The Coming of
Photography in
India

The Coming of Photography in India

CHRISTOPHER PINNEY

For Robert and Thomas,
and their love of India,
and the camera
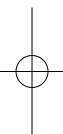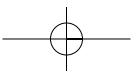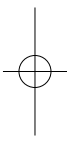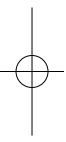
Contents
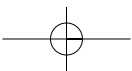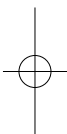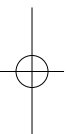
Acknowledgements

This book is a revised version of the Panizzi Lectures delivered at The British Library in 2006. I am grateful for the invitation by the lecture committee to address the history of photography in India through the framework of debates concerning the history of the book. In connection with the logistics of the lectures and organisation of illustrations for the current book I'd sincerely like to thank Chris Michaelides and John Falconer. John Falconer's seminal research on early photography in India needs also to be underlined. His immense labour and the generosity he has shown in sharing unpublished elements of it have contributed in a very fundamental manner to whatever I have been able to achieve in the present text. I wish also to express my appreciation of the quiet efficiency of the staff of the Africa and Asia reading room and the prints and drawings room in The British Library.

The Panizzi Lectures provide an opportunity to focus on materials in The British Library, but as will be readily apparent I have also had recourse to other collections. Chief among these is the Alkazi Collection of Photography in Delhi, New York and London. In addition to recording Ebrahim Alkazi's foresight and generosity, I would like to note the invaluable assistance offered by Rahaab Allana, Esa Epstein and Stéphanie Roy Bharath. Thanks are also due to Howard and Jane Ricketts for generously showing me relevant parts of their collection and for permitting me to reproduce an image. Research in other archives has also fed into this project in various ways and I am grateful for the trouble taken by the staffs of the National Archive of India (Delhi), the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Delhi) and the Special Collections room at Northwestern University Library.

I was able to clarify my thinking about the central issues addressed here while in India under the auspices of a British

Abbreviations

ACP   Alkazi Collection of Photography

BL   The British Library

BPS   Bengal Photographic Society

IOLR   India Office Library Records

JBPS   *Journal of the Bengal Photographic Society*

JPSB   *Journal of the Photographic Society of Bombay*

PSB   Photographic Society of Bombay

1 (*left*). 'Don't move or you won't come out at all!' The sitter's anxious gaze directs our attention to the *event* – the encounter between this young woman and the photographer – that this image records. Carte-de-visite, *c.* 1880s (private collection).

2 (*right*). 'Make me look like a proper king, he ordered. …' Cabinet card *c.* 1870s-1880s (private collection).

Chapter 1

Photography as Cure

No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed his subject, the beholder feels an irresistible urge to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of the here and now, with which reality has (so to speak) seared the subject, to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it. (Walter Benjamin, 'A Little History of Photography')[1]

IT IS YOUR FIRST TIME. Your father insisted. He almost forced you into the itinerant photographer's enclosure. The photographer is distracted and mutters, pointing to the chair. He fiddles with the lens and adjusts the plate underneath the cloth. He isn't happy about something and tells you to fold your hands on your lap, to look directly at the camera and remain very still. Don't move or you won't come out at all! You gaze at the machine, your body pinned in the chair, the solid base of a triangle whose sharp mysterious point is the glinting lens.

It was a squeeze getting through the door and the photographer shouted at us as we scraped against his drapes with our swords. We started to unsheathe them but the photographer became angry, shouting that he didn't want his studio cut to a thousand pieces. Pratapsingh sat in the throne and told the photographer to stop complaining and to get on with making the best picture he could. Make me look like a proper king, he ordered, and told us that we should all try and look like proper thakurs, not a bunch of adivasis. Angry, fierce, he said: feel the hot blood flowing in our veins, and get that in the picture, photoman. Full, strong picture, he shouted, something to really scare the lower castes, so they would know who was the real boss. When they saw this picture they'd think twice about letting their shadow fall on a great man like Pratapsinghji.

These imaginative reconstructions of picture-making events are
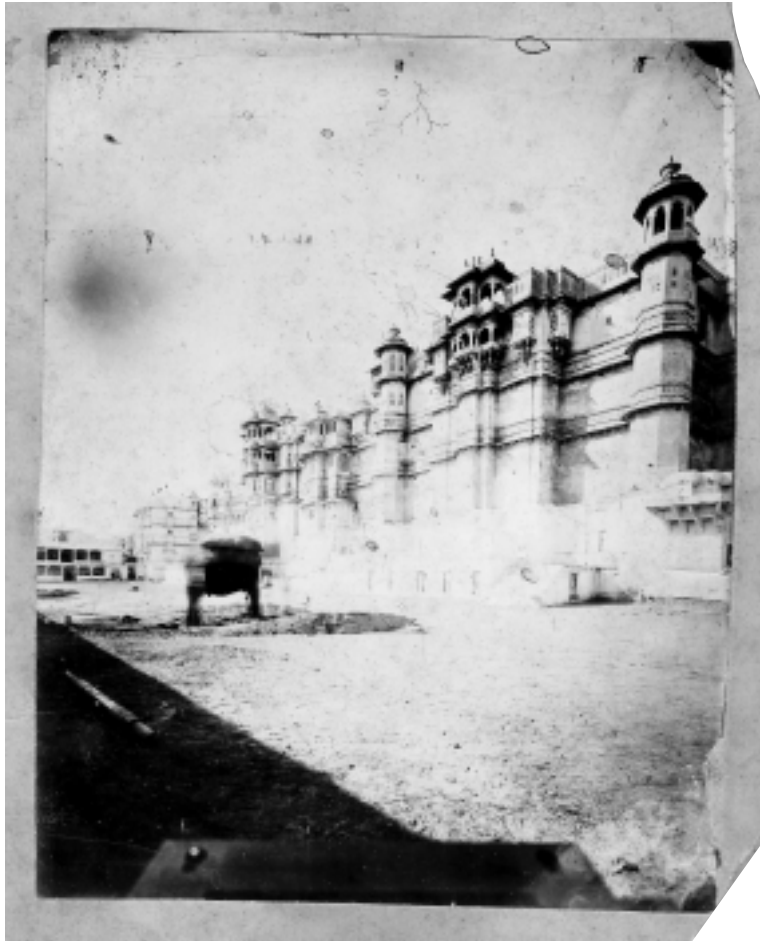
3. Every element in this image which might be accounted a failure – the blurred elephant, the deep shadow in the foreground, the numerous scratches to the negative, simultaneously attest to the camera's *inability to exclude*. Our assessment of it as a failure involves the imagination of a different, utopian, scenario that might have been placed in front of the camera. Everything here – within the protocols of photography – is entirely successful. Udaipur City Palace, *c*. 1880 (private collection).

made possible by a particular quality of photography – its 'data ratio', 'noise' or 'exorbitance' – the recognition of which is central to the argument advanced in this book. Different media record different kinds of events. An image such as a painting is a record of an event, but primarily the event of the painter's relation with the canvas. Paintings leave us physical traces, but they are the traces of the painter's body, the position of a hand holding a brush as it leaves

[2]

a particular mark, an involuntary flick as an elbow flexed. Photographs reflect the intentionalities and ideologies of their makers, just as paintings do. However, the photographic event is different, and for this reason photography's 'data ratio' is quite unlike that of painting. As Roland Barthes writes, 'in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past. And since this constraint exists only for Photography, we must consider it, by reduction, as the very essence, the *noeme* of Photography.'[2]

Because this argument is so critical to what follows – and not least becuase it differs from positions with which the current author has been associated in the past – it is crucial that it be expressly clearly. Much of what follows in this book stems from the proposition that we need to understand photography as a technical practice (a practice of course which is remarkably fluid and supple) in order to understand its complex history in India. My suggestion is that the complexity of this history is in significant part a reflection of this protean technical base. In due course we shall consider the changing incarnation of photographic apparatus (including what happens as it gets smaller and cheaper). We will also consider questions of spatiality and phenomenology in relation both to the acts of *making* the photograph and of *viewing* the image which ensues.

First, however, I should clarify my assumptions about the semiotic and evidential nature of the photographic image. I foreground the physical procedure of light reflected off objects entering the lens and leaving its trace on the photographic plate. The photographer who is marshalling the complex equipment to facilitate this will no doubt be burdened by a host of aesthetic and political encumbrances. But no matter what the intention or ideology of the photographer, the image they produce is always a record of the event of the entrance of light through a lens.

The term *index* (devised by the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce) is often used to describe this quality of causal contiguity. Peirce distinguished indexes from icons and symbols, writing that the index 'refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object'.[3] Further, indexes are not dependent on 'association by resemblance' or upon 'intellectual operations', but depend instead on 'association by contiguity'.[4] 'The referent adheres',[5] as Barthes puts it. The art historian Rosalind Krauss – the

leading contemporary exponent of this idea of the photograph as index – provides a much stronger interpretation of this in which many of Peirce's nuances are discarded.[6] Motivated in large part by Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*,[7] she refers to photographs as 'imprint[s] or transfers off the real … a photochemically processed trace causally connected to that thing in the world to which it refers'.[8] This is – to my mind – a highly productive way of thinking about photography, albeit one which I willingly concede diverges from Peirce's original formulation. However, much (indeed most) recent theorisation of photography[9] condemns such a position as naively affirming early photography's own self-mythologisation as the *Pencil of Nature*.[10] To affirm photography as index – as a 'transfer of the real', they argue, is to ask the viewer to believe that photography is somehow 'true'.[11]

Here we see how a massive and absurd category error has blighted the theoretical understanding of photography, for such positions fail to discriminate between the photograph as a record of what was placed in the camera and the (completely different) question of whether what was placed in front of the camera was the *appropriate* matter to place there. Critiques of the manner in which the *photograph* 'lies' or 'distorts' turn out to be complaints that *photographers* have lied. Towards the end of chapter 3 we will explore photography's role as 'prophecy' and see that it is the fact that photography is bound to record what is placed before it that facilitates its development as an improvisational and experimental zone: a European in 'Indian costume' looks like an Indian (see pp. 138-9); a woman who is photographed out of *parda* becomes – in the photograph – a woman with a visible face (see pp. 138-42). What the photograph records is the fact of manifestation of what is placed in front of the camera: not the atypicality of the act or performance.[12]

Photography also entails a paradox, for the very capture of light on film implies an inerradicable surfeit. If we think of the painter's imagination and brush as a filter capable of complete exclusion, then the lens of the camera can never be closed for something extraneous will always enter it.[13] No matter how precautionary and punctilious the photographer is in arranging everything that is placed before the camera, the lens's inability to discriminate will ensure a substrate or margin of excess. However hard the photographer tries to *exclude*, the camera lens always *includes*. This reflects what Margaret Iversen

calls the 'blindness' of the camera, 'its inability to censor',[14] and facilitates the photograph's access to what Elizabeth Edwards resonantly describes as 'raw histories'.[15] Walter Benjamin theorised this in the 1930s as the 'tiny spark of contingency' that inheres within the photograph, reflecting the fact that it has been messily 'seared' with reality.

Because so much debate about photography has chosen the unhelpful dichotomy of truth and falsity, it may appear that I want to weigh in on the side of 'truth'. I have tried to make quite explicit how far this is from my intention, and the extent to which I consider this to be the 'wrong' sort of question, albeit one which (unfortunately) seems incapable of dying. My concerns lie at a completely different tangent to these stale debates and focus instead on what Friedrich Kittler terms 'data ratios'. Whereas debates valorising the impossible antimonies of the true and the false dramatise a conflict between – on the one hand – a utopian lack of mediation and – on the other – the imposition of the photographer's ideology, attending to different image technologies' data ratios permits us to understand how the same technology might – at different times – throw up radically different kinds of effects. Data ratios permit us to understand photography as a chemical trace without valorising it as truth.

The title of this book and of the series of Panizzi lectures on which it is based – *The Coming of Photography in India* – alludes to Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin's 1958 *L'Apparition du livre* (translated into English as *The Coming of the Book*).[16] In establishing this resonance I hope to explore a set of key questions which have preoccupied historians of the book but which have largely passed historians of photography by. Roland Barthes notes this unwillingness of photographic historians to ask what photography *changed*: 'Odd that no one has thought of the *disturbance* (to civilisation) which this new action causes.'[17] Just as Febvre and Martin sought to investigate, in an extremely nuanced manner, the impact of printing as an agent of transformation, I will endeavour here to describe what photography (in contradistinction to earlier technologies and practices) made possible and impossible. Is photography simply a kind of external commentary and reflection of a society and history which is immutable, or does it enter a complex conversation with unpredictable consequences? Did photography produce a 'disturbance'? If so, what kind was it, and of what magnitude?

[5]

Within debates about print culture there has been a general complication and repudiation of the transformational claims of earlier narratives. Febvre and Martin's subtle conclusions included the suggestion that printing had empowered and standardised national vernaculars, and in the process undermined the centrality of Latin. Standardisation produced a paradoxical effect of localisation. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein[18] made a stronger set of claims for the ways in which the fixity and velocity of printed texts was one factor in the Reformation and the scientific revolution. These claims have subsequently been questioned by Roger Chartier, Adrian Johns and David McKitterick, among others who have drawn attention to the instability and variability of texts, and the late appearance of 'authorship'.[19] In an Indian context Francesca Orsini, Anindita Ghosh and Stuart Blackburn have engaged the relationship of print to the emergence of a Hindi public sphere, the growing power of plebeian print culture, and the tenacity of a folkloric imagination.[20]

Although my title genuflects to these important debates, I am also aware that the oppositions they often invoke are – to borrow a term from the social theorist Bruno Latour – *purified*. They are purified in the sense that far from being truly alternative positions, they map a complementarity (positively and negatively phrased). We are presented with what appears to be a choice – a *revolution* precipitated by moveable type, *continuity* guaranteed by the resilience of mankind – but this choice can be shown to be a chimera produced by a process of historical titration. Pro-print *and* pro-reader arguments, or to put it differently but identically, pro-technology *and* pro-human positions, might be complementary. As Latour puts it, the idea of technology as embodying an 'autonomous destiny' which no human can master, and its apparent opposite the myth of technology as a 'neutral tool' under complete human control, are mutually dependent.[21] For Latour this reflects a historical process of purification: in seventeenth-century Europe subjects and objects, humans and non-humans, culture and nature were purified or separated, and in their duality came to form the foundations of our modern constitution. The birth of 'man' and the birth of 'non-humanity' (including 'things' and 'technologies') were simultaneous, Latour convincingly argues.[22]

In the light of this, it would be otiose to take a position on either of these sides, in the sense of being understood to advance an

argument that photography is *either* a determining force, *or* it is completely overridden by the pre-existing agency of humans. As Latour has shown, these are two sides of the same coin. Instead, what I will attempt to do here is elaborate a different kind of modality of analysis in which photography appears as a force with blurred and unknowable limits, intersecting with equally fluid subjectivities. Latour comments on the mistake made by those who 'start with essences, those of subjects and those of objects', urging instead a fluid, 'networked' approach in which 'we must learn to attribute – redistribute – actions to many more agents than are acceptable in either the materialist or the sociological account'.[23]

One of Adrian John's complaints about Elizabeth Eisenstein's concept of 'print culture' concerned the way in which her notion of printing stood outside history, and he claimed that her notion of culture was completely placeless and timeless. Whatever faults my account of photography in India has, I hope that it will not be seen as lacking in an invocation of the material specificity of time and place, for this is central to my purpose in recreating 'photographic events'. I mean here events in the sense of conjunctions of apparatus with photographers and subjects: I am wholly un-interested in photographs as embodiments of a de-materialised phantasmatic ideology.[24] Conversely, however, too much specificity of a particular 'culture' leads only to the reinscription of a dichotomy from which we must struggle to escape.

With photography we engage a fantastically protean technology, and a fluid and revolutionary medium engaged in an endless series of transformations: from daguerreotype to calotype, wet collodion to dry plate, glass to nitrate, bulky wooden and brass cameras to box brownies, to nearly invisible spycams. And we will see it used by amateurs and professionals, British colonials and Indians, rulers and subalterns. For some – such as John Tagg – this diversity of practice dissolves that very technology which originates it: 'photography as such does not exist … it is flickering across institutional spaces'.[25] The conclusion of this mode of analysis is that technologies are simply the congeries of uses to which they are put. I believe that that there is much more to be said.

The German media theorist Friedrich Kittler offers many pleas-urably bracing slogans. Among these we might include the opening words of his remarkable *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 'media

determine our situation … '.[26] To this we could add the astonishing claim, from an earlier work, that '"media science" (*Medienwissenschaft*) will remain mere "media history" as long as the practitioners of cultural studies "know higher mathematics only from hearsay".'[27] This is a delicious riposte to all those who have strangled media in the name of heroic sovereign humans, but it would be a grave error to embrace the 'non-human' in such a simplistic manner. I hope I have already indicated, in my brief discussion of Latour, how this would only lead us back to an old debate to which we do not wish to return.

However, there is much in Kittler's work that we might cannibalise for our own, rather different, purposes. Kittler provides an invigorating vocabulary which can help us to rethink familiar problems. Chief among these is the notion of 'data ratio'. Photography and phonography, to cite Kittler's expert interpreters Winthrop-Young and Wutz, 'shifted the boundaries that distinguished noise from meaningful sounds, random visual data from meaningful picture sequences, unconscious and unintentional inscriptions from their conscious and intentional counterparts'.[28]

But there is also a new angle of vision that can be brought to Kittler's arguments which, at the very moment it might dispute the direction and intensity with which Kittler pushes them, also recognises their insight and usefulness – once suitably corrupted – for the narrative advanced in this book.

Winthrop-Young and Wutz wittily rename Kittler as Marshall McNietzsche for the way in which he combines McLuhanite concerns with the relationship between the sensorium and technology and the older Nietzsche's pre-occupation with the relationship between thought and technology (due in part, the Kittlerite hypothesis has it, because he was the first philosopher to use a typewriter). 'Our writing tools are also working on our thoughts',[29] Nietzsche wrote in one of his few typed letters (produced on a Danish writing ball machine which – like the photography of the time – rendered the letter invisible at the moment of inscription.)[30] In *On the Genealogy of Morals* (written, Winthrop-Young and Wutz remind us, 'crouched over his mechanically defective writing ball') he records the loss of the bringing forth of 'voice, soul, [and] individuality through their handwriting'. 'On the contrary,' he concludes, 'humans change their position – they turn from the agency of writing to become an inscription surface.'

[8]

To reduce Indians and Europeans in India to mere 'inscription surfaces' of a technology would be as pointless as attempting to demonstrate that there was 'no such thing' as photography since it was thoroughly constituted by – and exhausted by – its historical and cultural specificity. An exploration of the impact of photography's new 'data ratios', a tracing of its protean 'technomaterial' base, and the manner in which it was 'working' on the thought and practice of photographers and consumers will, however, help us to access some surprising consequences of the coming of photography in India.

The first photographs in India

The excitement that attended early photography derived not only from what it had already achieved in the course of its short career, but also from the prospect of what it might make possible. In October 1839, William O'Shaughnessy (whose creation of a tele-graphic network in India will feature in chapter 3) reported to a meeting of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta on his experiments with the new *photogenic drawing* 'which was exciting so much attention' in Europe.[31] Daguerre's discovery also provoked three long articles on the subject in the *Bombay Times* in December of the same year,[32] and by January 1840 the Calcutta firm of Thacker, Spink & Co. was advertising daguerreotype cameras for sale.[33] By 5 March 1840 *The Calcutta Courier* was able to record what were almost certainly the first daguerreotypes produced in India. Reporting on a 'highly delighted' meeting at the Asiatic Society the *Courier* noted how 'Several [photographs] were exhibited to the meeting, of the Esplanade and other parts of Calcutta. … In one part of one of the drawings a black speck was observable to the naked eye, but with a microscope of great power it would be seen that the speck rep-resented a kite which was at that moment perched [on] the building – and though so small, even the wings and tail of the bird could, with a lens be easily distinguished so minute and yet so true to life was the picture.'[34] The following day *The Englishman and Military Chronicle* noted 'No language can describe the incredible beauty of these delineations, of which three or four, taken from a house in Chowringhee, were exhibited to the meeting; and admirable as they appear to the eye, when examined with the microscope, they are found to have reproduced traits, which the eye cannot discern in the

4. William O'Shaugnessy, a pioneer in photography and telegraphy, at work in the Medical College, Calcutta (BL, unaccessioned image).

buildings, unless by the minutest scrutiny.' This enthusiasm for the prosthesis that photography proffered and its creation of what – much later – the German writer Ernst Jünger would term a photographic 'second consciousness'[35] will feature extensively in my narrative below.

Although the earliest Indian photographs in the British Library collection date from the early 1850s, the earliest extant photographic images from India are most likely a group of twenty-three salt-fixed calotypes and three photograms probably made by a female photographer in Uttar Pradesh between 1843 and 1845. These images, formerly in the Paul F. Walter Collection, were assembled in a keepsake album, together with sketches and manuscript poetry. The photograms are traces of leaves; the calotypes document street scenes, temples and the gothic church at Cawnpore.[36]

In Bombay the inaugural meeting of the Photographic Society of Bombay was held in the rooms of the Geographical Society, in the Town Hall on Tuesday 3 October 1854, with Captain Harry Barr in the chair and the Governor of Bombay, Lord Elphinstone, as Patron.[37] Barr was keen to assert at the outset that photography in
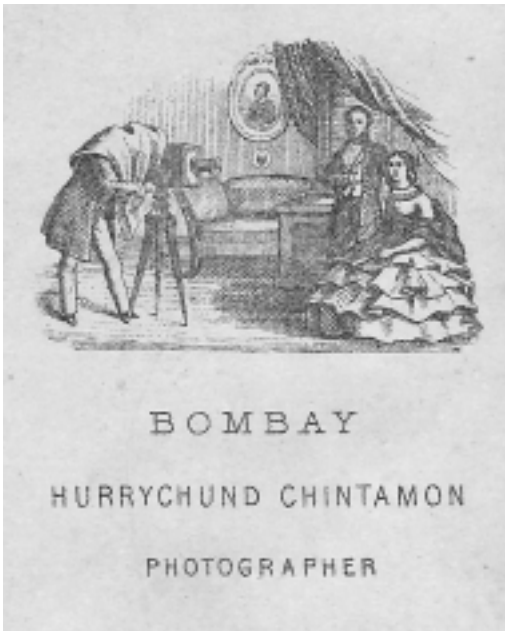
5. Hurrychand Chintamon's device on the reverse of a carte-de-visite, *c.* 1860. Photographers such as Chintamon, a product of the Elphinstone Institute's Photography Class, would contribute to the infrastructure for the industrial production of 'sentimental realism' (private collection).

Bombay was in no way to be considered a 'belated' version of London photography. He told the assembled members that: 'India, I need hardly point out … offers a vast field to the Photographer … [which] should incite us to the practice of an Art, of which the beauty and utility are only surpassed by its truthfulness. …'[38]

The records of the first meeting document thirteen founder members of whom three were Indian (Venaik Gungathur Shastree, Ardaseer Cursetjee and Dr Bhao [Bhau] Dajee, M.D., of whom we shall hear more shortly). Within the first year of the Bombay Society's founding there were already 'upwards of one hundred members'; by late 1855 it had attracted over 250 members and in the year after that further photographic societies were formed in Calcutta and Madras.

In 1855 in Bombay the Elphinstone Institution opened a photography class which attracted forty pupils,[39] including Indians such as Hurrychand Chintamon, winner of the Rs. 50 government-sponsored prize at the end of that year, who went on to run a commercial studio competing with the dozens of other Indian-run concerns.

The extent of the Bombay Government's enthusiastic support of photography was underlined by Dr Buist at a meeting on 3 June

1855.[40] He reported that 'Government here and at home had shown the utmost anxiety to promote the Art of Photography'. Captain Biggs (of the Bombay Army) exhibited many photographs together with 'a very handsome Photographic apparatus for Pictures 15 by 12 finished in Ross'[s] best style, and fitted with a set of Ross's double and single Lenses, a present to him from the Court of Directors [of the East India Company]'.[41] In Calcutta the Bengal Society enjoyed similar benefits reflecting the Governor General Canning and his wife's keen interest in photography.

Alongside officially supported photographers such as Biggs, a number of Indian photographers were displaying their work at meetings of the Bombay Society. At a General Meeting on 17 January 1855, several prints by Narain [Narayen] Dajee (the brother of Bhau Dajee) were exhibited and admired. These productions gave evidence, the Society's journal noted, 'of the rapid advance in the art made by our Native gentry'. What are probably the original displays are now in the Alkazi Collection of Photography. Around a dozen images[42] are pasted – usually three at a time – on boards, often with letterpress descriptions, and present a fascinating *tour d'horizon* of mid-nineteenth-century western India, seen through the eyes of a young doctor, a rising member of Bombay's emergent civil society.

Narayen Dajee's images depict mosques in Gujarat, Jain priests and Kolis (fishermen) in Bombay, and Jain Temples at Palitana, and all have letterpress captions pasted alongside the images with the date 1855. Two of the most interesting of Dajee's images depict 'A Native Travelling Bullock Cart' and 'Gujarat Ryots, Bora Cultivators'. These seem to testify to Dajee's interest in rural work and transport, but also reveal how photography at this moment is forced to abstract and freeze labour and movement in static tableaux. The camera is always an actor in the performances staged for it: the Bora cultivators have to be ushered from their field into an improvised studio area. Their hoes and axes – once in front of the camera – are transformed from functional tools into problematic accessories in an aesthetic project. In the pose of the bullock-cart driver, we can see the effort that has been made to align his vehicle with the camera. These are performances: but also traces in which we can see a wariness in the cultivators: their low status and vulnerability, fixed in their uneasy gaze as they confront the camera,

PHOTOGRAPHY AS CURE

6. These agricultural labourers in Gujarat seem to have wandered straight from the field in which they were working. Narayen Dajee's image was exhibited at the Photographic Society of Bombay in January 1855 (ACP 2005.01.0001(11)).
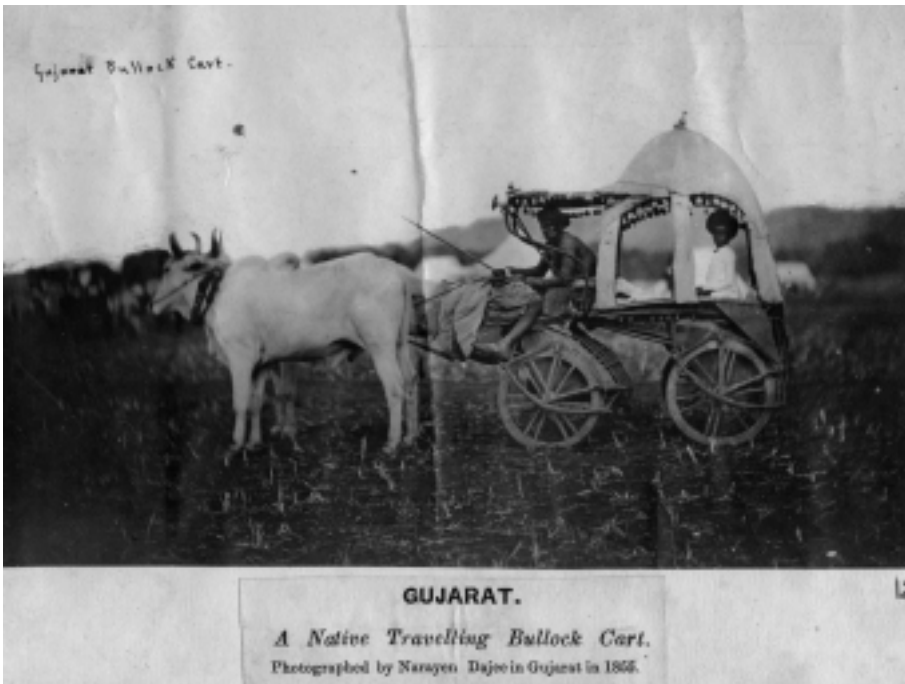
7. The traveller halted. Dajee's images necessarily demanded stasis but our eye is always drawn to the 'off-screen' space. Where were they coming from, where were they headed? Narayen Dajee, 1855 (ACP 2005.01.0001(13)).

[13]

contrasts with the curious attentiveness of the bullock-cart's higher status passenger.

Dajee's work also pre-emptively answered the Reverend Joseph Mullens' complaint to the Bengal Photographic Society in October 1856 that photographers in India 'have shewn a *want of purpose* in their various proceedings, and [that] Members have no clear idea of what their Photographic practice is to do. …'[43] Mullens maps the timid photographic topography already delineated by most aspirant photographers: 'the ingenious expedient of taking the view from our house verandah or from the roof: we have all practiced upon our servants, and taken advantage of an auspicious moment to focus the bullock cart employed in conveying goods from next door … everyone has tried his hand on Government House, and both the Dhurrumtollah Mosque and St. Paul's Cathedral have been especially popular'.[44] Mullens then declared the desirability of a 'more complete and systematic' photographic endeavor to document the 'perfect specimen of all the minute varieties of Oriental Life; of Oriental Scenery, Oriental nations and Oriental manners'.[45]

In the same year a new monthly publication, Johnson and Henderson's *Indian Amateurs' Photographic Album*, appeared in Bombay. Published monthly until 1858, under the patronage of the Bombay Photographic Society from the Photographic Depot and Portrait Rooms, in Fort, Bombay, each issue contained three photographic prints with accompanying descriptions and cost Rs. 7 and 8 annas. The publishers, Messrs. Williams and Co., invited submissions 'from local and up-country Amateurs, the loan of negatives, whether Glass or Paper, contributors being entitled to a Copy of the Album gratis for each negative selected for publication'.[46]

In all these early enthusiasms for this new technology, a recurrent refrain concerns what the Joseph Mullens in the talk detailed above would call its 'stern fidelity'.[47] An album in the British Museum juxtaposing small albumen portraits with the dried skeleton of vegetable forms plays out in a fascinating way this sense of photography as non-conventional, that is, transcending − by virtue of its indexicality − code-based systems of representation. Pre-photographic images always depended on the trustworthiness of the author/artist and many early volumes of lithographs included assurances of the closeness of fit between the image and the reality. Here what mattered was what Anthony Pagden terms 'autopicism' − the
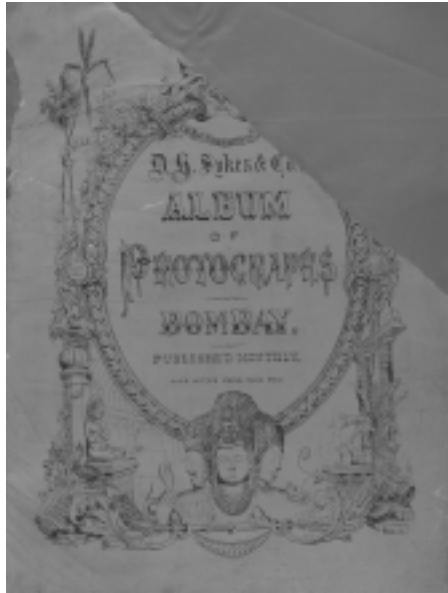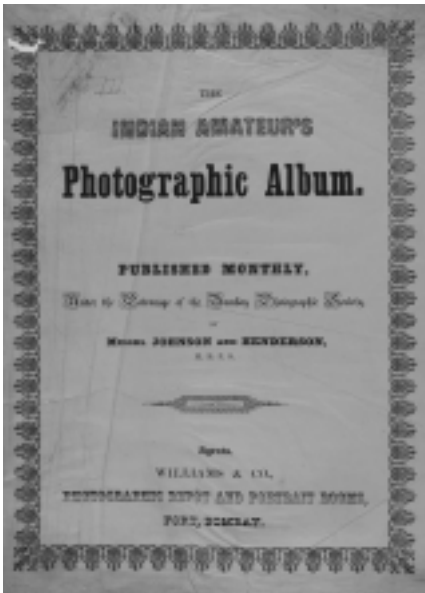
8 (*left*). Each issue containing three photographic prints, Johnson and Henderson's 1856-8 publication offered amateurs the prospect of a national audience. Some of these images would later appear in Johnson's *The Oriental Races and Tribes, Residents and Visitors of Bombay* (1863, 1866) (BL, Photo 140 (ephemera bound at back of album)).

9 (*right*). Adorned with the Elephanta *trimurti*, Sykes' publication appeared monthly in 1872 at a cost of Rs. 10 (BL, Photo 140 (ephemera bound at back of album)).

authority of the eye witness – and as he shows in his discussion of the debate between the sixteenth-century Spaniards Las Casas and Oviedo, the claims to authority were hard to establish.[48] Photography required no additional autoptic testimony, for eyewitnessing was the ontological condition of the very existence of the photograph. The Bombay Society's *Journal* provided the most florid testimony of the new fidelity observing 'with much satisfaction' the Court of Directors' support for Biggs's attempt to 'obtain Photographic *Fac Similes* of the Caves and Temples of Western India'. The Government had already expended 'enormous sums' to reproduce Indian antiquities by pre-photographic means including oil paintings. But 'it will still remain a question … how far they are to be relied upon as accurate, and how much of the details are to be set down to that peculiar species of "license" which "poets and Painters" are proverbially partial to'. 'Should Captain Biggs prove

10. The autoptic trace: a small albumen print and dried flora juxtaposed in ontological equivalence. From an 1860s album in the Britsh Museum (neg. no. 74803 AOA).

successful,' the journal continued, 'Photography will have accomplished a stupendous undertaking, and the Court of Directors will be placed in possession of a series of Photographic views, from which Oil Paintings of any size might be made, which shall combine the truth and faithfulness of the "PENCIL OF THE SUN" with the grace and beauty of the "PAINTER'S BRUSH".'[49]

In this and the next chapter, 'Photography as Poison', I shall map two seemingly opposed, but I claim, complementary dimensions of photography. Here I have been describing an early enthusiasm for photography's *cure* of existing representational problems. The

daguerreotype and the calotype – with their descriptive intensity – appeared to supersede and resolve the deficiencies of earlier systems. In the next chapter I shall examine some uses of photography which made the colonial state – in some instances – extremely anxious. Photography's qualities as cure and poison stemmed from the same source. My argument here invokes two levels of rationalisation. One is abstract and philosophic and will seek support from Jacques Derrida's discussion of the unstable nature of the 'remedy' that is Plato's *pharmakon* or pharmacy (more on this below). The other is banal and mechanical, and reflects the fact that the 'data ratios' that photography generated reflected a supple and changing technical practice. In the mid-nineteenth century these data ratios could be produced only by bulky and expensive equipment which required significant logistical support. We shall shortly examine some of these constraints at work in the practices of John Murray, James Water-house and Samuel Bourne. The supple nature of photographic technology entailed a progressive miniaturisation of equipment and mobility of the photographer towards the end of the nineteenth century. Photography's central technological claim – its chemical connection to reality – was thus continually re-inscribed through a fabulously protean material base. But this chemical (indexical) claim remained central to all photographic practice until the dawn of the digital age in the late twentieth century.

Let me restate this central shape of the history which is so fundamental to the narrative I am trying to develop here. The history of British colonial engagement with photography in India can be seen to have a symmetrical form. From the announcement of photography in 1839 until (very roughly) the beginning of the twentieth century, photography was perceived as a cure. It was seen as a solution to the weaknesses and corruptions of earlier practices of representation. Its *positivity* lay in its indexicality. As the twentieth century progressed, however, photography was increasingly viewed as a curse. Deployed by agents other than the colonial state it revealed its dangerous ability to store juridical evidence. Its *negativity* was now seen to lie in that self-same indexicality. The data ratio would prove to be politically dangerous.

Photography's optical unconscious

It is important to frame the increasingly routinised nature of photo-
graphic activity in the nineteenth century through the prism of the
enormous excitement and sense of infinite potentiality that first
attended experiments with photography. Photography's inviolability
seemed to make possible not only the precise description of the
world, but a kind of limitless scrutiny beyond the mere appearance
of the image.

A classic example of this appeared in Norman Chevers's remark-
able text *A Manual of Medical Jurisprudence*, first published in
1856. Chevers, the Secretary of the Medical Board in Calcutta, noted
that 'there could scarcely be a doubt that PHOTOGRAPHY would,
before many years elapsed, be employed throughout India as a
means of identifying bodies, anticipating the disfigurement of rapid
decay, and enabling the magistrate and the civil surgeon to examine,
in their offices, every detail of a scene of bloodshed, as it appeared
when first disclosed to the police, in a place perhaps sixty miles from
the *sudder* station, which no activity on the part of the police or
themselves could enable them to visit in time.'[50]

Chevers here grants photography powers over time and space:
decay can be arrested through the frozen image of the corpse, the
location of a murder can be studied sixty miles away in the police
station. This networking and de-territorialising feature of photogra-
phy will be examined in much more detail in chapter 3 when I
consider its entanglement with telegraphy; the new idioms of
historicity which the photographic image's 'there-then-here-now'
(to invoke Roslyn Poignant) facilitated will also be subsequently
elaborated.

By the time of the second edition of his *Manual* in 1870, Chevers
is able to report on some advances, but it is striking how much
remains speculative. He is able to report that in 1868 it was 'photo-
graphs by which alone the remains of Rose Brown whose dead body
was found in a Calcutta Street with the throat cut'[51] were identified,
and he reproduces one of these photographs in his account. The
photograph's value resided not simply in its ability to freeze time,
and to translocate space, but also to serve as a simulacral body.
Chevers is much concerned with the difficulty of establishing – in
the words of one of his sub-headings – *'What is Truth?'* Many recent

11. The prosthetic body: the photograph of Rose Brown, the victim of the Calcutta 'Amherst Street Murder', which permitted the identification of her remains in 1868. From the 2nd edition of Norman Chevers's *Manual of Medical Jurisprudence in India* (1870) (BL, V.3587, opp. p. 74).

legal judgements, he notes, have signalled 'the untrustworthiness of native evidence in India'.[52] Chever's *Manual* is a massively extended eulogy to (in his words) 'that silent witness who never lies – the Corpse'. Chevers engages with photography as a duplicate body, a matrix of forensic marks of a past event. In my third chapter I shall touch on the way in which photographic protocols would reconfigure notions of historicity and the treatment of evidence in the Indian legal system.

The truth of the photographic corpse aside, Chevers still presents a vision of photography as a practice whose true potential remains opaque. Looking back at his earlier prognostications he notes that: '*we have yet to judge* the effect which would be produced upon the conscience of a hardened savage, obstinate in the denial of guilt, by placing before him, in the stereoscope, the actual scene of his atrocity – the familiar walls, the charpoy, the ghastly faces – as they last appeared to his reeling vision – the sight which haunted his brain every hour since the act was done – while he believed to certainty, that its reality could never come before his eyes again.'

Here photography, incarnated three-dimensionally through the stereoscope, serves as the ultimate simulacram. In Chever's fantasy, a half-century-long visual practice, which through panoramas and dioramas[53] conjured a virtually-real India available for incorporation into the knowledge/power registers of colonialism, was now to be turned back onto the actual terrain of the country as a pragmatic tool of police power. The two images of the stereoscope, combining to produce effects 'so heightened as to produce an appearance of reality which cheats the senses with its seeming truth',[54] re-animated past time and distant space with an ineluctable potency.

[19]

The most striking example of this prosthetic ambition is actually imported into the 1863 *Journal of the Bengal Photographic Society* from the *British Journal of Photography* but reported with such glee by the Bengal journal that we are left with a clear sense of how this resonated with ambitions for photography in India. The news item was headed 'Photography and Murder' and reproduced a letter from W. H. Warner, the Metropolitan Police Photographer at Scotland Yard, who had written to a detective investigating the murder of one Emma Jackson. The letter alerted the detective to the fact that 'if the eyes of a murdered person [are] photographed, upon the retina will be found the last thing that appeared before them, and that in the present case the features of the murderer would probably be found thereon'. Warner also noted that four years ago he had taken 'a negative of the eye of a calf a few hours after death, and upon microscopic examination of the same. [He had] found depicted thereon the lines of the pavement of the slaughterhouse.'[55]

Chevers' 1857 work made explicit the un-knowability of the limits of the camera's prosthesis. Photography's power appeared so resplendent that it appeared that it might be able to reach back in time. Maria Antonella Pelizzari has termed this 'memory-retrieval.'[56] When Linnaeus Tripe – as part of his 1858 Madura project – photographs buildings damaged during conflicts in the mid-eighteenth century, and Tipu Sultan's son's photograph circulates as a carte-de-visite, it is as though photography might be able to recuperate – through these buildings and bodies – the history of an epoch before photography.

M. Norman, in his descriptive note to Tripe's 1858 image of the south-east angle of the Tirambur Pagoda, eight miles east of Madura, commented that 'the shrine is of no special celebrity', but it played an important role in political events in the eighteenth century. It was visually boring, but resonated a history of consequence. Pelizzari has observed a similar strategy at work in photographs showing the arch at Seringapatam, where Tipu Sultan's body was discovered. This had been the subject of numerous paintings, and it might be argued that the inert body of Tipu which features in many of these served as a surrogate India made available for European control. The Fourth Mysore War's unfortunate fate, however, was to have occurred before the advent of photography: photographs of the Seringapatam arch and of Tipu's son enabled the

12. The photograph as 'memory retrieval'. Tirambur Pagoda, near Madurai by Linnaeus Tripe, from his *Photographic Views in Madura*, 1858 (BL, Photo 935/1(2)).

13. 'Prince Gholam Mohamed, son of Tippoo Sultan', carte-de-visite by Ferdinand Schwarzschild and Company, 1870. Unable to recapitulate the historical events associated with Tipu Sultan, the camera settles for second best – his embodiment by descent (BL, Photo 156/1).

recuperative deployment of this redemptive technology into a past which predated it.

In 1869 Chevers would further elaborate his sense of how photography might reach back to the primal moment of a crime, functioning as a silent witness. In that year he published a paper in the *JBPS* on photographs relating to the black hole of Calcutta.[57] Though long disappeared, the 'Black Hole of terrible memory' might with the help of two photographs taken for him by Baker and subsequently sold to Saché and Westfield[58] give substance to the fabled events: these 'admirable photographs … will afford a most vivid and picturesque idea of the stifling antre in which one hundred and twenty-three souls gasped out their release on the night of the twentieth of June, Seventeen hundred and fifty-six'.

Just as one might apply a microscope to images and reveal what the human eye itself could not see, so there was also a palpable sense that photographic scrutiny might be able to reach other domains as yet unexplored, creating what Walter Benjamin called the 'optical unconscious'. We see here how photography as a technology is not something that drops into 'society' pre-formed as a determinate technology: it is from the start blurred and uncertain. Photography's potential had to be explored through interaction with blurred and uncertain subjects, and a blurred and uncertain history and temporality, in complex processes that reconstituted all these terms. The 'inscription surface' to which Kittler referred is best conceived as an osmotic and complexly reticulated space.

'A Perfectly European Security': the Colonial Habitus

Joseph Mullens, when demanding, in 1856, that his fellow photographers leave their verandahs and explore 'all the minute varieties of Oriental life', had also reassured them that it 'is open to us to explore these peculiarities to the last degree while enjoying a perfectly European security'.[59] At the back of the issue of the *Journal of the Photographic Society of Bengal* reprinting Mullens's talk, there was an advertisement for 'Newland's Photographic and Daguerrian Depot' which gestured to the decay of the security, for James William Newland would be murdered in Meerut in May 1857, 'taken from the dâk carriage and mutilated with great barbarity' as one contemporary account put it.

[22]

14. 'His Lordship … requests that on your way to Cawnpore you will halt at Benares, and apply yourself to taking a set of views. …' John Murray's photographs of post-Uprising damage were commissioned by Canning and facilitated by complex logistical and financial assistance. 1858 (BL, Photo 52/39).

Newland's mournful fate alerts us to the implosion of a colonial habitus as (in the theorist Pierre Bourdieu's words) 'structuring determinations' which inculcate a normalised world-view 'through convergent experiences which give a social environment its *physiognomy*'.[60] Newland suffered the dismantling of this *habitus* by those whom it oppressed. But many other photographers during this period found themselves absorbed in what Bourdieu further describes as the 'homogeneity' of *habitus* which 'causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted'.[61] It is this taken-for-granted quality, and the technomaterial 'guarantee' of the physiognomy of this colonial environment which we can see in the *habitus* of important photographic practitioners such as John Murray, James Waterhouse and Samuel Bourne.

Photography was already being shown to have practical, utilitarian applications that made it of great interest to colonial authorities. Significant elements of the work of a figure such as the Agra-based

15. 'You are also requested to halt at Allahabad to take a set of views of principal building in the Fort, and the buildings in the course of adaptation, or construction. … You will have the goodness to forward in duplicate from Benares and Allahabad respectively the views you are required to take at these stations. These should be carefully packed and despatched on alternate days by Dâk, on the Public Service to my address.' Murray's images are intimately connected to the 'colonial *habitus*' (BL, Photo 52/38).

surgeon John Murray were very precise responses to official requests for photographic documentation of the state of repair of military sites in the wake of the 1857 Uprising. Following his return to India after six months' furlough in Britain, Murray was requested by Lord Canning to 'take some Photographic views at Benares, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Agra and Delhi'. Furnished with 'definite instructions' and a Treasury grant of Rs. 2000, he availed himself of Government-arranged transport from Benares to Allahabad and then by rail on to Cawnpore and by palankin to Agra (luggage in excess of one and half maunds was to be sent by bullock-cart). The archives record Canning's detailed instructions as to the particular views to be taken – views of the Fort at Allahabad, views of grounds where new barracks and hospitals are planned.[62] Murray's images act as records of damage sustained during the Uprising and site surveys for build-

ing projects. He is to 'convey as clear a sense of the works as possible', and provide 'general views exhibiting the intended sites' of new construction.[63] The auction-house-led narrative of figures like Murray (whose work is among the most expensive currently on the market) voids this intimacy between his work and the colonial Government, an intimacy which was not simply ideological (as is of course wholly inevitable), but a logistical intimacy in which early photographic practice defined itself in spaces and trajectories, transport networks, and finance.

Within a similar disposition in December 1862, Lieutenant James Waterhouse of the Royal Artillery started to forward, to the Governor-General of Central India, photographs he had taken in Dhar, Jaora, Ratlam and Bhopal (some of which will appear in chapter 3).[64] Waterhouse's astonishingly detailed reports give us an insight into the technomaterial complexity of his endeavour in terms both of the logistics of his larger venture, constrained and derailed by transport problems and lack of materials, and of what we might term the micro-physics of the portrait events which his images transcribe. If much critical writing on colonial photography tends to incarnate it as disembodied 'theological' ideology, Waterhouse's account returns us time and again to the physical locations and compromises of its production. Waterhouse's narrative continually reinscribes the uncertainty of his encounters and the complexity of marshalling apparatus, chemicals and human subjects in challenging climatic conditions and diminishing time.

Waterhouse was in Saugor District when he received his instructions, in December 1861, to photograph 'the tribes of Central India'.[65] This request had its origins in Lord Canning's decision to make the photographic documentation of Indian communities an official project and was filtered through all provincial administrators.[66] Waterhouse's new chemicals arrived from Calcutta on 16 January, and on his arrival at Indore on 3 February he reported to the Officiating First Assistant Agent, Governor-General. He then travelled (being paid a travelling allowance of eight annas per mile)[67] to Jowra (Joara), where the Nawab's son had recently contracted smallpox. Here he tried to take photographs but 'never could get the sitters to come early enough', and had to face the added complication that 'the Nawab was a photographer and always pressed me to lend him any negatives or else print him copies'. He

then headed south to Ratlam, where he was received 'with tolerable civility' but ran out of collodion. At Seetamhow he was 'met with every civility and assistance' and furnished with letters from the Raja of Seetamhow to the Kamasdar of Chundwassa to assist him in finding Sondies and Grassiahs whom Waterhouse wished to photograph. Following the end of his travels in December 1862, 35 sets of photographs, comprising 667 images, were 'dispatched by Dâk Banghy'[68] to the Governor-General's Central India agent in Agra and then transmitted by the same means to Colonel Durand in Meerut.

Waterhouse presents ample evidence of Indian subaltern resistance (he attributes the absence of Sondies to the fact that 'they thought their pictures would be used against them and therefore refused to sit'[69]), but I present the details of the first half of his trip in order to disclose the complex infrastructure which made his images possible. In his account, Waterhouse delineates complex networks of colonial authority, logistical trajectories and the delegation of authority from the colonial occupiers to sundry 'hollow crowns', to petty chieftains. This narrative is interlaced with a complementary narrative concerning the *apparatus* upon which his project depended: equipment had to be bought, chemicals shipped, portage arranged, collodion and glass plates replenished.

The inescapable *technomateriality* which Waterhouse maps in his narrative of travel is equally present in many of his accounts of specific *portrait events* which conjure an anxious chronotope in which having demarcated a space for the making of the photograph (through the erection of his camera, together with any appropriate backdrops) he is then faced with a recalcitrant temporality (his sitters always arrive too late, and it is always approaching noon – when it becomes too hot to process the chemicals – or dusk advances and with it, a diminution of the necessary light). On 20 October, in Indore, Waterhouse attempted to photograph a group of Mahrattas, and provides a memorable account of the difficulties of conjoining the bodies of his sitters with apparatus and light:

I had been taking the chief men of Holkar's Court all the morning, and had been promised that some Mahrattas and agricultural tribes should attend: with the usual Native unpunctuality, I was kept waiting till nearly 3pm and had packed up all my chemicals, ready to return to Cantonments, when I was told that they had arrived. I unpacked my chemicals, &c., but by the

16. 'I … had packed up all my chemicals. …' James Waterhouse's narrative of his travels in 1862 stresses the contingencies and vagaries of photographing in central India. This portrait of three Mahratta men was taken in Indore, 20 October 1862, some time after 3 pm (BL, Photo 355/9(14)).

time I was ready, there was only one corner suitable for taking pictures, and that did not admit of my putting up my usual background and screen, so I had to take them as well as I could in the rapidly-failing afternoon light: such as they are I send them.[70]

Samuel Bourne (1834-1912) – perhaps the pre-eminent figure in any aesthetic history of photography in colonial India – presented his photography as omniscient, but his detailed accounts of his travels continually connect his photographic transcendence with a material world of coolies and official permission to use government staging-bungalows.

Bourne published a celebrated series of reports in the *British Journal of Photography* between 1863 and 1870. In general, his narrative presents an unattractive picture of a photographic im-perialist intent on achieving high-altitude viewpoints from which

17. 'I seemed to stand on a level with the highest of these innumerable peaks, and as the eye wandered from summit to summit, all robed in the silent whiteness of eternal winter, it seemed as though I stood on a solitary island in the middle of some vast polar ocean, whose rolling waves and billows, crested with foam, had been suddenly seized in their mad career by some omnipotent power and commanded to perpetual rest. … My poor coolies could not climb so fast as I had done, and I saw them far below apparently almost motionless beneath their burthens.' Samuel Bourne's 1866 Manirung Pass, photographed at 18,600 feet (BL, Photo 11/111).

he could look down on a picturesquely ordered India. Bourne's 1866 Kashmir Narrative is peppered with a dislike of the dialogical spaces of face-to-face encounters ('listening to nothing the whole time but barbarous Hindostani') juxtaposed with epiphanal moments of ascendancy ('The whole rich valley of Kangra which is about forty miles long by fifteen broad, was spread beneath, bounded on the opposite side by a superb mountain chain'). Ascendancy appealed to Bourne because it facilitated an encompassing view ('Here and there I could see far down into obscure and apparently inaccessible glens').[71]

But this Google Earth like omniscience is the transcendent top-dressing on a complex web of negotiations with customs offices, government officials and labour agents – *chowdrees* and *lumbadars*. These reflect the fact that all his photographs are, as he says of his famous image of the Manirung Pass (the highest-altitude photo-

graph of its day), 'a memento of the circumstances under which it was taken'. In *Ten Weeks With a Camera in the Himalayas*, published in February 1864, he cites approvingly Harriet Martineau's discussion of the difference between the idealist and empiricist painter: 'it is one thing to lie in bed till noon in a "simmering" state of thought, or gazing at visionary scenes, and another to be abroad at daybreak, studying the earth and sky. … It is one thing to represent historical tragedy in painting … and quite another to go to the actual scene … in suffering and privation, with labour and anxiety under an eastern sun.'[72]

Consequently, Bourne's written narrative perpetually re-inscribes the privations which his indexical encounters with the scenes in front of his cameras entailed. Railways from Calcutta to Benares and then Allahabad to Agra, the 'clattering dâk' (or mail coach)[73] and most of all the endless marches with huge teams of coolies – 'retinue[s] of thirty coolies carrying cameras, chemicals, tents, bedding, provisions etc.'.[74] And all the time Bourne makes us aware of the technomaterial complexity of a mode of picture-making which chooses not to lie 'simmering in bed': 'everything has to be carried on the backs of coolies: it is therefore necessary that the packages should be as far as possible small and light, so as to form only one man's load'. Behind the remarkable beauty and technical perfection of Bourne's images we continually feel this trudge, the movement of feet, the straining of packages held by leather straps, of large boxes of negatives suspended on poles and carried by several coolies, none of whom, as he writes like being 'puckeroed'[75] in these expeditions.

In 1877 the railway guard turned photographer John Blees (whose dramatic change of career will be detailed in the next chapter) published an account of *Photography in Hindostan; or Reminiscences of a Travelling Photographer*[76] aimed at aspirant commercial photographers which allows us to consolidate our sense of the technomaterial constraints within which many photographers were working.

Blees's account draws on his experience during fifteen months' travel through the Konkan, Berar and the Central Provinces, and his narrative maps a space determined by the railway network. He advises the hiring of an assistant who can travel ahead taking specimens of the photographer's art and gathering commissions.

Meanwhile the photographer should take 'The most important articles, such as cameras, lenses, silver baths, &c. … along with you as luggage in the same train you are travelling by. Watch the porters putting them in the brake-van, for they have an unfortunate knack of turning your boxes upside down.'[77] Then, he says, buy your own ticket, 'pay for your baggage, and enter the mail train *en route* to your next scene of action. Arrived, your assistant is awaiting you on the platform, with carts and coolies in readiness to convey you and your luggage to your future residence.'

Blees maps a commercial space different from the official sanction and assistance that characterised some of Murray's endeavours and most of Waterhouse's, but it is a practice which nevertheless indicates a *habitus* of official co-operation: 'For covering, apply to the Station Master for tarpaulins, or to the District Commissioner for a common tent.' 'At military stations, as Kamptee and Mhow, you will have to get permission from the Officer in charge to live within the limits of the cantonment.'[78]

The vulgar way of understanding my detailed exposition of the material basis of these photographic practices is to say that the colonial state believed photography to be a cure so long as it controlled its outcomes. The more nuanced position that I am trying to explore relates to the subtle *habitus* − the tacit system of codes that quietly encode a life-world − which photography was able to mobilise but which also came to define in certain respects the proper use of photography. Photography's technomaterial base finds echoes and affirmations in a bureaucratic disposition that affords easements which subtly mould and constrain the possibilities of photography. In the following chapter, I shall advance the symmetrical other half of this argument − that the changing technological base of photography − its increasing miniaturisation and cheapness − propelled a disengagement from the colonial *habitus*.

If Murray, Bourne and Blees might be seen to define and occupy − in diverse and complex ways − an official *habitus* configured by the colonial bureaucracy, the army, telegraphy and the railroads, we can also see more precisely localised centres of photographic production which were largely controlled by Indians. Bourne indeed provides a celebrated example − that of the Raja of Chamba [Chumba] with his shiny cameras and lenses, which provoke in Bourne a sense of surprise 'to find photography amongst his fancies: it shows to what

18. The photographic prestation: tinted daguerreotype of the Raja of Dhar given by him to the East India Company (BL, Photo 67/1).

remote and hidden corners the camera has gone and collodion found its way'.[79]

To the case of Chamba we can add many others but here I will briefly mention only Lucknow and Benares. The Raja of Dhar's 1850s daguerreotype reveals the ways in which photography produced in some Indian courts was enmeshed in networks of exchange (presented to 'Captain Jenkins Indian Navy to be presented ... to the Honourable Court of Directors of the Honourable East India Company') which attempted to consolidate relations between the courts and the growing colonial presence.[80] But in other centres we can see photography deployed less transactionally, and in some cases – perhaps – oppositionally.

The greatest early body of work is that associated with Ahmed Ali Khan, aka *chota miya* a designer/architect turned photographer in Wajid Ali Shah's court at Lucknow in the late 1840s and mid-1850s.[81] Credited with having designed the Kaiserbagh – an important building in Lucknow with its mermaid court insignia – Ahmed Ali Khan then mastered photography, a medium in which both the Kaiser-

19. Salted paper print by Ahmed Ali Khan from a two-volume collection taken in Lucknow, some time before the siege in May 1857 (BL, Photo 269/1(17)).

bagh and that mermaid insignia would resurface (see illustrations 114 and 115). Henry Polehampton, writing in October 1856, gives an insight into Ahmed Ali Khan's role as gentleman photographer to the Indian and British elite in pre-Uprising Lucknow, noting that he 'was the only man in the station who does daguerreotypes and everybody wants them, so he is becoming an important person'.[82] Ahmad Ali Khan produced two albums dating from 1856-7 which are now reunited in the British Library.[83] The albums consist chiefly of faded salt prints of residents of Lucknow, many of whom were to lose their lives in the 1857 Uprising in which Ahmad Ali Khan himself fought with the rebels, being subsequently pardoned under 'Clemency' Canning's amnesty.[84] Martin Gubbins in his 1858 *Account of the*

[32]
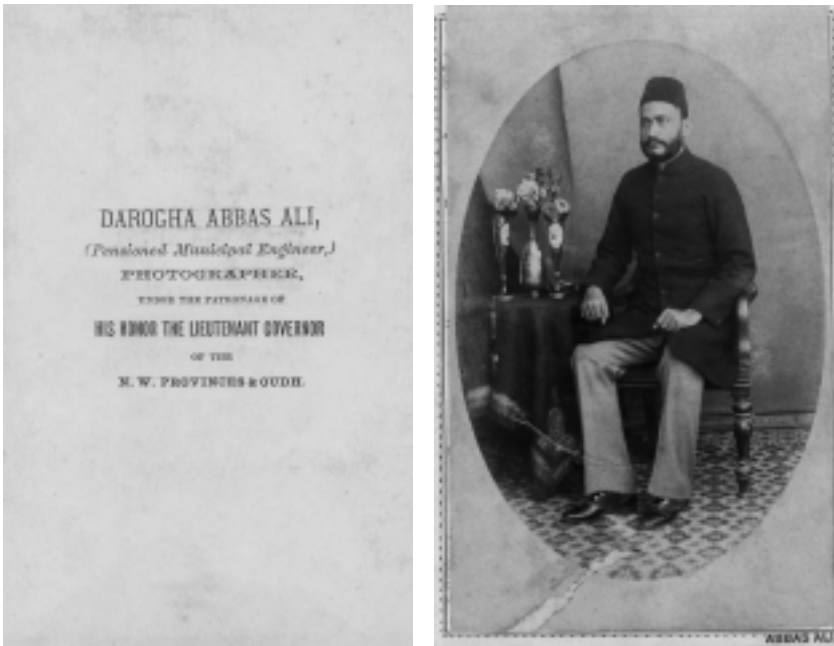
20/21. Recto and verso of a cabinet card by a later Lucknow photographer, Abbas Ali. The identity of the sitter is not known. George Couper – the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Provinces and Oudh , to whose patronage the card alludes, would subsequently involve Abbas Ali in the 1880 *Rajas and Taaluqdars* project (ACP 2001.14.0229).

Mutinies in Oudh and the Siege of the Lucknow Residency[85] used one of Ahmed Ali's photographs of the Kaiserbagh as the basis for his engraved frontispiece. This photograph he noted was in his possession and was created by 'Darogha Azim Alee Khan, who attained to great excellence in this beautiful art'.[86] In the same year the first indication that Ahmed Ali had fought with the rebels appeared, when *The Bengal Hurkaru and India Gazette* of 23 February commented on photographs 'taken by the Darogah who has since gone over to the rebels'[87] which were admired at a meeting of the Bengal Photographic Society in that same month. This information was echoed by P. C. Mukherjee, writing in 1883, who recorded that Ahmed Ali joined the mutineers 'lost his fortune and name and died a miserable man'.[88]

Twenty years later another photographer – Abbas Ali – was active in Lucknow.[89] He produced a series of works: the 1874 *Lucknow*

Album,[90] a portfolio of *Beauties of Lucknow*, and in 1880 (on behalf of the local Government) a mass-produced photographic vanity book aimed at the post-Uprising social order. In his 1874 book, containing fifty poorly executed photographs, Abbas Alli noted what he termed 'the silent eloquence of modern illustration aided by photography … with [its] talismanic power'. Invoking the words of a poet he declared:

> Sounds, which address the ear, are lost, and die
> In one short hour; but those which strike the eye
> Live long upon the mind; the faithful sight
> Engraves the knowledge with a beam of light.

Despite the ghostly imperial sales patter[91] which suggested a significant English audience for his work, scenes of British martyrdom are few and far between. Baillie's gate is included but very little else. By contrast there is an (unavoidably) great emphasis on Islamic heritage, creating the sense of the British presence as a transient moment in a much nobler, expansive, history. As Sophie Gordon has written, this suggests that underlying Abbas Ali's 'presentation of the route for British "pilgrims," he possessed a different conceptual map of the city that drew its form and content from religious associations'.[92]

A similar strategy is apparent in B. G. Bromochary's *Views of Benares from the Riverside* produced in 1869. Twenty-four large albumen prints taken by the photographer to His Highness the Maharaja of Banaras are supplemented by a detailed letterpress. Although this album also clearly anticipates a partly European audience, its text is full of praise for the Hindu benefactors who have paid for the erection and refurbishment of *ghats* and rest-houses. Rather than the Orientalist nightmare of burning ghats that European photographers from Murray and Bourne onwards favoured, this is a world in which Hindu rulers attend to the requirements of a just polity. A similar argument might be advanced in relation to Lala Deen Dayal whose earliest work in Indore from 1874 celebrated the role of the Holkars, and who would subsequently, in 1884, become the Nizam of Hyderabad's official photographer. Throughout his career, Deen Dayal skilfully occupied a position between colonial patrons and Indian rulers such as Tukaji Rao II and the Nizam. For the latter he was able to celebrate a beneficence that befitted a just rule.[93]
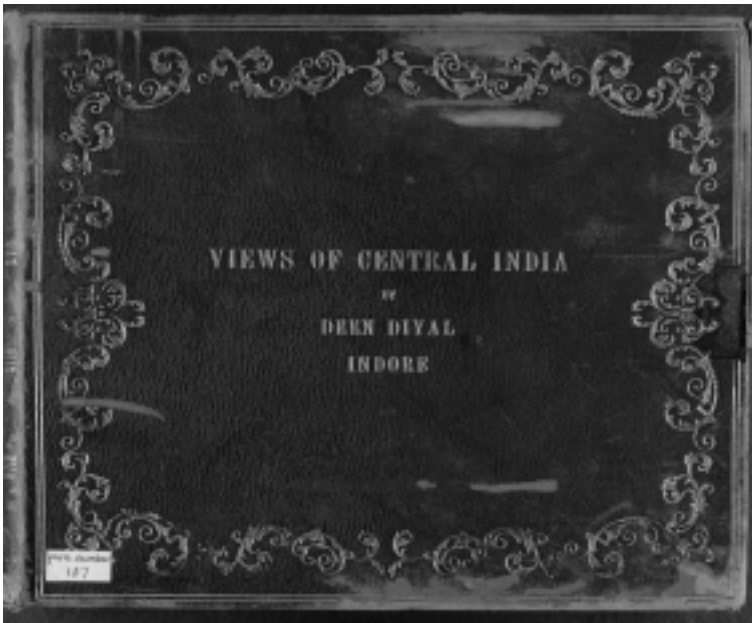
22/23. An album produced during the early part of Lala Deen Dayal's remarkable career, documenting the good works of Tuakaji Rao II of Indore, from whom the photographer would receive a *jagir* or gift of land (BL, Photos 187/cover and 187/15).

24/25. 'An Oriental magnificence': from Abbas Ali's 1874 *The Beauties of Lucknow* (ACP 2000.17.0002.1(17) and 2000.0002.1(15)).

In the same year as the *Lucknow Album*, Abbas Ali produced *The Beauties of Lucknow*,[94] a nostalgic eulogy for Wajid Ali Shah's court, illustrated with twenty-four photographic portraits. Abbas Ali skilfully appealed to different audiences eager for 'old memories of the mighty dead'. The *Lucknow Album* attempted to address a European audience, *Beauties of Lucknow* an Indian male audience, eager for the scent of a 'Lucknow immemorable for the Oriental magnificence of the entertainments'.[95]

At about the same time, a Jaipur Photographer − possibly Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II − was photographing 'courtesans of the Jaipur Court'.[96] One of the images 'A Nautch [dancing] Girl at Her Toilet', grants the viewer access into an intimate space which would not normally be available to the male viewer. The image has similarities to Kalighat paintings, and slightly later chromolitho-graphs, produced in Calcutta in which the woman's self-regard in a mirror serves almost as an alibi for the viewer's visual interest, but in the Jaipur image the prosthesis of the camera introjects us into an actual space, inhabited by real and thrilling bodies. In the absence of a mirror − legitimising our desire to join in with this 'looking' −

[36]

PHOTOGRAPHY AS CURE

26/27. The private becomes public. Photographic and chromolithographic representations of a male fantasy. The camera conjured an actual space, 'prophesying' new modes of visibility, and 'performing' new spatial practices through 'image acts'. The 1870s photograph 'A Nautch Girl at her Toilet' originated from Jaipur (ACP, 94.48.0006); the 1880s chromolithograph is from the Chorebagan Art Studio, Calcutta (Collection of Late R. P. Gupta).

[37]

Abbas Ali grants the viewer the alibi of a lost cultural splendour, of the 'Oriental magnificence' of the Awadhi court, through the vector of these 'dancing girls'. Eschewing the paraphernalia of classical columns, books and flower-vases which so often clutter images of this period, Abbas Ali invites us to repose in the utopian luxury of bundled silk saris and jaunty poses on a chaise longue.

The Aesthetics of the Same

Six years later, in 1880, Abbas Ali was involved in another project, a sustained attempt to use photography by the colonial administration to flatter its subjects. *An Illustrated Historical Album of the Rajas and Taaluqdars of Oudh* was published in 1880 in a joint English and Urdu edition by North-Western Provinces and Oudh (Awadh) Government Press. A compact volume, crammed with 344 carte-de-visite-size albumen prints of local landholders, the intended audience for the *Rajas and Taaluqdars* album was those very land-lords who are depicted in the album.

Natasha Eaton has alerted us to the complex politics and aesthetics of the commissioning and prestation of, and payment for, portraits in late-eighteenth-century Indian courts. She describes the East India Company's attempt to replace Mughal rulers' gifts of robes (*khil'at*) and tribute money (*nazar*) with 'symbolically potent portraits'.[97] Both *khil'at* and painted portraits 'aimed to transmit the 'presence' of the donor to the recipient'.[98] It is also clear (for example in the case of the Raja of Dhar's daguerreotype) that Indian rulers were also offering photographs as gifts to British authorities. The *Rajas and Taaluqdars of Oudh* reveals the advantages of a new technology that allowed the industrial production of portraiture as part of a gesture aimed at consolidating the allegiance of an *entire social class* of landlords.

This book was an explicit celebration and recognition of those landlords who had demonstrated political loyalty during the Up-rising of 1857 and an attempt to integrate those who had been given land as a reward for their loyalty to a pre-existing social order. The normalising space of the photographic portrait was the chief instrument of this integration: regardless of the size of landholding, each individual occupies one quarter of a page on which three other

photographs are pasted. The preface noted that: 'A likeness of every taaluqdar in the province has been secured at a great expenditure of time, labour and money, and photographs have been given in preference to any other kind of pictures as giving more correct portraitures.'

Abbas Ali dedicated the work to Sir George Couper, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces and Chief Commissioner of Oudh, the initiator of the project, who had been berated two years earlier for his incompetent role in a famine in which more than half a million poor cultivators died.[99] The *Rajas and Taaluqdars* text provided accounts of the loyalty of the two-thirds of the taalaqdars who retained their properties and of the one-third of the new land-holders who had been rewarded with land confiscated from those who had supported the insurrection.

Let us consider a page, taken almost at random, which, like all the other pages, presents four images. The first, number 85, is Babu Mahindrat Singh Taaluqdar Khajraita, who was quietly loyal; number 86, Chaudhri Khaslat Husain, benefited from his father's support of the British, and his lineage was rewarded with extra land. During the Uprising the sitter's father Chaudhri Hashmat Ali Jhan 'took a prominent part in fighting the mutineers and stamping out the rebellion'. The two figures at the bottom, Thakur Bhart Singh, and Thakur Sheo Baksh Singh were quietly loyal and the text has little to say about them.

Thirty-seven out of the 344 cartes-de-visite images give the name of the sitter, but instead of a face present a medallion on which is written *pardanashin*, that is, 'maintaining the veil'. This is a courtesy extended to all females, both Muslim and Hindu, with the result that the only faces one sees in the volume are male. One memorable page presents three *pardanashin* medallions, and the visage of one child, Chandarpal Singh.

No doubt Abbas Ali – who had earlier produced *The Beauties of Lucknow* – understood an elite rural sensibility of seclusion. But it is possible that Couper made this concession to the heterogeneity of the scopic regime of the landlords they represented, because he had learnt something from an earlier objection to the *summa bonum* of nineteenth-century Indian colonial photography, *The People of India*.[100] Couper had in 1861 been an enthusiastic proponent of the photographic survey that ultimately led to *The People of India*.

28/29/30/31. The 'aesthetics of the same' tempered by a respect for seclusion.
'*Pardanashin'* signals a woman taking the veil who has not been rendered visible.
Urdu title-page and three leaves from *An Illustrated Historical Album of the Rajas
and Taaluqdars of Oudh* of 1880, with photography by Abbas Ali (BL, 14109.bb.24).

32. 'Brahuis from Khilat, Baluchistan', by
Captain W. R. Houghton and Lieutenant
H. C. B. Tanner, 1858-60 (BL, Photo 143/16).
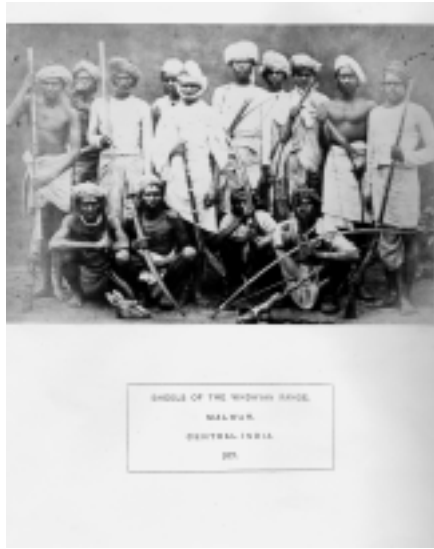
33. 'Malwa Bheels': James Waterhouse's image
as it appeared in *The People of India*, 1868-75.
Waterhouse's remarkably detailed records
makes it possible to identify all the individuals
in this image (anti-clockwise from top right:
Deetia, Beeja, Buddeah, Jalim, Gobriah, Nur
Singh, Beer Singh, Nimbah, Dulliah, Nantia,
Weree-ja, Poomia, Nain and Ram Singh).
In *The People of India* they are required to
exemplify a generic category of 'Bheel-ness'
(private collection).

This final delayed fruit of (Lord and Lady) Canning's passion for
photography had been published in eight volumes between 1868 and
1875. Containing 486 pasted-in albumen prints with letterpress
descriptions, half of the two hundred sets which paid special atten-
tion to communities' political loyalties were reserved for official use.
Among the images used were Houghton and Tanner's 1861 photo-
graphs from Sind, and many of the fruits of Waterhouse's central
Indian travels.

The objection – the most striking Indian negation (and, as I hope
to show, simultaneous affirmation) of photography in the whole of
the nineteenth century – was voiced by Syed Ahmed Khan, the most
significant Indian Muslim of his time.[101] The objection was voiced in
a letter of 1869 from London to the Aligarh Scientific Society, a

34. 'Moulvees,' plate 198 from *The People of India* (vol. IV) (BL, Cup.420.c.88).

reformist organisation founded by Syed Ahmed. In this letter – full of a disturbing self-loathing – he reports that:

In the India Office is a book in which all the races of India are depicted both in picture and letterpress, giving the manners and customs of each race. Their photographs show that the pictures of the different manners and customs were taken on the spot, and the sight of them shows how savage they are – the equal of animals. The young Englishmen … desirous of knowing something of the land to which they are going … look over this work. What can they think, after perusing this book and looking at its pictures of the power or honour of the natives of India? One day Hamid, Mahmud (Syed's two sons), and I went to the India Office, and Mahmud commenced looking at the work. A young Englishman … came up and after a short time asked Mahmud if he was a Hindustani? Mahmud replied in the affirmative but blushed as he did so, and hastened to explain that he was not one of the aborigines, but that his ancestors were formerly of another country. Reflect therefore, that until Hindustanis remove this blot they shall never be held in honour by any civilised race.[102]

How might we best understand this powerful reaction? Was it perhaps because (to take one example from several possible candidates) Syed Ahmed objected to the letterpress description accompanying plate 197 captioned 'Moghuls, Mussulmans, of Royal family of Delhi'? 'They were for the most part,' the caption notes, 'vicious and dissolute, idle and ignorant; too proud to seek employment, and

35. 'Shair Ali Syud': 'On the classes to which Shair Ali belongs, time and change, with all the adjuncts of modern civilisation, make little progress', pronounced the letterpress description accompanying Shair Ali's portrait in the third volume of *The People of India* (1868) (BL, Cup.410.c.88).

too discontented to abstain from plots and intrigues, as futile as they were foolish.'

Well, Syed Ahmed would almost have certainly agreed with that judgement, for he had himself famously written vituperously in his influential 1858 pamphlet *The Causes of the India Revolt* (a copy of which he had sent to Canning) that 'Such an imbecile was the ex-King that if one had assured him that the angels of Heaven were his slaves, he would have welcomed the assurance. …'[103]

Perhaps what really upset Syed Ahmed was the description, on the next page of *The People of India*, of 'Moulvees'. 'Who' the text asked 'on any other subject but the law or the exercise of his profession is more profoundly and persistently ignorant?' It would be surprising if Syed Ahmed had not been offended by such a calumny. Perhaps what also offended him were the prejudicial descriptions of Aligarh landowners, some of whom, as David Lelyveld has noted, would have been known to his father.[104] Although some such as Moulvee Kwajeh Torab Ali of Aligarh are credited with 'settled habits',[105] and Meer Inayut Hosein from an Aligarh Shia sect whose 'usual disposition is peaceable, and … did not take part in the rebellion of 1857' is described in positive terms,[106] others are characterised in terms that must have puzzled Syed Ahmed and his sons. Izzut Ali Khan of Aligarh, comes from a community 'in the last degree superstitious'

36. James Waterhouse's Malwa Bheels: a print made by Waterhouse of the image which was later recycled in *The People of India* (see illus. 33). 'This photograph was taken at Sirdapoor in June 1862; it was a very good plate, but the film broke while printing it in the rain … the subjects are Sepoys in the Malwa Bheel Corps' (ACP 98.72.0002.1(53)).

and given to practising Hindu rites in secret,[107] while the sixty-four-year-old Shair Ali Syud, from Gubngeeree in Aligarh district, exemplified 'in a strong manner, the obstinacy, sensuality, ignorance, and bigotry of his class'.[108]

However, there are good grounds for thinking that Syed Ahmed's reaction was a response not simply to the ideological slant of this or that caption, but rather to the systematic normalising and rendering visible of diverse communities within a unitary framework. His account of these volumes acknowledges the indexicality of the photographic record: for he wrote that the 'photographs show that the pictures … were taken on the spot'.[109]

Recall Mahmud's blush when asked if he was a Hindustani. Perhaps we should imagine Mahmud looking at Waterhouse's illustration of the Malwa Bheels, and understand Mahmud interpreting his English interlocutor's question as an invitation to identify

himself with 'aborigines' rather than a foreign noble. Mahmud's grandfather – as Francis Robinson has noted – was descended from Husaini Syeds who migrated from Herat at the time of Akbar. As Syed Ahmed had earlier written in his 1858 *The Causes of the Indian Revolt*, 'The Muhammadans are not the aborigines of this country. They came in the train of former conquerors and gradually domesticated themselves in India.'[110]

Syed Ahmed had described *The People of India* as 'a book in which all the races of India are depicted both in picture and letterpress, giving the manners and customs of each race', locating quite precisely what Walter Benjamin termed the 'sense of sameness in the world' that photography uniquely engendered. In his 1931 'Little History of Photography', Benjamin wrote that 'The peeling away of the object's shell, the destruction of the aura, is the signature of a perception whose sense for the sameness of things has grown to the point where even the singular, the unique, is divested of its uniqueness – by means of reproduction'.[111]

While for Benjamin – the Marxist critic of traditional hierarchy and authority – this sameness offered revolutionary potential, for Syed Ahmed Khan this was perceptually threatening, for it suggested a representational levelling and uniformity.[112] Although one could cite other writings by Syed Ahmed which embrace a thoroughgoing rationalist reformism, this is a theme that Syed Ahmed developed in considerable detail in his analysis of the causes of the Uprising of 1857. Syed Ahmed's account is complex and nuanced, but two strong themes are Indians' anxieties about a technological and Christian normalisation; and the reversal of an idealised system of vision.

Syed Ahmed was troubled by the new public mode of address of missionary discourse, a mode which pried *aura* from its shell, so to speak. Syed Ahmed here focuses on the antagonism created by Christian missionaries' attempt to universalise belief as a rationalised norm of public space. This theme is engraved even more deeply by the attention that Syed Ahmed gives to a letter issued by E. Edmund of Calcutta in 1855 (which he also included as an appendix to his pamphlet). This was, in Syed Ahmed's paraphrase, 'to the effect that all Hindustan was now under one rule, that the telegraph had so connected all parts of the country that they were as one; that the railroad had brought them so near that all towns were as one; the

time had clearly come when there should be but one faith'.[113]

Copies of the circular were issued to 'all the principal officials of the Government', Syed Ahmed notes. Its very circulation acted as an embodiment of the rule of one which it prefigured: 'The native officials were so ashamed of the circular that those to whom it had been sent, used to hide the fact from fear of being ridiculed and abused, and would deny having ever received it. They used to say "It has not been sent to us". And the answer used to be "Well, Well: Be sure that it will come …".'[114]

It was the systematicity of the emergent bureaucracy, its *in-eluctability*, and the prospect of *sameness* which in Syed Ahmed's words led Indians to feel that 'The ground seemed at last to have given way beneath their feet'. In 1893 in a letter written at Shelidah, Rabindranath Tagore would express a similar rejection of this law of the same, when he wrote that 'Curiously enough, my greatest fear is that I should be reborn in Europe! For there one cannot recline like this with one's whole being laid open to the infinite above. … Like the roads there, one's mind has to be stone-metalled for heavy traffic – geometrically laid out, and kept clear and regulated'.[115] A year later he would write of his repugnance of Calcutta which 'is as ponderously proper as a Government Office. Each of its days comes forth like a coin from a mint, clear cut and glittering, Ah! Those dreary, deadly days, so preciously equal in weight.' Roland Barthes' description of cameras as 'clocks for seeing'[116] helps us to conjoin Tagore's horror of colonial modernity's temporal homogeneity with Syed Ahmed's apprehension of photography's optical homogeneity.

For Syed Ahmed *the People of India*, by virtue of its reliance on photography's normalisation, its 'sense of sameness in the world' was equally deadly: it threatened the destruction of the heterogeneity, hierarchy and aura, which constituted his learned and value-laden life world. But something else also clearly bothered him. In the past when things were good, Kings had made themselves visible to their people. From time immemorial the people of India had relished Durbars – the opportunity to see rulers as objects of public visibility: 'This feeling of gladness at the sight of the sovereign is a feeling instinctively felt by every one. Man feels the power of the ruler when thus brought face to face with him …' Syed Ahmed wrote. But the ruler had faded from visibility … the days when those munificent, visible rulers were deemed 'Shadowed of God' seemed long gone.[117]

This invisibilisation of power, a force traditionally magnified in Indian polities, went hand in hand with the increased and enforced visibilisation of India's subjects. Syed Ahmed reports anxiety about the compulsory education of unveiled females: 'Man[y] believed it to be the wish of the Government, that girls should attend, and be taught at these schools, and leave off the habit of sitting veiled. Anything more obnoxious than this to feelings of the Hindustanees cannot be conceived.'[118] A similar sense of a moral world turned upside down is apparent in Tagore's thought that 'We [Bengalis] shall grow ashamed of going about without socks, and cease to feel shame at the sight of their [English] balldresses'.[119] The *Rajas and Taalaqdars of Oudh* had learned the offence that unveiling could cause, and substituted all females in its scheme with the *pardanashin* medallion, although in all other respects the law of the same was retained.

If Syed Ahmed's response to what Deborah Poole calls 'the aesthetics of the same'[120] reveals a dimension of photography that slips between positive and negative evaluation, Partha Chatterjee's analysis of the problems posed by photography's 'profane realism' for nationalist iconography helps to consolidate the possibility that there might be a more general principle of mutation between cure and poison at work. Photography, Barthes noted, belonged to that class of 'laminated' objects 'whose two leaves' including Good and Evil 'cannot be separated without destroying them both'.[121] In the logic of the *pharmakon*, precisely the same qualities that make photography a cure are also conditions by which it becomes a poison. The *pharmakon* is the term used by Plato in the *Phaedrus*, and catches Jacques Derrida's attention because of its fluidity and reversibility – its potential for 'leading astray'. In a resonant passage, Derrida points to the manner in which 'in the most striking manner the regular, ordered polysemy that has, through skewing, indetermination, or overdetermination, *but without mistranslation*, permitted the rendering of the same word by "remedy", "recipe", "poison", "drug", "philtre", etc.'.[122] This double-ness, Derrida continues, '*is a difficulty inherent in its very principle*, situated less in the passage from one language to another, from one philosophical language to another, than already … in the tradition between Greek and Greek'.[123]

Chatterjee considers 'the strange denial of the advantages of
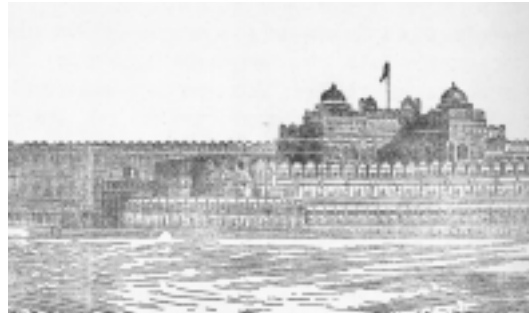
37/38. Exorbitance reduced: engraved illustrations from Bengali school books. Such attenuated signs – voided of any extraneous detail – fitted nationalist narratives much better that the 'suspicious' and 'profane' realism of photography. 'The Shiva Temple at Thanjavur', unknown artist, engraving in Dilip Kumar Ghosh, *Bharat o bharatbasi*, Calcutta, New Book Stall, 1974; 'The Fort of Shah Jahan (Red Fort) Delhi', unknown artist, engraving in Sobhakar Chattopadhyay, *Bharater itihas*, Calcutta, Narmada Publications, 1987.

photographic reproduction' and asks why post-Independence Bengali school textbooks chose simple engraved rather than photographic illustrations to visualise the nation's iconic monuments. He dismisses the technological and economic aspects of image reproduction that might bear on this, arguing instead that 'the pedagogical purpose of nationalist education is believed to be served far more effectively by such idealized drawings than by the suspiciously profane realism of photographs'.[124] *Bibidhartha samgraha*, a journal founded in 1851 by the polymath and photographer Rajendralal Mitra (see pp. 60-1), reproduced engravings of monuments having 'the same picturesque quality that was the hallmark of … early colonial photography' but this was acceptable because 'the age of nationalism was yet to appear in Bengal'.[125] The age of nationalism by contrast required the elimination of 'any element that does not have a specific place within the narrative economy. … Hence, no superfluous foliage or shimmering reflections on water, no lazy dog sleeping in the shade or stray passersby going about their daily business.'[126] Photography's problem was its *noise*, its *exorbitance*[127] – the surfeit of information – that obscured the symbolic simplicities of nationalist pedagogy.

Both Syed Ahmed Khan and Partha Chatterjee, in their very

different ways, draw our attention to a refusal that reveals a quality of photography that transcends every one of its historical and cultural appropriations. In the first case it is anxiety about photography's revolutionary introduction of a 'sense of sameness in the world', the mechanisation and industrialisation of perception, the rise of the 'aesthetics of the same'.[128] In the second case it is photography's excessive data ratio which produces a surplus and profane realism which exceeds the requirements of a narrow national iconography. Photography has *too many meanings* for any efficacious nationalist instruction.

So, two anxieties, both apparently opposed: a multiplicity of sameness, and a singularity of excess. Here we glimpse the logic of the *pharmakon* – of the recipe which is *both* cure and poison – and whose seemingly opposed qualities spring not from disagreements about how the 'essence' of photography might be translated, but reflect, rather, an intrinsic and unavoidable oscillation lying at the heart of photography's fluid practice.

39. 'I saw at once that there was a picture here for my camera.' Samuel Bourne's prize-winning photograph *Picturesque bridge over the Rungnoo below Ging, Darjeeling*, *c.* 1869 (BL, Photo 11/122).

Chapter 2

Photography as Poison

IT WAS A LONG DESCENT, 'the latter part of which was through a beautiful forest filled with creepers and climbing plants, which hung from tree to tree in graceful festoons. … I at once saw that there was a picture here for my camera, and soon began to *reconnoitre* for the best point of view. But the foliage was disturbed by the wind and the sun was in the wrong direction. I decided to wait until conditions improved. I was staying with a planter (who had built this bridge) near Darjeeling and two days later that planter and his friend accompanied me back to the bridge where we planned to have breakfast.

At this early hour, and in this secluded glen there was no wind to ruffle either the foliage … the atmosphere was thick, and the sun vainly struggled to scatter the haze which shut out all objects at only short distances … but looking at my subject, I saw that the haze added a new element of beauty to my little confined landscape. So without waiting for the tardy sun and the wind to scatter the haze. I had my tent and camera erected and told the planter and his friend to carry on their conversation on the *bridge*, … and the picture was taken.'[1]

This is the photographer Samuel Bourne's account of the making of his photograph, 'a view of a picturesque though not very old bridge thrown across a small stream called the Rungnoo, a few miles below Darjeeling …', the image which was awarded a Gold Medal by the Viceroy, Earl Mayo, as being the best single photograph in the twelfth annual exhibition of the Bengal Photographic Society in December 1869 and a copy of which was circulated to every member of the Society.[2] 'Being sufficiently close to the bridge, the haze did not interfere with the foreground objects, while it toned down the dark looking trees beyond and gave an aerial softness and beauty to what would otherwise have been harsh and hard – I thus got a picture full of gradation and harmony, with sufficient vigour in the

[51]

40. 'One longs to take a sharp instrument and after cutting the priests' throats with it, scrape away these diabolical accretions.' View of the Horse Temple at Seringham by Samuel Bourne (BL, Photo 11/35).

foreground to give force and contrast, while bridge, trees, boulders, figures and creepers all combined to form a happy composition, such as the photographer alas too rarely meets with.'[3]

The Society's own report affirmed the judgement of the Viceroy, agreeing that 'it is certainly unequalled in artistic treatment of the subject and perfect photography … the details of the distance, melting away beyond the bridge, are admirably delicate and rendered with perfect atmospheric effect. Two figures crossing the bridge give life to the picture and break the lines of the bridge.'[4]

The other image which was circulated to members of the Society was described by Bourne as '… a view of the "Horse Temple" at Seringham, near Trichinopoly. … The priests have a curious notion that these fine carvings are improved by white-washing, and this has been done so often that some of the finer details are almost clogged up and obliterated, evidences of which may be seen in the picture.

[52]

One longs to take a sharp instrument and after cutting the priests' throats with it, scrape way these diabolical accretions.'[5] Bourne's extraordinary comments are in keeping with what he reveals of his character in his published accounts of his photographic expeditions in which – as we saw in the previous chapter – he often finds himself in conflict with his Indian employees.

Manifest initially as a triumph of photography, Bourne's success in the 1869 exhibition was soon to cause the implosion of the Photographic Society of Bengal. The commercial photographers took all the chief medals: Bourne was awarded the Gold Medal, Charles Shepherd the silver, and the third prize, also a silver medal, was awarded to William Baker. Bourne, as we have seen, also got the Viceroy's Gold Medal. In response to the professionals' apparent total domination, discussion ensued within the Society about how to redress the balance between professionals and those amateurs who had been the driving force behind the Society since its inception in 1856.

The June 1870 issue of the *Journal of the Bengal Photographic Society* – tellingly the physical size of the journal had shrunk by this point – reported on various members' complaints about unequal distribution of prizes and the decision henceforth to reserve 50 per cent for amateur members of the society. It was hoped that the reduced quota of medals for professionals would remedy matters, but the professionals simply boycotted the exhibition.

James Waterhouse was among those who engaged in the discussions at the end of which 'It was generally agreed that the objects for which the society had been founded could no longer be fully carried out, that members had ceased to take an active interest in the society and no longer communicated the results of their experiments, the reason which appeared to be that few now had the time and money to spend on photography and carry out experiments; that at the present time processes were so perfect and well understood that little improvement could be expected; that there were in India few if any original investigators in the science of photography; that communication with Europe was now so rapid that, through the medium of the European journals, photographers in India were made acquainted with the latest novelties long before they received the Society's journal and thus the operations of the Society had become reduced to holding an Annual Exhibition and distributing

the prize of the Society, and distributing the prize prints.'[6] As we have seen, it was professionals such as Bourne who now dominated these exhibitions.

As in Europe[7] this marks the end of a period during which amateur experimenters advanced the possibilities of photography. Technologies were being commercialised in new ways and capitalistic economies of scale were turning photographic amateurs increasingly into consumers of the products of industrial corporations. Photographers were no longer scientific originators but consumers of a technology being transformed in Europe; hence the Society was no longer a local forum for the exchange of experimental knowledge. In the previous chapter I described the logistical complexity of Bourne's expeditions: few if any amateurs were able to spend months travelling and few had the budgets for equipment and labour. Bourne's success was not simply the victory of a dematerialised aesthetic – it was equally the inevitable triumph of a techno-material and fiscal regime. As the *Journal* noted 'In the early days of the Society … the best prizes were frequently gained by amateurs … at the present time … a well-known firm, possessing superior resources which enabled them to surpass most other professionals (European or Indian) and all amateurs, carried everything before them.'[8]

Tensions between members of the Bengal Photographic Society and professionals had surfaced earlier. In 1863 Josiah Rowe, the *éminence grise* of the Society, submitted two carte-de-visite images of Lord and Lady Canning, images taken by himself which had been pirated in London by Hering, photographer to the Queen. Hering had declared his own copyright over the images, and in response the Society passed a resolution protesting against 'such unacknowledged appropriation'.[9] At the next meeting Donald Horne Macfarlane commented that he 'had been advised never to send home a photograph without first tearing it in the middle'.[10]

The theft of Rowe's images clearly rankled with many members. At the following monthly meeting in late April, the Treasurer, Walter Bourne, placed upon the table a printed circular from several leading London photographers, including Hering, 'cautioning against the pirating of copyright photographs and declaring such an act liable to prosecution'. This was clearly too much for the Treasurer who then exclaimed that 'Mr Hering considered it a great

41/42. The perils of reproduction: Hering's pirated copies of Josiah Rowe's portraits, taken in 1860, of Lord and Lady Canning (BL, Mss Eur D 661, f.14b and BL, Mss Eur D 661, f.14c).

wrong if one of his photographs should be pirated, but did not scruple in the same way to plunder others himself'.[11] The issue refused to die: in August of 1863 there was yet more discussion with a Mr Sandeman moving that the Society involve itself in attempts to amend Indian copyright legislation. In November a response from Hering to a formal letter of complaint from Walter Bourne was tabled. Hering claimed to have bought the images from one of Canning's own staff and that 'this gentleman did not say a word to me about authorship', and concluded with the observation that 'Mr. Rowe is no worse off than myself; for, some years since, I published a beautiful engraving after Thornburn's large miniature of the late Lady Canning and Lady Waterford, at the cost of 600 guineas, and it has been copied by all the pirates in England, perhaps, too, in the East. About sixty of the best of [Felice Beato's] views, taken during the Indian mutiny, have been copied by an officer in the Indian Army and distributed (perhaps sold) very extensively.'[12]

Here we see the anxious side of photography's limitless repro-duction, but also in the original Bengal Society's concerns an

[55]

anxiety about the 'belatedness' which this metropolitan discourtesy bestowed on a 'provincial' photographic practice. Early on in the controversy over this issue Sir Mordaunt Wells commented that 'It would tend greatly to the credit and honour of the Society if they could gain an European as well as an Indian reputation, but this appeared impossible while such a system of copying without acknowledgement was going on'.[13]

Photographs would continue to have an ambivalent status in Indian copyright legislation for many decades. In 1885 the publishers Thacker, Spink & Co. attempted to register a photograph – in both cabinet-card and carte-de-visite sizes of the ex-King Thibaw of Burma and his two wives taken by P. Klier of Rangoon. This elicited the response from the Home Department that the registration of photographs did not come within the scope of Act XX of 1847, the Indian incarnation of the 1842 Literary Copyright Act. A marginal note filed with a copy of the response noted that 'Act XX of 1847 provides for the registration of *books* and photographs can by no means be brought within the category'.[14]

The amateurism of the Society found itself in conflict with professional photographic practice in other ways. In November 1868 the President J. B. Phear contrasted a superior amateur aesthetic with the commercialism which infected the work of professionals. He had recently visited a professional studio in a hill station where he was shown a photograph of a mountain ridge in the station. Although the topographic feature might well have formed the basis for an interesting composition, in the photograph 'a dead plane of representation filled the sheet of paper'. Phear then voiced his opinion that a much better image might have been made had a different angle been chosen and a different time of day chosen for the exposure. The professional photographer agreed 'but then the change of position would have the effect of excluding half the bungalows of the station from the picture, and the public only buy for the sake of getting a representation of the house in which they resided'.[15] After a vote of thanks there was then nostalgic discussion about the 'old days of the Society, when the room was crowded, every chair filled with interested, eager amateurs', and Phear proposed that the monthly meetings be reduced to quarterly occasions.

By the late 1860s, scientific amateurism was dead and with it the Society. In November 1870 the Honorary Secretary reported that

'meetings were so poorly attended that it was scarcely worthwhile going to the expense of lighting the rooms'. When Samuel Bourne had first arrived in Calcutta in 1863 he had written about the Photographic Society's thriving activities ('On entering I was surprised to see so many present (about fifty), and still more surprised … to find that the Society numbered no fewer than 243 members, and had a balance of 1500 rupees').[16] It is thus ironic that it was Bourne's professional dominance which would destroy that very society. Within the aesthetic and technical perfection of Bourne's images lay a very powerful poison.

Indigo (part one)

The beauty of Bourne's images cloaked other kinds of poison also. Although best known for his Himalayan work and picturesque visions of Kashmir, he also photographed in rural Bengal, producing images of tranquillity and stability. In his 1867 image known as 'Village Life in Bengal' he presents an image of a bucolic hamlet, seen from a distance. Bourne, and hence the viewer, are placed at some distance on the other side of the road from which a bullock-cart has just turned into the entrance of the hamlet. This spatial construction seems to imply that Calcutta – the cosmopolitan metropolis – is behind the body of the viewer and that our gaze outwards takes us further and further into a rural hinterland, and that the further our gaze takes us the further we move away from Europe and into India.

Such scenes give us no insight into the manner in which significant tracts of the Bengali countryside was subject to semi-industrialised indigo production. In 1860 an Indigo Commission was established following violent protests in various parts of Bengal by *ryots* – cultivators – who were increasingly indebted, oppressed and terrorised by British indigo planters. The Commission documented how cultivators had draught animals stolen and crops and houses burnt to force them into indigo cultivation. As District-Officer John Beames recorded, 'they were always in debt to the factory, and were purposely kept so, to ensure their subserviency'.[17] Writing about events in the same year that Bourne probably took this photograph, Beames commented on the managers of indigo factories as 'hard drinkers, loose livers, and destitute of sympathy for the natives'.

43. *Village Life in Bengal*, *c.* 1867. A rural landscape without indigo as seen through Samuel Bourne's lens (BL, Photo 29/35).

They exercised a 'despotic control' which 'often degenerated into cruel oppression'. In one case, after a *ryot* refused to cultivate indigo, the planter ordered all the land around his house ploughed up 'and put a fence of thorns round it, and so made the man and his family prisoners in their own house'. After two days without food and water they agreed to start cultivating indigo again.

These are elements of a colonial landscape which never ruffle Bourne's vision of the beauty of India, although at least one other photographer – Oscar Mallite – did subsequently extensively photograph indigo production processes. Several images by Mallite dating from 1877 are in the Science Museum Collection, in London. These seem to be part of a visual propaganda assault by the Planters' Association: uncultivated land is shown being brought into cultivation as though indigo were a supplement to a universe of unlimited good, and the bulk of the twenty images illustrate the carefully regu-
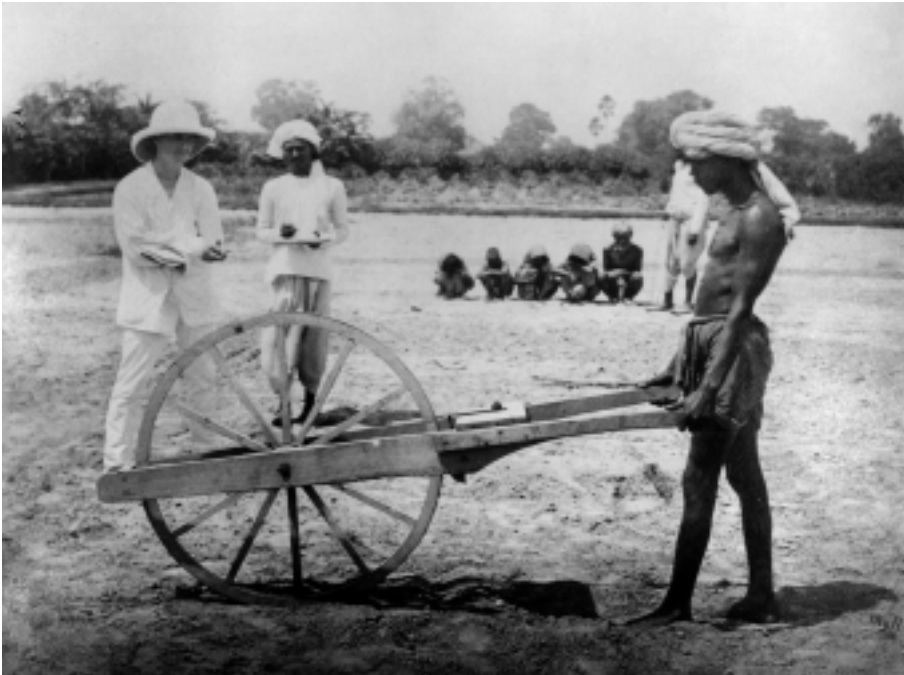
44/45. The landscape of indigo seen through Oscar Mallite's lens, 1877 (Science
and Society Picture Library (London), 10318251 and 10318244).
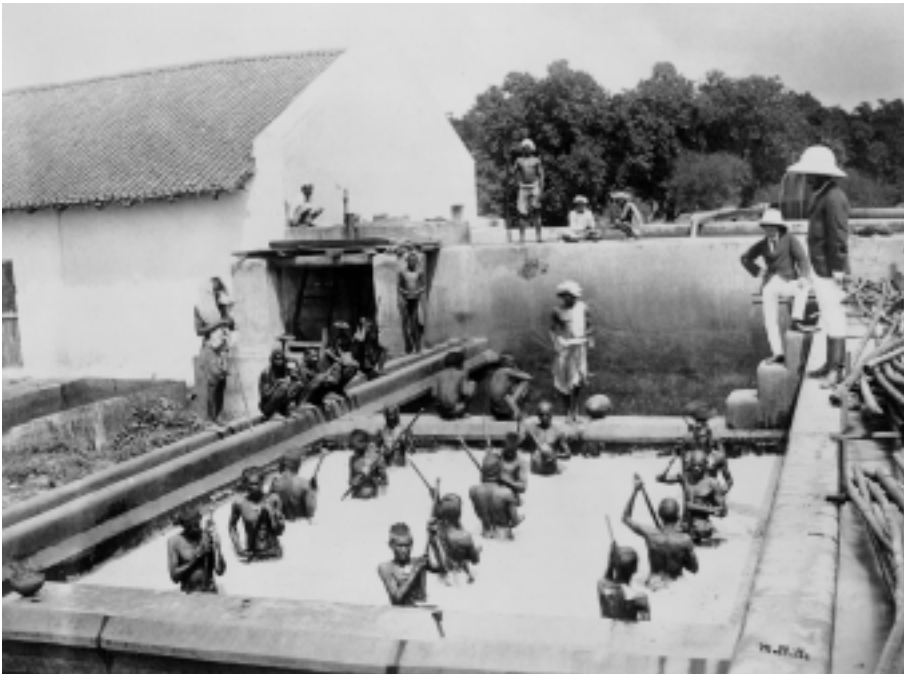
lated system of the indigo factory, rather than the chief space of indigo production – already cultivated fields subject to the terroristic capriciousness of the indigo system which Beames so powerfully described. Indigo production was either photographically elided in favour of an orientalised village economy, or it was presented as the breaking of virgin ground, a frontier of a benevolent colonial capitalism.[18]

We also find evidence of that subtle *habitus* which I described in chapter 1 – the field of logistical support – of accommodation, transport and finance which hovers throughout Bourne's account in relation both to government staging bungalows and to the hospitality of planters, and which appears as a physical presence in Mallite's images. Beames also comments on this, recording how the outgoing District Officer at Champaran (in Bihar) observed that 'indigo planters were very numerous and powerful [and] that owing to their being genial and hospitable the magistrates who ruled the district hitherto had preferred to let them have their own way rather than have any social estrangement or quarrelling'.[19]

But indigo and photography had collided in a different, and more powerful way, two decades earlier when the antiquarian and founding member of the Bengal Photographic Society, Rajendralal Mitra, was expelled from the Society in November 1857. At a public meeting in Calcutta Town Hall in April 1857 Mitra had spoken in favour of Indian judicial jurisdiction in mofussil courts, and against the 'ruin and devastation' brought by indigo planters to Bengal. This precipitated various accusations against Mitra, who was then expelled from the Society. Various Bengali members also left in protest together with Major Henry Thuiller (of the trigonometric Survey, who worked closely with James Waterhouse). *The Friend of India* claimed on 5 November 1857 that 'We are happy to perceive that in getting rid of Rajendralal Mittra [sic] the Photographic Society has succeeded in purging itself [of] several other equally unwholesome members. The latter court publicity and have appended their names to a ridiculous effusion in which they call the Photographic Society an engine for political oppression.'[20] A pamphlet published at the time (which appears to be anti-Mitra but troubled by procedural irregularities in his expulsion) reports that the President of the Society had said that he was 'one of the few practical Photographers of whom the Society could boast' and 'had

46 (*left*). Rajendralal Mitra, the key figure in photographic controversies in nineteenth-century Bengal (Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Photo Archives, Siddharta Ghosh Collection, Kolkata).

47 (*right*). The dactylograph: Konai's hand print adorns the cover of W. J. Herschel's 1916 *The Origin of Fingerprinting*. In evidence to the Indigo Commission in 1860, Herschel had advocated the use of 'the impression of a man's finger on paper [which] cannot be denied by him afterwards' (Cambridge University Library).

worked well for the Society, and had done so when Europeans had hung back'.[21] Mitra was re-admitted in 1868. We might also finally note that William J. Herschel's experiments with fingerprinting (which would soon challenge photography as a competing indexical technology) were provoked (as Radhika Singha has shown[22]) by the need to register the identities of illiterate peasants in the world of contested contracts and identities that characterised the indigo disturbances.

Convict photography

The emergent tensions within photography were also making themselves felt at the heart of the colonial administration where we can trace a faltering, a stepping back from the enthusiastic endorsements

48. Possibly the work of William Glyn in 1857, this photograph in an album compiled by Henry Yule depicts four members of the Trigonometric Survey including, seemingly, on the right Major Thuiller, who resigned from the Bengal Photographic Society in solidarity with Rajendralal Mitra. The signatures pasted below the image complete all possible ways of being in the world: the abstract certainty of the Survey (denoted by the theodolite), the indexicality of the photograph, and the subjective embodiment of the signature (BL, Photo 139/1(2)).

of previous decades, and an uncertainty about the uses to which photography might be put. In debates concerning how the new technology might be put to work in the service of the colonial state, photography was *not*, as Clare Anderson points out 'an extension of the all-seeing eye'.[23]

In February 1869 a memo was circulated describing a plan developed by the Commissioner of Mysore for taking photographic likenesses of twice-convicted criminals. The Home Department was
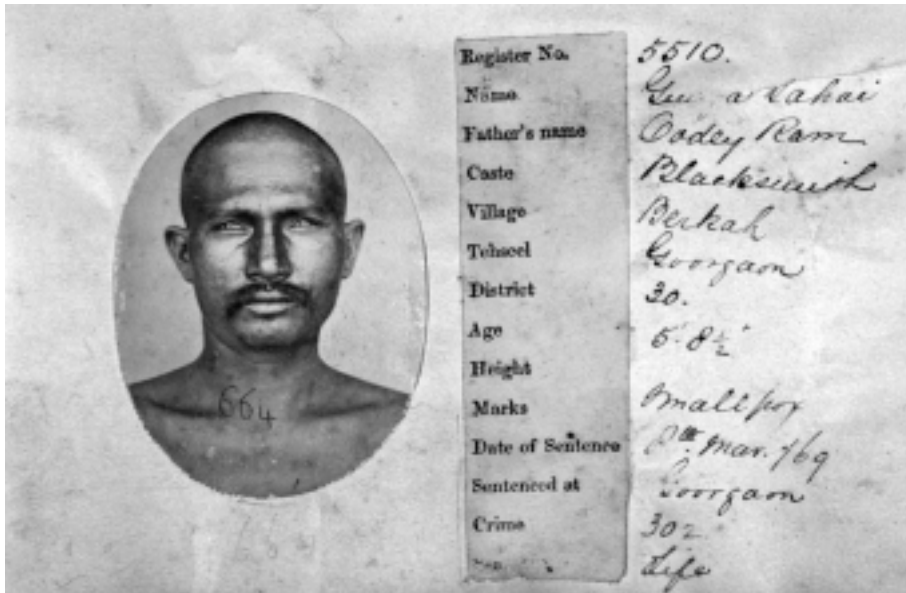
49. A partially seeing eye. A photograph of a convict, probably taken in the central jail, Lahore, in 1869. The possibility of photography's contribution to colonial India's 'carceral network' was endlessly discussed. In practice, the financial burden loomed large, together with anxieties about its practical utility (Howard and Jane Ricketts Collection).

inclined to support the idea but wanted to gather opinions and to survey current practice elsewhere in India.[24] It became clear that in the Punjab such prisoners were already being photographed on entering and leaving the central jail in Lahore, an annual list being published in the *Police Gazette*.[25] However, somewhat surprisingly, of the five replies received, three (from Bengal, North-Western Provinces and Central Provinces) concluded that 'the advantage of having the portraits of twice-convicted prisoners would not justify the expenditure'.[26]

The reservations expressed took two forms, pragmatic and epistemological. The pragmatic obstacles included cost and the lack of suitably technically competent photographers. Bengal noted that it had considered using photography two years earlier in 1867 'but as the expense would be considerable, it was not adopted'.[27] Likewise, the North-Western Provinces noted that 'The expense and trouble of taking photographs would be great'. Beyond cost there was the problem of finding photographers technically capable of conducting the work.

More consequential were epistemological cautions. As the Acting Police Commissioner of the Northern Division protested, 'Even if the portraits could be taken, they would be of little use as a means of detection; the eye requires a certain education before it can perceive a likeness even of the most marked character. The Police have not had this education, and the most ludicrous consequences would result from an order to arrest suspicious characters by portraits.'[28]

This anxiety about Indians' inability to read photographic likeness was expressed most intensely by Colonel C. Hervey, General Superintendent of Operations for the Suppression of Thuggee and Dacoity. 'The Natives of the country,' he observed, 'even the intelligent portion of them, are seldom able to recognize in photographs features with which they are even well acquainted. … But a few days ago I asked an intelligent dacoit approver to examine half a dozen photographs received from the Police Superintendent for Ahmedabad, whether any of them corresponded with the face of a dacoit with whom he was well acquainted. … He exultingly, and to the delight of the men round about me, selected the photograph of quite another man, of one who had lost one eye, while his man had both eyes perfect. If, then, it should be difficult for a detective to distinguish from a photograph the face of a man he well knew, it would be very hazardous to entrust to such a man the likeness of some person whom he did not know at all as a means for detection and arrest. A policeman charged with such a photograph on a Railway platform for instance, would probably take into custody ten or twenty passengers as they stept out of the train, from the mere fact of the photograph resembling them, and the result of such action, not confined to a single instance, but daily enacted throughout the country, need not be described.'[29]

This scepticism was widespread: Colonel Sir W. L. Merewether, Commissioner of Police in Sindh, argued that: 'as regards the members of the Police force generally, the Photographs would be useless, inasmuch as they are, as a rule, indifferently educated men who cannot recognize a likeness, and in whose hands a photograph would be of as little use as a blank card'.[30]

Even those few positive respondents revealed in their affirmations the fragility of photography as cure. A. F. Bellasis, Officiating Commissioner of Police, Northern Division, enthused (in a way that echoed Chevers) about 'The deterrent effect to a criminal of having
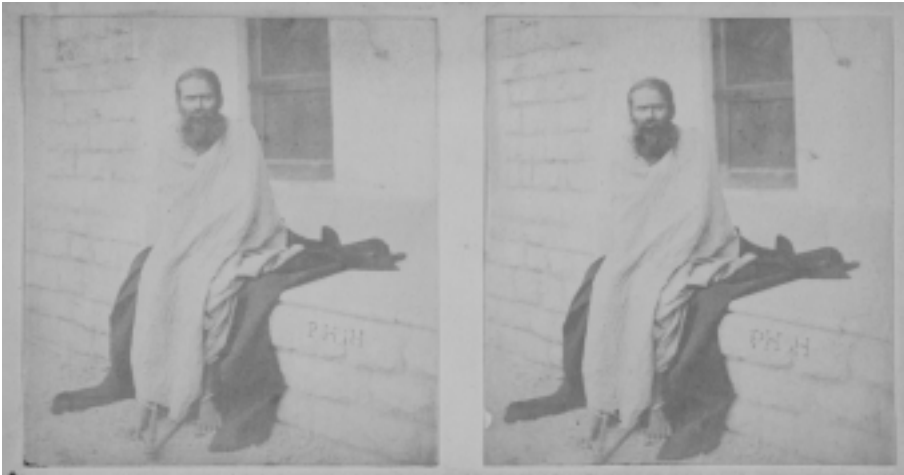
50. The virtual Nana Sahib, whose identity was subsequently disproved. Major
Philip Hammer Harcourt, 1874 (BL, Photo 381/1).

his likeness taken' in what we might – following the model of speech
act theory – call the 'photographic act'. Such a procedure was 'very
salutary if not done too often', he continued. 'I recollect,' he con-
tinued, 'the salutary effect of taking the photographic likeness of a
man named Dajee, who was apprehended in Kurrachee in 1859, and
supposed to be the Nana [Sahib, a key figure in the 1857 Uprising].
Had he been sentenced to be hung, he could not have exhibited
greater fear. When shown his likeness, and told that it was going by
post to Delhi, he became very communicative.[31] His photograph was
immediately recognised by the authorities at Delhi, and he turned
out to be not the Nana, but one of his followers. Eventually he was
released from Jail, and I verily believe that man never showed his
face again within the confines of Sindh.'[32] The British Library
possesses an intriguing stereoscopic image by Philip Hammer
Harcourt, which purports to be of an aged Nana Sahib 'as delivered
by Maharajah Scindia [of Gwalior] to the Political Agent Morar [on]
26th October 1874 but whose identity was subsequently disproved'.

Bellasis then reminisces about the days 'before photography was
so common as now-a-days' when 'we had a practice in Sindh which
was somewhat similar and equally deterrent. Every cattle-lifter and
notorious thief who entered the Jail had to put his feet on two pieces
of wet clay, and thus a perfect impression of his feet was taken, and
these prints were registered and studied by all of the Government

Puggies [professional trackers][35] in the Police, and were no doubt often valuable, and a great deterrent to the criminal.'[34]

The invocation of this earlier competing indexical technology (which brings to mind Sherlock Holmes' ability to recognise 42 different types of bicycle tyre impression[34]) is startling. Photography's cure, it seems, had not been so decisive that it had swept all earlier systems away in its wake. Some still hankered after old technologies, albeit ones which were also indexical.

The pragmatic difficulties of producing photographs came to the fore once again six years later when the authorities in India found themselves tendering for a budget cost carceral network (carceral is the term Foucault uses for 'disciplinary' systems that demand transparency of their subjects). If in the 1850s the idea of photography as a cure generated enormous excitement, by the 1870s photography as a tool of carceral control had become a routinised burden, one whose costs were too much to bear and whose utility was increasingly contested.

The bodies to be photographed in this case were of convicts awaiting transportation to the new jail in the Andamans, and the Bombay and Calcutta authorities were faced with the challenge of trying to match the bargain photographs that were available in Madras. In the 1850s the colonial state was willing to pay – almost whatever photographers demanded from them – because they were investing in the possibility of visibility itself. By the 1870s photography had become almost a burden, one which was too expensive to contemplate.

The Inspector General of Prisons in Bombay noted that 'as none of the photographers in business in Bombay are willing to accept the rates prevailing in Madras, viz., Rupees 5 for eight copies and the negative, I would suggest that the offer of Mr. Blees, a guard on the Great Indian Peninsular Railway should be accepted'.[36] The Penitentiary in Madras photographed every thrice-convicted prisoner. Eight copies were made and 'These photographs are distributed to all the Police Divisions of the Madras Town, and are pasted into the "Old Offenders' Registers"'.[37] Mr Blees was none other than John Blees whose 1877 account *Photography in Hindostan: or Reminiscences of a Travelling Photographer* we encountered in the previous chapter. As part of the tender process and in a bid to escape from the millstone of his railway whistle he had enclosed three cartes-de-visite (which seem not to have

51/52. 'A competent workman.' The railway guard turned prison photographer. John Blees's studio logo from a carte-de-visite, and a later elaborately over-painted portrait (BL, Photo 449/158 and ACP, unaccessioned).

53/54/55. 'Government, I may tell you, expect them to be taken as cheaply as possible.' Studios who tendered for the carceral network, but proved to be too expensive (BL, Photo 91/61, ACP.96.25.0009, private collection).

survived) 'the first is of Mr Baker, S.M., Bombay, the other Charles Gardner, Engine Turner, Kasara, and the child is Mrs Whitburn's baby at Igatpuri'. Iagtpuri is the subject of a lavish and nostalgic description in his 1877 text.[38]

The Superintendent of Tanna Jail closely examined the photograph of Mrs Whitburn's baby and concluded that Blees was his man.[39] He was a 'competent workman', and more to the point he was cheap. He had told Blees that 'Government, I may tell you, expect them to be taken as cheaply as possible'. He urged the Inspector General of Prisons to approve the appointment swiftly for he had 'a batch of convicts ready for deportation in a few days' and would like to get started on them.

A similar bargain-basement approach to surveillance was apparent in Bengal where the Superintendent of Alipore Jail recorded that he had 'ascertained from Messrs. O. Mallite (this is three years before his indigo project) that he would be prepared to do the work for Rs. 3 per head 'giving four copies of each'. The Superintendent went on to note that only photographs of men would be taken, photographs of women would 'I take for granted, under no circumstances be required'. However, 'Power would have to be given to make it a jail offence on the part of the convict to refuse to be photographed, and authority might be required to detain an obstinate prisoner in the Alipore Jail until his photograph had been taken.'[40] Subsequent

rules also made it a breach of prison discipline to offer 'any oppo-
sition to being photographed or wilfully giving unnecessary trouble
by shifting his position, by distorting his features, or by neglecting to
sit still when ordered'.

The Inspector General of prisons in Poona reported that Messrs
Ritter and Molkenteller have offered to do the work at Rupees eight
per half dozen copies carte de visite size, and that Messrs Bourne and
Shepherd's rate was Rs. 10 per half-a-dozen copies. His plan was to
take half-a-dozen photographs of each prisoner and distribute one
each to the Commissioner of Police in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay,
Superintendent Port Blair, the Superintendent of Tanna Jail,
Inspector General of Prisons. The photographs were to be numbered
consecutively, and on the back of each will be given the name, resi-
dence, a brief description of the prisoner and other important details.
By this arrangement, he argued 'much time and expense could be
saved in case of an escape, for it would be sufficient to telegraph
photograph number and name to ensure the three Presidency Police
Commissioners being enabled at once to take steps for the recapture
of a convict. A telegram to this Office or the Tanna Jail would elicit
particulars as to the convict's previous history, and enable the local
authorities at the place of conviction to be at once communicated
with.'[41]

Note here how photographs become almost an adjunct of the
telegraph. They inhabit a networked space, a de-territorialised infor-
mational matrix, cross-referenced by the mobility of the code. The
doubts of 1869 (recall the Indian policeman causing havoc on that
railway platform) are abolished by a relocation of adjucation from
the uneducated eye of the ordinary Indian to inculcated senior
British officials.

Indigo (part two)

The question of Indians' 'uneducated eye' – which Colonel Hervey
had expressed so vigorously – would re-emerge in a controversy that
triangulated indigo, Rajendralal Mitra and Sir James Fergusson, the
leading British historian of Indian architecture. In 1884 Fergusson
published an astonishing *ad hominen* attack on Mitra in a book
entitled *Archaeology in India with Especial Reference to the Works
of Babu Rajendralal Mitra*.[42] Fergusson had first gone to India as an

No. I.—View of Cave at Bhaja. (From a Photograph.)
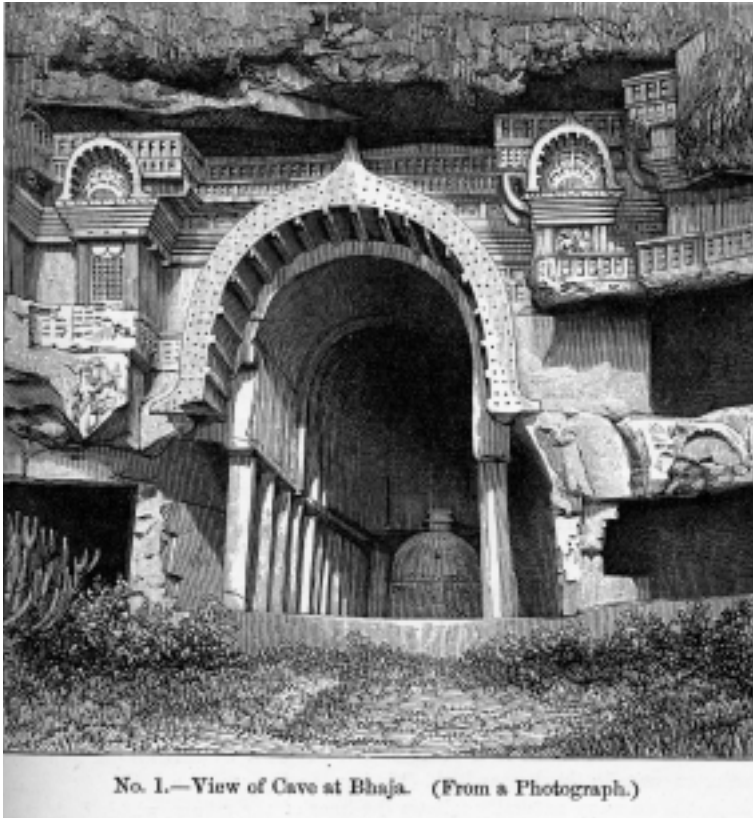
56. 'From a Photograph': a wood-cut from James Fergusson's remarkable attack on Rajendralal Mitra's 'gigantic pamphlet' (Northwestern University Library).

57. Carte-de-visite of the Bengali literary colossus Michael Madhusudan Dutt by David Garrick. Garrick was the chief photographer in Mitra's controversial Orissan expedition (private collection).

indigo planter and had made such an enormous fortune that he was able to retire after ten years. One obituarist recorded that 'a rise in favour of some Turhūt indigo shares in his possession did him good service. Henceforth his career became that of a devotee of art'.[43]

Fergusson's indebtedness to the exploitation of the rural poor of Bengal and Bihar[44] and Mitra's outspoken statements against the suffering inflicted by the indigo system clearly inform the antagonism between the two, but it is the use of the photograph as evidence, the ability to read photographs, and the very nature of indexical 'being there' through which this conflict is articulated.

Ferguson was a great enthusiast for the inviolable nature of photographic evidence and used photographs extensively in his publications, but being no photographer himself relied on Gill, Burgess, Pigou and others. Mitra by contrast was a competent photographer.

As we have already seen, even an anti-Mitra commentator who published a pamphlet protesting against certain procedural aspects of Mitra's expulsion from the Bengal Photographic Society conceded that the President of the Society had described him as 'one of the few practical Photographers of whom the Society could boast' and 'had worked well for the Society, and had done so when Europeans had hung back'.[45]

Mitra prefaced his *Antiquities of Orissa* by explaining that one of his prime objectives was to 'carry out the directions of the late Lord Canning … to secure "an accurate description – illustrated by plans, measurements, drawings, or photographs, and by copies of inscriptions – of such remains as most deserve notice, and with the history of them so far as it may be traceable, and a record of the traditions that are retained regarding them"'.[46] Surprisingly, Mitra does not seem to have been personally involved in the photography: in a rather hostile discussion at a meeting of the Bengal Photographic Society, Mitra reported on 'The Temples of Orissa', explaining that he had 'been deputed by the Bengal Government to make a tour of Orissa with a competent draughtsman for an assistant. He also had with him Mr Garrick for photographer and several assistant draughtsmen from the Industrial School who were placed under Mr Atkinson.'[47] In the Preface to *Antiquities of Orissa* he thanks 'H.C. Levinge, Esp., Superintending Engineer of the Bhar Irrigation Works for a set of eighteen negatives, several of which have been used in the illustration of this work', and also John Beames – by this stage in his career Collector of Cuttack – for the originals of maps of Cuttack.[48] Fergusson himself refers to Mitra conducting, in 1868, 'a party of artists and photographers'.[49]

It was this publication, *Antiquities of Orissa*, which would so infuriate Fergusson.[50] He had remained silent for the last ten years, he explained, and would have continued to do so, he claimed, were it not for the fact that 'that Babu Rajendralala's attacks on me are enshrined in the magnificently illustrated volumes [the original volumes are indeed impressive folios] issued by the Bengal Government, which naturally invest them with an exceptional importance they otherwise would not possess'. In an even more indignant tone Fergusson then goes on to complain that 'these works have become practically gigantic pamphlets written for the purpose of exposing my iniquities and ignorance'.[51]

THE COMING OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN INDIA

58/59.
Photographic
illustrations,
possibly by
David Garrick,
in Rajendralal
Mitra's *The
Antiquities of
Orissa* of 1875
(Northwestern
University
Library).

[72]

There was a colonial and anti-colonial dimension to the point of dispute between Fergusson and Mitra, the former claiming that Indians would have first built in wood, copying stone techniques from the Bactrian Greeks, the latter claiming that they possessed the intellectual abilities to have built in stone. However, Fergusson focuses on the methodological uses of photographs. 'If instead of inditing sentimental nonsense about the injured feelings of his countrymen, the Babu had only spent a few hours in studying the photographs of Mauryan Chitya caves of Western India' Fergusson remonstrates, he 'could not have failed to perceive, even with his limited knowledge of art, that they were literal copies of structures, built with wood and wood only'.[52]

Fergusson's problem arose from the difficulty of retaining the authority of the photograph as index when faced with a photo-graphic counter-practice. His solution is not to challenge the photo-graphs marshalled by Mitra, but to question his ability to see them properly. At the heart of Fergusson's complaint is the claim that Mitra's eye was 'uneducated'. He may have been a good photogra-pher, and commissioner of photographs, but he could not see what was really in his photographs, he muddled his locations, and he claimed to have been to places that he had never in fact visited. Mitra's work was, Fergusson claimed in a resonant metaphor 'an attempt to throw dust in the eyes of the public'.[53]

Fergusson makes endless reference to his own vast collection of photographs and his own ability to read them properly for evidence: 'I now feel sufficient confidence to boast that if any one would produce me a set of photographs of any ancient building in India. I would tell him within fifty miles of where it was situated, and within fifty years of when it was built.'[54] Mitra, by contrast – like other Indians – excelled in the arts of memory, but could not see properly. 'I perfectly understand the uneducated eye of the Babu not perceiving' a particular detail, he writes and concludes that since 'the Babu had no system and no story to tell, one photograph in his eyes was as good as another'; even with a photograph 'staring him in the face' his 'uneducated eye' prevents him from seeing what he really should see, Fergusson claims.[55]

For Fergusson, however, the issue at stake was more than simply a debate between wood and stone. Rather, as he explicitly states, the question was about evidence, and whether Indians could be trusted

to assess it justly. 'The real interest,' he wrote, 'in these days of discussions of Ilbert Bills, [is] the question of whether the natives of India are to be treated as equal to Europeans in all respects.' The Ilbert Bill would have allowed senior Indian magistrates to preside over cases involving British subjects.[56] Consequently 'it cannot fail to interest many to dissect the writings of one of the most prominent members of the native community … and thus ascertain how far Europeans were justified in refusing to submit to the jurisdiction of natives in criminal actions'.[57] Mitra was 'a typical specimen of one of the proposed class of governors', and Fergusson's message is that inured in the arts of memory and lacking the ability to read 'photographic truth', Indians were not fit to judge Europeans. I shall have more to say about this important entanglement between photography and judicial protocol in chapter 3.

It is striking how the historical trajectory upon which Fergusson builds his complaint against Mitra repeats – in an inverted form – many of the questions which so pre-occupied Syed Ahmed Khan. Recall that Syed Ahmed had reacted with hostility to an 'aesthetics of the same' which he saw as a looming presence in the colonial landscape and, as I argued in chapter 1, in the photographic structure of *The People of India*. Fergusson's anxiety relates also to the dangers of equality. He outlines a brief history of misunderstanding: British presence weakened caste which was 'indispensable for the regulation of Indian society' and 'in its place we have tried to introduce the loose regulations of a form of civilisation the natives can neither understand nor appreciate'. Not understanding the foundational necessity of hierarchy in 'native' epistemology, 'we petted and pampered the Sepoys till they thought they were our equals', and it was this equality which they sought to assert in the 1857 Uprising.[58] The past experience of the dangers of *sameness* make it 'easy to understand why Europeans resident in the country, and knowing the character of the people among whom they are living, should have shrunk instinctively with purely patriotic motives from the fatuity of the Ilbert Bill'.[59]

Fergusson, like Syed Ahmed, opposes 'sameness' as a threat to a desirable set of discriminations and differences which were unavoidably embedded in history and nature. Just as for Syed Ahmed those 'who came in the train of conquerors' must not be confused with 'Malwa Bheels', so for Fergusson it was crucial to differentiate an

analytic sensibility of reason, from one which – through the facility of memory – was able to coagulate facts: 'A man who by his powers of memory alone has become familiar with a great mass of scientific facts , is apt to consider himself quite equal to those who, by long and careful reasoning, have assimilated the great truths of scientific knowledge.'[60] Memory (which 'is, in fact, the Indian's forte') becomes also a means of articulating what we might see as Fergusson's own complex and anxious self-doubt about the 'de-Platonising' qualities of photography itself. 'De-Platonising' describes the process observed by Susan Sontag in which truth is relocated from Idea to the surface of the photographic index, which functions like the shadows in Plato's cave.[61] We saw in chapter 1 several of the ways in which this was enthusiastically endorsed in the middle of the nineteenth century, but Fergusson – in his elision of 'prodigous' Indian memory with a kind of bad Indian photographic practice (counterpoised with his own judicious and 'reasoned' used of the photograph as evidence) – seems to express a profound doubt about everything that is 'superficial and sadly wanting in depth and earnestness'.[62] Here he ostensibly describes that exorbitant Indian memory which troubles him so greatly, but one might also choose to read this as a metaphor of the exorbitant surface of the photographic image itself.

Photography's 'dynamite of the tenth of a second' prefigured

We have already had cause to allude to Roland Barthes' description of cameras as 'clocks for seeing'. Through this metaphor Barthes evokes, in an affirmative manner, the way in which early photographic equipment was 'related to techniques of cabinet making and the machinery of precision'.[63] Preceding this is a more sombre declaration that 'Death is the *eidos* of the Photograph' and that the photographer's 'organ' is not his eye 'but his finger: what is linked to the trigger of the lens'.[64]

Willoughby Wallace Hooper, perhaps more than any other photographer in India during the nineteenth century, was preoccupied with the 'trigger of the lens'. In 1886, two years after Ferguson's undignified assault on Mitra, his experiments with the *eidos* of death during the Third Burma War would provoke extreme opposition and concern. Hooper was Provost Marshal of the Burma Expeditionary
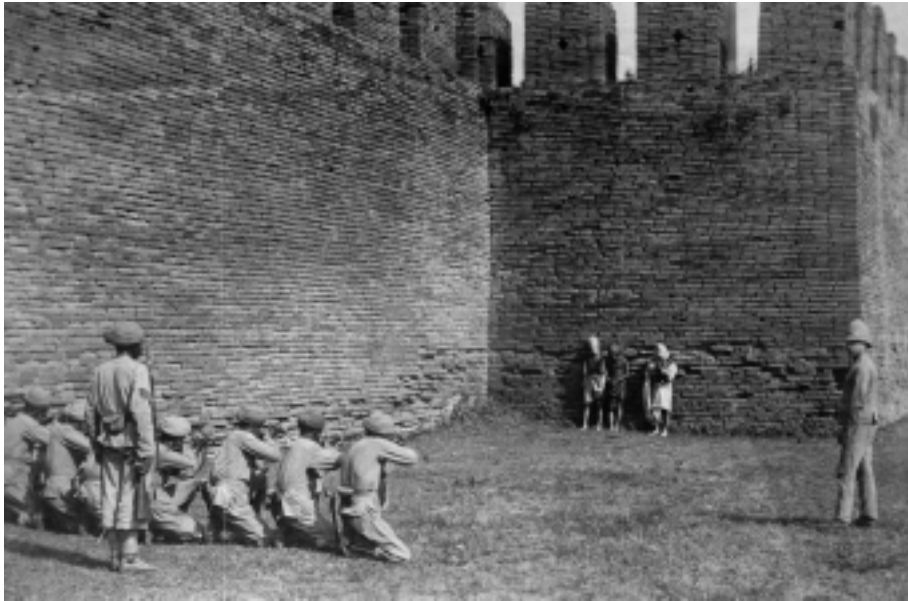
60. The trigger of the lens: Burmese insurgents are executed for the incidental benefit of W. W. Hooper's camera (BL, Photo 447/8).

Force from November 1885, charged with the maintenance of civil order in occupied territories. In his battle with a Burmese civil insurgency, Hooper used executions as a routinised response and on 15 January 1886 took two photographs of three hooded Burmese being executed by a party of nine sepoys under the command of Lieutenant Oswald.[65]

This event, together with the protestations of the Rev. Mr Colbeck of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel formed the basis for a lurid account by a disgruntled journalist – Edward Kyran Moylan – published in *The Times* on 21 January. Moylan reported Colbeck's condemnation at a public meeting of 'the grave public scandals' of Hooper's love of 'ghastly' executions. He continued that 'The Provost Marshall, who is an ardent amateur photographer, is desirous of securing views of the persons executed at the precise moment when they are struck by the bullet. To secure this result, after the orders "ready", "present" have been given to the firing party, the Provost Marshal fixed his camera on the prisoners, who at times are kept waiting several minutes in that position. The officer commanding the firing party is then directed by the Provost Marshal to give the order to fire at the moment when he exposes his plates. So far no

61. '*He is dead* and *he is going to die*'. A daguerreotype of Edmund Charles Vibart, *c*. mid-1850s (BL, Photo 138).

satisfactory negative has been obtained, and the experiments are likely to be continued.'[66]

As John Falconer has shown, Moylan's account was 'riddled with distortions, exaggerations and downright lies',[67] suggesting that the journalistic presentation of Hooper requires some modification. The subsequent controversy in Parliament, and Court of Inquiry in Burma into Hooper's activities, revealed a slightly less sensational – the prisoners were blindfolded and no delay occurred on account of Hooper's activities – but equally disturbing version of events.

Photography's 'That-has-been' (as Barthes terms its preservation of an earlier time in the present) was always a key element of its *magical* power – the 'lacerating emphasis of the *noeme*'. Intrinsic to all photography, it is usually melancholically embraced: 'Daguerreotype presumed to be a portrait of Major Edmund C. Vibart who was killed at Cawnpore' declares the text on small card enclosed in the brown case of a Bakers' daguerreotype. An additional note bestows more fine points of time: 'Edmund Charles Vibart 1825-1857, 11th Regiment Light Cavalry, 1842. Captain 1855. Killed at Cawnpore during Mutiny 27 June 1857.' As Barthes notes of Alexander Gardner's 1865 *Portrait of Lewis Payne*, a thwarted assassin depicted in his cell, his wrists shackled, prior to his execution, '*He is dead*

[77]

and *he is going to die*.' Vibart's photograph also positions us in this uncomfortable double time of '*this will be* and *this has been*'.[68]

Hooper engaged this quality of the image, perhaps hoping to stall time through his investigation of the astonishing and unimaginable space between *he is dead* and *he is going to die*. In doing so he succumbed to a logic of photography's mortiferous *eidos*: the camera as trigger and a ballistic photographic image, hitting the spectator 'like a bullet' as Walter Benjamin would later write. Hooper's *camera macabre* also re-connects us to the earlier ambition of Norman Chevers and photography's potential in a world in which 'man' and 'technology' were not yet fully divorced. It also projects us into a future practice – discussed in chapter 3 – in which photography's 'dynamite of the tenth of a second … reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject'.[69]

The photographic pharmakon

In the early twentieth century the colonial state found itself increasingly compromised by photography's poisonous nature. It is important that we understand the problems that photography posed not simply as the result of an ineffective or botched implementation of the possibilities of the photographic image. Rather the state invested authority in a technical practice which would repay it with duplicity. Some of these controversies had the effect of re-empowering photography's chemical trace. Just as Milton argued in the *Aereopagitica* that evil helped define what was good ('the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue'[70]), so the enduring anxiety about the potential unreality of photography served to endlessly reinscribe the power of indexicality.

Philip Woods has described the reluctance with which the Indian Government agreed to the appointment of Hilton De Witt Girdwood as the first cameraman to be allowed – in July 1915 – to photograph on the Western Front It was hoped that his images of Indian troops being well treated would assuage Indian unrest, and address in particular the anxieties of Muslims, troubled by participation in a war against the Sultan, the subjunctive figurehead of the Caliphate whose re-effervescence and sustenance the Khilafat Movement advocated. Wellington House (the main British propaganda centre) was of the opinion that what they termed 'the oriental' 'had a firm

62. The index contested. An image, but of what? Hilton De Witt Girdwood's
'deliberate fake' (BL, Photo 21/48).

belief in the veracity of the camera',[71] so some suitable photographs
would – they hoped – prove useful.

The British thought that truth-telling photographs of Indian
troops being supported by their officers, recognised by the British
royal family and treated in hospitals (all subjects Girdwood photo-
graphed in detail) might usefully mediate the divided loyalties
of Muslim troops fighting for King and Empire and against the
Ottomans. As Philip Woods has documented, Girdwood managed
to persuade the India Office to permit him to crown himself
'Geographer and Historical Photographer to the Government of
India'. However, by August 1916 relations with Girdwood had
soured because of his repackaging of photographs taken of training
exercises as traces of battlefront confrontations.

[79]

What is striking here is the force of the attachment which the War Office, India Office and Government of India had to a normative indexical photograph whose linguistic caption was consonant with the chemical trace. Several images in the British Library's copy of the *Indian Office Official Record of the Great War*, published (ironically) by a company called Realistic Travels, have contestatory pencilled annotations by India Office officials. 'Second Line of Gurkhas Coming up Under Shell Fire to Consolidate Trench Taken by First Line' is annotated 'A deliberate "fake" it is a photograph of practice maneuovers. Dr Girdwood was expressly forbidden to describe it as a real scene of action'. Another image, 'Cutting the Wire – Where Our Gallant Heroes Fell', has pencilled beneath it 'disturbing image of corpses – but is this faked?'

This anxiety about photographs which abuse the almost sacred connection with the real, has a long history. As early as 1862 the Bengal Photographic Society was troubled by accusations by one anonymous member (who had bet 'ten to one on it') that Dr Benjamin Simpson had repainted one of his negatives to refine the tip of the nose of a Lepcha woman. Simpson brought the negative to a meeting of the Society for members to inspect, and opined that 'he would have considered it a fraud if he had competed for a prize with a Photograph that had been painted up'.[72]

Six years after the Girdwood affair, Khilafat, photography and fakery would once again be triangulated. The occasion was the trial of the Ali Brothers and Jagadguru Shankaracharya of the Sharda Peeth in Karachi in 1921. The Shankaracharya – a venerable Hindu leader – was accused with the Ali Brothers of 'conspiring to seduce soldiers from their allegiance and their duty to the King' in the course of speeches made during the All India Khilafat Conference in Karachi.[73]

The Shankaracharya addressed, in his remarks to the Court, what he termed the 'utter bankruptcy' of the Government's 'out of court proceedings against us in the shape of communiques, circulars, etc., calculated to prejudice the minds of the judges and the unknowing, undiscerning and unthinking public against us personally that we are *not* the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of the Sharda Peeth but only an *imposter*'.[74]

In an impassioned address the Shankaracharya detailed the authority under which he was installed, the circumstances of his
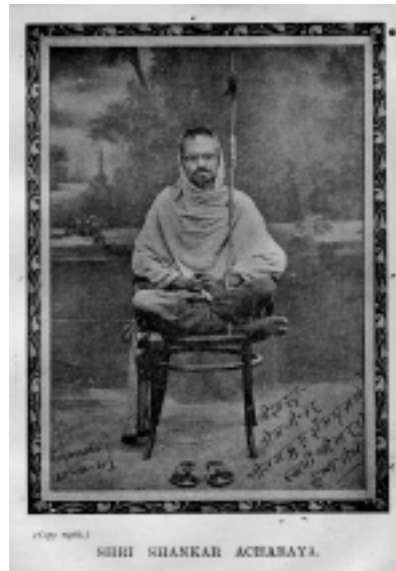
63/64. Nationalist photographic truth: Hindu-
Muslim unity, and the real status of the Sharda Peeth
Shankacharya as embodied during the trial of the
Ali Brothers, in Karachi, 1921 (private collection).

installation and the recognition which this elevation had been
accorded, concluding in a rising crescendo that 'Our connection with
the Sharda Peeth is thus – both morally and legally – as unim-
peachable and binding as the anointing of Aaron by Moses or the
anointing of King David by the Prophet Samuel or the appointment
of Lord Reading by His Majesty King George V to the Viceroyalty of
India!' He was thus not a 'political' Shankaracharya invented by
Congress and the Khilafatists but the 'actual Shankaracharya of the
Sharda Peeth'.

    In published accounts of the court proceeding – aimed quite
clearly at Khilafat supporters – photographs fulfil an interesting
dual purpose of affirming a Hindu-Muslim unity (the frontispieces
usually show the Shankaracharya flanked on either side by the Ali
brothers, Maulan Shaukat Ali and Maulana Mohammad Ali), and –
of more significance for our present discussion – signed images of
the Shankaracharya seated on a chair. The work of this image is
complex: his posture visually signifies a renunciatory orthodoxy that
is consonant with his claim to legitimacy, his position on the chair
may allude to an exchange in the court in which he refused to stand
while being questioned (claiming that he was of higher status than
the judge and that he would stand only for his Guru), and finally the
signature at bottom right which reads *ShriSharada-Pitha [Dhivar]*

65. The staff of Bourne and Shepherd at the 1903 Delhi Durbar. Public spectacle was staged as photographic opportunity by Curzon, ultimately with dangerous results (BL, Photo 440/2(45)).

ShriJagadShankaracharya Swami Shri Bharati Krishna Tirth.

These images of the Shankaracharya demonstrate the increasingly common use of photography in an anti-colonial politics. It would be easy to argue that photography is simply the screen on which a politics increasingly organised around the question of national self-determination projects itself. However, a return to the technomaterial dimensions of photography and the changing its *habitus* also illuminate these developments.

As photographic technology became increasingly miniaturised and increasingly mobile, especially in the early twentieth century, its *habitus* changed . It was no longer dependent on the kinds of official support or financial investment which we have seen were so central to photographers such as Murray and Bourne. If nineteenth-century Indian photography's paradigmatic location was the Himalayan foothills, in the twentieth century photography's preferred location became the street. One of the key moments of transition was Lord Curzon's decision that the 1903 Delhi Durbar should be covered by as many photographers and journalists as possible. Curzon had announced his hope, in a speech in September 1902, that 'a good

[82]

many eyes in a good many parts of the globe will be directed upon Delhi'[75] and encouraged the international press and freelance photographers to document the event. Representatives from at least sixty-four international papers attended, including those from *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily Graphic*, *Hindoo Patriot*, *Bengalee* and the *Bombay Samachar*.

A mobile photographic technology was more easily able to document increasingly chaotic public spaces in which colonial hegemony appeared increasingly fragile. It is two examples of this – both occurring within a few years of each other in Amritsar – which I shall now discuss.

The Jallianwallabagh (Amritsar) massacre on 13 April 1919 was to kick-start a resurgence in anti-colonial struggle. A peaceful crowd, mostly villagers, who had arrived for a fair was fired on without warning on the orders of General Dyer. The official death toll (widely considered an under-estimation) was 379.

Soon after this a committed young photographer, Narayan Vinayak Virkar, arrived to photograph the evidence of this atrocity. Born in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra in 1890, Virkar studied photography in Lahore with the Vedic scholar Shreepad Damodar Satavalekar. He then moved to Bombay where he worked initially as an X-ray photographer on the hospital ship *Madras* before opening his own studio on Girgaum Road in Bombay.[76]

Right from the beginning of his career Virkar was intimately involved in documenting the nationalist struggle. The Amritsar images – to be detailed shortly – are atypical when set against the body of his output. For the most part he wielded his camera not as a documentary tool but rather as a medium for the production of authority. His numerous portraits of nationalist leaders (such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Chittaranjan Das, Subhas Chandra Bose, and M. K. Gandhi – but also many, many others) place them in the opulence and comfort of a bourgeois European photographic studio. Tilak stands with his left hand on a pile of books spread over a casually placed copy of his incendiary anti-British newspaper *Kesari*. The patronage by nationalist leaders of other studios would feature prominently in their publicity ('certified' by Sarojini Naidu and Subhas Chandra Bose, Bombay's Vanguard Studios claimed).

Virkar's Amritsar images, by contrast, document the scene of a crime. Their task is not to produce likenesses that can jostle against

66. The anti-Imperial portrait gallery: Tilak photographed by N. V. Virkar, much
as Pompeo Batoni might have portrayed a European aristocrat on the Grand Tour
(Nehru Memorial Library 743).

Europeans inhabiting similar likenesses in the imperial portrait
gallery. It is, rather, to witness and preserve an event, although,
rather like Boyle's vacuum pump,[77] it is an event whose meaning
requires mediation by other eyewitnesses.

Here we see how photography differed radically from earlier
technologies. In a lithograph depicting the Apparition at Knock,

67. The index certified: Vanguard Studios of Bombay appeals to 'Lovers of Art' and anti-colonial Indians in the early 1930s (advertisement in Mahatma Gandhi, *India's Case for Swaraj*, ed. Waman P. Kabadi, Bombay, n.d.; private collection).

County Mayo, Ireland, the artist assures the viewer that the image was 'taken on the spot' and has been 'submitted to, and approved of by the several persons who saw the above'. Lacking indexicality the image requires authentication from elsewhere.

In Virkar's photographs, however, eyewitnessing is necessary only to attribute evidential significance to this opaque element in the image – no further eyewitnessing is necessary to establish the veracity of the image itself. Virkar's images document the bullet-pocked wall against which so many hundreds of villagers died and which is now covered in anti-Dyer graffiti. Bullet-holes are ringed with white chalk and various crouching figures point to these, serving as internal verifiers of a 'quasi object' (the hole in the wall which is also the event of an atrocity).

An album in the British Library of 'Views of scenes connected with the unrest and massacre at Amritsar' is evidence of a British attempt to use photography as counter-evidence. It attempts to situate Dyer's behaviour within a longer history of Indian actions against Europeans. But the images inevitably record an absence, Atget-like records of a crime that has passed, leaving only emptiness.

THE APPARITION AT KNOCK C^O MAYO.

68. 'Submitted to and approved': the dilemma of non-photographic authority illustrated by a lithograph (private collection).

Railway lines, signal-boxes, urban streets, open doorways – and sometimes proxy bodies – are pressed into the service of a narrative of history and culpability. We see here the state demanding that the photograph speaks evidentially in support of the state's own narrative. But the image refuses to testify to this crime, an event that has been already lost leaving only scenes of an everyday banality which refuse to breathe the marks of its historicity. In an image near the beginning of the sequence of one hundred plus photographs (photo 39 (5) 'Chheharta Railway Station, where train was looted') the converging railway lines, the signals, telegraph pole and uninhabited signal-box are pressed into the service of a narrative of history and culpability but the event to which it refers has deposited few, if any traces, leaving only the everyday infrastructure of the railway. The photograph – of necessity – can record only the banality of place.

This banalisation is even more evident in another photograph in the series captioned 'near Parcels Office of Railway Station where firing occurred'). As with several of John Murray's post-Uprising

69/70. Visual democracy: survivors of the Jallianwallabagh massacre direct the
viewer's gaze to evidence of Dyer's atrocity in N. V. Virkar's photographs (Nehru
Memorial Library, 1054 and 1056).

Chheharta Railway Station, where train was looted.

View showing the location of the firing line during the Jalianwala Bagh shooting.

71/72/73/74. Scenes of crime: an official attempt to offset Dyer's massacre against the silent counter-evidence of earlier incidents (BL, Photos 39/5, /83, /92 and /101).

Stairs where Mrs Easdon took shelter.

Alliance Bank. Room where Mr Thompson was murdered.

images, the camera is pointed at empty space – a nondescript fore-ground that is asked to make tangible a past event. They acquire a curious potency through absence: just as Atget's images conjure the figures whose ejection from his picture space makes us keener to imagine them, so in this image the caption overlays a ghostly set of events: angry Gujranwalas surging towards a police line and the rico-chet of rifles.[78]

Amritsar does not appear until halfway through the album, when we are presented with images of destruction to the Christian Library, the Christian Preaching Hall, the National Bank and the destruction of the Post Office in the Town Hall. Then – spread across two facing pages – are four images relating to Jallianwala Bagh. We see the 'Bazar leading to Jalianwala Bagh'; the 'Narrow Entrace leading to Jalianwala Bagh' (remember that Dyer had been unable to bring in mechanised support because of the obstruction this posed) and then on the next page 'View showing the location of the firing line during the Jallianwala Bagh shooting' and a general view of the area in which the massacre occurred. In the photograph of the firing line we see a rubble-strewn piece of ground abutting the backs of brick-built structures against which Dyer's three hundred and more victims lost their lives. There then follow further Atget-like images of absence: 'Latrine in Zenana Hospital where Mrs Easdon took shelter' and 'Stairs where Mrs Easdon took shelter'.

These images are indexes of course, but of what? They record what was in front of the camera, which was simply a latrine door, or a set of stairs, not the event which the camera is asked to conjure. These images cannot reach back to summon events prior to the making of the negative; it can merely depict a forlorn absence onto which we can project a narrative.

Among the few images which are able to capture melancholy material traces of the event are 'Alliance Bank. Room where Mr. Thompson was murdered': three windows are open at the rear, a static roof fan hangs above and papers and debris scattered across the floor present a powerful scenario for which the caption invites the viewer to conjure ghostly participants.

Other images, lacking the detritus of history, interpolate an inter-mediary – figures in the image which corporeally fix and partially re-inhabit the site of the event – just as in Virkar's images. Indian bodies are positioned as proxies for the figures to whom the captions
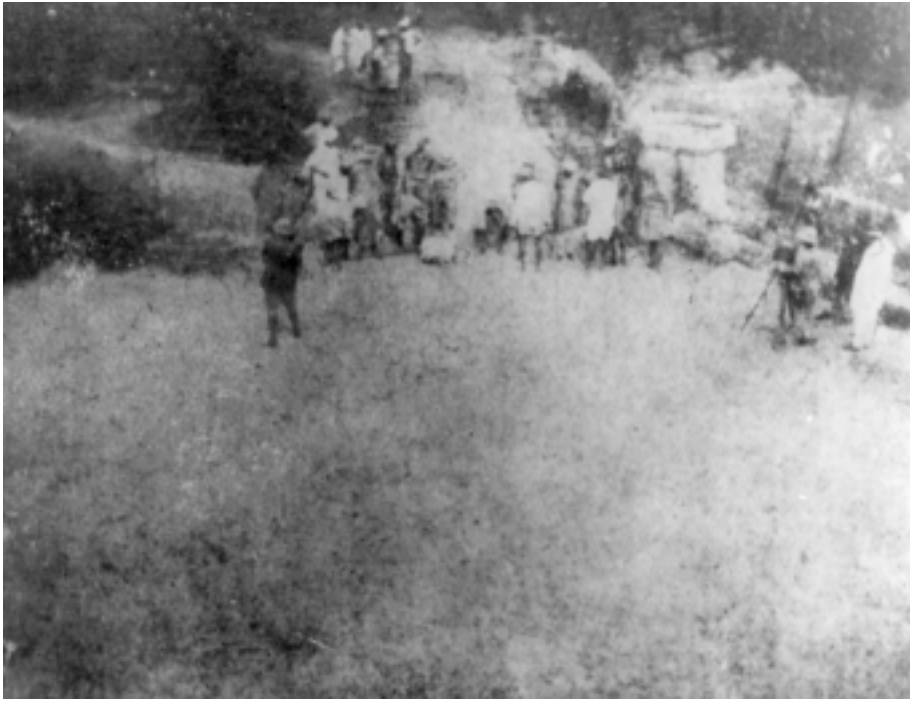
75 (p. 90, *top*)/76 (p. 90, *bottom*)/77. From poison to cure. 'He told me on several occasions that his design was to show the American people the real India, and to destroy the halo of romance with which Gandhism is surrounded in the eyes of certain sections of the American public,' the cinematographer Ariel Varges disingenuously told a colonial official. The sensational images he produced of the Guru-ka-bagh incident in Amritsar in 1922, documenting police brutality, demonstrated the threatening power of a mobile photography, delinked from the colonial *habitus* (Nehru Memorial Library, 50439, 50441 and 23088).

refer: 'Scene of first assault on Miss Sherwood', 'Railway Station – Spot where Guard Robinson was murdered' all break up the anonymity of space (apparent in the earlier images) with standing figures (all Indian) which mark the precise location of the crime. Abstract, unimaginable, space is punctured by the specificity of a body standing in for these crimes against Europeans. In a similar fashion in one image a boy marks the 'Scene where Miss Sherwood was beaten for the second time'; and in another we see 'where Miss Sherwood took shelter (where the boy is lying)'. Seen in this context, in 'Chheharta Railways Station where train was looted' we might see the railway tracks as marking an 'x': the two converging railway tracks mark a fortuitous and eloquent specificity in an otherwise silent space.

In 1922 Amritsar was once again a flash-point. In this year, however, cameras were there to record events as they unfolded. One of the cameras belonged to an American cinematographer named A. L. Varges.[79] An official report written by V. W. Smith Superintendent of Police CID Punjab, on 10 September[80] described how Varges had photographed an Akali protest procession en route for the Guru-ka-Bagh. Four waves of protestors attempted to access a disputed piece of land and were beaten back by *lathi*-wielding police, all this being filmed and photographed by Varges. 'Eventually 23 of the Akalis were taken off on stretchers, the remaining two, who were more obstinate, were treated more roughly by the Police … meanwhile the cinematograph operator and other photographers and Press representatives were all busy,' Smith noted in his report.[81]

Appended to Smith's report is 'Notes in the Intelligence Bureau' directing that it be shown to H.E. (the Governor in Council), whose handwritten response records that 'He does not feel happy about the activities of the cinema operator and the possible ill-effect of these films in fostering anti-British feeling in the United States' and then instructs the Home Department to ascertain whether there was any way of stopping Varges from shooting more film.

The Governor in Council issued instructions that Varges's whereabouts be identified, that the films should not be shown in India and that if possible they should be prevented from being exhibited anywhere else. Rushbrook Williams was deputed to liaise with Varges and request him to 'exercise caution that none are exhibited which are likely to cause misunderstanding'.[82]

In Varge's images – these scratched, panicked slices of reality – we see evidence of photography's indiscriminate capture which (as Kittler suggested) 'shifted the boundaries that distinguished … random visual data from meaningful picture sequences, unconscious and unintentional inscriptions from their conscious and intentional counterparts'.[83]

By this stage any researcher sitting in the National Archives in Delhi and retracing this immense flow of official paperwork in pursuit of Varges would be aware that a profound anxiety is at large. Partly this is simply bureaucratic buck-passing: no one, for understandable reasons, wants to be shown to have been sufficiently gullible to have facilitated the activities of this foreign photographer.

[92]

But the anxiety also marks the deep and destabilising realisation that the control of the technology of photography and its evidentiary protocols had now slipped from the hand of the state. Photography's 'penetrating certainty', which earlier colonial figures had extolled, had been desirable to the extent that it was a certainty that the state could own. In these files is dramatised the passing of carceral surveillance. From this point on the archive documents a state which perceives itself increasingly vulnerable to the evidential scrutiny of others.

It is at this point that we see with exceptional clarity photography's *intransigence*. Here is its 'tension' as a limit to tensility. It is photography's data ratio, its inability to exclude the random, which forces it from the slippery hands of the state. The vision of photography as an epiphenomenal reflection of discourse and power could hardly be less appropriate. The logic at work here is the logic of photography, not the logic of the state.

From Gur-ka-Bagh in 1922 onwards, images in India were at war, to invoke Serge Gruzinski.[84] Colin Powell's presentation of satellite imagery of putative WMD sites before the UN in 2002 and photographs of torture perpetrated at Abu Ghraib are later renditions of a struggle between competing indexicalities which is already apparent in 1886 in Burma and 1920s India. Official response to Varges initiated a notion of the 'embedded' photojournalist whose resonance in the early twenty-first century will be obvious.

The Guru-ka-Bagh episode precipitated an official discussion about whether unsanctioned filming of public places could be controlled. In December 1922 the Secretary of State for India concluded that section 144 of the Criminal Procedures Code could be used to 'prevent the photography or filming of objectionable subjects' and asked for further clarification of this possibility by the Legislative Department. They replied that section 144 probably did not apply but even if it did 'it would be quite useless. In practice a film would be taken long before an order preventing it had been received.' The solution proposed was more pragmatic: 'if a photographer were attempting to take pictures with a view to the production of incidents with objectionable features, such as for example the forcible dispersal of the Akalis at Guru-ka-Bagh, it would always be possible for the police by executive action "to move him on", since a film is not obtained with the same speed and ease as an ordinary photograph'.[85]

[93]

One year later, in 1923, Varges applied to the Viceroy for permission to film M. K. Gandhi in jail in Poona. In his request he noted that he had been unable to convince the authorities in Poona of the 'advantage of modern methods of publicity' despite the fact that his work 'will do a lot for steadying confidence in India'.[86] In response S. P. O'Donnell (private secretary to the Governor-General) noted that 'I am not surprised that the Bombay Government were not impressed with the advantages of the modern method of publicity suggested by Captain Varges, and were not disposed to accept a proposal which is repugnant to every canon of administrative propriety and even decency'. W. M. H. Hailey, commenting on the request, wrote, 'The proposal seems to me to be simply disgusting.'

Having failed to prevent the Guru-ka-bagh images being taken, and then having failed to prevent the images leaving the country, various anxious middle-ranking officials looked to the caption as a final redemptive strategy. Rushbrook Williams[87] wrote a desperate prefiguration of Walter Benjamin's declaration in the 1930s that in future 'the caption [will become] the most important part of the shot': 'It is [crucial] that the captions employed, *which are so important from the propaganda point of view* are deployed in the most moderate terms.'

So the colonial state then pursued the caption as a means of redeeming the image. J. E. Ferard, Secretary of the Judicial and Public Department, and others communicated with film distributors such as Louis F. Behr, of the Gaumont Company in London, who agreed to interpolate colonially dictated captions and inter-titles.

Varges's original opening inter-title was 'Amritsar India: International News presents exclusive pictures of India's martyrdom' followed by 'A conflict unique in human history is being waged today in Mystic India where millions of Indians are engaged in "peaceful" rebellion against constituted authority'. The film then moved to its crescendo where, as the inter-title noted, 'At no matter what cost of bodily suffering they keep on trying. …'[88]

Louis Behr was persuaded to change most of the captions, contradicting the intent of Varges's original captions, or emphasising other elements in the image. One new inter-title read: 'A rough military formation was adopted. Pools of water can be seen, the result either of rain or irrigation. But rainfall is scanty in the Punjab and millions

of acres are irrigated from canals from the "five rivers".' Where Varges had 'Scores are carried away unconscious', the revised inter-titles observed that: 'The police use force against the trespassers, causing it may be in some cases serious injuries, but the ease with which the "non-violent" Akali falls is evident. …'

In this manner language was used in a futile attempt to re-engineer and defuse the indexical potency of the image. Pools of water become signs of a beneficent colonial administration's irri-gation policies, and Akalis bearing the blows of colonial *lathis* fall too easily.

The index redux

The specific problematic nature of representations which have – in Benjamin's words – been 'seared with reality' was explicitly theorised during this period by the Indian Cinematographic Com-mittee. We earlier considered the anxieties that surrounded W. W. Hooper's photography of executions. Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, had anxiously telegraphed the Chief Commissioner in Rangoon upon hearing reports of Hooper's activities, commenting that the 'Effect upon public opinion in England, and in Europe, if *Times* report is true, will be most disastrous'.[89]

It is important to note, however, that Dufferin's anxiety concerned the circulation of journalistic reports about the events. Hooper's own photographs did not circulate at the time and the Burma insurgents were not in a position to photograph Hooper at work. Dufferin's anxiety is thus something rather different from what we might – from the infamy of our current century – term the Abu Ghraib effect, in which indexical traces make public what otherwise would be kept secret, circulating as unassailable documents of events.

The *Report of the Indian Cinematograph Committee 1927-1928* notes in its very first sentence that 'the great potentialities of the cinematograph for good and for evil are generally recognized'. In the Varges case the colonial state devoted its energy to attempting to stop images *leaving* the country. In the activities of regional censorship boards we can trace a systematic attempt to control the *inflow* of equally threatening images. The detailed records of the censorship

[95]

boards preserve episodes of otherwise extinct movies, for they document in detailed prose the sections of films which were to be deleted. Most of these deletions were required lest the scenes within them destroy the moral authority of white colonisers.

Through this extreme *chiaroscuro*, we see perfectly delineated colonial anxieties about what others might think of them. The following are typical of the regional censor boards' adjudications in the 1920s:

Earth's Curse or Passion and Love 18 January 1922 Passed with endorsement. … b) that part in Act III in which a wild orgy takes place after the bicycle races (42 feet); c) that part of the scene in Act IV which shows Lil rising out of an Indian Juggler's basket quite naked to the waist, and thereafter dancing a serpentine dance naked to the waist. …[90]

Temptations of Paris 6th June 1928. [omit] (a) scenes in the Moulin Rouge. Omit the scene showing two drunk men dancing with a lot of girls.[91]

Temptress 8th August 1928. [omit] (1) from the sub-title 'Spring and nights of Paris throb with love and desire' substitute 'Spring and the nights of Paris' (2) Omit scenes of revelry showing semi-nude woman being carried. … Omit all the close-ups of the dinner scene where the busts of ladies are discernible. Omit all scenes showing the manipulation of feet and legs under the dinner table.[92]

The colonial state, of course, surveillanced mass produced images resulting from earlier technologies.[93] Film Boards had concerns about an *imaginative agency* (e.g. in relation to the question of whether seeing people with guns, which so preoccupies the 1928 Cinematographic Committee Report, would encourage people to use guns). But in relation to sex and alcohol their concerns were other: what would Indians think if they saw 'westerners' engaging in modes of behaviour that so flagrantly negated Indian moral orthodoxy? In the dealings of the regional film censorship boards, it is quite clear that a perception of what might be termed *performative indexicality* was present. The question here of whether *all* 'westerners' engaged in such behaviour (i.e. whether the filmic representation was to be taken as sociologically representative) was irrelevant. All that mattered was *those people on the screen* had *performatively indexed* this behaviour. Film became an index of the actions of those whom the film documented. It was 'seared with

reality', with the reality of the performance that had unfolded in front of the camera.

A notion of the performative index was quite explicitly theorised in the summary comments of T. Rangachari, the chair of the 1927-8 Cinematographic Committee, in response to oral evidence by a Mr Tipnis on 13 February 1928. Tipnis described a film titled *The Answer of the Sea* which narrated a tale of sea nymphs in which 'dozens of girls absolutely and almost naked appear on the surface of the water swimming with their buttocks exposed and in some places their fronts exposed also. As a fairy tale it has no lesson to convey. It is designed to be a feast for the eyes. ...' After listening to this, Rangachari concluded that: 'I think I must add that after seeing [*Answer of the Sea*] there is no doubt in my mind that *the fact (it is not a question of representation or misrepresentation of western life on the screen in this case)* that so many western girls are available for exposing their bodies in this manner is bound to create a deservedly bad impression about western morals in this country.'[94]

Rangachari here identified photography's inability to exclude – the basis of its claim to be a cure –as also the basis of its potential as poison and in so doing demonstrated a more sophisticated under-standing than most commentators on photography. Incapable of asking whether what it records is 'appropriate' (i.e. in Rangachari's words a question of representation or misrepresentation) the camera can only engage what is 'available'. In the following chapter we shall explore the prophetic potential of photography's disinterest in the relation between what it records and its relation to prevailing social norms.

A poison extracted from a cure

The British attempted to counteract the impact of nationalist propaganda in the USA by funding figures such as T. K. Peters and Lowell Thomas. Peters – the beneficiary of Rs. 25,000 from the Government of India – was a minor chancer on the fringes of Hollywood and it was soon clear that he would be of little help.[95] Thomas had successfully marketed T. E. Lawrence as a hero, but was far less successful in this instance, and by 1930 his debt to the Government of India had to be written off. In India there was an attempt in 1921 to engender enthusiasm for the Prince of Wales's

[97]

78. *Camera macabre*. W. W. Hooper's images of famine victims provoked ambivalent responses: were these victims figures available for redemption, or should a fit colonial state have already redeemed them? (ACP 98.54.0003).

visit through the distribution of celebratory newsreels to counter press indifference.[96] However, in Madras the cinema showing the film was the 'object of attack by hooligans' and the copy of the film was damaged.[97] Most famously the India Office funded Katherine Mayo to write her 1927 gutter-journalism book *Mother India*. Intended to paint a picture of a barbaric and sexually degenerate Hinduism as the motor of nationalist consciousness, the book had the paradoxical effect (as Mrinalini Sinha has recently argued in a perceptive analysis) of making her readers question – if things were really this bad – British claims concerning their contribution to Indian society. This reflected what Sinha describes as the 'uniquely beleaguered status of Mayo's fact-laden rhetoric' whose chief effect was a fundamental and ironic reversal of everything she intended.[98]

This was an anxiety that applied particularly to images of famine from the mid-nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century. When published in *The People of India* starving bodies were intended to depict objects suitable for reform: this is what the British

[98]
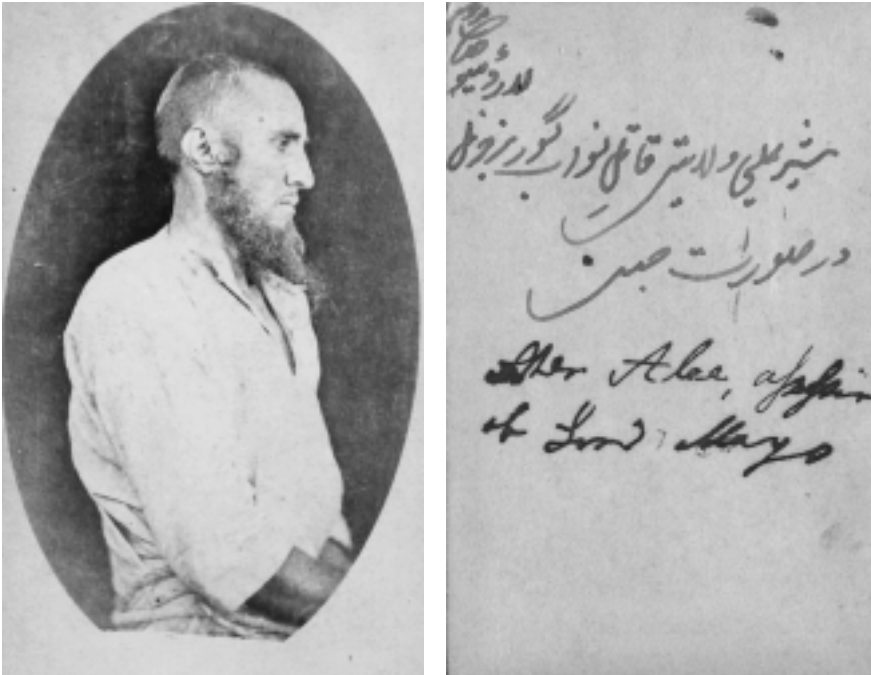
79/80. The seductions of celebrity. Sher Ali, the murderer of Lord Mayo, in the
Andamans in 1872 (ACP 2001.14.0187).

presence will prevent. But located in an official publication it raises
the question of why they are still in need of reform. W. W. Hooper,
who as John Falconer puts it had a 'known predilection for photo-
graphing subjects *in extremis*',[99] engaged the starving body as part of
his photographic eschatology but also produced images whose excess
was always dangerous to a colonising ideology.

   Mayo published an illustrated sequel to her notorious book in
1935 with the title *Face of Mother India*, a book which – though it
was clearly substantially illustrated with images directed to her
through official channels (and written with the support of Hugh
MacGregor in the India Office) – was attached to such a contro-
versial author that the colonial authorities felt they had to ban it.[100]
Colonial surveillance and proscription, like photography itself, was
now caught in a vortex of its own making.[101] Perhaps nothing sums
up this paradox better than the official anxiety about Sher Ali, a
convict who had murdered Lord Mayo during a visit to the
Andamans in 1872. This was the same Mayo – Richard Southwell

Bourke – who, three years earlier, had awarded the Viceroy's medal to Samuel Bourne in the Bengal Photographic Society annual exhibition. Sher Ali was first photographed as an object-lesson in colonial punishment, but his love of the camera and sense of himself as a celebrity started to unhinge a colonial system of discipline structured around visibility. Clare Anderson notes W. W. Hunter's description of how Sher Ali was 'childishly vain of being photographed as the murderer of a Viceroy' and Hunter's subsequent refusal to publish details of his identity. Anderson also notes how although there are three images of Sher Ali in the British Library, in only one of these is he named: in the other two he is an anonymous murderer and assassin.[102]

A poison extracted from a cure: when photography first arrived in India it was greeted by many as a magical cure for a set of already existing representational problems. It seemed to provide perfect chemical traces of the world: the largest spaces could be recorded, the tiniest spaces probed, past events appeared as though they might be recoverable, the retinas of murder victims – if photographed quickly enough – might reveal the identity of their attackers. The camera seemed to be a truly magical prosthesis and its possibilities seemed limitless.

One of the most enthusiastic proselytisers on behalf of the wondrous new technology was the Rev. Joseph Mullens. In his celebrated lecture *On the Applications of Photography in India* delivered to the Bengal Photographic Society in October 1856, he had noted that:

There are some applications of Photography, less peculiar but equally professional and of great importance to the Government. *The scene and circumstances of a riot, the damage inflicted by rioters*; the mode in which a robbery was committed; the scene of a murder and all its attendant circumstances**;** the position of a body whether hanging up or lying down, the state of its dress; the marks made on it, can all be copied with perfect accuracy. … *A very active Photographer, in whom the ruling passion was very strong, might be able to sketch a riot during its actual progress, and by successive pictures to show who was most active, to identify the ringleaders, and show the murderous hand in the very act of inflicting a fatal blow. The purpose of justice would in this manner be served to the most material degree.*[105]

Mullens assumed that photography's indexicality would serve the interest of the British colonial presence: we have seen how that

same indexicality, photography's non-discriminating data ratio, did come to serve the purpose of justice, but not in the way Mullens anticipated.

As with the Derridean *pharmakon* (the untranslatable zone of the remedy, drug, philtre, cure and poison) this transformation reflected not a distortion of photography but a potential intrinsic to photography itself. The data ratio of photography proved itself capable of generating several directly opposed outcomes. From cure to poison, and all the while the same.

81. A travelling photograph, Robert Montgomery and staff, Lahore, 1858
(BL, Photo 139/2(7)).

Chapter 3

Photography as Prophecy

Odd that no one has thought of the *disturbance* (to civilisation) which this new action causes … it is as if we repressed the profound madness of Photography. (Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*)[1]

THE TRICK WAS TO FOLD IT CAREFULLY, in the right places. Of course a ruler helped. First, all the way along the top, about a third of the way down, then the same all the way along the bottom so that when folded into itself the photograph couldn't be seen. Some of the albumen on the surface of the print cracked and fell off, but that couldn't be helped. Then one end was folded over to make an envelope shape. Then the photograph – taken in Lahore in March 1858 of Sir Robert Montgomery, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, with his staff and their wives (survivors of the recent Uprising) and reproduced here – was addressed to Major Henry Yule[2] in the Public Works Department, stamped of course (to the amount of 4 annas), and posted.

This travelling image draws our attention to the manner in which some photographs existed in networked spaces, informational flows, data streams. Here we can detect a trajectory of connectivity, photography mediating collectivities in extended networks. But we can also trace a converse trajectory of privatisation and individuation. In this idiom photography constitutes an increasingly confined space in which its technology seems best suited to the capturing of individuals rather than collectivities. I will have more to say about this process of individuation later.

Photography and telegraphy

Let us start by considering photography as network. A Kittlerite analysis (that is one inspired by Friedrich Kittler's technomaterialism) would be deeply struck by the coincidence of photography and
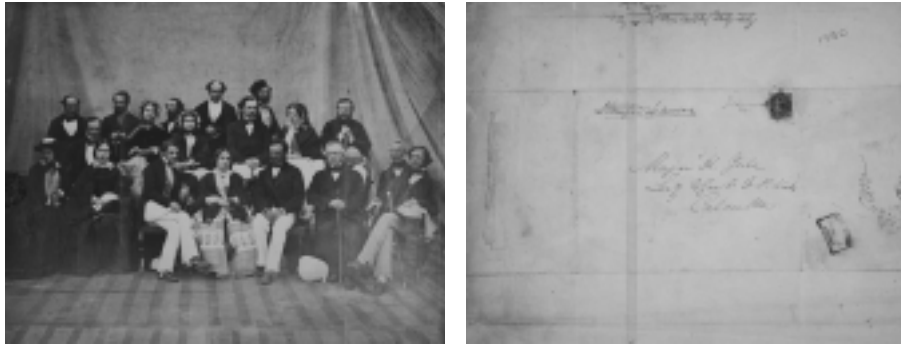
81/82. A travelling photograph, 1858 (BL, Photo 139/2(7) (recto and verso)).

telegraphy. In India this relationship was peculiarly intimate, in large part because of the role played in both domains by Assistant Surgeon William Brooke O'Shaughnessy, one of the earliest enthusiasts for photography in India and subsequently Director-General of Indian Telegraphs (1852-61).[3]

As was documented in chapter 1, it was O'Shaughnessy who reported (in October 1839) to a meeting of the Asiatic Society on his experiments with the new *photogenic drawing* 'which was exciting so much attention'[4] in Europe. It was O'Shaughnessy who could claim the crown of having introduced photography into India.

Six months earlier, in April and May 1839, O'Shaughnessy had erected 'the first *long* line of Telegraph ever constructed in any country'. Starting in the house of Dr Nathaniel Wallich[5] (the Superintendent of the Botanic Gardens of Calcutta, founder of the Indian Museum and from 1837-8 Professor of Botany in Calcutta Medical College, where O'Shaughnessy also worked), the line was 21 miles in length, with 7000 feet of river circuit. Unaware of Morse's development of a different system two years previously, O'Shaughnessy's telegraph registered its effects on humans by electrical pulses delivered to the fingertip. O'Shaughnessy's experiments performed on this line removed, as he subsequently wrote, 'all reasonable doubts regarding the practicality of working Electric Telegraphs through enormous distances', a possibility he tells us which was initially 'generally [regarded] with contemptuous skepticism'.[6]

In 1850 the Court of Directors enquired of the Military Board of Bengal what the potential of the new invention might be. In the next

year a 30-mile line commenced and opened in Diamond Harbour; within a few months it had been extended to 80 miles and 'in March 1852, the rivers Hooghly and Huldee were crossed and the line from Calcutta to the sea opened for official and public correspondence'.

Within a few weeks of this the Second Anglo-Burmese War broke out and, as O'Shaughnessy recorded, 'the services of the telegraph were thus brought into instant and practical requisition'. A 'steam-frigate, bringing intelligence of the first operations of the war, had not passed the flagstaff of Kedgeree … when the news of the storming and capture of Rangoon was placed in the hands of the Governor-General in Calcutta, and posted on the gates of the Telegraph Office for the information of the public'.[7] The editor of the *Friend of India*, on learning of the success of the Calcutta-Kedgeree line, wrote ecstatically about the prospect of an 'instantaneous communication' which would make of India 'one magnificent city. … The telegraph will give a character of ubiquity to the Government'.[8]

Just days after, Lord Dalhousie as Governor of Bengal proposed the construction of lines to Calcutta, Agra, Bombay, Peshawar and Madras. 'If addition of its political value were required,' Dalhousie wrote, 'it would be found in recent events, where the existence of an electric telegraph would have gained for us days when even hours were precious, instead of being dependent for the conveyance of a material portion of our orders upon the poor pace of a dâk foot runner.'[9]

The telegraph was essential to the British response to the Uprising of 1857. The Urdu poet Ghalib wrote that 'with their magic, words fly through the air like birds'[10] and Earl Roberts memorably sketches the theatrical moment in Peshawar when the telegraph bought intimations of the cataclysm unfolding on the other side of India: '… as we were sitting at mess, the telegraph signaller rushed in breathless with excitement, a telegram in his hand, which proved to be a message from Delhi … conveying the startling intelligence that a serious outbreak had occurred at Meerut the previous evening …'[11] Robert Montgomery in Lahore commented that 'Under Providence, the Electric Telegraph saved us'.[12]

The role of the telegraph in precipitating the revolt also quickly became a key element of imperial historiography. Edwin Arnold, in his account of Dalhousie's administration reports a mutineer on his

83. 'Mr Paschud – Supt.
of Telegraphs, Lucknow',
salted paper print by Ahmad
Ali Khan, mid-1850s
(BL, Photo 269/1(124)).

way to his execution pointing to a telegraph line and shouting
'the accursed string that strangles us!'[13] *The Illustrated London News*
reported in November 1857 that at Meerut the cast-iron sockets of
telegraph posts, strengthened with electric telegraph wire, formed
the basis of hastily constructed canons which were loaded with small
pieces of telegraph wire as shot.

The advocate of Comtean positivism, Harriet Martineau, in her
1858 *Suggestions towards the Future Government of India* presented
an Indian fear of telegraphy as *xeno-techne* as symptomatic of a pre-
scientific theological mentality, a trope which would be endlessly
repeated by other writers. 'The European railway, telegraph, and
other magical arts introduce into India much more than themselves,'
she wrote. 'They introduce an experience subversive of ideas and
practices, which would in natural course have taken centuries to
dissolve and abolish.'[14] Even the liberal historian Edward Thompson
would write in 1935 'Inventions such as the railway and the tele-
graph, suggested to the lower castes that the foreigners possessed
occult knowledge hidden from the Brahman'.[15]

Photography, when allied to these networked spaces was, as we
have already seen, also a cause of anxiety. In chapter 1 I suggested
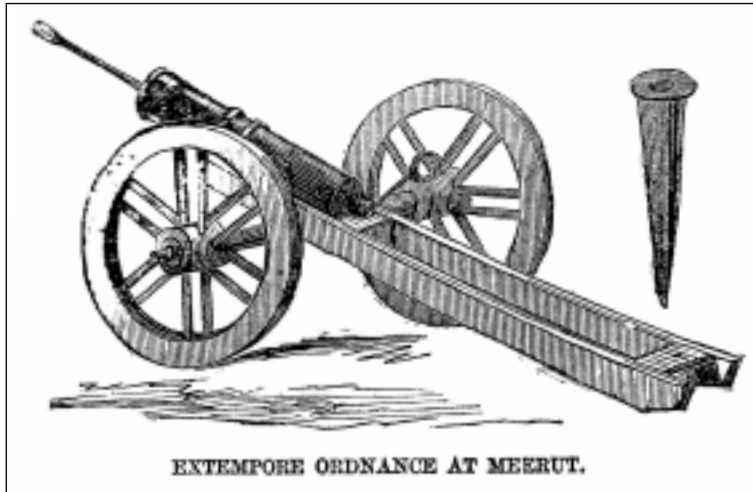
84. The telegraph recycled: telegraph posts used to construct canons as depicted in *The Illustrated London News* (21 November 1857, p. 513, private collection).

that one way of understanding Syed Ahmed Khan's anxiety about the *People of India* (the multi-volume photographically illustrated compendium of which one hundred copies were reserved for official use) was in terms of photography's 'aesthetics of the same'. Syed Ahmed had placed great emphasis in his account of the origins of the 1857 Uprising on the fear that Edmund's missionary circular had caused. This, recall, had argued that (in Syed Ahmed's paraphrase) since 'all Hindustan was now under one rule, that the telegraph had so connected all parts of the country that they were as one; the time had clearly come when there should be but one faith'.

Photography as network was also clearly linked to attempts to discipline and control Indians as colonial subjects. Although the transmission of photographs by telegraph was not possible until 1925,[16] we have already documented how telegraphy was used to make photographs highly mobile as early as 1874 in India. Prisoners transported to the Andaman Islands were photographed before their departure from the mainland. Six copies were made and distributed to the police in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, the Inspector General of Prisons, the Superintendent at the Tanna Jail, and one kept in Port Blair. In the case of an escape, one prison official noted 'it would be sufficient to telegraph the photograph number and name to ensure the three Presidency Police Commissioners being enabled at once to take steps for the recapture of a convict'.

[107]

Photography as individuation

Photography's historical entanglement with telegraphy alerts us to photography's mobility, its ability as Norman Chevers had recognised in 1856 to transport data spatially (from the *mofussil* to the *sudder* or central police station), and its capacity through the multiple reproduction of the image to dissolve the specificity, or aura, of the original (recall the Bengal Photographic Society's anger at the pirating of Josiah Rowe's images). In a directly opposed – yet complementary – fashion early photography found a special affinity with the individual as an object of portraiture.

These opposed idioms – the network and individuation – were aspects of a complex photographic revolution in late colonial India, a revolution whose complexity and contradictions have served to mask the force of its *disturbance* to those seeking one-dimensional signs of transformation. In the previous two chapters I have traced how photography as cure *and* photography as poison reflected identical potentials transected by a changing material apparatus, so here I want to persuade you that these two dimensions (to describe which we could co-opt Allan Sekula's terms 'instrumental realism' and 'sentimental realism')[17] can in a similar way be reconciled to a common pattern. Difference in practice may make manifest a deeper similitude; superficial variations in social practice may conceal the complexity of a practice which makes possible, and perhaps demands, a variety of outcomes. This is not determination of any simplistic kind but a complex pattern of transformations.

I have already alluded to Kittler's theorisation of the gramophone, camera and typewriter, and especially the similarity in the random data gathered in the photograph and gramophone record. A comparison of those two early technologies may help clarify the point I am seeking to make about photography's individuating propensity.

Anyone comparing the content of any major retailer of classical compact discs with the 1905 catalogue of HMV's 78rpm recordings will be struck by one obvious fact. The recording angel in 1905 – in the heyday of pressings made from recordings on wax cylinders transposed through the Berliner process to metal, then rubber and finally shellac[18] – was predisposed to the human voice rather than the sound of an orchestra. And, with its limited ability to record

85. Photographic
individuation: the visual
equivalent of the 'Caruso
effect', *c.* 1860 (private
collection).

harmonics, it seemed to have a special liking for particular types
of voice: Caruso, Nellie Melba and Adelina Patti, for instance. By
contrast, current CD production reveals a heavy preponderance of
orchestral music and collective vocal singing.

   This was a reflection of a technomaterial constraint: until 1925
acoustic recording apparatus involved the buffeting of sound waves
on a sapphire cutter which incised grooves in wax discs and, as
Timothy Day notes, 'The sound waves – the acoustical energy – from
a solo singing voice could be concentrated crudely by means of a
horn, but the sound from the resonating strings of a grand piano, still
less the spread-out sound sources of a body of orchestral players,
could be caught much less successfully. … Singers recorded best.'[19]
Orchestral sound was especially difficult to capture as a totality, and
the relatively few orchestras advertised on early 78rpm record labels
were always reduced ensembles chosen for their recordability.

   I would suggest that early photography was subject to its own
'Caruso effect'. Photography produced better results when photo-
graphing individuals (or, at a pinch, couples) than when confronted
with large collectivities of the sort by which – so one kind of histori-
ography would claim – India in the nineteenth century was still
largely constituted. One does not have to agree with the extremity of

the anthropologist Louis Dumont's claim that the individual as such did not exist in India[20] to recognise that the obvious subject for the photographer in India might have been *jatis, biradaris*, work groups or other collective expressions of social solidarities, although these of course were the object of some photographic endeavours which were discussed in chapter 1.

Individuation – the differentiation of the person from wider social solidarities – was the result of two related dimensions of early photographic practice. One reflected the aesthetic force that single bodies – as opposed to multiple bodies – were able to deposit in the image. The other reflected slow exposure times and the difficulty in marshalling collective bodies in front of the camera. This second dimension is explicitly commented on by John Blees in his *Photography in Hindostan; or Reminiscences of a Travelling Photographer* (1877). He stressed the complex preparation that must be made to photograph groups successfully: 'Make it a rule to inquire the day before of how many the group will be composed. Trace an outline in your mind, and try to realise your plan the next day on the negative.' Very large groups pose further problems: 'When there are as many as 30 or 40 to be portrayed on a 10 × 8 or 12 × 10 plate, a fancy design must be abandoned. Here the difficulty encounters you of getting the lens to see them all at the same time.'[21] And then of course there is the problem of movement in large groups: 'Some people will move notwithstanding their best endeavour to the contrary. … Always seat as many as you conveniently can.'

Taking groups of people is more difficult, Blees implies, than photographing horses: at least with horses, as with those belonging to Major Bloomfield of Nagpur (which he reproduces in his account), one could keep 'a crust of bread close to the horse's mouth just before exposure'.

Blees then demonstrates that what he terms 'the picture of a gentleman' is what we might term the default setting of nineteenth-century photographic apparatus. Suppose 'that a bust of a gentleman is to be taken', he suggests. For this all that is needed is a posing chair and a head-rest in which the sitter is positioned. The photographer then focuses and the sitter is told that 'he may … do whatever he pleases, whilst you are preparing the sensitized plate – he may even get up and walk about'. The point is to be able to expose the plate quickly, before it deteriorates: 'The head-rest and chair will already

86. Equine contentment: John Blees's study of Major Bloomfield's horses, 1877 (BL, T.3508, facing page 105).

occupy their proper places, the sitter is rightly focused on the ground glass, and all you have to do when you return from the dark room is ask the gentleman to resume his position and have a general look to see whether everything is right.' Here is the photographic apparatus in what we might think of as its pure and normative form: all that is needed is the presence of a sitter, whom we should assume is solitary, and male.

In Dr John Nicholas Tressider's remarkable 1857-63 album of Agra and Cawnpore – a document in the Alkazi Collection of Photography of the utmost historical importance – we see how individuation frequently worked through the 'aesthetics of the same' which so upset Syed Ahmed Khan. After nine years' service with the Bengal Medical establishment, Tressider had been appointed Civil Surgeon at Cawnpore in 1854. Following the death of his wife a year later he returned to England and was there on furlough when the Uprising started.[22] He arrived at Calcutta with his new wife in October 1857, following which he served with the Black Watch until the recapture of Cawnpore where he again served as Civil Surgeon until the end of 1860. In the following year he shifted to Agra where he worked very closely with Dr John Murray (see chapter 1, pp. 23-4) during the course of a cholera outbreak which left Tressider so ill that he was granted two years' furlough in England where, John

Fraser suggests, he compiled the album under discussion.

The momentous historical events with whose preamble and conclusion Tressider was intimately familiar are complexly articulated in his album. There are many images that invoked specific places and events ('St John's Church Cawnpore – In which the Christian inhabitants of Cawnpore met on 4th and 5th June/57 and where prayer was made immediately before going into Wheeler's Entrenchment …'). Photographs map a virtual topography in which events can be re-animated ('Coila Ghat – Cawnpore – where Wheeler's Garrison was entrapped in the boats by the treachery of the nana – this shews the Gorge down which they walked the boats').

In the above instances the photograph traces a place to which an anterior event is attached by the caption. Tressider however also explores the space of the album to create complex allegorical intersections and oppositions. On one page, headed 'Cawnpore', he places images of three rebels above two montaged images of 'Cawnpore friends'. Placed at the top of the page (printed from a cracked negative) is 'Moulvie Salamut Ali – the Mahomedan High Priest of Cawnpore – aged 104 years – he issued the Mahomedan decree that it was right and proper for Musselmans to kill Christians as heretics June/57'. On either side of Salamut Ali are 'Nana Narain Rao – Mahratta – son of Ram Chunder Punt Commander in chief of the late Peshwa's army' and 'Anna Sahib – Son of Nana Narain Rao'.

This image is clearly structured as a moral lesson in culpability, a way perhaps for Tressider to mediate his grief. The album provides ample evidence for the effects of the Uprising on Tressider, but also for a detailed, and often empathetic, engagement with Indian (especially Hindu) architecture and culture. His photographs of temples and topography in Mathura and Brindavan betray the deep care with which they have been made, and in the extensive series of portraits Indians and Europeans there is little sense of a society hierarchised through race. Tressider photographed many different Europeans and Indians from all strata of society with great care, and on one page he presents a mixture of individuals and couples, and one group, some Indian, some English. At the top left of this page, side by side are two images, captioned (on the left) 'Lala Jootee Persad (The Richest man in NW India)' and to the right of this a smaller blurred shot of a figure shot against the same background

87 (*top left*). Photography and allegory: John Tressider's mournful montage, 1858 (ACP 97.15.0002, p. 48).

88 (*top right*). The destruction of aura: Britons and Indians, rich and poor, merged in the same epistemological space. John Tressider, 1858 (ACP 97.15.0002, p. 94).

89/90 (*below*). 'The singular, the unique … divested of its uniqueness': the richest man and the poorest man depicted by John Tressider (ACP 97.15.0002, p. 94, detail).

[113]

captioned: 'The Poorest man in NW India (an insane fakeer or religious mendicant).'

If in the montage of 'Cawnpore Friends' we see Tressider extracting 'likeness' from photography's chronotope (in order perhaps to intensify through sheer density the force of his mourning), here photography makes possible a new kind of fundamental juxtaposition – individuals who outside the studio might not inhabit the same terrain are here brought within a common epistemological space. Recall Benjamin's observation concerning 'the peeling away of the object's shell, the destruction of the aura, [which] is the signature of a perception whose sense for the sameness of things has grown to the point where even the singular, the unique, is divested of its uniqueness – by means of its reproduction'.[23]

Photographic Civil Society

I have suggested that early photography's technomaterial regime – like that of early recorded sound – provoked an individuation – a disaggregation of the individual from wider collectivities. The question now is what the consequences of that process were and the extent to which we can see them as contributing to what we might think of as a 'photographic revolution'.

Might it be too fanciful to hypothesise that the small confined space of photography helped create new forms of identification, one of whose legacies is India's contestatory, democratic culture? Put starkly in this fashion this seems absurd. But what kind of evidence would we need to suggest that this might have some validity?

One historical event, and the network of Bombay based individuals associated with it, may help advance the argument. The event is the 'Maharaj Libel case' in 1862 in Bombay. The libel was purportedly committed by Kursondasji Mulji, a Gujarati journalist and editor of *Satya Prakash* (the light of truth), which had published an exposé of the carnal practices of Bombay-based Vallabhacharyas, Vaishnava followers of Krishna as Shrinathji.[24]

Mulji saw himself – as the title of his journal suggested – as engaged in a process of illumination: the light of truth was to be cast upon a corrupt version of Hinduism. A description, in a 1935 volume marking the centenary of his birth, allows us some insight into the way different image regimes were invoked in mid-nineteenth-

century Bombay. 'His words were photographic,' the eulogy announced, 'picturing the character, the temper, the disposition, and the intellectual resources behind him.'[25] His words were photographic. What on earth could this mean?

One aspect of this seemed to involve a competition between different modes of indexicality: that of the photograph versus what the nineteenth-century anthropologist James Frazer would theorise as 'contagious magic'.[26] Photography, as Roland Barthes argued, is '*a magic*, not an art'.[27] Its magical indexicality found itself in competition with Vallabhacharya magical indexicality in which the causal contiguity of bodies and objects facilitated a contagion of authority. The Mulji centenary account which had praised his 'photographic words' noted that he detested: 'False shows of religion [and the] worship of stocks and stones.'[28] This sense of a choice between two modes of indexicality – between the causal contiguity of light and image in photography and power and effect in contagious magic – was further underlined by the pre-occupation of one of his supporting witnesses in the 1862 trial, Dr Bhau Daji, with a particular instance of 'false religion': 'I have seen the Maharaj's bath, and hundreds rushing to drink the water dripping from his langoti.[29] The women apply their hands to the soles of his feet and eat the dust.'[30]

If the Vallabahcarya's contagious magic was about the corruption of collectivites, Mulji's 'photographic words' presaged individuation: 'the economy' of the ideal citizen's 'social conduct as member of a family, neighbour, citizen, patriot, human being' was praised by Mulji: 'he must think out and use for himself, and must not permit the gusty violence of some mob passion, in whatever respectable garb that passion clothed itself, to usurp the authority of private judgment'.[31]

Dr Bhau Daji introduced himself to the Court on 14 February 1862 with a lengthy inventory of his claims to authority: a graduate of Grant Medical College, a private practitioner, a prizeman of Elphinstone College, winner of a prize for the best essay on female infanticide in Kathiawar, member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Bombay Geographical Society and several other Societies.[32] There was, he added, a female school permanently endowed in his name. He was the photographer brother of the commercial photographer Narayen Dajee whose work we encoun-

91. Bhau Daji and friends, photographed by Hurrychand Chintamon, 1867
(BL, Photo 1000/42(4358)).

tered in chapter 1 (pp. 12-14) and whose photograph of a group of
Vallabacharyas formed the basis of the engraved frontispiece in the
main account of the Mulji trial.[33] It is striking how this group forms
a line almost as though they were waiting to be split one from the
other in a process of redemptive individuation.

One week earlier (8 February 1862) another of Mulji's supporting
witnesses, a Dr John Wilson, had introduced himself to the Court
with an equally impressive set of meritocratic credentials: '… minis-
ter of the Free Church of Scotland … graduate of the University
of Edinburgh … offered the role of Translator to the Government
but declined … member of the Royal Society of Great Britain, and
Ireland and a member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic
Society'.[34]

These two witnesses present a small glimpse of an emergent –
imported – civil society in Bombay. Civil society might be under-
stood – in Charles Taylor's words – as those 'autonomous asso-

92/93. Narayen Dajee's image of 'A Group of the Bombay Mahárájas', which
became the public sign of the Mulji libel case of 1862, shown in its original
photographic form and the lithograph used to preface a popular account of the
trial (private collection and BL, V.24935, fp).

ciations, independent of the state, which [bind] citizens together in matters of common concern',[35] and what Partha Chatterjee terms those 'institutions of modern associational life originating in Western societies which are based on equality, autonomy, freedom of entry and exit, contract, deliberative procedures of decision-making, recognized rights and duties of members, and other such principles'.[36]

We might also understand it in terms of a public sphere in which, to cite Habermas, 'citizens confer in an unrestricted fashion [with] the freedom to express and publish their opinions – about matters of general interest'.[37] In this case this group of putative citizens were all friends of Mulji and staunch supporters of his attacks on corrupt collectivities in the name of a photographically enunciated 'authority of private judgment' – and they were all very intimately enmeshed in photographic practice.

Wilson had hovered in the background of an image published first in Johnson and Henderson's *The Indian Amateur's Photographic Album*, an example of which can be found in the *Views of Western India* album in the British Library. I quote from the letterpress pasted on the back of that image, which starts by invoking precisely that photographic community that I am attempting to delineate here:

We have great pleasure in submitting to our friends a Photograph of two very interesting female representatives of the Brahman tribe. The elder of these two intelligent young ladies, Arala Bai, is the daughter of Rao Saheb Tirmal Rao, Inamdar at Dharar, and Saddar Amin of Bagalkot in the Southern Maratha country; and the younger, Lakshmi Bai, who is espoused to his son, is the daughter of a respectable Inamdar in the Kolapur State. They are both at present in Bombay, under the care of their venerable grandmother, enjoying instruction, principally through the medium of our noble English tongue – for they are already proficients in their vernacular Marathi, – at the missionhouse, Ambrolie, under the direct guidance of Dr Wilson's family. The attention shown by their father, – who is much distinguished in the judicial service of the Government, – to their training and culture, is highly exemplary, and much to be commended, especially in a country in which, even among the higher classes of the natives, it is so rare. This concern for the proper education of his family, this amiable native gentleman inherits from his father, the late Rao Bahadur Venkat Rao Subaji, Principal Saddar Amin of Dharwar, who was himself distinguished for his knowledge of Indian, Persian, and English languages.

94/95. 'Always oriented towards a public': Arala Bai and Lakshmi Bai displayed for approbation in *The Indian Amateurs Photographic Album* (BL, Photo 140/49).
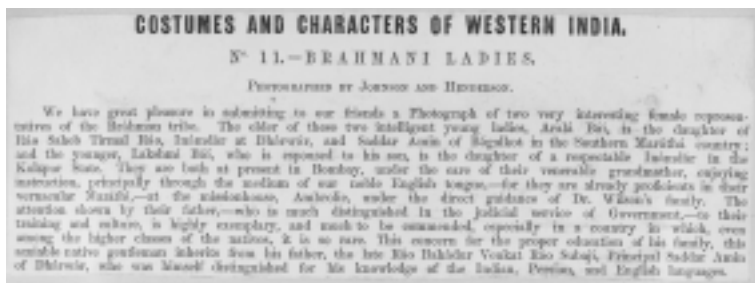
In Mulji's notion of the 'authority of private judgment' and the public display of Arala Bai and Lakshmi Bai in Johnson and Henderson's image we can see 'that new conception of personhood where the private and intimate are … always oriented towards a public'.[38] In the case of Arala and Lakshmi the care of their 'venerable grandmother' and the 'attention shown by their father' cease to be purely private domestic matters and are redirected to a new public which is constituted through the complex semaphore of the text, signalling them as 'representative', invoking a unitary moral world in which they are 'exemplary' and mirroring back the commendations of this imaginary public.

Speaking words of 'photographic truth' was a possibility that greatly interested the Honourable Mr Justice John Budd Phear. Phear is probably now best known for the use Karl Marx made of his book *The Aryan Village in India and Ceylon*, but he was also a senior judge, President of the Bengal Photographic Society, the Bengal Social Science Association and the Asiatic Society in the late 1860s. T. C. Hughes and Kathy Prior have noted that Phear 'prided himself on his freedom from racial prejudice' and that as long-term President of the Bethune Society he 'established himself as a prominent commentator on Indian domestic life'.[39]

In March 1866 Phear delivered a *Lecture on the Rules of Evidence in Indian Courts of Law* to the Bethune Society, a key institution in an emergent Bengali civil society. Founded in 1851 and named after John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune,[40] whose draft bill giving equal judicial rights to Europeans and Indians (the 'Black Acts') prefigured the Ilbert Bill controversy, the Bethune Society attracted many key intellectuals in Bengal such as Rajendralal Mitra (whom we encountered in chapter 2), Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and the Rev. James Long. Vidyasagar was an important reformer and educationalist who developed a powerful Bengali rhetoric of improvement based (as Brian Hatcher has written) on 'linking the amelioration of systemic social problems to the inculcation of personal morality'.[41] James Long was a sympathetic documenter of vernacular literature, probably best remembered for the scandal of his imprisonment following his translation of *Nil Darpan*, Dinabandhu Mitra's anti-Indigo-planter play in 1861.[42] It is striking how various different biographies swirl around these same issues: Mitra had been expelled from the Bengal Photographic Society because he had spoken in

favour of Bethune's bill, and against the conduct of indigo planters.

Photography had famously been invoked as a model of judicial protocol in 1859 in the writing of the American physician and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose son would coincidentally become a US Supreme Court Judge. In his essay on the stereograph, 'Sun-Painting and Sun-Sculpture', Holmes had noted that 'the impossibility of the stereograph's perjuring itself is a curious illustration of the law of evidence'. 'At the mouth of *two witnesses*,' he continued, 'shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one he shall not be put to death. No woman may be declared youthful on the strength of a single photograph; but if the stereoscopic twins say she is young, let her be so acknowledged in the high court of chancery of the God of Love.'[43]

Phear by contrast was content with the truth of single images, and explored how their unimpeachable truths might form a model for rules of evidence in the Indian judicial system. Phear's initial assumption is that there are principles of English justice which need to be introduced into Indian Courts which as yet are not able to gather evidence properly.[44] Chevers had noted in 1856 that 'the untrustworthiness of native evidence is taken as received fact'.[45] It was specifically *autoptic* indexicality, that is the physical, causal, contiguity between a representation and the object it represents, that Phear invokes.

Phear mobilises precisely this reasoning in his argument against hearsay: 'a witness will not be allowed to testify to a matter of fact, not within his direct knowledge, or perception'.[46] *Hearsay* produces a filtered account, the *eyewitness* embodies a surplus, an excess that may be of use in the court: 'it is he alone, who can furnish additional facts, facts incidental to, connected with, following upon the main fact, but [as yet] untold by him …'. In a similar vein, the eyewitness's evidence might – like the non-discriminating data ration of the photograph – have unexpected *exorbitant* effects: 'It is essential that he should speak only that which he knows of his own knowledge; that he should say all of that which he so knows, which may be beneficial *to either side*.'[47] Phear concluded his talk by noting that experience in the Calcutta judiciary over the last eighteen months demonstrates that 'the Courts here, unconsciously perhaps, ignore nearly every one of the rule of procedure and of investigation to which [he had] alluded'.[48] The impact of Phear's lecture on James

Fitzjames Stephen's drafting of the 1872 Indian Evidence Act is a matter for further research. It is, however, worth noting that section 63 of the Act dealing with 'Secondary Evidence' records that 'A photograph of an original is secondary evidence of its contents' but that an 'oral account of a photograph' is not secondary evidence of those contents.[49]

Photography, in Phear's account, served as the perfect model of judicial evidence in which indexicality would win out against 'hearsay'. In other forms of evidence production, however, photography's task was more complex. Here photography's inability to compete with the imaginative ability of non-photographic representation made commercial photographers confront difficult decisions.

The photographic mutiny

In John Tressider's 1857-63 album of Agra and Cawnpore an image – captioned '*Christ's Church Cawnpore – taken on 3rd March/57 – (before the Mutiny) copied from a paper negative found in the Cawnpore Bazar after the mutiny*' – signals Tressider's deep exploration of photography as a history machine, a technology for the deposition of traces and memories of what has been lost but also prefigures Kittler's discussion of how film with its separation of consciousness and memory laid the foundations for psychoanalysis. But this 'history machine' in its early form brought with it disappointment.

Oliver Wendell Holmes had forecast that: 'The time is perhaps at hand when a flash of light, as sudden and brief as that of lightning … shall preserve the very instant of the shock of contact of the mighty armies that are even now gathering. The lightning from heaven does actually photograph natural objects on the bodies of those it has just blasted. … The lightning of clashing sabers and bayonets may be forced to stereotype itself in a stillness as complete as that of the tumbling tide of [the] Niagara.'[50]

The protean nature of photographic technology *would* eventually make the production of such battlefield documents possible, and as we saw in chapter 2 with Varges's images of the Guru-ka-bagh incident these images made indexical evidence available to different audiences. The 1857 Uprising in India was the subject of extensive photography, but rather than capturing the clash of sabres and

Christ Church Cawnpore . taken on 3rd March 57 - (before the mutiny) copied from a paper negative . found in the Cawnpore Bazar after the mutiny

96. Photographic historicity. Tressider's elaborate meditation on loss includes this photographic recapitulation – an image miraculously found after the Uprising bearing traces of an earlier history (ACP 97.15.0002, p. 19).

bayonets, the camera would struggle to document the scene of a crime.

The central technomaterial fact of all photography relating to the 1857 Uprising is that it happened after the events it wished to document. The photographer only had the scene of an event which has long gone, and we can frequently see the camera poised, uncertain as to where to fix its evidence. The stage, long empty, and in many cases metaphorically darkened, refuses to release its evidence of the event.

In the Harriet and Robert Tytler collection in the British Library one can see the limitations of the camera as a producer of 'historical effect'. 'Humaion's [Humayun's] Tomb, where the King was captured by Hodson' is simply a photograph of that magnificent tomb, with some cultivated land in the foreground. The caption encourages

97. Harriet and Robert Tytler, *Humaion's Tomb, where the King was captured by Hodson*, but *where*, exactly? (BL, Photo 193/13).

98. Freed from photographic protocols, popular engravings easily grasp the theatre of historical events (Engraving from John Grant, *Cassell's Illustrated History of India*, Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., London, n.d., vol. 1, p. 277).

CAPTAIN HODSON ARRESTING THE KING OF DELHI.

99. A stretch of mud, enrolled in the scenography of Imperial suffering: the Tytlers' *Slaughter Ghat, Cawnpore* (BL, Photo 193/20).

us to search for the precise location of the capture of the King, but our inability to do this further inscribes the absence of the prior event that photography fails to capture. Popular engravings of the incident had no such problems: Charles Ball's *History of the Indian Mutiny* and John Grant's *Cassell's Illustrated History of India* show us the action as it unfolds. The camera is always constrained by what the lens can record: other media were freed from this constraint.

In a similar way 'Slaughter Ghat, Cawnpore' presents us with a vacant space waiting for its historical inscription: this is the space of an event, but because that event has gone it remains simply a space. This is the Suttee Chaura Ghat where, following an agreement with the Nana Sahib, many hundreds of British refugees boarded barges in the belief they would be allowed to proceed to Allahabad. As they embarked they were fired on by rebels, most of them being killed. Without the caption there is only a topographic scene – a river-bank where various small shrines abut a lower mud shelf above the river, on the banks of which are tethered two country boats.

The fusion of space and event was easier where the event leaves a material trace. 'The [Bibighar] Well, Cawnpore', places at the centre of its vision something more substantial than the field in front of

[125]

100. The memorial stands as a proxy for the absent event: the Tytler's *Bibighar Well, Cawnpore* (BL, Photo 193/21).

Humayun's Tomb, or the mud on the ghats. The Bibighar Well into which the survivors of the [Suttee] Chaura Ghat massacre were thrown was very quickly marked as a sacred site, and it is the signs of its sacredness – the tomb, the railings etc. – which come to mark the historicity of the event. The memorial marks the spot and becomes the primary referent of the event.

The Tytlers and Murray – participants and in Murray's case a near participant in the events of 1857-8 – were content with this emptiness, for these were places they already knew, where friends and acquaintances had died. For them, the emptiness was sufficiently resonant with loss not to require further elaboration. For a commercial photographer such as Felice Beato, however, the scene of crime which could no longer be seen was insufficient. His solution was to create a complex photographic diegesis, a complex reanimation of the Uprising as a theatrical spectacle for which the spectator was granted front row seats. 'Magnificient Views and Panoramas,' declared Hering, his London publisher.

This theatrical aspect was created through various forms of re-enactment and mis-description. In an image often captioned 'News from Dispatches', Colin Campbell and William Mansfield participate in Beato's re-creation of the war that he had missed, and 'The Hanging of Two Rebels' positions us in the photographic *eidos* of

[126]

PHOTOGRAPHY AS PROPHECY

101. Selling History and Celebrity: H. Hering's list advertising photographic views by Beato of the Indian Mutiny and the Second Opium War in China. Beato's images of sites associated with the Uprising created a proto-filmic narrative of events and elevated its chief colonial protagonists to 'celebrities' (BL, Photo 6/13).

death, always a good surrogate for historicity. The most striking example of Beato's attempts to make the crime re-inhabit those scenes from which it had long departed was 'Interior of the Sikandarbagh at Lucknow'. As John Fraser has documented, Beato did not arrive in Lucknow until probably March 1858, four or perhaps five months after its capture. So how was it that so long after the event the skeletons of rebels were so evident, so conveniently

102. *News from Dispatches*: Beato persuades Colin Campbell and William Mansfield to re-animate momentous events (BL, Photo 139/2(1)).

acting out the ghostly tragedy of the Sikandarbagh? Writing in 1893, Sir George Campbell would recall that 'There was a first-rate photographer in attendance taking all the scenes [and] many of the scenes were really very striking. One horrible one was the Shah Najaf [Fraser assumes that this is a misremembering of Sikandar-bagh]. The great pile of bodies had been decently covered over before the photographer could take them, but he insisted on having them uncovered to be photographed before they were finally disposed of.'[51] For a public desiring images of the events themselves this was of little consequence. Photography was, after all, supposed

[128]

103. The 'mortiferous *eidos*'. The rationale for this execution is not known
but in Beato's Mutiny narrative it became *The Hanging of Two Rebels*
(ACP 2001.18.0001(11)).

104. History disinterred. Beato arranged for bones to be scattered in front of the
Sikanderbagh at Lucknow to 'preserve the shock of contact' (BL, Photo 27/2).

to 'preserve the very instant of the shock of contact'.

How far photographers and their entrepreneurial collaborators were prepared to go is apparent from an intriguing commentary relating to a volume in the British Library known as the Dannenberg album. In May 1892 a writer to *The Pioneer*, an Allahabad newspaper,[52] recorded how he had just seen an album: a 'rare curiosity' with sixty-eight 'rare photographs' of buildings in Lucknow and Cawnpore, 'all of which are more or less memorials … of 1857-58'.

'The photos,' he assured other readers, were 'all good and artistically done' and were 'all taken shortly after the Mutiny, but [only] a few copies were struck off at that period. The head of a large firm in Calcutta was so struck with them that he begged leave to take them to England and get a number of copies printed off there. It is only a short while ago that the owner has been able after some 30 years to get his negatives back.' Hence this belated letter in 1892.

The argument then becomes more surprising, becomes indeed startling. 'Though laid by for so many years the pictures are as fresh and sharp as if they had been printed from recent negatives,' the writer claims. 'What makes these photographs interesting is that we have in them the correct picture of the various buildings *just as they appeared* immediately after the battering to which they were subjected in the struggle of the memorable Mutiny of 1857; and I doubt if there is another such series of photos taken *at that time*, in the whole of India.' The *Pioneer* correspondent then comments on three photographic copies of lithographs from drawings by Charles Wade Crump[53] as though they were photographs like Beato's images of Lucknow.

We have a graphic picture of General Sir H. Wheeler's entrenchment as it appeared just after the terrible struggle, with skeletons and vultures on the ground. We have also a most vivid scene of the Cawnpore chamber of blood, with marks on the walls and broken pots and pans, shoes and slippers, &c., on the floor, photographed evidently before the place had lost the sad signs of the terrible sufferings endured there. We have also the original of the well which has become so famous as the pit into which the dead and dying were cast before Havelock and his brave troops entered the city. There is also the battered barracks which Wheeler occupied in the entrenchment and the Slaughter Ghat on the Ganges. … There is a good photo of the enclosure at Secundra Bagh, where 2,000 of the rebels were shut in and cut down to man.

General View of Sir Hugh Wheeler's entrenchment with barracks in the distance.

105. 'After the terrible struggle': overpainted lithograph by Charles Wade Crump in the 'Dannenberg Album' (BL, Photo 254/13).

106. 'Incense in pictorial form': another image from the 'Dannnenberg Album' (BL, Photo 254/16).

The Chamber of Blood, where the ladies and children were massacred.

VICTIMS OF BRITISH BRUTALITY
Indian Revolutionaries blown from the mouth of guns
(From the painting of the great Russian painter Verestchagin)
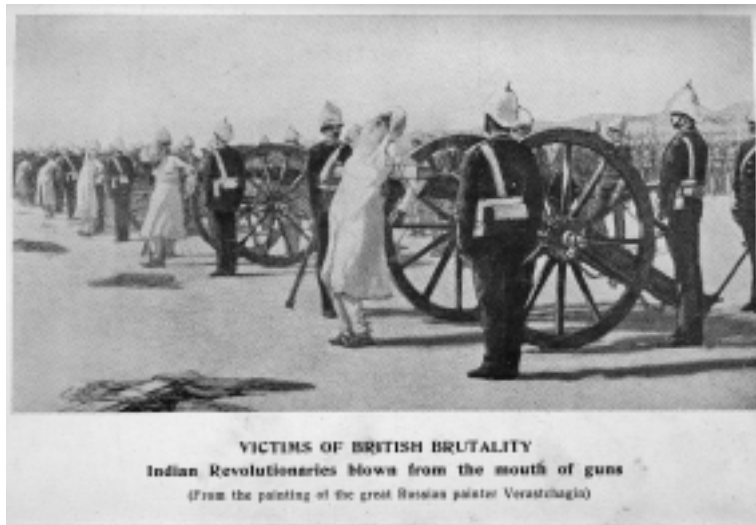
107. Already linked to 1857, and soon to metamorphosise into a 'photograph', Verestchagin's (sic) image as it appears in Savarkar's *The First Indian War of Independence* (BL, Orw.1995.a.1240, opp. p. 124).

A parallel commentary by one Thomas Evans[54] records gazing at this album through which 'Mr Dannenberg, a photographer of pre-mutiny days,[55] has brought back to the knowledge and memories of men the pathos and greatness of the days of the generation just passing away'. He then quotes the French Orientalist writer Pierre Loti to remarkable effect: '[if] places have the adumbrations of human souls still inhabiting their precincts as a sort of delicious spiritual aroma of self-sacrifice pervading the localities where noble life and beautiful human love were shed in profusion for a nation's cause, then this album of Mutiny memorials will remain a sort of incense to the heroic deed in pictorial form.'

This willingness to read photographs of lithographs as indexical traces reveals the necessity that viewers of photographs should find in them a living historicity. As we saw with the 1922 Guru-ka-bagh incident (pp. 90-3), an increasingly mobile technology would eventually permit this − indexically. In the meantime the non-indexical seeped into the domain of the indexical driven by that yearning for the 'delicious aroma'. A curious example of this is a painting by the Russian painter Vasili Verestchagin which the Hindu nationalist theorist V. D. Savarkar reproduced (correctly attributed to Verestchagin) as an image showing 'Indian Revol-

utionaries Being Blown from the Mouth of Guns' in his account of the 1857 Uprising *The First Indian War of Independence*. Many rebels were executed in this fashion – the *Illustrated London News* pictured this in 1857, and Ball's *History of the Indian Mutiny* has a striking steel-engraving. But if Savarkar was right to identify this as a painting, he was wrong to attach it to 1857: in fact Verestchagin who was in India 1876-77 painted 49 Namdhari Sikhs being executed in Ludhiana following anti-cow slaughter disturbances. Eventually the image would attain a quasi-photographic status. The source of this transformation is most probably a 1941 Nazi propaganda leaflet *Raubstaat England* (Robber State England) which reproduced the image as part of its anti-British colonial litany with the caption 'This 1857 photograph was published in 1939 by the English newspaper *Picture Post*. It shows the methods used to suppress the Sepoy Rebellion.'[56] This painting of events in 1872 now circulates widely as a photograph of events in 1857.

Here we encounter photography incarnated in ways that resonate with those who argue against strong versions of the print culture 'revolution'. All those questions of authorship, copyright, the variability of the text, the apparent tenacity of older ('scribal') forms which are adduced in critiques of the print revolution thesis in texts by Adrian Johns and David McKitterick in a European context, and Stuart Blackburn in relation to South India, are thrown up in photographic processes also. However, much though I admire and concede the validity of many of those counter-positions, I still want to insist on the significance of the changes – the *disturbance* – that photography precipitated in India.

So if my attention is directed to instances where photography is incorporated into pre-existing Islamicate schemata (such as in Ahmed Ali Khan's image of Wajid Ali Shah's household – see below), and parallels drawn with the marginalia to be found in incunabulae which are invoked as evidence of the blurred space between manuscript and printed cultures, well then, yes, I would readily agree that the photographic revolution I am trying to describe does not entail an abolition of everything that goes before. There are complex entanglements with and echoes of what precedes photography within photography (as W. J. T. Mitchell observes, all media is mixed media) but this does not negate the possibility that photography was an agent of radical social transformation, not as a

108 (*left*). The photographic studio prefigured in painted portraiture: an engraving of Winterhalter's *Victoria Gouramma of Coorg*, *c*. 1835 (BL, P.1431).

109 (*right*). An elegant column and books: photographic studios appropriate the accoutrements of painted portraits (private collection).

'technology' overpowering 'man', but as a *technical practice* which fused human actors with the apparatus of photography.[57]

So, for instance, many Indian photographic portraits invoke conventions established in earlier painterly practice. The conventions apparent in Winterhalter's 'Princess Victoria Gouramma of Coorg' *c*. 1835 – a full-length figure facing the viewer with one hand placed on top of a column on which there are various decorative items, the whole ensemble positioned by a hazy backdrop connoting nature – are endlessly repeated in the portraiture practices of both professional and amateur photographers. There is nothing surprising about this. Indeed one might go further, and argue that in India a very powerful attachment to a hieratic and coherently pictured body has tenaciously lain at the centre of popular photographic, and filmic, practice. Photography's arbitrary truncation of space (its 'screen' rather than 'frame' in Bazin's terms),[58] which seemed so

revolutionary for many nineteenth-century European artists,[59] posed what Rajadhyaksha perceptively terms an *ethical* problem for many Indian practitioners.[60]

What photography makes possible is not the creation of a dramatically new aesthetic mis-en-scène, but the mass-production and democratisation of such an aesthetic. A focus on aesthetic continuities runs the risk of blinding us to the the consequences of the fact that, as Adorno says, photographs embody a 'two-dimensional model of reality that can be multiplied without limit [and] displaced both spatially and temporally'.[61] The Bengali writer Ardishwar Ghatak observed in 1904 that 'a good oil painting cannot be had for less than a thousand or even two thousand rupees. Photography gives us a far more accurate likeness for a hundred.'[62] Here we might think about Peter Stalleybrass's wholly compelling argument (developing Elizabeth Eisenstein's original claim[63]) that the increased numbers of printed indulgences triggered the Reformation: an earlier corporeally constrained scribal system of indulgence production was exploded by an exponential inflation of printed pardons.[64] Gutenberg was printing indulgences as early as 1452, and one indulgence is thought to have been printed more than 140,000 times by the end of the fifteenth-century.[65] Here we see, as with photography's reproduction of painterly idioms, the point at which the quantitative becomes qualitative. More of the old is not necessarily only more of the old: if there is enough of it and it moves at a fast enough speed a new system and new structures emerge.

One aspect of photography's new order is apparent in a collection, in the British Library, of 62 exquisite albumen prints from the early 1860s. These reveal the way in which photography made existing modes of portraiture available to new subjects. As with Tressider's work, we see the application of an aesthetic that makes no discrimination between Indian and English sitters. The heightened aesthetic techniques of portrait painters are drawn upon to position these Bengali subjects; these are what Blees refers to as 'Rembrandt photos'.[66] The figures are posed with exquisite precision producing images of astonishing stillness and beauty. A dhoti clad man gives spatial depth to the image through his extended arm clutching a walking stick, and psychological depth with his off-stage vision. Photography extends an aesthetic previously available only to those who could commission painted portraits.

110/111 (p. 137). 'The Classicized Peasant'. Familiar aesthetic codes were democratised through photography. In these beautiful and sympathetic images, an unknown photographer has encouraged Bengali villagers to assume highly stylised poses worthy of Joshua Reynolds or Johann Zoffany (BL, Photos 124/17 and 124/24).

Perhaps the most significant example of the blurred space where the quantitative turns into the qualitative – where the sheer velocity and intensification of representation produce new social forms – can be seen in the connection between frontality and individuation. Mass portraiture prior to photography took the form of the silhouette and profile (in Europe and in Indian traditions). The British Library collection includes an 1880s photographic copy of a silhouette of Major George Broadfoot of the Bengal Engineers. This photographic copy of an earlier technology of portraiture underlines

– through its curious anachronism – the transformation that photography facilitated. Photography's industrialisation of portraiture made frontality available to every Indian who could afford to enter the studio. Photography invented the face, rather than the profile as everyone's right – and, since this technical practice developed alongside the emergence of the modern Indian state – it is tempting to say as the right of every *citizen*. With the face came new forms of recognition, memory and mass-perpetuity. In India prior to photography only the gods and kings had faces: photography reconfigured this ratio.

These faces and the subjects that began to adhere to them could be of different kinds: the already achieved and the aspirant. The photograph as index, or chemical trace, and non-discriminating data

112. An old technology rendered by the new. This photographic copy of a silhouette underscores its archaic nature, and dramatises the subsequent ubiquity of the *face* made possible by photography (BL, Photo 500/7).

ratio, was unable to differentiate between existing and subjunctive identities: it merely recorded whatever was placed in front of the camera. An image of the merchant L. E. Ruutz-Rees (subsequently celebrated for his *Personal Narrative of the Siege of Lucknow*, 1858) in Ahmed Ali Khan's 'Lucknow Album' is captioned 'Mr Rees in a native Costume', but what the photograph actually does, non-judgementally, is to record a body in Indian clothes: it has nothing to say about the normativity or identity of that body or its adornment. As T. Rangachari, the chair of the 1927-8 Cinematographic Committee, would later observe, 'it is not a question of representation or misrepresentation' (see pp. 96-7).

The French cultural theorist and sometime politician Jacques Attali has argued that music, in certain circumstances, acts in advance of social reality – its code is 'quicker' than that of society as a whole, its prophecy operating on a semiological frontier.[67] Photographic self-presentation also seems to often act as prophecy, as a tactic of enquiry and imagination. This is a quality perceptively engaged by Roland Barthes: 'once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of "posing", I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image'.[68]

Consider for instance two striking images photographed by Ahmed Ali Khan of Begums in the Avadh Court, *c*. 1855. The physician Joseph Fayrer recorded a visit,[69] at around the same time, to

[138]

113. A body in Indian clothes: the camera records; the caption normalises. Salted paper print by Ahmed Ali Khan, *c.* 1855 (BL, Photo 269/2(89)).

treat one of the Begums who was 'dangerously ill'. Arriving at the Chutter Manzil he was taken to the sickroom where the chief eunuch and various female attendants were present: 'A cashmere shawl was stretched across the room, behind which the Begum was seated.' Fayrer immediately requested that the *parda* be removed. The screen was removed to reveal the Begum 'seated upon a silver charpoy, enveloped in shawls'. Fayrer repeated that 'without seeing her nothing could be done, she giving faint and muffled replies from

114. 'Picture of Nawab Raj Begum Sahiba, of the Lord Sultan of the World
[= Wajid 'Ali Shah] … in Indian clothes adorned with gold and jewels on her
arms and ears, and a hair ribbon made of gold and wood clasped on her head, as if
in a meeting of the Hazrat Sultan-e 'Alam etc. in a state of passion and torment/
wailing, sitting on a silver seat, at the age of 23, in 1271 H [CE1845 or 1846],
3 years after his ascension to the royal throne, at the House of the Sultanate,
Lucknow.' (Modification of translation by Francesca Orsini.) Salted paper print
by Ahmed Ali Khan with watercolour surround (BL, Photo 500/3).

the depths of the shawls'. Fayrer is eventually able to hold her wrist
and by the third visit 'was allowed to see her face and her tongue and
to ascertain something of the nature of her case'. On the fourth visit
'she laid aside her shawls and her veil, and … sat and talked face to

115. 'Picture of the lover of the Sultan "Choice of the world" [Mumtaz-e 'Alam] Nawab Qaisar Mahal Sahiba, in Indian clothes full of gold on her breast and a golden hair band on her head and with jewels, the right hand lying on the right knee, sitting on a silver chair …, 1271H [CE1854 or 1855], 9 years after the ascension to the throne, at the House of the Sultanate, Lucknow.' (Modification of a translation by Francesca Orsini.) Salted paper print by Ahmad Ali Khan with watercolour surround (BL, Photo 500/4).

face … she was very loquacious … a nice-looking girl of twenty-four or twenty-five'.[70]

Ahmed Ali Khan's photographs record a much greater readiness to unveil, and suggest that the space in front of the camera became for many a zone for the presentation of selves that could not be so

116 (*left*). From James Waterhouse's series of images taken in Bhopal between 10 and 20 November 1862: 'After all the guests had gone away I began to go to the Palace and took the Begum's portrait' (BL, Photo 355/1).

117 (*right*). 'I used to get up every morning at 6 am and return at 11 or 12, and was taking pictures all the time. I was very successful, indeed, and took nearly 40 negatives without a failure.' James Waterhouse, 1862 (BL, Photo 355/30).

easily presented elsewhere. The presence of several of these images in an album – in the Alkazi Photographic Collection – seemingly compiled by a European (one of them is captioned 'One of the King of Oudh's Ladies')[71] indicates that they were not circulating only within the seclusion of Wajid Ali Shah's court. If Fayrer's account can be said to record the everyday practices of visibility and seclusion in the Oudh Court, Ahmed Ali Khan's photographs seem to record that peculiar space of prophetic experimentation that the camera engenders. As Walter Benjamin wrote: 'It is a different nature which speaks to the camera than the eye: so different that in place of a space consciously woven together … there enters a space held together unconsciously.'

This seems also to have been the case with the Secunder Begum of Bhopal, photographed by James Waterhouse in 1862. In each of

118. 'The Begum dressed herself, her daughter, and granddaughter, and Madame Doolan in all fashions of Native costume in order that I might get photographs of the dress of Native ladies.' James Waterhouse, 1862 (BL, Photo 355/4).

the eight photographs in which Secunder Begum appears she is dressed differently. 'I was constantly employed in taking pictures of the Begum in various dresses of Native ladies. I had no time to take the same picture twice, as the Begum changed her dress immediately,' Waterhouse reported. In one image the Begum appears in satin pyjamas, a gold-embroidered black jacket and a cap with a Bird of Paradise plume which all offset her recently awarded Star of India. In another image she is flanked by three *chowriburdars* wielding the bushy tails of Tibetan yaks. The Begum wears a kincab jacket embroidered with blue and gold, with feathers or fur around the collar and very loose Turkish trousers. Together with her daughter, the Shah Jehan and Bibi Doolan, she then appears in red and white saris of the kind worn for marriage in Malwa and the North-Western Provinces.[72]

The Begum's striking behaviour would seem to lend support to the idea that photography precipitates behaviour which otherwise remains latent: as with Attali's music 'which makes audible what will gradually become visible', there is a faster exploration of possibilities when the camera is present and when the sitter controls the process.

119/120. Photographic studios – which increased exponentially in the later nineteenth century made their money by producing individual portraits and photographs of married couples on cartes-de-visite and cabinet cards. These *individuated* units of the photographic repertoire stood in marked contrast to the *collectivities* that characterised key aspects of a wider Indian society. Cabinet cards, 1880s-1890s; the Johnson and Hoffman image possibly depicting Rabindranath Tagore and his wife Mrinalini (private collection).

Both Sujith Kumar Parayil[73] and Malavika Karlekar,[74] in different ways, have made important claims about the way in which photography transformed women's relationship to public space, and helped create new modes of domesticity. Here the space of the photographic studio enforced a new focus on marriage as conjugality – the relationship between husband and wife – rather than the alliance between lineages. The standard unit of photographic record becomes a man and a woman together, not two large *gotra* (or sub-caste) collectivities. This new technology, brought to bear on what might reasonably be seen as the fundamental mechanism of Indian society, restructured it as a conjugal relationship. Rochana Majumdar asks: 'How (are we) to understand Bengali wedding portraits, most of which show the bride and bridegroom … often

[144]

with their limbs touching, their images frozen in a gesture of togetherness when other histories seem to suggest that these senti-ments were far more contested in everyday life?'[75] Conjugality, especially in various Indian reformist movements, was defined and enacted in front of the camera ('prophesised' Attali would say) before being exported to more everyday spaces. As Sujith Parayil[76] has convincingly argued, photography (not as 'representation' but as 'event') also articulated new modes of the public, and the physical act of photographing women outside their homes (precipitated by the need for light and new mis-en-scène) was not simply a represen-tation of new modes of spatiality but the simultaneous physical enactment of that new world. Photographs become 'image acts'[77] which like J. L. Austin's 'speech acts' are 'performatives': in the act of enunciation they do not simply describe the world: they change it.[78]

These contrasts between photography as the documenter of what has already been achieved socially, and as a space of experimentation where new identities can be conjured, are made possible by photog-raphy's indiscriminating data ratio: it records both equally well and this is why such powerfully different expectations can be brought to bear on the same technical process. Photography's indexicality, its chemical trace, its data ratio, has underpinned the dualities I have elaborated here: cure *and* poison; network *and* individuation; the already existent *and* the future possibility. All these evolve from and return to photography's inability to discriminate, its *exorbitance*.

This inability to discriminate – an inability reflecting photogra-phy's 'data ratio' and the openness of its 'filter' – underwrites the diverse outcomes that have been described in this book. I have tried here to attend to the specificity of India and to convey a feel of the sensuous particularity of the archive through which we can recover this specificity. Yet, beyond this necessary localism, I have advanced an argument about the underlying exorbitance of photography which explains – *precisely* – the reticulated terrain whose com-plexity has often been taken as evidence of the impossibility of any general account of photography.

Throughout this complex history, however, a continuous thread has stood out: Indian's enthusiasm for the 'sentimental realism of portraiture'. In embracing this technology with its individuating dynamic, and the photographic studio as a prophetic space for making things 'come out better', Indians have also engaged, in a

profound everyday sense, with the experiential epistemology of what – for want of a better word – we might call democracy: representing themselves to themselves.[79] It is certain that most Indians have never been able to believe in the bourgeois modular subject that seems to have inspired Bhau Daji in the 1850s and 1860s: the civil institutions which succoured such forms of identity never made it far outside of small metropolitan elites.[80] However, standing in front of the camera, or the polling booth and voting machine, India's citizens are able to ask the same fundamental question: 'who do I want to be?' And this, I would suggest, may well be the major legacy of the coming of photography in India.

Notes

Chapter 1: Photography as Cure

1 Walter Benjamin, 'A Little History of Photography', in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 1, part 2, 1931-1934, trans. by Rodney Livingstone and others, ed. by Michael W. Jennings et al. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), p. 510.
2 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981 [1980]), p. 76, emphasis in original.
3 Charles S. Peirce, 'Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs', in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. by Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955 [1940]), p. 102.
4 Peirce, *Philosophical Writings*, p. 108.
5 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 6.
6 See James Elkins, 'What do we Want Photoraphy to be? A Response to Michael Fried', *Critical Inquiry* 31(4), Summer 2005, 938-56, and *Photography Theory*, ed. by James Elkins (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 130-1 ('It could … be argued that the use of the index in isolation from the symbol and icon is a misuse of Peirce's theory, since he was adamant that *every* sign includes elements of all three.')
7 Barthes had written there of that way in which 'The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here' (*Camera Lucida*, p. 81).
8 Rosalind Krauss, 'The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism', in her *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 110.
9 See Elkins (ed.), *Photography Theory*, in which Krauss's attachment to the index and her reiteration of Roland Barthes as foundational figure are pitted against a phalanx of commentators who would rather view photography as a form of 'late' painting, an epiphenomenon of state power and so on.
10 This being the title of the first photographically illustrated book, produced by Fox Talbot in 1844-6.
11 See the discussion (excepting Margaret Iversen's insightful comments) in Elkins (ed.), *Photography Theory*, pp. 131-4 for an exemplar of this.
12 Bernadette Bucher's argument about the 'positivity' of visual representation per se is illuminating here. She argues that the visual – unlike the textual – cannot negate. There is no visual equivalent of Montaigne's 'Look, they have no breeches!' Bucher, *Icon and Conquest: a Structural Analysis of de Bry's* Great Voyages (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 35.
13 This argument owes much to Carlo Ginzburg's observations on the productive excess facilitated by 'misrecognition'. See Carlo Ginzburg, 'The Inquisitor as Anthropologist', in his *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, trans. by John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 156-64, and Christopher Pinney, introduction to

THE COMING OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN INDIA

Photography's Other Histories, ed. by Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 6ff.

14 See Iversen's comments in Elkins (ed.), *Photography Theory*, p. 132. See also her 'What is a Photograph?', *Art History*, 17(3) September 1994, pp. 450-64.

15 Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

16 Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book* (London: Verso [1958]).

17 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 12.

18 *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

19 Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the 14th and 18th Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000) and David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

20 Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002); Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society 1778-1905* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Stuart Blackburn, *Print, Folklore and Nationalism in Colonial South India* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003).

21 Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 178.

22 Bruno Latour, *We have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 13.

23 Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, p. 180.

24 Again one might draw on Latour for critical insight into the manner in which post-Foucauldian and Saidian readings of colonial-era photographs for their 'theological' *ideological* content reproduce an essentially Durkheimian notion of the 'social' as origin, producing 'secondary' representations. Latour dramatises this – in a number of essays – as a choice between Emile Durkheim and Gabriel Tarde.

25 John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 63.

26 Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. by G. Winthrop-Young and M. Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. xxxix.

27 Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, citing Kittler's 'Die Laterna magica der Literatur: Schillers und Hoffmans Medienstrategien', in *Athenäum: Jahrbuch für Romantik*, ed. by Ernst Behler et al. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1994), p. 219, in their translators' introduction to *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. xiv.

28 Winthrop-Young and Wutz, p. xxix. Kittler himself goes on to align photography with the Lacanian 'real' and film with the 'imaginary'.

29 Cited in Winthrop-Young and Wutz's introduction to *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, p. xxix; see also pp. 206ff.

30 Winthrop-Young and Wutz, intro., p. xxix.

31 *The Calcutta Courier*, 3 October 1839.

32 Ray Desmond, 'Photography in Victorian India', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 134, December 1985, p. 49.

33 Pratapaditya Pal and Vidya Dehejia, *From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India, 1757-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 182.

34 *The Calcutta Courier*, 5 March 1840.

35 'Our endeavor is to go further and peer into spaces that are inaccessible to the human eye' (Ernst Jünger, 'Photography and the "Second Consciousness"', in *Photography in the*

Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913-1940, ed. by Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Aperture, 1989), p. 208.
36 Offered for sale in Catalogue 381, Christie's, *Visions of India*, 5 June 1996, pp. 200-1.
37 The hiatus between the extreme enthusiasm of 1839-1840 and the emergence of Photographic Societies in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in the mid-1850s has been remarked on by John Falconer, *India: Pioneering Photographers 1850-1900* (British Library, 2001), p. 9.
38 *JPSB*, 1, 15 January 1855 (Bombay: Smith Taylor and Co.), pp. 2-3.
39 *JPSB*, IX, 1855, p. 142.
40 *JPSB*, IV, July 1855.
41 *JPSB*, II, February 1855.
42 ACP 2005.01.0001. There is a total of 31 images, but some of these are very likely the later work of Oscar Mallite (Stéphanie Roy Bharath, personal communication).
43 Rev. Joseph Mullens, 'On the Applications of Photography in India', *JBPS*, no. 2(1) (January 1857), p. 33.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Several original wrappers from the *Indian Amateurs' Photographic Album* are bound into the back of the British Library's Photo 140: Views in Western India Album.
47 Mullens, 'On the Applications of Photography', p. 35.
48 Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 51ff.
49 *JPSB*, II, February 1855, p. 17.
50 Norman A. Chevers, *A Manual of Medical Jurisprudence for India, including an Outline of a History of Crime Against the Person in India*, 2nd edn (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1870), p. 74.
51 Ibid., pp. 74-5.
52 Ibid., p. 85.
53 Carol A. Breckenridge's 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31(2) April 1989,

pp. 195-216, traces a history of the visual display of India from Robert Kerr Porter's 200-feet-long *Taking of Seringapatam* displayed at Somerset House in 1800 to Robert Burford's *Fall of Delhi* shown at the panorama in Leicester Square in 1858.
54 Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'The Stereoscope and Stereograph', *The Atlantic Monthly*, June 1859, no. 3. Holmes also provides a wonderful account of the 'tiny spark of contingency' which is guaranteed by photography's 'excess': 'Theoretically, a perfect photograph is absolutely inexhaustible. In a picture you can find nothing the artist has not seen before you; but in a perfect photograph there will be as many beauties lurking, unobserved, as there are flowers that blush unseen in forests and meadows.'
55 *JBPS*, vol. II no. 5, July 1863, p. 39. These images are referred to – in a European context – as 'optograms'. See Georges Didi-Huberman, 'Photography – Scientific and Pseudo-scientific', in *A History of Photography: Social and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. by Jean-Claude Lemagny and André Rouille (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 74.
56 Maria Antonella Pelizzari, 'From Stone to Paper: Photographs of Architecture and the Traces of History', in *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900*, ed. by M. A. Pelizzari (Montréal: Canadian Center for Architecture and New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2003), p. 45.
57 New Series no. III, September 1869, pp. 3-5.
58 On whom see Stéphanie Roy, 'Early Photography in India, 1850s-1870s', Ph.D. thesis, University of London (SOAS), 2004.
59 Mullens, 'On the Application' (note 42 above), p. 33.
60 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 86. Bourdieu elaborates a generic *habitus* as a feature of all social practice. The colonial

prefix used here embodies my own attempt to use it in a more localised fashion.

61 Ibid., p. 80.

62 '2.His Lordship in Council requests that on your way to Cawnpore you will halt at Benares, and apply yourself to taking a set of views of the Raj Ghat entrenchement, conveying as clear an impression of the works as possible. 3. You are also requested to halt at Allahabad to take a set of views of the principal buildings of the Fort and the buildings in course of adaptation or construction as Barracks and Hospitals, and, if possible, to take a general view exhibiting the intended sites of such building. 4. You will then have the goodness to forward in duplicate from Benares and Allahabad respectively the views that you are required to take there.' (National Archives of India, Home Public, No. 176, 22 January 1858.)

63 Ibid.

64 See John Falconer, '"A Pure Labour of Love": a Publishing History of *The People of India*', in *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*, ed. by Eleanor M. Hight and Gary Sampson (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 71-4.

65 National Archives of India, Foreign Dept. 1863. Genl. A. July 11-28, hereafter referred to as 'Waterhouse', p. 39.

66 See Falconer, '"A Pure Labour of Love"', pp. 58-61. The National Archives of India holds a handwritten letter dated November 1861 from Sir George Couper, Secretary to the Government of the North Western Provinces, forwarding twenty copies each of four 'Photographic likenesses of Individuals of different races inhabiting the Jhansi District' by Major F. W. Binkney. An accompanying sheet gives the most perfunctory information (e.g. 'Gonds, male and female, Jhansi'). This provoked a response from Fort William in Calcutta (presumably from Bayley, but the signature is illegible) declaring that the descriptions appended to photographs 'should embrace 1st The realities in which the tribe or class is found. 2nd Its chief occupation 3rd Whether migratory or settled 4th Religion or chief object and mode of worship 5th General disposition and character 6th Principal diet, whether animal or vegetable … 7th Degree of longevity' (National Archives of India Foreign Dept. Gen. 16th December 1861. No. 456).

67 Waterhouse, p. 17.

68 Waterhouse, p. 19.

69 Waterhouse, p. 40.

70 Waterhouse, p. 45.

71 Samuel Bourne, 'Narrative of a Photographic Trip to Kashmir (Cashmere) and Adjacent Districts', *British Journal of Photography* 1866, p. 471.

72 Samuel Bourne, *Photographic Journeys in the Himalayas, Comprising the complete texts of four series of letters to the* British Journal of Photography *published between July 1s. 1863 and April 1st 1870,* ed. by Hugh Ashley Rayner (Bath: Pagoda Tree Press, 2nd edition, 2004), p. 18. All subsequent references to Bourne's writing cited here are taken from Rayner's edition.

73 Bourne, ed. Rayner, p. 3.

74 Bourne, p. 15.

75 Bourne, p. 31. Hobson and Jobson notes that '*puckerow* belongs essentially to the dialect of the European soldier, and in that becomes itself a verb "to *puckerow*", i.e. to lay hold of (generally of a recalcitrant natives).' Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: The Anglo Indian Dictionary* (London: Murray, 1886), p. 735.

76 John Blees, *Photography in Hindostan; or Reminiscences of a Travelling Photographer*, illustrated with a lithographic engraving and two photographs (printed at the Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1877).

77 Blees, p. 28.

78 Blees, p. 16.

79 Bourne, p. 33.

80 In 1866 the Maharaja of Jaipur, the renowned photographer Sawai Ram Singh II, sent some of his own photographs to the Viceroy with the accompanying message, 'The photograph were taken by myself, and

I trust that they will be met with your kind acceptance. I trust you will always look upon me as a faithful ally and true friend of the British Government. I trust you will favour me from time to time with your friendly letters' (National Archives of India, Foreign Pol. A. 1866. Feb. No. 19-38).

81 See Sophie Gordon, 'A City of Mourning: The Representation of Lucknow, India in Nineteenth-Century Photography', *History of Photography*, 30(1) Spring 2006, pp. 80-91.

82 Edward and Thomas Polehampton (eds), *A Memoir, Letters and Diary of the Rev. Henry S. Polehampton* (London: Richard Bentley, 1858), pp. 141-2, cited by Gordon, 'City of Mourning', p. 81.

83 The albums were compiled shortly before the siege, annotated after the siege and presented in March 1858 by Trevor Wheler, a captain in the First European Fusiliers, to the celebrated *Times* war correspondent W. H. Russell. The first volume of the album found its way into the IOLR in 1922, and the second volume – through the agency of Howard Ricketts – in 1974. Now BL 269/1 and 269/2.

84 Ray Desmond, 'Photography in Victorian India', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 134, December 1985, p. 57.

85 Martin Gubbins, *An Account of the Mutinies in Oudh and the Siege of the Lucknow Residency* (London: Richard Bentley, 1858).

86 Gubbins, preface, p. vi.

87 Cited by Gordon, 'A City of Mourning', p. 82.

88 P. C. Mukherjee, *Pictorial Lucknow* (Lucknow, 1883), p. 183. Mukherjee continues: 'The old views of Lucknow taken just after the Mutiny, and at the time of the demolitions engraved in this book, are presumably copies of his photographs.' Mukherjee also mentions the photographers Mushkoor-ud-dowlad', the famous photographer of Lucknow and Oudh', and Asgar Jan, Mushkoor-ud-dowlah's brother, who 'is also a known photographer'.

89 See Gordon, 'A City of Mourning', pp. 86ff.

90 *The Lucknow Album. Containing a Series of Fifty Photographic Views of Lucknow and its Environs Together with a Large Sized Plan of the City executed by Darogha Ubbas Alli, Assistant Municipal Engineer. To the above is added a full description of Each Scene Depicted. The Whole Forming a Complete Illustrated Guide to the City of Lucknow The Capital of Oudh* (Calcutta: printed by G. H. Rouse, Baptist Mission Press, 1874). See also Brij Bushan Sharma, 'Darogha Ubbas Allli, an Unknown Nineteenth-Century Indian Photographer', *History of Photography*, 7(1) Spring 1983, pp. 63-8.

91 Abbas Ali continued: 'to the general traveller or tourist, the work will prove of great interest; it may be added that, to some, it will be of inestimable value; but to the friends and relations of the survivors, and to the survivors themselves, of the terrible rebellion of 1857-8, especially to those who were actual members of the beleaguered Garrison at the Lucknow Residency; whose gallant and glorious defence against overwhelming forces of a cruel, fanatical and barbarous foe, preserved the prestige of the British arms at such fearful sacrifices, this work will not prove an intellectual treat alone; the scenes herein depicted will revive old memories of the mighty dead, of brave sons and fathers, of dear sisters, loving wives and sweet children, who now sleep peacefully in the midst of the ruined grandeur where they fell. To the survivors of that Garrison, this Album will bear a sacred interest, and many a tear will fall at the contemplation of some well-remembered spot, over which a sort of holy radiance will appear to linger as the book is sorrowfully closed. The volume may be preserved, for transmission to posterity, as a memorial of the dangers passed and the hardships suffered by the glorious Garrison of Lucknow,' Abbas Ali, *Lucknow Album*, p. 2.

92 Gordon, 'A City of Mourning', p. 88.

93 See Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: the Social Life of Indian*

Photographs (London: Reaktion, 1997), pp. 83ff.

94 Abbas Ali, *The Beauties of Lucknow Consisting of Twenty-Four Selected Photographed Portraits, Cabinet Size, of the most Celebrated and Popular Living Histrionic Singers, Dancing Girls, and Actresses of the Oudh Court and of Lucknow* (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press Company Ltd, 1874).

95 Abbas Ali, *Beauties of Lucknow*, preface, n.p., cited by Gordon, 'A City of Mourning', p. 90.

96 There are five images in this series in the Alkazi Collection of Photography in London (ACP. 94.48.0006**).**

97 Natasha Eaton, 'Between Mimesis and Alterity: Art, Gift and Diplomacy in Colonial India, 1770-1800', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2004, 818.

98 Ibid.

99 Couper appears several times in caricatures in the *Oudh Punch* in 1880 (see *A Selection From the Illustrations Which Have Appeared in the Oudh Punch from 1877 to 1881* [Lucknow, 1881] available at http://dsal.uchicago.edu/digbooks/digpager.html?BOOKID=NC1718.08&object=3).

100 *The People of India: a Series of Photographic Illustrations with Descriptive Letterpress, of the Races and Tribes of Hindustan*, ed. by J. Forbes Watson and John William Kaye, originally published under the authority of the Government of India, and Reproduced by Order of the Secretary of State for India in Council (London: India Museum, 1868-75, 8 vols). The best account is provided by John Falconer, '"A Pure Labour of Love"' (note 63 above, pp. 51-81).

101 Described by Francis Robinson as 'the greatest Indian Muslim of the nineteenth century', Syed Ahmed Khan (1818-88) was raised in proximity to the Mughal Court. In 1838 he started work in the judicial branch of the East India Company. From 1878 to 1882 he sat on the Viceroy's Legislative Council and founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Educational College at Aligarh in 1877 and the Muhammadan Educational Conference in 1886. See Francis Robinson, 'Introduction', in Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt … written in Urdoo, in the Year 1858, and Translated into English by his Two European Friends* (Benares: Medical Hall Press, 1873), repr. by Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2000, pp. vii-viii.

102 G. F. I. Graham, *The Life and Work of Syed Ahmed Khan* (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1885), pp. 188-9.

103 Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt … Written in Urdoo, in the Year 1858, and Translated into English by his two European Friends* (Benares: Medical Hall Press, 1873, repr. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 4.

104 David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p. 6.

105 Letterpress for plate 135.

106 Letterpress for plate 136.

107 Letterpress for plate 138.

108 Letterpress for plate 139.

109 Graham, *The Life and Work of Syed Ahmed Khan*, pp. 188-9.

110 Syed Ahmed Khan, *Causes of the Indian Revolt* (note 1 above), p. 35.

111 Benjamin, 'Little History', p. 519.

112 John Falconer comments on the 'misinterpretation' (not least by the present author in an earlier work – *Camera Indica*) of Syed Ahmed's critique, arguing that the 'blot' was not the 'insulting photographs' in *The People of India* but the 'lack of educational and social progress which, he felt, justly relegated his country to an inferior status and shamed his son into disowning it' (p. 80). I would suggest that the 'aesthetics' of the same precipitated a confrontation – *an intensified acknowledgement* – of this disjuncture. In this sense the blot was the lack of progress *and* the photographic logic which dramatised it so intensely. Syed Ahmed's account is powerfully framed by a double mise en scène: that of *The People of India* ('in which the races of all India …') and

that of the India Office (where 'a young Englishman … came up …'). This is the context in which Mahmud is asked to identify himself with the 'races of all India' and in which consequently he 'hastened to explain that he was not one of the aborigines'.
113 Syed Ahmed Khan, *Causes*, p. 22. Edmund's circular, reproduced as Appendix no. 1 in Syed Khan's text opens with the following words: 'The time appears to have come when earnest consideration should be given to the subject, whether or not all men should embrace the same system of Religion. Railways, Steam Vessels and the Electric Telegraph, are rapidly uniting all the nations of the earth; the more they are brought together, the more certain does the conclusion become, that all have the same wants, the same nature and the same origin'. *Causes*, p. 55.
114 Syed Ahmed Khan, *Causes*, pp. 22-3.
115 Rabindranath Tagore, *Glimpses of Bengal, Selected from the Letters of Sir Rabindranath Tagore 1885-1895* (London: Macmillan, 1961 edn), p. 106. This particular letter was written from Shelidah on 16 May 1893.
116 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 15.
117 Syed Ahmed Khan, *Causes*, pp. 45-6.
118 Syed Ahmed Khan, *Causes*, p. 20.
119 Tagore, *Glimpses of Bengal.*
120 Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 119ff. Poole writes of 'an arithmetic logic' (p. 123), the need (in a cartes-de-visite album) 'to fill the rows and columns of empty sheets' (p. 130) and 'equivalent and interchangeable images' (p. 132).
121 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 6.
122 Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. by Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 71, emphasis added. My strangely precise explanation for the transition from photographic cure to poison would of course, hardly have met with Derrida's approval.

123 Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 72, emphasis added.
124 Partha Chatterjee, 'The Sacred Circulation of National Images', in *Traces of India* (note 55 above), p. 289.
125 Chatterjee, 'Sacred Circulation', p. 280.
126 Chatterjee, 'Sacred Circulation', p. 284.
127 Barthes writes that the photographic image, 'the *exorbitant thing*' is 'full, crammed' (*Camera Lucida*, pp. 91 and 89).
128 Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity*, p. 119.

Chapter 2: Photography as Poison

1 *JBPS*, April 1871, p .2.
2 See the report on the Twelfth Annual Exhibition in *JBPS* 4(1), December 1869, p. 3.
3 *JBPS* II(VI), April 1871, p. 2.
4 *JBPS* IV(I), December 1869, p. 3.
5 *JBPS* II(VI), April 1871, p. 2.
6 *JBPS* II(V), June 1870, p. 6.
7 See Grace Seiberling, *Amateurs, Photography, and the Mid-Victorian Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
8 *JBPS* II(V), June 1870, p. 7.
9 Report of monthly meeting on 24 February 1863 reported in *JBPS* II(4), 1863, p. 18.
10 Meeting on 31 March reported in *JBPS* II(4), p. 22.
11 Meeting on 28 April 1863 reported in *JBPS* II(4), p. 41.
12 Meeting on 10 November 1863, reported in *JBPS* II(6), December 1863, p. 69.
13 Meeting on 31 March, *JBPS* II(4), p. 22.
14 National Archives of India, Home 1886, Books and Pubs. January 19/20, 'Copyright Registration of the photos of Ex-King Thibaw and his two wives'. See also Home Books and Publications, 1902, June 146-47, Part B.
15 *JBPS*, new series No. II, March 1869, p. 6.
16 Bourne, ed. Rayner (ch. I, note 71), p. 3.
17 John Beames, *Memoirs of a Bengal*

Civilian (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961; Eland, 1984), p. 149.

18 See Anon. *Indigo*, Howe, Balch & Co., Boston, New York, Calcutta, 1891, a series of photogravures from Mallite's images.

19 Beames, *Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian*, p. 171.

20 Cited by Malavika Karlekar, *Re-visioning the Past: Early Photography in Bengal 1975-1915* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 140.

21 'A Member', *To the Members of the Photographic Society of Bengal* (1857).

22 Radhika Singha, 'Settle, Mobilize, Verify: Identification Practices in Colonial India', *Studies in History* 16(2), 2000, p. 175. See also Chandak Sengoopta, *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting was Born in Colonial India* (London: Macmillan, 2003), pp. 70-2.

23 Clare Anderson, *Legible Bodies: Race, Criminality and Colonialism in South Asia* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 147.

24 National Archives of India, 1869 Home Department Judicial A, 27 February 1869, Nos 49-50, 'Practice obtaining in Mysore of taking photographic likenesses of twice convicted criminals.'

25 Anderson, *Legible Bodies*, p. 146.

26 1869 Home Department Judicial-A, 9 October 1869, Nos 31-50. p. 3.

27 Ibid., p. 5.

28 Ibid., p. 9.

29 Ibid., p. 19. We can also hear in Hervey's anxieties an echo of Socrates complaints in Plato's *Phaedrus* about *writing's* inability to discriminate between readers: 'once a thing is committed to writing it circulates equally among those who understand the subject and those who have no business with it; a writing cannot distinguish between suitable and unsuitable readers' (Penguin edn, p. 97).

30 Ibid., p. 24.

31 Clare Anderson, in her excellent account of these debates in *Legible Bodies*, sees in such incidents a strategy to exclude Indians from 'the colonial modernity that the camera represented', pp. 154ff.

32 1869 Home Department Judicial-A, 9 October 1869, Nos 31-50, p. 21.

33 Hobson Jobson (ch. 1, note 74) gives: '*pagi* – from *pag* the foot – a professional tracker, the name of a caste, or rather an occupation whose business is to track thieves by footmarks'.

34 1869 Home Department Judicial-A, 9 October 1869, Nos 31-50, p. 21.

35 Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Adventure of the Priory School', *Strand Magazine*, vol. xxvii, No. 158, February 1904. ('I am familiar with forty-two different impressions left by tyres. This as you perceive, is a Dunlop, with a patch upon the outer cover. Heidegger's tyres were Palmer's, leaving longitudinal stripes.')

36 Home Dept. Port Blair-A, March 1875, Nos 49-51: 'Arrangements for taking permanent photographs of transportation convicts.'

37 Indian National Archives, Home Dept. Port Blair, December 1874.

38 'If you are a lover of the grand, of the sublime, here indeed you will find food for your soul, more than enough to satisfy your cravings. But why do I dwell so much upon this description? You will no longer be surprised when I tell you that at this place [Igatpuri] I love so well, I was once living for three years when employed on the G.I.P. Railway.' Blees, *Photography in Hindostan* (ch. 1, note 75), pp. 163-4.

39 Seeton Smith, Supt of Tanna Jail to Insp. Gen. Prisons, Bombay: 'I have the the honour to inform you that I have made enquiry amongst the photographers in Bombay, none of whom are willing to take the photographs of convicts at less rates than those offered by Messrs. Ritter and Molkenteller [sic] with the exception of one whose offer I now enclose.2. Mr. Blees, who is at present a Guard on the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, was formerly in business as a photographer at Kurrachee. Being desirous of perfecting himself in the art he obtained leave from the Company and went home for two years. In London and Paris he placed himself under competent masters, with

what advantage the enclosed three copies of his photos will show. This is Mr Blees' own account, for the truth of which I cannot vouch. However, he appears to be a competent workman judging from the samples he submits, and I do not think we could get a fairer offer.'

40 National Archives of India, Home Department Port Blair A, December 1874, Nos 52-7, 'Proposal for photographing convicts sentenced to transportation for life.'

41 J. Cruickshank in No. 3078, ibid.

42 James Fergusson, *Archaeology in India with Especial Reference to the Works of Babu Rajendralala Mitra* (London: Trübner and Co., 1884). See also Malavika Karlekar, *Re-Visioning the Past* (note 19 above), pp. 138ff. I am very grateful to Finbarr Barry Flood for sharing his unpublished text 'Indigo, Photography and Colonial Authority: Context and Subtext in Fergusson's *Archaeology in India*'.

43 Major-Gen. Sir Frederic Goldsmid, obituary in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society*, February 1886, p. 114.

44 Whether James was related to W. F. Fergusson, a dissenting member of the 1860 Indigo Commission, has not yet been resolved.

45 Anon. ('A member'), *To the Members of the Photographic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta: 1857).

46 Rajendralal Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1875), vol. I, p. i. See also Kalyan Kumar Dasgupta, *Indian Historiography and Rajendralal Mitra* Satchidananda Prakashani (Calcutta: 1976), p. 28.

47 *JBPS*, new series No. IV, 1870, p. 10. In the ensuing discussion, the Rev. James Long (of *Nil Darpan* fame) enquired whether 'the Baboo had photographed any interiors, as they might be interesting'. Mitra explained that he had not: they were too plain.

48 Mitra, *Antiquities of Orissa,* vol. I, p. iii.

49 Fergusson, *Archaeology in India*, p. 6. At p. 21 he refers to 'a considerable party of moulders, photographers, and

artists … the superintendence of the whole [being] confided to Babu Rajendralal Mitra'.

50 Interestingly, Upinder Singh, *The Discovery of Ancient India: Early Archaeologists and the Beginnings of Archaeology* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), discovered a copy of this text annotated by one of Alexander Cunningham's assistants, J. D. M. Beglar, in the Central Archaeological Library in Delhi. Beglar's comments suggested that he perceived Fergusson's text as an attack on a nascent professional archaeology as a whole. Given statements like Fergusson's claim that 'General Cunningham chooses his assistants, not because of their fitness for the work they have to perform but rather because of their incompetence' (p. 77), Beglar's response is hardly surprising.

51 Fergusson, *Archaeology in India*, preface pp. iii-iv.

52 Ibid., pp. 15-16.

53 Ibid., p. 99.

54 Ibid., p. 2.

55 Ibid., pp. 56 and 59.

56 Fergusson also mentions that his nephew Frederick Fergusson was barrister in the Supreme Court in Calcutta. Ibid., p. 23.

57 Ibid., p. vi.

58 Ibid., p. vii.

59 Ibid., p. vii.

60 Ibid., p. 5.

61 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), pp. 153-5.

62 Fergusson, p. 5.

63 Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (ch. 1, note 2), p. 15.

64 Ibid.

65 My account of Hooper's activities is entirely indebted for its empirical substance to John Falconer's 'Willoughby Wallace Hooper: a craze about photography', *The Photographic Collector* 4 (Winter 1983), pp. 258-85.

66 Cited by Falconer, 'Willoughby Wallace Hoooper', p. 263.

67 Ibid., p. 265.

68 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 95-6.

69 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical

Reproduction', in *Illuminations,* trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), p. 236.

70 John Milton, *Areopagitica*, ed. by Edward Arber (Westminster: Constable, 1903), p. 46.

71 Philip Woods, 'Film Propaganda in India', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 15(4), p. 543.

72 Reported at monthly meeting, 28 October 1862, *JBPS*, vol. 1 No. 3, p. 70.

73 Anon., *Historic Trial of the Ali Brothers and Others,* Part II, Proceedings in the Sessions Court (Karachi: New Times Office, *c*. 1921), p. 137. In a speech of remarkable contemporary relevance the Shankaracharya argued that if 'by placing our Dharma thus on the highest pedestal, we come into conflict with a Government that places crooked diplomacy above the straightforward Dharma and selfish policy above impartial justice, and if we find ourselves clapped in jail in consequence thereof, even then we have absolutely nothing to regret!' (p. 145).

74 Ibid., p. 153.

75 Cited in Stephen Wheeler, *History of the Delhi Coronation Durbar Held on the First of January 1903 to Celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII Emperor of India* (London: John Murray, 1904), p. 247.

76 This is paraphrased from Sharada Dwivedi, 'In Pursuit of History', *Harmony*, August 2004, p. 40. Virkar subsequently also opened a studio in Nasik.

77 See Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) and Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (ch. 1, note 22).

78 Walter Benjamin notes of Atget that 'It has quite justly been said of him that he photographed [deserted Paris streets] like scenes of crime. … With Atget, photographs become standard evidence for historical occurrences and acquire a hidden political significance. … They stir the viewer; he feels challenged by them in a new way.' 'Work of Art', p. 226.

79 Varges worked for International News, a Hearst organisation, and specialised in filming colonial wars and political struggle: he had previously made films in Macedonia and Mesopotamia (Home Pol. 1922, 949, p. 25) and would subsequently film the Italian incursion in Abyssinia (1935) and the Spanish Civil War (see Ariel Varges, 'Ace Newsreeler Gives Light on How he Films News of the World', *American Cinematographer*, July 1938, pp. 275-6, for which I thank Julie Codell).

80 National Archives of India, Home Political 1922, 949.

81 Ibid., p. 2.

82 Handwritten note 18/9/22 in previous file.

83 I draw here on Kittler's translators' words (Winthrop-Young and Wutz, introduction to *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (ch. 1, note 26), p. xxvi).

84 Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to* Blade Runner *(1492-2019)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

85 National Archives of India, Home Political. 1923. F.71, p. 4.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid., p. 21.

88 Ibid. I am most grateful to Parmjit Singh for directing my attention to surviving portions of Varges' film in the ITN Archive, London.

89 Cited by Falconer, 'Willoughby Wallace Hooper' (note 64), p. 265.

90 Bombay Censor Board.

91 Bengal Board of Film Regulation.

92 Bengal Board of Film Regulation.

93 See C. Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion, 2004).

94 *Indian Cinematographic Committee 1927-28*, vol. V (underlining in original, emphasis added), p. 45.

95 National Archives of India, Home Political 1922, 949, pp. 25 and 30.

96 'Cinema records of scenes in Bombay well in advance of Prince is strongly advised by this Government' – ibid., F-66.

97 Note by Rushbook Williams in ibid., p. 8.

98 Katherine Mayo, *Mother India*

(London: Cape, 1927). Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of a Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 110.

99 Falconer, 'Willoughby Wallace Hooper', p. 277. Falconer notes the presence of British voices who thought such images useful to the cause of re-directing resources to the 'labouring poor' (pp. 259-60).

100 It is peppered with incendiary descriptions such as the caption on p. 358: 'Hindu Holy Men like these murdered the Muslim refugees, men, women and children outside the meadows outside Cawnpore. Over a million of these types are today walking idle about India, living on the charity or the sheer physical terror of pious Hindus. Often secret agents of the Terrorists, they know how to make themselves feared in many ways.' The photograph is credited to one 'Captain Major A. W. Gill'. Katherine Mayo, *Face of Mother India* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1935).

101 Ibid.

102 Clare Anderson, *Legible Bodies* (note 22), p. 161; these being Photo 125/2(46), 'The Murderer of Lord Mayo'; Photo 127/(96), 'Sher Ali' (assassin of Lord Mayo); Photo 127/(99), 'Assassin of Lord Mayo'.

103 Mullens, 'On the Applications of Photography' (ch. 1, note 42), p. 34, emphasis added.

Chapter 3: Photography as Prophecy

1 (Ch. 1, note 2), pp. 12-13.

2 Yule was the author – together with A. C. Burnell – of *Hobson Jobson* (ch. 1, note 74), the classic compendium of Anglo-Indian linguistic idiosyncrasy. In that book he provided a historical etymology of *Gutta Percha* derived from Malay *Gatah Pertja,* the sap of *Palaquium gutta* a species of tree to be found throughout south-east Asia. Popularised in 1843 by Dr William Montgomery of the Singapore Botanical Gardens, it would rapidly prove crucial to the continuation of the British presence in India. Yule quotes

Mundy's *Journal of Events in Borneo and the Celebes* to the effect that 'Gutta Percha is a remarkable example of the rapidity with which a really useful invention becomes of importance to the British public'. Gutta-percha is a natural latex, and as well as revolutionising the game of golf, its unattractiveness to animals of various kinds made it an ideal insulator of telegraph cable.

3 Cf. M. Gorman, 'Sir William O'Shaughnessy, Lord Dalhousie, and the Establishment of the Telegraph System in India', *Technology and Culture*, vol. 12, No. 4, October 1971, pp. 581-601.

4 *The Calcutta Courier*, 3 October 1839.

5 Who 'saw at a glance the marvellous future which these and simultaneous experiments in other countries foretold, and with his high name he protected the experimentalist from much of the derision which his attempts excited in the community of Calcutta'. W. B. O'Shaughnessy, *The Electric Telegraph in British India: A Manual of Instruction for the Subordinate Officers, Artificers and Signallers Employed in the Department* (London, by Order of the Court of Directors, 1853), pp. iiii-iv.

6 Ibid., p. iii.

7 Ibid., pp. iv-v.

8 Cited by Gorman, 'Sir William O'Shaughnessy', pp. 596-7.

9 O'Shaughnessy, p. xi.

10 Cited in William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The fall of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p. 131.

11 Earl Roberts of Kandahar, *Forty-One Years in India* (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 34. See also John McCosh, *Advice for Officers* (London: W. H. Allen, 1856), p. 103: 'The electric telegraph is now open all over India. The events at any one Presidency are known at any other presidency an hour or tweo after they have taken place.'

12 Gorman, 'Sir William O'Shaughnessy', p. 599.

13 Ibid.

14 Harriet Martineau, *Suggestions towards the Future Government of India*

(London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858), p. 32. Martineau continues, elaborating a metaphor which would have fascinated Walter Benjamin: 'A Brahmin broke the microscope long ago. He could thus disguise from himself, and conceal from his neighbours, the vanity of their endeavour to abstain from destroying life and swallowing animal substances. He might persuade himself when the microscope was destroyed, that the animated world he had seen in a drop of water was a dream or a temptation; but when it comes to a railway train moving through a hundred miles of villages, or of a telegraph enabling men on the Indus to talk to men at the mouth of the Ganges, the case is beyond Brahmin management; and we ought to prepare for the hostility of all who live under Brahmanical influence. I must refer again, though I have done it more than once before, to the significant fact that, for some years past, there has been a controversy in Hindostan Proper, as to how far the accommodation of the rail will lessen the merit of pilgrimage. From year to year the Hindoo notions of virtues and expediency have been more and more shocked and encroached upon by the introduction of our arts among a people who would not otherwise have attained them for centuries to come. They see that there is no chance for their adored immutability, their revered stagnation, their beloved indolence where the English magic establishes itself.'

15 Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (London: Macmillan, 1935), p. 442.

16 Lucia Moholy, *A Hundred Years of Photography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1939), pp. 175-6.

17 Sekula uses these terms to distinguish 'industrial photography' and family photographs in the work of the Canadian photographer Leslie Shedden. Cited (critically) by Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: the Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT, 1997), p. 9.

18 Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 2. India was the major producer of shellac: its history remains to be properly documented.

19 Ibid., p. 9.

20 Louis Dumont, 'The Functional Equivalents of the Individual in Caste Society', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No. VIII, October 1965, pp. 85-99.

21 John Blees, *Photography in Hindostan* (ch. 1, note 75), pp. 100-1.

22 Biographical data on Tressider derived from a typescript by John Fraser in the Alkazi Photographic Collection.

23 Walter Benjamin, 'Little History of Photography' (ch. 1, note 1), p. 519.

24 *History of the Sect of Maharajas* (London: Trübner, 1865).

25 B. N. Motiwala, *Karsondas Mulji: A Biographical Study* (Bombay: Centenary Celebrations Committee, 1935), p. 347.

26 'Its physical basis … is a material medium of some sort which, like the ether of modern physics is assumed to unite distant objects and convey impressions from one to the other.' James G. Frazer, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, vol. 1, in *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, third edition, 1911), pp. 174-5. See also Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 47-51.

27 Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (ch. 1, note 2), p. 88. See also Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*.

28 Motiwala, *Karsondas Mulji*, p. 351.

29 A small dhoti.

30 Mulji, *History of the Sect of Maharajas*, p. 40.

31 Motiwala, *Karsondas Mulji*, p. 358.

32 The esteem in which Bhau Daji was held is evident in his obituary in *Nature*, 6 August 1874, pp. 270-1. See also *Writings and Speeches of Dr Bhau Daji*, ed. by T. G. Mainkar (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1974).

33 *History of the Sect of Maharajas*.

Frontispiece is engraving from photograph by Dajee (immediately under engraving 'From a Photograph by Dr Naraen Daji', captioned 'A Group of the Bombay Maharajas').

34 Jadunathjee Brizrattanjee, *Report of the Maharaj Libel Case, and of the Bhattia Conspiracy Case, Connected with it* (Bombay: N. R. Ranina at the Union Press, 1862), p. 136.

35 Taylor, cited in *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, ed. by Philip Goodin and Robert Pettit (Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd edn, 2005), p. 88.

36 Partha Chatterjee, 'On Civil and Political Society in Postcolonial Democracies', in *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, ed. by Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 172.

37 Jürgen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)', *New German Critique*, Fall 1974, p. 49.

38 Partha Chatterjee, 'On Civil and Political Society', p. 169.

39 T. C. Hughes and Katherine Prior, 'Sir John Budd Phear', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (entry at http://www.oxforddnb. com/view/article/35502)

40 See Katherine Prior, 'John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (entry at http://www.oxforddnb. com/view/articleHL/2310?docPos= 9&anchor=match

41 Brian Hatcher, *Idioms of Improvement: Vidyasagar and Cultural Encounter in Bengal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 273.

42 Long was imprisoned by Sir Mordaunt Wells, a fellow member of the BPS. Geoff Oddie notes that Long's preface to *Nil Darpan* described Mitra's language as 'plain but true', a characterisation which figured in the planter's libel action. (Geoff. A. Oddie, *Missionaries, Rebellion and Proto-nationalism: James Long of Bengal, 1814-87* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999), pp. 126 and 119. See also James Long, *Statement by the Rev. J. Long of his Connection with the Nil Darpan* (Calcutta: Sanders, Cones & Co., 1861).

43 Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Soundings from the Atlantic* (London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1864), p. 175.

44 Hughes and Prior observe that 'it was beyond doubt to him that Bengal's indigenous culture … represented a lesser, primitive stage of development'.

45 Chevers, *A Manual of medical Jurisprudence for India* (ch. 1, note 49), p. 85.

46 J. B. Phear, *Lecture on the Rules of Evidence in Indian Courts of Law*, delivered before the Bethune Society, 8 March (Calcutta: J. C. Hay & Co., 1866), p. 5.

47 Emphasis added.

48 Phear, *Lecture on Rules of Evidence*, p. 6.

49 See C. P. Ilbert, 'Sir James Stephen as Legislator', *Law Quarterly Review* 10, 1894, pp. 222-7, and C. P. Ilbert, 'Indian Codification', *Law Quarterly Review*, 5, 1889, pp. 347-69.

50 *Soundings from the Atlantic* (1864), p. 165 (first pub. in *The Atlantic Monthly* 3 (June 1859), pp. 738-48.

51 Sir George Campbell, *Memoirs of my Indian Career* (1893), vol. 2 p. 4, cited by John Fraser, 'Beato's photograph of the interior of the Sikandarbagh at Lucknow', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* LVIV, No. 237, 1981, p. 54.

52 *The Pioneer*, 19 May 1892.

53 Which were published as Charles Wade Crump, *A pictorial record of the Cawnpore massacre, three original sketches, taken on the spot* (Calcutta and London: 1858).

54 *The Pioneer*, 19 May 1892.

55 Although note that most of the photos are copies of Beato's.

56 www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/ gpa/raub.htm

57 Latour suggest that 'technique' and its upgraded version 'technology' are 'lousy' descriptors (since they play the role of the foil for the human soul in the modernist scenography') preferring instead the adjectival form 'technical'. Latour, *Pandora's Hope*, p. 191. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

58 André Bazin, *What is Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 164, cited by Ahish Rajadhyaksha, 'The Phalke Era: Conflict of Traditional Form and Modern Technology', in *Journal of Arts and Ideas*, 14-15, 1987, pp. 53ff.

59 Aaron Scharf, *Photography and Art*.

60 Rajadhyaksha, 'Phalke Era', p. 67.

61 Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Form of the Phonograph Record', in *Essays on Music*, ed. by Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 278.

62 Cited by Rochana Majumdar, 'Refiguring Conjugality: The Couple in Colonial Bengal', unpublished ms. to whom thanks.

63 Eisenstein, *Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 30.

64 Stalleybrass: talk, Northwestern University, May 2006.

65 'The work of the pen could not effectively compete with the work of the press. Setting an indulgence text in type would have taken only an hour or two, and by the end of the day more copies would be ready for the pardoners' sacks than a scrivener could prepare in several weeks of steady writing.' Paul Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner: An Unrecorded Indulgence Printed by William Caxton for the Hospital of St. Mary Rounceval, Charing Cross* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1986), pp. 29-30. See also www.bl.uk/treasures/gutenberg/indulgences

66 Blees, *Photography in Hindostan*, pp. 115-16. 'As the fashion at present stands, that part of human creation which earns its bread by manual labour as a rule like those photographs in which they are represented with not too heavy facial shadows, and condemn the "darker" without appeal. The higher clases of society do just the contrary: to them the "Rembrandt", the shadow style of lighting, is the *ne plus ultra* of photographic practice.'

67 Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

68 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (ch. 1, note 2), p. 10.

69 Which may have left its literary deposition in Salman Rushdie's description of Dr Aadam Aziz's examination of Naseem Ghani in *Midnight's Children*.

70 Joseph Fayrer, *Recollections of My Life* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1900), pp. 105-6: *c.* 1857.

71 ACP Warner Album 2001.18.0001.

72 Waterhouse, p. 51.

73 Sujith Kumar Parayil, *Photography in 20th Century Kerala*, Ph.D. thesis submitted to Manipal University 2007.

74 Karlekar, *Re-Visioning the Past*.

75 Rochana Majumdar, unpublished ms. p. 191.

76 Personal communication.

77 Lisa Bakewell, 'Image Acts', *American Anthropologist* 100(1), March 1998, pp. 22-32.

78 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 6.

79 On 'coming out better' in central Indian photographic studios see Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica*, chapter 3.

80 On the 'failure' of civil society in India see Sunil Khilnani, 'The Development of Civil Society', in Kaviraj and Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society*, pp. 27ff and Chatterjee in the same volume, p. 172. See also Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), for an elaboration of the division between 'civic nationalism' and 'the politics of the governed'.

Index

THE COMING OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN INDIA

THE COMING OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN INDIA