

Chapter 1

**THOUGHTS ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE
PRACTICE OF HISTORY**

Elizabeth Edwards



Photographic technology belongs to the physiognomy of historical thought ... there can be no thinking of history that is not the same as thinking of photography
—Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light*

The anatomical and structural resonances of Eduardo Cadava's comment on Walter Benjamin's interest in the philosophy of history and the philosophy of photography provides a useful starting point for the focus of this chapter – that is, the historiographical disturbance that photographs cause. What troubles me, and has done for some time, is how photographs seem to be sort of 'bolt-ons' within a wider landscape of historical method and historical thinking, when really photography and history, as that assessment of Benjamin suggests, belong to the same – or at least related – project. Little attention is given to what photographs actually do to historical method, and more particularly to the commonplaces of history's disciplinary apparatus. This is remarkable given the saturating degree to which access to the past itself is increasingly texted by its visual other, and has been for a least a hundred years.¹ I want to open up the relationship between photography and how we do history. This has profound implications for the ethics of seeing, especially the historiographical density offered by twentieth-century German history, and I hope that it will resonate with the other contributions to this volume. I want to take a step back and consider what happens when we look not at how we might or might not use photographs as historical sources, but what happens when we allow photographs to intersect with the commonplaces of historical apparatus – by which I mean the categories and assumptions that translate into practices. These practices

Notes from this chapter begin on page 32.

have, of course, been extensively critiqued over the years – from the Annales school, through constructivism, post-modernism, post-post-modernism and so forth, not to mention the influences in and out of anthropology. My intention is simply to position aspects of these arguments in relation to photographs, because these historiographical commonplaces continue to resonate through the ways in which the past is accessed, photographs being no exception. I shall argue that these commonplaces are the sites of central methodological and historiographical anxieties around photographs; ‘how’, as Alan Trachtenburg puts it, ‘to make random, fragmentary, and accidental details of everyday existence meaningful without loss of the details themselves, without sacrifice of concrete particulars on the altar of abstraction’.² Thus one must ask: what is the effect of photographs, and how do they destabilize the deep-held categories and assumptions of historical practice? This is clearly a huge question that sprawls over philosophy, theory of history, historiography and visual theory, so what follows is inevitably only a sketch that raises questions rather than gives answers. Yet I hope there is just enough to rattle a few cages a little bit.

Photographs are, as historical sources, strange and different. Indeed photographs are, perhaps, the discipline of history’s Other, as indicated by the way in which, in books on historiography and historical methods, they are sequestered on the margins as ‘alternative’ sources.³ As such, photographs as historical sources are subject to the familiar cultural processes of othering: typifying, fetishising, normalizing and pathologizing. They are dynamic, difficult, slippery, ambiguous, incongruous and contradictory. It is easier to say what they are not, than what they are. Mitchell has described the engagement with photographs as a ‘double consciousness’, as photographs vacillate ‘between magical beliefs and sceptical doubts, naive animism and hard-headed materialism, mystical and critical attitudes’.⁴ Julia Adeney Thomas has expanded this repertoire, describing photographs as flirtatious. They lead on seductively. They reveal in ways texts never could. But they also face us with the dualities of the relationship with history – visceral yet discursive, instinctive yet interpretative, sensuous yet cognitive, voluptuous yet analytical.⁵

So how is the historian to think with and through photographs? What is it to write history in a world in which photographs exist? What do they do to our categories of understanding? Indeed the methodological fear of the photograph, as it resonates through ‘how-to’ advice for historians, perhaps indicates at a deep-seated unease lurking within the practice of history itself.⁶ Up against such a historiographical security alert, it is perhaps small wonder that many take an uncritical, illustrative, even careless approach to photographs, at the very margins of analysis, rather than engage with them in an intellectually creative way that places them at the centre. In attempting to grapple with this, historians have tended to look to photography itself, and the theorizing of photography, to help with historical explanations. This is, of course, useful and necessary, and

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photographic theory has much to recommend it in formulating certain questions and critical positions about photography and photographs.

However I would argue that when grappling with photographs as historical sources, photographic theory can only take us so far. This is because the problems that confront the historian when addressing photographs are not contained within medium specificity alone but grounded in the relationship between medium specificity and the apparatus and practices of history itself. I argue instead that it is necessary to think through the work of photographs at the intersection of photography and the historiographical and philosophical categories that cluster around a sense of the past, its sources and its articulation. How can we cope with the Janus face of history itself, and the frightening force of photography's reality effect, that these intersections with history's Other reveal?

Photographs and History's Tools

Photographs have, of course, that Rankeian reach into the past, to tell it as it really or essentially was.⁷ They intersect temporal and spatial spheres. They have a 'proximity effect' – the there–then / here–now – the appearance of a direct experience of the past, not a merely glimpsed experience beneath the textual document.⁸ This is their historical seduction. There is a very substantial body of critical theory, from Baudrillard to Tagg, that has argued why this cannot or should not be so.⁹ Yet the promise of seduction remains – what kind of history, what kind of photography can allow us access to that physiognomy of the past in a comprehensible way? So in order to resist seduction and apply a more ordered response – and this is the core of my argument – it is necessary to explore more closely the way in which photography disturbs the core nodes of historical relations and the practice of history: the nature of event, happening, occurrence; the nature of context, narrative, temporal distance; the spatialization of time; fragmentation; and, above all perhaps, the concept of 'presence'. How can thinking through photographs 'stretch the habits of the discipline'?¹⁰ But this question demands that photographs are treated not merely as evidence 'of something, but as think-spaces in the relations between the present and its pasts.

Such a position does not dispose of photographic categories, such as index, icon, trace and representation, but rather complicates them in an attempt to escape the methodological conundrum which is perhaps the basis of academic history's uneasy relationship with photographs – that they are too raw, too visceral, too subjective, too fragmentary, too slippery. Indeed, there is a particular 'hermeneutics of suspicion' that has marked historians' relationship with photographs, which has some similarity to the kinds of anxiety that afflict photography more generally.¹¹ For as Didi-Huberman has argued, in the context of Holocaust photographs, we expect too much of photographs and too little. Ask the whole

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truth and we will be disappointed, for photographs are messy and inexact; or ask too little, and we ‘immediately relegate[e] them to the sphere of the *simulacrum*’.¹² The net result is the same: an inattention to photographs, because they are found somehow inadequate for the task of doing history.

The idea of experience, and its correlate ‘presence’, is, I would suggest, central to the function of photographs as historical players. It intersects with the basic tenets of historical practice, as past experience is inscribed and traced in photographs. Integral to this is the ontological scream of photography – ‘it was there’ – from which can be argued, as Ulrich Baer does, that a photograph is an experience that someone lived through, however banal.¹³ This is surely a point of connection not alienation, because history is an essentially realistic discourse that is expected to convey ‘a certain notion about the nature of past [or present] reality’.¹⁴ However, despite its realist aspirations, historical knowledge and experience are also ‘impressionist’ in that they are acts of translation that must, at the same time, remain credible in relation to sources and practice. Thus if historical documents function as evidence of what the past might have been like, photographs allow us perhaps to reach further into that past in new ways because of the illusion of historical experience that exceeds other historical sources. That is their seduction, their flirtatiousness, their magic.¹⁵

Returning to ‘historical apparatus’, perhaps a primary disturbance is in relation to event and its temporal inflections. Photographs change the rhythm of the past, they destabilize what has conventionally been thought of as historically significant. If, as Reinhart Koselleck argued, event – a happening at a specific time and place – is separated from the infinity of circumstance, photographs still that infinity causing the separation on which event depends.¹⁶ But photographs challenge the sense of ‘event’; they do not simply provide happenings to be grouped, but constitute the very happening itself. However banal and inconsequential the subject matter, the photograph frames the fleeting instant. It heightens, projects, performs and pushes the moment into significance and analytical possibility. Photographs give the moment a stability and definition, identifying it as a ‘minimal unit ... in historical discourses’.¹⁷ It thus gives these fleeting moments the look of ‘event’ or ‘happening’, as the trace is inscribed without hierarchy on the picture plane as spatial and temporal are intensified within the frame.

Consequently, in terms of history, the photography is part of the translational processes from non-event to event – indeed it arguably obliterates, or at least confuses, the distinction. Georg Simmel argued that there was ‘threshold of fragmentation’ below which event dissolves, while Martin Jay asks of an event, ‘How do photographs record and preserve what can justifiably be grouped under this rubric?’¹⁸ But the photograph contests this by holding the atomic structure of experience and happening clearly in place. It shapes a moment, giving the appearance and equivalence of an event to happenings that otherwise have ‘no properties, physical or otherwise: it is a null or non-event’.¹⁹ Defined in this

way, all photographs become events in the historiographical sense, because they bestow the appearance of completeness and coherence of experience as historical detritus forces itself into the domain of present/past relations. They form links between the event of the everyday and the shape of epoch. In its immediacy, photography offered not only the minutiae of scale in its random inclusivity, but affective and ideological proximity that disturbed traditional hierarchies of significance.²⁰

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the massive expansion of foci for historical study, which effectively began with the *Annales* school, although there were earlier resonances, emerged from the photographic age. For it is in the photographic age that time, space, experience and memory have been refigured and have served to 'direct our attention away from structures, processes, and synthesis toward how ordinary people in the past experienced the world'.²¹ Likewise it is no coincidence that the rise of visual histories in 'old photographs', of the kind tracked by Raphael Samuel, emerged at the same historical moment as the social and cultural destabilisations of the 1970s and 1980s.²² Photographs shift the scale of historical attention. They allow, as Paul Ricoeur has noted of scale and microhistorical technique, new interconnections; because 'what becomes visible are not the same interconnections, but rather connections that remained unperceived on the macrohistorical scale'.²³

However, the fragmentation of photographs and their creation of micro-events is the major challenge for the historian. Even if working serially with groups of photographs, it is difficult to build a synthetic view from these units and fragments of past experience. The response here is often to collapse into a greater reliance on another of those commonplaces, context – perhaps disproportionately so when compared with other sources. Arguably one of the problems found working with photographs, and a point to which I shall return, is the uncertainty of what kind of history is being presented through photographic inscription and its semiotic energy. Thus there is an overemphasis on simplistic notions of context as if this will contain the meaning of an image or give us an automatic conduit to a set of truths through assigning one or other particular arrays of framing attributes.²⁴

So it is to context that I now turn. There is, like other commonplaces, a huge theoretical literature on context, which I cannot begin to address here, so it is not as if historians or anthropologists are unaware of the problem, as patterns of connection and indeed disconnection are woven around photographs.²⁵ For, of course, 'context' is not naturally constituted but an act of interpretation or framing used to contain and give meaning or coherence to a happening. But with photographs that critical position tends to give way to a sense of the self-evident – as something potentially 'stable, clear and self-sufficient'.²⁶ In this process the apparent coherence of a context derived from the content of the image, entangled with the naturalism of the photograph, seems to create an assumed set of

external relations. As Kracauer has argued, we ‘tacitly assumed that our knowledge of the moment at which an event emerges from the flow of time will help us to account for its occurrence’.²⁷ Hence the problems encountered, for instance, with a generic ideological explanation for photographs (for instance, the category ‘colonial photography’) is perhaps created by the contradictory tensions in which photographs function: between micro- and macro-analysis (between what Pinney has been termed *corps* and *corpus*), between micro-event and macro-meaning, between singularity as presented in the image and the generality of history and lived experience, within an overdetermining notion and application of ‘context’.²⁸ For as Ankersmit has argued, the ‘gravitational pull’ of context has the effect of draining the object or the subject of content to the extent that the thing itself, and its statement, will be left with little to say, emptied of other possible contents.²⁹ This also means, as Ulrich Baer has argued, that ‘we paste the image into a particular type of historical understanding’, using it to demonstrate, or even illustrate, what is already known from other sources rather than admit a history worked out from the traces that present themselves from the image itself.³⁰ Such persistent processes have repeatedly rendered photographs historiographically inactive.

The point, as Brian Axel argues of historical anthropology, ‘is not to abandon the notion of context [such an action would indeed be foolhardy], but generate a critical analysis of contextualisation, from which we might illuminate disparate cultural forms of creativity, subversion or collective identification’.³¹ Thus by simply approaching images by wrapping them up in a predetermined explanatory model, generated by an uncritical application of the notion of context, there is a danger that what they have to tell us as historical sources is overlooked.³² Of course photographs can be those things – ideological, contextualizing and so forth – but those things are not all they carry and they cannot be reduced to them, because that flirtatiousness renders them semiotically dynamic, recodable, and carriers of multiple meanings, alternative narratives and contested histories. At the same time, however, it should be noted that not all photographs have the same density of possibility, as they carry different political and social weight. Thus it is necessary to think about photographs as sources more flexibly, taking account of their historiographical energy. They are not on this account, simply ‘truth’ or ‘not-truth’, but carry a ‘data-ratio’ as nodes of historical experience in which time, place, ideology, experience, expectation and instrumentality intersect in the varying and shifting relations that can take account of the transtemporal movements and affective resonance of photographs.³³

Photography’s temporal dynamic, on which I have already touched, is perhaps the most compelling in terms of historical commonplaces. Time is the essential experience of both history and photographs, and which shapes historical experience of those photographs. These temporal inflections are well documented and theorized, blurring the idea of distance and a separation from the past, as that which ‘has been’ appears ‘present’.³⁴ Conventionally photographs have been conceptualized

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as ‘frozen moments in time’ as the cliché has it, as fragments extracted from a linear flow of time – random moments from an imaginary continuity. This sense of the contained and isolated fragment has also tended to emphasize the semiotic and representational aspects of the image and its visual affect. However, as Jan Baetens argues, thinking about photography must move beyond the singularity of time. For the image can accommodate ‘new readings of time aspects ... which is never just a slice of time’.³⁵ If the possibilities for thinking about photographs’ relation to the past are to be expanded, and responsive to the kind of pasts that might be encountered, it is necessary, as Baer argues, to reconceptualize photographs temporally. ‘Only if we abandon or substantially revise the notion of history and time as inherently flowing and sequential will we recognize what we see or fail to see in ... photographs’.³⁶ In other words, how do concepts of time and history, as they intersect with the ontology of the photograph, cause photographs to be understood, misunderstood or misknown? Conversely, how are temporal disturbances to be factored into photographically generated historical narratives?

The discussion of time is, of course, entangled with that of historical distance. The historical distance of photographs is a ‘conceptual distance, which can be diminished or augmented in ways that can fundamentally change our sense of what history represents’.³⁷ Temporal distance, which has always been a prerequisite of the historical endeavour, is rendered invisible to the extent that, as Mark Phillips has argued, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the concept of historical distance and the idea of history itself.³⁸ But photographs cut across this; they blur analytical categories. Photographs are distance effects, in that they are ineffably ‘of the past’, in all senses. Yet they also have far-reaching closeness effects, in that they carry a sense of immediacy. Benjamin calls this ‘aura’ – ‘a strange web of time and space: the unique appearance of distance, however close at hand’.³⁹ As such, photographs modify and refigure the temporality of historical accounts in an irresolvable tension between distance and closeness. They shape every part of historical engagement, offering as they do an ‘entire continuum from proximity to detachment’.⁴⁰

With photographs, these ideas of distance, proximity, space and time are manifest through the idea of presence, which has become increasingly central to debates in the interstices of historiography, philosophy and photography.⁴¹ What mitigates against the dominance of temporal distance – the gap between past and present, fact and narrative – is the spatial immediacy and ‘proximity effect’ offered by photographs, with which the temporal is entangled.⁴² If presence is marked by temporal contemporaneity, photographs also offer a spatial dimension to presence; ‘the more you press on space, the more the notion of time will return with a vengeance – and vice versa’.⁴³

Photographs’ reclaiming of presence, an individualizing of the past, is, in historiographical terms, related to questions of agency and affect. Important for my argument here is Ankersmit’s claim that such a position constitutes a move

from the centrifugality of meaning in deconstruction, to the centripetal intensity of the contemporary fascination with experience, which pervades both anthropology and history.⁴⁴ That individualizing of the past is something to which photographs contribute so markedly – it is another effect of their fragmenting propensities that I noted earlier. This position also privileges the potential of the subjectivities of the photograph. These have long troubled historians, but they have emerged more forcefully within the frames of the new affective and subjectivist histories that have marked recent years. Here a sense of presence is shaped not by context, but rather by the photographic trace itself. Photographs carry an almost pre-discursive recognition that privileges content and the power of trace over, for instance, context and questions of ‘representation’. It brings us back to photography’s primal scream – ‘it was there’. But this is not a naive realism. Rather it is a return to the close analytical reading of the object in ways that form a critical forensic of photographic engagement and thinking through the implications historiographically.⁴⁵

One can connect this too, especially in relation to photography, to the ways in which Eelco Runia has attempted to track the shifts in historiographical desire from meaning to those of experience. He argues that despite the search for meaning and the understanding of the mechanics of meaning (perhaps, in the case of photographs, the fixation with linguistically derived semiotic models), what is actually wanted is something else.⁴⁶ That thing, Runia argues, is ‘presence’. As he puts it: ‘[P]resence is being in touch, either literally or metaphorically, with people, things, events and feelings that made you the person you are’. It is the ‘desire to share the awesome reality of people, things, events and feelings, coupled to a vertiginous urge to taste the fact that awesomely real people, things, events and feelings can awesomely suddenly cease to exist’.⁴⁷ Photographs, I would argue, are at the centre of this vertiginous historical tension between presence and non-presence; as I noted earlier, they trace moments that people lived through – their presence. It is the root of their historiographical flirtatiousness and ambiguity but it is also the root of their power to disturb.

Closing Thoughts

I have tried here to suggest that our understanding of photographs and their relation to history involves not only an address to photographic theory, but more importantly a consideration of ‘doing’ history itself, represented through deep-seated assumptions and practices. I have tried to indicate ways in which some of these assumptions and practices might be destabilized by bringing photographs into the centre of that thinking.

Ankersmit has argued, possibly overstating the case a little but still good to think with, that ‘the linguicism of the philosophy of language, of hermeneutics,

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of deconstructivism ... of semiotics, and so on has become by now an obstacle to, rather than a promoter of, useful and fruitful insights. The mantras of this [are] now so oppressive ... [that] the notions of presence [and a few others I would argue] may help us to enter a new phase of theoretical reflection'.⁴⁸ This might, as he argues, loosen ties with some of the theoretical models on which we have relied, including those, as I have suggested, in photographic analysis. At the same time, we can expand the possibilities of cultural and narrative meanings of photographs through revisiting the critical concepts and apparatus from history itself. What does the existence of photographs 'do' to history?⁴⁹

There is ample scope I would argue for history's 'Other', photography, being brought into the centre of both historical analysis and theory as a prism through which to think about the very physiognomy of history and its practices. For photography is an unacknowledged shaper of the shift in theoretical interest from practices of narration and representation to questions of experience and memory. It can be crucial in analytical attempts to recover the category of experience as a historical modality, not merely as a vehicle and prompt with memory work, but for the very shaping of what it is to think about the past. But photographs are seldom recognized as such, never mind applied as such.

This address becomes even more pressing in the face of the hyper-flows in images in the digitally linked world in which historians face a veritable tsunami of possible sources. Within this, photographs are repurposed, remediated, refigured and reinterpreted in an uncontainable flow in which the sense of the image and its historical potential is understood as increasingly unstable, whether in the atomization and individuation of history as a practice or the demands of geopolitical validation being placed on photographs. This is beyond the scope of this short chapter, but I mark it because this hyper-flow of photographs is rapidly changing, complicating all that I have described and raising heightened methodological, historiographical, epistemological and indeed ethical questions for the apparatus and practices of history.⁵⁰ It follows that there are, in relation to photographs, further and more complex challenges to questions of veracity, distance, proximity and credibility, because photographs, and indeed other visual media, are profoundly entangled with these processes. Yet the basic tenets of questions that I have explored in the relationship between photographs and historical apparatus do not go away, they simply become more urgent in the face of potential fragmentation and centrifugal force, and where the technologies of historical thought, its physiognomy, are challenged at a profound level.

Both photography and history are 'citational structures', always referring, through their permeability, to something beyond and of perhaps limited knowability, despite all appearances to the contrary. Photographs seep into almost every corner of historical endeavour. So what happens when we address the challenges I have outlined and stop treating photographs as history's Other? What happens when we bring photography into the centre of our method and

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analytical arsenal, entangle them productively with other kinds of data and think through other interpretative possibilities that, to use Walter Benjamin's wonderful analogy of linguistic translation, 'envelope their content like a royal robe with ample folds'.⁵¹

Faced with the challenge of the photograph as a mediator of the past, we are returned to that 'struggle of the document', which dogs all historical endeavour.⁵² But this is not merely an extraction of evidence; and as I have noted, the struggle for the document takes on a new dimension in the digital age.⁵³ Perhaps photographs within the historical domain should be thought of as scientific experiments, in which each experiment has the power to overturn established knowledge and open up another space.⁵⁴ But we cannot begin to address photographs as historical sources without integrating them into our whole notions of what it is to do history, recognizing that history itself is saturated with, yet unnoticed by, photography.

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Notes

1. Patricia Hayes, 'Santu Mofokeng, *Photographs*: "The Violence is in the Knowing"'. *History and Theory* 48(4) (2009), 36.
2. Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History. Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hall and Wang, 1989), xiv.
3. S. Barber and C.M. Peniston-Bird (eds), *History Beyond the Text: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).
4. W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 7–8.
5. Julia Adeney Thomas, 'The Evidence of Sight', *History and Theory, Theme Issue: Photography and Historical Interpretation* 48(4) (2009), 151–52.
6. Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photography and the Business of Doing History', in G. Pasternak (ed.), *Handbook of Photography Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming).
7. Siegfried Kracauer, *History: The Last Things Before the Last*, trans. P.O. Kristellen (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publications, 1995), 50.
8. Mikael Petterson, 'Depictive Traces: On the Phenomenology of the Photograph', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69(2) (2011), 185.

9. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988); John Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning* (Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press, 2009).
10. Ludmila Jordanova, 'What's in a Name? Historians and Theory', *English Historical Review* CXXVI (523) (2011), 1468.
11. Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson, 'Photography's Double Index (A Short History in Three Parts)', in B. Stimson and R. Kelsey (eds), *The Meaning of Photography* (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2008), xxii.
12. George Didi-Hubermann, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, trans. S. Lille (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 33.
13. Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002), 8.
14. Ewa Domanska, 'Frank Ankersmit: From Narrative to Experience', *Rethinking History* 13(2) (2009), 179.
15. Of course film, the long quotation as opposed to photography's short quotation, shares some characteristics, notably temporal construction, representation and immediacy, but it lacks the temporal and spatial density of photographs. As Christian Metz put it, if film 'lets us believe in more things', photographs allow us to 'believe more in one thing'. See Christian Metz, 'Photography and Fetish', *October* 34 (1985), 88.
16. Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 105.
17. R. Fogelson, 'The Ethnohistory of Events and Non-Events', *Ethnohistory* 36(2) (1989), 134.
18. Quoted in Koselleck, *Conceptual History*, 106; Martin Jay, 'Photography and the Event', in O. Schevchenko (ed.), *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press, 2014), 91.
19. Fogelson, 'Ethnohistory of Events', 134.
20. Mark S. Phillips, 'Distance and Historical Representation', *History Workshop Journal* 57 (2004), 128.
21. Domanska, 'Frank Ankersmit', 181.
22. The rise of visual anthropology as a sub-discipline can also be traced to this moment of textual and representational crisis. See Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994), 315–33.
23. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 210–11.
24. Rita Felski, 'Context Stinks', *New Literary History* 42 (2011), 577; Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 133–38.
25. Roy Dilley, *The Problem of Context* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), x.
26. *Ibid.*, 2.
27. Kracauer, *History*, 141.
28. Christopher Pinney, *The Coming of Photography in India* (London: British Library, 2009), 25–26.
29. Frank Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 279. Felski, writing of literary studies, makes a very similar argument about the over-powering claims of context 'stopping the description' and thus understanding. See Felski, 'Context Stinks'.
30. Baer, *Spectral Evidence*, 3.
31. Brian Axel, 'Introduction: Historical Anthropology and its Vicissitudes', in B. Axel (ed.), *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and its Futures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 22.

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32. Ben-Ami Scharfstein, *The Dilemma of Context* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), 1–2.
33. Pinney, *Photography in India*, 8–9; Felski, ‘Context Stinks’, 574.
34. This has most famously been explored by Roland Barthes in his *Camera Lucida*, trans. R. Howard (London: Fontana, 1984) and over a range of photographic forms. See, for instance, Jan Baetens, Alexander Streitberger and Hilde van Gelder (eds), ‘Introduction’, in *Time and Photography* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010).
35. *Ibid.*, viii.
36. Baer, *Spectral Evidence*, 1.
37. Phillips, ‘Distance’, 124.
38. *Ibid.*, 128.
39. Walter Benjamin, ‘A Small History of Photography’, in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. E. Jephcott and K. Shorter (London: NLB, 1979), 25.
40. Phillips, ‘Distance’, 126.
41. Haidy Geismar and Christopher Morton (eds), ‘Reasserting Presence, Reclamation and Desire’, *Photographies* special issue 8(3) (2015).
42. Petterson, ‘Depictive Traces’, 185.
43. Baetens, Streitberger and van Gelder, ‘Introduction’, vii.
44. Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, 1.
45. Bal, *Travelling Concepts*, 10; Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Der Geschichte ins Antlitz blicken: Fotografie und die Herausforderung der Präsenz’, in H. Wolf (ed.), *Aufzeigen oder Beweisen? Die Fotografie als Kulturtechnik und Medium des Wissens* (Zurich: Institute of Art History, 2016), 311.
46. Edwards, ‘Photography’.
47. Eelco Runia, ‘Presence’, *History and Theory* 45(1) (2006), 5.
48. Frank Ankersmit, ‘Presence and Myth’, *History and Theory* 45 (2006), 336.
49. Edwards, ‘Photography’.
50. Lara Putnam, ‘The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast’, *American Historical Review* 121(2) (2016), 377–402.
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52. Ricouer, *Memory*, 172.
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