Introduction

Visualising Human Rights

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This book is about the diverse ways that visual images have been used to define, contest or argue on behalf of human rights. As we plough swiftly into the twenty-first century, images constitute an ever-more important means of witnessing, sharing ideas, proving arguments and mobilising audiences. Historically, images have created relationships between far-distant peoples, and prompted emotions such as compassion and empathy, providing the basis for arguments about who counts as human and whom one should feel *for* or *with*. Conversely, visual culture can define boundaries between people, supporting perceived hierarchies of race, gender and culture, and justifying arguments for conquest and oppression.

Over the last decade there has also been an explosion of scholarly interest in the history and culture of human rights, a global framework for justice that has become ubiquitous in our time. Formalised in December 1948 with the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (the Declaration), many historians trace the origins of

ideas of rights back to the eighteenth century and earlier. A considerable body of scholarship has now traced the 'evolution' of human rights and their basis in definitions of humanity, as well as their imbrication with humanitarianism – a term that passed into everyday use only during the nineteenth century, referring to a philosophy of advocating or practising compassionate action.[1] In turn, the emotional dimensions of these orientations are now understood to shape their political deployment in important ways, especially feelings of identification with another's situation that we term 'empathy', 'compassion' or 'pity'. While human rights are often secured through an appeal to humanitarianism, these orientations may exist in tension – as exemplified by the slave owner who campaigns for the kinder treatment of slaves.[2] Contributions to this collection address a range of pressing contemporary issues and their historical context. The period following World War II first saw the global dissemination of the modern idea of human rights through visual culture. Through diverse contexts and debates, the essays in this book explore visual strategies deployed in the pursuit of human rights, but also reveal the entanglement of rights with colonialism, genocide and conquest.

A universal language of human rights

Since its inception, the legal framework of human rights has been explained through visual culture, and photography in particular. After World War II, images quickly became integral to demands for human rights and decolonisation around the world. When the Declaration was proclaimed, the United Nations cultural arm, UNESCO, sought to harness the 'universal language' of photography to communicate the new system of principles. This new legal and ethical framework was communicated through a range of visual narratives that sought to create a sense of universal humanity and a shared global culture through picturing 'unity in diversity'. As Article 1 of UNESCO's constitution stated, it would collaborate in the 'work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such inter-

national agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image'.[3] However, Glenda Sluga has traced continuities between the interwar liberal idealism of the League of Nations' mandate system and its notions of imperial 'trusteeship', and postwar international efforts. The League's aim to create world citizenship through education, symbolised by its slogan 'One World in the things of the mind and spirit', also underpinned the UN and UNESCO's faith in the 'universal power of knowledge'.[4]

A major means of furthering UNESCO's goals to overcome barriers of nation, language and illiteracy was photography, the basis of new forms of mass communication that emerged during the 1940s, in the form of photo-books, exhibitions, magazines and other ephemera.[5] Postwar conceptions of photography as a universal language produced a standardised visual language that underpinned a shift from nationalist to internationalist conceptions of identity.[6] The most famous of the visual projects mounted at this time was the 1955 photographic exhibition 'The Family of Man', curated by Edward Steichen at New York's Museum of Modern Art. It contained 503 photos from sixty-eight countries and toured the world, showing the seemingly eternal dimensions of human life: birth, play, work, marriage and death.

Steichen explained that 'The Family of Man' aimed to illustrate the 'essential oneness of mankind throughout the world', mirroring mankind back to itself.[7] Critiques of 'The Family of Man' focused on its universalising aspirations, effacing differences of race and class, as well as its complicity with American Cold War liberalism (as a number of critics have pointed out).[8] Perhaps most famous of these attacks was Roland Barthes' anti-humanist critique of its simultaneously exoticising and incorporative effects – emphasising difference only to assert a transcendent sense of shared humanity, with the effect of naturalising the status quo. Barthes' famous attack on the exhibition set out the primary anti-humanist objection to such attempts to visualise universalism on the grounds of effacing difference and history, arguing that

> This myth of the human 'condition' rests on a very old mystification, which always consists in placing Nature at the bottom of History. Any classic humanism postulates that in scratching the history of men a

little, the relativity of their institutions or the superficial diversity of their skins (but why not ask the parents of Emmet Till, the young negro assassinated by the Whites what they think of The Great Family of Man?), one very quickly reaches the solid rock of a universal human nature. Progressive humanism, on the contrary, must always remember to reverse the terms of this very old imposture, constantly to scour nature, its 'laws' and its 'limits' in order to discover History there, and at last to establish Nature itself as historical.

Despite the positive intent of Steichen's assertion that '[t]he family unit is the root of the family of man, and we are all alike', as Kaplan points out, 'the utopian inclusiveness of the ambiguous myth of human community demands a series of exclusions that mask inequalities and cultural hierarchies'.[9]

But before Steichen, UNESCO had already pioneered this humanist photographic narrative, mounting an exhibition at the Palais Galleria in Paris in 1949 designed 'to convey a compelling visual history of human rights' and disseminate the abstract contents of the Declaration through a display of photographs, images, documents and objects.[10] Fourteen themes covered a historical struggle for a set of rights, structured by a teleological movement from a preamble in prehistory to the postwar period, as widely different cultures were enfolded into a narrative of progress. These illustrated the introductory text that stated that 'the illustrations mark the stages along the road leading from the cave-man…to the free citizen of a modern democracy'.[11] Key documents of rights were featured – although among the notable exclusions was the 1918 Russian Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People. As Tom Allbeson points out, '[t]he Soviet Union is, in a sense, the exhibition's unconscious; while not explicitly referenced, the threat of nuclear war animated much of postwar visual culture'.[12] This question of 'community' and the exclusions required to constitute the universal continues to engage theorists, as I explore further.

Figure 1. Families. UNESCO, *Human Rights: Exhibition Album* (1950).

Righting wrongs

While much of the 1949 exhibition represents harmonious, familial imagery evoking the 'family of man' in its depiction of a shared way of life (Figure 1), a counter-narrative of atrocity and what it termed 'struggle' was introduced through scenes of war, such as soldiers washed ashore on a beach, a heap of corpses at Buchenwald, and book-burning, in a discourse centred upon the violation of human rights (Figure 2). The 1949 UN exhibition can be seen to mark the first deliberate and systematic use of

atrocity imagery to picture the new concept of human rights through their violation, and to counterpose this against the humanist conception of a shared human history, culture and identity.

The strategy of revealing 'struggle' has been integral to the humanitarian narrative since at least the eighteenth century, but was given new power by emerging photojournalist technologies now available to reveal the barbarism of warfare. Holocaust scholars point to the impact of photography as witness to the liberation of the camps at the end of the war and the enhanced power it gave the medium as evidence for distant suffering.[13] In this tradition, Gayatri Spivak suggests that 'The word rights…acquires verbal meaning by its contiguity with the word wrongs', noting 'the verb to right cannot be used intransitively on this

Figure 2. War dead. UNESCO, *Human Rights: Exhibition Album* (1950).

level of abstraction. It can only be used with the unusual noun wrong: "to right a wrong", or "to right wrongs"'.[14] Following this approach, Sharon Sliwinski's important study of the visual images of human rights argues that the circulation of images of shocking distant events, including the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and the atrocities of King Leopold of Belgium's regime in the Congo, formed a virtual community between spectators that generated a sense of shared humanity.[15]

In this volume, Sliwinski furthers her exploration of rights and photography, starting with American photographer Eve Arnold's question, 'What do you hang on the walls of your mind?' Contrasting the human dignity that radiates from Arnold's 'School of Non-violence' series with images that reveal the violation of African Americans' rights, she suggests that 'people often claim their right to an image by staging a quarrel with the pictorial realm' – that is, we demand the right to a dignified image and refuse to be represented in ways that degrade or diminish us.

Some scholars go so far as to argue that rights are *only* visible in their violation, and therefore atrocity images that reveal such violation are fundamental to our understanding of human rights.[16] In this view, 'human rights' can only be imagined or depicted through the suffering of those who have been stripped of their humanity. As Susie Linfield argues, for example,

> The philosophies that undergird ideas about human rights are… built around absence. And photographs, I would argue, are the perfect medium to mirror the lacunae at the heart of human rights ideals. It is awfully hard to photograph a human right…in fact, rights don't look like anything at all.[17]

This position has led many scholars to insist upon the importance of revealing the violation of rights in order to effect change, and the power of the image as witness.

Abu Ghraib: 'Unstoppable'

This power sometimes seems irresistible. In April 2004, against the background of then US President George Bush's 'War on Terror' and the invasion of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist Iraq, the American television and radio network CBS News published a series of photographs revealing the abuse of prisoners held in the Iraqi prison Abu Ghraib. These human rights violations, including torture, rape, sodomy and murder, were committed by personnel of the United States Army and the Central Intelligence Agency during the war in Iraq. Prior to publication of these photographs, a range of humanitarian organisations and inquiries had reported such abuse to little effect – Amnesty International, for example, had in July 2003 issued a press release condemning widespread human rights abuses by US and coalition forces in the jail. The military tightly controlled the public dissemination of information and imagery through 'embedded reporting', which specified the kind of news that could be told and suppressed images that might galvanise political opposition to the war.

The photographs had a tremendous impact on a scandalised global public: but what exactly were their consequences? The Abu Ghraib photographs provided evidence of war crimes and served as courtroom evidence; they also became icons of criminal US military tactics used in the recruitment videos of terrorist groups as well as for fundraising for human rights organisations. However, while seventeen soldiers were removed from duty and subsequently discharged, with two soldiers receiving jail terms, many soldiers of higher rank were not prosecuted. No one was convicted for the murder of detainees such as Manadel al-Jamadi, who had been tortured to death.[18] It was later found that international humanitarian laws, including the Geneva Convention, had been ignored under the mandate of the highest levels of US government, and 'enhanced interrogation techniques' (first developed at Guantánamo detention centre) had been approved prior to the invasion. Then US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld testified that he took full responsibility for the abuse and apologised to the Iraqi victims (Rumsfeld acknowledged abuse but denied torture).

Visual theorists have taken very different positions regarding these images and their effects. Many have noted the use of the camera in perpe-

trating these acts of torture, literally constituting them as forms of spectacular violence and providing 'trophies' of sadism, in a historical genealogy that includes the photography of lynching in the United States.[19] As critic Susan Sontag pointed out, 'the horror of what is shown in the photographs cannot be separated from the horror that the photographs were taken – with the perpetrators posing, gloating, over their helpless captives'.[20] Despite the sadistic pleasure evident in the Abu Ghraib trophy photos, Judith Butler argues that it is not the camera that is to blame but the perpetrators and the military system that sanctioned their behaviour. However, even Sontag concluded that their impact was 'not because of the photographs but because of what the photographs reveal to be happening, happening with the complicity of a chain of command'. Her simple conclusion: 'Unstoppable'.[21]

The politics of pity

Despite her endorsement of the power of photography as witness to abuse, Sontag is more generally known for her view of photography that emphasises its control and power over the photographed, but limits its explanatory capacity.[22] Sontag belongs to a 'hostile critical tradition' (as described by Susie Linfield) within photo theory and employs a scholarly approach that emphasises the power inequalities entailed in the relationship between viewer and image.[23] This prominent theoretical strand has focused upon the ethical relationship constituted between viewer and viewed, emphasising the medium's tendency to diminish and humiliate the suffering person, who is rendered as passive victim.[24] Sontag's reservations are grounded in part by the position that images are limited in their explanatory power: they may make us feel, but do not necessarily make us think.[25] By contrast, Judith Butler argues that affect is an integral effect of images, but this emotional response does not foreclose meaning: emotion and understanding are simultaneous and entwined. Butler's study of the 'frames of war' emphasises the social structures that govern the production and circulation of images and their reception, exploring the conventions or 'norms' that determine 'which human lives count as human and as living, and which do not…whose life, if extinguished, would be publicly grievable?'[26]

Sontag and Butler's opposed stances mark out a much older and broader critical opposition, as the tradition of revealing and responding to suffering has always called forth a critique of the disempowering effects of such images and feelings. Without obscuring the diverse cultural, political and temporal contexts of these distinct phenomena, it is useful to note that a shared critical stance animates an interpretive tension within analyses of the role of photography, the empathetic emotions it evokes and the operations of humanitarianism itself. This tension centres upon the fundamental inequality that is often argued to be inherent within the relations between viewer and viewed across these cultural formations. This relationship is what Hannah Arendt termed a sentimental 'politics of pity' – being 'sorry without being touched in the flesh', a stance that easily sacrificed real suffering to abstract principle.[27]

Yet, many observers acknowledge that emotional responses are fundamental to the practice of both human rights and humanitarianism, expressing a concern for the suffering of other people. These have been defined variously over the last three centuries as pity, sympathy, fellow-feeling or compassion, and since the twentieth century have increasingly often been glossed as empathy.[28] However, empathy is limited by the viewer's own experience and so remains unable to truly enter into another person's subjectivity; empathy can thus only be felt as an imaginative identification. Lauren Berlant has pointed out that emotions such as compassion merely imply a social relationship with an emphasis on how the viewer feels and responds, yet in practice, it is clear that such emotions do not always lead to reform or progress, but may in fact maintain inequalities and foster division.[29] Berlant's sceptical stance towards empathy represents a popular critical view that feelings such as pity and compassion mask complicity with oppressive practices.[30] Wariness about empathy stems from three chief problems: first, the feeling is not necessarily linked to action, so these emotions may simply reinforce the status quo. Second, representations of suffering may obscure the other's subjectivity, distancing and diminishing their humanity; some scholars have therefore argued that empathy occludes the other's experience.[31] Finally, and most unsettling, Berlant suggests that perhaps 'compassion and coldness are not opposite at all but are two sides of a bargain that the subjects of modernity have struck with structural inequality'.[32]

Such concerns are shared by visual theorists exploring the operation of empathy in visual representation, and who have also largely focused on identifying its *limits*. A substantial scholarly literature has traced the ambiguities of empathetic viewing across racial, gender and class lines. Such research raises questions regarding the ethics of spectatorship and the implication of humanitarianism within political inequality, demonstrating that empathy is produced within networks of power relations that enmesh both viewer and image, and that visual narratives of suffering may act to reduce and distance the sufferer or appropriate their pain.[33] Many argue that such identification effaces racial difference, denies agency to the sufferer or gives the viewer a feeling of benevolent largesse that never actually changes anything.

In the same way, some scholars have concluded that humanitarianism itself relies upon a notion of the human that is partial, limited and exclusive. Arendt noted a fundamental paradox of human rights: that 'a man who is nothing but a man has lost the very qualities which make it possible for other people to treat him as a fellow-man'.[34] In practice, rights are *not* given to all but belong only to citizens, as a series of exclusions are required to constitute the 'universal'.[35] Humanitarian narratives have often acted as a potent mechanism for the distribution of power, including the power to justify who is deserving of the 'gift' of rights.[36] Historians have focused upon the relationship between the 'extension of western concern for distant strangers' and the expansion of Western empires, arguing that humanitarianism is distinguished from earlier forms of compassion by its imbrication within imperial governance.[37] A range of studies have demonstrated the overlap of compassion and domination, as sympathy becomes a modality of power that legitimates missionising, colonisation and conquest.[38] Recent work on imperial humanitarianism has traced the intertwining of humanitarian ideals and the apparatus of colonial government, challenging simple oppositions between moral and political, philanthropic and colonial interests.[39]

This is the focus of Susie Protschky's contribution to this volume, critiquing the images produced by Dutch soldiers fighting in Indonesia to retain its colony, 'the Netherlands East Indies', against anti-colonial forces in what is now remembered as the National Revolution of 1945–1949. Through a large but until now overlooked genre of soldiers' photographic

albums, Protschky shows how Dutch combatants portrayed their war as a humanitarian intervention. Despite the systematic use of extreme violence against Indonesian civilians, Dutch counter-insurgents saw themselves as 'humanitarian *reconquistas*' restoring law and order. This seeming paradox reveals the imbrication of ideas of protection and humanitarianism with the military objectives of state conquest, as the language of peace-making and emancipation was deployed to further neo-colonialism and Dutch nationalism. Protschky's nuanced analysis reveals the specifically visual and rhetorical strategies of Dutch military propaganda and the ways that soldiers' purported concern for the suffering of others was deeply complicit with structural inequalities. Soldiers positioned themselves as witnesses to atrocity rather than perpetrators and, as Protschky argues, by foregrounding the suffering of Indonesian civilians, and the humanitarian interventions of Dutch armed forces, the photographic narratives in soldiers' amateur collections render invisible the part they themselves played in the conflict and its effects on civilians, while their annotations foreground what might be termed their enemy's 'atrocities of neglect'.

Between 1901 and 1942, a form of humanitarian governance that aimed to consolidate colonial rule known as the Dutch 'Ethical Policy' prevailed on the islands of Java and Madura. Photography in the form of private and public albums constituted evidence for the successful administration of this doctrine and served to justify colonial governance, for example, in documenting Dutch medical programs. Conversely, images showing suffering victims of war during the National Revolution implied that Indonesia was incapable of self-rule. Photographs of Indonesian suffering amid the carnage of warfare became an argument for benevolent Dutch rule. More recently, Protschky shows that testimony to the atrocities inflicted by Dutch soldiers during the conflict has emerged into public memory, but soldiers' photographic records of Indonesian suffering are deployed to argue for their own trauma and empathetic witnessing – concealing their own complicity in that suffering.

Australia and refugees

Since the 1990s the prevailing sense of a global 'migration crisis' has been invoked to justify draconian measures to protect national borders, even at the expense of obligations towards refugees. Like many Western countries since the end of the Cold War, Australia has worked to prevent refugees from seeking asylum there by making its borders impenetrable.[40] Just as in Europe, Australia has defined refugees as a threat to public security, social security and what anthropologist Didier Fassin characterises as 'racial security: it has to do with the protection of a European, Christian, and white civilization against Third World, Muslim, or black populations'. In the context of these perceived threats, Fassin suggests that the 'logic of humanitarianism' entails a focus on innocence and vulnerability that often simultaneously prompts the criminalisation of the guilty: humanitarianism's obverse is repression, expressed through practices of policing and hierarchies of humanity.[41] His description of European responses equally describes the Australian regime, founded on a grim contrast: '[b]ecause these regimes defend the polis for the happy few, they invent the camp for the undesirable. In the former, life is recognized as the political existence of the citizen, whereas in the latter, it is reduced to the bare life of the vagabond'.[42]

The visual rhetoric of humanitarianism continues to require 'innocent' sufferers to be represented in the passivity of their suffering, not in the action they take to confront and escape it, often rendering refugees as mute victims.[43] Mary Tomsic's contribution to this volume, 'Sharing a Personal Past: #iwasarefugee #iamarefugee on Instagram', explores a recent intervention that disrupts media and official stereotypes – that is, the growing use of social media for refugees taking control of the public circulation of their own images. Where visual self-representations of refugees and displaced people in the public sphere remain unusual, Tomsic explores the ways that these personal, self-selected Instagram images contest images that construct displaced people as different and 'other'. Through a seemingly ordinary family photograph of a young girl, one former refugee connected her younger displaced self with her contemporary settled American self, so addressing the politics and experiences of people who are forcibly displaced today. Tomsic argues that these Instagram posts' novel, visual self-representation

of displacement creates a sense of shared humanness that is fundamental to contemporary understandings of human rights, countering typical visual tropes that dominate the depictions of refugees in the public sphere. In particular, these personal stories challenge the media emphasis on picturing refugees as a 'sea of humanity'.[44]

Tomsic points out that this wave of story-telling was prompted by the media imagery of the body of three-year-old Syrian boy Alan Kurdi, washed up on a beach near Bodrum, Turkey, in September 2015. The Kurdi family was escaping civil war in Syria and were living in Turkey while attempting to travel to Canada. While careful not to make 'simple comparisons', Tomsic argues that the image of Kurdi and those more personal images shared on social media are nonetheless related as both 'are expressions about people seeking safety and moments when humanness is visually recognised'. Where such stereotypes move between 'voiceless, helpless victims' and 'uncontrollable threats to state security', these family photographs enact a modern ritual of public self-representation to convey a shared humanity.

Iranian-Kurdish refugee and journalist Behrouz Boochani questions the visual rhetoric exploited by the Australian government's regime of offshore detention for those seeking asylum. Since fleeing Iran in early 2013, Boochani has been imprisoned in the Manus Island detention centre where he continues to communicate the experience of detainees to a global public, at great risk to his personal safety. Boochani draws on Giorgio Agamben's notion of the 'state of exception' to explain the way the Australian government has framed asylum-seeking in the language of national security and war.[45] Boochani himself went to great lengths to shoot a film, *Chauka, Please Tell Us the Time*, sending the files one tiny piece at a time on slow mobile-phone internet to his co-director, Arash Kamali Sarvestani, in the Netherlands. The film's name is inspired by the Chauka bird, sacred to Manus Island culture and also the name of the high-security prison.[46] The film's slow-paced, haunting documentary aesthetic, according to reviewer Arnold Zable, transcended the 'severe limitations' of the circumstances under which it was shot to document 'a specific time and place, and helped expose the horror that is indefinite offshore detention, whilst remaining true to the paradoxical beauty of their art-form, and their deeply humanistic vision of life'.[47]

In contrast, Boochani is critical of the visual regime of spectacular violence that has been created and promoted by the Australian government in its pursuit of policies of 'deterrence'. Specifically, he criticises well-meaning 'journalists, human rights defenders and politicians against offshore detention who have unintentionally been in line with this policy and the government's purposes as they are playing a critical role in advertising the violence and exporting it to the globe. As they discover and come to understand the violence in these two wheel cages, Manus and Nauru, they advertise it on a regular basis. The government, in this tremendous advertising and political game, discerns what type of violence to examine, to produce and to export. Certainly, the most eye-catching headlines are the little children and women who have been raped, the burned body of baby Asha and the crushed body of Abyan, with their bodies the objects of debate in political dialogues in the Australian parliament.'[48]

Recognising this problem, many scholars reiterate the critique of humanitarian emotions such as empathy and call for 'new affective and political grammars in response to suffering, injustice and death'. Miriam Ticktin argues that we need another form of political care, one that reaches beyond care as welfare in nation-states and beyond the benevolence of humanitarianism.[49] In this volume, Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese take up the challenge of intervening in this repressive visual culture in their chapter 'Between Spectacle and Secret: The Politics of Non-visibility and the Performance of Incompletion'. They start with the paradox that asylum seekers and refugees have been at the centre of the performance of Australian politics for the last two decades, at the same time the government has increasingly restricted independent media scrutiny of offshore detention camps. Such measures are constituted in and through Australian law. They term Australia's offshore detention places in the Pacific 'black sites' – a term that highlights the forms of secrecy and exclusion that structure these zones. Perera and Pugliese ask how we are to intervene in the destructive relation between the spectacle and the secret of refugee policies in Australia. Their project, 'Researchers Against Pacific Black Sites', actively challenges analysis and activism animated by an 'uncritical humanitarianism', which they argue resorts to a conception of refugees simply as those who must be protected or saved, with

citizen-advocates playing the role of 'ventriloquists, protectors, defenders and, too often, white saviours'.

They explicitly oppose this society of the governed or the 'unable not to be governed' from recent theorisations based on the conditions of 'vulnerability' and 'precarity', such as Judith Butler's. Instead Perera and Pugliese draw on Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of the 'inoperative community' in developing their commitment to the 'solidarity of the governed' and 'community of the governed' as an entity that refuses facile fusions and the collapsing of differences. Following Nancy, they discard popular notions of community, seeking to avoid reduction either to a collection of separate individuals or to a communal substance.[50] Their alternative visual intervention, *Call to Account*, is a 'staging of community as constituted precisely by its "incompletion", or, to be more precise, by the incomplete "activity of sharing" that simultaneously marks the asymmetries of power and resources that inscribe the respective spaces of the performers'.[51] They hope this 'proactive form of public grief' will engender and sustain political alternatives that allow us 'to turn grief into an anticipatory force that can address continuing injustices' at the hands of the Australian state.[52] As Perera's and Pugliese's visual essay documents, their film *Call to Account* disrupts the politics of pity, instead denouncing those responsible. This is what Perera terms 'survival media', the 'embodied and expressive movements of survivors and refugees of the war, and the practices and narratives, artefacts and apparatuses that constitute their flights, forced and free'.[53]

In another strategy of public testimony and accusation, Vera Mackie explores the power of memorials to sustain memory and demand reparations in her chapter, 'An Avatar of Peace: Commemorating Human Rights Activism'. On 14 December 2010, a statue was erected in central Seoul, opposite the Embassy of Japan. The statue depicts a young woman with bobbed hair and Korean ethnic dress seated on a chair facing the embassy, with an empty chair beside her. The statue is on a low dais, which includes a plaque with inscriptions in Korean, Japanese and English. The statue commemorates the weekly demonstrations held in front of the Japanese Embassy in support of the survivors of the enforced military prostitution/sexual slavery system perpetrated by the Japanese military during the Asia–Pacific War in the 1930s and 1940s. It is both a memorial

to those who suffered from militarised sexual violence and an acknowledgment of the activists who have fought for redress. Mackie explores the affective politics of this artwork, installation and memorial in Seoul and elsewhere, and its rippling effects in the geopolitics of relationships between Japan, its East Asian neighbours and their diasporic communities. Activist art of this kind provides a potent response to official discourse focused on state structures and citizenship, and constitutes performative 'truth events' that 'face the past directly'.[54] Such artworks insist on the truth of historical violence, challenging the historical amnesia so deeply embedded in nationalist identities.

Indigenous rights

Perera has also argued that the Australian state, founded on 'the denied sovereignty of Aboriginal and [Torres Strait] Islander people', was from its inception constituted through 'interlocking inscriptions of alterity and sameness, by the hierarchies of colonial raciology and its performed differentiations and discriminations'.[55] Legal historians John Chesterman and Brian Galligan identify as 'Australia's non-citizenship tradition' a tradition founded on the 'deliberate eschewing of citizenship in favour of subjecthood' to Britain and the exclusion of 'non-white groups'.[56] Extending this insight, Perera notes, we might see that 'the constituent elements of Australian citizenship were the exclusion of non-white subjects and the racial link to British ancestry'.[57] In this way she signals the connection between the politics of Indigenous recognition and policies of border protection.

From invasion, official Australian policies of Indigenous assimilation drew upon the rhetoric of humanitarianism and 'uplift' in arguing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's transformation on missions and in schools. Such conversion became framed in terms of human rights after the World War II when a policy of assimilation was implemented in 1951 under the new Minister for Territories, Paul Hasluck. The aim of assimilation was to raise the status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that they could qualify for full citizenship, although it was an agenda contested then and now.[58] Many

Indigenous people today emphasise the costs of assimilation, including policies of child removal, which created what is now known as the Stolen Generations.[59]

In 'home/lands', her contribution to this volume, Brenda L. Croft, one of Australia's most respected artists, engages with the consequences of dispossession and assimilation – the effects on her individually, her immediate and extended family and her people. Brenda's father, Joseph Croft, was one of the Stolen Generations, removed in the 1920s as a child under official assimilation policies from his Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra people of the Victoria River region in the Northern Territory. When he was physically reunited with his mother again in 1974, their reunion was to prove tragically short-lived when Bessie died seven months later. Brenda's photo-essay explores her journey home, reasserting her connection with places and kin fragmented by the ongoing impact of colonialism. In a moving account of her project and its careful methodology, she explains that her work asks whether 'an actual place can exist for people such as myself – descendants of the Stolen Generations, many of us dispossessed of our homelands, languages, and communities'.

Through images, she documents her metaphorical road home, following her father's footsteps and retracing the footprints of her Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra relatives who famously walked off Wave Hill pastoral station in the Northern Territory in 1966 on strike – initially in protest for equal wages, but also as a response to more than eighty years of massacres and displacements, unpaid servitude, stolen children and other abuses. She walked over tracks and sites associated with her community's past, sometimes alone, mostly with family guides, her beautiful photographs recording key places, artefacts and moments much as an archaeologist might, but from a critical performative Gurindji-specific standpoint. Her encounter with a stone axe (see Chapter 5, Figure 4), for example, which she considers as Country calling her home, remains as a yardstick that summons up culture and the consummate skill of its unknown maker. Through these seemingly objective records of journeys and places, Croft's creative-led research produces a series of such touchstones, waymarks to the still-fragmented wholeness of identity and kinship violated by colonialism. Through her continuing, resolute account of her journey, Croft invites her viewers, as fellow-travellers, to share her journey.

In a contrasting visual strategy, where many Indigenous Australians continue to suffer the violation of rights, images can also constitute a form of denunciation. As witness, photography may reveal atrocity and injustice, and prompt scandal with the result of effecting change. Ms Dhu was a 22-year-old Yamatji woman who died in custody in the South Hedland Police Station in August 2014. Arrested for unpaid fines, she was already suffering from pneumonia and septicaemia caused by a broken rib, inflicted by her partner some months earlier. She became very ill and died two days after being taken into custody. The 2015-16 coronial inquest into her death heard that police officers had believed that Ms Dhu was 'faking'. At the inquest, footage was shown revealing that Ms Dhu was treated roughly by police. Her family requested that the CCTV footage of Ms Dhu's final, agonising hours of life be released, because the grief of seeing their relative die was outweighed by the need to demonstrate the injustice of *how* she died.[60]

An internal police investigation into Ms Dhu's case found that eleven police officers failed to comply with police procedures, but none were fired or suspended. Ms Dhu's family's demand to make her treatment in prison public echoes the argument of many visual theorists today: if others are forced to undergo suffering and pain, surely the privileged observer has a moral duty to witness, acknowledge and respond to what they see? Further, the image's power as proof may convince even unsympathetic/oblivious Australian audiences by revealing atrocious conditions and ill-treatment.

However, such images are not straightforward in their effects. In Australia, as many Aboriginal people have argued, such imagery may disempower their subjects, showing them as abject, distant or less-than-human. For example, one of the most effective critiques of Aboriginal treatment during the 1950s was the film *Their Darkest Hour* (1957), made by West Australian MP William Grayden about Ngaanyatjarra people in the Warburton Ranges area, on the south-eastern fringe of the Gibson Desert.[61] This film included graphic, shocking imagery of ill and malnourished Aboriginal people that successfully mobilised public concern across Australia and overseas well into the 1960s, contributing to a growing international concern with racial discrimination. Specifically, it is credited with fuelling a wave of public support for the Aboriginal rights

movement, which eventually led to the successful 1967 referendum to empower the Commonwealth in Aboriginal affairs. Yet today, its subjects and their relatives resent the film's shameful exposure of their lives and question the benefits for them personally. Aboriginal people now demand control over their own representation, using photography to assert a strong identity and demanding change on the basis of rights, rather than pity, with its overtones of patronage and condescension.

Preceding release of the CCTV footage of Ms Dhu's treatment in custody, her family and supporters tried to keep her presence alive in the city of Perth through clever use of light graffiti. From 2015 to 2016 they projected night-time images of her face on sky scrapers to continue her memory and visibility. These storeys-high portraits of Ms Dhu and her family disrupted the urban landscape and served as a reminder, insisting that we remember.[62] In 2017 the footage was made public, revealing with irrefutable power the rough treatment of Ms Dhu during her final hours. Similarly, the revelation of a pattern of abuse, deprivation and punishment of vulnerable children within the Don Dale youth detention centre by the ABC's *Four Corners* aroused intense public sentiment, prompting an inquiry into juvenile detention in the Northern Territory. Although these processes continue, these visual revelations act as a form of public witness to the violation of these subjects' rights and draw the line between acceptable and intolerable.

Finally, in a historical review of Australian photo-journalism, media historian Fay Anderson's contribution to this collection, "Never Look Away": Humanitarianism and Australian Newspaper Photographers', explores the humanitarian impulse/ethos within this visual field. Drawing from her large-scale research project, the 'History of Australian News Photography', and interviews conducted with professional photographers, Anderson traces the tensions between 'photographers' conviction that they have a duty to take agonising images and that the public has a moral responsibility to view humanity and its worst excesses', and the commercial imperative that governs editorial decisions regarding what to publish. Anderson's perspective is grounded in a deep understanding of the industrial and aesthetic workings of photo-journalism, and her interviewees' experiential/practice-based knowledge. Starting with Linfield's observation that making violence visible does not 'necessarily translate into

believing, caring or acting', which 'is the dialectic and the failure, at the heart of suffering', she argues that histories of Australian photo-journalism and of photographing humanitarian crises are not historically entwined, but that opportunities for newspaper staff photographers to bear witness, convey compassion and advocate for the less powerful were only available from the 1980s onwards.[63] Although the liberation of the German concentration camps by the Allies in the summer of 1945 at the conclusion of World War II is regarded as a watershed in press photography, these events did not immediately influence Australian photographers – and Anderson argues that this was due in large part to military control over the visual field, mistrust and cynicism. Whereas European visual theorists have emphasised the impact of Holocaust imagery, Anderson's detailed empirical survey reveals a more complex picture, and the less direct impact of Holocaust imagery. She concludes that new attitudes towards the visual representation of humanitarian crises in Australia developed only gradually by enhancing the evidential value of photographs, by reinforcing the photographic imperative of covering suffering, heightening attention to ethics and revealing power dynamics.

Conclusion

Readers who have made it this far through the dark side of human rights may be wondering where this leaves Arendt's 'passion' of compassion and her principles of solidarity. Despite the fraught and unequal applications of emotional politics and humanitarian practices, we cannot do without the images that reveal atrocity, evoke fellow-feeling and construct a shared humanity. We continue to puzzle over the ethical use of the imagery of suffering. Their circulation and consumption is always in a state of tension, as bodies are exposed to the gaze in ways that render them abject and humiliated, even if our goal in the use of that imagery is to oppose their condition. Scholars continue to distinguish between a politics of justice, frequently focused on the perpetrators of violence, and a politics of pity, evoking sentimental responses as spectators are able to sympathise with the experience of the sufferer.[64] Yet, despite the sceptical scholarly stance that warns us of the potentially troubling effects of empathy, we must not

assume that sympathy 'has the same homogenizing meaning, the same stultifying and baleful effect, the same mode of production, regardless of the context in which it is cultivated, extended and received'.[65] While it is true that empathy may be complicit with injustice in specific circumstances and times, this volume demonstrates that such risks pale beside the oppression and injustice sanctioned by a *lack* of sympathy for other people's suffering.

Notes

1   In contrast to the historical interest in these discontinuous and overlapping genealogies, Samuel Moyn influentially argues that our current understanding of human rights only emerged during the 1970s, and advocates the separation of analysis of human rights and humanitarianism. S. Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 2010.

2   R. A. Wilson and R. D. Brown (eds), *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008.

3   UNESCO, *Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, in UNESCO, *Basic Texts,* UNESCO, Paris, 2014, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002269/226924e.pdf>.

4   G. Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley', *Journal of World History,* vol. 21, no. 3, 2010, pp. 393–418.

5   T. Allbeson, 'Photographic Diplomacy in the Postwar World: UNESCO and the Conception of Photography as a Universal Language, 1946–1956', *Modern Intellectual History*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2015, pp. 1–33.

6   ibid.

7   E. Steichen, *The Family of Man: An Exhibition of Creative Photography, Dedicated to the Dignity of Man, with Examples from 68 Countries*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1955, p. 4.

8   A. Sekula, 'The Traffic in Photographs', *Art Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1, 1981, p. 19; L. Kaplan, *American Exposures: Photography and Community in the Twentieth Century,* University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2005.

9   Kaplan, *American Exposures*, p. 66.

10 After the Paris exhibition ended, 12,000 copies of a portable photograph album intended to form the basis for local exhibitions was sent out to the fifty member states, including twenty copies sent to Australia. UNESCO, *Human Rights: Exhibition Album,* UNESCO, Paris, 1950. For discussion of its Australian reception, see J. Lydon '"Visual history at its best!": UNESCO's 1951 *Human Rights Exhibition* in Australia', in G. Griffiths and P. Mead (eds), *The Social Work of Narrative: Human Rights and the Cultural Imaginary*, Ibidem-Verlag and Columbia University Press, Stuttgart and New York, 2018.

11 UNESCO, *Human Rights*, p. 10.

12 Allbeson, 'Photographic Diplomacy'.

13 B. Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000.

14 G. C. Spivak, 'Righting Wrongs', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 103, no. 2/3, 2004, p. 523.

15 S. Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera,* Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2011.

16 L. Hunt 'Foreword', in S. Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera,* Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2011, p. ix; and see S. Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2010, p. 37.

17 Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance,* p. 37.

18 S. Hettena, 'Reports Detail Abu Ghraib Prison Death; Was it Torture?', Associated Press, NBC News, June 29 2005, <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/6988054/#. Wh4hWK3AfXQ>; M. Thompson, 'Haunted by Homocide: Federal Grand Jury Investigates War Crimes and Torture in Death of "the Iceman" at Abu Ghraib, Plus Other Alleged CIA Abuses', *Time*, June 13, 2011, <http://nation.time.com/2011/06/13/haunted-by-homicide-federal-grand-jury-investigates-war-crimes-and-torture-in-death-of-the-ice-man-at-abu-ghraib-and-other-alleged-cia-abuses/>.

19 D. Apel and S. M. Smith, *Lynching Photographs*, University of California Press, Oakland CA, 2008.

20 S. Sontag, 'Regarding the Torture of Others', *New York Times*, May 23, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/23/magazine/regarding-the-torture-of-others.html>.

21 Ibid. Even sceptics concur that without the photographs there would have been no scandal. For analyses see P. Gourevitch and E. Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure: A War Story*, Pan Macmillan, 2012, and Errol Morris' accompanying film *Standard Operating Procedure,* Participant Media, United States, 2008.

22 S. Sontag, *On Photography*, Penguin Classics, London, 2014 [1977].

23 Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, pp. 7–12.

24 This strand of critique became especially dominant during the postmodernist 1980s: see, for example, A. Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1991; M. Rosler, 'In, Around, and Afterthoughts (on documentary photography)', in *Three Works*, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, 1981; J. Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988.

25 S. Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Penguin, London, pp. 115–117.

26 J. Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* Verso, London, 2010, pp. 74–75.

27 H. Arendt, *On Revolution*, Penguin, London, pp. 85–86. However, it is important to note that Arendt was not dismissing all emotional responses – indeed she contrasted her definition of the instrumentality and 'insensitivity' of pity with the 'passion' of compassion and the 'principle' of solidarity. Arendt's term has been more recently popularised by L. Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

28 K. Stueber, 'Empathy', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last revised 14 February 2013, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/empathy/>.

29 L. Berlant, 'Introduction: Compassion (and Withholding)', in L. Berlant (ed.), *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*, Routledge, New York and London, 2004, pp. 1–14.

30 See, for example, S. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Routledge, New York, 2004; L. Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008; Berlant, 'Introduction: Compassion'.

31 For a classic analysis, see S. Hartmann, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

32 Berlant, 'Introduction: Compassion', p. 10.

33 See, for example, Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*; M. Reinhardt, H. Edwards and E. Duganne

(eds), *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain*, University of Chicago Press and Williams College Museum of Art, Chicago, 2007; Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera*.

34 H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Penguin Books, London, 2017, p. 300.

35 This is what Giorgio Agamben terms the constitutive role of abandonment or 'inclusive exclusion': G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1998, pp. 28–29.

36 See, for example, L. Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2006.

37 M. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, Cornell, Ithaca, 2011.

38 L. M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2006.

39 A. Lester and F. Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Intervention: Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-Century British Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014; L. Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788–1836*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2010; A. Nettelbeck, 'Colonial Protection and the Intimacies of Indigenous Governance', *History Australia*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2017, pp. 32–47; J. Lydon, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*, Bloomsbury, London, 2016.

40 K. Neumann, *Refuge Australia: Australia's Humanitarian Record*, University of NSW Press, Sydney, 2004; J. Lydon, 'Fantasy Islands: Photography, Empathy, and Australia's Detention Archipelago', in T. Sheehan (ed.), *Photography and Migration*, Routledge, New York, 2018.

41 D. Fassin, 'Inequality of Lives, Hierarchies of Humanity: Moral Commitments and Ethical Dilemmas of Humanitarianism', in I. Feldman and M. Ticktin (eds), *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat*

and Care, Duke University Press, Durham, 2010, pp. 238–255; D. Fassin, 'Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France', *Cultural Anthropology,* vol. 20 no. 3, 2005, pp. 362–387; M. Ticktin, 'Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders', *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, vol. 83, no. 2, 2016, pp. 255–271.

42 Fassin, 'Compassion and Repression'; D. Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, trans. Rachel Gomme, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2012.

43 Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*; L. Malkki, 'Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1996, pp. 377–404.

44 Malkki, 'Speechless Emissaries'; R. Bleiker, D. Campbell, E. Hutchinson and X. Nicholson, 'The Visual Dehumanisation of Refugees', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 48, no. 4, December 2013, pp. 398–416.

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47 Zable, 'A Review'.

48 Boochani, 'Australia, Exceptional in its Brutality'.

49 Ticktin, 'Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders'; see also V. Mackie, 'Putting a Face to a Name: Visualising Human Rights', *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 20, no. 1, 19 March 2014, p. 225.

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Social Research: An International Quarterly, vol. 83, no. 2, 2016, p. xxiv.

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54 P. Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation,* Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016, p. 115.

55 Perera, *Survival Media*, p. 64; see also S. Perera, *Australia and the Insular Imagination: Beaches, Borders, Boats, and Bodies*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009, p. 152.

56 J. Chesterman and B. Galligan (eds), *Defining Australian Citizenship: Selected Documents*, Melbourne University Press, 1999, pp. 73–74; see also J. Chesterman's C*ivil Rights: How Indigenous Australians won Formal Equality,* University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2005. Until Australia's first citizenship legislation was passed in 1948, people born in Australia usually became British subjects.

57 Perera, *Australia and the Insular Imagination*, p. 152.

58 T. Rowse (ed.), *Contesting Assimilation*, API Network, Perth, 2005. This policy had been formulated before the war and in 1938 the new Minister for the Interior responsible for Commonwealth Aboriginal policy, J. W. 'Blackjack' McEwan, placed proposals for a 'New Deal for the Aborigines in the Northern Territory' for economic and social assimilation before parliament.

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60 J. Lydon and D. Oxenham, 'Seeing Ms Dhu: How Photographs Argue for Human Rights', *The Conversation,* 29 November 2016, <https://theconversation.com/seeing-ms-dhu-how-photographs-argue-for-human-rights-69044>.

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