

Making Arguments with Images: Visual Scholarship and Academic Publishing

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Images seem to speak to the eye, but they are really addressed to the mind. They are ways of thinking, in the guise of ways of seeing (Wilson Duff, 1975).

AQ1 Please confirm opening quote is from Duff, 1975

INTRODUCTION

In the context of this volume it seems appropriate to begin with a pedagogic story. My own visual education began, formally at least, with a vocational diploma in photography. The incident I recall took place early on in the course. I happened to be wandering along the corridor holding in my hand some 35mm black-and-white negatives I had developed. One of my tutors, heading in the opposite direction, stopped and challenged me. Why were the negatives not in sleeves? What on earth was I doing wandering around the dusty college corridors with vulnerable negatives in my hand? Did I not care about the images? It was this last question that struck home most forcefully. Whether or not

I realized it at the time, one of the central things I was being taught was to care about, and for, images. The pedagogic implications that flow from this point will provide something of a refrain in this chapter. I want to be provocative and argue that the field of visual research has yet to fully learn how to care for images. It is not just a question of the occasional researcher taking a casual approach; rather, there is a systemic lack of care for images, despite the ostensible focus on the visual. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of academic publishing. Ask how many volumes have been written on how to publish? Then ask how many of these specifically discuss visual forms of presentation, or the role of images as illustrations? How many even have a chapter devoted to the topic? Even books devoted to visual methods are not always a good advertisement for the use of images in the presentation of research.

I do not mean to minimize the challenges visual scholars face in the context of academic

publishing practice. Doing visual publishing well involves extra work and cost, although the latter is not as significant an issue now as it was in the past. And I can tell my own stories of frustration from trying to lever attention to the careful use of visual material into a process than can seem designed to exclude such attention; sometimes, I have succeeded, sometimes I have failed. But real as these challenges are, I am not convinced that as a broad field of academic enquiry we are doing all that we should to educate the attention of scholars, students and publishers, or even that there is a broad consensus on what is at stake. If researchers are required to argue for the value of images in the published presentation of their research, then it is important they understand precisely what they are arguing for.

In keeping with a handbook publication, this chapter is principally concerned with the practical decisions and consequences of working with images. However, underlying the discussion is a theoretical argument about images and their intellectual respectability, something that we tend to take for granted with words and numbers. I have used the quotation that heads the chapter as a point of departure for two reasons. First, the link it draws between images and thought is important to those whose academic endeavor involves grappling with visual meaning. Duff draws our attention to the complex communication and expression that takes place when images are made and viewed, and their capacity to embody ideas and theories. Secondly, however, it serves to alert us to a trap, one whose long history in Western thought casts doubt on the testimony of images, and which risks undermining the case for visual presentation. I am referring to the neat separation Duff makes between the eye and the mind, sensory experience and thought, and the suggestion that the appeal of images to the former is inherently deceitful, demanding vigilance on the part of the thinking viewer.¹ Little wonder that so much scholarship is devoted to visual critique, the unveiling of images so to speak. This way of

thinking has consequences for the field of visual studies. It underpins the privileging of talking/writing about images over working with them, the dominance of the intellectual over the sensory. Too much attention to images is seen as suspect, a concern with mere aesthetic matters over the serious business of research and knowledge. Ironically, the flipside of this is a degree of nervousness and caution: a fear that one will fall into the trap set by the image and be seduced, losing control of meaning. Researchers withdraw from using images, concerned that they might be misunderstood, and take refuge rather too quickly in loose arguments about their polysemic nature. These concerns do have a legitimate basis; however, this failure of nerve is both symptomatic of, and made possible by, the idea that images are less knowledge-bearing than words or numbers. Anyone who has written an academic paper or research report knows very well that words and numbers must be disciplined if they are to do what is asked of them, and even then they can often elude the writer's grasp. Nevertheless, we continue to struggle with them because they are at the very core of academic work. Surely, by the same standard, it is the task of visual studies as a field to grapple with the complexities involved in working with images, not to withdraw from them.

I do not intend to pursue the philosophical arguments in any greater depth, but ask readers to keep in mind two propositions that inform my thinking. The first is the idea that the aesthetic cannot be neatly divided from the intellectual: i.e. the address to the mind is inseparable from the address to the eye. There is meaning in their form, and in their form of presentation. Images are not ideas in disguise, but are themselves intellectual formulations. The second idea is that visual researchers should be attempting not just to illustrate written arguments but to do things with images. Images have agency, as Alfred Gell (1998) has argued convincingly; and, significantly for those arguments that suggest it is desirable to separate the information

content of images from their form, the captivation of the attention of the viewer represents a 'primordial kind of artistic agency' (1998: 68–69). The point I want to make here is straightforward: if researchers recognize images as a primary means of achieving the ends they seek they will treat them with more care.

What does it mean to care about images? Of course this is not simply a matter of looking after them in any narrow sense, which at the extreme is simply to fetishize the image as object. But maybe it does start with a concern for the image in its own right. It requires us to think about where images come from, what they can tell us and how we can use them to make arguments and communicate findings. It also has an ethical dimension; we have a duty of care to images. This might seem a slightly odd claim, so an analogy with research participants is useful here. Many of the images that are of concern to researchers have lives beyond the specific research project; we might use the idea of image biographies.² Researchers therefore have a responsibility to consider the impact of their own uses within the life of an image. Following Gell (1998), images can be conceived of as complex distributed extensions of the agency of those who have made them or owned them or shaped them in some way. Researchers should ask how they are inflecting this agency, how they are harnessing it towards their own ends, amplifying it or even attempting to undermine it, through critique for example. If visual studies scholars and image-based researchers are to engage with the full complexity of images *as images*, then they must, of necessity, think reflexively about what they, too, are doing with them.

There are many issues at stake here, and this chapter is only a modest contribution to a much longer debate, so it is necessary for me to set out how I intend to structure the discussion, and some of its limitations. My focus is academic publishing. I intend therefore to concentrate on how images are or can be used and the decisions researchers need to

make when presenting visual material, usually alongside text. Nevertheless, I believe much of what I say here has implications that extend both forwards and backwards. The images I refer to are mostly still photographs, artworks or graphic illustrations. I do not deal with film, the narrative and rhetorical complexity of which is an object of study in its own right. Nor do I deal with the various diagrams and charts that visual researchers construct to represent their data. Readers interested in the latter should turn first to the work of Edward Tufte (see Grady, 2006). I am also concerned mainly with print publishing in journals and books. The Internet and other forms of electronic publishing offer significant new opportunities for visual researchers that many visual scholars have embraced with enthusiasm in recent years.³ My examples come largely from more traditional and familiar forms; nevertheless, many of the issues that I discuss apply equally well whether one is talking about a journal paper, web-based material, or even a visual conference presentation.

The discussion is based on my experiences as editor of *Visual Studies* over the past 7 years, as well as considerations that have arisen in the publication of my own research on photography. I draw heavily on papers published in the journal to illuminate the discussion. These examples are the ones that I know best. The fact that I have played a part in shaping them has the benefit of enabling me to reflect on the thinking and decision making that made them appear the way they do. I will occasionally refer to other examples, which demonstrate a thoughtful and intelligent approach to the use of images. It would no doubt be instructive to consider negative examples: those cases, of which there are not a few, where the use of images leaves a lot to be desired. However, for ethical reasons such examples are perhaps better discussed in less public contexts. Despite the limitations of my sample, I will attempt to draw out some general principles that contribute to what I am calling visual scholarship.

VISUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Visual or image-based research is a broad field encompassing a range of disciplines and forms of academic enquiry. It follows that there cannot be a single approach to the use of images in publication. However, in order to proceed we need to make some distinctions. Although the division is somewhat crude, one can think of visual images serving three different purposes: illustration, analysis and argument. (I am talking here specifically of images in published presentations, which is distinct from methodological questions about the use of images, although there is of course a relationship between the two.)

Illustration occurs where images are used as an explanatory adjunct to an argument or discussion presented in written form. For example, they may be used to show the reader a particular cultural practice, as is common in ethnographic film or photography, or to describe a particular space or environment or object, or even to exemplify different image types. The test of whether any particular use is illustrative is to ask what happens if you take the image away. The presentation may be impoverished somewhat, but should be able to proceed, or at least one could conceive of presenting it in an alternative, albeit less satisfactory, form. In this context images are valued for the economy with which they are able to describe, as well as the richness that they can add, to a published presentation. Words tend to dominate, but this is not essential to the definition; a descriptive ethnographic film or sequence of documentary images for example may be the main component of a presentation without ceasing to be illustrative of something that could be described in other ways. For practical purposes the image is treated as relatively transparent, allowing viewers access to what the researcher wants to show them. Of course images are never entirely transparent in quite the way this suggests – they are always socially constructed – but there are occasions when it is legitimate to bracket out contextual arguments in order to

proceed with the discussion at hand. One should of course do so carefully, otherwise alternative interpretations may disrupt what is intended. This is a very common way in which images are used in our field; and, historically, the earliest, in the form of anthropological and sociological fieldwork photographs. But if we only ever consider images as illustrations, then we are missing a great deal.

Analysis refers to instances where the image itself is the focus of attention, the object of study: for example, studies in which the content or organization of the image is examined for what it reveals about the values of a society, or studies where the history of the image is of particular relevance or interest.⁴ There is a clear distinction between illustrative and analytical uses, a marked shift of attention from what the image allows the reader to see, to the nature of the image as it presents itself to the viewer, an acknowledgment that what we are looking at is an image not the thing itself. Sartre refers to this as ‘reflective consciousness’ of the image (2006: 134). In this category the image is treated as having a greater degree of autonomy, and attention is drawn to its construction and effects; even where it permits access to a world beyond, the reader is made conscious that this access is on terms set by the image. As above, it is useful to ask what happens if you take the image away. In analytical examples, the argument is in danger of collapsing, or at least becomes very difficult to sustain. The interpretation becomes instead a private act to which the reader does not have access. While one may be able to present a line of argument in analytical cases, it is unlikely to be very convincing in the absence of the visual evidence. Nevertheless, there is usually a predominance of text over images. Indeed, the analytical mode is in many respects the struggle for control of words over images.

The final category refers to those examples where the image, or more likely sequence of images, is explicitly designed to convey an argument. The paradigmatic example is the

photo-essay, presented with minimal or no text. However, this is not necessary to the definition; sequences of images can be woven together with text, but nevertheless making an independent argument. It may be an argument that reinforces what is presented in text or it may not. Either way, in these cases the images have autonomy from the textual component, and if the images were taken away there would quite simply be nothing to discuss. There is no requirement that the 'author' of the visual argument needs to be the person who made the images; visual arguments can take many different forms. In a visual research context, argumentational examples are less common, though my point here is precisely that visual scholars should become more conversant with this potential. One should not forget of course that visual practitioners, photographers and filmmakers and so on, have always worked with images as their primary means of communication. Visual scholars can learn a great deal from looking at the work of those who work predominantly with pictures. Referring to the work of Robert Frank and Walker Evans, Howard Becker urges researchers to pay attention to the work of 'photographers who never pretended to be social scientists but who we would do well to claim as our own' (2004: 196). And, alongside classics such as John Berger and Jean Mohr's (1975) *A Seventh Man*, I would add Susan Meiselas's (2008) *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* and Susan Schwartzberg's (2005b) *Becoming Citizens: Family Life and the Politics of Disability*, as notable examples that exist in the fertile territory between research and practice.⁵

These distinctions are, of course, intended to help think about the use of images in the publication of visual research rather than providing a definitive typology. The reader will no doubt be able to point to examples that bridge categories or that cannot easily be fitted into any particular one. That is fine; in fact, it is an important observation. The more sensitive one becomes to the complexity of images, the more one realizes that they

operate on multiple levels simultaneously, and in the spaces in between. Photographs that serve as descriptive illustrations in the context of an ethnography may, by virtue of their qualities as photographs and the way they are presented, also make an argument that has an ethical or humanistic dimension, seeking to expand the moral imagination of the viewer. Equally, images can migrate between categories. For example, ethnographic photographs originally understood and used principally as descriptive illustrations may later be subject to an analysis which directs attention to the form of the photograph, the way subjects are posed and so on, in order to comment on the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters. The same photographs could be recontextualized with other images to make a visual argument about the complicity of photography with colonialism, or appropriated to construct counter narratives. In other words, the three categories – illustration, analysis and argument – are not fixed qualities of the images themselves but relate to the way they are deployed.

The point of course is to consider these different potentialities when putting together a paper or structuring a presentation. At this time it might be useful to look at a few examples.⁶

SOME REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES

Danny Hoffman's (2007) paper on the environment around Freetown, Sierra Leone, is interesting for the way in which it combines two distinctly different uses of photography: one illustrative, the other offering a sophisticated visual argument. Hoffman's research in Sierra Leone was an ethnographic study of participants in the civil war, including an examination of the way the conflict had been 'inscribed on the landscape' (104). Photography was an aspect of the methodology and Hoffman made many images of his informants, ex-combatants making their living on the margins of Freetown. In the

published paper, these images served an illustrative purpose, drawing on a conventional notion of documentary realism. We decided therefore to situate these images in a direct relation to the text, making them one-column width, within the two-column journal page layout, giving them short descriptive captions and including reference to them at the appropriate point as Figure 1, Figure 2 and so on. The second type of image used within the paper was, by contrast, a self-conscious attempt to find a visual form which represented 'the impact of the expansion of the urban periphery on the surrounding forest', in a context where 'visual tropes of clear cutting and deforestation are by now so familiar that they lack any explanatory or interventionist authority' (104). In contrast to documentary realism, and drawing on West African notions of representation and aesthetics, Hoffman sought a way of representing the landscape through absence, presenting 'a vision of the disappeared that avoids the standard visual tropes of environmental degradation' (112). Readers will need to turn to the paper if they want to explore the argument more closely; for my purposes, here, the important point concerns the organization and placement of the images within the paper. Rather than placed within the text, these six photographs run parallel with it, each image centered on the page, with titles rather than descriptive captions. The reader is

of course meant to switch back and forth between the images and the text, but the relationship is not one of pointing to what is *in* the image, rather it is an invitation for a more imaginative engagement *with* the image and, by extension, the environment it represents. The success of the visual strategy is something readers can judge for themselves; my main point here is to emphasize the different uses to which images may be put, and how this demands careful thinking about presentation. In the above case, the illustrative and argumentational use of images was clearly differentiated; the two sets of images serve different purposes and were presented in a way that emphasized this point. However, the distinction is not always so clear.

Annette Kuhn's (2007) article on photography and cultural memory provides an example where these dimensions are present in relation to a single image. The paper considers as a case study a single family photograph brought to a photography and memory workshop by a Chinese man recently moved to Britain. In terms of the above categories, we would probably class this as primarily analytical in its relation to the image, though it goes beyond a simple semiotic or deconstructive reading. Kuhn's approach to the image is multi-layered and collaborative, involving what she describes as an 'interactive performative viewing' (290), paying attention not only to the people and spaces



Figure 34.1

please provide
34.1 and 34.2
figures



Figure 34.2

depicted but also to what is absent from the image and the memories it evoked. The way in which a single image can open onto an extended discussion about history and memory should be acknowledged, but I want to make a narrower point about presentation. With the permission of Kuhn's collaborator, the owner of the photograph, the image was reproduced in the published paper. The final reproduction involved not just the facing side of the photograph but also the reverse, with its short inscription in Chinese script and a date. Both sides of the image were shown against a black ground in order to include the patterned edge of the photographic print within the frame. The choice to present the photograph in this way was to emphasize its materiality, its qualities as an object, one that Kuhn's interlocutor had carried with him since he was a young man. The image was also presented without a caption, acknowledging that a single explanation could never be adequate to the multiple and complex narratives and emotions the photograph called forth. The careful attention to presentation in the paper proposes important methodological arguments concerning what photographs are and the complex meanings they carry.⁷

In publications from my own research I have tried to develop the use of images as a

means of making arguments alongside, but nevertheless independent of, the written word. In my book on South African photography during the apartheid period (Newbury, 2009), I made a conscious decision not to make direct reference to the images in the text in the conventional form (such as Figure 1, and so on), though the images were given detailed captions. Although my study was an historical and analytical one, I wanted to deliberately undermine the certainty of a linear directional relationship from text to image. My intention was to emphasize the autonomy of the sequence of images that ran throughout the book. The aim was to have a set of images in dialog with the text, not merely providing illustrations, although they do serve as illustrations in many cases too. Images discussed specifically were on the same page or, where the practical constraints of layout did not allow this, close by the relevant text. At some points the image serves a relatively straightforward role as illustration or object of analysis, at others the images are intended to convey a point not explicitly discussed. For example, at the end of one chapter, a magazine page spread showing a photograph of the funeral that followed the Sharpeville Massacre is juxtaposed with a musician seated at a piano. The visual echo of the row of coffins in the piano keyboard

was intended to summarize one of the themes of the chapter, which counter-posed the oppression of the apartheid state with culture as a form of resistance and escape.⁸

The lengthy format of a book also allows one to exploit the potential of sequences and repetition, with earlier images becoming repositioned by later ones. One of my interests was in examining the visual repertoire that developed to depict South African society during this period. Funerals were a recurring feature in this repertoire, and the book includes several images of funerals, the earliest of which is a mock funeral performed as a protest against forced removals. The point of including a number of such images was not simply to show what the images depict, but to indicate that funerals were consciously attended to as opportunities for performative protest, with visual documentation itself an important component. I also intended that readers should recognize the history of photographic practices.

Another book-length example is Caroline Knowles and Doug Harper's (2009) collaboration on migration in Hong Kong. Harper's photographs run through the book in parallel with Knowles' text narrating the life stories of her informants. The photographs serve a variety of purposes. At times they are illustrative. The portraits, sometimes expressive, other times uncertain, give an identity to the names and voices that populate the text. The visual presence echoes the qualitative narrative approach and the focus on individual life stories. More often they go beyond illustration, bringing the reader closer to the subject matter and providing a vicarious experience of the ordinary spaces people inhabit, the views available to those who live on the high peaks, the bustling spaces where people shop and Statue Square where Filipino maids congregate on their day off.⁹ Occasionally they offer the reader glimpses of the research process, when they show Knowles engaged in interviews with her informants. The images are not captioned, something which would have interrupted their flow and placed a textual barrier between the reader and her

visual engagement with the urban landscape. They operate in parallel to the text, providing an alternative means of appreciating the texture and quality of daily life, and reflexively situating the research.

Visual Studies also publishes visual essays, where the images are intended to convey an argument independently of text. In the introduction to a special issue on the visible curriculum, Eric Margolis brought together a diverse selection of historical images of school settings taken at various points in the twentieth century (Margolis, 2007). These 'visible traces' of school life were intended to prompt questions in the mind of the viewer, for example, about 'the arrangement of student and teacher bodies within the spaces of the built environment of the school' or about the 'performance of social order' (2007: 11). Presented on the page without captions (these are available at the end of the visual essay), the viewer's attention is steered towards visual and spatial concerns within the images, and to contrasts and similarities between different settings. Garvens' (2009) photo-essay offers another example. In this case the images were not found historical images, but the result of a photographic documentary project. Taken in prosthetics laboratories and clinics, the photographs represent a striking and aesthetically powerful record made during quiet moments, when the spaces were devoid of human activity. In an understated way they signify the intimate work of bodily repair that follows terrible acts of violence or occasions of human misfortune. A selection of the images were reproduced one to a page without captions, prefaced by a brief description of the project, and followed by a captions listing giving title, date and location. The space given to the images, the careful selection, the placement of textual elements and, in this case, the opportunity to reproduce the images in color are all-important to the final result. This example returns us to the idea discussed above of an expanded territory encompassing and combining research and visual practice.

SUGGESTIONS FOR AUTHORS

With these examples in mind, I now want to turn attention to some of the practical questions and decisions that need to be made in putting together a visually based submission. As is equally true when putting together any academic presentation, this is a question of both strategy and tactics. At the strategic level one should consider what individual or combination of purposes the images are intended to serve in the specific context of presentation. One must also consider how much work to ask of the reader. Howard Becker (2002) draws a contrast between analytical studies such as those by Bruno Latour, where the text explicitly directs the attention of the reader to evidence within the image, and the strategy used in John Berger and Jean Mohr's *A Seventh Man*, where 'the authors present a lot of material and leave it to us to connect it all' (2002: 6). There is a natural inclination in academic studies towards the control offered by the former, but this can risk reducing the image to its explanation, rendering it redundant, or duplicating in text what the image does with greater elegance or economy. It may also be in the space between the images, and between images and viewer, that meaning is most productively created. This demands greater consideration of the audience and their prior knowledge than is typical of academic publishing, but perhaps that is no bad thing, especially for a field of study that crosses boundaries between theory and practice as well as between disciplines.

One may want to alert the reader in advance to the approach that has been adopted. In the now classic *Ways of Seeing*, first published nearly 40 years ago, John Berger was sufficiently uncertain about his readers' preparedness that he prefaced the book with a 'Note to the reader' (Berger, 1972). He explains that 'the form of the book is as much to do with our purpose as the arguments contained within it' and, aware that some may find the visual essays particularly challenging, comments explicitly on this strategy:

Four of the essays use words and images, three of them use only images. These purely pictorial essays are intended to raise as many questions as the verbal essays. Sometimes in the pictorial essays no information at all is given about the images reproduced because it seemed to us that such information might distract from the points being made' (1972: 5).

It is irrelevant whether current academic audiences need this kind of prior instruction, though I think it may be more necessary than some of us would like to concede.

How many images should you include? This is rather like asking how long is a piece of string, but there are some considerations that can help set parameters. There may be practical reasons why certain images are not available to reproduce or ethical reasons why use may not be appropriate. The ubiquity of visual images in contemporary culture and the increasing ease, through the last century and into this one, with which images can be circulated and reproduced, seems like a free gift to the visual research community. No longer is it necessary to search out visual material in remote locations or dusty archives; it is all there ready and available for us to use. Except, that is, until it comes to publication. At this point our abandonment in the playground of visual culture suddenly turns sour, to be replaced by concerns about who owns the images we are looking at, and how much they might charge us to use them to illustrate a book or paper, if they allow us to use them at all.

Melinda Hinkson's (2009) article in *Visual Studies* on the removal, by police, of several of Bill Henson's artworks from a gallery in Sydney presents an interesting case. The accusation that led to the images being removed was that they constituted a form of child pornography; the article explores the cultural attitudes revealed by the debate surrounding this incident. It had been the author's intention that the article would include the image at the center of the scandal, both in its original form and in the manipulated form in which it was reproduced in the media and circulated on the Internet. However, images, as original works, are under copyright, and it was clear that we would

need permission of the copyright holder, in this case the artist.¹⁰ It could be argued that there was a second copyright in the manipulated image, if it were considered a new work in its own right (though given that the media agencies making these alterations doubtless did so without the artist's permission, this exercised me less). Unfortunately, while under normal circumstances the artist may well have granted permission, given the furor, the artist and gallery were understandably cautious. As a result the journal was unable to reproduce the image. Although the article, as published, was not able to present a key piece of evidence under discussion, the easy availability of the image on the Internet meant that this was much less of a problem than would otherwise have been the case.

Alexander Riley's (2008) piece on narratives surrounding the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 presented a similar issue. The image, dubbed 'The End of Serenity', was taken shortly after the crash and shows what might be described as a 'country postcard' scene, except for the dark cloud hovering over the landscape. Although the image was, and still is, widely available online, the woman who took the photograph was unwilling to grant formal permission to the journal. It was decided, therefore, to omit the image, provide a brief description and refer readers to where they may view the image on the Internet. In some cases it might be argued that images available on the Internet should be regarded as fair game for visual researchers. However, given the controversy around these images, we felt the circumstances weighed against such arguments.¹¹ Margaret Godel's (2007) study of stillbirth memorial websites raised similar issues, but in this case the additional work of contacting website creators for permission was largely successful. It is worth stating at this point that I regard the additional work of contacting image-makers and seeking permissions as an essential, and indeed informative, part of visual scholarship. One of my complaints as an editor is that many visual researchers have yet to fully grasp this point.

For quite different reasons, Jamie Joanou (2009) chose not to include any illustrations for her article on the ethics of participatory photography with young people living and working on the streets of Lima, Peru. It is worth quoting her rationale for this decision:

I have purposefully chosen not to publish the photographs discussed in this article as their publication may compromise the dignity of the participants involved. Furthermore, while it is possible to conceal participants' identities through the use of blurring techniques, it is my concern that these techniques serve to objectify and dishonor those they aim to protect (2009: 222).

The potential impact on participants, and their perception of these images by others, has to be considered alongside the importance of images to the argument being made. In this case, the balance weighed in favor of omitting the images. In other cases, the argument may go a different way, and, furthermore, one might want to consider the role of participants in the decisions about which images to include and which to omit. Like Joanou, I find the blurring of faces an unsatisfactory approach, in most cases.¹² A key aspect of caring for images is thinking about when they should and should not be shown, and understanding the process for arriving at such decisions.¹³

One could make a strategic decision not to provide any images, as Joanou did. This might seem a somewhat perverse suggestion in the context of this chapter, but maybe it is not. Although she discussed specific photographs and photographers, Susan Sontag deliberately chose not to include any reproductions in *On Photography* (1979). The publisher had originally wanted to include images, but she was quite clear that she did not want to produce an illustrated book. One consequence of this strategy is to bring into play more of the reader's own mental stock of images, highly appropriate for Sontag's sophisticated reflections on the place of photography in modern society. My own reasons for not illustrating the examples I discuss in this chapter are twofold. First, I am asking

the reader to consider the use of images in the context of published papers; extracting them from that context necessarily renders them less useful for my purposes. Secondly, as I am trying to encourage the reader to think critically about the uses of images in academic publications in general, rather than making a specific point about any one use, it serves my purposes better to ask readers to go and analyze these and other examples for themselves.

There may be limitations of the kind discussed above, such as issues of cost (academic authors are almost invariably responsible for permission fees), or perhaps some of the images you might want to include may simply not be available at the right quality for reproduction.¹⁴ Assuming you are including images, from my perspective as both an author of visually based research texts, and as the editor of a journal dedicated to publishing visual studies, there are three main issues to consider.

First, determine which images will be selected: it does not follow that because you have plenty of images you should use them all. A small, but well-chosen, set of images is better than a large, unfocused selection. Images are no different than text in that respect; it is best to leave out images that, while striking or interesting in some way, do not move your discussion forward. Occam's razor is just as useful in visual research as anywhere else. For each image included, ask yourself what purpose it serves, how it develops or provides evidence for the overall argument. You might also want to reflect on how familiar your reader is likely to be with the images you are using. If they are likely to be very familiar then you can be more selective, choosing just those that are key to the discussion, leaving the reader to call on their knowledge of the image world to fill in the context. If the images have not been reproduced before or are of an unusual kind, then you may want a slightly larger selection so that the reader can grasp the corpus of material you are dealing with.

Secondly, consider sequencing: here I am referring to internal relationships within the

selected images – how they are ordered and so on. There may be a natural order suggested by the images themselves; they may be placed chronologically for example. Alternatively, you may want to consider thematic groupings. You may wish to juxtapose two images to make or reinforce a particular point, or there may be themes that recur through a longer selection of images.¹⁵ And, of course, the sizing of images can be a way of signaling relative importance. All of these concerns will affect how you wish the images to appear in a final published version, even if some of these things may eventually be outside your control (this depends very much on the individual journal or publisher).

Thirdly, attend to the pace of the images in relation to text, giving careful consideration to the movement of the reader's attention between the images and text. Should all images discussed in the text be included and vice versa? The answer, of course, is it depends what you are trying to do. Yes, if your text is a detailed analysis of a small number of images, or if descriptive illustrations are needed to convey to readers the social scene you are discussing. No, if you are making an argument through images. Where images are discussed in the text, it is often ideal to have them placed on the relevant pages; however, there may be instances where you want readers to see the image before they read about it, or to read before they see. Within practical constraints, authors should consider how much or how little they want to try to direct the reader's attention. There may be tension here between the desires of the author, and the practical and aesthetic considerations of importance to those finalizing the layout. Production staff are not always used to accommodating input from scholars with a visual imagination.

As discussed in a number of the examples above, there are times when one wants to make the reader look carefully at the images *as images*. In such cases conventional figure references and, sometimes, even captions are a distraction (see Becker, 2002: 5). Captions, those infamous textual anchors, are an

important consideration. There is the question I have already touched upon of whether captions should be placed alongside each individual image, or, as in the photo-essay examples (and, incidentally, Berger's (1972) *Ways of Seeing*), offered for readers to consult separately from the visual presentation. Or whether they should be used at all: Elizabeth Chaplin (2006) argues provocatively that they are a positivist anachronism: an attempt, doomed to failure perhaps, to wield the power of words over images.

But, assuming one sees some value in captioning, there are still plenty of questions to be answered. As a photographic historian, I am inclined to argue for the application of the same degree of rigor and transparency to the referencing of images as is expected in the referencing of manuscript sources or academic literature: where was the image made, when, by whom and so on. Knowing where an image has been sourced can also give an insight into the circulation of images as objects, and may be of more than incidental interest. There are of course instances where it is appropriate to use images with little or no provenance, considering them purely in their capacity as images: for example, there is an increasing interest in photographs that have been removed from their original contexts and sold through online auction sites. Nevertheless, such information as is available can provide valuable insights for the reader. And I would endorse Susan Bielstein's (2006) plea for authors to provide greater transparency about the costs of image reproduction in their captions (160). The position of academics in the economy of images often seems absent from the discussion, and the notion of 'fair use' is often invoked as an argument for their freedom to reproduce images as they see fit (for further discussion of issues related to the 'fair use' of images, see Chapter 37 in this volume). However, it can sometimes be an excuse for laziness, a reason for not engaging with those responsible for their creation and dissemination, or with the dynamics of a complex economy of images. There is a vast difference between a

young African photographer and the Reuters media empire, and academics are not always powerless players in this world, despite what they might claim. The neglect of these issues on the part of visual scholars seems curious; it is hard to believe that researchers would take a similar attitude to the provenance of textual or numeric data.

Images can acquire different kinds of captions at various stages in their lives, for example, text written on a photograph, or a descriptive catalog entry if the image is from a collection; participants may have commented on an image during the process of research, in effect giving it a verbal caption which could serve equally well in a published context. It is important to be clear about the status of the words appended to an image. Often the least satisfactory captions are those which try to describe the image, which may simply be redundant unless the intention is to save the reader the bother of looking, or those which try and over-determine the way the image is read.¹⁶ It can be appropriate, however, to draw the reader's attention to particular elements within the image or to aspects of its construction.

Corinne Kratz (2002) describes the careful consideration that lay behind the multi-layered captions that evolved as she created and then toured her exhibition of photographs of the Ogiek people from Kenya's forested highlands.¹⁷ Each image is accompanied by two sets of captions: the first set, in Kiswahili and English, is descriptive, naming those in the image and providing sufficient cultural context to understand what is going on; the second set, in Ogiek and English, is drawn from conversations by Ogiek people viewing the images, with the occasional involvement of Kratz herself. Attention was paid to tone, the use of personal names and the impact of multiple languages on Western as well as Kenyan audiences. Kratz's reflections bring to the surface the complex decision-making process behind apparently simple captions (2002: 124–129) and provides an exemplary model for visual researchers.

In practice, there are often trade-offs between the number of images, their sequencing and how they relate to the text. It may be difficult to bring the selection of images into an ideal relationship to the written discussion. If you refer to several images within a paragraph or two, then it is likely to be impractical to have the images appear on the same page, unless they are reproduced very small. Which takes priority here, the images or the text? That has to be a decision made in relation to the specific aims of any particular presentation; but as something of a corrective, where there is doubt, I tend to give the benefit to the images. In my experience as editor of *Visual Studies*, authors do not always give sufficient thought to these issues, leaving me guessing at the author's intention, and sometimes getting it wrong.

SUMMARY DISCUSSION

My intention in this chapter has been to demonstrate that, despite its frequent reduction to narrow or technical considerations, careful attention to the use of images in published research is a fundamental component of visual scholarship, and opens onto philosophical, methodological and ethical questions at the very heart of visual studies. Visual scholarship demands that we treat images with the same seriousness and rigor as we apply to other materials with which we work. It insists that we think carefully about what images are and how they may be used to communicate ideas and make arguments. It asks us to observe a duty of care to images, considering the ethical and political dimensions of our own uses, and our place in the image economy. Attention to these things not only makes for better research presentations but also, I believe, contributes to a more thoughtful and reflective research practice.

I want to end with a piece of practical advice, borrowed from Howard Becker: 'The way to proceed is not to reason from methodological principles but to look at books and

articles that seem to be what [you] would like to produce and work out what they have done right' (2004: 196). I hope I have given a few tools and ways of thinking that will help visual scholars to do this working out, and which will prove useful as they shape their own visual arguments.

NOTES

1 For a discussion of this idea in relation to design education, see Moore (2010).

2 For further discussion of this approach to cultural artifacts, see Appadurai (1988).

3 *Visual Studies* has recently begun to publish review essays in the area of new media to track the opportunities for visual research they provide. See also Coover (2004) and www.roderickcoover.com.

4 I include here the contextual analysis of images, which are central to sociological and anthropological accounts, not simply analyses of a semiotic or art historical kind.

5 An excerpt from Schwartzberg's book was first published in *Visual Studies* (2005a). On Meiselas, see my review of the second edition of *Kurdistan* in *Visual Studies* 24(1).

6 The reader may find it useful to assemble some of the examples I reference here to look at alongside my discussion.

7 See Barr (2009) for another example of this approach to presentation.

8 The pianist was Dollar Brand (later Abdullah Ibrahim) who, along with many other musicians, went into exile in the 1960s in the wake of Sharpeville.

9 Within the categories I have discussed this might be considered a heightened form of illustration, rather than categorically distinct.

10 Susan Bielstein (2006) provides an excellent and very practical discussion of copyright and image permissions, although as the text mainly draws on art historical examples, it does not cover all of the territory traversed by visual studies scholars.

11 The notion of 'fair use' is often invoked in discussions of which images visual scholars can use, not always appropriately in my view. I do not have the space to develop this point here but I think this deserves greater debate within the field. One also has to be aware of the policies of publishers, some of whom regard the relatively untested legal grounds of 'fair use' with extreme caution.

12 In contrast to anonymizing participants as a default position in sociology, Paul Sweetman (2009) has proposed the idea of 'an ethics of recognition'.

13 The International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA) Code of Research Ethics includes the following advice: 'When publishing or exhibiting visual material researchers take account of research participants' interests and proceed in accordance with the consent they have been given by image creators, image owners, and subjects who are visually represented' (Papademas and IVSA, 2009: 257).

14 Images culled from the web are rarely of sufficient resolution to be reproduced in print, although there may be circumstances where the significance of the content trumps any concerns over image quality. It is not my main concern here, but technical considerations are nevertheless important. The resolution required for print reproduction is normally 300 ppi (pixels per inch), whereas the standard for screen viewing is only 72 ppi. Importantly, one also needs to bear in mind the size the image is to appear on the page: a digital image that is 300 ppi at postage stamp size will lose resolution if its size is increased. And while image software programs make it possible to resample an image at a higher resolution, this rarely helps: one cannot put back quality which is not there in the original file. The most common formats are TIFF and JPEG. TIFF is a more stable format and retains a greater degree of quality than JPEG, which compresses the image each time it is saved (making for smaller file sizes).

15 Juxtaposition is perhaps one of the most basic forms of visual argument and has a long history, with which visual researchers might wish to become better acquainted. One pleasurable starting point might be Stefan Lorant's use of images in the British illustrated magazine *Lilliput* (see Lorant, 1940).

16 In the context of image databases, descriptive captions which attempt to duplicate the visual content of the image do of course play a valuable role in enabling them to be found using keyword searches.

17 Kratz's book is an exemplary extended study of communication through the photographic exhibition form and there are many insights here that could be equally applied to the use of photographs in print or web-based publication.

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