

THE VISUAL PRODUCTION  
OF NATION AND PEOPLE

**LOOKING FOR  
AMERICA**

Edited by ARDIS CAMERON

 **Blackwell**  
Publishing



# Looking for America

To *Nancy Webb MacKay*  
For never looking back . . .

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OF NATION AND PEOPLE

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AMERICA**

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Publishing

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**12.4:** This February 1925 photograph is captioned “His first mirror: Porter’s boy seeing himself as others see him,” suggesting that self-awareness comes with Western contact and technology. Photography by Felix Shay. © by National Geographic Society. Reprinted courtesy of National Geographic Society.

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**Appendix A:** Advertisement for Matson Line cruises, *Vogue*, November 1, 1941, inside cover. Edward Steichen, photographer; Lloyd B. Meyers, art director.

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*Laughing on the bus, playing games with the faces  
She said the man in the gabardine suit was a spy.  
I said "Be careful his bowtie is really a camera." ...*

*Counting the cars on the New Jersey turnpike  
They've all come to look for America  
Simon and Garfunkel*

# Introduction

ARDIS CAMERON

*The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible*

*Oscar Wilde*

In the fall of 1967, the filmmaker Hugh O'Connor stopped by the side of a Kentucky road to shoot some footage for his film about poverty in America. Like many journalists and photographers, he and his crew had turned their lenses on Letcher County, Kentucky, where images of barefooted children, gritty miners, toothless women, and rickety old shacks were both in abundance and in demand as supporting evidence for America's "war on poverty." But in the time between O'Connor's request to film a tenant miner with his family and his crew's ability to do so, word had spread around the county of O'Connor's presence. Soon, Hobart Ison, whose family had owned land in eastern Kentucky for generations and who now owned the property O'Connor was filming, drove up, looked at the cameramen, and fired a round of gunshot. Two bullets lodged in the camera. A third made a gaping hole in O'Connor's chest killing him almost instantly.

In many ways the confrontation between O'Connor and Ison embodies the complex relationship between image-makers and their subjects: it forces those who represent "others" to acknowledge in new ways those who take on the representative burden of authenticity and become the visual emblems of social and cultural difference. But the incident also reminds us that looking is always a mediated act capable of arousing intense emotions and desires as it simultaneously calls forth narratives of difference – of us and others, of home and away, of the citizen and the alien, of the normal and the deviant – and communities of belonging.

Building upon the work of theorists such as M. M. Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, and Michel Foucault, scholars in a number of fields have shown the degree to which image-making and the kinds of looking relations they

exercise, entered into the formation of new types of power – those located not at the level of economics or government but at the more general level of social perception and conceptualization. Like the notorious *flâneur*, whose power in the nineteenth century derived less from his links to institutional power than from his unfettered ability as a bourgeois male “at home in the city” to observe without being noticed himself, modern relations of looking appear on the surface of things as both unremarkable and unremarked. Indeed, it is the very ordinariness of looking that gives to everyday habits of seeing both their constitutive power and their historical invisibility.

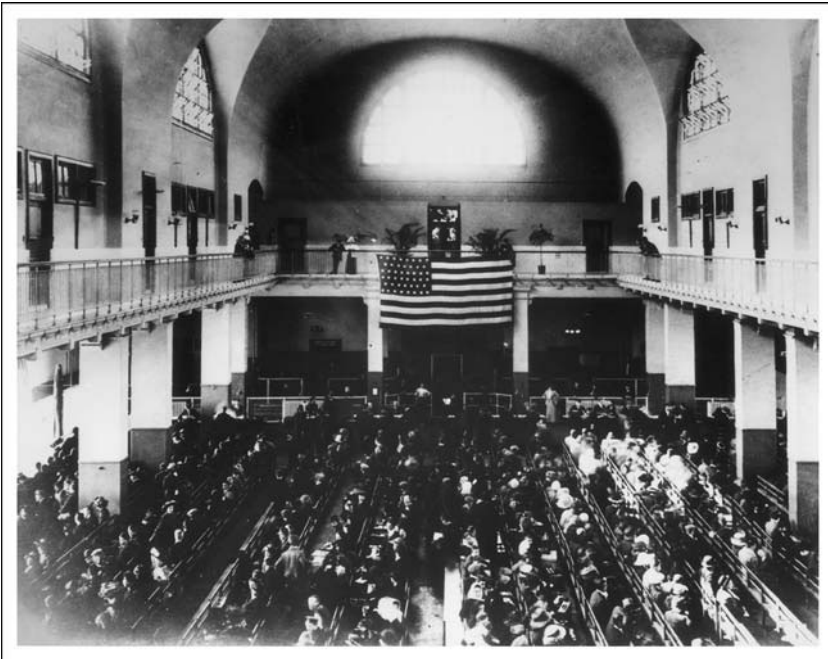
Not surprisingly, looking relations came to the center of historical analysis as a way to understand covert forms of resistance among populations where open insubordination and overt acts of rebellion were futile, if not altogether suicidal. Historians of American slavery, for example, have long noted the importance of eye contact and the visual management of imaginary spaces in maintaining the symbolic order of plantation life, while a nod, a wink, an upturned finger, a stare, or a glare was always an effective, if risky, “weapon of the weak.”<sup>1</sup> So too have looking relations been important, if under-studied, strategies of female resistance, evasion, and defense. “In order to survive,” noted the feminist poet Audre Lorde, “those of us for whom oppression is as American as apple pie have always had to be watchers.” By closely watching the oppressor, African American women learned the “look” of social deception in order to nurture and protect “a self-defined standpoint from the prying eyes of dominant groups.”<sup>2</sup>

More recently however, historians have turned to the broad terrain of looking as a way to explore the kinds of visual skirmishes unloosed by modern technologies and the visual practices and performances they structure and shape. This has been especially true among feminist scholars and historians of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and “race,” where representation, image-making, appearance, spectatorship, and bodily display have provided critical insights into the codification, maintenance, and disassembling of identities. In his prize-winning book on American immigration and ethnicity, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, historian Matthew Frye Jacobson effectively argues that “race is not just a conception; it is also a perception. The problem is not merely how races are comprehended, but how they are seen.” And, one might add, how people are *seen* goes a long way in determining who “they” are and how they take on meaning as citizens and as Americans.

This book introduces readers to the historical operations of looking as image-making and image-reading became, in Martha Banta’s words, “a major cultural activity” in the modern era.<sup>3</sup> By “looking,” we mean to define visual culture broadly, including both practices of representation, such as photography, documentary filmmaking, self-fashioning, spectacle, and display, as well as the kinds of relationships and imaginary topographies

such practices composed. As the title suggests, the collection is especially concerned with the ways in which visual culture became, in the last century, a primary means through which differences were imagined and notions of “Americanness” produced, resisted, defamiliarized, and reframed. The essays collected here show that in many ways the visual economy of American culture has been as powerful a determinant of social place and position as modes of production. Neither benign nor neutral, looking is always an exercise in power.

Consider, for example, the image in Figure 1. If we proceed from the premise articulated by Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins that “all photographs tell stories of looking,” how do we read this image for what it can tell us about the signifying practices of the modern eye and the kinds of narratives that image-making and image-reading authorize? The photograph is entitled “Great Hall Number Three,” and it shows Ellis Island sometime in the first decade of the twentieth century. It shows the vast waiting room where, under a large American flag, new arrivals, mostly from southern and eastern Europe, wait to be processed by US immigration officials who sit at their desks immediately under the flag and at the end of each row. Note too the inspectors standing mid-picture watching the crowds



**Figure 1.** “Great Hall Number Three,” Ellis Island. Reprinted courtesy of the Statue of Liberty National Monument

before them: they gaze out above the seated rows, their bodies poised to look this way and that as the clerks in front of them conduct their interviews. The slight blurring in the bottom half of the picture conveys something of the famously described “teeming masses” as shawls and hats anxiously shift about. They are waiting to be examined – to pass the physical inspections that are the worry of every alien who ever passed through Ellis Island. To fail means to be deported, to be sent back perhaps alone without their families to places where many no longer have homes. But as they wait, the examination has already begun.

The inspectors look out over the seated crowds with eyes alert. Many of them have been trained in “visual detection” at the University of Virginia, or perhaps at the Vineland School for the Feeble-Minded in southern New Jersey. Earlier in the day, as the immigrants passed through the many receiving lines, or now, as they simply wait, officials adept in the “art of snapshot diagnosis” scrutinize their bodies for any signs of physical, mental, or moral “defection.”<sup>4</sup> Sheer numbers no doubt helped elevate this ability to sleuth out the “defective” for, when this picture was taken, inspectors had to examine between 2,000 and 5,000 arrivals each day. But as the articles in this collection make clear, the visual markers of bodily difference have always taken on shape and meaning within historically specific moments of social formation and the discursive topographies of belonging they enact.

This collection begins, then, with two essays that help situate the modern body by exploring everyday habits of seeing as they congealed and operated in the wake of the Civil War as new visual technologies reflected and helped shape emerging class and national identities. Both Ardis Cameron and Andrea Volpe demonstrate the constitutive role of visual culture in stabilizing, even inventing, “racial,” class, and national identities and making them visible within a hierarchy of typologies. Cameron provides a general introduction to this process as it took shape in nineteenth-century discourses of physiognomy as visions of bodily difference insinuated themselves into racialized and class-bound habits of seeing. Volpe shows how the mass production and consumption of commercial portrait photographs, known as *cartes de visite*, was especially instrumental in the processes of class and nation formation. Her essay details how the form and pose of the portrait sitter helped produce a standardized body around which middle-class consciousness was visually “made real” as the rituals and performance of national identity intensified in the decades that followed the Civil War.

In many ways, then, the inspectors shown here at Ellis Island were only marginally better trained than ordinary Americans in the visual codes they used to sort out, categorize, and interpret physical differences. The “defectives” they watched out for had long been associated with particular bodily features that by 1900 had sedimented into a canon of national types whose

outward appearance was read as a sign of inward character traits that varied only by gender and marital status. Single women from southern and eastern Europe, for example, were especially suspect as possible carriers of venereal disease or as prostitutes fleeing host countries. Looking out for these women involved watching for “shifting eyes” or, in the case of women between the ages of 25 and 45, scrutinizing the facial hair of those not married. “A fine hairy growth on the face,” wrote one expert, “is at least evidence that they do not indulge in sexual congress with any degree of regularity or frequency.” A smooth face, on the other hand, suggested “physiological stimulus” thus marking the unmarried woman as a possible prostitute. Similarly, the facial inspection of men could lead investigators to discover “unusual sexual proclivities” among those whose erotic abdominal tattooing might otherwise go undetected.<sup>5</sup> To understand this photograph, then, we need to recognize its participation in a distinct visual genealogy that gave shape and meaning to the art of “visual detection” and the kinds of looking it engendered.

Look at the photograph again. While the bottom half depicts discrete moments of visual indexing and detection, the picture viewed as a whole is more representative of looking relations as a general mode of social legibility and interpretation. If we step back and view the full image, we find ourselves gazing not only at multiple scenes of surveillance and observation, but at the new kinds of looking relations forged in tandem with global capitalist expansion and the disparate kinds of “travel” it produced. We see in this picture not only the spectacle of Ellis Island but also the phantasmagoria of mass human migration, displacement, homelessness, and exile. But note too the balcony that supports the American flag. Observe the couples that seem to lounge about along the railing. Just to the left of the flag a man casually crosses his legs and leans over while his escort in stylish hat and cloak stiffly gazes below. The men to the right bend their upper bodies to get a closer look. The spacious perch of these men and women, well above the crowded rows of immigrants below, signals their privileged position as “watchers” and mirrors the national preoccupation with working-class and immigrant life that was captured, as Paula Rabinowitz notes, in 1930s films and songs as a form of class “slumming.” In the spacious eyrie above the Great Hall, middle-class men and women watch in fascination, but cross-class looking was always, as Rabinowitz shows, a complicated mixture of pleasure, thrill-seeking, fear, social concern, and, at times, sheer voyeurism. The artist John Sloan “peeped,” at his neighbors on Manhattan’s 23rd Street because, as he put it, “I am in the habit of watching every bit of human life I can see about my window.” “I peep,” he explained, “through real interest, not being observed myself.”<sup>6</sup> Others, like Progressive reformers, new dealers, radicals, intellectuals, and photojournalists such as Margaret Bourke-White, whose poverty pictures for *Life* magazine made her one of the highest-paid women in 1930s

America, cloaked their “peeping” in the garb of social science: participant observation and social documentation. In her self-reflexive article, Rabinowitz explores various forms of Depression-era boundary-crossing as revealed in moments of visual encounter between those who were privileged observers with the power to regulate and represent others and their subjects, usually the poor. When a middle-class woman looks across her class privilege at another woman what, asks Rabinowitz, does she see?

The genteel tourists shown above most likely see the spectacle of “Otherness” as they scan the faces of those whom they too have learned to recognize through mass-circulation magazines, where images of the “new” immigrant circulate within, and in relation to, an archive of “primitive” types collected both from around the world and along the hidden byways and remote “pockets” of America. This Sunday, they have come to see for themselves. Yet as they look down at the exotic shawls and felt hats, the long beards and strange clothes, the stooped postures and weary faces, they enter what Shawn Michelle Smith describes as a “visual terrain” already mapped in terms of both “race” and “nation.” As they looked they encountered the historical legacy of physiognomical surveillance that gave to the bodies of private immigrants a knowing “public” recognition and, to those who watched from above, the cultural tools to ascribe meaning and value to what they saw below. They had, after all, seen these faces before and, as the essays in this collection show, the mass reproduction and representation of “physical types” and bodily differences conjoined specific historical formations of class, ethnic, race, gender, and national identities. Like Sloan and other fascinated cross-class observers, the Ellis Island tourists peeped through real interest, but the world they saw reflected and reproduced essentialized types that simultaneously ascribed social value and meaning to physical differences and gave to them as well the power of social authorship. “This is not to say,” writes Jacobson, “that people all ‘really’ look alike; rather, it is to argue that those physical differences which register in the consciousness as ‘difference’ are keyed to particular social and historical circumstances.” In the history of looking, bodies have been ubiquitous storytellers whose fictions have helped fix the face of America and the changing look of those conceived as alien to it.

For many reformers and journalists, the camera provided a powerful means to gather evidence and so “document” the nation’s social ills. And, as Maren Stange notes, it offered as well a way to articulate class differences and buttress middle-class claims to social and moral guardianship. “Throughout the century,” writes Stange, “the documentary mode testified both to the existence of painful social facts and to reformers’ special expertise in ameliorating them, thus reassuring a liberal middle class that social oversight was both its duty and its right.”<sup>7</sup> But images like these circulated amidst a wide terrain of representation, especially after 1890 as the cheaper half-tone process

made illustrations available to a national market and to readers of every class. Part II therefore picks up on Laura Wexler's important observation that this "burst of photographic invention corresponds quite closely with the era of national self-creation." What is often missing in discussions of Progressive documentary is how these images worked in tandem with other forms of turn-of-the-century photography and in relation to assimilationist rituals and performances, such as "saluting the flag," re-enacting the Pilgrim landing, and memorizing the words of "illustrious Americans," whose mass-produced faces were increasingly offered up as the embodiment of Americanness. Both Shawn Michelle Smith and Laura Wexler use the expansion of print capitalism and illustrated newspapers and magazines as a way to explore these connections, especially as they affected white women and the "American Negro," a term that, as Smith points out, "would have registered as a kind of oxymoron" for many turn-of-the-century whites who "attempted to define 'American' as an exclusively Anglo-Saxon purview." Both Wexler and Smith utilize Benedict Anderson's influential study *Imagined Communities* as a point of entry into the gendered and racially codified topographies of American identity as they took shape in the highly charged atmosphere of imperial expansion and middle-class concerns about racial and class reproduction. Both bring into discussions of nationalism not only the central role of photography but also the critical role of domestic visions and racial self-fashioning as central elements in the formation and construction of Americanness.

Like Volpe's, these articles bring into play as well everyday forms of photography, including the family photograph album and the ubiquitous "snapshot." If we look once more at the Great Hall, for example, we can appreciate the importance of the hand-held camera as it became more accessible and thus more involved in the visual operation of everyday life. Consider the "eyes" which take us into the Great Hall and turn us into "peepers" too. While we don't know much about the photographer, Augustus F. Sherman, except that he was a customs official stationed at Ellis Island, we know from his photograph collection that he belonged to a new class of amateur picture-takers collectively known as "Kodakers" and, more derisively, as "camera fiends." Labels like this attest not only to the popularity of the hand-held camera and new possibilities it afforded the amateur, but also to the public suspicion and anxiety that accompanied it. With their ability to snap an unguarded face and "capture reality" with the click of the shutter, owners of these "deadly little boxes" presented an array of troubling questions, especially as the newspaper and magazine industries expanded the uses of photographic images. What, if any, were the moral and ethical responsibilities of the ubiquitous snapshotter? Who owned an image? Could images of private persons "captured" without their permission or knowledge be made

public? Did the snapping of a photo constitute an invasion of privacy? Should the so-called “detective” camera, popular among amateurs and professionals alike, be regulated or outlawed altogether? So disturbing was the popularity of the camera that the Cleveland administration banned amateur Kodakers from the grounds of the White House in 1887.<sup>8</sup>

For Sherman, camerawork seems to have been a source of recreation and pleasure. Unlike the progressive sleuths who used photographs to document social ills and the painful realities of industrial life, Sherman did not plan to display his collection, nor did he elect to use it as evidence to advocate reform. But, by clicking his shutter to record the events before him, he put himself firmly within the Progressive tradition, using his camera to freeze the present and the photograph to establish what it could never become: an unmediated record of the world around him. Unlike Sherman, however, many other amateurs turned to the camera not only as a way to document historic events, but as a way to shape them. Labor organizers and strikers saw the camera as a way to present to the public their side of industrial struggles. During the great uprisings at Lawrence, Massachusetts, Paterson, New Jersey, and the Lower East Side of New York City, the Industrial Workers of the World gave cameras to strikers, who used them to snap images of scabs who crossed the picket line. Union leaders also used them to bolster support for a strike and gain sympathy from allies. But, as Jacquelyn Dowd Hall demonstrates, union leaders did more than simply “appropriate established forms”; they used their cameras “to show strikers to themselves.” The camera becomes autobiography. Focusing on the 1914 strike at the Fulton Mills in Atlanta, Georgia, Hall shows how one leader in particular, O. Delight Smith, scurried about town taking hundreds of photos. She then captioned them and displayed them in the city’s store windows. Seeing themselves “in action and in captivity” workers saw themselves in solidarity and in relation to a radically reconfigured social landscape. They saw as well a dramatically reimagined America. In newspapers and magazines, as well as in local shops, strikers presented themselves carrying and at times wearing large American flags, turning their strikes into ritualized performances that situated national character and Americanness firmly within the turbulent industrial struggles that characterized the era.

Like Sherman’s photo, Hall’s article alerts us to the complexity of looking relations and the multiplicity of gazes as marginalized groups turned clothes, cosmetics, gestures, tattoos, hair, and American flags into a distinctive personal and collective sense of self that was potentially challenging to normative habits of seeing and seemingly fixed visions of national identity. Note, for example, in the Great Hall, the many wide-brimmed hats worn by the female arrivals. Those who wear the traditional shawls are actually a minority, and, while the hats are not as grand as the one displayed by the lady observer

above, they demonstrate a cultural style that was far more complex than genteel observers recognized. As Kathy Peiss has shown, “putting on style” was for working-class women a “particularly potent way to display and play with notions of respectability, allure, independence, and status.”<sup>9</sup> It was also a way to distance oneself from the old world and embrace the new. Paying attention to how people present themselves points to the kinds of sartorial politics and visual skirmishes embedded in acts of “dressing up” as well as going “undercover” – of public looks, as well as “private eyes.” Essays by Hall and Stuart Cosgrove make the purposeful use of clothing and style a locus for examining the political agency of bodily display and the emblems of visibility – a spectacular way in which oppressed groups and self-defined subcultures could negotiate alternative identities, refused subservience, or “pass” in complex and, at times, contradictory ways. This was made clear not only in Atlanta, but in the complex history of the zoot-suit riots that erupted across the country in the 1940s. Worn by young black and Mexican Americans, the zoot-suit was unmistakable in its flamboyant style, but for those who wore them they were more than merely gaudy outerwear. “The zoot-suit,” Cosgrove writes, “was more than the drape-shape of the 1940’s fashion, more than a colorful stage-prop hanging from the shoulders of Cab Calloway, it was, in the most direct and obvious ways, an emblem of ethnicity and a way of negotiating an identity. The zoot-suit was a refusal.”

It is no coincidence that the zoot-suit riots broke out during a period of war, when tensions over what and who constituted an American citizen were at their greatest. For minorities and subcultures whose status as Americans was probationary at best, appearance provided an immediate “in-your-face” way to assert a community of difference and to resist narratives of subservience. The end of the war, however, did not end the clash over national identity. Always a contested site, Americanness grew even more narrowly defined in the postwar years as images of nationhood serviced competing emotional and political claims. Nowhere is this more revealing, perhaps, than in the warring images over what constituted the “all-American family” during the Cold War. Wendy Kozol, Larry Peterson, and Mary Beth Haralovich show that “ordinary American families” were not born; they were created in the pages of popular magazines like *Life*, and in the new technologies of television and the sit-coms it promoted. Unlike the images taken in the 1930s by *Life* magazine photographer Margaret Bourke-White, those of Nina Leen put white, middle-class domesticity at the heart of *Life*’s portrait of the postwar nation. As Kozol argues, “In the hegemonic struggle to define and assert a national identity... *Life* vigorously promoted a vision of the American nation through pictures of nuclear families surrounded by consumer products in suburban homes.” Television programming reinforced these images with popular shows like *Father Knows Best* and *Leave*

*it to Beaver*, two sit-coms that stressed the centrality of women's place in the home at the very moment that more women than ever were entering the paid labor force. As Haralovich notes, "*Father Knows Best* was applauded for realigning family gender roles" at a time when "an ideal white and middle class home life was a primary means of reconstituting and resocializing the American family after World War II."

Less widely known, however, was the visual response to these images on the part of the American labor movement which, as Larry Peterson shows, began to contest corporate domination of the photographically illustrated press by publishing its own picture format magazine *Steel Labor*, one of many vividly illustrated newspapers that served millions of American workers. Countering corporate images that sought to link workers' real families with the company's paternalistic "imagined community," *Steel Labor* depicted union members at the local hall, attending meetings, and with friends, purposefully including as well portraits of black workers along with whites. As an alternative to dominant images of the era, it challenged the monopoly of corporate-sponsored representations that associated white, middle-class suburbia with the face of postwar America.

Let me use Sherman's evocative photograph one last time as a way to call attention to one final concern these essays collectively raise: our own position as spectators in what Benjamin described as "the age of mechanical reproduction." Always a meaningful form of exchange, looking became, in the expanding market economy of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a profitable one as well. Images, these essays remind us, were viewed with historically and culturally tutored eyes, but as commodities, they circulated as well in a system of commodity exchange and aesthetic value. The poverty pictures taken in the 1930s and 1960s, the images of non-Western peoples published by *National Geographic*, the documentary films of the socially marginal are re-examined here for what they can tell us about the visual encounters between those who stand in front of and those who stand behind the camera, and between those who consume these images and those who market and value them as "art." What are the politics and poetics of cross-class looking? How can feminist academics and social historians committed to writing history "from the bottom up" theorize, as Paula Rabinowitz suggests, "a politics that acknowledges women's class and generational differences as 'an exchange between these moments of female humanity, between the woman who wants and the woman who knows?'" The essays by Rabinowitz, Cameron, and Lutz and Collins especially challenge us to think about the cultural operation of cross-class looking as a historic and political act.

Consider then, where, and how do "we" as readers of books like this locate ourselves as consumers and producers of visual culture and the kinds

of narratives our “peeping” helps produce? What are the competing views elicited by camera work? How is our gaze shaping the nation and the world into something it is not for those we imagine to be “Other”? What do we see when we look at images different from our own and how do these visual representations work to shape, as Lutz and Collins put it, “who Americans are and who others might be”? Exploring “Otherness” Catherine Lutz, Jane Collins, and Ardis Cameron make questions like these central as the former analyze photographs from *National Geographic* as an intersection of gazes, and as Cameron scrutinizes the politics and poetics of socially concerned filmmaking as represented in two recent documentary films, *Strangers With a Camera*, by Elizabeth Barret, and *Belfast, Maine*, by Frederick Wiseman.

If, as Benedict Anderson has argued, “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined,” then we need to pay attention to the critical role of visual culture in historically shaping notions of who and what constitutes this thing we call “Americanness.” The essays collected here provide a beginning to such a project, asking not just how images reflected a nation, but rather how, in specific moments and under certain circumstances, the American nation was conceptually forged; its identity envisioned in and through physically encoded discourses of difference and hierarchies of belonging. Like Sherman’s photograph, these essays provide a spectacular reminder that looking is always a constitutive practice. But they demonstrate, as well, that visual culture is also and always a reflection of power-infused, unequal situations. Whether as amateur Kodakers, documentary filmmakers, photojournalists, family snapshooters, reformers “botanizing the asphalt,” company spies, or scientific observers for *National Geographic*, image-makers and the looking relations they exercise have occupied a privileged place in shaping and reshaping narratives of citizenship and the inequalities they enacted. By looking at this history, perhaps we too can begin to see the look of a more just society and the face of a more equitable America.

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### Notes

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- 1 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 28–41.
- 2 Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (1984), 114.
- 3 Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women: Ideas and Ideals in Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. xxviii.
- 4 L. E. Cofer, quoted in Anne Emanuelle Birn, “Snapshot Diagnosis: The Medical Inspection of Immigrants at Ellis Island, 1900–1914” (BA thesis: Harvard University, 1986), 40.

- 5 Howard A. Knox, MD, "A Diagnostic Study of the Face," *New York Medical Journal* (June 14, 1913), 1227–8.
- 6 John Sloan, quoted in Patricia Hills, "John Sloan's Images of Working-Class Women: A Case Study of the Roles and Interrelationships of Politics, Personality, and Patrons in the Development of Sloan's Art, 1905–16," *Prospects*, 5 (1980), 157–96: 178. My thanks to Donna Cassidy for this citation.
- 7 Maren Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890–1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. xiii.
- 8 See especially Robert E. Mensel, "Kodakers Lying in Wait: Amateur Photography and the Right of Privacy in New York, 1885–1915," *American Quarterly*, 43 (Mar. 1991), 24–45.
- 9 Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 63.

# Introduction: Suggested Readings

As Nicholas Mirzoeff recently noted, visual culture “is not just a part of your everyday life, it is *your* everyday life.” Yet understanding the visual – how it works and how we might better interpret visual experience, both in the present and in the past – is only just emerging as an essential part of the historian’s craft. This book pays close attention to the historical operations of the visual as they affect national identities and a collective sense of belonging. Readers, however, will find the following useful sources for a general exploration of visual culture.

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (2001).

Judith Fryer Davidov, *Women’s Camera Work: Self/Body/Other in American Visual Culture* (1998).

Nicholas Mirzoeff (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader* (1998).

Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (eds.), *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations* (1994).

Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (1991).

Richard Bolton, *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (1989).

John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (1988).

John Collier, Jr. and Malcolm Collier, *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* (1986).

