

## Preface

### Humanities and the Image: A Relationship Path

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This text is intended to offer a fundamental and comprehensive outlook of the image, and the way it has become a main analytic subject in Humanities studies. More than a balance, what is presented here is a guideline to identify processes, problems and approaches done by other disciplines which have approached it, such as History, Anthropology, Sociology and the newborn Visual studies.

#### 1. Image: a representation or a testimony. History confronts the image

The burst of History studies towards the image in the last couples of years has evidently separated from the Art History and its field of debate, together with a series of reflections surrounding the visual extension and dimensions as a cultural phenomenon<sup>1</sup> that has been generated. There is wider concern of the image in History discipline today judging from the bibliographical production that talks about it in some way or another. Nevertheless, and apart from the recent analytic

and theoretical advances, the image is still seen under suspicion —and even with hesitation— when used as a starting point to analyze the past. Taking away the debates regarding images to belong to the exclusive Art History sphere or not, this section is aimed at offering a holistic view of how this historic discipline, in general, has included images to the research field.

The image has had a relegated place in History. In general terms, this subject has been elusive regarding the conundrum represented by image themselves – as a cultural product or as a social elaboration. It has limited their references to the problem they put out when being a document source when included in a historical analysis, questioning the truth and certainty of the past spirit. Before being epistemological, the questions that History formulated and asked to the image had been on the methodological order. The 1734 *Authorities Dictionary* pointed out that image is “a things figure, representation, similitude, and appearance”, but not the thing in itself, if you may say so. This representation quality was the one that established a deep untrusty seal towards the truthiness and veracity of the image as a source.

Since then the image carries a suspicious burden and its introduction in History was done in a tangential manner that subsided with textual sources in its relationship. The image in itself did not say anything, or almost anything to the historian. In a paradoxical outcome, while in the

1 These debates are formulated because of Cultural History, and also due to the surface of Visual studies. They both fight the main object of Art History, at the same time that they unchecked from it due to the condemnation of the close relationship with Institutions (such as Galleries, Art Dealers, and Art Critics), that defined the field and make it even more restrictive or close. The debate generated surrounding the Visual studies surface and the reaction from Art History can be notice in Matthew Rampley: “The phantom menace: Visual Culture as the End of Art History?” In: *Estudios visuales: la epistemología de la visualidad en la era de la globalización*, José Luis Brea (2005.)

last fifty years the historical discipline advanced in new approaches of new sources and problems both in theoretical and methodological fields, the images stayed under a suspicious shadow. It was expected from it to offer a series of data and information that combined with written texts could be able to support a critic answer and data confrontation. Finally, it was expected from the image to throw positive data, treating it like if it where the exact reality.

It was the Annales School the first one to take the image as a source in itself in a systematic stance. Positivism have had declared before its interest on images although in a very restricted way — mostly, it was about some specifics relating iconography, heraldry, and other more general and closer to Art History, like European Medieval Art. The Annales School took into account that in order to achieve their long howl goal that was total History, sources most been broaden furthermore to those applied traditionally by the historian. Although specifically did not relate to the problem of the image itself, at least it was considered as a possibility among many others.

Was Lucien Febvre who —following his teacher Émile Malé— included the pictoric iconographic analysis in his studio about Disbelieve in the Sixteenth Century<sup>2</sup>. March Bloch did the same, particularly when he wrote his study on Thaumaturgy Kings<sup>3</sup>. Although these works included the image in a historical analysis, it was done only in a tangential and as a complement of other information. So, more than an object in itself, the image end up constituting a link that confirmed written text. Michel Volvelle work on dead, done from the representation of the French Medieval ex votes, included the analysis of image as social representations and put them in an important place as the sources of historians.

Even if the image was limited to bee an illustrative indicator of a series of cultural manifestations, also comprises and validated the register on the image susceptibility by giving historical information. History of Mentality took advantage of

image usage to found the most wanderous registry of mentalities, and used the later with means to “decipher the unconscious expression of a collective sensibility or to found again a collective representation of deepest banality that was shared in a spontaneous and universal way”<sup>4</sup>.

Aside this advances, image maintains its quality of being an accessory source and it wasn't problematize or analyzed in a more deep significant form. Still, the image was thought exclusively in relation with painting, and in a more generalized way, to European painting and in a specific way to its “Universal” Art History.

In recent years, this kind of postures had been overcome and new theoretical elements have araised together with new kinds of problems and questions about the past have broadened the frontiers of the image possibilities. In this sense, Cultural History has been the visible head in this documental and historiographical revolution, and its approach to other disciplines and fields, including Art History, has offered new possibilities on dealing with this subject.

Nevertheless, paradoxically this renewal has been oriented in taking into account a series of writers that were isolated on their time and under the shadow of historiography, criticized because or their unorthodox use of sources, and to their unattachment to the imposed aesthetic tradition. This is the case of Walter Benjamin<sup>5</sup> and its reflections surrounding the images nature that trespassed their merely visual characteristic, and started to install in the genesis of the world apprehension.

Benjamin considered images in relationship with society and contemporary massive character of culture. The same importance had had the retrieval of the work by Aby Warburg —only until 1998 his work was reprinted for the first time— and that has opened even more the limits traced between Art History and general History, producing a field that the same author named: “the science of Culture.”

2 Lucien Febvre, *El problema de la incredulidad en el siglo XVI: la religión de Rabelais* (México, Uteha, 1959.)

3 March Bloch, *Los reyes taumaturgos* (México, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de Satsbourg, 1924.)

4 Roger Chartier, —¿Existe una nueva historia cultural?— En *Formas de Historia Cultural*, ed. Por Marta Madero y Sandra Gayol, 1ª ed. (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros/Los Polvorines/Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento, 2007.)

5 Walter Benjamin, *La obra de arte en la época de su reproductibilidad técnica* (México: Editorial Itaca, 2003); Walter Benjamin, *Discursos interrumpidos* (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 1989.)

His analysis about the nature of the image had a deep impact in the image re value and re signification as a cultural phenomenon<sup>6</sup>. Something similar has happened with the second readings of Jacob Burckhardt work and his interpretation between art and culture relation, and the search of zeitgeist that was able to figure out the relations between cultural productions, historic context and viewpoints<sup>7</sup>.

### The image at the historian workshop: the photography

The appearance of the re actualization of the mentioned perspectives has strengthen the historical analysis surrounding the image, wouldn't be possible in the most traditional and conservative standards of this discipline, that even today are fought for the means to detached completely from them. This new "disposition" has allowed the appearance of valuable contributions in areas in which the image has a central role in the analysis, not only as an illustrative and informative second source, but as a social fact and social phenomena.

For example, photography has become a privileged source in image analysis. Photo albums and collections, for example, had allowed an analysis turn because is not longer seen as a reservoir of truthful and reliable data, but in Walburg<sup>8</sup> terms as a source of the "human expression psychology" study.

A series of works about the relation of how remembrance works and how the emotional ties are materialized or vanished, have place in this valuable work about the relation between the sensibilities and history. A representative work of Cornelia Brink is the process of iconographical analysis —almost a canonic one— of the Nazi Concentration Camps, in which is established a contrast between religious paintings and the mentioned photographs<sup>9</sup>.

A local example, in this kind of takes, has been done in the Argentinean historical field, having important developments in the relation between memory and photography, and even if it started as a civil response in order to rescue the Dictatorship memory, soon enough it began to spread to other settings and historic contexts: Worker History, Migration Urban Memory, the Pampa Expansive Colonization, Gender History, and so on<sup>10</sup>.

In a similar stake, some Brazilian works based of familiar photo albums, useful elements in migration and colonization memory rebuilding, and in spatial and geographical narratives<sup>11</sup> stands out.

### Moving image, history through representation

If photography itself has been included as a visual narrative, cinema has presented to historians even more obstacles. We no are exactly meaning cinematographic history, but those works that focus on analyzing cinema and the cinematographic language. In historiography development it can be found three trends that are mostly defined. The first one makes a reference in pointing out that cinema History refers to technical studies, the characters, productions, and so on. The second one is about History in cinematography, where the representations of past time periods are taken as a source of analysis, and thirdly, cinema in History, which tries to comprehend the relationship between cinema and its political and social context, and the way they affect reality in a given moment<sup>12</sup>. These perspectives have opened in the Historic discipline new possibilities to deal with the subject no only from its content and representation manners, also from its Form, social, political and economic phenomenon.

In this field, the work *Cine e historia* written by Marc Ferro is well known, in which he sees cinema as a product, like an object – image "with meanings beyond the cinematographic stance."<sup>13</sup>

In his work, Ferro tried to approach a method

6 Aby Warburg, *El renacimiento del paganismo: aportaciones a la historia cultural del Renacimiento Europeo* (Madrid: Alianza, 2005.); Aby Warburg, *El ritual de la serpiente* (Madrid: Sexto Piso, 2008.)

7 Jacob Burckhardt, *Reflexiones sobre la historia universal* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999.)

8 Walburg, *El renacimiento del 307*.

9 Cornelia Brink, "Secular icons: Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration camps", *History & Memory* 12, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2000): 135-150.

10 Mirta Zaida Lobato, "Memoria, historia e imagen fotográfica: los desafíos del relato visual—", *Anuario* 5 (2004): 25-38.

11 Alcides Freire Ramos et al., *imagens na História* (Sao Paulo: Aderaldo & Rothschild Editores, 2008.)

12 Antonio Costa, *Saber ver el cine* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1988).

13 Marc Ferro, *Historia contemporánea y cine* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2000).

that allowed pulling out information about the past in Fiction and Non-fictional cinema.

However, the methodological path traced by Ferro was seen by historians with suspicion. In 1988, the *American Historical Review* did an Issue about the analysis of the relationship between cinema and history where its clearly displayed this untrustiness, and was shown in a debate that spoke about the impossibility that animated images have to become a trustworthy source of history because its representations are unable to be criticize, or be an obvious methodological tool that signals the viewer the possible interpretation problems or discussions about the characterized historical events<sup>14</sup>.

Another argument would point out that cinema hardly be able to produced such information and the one produced would be so scarcely and would have a weak discursive capacity that it couldn't give the materials to do history with it. This discussion relative close to our times creates attention because shows a deeper problem: The hegemony of the written text and the historians paradigm that most of the sources of analysis strategies should be bound and come from it. The debate also created some interesting answers that wanted to clear the methodological approach of cinema History, but also the form it should be question by History. In 1990 James O'Connor published a book where he told that image problematic existed because historians have a visual ignorance<sup>15</sup>. The author was prompt to emphasize that the advances in the field did not arrive from History, but from other disciplines such Anthropology, Communication and even from cinematographic studies. historians would be oblige to consult cinematographic Theory in order to understand the image production phenomena to deconstruct the visual phenomena from a proper methodology able to go deep in the analysis of scene set ups, and creation of cinematographic grammar to understand their own created meaning of "Visual Discourse". The idea, although not new, was suggestive. Ferro

already have mentioned it in 1975, and most of O'Connor methodological ideas were priority taken by Pierre Sorlin<sup>16</sup> and Robert Rosenstone<sup>17</sup>.

Despite their differences, both authors propose three main topics: History represented in cinema, like is it done in a History book, is not "History", but a form of representation of it, meaning that it can be possible to examine the different forms of how the past is represented. Secondly, being cinema a massive access media, it can generate an idea and a particular conscience about the past that is why is it crucial to observe the audience and the circuit of representation. Thirdly, because of its visual language, it would be absurd if tried to explained and analyzed like a written text.

Even though the outlook has been cleared in some sort, the production around this theme is quite scarce. Cinema has still much of the main territory of cinematographic studies, and other disciplines such Literary and Cultural studies and Anthropology more than it is a History Subject. It seems that Ferro and his followers' message continues to be unattended. But, and attention to it can be the text *cinematógrafo. Um olhar sobre a História*, published in 2009 in Brazil. This anthology includes a series of writings that follows Ferros' ideas, and hope to display the relationships between cinema and History taking by example the way World War II was represented in the movies and how it can be related to a historical discourse<sup>18</sup>.

### History and painting

Opposing cinema, Paintings have had a greater and more consistent presence in History making it more known. However, being a strategy and fundamental heritage of Art History, it has also been a subject of quarrel in other historic fields. Today, it is in the theoretical confines where image has won more battles to the historian suspicions and doubts. In this process, the nonchalant approach to painting undergo by History of Mentalities,

14 David Herlihy, "Am I a Camera? Other Reflections on Films and History", *AHR* 93, no. 5 (December, 1988): 1186 and ss.

15 John, O'Connor, ed., *image as Artifact: the Historical Analysis of Film and Television* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Pub Co., 1990).

16 Pierre Sorlin, *The Film in History: Restaging the Past* (New Jersey: Totowa/Barnes and Noble, 1980).

17 Robert Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: the Challenge of Film to our Idea of History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

18 Jorge Nóvoa; Soleni Fressato y Kristian Feigelson, eds., *Cinematógrafo: um olhar sobre a história* (Salvador, Sao Paulo, Brasil: ED-BA/UNESP, 2009).

or the new Cultural History has been key in this process, also because this disciplines share common theoretical backgrounds with Art History, regarding the growing academic and administrative closeness in many Art History and History Departments in Universities nowadays.

Historiographical production that borrows Paintings to explained and comprehend city transformations in Urban History is numerous and it is only an example. Its role, as a more evident source, is shown in the parts taking new objects on Cultural History. In the past years, traveler paintings have become precious objects to historians and because of the analysis of painting advancement in themes such the history of the body or ethnical representation have been accomplished<sup>19</sup>. Likewise, we should mention other works that have become part of a historiographical balance. They are about how representation from Painting has advanced in theoretical analysis, widen specially in cultural phenomena such as Vision and the act of Observing<sup>20</sup>, or problems such as the close relationship between Painting, Landscape and Representation<sup>21</sup>. Moreover the links between these kinds of works, and their cultural outline of “View”, turn them into foundation texts in Visual studies.

Regardless the different usage of the image turnout, theoretical discussions still exist despite the reticent acceptance of Painting as a source, there is not a real convincement or its doesn't not cover the general meaning of image. The reason of the appearance of *Visto, no visto*, by Richard Burke, appeared. The author, in a very pedagogical and amiable way, invited historians to lose their fear to work with images, and onwards is follow by the ways image can be approach without risking a historical analysis in a very practical manual-like text. Burke then transformed this text

into a Decalogue Diagram in an article dedicated to those historians that were willing to work with the image<sup>22</sup>.

### Image in representation: public History

Recently a new History field has seen light and until know it have had an important in image uses and management. We are talking about Public History, and its main objective is to join and intercede in the ways that History and particularly historic consciousness have distributed it through mass media and memory institutions (museums, exhibitions and collections). This memory related strategy applied in public exhibitions and museums have created takes about image, mostly to its pedagogical possibilities and as a Memory mechanism. Public History is more than a theoretical field because is formed from the historians need on making History public and collective<sup>23</sup>. Assessing that is more a strategy than a study discipline in itself. Because of that, is appealing to all the communications forms: From the traditional such Museums exhibits, up to advertising billboards, and it that sense, all the images in all the supports, including the Web, where image usage is formulated in processes that have mainly to do with thoughts that inquires and research Public Memory<sup>24</sup>. Under these circumstances, image is an inquiry instrument, more than it is an analysis. It does not pretend a particular analysis about it, but it does have the will to widen its communicative and operative lengths by including it on a particular narrative structure (the museographic script, for example), where comprehension and explanation is determined by its context.

In present days, many historians act as Curators of public exhibits due to their deep knowledge of the Museum constitution as a mechanism of collective

19 Rebecca Parker, *Visions of Savage Paradise. Albert Echout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006); Jaime Borja Gómez, *Pintura y cultura barroca en la Nueva Granada. Los discursos sobre el cuerpo* (Bogotá: Fundación Gilberto Alzate Avendaño/Alcaldía de Bogotá, 2012).

20 Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of Observer. Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992).

21 Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

22 Peter Burke, “Cómo interrogar a los testimonios visuales”, in *La historia imaginada: construcciones visuales del pasado en la Edad Moderna*, Joan Lluís Palos y Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, pp. 29-40 (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispana, 2008).

23 James Gardner y Peter LaPaglia, eds., *Public History. Essays from the Field* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 1999).

24 Gardner y LaPaglia, *Public History*, 124-125.



memory<sup>25</sup>. There the specific usages of image have created thoughts that have started to go deep into the image essence and its communication issues.

## Afterword

Although important steps have been made in the path of including image to historical researches, more are the profound problems that haven't yet been solved. While in other disciplines image as a social and cultural dilemma, have advanced, in History it stills fights to transcend the discussion around its trustfulness as a source. The methodological and formal preponderance aspects have prevented it to advance in key epistemological analysis aspects. The approaching limits are kept consign to the particular historians ability to come up with images' social and/or cultural relations, and if them are more or less cohesive in deliver their message with other discursive series, text, in particular.

Image have receive the misgiving name of "Visual Texts" and such reveal an big mistrust of historians on letting go some positivism anxiety in which the document, its graphology and grammar, still today have fundamental importance in validating their sources. But by saying "Visual Text" they decreases image dimensions and its communicative and symbolic (multi dimensional and polysemic) characteristic to a deterministic causality.

This attitude also means passing through other major epistemological problems, like the conceptual broadening of the meaning of the word "image", not only signifying a visual manifestation: The analysis of the "See" nature, and more generally to the cultural phenomena of "Viewing", the places of Visual production and the close relations with other subjects such Imaginaries, Representation, Alterity and the ways of being in the world.

In the present day is inevitable for History to face in an inmost way the problem analysis. A theoretical reflection able to transcend just the formalities is urgent, because the absences of sufficient references are being fill by other fields. Evidence is the broad and different origin of bibliographic

titles that historians use, that contrast with that produced in their own discipline.

## 2. Alterity, image and representation: image and anthropology

Anthropology has grown and shared a common path with the image, unlike History. Illustrations were a very important part on Ethnologic studies, and in the Nineteenth Century, photography use, rapidly became part of Culture and Race Comparative studies. The scientific aim of these images was continuously defended and many technical advances on photography and even in cinema resulted due to Anthropology.

In the famous 1895 world exhibition held at Paris, Felix – Louis Regnault showed the amazing technical photography advances that displayed the behavior of different human races. There was installed the future uses of cinema and photography as a scientific and ethnographic Documents<sup>26</sup>. In the Latin American case exists films and audible registry done by Koch – Grunberg between the Venezuelan Guyana and the Taurepan in early 1911. The twenties would become a height in personal filming registry with Ethnography purpose. We can mentioned Flaherty films, but also is relevant to stand out, for example, the works by Silvino Santos being part of Alexander Hamilton Rice expedition in 1924<sup>27</sup>, or the work, held by the Servicio de Protección al Indio in Brazil, that by the way, has an immense photographic an filmic heritage<sup>28</sup>.

In the thirties *Trance and Dance* in Bali, the legendary work by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson suggested the possibilities that ethnographic films have to be appreciated as a valid registry to Cultural studies<sup>29</sup>. The forties saw how distance ethnographic studies surface due to War, and the how the filmic and

25 Tony Bennett, *Past Beyond Memory. Evolution, Museums and Colonialism* (London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2004).

26 Virgilio Tosi, *El cine antes de Lumiere* (México: Unam, 1993).

27 Luciana Martins, "Illusions of Power: Vision, Technology and the Geographical Exploration of the Amazon, 1924-25", *Journal of Latin American Cultural studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 285-307.

28 Fernando de Tacca, *A imagética da Comissão Rondon: etnografias filmicas estratégicas* (Campinas: Editorial Papirus, 2001).

29 Margaret Mead y Gregory Bateson, *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*, vol. 2, Special Publications of the New York Academy of Sciences. 1942.

photographic registry established themselves as common ethnographic practice. From the fifties onward Jean Rouch gave a new input when she included new taping techniques, equipments and postures, known as *cinema vérité*.

### Toward a Visual Anthropology

This ethnographic documental and graphic tradition created a new series of inquiries. In the sixties the question of the anthropologist hegemonical status opposite to the “other”, displaced the study schemes and the way it was seen, taking it to practice literally.

The impact produced by the linguistic spin call for an update on the discipline practice and the anthropological discourse production. One of the results was the creation of a new field exclusive to the studies on visual registry: Visual Anthropology.

Accordingly to Jay Ruby, Visual Anthropology domains can be classified in three sections: The one that analyzes ethnographic and Educational film productions; the one that studies Mass Media and Audiovisual productions, and the one that studies communication as a problem<sup>30</sup>.

The development of a new disciplinary field had an important input with Sol Worth work about Navajo Indians and the way it was register. Studying Visual Communication<sup>31</sup> set the beginning of thoughts on the registries’ nature and image reception and interpretation. Also created a doubt about the films and photographs registry objectivity and formulated questions about the ethnographic glance.

Worth work started a series of reflections collected later by Ruby in an established article about Visual Anthropology: “Exposing yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology, and Film.”<sup>32</sup> There she talked about a definition called by her ethnographic practice, a critical reflectivity way to understand the Anthropologists’ work and exposed in a

neat manner the theoretical suppositions that an Ethnographer face with their research objects<sup>33</sup>. In her text, Ruby opened the path to find urgently a profound reflection about the ethnographic work, and other visual productions of her field of practice.

### Image and reflectivity

The nineties found a wide group of anthropologists asking and inquiring about the Visual phenomena not only as a result of their research practice, but also because of the nature, development and effects of it. In that sense two main works initiate a new reflective phase on ethnographic practice in Visual Production, and the structural aspects of building anthropological disciplines such as Racism and Colonialism.

*The Third Eye: Race, cinema and ethnographic Spectacle*<sup>34</sup> by Fatimah Tobing<sup>35</sup> showed how ethnographical visual production was traversed by a view that come from specific discursive places: Colonialism and Racism. Tobing problematize Visual Technologies used by ethnographic studies and designate them as significance machines that help characterized and established the place of Subjects in a world racial taxonomy<sup>36</sup>.

That how Audiovisual Media is the extension of a discourse that defines and determines the “Other” point of view, more than being an objective and neutral registries of a reality. Seeing it under this perspective, Visual Media analysis carries a question that goes beyond visual materiality and inquires the Glance nature.

*The Ethnographer Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology* by Ana Grimshaw appeared in 2001, and it addresses, more than the visual, the Glance dilemma, or what she called “Ocularcentrism” of Occidental Sciences, describe as the relation between the speech that describes and the representation that creates about the world.

Based on Rony and other author work, Grimshaw unveils the existent relation between the Visual

30 Jay Ruby, —Los últimos 20 años de antropología visual una revisión crítica—, *Revista Chilena de Antropología Visual* 9 (junio 2007): 13-36.

31 Sol Worth, *Studying Visual Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

32 Jay Ruby, “Exposing Yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology, and Film”, *Semiotica* 30, no. 1-2 (1980): 153-179.

33 Ruby, “Exposing Yourself”.

34 Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Duke University Press, 1996).

35 Anna Grimshaw, *The Ethnographer Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology* (Cambridge: University Press, 2001).

36 Rony, *The Third Eye*, 43.

Registry executed by the Ethnographers and the construction of a particular interpretation of the “Others” world. By showing them, the points of view would be about the particular interrelation between Scientific Speech and their Watching practices.

In *Doing Visual Anthropology*<sup>37</sup>, author Sarah Pink goes forward when she involved the Anthropologist work reflectivity when selecting and editing his visual resources, and questions how ethnographic images – beyond visual – are created and interpreted, and how them have created a virtuality in Alterity.

This theoretical advances have fed a wider analysis production on Visual Registry. Works like the one written by Jennifer Lynn Peterson<sup>38</sup> about Ethnography popular representation and exotic locations, or the one by Amy J. Staples<sup>39</sup> on the circulation of documentaries about exploration (safari ethnography), and its relation with the circulation of imaginaries of exotism, are results of this field thrust.

*Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean World*<sup>40</sup> written by Deborah Poole was a distinguished work in Latin America, where from a broad group of Visual images and representations of Andean Indians, the author tries to understand the role that these images played in the constitution of modern interpretations on race. Poole also approaches the nature of modernity projects and their relation with image representation and circulation, its changes and effects<sup>41</sup>.

*A imágética da Comissão Rondon: etnografias filmicas estatégicas* of 2001 was an important second work written by the Brazilian Anthropologist and Photographer Fernando de Tacca. The text suggested an analysis of the films shots and the photographs taken of Brazilian Indians between 1914

and 1932 by the famous Comisión Rendón that also was in charged of the telegraphs net installation. De Tacca in his text deepens the analysis about this kind of Visual Ethnography, its strategic uses – showing how the Indians were going into civilization in a successful and pacific way – and the circulation that these images had<sup>42</sup>.

Without a doubt there are still a lot of works and texts outside this brief inventory. Many are the theoretical Issues that escape these short lines. But it haven't been about a careful theoretical or disciplinary results, much that it is an exercise to offer a succinct outlook of the Anthropological studies scenario and its relation with image, some developments and some works that are able to make a deeper introduction regarding its field and its problematic. A next Issue should take care on going through these aspects and generate interest in the social Scientist about the need to re think the relation between the image, its disciplinary developments and it theoretical reflection.

### 3. Visual sociology and visual studies

Unlike Anthropologist, Physiologies, Criminologist and nineteenth century Eugenicist, Sociologist did a rather timid use of resources like photography and the Moving image in their research agenda, only using it as an illustration form that frequently deviated it from the real context and as a result backlash their social researches<sup>43</sup>.

Regarding Documental photography tradition (where it stands out names like Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans), until the sixties, is when Sociology rediscovers audiovisual resources for investigation. An increase of ostensible publications and seminars that mentioned the theme of the Visual in social research was shown not until the sixties. One of the main texts was an emblematic essay by Howard Necker, “photography and Sociology”<sup>44</sup>, where he calls photography and Sociology to join forces and work together.

37 Sarah Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001).

38 Jennifer Lynn Peterson, “World pictures. Travelogue films and the lure of the exotic: 1890-1920” (Phd Thesis, Chicago University, 1999).

39 Amy J. Staples, “Safari Ethnography: Expeditionary Film, Popular Science and the Work of Adventure Tourism” (Phd Thesis, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2001).

40 Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean image World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

41 Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity*.

42 Tacca, *A imágética da Comissão*.

43 Fernando Aguayo y Lourdes Roca, *Imágenes e investigación social* (México: Instituto Mora, 2005).

44 Howard S. Becker, “Photography and Sociology”, *studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 1 (1974): 3-26.



The second source that feeds Sociology Visual work comes from an enduring historic interest on “reading” the images, effort achieve under several interpretative and methodological framework. This interest comes from the Critic and Art History field, and was fulfill by the appearance of Mass Media in the beginning of the twentieth century. Under these phenomena, Sociology will provide itself with several stages from Critic Theory that goes from Benjamin and the Frankfurt School, up to Williams and Hall in a movement that ends in the origin of Cultural and Visual studies<sup>45</sup>.

The later fields have a relation with the “Cultural Turn” of the eighties that was affiliated with Structuralism and Poststructuralism, which privileged a linguistic model that assumed that images (just like social behaviors), where equal to “Text” hence, where sensitive to be “Read”. Roland Barthes works becomes mostly important in this field of study by applying techniques and theories that came from Ferdinand de Saussure Structural Linguistics. By doing it, Roland Barthes made possible the interpretation of images and aspects of material Visual Culture, without taking into account social Sciences restrictions. Also he showed by doing numerous analysis, multiple results that included characteristics such Race, Class and Gender, as well as Homosexuality, Body image, and Stereotypes<sup>46</sup>.

However, in the early nineties authors such Gottfried Boehm<sup>47</sup> and W.J.T. Mitchell<sup>48</sup>, announced that a pictoric turned have had emerge and it restored the image analysis without a main linguistic model. It did not replace the later Figurative and Pictoric approach, but it did talked about analyzing mutual conjugations<sup>49</sup>, image inner logics<sup>50</sup>, and the complex relation between images,

Power and Knowledge<sup>51</sup>. Considering the image outside textuality and see it from a Critic perspective becomes the foundation in the field of interdisciplinary Visual studies an interest of Visual Sociology because of its analytic exercise of the Visual dimensions on social life.

John Grady following this idea, presents an outlook of Visual Sociology with two main outlines: The one build by researches interested in the development of investigative methods combined with empirics inputs such as the ones by Marcus Banks<sup>52</sup>, Richard Chalfen<sup>53</sup>, John Grady<sup>54</sup>, Douglas Harpers<sup>55</sup>, Luc Pauwels<sup>56</sup> and Jon Prosser<sup>57</sup>, and another by researches interested in Visual material interpretation that includes theoretical resources from Humanities, Literature, Arts, Cultural studies follow by Elizabeth Chaplin<sup>58</sup>, and Sarah Pink<sup>59</sup>. Both trends present different visions about Visual Sociology possibilities: May it be as a social Science view or an interdisciplinary field that focus on Sign and Representation studies. The point of union of both tendencies is that each considers the image as “Concepts”<sup>60</sup>. Looking at Visual Sociology from this point of view would be a series of Visual approaches where the practitioners employ images to portrait, describe or analyze social phenomena<sup>61</sup>. This job can be organized in two areas: The first one

45 John Grady, “Visual sociology”, en *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant y Dennis L. Peck (Sage, 2007), 64.

46 Grady, “Visual sociology”, 64.

47 Gottfried Boehm, “Die Wiederkehr der Bilder”, en *Was ist ein Bild?* (Munich: Fink, 1994).

48 W. J. T. Mitchell, “The Pictorial Turn”, en *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

49 Martin Jay, “Cultural Relativism and the Visual Turn”, *Journal of Visual Culture* 1, no. 3 (2002): 267-279.

50 Mitchell, “The Pictorial Turn”; James Elkins, *Visual studies: A Skeptical Introduction* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003).

51 Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999); Irit Rogoff, “Studying Visual Culture”, en *The Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Routledge, 1998).

52 Marcus Banks, *Visual Methods in social Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001).

53 Richard Chalfen, *Snapshot Versions of Life* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987).

54 John Grady, “Visual sociology”, en *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*, eds. Clifton D. Bryant y Dennis L. Peck (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage, 2007).

55 Douglas Harper, “Reimagining Visual Methods”, en *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. N. K. Denzin y Y. S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2000).

56 Luc Pauwels, “Conceptualising the Visual Essay as a Way of Generating and Imparting Sociological Insight: Issues, Formats and Realisations”. *Sociological Research Online* 17, no. 1, 1. <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/17/1/1.html> (consulted January 12, 2012).

57 Jon Prosser, “The Status of image-based Research”, en *image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*, ed. J. Prosser (London: Falmer Press, 1998).

58 Elizabeth Chaplin, *Sociology and Visual Representation* (London: Routledge, 1994).

59 Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*.

60 Grady, “Visual sociology”, 64.

61 Douglas Harper, “Visual Sociology: Expanding Sociological Vision”, *The American Sociologist* (Spring 1988): 55.

uses Visual materials mainly to document and analyze social phenomena. In the second, Visual materials are used as a way to produce forms of information. In an intermediate space between both approaches it is possible to find people who work with images produced by a Culture and that have been kept, for example in Publicity, Newspapers, or Family albums (this perspective would apply the textual analysis resources mentioned above). Douglas Harper would sum up both postures by saying: "Some Sociologists take photos in order to study social World, while others analyze Photographies taken by others in their institutionalized context or family life"<sup>62</sup>. Harper also takes notice in clearing up that both distinctions do not exclude each other, because many Visual Sociologists walk in both action fields.

The appearance of Visual Sociology and its organization in work spaces suggested a series of agreements about the meaning of what is an image: First, is seen as a significative representation created with a particular intention in a given moment, hence, images in a Culture are produced data and must be held by a context. Second, like a product of a concrete representation of an action, and third as a communicative strategy<sup>63</sup>. Working in social investigation with images implies a series of methodological and interpretative challenges that have started some heated theoretical debates and interested developments in Visual and technical interpretative methods, some of which we would comment on below.

### Image and fieldwork

Common sense assumes that seeing is an innate practice, but the development of a "Sociological Eye" needs education. Capturing an image is without a doubt a key mechanism to refine the research to see, because it is truly an instrument of discovery. Particularly in Sociology many of its categories are based on watchable phenomena that is easily understood when visible to the eye, than when readable in a written text, such as a Field Journal<sup>64</sup>. Although not all the

Sociological data can be visually register, some investigative areas where Visual or Audiovisual resources became particularly useful. In Ethnography, for example, this comes as evident, due to its major capacity to include details and preserve perception moments. The use of a Camera allows the researcher if it have little information<sup>65</sup>, to go through processes of reviewing, and it would help to broaden his areas of investigation. It's clear that Visual Sociology does not replace observations but is a stockholder of techniques of visual investigation<sup>66</sup> that not only includes ethnography but Visual Culture<sup>67</sup> product analysis, as explained above.

Another use of photography have to be with historical archives that contributes to register social changes dynamics, changes in urban or rural landscapes, in the relations between humans and their material surroundings, and even themes of private life such physical changes on a person (for example aging process that Nixon or Rogovin have register<sup>68</sup>.)

Eliciting is another use of photography when wanting to evoke memories and associations in interviewed Subjects or even to be "ice breakers" in interviews. This method is able to identify people, places, objects and image significative processes (can be "found objects" taken by the researcher or the Subject). This method encourages the memory of the interviewee and helps identify what the observer values of an image<sup>69</sup>. *Podría ser yo. Los sectores populares en imagen y palabra*<sup>70</sup> is a research example undergo with this type of methodology, as well as *Fotografía e identidad: captura por la cámara, devolución por*

62 Harper, "Visual Sociology", 55.

63 Grady, "Visual sociology", 64-65.

64 Harper, "Visual Sociology", 61.

65 John Collier y Malcolm Collier. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 66; Mario Ortega, "Metodología de la sociología visual y su correlato etnológico", *Argumentos* 22, no. 59 (2009): 165-184.

66 Jon Wagner, ed., *Images of Information* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979).

67 Harper, "Reimagining Visual Methods".

68 Nicholas Nixon, *The Brown Sisters* (New York, NY: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999); Milton Rogovin, *Tryptich* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

69 Douglas Harper, "Talking About Pictures: A Case of Photo Elicitation", *Visual studies* 17, no. 1 (2002): 13-26.

70 Elizabeth Jelin y Pablo Vila, *Podría ser yo. Los sectores populares en imagen y palabra*, fotografías de Alicia D'Amico (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor/Cedes, 1986).

*la memoria*<sup>71</sup> a study that extended the Subject on popular classes in order to include Chaco Indians and ex habitants of a neighbor that in the past was a detention campus during Argentina Military Regime.

Lastly it can be point out that the images produced by the Subject owners<sup>72</sup> can be seen as a methodological contribution as well a those that are a result of a co production between the researcher and its subjects. Is important to mentioned that in this kind of productions the visual research data does not lies on the resulting images but in the process of theoretical construction that results by the interplay between the researcher Epistemological orientation, the filming context and the registration apparatus<sup>73</sup>.

### Visual sociology sources

images don't talk by themselves, is the researcher the one that questions and strained them. The path between the "Visible and the Visual"<sup>74</sup> includes three methods: "The Visual Document as a registry produced by the Observer, the Visual Document as a registry or part of what is Observable, in the Observe Society, and finally, the integration between the Observer and what is Observe"<sup>75</sup>. Hence, Visual Sociology task can include Production, Circulation and image consumption aspects, besides the communication between Observer and the one that Observes. Visual Sociology and the Visual studies show interest by the theme of Power that comes from the communication between the prior mentioned<sup>76</sup> elements and what is expressed in terms of whom is represented, and how and who is authorized to represent the others. Hal Foster says: "How we see makes possible or make us see

how we see the see or the unseen"<sup>77</sup>. Visual studies would make a similar claim in a term expressed as Visuality, "a social Visual construction (no only the social construction of the vision)"<sup>78</sup>, notion that contains an analysis of Visual phenomena, image mechanism and the Seeing behavior in day-to-day life<sup>79</sup>.

More over, and in the Visual studies case, its object of study (called Visual Culture) is defined by the "expanded field of images" in its diverse way of Technologization, Mediatization and socialization that includes also its other different origins such as Art, publicity, Design, cinema, Television and Video among others<sup>80</sup>. In the same way, recently Sociology has included Visual materials that came from their researches different and vast sources: Personal and institutional archives, official documents repositories, family albums and massive produced images included in postcards, cards, publicity, newspapers, and other types of objects that come in handy when analyzing the forms of representations<sup>81</sup> on changeable times.

image access its defined on the Researcher position. He can categorize world parts to create data (scientific approach), use own subjective experience (phenomenological approach), organized data in a narrative way (narrative approach) or build data from the Subjects' point of view (reflective approach). images can take these functions depending on how they are put together, shown and seen<sup>82</sup>. As a consequence Visual Sociologists should developed some abilities to be able to analyze the wide range of Visual materials and available methodologies<sup>83</sup>, including a detailed knowledge about how visual materials are done, what kind of knowledge they

71 Ludmila Da Silva Catela; Mariana Giordano y Elizabeth Jelin, eds., *Fotografía e identidad. Captura por la cámara – devolución por la memoria* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Trilce, 2010).

72 Chalfen, *Snapshot Versions of Life*, 290.

73 Elisenda Ardévol y Luis Pérez, *imagen y cultura* (Granada: Diputación de Granada, 1995), 160.

74 María José Aguilar, "Usos y aplicaciones de la sociología visual en el ámbito de las migraciones y la construcción de una ciudadanía intercultural", *Tejuelo* 12 (2011): 117.

75 Aguilar, "Usos y aplicaciones", 117-118.

76 Aguilar, "Usos y aplicaciones", 118.

77 Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), ix.

78 W. J. T. Mitchell, —Mostrando el ver: una crítica de la cultura visual—, *Estudios Visuales I* (2003): 39.

79 Nelly Richard, "Estudios visuales, políticas de la mirada y crítica de las imágenes", en *Fracturas de la memoria* (México: FCE, 2007), 96.

80 Richard, "Estudios visuales", 96.

81 Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1979).

82 Harper, "Visual Sociology", 60.

83 Luc Pauwels, "Taking the Visual Turn in Research in Scholarly Communication", *Visual Sociology* 15, no. 1-2 (2000): 7-14.

spread, and which are the most effective tools to communicate from Visual material<sup>84</sup>.

### Image and knowledge production

The use of Visual apparatus in social Sciences as we have seen also includes Visual information analysis, its usage in interviews or visual material production. The obtained information from these researches is mostly register in articles (that can or can not include Visual material), and more growingly in Movies or Multimedia archives.

These types of representations called "Visual Essays" by sociologist like Jon Wagner<sup>85</sup>, John Grady<sup>86</sup> or Luc Pauwels<sup>87</sup> have its roots in journalistic Photo Essays produced in the thirties and forties, and that juxtaposed texts and images, and the narratives frequently talk about social themes. Contemporary Visual Essays is a complex object where still image and text interweaves, is a place where artistic and scientific practices come together while simultaneously most accomplished the exigencies of each applied discipline. The Visual Essay is an acute way of social Investigation that needs technological knowledge, but also analytic, creative, semantics, among others, so it can successfully includes the visual elements with other expressive elements (Music, Sound, Text), as it also adjust to the disciplinary rules of knowledge production<sup>88</sup>.

In formal terms, Visual Sociologist like Grady have plead for Visual Essays with strong narrative structures (as in Harper narrative approach mentioned before), whilst others have advocate for a more experimental approach, expressing that its value resides in its capacity of producing experiences. The narrative approach have had a bigger influence in photography and Documentary cinema because it expands the narrative conventions that frames the investigation and attempts to give life at those social factors implied in

concrete lives. However, its been criticized because it can jeopardize its scientific commitment to developed a theory form valid and representative data. The answer to this quandary comes from Visual Anthropology that affirms that ethnographic Film is a particular gender capable of framing a theory when exposing the director role and by developing a filming strategy that includes social and Cultural context. Documentaries in particular is a rich field for research (for once more than photography), because it have developed numerous conventions to give material about the context (Narration, Off Voice, additional material inclusion, outside sound, etc.) To its outbreak can be added the technological development of the field, and the lower prices on the budget production making it more accessible<sup>89</sup>.

But more than defend a particular gender or to mark clear limits, it can be more productive to show the common areas that documentaries and visual research have in the social sciences that can be less distinguished because of different investigation logics, and more by social conventions to talk about three important aspects: Credible production of Cultural and social life images, the framing of empirics observation to mark new knowledge and challenge existing theories<sup>90</sup>.

Finally is clear to social researchers that the commitment to developed comprehensive explanations of social and Cultural behavior is a collaborative task, based in the integrations of several investigations that are inevitable partial in their method and reach<sup>91</sup>.

### Conclusion

Visual Sociology can offer a more inclusive, active, participative research process, which eventually can result in a refined investigation. Visual resources add to the research a sensorial dimension that has been traditional ignored by the discipline. Moreover, beyond the Visual experience, representation and meaning considerations, and reception inclusion, are axis that widens the relations

84 Grady, "Visual sociology", 64.

85 Wagner, *images of Information*.

86 John Grady, "The Visual Essay and Sociology", *Visual Sociology* 6, no. 2 (1991): 23-38.

87 Luc Pauwels, "The Visual Essay: Affinities and Divergences between the social Scientific and the social Documentary Modes", *Visual Anthropology* 6, no. 2 (1993): 199-210.

88 Pauwels, "The Visual Essay".

89 Grady, "Visual sociology".

90 Jon Wagner, "Constructing Credible images", *American Behavioral Scientist* 47, no. 12 (2004): 1478.

91 Grady. "The Visual Essay".



and social phenomenon understanding<sup>92</sup>. This can be accomplished by going deeper than seeing the images just as illustrations, “thinking, writing, and talking about and with images, not only can we do more lively arguments, but more lucid”<sup>93</sup>. The inclusion method in this sphere is particularly considered promising because faces an important Sociology theme that is accessing “the Subject point of view – Weber *verstehen* concept – in a new and effective manner”<sup>94</sup>.

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92 Becker, “Photography and Sociology”.

93 John Grady, “Becoming a Visual Sociologist”, *Sociological Imagination* 38, no. 1-2 (2001): 84.

94 Harper, “Visual Sociology”, 66.



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