The problematic power of photograph and film, in their apparently authentic representation of what actually happened, in their capacity to be highly constructed in inapparent ways, in their dependence upon context for interpretation, is deeply present in the material culture of our present era, lavishly exploited and celebrated in the pop rock video clip as well as in presences and more significant absences of images in television news. The way the photograph, once it exists, comes to have and to exercise beyond full intentional control its own force was revealed in the television and newspaper politics of the Vietnam War and may well have led quite directly to Pentagon decisions to restrict access of journalists and photographers to the Gulf ground war in 1991. The images that were televised during the Gulf War were from the aerial war—almost abstract, sanitised rocket trajectories viewed from the aircraft that bombed Baghdad—and quite different from the disturbing, unambiguously blood-and-guts images of the Vietnam ground war. The ideology empowering the war images in 1991 yielded a visual sense of computer games and favoured a similar detachment at the political level, reinforced by young airmen who spoke in relief and exhilaration of their sense of participating in a form of football game. This interplay of the profoundly real (in the sense of death, the actuality of the aftermath of a bomb’s explosion) with forms of representation, which also have consequences, implications, and reality, was like an enactment of the concerns of many of the papers in this volume.

The authors in this volume come to question how film and photogra-
phy work, both formally and contextually in society, from a variety of perspectives: as critics, as social scientists, as filmmakers, as literary scholars. The result is a collection of thoughtful essays on diverse, though related, subjects which are meant to be both instructive and enjoyable — edifying, in the true sense. The differing scholarly and intellectual backgrounds of the authors are evident in their vocabularies, their methodologies, and their approaches, and these, we feel, are the virtue of the collection, which presents some very serious writing about film from across the disciplines in a way which will allow access from many points to a consideration of the nature of film in culture and society today.

Themes

The essays have been grouped in such a way as to make clear their interconnections at a topical, thematic level. However, the volume begins with three papers (two from anthropology and one from critical cinema studies) that themselves set out the larger theoretical themes that the volume as a whole addresses: the interplay of film with aesthetic form, with economic and political structures, and with gendered and philosophical concerns embedded in the cultures that produce it.

It is extraordinary that in this final decade of the twentieth century, the century following the invention of moving pictures, the immense importance of visual technologies in the production and distribution of knowledge throughout the globe has still made so little impact on scholarly activity in the humanities. While cinema studies have begun to grow, largely as a form of literary or cultural theory, scholars in the humanities remain dedicated wordsmiths, whose representations and ruminations rarely include the visual, let alone the filmic. Among the realist disciplines of the humanities, anthropology has perhaps made the greatest excursion into filmic representations, and yet ethnographic film has still not yet been regarded with much intellectual rigour or trust. Despite promising beginnings anthropologists have not yet inquired very deeply into the reasons for their mistrust of visual representation. It is still the case that most scholars are far more practised at critically reading a written text than they are at understanding the discursive impact of a documentary film or television show. Visual literacy, outside of cinema studies courses, is not taught to university students, and yet
they will certainly come to know their world and to decide their place in it through the representations of the visual media, to which written texts and books will be at most a specialist corrective.

The realist disciplines of the humanities—history, sociology, anthropology, political science—need to debate their representational practices in much the same way as the literary canon has become contested ground in departments of literature. They are, after all, engaged in representing difference—different cultures whether distant in time, space, or concept, different experiences—to audiences composed of multiple positions and of multiply positioned people: Korean-Americans, Aboriginal Australians, West Indian–Britons. To write or to make films in the 1990s is to confront the twin facts of cultural dominance and robust cultural difference. How does the discourse shift when a different speaking voice asserts itself? How can representation, encrusted with its conventions, assume new audiences, accommodate new voices, express the suppressed experiences of groups new to self-representation in the dominant discourses of knowledge?

The three theme-setting papers in this volume (Willemen, Marcus, and Devereaux) deal both with issues of the tyranny of form and institution over the self-representation of the formerly silenced—women, indigenous populations, migrant populations—and with the dilemmas of scholarly, ethical representations of nondominant cultural realities; many of the other papers (Ginsburg, Creed, Studlar, MacDougall) carry these forward from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, addressing both cinema and documentary film.

All these writings are, in one sense or another, about coming to terms with the play of the real in film and photographic representation. Their audience could be anyone with a fascination for the unknown reality trapped in a filmic image: the snapshot, the home movie, the newsphoto, the documentary film, or fictional cinema. The singular virtue of a collection of papers emanating from disparate disciplines is that each discipline asks questions which the others, in their internal self-representing practices, would not have asked in quite that way, or in just that language, if they had posed the question at all.

Film, photography, cinema are all cultural products available as artifacts to be scrutinised for their form, their use, their origins, and their meaning. The contested critical space of the discovery of meaning contains many possible investigative manoeuvres: inquiry into the nature of the producers, as author, technician, artist, biographical subject; assessment of the conditions of production, those enabling structures and devices and constraints; interrogation of the receiving audience, as
viewer, reader, critic, dupe. The elastic and high-tech fibres that connect representation to our senses of reality are multiple, sheathed in relations of power that inhibit interference. They can be traced with difficulty.

A critique of representational practices can take a purely formalist position, but it will inevitably have political consequences since the unproblematic nature of a practice—its naturalness, its commonsensicalness, its objective inevitability—is itself the outcome of political processes. Many academic representational forms remain divorced from the implications of postcolonial cultural contestation, even in a world of technological simultaneity, where film, video, and photographic images are ubiquitous. Third World cinemas are now attracting a growing critical literature among First World audiences, but the recent uses of media by encompassed, indigenous populations, such as those of the Kaiapó and Nambikwara peoples in Brazil, Navajo video self-representation, and Inuit and Aboriginal Australian television production, are all important aspects of self-representation as well as interventions in national cultural politics and their relationships to state bureaucracies. Not only is real contemplation of images underdeveloped in traditional disciplines such as anthropology, history, and sociology, which often relegate them to contemptuously conceived categories such as popular culture, but the use of image, especially in video and film, as a means of serious intellectual discourse has, outside the arts, remained exceedingly rare.

Another theme which threads through the papers in this volume is the effects on all representational practices—"scientific" representations such as ethnographic and documentary film as much as locally produced indigenous children's television—of Hollywood cinematic conventions and production values. These conventions produce effects both on the aesthetic forms of representation—such as conventions about beauty, the nature of relationships—and on the exploration of culturally local meanings not shared by the mass audiences of Hollywood cinema. Competing for an audience, as well as for advertising, packaging, and distribution, all participate in forcing culturally specific film and video toward the conventions of Hollywood.

The filmic forms of knowledge produced in even so arcane and scientifically oriented a discipline as ethnographic film are necessarily entwined with the fictional cinematic forms of Hollywood and television, because the narrative and compositional expectations that even university students bring to their viewing have been schooled by the movies, by TV, and by home videos. David MacDougall's essay here (as well as other writings by him) in part shows the historical development of
ethnographic film within this greater context. Ethnographic filmmakers have been very aware of this cultural and formal pressure of the conventions of our Euro-American mass media upon their work, precisely because they make representations of what is culturally unfamiliar, even though anthropology is an objectivist knowledge practice that brings back its information from “the field” in the form of notes, observations, and field recordings on audio tape, photograph, film, and video. Cross-cultural or historical documentary films are necessarily different from cinema, which works precisely through audiences’ deep and nuanced cultural familiarity with gesture, prop, location, light, and sound. Audiences for ethnographic or historical film are like European cinemagoers encountering an Ozu film for the first time—they cannot necessarily trust their own suppositions about the meaning of most of what they see. At the same time, as otherwise accustomed movie and TV viewers, they cannot but attempt to make the same interpretive moves that work for them when looking at a Hollywood or television piece.

So ethnographic film participates in a medium whose conventions are drawn from Euro-American cultural forms of self-representation— theatre, cinema, photojournalism—and it uses this medium to document the practices and meanings of other cultures. It is not surprising, then, that anthropology’s best filmmakers experience a genuine need for critical analysis of the film medium of representation as well as of the written genres of ethnography, scientific report, and intellectual argumentation. Several of the papers in this volume, in particular those by Ginsburg and Marcus, are written by anthropologists with these sorts of issues in mind and resonate with Willemen’s concerns.

Those concerns are allied with consideration of more widespread and pervasive manifestations of the economically and culturally dominant nature of Euro-American cinematic form. Representation is always happening across the notional boundaries of psychological, social, or cultural specificities. Men represent women to audiences of men and to women themselves. The rich represent the poor and dominate the media so that few acts of self-representation ever penetrate the veil of bourgeois homogeneity within First World cultures. And the technologies of knowledge and representation in the First World continuously overwhelm the possibilities for non-Western cultures to represent themselves on a world stage, as Faye Ginsburg’s essay demonstrates. Can these cultures ever succeed in parochializing Europe as it has rendered them parochial? This is a question less to be answered than to be explored for its implications about what such a project would entail.

Self-representation of indigenous peoples and of immigrant “ethnic”
populations within nation-states, not to mention class-derived subaltern cultures, also has to come to terms with the narrative structures, archetypal forms, and economic practices of international commercially viable cinema whose roots lie in Euro-America. At work here are formal and historical processes of cultural dominance which are outlined in Paul Willemen’s essay on the concept of the national cinema. At one level Willemen’s essay explores what is at stake in subsidising or not subsidising culturally specific cinema, which cannot, by its very nature, be commercially viable on an international or global scale. Cinema is a highly capitalised and now universally penetrating art form that has broad appeal but whose own “production values” are set by an industry designed to mass market its products and recoup its enormous investments. The mechanisms of mass marketing overwhelm cinemas with local meanings and smaller production budgets and threaten to expunge them. National governments are the entities with sufficient resources to subsidise culturally specific cinemas.

In thinking through this issue Willemen rigorously engages with the question of cultural boundaries and considers what is to be gained and lost by crossing them and in what state of mind the intellectual traveller can best do this. Indeed, even to think in “cross-” or “multi-” cultural terms sets up central and defining vantage points from which difference can only be perceived ethnocentrically. Willemen helps us to disentangle the issue of national specificity from the discourses of nationalism, and also from the discourses of universalising humanism, by which cultural specificity is doubly colonised. He carries out this project not merely in the name of a polycentric, multivocal world, which could hopelessly fragment (or deafen) itself, but in the service of the dialogism that Bakhtin termed “creative understanding” and that Raymond Williams called “diagnostic understanding” — both notions which are remarkably close to what the best anthropologists aim for in their own, also power-laden, context. Willemen quotes Bakhtin:

*Creative understanding* does not renounce itself. . . . We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones it did not raise for itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths. Without one’s own questions one cannot creatively understand anything other or foreign.

Carrying out creative understanding in the context of multinational industrial cinema regimes may be hard, but if we value the expression, self-representation, comment, and critique that is available through cin-
ema produced in nondominant cultural contexts, whether West Indian in Britain, Turkish in Berlin, or Aboriginal in Sydney, structural support for that cinema must be a priority of intellectual activity and arts funding.

One of the objects of this volume is to bring cinema into closer relation to the work of writing-based disciplines, not only as an object of critical scrutiny, but as an activity of relevance to the various disciplines themselves. George Marcus examines the literary possibilities of cinematic techniques demanded by the conditions of twentieth-century global forms in which no one can any longer live in self-contained and wholly knowable communities but in which filmmaker, ethnographer, and villagers are complexly linked in space-time contexts of simultaneity and difference through a multiplicity of homogenising technologies and appropriations. Devereaux and MacDougall both consider the possibilities of an expanded role for film in anthropological description and thought through considerations of objectivity, subjectivity, positionality, and voice as they have been taken up in cinema theory and practice.

Devereaux, in particular, further pursues the paradox posed by MacDougall—that anthropologists want ever more “realistic” documentary while filmmakers are more interested in what cannot be seen, in seeking what lies behind the overexposed, foregrounded body, namely “the experience of existing in it.” This hinge between the papers of MacDougall and Devereaux, in which the unforgettable image of a woman’s belt imprinted upon her skin stands for a whole indelibility of culture, sentence, and her being as a woman, links up further with most of the essays in this volume in their concern with encompassing more adequate perceptions of the body.

Devereaux’s paper, like Dermody’s, seeks to reinstate the subjective voice, and also women’s voices, to speak of their own experiences, to temper and to redirect male discourse, and both papers have implications for film aesthetics within the documentary and the ethnographic realms. And not just for film aesthetics; if there is, indeed, no (anthropological) discourse for the way woman’s body feels to itself, then this is a gap that is the subtext, or perhaps the urtext, to many of the essays in this volume. The conclusion, “Female experience, like female desire, is absent in this record of male visual pleasure,” is in fact Devereaux on chimpanzees but clearly reads as a gloss on Studlar’s study of Barrymore films.
Case Studies: Film

Dialogism is a theme which is set in the initial papers and resonates through the entire volume. Bakhtin's recognition of the situated nature of every utterance has implications not only for the realist disciplines of the social sciences but for interpretive historians of cinema and for feminist and other theorists of spectatorship. Film is of interest to any theoretical approach to the interpersonal generation of meaning, since film, as text, has conditions for production, duration, and repetition that are unique to it. Aspects of this issue are touched on in all the papers but most particularly in Gaylyn Studlar's discussion of the relation of women to the "women's film" of the 1920s and in Barbara Creed's analysis of the carnivalesque functions of the horror film. And virtually all of the papers, especially those dealing with the documentary qualities of film and photograph, owe an unacknowledged debt to Bakhtin's commitment to realism not in mimesis but in the profoundly social nature and historicity of human life. This is most clearly evident in Wellek's essay but also echoes throughout the volume as the authors attempt to deal with the deep interpenetrations of form and meaning between different cultural positionings—woman and man, Aboriginal and Anglo-Australian—without reducing those positionings to issues of essential difference or sameness.

The body as the site and the icon of the construction of self and other is a key element of a culturally situated representational practice and occupies a central place in current theoretical debates. Once the debased term in many Western paired oppositions, it is now experiencing intellectual recuperation. Barbara Creed considers the body in popular discourse through the transmogrifying lens of the horror film, which she sets in its cultural history of the politics of symbolic inversion. Drawing on Bakhtin's analysis of the way symbolic inversion in European carnival works as a critique of high culture, Creed examines the grotesque and dismembered bodies of the horror film for their critical and constructing work in bourgeois culture. She discusses the processes by which the infant psyche enters culture, its body is ordered, and its body products contained. Creed shows how these processes are relived and disrupted by the representations of horror, where the expelled and rejected bodies are drawn back into consciousness. It is here that the pleasures of the horror genre lie for the spectator, in this challenge to the classical ordered body, as well as in its simultaneous confirmation, Creed claims.
The political possibilities of symbolic inversion, whether in public ritual or in popular cinema, are rebellious rather than revolutionary, but the cracks and gaps which they open in consciousness are not inconsequential.

The questionable power of the spectator to command the pleasures that cinema constructs for it in the manipulated economy of the mass market is under scrutiny in Gaylyn Studlar’s essay on women’s role in constructing the male body in Hollywood romances of the 1920s. She shows how these films, aimed at a female audience and speaking a discourse of romantic love, participated in an already conventionalised web of representations of the eroticised male body produced for women’s sexual subjectivities. This very fact of female sexual desire was the focal point for male anxiety about blurring masculine and feminine in public culture. The New Woman who smoked and drank, and the feminised matinee idol like Valentino, created a terrain of cultural antagonisms successfully traversed by the vigorous body of John Barrymore when allied to scripts of romantic melodrama in which the hard indifference of the pure male gradually allows its repressed softness to emerge and envelop the heroine in its nurturant love.

Once again the ambiguities of gender and power are represented in a genre formula that fulfils a complex specular function, harnessing the disorder of male desire to the imperative of moral and tender love through the physical suffering of the heroic male body, a body which, moreover, must be wholly unaware of its own desirability in order to remain male. The pleasure of the image in narrative, then, lies in the play of partial inversions; what survives in the gender systems of popular culture and what is altered or inverted is the very stuff on which any understanding of representation’s relationship to social process depends; we see the feminine in the masculine, and the masculine in the feminine, and acknowledge the utility of a gender analysis for understanding human life.

The concerns of these papers in citing the voyeuristic pleasures of the cinema spectator return like the repressed to haunt the more scientific representational practices. This is so especially, of course, with ethnographic film but also with the uses of archival film and photography in the construction of historical narratives, where we can usefully ask whether the intellectual pleasures of knowledge are voyeuristic and are newly reconstructing the power relations of the past. As an example, the republication of colonial photographs in a recent volume commissioned to critically review colonial representational practices was stopped by a
complaint that such reuse simply perpetuates the voyeuristic pleasures of old power relations, and, in fact, releases their constructing effects once again. Scholarly as well as popular imaging of others, whether conceptually distanced by space or by time, inevitably constructs self and other in the present, and it may well be that simply surrounding the images with a critical environment of words may not rescue those constructions from the work of the image. Indeed the recurrent question is whether any image can avoid the place of stereotype already prepared for it by the power relations of the past. Can films (such as Trinh Minh-ha’s Reassemblage) show women’s breasts without participating in the lascivious male gaze of Western cinema? Can films (such as Robert Gardner’s Rivers of Sand) show Ethiopian tribal women laden with heavy brass bangles without participating in the misogyny it claims to critique? Under the weight of European representations, can any image of non-Western people, let alone nomadic herders dressed in skins, be other than stereotype? Can any film image of woman be other than made for man? These issues will reward attention as the impact of new representations accretes. Gaylyn Studlar’s paper is a case study in the reception of film history, her assessment of the Barrymore films differing radically from the response of the contemporary critics.

Working another vein in the same scam, Gino Moliterno’s essay on The Name of the Rose takes as its point of departure the phenomenon of a narrative multiply embedded in the form of the European book widely translated into languages that in some cases have only recently moved from orality to literacy as well as into the medium of film. The novel, a study in overt intertextuality, takes its narrative complexity from its structure as a multilayered palimpsest aqiver with the dialogic murmurings between all the parchments of the mediaeval canon, a palimpsest in which the desire of the text for itself becomes the story. Moliterno inquires into this dialogism of the novel and its condemnation of the monologic motivations of books, of knowledge, and of representation, especially as they fail to be taken up by the film version of The Name of the Rose. His critique shows how realism as a form of objectified mimesis (Bakhtin’s rejected pseudo-realism) wholly misses its object when the subtleties of framing, perspective, and voice are ignored. The mediaeval authenticity so painstakingly produced in Annaud’s film at the level of costume and prop becomes caricature when the dialogic and intertextual nature of the originating text are themselves not made operative in cinematic code. Far as this may seem from matters of realism in science and documentary film, it is nonetheless a persuasive example of the way
in which visual literalness inevitably becomes stereotype, a problem that yawns like the caverns of hell at the feet of all cross-cultural, cross-gender, and cross-positional representation when it seeks faithfully to repeat a cultural form rather than courageously to intersect with it. This is another point at which we hear the echo of the political extension of Bakhtin's thought in Paul Willemen's essay.

Taking some issues of adaptation between media a step further, Roger Hillman invites us to discard simplistic views of film music as emphasis and mood and to consider its work in creating an alternative or commenting narrative to the visual and verbal dimensions of plot. The narrative potentials of musical scores in films produce a capacity for polyphony, which is not always noticed overtly and represents a complex intertextuality between the arts to which film criticism has remained relatively impervious. The force of our Western urge toward realism in narrative is perhaps nowhere less challenged than in the non-verbal audio aspects of most Hollywood films. However, in the more crafted films of the European auteur tradition, music, as Hillman shows, can do the work of omniscient narration, which carries the shifting positioning of the audience from character to character. The question which the essay opens up is the intertextuality between works of different genres and the possibilities and limitations this creates. In a volume in which less problematic concepts of ethnography, representation, and indeed narrative itself are critiqued from feminist positions, the feminist restoration of sound beyond the privileged sense of sight finds some echo here, too.

Case Studies: Photography

Two papers take up the relationship between the photographic image (primarily the still image) and the practices of historical scholarship and popular history. Once again the issues of visual realism and its implications for cross-temporal representation, knowledge, and historical narratives emerge. The self-interested, now-interested production of historical narratives determines the nature of the use of photographs from the past.

Anne-Marie Willis's essay ironically deconstructs the phenomenon of historic theme parks, which some would place on a par with ethnographic film and TV nature series—captive re-creations of waning
worlds, or disappeared worlds, for purposes of lucrative spectacle. Willis calls on Thomas Elsaesser's work to elaborate the conditions which contributed to the rise of the visual in Western culture and the subsequent use of the figural in discursive attempts to come to terms with cultural process. She describes the use of photographs in the production and practices of historical theme parks and in the ellipsis between realism and actuality. We are entangled in the technologies of our recording mediums and cannot move hand or foot without setting in motion images of the distant or more recent past. And at the same time the rapidly receding past carries our nostalgia for stability of place and meaning. This nostalgia in turn produces a hall of mirrors of authentic recreations of absent places and times through the details of the once-real afforded by photographs stranded in albums, archives, and bureau drawers and revivified in the props and staged locations of historic theme parks.

The stories that we weave around the activity of war, stories that make it possible to wage and to endure, come out of many centuries of heroic narratives and are often incompatible with the documentary character of the photograph. Bernd Hüppauf's paper on photography in World War I explores the urges to retouch and make composite photographs of moments in combat in order to express the totality of both grandeur and desecration experienced by the photographer but not "captured" by the narrower focus of the camera lens. Hüppauf demonstrates how the particular and documentary nature of the photograph clashed with the morally committed reportage of war, and also with the aesthetic requirements of visualising a reality that, by its distance and overloaded meanings, had become highly abstract for the audience back home. He connects this observation to more mundane and present situations by pointing to the abstract, scientific, and disjointed nature of modern reality, which seems to require highly conceptual modes of representation rather than pictorial duplication of visible reality. Once again, the reality of the experiencing subject bears an uneasy relationship to the acts of representation for a distant and nonexperiencing viewer, precisely the problem that ethnographic film confronts in presenting a cultural reality different from the one in which the viewer has expertise. The technological mimesis of the photograph fails to create a "you were there" experience in the viewer because the meaning of the moment may lie visually, or auditorily, outside the frame; indeed it may lie in the juxtaposition of this moment with other moments in the mind of the experiencing subject, moments not available to the viewer
except through montage or through the multiple image created by means of composition and overlay. Frank Hurley’s composite photographs of jungle savages, island paradises, and storm-ridden battlefields become, indeed, “more real” than the literal reality he could offer through unretouched documentary photography.

Subject(ive) Voice

David MacDougall’s “concern with the portrayal of experience across cultural boundaries rather than cultural self-expression or reassertion” complements in terms of a geography of human experience the two essays with which this volume opens. But in its reinstatement of a subjective voice within the (human) scientific classifications of the ethnographic film it also bears on the way Gaylyn Studlar’s paper addresses the suppression of experience via its unacknowledged channeling across gender boundaries. MacDougall provides a historic survey of ethnographic film’s approach to its subjects through such devices as the glance into the camera, dramatisation — whether exterior, interior, or narrated — and the approaches of psychodrama, cultural reexpression, and ethnobiography. A title in a very early film he cites invites us to “see what the native sees” — MacDougall’s article continually poses the question of the extent to which we can share not only the object of “the native’s” gaze but the consciousness informing it, its manner, the subjectivity structuring and interpreting it. The magnitude of this issue goes beyond ethnographic film and indeed film itself among the arts, and so it is not surprising to find a close analysis of Epstein’s Finis terrae (which MacDougall considers an ethnographic film) leading to a comparison with Antonioni. Between the lines of MacDougall’s wide-ranging examination of techniques straddling both ethnographic and fiction films, intriguing questions are raised. He implies that the coming of sound was an irreversible turning point for documentary film, with the risk of the spoken word swamping the visual image as a vehicle of narrative. One is left with the possibility of an ethnographic film abandoning the spoken word and relying exclusively on imagery and a nonverbal sound track, something that Trinh Minh-ha’s film Reassemblage approached, in fact. MacDougall registers a shift from representation to evocation, but this too is located in the domain of discourse.
One attempt to transcend the discursive, which though ultimately a failure seems to demand attention from ethnographic filmmakers, is Reggio’s *Powaqqatsi*. With its stylized use of slow motion and its Third World images crying out for political contextualisation, this film relies on Philip Glass’s sound track to carry the narrative beyond the visual level, a burden to which this particular music is not equal and which may ultimately have defied any music. It may be that unsourced music — music emitting from a source not visible on the screen — cannot replace the cognitive content of the spoken word, but natural sound (whether distant thunder or a musical instrument played by the subjects of the film) could possibly meet the challenge. And all three aspects — unsourced music, the spoken word, and natural sound — are certainly implicated in the issue of subjectivity in ethnographic film. They further that crossing of generic lines which George Marcus pursued from a different vantage point. A key figure, one important to MacDougall’s essay and one taken up in detail by Peter Loizos, is the controversial Robert Gardner. His films seem to have crystallised for ethnography what John Berger has formulated for fiction films, namely the simultaneous presence within the filmed event of “something of the focus, the intentionality of art, and the unpredictability of reality.” The very terms of the tension would perhaps be denied by the more positivist streams of ethnographic film, for whom the profilmic event can ultimately be made largely predictable.

Epistemology and form are questions with both political and economic roots, as Ginsburg’s paper reveals in her discussion of what forces come into play when indigenous cultures are linked to metropolitan centres by satellite technology. Ginsburg takes up the emerging literature about the engagements of indigenous peoples with mass-mediated television and video technology. Her paper provides a striking case in point with a detailed discussion of the regional television produced by Aboriginal people in central Australia, work that demonstrates the complex range of Aboriginal responses to the introduction of media technology. These responses include informed consideration of what is at stake in using this technology to construct cultural identity and attempt to intervene in the dominant representations. Aboriginal writers and producers are aware of the trade-offs, traps, and possibilities that are bound up in the use of television to mediate culture. Ginsburg’s paper opens these discussions and developments in Aboriginal broadcasting to the debates about representation taking place in the film and writing arenas that have been concerned with “the ethnographic.” Ginsburg’s contribu-
tion provides a link to wider political concerns about the subtle dominations inevitably arising from both institutional and technical/formal aspects of technologies of representation.

A different dilemma of self-representation is faced by the central figure in Alexander Kluge’s *The Patriot*, a female history teacher seeking a positive history of her native Germany. Susan Dermody discusses a bizarre embodiment of a narrator in this film, namely the knee of a corporal killed at Stalingrad. Here we have the concretisation of an antiwar nonsense poem by Kluge’s countryman Morgenstern in which a knee, no more nor less than a knee, walked alone through the world. Even the experience of existing in the body is transcended here by the disembodied consciousness of a key link in the body, a knee, which supplies a perspective on (German) history from below. The film’s narrative progression is continually punctuated by photographs and paintings, all of them conjuring up stories that are the stuff of history and which function as allegory, an eclectic ancestral gallery of the German past. For the traditional ancestors are displaced, and yet the absent or alienated icons of the past are also the film’s documentary foundation. The knee, and the knee’s perspective, would not exist without the Battle of Stalingrad, a nadir in Germany’s experience of World War II, and the death of Corporal Wieland the day before the lifting of the siege. Absurd history demands absurd or surrealistic imagery. Even were it less fertile as a nonauthoritarian voice from the wilderness of history from below, Kluge’s narrator would yield more truth, as Dermody tells us, than the “factual” referents of documentary as reduced to absurdum in Kluge’s image with which Dermody’s paper finishes. Not only is the distanced man unknowable, but a totally incidental detail eclipses him further—the flame of his cigarette, foregrounded by the conditions created by the documentary.

A comparable distancing from experience was addressed by both Willis and Hüppauf, particularly in the latter’s examination of war photography from planes. The problems of distancing addressed by Dermody echo Devereaux’s call for anthropology to take a less distanced perspective and to put “dailiness” and “embodiment” closer to the heart of its ethnographic documentation. The aim of reducing distance is to come closer to a view of other lives as they are experienced in their own terms and to recognise the interpenetration of those terms in the global connections of life in the twentieth century.

Here we come to the central dilemma of the politics of representation. Can an author or filmmaker, can a medium for that matter, rooted
in one culture, in one sex, ever produce a representation of another culture or sex that is not, to some extent, a stereotype? This question arises not only because of cultural limitations on the perceiving consciousness of the filmmaker but also because of the heavy weight of all the representations already in existence. Can an image of a rainforest tribesman in the 1990s ever fail to evoke the jungle dramas of safari films or the glorious photographs of the *National Geographic*?

Peter Loizos bridges ethnographic and aesthetic concerns in considering one of Robert Gardner’s films, concerns that arise in several papers in this volume, in different vocabularies, each pointing to the tension between “realist” and aesthetic desires. Gardner’s films have fascinated and infuriated anthropologists for many years, since they remain some of the most watchable of ethnographic footage while refusing to work within the genre of didactic film. Anthropological audiences often react with suspicion, fearing manipulation by “unexplained” images, and demanding more information and contextualisation than Gardner is willing to supply. His most recent film, *Forest of Bliss* with Akos Oster, indeed refuses any contextualisation and has given rise to intense debate about the effects its images have on Western audiences.

Loizos writes from a position of commitment to the possibility and the need for an objectivist social science, but he offers a filmic analysis of the way Gardner’s *Rivers of Sand* works as film to produce its meaning. His analysis assists students of ethnography to inquire into their own responses to documentary films by examining the way a visual essay creates meanings, and he seeks to avoid drawing hard conclusions. In this Loizos demonstrates some of the significant differences between the rhetorics of image and text, especially in nonnarrative genres.

Representation and self-representation are equally caught in this web of image; there is a labyrinth here, from which there is no escape. We cannot transcend our relationships to observe, speak, and know from any wholly exterior point. At the same time, the exteriority of the other creates a continuous field of awareness in which knowledge is produced. This is the relationship of astonishment, whose ethics are respect.

Here the political stance of Bakhtin toward cultural knowledge points the way forward, and his work runs through much of this volume in recognisable but unstated ways. The ground of the encounter with the other is dialogue, in which the subject is herself brought forth. Each and both always—therefore, contextual. The culture that is in us and the culture that is in things, our products, point to the politics of difference—class, gender, national difference—which is at stake in cultural