Introduction

Photographing

OR, THE FUTURE OF THE IMAGE

CHRISTOPHER PINNEY

Anyone who stands in any relation whatsoever to photography has membership of the citizenry of photography—by virtue of the fact she is a photographer; that she views photographs; comments on or interprets them; displays them to others or is herself photographed.—ARIELLA AZOULAY, *CIVIL IMAGINATION*

This collection of essays presents a series of reports on photography as actually existing practice. Its concern is with pragmatic, demotic, everyday routines, interventions, and predicaments, which only ethnography can capture. However, whereas the standard anthropological reflex anticipates an endless diversity of appropriation driven by the creativity of human subjects, this collection highlights a set of recurring tropes and architectures that point to photography's ambivalently determining presence. This volume hopes to contribute to photographic theory through the study of grounded practice and to advance anthropological thinking on the relationship between media and culture by taking the nature of technics seriously. One of its tasks is to reach a conclusion about the complexity of photography rather than dissolving photography in observations about the complexity of culture.

It also seeks to contribute to the recognition of what might be termed "world system photography." It is still the case that if you study European photography, you are likely to be considered a photographic theorist or a historian of photography sui generis. Europe "remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all [photographic] histories."[1] By contrast, if you study Nigerian photography, for instance, you are likely to be considered a commentator on Nigerian photography. In the first instance, the European placement fades away while, conversely, Nigeria is underlined as a location, a "belated" case study, stuck in the "waiting room of history," of what has already happened elsewhere in a purer form.[2]

Work in the "periphery" has to confront a deeply embedded structure of knowledge that distinguishes between normative and variant practices. India (or equally Peru or Japan) becomes the site for footnoted descriptions that are intended to counterpoint a core photographic history, European in its sources and nature, but that declines to name itself as such. *Ex-nomination* is the term Roland Barthes uses in *Mythologies* to describe the process through which an ideological fact disappears. The category he is concerned with is the bourgeoisie, "*the social class which does not want to be named*."[3] For Barthes, the bourgeoisie was the source of an ideology that "can spread over everything and in so doing lose its name without risk."[4] By naming, by studying other locations that we consider to be equally important for the study of photography, and by assuming that the study of diverse practices can contribute to an understanding of photography's coherence, this collection hopes to contribute to the erosion of this still-powerful ex-nomination.

The case studies (covering Bangladesh, Cambodia, Greece, India, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, and Sri Lanka) are empirical anthropological investigations of a central hypothesis about the relationship between photographic self-representation and different societies' understanding of what is politically possible. The collection explores, through field research, recent ideas about the metaphorically "prophetic" nature of photographic visibility, and the possibility that the camera can offer a form of political recognition in advance of ordinary citizenship. "Citizenship" is loosely understood as describing the rights and duties that come from recognition within a political community, and, like Robert Hariman and John Lucaites, we acknowledge that "one sign of its importance is its complexity."[5] It will be seen that the concept is invoked in diverse ways that testify to this complexity.

If a hypothesis is sound, it should be capable of falsification, and so this collection does not in any sense merely seek confirmation of initial ideas. Its method is, we hope, seriously empirical, embracing the likelihood of refuta-

tion, and seeks advances in description and understanding through the meticulous accumulation of data acquired through in-depth anthropological participant observation. All the contributions to this volume embrace the view that ethnographic theory can only be produced through good ethnography.

The Civil Contract Provocation

This volume builds upon earlier work by Georges Didi-Huberman, Deborah Poole, Christopher Pinney, Elizabeth Edwards, and Corinne Kratz that has stressed the irreducibility of photography to the ideological contexts in which it appears. Didi-Huberman, in his searing study of photographs from Auschwitz, argues that "we ask too little of images" if "we sever these from their phenomenology, from their specificity." Honoring their phenomenology, he continues, gives access to "everything that made them an *event*." Images, he concludes, endure "in spite of all."[6]

Poole's study of early photography in the Andes underlines the medium specificity of photography, noting the role that cartes-de-visite "aesthetics of the same" played in configuring motions of race as visible difference.[7] Pinney's ethnography of the camera in central India puts particular emphasis on the unruly performative dimensions of small-town studio practices and highlights the creatively destabilizing effects of this on "identity."[8] A further anthropological perspective, this time emerging primarily from archival engagement, is offered by Edwards. Her fine-grained work stresses the need to engage "*specific* photographic *experiences*: how photographs and their making actually operated."[9] Rather than a capture by discursive regimes, Edwards underlines the "rawness" of photography and the manner in which even the seemingly "most dense of colonial documents can spring leaks."[10] Furthermore, photographs were acknowledged to be capable themselves of making history and of generating a "beyond."[11] Kratz echoes this, suggesting that diverse Kenyan responses to the excessive "mnemonic" qualities of photographs entail a "going beyond what was shown."[12] These insights suggest that the Foucauldian model, although dominant within photography studies, was often contested.

The various inquiries collected here also engage recent work by photographic theorists, including Ariella Azoulay, on the "political ontology" of photography that explicitly addresses the political "beyond" intrinsic to photography. She has argued, in her early work at least, that photography makes possible a new form of "civil imagination" because of its inclusiveness and contingency.[13] Azoulay develops her argument in the context of historical

images and also in relation to contemporary photojournalism and the manner in which photographic images appear to provoke actions with political consequences. At the heart of this hypothesis is a refusal to reduce "representation" to mere power (as in the Foucauldian approach) and to instead see it, following Walter Benjamin's insights, as an active, unpredictable, and potentially transformative process.[14] Azoulay argues that photography "has created a space of political relations that are not mediated exclusively by the ruling power," inculcating "civil skills" that create "civil knowledge" and facilitate a "citizenship of photography."[15] These are aspects of the "civil contract," which Azoulay notes she has encountered "at any and every site where there has been photography—and that is almost everywhere."[16]

Azoulay offers an alternative to the use of Michel Foucault in theorizing photography. That approach, propounded initially by Victor Burgin, John Tagg, and others, undoubtedly cast a useful skepticism on the claims of documentary photography and delivered a necessary critique of naive celebrations of the camera's "realism." However, it also conceived of photography as a mere epiphenomenon of the state, photography's power being in actuality, it was claimed, the power of the state to document, surveil, and archive. Far from being characterized by an indexical exorbitance, photographs were best viewed as "paltry pieces of paper," underdetermined scraps that required inscription by powerful discursive formations in order to be able to advance their (fraudulent) claims that they were capable of describing the world through direct reference. Photography as a technical practice characterized by contingency and uncontrollability was overscripted by state-dominated narratives that inserted a totalizing and normalizing power into the social. Photography, even (or, in fact, *especially*) when it thought it was acting in the interests of freedom, was merely acting as an insidious agent of state power. As Tagg famously wrote, photography "as such" has no identity, being simply the reflection of the power that informs it.[17] It is in this context that Tagg asks whether "power" should ever be afraid of photography.[18] Tagg's answer was "no." The importance of stressing photography's "rawness" and its making visible of the "beyond" is that it allows us to imagine the conditions under which it might be possible once again to say "yes."

For Foucauldian photographic theorists, there is an anxiety about the photograph as a window, a kind of trick that asks us to see through it and discover reference and figuration as though these were somehow capable of existing independently. We "dream in the ideological space of the photograph," Tagg wrote, and he sought to shatter this dream, directing attention instead to the societal expectations and conventions that swirled around the occluded surface of the picture plane.[19]

Skepticism in the face of naturalizing claims is entirely justified, but Tagg's strategy allows "ideology" to occupy the complex and paradoxical space of the photographic event and index that Benjamin and several of the other theorists mentioned here have opened up. Perhaps the most damaging impact of the Foucauldian consensus in photographic theory was this foregrounding of the ideological work of the image at the expense of the contingencies and logistics of its making. It is these unruly contingencies that the contributions to this volume explore in detail.

Azoulay's early provocations open up possibilities and political potentials that an earlier orthodoxy foreclosed. However, Azoulay's foundationalist and utopian paradigm inevitably encounters problems when we start to pit her hypothesis against the empirical evidence of actual practices.

The research presented here takes some of Azoulay's insights and seeks to explore them at a local level, through the examination of actual practices, in relation to popular, vernacular, or "demotic" photography. This involves taking a set of claims formulated exclusively in relation to documentary and journalistic photography and scrutinizing them in the context of different genres such as studio portraiture and the "messianic" potential of digital media.

The locations for the ethnographic investigations were chosen because they are sites of current crisis or former political conflict, sites where differences in religious practices are evident, or sites that have significance in the history of visual anthropology. Some of the locations, most notably Nicaragua and Sri Lanka, would be seared by new conflicts during the research period.

In summary, this volume presents a series of social science investigations, through intensive ethnography, of a hypothesis that has been much discussed by photographic historians and political theorists as a foundational and philosophical issue that could be settled by a priori evidence. We, by contrast, focus on how different groups of people actually use photography and what they have to say (and what they do) about politics. At its core is the question of the relationship between visual representation and political representation in social practice.

The Photographic Event and the Event of Photography

Benjamin, and his legacy in thinkers as diverse as Didi-Huberman and Azoulay, offers escape from reductive positions into the ambivalence and complexity of the photographic event. This richness can be grasped through the concepts of "contingency" and "exorbitance." When Barthes wrote about the

"sovereign Contingency" of the corps, he was perhaps deliberately recalling Benjamin, who had linked contingency and the event much earlier.[20] Benjamin's much-cited observation in the "Little History of Photography" essay marks a key breakthrough and demands careful attention. "No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed his subject," he writes, "the beholder feels an irresistible compulsion to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, the here and now, with which reality has, so to speak, seared through the image-character of the photograph, to find the inconspicuous place where, within the suchness [*Sosein*] of that long-past minute the future nests still today—and so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it."[21] Barthes's punctum is in many ways an echo of Benjamin's "tiny spark of contingency," although one that could be seen as neutralizing its political charge by converting it into a matter of idiosyncratic subjective interpretation that is removed from social and historical interrogation.

Here Benjamin provides a description of the fragility of what E. H. Gombrich would later have described as a visual filter. Benjamin starts with an account of that filter through which the photographer attempts to screen the real through "artfulness" and "careful" posing. Benjamin, of course, does not deny that the photographer is likely, perhaps certain, to attempt to massage or finesse the profilmic. We might also add here that much of the work of the many photo studios that appear in this volume is devoted to attempting to manage and minimize contingency through overpainting or photoshopping images (figure I.1).

But the crucial point is that attempts to eliminate contingency will never be wholly successful. The screen or filter will never be complete because the complexity of the mise-en-scène in its minute and infinite details will always evade the anxious control of the photographer. The image is "seared" with the event, which deposits more information than the photographer can ever control. It is this searing that deposits those "tiny spark[s] of contingency," which make the photograph such a rich resource for future viewers.[22] Konstantinos Kalantzis offers many examples of this, tracing the ways in which commercial images (for instance, postcards) of Sfakians that are narrowly encoded by their producers as images of anonymous consumer-friendly shepherds are sufficiently "unruly" for his Sfakian interlocutors to narratively and materially reanimate the images so that they escape their earlier framing (figure I.2).[23] Note here that "reappropriation" marks not so much the triumph of a later interpretation as the discovery of a possibility intrinsic to the original ontology of the image.

I.1 Selection of images, several overpainted, from Foto Luminton, Managua, Nicaragua. Photograph by Ileana L. Selejan.

Vindhya Buthpitiya and Sokphea Young provide further examples of image "transcoding" or repurposing. In Sri Lanka (Buthpitiya, this volume), National Identity Card (NIC) photographs have been widely photoshopped into memorial images that are mobilized in spaces and acts of resistance demanding accountability from the state for enforced disappearances (figure I.3). These photographs, in many cases the only images of the disappeared that remain, possess extraordinary afterlives, conjugated into new forms and uses. Through a process of copying, retouching, and overpainting, initially with brush and ink and now with Photoshop on desktop computers, each photographic incarnation is recast and remade. State-mandated images form the basis for widespread antistate visual practices. In a parallel manner in Cambodia (Young, this volume), the pre-execution identity photographs made in the Khmer Rouge S-21 Tuol Sleng security prison have become national icons of postgenocide conciliation.

This contingency is central to Azoulay's understanding of the productive nature of the photographic event. Both Benjamin and Barthes might be seen as first and foremost interested in how the event leaves its trace in image content, whereas Azoulay emphasizes the event as plural and paradigmatic

I.2 Sfakian men looking at images taken by professional photographer Nelly, working under commission from the Metaxas regime's Under-Ministry for Press and Tourism in the 1930s and by Voula Papaioannou in the 1950s. Both photographers, and especially Nelly's portraits, emblematizing Sfakia through an emphasis on traditional highland men are highly prized by Sfakians—particularly the sitters' descendants. These images triggered enthusiastic responses, and local viewers who examined them were primarily concerned with identifying and naming the subjects. Interlocutors also commented on sitters' life histories and local reputations, and some photos even uncovered stories of feuding and discord that were otherwise left uncommented on in public. Such commentaries, emphasizing the distinctive properties and materialities of the subjects, break with these images' original typological aesthetic (the Sfakian as an anonymous shepherd type). Historical photos by Nelly, ca. 1939, and by Voula Papaioannou, ca. 1955, copyright Benaki Museum Photographic Archive. Photographs of viewing by Konstantinos Kalantzis, 2007–12.

I.3 Copying negatives, Kugan Studio, Jaffna, 2018. These demonstrate the repurposing of National Identity Card (NIC) photographs to create memorial portraits. Rephotographed by Vindhya Buthpitiya.

of possibilities that are subversive of established politics. Azoulay starts by declaring that "the photograph bears the seal of the photographic event" before developing, through a discussion of Mayer and Pierson's 1859 studio image of Napoleon III's son (figure I.4), a deeply Benjaminian understanding of the structuring nature of contingency.[24] This leads her to the conclusion that the encounter between subjects in photography is "never entirely in the sole control of any one of them: no one is the sole signatory to the event of photography."[25]

The photograph depicts the son seated on a horse in front of a screen. Additionally, reflecting the "dynamic field of power relationships that the pho-

I.4 Pierre Louis Pierson, *Napoleon III and the Prince Imperial*, ca. 1859. Getty Research Institute.

tographic situation portrays," we also see Napoleon III standing on the right side of the image and on the other side a figure that may be that of a servant or equerry.[26]

The visible presence of the sovereign, whose image Azoulay suggests has been "pilfer[ed]," testifies to the explicitly Benjaminian conclusion that "the photograph . . . does not exclusively represent the photographer's will or intention. . . . In fact the photograph escapes the authority of anyone who might claim to be its author, refuting anyone's claim to sovereignty."[27] Azoulay also goes on to make a distinction between "the event of photography and the photographed event" as a way of understanding images that "never come into being."[28] The event of photography, photography's ubiquity and permeation into almost every aspect of human existence, establishes a "photographability" even where no photographs exist. Consequently, some of the most heightened discussions about photography concern photographs that do not exist but that "ought" to, their hypothetical existence becoming an expectation of "modernity," "transparency," "equity," or, most fundamentally, of "history" itself. This was already the underlying idea in the poet Paul Valéry's striking philosophy of history and photography, which transformed an assumption about the concrete conditions of photography into a general model of the event that would allow history to escape from "mere story telling." Lecturing in 1939 on the centenary of Louis Daguerre and Henry Fox Talbot's announcements, and as Europe descended into atrocity, Valéry's text offers many insights. He argues, for instance, that not only did photography teach the eye "not to see non-existent things which, hitherto, it had seen so clearly," but the eye also "grew accustomed to anticipate what it should see."[29]

There are prefigurations here of what Edwards terms the "beyond" and of the distinction that Azoulay makes between the event of the photograph and the event of photography: photograph*ability*, or what Valéry calls "the mere notion of photography," creates expectation and reorients our demands of what will be. "The mere notion of photography, when we introduce it into our meditation on the genesis of historical knowledge and its true value," Valéry explains, "suggests this simple question: *Could such and such a fact, as it is narrated, have been photographed?*" Note the hypothetical and speculative nature of this anticipation: History is not so much what *was* photographed but was rather what was "caught in 'quick takes' *or could have been caught had a cameraman, some star news photographer, been on hand*."[30]

It is in the light of this that a 1961 article in the Indian newspaper *The Current* could proclaim that the "World's Greatest News Picture" was one that didn't exist (figure I.5).[31] When asked what was the "greatest photo [she] had

missed taking," the photographer Homai Vyarawalla responded that it was of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. As on many previous occasions, she had special permission to attend the prayer meeting at Birla House on January 30, 1948. She took her camera and left her office, but after she went out of the gate, "something cropped up" and she decided that she would go the next day instead. After all, as she recalled, she had photographed the Mahatma many, many times. Her decision would prove fateful: within half an hour, news came of the assassination, at the very spot where she habitually photographed Gandhi, and she realized that she had missed the "one big chance for taking the biggest picture ever." In retrospect, she concluded it was destiny, a force that does "strange things to people" that prevented her attendance that day and resulted, as a later news story proclaimed, in her missing "the world's greatest news picture."

I.5 Article by Ratan Karaka published in *The Current*, 1961. Courtesy of Sabeena Gadihoke and the Alkazi Collection of Photography.

India's best-known woman photographer too missed the

WORLD's GREATEST NEWS PICTURE

By Ratan Karaka

★★ BOMBAY: India's ace press photographer, the 48-year-old **Homai Vyarawalla**, accredited to the Government of India, and who since Independence has photographed every big moment in our political life and snapped every V.I.P. and dignitary in the Capital came to Bombay last week.

Dressed in a simple white salwar, a navy blue coin-dotted kameez and a black 'dupatta' she carried with her her favourite camera, the Rolliflex. For Homai this is a sort of third arm.

"What is the greatest picture you have missed taking?" I asked Mrs. Vyarawalla, "I've always wanted to ask you this question."

★★ In her quick, staccato manner of speaking. Homai replied: "My greatest missed picture—well it was a tragedy The greatest picture I missed taking was **Mahatmaji's assassination.**

I'll never forget that dreadful day or that dreadful hour. I sometimes think destiny does strange things to people. In those days I was working for the British Information Services and I got special permission to get a picture of the Mahatma and they agreed I could. I was then ready to attend the prayer meeting. I took my camera and started from my office, all ready to attend the prayer meeting. Yes, I took my camera and started off almost to Birla house. **But somehow I went out of the gate and came in again and then suddenly something cropped up, I delayed for a moment and decided I would go tomorrow . . . I put it off by a day . . . after all I had gone to so many of the Mahatma's prayer meetings and had photographed him so many, many, times. Well then I did not go, and, within half an hour, the news, the frightful sad news burst upon the nation that the Mahatma was assassinated. I felt like crying. There was one big chance for taking the biggest picture ever and I had missed it.**

"Usually I used to photograph the Mahatma at the very spot when he came out of **Birla House** . . . if destiny had willed it, I could have had that picture, that record of that tragic day when we lost our leader and Father of the Nation.

"My hand would as always have been on the camera and I would have automatically taken that pitcure. Of course it was the saddest thing imaginable, but I would have had the picture. As soon as I heard of the assassination I rushed to the spot, I took

(Continued on page 18)

Mrs. Vyarawalla

I.6 Detail of photo collage in the final hall at the Municipal Museum of the Kalavritan Holocaust, Greece. Collecting images of the murdered town residents was one of the museum's key missions since its inception. Note the silhouettes used for those cases where photos of the deceased were impossible to retrieve. Photograph by Konstantinos Kalantzis, 2018.

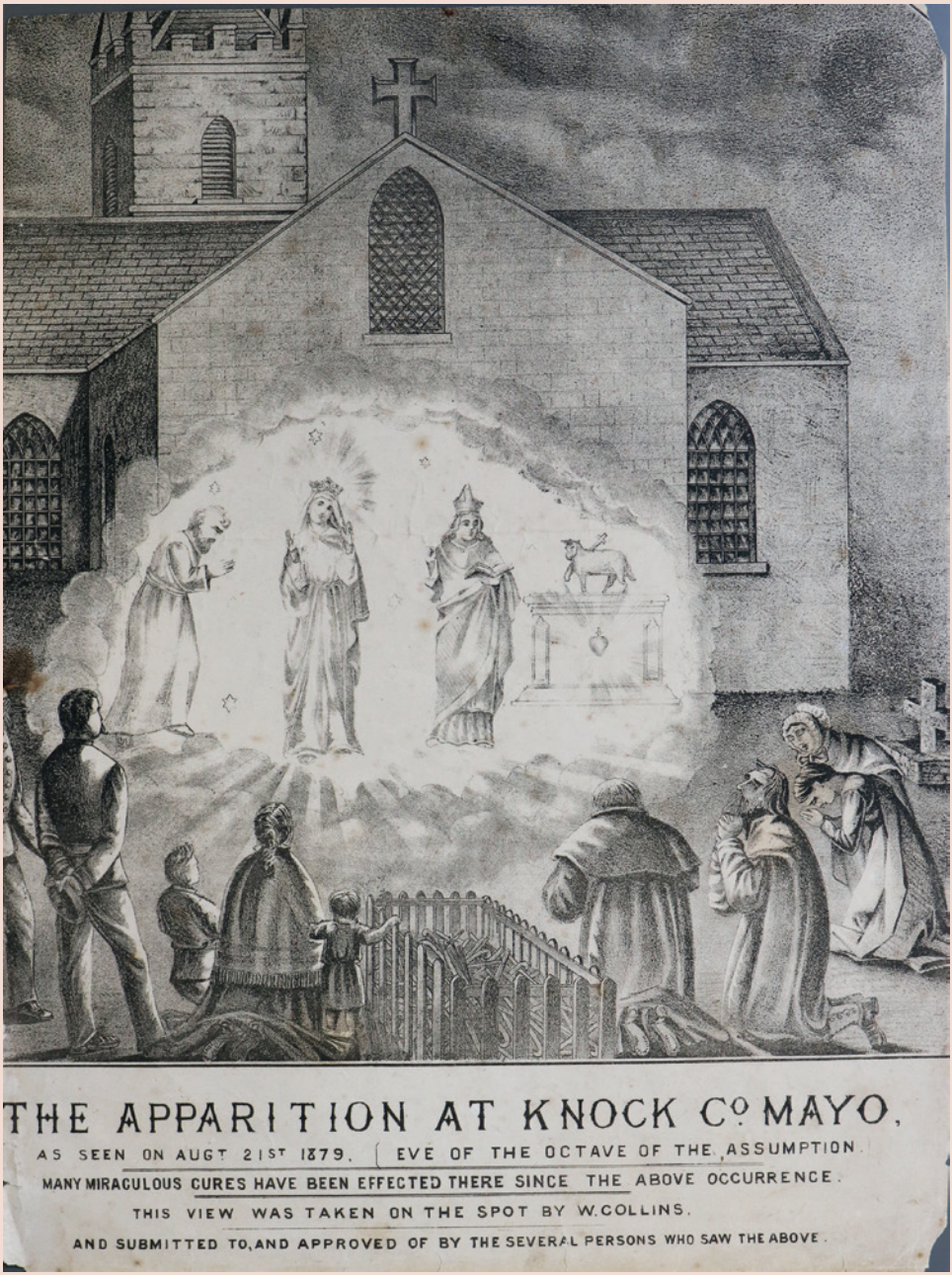
An even more poignant triumph of the event of photography over the event of a specific photograph can be found in Kalantzis's account (this volume) of mainland Greek's valorization of primordial originary footage that could/might/ought to have been taken to document the slaughter of civilians by Nazi troops. He reports that a space in a commemorative museum had been left vacant to accommodate this yet-to-materialize footage (figure I.6).

There are echoes of this, too, in the response of the Bangladeshi Ready Made Garment Workers activists to the group photograph of Rana Plaza victims reported in Pinney's essay in this volume. The absence of an individuated portrait of one of the victims (her face was recoverable only through an image of her together with seven fellow workers) provoked the demand that there *should have been* such an (individuated) image. To recall Valéry, the eye became "accustomed to what it *should* see."[32]

Photography in the World

The core Benjaminian idea of the "event" that lies at the heart of the "civil contract" hypothesis ultimately depends on the medium specificity of photography and on photography's emergence as a kind of historical rupture. At its heart, the hypothesis assumes that photography is a self-authenticating form of autopticism (eye-witnessing). The revolution that photography brought can be established through the consideration of a rather haunting lithograph depicting "the apparition at Knock" in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1879 that shows the Virgin Mary and other figures appearing in an ethereal burst in front of a number of astonished foregrounded figures (figure I.7). Much more significant for our current purposes is the elaborate caption, which reveals what it is that photography renders redundant. It describes how "this view was taken on the spot by W. Collins and submitted to and approved by the several persons who saw the above." The image, in other words, required further authentication beyond its simple creation: its "seeing" demanded affirmation from those who had seen the original event. Photography abruptly shortens this sequence, for it allows the viewer of the photograph to see the event itself. To this we might add that the photograph—in its "pure" form—is not only self-authenticating (i.e., not requiring the kind of social consensus after the fact that the Knock image clearly did). Its indexicality is radically "unfiltered" when compared to the socially managed consensus of the Knock image's iconic and symbolic properties. Recall that for C. S. Peirce, who first formulated the trichotomy of symbol, icon, and index, the icon's association with its referent (through likeness) was not dependent on the existence of that referent ("an *Icon* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own . . . whether any such Object actually exists or not"[33]). The icon, in Webb Keane's words, refers to a "possible object."[34] To this we might add that inasmuch as the "likeness" was arrived at through social agreement, then like the "symbol," the relationship between sign and interpretant (signifier) depends on "an association of general ideas."[35]

In contradistinction to what is sometimes referred to as the "ontological turn," the essays in this volume adhere to a universal semiotics for the purposes of our analysis while recognizing that local semiotic ideologies (semiotic evaluations as "social facts") frequently diverge. Thus we do not see the fact that in much of India, chromolithographs of deities are widely described as *photos*, as requiring us to accept that lithography can acquire the power of the index. They *are* indexes of the stone or offset roller with which they are impressed but *not*, analytically speaking, indexes of gods.



I.7 Contemporary lithograph depicting the apparition at Knock, Ireland, in 1879. Private collection.

The requirement, therefore, is not to affirm local sign systems (this would be impossible since they contradict each other and cannot all be affirmed simultaneously[36]) but rather to describe them adequately. Part of this description must communicate the strange "not-quite-secular" power that photography has to capture performative enactments (what Barthes termed the "corps" or "body") and the widely distributed idea that the photograph serves as a space of heightened revelation.[37] The "not-quite-secular" is a marvelous phrase devised by Kajri Jain to describe the power and modality of Indian calendar art, a genre of mass-produced popular art that, while frequently celebrating the modern (e.g., bicycle-riding women), also simultaneously invoked mythic and divine archetypes.[38] Photography, too, exemplifies this paradoxical duality, being at the cutting edge of technical innovation and also, at the same time, saturated with an archaic magic. This is an observation made by Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon), who noted how "awesome night—dear to all sorcerers and wizards—reigned supreme in the dark recesses of the camera."[39] This sentiment was echoed by Benjamin in his suggestion that the photographer might be considered the descendant of the "augurs and haruspices"—the diviners of the classical world—and that photography makes the "difference between technology and magic visible *as a thoroughly historical variable*."[40]

How does this concern with normative semiology and the possibility of "pure" photography play in the context of actually existing photographic practice? Consider, for instance, a framed print of a *sati* (the self-immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre) that was photographed in the home of a central Indian factory worker, a former native of Jhunjhunu, a town in the arid north of Rajasthan famous for its martial Rajput culture (figure I.8).

The print is titled *Sri 1008 Kotadivali Sri Sati Savitri Mata* (Sri 1008 female from Kotadi village Sri Sati Savitri mother), below which is given information on the date of the sati (2025 in the Vikram Samvat calendar = 1969 or 1970 CE). At the center of the images is a color reproduction of a painting that possibly incorporates photographic faces. This image is surrounded by eight black-and-white halftone photographic images that show Savitri with her brother (*bhai milan*) as well as the preparation of the pyre (*chita ki taiyari*) and the priestly ritual (*brahman puja*). The image presents two central questions for the Azoulayean hypothesis. First, it problematizes the differential evaluation of "atrocity photography," for the black-and-white photographs serve for most of the image's viewers as celebrations of the renunciatory act of the widow (sati as "blessing").[41] It is only for a smaller audience of metropolitan activists that the photographs serve as evidence of atrocity (sati as "curse") of

I.8 *Sri 1008 Kotadivali Sri Sati Savitri Mata*. Framed offset lithograph with halftone photographic elements. Photograph by Christopher Pinney, 2015.

the sort on which Azoulay focuses.[42] This duality underwrites the dangers of assuming that there is a single public, one equally committed to agreed civic virtues. We are faced by contrast with "counterpublics" constituted by fundamental disagreements. *Counterpublics* was the term that Michael Warner adopted from Nancy Fraser's optimistic claim for a late twentieth-century US feminist subaltern alternative sphere.[43] However, Warner's reworking of the concept, in line with his general proposition that "political confidence is committed to a strange and uncertain destination," is not confined to politically approved "subalterns."[44] He asks why counterpublics should not include "US Christian fundamentalists" or other entities that do not privilege "the hierarchy of faculties that elevates rational-critical reflection as the self-image of humanity."[45] Those who eulogize sati "as blessing" (and in western India,

they are many) would certainly qualify as a counterpublic not enamored of Habermasian critical rationality.

Second, the print offers a fine example of "mixed media." The black-and-white photographs play a secondary role to the central image, which is largely painted and duplicated through offset chromolithography. The "failure" of photography at the center of this image reflects the difficulty or impossibility of capturing the event that authenticates sati: the transmission of a beam of fire from the god Shiva that certifies the divinely approved status of the act and initiates the immolation. In the central image, we can see Shiva and his consort Parvati in the sky on the left; the beam of fire emerges from the right-hand side of the image. The other subsidiary point to make concerns the image's intervisuality. The arrangement of a central devotional image surrounded by contextualizing and historicizing images is a peculiarity of visual culture in this part of Rajasthan. The most illuminating parallel is that of images of Baba Ramdev Pir, whose *samadhi* (tomb) is near Pokharan, also in northern Rajasthan. In one widely circulated print (versions of which were produced by Harnarayan and Sons in the 1930s and Sharma Picture Publications in the 1950s), known as *Ramdevji ki chaubis parche* (The twenty-four proofs of Ramdevji), Ramdev is show on horseback in the center and is surrounded by twenty-four medallions or *tondi* that record the "proofs" (*parche*) of the deity's divinity.[46] The sati image reproduces this basic visual structure and reveals photography's work in this context not to be the self-authenticating historical reflex about which Valéry commented but to demonstrate conformity to a local visual-cultural convention (i.e., the authority of parche rather than, or not simply, the Peircean index).

At this point, cultural relativists, or radical adherents of the "ontological turn," might argue that anthropology faces a choice between embracing a universal or a locally sensitive semiotics. Keane stresses that for Peirce, signs gave way to more signs opening up semiotics to "sociability, struggle, historicity, and contingency," thus opening up the conditions for what Keane calls "semiotic ideology," in which "different ontologies . . . underwrite different sets of possible signs," or as he later puts it, the manner in which signs, agentive subjects and acted-upon objects, "are found in the world."[47] Keane advocates the relocation of semiotic research from the closed confines of philosophy into the "messier, open-air landscapes of ethnography," an aim with which this collection is in total agreement.[48]

Keane cites Peirce to the effect that indexes in themselves "assert nothing" and require "instructions," this being the work of semiotic ideology.[49] In light of this, we would have to acknowledge for Hindu viewers of the sati im-

age that the central painted/chromolithographed element may well be more indexically powerful than the black-and-white photographic elements. This conundrum recalls an intriguing discussion by Jain of a photomontage not dissimilar to the central element of the *Kotadivale* image reproduced here, depicting the eighteen-year-old 1987 sati Roop Kanwar.

The Roop Kanwar image, which concerns Jain, shows her being "consumed by flames as her hands are joined in prayer over her husband's body; in the air in front of a tree hovers the mother goddess (*devi/mata*), who is sending a beam of light toward Roop Kanwar's haloed head."[50] This image plays a significant role in Anand Patwardhan's 1994 film *Trial by Fire*, in which we hear Patwardhan interrogating a Rajput women named Godavari about the semiotic status of the photograph. Has it been "faked," he asks, to which she replies, "No . . . that's the way it is in the photo." Patwardhan then asks how it is possible to photograph god, at which point she insists that "he'll definitely come in the photo. . . . He hides and then appears in the photograph." It must be god in the photo, she concludes, because otherwise how would you know that it was god's beam of fire that ignited the pyre? This stages what Jain refers to as "a radical incommensurability" grounded in different evaluations of what constitutes a "photo" (the term *photo* being used in Hindi to denote any kind of two-dimensional image) and an equally significant divergence about what the capabilities of the gods are.[51]

"Secular" demands can of course also be made of photographs. In Cambodia, according to the sub-decree on Khmer identification and identity cards, a Buddhist monk is not entitled to a Khmer citizen ID. Consequently, monks occasionally ask photographers to photoshop "Buddhist images" (images that they already have that show them attired as monks) into something that looks like a civil photo ID by adding a shirt, moustache, hair, and eyebrows (figure I.9).

Elsewhere in South Asia, family portraiture dips in and out of the transcendent. In Indian Hindu practice (Pinney, this volume), framed photographs of ancestors are routinely worshipped (in theory for seven generations after their death). Pinney often experienced villagers in central India complaining (if upon returning to his field site without a portrait photo he had pledged to a sitter), "So what will they do when I'm dead?" (meaning, what would their relations do in the absence of a suitable image for memorial purposes?). Buthpitiya (this volume) documents a kind of "remixing" that underlines the "not-quite-secular" status of photographic images—a material embedding of images of the departed in Sri Lanka within small temple-like wooden structures. Studio practitioners transform staid NIC photographs into extrava-

I.9 A Phnom Penh studio photoshopping a monk's portrait so that it can be used for a national ID card. Photograph by Sokphea Young, 2019.

gant memorial portraits made even grander by frame makers with twinkling electric lights and neon plastic flowers, to be placed and worshipped among Hindu or Catholic household pantheons (figure I.10).

Ileana L. Selejan documents similar crossovers between photographic ensembles and devotional assemblages of ex-votos in Nicaragua. She notes that photographs are frequently displayed alongside religious images. This spillover between auratic registers also encompasses revolutionary displays of martyrs' portraits and portraits of the victims of the 2018 repression, which are incorporated into portable saints' altars. The latter are displayed during subsequent Semana Santa (Catholic Holy Week) precessions and placed alongside

the figure of the Virgin Mary within altars erected in homes and neighborhoods during the celebrations of La Purísima (the immaculate conception).

The "not-quite-secular" characteristic of photography suggests, however, not that we need a relativistic semiology but that we need to not lose sight of the commonalities that underlie the diversity in semiotic ideologies and that most of all we need to understand the centrality of the photographic event to the semiotics of photography. Although local "Hindu" semiotic ideology would insist that the colored centerpiece and the black-and-white "proofs" in the Indian sati image are equally indexical, we should not experience any embarrassment in making the contrary claim that this is not the case: the black-and-white images are signs of events, whereas the "event claim" of the central colored element can only be equivalent to that made by the Knock lithograph: it meets with social "approval" after the fact.

Consider in this context a photoshopped image of a Cambodian graduate with Prime Minister Hun Sen, as discussed in Sokphea Young's contribution

I.10 Memorial portraits awaiting collection at framing shops. Jaffna, 2018. Memorial portraiture, inextricable from wartime public remembrance practices and aesthetics, has a significant social presence. These were placed among Tamil Hindu and Catholic pantheons in households and commercial establishments and incorporated into rituals of daily worship. Photograph by Vindhya Buthpitiya, July 2018.

(this volume). Believing that being photographed in the presence of a powerful figure will bring fortune and facilitate a flow of power, many Cambodians desire such images. However, only a few students are fortunate enough to be photographed with the premier. The poor graduate shown in figure I.11 paid a photographer to photoshop himself with Hun Sen with the intention of displaying the image at home or in the office to show relatives and friends his indexical connection to power. The "semiotic ideology" is clear: the graduate hopes that beholders of the image will believe that he was in physical proximity to the fountainhead of power. However, analytically we can safely dispute this indexical claim, concluding that it is merely "iconic" trickery.

The Political and Optical Unconscious

Intrinsic to the Benjaminian event is also his idea of the "optical unconscious" and the sense that photography, rather than simply confirming our vision and view of the world, *extends* and *subverts* it.[52] This intuition was most perfectly expressed in his response to Karl Blossfeldt's close-ups of the structure of plants. Originally conceived as a contribution to scientific botany, they were received upon their belated publication in 1928 as *Urformen der Kunst*, as somewhere "between New Objectivity and Surrealism."[53] Blossfeldt's work ("the forms of ancient columns in horse willow, a bishop's crosier in the ostrich fern, totem poles in tenfold enlargements of chestnut and maple shoots") had provoked Benjamin to a memorably poetic vision of "the image worlds, which dwell in the smallest things—meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams."[54] This "perceptive inventory" opened up the possibility of an optical unconscious.[55]

To Benjamin's idea of the optical unconscious we might add the idea of a "political unconscious." Although this is a phrase associated with Fredric Jameson, its usage here directs our attention not so much to fundamental questions of *form*, as in Jameson, as to the manner in which "subjunctive" performances in front of the camera find a place in "waking dreams."[56] Photographs, as Vilém Flusser puts it, are "projections . . . images of the future" that encourage covert explorations of what, once made conscious, we would readily recognize as conventionally "political." Photographers, Flusser continues, "are pursuing new possibilities."[57] There is already ample ethnographic evidence for this, perhaps most notably through Karen Strassler's work on photography in Indonesia, which has advanced important propositions con-

I.11 A photoshopped image of a graduate with Hun Sen, the prime minister of Cambodia. Rephotographed by Sokphea Young, 2018.

cerning the nature of "visual history," the role of affect and visuality in nationalism, the relationship between intimate and public spheres, and the "messianic" potential of photography.

Strassler emphasizes the subjunctive nature of photography, what she terms the "as if" quality of the image. This involves photography's *inability* to do other than capture the proleptic future-made-present of the performative self-presentation so commonly found in popular images. Strassler's *Refracted Visions* is replete with insights about the political identifications, projections, fluidities, and erasures that photography facilitates. In the process, it delivers a subtle analysis of the role of visual practices in political imaginaries. She writes, for instance: "In posing for—and with—the camera, people place themselves (and are placed) within the visual landscapes, temporal logics, and affective and ideological structures of Indonesia's national modernity. Popular photographic practices thus register how people pose as 'Indonesians' and the ways that 'Indonesian' itself has been posed: as a problem, a proposition, a possibility, and a position from which to occupy the world."[58]

The covert dimension of the political unconscious partly speaks to the problem identified by Judith Butler concerning how different behaviors and issues come to be framed as "perceptible reality" or how, conversely, they may never enter the field of visibility: "how we articulate political analyses, depends upon a certain field of perceptible reality having already been established."[59] Strassler provides tangible evidence that the study of photographs can give us access to the political unconscious and in the process make visible what would otherwise be occluded: "Popular photographs . . . reveal the larger currents of Indonesian history as they are refracted through the prism of the intimate and the everyday. At the same time, they show the visual to be a domain crucial to the very making of history itself. History, after all, encompasses not only the main events and central plots but also people's barely registered efforts to orient themselves to new narratives and possibilities, to assimilate alien ideas and practices, to see and be seen in new ways."[60]

Photography's political unconscious realizes what would otherwise remain latent, hidden, as Benjamin put it, "in waking dreams." It is through photography that images of "'imagined' social entities like nations become visible and graspable."[61] Photography is central to becoming, to emerging identities and identifications, to selves in the process of being forged. This subjunctive and unconscious modality suggests that the gerund *photographing* may better capture this processual and emergent quality than the noun *photograph* or the abstract noun *photography*.

It is for this reason that the study of photography can provide access to "affective dimensions of national belonging that have remained elusive to scholarship—not (or not only) the strident emotions of nationalist fervor and patriotism but the more subtle and often ambivalent sentiments that attach to the nation."[62] Kalantzis (this volume) provides equally powerful documentation of the way in which photography allows access to a level of the social imagination, a political unconscious of sorts, in which Sfakians mobilize affects that are in tension with the formal political rhetoric that would otherwise attach to concepts like "Germany." He further shows in other work how Sfakian men use photography to both perform and deform nineteenth-century warrior archetypes, reanimating motifs and identifications that have the potential to reorient the terms of conventional political debate.[63]

The Sfakian case study speaks to a long history of asymmetry in the area's representation: Sfakians are always the subject of others' photographs and texts—never, until very recently, the producers. However, out of this asymmetry is forged a dialogical mediation in which outsiders drawn to local idioms encounter locals posing in ways that fit their own sense of self and outsiders further inflate that local sense through their presence and through their images that locals reimport.[64] This echoes the negotiations through which Sfakians ameliorate an unequal image economy by partly erasing the role of photographers through their emphasis on the aura of ancestors as in some sense the authors of photographs. This is less the egalitarian space of the civil contract and more a patrilineal and hieratic valorization of sacred ancestors.

The *overt* uses of photography for political purposes are documented by Buthpitiya in Sri Lanka (where atrocity images feverishly circulate as part of ongoing Tamil political claims [figure I.12]) and by Naluwembe Binaisa in Nigeria (where elaborate photographic billboards promote political candidates in state elections). Selejan documents how in the 2018 uprising in Nicaragua, portraits of victims of the regime were repeatedly brought into view during months of protests, marches, and assemblies (figure I.13). One might say they were embodied by the mass, and *performed* and revivified in public space through the prominent display of images of the martyrs. These strategies resemble practices from the earliest revolutionary period (late 1970s and 1980s), signaling certain continuities that nevertheless many protesters sought to contradict.

Bangladeshi photo studios are also unusually vocal about their competition for the patronage of local politicians, each studio claiming they can deliver "cleaner" and "shinier" portraits for campaign images. But these practices

I.12 Family members hold up photographs of their loved ones at a protest of the Families of the Disappeared in Maruthankerny, Jaffna, March 2018. Continuing for more than 2,000 days since February 2017, the Families of the Disappeared in the north and east of Sri Lanka have gathered in various locations to demand answers from the state about the whereabouts of their loved ones, a number of whom surrendered to the state security forces at the end of the civil war. Photographs of the protesters, wielding photographs of missing family members, have become a visual metonym for the injustices and grievances that characterize the postwar period. Photograph by Vindhya Buthpitiya.

usually have a covert underside: in Osun, Nigeria, Binaisa reports a liking among politicians and dignitaries for "mirror portraits" offering an amplitude through doubling. In Cambodia, as we have seen, the image of Premier Hun Sen is photoshopped into images where individuals crave the benefits of supposed physical contiguity. In small-town central India (studied by Pinney), mobile phone covers with photographic prints of the local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), or their political competitors, are popular, the image of the politician here acting as talisman, compressed through daily use, into the intimate bodily space of the loyal devotee.

I.13 Students demand the release of political prisoners in Nicaragua as part of an antigovernment solidarity protest in front of the police headquarters in Managua. The poster includes a family photograph of one of the protesters, with details surrounding his arrest provided in the text. Photograph by Ileana L. Selejan, May 9, 2018.

Performance and Imagination

Karen Strassler also persuasively affirms James Siegel's observation that in the late colonial Indies, photography "emblematized the pervasive fantasy" of a lingua franca of modernity, establishing a zone of translatability and transmission, a space of performative invention and consumption, a laboratory for the development of new selves and identities.[65]

The current collection presents many examples that echo this insight as well as photographic practices that consolidate powerful narratives of "tradition." To focus only on South Asia, we can find strikingly explicit visualizations that place photography itself in the vanguard of progress. Early twentieth-century South Indian studios picture photographic packaging virtually laminated against clocks as though they could be harnessed to the onward march of time or perhaps propel that time ever forward. Images from

1960s Kathmandu similarly foreground photographic packaging's high symbolic yield. A parallel genre deploys photography to record or imagine mobility: bicycles were frequently brought into the studio, and the studio in turn became a staging space for travels in airplanes and automobiles. Frequently, this was tied to the desire and/or necessity of transnational migration (figure I.14).

Motorbikes, for long a means of surveying urban glamour within profilmic space, still feature as a prop in the photographic studios that accompany traveling fairs in central India. Pinney's research in South Asia revealed numerous images where the motorbike featured as a prop, including a poignant late 1970s one made in a traveling studio at a fair in Birgunj, Nepal, in which two brothers straddle a Royal Enfield Bullet bike, one wearing a policeman's cap in reference to the then popular Yash Chopra 1975 film *Deewaar* (figure I.15).

I.14 Elaborate photomontage of a prospective migrant, visualizing a future in the Gulf. Birgunj, Nepal. Rephotographed by Christopher Pinney, June 18, 2019.

I.15 Ganesh Lath and his brother photographed in a traveling studio in a *mela* at Birgunj, Nepal, late 1970s. Courtesy of G. P. Lath. Rephotographed by Christopher Pinney, June 19, 2019.

The expressionistic Dr. Caligari–like painted backdrop beautifully conjures the access to modernity opened up by the space of the photographic studio.

In Nicaragua (Selejan, this volume), Photoshop has of course replaced artisanal practices of overpainting and adornment with new aspirational backdrops indicative of the desire for economic prosperity, usually through some iteration of the American Dream (villas, cars, luxurious interiors). Some image types have remained consistent (figures I.16–I.18): standard graduation photographs in Sri Lanka will have the hand-painted library backdrop replaced with an almost identical digital one; family portraits posed against painterly gardens will be juxtaposed with an equivalent chosen by the sitters from a multitude of floral backdrops "harvested" online. In Nigeria (Binaisa, this volume), aspiration is embodied in ornate golden chairs found in many studios. There are resonances here with Krista Thompson's work on Bahamian photography and Tobias Wendl's documentation of Ghanaian studio images.[66]

In Crete, the circuit is rather more complex. Kalantzis (this volume) dissects the process through which Germans, envisioned by Cretan shepherds as arch agents of modernity (exemplified by their presence as early photographers of local life but also through other vectors such as the engineering prowess embodied in cars, and Germany itself as a high-value migration destination), were the chief propagators and image preservers of the antimodern traditional Sfakian archetype (figure I.19). Thus a German modernity invested itself (through a Romantic Orientalism) in the image of what it had itself lost.[67]

Demotic versus Vernacular

The connections between the different practices documented here suggest the need for a new theory of "demotic" photography as opposed to "vernacular" practice. This, following J. F. Champollion (who elaborated this concept in his engagement with the Rosetta Stone), denotes a "ground-up" practice "of the people" rather than the reactive "top-down" trajectory of theories of vernacularity.[68] "Vernacularity" has certainly done useful work in the past, and we do not propose its complete abolition.[69] However, "demotic" assumes a widespread subaltern practice that is "more than local and less than global." "Vernacular," based on linguistic models, assumes popular practices that are reactive to dominant hierarchies, as for instance in Pierre Bourdieu's influen-

I.16 (left) Studio backdrop, Kumaran Photo Studio, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Library backdrop as used for university graduation portraits either on-site at the studio or as part of official photography services offered at graduation ceremonies. On both occasions, sitters typically pose standing with a cap, gown, and rolled-up diploma in hand. Photograph by Vindhya Buthpitiya, April 2018.

I.17 (center) Throne chair, the central studio backdrop in Dr. Lukson Star Photo Studio, Ilé-Ifè, Osun, Nigeria. In a highly segmented society, a photograph posed in the throne chair invokes and visually cements aspirations for future social mobility. Photograph by Naluwembe Binaisa, 2018.

I.18 (right) A client, Oladimeji Ogunoye, a PhD student at Obafemi Awolowo University. Image taken in 2017 by Dr. Lukson Star Photo Studio, Ilé-Ifè, Osun, Nigeria. Rephotographed by Naluwembe Binaisa. 2018.

tial work on French popular photography.[70] "Vernacular" may accurately describe certain practices (such as Bourdieu's), but it is inappropriate in many instances, including several documented in this book.

The linguistic paradigm of vernacularization involves a distilling out of local idioms from much larger cosmopolitan structures; as the Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock puts it: "in conscious opposition to some larger world, in relationship to which they chose to speak more locally."[71] Pollock contrasts vernacular "place" with cosmopolitan "space," describing vernacularization as choosing "to write in a language that did not travel . . . as easily and as far as the well-traveled language of the older cosmopolitan order."[72]

It is apparent how models of vernacularization, applied to media, suit a rather conventional mode of anthropology invested in emphasizing localization as active cultural practice. It affirms the heroic estimation of the human subject who always proves capable of overcoming the potential tyranny of technology and unwittingly feeds ex-nominating narratives through its celebration of divergent local appropriations.

The desire to move away from the concept of the "vernacular" lies in the recognition of its hierarchical origins in the "language of the *verna*, or house-born slave of Republican Rome."[73] It was this sense of a local, subordinate practice developed in opposition to dominant class practices that Bourdieu advances in his work on photography and visual culture. While this may well be an appropriate characterization of the hierarchical dynamic of 1960s French photographic practice, it is this volume's contention that it fails to

accurately describe the dynamics and contours of all "popular" photographic activity.

"Demotic" seems a better descriptor than "vernacular" for much of the popular practice documented in this volume for two central reasons. First, a good deal of popular photography reveals a desire to engage with (rather than withdraw from) the cosmopolitan: telephones, cityscapes, motorbikes, and airplanes are all symptoms of a modernity and mobility that connects, rather than disconnects, localities. This mélange of speed, glamour, consumption, and aspiration forms the core repertoire of much global popular photography.

Second, much global popular photography looks very similar. This is the "more than local, less than global" space of the *demotic*, a distributed horizontal space of popular practice whose dynamic space is quite different from

I.19 A woman holds up a portrait of her father-in-law, Charitos Protopapas, taken originally by a tourist, most likely a German, in the 1970s at a highland village in the Sfakia region of Crete. This particular sitter had been photographed on various occasions in his lifetime by passing travelers and professionals and had been featured in various media, including the German travel magazine *Merian*. Such images of "traditional" rugged men acquire complex social lives and often become cherished photos of ancestors for Sfakians in the absence of other locally produced images. Original photographer unknown. Photograph by Konstantinos Kalantzis, 2018.

the vertical place of the *vernacular*. It is worth adding here that Bourdieu's nation-state space of aesthetic hierarchy seems especially ill-suited to (for instance) the diasporic space of Tamil nationalism in which image flows configure a landscape that massively exceeds the northern part of Sri Lanka (see Buthpitiya, this volume).

The Photograph as a Scarce Resource

Photographic theory in its ex-nominated form frequently bemoans the anaesthetizing properties of simulation. From Ludwig Feuerbach in 1843 onward, this has combined a Platonic disparagement of the image with complaints about the sheer numbers of images and the velocity of their circulation. Guy Debord's profoundly Platonic 1960s regret about the triumph of "spectacle" opens with Feuerbach ("the present age . . . prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original").[74] This gets rebooted in Susan Sontag's popular account and Baudrillard's account of modernity's "simulation" in which the precession of simulacra drives out the "original."[75] In the 1990s, Paul Virilio would emphasize the importance of speed in "dromospheric circulation."[76] In the digital age, what Sontag referred to as photography's "usurpation" of reality appears complete, for the digital image is (ostensibly) divorced from its referent by the lack of any indexical contiguity.[77] We have too many images, and they are not even indexes!

But before we assent too readily to this position, we should consider how some of the most powerful accounts of photography are predicated upon its scarcity and the extreme difficulty of its making. The photographers Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin provide a memorable introduction to *Mr. Mkhize's Portrait*, noting that their eponymous South African subject had only been photographed twice before (for a Pass Book and then an Identity Book) and that their picture, taken in 2004, was the first portrait of him made "for no official reason."[78]

In Cambodia, Greece, India, and Nigeria, the fluctuating "demographics" of the image (its literal presence and absence, abundance and scarcity) provide a vital way of understanding history (figure 1.20).

Sokphea Young's and Konstantinos Kalantzis's contributions are fundamentally about scarcity. In Greece, in wartime slaughter towns, people are desperate to acquire images of relatives. Martyrdom is predicated on scarcity, the gallery of Nazi victims being peppered, as we have seen, with shadow figures where photos don't exist. Scarcity is also a feature of Sfakian image ecol-

I.20 A villager in central India holds out the only images she possesses of her deceased husband and son for rephotography. Photograph by Christopher Pinney, 2017.

ogies and is the condition for the compromises and intimacies precipitated by the dependence on German tourists for photographs. There is a deep yearning for photographs of co-villagers, and in practical terms this involves appropriating images produced by powerful outsiders such that the external authorship of those images is partially erased.

Young discusses an image of his own grandparents, a photograph taken in a studio in Phnom Penh around the 1930s during the French colonial period (figure I.21). The photograph survived apocalyptic and political calamities, from peace to war, from war to genocidal regime, and to peace again. Recently it was colorized in Photoshop and shared among a wider group of relatives. The photograph's complex career reveals that photography in Cambodia for much of the twentieth century was a scarce resource, not part of an anesthetizing deluge of images.

Indeed, modern Cambodia's history can be seen as involving an image deficiency with projects such as Charles Fox's *Found Cambodia* serving to recuperate image worlds that Khmer Rouge tyranny attempted to destroy. The photographer Kim Hak's powerful (2014–ongoing) series *Alive* rephotographs

objects (including family photographs) that were hidden as repositories of family memory during the dark days of Khmer Rouge rule (figure I.22). Photographs were frequently hidden, stitched inside clothing or buried for fear that they would incriminate through their intrinsically "bourgeois" existence, the mere fact of being able to afford to have a photograph made serving as an index of culpability. Hak's series, as also Young's contribution here, highlights the significance of not only the epidemiology of representation but also the political stakes of the "distribution of the visible."[79]

Pinney's research notes the huge difficulty in obtaining apparatus and film in Nepal. One leading photographer recalls swapping a transistor radio with a farmer who had found a Leica camera left by Japanese tourists in a temple. The same photographer had many tales of waiting months for color film sent by post to be processed in Pakistan and India. Pinney's chapter reports the difficulty the Nepali photographer Gopal Chitrakar experienced prior to the 1990s in getting photographic images reproduced in local newspapers. Mass

I.21 The only image of the grandparents of Sokphea Young, ca. 1930s. Unknown Phnom Penh studio, recently colorized.

I.22 Kim Hak, "Photo and Plastic Bag" from the *Alive* series, 2014. The subject of the photograph was Chhoa Thiem, a friend of Hak's father who buried his photo along with other treasured mementos during the Khmer Rouge period.

media was no guarantee of a superfluity of images: halftones were badly made and frequently, literally, could not be "seen." Selejan reports a similar experience during the revolutionary period in 1980s Nicaragua due to general scarcity as well as a US-imposed embargo. Local photographers were thus at a great disadvantage when compared with foreign correspondents who had access to plentiful supplies.

The fragility and silencing of the archive run in tangent through Nigeria's visual history and underscore the scarcity of atrocity photographs. A black-and-white photographic history is hard to access in the public domain, hence the growth and popularity of online platforms like the Nigeria Nostalgia Project, whose popular (but private) Facebook profile displays photographs from the mid-nineteenth century to 1980. The silencing of the archive is loudest when it comes to conflict photographs depicting the atrocities in Biafra. Despite the overflow of images depicting the Biafra war within the international domain (a reflection of the large numbers of international photojournalists who covered the war), almost none of these images circulate in Nigeria's public sphere. This asymmetry of demand and visibility across the transnational media space continues and is reflected in the coverage of contemporary con-

flicts in Nigeria, where images are commissioned by the international press and press agencies, shot by photographers within Nigeria, but seldom appear in the country's mainstream press.

Selejan argues that although photography in Nicaragua was quantitatively scarce, especially if measured by the incidence of professional photographers and studios (it was not unusual to encounter interlocutors whose entire life span had resulted in only one or two photographs), this was belied by the recognition of its importance as a social practice. Many interlocutors observed a surfeit of images of the revolution and deficit of images recording the history of their community as though a nationally authorized visual narrative had squeezed out the intimate and covert identities discussed by Strassler.

Within the context of war in Sri Lanka, photographs became exceedingly vulnerable to loss and destruction, not simply on account of the frequent and pervasive displacement that the northern Tamil community was subject to but also on account of the political allegiances they might betray. For example, in the postwar, personal photographs of those pictured in Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) uniforms had to be concealed or destroyed for fear of repercussions from state security forces as the groups' iconography was immediately perceived as a threat to national security and Sri Lanka's territorial integrity. This was especially challenging within spaces of commemoration and personal remembrance where such portraits were the only images available to family members. By contrast, an excess of digital atrocity photographs captured on cell phones and compact digital cameras by "victims" and "perpetrators" began circulating locally and internationally, underpinning political claims for self-determination.

Mnemosyne versus Iteration, or "Never Again" (Again)

Ariella Azoulay observes that "political imagination does not always provide us with the wings we need to soar. Political imagination runs the risk of remaining cramped, limited and circumscribed. It often re-inscribes existing forms, but remains a form of imagination all the same."[80] Although the photographic event is endlessly capable of generating contingency and newness, established images frequently persist. Aby Warburg gave the name of Mnemosyne, the Greek goddess of memory, to his 1920s atlas of visual archetypes. Concerned at one level with the "afterlife of antiquity," it was also immersed in tracing the tension between historical change and recurrence.[81]

If we can be allowed to detach the idea of Mnemosyne from Warburg's very specific understanding of it and use it as a metaphor for the complex intersection of visual continuity and transformation (a certain tenacity of iconicity mixed with mutability), we can also put it in conversation with the Derridean notion of "iteration," that is, the suggestion that there can be no repetition without difference. As Derrida puts it, "iteration alters, something new takes place" because of the "logical force of the *iter* which 'ties repetition to alterity.'"[82] In the matrix produced by this conjunction of Mnemosyne and iteration, we can start to think about what stays the same and what changes. This theme is further expanded by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's understanding of collective memory as "a series of montages that are updated according to the ebb and flow of struggle and are deployed as auspicious gestures of justice."[83]

A Jamesonian approach might investigate the "shape of seeing" as a route to grasping the fundamental *forms* that change or don't change (for instance, aspect ratios, which were so variable until the introduction of 35 mm [4:3] and which in the digital era have once again endlessly morphed between square Instagram and smartphone panoramas). Future work might still find this to be a productive and strangely underexplored area.

In terms of image content and the politics that attaches to it, the Nepali editor and curator Kunda Dixit's wry observation about his book *A People War* and his photographic exhibition on the Nepalese Civil War points to a paradox from which it is difficult to escape. He noted that he and his collaborators had come up with the slogan "Never Again" as a way of condensing their political and ethical demands.[84] It was only subsequently that "we realized . . . that everyone demands 'Never again!'" In other words, it was "never again (again)," a resigned repetition when what is demanded is cessation.

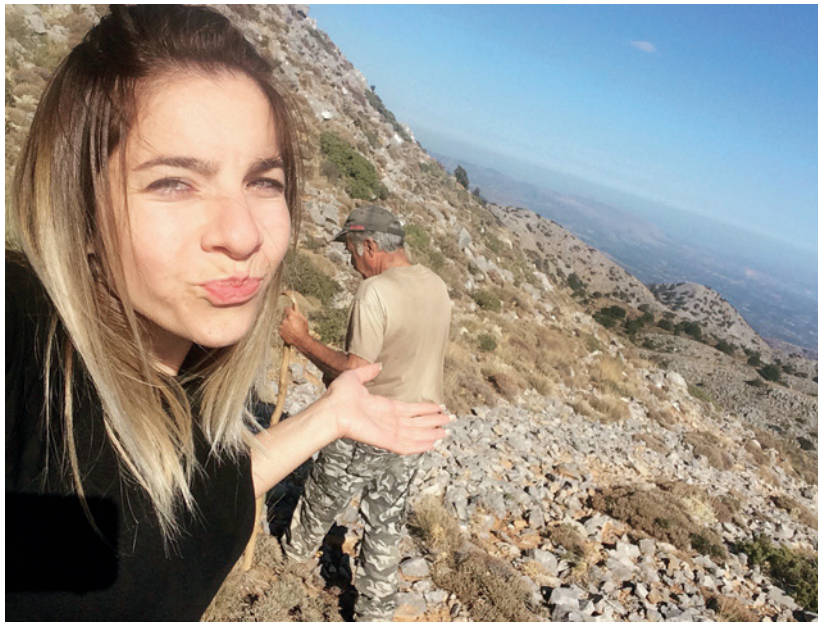
This may be one way of framing the observation that while some photographic genres privilege contingency and "newness," others—such as pilgrimage photography in Dakshinkali in Nepal, or north Indian *manorathas* (Pinney, this volume)—can be considered machines for the suppression of contingency by strictly imposing repetitive templates that attempt to mobilize an "eternal time" of photography that suppresses iteration. But of course, contingency seeps through, and repetition always reveals itself to be a form of iteration. Repetition as iteration is clear in the afterlife of Susan Meiselas's famous "Molotov Man" from the Sandinista Revolution. This is endlessly quoted in other images circulating in Nicaragua and exemplifies a wider practice of citationality and deformation of images, a circulating constellation of images that establish the parameters of what Selejan calls "hauntology." During the April 2018 events, Nicaraguan activists urgently scoured the internet for material

I.23 Digital collage showing a timeline of protest in Nicaragua (*from left*): an image of national hero Andrés Castro, who in 1856 fought against the invasion of US filibuster William Walker (sourced from a 1964 painting by Luis Vergara Ahumada); Susan Meiselas's "Molotov Man" photograph from the historic Sandinista insurrection taken in 1979 in the town of Esteli; and a contemporary image taken by Jairo Cajina during an April 2018 protest in the capital city, Managua.

for memes that could be redeployed as part of a digital campaign (figure I.23). In part *detournement* ("rerouting") of the kind beloved of the Situationist International, this strategy also contributed to the construction of genealogies through the repetition of highly recognizable images: Meiselas's *guerrillero* was materialized within the bodies of recognizably contemporary student protesters, again and again.

Kalantzis provides a compelling study of gendered photographic transformation. Digital media, and especially social media, enable possibilities of self-display that extend preexisting modes of envisioning, specifically through the placing of women in a highly gendered landscape previously occupied by older "warrior" men. Sfakian women use social media to humorously comment on the novelty of this scenography (figure I.24). While echoing a global-media normativity, this nevertheless opens up distinctly new possibilities of existing and imagining oneself in a place that social media is transforming into a cosmopolitan space.

Binaisa points to the tenacity of certain poses coded as "traditional" in Nigeria. During election season, whole streets in towns and cities are inundated, seemingly overnight, with posters of prospective political candidates. Rival gangs overlay opposing candidates' campaign posters thick and fast in a



I.24 "Since Dad doesn't have a son." Photograph by Iosifina Lefaki, 2017. This photograph was taken by a young Sfakian woman and originally posted on her Instagram page. Konstantinos Kalantzis later asked her to submit it to the exhibition of local digital photography *The Sfakian Screen*, which he curated in 2018; the photographer opted for the caption "Since Dad doesn't have a son." The photograph represents an emerging genre of imagery in Sfakians' social media pages in which young women visually highlight the perceived contradiction of a female subject posing on the mountain (her father is a shepherd who would in the formalist Sfakian scenario have sons to assist him at work). Image collected by Konstantinos Kalantzis.

race for maximum visibility. There is a striking similarity of pose despite differences of gender and political persuasion, with most candidates adopting a similar facial demeanor. The poster shown here features just the upper half of the body instead of the full body of the "traditional" pose (figure I.25). By making the head prominent, the portrait alludes to the Yoruba philosophical linkage of *Orí-inú* (inner spiritual head) to *íwa* (the essential nature of the person) visualized through the symmetrical body pose and the characteristic "cool" set of facial features.[85]

Buthpitiya, by contrast, documents practices that explicitly strive for greater fixity: Sri Lankan Tamil activists compile photographic memorializa-

I.25 Poster of Dr. Sule Lamido competing for the nomination as People's Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate for the 2019 federal presidential elections. In this triple portrait under the banner Wazobia, he is depicted wearing the three hats that indicate the dominant ethnic groups in the country (*left to right*): Yoruba, Fulani, and Igbo. Wazobia is the common phrase for One Nigeria. Here, iteration is performed in the cause of suturing identity back into a master narrative of a singular Nigeria. Photograph by Naluwembe Binaisa, 2018.

tion books that amass individual images of the dead into fixed assemblages of suffering that are then duplicated across international borders throughout the diaspora. Scanning and printing open up a new space of standardized dissemination.

Augurs and Haruspices

The contingency of the event also returns us to photography's divinatory potential. Benjamin's vision of the photographer as a modern-day "augur" or "haruspex" can find much support from recent anthropological commentaries on demotic imaging practices that stress the dangerous liminality of the moment of exposure of the negative. Tobias Wendl notes the use of photography in Ghana as a mode of exorcism, a kind of "photo-therapy," and also that negatives were referred to as *saman* or "ghosts of the dead." Pregnant women commonly avoided the camera for fear of exposing their unborn child to various dangers.[86]

The essays in this volume provide numerous affirmations of Benjamin's insights into photography's double identity as simultaneously modern and archaic. Its "optical unconscious" provides access to an underneath that is not straightforwardly clarifying but endlessly refracted. Binaisa (this volume) recounts meeting Simple Photo and Sir Special, elder photographers in the ancient city of Ìlá Òràngún, Nigeria, whose work appeared in Stephen Sprague's seminal article "Yoruba Photography: How the Yoruba See Themselves." Fifty years since this article was published, Sir Special (who is now known as Uncle Special to reflect his elder status) explained to Binaisa how he perfected the art of merging photographs within mirrors, a technique that first came to him in a dream.

Photography's relationship to the "otherworld" is also clearly evident in Pinney's account of how a photograph revealed the presence of King Cobra (Nag Maharaj) at an Indian village festival. It can also be opaque but no less interesting. Kalantzis reports a Sfakian who spent much of his time in the mountains and declined to take a smartphone with him because he deemed it "too bulky." Kalantzis then heard a story narrated by a friend of this intrepid trekker and hunter recounting that after an encounter at high altitude with some demonic force, he had taken to traveling with a bulky icon of Panagia, over which he would loudly say the Lord's Prayer to exorcise the demonic threat. Subsequently, this mountaineer did acquire a phone and became an avid Instagram uploader of images from his treks. The narratives that circle

around him are offered humorously, and though they do not assert the direct equivalence of the icon and smartphone, they nevertheless bring them into a zone of proximity where their similarities can be evaluated.

In Cambodia, the "not-quite-secular" nature of photography is apparent in its connection to death and the afterlife. The country is in part defined by the chilling portraits from S-21—images, like Alexander Gardner's 1865 photograph of Lewis Payne before his execution, that allowed Barthes to caption the portrait "he is dead and he is going to die" and establish an uncanny doubled temporality.[87] As is also the case in much of South Asia, demotic photographs of ancestors are photoshopped with modernized backdrops, such as mansions, flower gardens, and utopian landscapes often featuring a car. The Sino-Cambodian diaspora also makes use of ghost passports to enable their ancestors to travel to industrially developed countries in the West and in North America. The passports include a space on the main page intended for an ID photo of the deceased (figure I.26). Visas for desirable destinations (the one shown here features the United States) also require completion through the addition of photographs. Once the photograph is attached, the passports (together with boarding passes, cardboard cars, and cell phones) are burned during Qingming, the annual ceremony honoring the dead, and the ancestral ghost can then use the passport. Through these practices, which propel the aspirational props of the photo studio in a reverse direction, the deceased ancestors can acquire the benefits of a modernity they were denied in their earthly life.

Liquid Photography

Georges Didi-Huberman, in his discussion of photographs of the Holocaust, provides an unforgettably powerful account of a kind of pure analog materiality and phenomenology.[88] The question is what, if anything, of this endures after the "end of photography"? One account might emphasize the dissolution of the photographic "event" as the empirical world of the analog image gives way to the simulacrum of the digital.

In fieldwork in central India, I formerly used a cassette tape recorder with a graphic equalizer. The dizzying rows of red lights, like an undulating cityscape, always attracted eager villagers to participate in conversations for my microphone. They were being captured by the glamour of a foreign city, happy that their voices would be transported halfway across the world. Now they

I.26 The US visa page of a Cambodian "ghost passport." Collection of Sokphea Young, purchased in Phnom Penh, 2018.

do the same for my camera lens. What enchants them so? In India, before the spread of mobile phones, strangers would often ask to have their picture taken, but they rarely asked for the print, or they gave an address to which it might be sent. Standing in front of the lens was sufficient. Or to put it another way, which resonates with recent arguments about the circulation of photographs on digital platforms, we glimpse a practice that is outside of, or beyond, representation and materialization. What matters is participation and flow, not the stasis of the frame of the photograph as it was formerly known. Kalantzis's observations echo this, for he reports elderly Sfakians who had never traveled widely expressing their pleasure that their images would (through the agency of commercial photographers and tourists) become globally disseminated. José van Dijck suggests that photography for "digital natives" has more the quality of conversation, a communicative to-and-fro, rather than the monumental ethos of the analog era.[89] The materiality of photography is here compressed in the zone in front of the lens through performativity and enactment, and in the digital mobility of its trace.

Against this narrative of transformation, consider a dialectical triptych composed of three images glimpsed in quick succession in Suhag Studio in central India in early 2020 (figures 1.27a–1.27c). Viewed together, they suggest a technomaterial thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in which each image anticipates the next. The first reveals a dashing young Suresh Punjabi, the studio proprietor, photographed by his brother in the early days of the studio (almost certainly in the late 1970s). Obviously *filmi* inspired (one thinks of the eager Sashi Kapoor in *Deewaar*), Suresh talks on the phone while reading a copy of the newspaper *Dainik Bhaskar*.[90] Perhaps he is a journalist following one of his colleagues' stories, or a politician or businessman following pressing current events. At any rate, he is a connected man of action, connected both to the national space of the newspaper and to his unseen (and, in actuality, nonexistent) interlocutor at the other end of the phone. The image wonderfully conjures the imagined community that Benedict Anderson famously theorized. Anderson pivots his idea of the imagined network of like-minded national citizens with whom one can identify in the absence of any face-to-face experience through an account in an Indonesian serially published novel of a "young man . . . seated on a long rattan lounge reading a newspaper" in which there is a story about the death of a vagrant.[91] The "imagined community" is "confirmed by [this] doubleness of our reading about our young man reading," Anderson concludes.[92] We might imagine Suresh in a similarly doubled location asking his interlocutor whether they have read the same story that he is

I.27a (above), I.27b (right), & I.27c (overleaf) Three images from Studio Suhag, in central India, photographed by Suresh Punjabi. Figure I.27a dates from the late 1970s. The other two date from 2019 (I.27b) and 2020 (I.27c).

looking at, as they both, at a distance, in the same "meanwhile," consume and internalize the same narrative.[93]

The phone and the camera, which are allied as separate entities in the first image, are fused in the second image, which depicts a small boy gleefully clutching a mobile phone, shot in 2019 in the garden that is a unique feature of Suhag Studio's new premises. The mobile here is incarnated as a kind of poison, for it heralds the assault on the aesthetics and economics of studio practice. The third image is a 2020 example of the selfie images captured on a mobile that are brought to the studio for transformation into a physical paper print. One sees in the invisible apparatus into which the two women gaze a harbinger of the likely ultimate destruction of the studio system.

In the analog era, every photograph was a wager. Every exposure was made in the world. But after days (or sometimes months) had passed and you received the prints, that world had changed. In the digital era, the photograph becomes coeval with its world. There are other changes too. Edgar Gómez Cruz and Eric Meyer note that "giving away a photograph is no longer a subtractive process but an additive one."[94] "Sharing" as "flow" hence entails amplification: WhatsApp and YouTube serve as broadcast channels whose "width" contrasts with that of the "strange, confined space" of the analog photograph.

The additive (rather than subtractive) dimension of social networking has been theorized by Daniel Rubinstein and Katrina Sluis as a sensual plenitude: "Proliferation and abundance create a pornographic effect whether in the context of the App Store, Facebook timeline or Twitter stream. For that reason it becomes misleading to talk about the photographic 'frame' or the singular image for the image is everywhere at once, accessible from any point in the network, establishing a regime of intoxication and plenitude through its rapid multiplication and profusion."[95] It's not a "frame," or a "confined space," but a rolling frontier of superabundance.

In all regions, and especially India, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia, image-saturated social media plays a central role in socially and culturally polarizing politics. As such, these digital practices seem to undermine several of the foundations on which the "civil contract" thesis is built. Frequently, in the digital realm, cohesion around a shared image-world forms the basis for political division. Limitless and instantaneous sharing (at least until WhatsApp's recent constraint on the number of forwardees in India) facilitated the rapid circulation of idiosyncratic narratives, news, and opinions and has been directly implicated in political crimes and ethnic cleansing in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and India.[96] In Sri Lanka, the circulation of image- and text-based memes

propagating hate speech on social media, notably Facebook and WhatsApp, has stoked ethnic violence directed at several different communities. Photographs, which were often of indeterminate origin (identical images have been found circulating in both Sri Lanka and Myanmar), fostered racist and xenophobic fears against the Muslim community, offering commentary on the group's increasing numbers and espousal of Wahhabi practices that were condemned as a threat to the Sinhalese majority's future. During various pogroms, trophy photographs documenting damage inflicted by Sinhalese mobs were also shared widely on social media.

Classical photography's first chronotope entailed the physical coincidence of apparatus, operator, and subject. These were necessary for the creation of an image, underwritten by an "event" with claims to persuasive power. In photography's second chronotope ("after the end of photography"), such conjunctions are no longer required, and it is more appropriate to talk about photography's image act as "perlocution" (its ability to persuade) rather than its "indexicality."[97] Photoshop would now allow Homai Vyarawalla to "photograph" Gandhi's assassination after the fact, just as various technologies facilitate Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's digital distribution into spaces and times that his corporeal body has yet to encounter.

In spaces of low literacy, social media, especially Facebook, becomes a vital source of visual readability and new forms of politics. The impact of the new fusion between the camera and the phone cannot be overstated. While social media can affirm preexisting practices, there is clear evidence from Greece and Nigeria that it encourages new forms of images that break with conventional hierarchies of gender and politics.

The attraction of a notion like "liquid photography" lies in its suggestion of a radically new material form and ecology of imaging. The examples given here notwithstanding, it is not the case in the new liquid ocean that all the antique artifacts of photographic practice float away. The ethnographic investigation of actual practices reveals how much in the photographic landscape remains nonliquid (from photo studios to framed prints) and how much within liquid formats is filled by recognizably archaic structures and content (from Facebook "albums" to the ritualized modalities of Nepali pilgrimage prints). In a symmetrical fashion, we should note that analog techniques such as montage prefigured some of the transformations that we associate with the digital. The ethnographic reports in this collection do not support the view that the "real" has disappeared under a deluge of circulating representations detached from any "event."

If the event is no longer as relevant in this new perlocutionary chronotope, what are the conventions and limits of this new regime?[98] Are they burning the mimetic capital accumulated by the first chronotope (an entrenched memory of photographic "objectivity")? One of the most striking symptoms of the new chronotope in South Asia was a photograph of the face of convicted Bangladeshi war criminal Delwar Hossain Sayadee in the moon. Propagated via the Jamaat-Shibir Facebook page, this "divine" image was widely received as an omen, an interpretation reinforced by announcements from mosque loudspeakers. Many Bangladeshis then reported seeing the face directly in the moon (see Pinney's chapter in this volume).[99] A wonderful example of pareidolia (the discovery of a familiar pattern where none exists), this may conjure memories of Georges Méliès, and it raises the question of the extent to which digital perlocution remains indebted to codes established during the first chronotope of photographic "objectivity."[100]

The perceived nature of technical change may underwrite the longing for archaic modes: Kalantzis reports that Cretans have a tenacious attachment to the real valorized as analog. Although younger women have started to appropriate patriarchal mountain landscapes by means of social media, older males often reject what they see as the ephemeral color photography of the present, which is seen as secondary and less "historical." Black-and-white analog photographs are eulogized as repositories of value and affirmed as repositories of the aura of the ancestors.

Conclusion: Lifting the Veil That Hides the Future

Azoulay's comment that "the image is always the point of departure for a voyage whose route . . . is never known in advance" marks her difference from Foucauldian photographic theorists for whom the destination was sadly all too familiar.[101] But it also points to the prophetic dimension of photography to which Strassler also directs us and which Siegfried Kracauer long ago identified as a peculiar property of the visual. Pinney (this volume) cites Kracauer's memorable account of the response to Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* in the Paris Salon of 1831. Kracauer describes the crowds gathered around the image each day and speculates that the attraction of the picture may have reflected the suspicion in "the minds of some of those who came to gaze at it that this picture was not just a graphic representation of the three glorious days of July [i.e., the July Revolution of 1830], but that it also lifted a

corner of the veil that hid the future."[102] Kracauer here suggests a popular understanding and desire for pictures to point to what is yet to be rather than merely objectify what has already happened.

Photography's subjunctive invitation positively encourages experimentation. As Strassler notes, "Far from signs of an interior essence, studio portraits exploit the illusionistic potential of photography to bring into material, tangible proximity a fantasy portrayed 'as if' it were real."[103] This subjunctive dimension has also been identified by Thy Phu and Elspeth Brown as "enacting a future, right now, in the present" and by Tina Campt as an element of "black futurity," the future real conditional, or "*that which will have* **had to** *happen*."[104] Mohamed Shafeeq Karinkurayil has recently applied these prompts to an insightful analysis of Keralan migrants to the Arabian Gulf's "aspirational" photographs of mobility and travel as proleptic "image acts." Richard Vokes and Darren Newbury, in an important intervention, note how photography "has always been as much about fantasy, imagination and projection as about recording the visible social world."[105]

Consider also the case of simple ID photographs, for so long the exemplar within Foucauldian photographic theory of objectified state power and the end-point materializations of visibility and identity. In the high-migration ecologies described in this volume (such as Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Nigeria), the passport and visa photograph is future-oriented, embodying the aspiration to leave and prosper (figure I.28). Both Buthpitiya and Pinney (in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) encountered narratives of "lucky studios" where the descendants of customers who had success with visas attributed an auspiciousness to the work of the photographers.

The "subjunctive invitation" is facilitated by the fact that the *corps* of the photographic event has nothing to do with the *corpus*. This is a key differentiation made by Barthes in *Camera Lucida*; his observations about these two concepts are compressed in the following single paragraph: "In the Photograph, the event is never transcended for the sake of something else: the Photograph always leads the corpus I need back to the body I see; it is the absolute Particular, the sovereign Contingency, matte and somehow stupid, the *This* (this photograph, and not Photography)."[106] Corpus appears fleetingly here, as that thing "I need," which the photograph in its indestructible particularity refuses. The corpus is that "something else" that the particularity of the photograph can never be transcended to provide. The corpus signifies all those normalizing generalities that we expect the real to generate but that in its photographic specificity it is unable to produce. Indeed, this is the central point made by Barthes: the particularity of the corps cannot generate the

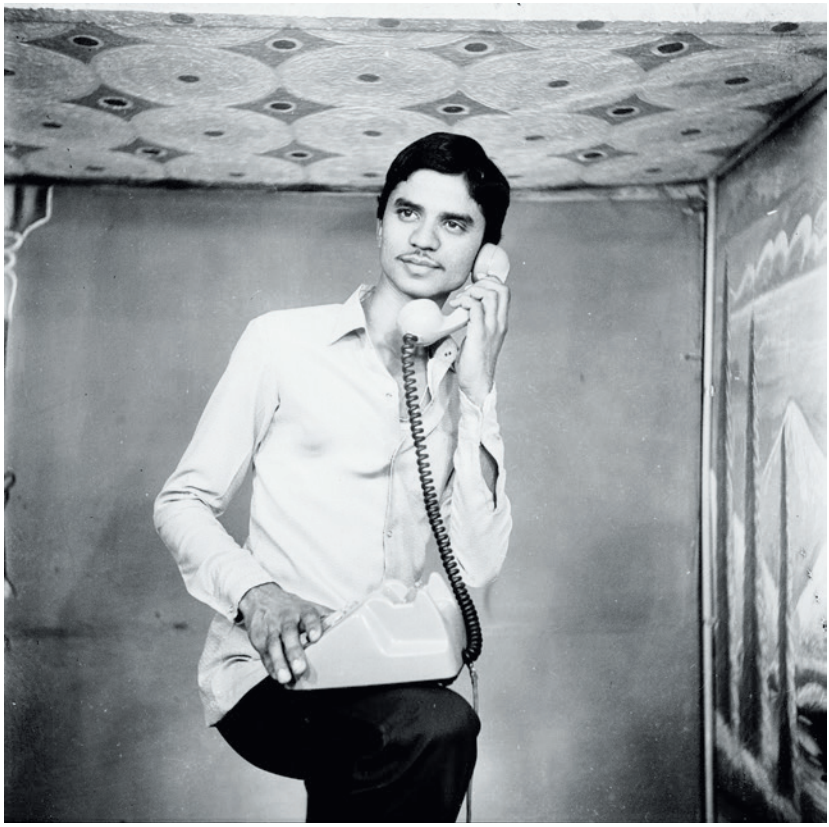
I.28 Advertisement for the US Electronic Diversity Visa 2020 program outside a photo studio in Birgunj, Nepal. Nepal has a particularly high application and success rate in the lottery for green cards. Most photo studios become data-processing centers during the lottery period, filing applications for their clients as well as preparing the correct biometrically formatted ID photos. Rephotographed by Christopher Pinney, June 18, 2019.

corpus. The camera delivers the *event* ("this photograph"), and this cannot legitimately be fused with the broader narrative of the corpus. The camera records what is placed in front of it and on its own is incapable of making distinctions about the relationship of its visual trace to psychic, social, or historical normativity. This is why it is for many consumers so liberating, and why rather than simply monumentalizing or ossifying already existing identities, it plays a prophetic role, adopting a vanguard posture, precipitating future possibilities.

I.29 Funeral brochure for S.O. Balogun, former chairman, Ila Area Council. Photo Speak in the center pages depicts the key stages of his life biography. The studio photographer who compiled the brochure, Hajj Hammed, and other local interlocutors remarked that his future success was already visible in the first photograph of his "youthful days." Rephotographed by Naluwembe Binaisa, 2018.

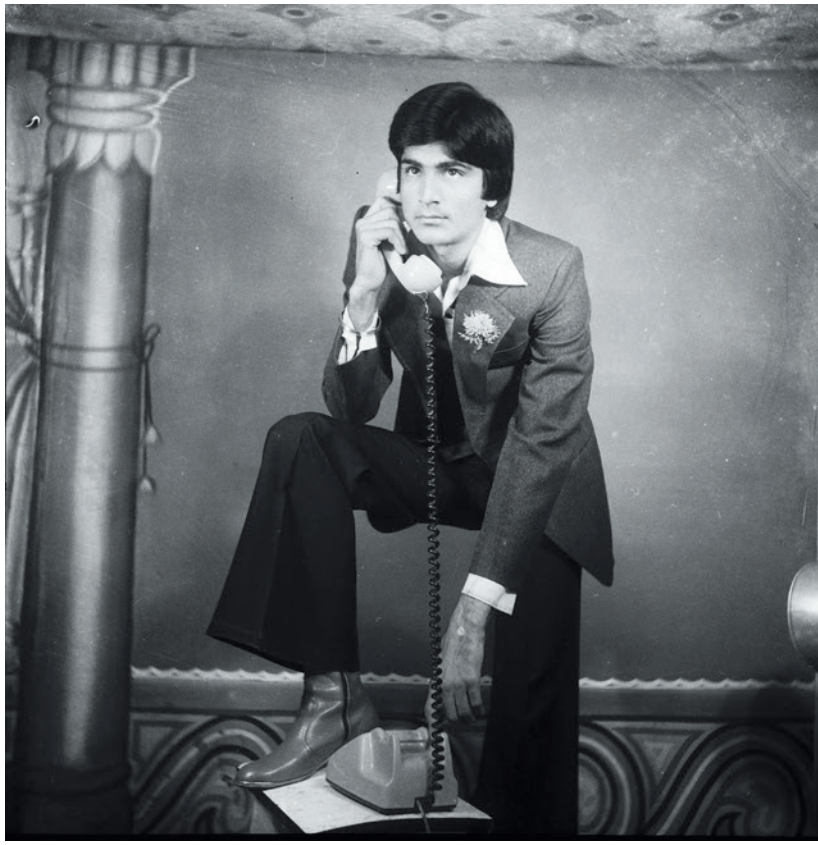
In Nigeria, the booking calendar of studio photographers revolves around clients' major life events such as naming ceremonies for newborns, birthdays, marriages, funerals, and other important occasions. These image-events invoke the life-yet-to-come with a liveliness that one hears in the oft-repeated phrase "the photographs are always speaking." Attendees are captured as witnesses, searing the future within the reciprocity of communal life. The deceased person's life is depicted as "Photo Speak," a pictorial biographical layout printed in the compulsory funeral brochure and in which images of the past are granted a predictive role in subsequent events (figure I.29).

Many of the photographic practices documented in this volume demonstrate a deeper concern with future potential than past events. Photography's peculiar power is to turn the "as if" (the hypothetical and conjectural) into the proleptic or the already achieved, a consequence of the "sovereign contingency" of photography's "body" rather than the "corpus." A significant part of the appeal of the studio system has derived from its opening of the



I.30a (above) & I.30b (overleaf) Suresh Punjabi, scans made in 2012 by Thomas Pinney from negatives made in the late 1970s by Studio Suhag in Nagda, Madhya Pradesh, India.

future into the present. Bourdieu's endless tautologies about the solemnization of the past (see Pinney, this volume) bear very little relation to the futuristic obsessions documented in this volume. Images such as those made in Suhag Studio in the late 1970s may seem now to invite a backward glance at a past that seems irretrievably lost (figures I.30a and I.30b).[107] But in fact most of the images speak in prophetic mode to a future that is yet to be. There are young men with phones, because phones could only be easily found in photographic studios. Suhag's customers posed wistfully, listening carefully to an interlocutor who is not yet there. They were lifting a corner of the veil that hides the future, using photography, as Azoulay suggests, to chart uncertain destinations.



More dramatically, but in a similar key, memorial photographs in South Asia are often possession "trigger objects"; that is, their presence and worship, especially if the subject died a violent and sudden death, can provoke the appearance of the photographic subject in the body of a medium (usually a consanguine) (figure I.31). Commonly the unsettled spirit of the deceased will offer advice about future predicaments and make predictions and prognostications (*bhavisvani*).

Photography is allied to the future in other ways: in Nepal, many photo studios offer a "cultural dress" service, usually through the provision of ethnicized costumes for clients to inhabit emergent new "indigenous" identities (such as Newar, Pahari, Tharu, etc.) of the kind encouraged by the Maoist government. They are not all yet widely embraced in society at large but can be commonly found inside studios.

I.31 Memorial portraits of ancestors in a rural Jain home in central India. The images of the boy (*second from left*) and the male (*far right*), both of whom died untimely deaths, regularly trigger possession events entailing future predictions. Photograph by Christopher Pinney, 2014.

If under the influence of Foucault the idea of a singular photography was smashed into the discursively nuanced multiplicity of photograph*ies*, in our present moment we might think of photography as being better conceptualized through the gerund *photographing*, which stresses the becoming of the image, the coming into being, and also the future life of the image. If earlier debates focused on what kind of noun *photography* was (singular or plural), the present debate, in part through the effect of Azoulay's generative thinking, focuses more on photography as a verb. As Patricia Spyer and Mary Steedly observe, images "move": they are mobile, unpredictable, and "world-making."[108] Karen Strassler underlines this, noting that images "are themselves eventful in that they are always *taking place* and *open-ended*."[109]

Photographing, conceived of as a gerund, enables us to ask new kinds of questions about how the visual reveals a cultural practice that is covert, la-

tent, and, most importantly, *yet to be*. It allows us to think of the metaphor of the developing image in a new manner. The latent image not simply *develops* to the point where it is "fixed" but continues to "become."[110] The evidence it provides is not the tautology of Bourdieu's "empty gravestone" but that of an inscriptional surface that endlessly multiplies and begins to form an image subject to as-yet-unknown gazes.

Notes

1 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 27.
2 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 8.
3 Barthes, *Mythologies*, 132.
4 Barthes, *Mythologies*, 139.
5 Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*, 16.
6 Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 32, 36, 3.
7 Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity*, 119–32.
8 Pinney, *Camera Indica*, 178–86.
9 Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 3.
10 Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 5, 12
11 Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 17, 19.
12 Kratz, *The Ones That Are Wanted*, 148.
13 Azoulay's Benjaminian embrace of the positivity of contingency is a feature of her early writing. Her more recent intervention, *Potential History*, is much more ambivalent, as when she declares her intention as a writer to "refuse to become the photographer" (xvi).
14 Benjamin, "Little History of Photography" (1999), 510; Azoulay, *Civil Contract*, 23, 29; Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 13.
15 Azoulay, *Civil Contract*, 12, 18; Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 10, 17.
16 Azoulay, *Civil Contract*, 26.
17 Tagg, *Burden of Representation*, 63. The evidence presented by this collection does not affirm any strong version of the Foucauldian claim that photography has "no identity." Neither does it affirm Friedrich Kittler's equally reductive claim that "media determines our situation" and his dismissal of media ethnography as "cultural-history gossip" (*Optical Media*, 9).
18 Tagg, *Burden of Representation*, 64.
19 Tagg, "Currency of the Photograph," 141.
20 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 4.
21 Benjamin, "Little History of Photography" (2008), 276–77.
22 My earlier formulation of this, via Carlo Ginzburg rather than Benjamin, argues that "however hard the photographer tries to *exclude*, the camera lens always *includes*" (Pinney, "Introduction," 7).

23 Kalantzis, *Tradition in the Frame*, 101–9.
24 Azoulay, *Civil Contract*, 14.
25 Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 17.
26 Azoulay, *Civil Contract*, 112.
27 Azoulay, *Civil Contr*act, 120. Benjamin had much to say about the radical egalitarianism of photography, which "pried aura from its shell." See Pinney, *Coming of Photography*, 38–49, for a discussion of the consequences of this in nineteenth-century India. James Siegel notes a similar effect through the reproduction of photographs in Indonesian newspapers: "Without their consent the rulers of Java sit next to sellers of soup. . . . It is as though royal presences are actually mingling with the popular classes" (*Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 85).
28 Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 10, 227–31.
29 Valéry, "Centenary of Photography," 193.
30 Valéry, "Centenary of Photography," 195, emphasis added.
31 Reproduced in Gadihoke, *India in Focus*, 83.
32 Valéry, "Centenary of Photography," 192, emphasis added.
33 Peirce, *Philosophical Writings,* 102.
34 Keane, "Semiotics and the Social Analysis," 417.
35 Peirce, *Philosophical Writings*, 102.
36 This is a key point made by David Graeber in "Radical Alterity."
37 On performative enactments, see Edwards, "Performing Science"; and Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, 69–78.
38 "The newness of modernity itself—can be understood within this not-quite-secular frame of the auspicious" (Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*, 236).
39 Nadar, "My Life as a Photographer," 9.
40 Benjamin, "Little History of Photography" (2008), 294, 279, emphasis added.
41 Batchen et al., eds., *Picturing Atrocity*.
42 Sati is familiar as a trope of atrocity against women, albeit one whose increased intensity is frequently seen as a paradox of colonial proscription (see Mani, *Contentious Traditions*; Hawley, *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse*; Nandy, "Sati"; and Courtright, "Iconographies of Sati"). The print reproduced here should, by contrast, be understood as a celebration of what is seen as a divine intervention. On sati as curse, see Hawley, *Sati, the Blessing and the Curse*; and Courtright's description in that volume of two competing—colonial and Hindu—iconographies of sati (Hawley, "Iconographies").
43 Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 85.
44 Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 52.
45 Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 86, 89.
46 See Pinney, "Accidental Ramdevji," 40.
47 Keane, "Semiotics and the Social Analysis," 413, 419.
48 Keane, "On Semiotic Ideology," 65.
49 Keane, "On Semiotic Ideology," 68.

50 Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*, 7.
51 "The male voice, appealing to secular reason seeks to establish the falsity of the image on the basis that its human fabrication invalidates its putatively divine authority. . . . For the woman . . . the very existence of the image invalidates the terms of truth and falsity" (Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*, 9).
52 See Sliwinski and Smith, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious*.
53 Mattenklott, *Karl Blossfeldt*, 6.
54 Benjamin. "Little History of Photography" (2008), 279.
55 Mattenklott, *Karl Blossfeldt*, 5; Benjamin, "Little History of Photography" (2008), 277.
56 Jameson, *Political Unconscious*.
57 Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, 26.
58 Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, 5.
59 Butler, *Frames of War*, 64.
60 Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, 28.
61 Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, 4.
62 Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, 4–5.
63 Kalantzis, *Tradition in the Frame*, 163–68.
64 Kalantzis, *Tradition in the Frame*, 191–97.
65 Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, 13, 27.
66 K. Thompson, *Shine*; Wendl, "Ghana."
67 Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India."
68 Thomas Young had originally used the term *enchorial* ("of the country") to denote the middle inscription on the Rosetta Stone. Champollion, in his later rival claim, used the term *demotic* ("of the people"), following Herodotus (Wood, *Thomas Young*, 208).
69 See Batchen, "Vernacular Photographies"; and Campt et al., *Imagining Everyday Life*.
70 Bourdieu, *Photography*.
71 Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 20.
72 Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 21.
73 Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 22.
74 Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*.
75 Sontag, *On Photography*, 179; Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," 166–84.
76 Virilio, *Open Sky*, 40.
77 Sontag, *On Photography*, 154.
78 Broomberg and Chanarin, *Mr. Mkhize's Portrait*, n.p.
79 "Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak" (Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*, 13).
80 Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 3.
81 Michaud, *Aby Warburg*.

82 Derrida, *Limited Inc*., 40, 44. Derrida quotes from his earlier essay "Signature, Event, Context."
83 Gago, "The Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui Principle," xvii.
84 Kunda Dixit, interview with Pinney, December 3, 2017.
85 Abiodun, *Yoruba Art and Language*; R. Thompson, *African Art in Motion*.
86 Wendl, "Ghana," 150–51.
87 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 95; see also Zelizer, *About to Die*.
88 Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*.
89 Dijck, *Mediated Memories*, 113.
90 *Deewaar* is the same 1970s Bombay movie that might have inspired figure I.15.
91 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 31.
92 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 32.
93 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.
94 Gómez Cruz and Meyer, "Creation and Control," 213.
95 Rubinstein and Sluis, "The Digital Image in Photographic Culture," 30.
96 See Pinney, "Digital Cows."
97 Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 102, 110.
98 A wonderful recent space for the exploration of this question has been provided by the photographer Jonas Bendiksen in *The Book of Veles*, with its AI-generated textual commentary and almost entirely confected photographic "documentation" of the North Macedonian town infamous as the origin of much "fake news."
99 See Zuberi, "The Man on the Moon," 262, 264, for analysis of "contested" and "polyscopic" Bangladeshi visual regimes.
100 Méliès directed *Le voyage dans la lune*, a 1902 Jules Verne–influenced film that might be best described as satirical science fiction.
101 Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 56.
102 Kracauer, *Orpheus in Paris*, 3–4.
103 Strassler, *Refracted Visions*, 27.
104 Phu and Brown, "The Cultural Politics of Aspiration," 157, cited by Karinkurayil, "Reading Aspiration"; Campt, *Listening to Images*, 17, italics and bold in original.
105 Vokes and Newbury, "Photography and African Futures," 2.
106 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 4.
107 Punjabi and Pinney, *Artisan Camera*.
108 Spyer and Steedly, "Introduction," 8.
109 Strassler, *Demanding Images*, 14.
110 Bajorek, *Unfixed*, 241.