes to function as
a "pledge of permanence" (Lenman 2005: 674). Photographic testimony acts
as an impersonal and positively biased witness of the ceremony, in some res-
pect as technological equivalent to the best man. This pictorial witness was
not enclosed in an album only to be taken out on special occasions but it was
– and still often is – hung openly on the walls of the home, either in the
couple's living room or more often in the bedroom (cf. Mary 1993: 150–
151).[33] The pictorial reminder of the marriage promise was thus integrated
into everyday life. By way of the photographic picture, the public manifes-
tation of a privately connoted romantic love re-enters the private realm,
again, in order to stabilize the love relationship. Formally as well function-
ally photographic memory pictures belongs to both spheres: the individual as
well as the collective, the private as well as the public.

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32 For the relation of the lavish wedding to the production of memories cf. Glasenapp
    (2002:121); Otness/Pleck (2003: 15–18).

33 A more recent survey of American homes proves that nowadays the prevalence
    of wedding photographs also depends on class. Whereas upper class households
    now shun wedding portraits on their walls, they are still common in working class
    households; cf. Halle (1993: 97).

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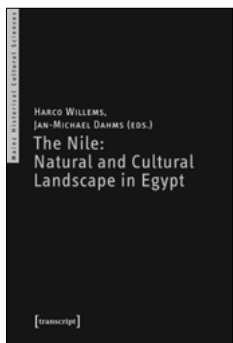
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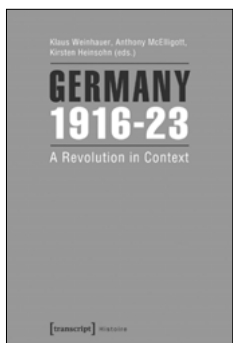
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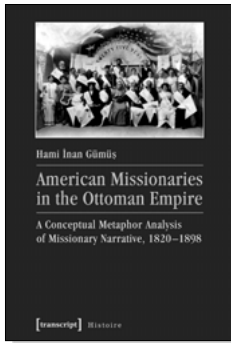
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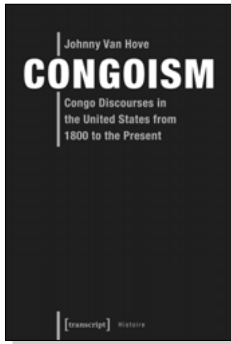
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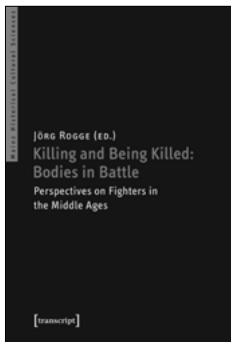E-Book: 39,99 € (DE), ISBN 978-3-8394-4037-7

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