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Introduction: Visual Genders

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I

The photograph on the cover of this journal was taken in the early 1960s by Daniel Morolong, at an East London beach in South Africa. Morolong was a press photographer covering popular leisure and social events in the city during the period before apartheid policies led to the forced removal of these residents to Mdantsane, a township later incorporated into the Ciskei bantustan. In the photograph, Morolong's mother and her two sisters are seated on the rocks by the sea. Aesthetically the image slides between two worlds, that of the black and white documentary photograph and that of the family seaside snap. Historically it also slides between a past and present denoting the inclusion and exclusion of African people in urban South Africa. On the right, the indeterminate space of the sea suggests a further slide, opening up another thinking space and rescuing the photograph from a single or dual history and genre. This openness is accentuated by the dispersed gazes of the three women, with the first looking back at the camera and the others at different points of the horizon, their bodies gradually inclining towards the sea. The photograph formed part of Morolong's extensive body of work, which has only recently drawn the attention of historians.[1] Then in 2004, a remarkable thing happened. The photograph was printed on a large conference poster. When numerous copies of it were pasted up around a busy South African university campus, it disappeared. More copies were put up, only to disappear again very quickly. The repeated theft of the image, which happened largely in silence, suggested some kind of connection. It revealed a relationship. It was not vandalism, but appropriation. The image belonged to the category of 'the ones that are wanted'.[2]

In '*Photos of the Gods*', Chris Pinney proposes that 'a new kind of history needs to be written' against a backdrop of practices that privilege

precisely what we have outlined above: 'the power of the image and visually intense encounters'.[3] In arguing for a visual history, he suggests that pictures have a different story to tell from words. What if we allowed them to do so, at least partly, on their own terms? Is it possible, Pinney asks, to 'envisage history as in part determined by struggles occurring at the level of the visual?'. Not so much a history of the visual, but a history made by visuals?[4]

In a way there is nothing new about this proposal, given that certain disciplines have long dealt with visuality. David Freedberg challenged art history long ago to shift away from a history of art towards something else, namely 'the relations between images and people in history'.[5] This converges with the push to study audience reception, advocated strongly by race and gender critiques of art history. These critiques questioned art history's construction of an 'emotionally detached, objectively accurate vision' of the (masculinist) connoisseur or trained expert and of the adherence to theories of innate aesthetic value.[6] New scholarship extends the call for the study of reception to mediation, transmission, circulation, to the inter-textual or inter-ocular receptivities and creativities that are generated in the course of this interaction, and to their effects on viewers and agency. But central to it all is the need, in social, historical and political analysis, to 'reflect on the significance of seeing itself'.[7] According to W. J. T. Mitchell, this involves the effort to 'overcome the veil of familiarity and self-evidence that surrounds the experience of seeing, and to turn it into a problem for analysis, a mystery to be unraveled'.[8]

Historians and other scholars have been waking up to the unacknowledged visual dimensions of gender.[9] The phrase 'unacknowledged visuality' comes from Alison Moore's study of the *tondues* images in liberation France, included in this volume, where photographs of women scapegoated for collusion with Germans during the Occupation keep coming back to the surface. She argues that it is precisely within this unacknowledged visuality that gender features, voicelessly and implicitly. Indeed, the processes through which *gender* history is made by visuals is the direct concern of this work.

The explicit visual focus of this volume elicited a record-breaking number of responses from potential contributors to *Gender & History*. In bringing gender, history and visuality together, the range of abstracts submitted to the journal appears to suggest a new readiness to bring gender history within the scope of the recent interdisciplinary field of visual studies. But contributors are not drawn so much by the allure of visual culture *per se*.[10] Rather, we are witnessing a specific urgency about gender in relation to the visual or 'pictorial' turn that the disciplines are taking in a much broader sense.[11]

In his key article 'Showing Seeing', W. J. T. Mitchell argues that a common core of scholarly interest has emerged with regard to the visual, though methods and reading lists may vary widely across disciplines. It begins with the hypothesis that vision is culturally constructed, that it is 'learned and cultivated, not simply given by nature'. Vision has a history related (in ways yet to be determined) to 'the history of arts, technologies, media, and social practices of display and spectatorship'. It is 'deeply involved with human societies, with the ethics and politics, aesthetics, and epistemology of seeing and being seen'.[12] Moreover, there are different ways of seeing, different histories of vision – again, most of these genealogies are yet to be determined. We shall return to this point later.

In total, we might refer to the above as the social construction of vision. But Mitchell goes further, to propose that we think directly about the visual construction of the social.[13] In a sense, this volume takes its departure from that point, for the direction we are pushing now is gender. Thus we do not confine ourselves to the social or cultural construction of gender, for that is the accustomed business of this journal. Instead, if the visual can take us more deeply into the cultural and historical configurations of society, as it seems able to do, then we are beginning to ask new questions – across history – about the visual construction of gender.

II

Acknowledging the visual immediately poses a number of questions. To begin with, the terminology of gender scholarship is loaded with visual metaphors, especially around visibility. Some distinction needs to be made between visibility and visuality. The term visibility often conflates 'seeing' with audibility, which in turn implies a transcription into textuality. The question of power is implicit in these formulations. In older feminist historical discourses of the 'recovery' of lost histories, the oft-stated problem of the invisibility of women begins to take on a different slant when visuality itself becomes the central focus.[14] This helps us to move beyond the positivist mandate to 'make visible' as the panacea for all gender ills, because it questions *how things are made visible* and asks on what terms this takes place. We immediately engage in a problematic zone, for the act of 'making visible' can silence women further. Visibility does not necessarily mean 'voice', or empowerment. For example, how can notions of 'recovery' and 'visibility' work when it comes to the *burqah*? In certain societies, as Alec Balasescu's essay on Iran suggests, women's public visibility has functioned in inverse proportion to social mobility. To push uncritically for all-out visibility is perilous: at its extreme, compulsory visibility comes from a certain historical-cultural

space and could be construed as a repressive and indeed an imperialist practice. There are contexts in which being invisible, unseen and even unknown have been and continue to be preferred options, giving scope and time to negotiate the difficult conditions of social and gendered existence.

In order to highlight the distinction between visibility itself, which is often used in an empirical sense, and visuality, which carries more discursive and rhetorical connotations, it is helpful to peel away the self-evidentiary language of seeing. There is something ironic in the fact that engaging with the visual demands a much greater precision with language itself, calling into question the appropriateness of visual metaphors in gender studies. In addition, when putting into language the frequently sensitive and power-laden issues around gender, race and class that emerge from visual material, we need to attend closely to what Michelle Rowley has called the ethics of articulation.[15] These ethics are connected with the more obvious problem of reproducing actual visual materials during research and publication, where great care must be taken to avoid replicating and re-circulating the power relations and gestures that went into their making. Contributors and editors have had to confront this problem directly, especially with regard to difficult photographic and film material of women during World War Two studied by Ulrike Weckel and Alison Moore in this volume, and Elspeth Brown's work on human locomotion. To historicise and problematise each frame is the method we have tried to sustain, acknowledging that neither can foreclose any debate about showing and seeing pictures for the reader-viewer.

In the essay about the Beneficent Society of Argentina in this volume, there is plainly a class politics involved in making visible those poor women selected for its 'Virtue Awards'. The authors depict society ladies poking their noses into working-class homes in Buenos Aires, their photographers making the 'popular classes hand their intimacy over'. In Iran, as Balasescu argues, the historical phase of unveiling under Reza Shah in the 1920s worked comprehensively to exclude working-class women from the public domain. The veil in fact facilitated women's mobility, their access to education and employment, which was disastrously curtailed with the increased forms of bodily visibility and changes in dress code introduced by the ostensibly modernising Shah.

Asking *how* things are made visible (or not) shifts 'gender' as an unmediated category of historical analysis to gender as a vehicle of specific representations. For historians of Africa, the study of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographic collections reveals the extent to which women were 'pushed into visibility' by the camera.[16] This is in striking contrast to the frequently stated problem of a lack of women's 'voice' to be found in the archive of texts. The African woman visually fills the frame, unlike the way she subsists on the edges in the official report.

In her very objectification she is constructed as a subject. If photographs are granted the status of 'record' and placed alongside textual documentation, it appears overwhelmingly that African women were seen and not heard. What then is this culture of visual documentation? Does it arise from the brutal simplification of photography? Were their stories too difficult? Or was it too cumbersome to produce the texts through a local male go-between? Were colonial photographers such as Heinz Roth in Namibia, featured in the essay by Lorena Rizzo, producing visual knowledge and therefore taken up with bodily appearances?[17] Photographing the latter – especially if it was 'thievish' as Rizzo suggests – may have required less mediation than a verbal relationship. In some cases the camera was invasive and immediate, effecting a gendered extraction.

As we broach the visual construction of gender, it often seems that sexualisation is the predictable lot of women. Yet Alison Moore's work on France during the Liberation shows it is not a simple matter. Frenchwomen accused of having relations with Occupation forces during World War Two were cast as the passive sexual recipients of 'German penetrative masculinity'. In a convulsive and compulsive sequence repeated in numerous French towns, there was a public spectacle of outing, shaving and shaming of these women in the street. An important ingredient seems to have been the presence of photographers. Significantly, Robert Capa's photograph includes the national flag in the frame. The phenomenon appeared to juxtapose an explosive and cathartic conjuncture of sexualisation (the feminisation of collaborative guilt) and desexualisation (the shearing of hair to remove the source of physical attraction). The symbolic mutilation of femininity offered a fast-track exorcism of the complicit humiliation and ambiguity concerning the German Occupation. But as Moore argues, the cultural and historical recurrence of the image of the *tondues* points to it being a traumatic fixed symptom of the Vichy syndrome which does not go away.

Moore's essay highlights what visuality brings to gender history as opposed to textualities alone. Its pathway is more immediate and affective, even visceral. The ambiguities of becoming or being made visible emerge particularly strongly in relation to sexuality and desire. Many of the essays work with this problem. It is notable for example that in Weimar Germany the dancer Mary Wigman, as interpreted by Susan Funkenstein in her essay, made spirituality visible rather than sexuality; that Argentine women written about by María Fernanda Lorenzo, Ana Lía Rey and Cecilia Tossounian likewise foregrounded respectability. Elizabeth Birdsall explores this troubling question in relation to queer sexuality in the exhibition *Faggots*, and concludes that without the text accompanying the photographed men, 'the simple question of visibility resists an answer'.

This Introduction has already touched on the existence of different histories of vision across the world. Gender is a cross-cultural issue, but so is seeing itself. There is an urgent need to address 'different ways of seeing'. This volume is intended as the first step in a longer and more sustained process,[18] given the importance of interrogating the alleged primacy and naturalisation of models of Western vision. Part of this relates to arguments that the eye tended to become privileged over other human senses;[19] that it became increasingly separated from the rest of the body, especially with the development of Cartesian perspectivalism and nineteenth-century industrial technology. Jonathan Crary for example speaks of the 'increasing abstraction of vision' in Western European history.[20] By contrast, a growing scholarship on India poses alternatives to this narrative of the disembodied, secularised eye. Pinney's work on popular Hindi visual production and consumption for example emphasises what he calls 'corpothetics', 'embodied, corporeal aesthetics'. The concept of *darshan*, whereby devotees experience 'seeing and being seen' in relation to the image of the deity, can be understood as the mobilisation of vision 'as part of a unified human sensorium'.[21] This is quite apart from Islamic visual cultures, which constitute a multitude of challenges to any notional Eurocentric model that historically privileges disembodied vision. We are also a very long way from understanding the histories of different ways of seeing on the African continent. In the making of this work, discussions have highlighted how any putative Eurocentric model should itself be provincialised and vernacularised into a thousand specific practices and histories.[22] Europeans may have invented the gun and the camera, but they have had little hope of monopolising the deployment and proliferation of either technology ever since. Nor should dominant Euro-American interpretations dictate what norm global photographic artefacts should be read against, though the tendency remains very strong.

This volume in fact offers a number of peculiar provincialities when it comes to 'Western' visual histories. In a sense these episodes highlight Walter Benjamin's concern with the 'central problematic of the effect of industrial production on traditional cultural forms'.[23] Eadweard Muybridge's photographs of human locomotion in Elspeth Brown's essay show how technology penetrated highly particular recesses of cultural-scientific practice in the United States. This concerted attempt to freeze motion and demonstrate what the eye could not see was all in the cause of a higher form of masculinity. At one level the University of Pennsylvania case is a welcome addition to the vast research on physical and racial typologising that normally focuses on colonial territories (to which Marijke du Toit's essay briefly alludes), for in case we had forgotten about Hillary Rodham Clinton's experience with posture

photographs at Wellesley,[24] Brown reminds us that those entering elite universities were also targeted in the USA. The dissemination of photographic methods of racial, gendered and ethnographic research across the globe are therefore not so much evidence of a single dominant source from which everything emanates, but rather signs of dispersed trafficking in the visual technologies of control that were being opened up internally and externally through specific scientific projects and collaborations.

In thinking about cross-cultural ways of seeing, and reiterating Mitchell's point that histories of vision are related to 'arts, technologies, media' and the social practices around these and other forms of display,[25] it is striking how many contributions here have honed in on photography, though we do include here film, dance, decorative arts, architecture and more. It has been a criticism of visual studies that it tends to focus on a very small subset, 'popular Western images from the invention of photography, but mostly objects of mass culture of the last 50 or so years',[26] the so-called visual media like television, film, video and the Internet. Mitchell calls this the 'fallacy of technical modernity', and rightly disputes the assumption of a Western monopoly of visuality or the pictorial turn, specific to the rise of new media technologies. He argues for a 'study of all the social practices of human visuality, and not confined to modernity or the West'.[27] Thus there should also be space for the more embodied, haptic or devotional kinds of seeing rooted in earlier histories of vision in the so-called West, let alone everywhere else.

The essays here do allow for the global flows and local dynamics of the photographic medium, its malleability and slipperiness, its capacity for alleged 'truth-telling' as well as audience 'misrecognition' and recoding.[28] They also explore its contagious effects on other visual and textual media, in closely historicised ways. Such bleeding between genres, media and visualities has already been highlighted elsewhere, for example in Nancy Rose Hunt's work on comics and painting in the Congo, and more generally in the useful collection entitled *Images and Empires*.[29] But while this volume (like so many others) concentrates on late nineteenth- and twentieth-century visual cultures and histories, its main contribution lies in making gender the centrepiece of its writing on the visual.

III

In order to allow the media and their gender issues to speak to each other more productively, we have arranged the papers on visual genders under three subheadings: documenting, trafficking and experimenting. These subheadings highlight the ongoing nature and open-endedness of

visual meaning and movement. While they allude to three powerful characteristics in visual representation, namely the positivist, the mobile and the subversive, the sections are by no means self-contained.

Documenting

The idea of documentary with its evidentiary underpinnings is a useful starting point, given the associations with empirical observation, recording of existing phenomena, realist discourses, sobriety, seriousness and truth-telling. Scholars have highlighted its Latin root in the verb *docere*, to teach, which was then transposed to legal settings and took on the persuasiveness of proof. The notion of a documentary genre emerged in the 1920s in the specific context of film,[30] where the proliferation and growing complexity of visual fields and specialisations meant it was taken up more broadly.

What does the notion of documentary conceal, and even more so, what does it congeal? In the history of photography and film, modes of empirical documentation can have repressive functions, though they may also 'spring leaks', in part as a result of their 'messy contingencies'.[31] This section deals mainly with photography, but begins appropriately with film. Bill Nichols speaks of film's ability to 'document pre-existing phenomena' and the 'uncanny capacity of the photographic image (and later of the recorded soundtrack) to generate precise replicas of certain aspects of their source material'. He adds that 'these modes rely heavily on the indexical quality of the photographic image'.[32] The 'index' here refers to the physical connection between photograph and subject, what Roland Barthes calls the 'certificate of presence'.[33] In the case of film, this indexicality creates trust in the audience, helping to suspend doubt, 'rendering an *impression* of reality, and hence truthfulness'. This impression does not necessarily 'guarantee full-blown authenticity in every case', though it fulfils the needs of rhetoric.[34]

In Ulrike Weckel's essay on documentary film, the footage of conditions in concentration camps was framed and shaped explicitly as visual evidence. This was aimed at two audiences: Allied and German. The 'visual confrontation' with evidence of genocide and inhuman treatment of prisoners was intended to justify the losses and sacrifices made by the allied powers, but also to force Germans themselves to look. Weckel reveals that because of the prioritisation given to filmic evidence by the Allies on the Western Front and the chaos surrounding the Western camps as opposed to the eastern camps, a few select places came to symbolise the Nazi genocide, 'which had largely been carried out elsewhere and by other means'. She concludes that certain scenes in the

finished films – such as the arrival of the liberators with ceremonial soundtrack – must have been recreations, thus unsettling their relationship to 'the real'.

More powerfully, the article reveals the immense difficulties of seeing itself. Margaret Bourke White recalled having to 'work with a veil over my mind' as she photographed. Witnesses confronting the human remains and survivors of the extermination and labour camps often expressed the view that what they saw, even on film, defied all understanding. Affect was difficult, cognition even more so. Weckel here touches on the troubling way that well-intentioned documentation might overlap with voyeurism. Her central question is whether gender matters; she charts the processes of stripping down of gender markers in the camps through the 'radical eradication of individuality and intimacy', including the execution of pregnant women and mothers with small children, the shaving of women's heads, the loss of clothing and the general extreme emaciation, so that arriving allied forces often found it difficult to distinguish men and women amidst these seemingly genderless beings. Weckel discusses gestures within the camps towards recovery of femininity, and the problematic, gendered filmic and textual responses by male cameramen.

The article by María Fernanda Lorenzo, Ana Lía Rey and Cecilia Tossounian concerns the establishment of the Virtue Prizes for poor women in Argentina at a time of threatening social change in the inter-war years. Part of the visual construction of these working-class women in Argentina was to portray them covered in long dark coats, a presence in which the body itself is diminished, thus making respectability visible, rather than sexuality. At the annual public performance, which was recorded photographically, they were positioned strategically within a hierarchical class panorama, in a setting that was ostensibly secular but figuratively very liturgical, resembling a 'polyphonic choir'. Close reading of the photographs here suggests how the Virtue prize-winners were usually represented through the 'long shot', not featured at centre stage. Even as they were brought into the public view, the positionings and tonalities of their subordination were evident. The ceremony and its photography presented the prize-winners as women who would not challenge the social and gender order. The authors liken the visual arrangement to a female family tree with the elite society ladies posing as the 'lineage heads'. This value system however was turned on its head by popular theatre in Buenos Aires. The authors conclude the essay with the case of a *sainete* (play) which presented two sisters, one 'virtuous' and eligible for an award, the other a prostitute financially supporting her family. The play slyly argues that the latter represents genuine self-denying virtue; she is in fact mistakenly addressed by the ladies as

involved in charity. The parody of the official award process – with accompanying photo ceremony – deconstructs the original 'document' as it were, suggesting how the event itself was 'unnatural', choreographed and self-legitimising.

Ellen Hellmann's photographs, featured in the essay by Marijke du Toit, also deal with 'the poor', in this case urban African women in the city of Johannesburg. Hellmann likewise inscribed women into respectability, though Du Toit points out that many women survived in the alcohol-based economy of beer-brewing. The article is an exploration of a particular moment in South African documentary photography in the 1930s, where it intersected with the emergence of social anthropology as a discipline and a new focus on the urban. Photographic theorists such as Abigail Solomon-Godeau have pointed to the consistent purpose of documentary photography in seeking to trigger social change,[35] to 'reconfigure its referent';[36] Hellmann's liberal networks outside the academy would support this argument. As in several other contributions, however, the woman photographer or artist occupied a privileged social position, in Hellmann's case inflected with both class and race. Not all of Hellmann's 'visual note-taking' translated into publication. Du Toit discusses both published and unpublished work in detail, exploring their possibilities as historical documents. An explicit methodological question she raises is how we can write photographs into feminist history.

The 'general view' signifies not only the encapsulation of the environment, thus shifting anthropology away from its prior emphasis on racial typologies and the body, but also speaks to the theoretical notion of photographic excess. Pinney refers to this as the 'ineradicable surfeit'. The alleged inability of the camera lens to discriminate, he argues, 'will ensure a substrate or margin of excess, a subversive code present in every photographic image that makes it open and available to other readings and uses'.[37] These are the opportunities to escape predictable or generic readings, with implications not only for gender but for revisiting the social history of urban South Africa more generally.

Attention shifts from the environment in which people function, to the empirical edifice of the body in the essay by Elspeth Brown. As mentioned earlier, this contribution examines the work of Eadweard Muybridge at the University of Pennsylvania, a project deeply embedded in late-nineteenth-century race and gender politics. The fascination with human movement as a means of indexing racial types drew Muybridge and his photography into a complex scientific institutional landscape. Brown explores the project of mapping somatic differences and pathologies through the conjunction of multiple cameras and freezing bodily action through separate frames. White male students destined to become leading professionals were the object of concern about 'feeble

bodies' and 'enervation'. The photographic 'grid' in this institutional space highlighted the gendered nature of ideas about racial progress. Brown also alludes to the important visual correspondences between Muybridge's photographic sequences and filmic narrative, with film history having claimed the photographer as a foundational figure.

Trafficking

The evidentiary and often repressive functions of photography in particular have a fixing, or immobilising, effect. In relation to gender this is especially germane. But if there is a question of visibility affecting mobility, there is equally a set of questions around the mobility of visuality itself: through reproducibility, transportability and circulation. These relate to how pictures or visual motifs are set in motion – they become unfixed – and lead to wider reactions, which often translate into further interpretations within the genre or medium, more pictures in different media, texts that describe the pictorial, and in some cases, actions that are highly visible. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto uses the term 'intertextual fermentation' in the context of film; Pinney speaks suggestively of 'inter-ocularities'.[38] Others rightly point out that images may resurface across both texts and visuals, with the latter very broadly defined. Here we refer to this simply as trafficking. The essays explore traffic across public spectacle, photography, the decorative arts and crafts and more.

In Alison Moore's article, the spectacle and performance of the shaming of the *tondues*, followed by its visual representation, presented French publics (and historians) after the Liberation with both the event (out in the street) and its simulacrum (in the photograph). While the traffic or circulation of photographs of *tondues* in relation to actual episodes is not the central issue here, the essay raises questions of how visibility and visuality work in conjunction. It brings to mind the specular relationship between the public act of lynching and the production and circulation of postcards in the United States, which was a distinctive but also deeply gendered and visual phenomenon.[39] In Moore's essay, the women who became *tondues* came to stand in for the French nation. As argued earlier, the assertion of blame, and its sexualisation and feminisation, provided an outlet for the ambivalent sentiments of a population who had for years lived with its occupiers. Moore's emphasis on the unacknowledged visuality in the 'traumatic fixing' of the *tondues* offers a powerful new route into the Vichy syndrome and questions the way recent historiography treats the issue.

Lorena Rizzo's contribution follows expeditionary photographs of Kaoko out of the archive and back into local circulation in northern Namibia, in the same places where they were taken over fifty years earlier in 1951. The author refers to the state of the normal photographic archive or collection as decontextualised, unsystematic and ephemeral. Certain archival constraints, such as the separation between photographs and accompanying documents, can be overcome through reconnection with local subjects. Rizzo brings a number of concepts related to visuality to bear on a marginal colonial history, where German control had given way to South African mandatory rule after World War One. She analyses the practice of chiefly portraiture as a symptom of the successful occupation of 'the visual field', where insignia and status were mobilised and enhanced through photographs. The expedition photographer Heinz Roth could not resist the popular settler trope of the empty land, but the involvement of museums in the organisation of this expedition signalled a new visual economy linked to colonial consumption outside the region. Masculinities feature in what Rizzo calls the parallel economy of guns and cameras, and we have already alluded to the photography of African women in this extractive economy. Rizzo also highlights what she calls the inter-visualities between colonial images, including paintings and maps, which anchor Roth in a genealogical line. While repetitious and generic photographs worked to reduce the individuality of African subjects, the post-colonial encounter with Kaoko residents re-opened identifications, as well as long-standing debates over the social mobility of women.

The reference to colonialism continues in Elaine Cheasley Paterson's article, where 'trafficking' encompasses Celtic, Asian and North African design motifs that were incorporated into the Watts Mortuary Chapel in Surrey. Inspired by the Home Arts Movement started by women in late-nineteenth-century Britain, Mary Seton Watts pushed the goal of self-realisation for women through arts and crafts. With the inclusion of local craft training and work on the chapel across social class, she attempted to reshape the 'interior and exterior landscapes' of workers through the transformative effects of art. The essay explores the divide between the masculinised (public) art and feminised (domestic) craft worlds of the time, and the ways in which Seton Watts sometimes blurred the boundaries. Born in India, raised in Scotland, then travelling in Egypt, Greece and Turkey with her artist husband on honeymoon, Seton Watts recorded decorative details which were later incorporated or 'translated' into the chapel and its design objects. While grounded in colonial assumptions and drawing on a 'pervasive orientalism', Paterson argues that Seton Watts intended the chapel as a site of symbolic interchange

linking different cultures. This of course takes on new dimensions and translations in a contemporary context of global tourism.

Experimenting

The essays here focus on strategies to unsettle or challenge dominant visual discourses and expectations around gender. We have already touched on the difficult relationship between mobility and visibility in Iran's history, but Balasescu's work also offers insight into wider debates on multiple or vernacular modernities. From the 1920s it seems that the lines of modernisation did not necessarily go with new secular dress for men, let alone women. Behaviour, body mobility and gestures are incorporated into the analysis of social compliance and experimentation across public and private domains, into those contemporary interstitial spaces where fashion photography can be found. This rather fragmented field is the site of much contest, Balasescu argues, because of its immediate reference to 'modernity'. The lack of physical movement and use of headscarves in acceptable fashion photography of women leads one photographer in Tehran to complain, for example, of the difficulty in visually constructing femininity, but other photographers do not necessarily agree. A crucial feature of this experimentation with fashion photography and gendered subjectivities is the way it is facilitated by the vibrant film industry and its public posters, which generate considerable visual traffic 'from the screen to everyday life'.

Elizabeth Birdsall's analysis of Arne Svenson's exhibition entitled *Faggots* studies the artist's adoption of a very dense tradition of documentation, the serial or archival method of photographic recording. Svenson uses an 'archival aesthetic', reminiscent of nineteenth century policing and pathologising methods in the tradition of Alphonse Bertillon and Francis Galton.[40] The implicit references to visual classification, archival method, repetitive photographic technique and near-uniformity also evoke the Muybridge *oeuvre*. Svenson is quoted as saying that he photographs taxonomically in order to understand that which is otherwise opaque. The point is to pose questions about what can be revealed about a person photographically. The exhibition unsettles taxonomic practices by their very deployment, through repetitious portraits of different men in an identical setting. Birdsall calls it 'creative documentation', the effect one of 'riffed taxonomy'. By repositioning this body of work within the art gallery, Svenson distances the exhibition from its origins in the 'social sciences'. As elsewhere, we find troubling consequences for the visibility of sexuality. According to Birdsall, this makes Svenson's subjects a possible target for homophobia, even as it means that the 'desiring eye knows where to look'.

The Women's Temperance Temple in Chicago was a unique effort by a sector of the American women's association to appropriate the medium of architecture and put it to work for a bigger cause. The feminisation of public space through urging middle-class women to go out and rescue drunken men in the streets was eclipsed by this ambition to erect a skyscraper in the 1890s, with funds raised by the Women's Temperance Movement. Paula Lee's article focuses on the critical reception of the building and the politics of architectural representation, rather than the ultimate failure of the experiment. According to Lee, the Temple represented a 'site of convergence' that could transform business into a worthy, even spiritual practice. Aesthetic properties were argued to give rise to social responsibility. Briefly the tallest building in the world, the technologically advanced skyscraper offered a prominent urban location, increased verticality, and more light, which was integral to the architectural 'vernacular of capitalism'. The increased interior space was an environment where 'quiet, repetitive work could operate as a bourgeois expression of virtue'. But as Lee puts it, wealth remained 'coded through gender', and the heyday of this skyscraper founded and funded by women was short-lived. The Temple was soon outstripped, and within forty years, demolished.

The volume ends fittingly with dance, and the expressionist performance and choreography of Mary Wigman in Weimar Germany (1918–33). According to Susan Laikin Funkenstein, the artist challenged the seemingly fixed dynamics of spectatorship. Wigman's use of African masks complicated the audience's gaze and allowed her to 'stare back'. The incorporation of African and Asian visual forms in her dance did not lead to exotic or erotic gestures and movement. Wigman in fact avoided the objectification and sexualisation of the female body by a variety of strategies, including the obscuring of physical outlines. Her dance work became the subject of two male painters, Emil Nolde and Ernest Ludwig Kirchner, who in their specific ways both reduced the totality of Wigman's art. Movement in particular was lost on the canvas or paper. But in the specific visualisations of the body represented through dance, Wigman emphasised spirituality, individuality and androgyny, producing a highly distinctive choreography of gender.

IV

The challenge, as Patricia Mohamed has argued from the perspective of the Caribbean, is to reach the point where research on the visual can give us new theoretical insights into gender.[41] Some of the historical routes taken by 'visual genders' have been mapped out by Griselda

Pollock, writing about the period the 1970s to the present: 'Feminist cultural theories of the image have moved along a trajectory from an initial denunciation of stereotyped images of women to a more exacting assessment of the productive role of representation in the construction of subjectivity, femininity, and sexuality'.[42] The problematic that Pollock identifies around 'images of women' results in a greater emphasis on process over product, and reminds us that 'images are densely rhetorical products of material, social and aesthetic practices'.[43] Many of the current articles here follow Pollock's recommendation for 'careful analysis of the specific constructions' of the gendered body, 'as well as of specific modes and sites of representation and discussion of address and the imagined spectator'.[44]

If we draw out some of the recurrent issues emerging from this volume however, something very striking about movement and mobility materialises in relation to a number of articles. This something ties in with travel, urban life, colonialism and modernities. Zones of experimentation and desire exist in the dialectic and tension between visibility and invisibility. A double possibility exists of fixing and unfixing. The terms on which subjects move between visibility and invisibility relate directly not only to mobility, but to power. This volume suggests there are several levels to this relation between seeing and power, which brings us back to the subtle but important distinction between the visible and the visual. Visibility implies that one can be seen, that there is an empirical presence. But visuality is the condition of being mediated specifically through sight, which does something specific as opposed to other kinds of mediation. It lends itself to certain rhetorical effects and genealogies which can be very persuasive over time. Several essays here suggest that making women visible, as in the ethnographic photograph from the Kaoko, the framing of Virtuous Poor women in Buenos Aires, or the standard female fashion photo in present-day Tehran, may have immobilising effects. These examples point to complex dynamics around both the attempts to control mobility, and to escape that control. Visuality then flickers across these scenarios, opening endless new possibilities through the malleability, mobility and inter-visual contagion of image forms themselves.

This brings me back to the photo on the cover. For South Africa, in terms of images that have made their way into the public domain, Morolong's photograph is very unusual.[45] The photographs discussed by Marijke du Toit in this volume come closer to the generality of official archives on black women. The conviviality and companionship, the way the women comfortably inhabit this leisure space, are portrayals not often seen from that era. But there is a tension, a tautness, about this photograph of Morolong's mother and her sisters at the beach. Not only are they caught between the splintering genres of the documentary that is evidential and

the family shot that is personal, but they occupy a series of further liminalities. One is the beach, the boundary between elements. Beaches are made of 'sensible things, raucous laughter' and intimacies, as Elizabeth Edwards remarks.[46] In hindsight these women were on the brink of losing access to these spaces through forced removals from East London. The photograph has the capacity to pull us into their history. On the rocks next to the waves, they are on the verge of being pushed out of their homes and out of urban visibility in apartheid South Africa. Despite the transfixed pleasures of the shot, their fate is mutable, like photographic meaning. In their case, they are poised on the knife-edge of history; in the harsh terms dealt out by apartheid, facing a loss of modernity.

But four decades later, when they appear on posters in a post-apartheid university, Nomakhosazana Morolong and her sisters immediately become 'the ones that are wanted'. With their quality of familiarity, and a lost feminine modernity spreading into the bigger horizon of the sea, they find their way on to many student walls. If not themselves, their image is finally taken home.

Figure 1: 'Sunday Beach Outing'. Mrs Morolong and her sisters. From left to right, Nomakhosazana, Lulu and Nompueuko Morolong. Eastern Beach, East London. Photo by Daniel Morolong.
Source: Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Fort Hare, East London, South Africa.

Notes

1. A selection of Daniel Morolong's work was curated for exhibition by Gary Minkley in East London in July 2003. The collection is now located at the Fort Hare Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Fort Hare, East London. We are grateful to Daniel Morolong for his permission to publish the cover photograph and to Gary Minkley and Anne King for facilitating the process.
2. The phrase comes from Corinne A. Kratz, *The Ones that Are Wanted: Communication and the Politics of Representation in a Photographic Exhibition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). One of the few comments explaining the popularity of this poster stated that the photograph reminded students of their mothers. Anonymous personal communication to Thandiwe Chihana, University of the Western Cape, August 2004.
3. Christopher Pinney, '*Photos of the Gods': The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion, 2004), p. 9.
4. Pinney, '*Photos of the Gods*', p. 8.
5. David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), p. xix.
6. See Lisa Bloom, 'Introducing *With Other Eyes: Looking at Race and Gender in Visual Culture*', in Lisa Bloom (ed.), *With Other Eyes: Looking at Race and Gender in Visual Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 1–17, here pp. 4–5.
7. John Berger, *Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer (New York: Vintage International, 2003), p. 282.
8. W. J. T. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture', in Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (eds), *Art History, Aesthetics, and Visual Studies* (Williamstown, MA: Clark Institute of Art, 2002), pp. 231–50, here p. 231.
9. On the tendency of the historical discipline more generally to subordinate images to text – History's scopophobia – and the critique of pictures as mere 'illustration' to the text, see Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester and Wolfram Hartmann, 'Photography, History and Memory', in Wolfram Hartmann, Jeremy Silvester and Patricia Hayes (eds), *The Colonising Camera. Photographs in the Making of Namibian History* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1998), pp. 2–9.
10. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing', p. 231, distinguishes between visual studies and visual culture by stating that they are the field of study and the object or target of study respectively.
11. On the pictorial turn in the human sciences and public culture see W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), especially ch. 1.
12. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing', p. 232.
13. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing', p. 237.
14. See e.g., Ciraj Rassool and Patricia Hayes, 'Science and the Spectacle: Khanako's South Africa, 1936–37', in Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley (eds), *Deep hiStories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern Africa* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 117–61.
15. Michelle Rowley, plenary discussion, International Workshop on Gender & Visuality, University of the Western Cape, 26–29 August 2004.

16. The phrase comes from Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photography and the Performance of History', *Kronos*, Special Issue: Visual History 27 (2001), pp. 15–29, here p. 19.

17. By visual knowledge I refer mainly to the photographic agendas of physical anthropology, which remained in vogue in southern Africa longer than in the metropoles. See Rassool and Hayes, 'Science and the Spectacle'. There is a vast literature on photography and the racial and ethnographic sciences. See *inter alia* Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), esp. pp. 131–55; Andrew Bank, 'Anthropology and Portrait Photography: Gustav Fritsch's "Natives of South Africa", 1863–1872', *Kronos*, Special Issue: Visual History 27 (2001), pp. 43–76. One of the few recent studies to analyse gender more seriously in this field is Christopher Wright, 'Supple Bodies: The Papua New Guinea Photographs of Captain Francis R. Barton, 1899–1907' in Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (eds), *Photography's Other Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 146–69.

18. This coincides with *Gender & History*'s own push towards a more 'global turn'. A South-South workshop on Gender & Visuality was held in Cape Town in August 2004 as a preliminary step, to be followed by a broader gender conference in India in 2006.

19. See Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Oyèrónké Oyéwùmi, 'Visualizing the Body', in P. H. Coetzee and A. J. P. Roux (eds), *Philosophy from Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2002), pp. 391–415.

20. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990).

21. Pinney, '*Photos of the Gods*', pp. 8–9. See also Diana L. Eck, *Darsán: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1981). I am grateful to participants at the CODESRIA-Sephis Workshop entitled *Visual South: Visual Sources as Alternative Histories* held in Maputo, Mozambique, September 2004 for their many insights and arguments about different ways of seeing in South Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

22. A problem hangs over the title of a recent edited collection, the otherwise excellent (and at times superb) *Photography's Other Histories*. While the book deals with previously neglected aspects of photographic theory and history, by default the title suggests that the former colonial world orbits around a single foundational history, constituting plural negatives to one positive.

23. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 53.

24. Students entering Ivy League institutions were subjected to the rigours of anthropometric photography until the late 1960s. These so-called 'Posture Photos' were stored in university archives. See Ron Rosenbaum, 'Even the Wife of the President of the United States Sometimes Had to Stand Naked', *Independent*, 21 January 1995, pp. 25–6, originally published in the *New York Times*. Thanks to Ciraj Rassool for this reference.

25. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing', p. 232.

26. Howard S. Becker, review of James Elkins, *Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2003), *Visual Studies* 20 (2005), p. 86.

27. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing', p. 241.

28. Christopher Pinney, 'Introduction: How the Other Half . . .', in Pinney and Peterson (eds), *Photography's Other Histories*, pp. 1–14, here p. 7.

29. Nancy Rose Hunt, 'Tintin and the Interruptions of Congolese Comics', in Paul Landau and Deborah Kaspin (eds), *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 90–123.

30. On Grierson's consolidation of the category, see Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 84. On the importance of the notion of the document to historians, and its relationship with the archive, see Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form', in Carolyn

Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michèle Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh (eds), *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2002), pp. 83–100, here p. 83.

31. See Allan Sekula, 'The Body and the Archive', in Richard Bolton (ed.), *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 343–79.

32. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, pp. 84–5.

33. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, tr. Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 1993), p. 87. A useful discussion of indexicality appears in Geoffrey Batchen, 'Ere the Substance Fade', in Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (eds), *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 32–46.

34. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 86.

35. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography in the Dock* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 169–83.

36. Pinney, 'Introduction', p. 1.

37. Pinney, 'Introduction', p. 6.

38. Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 218; Pinney, '*Photos of the Gods*'.

39. Lynching postcards were the subject of *Without Sanctuary*, an exhibition mounted in New York (2000) and Atlanta (2002). For the more problematic catalogue, see James Allen, Hilton Als, Congressman John Lewis and Leon F. Litwack, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Sante Fe, NM: Twin Palms, 2000).

40. See Sekula, 'The Body and the Archive'.

41. Patricia Mohamed, closing remarks, International Workshop on Gender & Visuality, University of the Western Cape, 29 August 2004.

42. Griselda Pollock, 'Missing Women: Rethinking Early Thoughts on Images of Women', in Carol Squiers (ed.), *OverExposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography* (New York: The New Press, 1999), pp. 229–46, here p. 229.

43. Pollock, 'Missing Women', p. 231.

44. Pollock, 'Missing Women', p. 233.

45. Apart from their obvious difference from official or documentary photographs of Africans in the Eastern Cape, Morolong's photographs are not as stylised as the highly publicised *Drum* images of a similar era, which cover urban life in Johannesburg.

46. Edwards, 'Photography and the Performance of History', p. 20, citing Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land: Marquesas 1774–1880* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980), pp. 31–2.