

Review Article

Visual anthropology: changing roles in fieldwork

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Abstract - Visual Anthropology, the study of visual systems, is a specialized study of culture involving photographs and films. The main objective of the study is to present the chronological development and changing trends in visual anthropology. Visual anthropology has a long history started with the photography of various cultural aspects by some professional photographers, and then there was an addition of supplementary use of photographs and films in ethnographic description. Later, reflexive, participatory and dialogic movements were introduced to more depth and objective studies, which finally led to the applied interventions with the use of photo voice technique in community-based participatory research to address social, environmental and health issues and problems. The paper provides an in-depth overview of enhancement in visual techniques and methods used for communication of anthropological observations and insights applicable for human welfare.

Key Words: Visual anthropology. Visual system. Anthropological fieldwork. Film. Photography.

Introduction

Anthropologists are interested in learning about pictures which can be either painted by humans or pictures and film captured by cameras. They study the visual system under a specialization visual anthropology that includes ethnographic photography and ethnographic films. Their approach to pictorial and visual studies is inclusive, non-judgmental and cross-cultural. They want to study everything visible that has been created by people of any time or place.

Visual anthropology is a specialized study of culture involving photographs, films and videos. It is the study of the visual systems i.e. how things are seen and what is seen is understood. [Jacknins \(1994\)](#) says that it includes “the production and analysis of still photos, the study of art and material culture, and the investigation of gestures, facial expressions and spatial aspects of behaviour and interaction”. Therefore, he only discusses its methods and scope in relation to the production and analysis of visual data but according to [Banks and Morphy \(1997\)](#) it is much more than that, as they argue “visual anthropology is concerned with the whole process of anthropology, from the recording of data, through its analysis to the dissemination of the results of research”. Overall, the main focus of visual anthropology is on the study of observable culture and visual systems, the production and use of visual texts and the utilization of visual material and text in anthropological research. Visual anthropology is central to anthropology because of its reflexive nature.

The present paper deals with the chronological development of visual anthropology and its varying methodology, shifting ethical issues, and its changing role in fieldwork and research. This is a review article, so secondary sources of data are mainly used to describe these various aspects.

Chronological development of visual anthropology

Visual Anthropology only became possible with the availability of cameras in the 1860s; however, the first visual professionals were not trained anthropologists while they were ‘photojournalists’. For example, Matthew Brady, one of the earliest photojournalists, took photographs during the American Civil War, which are still available today as the record of that event ([Fig. 1](#)) ([Garrison 2000](#), [Wilson 2013](#)).



Fig. 1: A Photograph by Mathew Benjamin Brady showing Deserted Camp and Wounded Soldier from a Federal Zouave Regiment, 1865 (Wilson 2013)

Since the inception of visual anthropology, it has undergone many changes over time in its aims, objectives, techniques, methods, strategies, approaches and applications. Its chronological changes can be broadly classified into various stages:

Stage-I: Emerging Phase

Visual anthropology emerged as a distinct sub-field of anthropology in the late twentieth century, but the focus of ethnography had already reached the visual elements of culture. During the phase of historical commercialization of anthropology, anthropologists used photographs in the classification of world populations according to geographic and temporal categories. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, physical anthropologists utilized a range of visual-photographic indices in support of theories of social evolution including anatomical and group portraits, film footage and biometric data of racial types etc. Such visual evidence also served to encourage discourses of race and evolution that was central to imperialist projects (Wacowich 2009)

In the mid-nineteenth century, academic anthropologists began producing and collecting photographs of the people they studied. British anthropologists Edward Burnett Tyler, Alfred Cort Haddon and Henry Balfour were members of the so-called ‘collecting club’. They exchanged and shared photographs as part of an effort to document and classify ethnographic races (Fig. 2). (Banks & Vokes 2010)



Fig. 2: Photographs from *The New Gresham Encyclopedia* (1922) depicting the Varied 'Ethnic Types' of Man

In the early stage of subject's development, colonial agents, navigators, explorers, missionaries and travellers were commissioned by scholars to collect visual data of anthropological interest including the physical bodies, costumes, ornaments and tools of exotic peoples etc. These were also exhibited at European world fairs, museums and, sometimes, zoos and thus became the subject of both popular display and scientific study. (Wacowich 2009) In this phase, the British focused on their colonies such as India (Fig. 3), the French on Algeria and American anthropologists on Native American societies. Modern scholars now believe that imperialist scholars classified the peoples of the colonies as 'others', which is an important historical but at the same time an absolute obnoxious aspect of early anthropological history.

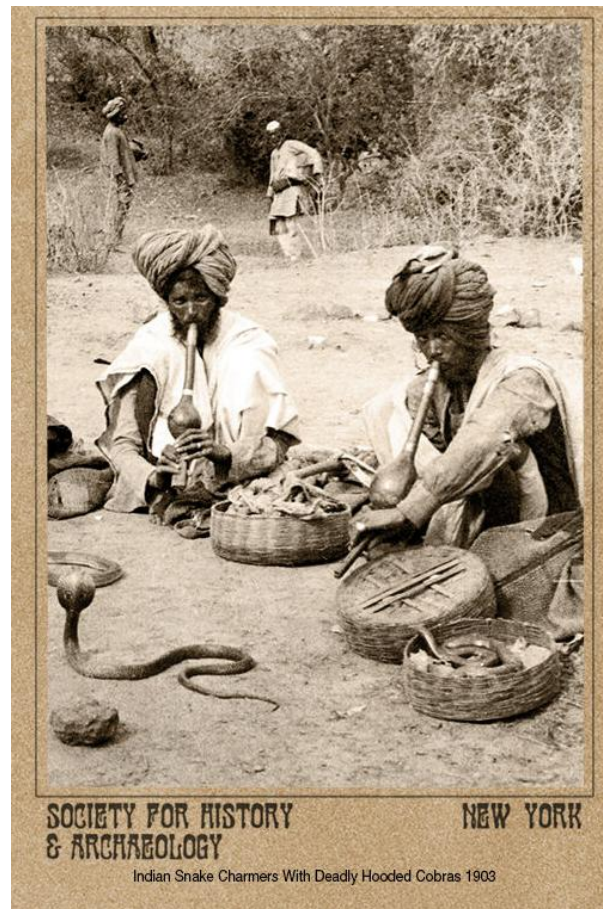


Fig 3: A Photograph of Indian Snake Charmers handling the Deadly Hooded Cobras ([Society for History and Archaeology 1903](#))

Innovations in camera technology advanced the comparative effort. For example, in 1895 the French physiologist and anthropologist Félix-Louis Regnault pioneered the use of chronophotography in the scientific study of kinaesthetic. ([Regnault 1895](#)) He produced *Chronophotographic Shots* ([Regnault1885](#)) of people walking with the help of Charles Comte, taking into account the idea that walking and gait patterns were related to different races. These recordings include a running African person, three striding Arab people, an African woman with her child tied on her back, a person from the South Sea Islands who is climbing a tree – in comparison with a French soldier, who manages it just as quickly without any help ([Fig. 4](#)).

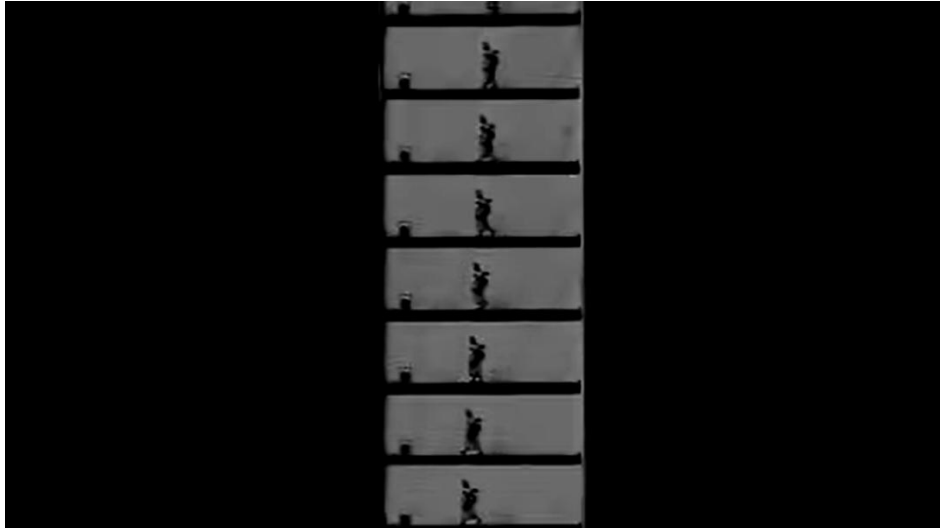


Fig. 4: A Scene from the Recordings of an African Woman with her Child Tied on her Back, included in *Chronophotographic Shots* by Félix-Louis Regnault (Regnault 1895)

The beginning of the ethnographic film is believed to be related to the Regnault's recordings of a Wolof woman from Senegal making pots without the aid of a wheel. This was the 'first ethnographic footage' (Fig; 5), although it was not recorded in Wolof's native place but was produced at the 'Exposition Ethnographique de l'Afrique Occidentale', an exhibition in Paris. On the basis of this footage he published cultural history of pottery making in 1895 and his later films followed the same theme in order to capture cross-cultural analysis. He later recommended the development of an archive of footage from anthropological studies. (Regnault 1895, Lajard & Regnault 1895)

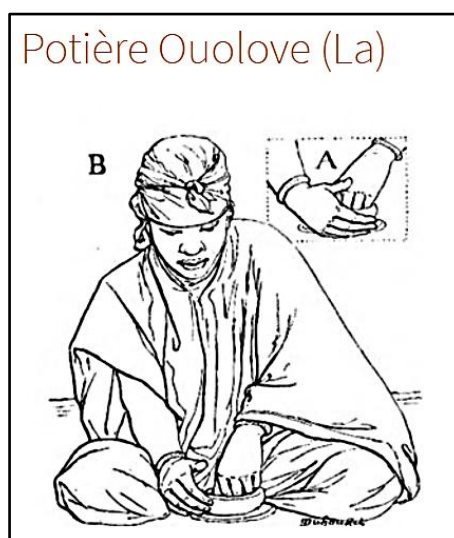


Fig. 5: A Sketch of the Regnault's destroyed Footage of Wolof Woman, recorded in 1895 (Lajard & Regnault 1895)

Before Anthropology emerged as an academic discipline in the 1880s, ethnologists used photography in their researches. For the purpose of ‘salvage ethnography’, both anthropologists and non-anthropologists carried out this work. They attempted to document the ways of life of communities thought subjected to extinction, for future generations. It’s one of the best example is the Native American photography by Edward Curtis who was an American photographer and ethnologist (**Fig. 6**) (Prins 2004, Curtis 2015)



Fig. 6: A Photograph by Edward Sheriff Curtis of Noatak Family Group (Curtis 2015)

Stage-II: Formative Phase

Major cultural discourses highlighting the ‘vanishing savage’ inspired a generation of anthropologists to undertake visual fieldwork to register photographs as evidence of the current cultural traditions of the local people and their possible absence in the near future. They perceived culture as phenomena, materially observable and decipherable, personified or expressed in the physical environment of the people and ready for analysis through purely positivist and objective means.

With the idea that visual data is important for scientific fieldwork expeditions, Alfred Cort Haddon led ‘Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits’ in 1898. The initial set of methodological reflections of this expedition details strategies

and approaches for the collection of visual data among ‘vanishing people’. In this seven-month trip, the research team collected more than 500 photographic plates, along with numerous native drawings, replicas and the first anthropological film (**Fig. 7**). (Wacowich 2009, Herle *et al.* 2015)



Fig. 7: A Photograph of Performance of ‘Makai’, the Death Dance, by the Islanders of Mabuyag, Staged for Torres Strait Expedition Members on September 24, 1898 (Herle *et al.* 2015)

During Torres Strait Expedition, Haddon documented the ‘first nonfiction anthropological film’ *Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits* (Haddon 1898-1899), captured during fieldwork among indigenous population (**Fig. 8**). He produced the film with one of the first Lumière motion picture cameras in the field to capture in the islanders’ behaviour. (Edwards 1992)

Haddon also recommended Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer to use the film to record evidence. Thereafter, Spencer recorded the *Australian Aboriginals’ ‘Tjitjingalla’ Dance* (Spencer 1901) by the Arrernte men in Australia in 1901 (**Fig. 9**). It was a project involving 7,000 feet of film. (Gibson 2015) Later, it was placed in the National Museum at Victoria. Because of this special contribution, he is considered one of the pioneers of anthropological filmmakers.



Fig. 8: A Scene from the Film - *Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits* recorded by Alfred Cort Haddon (Haddon 1898-1899)



Fig. 9: A Scene from the *Australian Aboriginals 'Tjitjingalla' Dance*, recorded by Walter Baldwin Spencer (Spencer 1901)

The Bureau of American Ethnology, established in 1878 in the United States, called upon scholars to photograph and gather anthropological information on North America's vanishing cultures. In 1894, Franz Boas started field photography in his effort to salvage ethnography and reconstruct cultural and ritual behaviours (Fig. 10). Boas was opposed to the ethnocentrism prevalent in earlier anthropological studies. He made the 'cultural relativism' the basis of his fieldwork. His cultural relativism was based on a rigorous empiricism and positive assumptions that an objective reality is apparent and visible to the scientific fieldworker (Wacowich 2009).

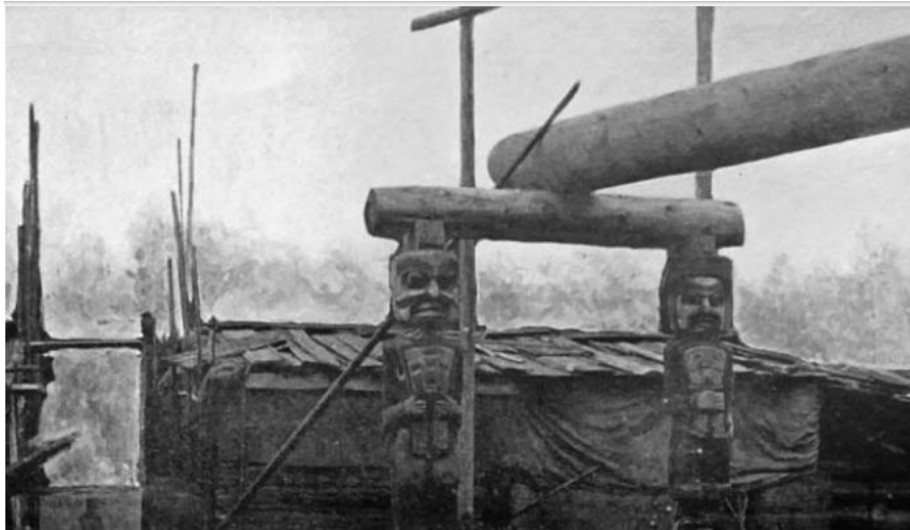


Fig. 10: A Photograph by Franz Boas of House posts in the Animal Shaped Holding Coppers in Kwakiutl (Boas 1895)

After World War I, Anthropology's relationship with the visual decreased as descriptive and classificatory frameworks gave way to more analytical, functional and structural accounts of social organization. In Britain, Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* created a new template for the ethnographic monograph in 1922. The monograph was organized around concept-based analyses of social relationships and systems. Photographs and drawings were used in it in a form of 'supplement' (Fig. 11) (Malinowski 1922).



Fig. 11: A Photograph by Bronislaw Malinowski of a Ceremonial Act of the Kula among Trobriand Islanders (Malinowski 1922)

The history of anthropological filmmaking is related with nonfiction motion pictures or documentary films intended to document the reality, although ethnofiction pictures may also be considered as a genuine subgenre of ethnographic film. Robert J. Flaherty, a salvager and a filmmaker, is known as the ‘father of ethnographic film’. He is most recognized for his nonfiction film *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty 1922) which is a silent recording of activities of an Inuit band in the Canadian Arctic (Fig. 12). After the suggestion of his supervisor to take camera and equipment on expedition of north, he became a filmmaker in 1913. His attempts to present Inuit people in a realistic manner became a useful film of an unseen way of living. (Rothman 2014) He did not have anthropological experience, but he had strong contacts with his subjects, which is one of the criteria related to anthropological in-depth fieldwork, so he also has an important place in the history of Visual Anthropology.

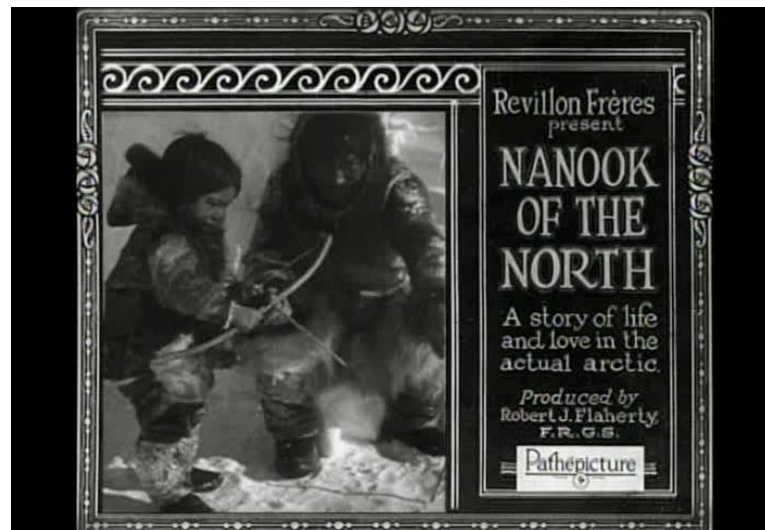


Fig. 12: A Scene from the Nonfiction Film - *Nanook of the North*, filmed by Robert Joseph Flaherty (Flaherty 1922)

Stage-III: Formalization Phase

During the formative phase visual data was never used in scientific ethnographic analysis as its use was only supplementary because of its illustrative and objective functions. Innovations in technology and developing methods and expansion in the scope of the subject have given visual anthropology a new direction and formal status.

The development of photography as a part of the scientific ethnographic analysis is usually attributed to anthropologists Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s 1942

examination of Balinese culture called *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*. Bateson and Mead took more than 25,000 photos while conducting research in Bali, and published 759 photographs to support and develop their ethnographic observations. In particular, the photos—arranged in a ‘sequential pattern like stop-motion movie clips’—illustrated how the Balinese research subjects performed social rituals or engaged in routine behaviour (**Fig. 13**) (Bateson & Mead 1942).

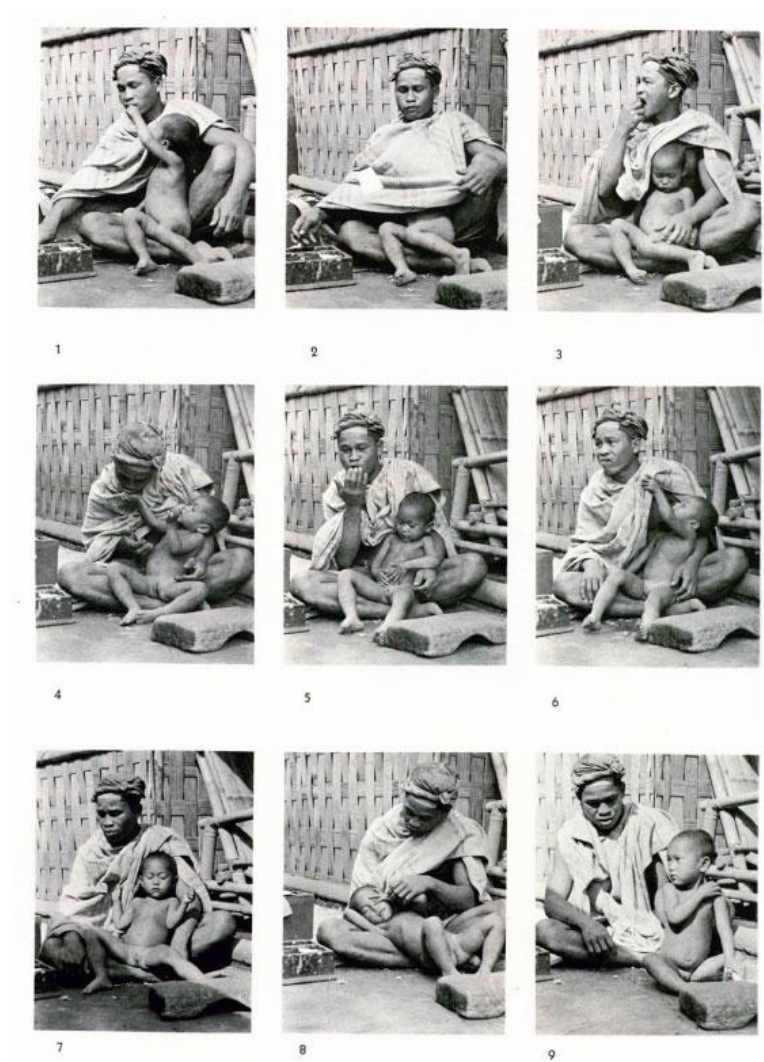


Fig. 13: Photographs of Plate 64 ‘A Father and his Daughter’ from the book *Balinese Character* by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (Mead & Bateson 1942)

Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson produced a short documentary film *Trance and Dance in Bali* (Mead & Bateson 1952) during their visits to Bali in the 1930s. The film was released in 1952 (**Fig. 14**). It shows a Bali ritual portraying the fight between good (dragons) and evil (witches). In the ritual, dancers are falling into and being

revived from trances, during the struggle of dragons versus witches (Henley 2013). The film had a major impact on ethnographic documentary production for its era as it offered a recorded view into an unknown ritual world of Bali with anthropological approach.



Fig. 14: A Scene from the Short Documentary Film - *Trance and Dance in Bali*, filmed by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (Mead & Bateson 1952).

In addition to Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead, other anthropologists attempted to bring an anthropological perspective on mass media and visual representation during the 1950s. Hotense Powdermaker (1950) published a book *Hollywood, the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers*. It was the first serious anthropological study of moviemaking. In this book she examined the social organization of feature film production. Margaret Mead and Rhoda Métraux (1953) produced *The Study of Culture at a Distance*, a compilation of contemporary researches. This remarkable work presents a rich and complex methodology for the study of cultures through photographs, film, literature, informant interviews, focus groups, and projective techniques.

Some visual anthropologists and ethnographic filmmakers who were active for much of the late twentieth century, such as John Marshall, Robert Gardner and Tim Asch, have contributed to the shaping of ethnographic films by their seminal works.

John Marshall, an anthropologist and documentary filmmaker, presented the most reflective film ever, *A Kalahari Family* (Marshall 1980s). It was a comprehensive visual record of transition among the Ju/'hoansi, from lingering, hunter-gather

subsistence to problematic and often tragic contemporary living conditions (**Fig. 15**). The film witnessed the negative impact of racist ideology and various development agendas that affect an indigenous group of people. It was a six-hour series divided into five parts and represents the culmination of 50-plus years (1950 - 2000). The film provides visual evidence of transition through changing documentary film styles and developing modes of technology in filmmaking and videography over fifty years as it begins with 16-millimeter nonsync film footage and moves up to the handheld video camera. Through this film it can be seen how the technological movement changed the level of participatory engagement between Marshall and the people who became the subjects of his lifelong project ([Durington 2004](#)).



Fig. 15: A Scene from an Ethnographic Film - *A Kalahari Family, Part 3: Real Water*, filmed by John Marshall ([Marshall 1980s](#))

Robert Gardner, a former associate of Marshall, was involved in the creation of ethnographic film. He released *Dead Bird* ([Gardner1963](#)), a study of symbolic warfare among Dani of New Guinea in 1963 (**Fig. 16**). The film grew out of a project in which ethnographers, a novelist and a filmmaker all described the same culture. It explores the nature and motivations of primitive warfare, as well as the traditional mutilation and death rituals of the Dani people. It depicts also their food production, habitat, mythology, clothing, ornament and art ([Banks & Ruby 2011](#))



Fig. 16: A Scene from an Ethnographic film - *Dead Bird*, filmed by Robert Gardner (Gardner 1963)

The Ax Fight (Asch1975) is an ethnographic film by anthropologist and filmmaker Timothy Asch and anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon about a conflict in a Yanomami village called Mishimishimabowei-teri, in southern Venezuela. It is noted as an iconic and distinctive ethnographic film about the Yanomamo that presents their kinship, alliance and village fission with an anthropological perspective during violence and conflict resolution. Also it details how anthropologists and filmmakers understand and translate their experience into meaningful words and intelligible moving images. Timothy Ash made a significant contribution by capturing the lives and rituals of remote societies through ethnographic film (Fig. 17) (Ruby 1995).

Stage-IV: Participatory Phase

Earlier photographs and films have been accused by critical theorists and they give numerous explanations about uncertainty over its use in anthropological research. They believed that these visual types are produced with subjective perception as are based on a culturally specific perception mode, especially on Western mentality, therefore due to involvement of connexions of power in their creation these misinterpret the ethnographic reality by distorting it. It has also been said that the visual imagery

belongs to the creative arts, which increases the risk of completely hijacking the anthropological approach because of its aesthetic sense. New reflexive, participatory and dialogic movements in visual anthropology have encouraged critical re-evaluations of the discipline's claims to the status of art and science. These actions have contributed significantly to the reformulation of disciplinary methodologies. (Wacowich 2009)



Fig. 17: A Scene from an Ethnographic Film - *The Ax Fight*, filmed by Timothy Asch (Asch 1975)

During 1953-1954, French anthropologist and ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch experimented with a form of 'shared or participatory ethnography' in producing a film *Les Maîtres Fous* (Rouch 1955) (Fig. 18). The film centres on an annual Hauka possession ritual which took place among the Songhay near Accra, the capital of the then English colonial Gold Coast, the present Ghana. It exists as a historical record documenting the religious practices of an ethnic group that no longer lives in Accra, and thus serves the purpose of socio-cultural anthropology. It also reflects the colonial reality that existed at the time of its production in the Gold Coast. Its censorship by the British is reminiscent of the structures of power and domination in Africa during the European Colonial Project. Rouch's version of 'cinema-verite' was designed to intimately involve anthropologist/filmmaker and filmed subjects as collaborators in the creation of ethnographic realism (Himpele & Ginsburg 2005).

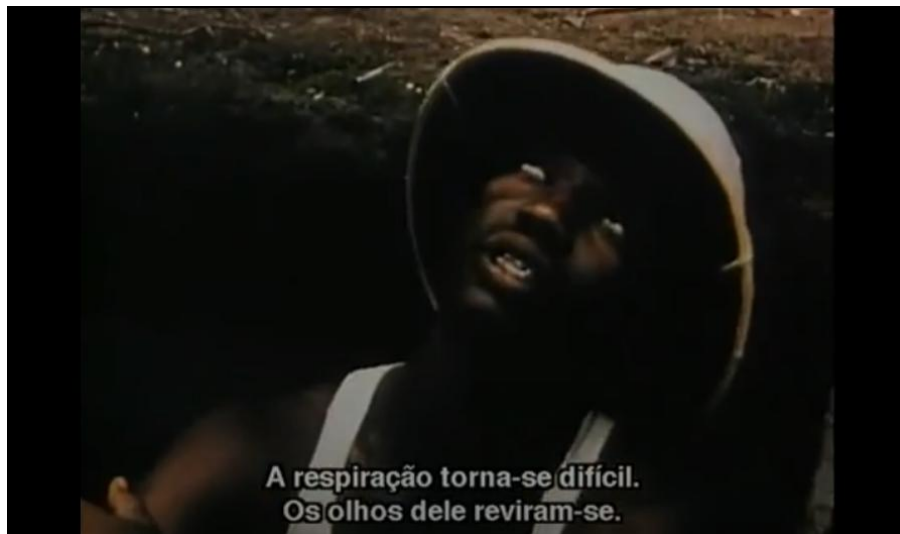


Fig. 18: A Scene from the Film of Possession Rituals among the Songhay- *Les Maîtres Fous*, filmed by Jean Rouch (Rouch 1955).

Subsequent generations of visual anthropologists have continued the reflexive focus by incorporating the social relations of visual production into their works. A group of Navajo Indians in Pine Springs, Arizona was trained by filmmaker Sol Worth and anthropologist John Adair In 1966. They taught to a group of six Navajos that how to capture 16 mm film, that is, about filmmaking and editing. During June and July of 1966, the research team met with them eight hours a day, five days a week. They gave them basic instructions, insisting that they should make a film about whatever is important to them. After two months, seven completed movies, *Old Antelope Lake*, *A Navajo Weaver*, *Second Weaver*, *The Navajo Silversmith*, *The Shallow Well*, *The Spirit of the Navajo*, and *Intrepid Shadows*, were shared by them. This film series is known as the *Navajo Film Themselves* (Worth & Adair 1972b) (Fig. 19). The pioneering book based on this venture, *Through Navajo Eyes: An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology*, published in 1972, has become a classic in visual anthropology. This work is an answer to the question of what would happen if people of the same culture who created and used motion pictures had no knowledge of it and were taught about it for the first time (Worth & Adair 1972a; Guindi 1998).



Fig. 19: A Scene from the Trailer of *Navajo Film Themselves*, a film supervised by Sol Worth and John Adair (Worth & Adair 1972b)

David MacDougall, a renowned ethnographic filmmaker and theorist, has an intensive engagement with the participatory and interactive approach. His recent filmmaking project of ‘shared anthropology’ with Indian children, *Delhi at Eleven* (MacDougall 2012), presents a thought-provoking documentary including the work of four young filmmakers. MacDougall coordinated a video workshop as the part of the ‘Childhood and Modernity’ Project in which four children, including two boys and two girls, took part at the CIE Experimental Basic School, a government primary school, from March to May 2012. Each of the filmmakers was eleven years old and a resident of north Delhi and none had made a film before. The four films directed by them are: a film about a shop in the neighbourhood ‘*My Lovely General Store*’, a film about the lives of girls ‘*Why Not a Girl?*’ (Fig. 20), a film about friends and family ‘*My Funny Film*’, and a film about children in family life ‘*Children at Home*’. Their films offer a unique and intimate perspective on Indian family and working life. This is a great collection of films which is based on reflexive and participatory methods. It is uniquely relevant to anthropology as it reveals children's perspectives and recognizes the child's insight as a researcher to understand the world (Ashar 2015).



Fig. 20: A Scene from the Documentary -*Delhi at Eleven*, produced by David MacDougall (MacDougall 2012)

Stage-V: Intervention Phase

During 1990s, reflexive and participatory methods have inspired an applied anthropological intervention, known as ‘photo novella’ during its inception but later identified as ‘photovoice’, in which cameras are given in the hand of the local collaborators as a plan for their empowerment. The effectiveness of photovoice technique is not limited to only research but it also contributes to activating people in problem-solving, as it works with the objectives to enabling the people being studied to visually document the issues, concerns and strengths of their community from their own perspective; generating critical discourse among community members through group discussions based on documentation; and empowering people by developing the ability of need assessment and reaching out to policymakers.

Photo novella was incepted by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris (1994) during their study *Empowerment through Photo Novella: Portraits of Participation* in a rural Chinese community in which they did not offer camera to health experts, decision makers or experienced photographers. They put it in the hands of those who have no access or very little access to decision-makers of their lives, thus put it in the hands of children, rural women, grassroots workers and some others. This photo novella helped the people to record and to discuss their living circumstances as they see them (Fig. 21). Its goal was to use people’s photographic documentation of their everyday lives as an

‘education tool’ to record and to reflect their needs for policy making and thus it suggests a process of empowerment education to enable community members with little money, power or status to communicate with policy makers where change should take place.



Fig. 21: A Photograph of ‘Feeding a Meal’ by Zhu Yu Zhen, Chengjiang County Farmer, Age 42 (Wang & Burris 1994).

Over the past several years there has been increasing interest in the use of ‘community-based participatory research’ to prevent and control complex public health problems and to address social issues and problems. In these researches, photovoice has become a very popular and frequently used technology due to its ‘participatory action research strategy’. This technique with multitasking approach is extensively being used for anthropological interventions as well as for addressing social, environmental and health issues beyond anthropology. (Wang & Burris1997, Sutton-Brown 2014, Chakraborty *et al.* 2021) For instance, it was used as part of an interventional program to educate Maasai women to prevent and manage trachoma in their community which was co-developed with the community. In October 2017, the participants were asked to share information through a workshop on trachoma with their community and to capture their experiences as educators using disposable cameras. After five weeks, Massai women shared photos of their successes and challenges they faced when educating the community about trachoma. Women proved empowerment as participants in this public engagement intervention (Fig. 22). The intervention suggests multitasking interventions for promotion of health and empowerment of women as ambassadors of change in settings with limited resources (Mtuy *et al.* 2021).



Fig. 22: A Photograph of Massai Participants practicing use of Disposable Cameras (Mtuy *et al.* 2021)

The use of photovoice technique in visual studies is not expensive. Although in the early stages of using this technology, the disposable camera was handed over to the participants to capture images, but the availability of mobile phone cameras today has made this technology much easier to use. Nowadays, the use of camera phones, which can capture good quality images and videos, has become very popular among the people. Along with this, recent developments in the field of digital media like ‘mobile cinematography’ can also be useful for photo voice technique. If a visual ethnographer is well versed in the principles of photo voice and mobile cinematography, he can skilfully involve the people of the community being studied in the filming of their own social issues in their own way. Similarly, the ethnographer can also audio-visually record moments when group discussions are going on based on the recordings and needs are being assessed. Such initiatives can produce astonishing results in identifying the problem, displaying issues from the perspective of the people and reaching them to the outside world and policy makers (Chakraborty *et al.* 2021).

Changing trends in visual anthropology

Visual anthropology is “the study of man based on what is offered to vision alone and grasped through non-verbal tools of investigation” (Mead 1974). The study of the visual aspect of culture has a long history, but with the passage of time there have been many epistemological and methodological developments in this field, due to which the earlier approach seems unrealistic today (Delphine Diom 2007). New recommendations have emerged in technical, ethical and epistemological considerations, which have brought changing trends in the methodology and role of visual anthropology in fieldwork and research. So many changing trends can be seen in visual anthropology:

From Voyeurism to Ethics and Collaboration

In earlier times, filming of individuals without their knowledge does not appear to have caused any particular moral dilemma due to the colonial mentality of the time. Mead and Batson even went into film situations where people did not wish to be seen. Although, these practices seemed normal at that time, it is unthinkable to proceed in the same manner at the present time. Today, nobody can take any person's picture or film without his permission or publish the same without his consent, as there are various research ethics related to privacy, anonymity, consent, actual information and authenticity that must be adhered to. It is even felt that a collaborative approach should be developed rather than trying to film people without or with their consent. The camera should be given in the hands of the respondents.

From Supplementary Use to Analytical Functions

Although the pioneers of visual anthropology often produced large quantities of photographic material, they never really made full use of the potential of their pictures. At that time, the image was reduced to two functions: illustration and objectivity of textual details. They emphasized the need to present a systematic description. Throughout the analysis, in support of their discourse, they presented various photographs taken in the area and referred them to the readers. They mainly used photographic images as a proof for the veracity of their observations. So, the use of visual data use was only supplementary. But later, photography and non-fiction filmmaking have become significant tools of data collection and analysis in research.

Study of culture at a distance approach gave it further impetus. Thus, these devices have become a vital part of the scientific ethnographic analysis.

From Presumed Objectivity to Relative Objectivity

Initially, anthropologists believed that pictures were an objective means of recording their observations and through this they could extract subjectivity from their field notes. But the objectivity of pictures was very quickly called into question as any visual description is selective and incomplete. The anthropologist makes choices about various aspects related to photography and filmmaking that may hide facts. The observation is rooted in a socio-cultural background, collective norms and individual experiences of each individual, all of which necessarily influence the description. Also, participants' awareness that they are being watched causes them to pose, which distorts the descriptions. In recent times, the reflexive and participatory movements have contributed meaningfully to the reformulation of corrective methodologies, as the current trend of giving camera in the hands of the subjects eliminates the probability of including personal bias of the researcher.

From Erasing to Confirming Anthropologist's Presence

Staying behind the camera, ethnographers try to erase their presence from research, although it seems unrealistic to think that people can forget the camera. The simple presence of an observer is disturbing in itself, whether he has a camera or not. He is always a foreigner to the subject, even as he tends to integrate and ground himself in the subject's culture. So, instead of trying to hide them in an effort to make people forget the presence of the camera and the researcher, the trend has evolved to put the camera at the centre of the interaction. Importance is being given to filming the interactions while being aware of changes in behaviour due to the presence of cameras.

From Salvage Ethnography to Applied Interventions

During the nineteenth century, photographers travelled the world to capture images of exotic lands and diverse people. Photography replaced written descriptions and sketches in research with the truthful and unbiased eye of the camera as the emphasis was on the collecting records of disappearing people of the world as due to colonization and homogenization of nationalities. Photography and video recording made it possible to see how indigenous cultures looked and lived, but obtaining many of

these photographs was a major challenge. Often ethnographers had to contact hostile people who had no idea about the camera or the ethnicity of the person behind it. Later, the scenario has changed, as currently introduced concept of photo voice in visual anthropology has led to a variety of applied intervention initiatives in anthropology and beyond anthropology, in which cameras are given to local collaborators as part of an empowerment strategy. Its goal is to record photographic documentation of people's daily lives and use them as a tool to reflect their needs, promote dialogue, encourage action and create policy for them.

From Use of Plate Cameras to Advanced Technology

Cultural discussion, with an emphasis on 'vanishing savage', motivated anthropologists to undertake visual fieldwork. This was done first with plate cameras, then with newer handheld models, and eventually with cine-cameras. Some of the first motion pictures during ethnographic studies were made with 'Lumière' equipment. It was often a very difficult task for photographers to convince hostile people who had no understanding of cameras and a strange person hiding behind a cloth and leaning on a big box to take photos or film them. In recent decades, new communication technologies have emerged to change the shape of visual anthropology. Greater access to portable video technologies in the 1970s and 1980s enabled indigenous filmmakers to contribute directly to the representational tradition. Developing fields of indigenous media and media anthropology have encouraged the production of photography and film in diverse cultural contexts and their cross cultural communication. In the twenty-first century, the digitization of photographic and film technologies and their distribution via the World Wide Web has become a vehicle of global mobility for visual anthropology.

Conclusion

Visual anthropology is related with the study of visual systems and works as processes of anthropological knowledge production. The scope of visual anthropology is wide, ranging from the creation and analysis of photograph, film and artistic productions to material culture, bodily expressions and spatial design. In its broadest sense, it is an inquiry into all that humans make for others to see. Visual anthropology incorporates

the study of both the human being captured by the image and the image of the person being photographed or filmed.

In terms of technology, the journey of visual anthropology began with the plate camera, but later handheld models and eventually cine-cameras significantly influenced the quantity and quality of works. In the current scenario, the digitization of photographic and film technologies and the World Wide Web have put new issues of global mobility in front of visual anthropology.

In discussing the role of visual anthropology, we can classify it into two aspects: pictorial manifestation of culture and pictorial media for communicating anthropological knowledge. It was started with photography of various cultural aspects by some professional photographers. Then for the classification of ethnographic races, exhibition purposes, study of kin aesthetic and for salvage ethnography photographs and films were captured and collected by both anthropologist and non-anthropologists. With the formal use of photography and filmmaking in fieldwork, many anthropologists began to use photography in their fieldwork, but at the time it was used only for illustration and objective purposes. In later researches, the camera was used as a tool for data collection and analysis, and many ethnographic filmmakers captured indigenous life and culture through their cameras with new anthropological perspectives and made significant contributions to the field.

Then, reflexive participatory and dialogic movements were introduced in more depth and objective studies. These ones finally led to the applied interventions with the use of photo novella or photo voice in community-based participatory research to address social, environmental and health issues and problems.

Overall, film and photography are, at the same time, both tool and field of research. By studying it as a field of research, understanding can be gained to enhance the communication of anthropological observations and insights through the use of photography, film and video, which can be applied to the noble goal of human welfare.

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