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INTRODUCTION

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THE CRITICAL READING of photographs and film taken by Euro-American photographers in the Pacific Islands has been pursued by English-language scholars from a surprising variety of disciplinary and institutional backgrounds, and although few in number and geographically widely dispersed, these scholars have taken the study of "old" photographs into innovative theoretical directions. The most remarkable attribute of this slowly increasing output of research papers, exhibition catalogs, and conference presentations analyzing black-and-white prints, lantern slides, stereoscopes, film, and postcards is not the empirical, classificatory, and descriptive diversity of material that these scholars have brought to notice. Rather, it is that, far from being the mere replication of interpretative and critical methodologies from other fields such as art and cultural studies, the study of the imaging and representation of Pacific Island peoples, places, and events is notable for its distance from the scholarship of those working on the photography of other culture groups, such as Native Americans, Africans, and South Asians. With the same enthusiasm that poststructuralists and postmodernists have applied to the interrogation of texts, challenging the taken for granted and the conventional, scholars working on Pacific Islands photographic and film material have broken new ground, seeking more appropriate methodologies and new forms of interpretation, particularly in the questioning of photographs as evidence. Another identifying characteristic of their work has been the highlighting of the multiple uses (and meanings) that images attract when displayed mostly in the Western world. Pacific researchers have sought to situate the practice of photography in its colonial and postcolonial time frame, but in a relationship that offers deeper understanding of the public reading of photographic

images at the time of their taking and their present reading when removed from the context of their production and projection, relabeled, and presented in museums, monographs, galleries, and public displays.

The scholars represented in this collection have sought to understand the deep structures of photographs not only in the "sites of their making" in Samoa, Papua New Guinea, the Torres Strait, and elsewhere, but also in the "sites of use"[1] in the West, where rearticulations, refigurations, multiple histories, and multiple trajectories raise questions about dissemination and meaning (Edwards 1994:14; 1995:49). They are interested in the provenance of the images—the who, when, and where of their taking—but more so in the intention, ideology, and motivation of the photographer, the journeys images take in their public reading, and the complexities of the relationship between image and ideology, discourse and narrative that frames their past and present use.

This collection is an acknowledgment of the rapid advances made in Pacific Island photographic scholarship. There has not been a similar publication focusing entirely on critical historical analysis of Pacific Island imaging, though there was a precursor when a special issue of *Photofile,* edited by Ross Gibson, was devoted to the "South Pacific." Half the material was on Aotearoa (Gibson 1988). No major publications followed this lead. Scholars writing in French, German, Dutch, and Italian continued to present conference papers on aspects of Pacific photography, and across the English-speaking world isolated researchers were tackling similar projects and themes. Nicholas Thomas began with some interpretive essays (1992, 1993, 1994), and in particular he opened up discussions on colonial and missionary imaging. Essays by Emese Molnar-Bagely, Judith Binney, Ric Bolzan, Hart Cohen, Stuart Cunningham, Paul Fox, Margaret Jolly, Gordon Maitland, Marta McIntyre and Maureen Mackenzie, Peter Quartermaine, Heinz Schutte, Garbor Vargas, and Chris Wright offered occasional and tantalizing glimpses of research completed, under way, and promised. Virginia-Lee Webb published on the photographer Frank Hurley in Papua (Webb 1986), on Samoa (Webb 1995a), missionary photographers (Webb 1997), and the wider Pacific region (Webb 1995b). Alison Nordström tackled several aspects of Samoan imaging (Nordström 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1995). Anne Maxwell has worked on the imaging of women, tourism, and colonial exhibitions (Maxwell 1993–1994, 1994, 1995–1996). Brigitte d'Ozouville has worked on nineteenth-century photography in Fiji and the Dufty family (d'Ozouville 1997). Max Quanchi began by looking at the colonial imaging of Papuans (Quanchi 1994b), the work of the photographer Thomas McMahon (Quanchi 1994a, 1995, 1997), and more recently the imaging of South Sea Island pastors (Quanchi 1996). The Pacific History Association conference in Hawai'i in

1996 brought together for the first time many of these scholars and a new group of younger researchers.

The effort of Elizabeth Edwards to gather a collection of essays analyzing the relationship between anthropology and photography (Edwards 1992), although with only a minor emphasis on Pacific material, set parameters for Pacific scholars. Edwards and her contributors explored methodologies and ideologies behind photographic imaging and its uses, and defined a path for subsequent researchers to follow. Chris Pinney's essays on South Asian photography made a similar contribution (Pinney 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1992). In addition to her research on Captain W. D. Acland's photography (Edwards 1995) and curating an exhibition of Diamond Jenness's D'Entrecasteaux Islands photographs (Edwards 1991, 1994), Edwards's next project was a collection, with a number of Pacific-related papers, on the relationship between colonialism, anthropology, and photography (Edwards 1997). At the same time a few collections of photographs were released, focusing on war, expeditions, or companies in the Pacific (Coutts 1990; Buckley and Klugman 1986; Gash and Whittaker 1975; Lindstrom and White 1990; Specht and Fields 1984).

Museum and gallery exhibitions of Pacific photography offered a further platform for some Pacific scholars, and small but important catalogs and essays devoted to Pacific material evolved from exhibitions and catalogs in London (Poignant 1980) and Oxford (Edwards and Williamson 1981), the *Der Geraubte Schatten* and *Die ethnographische Linse* exhibitions in Europe in 1989, the Powerhouse Museum *South Pacific Stories* exhibition (Stephen 1993), and the Southeast Museum of Photography and Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum für Volkerkunde, Cologne's traveling exhibition of Samoan colonial imaging (Blanton 1995). The catalog for the Musée National des Arts Africains et Oceanies exhibition on colonial imaging had only a limited focus on the Pacific but provided a wide-ranging and important study of French material (Blanchard 1995). Until the release of this *Pacific Studies* collection, a publication devoted solely to the analysis of Pacific photography was lacking.

The inclusion of a panel on photography at a major international conference on the histories of the Pacific, the Eleventh Pacific History Association Conference at Hilo, Hawai'i, signaled an awareness that photographs must be put under similar critical processes to those that historians now apply to other sources. Up to this point authors, editors, and publishers have used photographs uncritically, merely as editorial gloss for a book or monograph, and have not seen them as constructed, contested fields of tension. The few pictorial histories from the Pacific region have also treated images as evidence in the same uncritical manner, suggesting to readers, as did the photographers of the last century, that what was being offered was "truth" or "from real life." This editorial practice lies at odds with the concern displayed by

museum and gallery curators, who have warned their audiences and viewers at length that photographs do indeed mislead. Questions about evidence are raised by several essays in this collection in regard to the anthropologist Haddon's use of reenactment, the propaganda uses by missionaries of images of Pacific Island pastors, the Russian-born Swiss collector Paul Wirz's practice of filming what he desired (men living in harmony with nature) rather than what was there, and the filmmaker Flaherty's use of manipulated and carefully constructed "real" scenes from Samoan life. Discussions of salvage anthropology, ethnographic recuperation, civilizing missions, tourism and science, a romantic South Seas, and "men of nature" are connected in the essays by Edwards, Schmidt, Webb, Jolly, and Quanchi to uncritical public acceptance, earlier this century, of the messages projected by these images. The essayists warn that the projection of these same images today —in monographs, galleries, displays, or documentary filmmaking—is under surveillance.

The original use made of images by scientists, anthropologists, missionaries, and early museum curators sits in a particular conceptual framework and relationship with dominant Euro-American ideas about the Pacific. Webb and d'Ozouville suggest in their essays that images were predicated by colonial and hegemonic possessiveness. Edwards, Schmidt, Webb, Jolly, and Angleviel suggest a further relationship between anthropology and the pictorial imaging of cultures that were alleged to be dying out. Several scholars have taken these constructions of the Pacific, cited as salvage anthropology, ethnographic recuperation, romantic notions of lost paradises, and disappearing harmony between "native cultures" and nature, as their primary contention. These relationships take an interesting but as yet not fully explored contemporary dimension when professional and private photographers continue to juxtapose the new against the old and tradition against modernity—a Tarawa child eating a double ice-cream cone while walking past a *maneaba,* a Yapese lagoon pile house foregrounding a cluster of Mobil oil storage tanks, a plumed Southern Highlands warrior posed by a massive mining dump truck, or, beyond the Pacific, a robed Bedouin by a solar-powered telephone box.

The fertile field of study hinted at in much of the research so far concerns the impact of images once they become public. The huge collections of individual photographers like Crane, Haddon, Wirz, and Dufty and of organizations like the London Missionary Society were not stored away completely after their showing to family and friends or their appearance in a scholarly journal or monograph, the odd university lecture, or a missionary pamphlet. In many instances, a single image or a small folio of images also entered the wider public domain and became an iconographic marker for a whole era or

generation of learners-by-looking, viewers, and readers. Haddon, for example, provided photographs and two articles in 1920 for a new popular illustrated magazine, *Discovery,* probably reaching several thousand or tens of thousands of readers around the world. The London Missionary Society provided photographs of Papua for a mass-distribution London illustrated newspaper, the *Sunday Strand* (Abel n.d.), reaching a readership way beyond the religious congregations and donors that saw the same images in missionary newsletters and pamphlets. Pacific scholars have identified a gap in our understanding of meaning and reworked meaning, of representation and rearticulation, because they have taken a step beyond recovering photographers' lives, private albums, or expedition collections and have begun to trace the complex journeys taken by images as they enter the public domain.

The directions being taken in Pacific research can be measured against writing on photography in other geographic areas of study, for example, in three new books, *Displaying Filipinos: Photography and Colonialism in Early Twentieth Century Philippines* (Vergara 1995), *Navajo and Photography: A Critical History of the Representation of an American People* (Faris 1996), and *War and Photography: A Critical History* (Brothers 1997). Their subtitles indicate the interrogation to which "old" photographs are now being subjected. Vergara and Brothers pursue individual photographs, serialized commercial images, and private albums and establish relationships with colonialism, anthropology, manifest destiny, news (media), and the construction of histories. In their respective colonial (Philippines) and military (Spain) domains, they question the truth in photographs and measure representation against fact, and they are able to suggest agendas underlying the official and commercial distribution and reading of the images. The theoretical structure applied by Vergara and Brothers, outlined in the opening chapters of both books, resonates with the work of scholars working on Pacific material and English-language scholars of colonial photography in Africa. In contrast, Faris's study of the imaging of the Navajo, although absorbing and detailed, is concerned with identifying the photographers, the male and female photographic subjects, and the geographic locations. Although acknowledging the ideological motivations for imaging as a discursive enterprise with institutional and exploitative trajectories, Faris presents a narrative rather than a critical history. Both approaches are valid and valued, though it is with Vergara and Brothers that Pacific scholarship sits most comfortably.

The essays in this collection fall into three sections. On the surface the first section appears to present the imaging and representation agendas of expeditions, individual photographers, and missions and to identify and connect their images to a broader historical or intellectual period. The authors

move far beyond this useful, conventional approach. Their underlying and powerful intent is to unpack the images by treating them as historical evidence as well as to expose the scientific, intellectual, ideological, and commercial motives of the photographers; by doing so, they are able to trace the multiple uses to which these images have been put over time. Elizabeth Edwards examines the photographic practice and motivations of the Cambridge Torres Strait Expedition of 1898 under the leadership of A. C. Haddon; Andrea Schmidt follows Paul Wirz's long connection with New Guinea and highlights the distinction between ideologically driven and chance photographs in his collection; Brigitte d'Ozouville uses Francis Herbert Dufty's images from Fiji in the 1870s to question the relationship between colonial subjects, colonizers, and commercial photographers; Max Quanchi asserts that Pacific Island pastors are missing from the missionary pictorial record because of tension between commercial, civilizing, and anthropological agendas in the mission field in Papua; and Virginia-Lee Webb analyzes the photographic practice and the collections that emanated from the part-scientific, part–pleasure cruise privately funded Crane expedition to Papua New Guinea in the 1920s.

The second section tackles similar pathways through film. The questions raised about the underlying motivations of expedition, mission, and colonial photographers, who used mostly black-and-white still images for public announcement, are also asked about motion picture filmmakers. Distinctions are made in all essays between artistic and commercial images, but for the first time, propaganda as a motivation for the taking, dissemination, and sale of images is also highlighted with regard to documentary, ethnographic, artistic, and commercial film. Both Caroline Vercoe in her study of Tracey Moffatt's film *Nice Coloured Girls* and Margaret Jolly in her exploration of Flaherty's *Moana* and Murnau's *Tabu* bring feminist theory to the study of imaging, along with theoretical considerations from history and anthropology.

The third section looks at collections, one private and one institutional. These are particularly important, as knowledge of the whereabouts, depth, and accessibility of archival and other repositories of Pacific Island photography is still sparse. The two collections discussed here, for example, were mostly unheard of in the wider research community until the authors made them the subject of conference presentations in 1996. Frédéric Angleviel and Max Shekleton discuss one overlooked aspect of imaging—the postcard—by examining the content and depth of Shekleton's unique collection of Vanuatu postcards. Felicia Beardsley tackles another huge collection—and also an overlooked aspect of imaging, the stereoscope—and identifies the origin, depth, and unplumbed resources of the California Museum of Photography's Keystone-Mast Collection.

NOTES

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1. This phrase "from sites of making to sites of use" appears in the title of a paper Alison Devine Nordström intended to deliver at the Eleventh Pacific History Association Conference in Hilo, Hawai'i. She subsequently was unable to attend. The concept is also explored in *From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery* (Banta and Hinsley 1986) and *The Burden of Representation* (Tagg 1988).

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