IVSA Newsletter Spring 2002[·]

Editor's Note

This is the first issue of the Newsletter edited by me (Iarfhlaith Watson). As the incoming editor I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the outgoing editor (Jon Caulfield) for his guidance and I would like to express my thanks, as a reader of the Newsletter, for all his hard work over so many years. I would also hope that after a few issues I would attempt to emulate his standard.

The next issue of the Newsletter will be out in the Autumn (Fall, for the Americans), so any contributions would be gratefully received at the address above.

President's Message - Jon Wagner

Thanks to hard work by Yannis and his conference-planning colleagues, many of us are looking forward to this year's meetings in Santorini with great anticipation. As a parallel to both the anticipation and hard work, I'd like to call a few issues to the attention of IVSA members. Some of these will find their way onto the agenda for the Executive Board meeting or the IVSA business meeting in Santorini. However, the quality of our deliberations during the short time we're in Santorini will depend in part on how well IVSA members can think these things through ahead of time.

I'll mention three issues briefly and describe the fourth in more detail.

1. Fall 2002 IVSA Elections: Several Executive Board members and most IVSA Officers are nearing the end of their elected terms. This creates both the challenge and opportunity of renewing leadership for the IVSA.

While some people may be willing to serve again, the vitality of the organisation depends on engaging new people in new positions.

2. Administrative Resources: The IVSA has managed its affairs relatively well in absolute terms and incredibly well relative to its resources. However, we've also benefited from various forms of institutional support. Our partnership with Taylor and Francis is now supporting the journal publication, but we also need institutional 'partners' to help us with conferences and the Secretary Treasurer functions that John Grady has been performing. Without some kind of institutional support, the IVSA may need to pay for administrative services that have been donated in he past. We need to hear from members with creative ideas for addressing this issue.

3. IVSA Projects: Over the past few years, IVSA members have proposed a variety of intriguing, thoughtful and useful projects. Some have been brought to fruition, but many have not. That's not necessarily a bad thing, but the current organisation of the IVSA may not be effective for supporting projects that we care about. As one alternative, the IVSA could consider identifying additional officers - either elected or appointed - to give increased attention to key areas such as the protection of human subjects, copyright and fair use issues, student and faculty awards for exemplary research, and so on.

We will all benefit if IVSA members who have something to say about these issues can share their thoughts through the IVSA Listserv.

4. As a fourth issue for which Listserv discussions have already been initiated, let me comment briefly on the IVSA's current and potential membership:

Thanks to John Grady and Nancy Allen's efforts, we have relatively good data about who is and is not in the IVSA, and the 200 plus members confirmed prior to 2002 conference enrolments is a healthy sign. However, recent discussions and fact finding have also revealed several potentials for continued growth. Some of these may be realised without much effort on our part, but others will not. In particular, consider the following:

i. Half of all subscribers to the IVSA Listserv are not IVSA members.

ii. In their own efforts to promote *Visual Studies*, Taylor and Francis are calling the journal and the IVSA to the attention of new audiences and prospective IVSA members.

iii. We're experiencing increased interest among graduate and undergraduate students.

iv. This year's conference has attracted dozens of participants who are completely new to the IVSA and who, as part of their conference registration, will show up as members on our end-of-the-year rolls. We can anticipate a similar bubble of new members from the UK and its environs as our conference site shifts in 2003 to University of Leeds.

These opportunities for growth are considerable, attractive, and a bit problematic. To take advantage of them we need to ask ourselves - and our newest members - what the IVSA can do to turn one-time participants into active members. To ensure that we don't lose any current constituencies in the process, we need to be deliberate in how we respond, not only to new members but also to old.

We've already had some discussion of this issue on the IVSA Listserv. A proposal has been floated for supporting the creation of regional associations and networks that can sponsor IVSA activities of their own and provide activities for members between the annual IVSA meetings - something similar to what Yannis has been trying to develop in Greece. Another proposal suggested making special efforts to welcome new members and to acknowledge their interests and concerns. Other members have urged a renewed effort to recruit from within the IVSA's founding discipline of sociology - through a targeted approach to departments and individual faculty members and through increased interaction with the ASA or the International Sociology Association. At the Executive Board discussion last year in Minneapolis, suggestions for reaching out more aggressively to sociologists were complemented by an interest in applying similar strategies to other constituencies in anthropology, communication, education, and other fields.

We could try to bring these proposals together into an integrated work plan and see how far we can get. But working on so many fronts at the same time would fragment and disperse our extremely modest resources. We could also identify one or two key membership issues and invest in those alone, but that has an unfortunate potential to be divisive - i.e. will we choose sociologists over other groups, mature researchers over students, international travellers over colleagues who are just as interested but are inclined to work closer to home, regionally or nationally? We could also just leave well enough alone and see what happens, though I do think we'd forfeit something as a result.

As an alternative to the approaches I've just listed, I suggest we try to think about enriching the IVSA membership rather than enlarging it. Could we enrich our membership among sociologists themselves? I certainly think so. What would it take? I'm not sure, but I do know who we should ask - the sociologists who are currently IVSA members and those who might be sometime in the future, the same people who should also be in charge of this particular enrichment effort. What about enriching our membership regionally? Or enriching our membership among undergraduate or graduate students, among scholars working in a particular country or in disciplines and professions other than sociology.

In each of these cases, I'd pose the same questions and suggest similar answers. Are there particular

individuals, or groups, or constituencies who are interested in the IVSA and whose membership could enrich our organisation? If so, which of our current members know them and would be willing to work towards bringing them into the fold?

A disaggregated approach to enriching our membership could encourage inaction, but it also might allow us to move ahead, maintain the inclusive posture we've benefited from in the past, and respond to the interests of current members. And, by 'disaggregated', I do not mean disorganised. We've benefited in the last few years from thoughtful work by Judith Friedman, Doug Harper, Dianna Papademas, Jerry Krase and others in trying to make the IVSA more visible in the ASA. I expect that work to continue, and I'm willing to contribute to that personally by trying to enrich the IVSA/ASA connection at the 2004 ASA meetings in San Francisco. I also admire the efforts of some of our European colleagues to build regional networks and communities that have an IVSA thread running through them - in Greece, Italy, Belgium and the UK. And I'm delighted to find other regional efforts underway in the US, notable among them Brian Gran's work in Kentucky and the indirect but encouraging connection John Grady has maintained with the SALT Institute.

The best strategies for 'enriching' our membership as a whole will also enrich the disciplinary and professional interests of individual members. To assess the potential for that, individual members might ask themselves the following four questions:

1. What colleagues would I really like to bring more fully into the IVSA?

2. Who else within the IVSA might be interested in the same kinds of colleagues as I am?

3. What can I and other IVSA members do as individuals to attract these colleagues and keep them involved?

4. What could the IVSA as an organisation do to help us in that effort?

The IVSA certainly has some membership opportunities and challenges, and there's something to be gained by discussing these collectively. But encouraging current members to answer these four questions - for themselves and for the rest of us - could help ensure that ideals for what the IVSA should become are well-informed by who we are.

Secretary/Treasurer's Message - John Grady - The State Of The IVSA

Membership:
The transition from publishing *Visual Sociology* ourselves to having Taylor and Francis publish *Visual Studies* has forced us to bring our membership rolls up to date. We are now, for the first time in many

years, as up to date as we can ever expect to be. Let me explain.

Sometime during the spring of every year the secretary/treasurer delivers a list of paid-up members to Taylor and Francis. These people will receive issue number one sometime in late spring. Needless to say, there are always new people joining the organisation and some laggards, who do not pay in time to receive issue number one. This does not stop us from taking their money and adding them to the list for issue number two which is sent to Taylor and Francis in the late summer/early fall, for a late fall mailing. At this time those who have not received the first issue of the journal, will receive a special mailing of the same when they receive the second issue. Because the IVSA requires that everyone who attends the IVSA conference in the summer become a member of the IVSA for that year (and thus automatically receive *Visual Studies*), there will always be a sizeable growth in membership in mid-summer.

The IVSA had 247 individual members for 2001. The final tally for 2001 may increase to over 250, when everyone who has not paid his or her dues for that year settles up. For this year, we currently have 229 individual members. I believe that the Santorini conference will add another 100 to the rolls. If past trends persist, around twenty per cent of those enrolled at the conference may renew the following year.

Currently, three quarters of the membership in the IVSA comes from the USA and Canada. Several years ago that figure was two thirds. The growth in North American membership has been due to having our last two conferences in the US. This year's conference in Greece (and next year's in England) should significantly increase the number of non-North Americans in the IVSA.

It is clear to me that, as promising as these membership figures may be the IVSA will need to adopt a coherent and effective recruitment drive over the next several years. Proposals for such a drive will be discussed both on the list serve and at the conference in Greece.

Secretary-Treasurer riding IVSA Budget

Finances:

1. It is hard to know with any precision just how much money we have in the bank, but our current account at Wheaton suggests that we will have no less than $4,000 in the bank after all of our expenses

are paid for this year. It is clear to me that the IVSA can continue to run in the black with its current fee structure and the occasional generous gifts of some of its members. But what surplus we accrue is not enough for us seriously to entertain expenses that might make the organisation more visible and stronger: e.g. scholarships and prizes for students and junior faculty; underwriting conference costs for participants from poorer countries and so on. In fact, part of the reason we are in the black is that Wheaton College has for all intents and purposes underwritten a number of our expenses. These include allocation of clerical and secretarial help; incorporating us as a line item budget in the college and providing us with invaluable financial services, like cashing credit cards and so on.

2. Currently our schedule of fees is as follows: $55 for regular members earning above $50,000; $45 for regular members earning under $50,000; $30 for retirees and $25 for graduate students and unemployed. I think these fees need to be adjusted and am going to propose that we increase them as follows: $60 for regular members earning over $50K; $50 for regular members earning under $50K; $30 for graduate students, unemployed and the retired.

Nancy Allen:

Nancy Allen, who has served as Executive Assistant to the Secretary-Treasurer for the last several years, retired on May 9. She has worked tirelessly and happily for the IVSA during this period. She leaves us not only with an up-to-date set of files for the organisation, but also a record-keeping system that is a boon to me and whoever any of my successors might be. We will all miss Nancy Allen very much.

IVSA Annual Conference

More than 120 papers have been accepted for the forthcoming Annual Conference of the International Visual Sociology Association. The Conference, entitled 'Visualizing Community, State and Nation: Images of Power and Social Bond', is organised by the Department of Communication, Media and Culture, Panteion University, from 13 to 18 July 2002 in the Petros M. Nomikos Conference Centre, in the island of Santorini, Greece.

Two parallel workshops (with special registration fee) will be held on July 13th. The Conference will open in the evening of July 13, with speeches of the IVSA President, the Dean of Panteion University and the Head of the Department of Communication, Media and Culture. An exhibition in the terraces of the Conference Centre will be followed by the welcome party, with a view of the magnificent and famous sunset of Santorini.

During the next days, there will be parallel sessions, with three types of presentations: papers, posters and mixed sessions (also called 'special

sessions'). This last type of presentation will involve both a paper (shorter than paper-only presentations) and a poster with enough time for discussion. All three types of communication are of the same status. Proposals with more visual material were selected to be presented as posters or mixed, while proposals with a theoretical intention were accepted as papers. Six films are also included in the Conference programme.

The IVSA Business Meeting is scheduled for the July 17th, in the afternoon, while several social events are now planned, with the assistance of Heliotopos Ltd, who are working as our Organising Secretariat.

The tentative program of the Conference will be announced soon and posted to the IVSA listserver, as well as to the Conference website (www.panteion.gr/~ivsa2002). You will also be able to register for the Conference and the Workshops and book a room at a hotel via internet, from the website.

For any information contact Yannis Scarpelos (gskarp@panteion.gr).

Editorial From The Next Issue of *Visual Studies*

Welcome to *Visual Studies*. This journal has a long history of working at the forefront of image-based research. Originally it was published in 1986 under the title *Visual Sociology Review* and re-titled *Visual Sociology* in 1991 before metamorphosing again into *Visual Studies* in 2002. Throughout its extensive and distinguished career the journal has continuously evolved to meet the needs visual researchers whatever their backgrounds. Visual research is a rapidly developing and exciting field. *Visual Studies* will represent the case for a more 'seeing' approach to academic enquiry and, through informative articles, reviews and creative exchanges, explore the potential of image-based enquiry.

The aim of this journal is to provide visual researchers with a pivotal forum on issues of a visual nature, whether it be methodological, empirical, symbolic, or ethical. It will include articles on a broad cross section of topics and will be genuinely interested in all work that is visually oriented. The cross-disciplinary and multi-modal nature of the journal will be reflected by the coverage of visual anthropology, visual sociology, visual culture, media studies, documentary photography (moving and still), visual literacy, visual intelligence, communication studies and the visual related to information technology. This cross-disciplinary approach is born out of the belief that visual researchers benefit from reading not only informative articles in their own field, but also from alternative methodologies, innovative methods and techniques from different visual perspectives.

For visual researchers these are exciting times. Our numbers are

expanding, the potential avenues for publishing our work increasing, and non image-based researchers are recognising the significance of the visual in their own studies. With expansion has come a divergence in approaches to visual investigations; a richness and variety which is to be welcomed and celebrated. *Visual Studies* intends to provide researchers, whatever their persuasion, with an international forum where in-depth examination of differing approaches, methods, themes and visual phenomena can be explored and used to enhance mutual understanding. The ultimate aim of this journal is to enable visual researchers to improve their own work and support the image-based community in advancing understanding of the visual world.

The first paper in this edition is essentially concerned with a recurrent question - how should images in general be used in social inquiry? Howard Becker's analysis of A Seventh Man, a book about migrant labour in Europe, by John Berger and Jean Mohr, provides some answers to this question(1). Berger and Mohr have collaborated as writer and photographer for over 35 years and have considerable experience in combining words, numbers and images as evidence(2). Becker examines the structure and content of the book and then sets about asking how the photographs provide evidence for social science arguments. His summative, if somewhat cryptic answer is that Berger and Mohr do this successfully by 'providing specified generalisations, which state a general idea embodied in images of specific people, places, and events'. Berger and Mohr do not use the photographs in a 'sequence' in the colloquial use of that term, nor do they provide a preferred reading of individual or groups of images, or even use them as visual 'quotes'. Howard Becker's explanation of how they employ photographs as compelling evidence is chess-like, making what is clearly a complex problem appear simplistic in execution. This is a 'must read' article that will make you rethink your own use of visual images.

Image elicitation, using drawings, cartoons, video and advertisements within an interview situation, is being increasingly used by empirical visual researchers. It's a powerful way of 'triggering' respondents' memories and drawing out their perceptions. Orthodox qualitative researchers are also showing signs of adopting this technique and are often the first sign of interest in *Visual Studies*. Doug Harper's paper, although focusing specifically on photo elicitation (because it's the most prevalent approach) is a major contribution to the literature on image elicitation. Traditionally we exchange words in an interview but photo elicitation adds a visual dimension which, Harper suggests 'evokes a different character of information'. Using photographs also alters the power relationship placing the interviewee more centre stage and to some extent reflects the concerns of postmodernists and new ethnographers to give 'voice' to those we study. Harper's analysis is profound because it provides an illuminating overview, identifies the origins of photo elicitation and maps

its evolution, spanning disciplines and topics.

Dona Schwartz's article is about gaining media attention and using news coverage to promote a particular viewpoint. Schwartz's paper is an in-depth reflexive account of the relationship between news media reporters collecting stories and photographs, and a group of young political activists aiming to promote their cause via the media. However, what makes her paper special is that it explores not only the needs of news reportage and the strategies and ploys of those who seek to use the media for their own ends, but also the inter-personnel tensions that always exist between two parties who need each other, but whose agendas are different. Written in a deceptively simple style the article has an almost Agatha Christie twist to the plot - Schwartz is the mother of one of the key political activists. In her sensitive and sincere portrayal of what must have been schizophrenic activity as she balanced paternal instincts with professional needs, Schwartz evokes a deep and penetrating insight into her plight. The article tells us much about the 'force fields' acting on those creating and reporting news. The original article for a newspaper on which this paper is based can be found at 'www.picturestories.umn.edu'.

Sol Worth, who did so much to establish the importance of the anthropology of visual communication, was also concerned with the role of 'self' in shaping visual transmission and reception.

His concept of a 'Bio-documentary' film, which he explained as 'a film made by a person to show how he feels about himself and his world', was controversial because the filmmaker was not required to be particularly skilled or conversant with professional practice. The first demonstration of a 'Bio-documentary' film was as a result of the Navajo Filmmakers Project in which a film of the Navajo was made by the Navajo. Worth suggested that 'one should not only look to see how the Navajo live, but one would also look to see how a Navajo sees and structures his own life and the world round him'(3). Andrea Walsh extends and contemporises Worth's notion of 'Bio-documentary' in her study of two First Nation Canadian artists, Greg Staats and Jeffrey Thomas. Walsh, like Worth, celebrates 'insiders'' individual beliefs and their contribution to knowledge about cultures past and present. She draws on the artist's focus (space and place), their non-Indian use of media (photography), and contrasts these with colonial representations of First Nation Peoples. Walsh provides sufficient detail and analysis of the artists' work, which both reflects their individuality and intersects with First Nation culture and contemporary Canadian culture, to disrupt dominant colonial and post-colonial narratives, providing a starting point for alternative readings.

The final two articles both focus on visual analysis and how representation both informs and structures our reading of images. Terrence Wright's paper covers

much ground in his exploration of media representation of refugees. The starting point is a number of questions such as 'what moves people to respond to visual images of forced migration?' that are part of a long term project. However, the parameters for this article quickly narrow to address the still-substantial issue of the role of images in constructing the concept of 'the refugee'. Wright looks at a range of media forms and reflects on historical precedents that may have influenced their production and reading. He suggests that Christian iconography has shaped the 'standard' refugee image with which many of us are familiar, and goes on to propose a link between fictional filmmaking of the 'migrant/road movie' genre and the story line in media depiction of contemporary refugee migration. Wright's article lays the foundation for wide ranging research on the relationship between images and refugees.

Visual anthropology has evolved a sophisticated understanding of material culture that visual researchers can engage with at different levels. Elizabeth Edwards, well known for her work as a curator, archivist and visual anthropologist, has developed a range of interesting ideas drawing on this body of work. The materiality of an image is dependent on technology, social processes and, therefore, the culture that produced it; this has the potential to inform our interpretation of that image. Edwards develops arguments for the consideration of materiality by looking beyond the ethnographic content of historical photographs. Moreover, she suggests that the mode of production, context of reading and format, i.e. their essential materiality needs to be taken into account along side other, more conventional analytical tools of archival imagery.

Finally, I hope you enjoy and benefit from this edition of *Visual Studies.* In some ways this is a 'new' journal since it has changed its name and will be published on behalf of the International Visual Sociology Association by Taylor and Francis. I know that members of the organisation feel very positive about their association with a world renowned publishing house. Nonetheless, some things do not change and this journal will pursue its fundamental aim of meeting the needs and interests of visual researchers.

Notes
(1) This paper was presented initially at the National Portrait Gallery, London in October 2001, as part of the Visual Evidence seminar series funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK. Coincidentally, John Berger and Jean Mohr also gave a paper at Leeds University in April 2001 as part of the series. A book of the Visual Evidence seminars will be published in 2002 and edited by Peter Hamilton, Jon Prosser and Robert Walker.

(2) John Berger and Jean Mohr's most recent work is 'At the Edge of the World' (1999) published by Reaktion Books, London.

(3) Both quotes are to be found in Larry Goss's introduction to Worth's book which Gross edited (1981) Studying Visual Communication. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Budding Visual Sociologists: University of Kentucky's First Annual Visual Sociology Workshop

'Further incorporating visual images into the field of sociology enables us to extend our understanding of the subjects at hand. Photographs freeze a moment in time, and consequently they capture a multitude of social processes and evidence that might have been overlooked.'

This idea is just one example of the many concepts and issues discussed during the University of Kentucky's first annual Visual Sociology Workshop. This workshop was held from May 11 to 13, 2001, and was funded by the American Sociological Association's Teaching Enhancement Fund, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies, and the University of Kentucky Sociology Department. Twenty faculty and students from a broad range of disciplines at University of Kentucky and other nearby universities participated in the three day workshop devoted to learning how visual sociology can enhance our teaching and research efforts. Led by Dr John Grady, Professor of Sociology (Wheaton College, Massachusetts) (an experienced and active visual sociologist and former president of the International Visual Sociology Association) this workshop focused on how novices can use visual images as a form of data to answer and explore sociological questions.

To accomplish this end, we spent a day analysing photographs and documentary films for sociological content. While these conversations clarified our concept of visual sociology and its potential uses, the hands-on component of this workshop allowed us to do visual sociology. The second day we entered the field and spent several hours photographing a local festival to study how 'boundaries' are constructed, regulated, and adhered to within this context. We then returned to the conference room for a slide show, critique, and sharing of our experiences.

This workshop was a fantastic opportunity for novices to discover both the difficulties and rewards of visual sociology. The workshop created an important network of support and sounding board for individuals pursuing visual sociology in their teaching and research. The slideshow and group critique revealed diversity in approaches to sociological research and the richness of data surrounding us. It was also an exercise that could easily be adapted to fit into most sociology courses, and would no doubt raise interest in sociology among an entirely new group of students.

Another outcome of this three-day conference is that the University of Kentucky workshop was the centrepiece of a plenary session during the annual meeting of the International Visual Sociology Association last July. We described our efforts as a 'case study' of what this type of workshop can accomplish for budding visual sociologists. It appears to be the first of its kind, and the IVSA would like to encourage their members to conduct similar workshops for beginners all over the country. Many of our workshop participants intend to present papers at the 2002 IVSA annual meeting.

Moreover, because of the success of this first workshop, we have made plans to extend our discussions. For the 2001-2002 academic year we have institutionalised this forum into a year-long seminar. Because we are not experts in this field, we have occasionally employed a distance-learning approach to enable competent visual sociologists at other universities to teach interested students at University of Kentucky. For instance, Professor Douglas Harper lead a long-distance seminar earlier this spring in which University of Kentucky participants could question Professor Harper about his new book, Changing Works. In addition to these monthly lectures and discussions, seminar participants selected and worked with a media of choice (photography, video, etc). Finally, we are sponsoring a visual sociology workshop from June 19 to June 23 this summer here at the University of Kentucky to focus on more complex issues and approaches to using visual sociology. Professor Jon Rieger of the University of Louisville has agreed to lead this workshop. This workshop will offer learning opportunities for novices as well as for people familiar with visual sociology concepts and questions.

Please contact Nicole Breazeale (ndbrea0@pop.uky.edu), Terri Viggiano (tmvigg0@pop.uky.edu), or Brian Gran (bgran@uky.edu) for further information, including information about the 2002 workshop.

Members' Publications:

vom Lehn, D., C. Heath, and J. Hindmarsh 2001 'Exhibiting Interaction: Conduct and Collaboration in Museums and Galleries', *Symbolic Interaction.* 24(2): 189-216.

Heath, C., P. Luff, D. vom Lehn, and J. Hindmarsh 2002 'Crafting participation: designing ecologies, configuring experience', *Visual Communication.* 1(1): 9-34.

Book Review - Eric Margolis

Smith, Shawn Michelle 1999 *American Archives: Gender. Race, and Class in Visual Culture.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Visual Sociology published a number of important articles examining race, for example, analysing stereotypes in popular culture or ways that images of race are 'read' in advertisements. However there is a substantial literature on race and the visual by non-sociologists whose scholarship has much to offer. Shawn Michelle Smith teaches English, but she exercises that 'sociological' imagination that C. Wright Mills advocated to relate 'private troubles to public issues'. Her project, as she writes in the introduction, is to examine 'how nineteenth-century middle-class Americans utilised visual conceptions of identity to claim a gendered and radicalised cultural privilege' (p.4).

In a well-illustrated chapter called 'Superficial Depths' she revisits the surveillance function of photography explored by John Tagg and Alan Sekula. Adding race and gender to the analysis, she examines how middle class women produced images to distinguish themselves from the purportedly deviant. Smith sheds light on the construction of social class and gender by contrasting rogues gallery photographs of the 'body' with photos designed to capture the 'soul' or interior essence thought to be a middle class attribute.

The heart of the book is two chapters on African American photographs. Smith examines Southern images of 'true womanhood' and African American struggles to reclaim the image of black womanhood. The discussion of highly popular 'family records' in which snapshots were pasted into pre-printed frames depicting events of slavery and emancipation, depicts an important use of family photographs that connects two rising groups, African Americans and women. The chapter called 'Photographing the American Negro' examines photographs from the Paris Exposition of 1900, presented in the 'Palace of Social Economy.' Smith compares portraits assembled by W.E.B. Du Bois, with shots of the Hampton Institute made by Frances Benjamin Johnston, a white woman photographer. The resulting examination is a sophisticated and nuanced view of visual codes and systems of reform that were being bought to bear on what whites termed the 'Negro problem.' American Archives is an important contribution to a sociology of 19th century photographs.