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# Photographing Anthropologists Photographing Cultures

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Photographing Anthropologists Photographing Cultures

By

Nirmala Jayaraman

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements for  
Honors in the Department for Anthropology

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## ABSTRACT

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My thesis explores how anthropologists use photography as a research method in capturing cultural realities different from their own. This was a library-based research study where coding and semiotic analysis were used to investigate photographs from anthropologists and my term abroad experience of photographing another culture in Vietnam, fall 2011. This analysis specifically looks at the photographs of Bronislaw Malinowski's fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands during the early 1900's, of Margaret Mead's fieldwork in a Balinese village during the 1930's and 1940's, and of Philippe Bourgois' fieldwork in a San Francisco inner-city homeless community during the 1990's. Over time, the camera lens shift from focusing on the anthropologist's authoritative position to balancing objective and subjective lens' to finally acknowledging the presence of multiple subjectivities both in front of and behind the camera. Anthropological methodology, public attitudes towards camera technology and its products, and perceptions of power and agency have changed to include multiple voices. Ultimately these three case studies show that creating *communitas* is not always disrupted by the camera, when both anthropologist and local informants cross borders to difference places of power in the act of presenting their identities in public spaces.

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A. Topic and Central Research Question

Although I had been interested in photography for a long time, I first considered the photographic process as an anthropological phenomenon when I participated in a study abroad program in Vietnam. Our student group had to take a course on photographing another culture while studying Vietnamese language and cultural history. I had a memorable experience of learning the language and attempting to communicate with local civilians at the same time. The following photograph captures my interaction with a local bookseller on the curb of a street in Hanoi (Figure A and A.1). I asked if I could take her picture in Vietnamese and she felt comfortable with the presence of my modest coolpix camera and me (Figure A); she may have been pleased that I attempted to speak the local language too (Figure A and A.1).



Figure A: The following photograph depicts a woman selling books on a street in Hanoi, Vietnam, before I started a conversation with her. This photograph was taken by me during a study term abroad in Vietnam, Fall 2011.

However I did not find photographing from a distance to be an engaging experience because I felt that my own attempt to photograph was a passive act compared

to interviewing or participating in a local event. As I put away my camera and sat next to her, I started trying to converse with her more in Vietnamese and she was even more pleasantly surprised. Then I asked to take her picture again and the following image shows her laughing while holding the book she was reading (Figure A.1). I realized that both photography and anthropology were similar to each other because both practices require people to establish trust, also known as rapport, and investment in cultural immersion.



Figure A.1: The following photograph depicts a woman selling books on a street in Hanoi, Vietnam, after I started a conversation with her. This photograph was taken by me during a study term abroad in Vietnam, Fall 2011.

Anthropologists, also invested in cultural immersion, have often used photography as a methodological research tool (Pinney 2011: 25). This “metacritical” analysis, or study of a study, seeks to explore how anthropologists involve themselves in the process of photographing another culture (Brown and Henderson 1997). What is distinct about the interrelationship between photography and anthropology is that both disciplines transformed significantly from the beginning of the Modern Era, which for the



purposes of simplicity I date as the 1910's to the present. In this project, I explore the role of photography in anthropology, starting when both disciplines were exposed to each other, also in the 1910's, and relate my findings to larger concerns regarding how anthropology had an impact as a developing field of scholarly inquiry (Pinney 2011: 77). In fact, this thesis is a study of the culture of visual anthropologists. How do anthropologists support and challenge the methods, ethics, technological influence, and agency of photographic evidence documenting multiple cultural realities? After analyzing the various methods used by visual anthropologists, I apply such techniques and contextualize photographs of three distinct cultural groups: the Trobriand Islander as documented by Bronislaw Malinowski in the 1910's, Bali as portrayed by Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead in the 1940's and the life of San Francisco heroin addict as captured by Jeff Schonberg and Philippe Bourgois in the 1990's (Young 1998; Sullivan 1999; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). These supporting examples show how significant photography is for anthropologists working today; these progressive examples also demonstrate how the use of photography as a method has changed since the early days of the 1910's (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 52). Furthermore, research methods used in this thesis, such as contextualization, demonstrate how important and influential anthropology is for understanding the ways in which people communicate with each other in intra-cultural and cross-cultural settings (Bernard 2006: 344).

## B. Methodology

John Collier Jr., one of the earliest visual anthropologists, pointed out an important contribution of photography to anthropology when he noted that “the eye can keep track of only a limited range of phenomena, whereas the camera can record

unlimited detail precisely” (Collier Jr. 1995: 248). Indeed, Collier Jr. belonged to a group of ethnographers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century who believed in emphasizing objectivity while writing ethnographies and using the photographic lens to collect data with minimal personal bias (Jacknis 1988: 171). Though Collier Jr. published a revision of his work in the 1980’s, I use contemporary reactions by visual anthropologists to his work from the 1990’s and 2000’s, to show the relevance of his ideas for the purposes of this study (Banks and Ruby 2011; Hockings 1995).

Early anthropologists would make sure the camera lens remained objective by setting up a stand, in the community where they were doing fieldwork, and taking photographs directly from that position during different times of the day (Mead 1995: 9). The goal was to first have the local people accept the camera as a part of the scenery, and then see how the camera captured the locals’ interactions with each other and their physical surroundings (Mead 1995: 8). The rationale behind staying in the field for so long is that anthropologists need to take the time to unearth the different “front stage” [ideal] and “back stage” [real] behaviors of their local informants (“Goffman, Erving (1922-1982)”).

Collier Jr., who also wrote one of the first guide to using photography as a method, championed the technological advancement brought by the modern camera. In fact, in his guide, he discussed how photographs had multiple purposes for fieldwork (Collier and Collier Jr. : 1986). Anthropologists could use photography to map out social landscape and collect evidence of spatial and social engagements (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 29). Cameras could be used to test and eventually strengthen rapport between an anthropologist and the local community because cameras represented one more barrier, in

addition to language and cultural barriers, that both sides would attempt to overcome (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 19). The photographs could be analyzed and interpreted as visual surveys and visual interviews (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 117). Paul Hockings, a contemporary visual anthropologist, reflects on Collier Jr.'s ideas, of visual interviewing, noting that how an anthropologist's choice of audience for their work also acts as a significant factor (Hockings 1995: 512).

The method of coding photographs as if they were interview texts derives from the field of art semiotics, which is the study of natural and human made signs in visual text (Chandler 2002: 2). Semiotic's methods provide clarity to the visual interpreter who looks for human-to-human interactions, cues, or physical objects, and their place in the photograph (Chandler 2002: 3). Semiotic analysis emphasizes qualitative research; rather than tracking the number of times an object appeared in a photograph, the anthropologist codes, for example, the proximity or distance between objects and people (Chandler 2002: 8). However, as time progressed, public attitudes towards this new approach and philosophy, of collecting visual data, adjusted based on public exposure and further acceptance of seeing social interactions as visual display (Banks and Ruby 2011: 6). The differences between objectivity and subjectivity, between "emic" and "etic" realities would become the heart of many debates and discussions in ethnographic texts (Chandler 2002: 215; Ruby and Banks 2011: 168).

Specifically, structuralist and post-structuralist semioticians argued about whether or not objects, in a given piece of visual text, are symbolic extensions of the people performing their cultural identity in the frame (Chandler 2002: 213). Structuralists argue that inductive reasoning should be used in data collecting and analysis, where

observations are generated from gathering visual texts; this is in contrast to deductive reasoning where conclusions are first made and then applied to data (Chandler 2002: 92). Post-structuralists take this argument further and question how social analysts think they are able to measure qualitative results for their work and whether or not their own scale still “essentializes” or “reduces” the meaning of visual data (Chandler 2002: 218). Ultimately, all of these questions show how issues of methodology and issues of power overlap each other in this study.

### C. Theoretic Orientation and Literature Review

The sets of images in my thesis, photographs by Malinowski, Mead and Bourgois’ fieldwork, are references from the following reprinted volumes: Malinowski’s Kiriwina by Michael W. Young (1998), Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson and Highland Bali by Gerard Sullivan (1999), and Righteous Dopefiend, a ten year collaborative effort, between anthropologist Philippe Bourgois and photographer Jeff Schonberg (2009) (Young 1998; Sullivan 1999; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). In regards to Malinowski’s work, I use critical essays on Malinowski, in the reprinted volume by Young, and a report of a diary entry by Malinowski, as secondary sources to support my analysis of his photographs (Young 1998; “Malinowski, Bronislaw Kaspar (1884–1942)”). I use Mead and Bateson’s published notes and journal entries from other separate volumes in order to learn more about other thematic concerns they had while preparing for their respective studies (Sullivan 1999; Mead 2001 [1977]; Jacknis 1988). I also include a recorded interview of Schonberg and Bourgois from the Slought Museum at the University of Pennsylvania, where they exhibited their photographs (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009;

“Next Door But Invisible: The World of Homelessness and Drug Addiction”; “Righteous Dopefiend: Homelessness, Addiction and Poverty in Urban America”).

In addition to coding interviews and published field notes, I contextualize photographs and support my analysis with historical and critical documents for this study, including archives, journal articles, and research guides to using photography in the social sciences. In order to include a range of views on the phenomenon of photographing cultures I use articles from journals such as Anthropology Now and The Visual Anthropology Review as secondary sources. In addition to Collier Jr.’s guide I also use a contemporary research guide, Anthropology and Photography by Christopher Pinney; it describes how the development of both disciplines paralleled each other and significantly contributed to one another over time (2011).

Analyzing the effectiveness of photography in the ethnographies of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Philippe Bourgois is a major area of focus. I discuss whether the photographs in their work, about Balinese people, Trobriand Islanders, and inner-city heroin addicts respectively, are able to represent such distinctively different cultures (Young 1998; Sullivan 1999; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Can photography disrupt, capture or even contribute to building “communitas” among the people of a study or between the people in front and behind the lens? What are anthropologists looking for when they are looking at culture and then trying to define the idea of “culture”? Is this vision different from that of an assisting photographer, or research assistant, who is also looking for culture? Are there ethical implications involved when including this method for social research? For example, upon analyzing a photograph I took at the Chinatown market in Ho Chi Minh City, I found that the people

within the lens were looking in different directions (Figure B). Their paradigms not only shifted when my camera was present but also overlapped each other's frame of reference (Figure B). Did my assertion of taking photographs capture pre-existing social interactions or did it act as a catalyst in heating up social interactions in front of the digital lens?

Figure B: The following photograph depicts a scene during the day at the Chinatown market in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. I took this photograph while completing a study term abroad in Vietnam, Fall 2011.



Another question I probe is why would Bourgois seek out a photographer when writing ethnography as opposed to taking pictures himself? Could one argue that Mead, Bateson and Malinowski's work influenced his decision? Were these earlier pioneer anthropologists influential on each other? Considering that photography and "objectivism" are phenomenon during the Modern Era, has photographic fieldwork changed since then or will it change as ethnographic research continues to emphasize the inclusion of postmodern subjectivities like power and voice (Pinney 2011: 77)?

To explore these ideas I apply to photographic data some of the theories used to analyze behavioral data from functionalists, modernists and postmodernist anthropologists. I use Malinowski's functionalist theories to contextualize his photographs and methodological approach as an anthropologist (Malinowski 2006 [1939]: 88). I then use theories from Eric R. Wolf, who suggests that no culture is isolated and addresses issues of voice among the cultural bodies that have been subjugated by Western hegemony and philosophy through the modernist movement (Wolf 2006 [1982]: 367).

I also address issues of power and voice in the postmodern arguments of Lila Abu-Lughod, Angela N. Garcia and Faye Ginsberg. In her essay, "Writing Against Culture," Abu-Lughod's theory of the "Rushdie effect" highlights the importance of the fact that- once colonized people in an anthropologist's study can have access to photographs taken of their community due to advancements in media technology and communication (Abu-Lughod [1991] 2006: 469). In other words, now informants can possess the power and potential of using photography to portray *communitas* and thus give voice to their collective concerns after an extended period of voicelessness (Abu-Lughod [1991] 2006: 472).

Garcia's personal account of reading Righteous Dopefiend relates to Abu-Lughod's ideas, as she reflects on how her mother reacted to images of heroin addicts in the ethnography while talking about her sister's heroin addiction (Garcia 2010: 32). Ginsberg reflects on her own struggle to use photography while maintaining her sense of responsibility for representing different cultures in her work (Abu-Lughod, Ginsberg and Larkin 2002: 39). In order to address all of their ethical concerns, I also apply suggestions

made by the 2009 American Anthropological Associations Guide to Ethical Research, and resolve conflicting arguments over the ethics of using photographs with my own argument about collecting qualitative data (“Code of Ethics” 2009).

#### D. Supporting Examples (Case Studies)

To further discuss the tensions, between anthropologists and informants brought on by the use of photography in modern ethnographies, I analyze three sets of photographs of three different cultures, captured during different periods of time. The first two sets of photographs were taken in the early 1900’s and both portray two island cultures. Their tone contrasts with the tone of the third set of photographs, taken most recently during the 1990’s. What would account for this difference is not only the technological changes to camera imaging, but also the intellectual changes as anthropologists transitioned from privileging objectivity to openly discussing the influences of their own subjectivity in their fieldwork (Banks and Ruby 2011: 161).

The earliest text is Bronislaw Malinowski’s photographs of the Trobriand Islanders, published in 1922 (Young 1998: x). The Trobriand Islands belong to a larger chain of island communities in Papua New Guinea (Young 1998: 31). Upon researching the local culture, Malinowski observed a trading pattern among different communities, and most of his photographs reflect the tone of these exchanges (Young 1998: 33). Malinowski documents that he photographed as often as he could while investigating the purposes of performing local customs (Young 1998: 276). In other word, for Malinowski photography was just one among many methods of documenting the culture, neither better nor worse than interviewing (Banks and Ruby 2011: 165).



In light of Malinowski's research, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson set out to use photography in their Bali fieldwork from 1936-1942 (Jacknis 1988:160). In fact, Mead's first exposure to Balinese culture came directly from footage taken by one of her anthropology students; this also motivated her to incorporate photography with her field notes (Jacknis 1988: 160). As Mead and Bateson became participant-observers they took photographs while actively engaging in daily rituals and ceremonies. Mead, in particular, took most of her photographs of mothers nursing their babies (Sullivan 1999: 40). Mead focused on this social relationship, knowing that over time her photographs could capture the physical growth and social changes occurring between parents and children in her study (Jacknis 1988: 161).

Finally, the third set of photographs analyzed in this study is from Jeff Schonberg and Philippe Bourgois' Righteous Dopefiend. Schonberg and Bourgois researched the culture of homeless heroin addicts in San Francisco's shipyard district from 1994 to 2006 (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009: 4). Schonberg's photographs consist of scenes and portraits of the informants and the materials they use to support their addiction and their livelihood on the street (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009: 10). Bourgois' motivation for including photographs with his fieldwork came from a desire to present evidence of his findings to the public. Both he and Schonberg wrote:

This book [Righteous Dopefiend] is especially vulnerable to ideological projections, because it confronts the social suffering of cultural pariahs through explicit text accompanied by images that expose socially taboo behaviors. . . (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009: 15)

In other words, they believed that structural boundaries depicted in their ethnography were unbelievable, invisible or undetectable to anyone living outside this impoverished environment (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009: 15).

## E. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the arguments and methods used in my thesis about photographing cultures. My thesis is organized into five chapters in order to address the ethical dimensions, historical context of the technology, and the power struggles among the participants in front of and behind the camera. The first chapter includes an expanded definition of my central research question. The second chapter is a literature review of visual anthropology, photographic methodology, and of relevant anthropological theories applicable to this study. The third chapter discusses the methodology and ethics of photographing cultures. The fourth chapter takes account of the changes in cultural attitudes towards camera technology over time. The fifth chapter focuses on how agency and power shifts between anthropologists and the people they are observing. The final chapter summarizes my findings and relates the topic of my thesis to the larger issue of defining anthropology's purpose in helping the public understand the complexity and definitions of culture.

## Chapter 2: The Rise of Visual Anthropology

### A. Visual Anthropology

After the popularization of the invention of camera technology, during the 1910's, the act of photographing cultures became a social phenomenon (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 2). Visual Anthropology, the study of culture supported by visual text, such as photographs, roots back to 1900's as well (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 13). However, it should be clear that this method is not exclusively reserved for visual anthropologists, but rather is used by many cultural anthropologists. In their argument about the development of visual anthropology, Banks and Ruby state, "a linguistic anthropologist, a political anthropologist, an anthropologist of globalization can-and do-incorporate visual data and visual methods into their studies while contributing to their respective subfields" (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 2).

Banks and Ruby continue to argue that the history of visual anthropology shifted overtime across "three phases" marked by the early 1900's, the 1960's and the 1990's. The first phase of visual anthropology consisted of social researchers beginning to take pictures of their fieldwork but not having an organized way to present their findings to the public (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 13). Visual anthropology's second phase marks a time when more camera technology becomes available and social researchers begin to question their methods and effectiveness of representing unknown groups of people to the public (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 14). Finally, the third phase of visual anthropology ". . . is characterized by three main concerns: boundary crossing and collaboration; the use of new (digital) media; and a recognition of the full sensorium" (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 14). What all three of these phases have in common is the tension between privileging the

anthropologist's authoritative perspective and visual senses over the sense perceptions of the culture being spotlighted (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 14). In other words, the camera is judged to be more authoritative than the words that informants use (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 14).

In fact, Banks and Ruby play upon the anthropological concept of ethnocentrism, where a person's conditioned cultural bias influences their point of view about another culture; they refer to visual bias as "ocularcentrism" (Kottak, 2008: 50; Banks and Ruby, 2011: 15). According to Banks and Ruby, not only do anthropologists have a history of applying their own ethnocentric views to cultural analysis but they also have a history of privileging their visual sense over others when collecting data during their fieldwork (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 15). For example visual anthropologists, in the field, might neglect to write notes about the sounds, or intonation, that they hear at a community event because they are focusing their attention on the details that they can see in front of them (Edwards 2005: 28).

Banks and Ruby further argue that visual anthropology's importance relates to current anthropologists who seek to find ways that counteract or lessen the effects of their overall inherent cultural bias on a given ethnographic study (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 15). Banks and Ruby argue that the nature of still photographic images may have also contributed to the western public's belief that non-western culture was fixed and unchanging saying, "Representations, whether anthropological photographs or indigenous art, are static, and their aesthetics, veracity, and evidentiality can be debated within an objectivist paradigm" (Banks and Ruby, 2011: 13).

Another photography expert, Christopher Pinney, suggests that the timing of photography and anthropology's development strengthened their influence on each other saying,

The emergence of institutional practices that claimed the name of ethnology and anthropology coincided. . . . these practices of anthropology started to formalize their interests in new forms and possibilities of data, photography would emerge as an increasingly vital mode of data capture and transmission (Pinney 2011: 21)

Anthropology's acceptance of photography related to anthropologists identifying with the emerging purposes of using cameras. Pinney states, "it is easy to see how a technology of picturing, whose magicality was largely disavowed by those who deployed it, would fit easily within cosmologies where shadows, spirits and souls moved freely. . . ." (Pinney, 2011: 76). In other words, when studying non-western cultures, anthropologists found that not only did cameras contribute to their fieldwork, but the cameras' ability to focus from different physical angles also appeared to fit their desire to express objective observations (Pinney 2011: 21).

Pinney addresses the point of tension that Banks and Ruby are concerned with as well. Anthropologists may find that they are acting as interlocutors rather than social researchers, however Pinney states that, "Photography as a technical procedure-and one that ideally facilitated a distance between the photographer and what was photographed-seemed to resolve certain aspects of this problem" (Pinney, 2011: 79). Photography opened up a "new dimension" that enhanced anthropological practices, such as reflexivity (Pinney, 2011; 80; Pinney, 2011; 150).

Thus far, Banks and Ruby have argued that anthropologists started to use photographs as field notes in an unorganized systemic approach (Banks and Ruby 2011: 13). Pinney states however that anthropologists could readily use the analytic tools used

by photographers, because both disciplines have so many aspects in common (Pinney 2011: 76). One of the ways in which anthropologists could analyze photographic data is to apply art-semiotic theory. Like anthropology, semiotics, the study of natural and human made signs, stresses the importance of conducting qualitative over quantitative research (Chandler 2002; 8).

According to theorist Daniel Chandler, “we learn from semiotics that we live in a world of signs and we have no way of understanding anything except through signs and the codes” (Chandler 2002; 14). Chandler further argues that “we have to learn to read the codes” in order to become more aware of our ethnocentric or culturally influenced frames of seeing and thinking (Chandler 2002; 15). Like Banks and Ruby, Chandler best describes the process of our culturally biased thinking saying, “we select and combine signs in relation to the codes with which we are familiar. Codes help to simplify phenomena in order to make it easier to communicate experiences” (Chandler 2002; 157).

In other words, the meanings of cultural codes in everyday visual text are obscured and interwoven tightly. However, we can use semiotic theory and analysis to break down the signs and messages we find in images. For example Chandler suggests deconstructing photographs by teasing out details through “mechanical reduction” and “human intervention” (Chandler 2002; 163). Mechanical reduction requires researchers to highlight the proportions, textures, and colours of the objects present in a given photograph where as human intervention focuses on “choice of subject, framing, composition, distance and lighting” (Chandler 2002; 163).

Chandler also addresses arguments that have been made against the use of art-semiotics to understand captions of cultural practices saying, “such methods are not universally accepted: socially oriented theorists have criticized their [semioticians] exclusive focus on structure,” (Chandler 2002; 8). A second argument critics have made is that “Even photography involves a translation from three dimensions into two, and anthropologists have often reported the initial difficulties experienced by people in primal tribes in making sense of photographs,” (Chandler 2002; 161-162). Like Banks and Ruby, Chandler, also sees that components of culture like language are “not static closed systems” and static photographs used to depict culture neglect to show how cultures are always changing (Chandler 2002; 13).

Chandler suggests that post-structuralist thinking can resolve dimensional problems ignored by structuralist semiotic analysis. Structuralist “search for “deep structures’ underlying the ‘surface features’ of sign systems” (Chandler 2002; 9) and they seek to understand “how are phenomena [points] organized” in a given frame (Chandler 2002; 214). However, post structuralists analyze signs based on power-dynamics and the social context surrounding the existence of the photograph as a whole (Chandler 2002; 213).

#### B. Methodology and Ethics of Photographing Cultures

In his revised 1986 guide, Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method, John Collier Jr. argues that in order to discuss the phenomenon of photographing cultures, one must first acknowledge “the phenomenon of modern observation” (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 5). Since anthropologists, in the United States particularly, championed the use of participant-observation in their fieldwork, a wide acceptance of

using cameras grew among social research (Collier Jr. 1995: 236-237). When studying a different culture, anthropologists seek to gain insight by becoming more involved in daily rituals. They also found that could establish rapport, and gain the trust of the local people, as they became more actively engaged with the community (Collier Jr. 1995: 240).

Collier Jr. argues that bringing a camera to the field did not create a barrier between a researcher and the community but rather enhanced and enabled the anthropologist to employ more “objective methods”, where the camera cannot discriminate its focus as it captures “detailed” images consistently (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 9). According to Collier Jr., photography can make up for the inconsistencies in memory retrieval and selective “attention” among anthropologists (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 13). By having a set of visual data, anthropologists can rediscover details from their photographs that “can then be used to form more precise questions for interview purposes” (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 79).

There is, however, “limitation” to relying heavily on photography because “it is awkward and sometimes impossible to stand back aloofly while making human records” (Collier and Collier Jr. 1986: 102). In some instances, the presence of a camera between an anthropologist and an informant can create a barrier and suspend the anthropologist from gaining trust among community members (Collier Jr. 1995: 240). Contemporary responses to Collier Jr.’s field guide shows that his 1967 publication is still relevant and important to consider when assessing arguments about photographing cultures (Hockings 1995: 507). Paul Hockings edited a volume of essays critiquing Collier Jr.’s arguments called Principles of Visual Anthropology (Hockings 1995: vii). Despite the critiques, contemporary theorists, like Hockings, still use the same process of visual analysis



established by Collier Jr. For example, current anthropologists photograph still moments in a given culture and apply kinesics analysis, where they study how humans relate to each other through movement (Hockings 1995: 509).

The ethical dimensions of using photography in ethnographic research are best compared to the ethical expectations of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) (“Code of Ethics” 2009). The AAA “Code of Ethics for Fieldwork” addresses tensions that arise between researchers, their informants and the public who view their work. The AAA cautions social researchers on their approach to distributing their findings, stating,

. . . In conducting and publishing their research, or otherwise disseminating their research results, anthropological researchers must ensure that they do not harm the safety, dignity, or privacy of the people with whom they work, conduct research, or perform other professional activities, or who might reasonably be thought to be affected by their research” (“Code of Ethics” 2009)

The delicate nature of creating exposure for an underrepresented population relates to the work of Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg, because they are responsible for protecting their informants, and their past actions of breaking the law, from public scrutiny. The AAA further delve into the importance of a researcher’s responsibility, citing,

. . . Anthropological researchers who have developed close and enduring relationships (i.e., covenantal relationships) with either individual persons providing information or with hosts must adhere to the obligations of openness and informed consent, while carefully and respectfully negotiating the limits of the relationship. . . . (“Code of Ethics” 2009)

The limits between anthropologists and informants are tested when a camera is placed between the two people. This research explores how those limits evolved from a time when Malinowski readily crossed the line as he sought to have intimate relationships with

some of his informants (“Malinowski, Bronislaw Kaspar (1884–1942)”) to when the limits are redefined in Righteous Dopefiend (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 162).

The code of ethics employed in Righteous Dopefiend contrasts with the lack of ethical discourse that occurred during the time that Malinowski’s wrote his field notes (Bernard 2006: 345). Though it would be tempting to hold Malinowski accountable for neglecting to adhere to the same code of ethics as Bourgois, I stress that the AAA’s code from today should not be used to judge the actions of an anthropologist who did his research about ninety years prior to its existence and acceptance among anthropologist communities (“Malinowski, Bronislaw Kaspar (1884–1942)”). Thus, the following AAA code cannot be applied to the contextual analysis of Malinowski’s photographs (“Code of Ethics” 2009). The 2009 AAA code is best used when judging the work of the most contemporary case study in this research. In other words I will only apply the AAA code to Bourgois and see whether his ethnographic practices reflect the AAA code, which states,

While anthropologists may gain personally from their work, they must not exploit individuals, groups, animals, or cultural or biological materials. They should recognize their debt to the societies in which they work and their obligation to reciprocate with people studied in appropriate ways” (“Code of Ethics” 2009)

This contemporary standard reflects how current anthropologists’ willingness to uphold social responsibility in the field plays a significant role in this discipline’s future. The AAA continues to emphasize this critical point concerning ethics, stating,

“Anthropological researchers should do all they can to preserve opportunities for future fieldworkers to follow them to the field” (“Code of Ethics” 2009). Not only do anthropologists play a role in the future of their field, but they also influence the acceptance and skepticism of ethnographic processes among observed communities.

According to Eric R. Wolf's Europe and a People with No History, anthropology's past contains ethnographies that portrayed non-western cultures as static, isolated, and inferior (Wolf 2006 [1982]: 378). Depending on the communal reaction to accepting anthropologists in their midst, this initial impression influences the community's willingness to create or break *communitas* around the presence of an outsider and their camera. The issue of ethical research methodology thus influences how an anthropologist handles their "responsibility to the public" and the distribution or "dissemination of Results" ("Code of Ethics" 2009). Overall, the AAA has maintained these principles in their Code of Ethics in order to represent anthropologists as having a crucial role in sharing knowledge with the public and with each other.

Two theorists who have questioned the future of anthropology, its discipline and unique relationship to ethics, are James Clifford and George E. Marcus. In Writing Culture, Clifford envisions anthropology as progressing beyond its inherent roots of western thought (Marcus 1986: 2). Like Wolf, Clifford argues that ethnographies became composed of "systems, or economies, of truth. Power and history work through them, in ways their authors cannot fully control" (Clifford 1986: 7). Clifford also sees semiotics as a way to break down the codes embedded in ethnographic data (Clifford 1986: 10).

Marcus addresses anthropological methods similarly to Clifford.

Marcus stresses the importance of context, or what he refers to as the process of "textualization" (Marcus 1986: 264). He defines "textualization" as the act of incorporating "diverse contexts" from "field notes and recordings" of the people observed in an anthropological report (Marcus 1986: 264). Up until this point, Wolf and Clifford have expressed how problematic "incomplete truths" of a given ethnography are

for the public, the community observed and for the anthropologist (Clifford 1986: 10). Marcus argues that providing more background information, on who is speaking during events recollected in ethnographies, can help anthropologists add more to the picture of social phenomena that they witness (Marcus 1998: 232).

Another theorist who values the act of contextualizing as a research method is Takami Kuwayama. In his book, Native Anthropology, Kuwayama's arguments are similar to that of Wolf, Clifford and Marcus. Contextualization not only strengthens an anthropologist's ethnographic representation of an observed people, but also aids anthropologists in their commitment to the AAA "Code of Ethics" (Kuwayama 2004: 131). At the same time Kuwayama takes Western anthropologists, who are responsible for writing the AAA's code, to task for their refusal to abdicate any of their power and to hold themselves above the voices of native anthropologists (Kuwayama 2004: 117; "Code of Ethics" 2009).

Kuwayama addresses Clifford and Marcus' ideas in a more contemporary example of how photographs are used in textbooks portraying Japanese culture (Kuwayama 2004: 118). Kuwayama specifically addresses how the social phenomena of the tea ceremony in Japan is captured in photographs and frequently displayed to readers of Japanese ethnographies. He argues that it is unethical not to provide context to these pictures, stating, "for a non- Japanese viewer unfamiliar with the cultural context. . .the image creates the impression that a ritual bow is an ordinary event that can happen anytime, anywhere" (Kuwayama 2004: 129).

Not contextualizing photographs in ethnographic fieldwork is dangerous according to Kuwayama because " certain features are highlighted without context and

are paid disproportionate attention to their everyday practice in the culture, they reinforce cultural stereotypes and deepen the already existing gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Kuwayama 2004: 130). This point relates back to the limitations of structuralist semiotics. A structuralist can break down the significance of objects in a given image, but this analysis lacks detail concerning the power-dynamics of the social event in the photograph (Kuwayama 2004: 131). Thus there is a “mismatch of text and image”, and the ethnography regresses back to portraying culture as static and unchanging (Kuwayama 2004: 132). He continues to argue, “since the impact of visual images often exceeds that of the written text, careful attention should be paid to the selection of photographs” (Kuwayama 2004: 135). These arguments concerning the ethics and methodological implications of using photographs serve as only a part of the basis for why photographs are important in the field of anthropology.

### C. Attitudes Towards Camera Technology

Before the public can readily accept photographs as worth viewing, anthropologists must value photographs as data for their social studies (Edwards 2011: 164). Elizabeth Edwards associates the established method of photographing culture with the availability of camera technology, stating,

It can, of course be argued that the need for pose or reconstruction is dependent on technologies available. . . technical possibilities shift the social expectations that cluster around photography, as what was technically possible is integrally entangled with what is thinkable at a given historical moment (Edwards 2011: 165)

Anthropologists, like Margaret Mead, are attracted to camera technology because of “the precision of the medium’s documenting capabilities” (Edwards 2001: 51). Edwards even notes that Mead’s advocacy for photography’s place in ethnographic fieldwork echoes

later in Mead's arguments concerning technology and her analysis of life in a Balinese village (Edwards 2011: 164).

The public acceptance of camera technology can be traced back to museums incorporating photographs in their public exhibitions (Edwards 2011: 159). When designing their methodology, anthropologists bear in mind that how they present their results to the public plays just as significant a role as the ethnography itself (Edwards, 2001: 51). When including the science of photography with the practice of social research, Edwards reflects that "photographing objects was (and still is) integral and crucial to the apparatus through which ethnographic and museological knowledge was made, generating discourse around objects; yet it is one naturalized within museum curatorial practices" (Edwards 2001: 51). Edwards believes photographs can effectively support anthropological research because the analysis of cultural objects reveals what the observed culture values (Edwards 2001: 76).

However, Edwards begins to distinguish between analyzing cultural objects and analyzing people positioned in cultural event. In her essay, "Photographs and the Sound of History," Edwards argues that in spite of their two dimensional presentation, photographs contribute to understanding human experience because "photographs not only represent but also evoke" (Edwards 2006: 29). Her point is that human's sensory experiences, such as sight and touch, are directly embedded in a photograph's social "codes" (Edwards 2006: 29). She agrees with Pinney's earlier argument that photography positively contributes to the anthropological process of analyzing social phenomenon (Edwards 2006: 29). Both Edwards and Pinney ground their analysis in post-structural semiotic discourse because they argue that photography "allows us to think about the

complex and shifting relationships through which photographs as experienced are created and endowed with meaning and purpose” (Edwards 2006: 29). By acknowledging that people are sentient beings in a photograph, the anthropologist no longer views their respective culture as static like a still object (Edwards 2006: 29).

Another visual anthropologist, David MacDougall, has also made significant strides when using semiotic analysis in cultural studies. MacDougall, like Edwards, argues that post-structuralists make room to discuss issues of historical context, hierarchal as well as physical positioning in their work (MacDougall 2006: 147).

According to MacDougall “this is not only a matter of how people are presented (and present themselves) in photographs but also extends to the physical disposition of the photographers and their clients [the observed peoples]” (MacDougall 2006: 158).

However, MacDougall makes more of an effort to challenge arguments against using photographs altogether in social research. In his essay, “Photo Hierarchicus: Signs and Mirrors In Indian Photography,” he wrestles with the “predatory” steps taken during some photographic practices (MacDougall 2006: 148). The science of photography was applied in early anthropological studies, similar to that of museum studies, where the “observed” person in a photograph was categorized and presented to the public like a “scientific specimen” (MacDougall 2006: 151).

MacDougall uses the example of Mussoorie society in India to support his belief that photography can transcend its past history and provide insight into how a collective group of people views themselves saying, “Here [Mussoorie] class status appears to play a more important part than caste, religion, or ethnicity” (MacDougall 2006: 158). In other

words, even staged photographs can give insight into what a society values, both the observed, and the viewing public. Furthermore he asserts that,

. . . photography is not meant to break through class indifference or bridge social divisions. . . Its purpose is not so much to define, for people already exist as defined beings, but to acknowledge and enlarge. Thus photography assists in the creation of a reality not in the discovery (or uncovering) of it (MacDougall 2006: 169)

This argument relates back to an earlier question regarding photography's potential to disrupt *communitas*. What MacDougall poses is that *communitas* may actually strengthen when a social group is aware that a camera is present during an event. After all, participants in these social events are already prepared to perform their cultural identities in order to maintain their position as community members (MacDougall 2006: 169).

Thus far, theorists like Hockings, Pinney, Edwards and MacDougall have advocated for the use of camera technology in ethnographic fieldwork. Margaret Mead, whose work in a Balinese village is analyzed here, also advocated incorporating new media technology in fieldwork methods and museum collections (Jacknis 1988: 160). In fact, Mead was introduced to Bali through film and photographic projects made by her students (Mead 1977: 163). Upon seeing film footage of Balinese trance-dancing Mead writes, "It now appeared to me that Balinese culture had many elements that suggested it would be a suitable one in which to explore" (Mead 1977: 164). Due to her interest in childhood development, Mead also found that photographs could visually show the changes and growth of families living in the same Balinese village, stating, "This [photographic process] was especially valuable as the children whom we had been studying in detail over time were now almost a year older and were again photographed" (Mead 1977: 164). When Mead returned to Bali, after spending several years in the



United States, she was able to photograph the same village and see how her informants had experienced enculturation as part of their process of performing their cultural identity (Mead 1977: 166). Mead also contextualized her photographs in her ethnographies, as if they were a second set of notes or another field diary (Jacknis 1988: 165).

In the midst of taking her photographs Mead was quoted as saying that she aimed for each frame to be “purely objective” (Jacknis 1988: 169). However she also feared that the public would make “scientific generalizations” about the appearance of Balinese culture. As a result, Mead was motivated to also “allow alternative viewpoints” from different Balinese civilians in the frame of her photographs (Jacknis 1988: 170). Mead’s conflict with balancing subjective voices and an objective camera lens continues to preoccupy cultural anthropologists long after the 1940’s (Behar 1996: 174).

Even postmodernists, like Ruth Behar, struggle with embracing subjectivity, where the anthropologist’s voice is not always privileged in the ethnographic narrative (Behar 1996: 174). In an interview, Behar discussed her own experiences of photographing images as field notes along side a photographer during her research. First, Behar noticed that photographs acted as their own separate ethnography saying, “I wrote in response to the photographs. I was very conscious that the text was going to run parallel to the images, and that shaped the kind of text I wrote” (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 1). Like her anthropologist predecessors, Behar also agrees that photographs still require a great deal of contextualization in order to avoid the dangers of misrepresenting the culture she observed (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 2). In addition, Behar valued the presence of a camera in her interviews with her informants because it helped her establish rapport (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 4).

#### D. Issues of Power and Agency

Over time anthropologists have become more invested in highlighting multiple subjective voices, including their own, in their ethnographies. The anthropological desire to incorporate the personal, sensorial experiences of the social researcher into their field notes marks the beginning of the postmodern movement in the 1990s (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 14). Postmodernism also represents an anthropological concern with issues of power between researchers and their informants (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 297). Through postmodernism, social researchers are able to continue the dialogue they began with post-structuralists and semioticians (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 297).

Ruth Behar and Margaret Mead were not the only anthropologists who experimented with subjectivity and voice during their photographic processes (Hendry 1999). Joy Hendry, also included herself in photographic captions of cultural events during her research in Japan (Hendry 1999: 127). Her photographs are best contrasted with Kuwayama's photographs of tea ceremonies in Japan (Hendry 1999; Kuwayama 2004: 125). Unlike Kuwayama, Hendry chooses to include photographs of her own participation in social gatherings lead by her informants (Hendry 1999: 127; Kuwayama 2004: 125). Hendry then argues that how her photographs are presented to the public is just as significant as the content in her photographs because they show both the informants' acceptance of her and her ability to participate in local activity (Hendry 1999: 108).

Hendry also has ideas about "wrapping" and "unwrapping" presentations of culture that harken back to semiotic discussions on how to analyze codes constructed by collective cultural values (Hendry 1993: 5). Indeed the act of "unwrapping" culture is

similar to contextualizing photographs because both experiences require the same kind of sensitivity (Hendry 1993: 9). Photographing another culture is acknowledged in the process of “unwrapping” by comparing attitudes and assumptions of both the observers and the observed during the textual analysis (Hendry 1993: 142). Furthermore, like MacDougall, Hendry asserts that there are differences between analyzing the placement of objects and understanding the power positions of the body in a given frame (Hendry 1993: 70). She argues that the position of bodies are wrapped and presented by other people participating in the social event as well (Hendry 1993: 127). How people package and present each other within the frame of cultural event reveals how power is distributed among member in the observed community (Hendry 1993: 155).

How an anthropologist presents, or packages, their results to the public raises questions relating back to the AAA’s ethical guide for “disseminating results” (“Code of Ethics” 2009). For example, even after the publication of Righteous Dopefiend, are all members of the public able to see this photographic data? Where are the museums located and which segments of the public have easier access to see this photographic data? Museums may have helped in the advocacy of using camera technology, but who has access to these exhibitions to begin with (Kratz 2011: 23)? Bourgois addresses these issues of power by stating that the purpose of writing ethnographies is to draw attention to social positioning (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 18).

He further espouses that public knowledge of ethnographic texts reminds people across social divisions that their subjectivity shapes their attitudes and expectations of belonging to a community (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 19). Susan Hogan, who also addresses urban poverty and social class borders, extends Bourgois’ argument about

making the underrepresented locations of society visible. She argues that “the drawing out of contradictions, inconstancies and incongruities is an essential part of the anthropologist’s work: the end result may be a study which is messy, complex, and perhaps uncomfortable viewing, but it is multidimensional, not easily read, and perhaps actually resists, by its very complexity, reductive interpretation” (Hogan 2011: 275). Photographs may not always help ethnographies present more mainstream information, but their presence does highlight how people living within the same community define their culture differently from one another (Kuwayama 2004: 140).

Faye Ginsberg questioned the effectiveness of mediated representations of “the observed” as well. Public access to photographic portraits of a different culture lead Ginsberg to ask, “who has the right to control knowledge and what are the consequences of the new circulatory regimes introduced by digital technologies” (Ginsberg 2008: 289). She too is preoccupied by media, or the camera’s “. . . ability to marginalize and exclude those who do not have access to it,” adding “. . . we need to take responsibility for the future of this new information age” (Ginsberg 2008: 291). Her ideas relate back to visual anthropology’s discussions of ethics and progression in technology use among researchers (Banks and Ruby 2011: 5).

For postmodern anthropologists, like Ginsberg and Bourgois, there is a shared understanding that, “we,” researchers need to give back to communities from whom “we” have learned from about social behavior (Ginsberg 2008; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Just as Wolf argues that informants have been portrayed as “fixed” and voiceless in the field, Ginsberg asserts that there is a way to address informants concerns from a post-modernist, post-structuralist, analysis (Wolf 2006 [1982]: 378; Ginsberg 2008: 289).

Both the observer and the observed people can “reverse processes through which aspects of their societies have been objectified, commodified, and appropriated” (Ginsberg 2008: 302). According to Ginsberg, due to globalization during the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both photographers and anthropologists have “become increasingly self-conscious” and writing culture from a distanced, objective, point of view has become unfruitful and unrealistic (Ginsberg 2008: 302).

Ginsberg’s arguments about subjectivity relate to Lila Abu-Lughod’s postmodern sensibilities about the role of media and representations of marginalized cultures. In fact both anthropologists have collaborated in writing the introduction to the book Media Worlds, stating, “As we have recognized the place of media in a critical anthropological project that refuses reified boundaries of place and culture, so we have attempted to use anthropology to push media studies into new environments” (Ginsberg, Abu-Lughod and Larkin 2002: 1). Their perspective relates back to Pinney’s ideas that not only have photography and anthropology developed alongside each other, but both fields have also reinforced to each other’s ability to contribute to public definitions and appreciations of culture (Pinney 2011: 80). Pinney would also agree with the authors’ proposal of using anthropological theories to understand the multitude of realities existing in a given photographic image of a community event (Pinney 2011: 80; Ginsberg, Abu-Lughod and Larkin 2002: 9). To explain what these multiple realities are, Ginsberg cites examples from her work on Aboriginal people in Australia, stating,

[local Aboriginal informants] became interested –sometimes for different reasons– in how these media could be indigenized formally and substantively to give objective form to efforts for the expression of cultural identity, the preservation of language and ritual, and the telling of indigenous histories. Socially they are creating new arenas for meaningful cultural production for people living in both remote and urban-based communities (Ginsberg 2002: 51)

When understanding how mediated, or visual, interviews of culture become relevant for social researchers, Abu-Lughod also asserts that, “one goal is to reveal the particularity of the relationship between modernity and melodrama in the formation of subjectivity” (Abu-Lughod 2002: 115). In other words, to analyze the physical and social positions of people in a given photograph provides insight into how social positions are preserved as cultural performances in the community (Ginsberg, Abu-Lughod and Larkin 2002: 9). At the same time, the limitation of heavily relying on visual text, to acquire information about another culture, is that the “melodrama” in the photograph may lead contemporary anthropologists to assume what to expect when they try to immerse themselves in the local culture (Abu-Lughod 2002: 115).

Furthermore, in her essay, “Writing Against Culture,” Abu-Lughod addresses the phenomenon of the observed communities becoming increasingly aware of how their image has been mediated for public display, stating, “anthropologists are beginning to feel what might be called the Rushdie effect – the effects of living in a global age when the subjects of their studies begin to read their works” (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991] : 469). Abu-Lughod’s critical point reflects Clifford’s earlier ideas in his book Writing Culture (Clifford 1986). Clifford’s preoccupation, like Wolf’s, was that documentations of culture portray people as static and unchanging (Wolf 2006 [1982]: 368; Clifford 1986: 101). By “writing against culture” and including other subjective voices in the ethnographic text, postmodern anthropologists, like Abu-Lughod, can create room to capture multiple realities even in one frame (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 473). After all, the notion of pictures as “static” is important for anthropology since one issue that many

ethnographers encounter is the difficulty of the “ethnographic present” (Wolf 2006 [1982]: 368).

Abu-Lughod’s “Rushdie Effect” echoes Ginsberg’s desire for the observed people’s to take over the camera and subvert earlier anthropological assumptions of power (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 469; Ginsberg 2008: 287). This subversion of power, or “photographing” against culture, is best described as a kind of border crossing between anthropologists behind the lens and the observed informants who perform in front of the lens (Banks and Ruby 2011: 12; Edwards 2011: 160).

Angela Garcia writes about this experience of border-crossing when she sees photographs from Righteous Dopefiend that remind her of her aunt who died of an addiction to heroin (Garcia 2010: 31). For Garcia, the “Rushdie Effect” compels her to realize that as an anthropologist she can take “the tools of anthropology ‘home’ in order to try to understand and represent an aspect of social life” she witnesses in “other cultures” (Garcia 2010: 33). Garcia’s idea harkens back to Mead’s desire to balance between objective and subjective discourses while leading public audiences and readers to reflect on their cultural normative standards as they learn about “other cultures” (Mead 2008 [1935]: 221). Indeed, it is at the border between discourses like anthropology and photography or between people like the observers and the observed where *communitas* can be found as the definition of culture is reexamined and redefined for the future (Sahlins 1989: 286). If power positions between anthropologists and their local informants are reversed by the presence of a camera lens *communitas* does not have to unravel. Instead acts of *communitas* may be reaffirmed from crossing the borders of the camera lens.

## Chapter 3: Methods and Ethics

### A. Introduction

The methods used by cultural anthropologists vary from interviewing local informants to observing and eventually participating in community rituals (Bernard 2006: 347). In order to interview their respective informants, Malinowski, Mead and Bourgois had to establish a mutual sense of trust, also known as rapport (Bernard 2006: 368). By establishing rapport, anthropologists are also agreeing to adhere to research responsibilities that protect the safety of their informants (“Code of Ethics” 2009). Through content and semiotic analysis, I seek to show how photographs taken during fieldwork reflect these methodological and ethical preoccupations for Malinowski, Mead and Bourgois.

This chapter does not analyze Malinowski’s methods based on standards by the contemporary AAA code of social research practice because his fieldwork happened well before anthropologists even thought of incorporating ethical measures in their practice (“Code of Ethics” 2009; Bernard 2006: 345). This inference is based on contextualizing how he photographed ceremonial dance, cooking, kula exchanges and women in Trobriand Islands (Young 1979: 1; “Malinowski, Bronislaw Kaspar (1884–1942)”). Margaret Mead’s photographs, like Malinowski’s, enhance the context of written field notes, which actually relates to the ideals of future native anthropologists like Kuwayama (“Code of Ethics” 2009; Kuwayama 2004: 127).

While Bourgois reveals that rare tolerances of pain are a part of everyday life for his informants, Malinowski tries to present rare moments of *communitas* along side everyday events. Relating back to the central research question for this paper,



Malinowski's "exoticized" view of his informants does not necessarily disrupt *communitas* but rather restages cultural reality because he bases his photographic methods on how his colleagues in Victorian society would stage their photographic moments as part of the photographic process (MacDougall 2006: 233).

B. Supporting Example: Ethics, Gift Giving, Rapport and Reciprocity



Figure 1: Performed dances with decorated shields known as "kaidebu"  
The following photograph was taken during the Fall of 1915; it depicts the Fall yam harvest dance known as "Milamala" This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 96).

Malinowski's attempt to form a balanced, orderly and symmetrical frame becomes readily apparent in the following photograph (Figure 1). The quantitative codes in this picture, such as the number of dancers, dance shields and audience members present do not provide insight into understanding the social dynamism of the photograph (Chandler 2002: 148). The appearance of the overall location of the performance is more relevant to this semiotic analysis. Further behind the audience are small huts. Aside from these huts, the majority of space on the ground is cleared of other houses or stands.

In the foreground are small groups of two to three men dancing in a line. The dancers are adorned in white headdresses and shields. There is an audience present, however they are also in the background, with most of their faces hidden from the camera. On the left side of the photographs there are a few audience members who are staring in the direction of the camera as opposed to staring in the direction of the performers (Figure 1).

The centrality and order captured in Malinowski's photograph reflects his theoretical sensibilities as a functionalist; he believed that every aspect of a given culture served a specific purpose and helped maintain a balance within the community (Malinowski: "The Group And The Individual in Functional Analysis"). Thus, during his fieldwork, in the Trobriand Islands in 1915, Malinowski sought to find evidence of community events that best represented functionalism in action (Young 1998: 89). In the above figure, Malinowski seeks to show the fall yam harvest dance, known as "milamala" (Young 1998: 89). In collected notes written by Malinowski, the anthropologist states that he personally purchased the dance shields and clothes upon asking local men in the community to dance in front of his camera (Young 1998: 92). The steps he took to recreate this dance scene reflect his understanding of how cameras were used to take photographs in his home community in England, where portraits of community events were staged (Edwards 2001: 48, 170).

The ethnographer was aware of the ethical problems generated by his act of giving gifts as an attempt to establish trust; in fact the harvest dance was not supposed to happen until after the feast was prepared (Young 1998: 93). Malinowski's method of forcing *communitas* for the camera would not only create conflict between him and the

elders in the community but also appall the creators of the AAA Code of Ethics (“Code of Ethics” 2009). As part of his attempt to create balance within the frame, based on the



Figure 2: The following photograph is of one of Mead’s informants playing with a Koala Bear plush toy given by Mead and Bateson. This image is a reprint of Mead’s photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 74)

conceptions and standards of his time, Malinowski specifically finds that there is balance between the “whiteness” of the purchased dresses and the “brown skin” of the local civilians (Young 1998: 92). Contemporary native anthropologists, like Kuwayama, would read the subtext of Malinowski’s story as both rooted in racism, due to his attempts to exoticize a non-western culture for his ethnography, as part of the convention of gaining recognition among his peers for his discoveries in social research at that time (Kuwayama 2004: 127). However, Malinowski is also a pioneer for his use of photography as research method; he sets a model that future anthropologists, like Bourgois, will use when incorporating photographs (MacDougall 2006: 232; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11). In other words, it would be unfair to both associate Malinowski with Kuwayama’s negative criticism and also not acknowledge his contribution to showing Bourgois the

different ways to contextualize his ethnography with great amounts of detailed notes (Bourgois and Schonberb 2009: 52).

Captured in the following photograph is evidence of how Mead, like Malinowski and Bourgois, preoccupied herself with thoughts of connecting with local informants in order to gain their trust (Figure 2). First one sees both adult and child engaging in most of the space in the frame. The adult is in a squatting position and the lens of the camera is facing the adult at an equal height. The child is playing with the stuffed plush toy. Below the toy is a basket, containing a rooster (Figure 2).

The plush toy was actually a gift presented to the family by Margaret Mead and her partner Gregory Bateson (Sullivan 1999: 74). Mead particularly desired to establish rapport through reciprocity with the families because of her research interests in studying stages in child rearing and adolescence (Mead 1977: 164). Furthermore, Mead's gender, as a woman, may have also allowed her to gain trust from women and thus take more pictures of candid moments between parents and children (Bernard 2006: 373). At the same time Mead was aware that her gender would prohibit her from taking pictures of different interactions, perhaps between men, and tried to be sensitive about taking pictures during these moments (Bernard 2006: 373).





Figure 3: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. It depicts informants from San Francisco's Edgewater Homeless community working as cleaners. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 220).



Figure 4: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. It depicts an informant receiving medical treatment in a local hospital. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 230).

Bourgois and Schonberg's gifts to their informants related more to their needs for both health coverage and employment. Both anthropologist and photographer desired to give direct aid to their informants because they knew the homeless community could not afford to financially cover their basic needs for food and shelter (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 12). The following photographs from their ethnography represent their informants

on the job and in the hospital (Figure 3 and 4). Compared to the activity documented in both Malinowski and Mead's photographs, Schonberg's lens is closer and more intimate, due to his style and advanced skill as a professional photographer ("Righteous Dopefiend: Homelessness, Addiction and Poverty in America"). In one photograph, an informant is standing in the shadows outside of a building he is cleaning (Figure 3). A second informant is more visibly seen at a higher plane on the left side of the picture (Figure 3). A wooden beam holding up a corner of the building is seen as dividing the space between the two individuals (Figure 3). In the next photograph, an even closer lens is used to photograph an informant in the hospital. While we do not see the interior or exterior spaces of the hospital building in the photograph, the breathing and IV tubes needed by the patient occupy the majority of the space in the frame.

In order to gain trust from their informants, both Bourgois and Schonberg had to acknowledge the delicate balance required to learn about the lives of homeless heroin addicts in inner city San Francisco. Of the three ethnographies considered here, Righteous Dopefiend is the only one that takes place in a Western setting, closest to most readers who would learn intimate details about the lives of the informants. Both anthropologist and photographer know that if they give too much detail about their informants lives during their fieldwork they could jeopardize the safety and security of the Edgewater homeless community (Bernard 2006: 367). Bourgois and Schonberg gain the trust of the their informants by covering their everyday needs outside of their addiction as an expression of their cultural sensitivity (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 220, 230). Alternatively, the anthropologists' may join their informants during these activities to see if the power dynamic changes. After all, the heroin addict who provides

information during a group interview hanging out on the street may provide a different reality and history in front of a doctor or employer who occupies a higher ranked or socially consequential position than the anthropologist (Agar 1980: 109).

### C. Supporting Example: Observing Everyday Cooking



Figure 5: The following photograph depicts a group of women cooking taro (yam) during fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands in 1915.

This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 166).

Malinowski referred to the cooking scene in the following photograph as domestic cooking (Figure 5; Young 1998: 166). Once again, Malinowski tries to present a centered and balanced image in the frame of the photograph. The women in the center of the photograph have formed a semi-circle facing the camera lens. Each informant is doing her specific task of the cooking process. All of the informants' faces are directed downward at the meal they are creating. The rounded plates that are closest to the foreground space of the frame are holding layers of sliced vegetables (Figure 5).

The attempt to present a balanced picture with a set of active community members reflects Malinowski's point of desiring to see functionalist theory practiced during his fieldwork; he is looking for each informant to serve a specific role in the social gathering (Malinowski 2006: 89). In addition to that, this staged image is part of

Malinowski's earlier reflections of photographic conventions and models used during his time in the 1910's (MacDougall 2006: 52).

What may seem like "everyday domestic cooking" in the photograph is in fact a unique ritual performed before a mortuary ceremony (Young 1998: 166). How Malinowski chooses to describe his own photographs relates to Kuwayama's idea of the "qualitative gap" (Kuwayama 2004: 131). For Kuwayama, the "gap" between the ethnography written in words and shown in photographs is problematic because the community represented could be seen as even more removed, isolated and "exotic" to Western readers (Kuwayama 2004: 131). In other words, if readers see Malinowski's photograph without reading the context of how the image was made, provided by Malinowski, they would assume that this rare cooking event takes place as an everyday ritual (Kuwayama 2004: 127; Malinowski 2010 [1922]: Plate XXXV). In his original ethnography, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, Malinowski not only titles his photographs, he also links them to page numbers, directing the reader to access the written passages that correspond with the picture and provide context for the photograph (Malinowski 2010 [1922] Plate XXXV; Malinowski 2010 [1922]: 171). Thus, Kuwayama's problematic "gap", would only apply if Malinowski's photographs are reorganized and published without his written text to accompany them (Kuwayama 2004: 131).

Like Malinowski, Mead also observed and documented a cooking ritual during her fieldwork (Figure 6). Her photographic depiction is very different from Malinowski's in terms of how the space is divided within the frame. The two skewers being used are facing adjacent directions, which makes the image look asymmetrical. If there is food in the activity is a barely noticeable (Figure 6). The piles of bamboo shoots are cut in



different shapes and sizes; the cooks are not in an assembled line or semi-circle like the cooks in Malinowski's photograph.



Figure 6: The following photograph depicts a cooking scene for a child's birth in a Balinese village. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1936 (Sullivan 1999: 88)



Figure 7: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. It depicts informants from San Francisco's Edgewater Homeless community cooking together. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 62).

Mead describes the cooking photograph as a special scene where meat and bamboo are cooked for the ceremony of “a child’s two-hundred and tenth day of life” (Sullivan 1999: 88; Figure 6). In contrast to Malinowski’s methodology, Mead openly acknowledges the unique circumstances that lead to the moment in the frame of the photograph. What makes Mead’s photograph even more unusual is that the child, the reason for the feast, is not in the frame of the picture (Figure 6). This photograph actually best reflects the local culture, because ceremonies are not centered on the individuals in the community but on the groups of families involved in the lives of Mead’s informants (Mead 1977: 195).

Bourgois and Schonberg also photographed a cooking scene during their fieldwork (Figure 7). Like the previously analyzed photographs from Righteous Dopefiend, this image captures a kind of intimacy (Figures 3,4 and 7). In the foreground there is a couple holding each other in their own camp. There is a small saucepan resting on top of the garbage can positioned to the side of the couple. Surrounding the couple are more objects related to house, home and domesticity. For example, there are half filled plastic water bottles and containers both beside the feet of the couple and on the shelf in the background. Furthermore, the same shelf contains newspapers and clothes (Figure 7).

According to Schonberg’s fieldnotes, the photograph is of a couple from the Edgewater Homeless community who are also in a steady relationship (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 63). The male informant, a former culinary student, is building a fire in the garbage can while the female informant asks Schonberg to stay for dinner (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 63). Schonberg also observes how, in the middle of preparing the vegetables for dinner, the informants casually offer to fix some heroin in a pipe for each

other (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 63). The context behind this photograph shows how, in spite of living on the margin of society, the members of this homeless community are attempting to create a shared sense of domesticity around them (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 60).

#### D. Supporting Example: Participation and Photographed Communities



Figure 8: The following photograph (above) depicts a Kula exchange, during fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands in 1915. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 230).

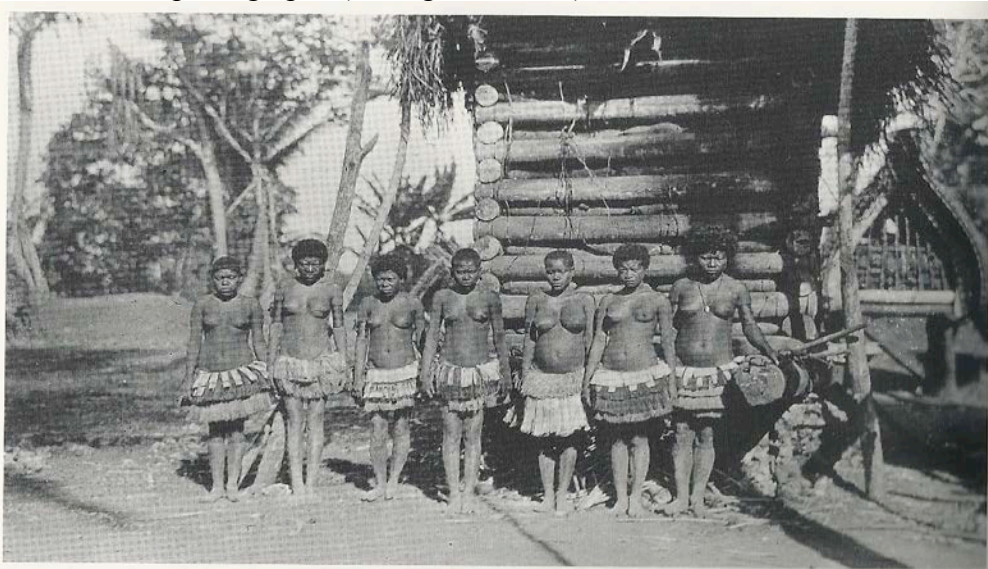


Figure 9: The following photograph (above) is of local women informants from fieldwork in Kiriwina, Trobriand Islands in 1915. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 174).

The following photographs are part of the group photographs Malinowski took while observing and participating in the daily activities in the Trobriand Islands (Figures 8 and 9). One photograph is of a Kula exchange ceremony (Figure 8; Young 1998: 230). The local men are standing in a line during the exchange, except for one man who is staring in the direction of the camera. On the right side, at the front of the line, is the designated community member using a conch shell (Figure 8). The next photograph is of local women who are also lined in a row in the foreground of the frame; they are also standing in the center of the space around them (Figure 9).

Malinowski's photographs display a sense of order and balance between people. The images used in his ethnographic text not only reflect his functionalist frame of reference but also portray the local culture as fixed and static (Malinowski 2006 [1922]: 95). Malinowski's attempt to stage *communitas* is evident because the photograph explicitly shows the presence of shells to indicate that a Kula exchange is genuinely taking place (Malinowski 2008 [1922]: 164). However, the reality related to this object's position and function becomes more ambiguous when one local informant breaks focus from the line and looks into the camera (Figure 8). Malinowski's questionable ethics are even more apparent when contextualizing his photographs of women; according to his own field notes, Malinowski developed sexual feelings for his informants that would manifest into "furtive caresses" (Young 1998: 164). However, the following photograph shows that not all of his photographs of women suggested this intimacy, as they stand in a row, expressionless (Figure 9).





Figure 10: The following photograph (above) depicts a dance performance in a Balinese village. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 167)



Figure 11: The following photograph (above) depicts another dance performance, different from the one in Figure 10, in a Balinese village. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1936 (Sullivan 1999: 91)

Margaret Mead's photographs of a community dance performance are comparatively different to Malinowski's earlier photographs of the harvest dancers in the Trobriand Islands (Figures 1, 10 and 11). The principal dancers in Mead's photographs

are not in the center. Instead the dancer is positioned to the left side (Figure 10) or is not facing the camera at all (Figure 11). The audience participants are in the foreground in both photographs. Like Mead's cooking scene photograph, the two dance photographs are also asymmetrical (Figures 6, 10 and 11).

Mead's dance photographs relate back to her understanding of how the local culture focuses on the importance of collective experience over individual experience (Mead 1977: 195). By immersing herself into the local culture, Mead is able to detect that a moment of *communitas* is not just between performers in a ceremony but also between local members of the village who participate by watching the ritual as well (Mead 1977: 195). Kuwayama would most likely approve of Mead's standards of practice because her photographs add context to the ethnography, and therefore minimize the "qualitative gap" (Kuwayama 2004: 131).



Figure 12: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. It depicts informants from San Francisco's Edgewater Homeless community injecting heroin into their bodies during group gatherings. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 86).

Like Mead and Malinowski, Schonberg and Bourgois' photograph adds greater context to their ethnography. The following photograph exemplifies this idea as it depicts an everyday ritual shared among the Edgewater Homeless community (Figure 12). The informants in the frame are injecting heroin into their bodies and sharing a pipe with each other. The camera is positioned as if it were on the ground and can only capture the length of the lower calf of one of the informant's legs (Figure 12). The space the informants are using is not in the center of the inner city they live in; they are located next to tents where they most likely reside (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 86).

Bourgois and Schonberg experienced limitations when using the method of participant observation because they did not want to risk their own health by engaging in rituals of heroin use (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 14). Bourgois and Schonberg credit Malinowski for his efforts to promote the praxis of participant observation; however they have a more ethical interpretation of how ethnographers should interact with their informants (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 52). While Malinowski uses his photographs to make rare events appear as everyday rituals, Bourgois and Schonberg use photographs to show how a rare ritual to mainstream society, specifically heroin use, frequently takes place on a daily basis among their marginalized informants (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 19).

#### E. Conclusion

Through semiotic analysis and coding, one can see how the photographs of Malinowski, Mead and Bourgois reflect their methodological approaches to studying a culture different from their own. A photograph can capture as much detailed observations as the human eye and, indeed, can allow people to see "more" than the eye because the

photo is “frozen” and can be viewed again and again (Chandler 2002: 214). Post-structuralist semiotics can deconstruct the hidden messages in a given image by relating the position and distance between people, rather than between objects (Chandler 2002: 213). All three anthropologists’ photographs reveal how they established rapport and gave gifts in order to observe and participate in local activities with their informants (Bernard 2006: 368). However, by contextualizing the photographs, one could see how one anthropologist’s method of participating differed from the next (Marcus 1998: 203). Of all three methodologies, Malinowski’s photographic process would upset contemporary native anthropologists (as well as anthropologists generally), such as Kuwayama, because of his attempts to force acts of *communitas*.

Indeed, participant-observation has helped anthropologists, like Malinowski, Mead and Bourgois attain insight into understanding how and why certain rituals have precedent in the local cultures they are studying. Even though all three anthropologists use participant-observation, the ways in which they immerse themselves into a new community and the ethical implications of their practices can be seen in their photographs of communal events. All three anthropologists may not disrupt *communitas*, but they do drive the focus of the camera documenting the collective experiences.



## Chapter 4: Camera Technology

### A. Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which camera technology itself impacted the context behind the photographic research in Malinowski, Mead and Bourgois' method of participant-observation. Overall both the technological advancements and the attitude behind how cameras should be used and physically positioned during fieldwork plays an influential role (MacDougall 2006: 158; Edwards 2001: 51). All three anthropologists explore the angles between subjectivity and objectivity and their pictures reveal whether they had an etic or emic approach to representing the local informants cultural realities (Harris Headland and Pike 1990: "Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate"; MacDougall 2006: 169). The physical placement of a camera-object in a photograph also gives insight into understanding the context of how technology was accepted by the social researchers. Malinowski's camera signifies how he privileges his etic view over the emic frames of his informants (Harris, Headland and Pike 1990: "Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate"; Figure 13-16). Mead's camera stands alone in on a tripod in her photograph to show how she experimented with being a more detached and objective observer (Jacknis 1988: 164; Edwards 2011: 167). The photographs in Bourgois' ethnography once again show a kind of intimate portrait of local informants so that multiple subjectivities are acknowledged (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11). At the same time, the photographs revealed how skilled Jeffrey Schonberg, Bourgois' research assistant, was after he received training for photography (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11).

In addition to this, Bourgois' colleague, unlike Mead, monitored his own experiments of photographing freely during group activity because his informants were already risking their lives as they continued their dangerous rituals of using and abusing heroin in front of the camera (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 9). In fact, the physical position of the anthropologists in their photographs represents the power of a camera's presence. The anthropologists are extensions of the camera's lens because they are trying to establish objectivity while keenly aware that their subjectivity dominates the frame's angle and direction (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 3). The acknowledgment of the multiple subjectivities happens when anthropologists contextualize their photographs with the stories and direct quotes of the informants (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11). How these multiple subjectivities are balanced within the frame of the camera's lens will further relate to the next chapter's concern about power positions and crossing the borders of the lens to create *communitas* (Banks and Ruby 2011: 12; Edwards 2011: 160; Edwards 1997: 53-54).

#### B. Malinowski's Camera and Technology Assistants:



Figure 13: The following photo-graph depicts Malinowski taking photographs with his camera of local informants during fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands in 1918. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 52).

In the following photograph, Malinowski is using his camera to take a picture of local informants (Figure 13; Young 1998: 52). There is distance between Malinowski's camera and the local people who are clustered together as a group. While members of the group are staring into Malinowski's camera, an individual informant, standing to the left of the anthropologist, is staring directly into the frame that captures Malinowski. This individual informant is holding Malinowski's camera equipment (Figure 13; Young 1998: 52).

This photograph was most likely taken by Malinowski's assistant, Billy Hancock, who was also an outsider to the local culture (Young 1998: 51, 52). Though Malinowski displays evidence of asking a local informant to assist him as well, he ultimately trusts Hancock more in taking additional photographs (Young 1998: 51, 52). In addition to that, the physical presence of his camera, as well as Mead and Schonberg's cameras, could be seen as a disruption in local activity, considering how a alienating technological object can attract negative attention to the anthropologist (Edwards 2001: 51). However, Malinowski had no control over how large and bulky his folding snapshot camera equipment would become, since cameras were just beginning to be more manufactured and mass produced at the time (Young 1998: 275).

Malinowski thus experimented with his own physical position, as he did not want to adjust the physicality of the camera's presence (Figure 14; Young 1998: 191). In the following photograph, Malinowski is squatting and is in closer proximity to his informants (Figure 14). A few of his informants standing in front of him are facing the lens of the camera (Figure 14). To his left, once again, there is an informant holding his

helmet, a piece of his anthropological attire and equipment (Figure 14; Young 1998: 191).



Figure 14: The following photo-graph depicts Malinowski taking photographs with his camera of local informants during fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands in 1918. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 191).

Even though Malinowski is physically closer to his informants, the social dynamics and positions remain the same. Once again, he chose to ask his outsider-assistant, Billy Hancock, to take a photograph of him, and of how local civilians received him as an outsider; Malinowski also continued to delegate his local assistant to hold equipment off to the side (Young 1998: 191). The following photographs thus display Malinowski's functionalist sensibilities because he cares about the organization and consistency of roles performed by both anthropologists and informants in any photographic documentation of his work (Malinowski 2006 [1922]: 94). Based on the ideas of the school of thought he belonged to, functionalist theory was supposed to explain that culture only existed to help humans regulate roles, in their society, about who would cover a particular need, such as cooking or providing shelter (Malinowski 2006

[1922]: 94). Malinowski's photographs would have been analyzed according to this model by his contemporaries; he had no control over how his colleagues interpreted these portraits as representing a community with some members relegated to upholding their responsibilities to make the photographic process run smoothly (Figures 13-14; Young 1998: 191). Malinowski's colleagues would also interpret both his physical position hovering over his informants and in the act of asking his outsider assistant to take photographs as a representation of his authoritative point of view (Young 1998: 52). The significance behind these gestures relates to the time in which Malinowski developed as an anthropologist. During this early phase in the discipline, researchers were expected to privilege their point of view over the views of their informants when sharing fieldwork about the local cultures they were observing (Gaukroger 2012: 81).



Figure 15: The following photograph depicts Billy Hancock, Malinowski's assistant, taking photographs with his camera of local informants during fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands in 1918. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 51).





Figure 16: The following photograph depicts local informants mimicking the action of a snapshot camera lens with their hands, during fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands in 1918. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 208).

Alternatively, Malinowski also took photographs of Billy Hancock with his camera in the field as well (Figure 15; Young 1998: 51). In the following image, Hancock is looking into his camera while photographing local informants (Figure 15). Like Malinowski, in the previous photograph, Hancock is keeping his distance from the informants to his right (Figure 13; Figure 15). Some informants are looking in the direction of Hancock's camera, while a few are staring forward into Malinowski's camera lens (Figure 15). Once again, a local assistant is holding camera equipment to the left of the photographer in the frame (Figure 13; Figure 15).

Malinowski's functionalist approach continues to be evident in his photographs of Hancock and their informants; each individual participating in the photographic process is fulfilling their roles designated by Malinowski (Malinowski 2006 [1922]: 94). Both Malinowski and Hancock's physical presence in these photographs represent extensions

of the Western, outsider, or etic, point of view influencing the camera position and angle (Figures 13 and 15; Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 3; Rorty 2007: 45).

Argumentatively, Malinowski did include a photograph from his fieldwork that incorporates emic, or insider perspective of the local informants (Harris, Headland and Pike 1990: “Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate”; Rorty 2007: 45; Figure 16). In the following photograph local villagers in the Trobriand Islands are making binocular poses with their hands and eyes at the camera (Figure 16). They are constructing snapshot camera lens with their hands (Young 1998: 208). In the bottom left corner of the photograph is a shadow of the physical profile of the anthropologist (Young 1998: 208; Figure 16).

Indeed, post-structuralism and semiotic analysis would suggest that the local informants are reversing the Western-outsider, or etic, gaze by making lens-like motions back at the camera (MacDougall 2006: 29). In other words, the local informants assume the position of the photographer and resist the authority figure by recreating the image-making action in their physical participation (MacDougall 2006: 18).

However, the shadow of the anthropologist and his camera also appears in the photograph; and once again the anthropologist’s image acts as an extension of the camera’s frame (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 3). Ultimately the anthropologist still held an authoritative role in using camera technology for social research (Young 1998: 208; Young 1998: 275). However, the shadow may not have been intentionally staged; after all, both Hancock and Malinowski were just beginning to experiment with different camera angles and with different times of day (Young 1998: 275).

A concern that links all four of these photographs together is the struggles between etic and emic points of views and balancing desire to display objective and subjective accounts of “true” *communitas* (Figures 13-16; Harris, Headland and Pike 1990: “Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate”; Rorty 2007; 45; Behar 1996: 6). However, this trend does not reflect that each photograph is unique from the other (Figure 13-16). The photograph of informants making camera lens’ with their hands and faces in fact represents a tone opposite to the seriousness of the other three photographs (Figure 16). Here, insider and outsider points of views are negotiated through a kind of play (Figure 16; Hendry 2005: 82).

#### C. Mead’s Camera and Technology Assistants



Figure 17: The following photograph depicts camera on a tripod capturing images of local Balinese villager. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson’s fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead’s photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 46)



Camera technology advanced substantially between Malinowski's work in the 1920s and Mead's early fieldwork in the late 1930's (Jacknis 1988: 160). The following photograph, in fact, includes a snapshot of a motion picture camera standing alone with only the help of a tripod, a technological advancement inconceivable for Malinowski and his contemporaries (Figure 17; Sullivan 1999: 46). On the left of the tripod stand is a fence; local Balinese informants are casually standing on both sides of the fence and in front of both cameras (Figure 17; Sullivan 1999: 46). The photograph that includes the physical presence of Mead's camera differs in tone compared to the previous photographs from Malinowski's fieldwork (Figure 13,14, and 17). However, a difference in technological capabilities does not fully encompass the reasons as to how and why these photographic processes are not the same (Figure 17).

The context behind Mead's photograph is that local informants were visiting her house in Bali (Sullivan 1999; 46). There is a kind of intimacy in this photograph, as local informants casually spend time on either side of the fence in Mead's backyard (Sullivan 1999; 46). The unorganized integration of space in Mead's photograph contrasts with the distance and boundaries maintained in the portraits of Malinowski and his informants (Figure 13-16). Even though both sets of photographs draw on frames of shared communal moments, Mead's photos appear less posed and thus less reflective of functionalist ideals (Figure 17; Malinowski 2006 [1922]: 94).

This readjusted style of photography relates back to earlier points made about promoting both objectivity and subjectivity in anthropological discourse. The context of Mead's time as an anthropologist placed more emphasis on being as objective as possible in research; where neither the anthropologist nor the informants' points of view

influenced the direction of the camera (Jacknis 1988: 165; Mead 1977: 3). However, Mead also sets the groundwork for future anthropologists to accept using multiple subjectivities because her photographs acknowledge both the local people's perspective and her frame of reference (Jacknis 1988: 165).

The evidence of camera technology's lasting influence for local informants can also be readily found in the production and distribution of the photographs themselves (Edwards 2001: 27). The following image shows a photograph within a photograph (Figure 18). In the interior of a local informant's home, a snapshot image taken of her hangs above on a wall (Figure 18).



Figure 18: The following image depicts a printed photograph of a local informant; it hangs on the wall of her home. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 46)

Mead's act of giving photographs as gifts to her local informants relates back to earlier observations about the importance of reciprocity and rapport (Malinowski 2008 [1922]: 164). On the one hand, Mead gave photographs as gifts to maintain social

connections within the community she was learning from over time (Jacknis 1988: 161). On the other hand, she may have wanted to include the local village in on the photo-making experience by sharing the material results of her fieldwork (Mead 1977: 196). Her desire to share this photographic experience is parallel to the act of incorporating multiple subjectivities, where the anthropologist's lens does not ignore the informant perspectives (Jacknis 1988: 163; Behar 1996: 10, 11; Gaukroger 2012: 84).

One may argue that Mead's understanding of the importance of gift giving roots back to the labors and photographic research efforts of Malinowski (Young 1998: 275). After all, Malinowski spent a great amount of time, funding, and experimentation with photography; and his work would influence the future understanding of how powerful cameras were for technology advocates like Mead (Young 1998: 275; Jacknis 1988: 171). However, as Bourgois reflects in his own ethnography, Marcel Mauss is the social researcher who unpacks the complexity of gift giving (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 52). Mauss' own argument is that even though Malinowski was a pioneer for writing about phenomenon like rapport and reciprocity, his insight does not penetrate the surface of what he refers to as "pure" acts of "gift giving" (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 52). In other words, Malinowski's shortcomings in using technology was not only from having limited camera functions, compared to Schonberg, but also from belonging to the school of functionalist theorists, whose ideas did not unpack all of the latent social meanings of the ethnographic data they collected (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 52). At the same time, Malinowski sets a standard for using camera technology that future anthropologists, like Bourgois, and photographers, like Schonberg, will build upon (MacDougall 2006: 232).

Like Malinowski, Mead also received assistance with using her cameras from both outsiders and insiders of the local culture (Jacknis 1988: 163, 164). The following photograph was taken by Bateson, Mead's American husband and research partner (Figure 19; Sullivan 1999: 79). In this image, there is a mother squatting at the side of a street in a Balinese village. She is cleaning a child's face. Another child is behind the mother and leaning on the fence while casually watching (Figure 19). In the next photograph, Mead's second assistant, a local villager named Madé Kalér, is taking notes to the side (Figure 20; Sullivan 1999: 48). In the foreground there is a Balinese child leaning on the wall of a home (Figure 20). The local informants are casually sitting or standing while listening and conversing with the child (Figure 20).

Since Malinowski was one of the first anthropologists to use camera-technology and document visual evidence of his methods, Mead would have had a historical methodology to base her views and techniques upon (Young 1998: 2). She too found it helpful not only to have assistance from another social researcher and outsider but also from a local informant (Jacknis 1988: 165). Although Bateson's research interests were thematically different from Mead's, he still played an integral role in the photographic process. Bateson took the following photograph around a time when he was experimenting with a telephoto lens (Sullivan 1999: 79; Mead 1977: 197). In addition to this, Malinowski's experimentations as an outsider with cameras could be seen as a foundation for Mead who would learn what choices she could employ as a visual anthropologist (Jackniss 1988: 164). Indeed Bateson's position is presented differently to viewers compared to Hancock's position. Bateson is not in this photograph, and the

candid moment looks like a moment that represents the everyday life of local people rather than a public event (Figure 15 and 19).

Figure 19: The following image below was taken by Bateson and depicts a mother tending to her child in a local Balinese village. This photograph was part of Mead and Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Bateson and Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 79)



Figure 20: The following image above depicts a group of local informants talking in a Balinese village; standing to the right is their local assistant, Madé Kalér, taking notes. This photograph was part of Mead and Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Bateson and Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 48)

Another difference in technique is shown in how Mead asked Madé Kalér for help compared to how Malinowski included a local informant in the photographic process (Jacknis 1988: 163). From Malinowski's example, future anthropologists, like Mead, would probably draw inspiration for greater interaction and involvement with the local people they interview (Young 1998: 2). Instead of standing still and holding camera

equipment, Madé Kalér is actively taking notes that will count as a local subjectivity included in Mead and Bateson's joint ethnography (Mead 1977: 197). The phenomenon occurring in Mead's photographs is her contemporary assertion to photograph objectively while also acknowledging the different subjectivities of Bateson and Madé Kalér as well as her own (Figures 17-20; Jackniss 1988: 163). Mead's unique merging of both objectivity and subjectivity in her photography will later influence anthropologists, like Bourgois, who seek to explore the roles of framing pictures with postmodernist discourse (Jacknis 1988: 165; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 14, 15).

#### D. Bourgois's Camera and Technology Assistants

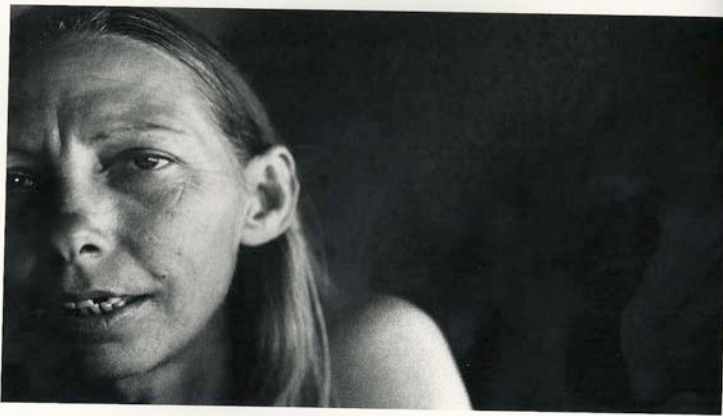


Figure 21: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. This is a close up portrait of one of the informants from San Francisco's Edgewater Homeless community. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 10).

Bourgois and Schonberg both collaborated in writing their ethnography, and Bourgois immediately acknowledges that Schonberg was responsible for taking all of the photographs in the field (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11). The following photograph shows how Schonberg's work brings a kind of intimacy to the ethnography (Figure 21). This is a close up frame of a woman's face set against a black background. There is no image except her face, the viewers are compelled to take the time to internalize her



expressions carefully (Figure 21; “Next Door But Invisible: The World of Homelessness and Drug Addiction”).

According to Bourgois, his intention as a cultural anthropologist was to draw attention to people, like the Edgewater homeless, who had been largely ignored and marginalized by mainstream society, or middle to upper social class communities in the United States (“Next Door But Invisible: The World of Homelessness and Drug Addiction”). Building from photography standards set by anthropologists, like Malinowski and Mead, Bourgois and Schonberg seek to use photography in a new way (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11).



Figure 22: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. This image shows a photograph hanging on the side of a tent, a home for one of the informants from San Francisco’s Edgewater Homeless community. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 216)

Even though Bourgois and Schonberg are hoping to reinvent how photographs can be used to supplement their ethnography, they still continue to use methodological practices established and consistently employed by Malinowski and Mead (Young 1998: 2; Jacknis 1988: 164). The following photograph shows a local informant, also from the

Edgewater homeless community, holding an American flag (Figure 22). Behind him, there is a tent standing, with one of Schonberg's photographs hanging on the side. This photograph within the photograph is similar to one of Mead's earlier pictures and it represents how comfortable local informants are, by now, about accepting cameras to be used in their communities; this image also represents the homeless community's attempt to decorate their home as a sign of domesticity (Figure 18 and 22; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 216).

Like Mead and Malinowski, Bourgois and Schonberg used the products of their camera technology as gifts to maintain rapport and reciprocity with their informants (Jacknis 1988: 161; Figure 18 and 22). Bourgois and Schonberg have also brought a new reason for why they gave photographs back to their informants; they wanted to show how their local informants are always trying to live a life of domesticity (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 62). Capturing a photograph of a framed portrait humanizes the lives of the homeless informants who attempt to create a kind of close-knit community every day in spite of how isolated they feel from the effects of their addiction (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11). Furthermore, this image reflects how the contemporary public in the United States have grown comfortable around and accustomed to displaying photographs as part of their material culture (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 216).

The following photographs were both literally taken underground, under a freeway in San Francisco (Figure 23, 24; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 136). The local informants of the Edgewater homeless community are resting and spending time out of sight from the public (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 136). Thus far, Malinowski had



explored a limited number of camera holding positions, in part because he could only physically support his large snapshot camera by holding it himself (Young 1998: 275).



Figure 23: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. This image shows a photograph of one of the informants from San Francisco's Edgewater Homeless community under a freeway. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: xvi).



Figure 24: The following picture was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. This image shows a photograph of one of the informants from San Francisco's Edgewater Homeless community under a freeway. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 136).

Mead insisted on having her camera in a fixed position on a tripod because of her theoretical attempts to achieve a highly objective portrait of her informants (Jacknis 1988: 163). Thus the limitation behind her approach was that the camera would only capture events that happened in front of its lens; otherwise, she would have to readjust its angle and therefore influence its position (Jacknis 1988: 163).

Compared to both of their camera positions that shift from their hands to the ground level, Schonberg takes this photographic process further by positioning his camera at the underground level ("Righteous Dopefiend: Homelessness, Addiction and Poverty in Urban America"). His approach reflects his postmodern considerations, where close and highly subjective perspectives are brought to the center of ethnographic

fieldwork (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 297). Alternatively, a significant difference between the Mead and Bateson team and Schonberg is that Schonberg could not afford to experiment with camera technology as freely as Bateson while assisting their fellow outsider-anthropologist during fieldwork (“Next Door But Invisible: The World of Homelessness and Drug Addiction”; Sullivan 1999: 79). After all, Schonberg could not afford to risk the lives of his informants, already living on the edge of the law and closer to American society than the informants from the Pacific, by arranging photography sessions with the local informants in a central public space (“Righteous Dopefiend: Homelessness, Addiction and Poverty in Urban America”).

#### E. Conclusion

In this Chapter I argued that the camera technology itself did not influence the camera angle as much as the anthropologist’s point of view and intent during their time in the field. Malinowski started to experiment with emic and etic perspectives and both his local informant and fellow researcher from the outside act as extensions of his camera’s reach because their physical presence influences the reaction and framing from the local community (Harris, Headland and Pike 1990: “Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate”). Mead’s interest in displaying objectivity with her photographs is built upon Malinowski’s exploration with his authoritative role as an anthropologist (Jacknis 1988: 163; Young 1998: 2). However, she also makes room in her fieldwork to include the insights and notes written by a local informant (Jacknis 1988: 164). By acknowledging her assistant’s subjective experiences with the photographic process, she is experimenting with a kind of proto-postmodern idea that ethnographies should highlight the multiple frames of reference influencing the products of fieldwork (Jacknis 1988: 165). Bourgois

and Schonberg will build their technological methods on both Malinowski and Mead's experiences with establishing rapport and reciprocity through the act of taking and sharing photographs of their informants (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 52). Ultimately, Bourgois and Schonberg take greater risks than Malinowski and Mead because of how close their informants live to the public that will have access to the future display of these photographs ("Righteous Dopefiend: Homelessness, Addiction and Poverty, in Urban American"). Unpacking the meaning behind power positions is a process shared amongst anthropologists, their photography assistants, informants, and the public receiving their photographs across borders (Edwards 1997: 64). Ultimately, by sharing these moments, the participants are able to find moments of *communitas* because negotiating or playing roles in front and behind the camera lens makes the photographic process a more active experience (Edwards 1997: 64).

## Chapter 5: Power and Agency

### A. Introduction

The way anthropologists present, package, and wrap themselves and their informants, in the materiality of public settings, reflects how power is split or shared during moments of photographed communitas (Kratz 2011: 22). In other words, how people choose to present, or “wrap” themselves for social gatherings in public spaces is linked to their position of power (Hendry 1993: 83). The metaphorical cloth covering both anthropologist and local informant reflects the anthropologists’ future intention in presenting and packaging their photographs for public display when they return home from the field (Kratz 2011: 21). How the anthropologist or local informant derives power from these public scenes is also represented by how they physically present themselves in the photographs (Hendry 1993: 70).

However, the underlying assumption, that all local informants desire to have their photograph taken during anthropological fieldwork, has also been maintained in the work of anthropologists Faye Ginsberg (Ginsberg 2008: 289). Furthermore, we see positions of power shift as anthropologists physically remove themselves from the center of the frame over time. By the time Bourgois has built on the visual models made by Malinowski and Mead, he exercises his choice to sparingly put himself in the photographs; in fact the only photograph of him is a close up of his hand (Figure 33). According to Abu-Lughod’s “Rushdie Effect”, overtime, as media technologies and photographs have become readily available in a globalized world, a new phenomenon has emerged where the local informants are able to access and see all of the media printed about their lives (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 469). Current anthropologists, like Bourgois, are also becoming

more open to taking fewer portraits of themselves working alongside their informants, in part because of the “Rushdie effect” (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 469).

Though we see Mead and Bourgois personally giving photographs back to their informants, the Salman Rushdie effect implies that the local informants are also witnessing how the public views their photographs (Sullivan 1999: 65; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 216; Abu-Lughod, Ginsberg and Larkin 2002: 2, 3). Angela Garcia, a native anthropologist, experiences the Salman Rushdie effect as she studies addiction cross-culturally and reflects on losing her aunt to heroin addiction while reading *Righteous Dopefiend* (Garcia 2010: 32). Garcia’s account relates back to an earlier concern of whether local informants have the power to possess the photographer’s position themselves and thus “write against culture” (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 473). By commenting on Bourgois’ photographs, the power of perception is placed in Garcia’s hands; she cross borders by comparing what she learned in the field, as an outsider, to phenomenon she sees at home, as an insider (Garcia 2010: 33; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2003: 12; Hendry 2005: 200-202, 216). Furthermore, *communitas* is not disrupted by the anthropologists’ new positions of power because of this “border crossing” experience where they and their informants reach across the lens and influence each other’s views relative to their respective cultures (Edwards 1997: 66; Sahlins 1989: 9).

#### B. Malinowski and His Informants’ Power through Presentation

The following photograph shows Malinowski sitting with his Western assistant, Hancock, and a local informant (Young 1998: 55; Figure 25). They appear to be partaking in a shared activity (Figure 25). Hancock tastes a sample of the item in his mouth and Malinowski, sitting in the center, is holding an elongated object (Figure 25).

The local informant is also holding a container or object but it is shaped differently from the one in Malinowski's hands (Figure 25).

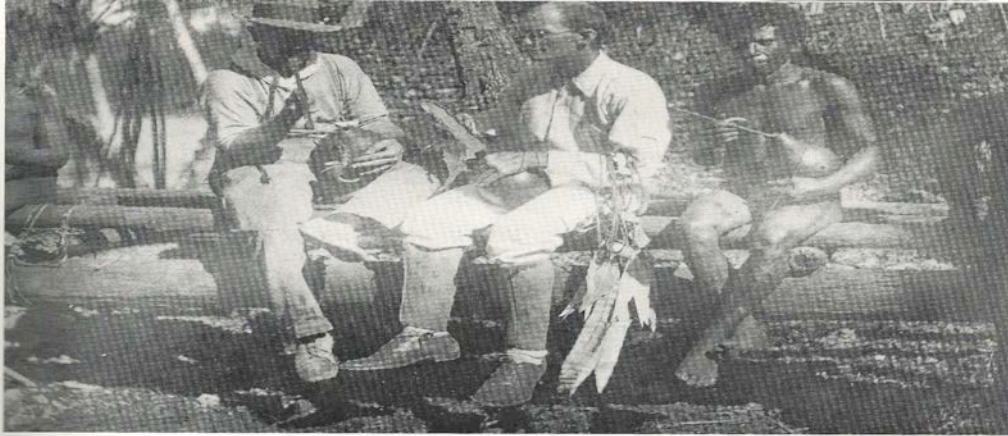


Figure 25: The following photograph (above) was taken between the years 1917-1918. It depicts Malinowski and his assistants eating a local narcotic called “betel nut”; this photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 55).

The three men in this photograph are chewing, betel nut, a local narcotic used in social gatherings (Young 1998: 55). Hancock is preparing to try the nut, while Malinowski is either chewing or pretending to chew because he does not want to ruin his new teeth implants (Young 1998: 55). Even though “all three men hold chiefly limepots”, Malinowski is utilizing an item made out of whalebone that acts as a local marker for social nobility (Young 1998: 55). In other words, Malinowski's wraps or presents his objects to the camera with a symbol and this act signifies his position of power within the group (Hendry 1993: 83).

Returning to an earlier point, Malinowski may have power from a superficial view of the photo, but his inability to fully experience the practice of chewing nut places him in almost as much a vulnerable position as future anthropologists who will study addictive behaviors, like Schonberg and Bourgois (Schonberg and Bourgois 2009: 7). Caught in his own limited functionalist rhetoric, Malinowski will have to rely on his

photographs to describe an ethnographic style different from the patterned approach in his writing (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 1).



Figure 26: The following photograph was taken within the years 1917-1918; it depicts Malinowski looking at the details of a local informant's necklace. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 56).

The following photograph is of Malinowski and two local women (Young 1998: 56; Figure 26). He is holding the necklaces of one informant, as she faces the camera lens; the second informant is facing him (Figure 26). In the background of the frame a group of informants is sitting and watching both Malinowski and into the camera lens (Figure 26). Indeed, Malinowski was both studying and positioning the necklace onto the local informant for the camera lens (Young 1998: 56). On the one hand, he wanted to show the dressing styles of local informants; on the other hand, he desired to have the camera capture his process of interviewing locals in the field (Young 1998: 56). Once again, Malinowski is perceived at an elevated place of power over the local informants in the photograph, as he uses the object of the necklace to wrap ethnographic meaning around his informant (Hendry 1993: 70).

The following photographs' displays Malinowski interacting with more local informants (Figures 27 and 28; Young 1998: 68, 69). Once again, everyone is sitting



outside in a public area and gathered in front of the camera (Figure 27 and 28).

Malinowski is fully clothed in his local dress while the informants are wrapped in their local dress (Figure 27 and 28). In one of the photographs Malinowski is holding his attaché case, from work, on his lap (Figure 28; Young 1998: 69).



Figure 27: The following photograph (above), of Malinowski is interviewing informants, was taken during fieldwork. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 68).



Figure 28: The following photograph (above), of Malinowski is interviewing informants, was taken during fieldwork. This photograph is a reprint from a collected volume of Malinowski's photographs (Young 1998: 69).



This time, the informants are holding the whalebone instrument, used as part of the nut-chewing social activity, which designates their social status (Figure 27 and 28; Young 1998: 69). Malinowski appears to be playing with the function of social hierarchies in these two photographs (Figures 27 and 28). The local native voices are able to present themselves as having a high social standing in the community, however not without the help and conditions that Malinowski help wrap their image by including his own position of power in being able to interact and intersect their social gatherings and conversations (Young 1998: 68, 69; Hendry 1993: 124).

### C. Mead and Her Informants' Power through Presentation



Figure 29: The following photograph depicts social gatherings, with Mead standing in the far left corner under a tree wearing sun glasses. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1936 (Sullivan 1999: 105)

Mead also took photographs of herself engaged in social gatherings during her fieldwork in Bali during the 1930's (Sullivan 1999: 105 and 125). The following photographs show social circles of local informants resting in the midst of performing their daily activities (Figure 29, 30; Sullivan 1999: 105 and 125). In one photograph, Mead is concealing herself in the background, by standing underneath a tree in the far left

corner wearing sunglasses and an informal sundress (Figure 29; Sullivan 1999: 105). In the second photograph, she is up close to the frame in the front right corner, however she is squatting and facing away from the camera lens (Figure 30).



Figure 30: The following photograph depicts local informants gathering outside, with Mead in the close right corner of the frame, facing away from the camera. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 125)

Like Malinowski, Mead also involves herself in "social wrappings," however her style is less formal and less direct than his presentation of the local people's voices (Hendry 1993: 123). Mead is trying to balance objectivity with subjectivity, by having the local informants present themselves as they are, facing multiple directions and not just addressing the presence of the camera fixed on a tripod stand (Sullivan 1999: 46). At the same time, she cannot remove her frame of reference from the photographic process entirely and thus tries to negotiate this power in the form of "politeness" and giving more of the camera lens' focus to the local informants (Sullivan 1999: 105 and 125; Hendry 1993: 155, 162 and 168).



Figure 31: The following photograph (to the right) depicts Mead bending down to a shrine in the backyard of her guest house in Bali. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 140)

Mead continues to present her power as an anthropologist differently from Malinowski by wrapping herself into the photographs in a new way. The following photograph shows Mead bending down in front of a shrine outside in a Balinese village (Figure 31; Sullivan 1999: 140). She is not wearing western clothes like in the previous photographs (Figures 29 and 30). She is wrapped in attire similar to that of the local informant standing next to her (Figure 31).

The shrine from the following photograph was in fact located in the yard of Mead and Bateson's temporary home in the local Balinese village (Sullivan 1999: 140). Unlike Malinowski, who chooses to present himself in his western dress facing the camera lens, Mead is trying photograph herself physically immersed into the local culture through the metaphor of wrapping herself in local dress and presenting herself through local customs (Young 1999: 56; Sullivan 1999: 140; Hendry 1993: 75).

Mead's message regarding social agency is that power and voice is meant to be shared and heard (Jacknis 1988: 163). Her egalitarian view is apparent in how she does



not desire the attention of the camera's focus, and tries to share the space of the frame with her informants (Jacknis 1988: 164). These photographs also convey how her ethnographic process of participant-observation is more engaging when compared to Malinowski's process of establishing reciprocity and rapport with his informants (Jacknis 1988: 164; Young 1998: 55).



Figure 32: The following photograph (to the right) depicts a local community event; Mead is sitting in the front row of the audience on a chair, while the informants are squatting on the ground. This photograph was part of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's fieldwork. This image is a reprint of Mead's photograph in a collected volume of both Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's photographs of a Balinese village in 1937 (Sullivan 1999: 161)

However, like Malinowski, Mead cannot overlook the fact that her position of power, as the outsider-anthropologist, is still influential as she immerses herself in the social gatherings and community ritual events in public (Kratz 2011: 23). For example, in the following photograph, Mead's physical position shows how she does in fact possess more power than her informants when collecting information about the social phenomenon performed and photographed in the local village (Figure 32; Sullivan 1999: 161). In the following photograph, a staged performance is unfolding in the foreground of the camera lens (Figure 32). In the background of the frame, the audience's attention is

on the two actors in the center (Figure 32). Mead is sitting on a chair in the front row of the audience, taking notes; she is not wearing local attire but her own outsider-clothes (Sullivan 1999: 161). The informants, in contrast, are sitting in a lower physical position while a few of the local children are leaning on both the left and right sides of Mead's chair (Figure 32; Sullivan 1999: 161)

The codes in this photograph could allude to how Mead is metaphorically accepted as occupying a higher status of power over her informants by sitting in a seat elevated above them (Hendry 1993: 132). When informants try to present their voices, this photograph indicates that they depend on Mead to take action in displaying and sharing portraits of them when she returns home from fieldwork (Kratz 2011: 22; Ginsberg 2008: 289). Like Malinowski, Mead's ethnographic fieldwork happened before their informants would have access to all of their published photographs, notes and anthropological media (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 469; Abu-Lughod, Ginsberg et Larkin 2002: 2). For now, they are only aware of images made of themselves through the direct gifts of photographs Mead presents to them (Sullivan 1999: 65). Mead can try to hide her presence by covering herself with sunglasses and a large hat, but her position of power and influence cannot be removed from the camera's lens (Hendry 1993: 137; Ginsberg 2002: 48).

#### D. Bourgois and His Informants' Power through Presentation



Figure 33: The following picture (above) was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. Bourgois' hand touches the back of an informant, healing from a recent injury (note that the crease in the middle of the image comes from the photo spread out on two pages). This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: xviii).

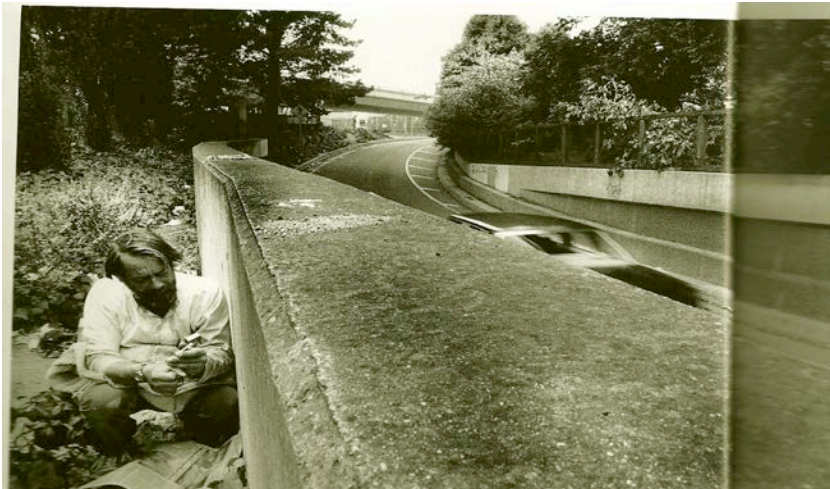


Figure 34: The following picture (above) was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. It depicts a constructed barrier between the main highway through the city and an informant injecting heroin into his body (note that the crease in the middle of the image comes from the photo spread out on two pages). This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 2).

Bourgois bases his methods on work previously displayed like Malinowski and Mead's models of photographing their informants and their ethnographic processes (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 52). The following photographs display how Bourgois's

fieldwork differs from Malinowski and Mead's styles of wrapping themselves and presenting their powerful status as anthropologists (Figure 33 and 34). The only photograph that includes Bourgois' physical appearance is displayed as one of the earliest photographs in Bourgois and Schonberg's ethnography (Figure 33; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: xviii). In this image, Bourgois extends his hand in front of the camera lens to comfort an informant recovering from an injury (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 321).

Bourgois and Schonberg choose to physically take themselves away from the camera's frame because their intention is to give power and voice to a community of people who have been marginalized within the confines of mainstream society (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 29). The following photograph best demonstrates their intention, as it shows the barrier between San Francisco's public life and the private lives of the Edgewater homeless community members (Figure 34; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 322). There is a barrier that structurally separates the main highway in the city and the outskirts of the city where Bourgois' informants hide the remnants of their addiction to heroin (Figure 34; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 322). Another difference, signified by this photograph, is that unlike the public displays in Malinowski and Mead's past, the local "natives" have access to these publicized photographs, and have the power to react to portraits of their personal lives (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 469). In fact, anthropologist Angela Garcia, who lost an aunt to heroin addiction, wrote a response to this very photograph in her essay "Reading 'Righteous Dopefiend' with My Mother" (Figure 34; Garcia 2010: 33). Garcia also interprets this image as a representation of how social groups within a local culture have been ignored in the past, and that visual

representations of their lives have the power to have their voices be heard and called upon by the public (Garcia 2010: 33).



Figure 35: The following picture (left) was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. It depicts an informant leaving the hospital early and presenting a bouquet of flowers that he stole from the ward. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 234).



Figure 36: The following picture (above) was taken by Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. It depicts an informant getting dressed to go outside. This photograph is directly from the ethnography *Righteous Dopefiend*, 2009 (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 313).

Indeed, the rest of Bourgois and Schonberg's photographs are of how local informants prepare to present themselves in public spaces (Figures 35 and 36; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 234 and 313). How their informants choose to present themselves and wrap themselves in the photographs relates to their position of power in their community (Hendry 1993: 122; 133). For example, in the following photograph, a local



informant stands outside holding a bouquet of flowers (Figure 35). He is wearing an overcoat over a hospital gown and looking in the direction of the camera through his sunglasses (Figure 35; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 234). In the next photograph another informant is wrapping himself in layers of clothes in front of a mirror (Figure 36). On his throat is an exposed area or wound from a tracheotomy-surgery; he is filling this hole with the substance of crack-cocaine through the use of a pipe (Figure 36; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 313, 326).

How both of these informants present themselves or wrap themselves in the photograph relates to their ways of negotiating power (Figures 35 and 36; Hendry 1993: 133; Ginsberg 2002: 48). The informant holding flowers actually stole this item from the hospital after he decided to leave his doctor's treatment plan prematurely; his intention is to present the flowers as a gift (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 234). This informant's conception of allocating very little time to recover internally before he invests in his public presentation reveals that he in fact has very little agency or control over his life on a day-to-day basis (Desjarlais 1997: 94; Hendry 1993: 143, 155).

The second informant's inability to cover his tracheotomy-wound without filling his throat with an addictive substance he depends on also relates to how limited his sense of power and agency is for his life (Figure 36; Desjarlais 1997: 94; Hendry 1993: 156). Informants' attempts to perform acts of polite behavior through greetings and gift-exchange relate to how they find power from relying on their resourcefulness in an environment lacking a lot of the direct basic aid that they need (Hendry 1993: 157; Ginsberg 2008: 301).

## E. Conclusion

Although visual anthropology has changed overtime to incorporate new research methodologies and media technologies, the informants' need to negotiate power with the visiting anthropologists has remained constant (Abu-Lughod, Ginsberg and Larkin 2002: 2). The photographs of *communitas*, or social gatherings among local informants, reveal that a native's attempt to present themselves to the camera can either be disrupted or in contrast to the anthropologist's authoritative views (Ginsberg 2002: 48).

Malinowski's wraps himself into his own photographs by fixing himself in a physical position that is in the center of the camera's frame (Figures 25-28). Mead also displays herself in elevated seated positions of power in front of the camera and tries to minimize the effects of her influence in the social gathering and blend into the scene by wrapping herself in local dress and positioning herself in the corners of the frame (Figures 29-32). Bourgois' presentations of power contrast with Malinowski and Mead's photographs because he chooses to indirectly show the public his position of agency as observer-ethnographer (Figure 33-36). Instead of placing himself in front of the camera, Bourgois emphasizes the importance of seeing how local informants present themselves to the public, and their greeting styles reveal how little control they have over how they can wrap themselves into public life when they live constantly on the margins of society ("Next Door But Invisible: The World of Homelessness and Drug Addiction").

These visual representations of how people engage in social gatherings harkens back to Hendry's theories that a person's way of wrapping or presenting their body, or the gifts they give in public spaces, relates to their social status or position of "ritual power" in society (Hendry 1993: 171). Upon analyzing the physical representations of

power, questions regarding how much power native voices' have in these photographed scenes of *communitas* begin to emerge (Kratz 2011: 25; Garcia 2010: 32).

Anthropologists, like Ginsberg and Abu-Lughod, promote the idea that natives can “write against culture” and reclaim the preservation of their own image by not allowing photographs to be taken of their community members without their involvement or direction (Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 473; Abu-Lughod, Ginsberg and Larkin 2002: 2; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2003: 114; Hendry 2005:200-202, 216).

In other words, as local informants cross the borders of the camera frame, by influencing the position of the camera, and anthropologists cross over to show the limits of their subjectivity in front of the camera's eye, *communitas* is not disrupted but intensified (Edwards 1997: 76). In fact, how insider-informants and outsider-anthropologists react to the presence of the camera at the social borders of public gathering creates *communitas* (Edwards 1997: 75; Sahlins 1989: 271).

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### A. Introduction

After exploring the literature that has been written about visual anthropology, I chose to code and analyze three case studies from cultural anthropological discourses. Upon comparing Malinowski, Mead and Bourgois' photographic data, different trends emerged within the contexts of analyzing their connections to methodology and ethics, attitudes towards camera technology, and involvement with presenting native voices as part of social agency. I found a thematic trend where Malinowski adhered to a strict methodological approach to participating in events, but negotiated ethical and social hierarchical concerns when using photographs to illustrate *communitas* (Young 1998: 20). Chronologically, Mead and Bourgois would build upon early models created by ethnographers, like Malinowski, and adjust the position of the camera lens to adhere to their contemporary understanding of how to best portray social gatherings; both of their ideal images of *communitas* are without the presence of an outsider acting as a social catalyst (Sullivan 1999: 15; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11).

In the volume Rethinking Visual Anthropology, David MacDougall writes that incorporating visual mediums, like photography, have not obstructed the ethnographic process of observing or documenting *communitas* (MacDougall 1997: 276). Rather, photography can highlight the preexisting boundary faced by both outsider-anthropologist and insider-informant (MacDougall 1997: 276). Indeed, during my experience of photographing another culture, I found that the photographic process involved both reflexivity, the acknowledgment that my own subjectivity influenced the camera, and a reversal lens where a local civilian gave directions to me through the

camera (Figure C). In other words, the presence of a camera not only brought us together but also reminded me of the border between us (Figure C).



Figure C: This photograph shows a girl pointing back at the camera lens I am holding, from when I traveled in Sa Pa, Vietnam. My hand, umbrella and coat can be seen at the bottom of the image. I took this photograph while attending a study term abroad in Vietnam, in the Fall 2011.

### B. Exoticization Is a Two-Fold Experience through Photography

Through the analysis of three case studies, this thesis has also shown how anthropologists have had a history of using cameras to exoticize their informants (Young 1998: 21; Clifford 2003: 17; Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 469). James Clifford, a scholar whose academic background is outside anthropology, reflects that “Cultural anthropologists used to have a special object, the ‘primitive’-those folks *out there* or *down there* and *back then*” (Clifford 2003: 17). Based on Clifford’s definition of what “exotic” looks like, Malinowski exoticized his informants the most compared to Mead and Bourgois (Young 1998: 22).

However, the process of exoticization, in the form of visual mediums, has an effect on both anthropologist and informant. Photo-Ethnographies can show how

anthropologists from the past have led to the exoticization of not only their informants, but also to the exoticization of their own research discipline (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11; Kondo 1990: 10). In other words, Malinowski's photos of his participation in *communitas* contributed to how researchers, like Clifford, outside the discipline of anthropology, exoticized and distanced themselves from the very discipline and praxis of cultural anthropology (Clifford 2003: 17). When Malinowski, Mead, and Bourgois, used photographs as a way to visually display methods they frequently use, such as formal and informal interviewing, their data would become a double-edged sword that both helped and limited their presentation of what anthropological fieldwork looked like to the general public (Young 1998: 47; Sullivan 1999: 11; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 12).

One could argue that Malinowski's set of photographs, from the early 1900's, is too dated to use as a case study for the aforementioned argument (Young 1998: 4). However, the act of indirectly exoticizing anthropology still pervades the discipline in contemporary contexts (Eakin 2013). Recently, in February 2013, the New York Times published an extended article reviewing the work of Napoleon Chagnon, an American anthropologist accused of not adhering to the ethical standards of the AAA (Eakin 2013).

Like Malinowski, Chagnon also used photographs to display what he observed (Eakin 2013). However, Chagnon took his visual data in a different direction by displaying images of "aggressive masculine" behavior among a tribe in the Amazonian region (Eakin 2013). However, in this retrospective article, the New York Times was able to contact and interview a current member of the same tribe Chagnon researched (Eakin 2013). This local informant expressed his opinion in the article and therefore contributed his voice and subjectivity as part of his experience of the "Rushdie Effect" (Eakin 2013;

Abu-Lughod 2006 [1991]: 469). In his own words, the local informant addressed Chagnon's work and said, "How much does any anthropologist earn? . . . They [anthropologists] may be fighting, but they are happy. They fight, and this makes them happy" (Eakin 2013). This local informant's observation about anthropologists reflected that the "aggressive" behavior Chagnon wrote about, in his ethnographies, may have come from his own cultural frame of reference and not from what he saw while practicing participant-observation (Eakin 2013). Furthermore, while immersing himself in another culture, Chagnon also ferreted for behavior similar to his own socially constructed definitions of "masculinity" and power (Eakin 2013; Kondo 43).

### C. How To Overcome Exoticization Of Anthropology As A Discipline

In spite of the tensions that exist among anthropologists, their informants, and their respective contemporaries, there is always a possibility to overcome the effects of the aforementioned history of exoticization. In fact, exploring the process of photographing culture is one way to reverse the damage brought by anthropologists like Chagnon (Eakin 2013). For example, when anthropologist Ruth Behar collaborated with a photographer during her fieldwork, she eventually allowed photographs to be taken of her performing anthropological methods; like Malinowski and Mead, she too became just as vulnerable as her informants during the interviewing process (Young 1998; Sullivan 1999; Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 3).

Of the three anthropologists written about in this thesis, one would hope Bourgois would most likely be the most progressive, since he is the most contemporary of the three (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). By collaborating with a photographer and reinventing the applications of not only photography but also anthropology Bourgois equally

contributed to humanizing experiences of social inequality and cultural difference (“Next Door But Invisible: The World of Homelessness and Drug Addiction”).

However, to address an earlier counterpoint from this thesis, not all informants and their communities are comfortable with allowing photographs to be taken of them (Ginsberg 2008: 301). Thus, acknowledging diverse subjectivities also requires anthropologists to acknowledge that every research medium, or lens, within the discipline has its limits as socially constructed and acceptable models for fieldwork (Edwards 1997: 62; Kondo 1990: 9). More studies in metacriticism, or reflective case studies about anthropological studies, could contribute to giving insight into how researcher assumptions from the past have influenced contemporary attitudes among anthropologists (Brown and Henderson 1997: “Metacriticism”).

In fact, metacriticism or borders studies can address concerns of exoticization because these approaches are holistic and therefore anthropological in forethought (Edwards 1997: 58). In other words, a holistic approach of using multiple mediums, such as visual and written text, during the ethnographic process can positively contribute to the larger frame of anthropological storytelling (Edwards 1997: 58; Behar and Brink-Danan 2012: 4; Kondo 1990: 8).

#### D. Why Concern Ourselves with Anthropologists and Their Ethnographies

This leads me to my last argument about why we should care about how to overcome the exoticization of anthropology as a research discipline. On the one hand, Clifford argues that anthropology as a discipline is dissolving into multiple academic research mediums that border each other due to how similar they are (Clifford 2003: 17). However, on the other hand, unearthing the borders and intersections between



communities is where anthropologists find culture and social phenomenon (Sahlins 1989: 9).

How anthropology has been exoticized should be addressed because the discipline's unique principles of comparative analysis and holistic practice are applicable to everyday ordinary contexts not just to moments of *communitas* physically located in non-western settings. Furthermore, by showing how anthropology can be found in everyday phenomenon, exoticization will become less problematic for both informants and anthropology as a research discipline. This harkens back to Garcia and Mead's desires to bring what they have learned from the field to contextual examples of cultural assumptions they find in their home communities (Garcia 2010: 33; Jacknis 1988: 161).

This also relates to Bourgois' intention in writing his ethnography; he sees his collaborative effort with Schonberg as part of a new wave of anthropologists who apply anthropology to settings within one's local society and holistically approach how a person's economic, social and psychological activity influences their social position and perception regarding their identity in their community (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 11).

#### E. Conclusion

Bridging mediums and applying holistic approaches to understanding social interaction was a part of my personal experience of learning how to photograph another culture. The following image best demonstrates how interconnected approaches positively contribute to the frame of understanding boundaries and borders between people (Figure D). Upon traveling through Vietnam, our student group stopped by a bridge to rest. We then learned about a floating village community constructed along the

river. This community was referred to as the “no-country no-citizenship” people because they were forced to migrate to both Vietnam and its neighboring nation, Cambodia, during periods of war (“UNHCR-Cambodia”).

While photographing a local civilian from the community, at the bridge, I could see that these individual floating villages were linked and that the cultural backgrounds of these neighbors were not isolated (Figure D). In that sense, the best way to convey their story would be through a holistic approach of “bridging” multiple mediums of written and photographic text (Edwards 1997: 73). The next step in this holistic and comparative research would be to include the local informant’s voices and find creative ways to make room for informants, like the civilians in this story, to speak for themselves (Figure D; Eakin 2013; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 9; Hendry 2005: 200-202, 216; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2003: 12).



Figure D: This photograph (above) shows a local civilian in Vietnam approaching the side of a barrier to a bridge; behind her there are “floating villages” of communities that live and build their homes directly on the river. I took this photograph while attending a study term abroad in Vietnam, in the Fall 2011.

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