TROUBLED VISION: INTERROGATING THE VISUAL PROTOCOLS OF 20TH CENTURY ETHNOGRAPHIC LITERARY AND CINEMATIC TRAVELOGUES

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation investigates the twentieth century American and British preoccupation with ethnographic looking by reading comparatively across literary travelogues, documentary films, and anthropological ethnography. I argue that twentieth-century texts about seeing "real natives" are not merely similar thematically and ideologically, but are linked through a shared set of formal operations. By applying methods of film analysis to written texts and methods of literary analysis to film texts, I illustrate the convergence of ethnographic texts around the point of view of the participant-observer. Instead of considering participant-observation as a methodology reserved solely for anthropologists, I suggest that the participant-observer is a point of view central to cinematic spectatorship as well as twentieth-century ethnographic literary travel writing. I trace the emergence of ethnographic visuality in the 1920's through its divergence into codified, disciplinary ways of seeing in the 1950's. Finally, I argue that the turn toward

For my daughter,
Mirabelle Lee Olson

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION …….. 1

CHAPTER 1 …… 22
CONVERGENCE: CINEMATIC, ANTHROPOLOGICAL, AND LITERARY VISIONS OF THE "PRIMITIVE" ……..22
NEW VISIONS OF THE REAL …….. 28
BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI'S CINEMATIC VISION…… 32
D.H. LAWRENCE'S ETHNOGRAPHIC GAZE……..…… 43
ROBERT FLAHERTY'S CINEMATIC ETHNOGRAPHY……..…….. 57
NATIVE IMAGININGS…….……74

CHAPTER 2 …… 76
DIVERGENCE: THE CODIFICATION OF "PRIMITIVE" VISIONS …… 76
FROM CAMBRIDGE TO THE KALAHARI…… 81
A VISION FROM ABOVE...……...……89
LITERARY VISIONS...……...…… 109
SEEING THE JU/'HOANSI ON FILM……..…… 125
VISUAL TROUBLE...……...……... 141

CHAPTER 3 ……...143
LISTENING TO NATIVES SPEAK: THE SHIFT FROM VISION TO VOICE ……..…143
SPEAKING WITH THE "NATIVE GIRL"...……..…… 152
SPEAKING NEARBY NATIVES..…….....169
SPEAKING AS THE NATIVE...……...……... 185

CONCLUSION ……...201

WORKS CITED ……204

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago, I boarded a bus at the base of what is known in northern New Mexico as the Enchanted Mesa and waited, along with some twenty other passengers, to climb the winding road that leads up to Acoma Pueblo, the oldest continually inhabited Native American village in the American Southwest. Our tour guide was a teenage girl who proudly informed us that she was to inherit her family home in "Sky City," or Old Acoma, on top of the mesa. Wearing an elaborate turquoise pendant over a Dallas Cowboys football jersey, she dutifully recited the history of the journey we were taking: "Hollywood film director John Ford built this road in the late 1950's," she told us, "when he was filming the John Wayne movie *African Sunset* here. Before that, we had to walk up the narrow steps carved into the side of the cliff walls and carry water and supplies up with us by hand". As the bus rounded the bend in the road, the adobe houses clustered on top of the mesa came into view along with the heavy-duty Chevy pickup trucks parked everywhere and anywhere they could fit. Filing out of the bus, we proceeded to see the sights: here was a traditional stone oven where people can bake bread if they do not feel like buying it at the local Walmart; there was a cemetery for the Acoma victims of Spanish Conquistador Juan de Oñate; here was a table displaying famous Acoma pottery for sale; there was the Catholic mission with the impressive iron bell that had to be carried up the sheer rock cliffs in the seventeenth century by the Acoma people themselves. Our tour guide encouraged us to sample a local treat—chopped pickles mixed with electric blue Kool-Aid powder. Everyone smiled and nodded their heads. No one bought any.

As we moved through the tour, women manning the pottery tables complained to our guide. "They're not buying anything. You're not giving them time to look," they told her. "You're going too fast". Our tour guide shrugged sheepishly and kept on eating her pickles. We

followed her to the mission where a religious celebration was underway. We were told we could enter but we could not take any pictures and should not stay too long. A group of men stood smoking cigarettes and watching us gathering outside the church, laughing at us and theatrically saying "How!" before quickly looking away. Gathering inside the dimly-lit building, I could make out a doll dressed as the Virgin set on top of a bare wooden table at the front of the room before we were herded out to stand and watch the procession leaving the church, chanting and stepping slowly and rhythmically. I stood watching silently, waiting to board the bus and head back to the reassuring familiarity of the visitor's center.

About a year later, I found myself mired once again in the troubles of the ethnographic gaze. Anyone who has taught Robert Flaherty's 1922 documentary *Nanook of the North* in a film studies class knows that students often find the film monotonous and difficult to decipher. To provoke discussion, I glossed the documentary's well-rehearsed critical history: I described Flaherty's collaborative filmmaking methods and his infamous motto "The aggie comes first!"; I screened the family scene set inside an igloo and reminded them that the structure was only partially constructed so that the camera and crew could fit inside, a scenario that was good for filming but left Allakariallak, the actor who played "Nanook," and his family exposed to the elements; I told them that Allakariallak died of starvation shortly after filming. I had hoped to complicate simplistic assumptions about documentary realism and animate a discussion about the ethical implications of ethnographic looking but what I got was quite different. One student rejected the film outright and demanded to know why it was still being shown. If the gaze of Flaherty's film was racist and imperialist, she wanted to know, why should we still care about the film at all? Another student complained that the film was simply an "anachronism". Because we easily recognize the ideological problems the film perpetuates, he argued, there was little to

be gained by subjecting that point of view to further critique. It is typical of undergraduate students to deny history, particularly histories of racism, and the effects of ideology on their own viewing practices. But what happens when we take these questions seriously? Why should we still care about *Nanook* and the spectator that the film elicits? Why do we teach texts that enact the ethnographic gaze and then ask students to rehearse a critique of that gaze and its implications? What might be the precise purpose of those scholarly practices, both inside and outside the classroom?

These two stories can only begin to suggest the complex historical and theoretical knot this dissertation seeks to untangle. On the one hand, the visual practices we now understand as "ethnographic" still exist. My own experience of what could aptly be called "ethnographic tourism," with its disorienting juxtaposition of the ordinary and the fantastical, rehearses some of the same thematic territory as D.H. Lawrence's travel essays "Indians and Entertainment" and "The Hopi Snake Dance" in which he describes his visits to Acoma to witness the "native dances" held there for tourists in the 1920's. I may have been uncomfortable participating in the kind of observation the pueblo was selling, but I was still compelled to "buy in" to the experience of witnessing Native American history and culture, motivated, perhaps perversely, by my interest in critiquing the ethnographic tourist gaze. Strangely, as anyone who has taught literature or film knows, looking at "primitive" people often gets restaged in the very classrooms where we work to reveal and then critique the ideological framing of that gaze. Both inside and outside the twenty-first-century university, the practice of looking at "real primitives" remains central to the ways Americans learn about our own history, no matter how self-aware those looking practices may be.

On the other hand, we are living in a moment where, thanks to decades of post-colonial and feminist ideological critique, the problems with ethnographic looking relations are glaring. When confronted with texts that ask us to look at so-called "natives", it is easy to identify and critique the paternalistic, objectifying gaze that those texts require us to assume. In my own re-telling of what is now a familiar story about seeing "real" Native Americans, the word "real" must always be bracketed by quotation marks that grammatically signal the impossibility of encountering such a subject. In an age often described as global, there are no more "real primitives". The fantasy of a pristine "primitive" subject, a truly isolated native who has never seen a white tourist, a film crew, or an anthropologist, has been thoroughly debunked. Just as the Acoma that twenty-first-century-tourists visit is already framed by a history of ethnographic looking practices, the *Nanook of the North* that twenty-first-century-students see is already framed by a history of ideological analysis. In short, observing people once considered "primitive" can no longer be (if it ever was) a simple or innocent act.

The questions I take up in this dissertation are rooted in an analysis of what is now commonly understood as the "ethnographic gaze". As a set of looking practices, the term "ethnographic gaze" no longer refers solely to the methods of anthropological fieldwork, writing, or filmmaking. Instead, the term now describes the visual relationships at work in a more diffuse, wide-ranging set of representational practices. In this dissertation, I consider the ethnographic gaze to be a particular set of practices for visualizing racial and cultural difference. Allison Griffiths' claim that what makes a gaze specifically "ethnographic" has to do with "the looking relations between the initiator of the gaze and the recipient" has provided a useful framework for my analysis (xxix). Her deceptively straightforward definition foregrounds two aspects of ethnographic looking that are crucial: first, that this kind of gaze actively produces "relations"

between the observer and the observed and second, that it is a mode of gazing "initiated" purposely by an observer. For me, the visual practices of the ethnographic observer can never be mistaken for a passive mode of spectatorship. Whether the ethnographic observer explicitly considers their looking practices anthropological or not, all ethnographic gazing is an active process of interpretation.

For scholars working in the humanities, the phrase "ethnographic gaze" has become oversimplified as "bad" looking relations, the kind associated with the Western, white, male gaze of Edward Said's "Orientalism," Laura Mulvey's "scopophilia," or Mary Louise Pratt's "imperial eyes". Inscribed by racist, patriarchal ideologies, the term often functions as a convenient shorthand for describing a set of visual relationships that position the one who looks as "modern" subject and the one who is looked at as "backward" object. At this point, referring to the "ethnographic gaze" does not so much convey meaning as it synthesizes a critical history of feminist, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial analyses of visual culture and its effects.

This dissertation is an attempt to re-invigorate an analysis of the gaze by thinking differently about the formal protocols of ethnographic looking in twentieth-century writing and film. Reading comparatively across literary travelogues, documentary films, and anthropological ethnographic writing, I argue that twentieth-century texts about seeing "real natives" are not merely similar thematically and ideologically, but are linked through a shared set of formal operations. To stake this claim, each chapter of the dissertation strategically compares a triangulation of three texts: one literary travelogue, one anthropological ethnography, and one ethnographic documentary. Reading these texts together as case studies, I have tried to do more than simply demonstrate the ways that various representations of "primitive" people are produced by history and ideology. By applying methods of film analysis to written texts and

methods of literary analysis to film texts, I seek to illuminate the surprising convergence of these clusters of ethnographic texts around point of view.

Certainly, the looking relations I describe in the anthropological, film, and literary texts I have assembled here create subjects and objects in ways that are not only troubling but have violent implications. What they also do is create a very specific set of experiences for the spectator turned ethnographic observer. Throughout this dissertation, I seek to re-animate that experience and ask questions not only about its ideological effects on readers and spectators, but also about *how* that experience works.

One of the central claims in this dissertation is that at the most basic level of form, both cinematic and written accounts of seeing "primitive" culture throughout the twentieth century position their spectator or reader from a particular point of view now commonly associated with anthropology: the participant-observer. While most anthropologists credit Bronislaw Malinowski with inventing participant-observation and coining the term, I suggest that the forefather of twentieth-century ethnography was only one voice in a larger conversation about how best to see and understand "primitive" bodies and behaviors in the early years of the twentieth century. The counter-intuitive juxtaposition of the two words that make up the term, "participant" and "observer", points to the very incongruity of the experience of seeing that Malinowski was trying to describe. To be immersed in the sensory experience of an event, yet at the same time estranged from it enough to recognize the seams that betray its status as cultural construct is to assume a highly artificial and practically impossible viewing position.

The point of view that Malinowski imagines and attempts to show readers in his first major ethnography, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), may have been groundbreaking for anthropology but was it was a mode of spectatorship already emerging in the cinematic language

of American filmmaker D.W. Griffith's blockbusters *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916). By experimenting with editing techniques that would immerse audiences in the world of the film, Griffith established a cinematic point of view that would dominate Classical Hollywood filmmaking and shift the preferences of American spectators away from non-fiction actualities and travelogues to narrative feature films. What made Griffith's films so compelling for audiences was the unique viewing position that they made available. Through the use of continuity editing principles, primarily the eyeline match and cross-cutting to show parallel action, Griffith encouraged spectators to see from the perspective of the characters in the film *and* see events that those characters did not witness. These innovations in editing allowed audiences to make sense of increasingly complex narratives onscreen but they also created a new point of view, one which was simultaneously inside the world of the film and the subjectivity of the people who live there and removed from that world. By both participating in the psychological and emotional lives of the characters while observing the larger patterns of action, viewers could interpret the event onscreen in more nuanced ways.

The historical links between cinema and anthropology are already quite clear. Tom Gunning has suggested that the most characteristic quality of early cinematic "views" of the world is the way that they tried to recreate the pleasures of observation ("Before Documentary" 9-24). Jennifer Peterson has considered the ways that early non-fiction films framed images of "exotic" people and places as a substitute for a "dreamlike" experience of travel and exploration (4). Fatimah Tobing Rony, Assenka Oksiloff, and Allison Griffiths have painstakingly traced the links between nineteenth-century discourses of science, race, imperial expansion, and the earliest film images, many of which focus on the bodies of non-white so-called "savages". Historically, both twentieth-century anthropology and cinema emerged as methods of visually investigating

the same subject: non-white, "exotic" people and places. Perhaps more than anything else, the notion that the film image is an index of the real body placed in front of the camera makes early cinema and an emergent twentieth-century anthropology conjoined discourses.

I argue that the connections between the visual protocols of modern anthropology and cinema do not end with early non-fiction film. Just as there are troubling thematic similarities between the ways a narrative feature film like Merian C. Cooper and Ernest Shoedsack's *King Kong* (1933) and ethnographic writing like Malinowski's *Sexual Lives of Savages* (1929) characterize "natives" as hyper-sexualized children, there are formal similarities between the visual practices of those texts. We may be more familiar with associating strategies of cinematic realism like the long take, or what film critic André Bazin famously fetishized as the "image-fact," with the ethnographic gaze (37). What is just as crucial to ethnographic looking are the often invisible editing practices that turn viewers into participant-observers. Perhaps that is why Malinowski was never satisfied with his efforts to capture the lives of Trobriand Islanders on film. While he brought a camera with him "into the field" he never quite got comfortable taking pictures of his subjects (Young 5). It seems that the stasis and distance of the photographic still could not approximate the point of view he was trying to inhabit as a researcher and re-create for his readers. By itself, isolated from context, a photographic portrait can never tell us what the subject is thinking, or as Malinowski himself famously put it, "grasp the native's point of view...[and] realize *his* vision of *his* world" (*Argonauts* 25). Where the photographic image freezes time so that a body or a moment can be inspected in detail, the first moving pictures animated the infinitely reproducible photographic image in an attempt to simulate human vision. The introduction of editing techniques that re-ordered time and space transformed the goals of that project from recreating human perception to transcending it. Using similar strategies, both

cinema and anthropology sought to extend the capacities of human vision and comprehension of racial (framed as "cultural") difference.

Despite the efforts of scholars, writers, and filmmakers to demonstrate the primacy of participant-observation as a mode of seeing and interpreting culture, by the 1960's the authority of the participant-observer had begun to crumble. What had appeared in the early years of the twentieth century to be a radical method of generating new knowledge with unlimited potential now seemed to exemplify the violent limitations of human vision. Decolonization in the wake of World War II, the British and American counter-cultures of the 1960's, and the civil rights and women's movements, called into question the authority of white, male, heteronormative privilege. Within academia, where anthropologists and ethnographic documentary filmmakers found legitimacy and funding, a series of seismic theoretical shifts that would call into question the formal strategies of ethnographic representation. Jacques Derrida systematically deconstructed the authority of Levi-Strauss' structuralist authority, Michel Foucault set about historicizing modernity and its institutional construction of "the subject," and Edward Said turned a critical eye toward a discursive construct he called "Orientalism". If participant-observation in its many guises had proved an extraordinarily fruitful mechanism for producing knowledge in the first half of the century, deconstructing that point of view, in all its incarnations, would be a project just as generative.

My second main claim in this dissertation is that the pronounced interest in voice that emerged in the 1980's across travel literature, anthropology, and documentary was a direct response to the epistemological problems bound up in the ethnographic looking that had preoccupied travel writers, ethnographers, and filmmakers for most of the twentieth century. Because the ethnographic gaze could no longer to be trusted as a method of investigating and

interpreting a "native" point of view, disciplines and textual forms bound up in the investigation of culture turned their attention to what was framed as the "voices" of people who had historically been the subjects of ethnographic study: non-white and indigenous peoples. Anthropologists embraced polyvocal ethnographies that incorporated the transcribed speech of their "native informants" and self-consciously showed how the interpretation of culture is the result of collaboration between ethnographer and subject. Subsequently, the life-history (an old anthropological genre) re-emerged as a popular form for representing the experiences of ethnographic subjects as they recounted them. Literary studies took up the task of deconstructing the authority of a canon dominated by white, male writers, re-thinking how the voices of marginalized writers could be incorporated into the university curriculum. Postmodern writers like Caryl Phillips, V.S. Naipul, and Jamaica Kincaid examined and critiqued the privilege inscribed in the literary travelogue they had inherited. Documentary filmmakers rejected the didactic, voice-of-God narration exemplified by mid-century ethnographic documentaries and adopted increasingly self-reflexive strategies to represent the voices of their subjects more fairly. The decade that Bill Nichols calls "the golden age of documentaries" was characterized by a flurry of experimentation with voice (*Introduction* 3).

Much of the late twentieth-century shift toward "native voice" had to do with the fact that the authors of ethnographic texts had changed dramatically. Non-white and indigenous people, many of whom came from cultures who had been objectified by the ethnographic gaze and all of whom had been marginalized and oppressed by the racism inscribed in those looking practices, were producing ethnographies, documentary films, and travelogues on a wider scale than ever before. If ethnography is largely a discourse that constructs the self, as feminist anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod has argued, it makes sense that ethnographic representation should change

with it is authors (*Can There Be* 24). I do not intend to suggest that indigenous anthropologists, literary writers, and filmmakers in the 1980's were unified in their politics or in their strategies of critique. Clearly, anthropologists have very different rhetorical contexts and strategies for their projects than postmodern travelogue writers. It is undeniable, however, that the late twentieth century saw a resurgence of interest in the authorial voices of "real natives". A productive way to think about this profound shift toward voice, particularly in ethnographic representation, is in relationship to an earlier preoccupation with the visual.

The participant-observer has certainly not disappeared from anthropology, documentary, or literary writing. Anthropology, more than any other discipline, has undertaken the work of critiquing and recuperating participant-observation through a sustained analysis of its central tenets. As early as 1973, Clifford Geertz conceptualized ethnographic writing as "thick description", an interpretive activity akin to reading a "foreign, faded" manuscript "full of ellipses [and] incoherencies" or writing "fictions, in the sense that they are 'something made'"(10, 15). In the early 1980's, James Clifford, George E. Marcus, and Dick Cushman set about de-naturalizing the vision of the participant-observer by situating ethnography as a writing practice closely linked with literary writing. Historian of Anthropology George W. Stocking subjected the ethnography of canonical forefathers of the field to critical analysis, exposing how they rhetorically constructed a mythology of the "ethnographer hero" (109). Modern anthropologists foreground their identities in their writing and largely consider the ethnography that they end up producing from their fieldwork to be rhetorically, historically and generically situated, writing that is closer to what Clifford has also described as "ethnographic fictions" than to so-called objective truths (*Writing Culture* 6). When twenty-first-century anthropologists enter the field, they do so with the knowledge that *what* they see is always framed by *how* they see.

Ethnographic filmmakers, in particular, have worked to reclaim the potential of the participant-observer's point of view. Jean Rouch, Timothy Asch, Napoleon Chagnon, John Marshall, David and Judith McDougall, and Les Blank (just to name a few) have all produced films that self-consciously comment on the artifice of their own point of view, fashioning a more self, reflexive mode of ethnographic documentary that attempts to account for its complicity in writing culture.[1] Faye Ginsburg has suggested that indigenous filmmakers strategically use documentary to create "screen memories" that recuperate and recirculate culturally-specific knowledges (40). All of this work attempts to reconfigure ethnographic looking for the twenty first century and mine the gaze of participant-observation for new, perhaps more ethical, ways to generate meaning.

As interesting as these efforts to reclaim ethnographic looking may be, they are not my concern in this dissertation. Instead, I turn my attention toward a body of work from the 1980's that either attempts to undermine the gaze of the participant-observer or move away from it entirely. Shifting focus toward the voice of the "native" subject has several significant implications: first, it calls into question any understanding of the photographic image as an infinitely reproducible reality or a ready substitute for the "primitive" body or artifact itself. Next, paying attention to voice necessarily *makes visible* the constructed quality of ethnographic representation itself, a characteristic that takes on particular importance in relationship to the

[1] Jean Rouch films his subjects watching the first part of his 1961 film *Chronique d'un été* (*Chronicle of A Summer*) and incorporates their responses to the film into the final text. Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon's 1975 *The Axe Fight* compares the unedited footage of an ambiguous conflict the anthropologists caught on film with the edited version to demonstrate how they interpret what they see. John Marshall's later films *N!ai, Story of a !Kung Woman* (1980), *Bitter Melons* (1971), and particularly *A Kalahari Family* (2005) show the film's indigenous subjects watching and commenting on Marshall's footage, critiquing representations of themselves on film, as well as collaborating with Marshall and others in the filmmaking process. David and Judith McDougall's many films, including *Lorang's Way* (1980) and *Familiar Places* (1977) incorporate images of themselves filming and interacting with their subjects. Les Blank's films *Always for Pleasure* (1978) and *Burden of Dreams* (1982) make the process of filmmaking their subject matter. The latter film focuses on documentarian Werner Herzog's frustrated attempts to make a film about a man's struggle to build an opera house in the Amazon jungle.

visual trouble associated with the ethnographic gaze. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, ethnographic representation that focuses on voice also necessarily foregrounds the author's point of view and why it matters. If the participant-observer's point of view worked to obscure the identity of the observer himself, directing attention to authorial voice provided an innovative resolution to what was a specifically visual problem.

Rather than narrowly focus my analysis by region, historical period, or media, I have purposely adopted a somewhat promiscuous, interdisciplinary lens for this project. Situated at the intersection of literary studies, film studies, and visual anthropology, in each chapter of the dissertation I tease out how the texts I examine construct a particular point of view to generate their claims about humanity and history. Ultimately, I trace a history of the ethnographic gaze over the course of the twentieth century, from its consolidation in the 1920's to its divergence into multiple disciplines and textual forms in the 1950's, and its eventual reconfiguration with a new set of questions about identity, authenticity, and point of view in the 1980's. As touchstones, these decades provide a kind of teleological map of a twentieth-century visual polemic that occupied scholars and artists who took "culture" as their object of study.

Perhaps it goes without saying that this methodology is highly artificial and limited in scope. Like all interdisciplinary projects, I necessarily gloss much of the complicated histories of the individual discourses I examine. An unintended consequence of this teleological mapping is that it implies that ethnographic looking was solely practiced by Western white, male subjects and that critiques of those looking practices were waged solely by women of color. That is most certainly not the case. A writer like Zora Neale Hurston, for instance, studied under American anthropologist Franz Boas before embarking on an ethnographic expedition to collect and preserve African-American folklore in Florida in the 1930's. The text that she produced from

that trip, *Mules and Men* (1935), can be read as an early example of self-reflexive ethnographic writing as Hurston foregrounds her point of view as a cultural insider with the "spy-glass of Anthropology to look through" (1). In his travelogue *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977), anthropologist Paul Rabinow discloses his uncomfortable, awkward relationships with his informants and portrays himself as a clumsy, often amateurish traveler, undermining the tone of scholarly expertise he constructs in the ethnography he produced from these experiences, *Symbolic Domination* (1975). These two examples complicate the notion that ethnographic looking was ever an unconscious, simplistic practice or that self-reflexivity was a late twentieth-century invention.

Similarly, I use the terms "primitive" and "native" throughout my readings to encompass a range of complex racial identities. In doing so, I run the risk of replicating the reductive logic of Western, white paternalism that I critique. Both of these terms are the inheritance of the nineteenth-century discourse of "civilization" and were used throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to violently homogenize a complex plane of racial and ethnic nuance to a single identity to be neatly categorized and marginalized. Clearly, not all the people who were the subjects of the ethnographic looking practices I describe in this dissertation were from the same racial and ethnic groups. This dissertation maps the scope of the ethnographic gaze, moving from the Trobriand Islands off Papua New Guinea to Oaxaca in southern Mexico, and from Samoa to the Kalahari Desert in Namibia. While the participant-observers I examine here saw Mexicans and Samoans as different versions of the same "primitive," I do not mean to suggest that these groups have much in common besides being the subject of a white, Western gaze. By bracketing these terms with quotation marks, I mean to suggest the ways in which the very notion of a coherent category called "natives" is ideologically constructed.

One of my primary assumptions in this dissertation is that written and cinematic texts share formal properties. I understand literary writing, scholarly writing, and documentary film as heterogeneous textual forms that incorporate descriptive language, actual images, and rhetorical practices of arrangement to construct visual experiences for readers or spectators. Certainly, watching a film and reading a written text are different experiences. Considering the ways they construct a participant-observer productively de-familiarizes the relationship between spectator and reader and opens up an avenue to examine what may otherwise by very counter-intuitive ideas about the most basic formal operations of language, image, and sound.

To stake my claims, I draw heavily on a large and unwieldy archive of critical work on the ethnographic gaze. To embrace a travel metaphor, I am walking a well-marked path. Said's deconstruction of Orientalism as a "nexus of knowledge and power" certainly informs any current attempt to think about how ethnographic looking produces a "native" subject (27).[2] Similarly, Talal Asad's ideological critique of what he calls Anthropology's "images" of Islamic and African Empires and V.Y. Mudimbe's claim that Africa is a European invention are foundational to any analysis of the ethnographic gaze and its effects (118). To demonstrate their claims about colonialism's ideological constructs, many of the theorists I draw upon turn to visual culture. Mudimbe, for example, uses his reading of the "discursive order" at work in Hans Burgkmair's 1508 painting *The Exotic Tribe* to build his case that Africa functions as the repository for European projections of desire (16). Mary Louise Pratt's highly influential study of how the "imperial eyes" of eighteenth and nineteenth-century British travelogues produced the

[2] While Said's analysis of Orientalism extended beyond the visual relationships of an eroticizing and infantilizing Orientalist gaze, his ideas created a theoretical language to frame discussions of ethnographic looking. Interestingly, the now-iconic painting reproduced on the cover of Said's 1978 book, Jean-Léon Gérôme's 1880 *The Snake Charmer*, reproduces the Orientalist gaze that the scholar identifies and critiques. Positioning viewers behind the nude boy displaying the snake to an audience of men, the painting situates spectators as participants in looking at the eroticized native boy and as observers of the boy's audience. Perhaps I am as indebted to Said's implicit reading of this image as I am to his explicit arguments about Western literature.

world for their readers has certainly suffused my own readings of the representational codes of literary travel writing (4). Marianna Torgovnick's arguments about what the term "primitive" does for modern art and science has been absolutely foundational to my readings, particularly her salient critiques of Malinowski's ethnographic authority and D.H. Lawrence's literary visions of Mexico. Informed by deconstruction and postcolonial theory, all of these texts took the representations of "exotic" or "savage" people that proliferated in travel writing as a point of departure for a wide-ranging ideological critique.

The rigorous analysis of the gaze in film studies is another crucial source for the arguments I make about point of view. Feminist, psychoanalytic analyses of the gaze inscribed within the cinematic apparatus, what Laura Mulvey has called the "voyeuristic-scopophilic look", developed a theoretical language critical to thinking about how the ethnographic gaze positions spectators (721). Bill Nichols' critical analysis of modes of documentary address, particularly in the ethnographic documentary film, provides another foundational frame for the formal analysis of non-fiction film. E. Ann Kaplan, Ella Shohat, Caren Kaplan, and Inderpal Grewal merged feminist readings of the gaze with a postcolonial theoretical concern about imperialism and its visual effects.

More recent work moves across disciplinary boundaries to read ethnographic representation as a more widespread phenomenon than anthropologists would allow. I draw on Fatimah Tobing Rony's provocative readings of ethnographic film as a "broad and variegated field of cinema which situates indigenous peoples in a displaced temporal realm" (8). Like her, I consider "ethnographic" representation here as primarily a way of visualizing race that crosses

encompasses a wide variety of discourses.[3] Allison Griffiths' work intermixes readings of nineteenth-century paintings, museum exhibitions, and early cinematic images, both popular and scientific, to unearth what she calls the "sedimented layers of evidence" about how ethnographic representation produces "wondrous difference" (xxxi). Anthropologist Anna Grimshaw reads comparatively between anthropology and art history to stake her claim that the "ethnographer's eye" cannot be extricated from contemporary art practices (9). Artist Coco Fusco moves easily between writing and performance to complicate and critique the logic of ethnographic spectacle. While I do not refer explicitly to her work, her ideas and methods has deeply influenced the way I think about the relationship between ethnographic representation and the spectator it imagines and produces.

I am certainly not the first scholar to find formal links between written and cinematic texts or between scholarly and literary forms of writing. Literary scholars have long argued that many modernist avant-garde writers tested the bounds of literary representation by experimenting with cinematic techniques.[4] Keith Cohen's 1979 *Film and Fiction* is an early example of work that provocatively linked Soviet Montage editing to the modernist literary experiments with stream of consciousness. Similarly, anthropologists have long recognized that anthropological and literary writing are what Clifford Geertz has called "blurred genres" (19). In the introduction to her 2013 edited collection *Novel Approaches to Anthropology*, for instance, Marilyn Cohen characterizes novels as "a rich source of information about societies that can or cannot be investigated with traditional ethnographic methods" (3). Pushing the interpretive

[3] In contrast, anthropologists consider the term "ethnographic" a disciplinary-specific term that describes a method of collecting and interpreting data. Etymologically, the term "ethnography" means "culture writing" and anthropologists distinguish the concept of "culture" from the concept of "race". Like Tobing Rony, I contend that the two terms, at least in their historical origins, are inextricably related.

[4] For a thorough history of these arguments, see Andrew Shail's *Cinema and the Origins of Literary Modernism*.

activities of literary scholars to their logical limits, Cohen's collection suggests that novels can be read as ethnographies, or interpretations of culture.

Like these interdisciplinary studies, I draw connections between the formal operations of written and image texts in this dissertation. It is not my intention to make general claims about form that flatten ethnography, literary writing, and documentary into simply "texts" that re-iterate the same ideas. Rather than argue that all travel writing is inherently cinematic or that all ethnographic documentary draws from the literary conventions of the travelogue, I work closely within the triad of textual examples in each chapter to tease out the formal protocols they share. In other words, I apply literary theory to image texts and film theory to written texts to open up new avenues of inquiry and to think differently about ethnographic looking practices and how they work. Reading comparatively, I put written and film texts into close conversation with one another and generatively explore their confluence around point of view.

This dissertation is structured in three parts that each examine a cluster of texts that coalesce around representing so-called "native" people and their culture. In the first chapter, I read Malinowski's 1922 ethnography *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* as startlingly cinematic to reveal the shared point of view of modern anthropology and narrative cinema. Similarly, I consider the ways that Robert Flaherty's 1926 film *Moana* positions spectators as participant-observers by carefully soliciting their attention and prompting them to discover and then interpret the event onscreen. Turning to D.H. Lawrence's 1927 collection of travel essays *Mornings in Mexico*, I trace the cinematic and anthropological effects of literary descriptive writing. Reading between these three texts, I argue that the looking protocols specific to the ethnographic gaze converge in this moment.

In the second chapter, I juxtapose three texts produced out of the Marshall family expeditions to the Kalahari Desert in the 1950's to illustrate how the ethnographic gaze diverges among three disciplines and media forms. Lorna Marshall's ethnographic monograph *The !Kung of Nyae Nyae* (1976), John Marshall's documentary film *The Hunters* (1957), and Elizabeth Marshall's popular travelogue *The Harmless People* (1958) all draw on the same archive of field notes, diaries, photographs, and film footage to describe the culture of the Ju/'hoansi hunter-gatherer tribe, known at the time by Afrikaners and the British as "Bushmen". The fact that three members of the family were able to construct distinct kinds of texts out of a shared archive and experience makes this case study a particularly rich illustration of what comes to distinguish an anthropological point of view from a literary or cinematic one.

In the third chapter, I examine three texts immersed in a very different problem: how to hear what "natives" have to say. I consider feminist anthropologist Marjorie Shostak's popular 1981 ethnography *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* to be a provocative example of the limitations of postmodern polyvocal anthropology. Shostak's attempt to incorporate the transcribed speech of a "native informant" she calls "Nisa" for the purposes of the study reveals less about Nisa than it does about Shostak and her struggle for interpretive authority over culture. Trinh T. Minh-ha's 1982 experimental ethnographic documentary *Reassemblage* brings the struggle to wrestle meaning from the sights and sounds of culture to the fore. As a self-identified "native," "woman," and "other," Trinh occupies a distinctly different point of view in relationship to ethnographic looking and its implications. Finally, I turn to Jamaica Kincaid's critique of the gaze of the tourist in her 1988 anti-travelogue *A Small Place*. Implicating her reader in the violent colonial history of her homeland Antigua, Kincaid forces an engagement with the voice that tourists never want to hear. While Shostak speaks for the "native" and Trinh

speaks as a "native" who is not the "native" she represents, Kincaid speaks as a "native", directly confronting, chastising, and teaching her readers.

The fantasy of seeing the "real thing" that lies at the heart of the ethnographic looking I describe in this dissertation is a powerful one. Ethnographic looking may not have gone away, but both the subject who looks and the people who are the bearers of that look have changed dramatically. Indigenous people are now active producers and consumers of ethnographic texts, whether they are anthropological, documentary, or literary (Ginsburg 39-57). Most twenty-first-century travelers engaged in observing people once marked "natives" cannot help but be aware, at least to some extent, of the racist paternalism inscribed in that gaze. The very language that we use to describe the subject produced by ethnographic looking has undergone a transformation. In a moment regularly described as a "global age", the identity category "native" has arguably become incoherent. As James Clifford suggests, the operating premise of early anthropology in which ethnographers were positioned as "modern" travelers and "natives" were not was always epistemologically flawed because "everyone's on the move, and has been for centuries: dwelling-in-travel" (*Routes* 2-3).[5] The nineteenth-century notion that defined non-white "natives" by their limited mobility and access to so-called "modern" technology begins to appear not only anachronistic but also logically impossible when we consider the unprecedented numbers of people who are connected in "real time" through digital networks. Can there really

[5] Clifford makes this claim complicating the terms "home" and "away" that have framed the twentieth-century anthropological encounter through his reading of writer Amitav Ghosh's 1992 book *In an Antique Land*. A heterogeneous blend of anthropological narrative, travel writing, and fiction, Ghosh's text imagines a medieval, pre-colonial world in which Indian and Egyptian characters who would later be depicted as "primitive" by nineteenth-century writers, are worldly, highly-mobile, and cosmopolitan travelers.

be a "native" in a digital context?[6] In our current moment, the categories "foreign" and "native", along with their cognate terms "modern" and "primitive", are becoming increasingly illegible.

How, then, do we account for and make sense of the strange persistence of the ethnographic gaze well into the twenty-first century? Even further, how can scholars of literature and visual culture find new ways to talk about ethnographic looking that can re-animate the stakes of that visuality in meaningful ways, both within our field and within the classroom? At a time in which the ideological analysis of ethnographic looking can be repetitive, or even worse, seems to have lost some of its political urgency, it is crucial to generate new strategies for analyzing what it means to engage in those looking practices. The analysis of visual culture is certainly not irrelevant in a world saturated by images and sounds that proliferate on the "small screen" of hand-held devices and computers. In fact, it would seem that the stakes of critically investigating point of view and the artifice of the gaze have never been higher. I suggest throughout this dissertation that comparative formal analysis offers one solution to this problem by opening up fresh possibilities for critique.

[6] I am not referring, of course, to Marc Prensky's term "digital native" which refers to a generation of learners born in a digital age and his contention that they learn differently from previous generations who are "digital immigrants" (1-3).

CHAPTER 1: CONVERGENCE: CINEMATIC, ANTHROPOLOGICAL, AND LITERARY VISIONS OF "THE PRIMITIVE"

Anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski concludes the first chapter of his canonical ethnography *The Sexual Lives of Savages* (1929) by sketching an overview of the "native village," asking his readers to become observers of the scene: "And now, in order to summarize briefly the results of this chapter and the previous one, let us imagine that we are taking a bird's-eye view of a native village, and are trying to form a compound moving picture of the life of the community" (49). The perspective of coolly-distanced observation that the anthropologist crafts for his readers in this moment should not be surprising as it is characteristic of the ethnographic gaze. Malinowski's purpose in this passage, however, is to ask readers to inhabit a point of view in which village life appears to "form a compound moving picture," a phrase that signals a startling shift away from the discourse of anthropology and into the discourse of cinema.

After all, what is a "compound moving picture" if not a strangely exacting definition of the cinematic medium? While Malinowski was most likely referring to film's ability to animate the photographic, his definition also refers to both the technical and conceptual qualities of the film image. Composed of multiple frames that project at 24 frames per second, the "compound" structure of the image on film is precisely the mechanism which produces the illusion of animation that distinguishes the cinematic object from the photographic still. In this passage, Malinowski makes explicit a thread that runs through all his ethnography by linking the emergent gaze of participant-observation to cinematic seeing, a distinctly twentieth-century mode of visuality more suited to picturing "culture," a distinctly twentieth-century object of study.

Connecting the participant-observer to the cinematic spectator at this moment of synthesis in the text opens up questions central to Malinowski's anthropological project: How

can spectators understand what they are seeing for the very first time? What kind of vision can render comprehensible the unfamiliar? What modes of observation can allow the observer to "see as the native sees" and more accurately "grasp the native's point of view" (*Argonauts* 25)? While Malinowski may have considered his text a scientific contribution to the study of "primitive" cultures, for twenty-first century readers his ethnographic writing appears to be an elaborate articulation of a specifically visual problem shared by early filmmakers: how to see the way the Other sees. Malinowski offered participant-observation, an ordered system of visual rules he codified in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), as a solution to this dilemma. By cultivating relationships with insider "informants" and participating in cultural rituals, the participant-observer strives to inhabit a privileged point of view both inside and outside of culture. As a mode of seeing, participant-observation offered the promise of a more complete picture of culture by suturing together fragments of observational data.

The emergent cinematic language of continuity editing offered a similar solution to the visual dilemma that Malinowski identifies. Through a systematic ordering of film shots, continuity principles sought to construct a perceptual framework to give film audiences access to the subjectivity of the bodies onscreen. The advent of the eyeline match, in particular, radically transformed the spatial, temporal, and psychological experience of cinema by opening up multiple ways of seeing the event onscreen. For the first time, audiences could inhabit an impossible point of view, simultaneously inside and outside the world of the film.

It is widely accepted by film scholars that point of view is a concept central to film studies and questions about who is observing and how have become increasingly crucial to anthropologists since the 1960's. What is elided in these discussions, however, are the suggestive links between point of view in its cinematic and anthropological manifestations. Filmmakers and

fieldworkers both shared a fascination with recording "primitive" bodies and behaviors, but their similarities extend beyond their subject matter. Crucially, both film and anthropology emerged in in the early years of the twentieth century as visual languages for interpreting culture from the inside.

Malinowski may have coined the term "participant-observer," but he was not the only traveler who pursued observational projects that would now be considered ethnographic. By the time the anthropologist was writing his canonical first monograph, British and American travelers in many guises were becoming participant-observers of "primitive" culture. As Carey J. Snyder has noted, modernist British literature was heavily inflected by ethnological discourse, a phenomenon she calls "ethnographic modernism" (6).[7] Inspired by anthropological writing, like James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915) and Franz Boas' *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911), as well as nineteenth-century travelogues by writers like Mary Kingsley and Richard Burton, modernist writers like Aldous Huxley and D.H. Lawrence travelled to "exotic" locales and lived among people they considered "primitive" with the intention of observing and writing about culture (6-7). Filmmakers in the 1920's also looked for ways to get closer to culture. Robert Flaherty regularly lived among the "native" people who became both the cast and crew of his films. Before making King Kong in the 1930's, Merian Cooper and Ernest Shoedsack accompanied the nomadic Bakhtiari people as they relocated from the harsh Turkish plains to the grasslands of pastoral Iran to make their 1925 documentary film *Grass*. Martin and Osa Johnson lived among various tribes in Kenya to capture the images of people they considered animalistic "savages" for their 1928 travelogue *Simba: King of the Beasts*. Certainly the politics of these "participant-observers" are quite different and the writing and films that they produced have

[7] Snyder draws on James Clifford's definition of "ethnographic modernity" as a general cultural condition of being "rootless, mobile.. [and] off-center among scattered traditions" here (*Predicament* 3).

distinctive purposes, audiences and modes of address. What they share is an investment in "getting off the verandah," as Malinowski would write, venturing "into the field" to come into close contact with "primitive" people in the prosaic rhythms of daily life.

In what follows, I trace the visual protocols that inform three early iterations of participant-observation: Malinowski's early anthropological writing, Robert Flaherty's documentary film *Moana* (1926) and D.H. Lawrence's collection of ethnographic travel essays *Mornings in Mexico* (1927). Reading comparatively across form and media, I seek to tease out the shared formal conventions at work in the visuality of early twentieth-century ethnography, literary travel writing and film. Considering the visual influences of literary and cinematic texts on Malinowski's anthropology, for instance, opens up the possibility of reframing his ethnographic writing as one articulation of a visual polemic, rather than as a masterwork of singular genius. Similarly, reading Lawrence's travel writing anthropologically and cinematically suggests the ways that his narrative experiments with point of view were not simply reflections of his own idiosyncratic preoccupations, but should be understood instead as part of a larger aesthetic project to capture a glimpse of the enigmatic "primitive" that runs through most of his fiction

Malinowski, Flaherty, and Lawrence are all polemical figures, regarded as the perverse forefathers of their respective disciplines. Taken together, their canonical texts exemplify a problematic gaze, whether that gaze is figured as Western, Orientalist, patriarchal, imperial or colonialist. As white men, their privilege and imbrication in modern British and U.S. imperialist projects created the very possibility for a geographically mobile observing eye. The inherently hierarchical logic of the discourse of "civilization" inflects their texts in ways that have been troubling to scholars. The joke sequence at the center of so many critiques of Flaherty's *Nanook*

of the North, for instance, in which the great hunter clownishly bites down on a record thus proving his status as a "primitive" type, depends on an opposition between the technologies that define civilization and the illiteracy with modern objects that defines not-yet-civilized subjects for its punch line to make sense.[8] Lawrence's tendency across his literary repertoire to position bodies and art objects that he considered "primitive" as artifacts promising access to repressed desires can and should be subject to ideological critique, as should Malinowski's professed desire to "penetrate" native minds and bodies. Like so many of their predecessors, these white, male travelers grafted their fascination with the violence of "base" desires onto bodies they considered savage and animalistic, a representational practice that came with dire consequences for indigenous people.

The crucial difference in Malinowski, Flaherty, and Lawrence's representations of Otherness was that their relationship to "the primitive" was framed by the concept of "culture," an object of study that had only recently become coherent. As Michael Elliot suggests in his study of American literary realism, the concept of culture that informed the wide range of documentary projects that he calls "culturalist writing" in the late nineteenth century emerged out of the anthropology of figures like E.B. Tylor and Franz Boas, ethnologists who actively sought to distinguish the term "culture" from the evolutionary, universalizing and aspirational discourse of "civilization" (xiii). Tylor and Boas' new conceptualization of "culture" was an attempt to establish the relativism that distinguished a twentieth-century notion of group-based difference from the teleological narratives of human progress that drove nineteenth-century ethnology. Unlike earlier observers of "native types," Malinowski, Lawrence, and Flaherty

[8] William Rothman reads this scene as a moment in which the film's narration encourages spectators to consider the white fur traders a "stand-in for the filmmaker" since Flaherty and the traders appear to be "in league with each other," positioning Nanook as childlike, animalistic, and the butt of the joke in a manner that is both "condescending" and "disquieting" (11).

regarded “primitive” cultures as bounded objects of study and looked to “culture” as a means to uncover human experience in its most essential and profound forms, deploying specifically ethnographic practices of observation to launch their investigations of difference.

Tracing the visual protocols that Malinowski, Flaherty, and Lawrence deployed in their quest to see the “real primitive” uncovers links between an anthropological, cinematic, and literary gaze in a period before the codification of that gaze as “ethnographic”. Read together, their texts trace the history of a powerful twentieth-century visual project to see “real” natives, a preoccupation that shaped the discursive construct of “the primitive”.

NEW VISIONS OF THE REAL

By the 1920's in Britain and the U.S., cinema and anthropology were conjoined visual discourses of investigation that seemed to offer the promise of what Malinowski rather infamously liked to term "penetrating" beneath the surface of reality. For early twentieth-century spectators, the experience of watching reality re-played on film offered a startlingly new point of view. The advent of cinematic seeing, with its rapid succession of fragmentary projected images, was largely about harnessing the ability to infinitely duplicate the visual experience of everyday life (Littau 43-44). The potential of recorded "actuality" to be replayed, run backwards, viewed in slow motion, or framed in close-up allowed spectators to witness "reality" anew, a phenomenon that continued to surprise and delight audiences with its novelty into the 1920s.[9] The real world recorded in one time and projected in another allowed viewers the critical distance of the historical observer, while at the same time offering an experience of immersion in another time and space believable enough that the first cinematic spectators confused the image on film with the real thing, if only for a few moments.[10] As Walter Benjamin suggested, what made cinematic perception so unique was its ability to close the spatial and temporal gap between the observer and the event on film, making it possible for spectators to simultaneously witness and experience a reality that on the one hand "extends our comprehension of the necessities that rule our lives [and] on the other hand manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of

[9] Jennifer Lynn Peterson writes that for the first twenty years of film history, non-fiction films made up the bulk of commercial cinema and that once feature films became more popular, actualities and travelogues persisted alongside comedies and melodramas. See her essay "Travelogues and Early Non-Fiction Film" in *American Cinema's Transitional Era: Audiences, Institutions, Practices*. Eds. Charlie Keil and Shelley Stamp. Berkeley: U of California P, 2004. 191-213. Print.

[10] The origin myth of cinematic spectatorship hinges on the moment where spectators supposedly shouted and jumped away from the screen in fear of colliding with the locomotive rushing toward the screen in the Lumiere's famous 1895 short film *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat*. Whether this story about the birth of cinematic vision is true or not, it dramatizes the physicality of the spectatorial experience in the earliest moments of film and asks us to recognize the advent of cinematic seeing as a transformative sensorial experience at the turn of the twentieth century.

action" beyond the reaches of ordinary human vision (236). This reflection, at the crux of Benjamin's claims about cinema's potential to mobilize a mass public, is also an early meditation on the psychology of cinematic point of view.

Cinematic technology at the turn of the twentieth century had already taken the shocking experience of everyday industrial modernity as its primary subject. The images in early films satisfied a public fascination with the prosaic activities of everyday life in both urban centers and in places imagined at the periphery of the modern, industrialized world. The film programs in what Tom Gunning has called the "cinema of attractions" typically featured a mixture of short actualities covering a wide range of subjects, from views of crowded city streets bustling with traffic to travelogues featuring images of "exotic" people and places ("Cinema of Attractions" 65). The lure of the exotic provided source material for both early non-fiction and fiction films, the former sensationalizing images of "real natives" and the latter staging the spectacle of "Oriental" and "tribal" people and rituals. Film's first spectators were very likely to witness multiple framings of "the primitive" in the course of one program, an arrangement that has indelibly linked the gaze of early cinema to the nascent projects of modern anthropology in film history.

In fact, cinematic technology emerged as the product of a century-long scientific investment in capturing and preserving the minutiae of a rapidly modernizing world on film, a project that resonated with the "salvage imperative" of twentieth century anthropology. The most canonical examples of early cinema catalogue a pervasive interest in recording the otherwise fleeting images of a real world in perpetual motion, from the fast-paced experience of travel vis-à-vis the locomotive and horseless carriage to the complex physicality of bodies on the move. While films framing "primitive" bodies like Felix Regnault's 1895 chronotographs *Wolof*

Woman Walking or Thomas Edison's shorts of Native American dancers and "savage" types are often regarded as predecessors of modern ethnographic documentary, the subject matter of early films in general can be considered "anthropological" in retrospect. Early cinematic images stand at the intersection of what are now framed as distinct, and often competing, discourses: the disinterested, observational practices of science and the subjective, wholly personal representational practices of art. Filmmakers at the turn of the century, however, did not make such distinctions. Film's unique visual pleasures came out of the medium's capacity to sensationalize prosaic experience and to re-enchant the observational gaze. As emerging modes of visuality, both anthropology and cinema in the early years of the twentieth century presumed that essential, undiscovered truths about humanity lay beyond the reach of ordinary vision, and that those truths could be accessed through a systematic reordering of visual perception.

As emerging modes of visual representation, cinematic and anthropological seeing had a profound influence on literary writing in the early twentieth century. The narrative experimentation of the modernist avant-garde was heavily influenced by the visual possibilities offered by the cinematic gaze. As Michael North argues, American writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemmingway, W.E.B. Du Bois, and James Wheldon Johnson all employed what he calls a "spectroscopic" point of view in their fiction, presenting a world "as if it were to be seen in published form by a spectatorial audience" as opposed to a conventionally-conceived reader (110).[11]

The twentieth-century preoccupation with seeing reality anew united artists and scholars working across media forms. Their struggle to invent a visual language with the capacity to

[11] Although North considers the "Camera Eye" sections of Dos Passos' *U.S.A* to borrow explicitly from cinematic techniques, specifically Soviet Montage, he also suggests that the realism typically associated with Hemingway's writing implicitly exhibits a tendency to "see everything as if it were already seen" and reads Fitzgerald's protagonists as "onlookers" to a Debordian "society of spectacle" (110-112, 142).

represent culture holistically led them to combine the multiple modes of observation available to them, including literary description, photography, the cinematic long-take and the emerging protocols of continuity editing. The visual logic of the participant-observer that emerged from this experimentation combined the subjective, dialogic perspective of the cultural insider with the "birds-eye view" of the supposedly objective, neutral outsider. This attempt at totalizing vision came to define the production of so-called "natives" in the twentieth century and their relationship to the Western, white travelers configured as global subjects.

BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI'S CINEMATIC VISION

For several generations of scholars, Malinowski's ethnographic writing has been understood either as a historical record of cultural encounter or as a reflection of colonial ideological formations about race and "civilization", and in both cases it is the distinct visuality of his work that is praised or problematized. Once hailed as the mythical "father of modern ethnography", since the 1967 publication of his fieldwork diaries Malinowski has been regarded as fieldwork's delinquent forefather.[12] Scholarly work on the anthropologist has made it impossible to ignore the ways that his ethnographic writing is a performance of authority implicated in the violence of colonialism. Marianna Torgovnick, for instance, convincingly reads the visual erotics at play in *The Sexual Lives of Savages* as "a form of narrative striptease," a set of looking relations that seek to authoritatively "penetrate" the intimacies of native life (4-7). Fatimah Tobing-Rony positions Malinowski's brand of ethnography as another iteration of the wide-ranging, objectifying ethnographic gaze, a form of "scientific voyeurism" inextricably bound up in a racist paradigm that positions racially-marked bodies as primitive versions of humanity (8). Since the 1967 publication of his fieldwork diaries in which the anthropologist described his intense feelings of both repulsion and attraction to the bodies of his subjects, Malinowski and the brand of ethnographic observation that he invented have been subject to a painstaking process of deconstructive analysis by a new generation of anthropologists seeking to disentangle themselves from the troublesome legacy of Malinowski's ethnographic gaze.

However troubling the anthropologist's writing may be for current audiences, Malinowski's first two major ethnographic works *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) and

[12] While Malinowski's ethnographic monographs studiously exclude his emotions from his observations, his fieldwork diaries revealed that the anthropologist was deeply troubled by the subjects of his study. He writes that he "was fed up with the niggers" and longed for white "civilization" for most of his stay in the Trobriands. In a reference to Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*, he infamously confesses that his "feelings toward the natives are decidedly tending toward 'Exterminate the brutes'".

The Sexual Lives of Savages (1929) reached a wide audience after their publication, appealing not only to professional anthropologists and scholars, but to a general readership interested in primitive cultures. Both of these ethnographies attempt to describe the culture of indigenous people living in the Trobriand Islands, a small island chain off the coast of Papua New Guinea, a country that became a frequent site for anthropological study in the twentieth century. Despite the cringe-worthy racism and sexism that permeates his texts, the popularity of Malinowski's ethnography at the time it was published in scholarly circles and beyond makes it worth posing questions about the formal operations at work in his writing. What qualities made his ethnography so compelling? How did a relatively unknown scholar manage to write books that shaped a discipline and appealed to both scholarly and general readers for several generations?

One characteristic that distinguishes Malinowski's anthropological writing from that of his contemporaries is his strategic use of narrative to draw readers into a diegetic world that is the stuff of pure exotic fantasy. His famed description of "the Ethnographer's tribulations" in the opening pages of *Argonauts* reads more like a travelogue or adventure tale than fact-based ethnographic study: "Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight" (4). Malinowski goes to great lengths in this introductory chapter of his first major ethnographic study to establish the scientific credibility and authority of his project, but first he appeals to his reader's imagination. In this sentence, so typical of Malinowski's authorial style, the writer explicitly borrows from the conventions of literary travel writing to pique his reader's curiosity. The castaway scenario with which he opens his ethnographic narrative is, after all, a staple of the adventure tale, a plot device made famous by canonical examples of the genre like Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and Robert Louis

Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Asking readers to imagine themselves "castaways" on an unknown island places them within a familiar fictional context, but it also works to link the unfamiliar role of "the Ethnographer" with a whole cast of beloved and heroic literary characters.

The introduction to *Argonauts* serves a dual purpose. Malinowski asserts his scientific authority to make claims about the Trobriand Islanders, but he embeds his mastery of "native" culture in another authorial voice: that of the storyteller or auteur. Before setting down anything like a series of dictums for carrying out effective fieldwork, he narrativizes his own experiences upon his arrival in the Trobriand Islands, describing a cause and effect chain of events that appear naturally to lead him to invent participant-observation. Readers learn that Malinowski struggles upon his arrival on the islands, suffering bouts of "hopelessness" and "periods of despondency" which can only be alleviated (perhaps unsurprisingly) by indulging in the reading of novels "as a man might take to drink in a fit of tropical depression and boredom" (4). On his first visit to the village, he feels alienated from both the "natives" (who either ignore him entirely or "flock" around him wanting tobacco) and the white trader "who has his routine way of treating the natives, and …neither understands, nor is very much concerned with the manner in which you, as an ethnographer, will have to approach them" (4). His frustration leads him to decide "to live without other white men, right among the natives," an experience "which at first is a strange, sometimes unpleasant, sometimes intensely interesting adventure," and eventually allows him to establish necessary relationships with the islanders he is there to observe.

In just a few pages, Malinowski manages to construct in miniature the narrative that frames his entire ethnographic project. Readers understand his decision to live "amongst the natives" as the product of a seemingly logical sequence of events, a brief narrative that precedes Malinowski's chronological plotting of the Kula exchange ritual, the text's central narrative. In

fact, it is difficult to extricate these individual narrative threads from one another, since Malinowski invites his reader to regard the text as a faithful reconstruction of what he actually witnessed in the Trobriands, from the moment he sets foot on the "tropical beach" of the island nation through the moment he sits at his desk writing an account of his time spent among "real" savages. His personal story invites readers to understand participant-observation as simply a very human response to exceptional circumstances, rather than a self-conscious intervention in a rapidly shifting academic discipline.

The anthropologist's account of his first trip to the village gives readers a first glimpse of "native" life, but it also introduces the three groups of characters that appear as recurring "types" throughout *Argonauts*: the "natives," who appear either both as a generalizable social category and as a cast of individuals singled out by name or status; the missionaries, traders, government officials, and other white men who Malinowski blames for everything from upheaval and unnecessary conflict to fabricating sensational stories about native customs; and finally the ethnographer himself, a character who is imbued with the ability to see the world both "as the native sees it" and the critical distance of learned observation. As historian of anthropology George Stocking suggests, although Malinowski explicitly compares the Trobriand Islanders to Homeric heroes in the title of his text, the narrative construct operates more like a "euhemerist validating myth" that glorifies the Ethnographer himself, a character "who stands apart, capitalized, in heroic singularity" (109). Ultimately, readers are positioned to see "native" culture from the ethnographer's point of view, a device that encourages them to identify with the Malinowski who appears in the story as witness to the prosaic realities of a living "primitive" culture.

Stocking claims that "description was only the device by which he made prescription compelling," but Malinowski's careful attention to visual detail and character development makes it clear that he was not just tinkering with narrative elements, but was deeply invested in cultivating a literary voice (109). This should not be surprising, given that the anthropologist professed a profound interest in novels. In both his introduction to *Argonauts* and his fieldwork diaries, he confesses his compulsion to read novels as an escape from the discomforts of travel, his propensity toward illness and "terrible melancholy," and most of all the people he considered "Neolithic savages," whose village exuded "the stench, smoke, noise of people, dogs, and pigs" that he found both repulsive and alienating (*A Diary* 55). Malinowski writes in his diaries about his fascination with the works of Alexander Dumas and Rudyard Kipling, but his most persistent literary inspiration seemed to be the modernist fiction of Joseph Conrad. In fact, Malinowski self-consciously set out to emulate his favorite literary writer, famously claiming that "Rivers is the Rider Haggard of anthropology; I shall be the Conrad" an ambitious claim that not only demonstrates his high regard for Conrad's more high-brow, modernist literary writing, but explicitly links ethnographic writing to the artifice of literary narrative (Stocking 104). When read together, *Argonauts* and Malinowski's fieldwork diaries bear more than a slight resemblance to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the complex psychological ambivalence that the novel charts.[13]

However, it is Malinowski's overwhelming interest in point of view that pushes his writing beyond literary description and into a specifically cinematic register. If the anthropologist used description as a device to "make proscription compelling," what he was

[13] In his book *Predicament of Culture*, anthropologist James Clifford also reads comparatively between Malinowski's diary and Conrad's novel. He argues that both texts "appear to portray the crisis of an identity—a struggle at the limits of Western civilization" and notes the literary influences on Malinowski's ethnographic writing (98).

proscribing was a particular way of seeing "primitive culture". In the moment that opened this chapter, for instance, readers are asked to imagine that they are suspended in space, taking an imaginary "birds-eye view" of the native village, an impossible and distinctly cinematic point of view. Malinowski proceeds to fine-tune this establishing "shot", asking readers to begin paying attention to the fine textures of village life by "casting our glance over the central place, the street, and the surrounding grove and garden land," noticing topographical details as they emerge through description (49). Only then does the ethnographer shift "our glance" to the villagers themselves, as they "work in the garden," "collect food-stuffs," and "separate, each sex forming a group of workers," a rapid series of verbs that ask readers to imagine the simultaneous enactment of "compound" tasks. After establishing the gender specificity of the villager's activities, Malinowski gives readers more details: the men are "discussing" and "preparing" while women are "busying themselves with household work" and "scold[ing] their husbands," the first intimation of the soundtrack that accompanies this ethnographic "moving picture".

> What begins as an exercise in careful yet casual observation then shifts dramatically: Suddenly, our attention is drawn to some singular event, to a death, a tribal squabble, a division of inherited wealth, or to some ceremony. We watch it with understanding eyes, and see, side by side, the workings of tribal law and custom, and the play of personal passion and interest. (49)

What counts as an "event" significant enough to capture this imagined spectator's attention appears in a succinct taxonomy of acts considered worthy of anthropological investigation: the affective and aesthetic experience of death and its attendant rituals, the violent "squabble" of conflict, the socially-proscribed methods of allocating wealth, and the ambiguous, catch-all category of "some ceremony". Ranging from the proximity of emotional intimacy to the

culturally-proscribed behavior associated with ritual, this list suggests that the messy, idiosyncratic patterns of a given culture are more easily observed in microcosm. "Culture" only becomes legible when we focus our attention on the particular, the "singular event" that replays the larger patterns of cultural behavior on the small scale that allows the ethnographic observer to verify what he already knows about "native" life and to watch the enactment of ritual "with understanding eyes".

The imaginary gaze of Malinowski's reader is highly directed in this moment, moving from the detached interest of an observing eye scanning the scene to a sharply focused attention on the "singular event," a mode of seeing informed by another emergent visual language, the principles of continuity editing gaining currency through the films of American director D.W. Griffith (the most famous of which incidentally was released in 1915, the same year Malinowski arrived in the Trobriand Islands).[14] Continuity editing conventions are designed to create easy-to-follow, spatially and temporally-coherent narratives that eliminate extraneous, unnecessary, or confusing visual information. Films edited using continuity principles typically open with a shot taken from a distance from the action that establishes place and time before strategically shortening that shot distance, moving viewer's closer and closer to the action to reveal important visual narrative information about setting, characters, or objects with each successive, more tightly-framed shot.

Malinowski's introductory description of Trobriand Islanders adheres to a similar visual logic. After initially establishing the reader's point of view in what could be described as an extreme long shot, Malinowski moves us closer to the action, in a sense "tracking in" to street level. When our attention is drawn to an event, the gaze of the reader shifts from the distance

[14]American filmmaker D.W. Griffith refined the continuity editing principles he had developed in *A Girl and Her Trust* (1912) in his two most famous films, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916).

afforded by a "birds-eye view" to a much closer proximity, one where readers can notice the detailed ornamentation of "festive dress," take pleasure in "the full, crimson, purple, and golden skirts" of the women and can distinctly hear "snatches of conversation, bursts of laugher and giggling" (50). The scene culminates by immersing readers in the rich visual and aural landscape of the native dance, an archetypal ethnographic ceremony, as Malinowski transitions to the third chapter in which readers will be "… led up to the closer study of the erotic phase of native life" (50). The overwhelming effect of this passage is to push the reader's gaze closer to the action, a visual device shared by literary fiction and narrative cinema. The visuality of this moment works to draw the reader into Malinowski's ethnographic narrative as Stocking suggests, but it also closely replicates the protocols of an emergent cinematic visual language contemporaneous with his study.

If it seems strange to consider ethnographic writing cinematic, one only has to turn to the theoretical work of filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein, who considered the visuality of literary writing, specifically the novels of Charles Dickens, as a "prototype" for Griffiths' cinematic language (366). Eisenstein carefully traces the shifts in time and place in a passage from *Oliver Twist* to demonstrate the startling similarities between Dickens' arrangement of plot and Griffiths' experiments with parallel action, an argument upon which he rests his larger claim that cinematic montage is an art form with close formal links to the nineteenth century novel. The Soviet filmmaker's primary goal in writing this essay was to legitimize cinema as an art form at a time when film was widely regarded as a degraded, "popular" entertainment. The connections he makes between the visual protocols of Dickens' literary writing and Griffiths' cinematic narrative language, however, compellingly illustrate close links between modes of writing typically considered to be discrete, even antagonistic, visual forms. If cinematic vision

borrows from literary visual devices as Eisenstein claims, I suggest reversing this formulation. Like modernist writers who borrowed from cinema, Malinowski's descriptive ethnographic writing sought to replicate film's visuality.

In this moment, as in many others across his ethnographic work, Malinowski shifts the reader's gaze strategically, moving from the impressionistic view of an outsider to the intimate proximity that comes from (almost) total immersion in "native life". The oscillation these two ways of seeing creates the unique interpretive position of the participant-observer, a point of view simultaneously outside and inside "culture" that bridges the gap between the subject positions "native" and "foreigner" making it possible for the ethnographer to inhabit a liminal point of view somewhere in between the two. The participant-observer that Malinowski imagines can see culture "as the native sees it", embedded in the cultural knowledge that allows him to see difference with "understanding eyes", but he is never fully extricated from the critical distance of the trained scientist who can not only witness events but interpret them in a larger, theoretically-informed, scholarly context. For him, participant-observation is a method for safely entering a "native psyche" without ever fully "going native", a metamorphosis that for Malinowski, would entail giving up the disinterested objectivity that makes total cultural comprehension possible.

Participant-observation is not only a visual method of producing knowledge "in the field" as anthropologists put it; it is also a highly visual mode translating that research into writing. As in most academic fields, it is not enough for ethnographers to conduct research. Their research must be written and circulated among other ethnographers. Just as they are trained to see within the highly artificial paradigm of participant-observation, ethnographers are trained to produce writing that comes with its own visual protocols. Most ethnographic monographs include photographs—portraits of "natives" (often informants are singled out as subjects of portraiture),

carefully-staged photographs of important artifacts, and action snapshots of ritual events or candid moments that attest to the fact that the ethnographer "was really there," the documentary ethos that validates the truth claims of the ethnographic text. Ethnographic writing also relies on graphs and charts to translate observed patterns of behavior into another visual system of representation, one that attempts to clarify and condense complex information into the one, singular image.

Perhaps less widely recognized are the ways that the distinctive voice of ethnographic writing is inscribed by a visuality inherited not only from the descriptive practices of the travelogue and the literary devices of fiction, but from the visual language of cinema. While visual anthropologists have made clear the links between realist documentary film and ethnographic projects, the connection between ethnographic writing and narrative cinema have been studiously ignored by anthropology, most likely because to recognize those links has the potential to undermine the aura of facticity and authenticity on which the discipline's legitimacy within the academy still relies. Ethnography since post-structuralism is certainly a highly self-conscious, reflexive practice; to their credit, anthropologists have undertaken the painstaking work of critically examining the colonial inheritance of their discipline, insistently unpacking its most basic tenets and de-naturalizing the ethnographic monograph as a form of writing. To suggest that ethnographic writing in its earliest incarnations worked through a logic of cinema to immerse its readers should push us not only to reconsider how anthropology makes truth claims, but to re-examine the ways that ethnographic projects were one experiment in vision among many other similar projects that tried to re-envision "the real" in the early years of the twentieth century. Like the documentary filmmaker or the travel writer, the participant-observer sought a

distinctive writing voice, one that said “I was really there and saw these things with my own eyes”.

D. H. LAWRENCE'S ETHNOGRAPHIC GAZE

D.H. Lawrence's fascination with "the primitive" is a thematic thread that runs throughout his literary repertoire, linking his preoccupation with the primal energies and desires in his fiction to the descriptions of the "rich physique" of "natives" found in his travel writing (*Mornings* 35). What constituted "the primitive" for him, however, was highly personal, as much the product of his own psyche as it was inherited from any supposedly disinterested science. As Torgovnick suggests, Lawrence's tendency to substitute his own version of "the primitive" for many of the other thematic categories that circulate throughout his writing, like phallic power and female sexuality, is one he shared with many modernists (159). She convincingly argues that his ability to substitute his version of "primitive" being for any one of the many categories operational in his work reveals how the concept becomes as a repository for unexpressed Western fantasies and desires.

Lawrence's recourse to "the primitive" may not have been motivated by a scientific interest in observing culture, but his travel writing, especially his 1927 essay collection *Mornings in Mexico*, seems to exemplify looking-relations now considered "ethnographic". Written while living in Oaxaca, Mexico, and Taos, New Mexico, the essays contained in this collection are lyrical, anecdotal, and contemplative, but they are also richly descriptive, filled with prose images of an otherworldly landscape and the people who live there. That Lawrence turns his observational eye to the bodies and behaviors of Mexicans, Mexican Indians, and Native Americans who he regards as "native" Others is perhaps what makes it easy to categorize these essays in particular as ethnographic. While he is certainly just as preoccupied with cataloguing a wide variety of Italian "types" in his most famed travelogue *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), it is when he turns his attention to the bodies of people he considered "primitive," a branch of humanity

"…whose being is not going the same way as ours," that his most fantastical meditations on the origins of humanity's deepest, most profound desires come to the fore (101).

Published just five years after Malinowski's *Argonauts of the South Pacific*, Lawrence's project strongly resembles that of a participant-observer entering the field to live among the subjects of his study. Despite his efforts to differentiate himself explicitly from the "anthropologists and myth-transcribers" who lapse into an easy "sentimentality" when writing about that "Indian bunk [that] is not the Indian's invention," Lawrence *did* in fact deploy similar practices of observing "native" people in order to make abstract truth claims about the "spirit" of humanity in the face of the alienating experience of industrialized modernity (100-101).

Consider the practices of looking that this descriptive passage, characteristic of Lawrence's travel writing, sets into play:

> Down the creek, two native boys, little herdsmen, are bathing, stooping with knees together and throwing water over themselves, rising, gleaming dark coffee-red in the sun, wetly. They are very dark, and their wet heads are so black, they seem to give off a bluish light, like dark electricity. (34-35)

As a twenty-first-century reader, it is hard to imagine a passage that would better exemplify the voyeuristic gaze of ethnographic observation than this one. Lawrence's descriptions of the bodies of bathing "native boys" whose skins are "gleaming dark coffee-red in the sun, wetly" overtly sexualizes and infantilizes the subjects of his gaze, transforming the everyday ritual of bathing into a richly aestheticized and erotic visual experience. Framing an intimate moment as picturesque and idyllic, Lawrence leaves the bodies of the "native boys" wholly available to the reader's gaze, opened up for the reader to view unapologetically, without the shame of being seen taking pleasure in such blatantly voyeuristic looking.

It is not enough, though, to read moments like this one in Lawrence's travel writing as symptomatic, simply refracting a historical context of conquest, industrialization, and imperialism, no matter how gratifying the scholarly yield of such reading practices can be. It is more interesting to consider Lawrence's writing as not just another manifestation of perverse ethnographic looking relations, but to ask slightly different questions about *how* exactly an ethnographic lens works in a literary context. Lawrence was not trained as an anthropologist, nor did he have investments in ethnography's salvage project. He did, however, set out to see "real natives" by living in places radically different from the industrial landscape of the English midlands, and recording those experiences in writing. Lawrence certainly comes to very different conclusions about "natives" in his ethnographic writing than either Malinowski or Flaherty. Where Malinowski found the decipherable patterns of "culture", Lawrence finds incomprehensible chaos; where Flaherty found a primal will to survive, Lawrence finds an irrational drive toward death. The visuality of his writing, however, is strikingly similar to both Malinowski's ethnography and Flaherty's film, particularly in the ways he plays with point of view, manipulates duration, and privileges the enactment of "primitive" ritual.

In the passage above, Lawrence sets up the narrative situation of looking at "native boys," attempting to verbally enact the participant-observer's point of view by skillfully manipulating language to construct a visual experience The exceedingly slow quality of these two sentences, with their multiple clauses extending what is a fairly simple snapshot image into a lingering, drowsy incantation, pushes the reader to savor each progressive detail and to focus their attention on the minutiae of Lawrence's writing. The first sentence of the passage establishes the information necessary to orient the reader, establishing "down the creek" as the site of encounter, "two native boys" as our subjects of interest, and "bathing," "stooping," and

"throwing water over themselves," as behaviors that arrest our attention. It is the question of *how they look* while bathing that primarily interests Lawrence though, and it is the moment we reach the word "rising" in its own individual clause that the details become increasingly indulgent and perverse. This is a moment, Lawrence tells us, worth watching; these are the kinds of details we should notice and savor for their aesthetic value.

Crucial to Lawrence's aesthetic is the fantasy that these "native boys" are suspended in time, as is the writer who finds himself caught in a kind of ethnographic reverie. Lawrence plays with duration in this passage to heighten the erotic tension of secretly viewing his subjects. The slow-motion effect of the layered clauses of the sentences here mimics the cinematic long take, a technique that allows the spectator to watch as action unfolds onscreen in "real time". Positioned obliquely in space where we can observe the boys without being seen taking such gratuitous pleasure in such a scene, Lawrence simulates the camera's position as unobtrusive, unacknowledged recording device. The slow building of action keeps the reader's gaze trained firmly upon the "coffee-red" bodies of Lawrence's "natives" as they bathe, never cutting away to give us another point of view.

Of course what is elided here is precisely the modern context in which this kind of euphoric spectatorship is located. Like many ethnographies, particularly those written before deconstruction's influence on the discipline in the 1980's, Lawrence's literary practices of ethnographic vision work by effacing the traces of modernity that appear at the edge of the frame here, so to speak. That the "native boys" are herdsmen, very probably taking a break from the routine of their daily work to bathe in the stream, hints, although only obliquely, to the fact that these "primitive types" participate in an already existing economy, one that is decidedly not tribal, nomadic, or even purely agrarian, but is instead subject to the same forces of modern

imperialism and globalization that brought Lawrence to Mexico as a tourist in the first place. That tourism is part of the local economy is attested to across the essays: Lawrence writes about the man he calls "the *mozo*" (or servant) who apparently "goes with the house" he rents (55); he complains about the local practice of overcharging white tourists for everything from oranges to huaraches; and he is deeply frustrated by the response of indigenous people to Western medicine, who he writes simple-mindedly refuse "proper" treatment out of what he perceives as a child-like ignorance (62-63).

When Lawrence does travel to an open air market, a site of explicit economic exchange, what he records is no less than the sight of "the primitive" exhibited en masse:

> They are mostly small people, of the Zapotec race: small men with lifted chests and quick, lifted knees, advancing with heavy energy in the midst of the dust. And quiet, small, round-headed women running barefoot, tightening their blue *rebozos* round their shoulders, so often with a baby in the fold. The white cotton clothes of the men so white that their faces are invisible places of darkness under their big hats. Clothed darkness, faces of night, quickly, silently, with inexhaustible energy advancing to the town. And many of the serranos, the Indians from the hills, wearing their conical black felt hats, seem capped with night, above the strait white shoulders. Some have come far, walking all yesterday in their little black hats and black-sheathed sandals. Tomorrow they will walk back. And their eyes will be just the same, black and bright and wild, in the dark faces. They have no goal, any more than the hawks in the air, and no course to run, any more than the clouds. (84)

This passage begins by describing the physiognomy of what Lawrence identifies as "the Zapotec race" with an audacity that now seems an outrageous appropriation of scientific authority and

expertise. Introducing his reader first to a description of the "small men," he then describes what he clearly regards as their female counterparts. Both of these sentences call attention to the seemingly ominous movement of the crowd: the men have "lifted" chests and knees and are "advancing"; the women are "running barefoot," "tightening" their babies to their bodies.

It is not until we reach the third sentence in the passage, or the third layer in this written image, that Lawrence takes a turn toward his more modernist literary sensibility. Here he introduces an idea that begins to subsume this passage, an abstract notion of darkness, incoherence, and violence that runs throughout his writing on Mexico. An aesthetic observation about what he perceives as the stark contrast between what is visibly apparent, the "white cotton clothes of the men," and what is imperceptible, the "invisible places of darkness under their hats," transforms the crowd into a prose version of a modernist painting, transforming human bodies into shapes and colors that come to stand in for alternative meanings made clear in the sentence that follows. In this formulation, "native" people are rendered faceless, disembodied figures of darkness clothed in white cotton. As spectral, ominous forms, they simply stand in for the "inexhaustible" energy of the crowd that "advances" like a wave moving steadily from nowhere to the somewhere that is town. That the purpose of their journey is to buy and sell goods, an enterprise that marks their humanity and the existence of an economy in which they actively participate, is replaced in this passage by a kind of purposelessness that for Lawrence becomes characteristic of whoever he marks "primitive" in Mexico. The "Indians from the hills" appear to "have no goal" and like the hawks in flight, their motives are incoherent. As though frozen in pre-history, these "natives" retrace a well-worn path to town, one that has been made many times before and will always be made in the same purposeless, meaningless way.

Once again, the layered clauses of Lawrence's descriptive writing create a slow-motion effect that gestures toward a cinematic register. The first two clauses repeat the otherworldly image of bodiless figures who look like "clothed darkness" and "faces of night", subtly re-fashioning Lawrence's original description. The third and fourth clauses shift from describing his "primitive" subjects to characterizing their movement as "quick" and "silent". Lawrence does not stop here, however, but continues to refine his original image, suggesting the terror of faceless crowd or a militaristic attack with the verb "advancing" in the fifth clause. First, individuals are rendered bodiless, then faceless, before the image takes on a more sinister quality. As a written image, the effect resembles that of a cinematic camera slowly tracking out to reveal how the fragment is part of a whole.

In a sense, what Lawrence found in Northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest was an imaginary Indian that already existed in his literary repertoire. The darkness that Lawrence ascribes to the "primitive" people of Mexico in this moment is just one iteration of an idea that he explores in various ways across his writing about both Mexicans and Native Americans at Taos Pueblo in New Mexico, distinct groups that he regularly blended into one version of "the native" in his travel writing and the novel he produced while living in North America, *The Plumed Serpent* (1926). Returning repeatedly to descriptions of what he called the "black eyes" of native people, Lawrence's preoccupation with the unreturned gaze of the primitive becomes a mantra of the text. What he perceives as the blank stare of Mexican men signals a predisposition to violence:

> And to this day, most of the Mexican Indian women seem to bring forth stone knives.
>
> Look at them, these sons of incomprehensible mothers, with their black eyes like flints,

and their stiff little bodies as taut and as keen as knives of obsidian. Take care they don't rip you up. (57)

What seems to bother Lawrence about the illegibility of the "native" gaze is that it renders the "little bodies" of the men he describes here as impenetrable surfaces, inscrutable as "knives of obsidian" and capable of as much damage. The threat of being "ripped up" is obvious when he looks at them, but their humanity, like that of their "incomprehensible mothers," is not.

Even when describing the only local person with whom Lawrence forged a relationship, his mozo Rosalino, the writer returns to his fascination with black eyes. Rosalino is different, for Lawrence, "from the average Indian down here"; he has a "certain sensitiveness and aloneness, as if he were a mother's boy," and he is somewhat daft, what "what Americans would call a dumbbell" (55). While he does not share the same "obsidian" glare of other natives, Lawrence finds the particularity of his gaze compelling and writes about it at length. Rosalino's eyes are "smaller, blacker, like the quick black eyes of a lizard," but most importantly "they are just a bit aware that there is another being, unknown, at the other end of the glance" (57). Through a perverse and contradictory logic, the mozo's eyes link him with an animality that he ascribes to the "flat saucer-eyed" gaze of the parrots, oxen, dogs, and lizards that populate the text, yet they also indicate that his humanity is what makes him available for a writer's inspection (22).

In his more well-known travelogue, *Sea and Sardinia*, Lawrence makes strikingly similar observations about the "great dark unlighted" eyes of peasants in Cagliari, the capital city of Sardinia, an island whose ancient history captures his imagination (*Sea* 67). Making a distinction between the "dark eyes" of Sicilians, a "type" whose physiognomy he considers reminiscent of Greece, and the "soft, blank darkness" of the eyes of Sardinian peasants, Lawrence links the gaze of this Italian type to a much earlier, imagined prehistory, "before the soul became self-

conscious: before the mentality of Greece appeared in the world" (67). It is not Cagliari's famed architecture and Neolithic ruins that reveal its ancient past, but the eyes of the peasant people, subjects who Lawrence positions as unchanged by time, that give the writer access to a primitive, "remote" version of humanity. Noting that he has seen "a suggestion" of the peculiarly dark eyes of Italian peasants in the paintings of Velasquez and Goya, he self-consciously marks his descriptive writing as part of an aesthetic tradition in which peasants function as picaresque types. Certainly Lawrence's vision of Italians was a ready part of his imaginative repertoire before he visited the country, produced through the histories of representation he alludes to. For him, Sardinian "types" are part of the ancient, remote landscape of Sardinia itself, a site that functions as a mythological destination for Lawrence who wished to see it as a place "which is like nowhere," a place that lies outside "the net of this European civilization" (3). Like other representational practices that claim to document the visual landscape of "the real" world, what Lawrence's travel writing actually records are the musings of a writer who desires contact with his own "primitive" self (52).

The darkness of the "native" gaze was a preoccupation already circulating in his travel writing, but it is in his essays about Mexico and the American Southwest that "black eyes" begin to acquire new, more complex meanings. In an essay entitled "Corsamin and the Parrots", the first essay in *Mornings in Mexico,* Lawrence introduces an idea that he pursues throughout the collection. He begins at the scene of writing itself, where he sits in the little adobe courtyard of the rented house in Oaxaca. Setting the stage for the essays that follow, the writer introduces the elements of his narrative: first the "little fat, curly white dog" Corsamin; next, Rosalino, who sweeps the patio, whistling; and finally the uncanny, "devilish" voices of the two tame parrots perched in the tree overhead who mock both of them, calling "Perro!," yapping like a dog, and

whistling like Rosalino, only "a little-more-so" (*Mornings* 11). Positioned in the text between a lap dog and two tame parrots, Rosalino is immediately framed as animalistic, a being whose subjective humanity can never be fully realized and whose interiority the writer can only speculate about.

Once all the narrative elements are in play, Lawrence begins to muse about their potential meanings. The cackling chatter of the parrots strikes him as "belonging to the ages before brains were invented" and leads him, like so many other observable phenomena, to the idea that lurks under the surface of all his writing: the origins of humanity (13). Expressing dissatisfaction with theories of evolution that conceptualize history as "a straight course [that is] hacked out in wounds, against the will of the world," he claims a preference for Aztec theories that privilege chaos and what he calls in a later essay, "worlds successively created and destroyed" (15, 81). What appeals to him about an Aztec narrative of origins is the way it conceives of history as a layering of "dimensions" that often overlap so that some residue of prehistory is always co-existent with the current moment.

In the midst of his writing, Lawrence meets Rosalino's eyes, returning his gaze as they acknowledge the uncanny sound of the parrots. Strangely, in a moment that seems to offer the possibility of forging a relationship over a shared joke, Lawrence suddenly becomes aware of his inability to understand the mozo. He writes, "Between us also is the gulf of the other dimension, and he wants to bridge it with the foot-rule of the three-dimensional space. He knows it can't be done. So do I. Each of us knows the other knows" (22-23). In the event Lawrence imagines, Rosalino belongs to another "dimension," not exactly an evolutionary narrative but a slightly different notion of "the primitive," a being who is human but remains separate from the writer, suspended across a "gulf" that cannot be bridged. Reminiscent of Jacques Derrida's formulation

of the animal gaze as an "infinite abyss" that prompts an ethnical relation with the Other, Lawrence suggests in this moment that he can recognize a "primitive" consciousness in Rosalino (381). His essay turns on the notion, however, that this consciousness is never wholly available for observation but is always obscured.

In a historical moment when the newly codified practice of ethnography insists on the possibility of revealing the logics behind "native" behaviors and rituals through specific ways of looking, here Lawrence asserts an opposite claim: that when he meets the gaze of the Other, what he sees is only a reflection of himself as an observer, one who can look at another "dimension" but never fully access what seems to be under the surface. It is in the context of writing about the Native Americans of the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico, a site Lawrence often visited to watch the native dances performed on for tourists on public feast days, that he most fully articulates his aversion to the efforts of "white men" to understand the "primitive" mind:

> The consciousness of one branch of humanity is the annihilation of the consciousness of another branch. That is, the life of the Indian, his stream of conscious being, is just death to the white man. And we can understand the consciousness of the Indian only in terms of the death of our consciousness. (102)

While the desire for death, the ultimate dissolution of the self, is not a new idea in Lawrence's writing, the violence with which he imagines the collision of absolute difference in this passage is startling. The white man, a category in which the writer clearly places himself and his readers, exists in one "branch of humanity," incongruous with "the life of the Indian," who, like in his earlier iteration this idea, is suspended in another "dimension". Humanity is divided into two "kinds" here, each with radically distinct ways of knowing or "streams of consciousness". Lawrence does not leave open the possibility of locating commonality between "branches of

humanity," a notion that he regards as bound up in the problems of sentimentality. Instead, he insists that understanding only comes from the "annihilation" of white consciousness, an annihilation he actively sought to imagine in his fiction.

Significantly, it is watching the spectacle of the native dances at Taos that compels Lawrence to stake a claim about the impenetrability of a native "stream of conscious being". The native dance is, after all, one of the privileged sites of ethnography. Appearing repeatedly in anthropological studies, the ritual dance satisfies the ethnographer's desire to ascribe meaning to patterned behavior. In this moment, the act of observing the quintessential primitive ritual forces the writer away from the descriptive and toward the declarative, a mode in which he readily asserts abstract claims about radical difference. Perhaps to compensate for the problems with visuality that he describes here, Lawrence turns from describing native bodies and rituals to attempting to write his way into "native" consciousness, the most literary of his strategies to comprehend the reality of the Other.

These experiments with point of view are most prominent in Lawrence's essay "The Mozo", a narrative in which Lawrence strategically shifting the reader's gaze from looking *at* "the primitive" along with the writer to looking through the eyes of the Other at the curious behavior of "the white man". Asking readers to "imagine a race of big white monkeys got up in fantastic clothes, and able to kill a man by hissing at him; able to leap through the air in great hops, covering a mile in each leap…" and other strange "monkey tricks," Lawrence attempts to sketch "…from our point of view, something of the picture that the Indian has of us" (58). This "picture" continues at length, as the writer oscillates between talking *about* Mexicans and Indians with the authority of the expert and talking *like* his imaginary native. Declarative statements like "Now to a Mexican, and an Indian, time is a vague, foggy reality" are followed

by the imagined voice of the Other as storyteller: "But to the white monkey, horrible to relate, there are exact spots of time, such as five o'clock…the day is a horrible puzzle of exact spots of time" (58-9). These imagined natives are defined largely through their inability to recognize or understand the technologies and economies regularly associated with industrialization, a way of framing "the primitive" as the logical opposite of "the modern".

What Lawrence seems to be after is a literary strategy of de-familiarizing the bodies and behaviors of "modern" citizens, a strategy typically reserved at the moment in which he is writing for studies of "primitive man". The writer turns his fascination with the indecipherability of the native's "black eyes" into a canvas on which to picture the strangeness and subjugating force of "civilization" that Lawrence himself spent a lifetime trying to escape. His strategic shifting between narrative voices and points of view can be read as a specifically literary iteration of the gaze of the participant-observer. Creating a narrative construct in which readers are forced to oscillate between inhabiting radically different kinds of subjectivity works through a similar logic, one with visual implications. *To think about* Lawrence's "Mexicans" and "Indians" requires conjuring the image of an unknown and unknowing "native", while conversely *to think like* a "native" requires its own set of images, those of "white monkeys" and their incomprehensible "monkey tricks".

In the end, writing in the imagined voice of the Other is a strategy that ends up simply naturalizing what become the defining characteristics of "natives" in twentieth century travelogue writing and ethnographic fictions: ritual behavior and a primitive relationship to modern technology. Imagining and trying to inhabit a radically Othered point of view *is* an attempt, however, to use literary tools to articulate kinds of relating that Lawrence claims are not available in "real life". If the acts of observation on which ethnography relies to make

interpretive claims about culture do not, for Lawrence, reveal the essence of "Indian consciousness," his travel writing suggests that thinking with Others is an "intangible" phenomenon that literary writing, rather than anthropological narrative, is uniquely positioned to address.

Compellingly, Lawrence's travel writing can now be read for the ways it seems to enact the trajectory of the ethnographic monograph since the 1960's, a form of writing that shifted from a preoccupation with the total vision of culture that Clifford Geertz termed "thick description" to foregrounding increasingly reflexive meditations on the self that writes and the unique identity and subject position of the ethnographer who navigates a culture they don't understand. Like contemporary ethnographic writing, Lawrence's travelogue shows the seams of what was once a naturalized practice of perception, calling into question his own methods as he becomes increasingly frustrated with the limits of the visual. While he may begin with a quest similar to Malinowski and Flaherty, Lawrence's modernist writing can accommodate his later uncertainty about his own capacity to see and understand "native" Others. Readers can never quite see "real natives" in either Lawrence's fiction or travel writing because the native is not available to his vision or to our own. What we can see is the writer himself, a traveler suspended in between worlds, who desires contact with his own imagined "primitive" self.

ROBERT FLAHERTY'S CINEMATIC ETHNOGRAPHY

Although Robert and Francis Flaherty's *Moana* (1926) has traditionally been considered the first "ethnographic documentary," the film has a complicated relationship to both of those terms. John Grierson famously coined the term "documentary" in a review of *Moana*, but it is Flaherty's first and far more famous film *Nanook of the North* (1922) that is commonly considered the model *par excellence* of early documentary film form (Brownlow 471). Unlike *Nanook*, the South Sea romance narrative of *Moana* did not feature the dramatic fight to for human survival that had originally captivated audiences, but instead painted a picture of island life as a drowsy, playful sequence of repetitive tasks.[15] Despite the coming-of-age narrative that culminates in a carefully-staged climactic scene of ritual tattooing, most of the film captures what at the time were perceived as rapidly diminishing "primitive" practices of gathering and preparing food, hunting, fishing, and making clothes, a focus which can certainly be described as "ethnographic". Flaherty may have intended to recreate the heroic survival tale that made his first film so successful, but he ended up producing what Jeffrey Geiger argues is "the first feature-length documentary to focus to such an extent on the details of everyday life" (423).

Perhaps it is the "everyday" quality of *Moana*'s visual landscape that made the film less appealing to both audiences in 1926 and to film scholars in the current moment. One only has to consider that *Moana* is one of the few Flaherty films still awaiting restoration and recirculation by Criterion to see that the film never really found a modern audience beyond film historians interested in categorizing early documentary images. The lack of vigorous critical interest in the film seems strange, especially considering its privileged status in narratives about the historical

[15] The Flahertys purposely chose the Western Samoan island of Savai'i as the location for the second film based on the mistaken belief that they would find islanders battling gigantic sea creatures in the Pacific, but they quickly learned that tropical life was far more sedate than they imagined. While they may have intended to film scenes of epic struggle with the natural world, what they ended up filming were the prosaic activities of the Samoan people with whom they lived and worked (Brownlow 481).

origins of Film Studies and Visual Anthropology, distinct disciplines that both claim it as an origin text. If Flaherty's second film is troubling for scholars, it is because the text is neither anthropological nor documentary in the twenty-first century meanings of those terms, but is instead closer to what Paul Rotha described as "romantic ethnography" (63). At the heart of the film's problematic status is the ways it troubles any clear distinction between fact and fiction. On the one hand, much of the film seems to operate in "real time," recording often complex activities from start to finish. Yet, as Richard Barsam suggests, *Moana*'s subtitle "Romance of a Golden Age" discloses Flaherty's "intention of taking us to a time and place that are not of this world," a fantasy about the spirit of primitivism that underwrites many other modernist texts of the period (51).

What interests me about *Moana* is precisely its focus on everyday "native" life and the ways that this particular mode of visuality that has posed considerable difficulty in efforts to categorize the film as either ethnographic film or realist documentary. It is precisely this tension between an anthropological premium on "accuracy" and the artifice of narrative that makes *Moana* a crucial text for histories of twentieth-century visuality. Flaherty's films are often read as singular projects, testaments to the genius of an iconoclastic auteur. Rather than trace the specificity of Flaherty's film language to demonstrate the singularity of his aesthetic project, I read his films as yet another iteration of the impulse to capture "culture" on film, linking his earliest film projects to other similar practices of documenting lifeways perceived as authentically "primitive" in the 1920s.

A brief glimpse at one of the more frequently mentioned scenes of the film in which Moana's little brother Pe'a climbs a tree to gather coconuts illustrates the film's hazy status somewhere in between ethnographic film and naturalist documentary. As the young boy expertly

climbs the slim trunk of the palm, the camera follows his upward movement in a dramatically long tilt that reveals, for the first time, the startling height of the tree and the danger that accompanies what initially seemed to be picturesque and childlike play. Pe'a continues his climb unfazed eventually leaving the frame, but this time the camera does not follow him. Instead, stylistically the scene takes an abrupt turn as Pe'a suddenly appears framed in medium close-up trying to dislodge coconuts from the palm to drop on the beach where his brother waits to gather them. Viewers are promptly positioned alongside the small boy, swaying precariously at the top of the skinny palm, a feat which points both to the artifice of the film's point of view and to Flaherty's impressive climbing ability.[16] The scene ends by cross-cutting between two distinct points of view: Pe'a's from the top of the tree and Moana's as he watches his brother and cheers him on from the ground, a juxtaposition that asks audiences to understand that Moana and Pe'a share the same experience and "actual" space, and that their exchange was filmed simultaneously.

Flaherty's tendency to shift between long takes and edited sequences troubles any easy distinction between ethnographic filmmaking, naturalist documentary, and fiction film in ways that have historically been disconcerting for film scholars and visual anthropologists alike. In this moment in particular, the filmmaker asks his audience to subscribe to the mythology that Bill Nichols claims underwrites all documentary film: that we are seeing events exactly as they would have happened if the ubiquitous camera had not been there to record them (239). Flaherty asks us to believe that we are granted privileged access to a vision of real Samoan life, yet the montage of the final moments of the scene make this notion untenable, reminding us that the

[16]In his humorous essay "The Camera People", Eliot Weinberger humorously points out that "superhuman tree-climbing abilities are a trademark of ethnographic filmmakers" (141). That these moments become a convention of ethnographic documentary unrecognized by anthropologists themselves testifies to the artifice of the genre and to Flaherty's considerable influence on the form.

version of events we see is, and always has been, elaborately framed for us by the filmmaker's editing eye.[17] Flaherty uses this contradictory point of view, at once "real" and fantastical, to stage a romantic elegy to the "primitive," an imagined subject on the verge of extinction by industrial modernity (albeit a state in which paradoxically, both filmmaker and spectator are complicit). If audiences of *Nanook* were thrilled by witnessing the dangers of Arctic life, *Moana* afforded another kind of spectatorial point of view, a rare glimpse into "real" native life, or as Malinowski famously put it, the opportunity to "see life as the native sees it".

More than anything else, it is Flaherty's impulse to capture images of "real" natives and their everyday activities that aligns *Moana* with the ethnographic mode of observation that emerged in the 1920s in the U.S. and Britain. Like Malinowski and Lawrence, the filmmaker sought to immerse himself in the primitive cultures that were the subjects of his films and then re-create that experience for film audiences. Flaherty was certainly inventing new forms of cinema, but he was also inventing new forms of observing and recording culture that were closely tied to the visual protocols of an emergent anthropology. Re-reading *Moana* as a film invested in seeing "native culture" from a "native" point of view asks us to recognize the links between cinematic vision in the twentieth century and the visual protocols of anthropology's participant-observer.

Documentary filmmaking and ethnography are closely linked representational practices with shared histories and disciplinary principles. It is a now a commonplace in film studies that documentary film is circumscribed by the uneasy relationship between "the real world" and representations of the real (Nichols, *Representing Reality* 5). Like all films, documentaries do not simply capture the real world in front of the camera lens, but organize that world through formal

[17] While Robert Flaherty worked with Helen Van Dongen to edit his later films, both *Nanook* and *Moana* were edited collaboratively by him and his wife, Frances Flaherty.

choices in both pre- and post-production. Similarly, it is now widely recognized within anthropology that ethnography is a process of inscription rather than straightforward transcription. "Ethnographic fictions," to use James Clifford's term, are highly artificial, historically and institutionally determined texts and can never be read as accurate recordings of real encounters and events, but as interpretive and inventive textual representations of culture (6). Although Grierson's frequently cited definition of documentary as "the creative treatment of actuality" is often taught in college classrooms as a description specific to film, it seems to me that his phrase can also be read as a fitting description of the representational strategies of ethnographic writing (Hardy 13).

Both documentary filmmaking and ethnography are practices historically linked to the increased mobility and rapid technological innovation of late nineteenth century industrial modernity. Equipped with the Lumiere's cinematograph, the earliest filmmakers took to documenting the very systems of mass transportation and industry that made their film projects possible. British anthropologists in Cambridge's 1898 Torres-Straight Expedition made photographic technology central to their ethnographic fieldwork, a practice that became standard for all ethnographic expeditions and quickly expanded to include cinematic cameras. Although the impulse to capture the world-in-motion on film is characteristic of the nineteenth-century fascination with optics, the invention and availability of cinematic cameras, celluloid film, and projection devices certainly propelled the rapid development of a host of documentary projects in the twentieth century.

Documentary filmmaking and anthropology also share a troubling history of complicity with various colonial political projects that made it thinkable to film in locations once considered remote or inaccessible, quite literally opening up multiple fields of research, and funding

expeditions to gather information about future imperial subjects.[18] That Flaherty's early films were subsidized by trading companies with substantial investment in imperial projects is often cited by scholars as evidence of his imbrication in colonial interests and power relations, calling into question the ethics of his relationship to his indigenous subjects along with any "scientific" veracity to his work.[19] The thrust of this criticism supposes that if the filmmaker really set out to preserve "real primitive" cultures on film before they were eradicated by industrialized modernity, his own complicity in those forces would seem to make the very bases of that project untenable. A similar problem has haunted anthropological fieldwork its inception. Early in the twentieth century, British functionalist anthropology's "salvage imperative" conceptualized "the native" as a rapidly disappearing subject, one whose "authentically primitive" culture was under threat of erasure by the demands of imperialist expansion. Claude Lévi-Strauss would make similar assertions about what he called "the irresolvable paradox" some forty years later, observing that "either I am a traveler in ancient times, and faced with a prodigious spectacle which would be almost entirely unintelligible to me…or I am a traveler of our own day, hastening in search of a vanishing reality…I am the victim of a double infirmity: what I see is an affliction to me; and what I do not see, a reproach" (45). As a product of imperialism, nascent anthropology saw itself caught in a disciplinary double-bind: the ethnographer's task was to document the culture of a "primitive" subject whose very existence was threatened by the ethnographer's presence.

[18] Historian of documentary Erik Barnouw notes that the major producers of early documentary films were imperialist countries who depicted "natives" as quaint, childlike subjects in need of European protection and actively sought to portray conquest overseas in a favorable light for audiences at home (22-26).

[19] Flaherty's imbrication in advertising for companies like Revillon-Frères, a French fur trading company, has been examined by film scholars and visual anthropologists. Brian Winston considers Flaherty's work both unethical and anti-realist, particularly the way he positions his indigenous subjects in relation to his imagined audience (8).

Despite their shared histories, documentary and ethnographic filmmaking are often considered distinct practices with distinct purposes, particularly by scholars of visual anthropology. Karl Heider, for instance, worries over what he perceives as a promiscuous use of the term "ethnographic" in scholarly discussions of film.[20] For him, properly ethnographic filmmaking must reflect "ethnographic understanding," must be made with the intention to record ethnographic data, and must be holistic, emphasizing cultural context over narratives focusing on individual characters (8). Similarly, Jay Ruby argues that only films intended for anthropological study should be considered ethnographic. Both anthropologists are highly suspicious of editing and its "distorting" effects on filmed reality, advocating for the use of a relatively stationary camera to capture continuous action as it unfolds.

Given visual anthropology's rather limited definition of ethnographic film, it may seem surprising that scholars in the field have been quick to categorize Flaherty's films as "ethnographic".[21] After all, none of Flaherty's films would seem to fit Heider's definition of ethnographic documentary, particularly his tendency to focus his films on individuals, reducing complex, large-scale social problems to relatively straightforward conflicts between man and nature. Despite the overt romanticism of Flaherty's films, it has become a commonplace to

[20] Anthropologists Karl Heider and Jay Ruby both expressed concern in the 1970's and 1980's over the widespread use of the term "ethnographic" to describe a range of image-making practices. In response to the common practice of hiring documentary filmmakers to accompany ethnographers in the field, Ruby urged anthropologists to "take control of the genre," a phrase that suggests the larger institutional struggle at that time to maintain the disciplinary specificity of the term "ethnographic" and to police the boundaries of what kind of films can be properly termed ethnographic films.

[21] Despite the overt intrusion of Flaherty's editing eye in *Moana*, Heider includes the film in his field-defining survey of ethnographic film *Films for Anthropological Teaching* (1976). To include Flaherty in his history of ethnographic film, he positions the filmmaker as an early forefather of the genre, making the case that Flaherty made films about cultures that have historically been the subject of anthropological study and in sites where canonical fieldwork was conducted: *Nanook* was filmed in a location close to Baffin Island, the site of Franz Boas' 1883 study of the Inuit, and *Moana* was shot just 300 miles from the site of Margaret Mead's study of Samoan adolescent sexuality on the Manu'a islands. Locating Flaherty's work in recognized fields of anthropological study is a way of writing a history of visual anthropology that legitimizes his contribution to ethnographic filmmaking, rather than considering his work to be tangential or anomalous. In this way, Heider salvages the "ethnographic data" that Flaherty managed to record, particularly in his favorite films *Nanook of the North* and *Moana.*

incorporate the his work into histories of ethnographic film practice, a rule so often followed that to fail to mention Flaherty in such historical surveys becomes a meaningful omission.[22] More recent critical work on ethnographic representation also positions Flaherty's films as prominent examples of ethnographic observation, but for seemingly opposite reasons. Allison Griffiths, for instance, explicitly compares the idealist impulses motivating the filmmaker's distinct visuality to Malinowski's written ethnography, arguing that Flaherty's films should be read in the context of an emergent anthropological perspective (46). Tobing Rony considers *Nanook* a prime example of "romantic, lyrical ethnography" and conducts an in-depth reading of the film in the context of her argument about the "taxidermic" gaze of ethnographic cinema, linking Flaherty's films to anthropological ways of imagining race in the early twentieth century (14). Both scholars emphasize the romanticism of Flaherty's ethnographic vision, but rather than view the artifice of this narrative as a break from an anthropological premium on "accuracy," they both view his romantic vision of the primitive as a characteristic that aligns his project with the impulses of early ethnography, a rhetorical move that positions Flaherty firmly within an anthropological historical narrative.

Flaherty is a unique figure in histories of twentieth-century visual culture, both because his distinct style of filmmaking lies at the intersection of multiple disciplinary knowledges and because his work continues to appeal to scholars and filmmakers alike (and often for the same reasons). The filmmaker's practice of living among his subjects and actively engaging them in the process of making films is routinely praised by anthropologists like Heider, who compares his methodological "commitment to something like the ethnographic technique of personal

[22] In her introductory text for students of Visual Anthropology, Fadwa El-Guindi only mentions Flaherty in passing, noting that his work, associated with Malinowski and "anthropology's colonial legacy," was "tremendously influential" for French cinema and anthropology. This choice is significant because she carefully limits the scope of Flaherty's influence and because she is obliged to mention him in the context of her discussion of Jean Rouch, a French ethnographer and filmmaker to whom she dedicates her entire book (37-43).

immersion in a culture," and the French ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch, who argued that Flaherty was "doing ethnography without knowing it" (Heider 21; Rouch 32). In a 1974 essay, Rouch famously claimed Flaherty as one of his primary influences, attributing his own concepts of "shared anthropology" and the "participatory camera" to the early filmmaker and suggesting that when he first screened his footage for Allakariallak, the man cast as the Inuit hunter Nanook, Flaherty "had no idea that he was inventing, at that very instant, participant-observation" (32).[23] According to Rouch's cinematic logic, the essence of participant-observation is the collaboration between subject and filmmaker. In the moment that he describes, Allakariallak recognizes himself represented on film as Nanook, the title character of an epic ethnographic fiction, and actively participates in constructing a cinematic representation of Inuit life. Rouch's imagining of this moment willfully ignores the problematic reality of Flaherty's filmmaking techniques in an effort to recast this moment as a an early iteration of his own experiments with "shared anthropology", but his re-reading of *Nanook*'s production is suggestive of the ways that Flaherty has been mythologized: as a savant anthropologist who turned to Allakariallak for answers in his investigation of the human will to survive.

Flaherty's technique of immersing himself in local life and eliciting the assistance of local people when making his films is certainly a very early example of contemporary ethnographic documentary practices, but it is not only his production methods that make his work "ethnographic". In stark contrast to the sensational images of "native" life that were his contemporaries, Flaherty's interest in recording everyday activities, particularly in *Moana*, aligns the visuality of his films with a specifically twentieth-century ethnographic sensibility.[24] Although *Moana* does feature a climactic finale that is the stuff of Hollywood fantasy, complete

[23] Significantly, Rouch names Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov as his other primary influence in this essay.
[24] Hollywood films like F. W. Murnau's *Tabu: A Story of the South Seas* (1931) and Cooper and Shoedsack's *King Kong* (1933) featured sensationalized images of "savagery".

with a staged ritual dance, the majority of the film is composed of rather lengthy scenes that capture "native" methods of hunting, gathering, cooking, and making clothes. Unlike the drama of imminent danger that haunts the hunting scenes in *Nanook* or *Man of Aran* (1934), collecting food appears in *Moana* as a series of pleasant and mundane tasks. Bare-chested "native" girls easily gather the abundant seaweed and shellfish out of the water, pulling oversized clams out of the shallows and displaying them playfully for the camera. A group of islanders swim out to meet a sea turtle as it swims close to shore and keep him underwater until he is lifeless, an act of killing that appears more playful than gruesome or difficult. Scenes like these do not advance any clear overarching narrative but rather depict island life as a series of anecdotal stories, plotting the minutiae of everyday "primitive" existence.

A scene in which P'ea lures a crab from its hiding place among the rocky crevices along the shoreline is a prime example of the film's tendency toward the anecdotal. Spectators are introduced to this scene by a single title card that reads "Pe'a comes upon a piece of tell-tale evidence—an empty cocoanut shell," a sentence that does not clarify the sequence of events that will unfold, but instead seems to pose a series of questions: What does an empty cocoanut shell signify? If the shell discloses a crime, as the use of the word "evidence" suggests, what crime has been committed and who is the likely culprit? Flaherty begins the scene by posing an ambiguous conflict scenario, a problem that the rest of the scene works to resolve and clarify.

Pe'a begins his investigation by peering into a den in the rocks to get a better view of what lives inside. First he tries prying the large rocks from their moorings, an impossible task for a young boy that leaves him breathless. He seems to pause, looking off in the distance, and then returns to the den, picks up the cocoanut shell once more to re-examine the "evidence," and looks back and forth between the object in his hands and the deep crevice between the rocks

before tossing the shell to the ground. A quick cut interrupts the shot, indicating that frames have been cut out of the sequence, as Pe'a continues to stare at the den and bites his fingernails. Suddenly, he brushes the sand off his knees, looks off-screen, and quickly moves up and out of the frame before returning to the camera's fixed gaze carrying two branches, a long one to sit on and a shorter one that he begins to strip with a knife. The image fades to black and when it returns, Pe'a is busily starting a fire, rubbing the shorter stick whose end he has already fashioned into a point against the longer one that has been prepared for this purpose. The film abruptly cuts to a close-up of the action, drawing our attention to the process of making fire through friction; in three cuts, Flaherty condenses that process so that audiences quickly witness the production of a smoldering spark. Suddenly Pe'a re-appears in the frame, patiently blowing on the spark he has managed to produce. Taking up some fibrous material lying just off-screen, he manages to light the tinder and coax it into a mass of white smoke that he uses to force whatever has been eating the cocoanut out its rocky den. Reaching his arm deep inside the dark crevice, Pe'a eventually manages to pull out the giant crab that lives there and display him for the camera. The final title card of the sequence identifies the culprit and clarifies the events we have witnessed: "Ah, Mr. Robber-Crab! You won't climb my father's cocoanut trees anymore!"

Moments like this one contrast sharply with the logic that drives the coming-of-age narrative that frames *Moana* because they do not advance the story in meaningful ways or give audiences information about the title character. In fact, the majority of the film is not directly concerned with Moana's personal history, subjectivity, or psychological motivations, information that would seem necessary to understand the title character's personal relationship to the tattooing ritual that signifies his transition to manhood. What this scene does reveal is Flaherty's interest in documenting that elusive object called "culture". By privileging process

over event, the film tells us that the tattoo ritual's meaning can only be understood in cultural context. It is not Moana's feelings about the painful ritual that matter here, but what the complex process of ritual tattooing signify to the entire group.

While not technically a long take, this scene requires spectators to watch a rather lengthy process of problem solving in its entirety, a technique that approximates an experience of "real time" and has an authenticating effect on the image. In fact, much of the pleasure of watching this scene comes from the ambiguity of the action as it unfolds onscreen. Rather than explain events, this sequence, like many others in the film, requires audiences to interact with the image onscreen, interrogating what we see and wrestling with potential meanings. This scene asks audiences to perform a task similar to Pe'a's task onscreen: to encounter visual information and work toward understanding what those visual clues might mean. It is no coincidence that Pe'a is featured here because in this moment in the film, audiences are prompted to examine an unfamiliar world literally and figuratively through the eyes of a child. From the moment Pe'a discovers an empty coconut shell and thinks his way to solving a problem onscreen, spectators are also required to attend to the problem posed by a series of ambiguous images and to solve the mystery of their final meanings.

Historians of documentary Jack Ellis and Betsy McLane characterize Flaherty's technique here as "pedagogical", a term that pushes the auteur's work toward a specifically ethnographic register (17).[25] While many ethnographic documentaries produced in the second half of the twentieth century were made for an audience of school-age children and were

[25]It is no surprise that Ellis and McLane also read the two scenes that feature Pe'a from Moana to make this claim, since the film is often read as an early version of ethnographic documentary. Like me, they contrast his pedagogical impulse with his storytelling impulse, a distinction that is certainly informed by a retrospective point of view, though at the time Flaherty made his films such distinctions were not codified. Ellis and McLane claim that Flaherty was both a storyteller and a teacher, whose curiosity infused all of his work. Their gloss of Flaherty is in the tradition of auteur criticism.

explicitly didactic, Flaherty's early films offer a more subtle lesson. *Moana* does not attempt to explicitly explain Samoan culture to its audience, but rather tries to teach us *how to see* culture, how to notice the subtle details of human behavior. Flaherty's emphasis in this scene and others like it is not to present information about Samoan history, values, or even the large-scale patterns of behavior that make culture legible, but instead to show us the ways that the camera can reveal what is authentically and deeply human about the subject on film. Editing the film in post-production allowed him to carve out what he called the "true spirit" of an event from this footage, revealing its deeper meanings (Calder-Marshall 97).

While I have turned an analytical eye toward the two scenes that feature Pe'a and his distinctly childlike point of view thus far in this chapter, I do not mean to suggest that these moments are singular points of entry to Flaherty's vision of "primitive" culture. These two scenes are often mentioned in the critical literature on Flaherty in general and *Moana* in particular, most likely because it is in these moments that the filmmaker's pedagogical lens clearly inscribes the image with meaning. No matter how appealing these anecdotal moments can be to scholars, focusing critical attention on the same set of images tends to naturalize many of the seemingly more straightforward images in the film, moments where a stationary camera records mundane tasks and activities as they unfold in "real" time. After all, it is the sheer number of such scenes in *Moana* that makes it easy for anthropologists to consider Flaherty's footage ethnographic and classify the film as an early ancestor of ethnographic documentary or the research film. While the audience's experience of the "real time" duration of problem solving in the "robber crab" sequence does not move the film's framing narrative forward, the scene is still structured by a problem-resolution narrative of its own. The scene may *delay* the larger coming-of-age narrative, suspending the progression of that story through a kind of anecdotal

aside, but it remains fully inscribed within a cause and effect narrative chain, one that also contributes to our knowledge of Pe'a and his role within the nuclear family structure that Flaherty created expressly for the film. Scenes that simply record tasks from start to finish, on the other hand, seem to function as digressive asides that disrupt the forward-moving logic of narrative film.

A four-minute scene in which two women transform a strip of mulberry bark into the traditional sarong-style wrap Samoans call the lava-lava is a case in point. Nestled between two scenes of food gathering, this sequence introduces viewers to yet another kind of household task, one that is depicted as women's work. The scene opens with the simple, declarative title card, "Mother Tu'ungaila has a dress to make", a sentence that both announces the process about to unfold in front of the camera and introduces Mother Tu'ungaila, a character crucial to the cohesion of the artificial family unit that Flaherty grafts onto the film's images. In a series of eighteen shots, Flaherty shows us the process of turning a single, flexible strip of mulberry bark into a soft, wearable garment. Strategically placed title cards clarify the images onscreen, directing viewers to understand the image in each take as a single step in a larger process of material transformation. As Mother works on the fibrous strip, rubbing, scraping, and banging it flat, the fibers become more and more malleable, softening and widening until the bark begins to resemble the woven fabric with which the film's viewers are more familiar. Once the strip reaches its maximum proportions another character is introduced to the scene, a young woman named Fa'angase, who was described in the first scene of the film as "the highest maiden in all the village" and who later appears flirting playfully with Moana. Fa'angase and Mother Tu'ungaila work together to complete the lavalava, patching any holes to make a smooth surface and then painting the fabric with intricate designs in a red dye they are shown making from

sassafras seeds. The scene comes to a close as Fa'angase tries on the lavalava, modeling the finely decorated garment both for Mother, who delicately touches the fabric admiring her own handiwork, and for an unacknowledged viewer who likely shares Mother's admiring gaze.

This scene shifts focus away from the logic of narrative film, drawing upon conventions of the actuality or travelogue film that revel in the spectacle of the recorded event itself. If a moment like this one can be said to contribute any information to the film's larger narrative, it is to frame a relationship between two women important to understanding Moana's coming of age: his mother and his love interest. That subtly implied narrative link recedes into the background here because the scene prioritizes the process of making, foregrounding the task rather than subordinating it to information about the relationship of the characters onscreen. In other words, Flaherty's primary goal in this sequence of shots is to show his audience *how* a traditional lavalava is made and to preserve an artisanal process on film, rather than to elicit questions about who is making it or why. As in each scene of the film, our attention is highly directed in this sequence. We are encouraged to believe that we are witness to a single, continuous event in which a "real native" transforms one single strip of bark into a soft, fibrous material on film, although what we know of Flaherty and his careful style of filmmaking suggests that this scene, like the others in his films, has been carefully staged for the camera and that what we perceive as a single, continuous process of transformation is quite probably crafted from numerous strips of mulberry bark at different stages of preparation that have been used to demonstrate the entirety of a lengthy, time-consuming process in a condensed fashion onscreen. Based on what the film tells us about the wide variety of daily tasks in typical Samoan life, why would we assume that anyone would spend an entire day to make a garment from start to finish, particularly when the film shows us how the task requires at least seven stages? What we are watching is perhaps

much closer to demonstration of traditional "native crafts" captured on film than a single event that unfolds seamlessly onscreen with the help of elliptical editing.

Nevertheless, the series of tasks that we see demonstrated on camera appeals to the audience's sense of wonder and fascination with an elaborate creative process that the fantasy world of the film seems to insist belongs to a "pre-contact" past. The film tells us that what we are watching is a "primitive" and therefore rapidly diminishing, artisanal practice, one that acquires new value in the context of the streamlined systems of mass production favored by industrialized modernity at the turn of the twentieth century. The kind of artisanal practice that Flaherty privileges here contrasts sharply with the dehumanizing work of the assembly line, in which each worker performs a single, repetitive task. In fact, Flaherty's focus on these moments of idyllic making and doing seem to be at the heart of the project undergirding *Moana,* the sites where he wants to locate the deep humanity and romance of "primitive" island life, unadulterated by the influence of the outside, "modern" world.

All of Flaherty's films celebrate the tenacity of human beings through an attempt to visualize something as ephemeral and abstract as human "will" or "spirit", a project that rested profoundly, particularly in the early years of his career, on visualizing the "primitive" bodies, customs, and rituals of indigenous people. The visual grammar of his documentaries may have announced themselves as a break from the storytelling conventions of classical Hollywood narrative, but that visuality was far from singular or exemplary. Flaherty's gaze was intimately linked to the visual documentary practices of travelers in many guises, from the tourist, adventurer, or explorer of the nineteenth century to the emergent ethnographers, journalists, and literary writers of the twentieth century. The visual protocols for representing "native culture" established and refined in his earliest films certainly resonate with what Malinowski was doing

in his early ethnographic writing, but his tendency to romanticize the bodies and behaviors of people he considered to be "authentic" versions of humanity also aligns his work with a modernist movement preoccupied with "primitive" sensations, bodies, and objects. Like so many modernist filmmakers, painters, and writers, Flaherty looked to "the primitive" explore his own subconscious desires and fantasies.

NATIVE IMAGININGS

Within scholarly discourse, "the native" is often referred to as an *imaginary* construct, a phrase that calls attention to the shifting, arbitrary meanings of the category and the many purposes it served for nineteenth and early twentieth-century Western thinkers and artists: as a subject to be civilized, as a negation of "the modern", and as a repository for fantasies about "primitive" sexuality, animality, and violence. But certainly the term "imaginary" also foregrounds the ways that categories like "the native" or "the primitive" are fundamentally *visual* constructs that rely on images to make meaning. To utter the word "native" is to conjure images of an anonymous figure, scantily clothed and engaged in some barely comprehensible ritual practice because, as a conceptual category, the term is inextricable from both an archive of images and a particular point of view. By tracing Malinowski, Flaherty, and Lawrence's shared investment in participant-observation in this chapter, I have to tried to call attention to the space behind the frame, so to speak, asking not only *who* is looking at so-called natives, but *how* they are looking, for what purpose, and to what effects.

By the mid-twentieth century, the visual protocols for looking at "natives" became practices firmly housed in the university and differentiated among specific kinds of disciplinary knowledge and media forms. Suddenly it became possible to consider certain kinds of image-making "anthropological" and others "documentary" or "literary realism". The gaze of the participant-observer, once a unique and innovative point of view, became codified and professionalized. If the gaze of participant-observation that consolidated in the 1920's can be considered a product of imperialism, what political, social, and economic forces dispersed that gaze into discrete modes of writing and image making by the 1950's? In other words, how did the experimental visuality of picturing "native culture" get disciplined? How did the work of

seeing “natives” move from the exploratory projects of iconoclastic, even eccentric, travelers to the serious work of professionals?

In the next chapter I explore these questions, tracing the ways that by the middle of the twentieth century in Britain and the U.S., the gaze of the participant-observer was diffused among distinct media forms and disciplinary knowledges. There are still profound similarities among literary, cinematic, and anthropological texts in our current moment, particularly their shared investments in visuality and narrative. Formally, however, literary writing, documentary film, and anthropological writing are distinct representational practices that make meaning differently. Thinking through these differences and their visual implications offers up potential ways to de-familiarize the historical trajectory of ethnographic visuality by imagining other configurations of looking.

CHAPTER 2: DIVERGENCE: THE CODIFICATION OF "PRIMITIVE" VISIONS

In the introduction to his 1986 collection of essays *Writing Culture*, James Clifford remarks that "…until recently literary influences have been held at a distance from the 'rigorous' core of the discipline. Sapir and Benedict had, after all, to hide their poetry from the scientific gaze of Franz Boas… the notion that literary procedures pervade any work of cultural representation is a recent idea in the discipline" (3-4). In our current moment, it is commonly accepted that the generic divisions that separate travel writing from anthropology or ethnographic documentaries from art films is arbitrary at best. As late as 1986, however, Clifford could easily recall the notion of a pure ethnographic study, based on research carried out in the field and defined against the impressionistic writing of tourist travelogues, and could make what were considered radical claims about the literary qualities of anthropological writing. For much of the twentieth century, the divisions between kinds of ethnographic representations were distinct and often regulated by institutional and disciplinary affiliation: anthropologists produced ethnography and documentary films while amateur travelers, journalists, or literary writers produced travelogues. The texts that I analyze in this chapter were produced in this climate and reflect the generic conventions that made the boundaries between ethnography, travelogues, and ethnographic documentaries legible.

By the mid-twentieth century in the U.S. and Britain, the ethnographic visuality that emerged in the 1920's had shifted from a consolidated visual language to a discipline-specific set of representational practices and conventions. The lure of an imagined primitive that had captured the imagination of white, Western travelers in the nineteenth century continued to provide a wellspring of source material for many academic fields in U.S and British universities in the 1950's, each with their own research agendas and methods. In a quest to find living

examples of humanity's most ancient ancestors, many scholars, writers, filmmakers and photographers sought contact with "primitive" cultures to record and preserve what were considered "traditional" or "native" ways of life. Drawing upon already-established visual protocols, these professional travelers selected and refined the conventions of "seeing natives" to craft texts that appealed to different audiences and reflected different goals.

This discursive shift has shaped the way scholars think and write about representational practices now considered "ethnographic". Texts produced long before the term "ethnographic" gained traction are retrospectively labeled as iterations in what has become a long history of ethnographic visuality. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Robert Flaherty may not have conceptualized his earliest films as documentaries in the 1920's, but by the 1950's he was a prominent figure in histories of film whose work was considered emblematic of documentary style. After the codification of ethnographic vision in the 1950's however, most ethnographic texts tended to adhere to disciplinary conventions.[26] Anthropologist Paul Rabinow wrote two books about Morocco, for instance, but one is an ethnography written for other anthropologists while the other is an anecdotal, impressionistic text written with a more general readership in mind.[27] To discuss them as simply different iterations of the same ethnographic narrative is to ignore their distinct rhetorical contexts and formal conventions.

This chapter traces how in Britain and the U.S. the practices for describing so-called "primitive" cultures shifted from a shared set of visual conventions in the first part of the twentieth century to the distinct protocols associated with specific disciplines and discursive forms in the latter. While scholars regularly characterize the gaze of anthropological writing and

[26] One notable exception is anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss' memoir *Tristes Tropiques*, a text that has become famous for its unique blend of subjective reflection and anthropological truth claims.

[27] Two years after publishing the ethnographic monograph *Symbolic Domination: Cultural Form and Historical Change in Morocco* (1975), Rabinow published *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977), a highly personal travelogue describing experiences strategically excluded from his scientific study.

certain literary travelogues and documentary films as "ethnographic", the ways they deploy this gaze are quite different. To achieve the neutral distance required of the scientific observer, anthropologists strategically tried to remove their own subjective voice from their writing and simply transcribe the data they had collected in the field into the academic conventions of an ethnographic study. The literary travelogue, on the other hand, did just the opposite. Indebted to literary modernism's transformation of the genre, by the mid-twentieth century travelogue writers were self-consciously foregrounding their uniquely subjective role as observers and interpreters of culture in their own texts. Documentary filmmakers used the supposed neutrality of the camera to frame footage as "real" evidence of culture combined with the tools of cinematic montage to subtly craft an interpretation of cultural behavior for spectators.

Other than representational medium, of course, the issue of subjective point of view is what distinguishes anthropological writing, literary travelogues, and ethnographic documentaries from one another. For mid-twentieth-century anthropologists, assuming the voice of the objective observer was part of establishing a scholarly ethos that gave the writer the authority to interpret the patterned behavior of "culture" and contribute an academic field. In contrast, literary writers sought to distinguish their writerly voice from ethnographers and other travel writers by giving their own particular version of events. After all, the unique authorial voice of literary modernists like D.H. Lawrence, Ernest Hemingway, Rebecca West, or William Carlos Williams is what made their writing compelling to readers. Documentary filmmakers, on the other hand, wanted to assure audiences of the authenticity of their footage while also offering spectators the thrill and safety of observing "primitive" culture without being seen. Subsequently, ethnographic documentaries craft a point of view that is both pervasive and often concealed.

In what follows, I strategically close read a literary travelogue, an ethnographic documentary, and a scholarly study to uncover the specificity of each text's vision of the "primitive". I argue that while literature, documentary film, and anthropology drew from a shared archive of source material to make claims about "primitive" people, the ways they deployed point of view were radically different by the 1950's. To illustrate this shift in visual practices, I turn to a nexus of ethnographic texts produced between 1957 and 1976 by the Marshall family describing their encounters with the people called Ju/'hoansi living in the Kalahari Desert of South Africa.[28] Working from a shared archive of field notes, diaries, photographs, film footage and memory, Elizabeth Marshall wrote a highly-celebrated popular travelogue *The Harmless People* (1958), John Marshall made an award-winning documentary *The Hunters* (1957), and Lorna Marshall wrote a canonical ethnographic study *The !Kung of Nyae Nyae* (1976). The family went on to produce more books and films using this source material, but these three texts are Elizabeth, John, and Lorna Marshall's first published accounts of their encounters with the Ju/'hoansi.

What their visual and textual archive elucidates so vividly are the ways in which acts of describing "primitive" cultures became codified into literary travel writing, documentary film and ethnography, forms of writing and image-making that had become distinct forms of knowledge production by the middle of the twentieth century. Each of their texts is an iteration of a shared ethnographic narrative that attempts to reconstruct the experience of cross-cultural

[28] I have chosen to use the term "Ju/'hoansi" when referring to the people indigenous to the Kalahari because it is the term they use to describe themselves. John Marshall wrote that the people his family met and befriended in the Nyae Nyae region of Namibia "called themselves Ju/'hoansi the way Germans say they German, speak German, and live in Germany" (1). The prefix "Ju" translates as "person", "/hoan" means proper or correct, and "si" is the plural suffix. Some anthropologists, including Lorna Marshall, also refer to the Ju/'hoansi as !Kung, a Khoisan language. Historically, Ju/'hoansi have also been called "San" or "Bushmen". I choose not to use either word here because both words are derogatory terms associated with governmental efforts to strip Ju/'hoa people of both human and land rights.

encounter through a specific set of visual protocols. How each text accomplishes this, however, is quite different. I consider this particular triangulation of texts to be a productive case study of the shift from the diffuse, experimental ethnographic visuality that emerged in the early years of the twentieth century to the codification of that visuality in the forms of ethnographic representation that exist today. The results of their efforts are texts that exemplify the visual protocols that came to define literary narrative, documentary film, and anthropological writing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

FROM CAMBRIDGE TO THE KALAHARI

The story of the Marshall expeditions has been told and re-told by many people: dutiful disciples of the family's legacy, scholars critiquing their work, and most often, by members of the family themselves. Elizabeth Marshall gives a brief narrative of her family's travels in the opening pages of her travelogue and reflects on that story in an afterward written in 1989; Lorna Marshall provides a more detailed account of the expeditions in the introduction of her first book about the Ju/'hoansi and later re-tells the story in the forward to her second ethnographic study; and John Marshall describes his family's expeditions into the Nyae Nyae region of the Kalahari many times over the course of his Ju/'hoan films, giving the most straightforward account in *A Kalahari Family* (2001), a five-part series that painstakingly documents the 50-year relationship between the Marshalls and the Ju/'hoan family they befriended in 1951.

Part tourist travelogue, part adventure tale, and part anthropological study, the story that the family collectively tells is firmly embedded within the conventions of a long history of travel writing. According to Lorna Marshall, after retiring from a long and successful career as a civil engineer, her husband, Laurence, decided to spend more time with his family and planned a trip to Africa with his teenage son, John, in 1950. It was on that trip that the family's curiosity about "primitive" hunter-gatherers was piqued. After consulting with anthropologists who were friends of the family, the family decided to return to South-West Africa and actively seek contact with the elusive bands of indigenous people called "Bushmen" living in the Kalahari Desert.

Following this first trip, Laurence and Lorna Marshall traveled to the Kalahari multiple times with both of their children, Elizabeth, 20, and John, 18, to see something few people had ever seen: people who Lorna Marshall described in 1976 as "unacculturated Bushmen" living by hunting and gathering in the remote and inhospitable desert (*!Kung* 8). The Marshalls were not

anthropologists, nor were they accompanied by a trained ethnographer on their first official, subsidized expedition in 1952.[29] According to Lorna Marshall's account in the introductory chapter of her 1976 ethnographic study, the expeditions were originally conceived of as exploratory trips for the family to "undertake some interesting project together" (2). Though they were not experts, they *were* curious, wealthy and well-connected to academic circles in their hometown of Cambridge, Massachusetts.[30] Although they could not entice a professional ethnographer to accompany them, their party typically included ten to fourteen people including some four or five African men who served as interpreters, a cook, and a mechanic, as well as scholars in archeology, linguistics, zoology, and botany from universities in South Africa, Britain, or the U.S. (*Harmless* 6; *Filming* 26).

For several months in 1951, travelling in a convoy of four trucks and a jeep carrying food, large drums of water, gasoline, and other supplies, the group traversed unmapped regions of the desert searching for Bushmen groups to film and study. The expedition was able to locate a band of Ju/'hoansi living at one of the few dependable waterholes in the region at a site called Gautscha, a place that became central in the narratives they re-constructed about their encounters. It was there that the family first met /Toma, the leader of the band living at Gautscha who Lorna Marshall describes as an "uncommonly intelligent, able man, much esteemed by his people" *(!Kung* 3). As Gautscha became the central site for the Marshall family's narratives,

[29] Lorna, Elizabeth, and John all express surprise that after the family's many attempts to entice an anthropologist or graduate student to accompany them, not one ethnographer expressed interest in joining their expeditions in 1951 and 1952. Other scholars, however, did accompany them. Archeologist Robert Dyson and physical anthropologist Eric Williams joined the expedition in 1951, and J.O. Brew, Director of the Harvard Peabody Museum, met the Marshalls in Namibia for a month in 1952. Namibian farmer Fritz Metzgar and local official Claude V. McIntyre also joined the 1952 expedition.

[30] In his forward to Lorna Marshall's second major ethnographic monograph, *Nyae Nyae !Kung Beliefs and Rites* (1999), Charles Simic writes that the Marshall family consulted many renowned anthropologists before leaving for southern Africa in 1952 including: Clyde Kluckhohn, a specialist in Navajo languages and culture at Harvard; J.O. Brew, director of the Peabody Museum; paleontologist Phillip Tobias and anthropologist Raymond Dart, both at the University of Witwatersrand at Johannesburg; Monica Wilson, a social anthropologist at the University of Capetown; and L.F. Maingard, a South African expert on Khoisan languages.

/Toma figured as the heroic protagonist of their accounts, a man who seemed to trust them, let them live with his family, and even went so far as to grant the Marshalls familial names, incorporating them into the social structure of his band. The group spent somewhere between six weeks and four months cultivating relationships with /Toma's family and decided to return the following year to resume their study.[31]

In 1952, Harvard's Peabody Museum sponsored the family's longest and most productive expedition in which they lived with Bushmen at three different sites in the Kalahari, collecting ethnographic data on the cultural practices of the Ju/'hoansi. Due to the intense drought conditions that year, many different bands of Ju/'hoansi were forced to remain in close proximity to the few consistent waterholes in the desert rather than roam their territories to gather the tubers, berries, and melons that the Marshalls call "veld foods" and to hunt game. As a result, Lorna Marshall writes, thorough "a circumstance exceedingly unfavorable to the !Kung, but favorable to us," the family had the opportunity to interact with and observe the daily life of many more people than they would have otherwise (3-4). Over the course of one year, the expedition camped at three different waterholes located in the Kalahari: a permanent waterhole called /Gam in the south, a site in the north known as Tsho/ana, and the Gautscha Pan in the central region of the desert. The Marshalls were warmly received on this second visit to Gautscha by /Toma and his family band. It was on this trip that they attracted the attention of many other small bands of Ju/'hoansi who travelled to Gautscha to see the white Americans who had come to film and study them.

[31] Despite the overall similarities between Lorna and Elizabeth Marshalls' accounts of this period, there is a substantial discrepancy in their stories about the duration of their time spent at Gautscha in 1951. In 1976, Lorna wrote that the expedition spent only six weeks living with the people at Gautscha while in 1958, Elizabeth recalls spending four months there.

According to Lorna Marshall, the Ju/'hoansi found the family's "interrogations" entertaining and gathered in large groups to answer questions about their beliefs and customs, sometimes confirming what the Marshalls already knew and at other times correcting or contradicting information given by other informants (9). Following the custom of anthropologists, the Marshalls regularly paid people who volunteered information about their culture with tobacco, cocoa, coffee, tea, salt, sugar, and empty cans; upon leaving the region in 1953, they awarded more substantial gifts to their most regular informants to thank them for their time and cooperation (9-10). By the time they left the Kalahari, Lorna Marshall reports meeting and talking with some 210 people belonging to ten Ju/'hoa bands (6). The archive of materials that they collected on this expedition became the source material their first scholarly articles, books.

What makes the Marshall expeditions distinctive in the history of twentieth-century ethnographic visuality is their collective transformation from amateur observers to expert interpreters of Ju/'hoa culture. When they first arrived in southern Africa in 1951 they were hardly more than ambitious tourists; within twenty years they were experts whose texts were considered required reading for anthropologists studying hunter-gatherer societies since the 1960's. Between 1950 and 1961, the family made eight expeditions to the Kalahari and became prolific chroniclers of Ju/'hoan life, collectively producing two ethnographic monograph, numerous academic articles, two travelogues, one novel, and a film and audio archive that includes 23 documentary films, one video series, 29 unpublished films, and over 309 hours of audiotaped interviews.[32] Their archive effectively created a sub-discipline within anthropology

[32] The John Marshall Ju/'hoan Bushman Film and Video Collection is currently held at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Another archive of ethnographic photographs from the expedition is housed at the Harvard Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology.

and inspired a generation of anthropologists to turn their attention to the Kalahari in the 1960's and 1970's.

The Marshall family's story is one of gradually increasing involvement in the politics of the region and in their subjects' lives. In 1951, the Marshalls claim that the Ju/'hoansi living at Nyae Nyae were still remote and supported themselves solely by hunting and gathering on land that they had lived on for as far back as anyone living at that time could remember. By 1960, the Ju/'hoansi found themselves caught at the intersection of competing economic interests in Namibia. As private parties and corporations moved to develop land for commercial purposes like farming, mining, and tourism, the South African parliament began to reclassify certain lands as "homelands" for various ethnic groups in the region; one of those groups was called "Bushmen". "Bushmen" were defined largely as "fauna", beings who were simply part of the landscape and therefore ill-equipped to exercise authority over it. John Marshall puts the problem this way: "since no rights flowed with the classification 'Bushmen'…the classification became a wastebasket into which thousands of people living in communal lands were dumped" (8). By 1970, Ju/'hoan people were removed from their land, forbidden to hunt or gather food, and relocated to housing projects in Tshumkwe, the capital city of their newly-created "homeland," Eastern Bushmanland. The Ju/'hoansi became dependent on low-paying jobs for white farmers and officials or made exploitation wages at the Consolidated Diamond Mines for survival. Their communities were plagued by the diseases of poverty: alcoholism, domestic violence, and crime. Filmmakers looking for "exotic" subject material paid some Ju/'hoan people to "play native," dressing in skins, hunting with bows and arrows, and performing dances in their films. The most famous of these directors is Jamie Uys, whose *The Gods Must Be Crazy* film franchise in the

1980's starred some of the Marshall's original subjects. A now sedentary population became exposed to tuberculosis and leprosy and as a result, the death rate soared.

All the members of the Marshall family have remained advocates for the Ju/'hoansi as they fought to regain control of their lands, drill ground-water wells, and establish subsistence farming communities. Both Lorna and Elizabeth have written about the changed living conditions for the Ju/'hoansi and Laurence has personally funded Ju/'hoa farming projects and advocacy organizations. John Marshall remained the most vocal advocate for the Ju/'hoansi by far. After expressing his allegiance to the Ju/'hoa people in the late 1950's, Marshall was expelled from South Africa and not permitted re-entry until 1978, when he received funding from PBS to make the documentary film *N!ai, Story of a Kung Woman* (1980). What he found when he returned to the region prompted him to make advocating for the Ju/'hoansi a lifelong mission. In collaboration with anthropologist Claire Ritchie, Marshall worked to create the Ju/'hoan Bushman Development Foundation in 1982 to organize and fund subsistence farming projects. Filmmaking itself and what he considered the camera's ability to "bear timely witness" to real events was a crucial part of his efforts to advocate for the Ju/'hoansi (50). In the past three decades he produced over twenty films about the people he originally met in 1951, the last of which was the five-part series *A Kalahari Family* (2002) that self-consciously documented and reflected upon his thirty-year relationship with /Toma and his family band.

The Marshall expeditions themselves played a part in bringing the violence of the outside world to the indigenous communities they studied and all of the family members have readily acknowledged the unintended consequences of their trips through the Kalahari. Lorna Marshall writes that no government official had ever "penetrated" Ju/'hoa lands until Clyde McIntyre, the first commissioner of the Office of Bushmen Affairs, joined the family expedition in 1951 (13).

Lorna, Elizabeth, and John Marshall have all observed that the tracks that their convoy cut through the unmapped countryside on their way to find "real primitives" eventually became roads that outsiders used to locate and exploit the Ju/'hoansi. In a very literal sense, then, the Marshall expeditions paved the way for the oppression and exploitation of the indigenous people they found so fascinating. The numerous texts that they published from their encounters with the Ju/'hoansi, particularly their first books and films, enjoyed a wide circulation precisely because they appealed to their audience's fascination with a fantasy about humanity's last remaining primitive ancestors, a damaging discourse that John Marshall later critically referred to as "the children of nature" myth (17). Like all anthropological investigations, the fantasy of making "first contact" with "real primitives" entails the tautological problem of tainting a pristine subject with modernity's contaminating influence. Paradoxically, making contact with "primitive" people necessarily endangers and eventually eradicates their "primitive" status.

The strategies that each family member uses to produce an image of the "primitive" Ju/hoansi are as much reflections of their own individual subjectivity as they are derived from the conventions of discipline and media. In the close readings that follow, I attempt to locate the idiosyncratic in each text by paying careful attention to the ways that their distinct rhetorical choices reflect their individual identities, preoccupations, and goals. For instance, it is clear to me that Lorna Marshall's anthropology not only manifests the conventions of academic writing but also reflects her personal struggle to claim the authority to make scholarly arguments in a male-dominated field, institution, and culture. Similarly, Elizabeth Marshall's choice of characters and events were heavily influenced by an emergent U.S. brand of feminism as well as her own status as a teenage girl among both the Ju/hoansi and the members of her family's expedition team. John Marshall's choice to frame his documentary as an epic story of masculine

hunting prowess most certainly reflects his own preoccupations as much as it conforms to the conventions of post-Flaherty documentary filmmaking in the U.S in the 1950's.

While the Marshalls' later books and films can be read as apologies or even projects of restitution for the collateral damage caused by their first representations of Kalahari "Bushmen," re-reading the first texts they produced reminds us of a time in the twentieth century when encountering "real" natives seemed possible. As iterations of an ethnographic visuality that has long since been thoroughly dismantled by post-structural, feminist, and post-colonial reading practices, these three representations of the Ju/'hoansi struggle to produce a vision of human being in its most primitive form.

A VISION FROM ABOVE

Published some twenty years after her children published their work, Lorna Marshall's ethnographic monograph *The !Kung of Nyae Nyae* deals in the quantifiable realm of factual data. As an anthropological study, her writing is shaped by a disciplinary investment in presenting a comprehensive view of Ju/hoansi culture. Anthropology's premium on holistic representation dictates that the idiosyncratic recede from view in order to identify the "big-picture" patterns of group behavior. Part of that convention, of course, means casting aside the subjective, reflective voice of travel narrative or memoir and adopting the scholarly voice of the ethnographer.[33]

As her first book-length scholarly project, the text that Marshall produces manifests some of her struggle to adopt this tone. An early moment in the second chapter, "Orientation and Perspectives", is a case in point. Marshall describes the arduous eight-day-journey through 150 miles of the Kalahari in detail, listing a series of setbacks that would be familiar to any traveler in the region: their convoy of trucks carrying gasoline, water, food, and gear get stuck in the sand multiple times and are "plagued with hourly punctures and daily broken springs"; once, she reports, the trucks "crashed into huge aardvark burrows"; the radiators have to be removed and boiled clean after they are clogged by the seeds of tall grasses; the frame of one of their trucks even breaks in two over the strain (14). Marshall follows this litany of obstacles with a curious qualification: "I mention the difficulties of the journey because I believe the conditions of travel were so important a protective factor for the !Kung in maintaining their own way of life" (14). Directly addressing her reader, the anthropologist in Marshall apologizes for her momentary lapse into the familiar discourse of travel writing in which complaining about the difficulties of

[33] It is important to note that the scholarly voice I describe here has undergone significant revision since the anthropology's disciplinary crisis in the 1980's. Contemporary anthropologists regularly employ self-reflexive rhetorical moves in their scholarly writing, self-consciously reflecting on their own subject position in the field and the ways that their subjectivity inflects their meaning-making practices.

travel itself is common. Here, Marshall makes plain how she works to conform to the conventions of scholarly writing, a rhetorical move that hints at what is at stake in making her claims. To distinguish herself from the conventions of the tourist travelogue she explains what she considers the anthropological value of such descriptions. It is precisely because the region is so difficult to access, she argues, that the Ju/'hoan subjects of her study have retained their authentic status as "primitive" people in a modern world.

Despite the tone of cool reserve that Marshall adopts to make declarative statements about Ju/hoan history, physiognomy, and behavior, her uniquely warm authorial voice often has the effect of softening the severe "facticity" of those anthropological observations. In an essay honoring Marshall's contributions to Ju/'hoansi ethnography, anthropologist Megan Biesele notes that she was a "serious stylist of the English language," a writer whose ability to "search for exactly the right words [and to] use…the entire range of the English language to show what was going on in the Bushmen world when she was there, have made her ethnographies documents that are one of kind" (12). It is Marshall's facility with descriptive language that most intrigues Biesele. Punctuating her text with vivid descriptions of what she observed in the field gives her readers the impression that they are granted a unique access to the subjects of her study at a historical moment before they are "discovered" by the outside world.

The way Marshall introduces the relationship between South African government officials and Ju/hoan people in her study illustrates her particularly deft technique. After simply stating that the then Department of Native Affairs of South West Africa established two posts at the edge of Ju/'hoan lands for the purpose of making "customs inspections of luggage…control hoof-and-mouth disease [and] disinfect tires and boots," Marshall proceeds to describe an encounter between the subjects of her study and outsiders:

> We had the opportunity to observe the !Kung contacts with the Bantu there. When the convoys—especially those returning from the mines—arrived, all the almost naked, slender, little brown !Kung men would stand in groups staring with awe at the big, black Ovambo with their mine uniforms, boots, helmets, headlights, and sunglasses, and their sewing machines and whatever other worldly goods they were bringing home to their wives. This was indeed the outside world to those !Kung. They told us explicitly that they feel shy, naked, and inferior in the presence of these big black men with their goods. (7)

Here, Marshall walks a fine line between the voice of the storyteller and the voice of the expert. The anthropologist strategically layers information in this passage, bookending highly-visual descriptive writing with declarative statements. First, readers learn about the establishment of outposts, their purpose, and the kinds of encounters that they generate between distinct ethnic groups: the Ju/hoan people that Marshall is there to observe and "Ovambo" Bantu men who travel through the region. What comes next, however, show readers what that encounter looks like to a third-party observer. In carefully-crafted prose, Marshall makes distinctions between the two groups she identifies: the "!Kung" men are "brown," "slender," and barely clothed while the "Ovambo" miners are "big black men" who wear a uniform engineered for industrial modernization. The gulf between these groups of African men, it seems, is defined as much by their physiognomy as by their relationship to industrialization. The Bantu men are miners, thoroughly acculturated to and actively participating in modern economies, while the Ju/hoansi remain, for Marshall, authentically "primitive" subjects who can only stare "in awe" at foreign objects from a modern material culture. In the sentence that follows, the anthropologist asserts that the subjects of her study reported that they felt "shy, naked, and inferior" to the Bantu miners, ethnographic data that verifies her own impressions of the scene.

Interestingly, this difference between "types" of men is refracted through a distinction in modes of writing. The multiple clauses and lyrical cadence of Marshall's descriptive writing sits uneasily alongside the cool reserve of the declarative mode the writer uses to claim her authority to interpret what she observes. Any good travel writer could come to similar conclusions about this moment of intercultural encounter simply from recording their observations of this event and reflecting on its meaning. An ethnographer, on the other hand, collects data systematically. Marshall can include this moment in her study because she can make the case that her observations are not simply anecdotal, but is instead illustrate feelings that many of her subjects reported in interviews she conducted in the field as an ethnographer.

A gifted writer with an ear for literary language, Marshall could have chosen to write about the Ju/'hoansi in many other forms. That she chose to write an ethnographic monograph suggests her desire to be taken seriously as an expert in her field of study. Though she was highly educated and an English teacher at Mount Holyoke College when Marshall first travelled to the Kalahari in 1950, anthropologists would not have considered her much more than a privileged housewife or perhaps a university patron during the years she collected data, the "ethnographic present" of her study.[34] Thus, the text that she ended up producing from the data she collected during those years was not warmly received by all experts in her field. Both her lack of formal training and her privileged entrée into academic circles cast a shadow of doubt over the value of her scholarship. Clearly, Marshall adopted the conventions of anthropological

[34] Anthropologist Megan Biesele gives an account of Lorna Marshall contributions to ethnography in her introduction to a 1986 essay collection in tribute to Marshall's legacy. According to Biesele, Marshall received a B.A. in Literature from UC Berkeley in 1921 and an M.A. in Literature from Radcliff College in 1928. In addition to teaching at Mount Holyoke, she taught seventh-grade English at the Lee School in Boston for two years after earning her master's degree, served as the Director of Shady Hill School in Cambridge, and was influential in community service groups in Cambridge, including the League of Women Voters (11).

writing to give her observations about the Ju/'hoansi in the 1950's the authority of scientific analysis.

Ethnography is a form of writing that shares an audience, disciplinary goals, and therefore certain characteristics. In their 1982 essay "Ethnographies as Texts", anthropologists George Marcus and Dick Cushman identified nine conventions of a genre they called "ethnographic realism", a term that they explicitly borrow from the literary study of nineteenth century fiction (29).[35] In broad strokes, they define ethnography as writing that represents a "total" culture holistically by emphasizing group behavior over the individual, subordinates the voice of the ethnographer in favor of representing "a native point of view" and explicitly "marks" the anthropologist's fieldwork experience to authenticate their claims (31-34). Marcus and Cushman may have generated their list to demonstrate how the increasingly experimental ethnographies of the 1980's were challenging the tenets of ethnographic realism, but their argument denaturalizes ethnography's rhetorical strategies by drawing connections between literary narrative and ethnography. The point of the ethnographic monograph, they suggest, is to make culture legible to readers by writing in the voice that combines the distance of the observer with the immersion of the participant.

Marshall's writing certainly adheres to these conventions. Like any good ethnographer, Marshall organizes her study to give readers an totalizing overview of her subject, moving from a discussion of the external forces that impact the Ju/'hoansi, like conditions in the Kalahari and available sources of food, to an analysis of their internal culture and its attendant rituals. This organizing schema accomplishes two things. First, it shifts focus from the abstraction of the

[35] Marcus and Cushman create the following list of conventions for ethnographic realism: "1) the narrative structure of total ethnography; 2) the unintrusive presence of the ethnographer in the text; 3) common denominator people; 4)the marking of fieldwork experience; 5) the focus on everyday life situations; 6) representation of native point of view; 7) the stylistic extrapolation of particular data; 8) embellishment by jargon; 9) contextual exegesis of native concepts and discourse" (31-37).

general to the specificity of the particular by subtly directing the readers' attention closer and closer to the subjects of her gaze. Second, this arrangement re-creates the perspective of an ethnographic observer, a figure who typically begins their work in the field as an outsider before increasingly taking on the role of cultural insider privy to the more intimate details of their subject's daily life. Marshall also works hard to prove that she was in the field, living among the subjects of her study and speaking to them in their own language. Through her strategic incorporation of charts, graphs, and photographs, the anthropologist gives readers substantial evidence of her interactions with the Ju/'hoansi. Her careful documentation of !Kung, the Ju/'hoan dialect of the Khoisan language, further testifies to this fact.

The authorial persona that Marshall creates is quite different, however, from the voice of the heroic ethnographer that Bronislaw Malinowski famously crafted in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Like Malinowski, Marshall opens her study with a narrative about her entry to the field. Almost perversely, though, the very first sentence of Marshall's book minimizes her role in the project: "The expeditions my family and I made into the Kalahari Desert to conduct our Bushman studies were instigated and led by my husband, Laurence Kennedy Marshall" (1). This sentence clearly announces Marshall's book-long struggle for authority in stark terms. Calling the expeditions in which she collected her data "our Bushman studies," the anthropologist immediately characterizes her project as a shared venture before handing over the ownership of the project to her husband, the one family member who never authored a text about the Ju/'hoansi. This kind of sentence would seem to belong on the acknowledgments page rather than the introduction. By her Lorna Marshall's account, Laurence Marshall not only "instigated" the family's "Bushman studies" but "led" them as well, a claim that would seem to directly undermine the expertise that she works so hard to establish in the remainder of her study.

This opening line prompts certain questions. What kind of scholar begins their study by subordinating their own role in conceiving of and carrying out their research? What does it say about Marshall that she frames her study as a collaborative "family" endeavor? Only a person who identifies as a wife and mother first and a scholar second could write that sentence. Given that she conducted her fieldwork at a time when academic institutions were still predominantly male, it is not surprising that Marshall found it difficult to inhabit the authorial voice of the scientist. That she valorizes her husband and children's roles in carrying out the fieldwork on which she bases her study gives her reader a glimpse into the mind of a woman struggling to write herself into the masculine role of anthropologist.

While Marshall may have intended to establish her expertise and legitimize her claims in this first chapter of her study, what she actually does is introduce readers to her unique authorial personae as the matriarch of the Marshall expeditions. In contrast to Malinowski who derived his authority from his role as a singular, heroic outsider living among the subjects of his study, Marshall's authority comes primarily from her relationships to her family. Never the outsider, the anthropologist belongs to two family bands: the Ju/'hoan family at Nyae Nyae that she observes and the Marshall family in which she is central.

In what follows, I read Marshall's ethnography as indelibly marked by her identity as the matriarch of the Marshall expeditions. This gendered identity is reflected in her study in many ways. On the one hand, Marshall writes extensively about women's work, marriage rites, and child-rearing because as a female ethnographer those were the practices she was privy to in a culture with a gender-specific division of labor. On the other hand, her maternal role in the field also inflects the form of her study, changing the way she actually records data. In a section matter-of-factly entitled "Average Number of Living Offspring", the anthropologist remarks that

although she learned through conversations with Ju/'hoa women that infanticide is commonly practiced out of necessity, she "did not have the fortitude to learn more" (166). While the scientist in Marshall recognized the value of including that fact in the "official record," the matriarch of the Marshall family admits that the subject of infanticide provokes a powerful emotional response. Here, Marshall's point of view explicitly intervenes in her study, establishing limitations on her intellectual curiosity and marking a proverbial line in the sand not to be crossed, even for the sake of capturing comprehensive data.

The !Kung of Nyae Nyae is a rich text for literary analysis because it manifests the fault lines of American anthropology's disciplinary project by the 1950's. While Marshall's text demonstrates the visual protocols that were an integral part of the rhetorical conventions of anthropology, it also illustrates her struggle to maintain the illusion of a natural, masculine authority over her subject matter. Because visual elements like photographs and graphics are commonly used in anthropology to provide evidence for a researcher's claims, I pay close attention to Marshall's use of visual materials throughout her study. I consider the visuality of Marshall's text, along with her brief lapses into other modes of writing, to be highly suggestive moments in her ethnography that can potentially reveal the logic behind anthropology's representational practices at a particular historical moment. Like any deconstructive literary analysis, reading Marshall's ethnography this way tells us more about the author herself than about the Ju/'hoansi culture she describes. What emerges is an image of a woman caught between competing, culturally-specific kinds of authority: matriarch and ethnographer. Sometimes these roles are complementary, but often they are not. Reading moments where these two identities come into conflict reveals much about two cultures: the American upper middle class and academic circles in the 1950's.

Marshall uses photographs to position her text firmly within a history of ethnographic visuality. Much of her writing gestures toward the many photographs she incorporates into her study, images that illustrate her claims and authenticate her authority to make them. In the context of her discussion about the evolutionary history and physiognomy of the Ju/'hoansi, for instance, she inserts a photograph meant to illustrate the physical appearance of her subjects. According to its lengthy caption, the photo depicts the interaction between three men: Keara, a Ju/'hoa visitor from another region of the Kalahari called /Ga; John Marshall, the author's tall, blonde son; and Ladino, the expedition's African interpreter who is not Ju/'hoansi. Kuara and John shake hands in the foreground on the left side of the frame while Ledimo looks on and three young Ju/'hoan boys play in the background, most prominently Tsamgao, the headman /Toma's son, who appears in the center of the frame.

This photograph does the work of illustrating two of Marshall's claims: explicitly, the image shows the physical traits of her subjects and implicitly, it verifies her description of the affectionate, familial relationships the Marshalls forged with the Ju/'hoan people they met. The positioning of the three men in the frame demonstrates the singularity of the Ju/'hoansi's small stature and what Marshall terms the "Bushmen's lighter yellowish-brown skin" through contrast with the other two figures, one a white American and the other a black African (33). However, it is in the context of Marshall's second claim about the nature of her family's relationships with their subjects that the image becomes even more crucial. For readers to believe Marshall's declarative statements about Ju/'hoan culture, they must also believe that she was really "in the field," living and working with Ju/'hoansi she describes in such great detail. This photograph,

along with the other images of her family members interacting with "natives" in the introductory chapters, testifies that she was, in fact, a first-hand witness to her subjects' daily lives.

All of the photographs that Marshall chooses to include in her study provide a kind of evidence that is crucial to her anthropological project, but this image in particular gives readers some insight into Marshall's authorial identity. Certainly the photograph demonstrates the contrast between the physical "types" that Marshall wants to illustrate to her readers but interestingly, the star of this photograph is not a Ju/'hoan person but her own son, John Marshall. Clearly, a proud mother selected this shot from all the photographs that were taken on this expedition. Featuring a smiling John Marshall shaking hands with a Ju/'hoan man, this image captures something of the tone of the family's interactions with the people they met. It is not enough that Marshall tells us that her children are "exceptionally gifted in minimizing cultural differences and in creating warm, friendly relations"; she wants to show her reader evidence of these traits (ix). Positioned at the highest point of the frame and facing the camera, John Marshall effectively upstages both Kuara and Ledimo in this shot. The caption assures us that Kuara is greeting John Marshall "warmly", but Kuara's back faces the camera so the viewer cannot clearly see his expression. What we *can* see is John's face, smiling charismatically as Kuara takes John's extended right hand into his two hands, gripping them under his chin. The visual cues that signal something as ambiguous and culturally-determined as a warm greeting are made legible through Marshall's careful combination of image and text. Even further, this image testifies to the veracity of Marshall's assertion that her children are "exceptional" when it comes to establishing meaningful cross-cultural relationships.

Images do not come with fixed meanings, of course, but are assigned meaning through context. Pairing each of the photos in her study with a deftly-written caption that didactically

tells readers how to interpret what they see, Marshall harnesses the indexical power of the photographic to authenticate her project and legitimize her observations. The many portraits of Ju/'hoan "types" that appear in the second chapter of the study are particularly clear examples of this strategy. Arranged by gender and age, Marshall selects photographs of young women, children, a young boy, and an aged woman and man to illustrate a wide range of physical characteristics that she considers typical of the Ju/'hoansi. Some of the images are paired with detailed captions, like the photograph of a young woman identified as /Gisa, who at 4'11", the "average height of thirty-one women measured at Gautsha," is used to illustrate the black pigmentation of the breasts and the patterns of facial scarification that Marshall claims are "common physical characteristic[s]of !Kung women" (34). Other photographs, like that of an aged woman smiling at someone on the right side of the frame, are assigned simple, one-line captions, like "!U, wife of /Toma, also has features typical of her race" (44).

Perhaps the most troubling of these images is a full-body portrait of a woman used to exhibit "steatopygia", or the "protruding" buttocks that have historically fascinated and horrified Western audiences (41). Like Saartjie "Sarah" Baartman who toured nineteenth-century Europe as the "Hottentot Venus," the unnamed woman becomes an exemplary figure used simply to demonstrate a physical trait Marshall labels atypical and identifies as a medical condition. In one of the longest captions in her study, Marshall explains that steatopygia is fairly rare among Ju/'hoan women as "only one other of the nine /Gwia women had buttocks as large as these in the photograph" before directing readers to notice the patterns of scarification on the woman's buttocks and thighs, marks that all Ju/'hoan women do exhibit (41). While all the other typological images in the study are used to illustrate features common among the Ju/'hoansi, this photograph draws attention to the singularity of a physical trait, posing questions about the

anthropologist's motives for including it at all. Marshall takes great pains to situate the photograph as evidence that confirms the findings of anthropologists studying incidents of steatopygia in "Hottentots" and "Bushmen" in the region, making it clear that the photograph constitutes a response to questions in her field. The sensationalism attending this image, however, is difficult to ignore, reminding modern readers of anthropology's conjoined history with the carnivalesque exhibition of "primitive" bodies. This portrait in particular unconsciously reproduces the problematic gaze of ethnographic images that scholars in the 1980's began to systematically deconstruct.

Like other anthropologists, Marshall's interest in portraiture is typological. When she singles out an important character like /Toma, whose portrait appears as a frontispiece to the entire text, it is only to assign him the representative role of "headman". /Toma functions as Marshall's Nanook—the natural leader of his family band, a man who is clownish at times, playful, and gentle, yet struggles to maintain his way of life in a rapidly changing world. As the tragic hero of Marshall's narrative about Ju/'hoan life, /Toma is transformed from man to metaphor. Positioning his somber portrait, simply labeled "/Toma", as the frontispiece to her study encourages readers to interpret his image as representative of the collective "!Kung" that the title announces will be the subject of the text.

Ultimately, Marshall's conventional use of ethnographic portraiture is part of her larger claim to present readers with a holistic vision of Ju/'hoa culture. As an art practice, portraiture is about capturing the specificity of its subject, but ethnographic portraits do just the opposite, framing individual people as representative members of a group. Portrait photographers and ethnographers both take interest in markings on the body of their subjects but for very different reasons. While a painter may pay attention to a tattoo or a prominent scar because those physical

markings convey the individuality and specificity of their subject, ethnographers regard those same markings as indicators of cultural ideas of beauty or as evidence of a cultural rite of passage. Because the anthropologist's goal is to uncover the logic governing culture, the representational practices of ethnography privilege the group.

Graphs, charts, and tables also pervade the pages of Marshall's book, synthesizing and visually organizing many kinds of ethnographic data. Detailed kinship charts, designed to illustrate the network of relationships foundational to Ju/'hoan society, form a particularly large part of her study. Tracing kinship ties is a common practice for ethnographers as it is often the first step toward piecing together a historical narrative for cultures that do not record their own history in a way recognized by Western anthropology. As Marshall puts it, the Ju/'haonsi "look respectfully to the past, [but] they are not history-minded. They make no effort to hold actual past events systematically in mind or teach them to their children" (53). Like many ethnographers, kinship was the primary subject of Marshall's first interviews with the Ju'/hoansi and recording these relationships "systematically", to borrow Marshall's term, was her first task. For a woman travelling with her own family, discussing, comparing, and recording familial ties with the Ju'hoansi would have provided some common ground on which to establish productive relationships with her native "informants". Given that /Toma's family gave the Marshall's Ju'hoan names, establishing kinship relationships seems to have been a priority for both family bands: /Toma's family and the Marshalls themselves.

Marshall's kinship charts resemble highly complicated family trees, partitioning data into strata and substrata based on generation. Simple geometric shapes like circles and triangles denote individual people, their gender, and their absence or presence from the band in 1952, the year that Marshall recorded kinship information at Nyae Nyae. Lines, on the other hand, denote

relationships between those individuals: single lines signify either parent-child or sibling relationships; double lines signify relationships established by marriage; and an "X" placed through a double line accounts for relationships dissolved by divorce. Names, titles, and additional information used to differentiate individuals with similar names appear directly under their symbol on the chart, along with individual identification numbers. The graphic that results from this highly-orchestrated synthesis of information works at what Edward Tufte has called "the intersection of image, word, number, art" (9). Although the chart is two-dimensional, it visually organizes many layers of temporal and spatial information.

Every kinship chart in Marshall's study tells many stories—stories about births and deaths, how individual relationships have changed over time, and ultimately how those changing relationships have affected the structure of !Kung bands. The synthetic visual effect of the chart means that readers immediately see the entire intergenerational history of the Ju/'hoansi at Nyae Nyae in 1952. While the graphic provides a macro account of Ju/hoan culture, it also invites micro readings of the individual subjects of Marshall's study.

Graphic representations of data require an active reader, one who is willing to locate and interpret multiple layers of information simultaneously. Although kinship relationships may appear relatively straightforward, the descriptive information about each represented individual that Marshall includes on the chart adds another layer of narrative information. Tufte suggests that this kind of "high density" micro/macro design "allow[s] viewers to select, to narrate, to recast and personalize data for their own uses," an effect that gives viewers some level of interpretive control over information (50). Considering the scholarly audience of anthropological writing, it is easy to see why organizing information into visually rich, graphic displays is an appealing rhetorical strategy. Marshall's readers are not only observers, passively accepting her

cultural analysis; they also participate in creating meaningful interpretations of her data for her field.

Marshall's graphic displays are designed to engage and reward such active reading practices. The layered narrative threads embedded within the multiple symbolic registers of her kinship charts is just one iteration of this design strategy. A perspective map of a Ju/'hoan game called Tsi Tsi Gwara visualizes data in a very different way, prompting readers to imagine the frenetic animation of bodies in motion through annotations on a two-dimensional surface. Compared to the other lists, tables, and charts that appear in Marshall's study, this infographic pushes at its own formal boundaries to represent a game in medias res.

Before the map appears, Marshall describes a game that she saw played by "a group of young women and girls and younger boys" only once on a very specific date, "a July morning in 1953" (353). On this occasion, she writes, three specific women, Old /Gasa, Old //Khuga, and //Kushay, "had much to say in teaching the young boys what to do," a sentence that classifies this particular game as inherited knowledge, passed down from generation to generation, and therefore establishes the anthropological value of her account. What follows is a lengthy description of the game that she witnessed: eight players held hands in a circle and then danced, sometimes stumbling and making themselves fall down, but all the while holding hands while they wind and unwind into different formations. The story that she tells conveys the spirit of the game—a young woman wearing her baby on her back couldn't pass under the arms of the other players without catching her baby's head so "Old /Gasa sprang up from where she was sitting watching and pushed the baby's head through" (354). From this narrative, readers learn that the game is communal, that there are often spectators who watch from the sidelines, and that the play is boisterous and silly.

The figure that accompanies Marshall's description of the game envisions a far more orderly event. Seven players, identified by letters A through H, collectively perform a series of movements that are divided into seven, numerically-labeled steps. Fine lines between individual players signify that they are connected by holding hands while curved arrows signify directional movement. The image that results strongly resembles dance notation, a stylistic choice that clearly illustrates the direction of motion and the sequence of steps involved in the game, both at the level of each individual stage and overall pattern. What dance notation visually implies, however, is the highly structured aesthetic of choreography. In sharp contrast to Marshall's written description of the lively jogging, shuffling, stumbling, and purposely falling down that are all part of the game, the bodies in motion in the graphic do not appear unruly or clownish. Instead, they are uniformly represented in order to render the game's governing organizational logics legible.

It seems that where the graphic itself fails, Marshall supplements with descriptive language. The academic conventions of ethnographic writing both celebrate the representational possibilities of information graphics and recognize their limitations, for if charts and graphs could tell the whole story of a culture, why would anthropologists need to produce so much writing? It is through a strategic combination of written text and images that anthropologists can present a truly holistic overview of any given culture and Marshall uses her facility with lyrical, descriptive writing to her full advantage.

The anthropologist gives a multi-modal account of food gathering, for instance, the physically demanding and repetitive work delegated primarily to Ju/'hoan women. The tenor of her careful, exacting writing makes it clear how much meaning Marshall attributes to the task and how much she admires the women perform it. "Every woman," she writes, "is responsible

for gathering for herself, her family, and her dependents...Unless she is sick or disabled, she must not expect to be supported by others. Failure to provide her share would be weakening to the group" (97). In simple, declarative sentences, Marshall defines food gathering as a task crucial to Ju/'hoansi survival in the Kalahari. She underscores this thought by emphasizing that even pregnant women and women carrying their babies on their backs gather for long hours in the desert heat, and even though old men no longer take part in the hunt, "most of the old women we knew...spry and wiry as they were, gathered regularly". No woman is exempt from such exhaustive and repetitive work, she stresses, because the stakes of not gathering food regularly are too high.

The declarative language of the anthropologist gives way to the lyrical cadence of the creative writer when Marshall describes the actual process of gleaning from the land: "Digging, then standing up, picking up one's load and probably a child, moving on to find another root, digging again—this activity carried on for hours in the heat is strenuous work" (101). The multiple clauses of this sentence simulate the repetitive nature of the work. A similar sentence structure appears a few pages later: "That day Di!ia found thirty-four roots; thirty-four times she sat down, dug a root, stood up, picked up her son, walked on to look for another root to dig" (106). Gleaning, Marshall observes, is a physically demanding and exhausting process. Gathering rewards the most indefatigable women and requires almost superhuman endurance.

The literary quality of Marshall's descriptive writing in these passages appeals to the imagination of her readers, inviting them to envision the arduous task of gathering desert foods. but it is only one way that she presents this information. Photographic images and tables add another layer of visuality to the chapter. No less than three photographs of women gathering food are included in the course of three pages. In the first image, a single woman sits on the ground

digging fiercely at a stubborn root. To illustrate the depth of the hole, her arm is in the hole she has dug up to her elbow. On the following page, a photograph shows a woman apparently finding what the caption tells us is a /ga root. Squatting close the ground, the unnamed woman wears her baby on her back and looks intently at the ground, away from the camera; in sharp contrast, the child wrapped tightly against his mother's body looks at the camera, acknowledging the stranger who insists on gathering images instead of food. A final photograph appears on the next page accompanied by a longer, descriptive caption: "Women laden with their children, the food they have gathered, and wood for their fires return in evening light" (101). Framed as a long shot, the image shows three anonymous women walking single file through long grass. Their bodies are dwarfed by the size of the bundles on their backs.

Like the layered clauses of Marshall's descriptive passages, this photographic tryptic makes meaning through accumulation. Once the first image establishes the physicality of the task at hand, the second image reinforces this visual fact and adds another piece of information, one that Marshall wants to highlight. Women do not perform any of their work alone but are always accompanied by a child, and because they carry children with them constantly and typically nurse children until they are around four years old, this is no small feat (103). Significantly, the second image draws readers' attention to the child who breaks the fourth wall of the image by acknowledging the presence of the camera, a feature that breaks the conventions of anthropological images. The final photograph pulls our gaze outward, shifting focus away from the individual woman busy at work to a group of women laden with the fruits of their labors. Carrying small children, desert foods, and firewood strapped to their bodies in the animal skins Marshall calls "karosses," the final image in this series draws attention back to the collective. Food gathering is never ultimately an individual burden in Marshall's study, but is ultimately

repositioned as a task that requires a collective expenditure of time and energy to sustain the group at large.

Here, Marshall's maternal identity once again comes to the fore. As a woman with the experience of caring for young children, Marshall repeatedly highlights the fact that Ju'hoan women are never without their babies who accompany them on even the most arduous tasks. As a scientist, this fact does not bear repeating because it is simply an observation about cultural behavior. As a mother, however, Marshall is obviously impressed by the very physicality of this feat and wants her readers to appreciate the strength of the Ju'hoan women who perform this labor on a daily basis. While the act of food gathering does not have the dramatic appeal of hunting for big game or sacrificial rituals, gruesome events that are often featured in ethnographic studies, Marshall frames the difficult and constant work of gleaning veld foods as having life or death stakes for the Ju'hoansi, positioning women's work in epic terms similar to the hunt. Her ethnographic study bears the traces of the female writer, one attuned to the daily labors of caring for families like birthing babies and raising children, collecting and preparing food, and attending to the elderly and the sick.

Although *The !Kung of Nyae Nyae* was published almost twenty years after her children's accounts of the Marshall family's encounters with the Ju'hoansi, I consider Lorna Marshall's ethnography to be the Ur-text of the family archive. As a scientific document, it attempts to consolidate and organize a record of both Ju'/hoan culture and the expedition itself and frames the texts that Lorna's children, Elizabeth and John, produced out of the same material and in response to the same events. Thoroughly invested in the scientific validity of "objective" observation in the field, Lorna Marshall's text is an imperfect ethnography that shows the seams

of anthropological writing and in so doing, renders legible the problems at the crux of anthropology's mid-twentieth-century project.

Unlike her mother Lorna Marshall's ethnography, the narrative that Elizabeth Marshall tells embraces the personal and subjective and is a story far more experiential than explanatory. Like all travelers, what Marshall sees is heavily inflected by her subjectivity and experiences. As a literary writer, however, she is free to draw attention to the ways that her identity frames the events she describes. In contrast to her mother's scientific record of the Ju/'hoansi and her brother's filmic one, Elizabeth Marshall's travelogue gives readers a highly sensory, meditative account of her family's encounter with the Ju/'hoan people they met in the Kalahari.

Drawing attention to her identity as a white woman contextualizes and personalizes Marshall's narrative point of view. Like other travel writing by women, her text bears what Kristi Siegel calls "the unmistakable imprint of gender" in both her authorial voice and the stories she chooses to tell (9). The kinds of tasks and experiences that she was able to observe and investigate—gathering veld foods, a wedding, birth rituals, caring for children—are occupations almost exclusively designated to Ju/'hoan women. In a very pragmatic sense, like her mother's ethnography, Marshall's text reflects a reality marked by the intersecting gender norms of two cultures, rules that govern which bodies perform which tasks. Her desire to forge profound and enduring relationships with the Ju/'hoan people she meets is certainly part of a tradition of ethnographic fieldwork, but it is also the kind of preoccupation associated with an American brand of femininity that privileges emotion, intimacy and interpersonal communication.

Marshall's fascination with moments of cultural encounter and the kinds of exchanges those encounters can produce is central to her travel writing and to the feminist politics that are implicitly at stake in her work. Meeting "natives" for the first time is never a uniform experience

in the story she tells. Sometimes the "Bushmen" her family meets are reserved and stand-offish, while at other times they seem almost childlike in their innocent acceptance of outsiders in their community. For her, however, the moment of first encounter is always a heightened experience laden with hidden meanings about both parties.

The travel writer begins her narrative by describing ambiguous encounters with mysterious indigenous groups and steadily builds toward richer, more personal meetings with individuals that produce the kinds of cultural insights that Marshall seeks. Her first glimpse of "real Bushmen" is brief. Marshall reports that after traveling through unmapped territory, the expedition stumbles upon a migrating group of Bakalahari people who employ the Ju/'hoansi as laborers. Describing the group, she takes pains to differentiate between the "tall, dark-skinned" Bakalahari people and "their Bushmen servants, old wrinkled men and women, light girls with their babies, lithe young hunters, small, light-skinned, all carrying great loads of household goods belonging to the Bakalahari's" (27). Here, Marshall asks her reader to notice the distinct physicality and social status of "Bushmen," who compared to the Bakalaharis, are smaller, "light-skinned" and "lithe" yet carry great burdens on their back like pack animals. As the expedition stops to watch, the villagers move steadily forward, hardly acknowledging their presence except for a group of Ju/'hoan women at the rear of the group who "turned their heads to look back at us: like vixens…neither smiling nor speaking, just watching with blank faces and great eyes" (30). This meeting of gazes, fleeting and ambiguous, portrays the "native" woman as an unknowable, indecipherable image and holds out the promise of more substantial encounters to come.

Marshall's second meeting with Ju/'hoansi is far more substantial. Like most of the encounters she describes, the Ju/'hoan people her team successfully "finds" have come to them,

revealing themselves only when they are so inclined. In this instance, the expedition had come across a small group of huts, the remains of the fires on the ground outside of them still warm, and human footprints that seemed to be "rushing off in all directions" (31). Interpreting these remains as signs that a group of Ju/'hoansi had recently abandoned the site and might still near enough to find, the Marshalls decide to camp there and wait to see if any of them return. After half the party spends the afternoon away from camp, breaking fresh track through the veld with their jeeps and stalking a lion they want to photograph, they return to find "two small men, one old, one young, in silhouette as they squatted by the fire, turning as we came to look at us, very nervous and very ill at ease" sitting silently with the rest of the expedition who have been anxiously waiting for the translators to return so they can communicate (35). The men are given food, tobacco, and a bucket of water but they remain cautious, apparently spooked by a rumor that a European farmer had lost seven horses and was looking for someone to blame. Marshall writes that the "Bushmen" had mistaken the party for policemen; in fact, their conversation begins with the older man's assertion of innocence, insisting that he hasn't seen or taken any horses and is too old to commit such a crime.

The meeting continues in a series of similar misunderstandings and misinterpretations: the Marshalls' questions "frighten" the old man, named Ukwane, and he is often "at a loss for something to reply"; the younger man, Gai, sits quietly, "self-consciously shifting his position, pretending to be unconcerned", meeting their eyes with a "reserved gaze" and holding his hand over his mouth to muffle his worlds, whispering to Ukwane only "in voice so soft that it was almost inaudible" (36). When asked where they live, Ukwane claims to be too old to remember and Gai gives ambiguous coordinates, saying only that his people live "many days' journey to the east". When asked if the huts beside the camp are theirs, they deny having ever seen them

before. The Marshalls try to gain their confidence by telling them a version of their own story. They explain that they have come from America to "visit them and give them presents" and say that they had already made friends with Ju/'hoansi at Gautscha where they lived for a year. They share the familial names given to them by /Toma, information which makes Ukwane and Gai smile and "soften" enough to admit that the huts beside the camp are theirs after all, abandoned in fear when their group heard the sound of the Marshalls' trucks approaching (37). After days of hiding, they heard the trucks moving and returned to the site only to find the Marshalls still camped there. Assuming that they were surrounded by police, they had come to surrender.

This second encounter with Ju/'hoan people reveals new information about "native" life, details that seem out of place in a narrative supposedly about "Africa's last hunter-gatherers". Readers learn something of the social context in which the Ju/'hoansi live, a southern Africa marked by volatile race-relations that threaten the Ju/'hoan people even within the isolation of the desert. Ukwane, Gai, and their family associate white people with the disciplinary force of the police and are "afraid for their lives," a fact that suddenly calls into question the fantasy that underwrites the entire narrative: the notion that the Ju/'hoansi are a pristine example of "primitive" culture because they are unsullied by contact with the outside world (35). The multiple misunderstandings in this meeting are not simply about Ju/'hoan "naiveté" or innocence, but instead map a history of violence between outsider and native, modern and primitive, or state authority and subject. The story Ukwane and Gai tell also confirms Marshall's ability to interpret the physical traces of Ju/'hoansi that the party finds in the desert and to re-construct an accurate narrative from tracks and artifacts, a skill that reinforces her credibility to tell a "true" story about native life.

Both the ephemeral encounter with Ju/'hoan "vixens" and the cautious meeting with Ju/'hoan men set the stage for a third, more substantial encounter, one that establishes a foundation for meaningful cross-cultural relationships. Ukwane and Gai lead the party to where their people are hiding and once they signal that it is safe to come out, a young woman, carrying a baby on her hip, emerges from the tall grasses:

> Presently she smiled, pressed her hand to her chest, and said: "Tsetchwe." It was her name.
>
> "Elizabeth," I said, pointing to myself.
>
> "Niasbe," she answered, pronouncing after me and inclining her head graciously. She looked me over carefully without really staring, which to Bushmen is rude. Then, having surely suspected that I was a woman, she put her hand on my breast gravely, and, finding that I was, gravely touched her own breast. Many Bushmen do this; to them all Europeans look the same.
>
> "*Tsau si*" (women), she said. (42)

Reminiscent of iconic literary encounters, like the ones between William Burroughs' Tarzan and Jane or even Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe and Friday, this moment plays with a convention familiar to readers of exotic adventure stories. First meetings between "civilized" characters and their "native" counterparts typically signal the introduction of a crucial relationship in adventure narratives. In the case of Tarzan and Jane, the meeting sparks a romance; for Crusoe and Friday, the encounter sets into motion a relationship between "master" and "slave" that underscores Crusoe's colonial ambitions. In the context of Marshall's travelogue, this first meeting between two young women, one a white, privileged American and the other a Ju/'hoan African living in

the open Kalahari, establishes the trust and intimacy between Marshall and Tsetchwe that drives her narrative forward and frames the rest of her impressions of the Ju'hoansi.

Riffing on a motif largely about locating difference between "civilized" and "savage" people, what Marshall draws our attention to instead in this passage is what these characters have in common—their shared identity as women. Tsetchwe's suspicion that Marshall is a woman is what prompts her to speak and motivates her to make physical contact with the writer. If at least initially the ambiguity of the gendered body makes it possible for Tsetchwe to wonder if Marshall is, in fact, a woman, a misrecognition that would seem to trouble the easy notion that gender categories are universally legible, this encounter ultimately suggests that communication between women has the potential to transcend cultural barriers. If a meaningful connection between self and other is ultimately what Marshall desires, her representation of this encounter suggests that she considers the shared experience of gender identity to be a useful way to establish a mutually-beneficial relationship.

Marshall's determination to regard womanhood as a universal category aligns with the second-wave feminist politics that inflect her authorial choices. The female characters that populate her story, for instance, are highly individuated, decisive, and powerful agents of action. Marshall's representation of Tsetchwe is a case in point. There are many ways to write Tsetchwe as a character: as a purely representative Ju/'hoan wife and mother; an earthy, maternal archetype; or a female counterpart to Gai, a young man introduced to the expedition party first. In the context of Marshall's story, however, Tsetchwe is both a representative of Ju/'hoan women *and* a dynamic character, differentiated from other Ju/'hoan people by the specificity of her appearance, personality, and history. We learn that Tsetchwe wears her hair long and a bit "disheveled" rather than shaving it closely like most Ju/'hoan women, that she is self-assured

and confident, that she is a "very conscientious mother and wife" who also tests boundaries and breaks cultural conventions (41, 74). When describing a ritual dance performed by Ju/'hoan men and boys, for instance, Marshall clearly takes delight when Tsetchwe suddenly "swept [her baby] to the ground and, flinging off her cape, jumped to her feet and began to dance… sing[ing] and wav[ing] her arms in great abandon" (73-74). Tsetchwe may be a representative "native" woman whose behavior Marshall uses to illustrate the culture of human ancestors, but she is also a singular subject whose idiosyncratic behavior distinguishes her from the group.

Even peripheral female characters are granted a special kind of authorial attention. When telling a story about "the most beautiful girl in all Nyae Nyae," a character aptly nicknamed Beautiful Ungka by the expedition party, she shifts focus from the girl's appearance to other attributes, like her intelligence, resilience, and "remarkable self-possession" (165-166). In Marshall's account, Beautiful Ungka succeeded in leaving an unwanted marriage when she was only ten years old, "flatly refused" another suitor when she was thirteen, outwitted and escaped from an admirer who kidnapped her in the middle of the night, and forced a separation from her second husband after he "tried to possess her in his sleep" (167). Marshall concludes this story with the strange pronouncement that "All that can be said is that she was extremely handsome," but her fascination with the details of Beautiful Ungka's past undermines this assertion (168). Clearly, there *is* much more to say about Ungka and what makes her story worth telling has little to do with her beauty. The way she tells it, Ungka's story epitomizes a particularly Western brand of feminist agency and empowerment.

At the core of the story that Marshall tells is a sustained, self-conscious meditation on the act of observation itself and its potential to locate meaning in the ambiguity of experience, a characteristic common to travel writing as a genre. In contrast to other literary forms, the

twentieth-century travelogue sits uneasily alongside memoir, journalism, and anthropological ethnography as a mode of documenting "real" people, places, and events. In fact, with their characteristic fluctuation between observation and reflection, twentieth-century travelogues employ visual and interpretive practices closely aligned with ethnography to the extent that it can be difficult to draw clear distinctions between literary texts and anthropological ones. Jack London and George Orwell, for instance, wrote books that are both ethnographies of the working poor and accounts of their journeys into the alternate realities of urban poverty.[36] Julia Emberley has shown that British travel writer Gertrude Bell classified the people she encountered on her journeys through Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia as "noble stock," an "intelligent and industrious race," or "a base-born tribe," a taxonomy that conforms more closely to "a racial rhetoric of physiognomic attributes" than to the purely impressionistic language of description (129). As James Clifford suggests, the representational practices of "writing culture" in the twentieth century can blur the classificatory lines between literary writing and ethnography considerably ("Introduction" 3).

The analogous relationship between the visuality of ethnography and travel writing is a phenomenon closely linked to twentieth-century modernity, but the travelogue has long been a form deeply invested in the illustrative power of images. After all, the travelogue is, in its most basic iteration, a record of a journey and what the author *sees* along the way. Historically, travel writers have relied upon a mix of descriptive writing and actual images to appeal to the

[36] Jack London's 1903 *People of the Abyss* documents the year he spent living in London's East End, a task he self-consciously took to observe and record the poverty he witnessed there. Likening his journey to that of the "explorer", he writes that he "… was open to be convinced by the evidence of my eyes, rather than by the teachings of those who had not seen, or by the words of those who had seen and gone before" (Preface vii). George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) records of Orwell's experiences as a dishwasher in Paris and a homeless "vagrant" in London and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) documents the poverty of industrial and mining towns in northern England and the people who live there. In both texts, Orwell describes characters he considers representative types, transcribes dialect, and poses pragmatic solutions to the social problems his identifies.

imagination of their readers and to authenticate that story they tell is about "real" people and places. The heterogeneity of the form can be traced from the early modern conventions of illustrating "savage types" on fantastical maps and the eighteenth-century use of portraiture through the nineteenth-century investment in the indexicality of the photographic image. While the relationship between image and text in each of these iterations is quite different, taken together these examples historically link the travelogue to the changing technologies of visual culture.

Marshall's pervasive interest in human visual perception is more than a little reminiscent of nineteenth-century travel writing about Africa. The famed missionary and explorer David Livingstone also documented his journey through the region in his 1856 *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, a narrative that precedes Marshall's account by almost exactly a century, a fact that she recalls in her description of Lake Ngami as "a flat marsh or even a dry pan at most seasons.. [that] was filled with water, something that had not happened since Livingstone was there" (139). In fact, Marshall's description of the lake as "an enormous, shining expanse of water" closely echoes the language Livingstone used to describe Ngami as "a fine-looking sheet of water" (Livingstone 40). The resonances between *The Harmless People* and *Travels and Researches* extend beyond their similar use of descriptive language to their shared preoccupation with the difficulties of reading the African landscape. Livingstone's quest to see Lake Ngami is also one of the more visually vexed moments in his travelogue. After a series of disappointing misrecognitions in the Kalahari, a place where "one clump of bushes and trees seemed exactly like another," the explorer mistakes a salt-pan for the lake because of the glare of the sun, an effect that so "completely deceive[s]" him and his party that "again and again did we seem to see it" (38). Livingstone's missionary agenda may have been quite different from

Marshall's anthropological one, but their travelogues speak to each other through a shared preoccupation with southern Africa's disjointed visuality, a problem refracted in each text through the historical specificity of their subjectivity and politics.

Marshall's ability to decipher the traces of human life on the desert landscape is precisely what propels her narrative forward, particularly in the early chapters of her book dedicated solely to the search for what she describes as an "almost invisible community" that seems nearly impossible to locate (40). To find bands of "Bushmen" requires a remarkably fine-tuned observational eye capable of noticing the smallest traces of human life left on the environment, like a small pile of residual ash from a spent fire, a piece of worked leather, or a sharpened digging stick accidentally forgotten in the rush to hide from outsiders approaching camp. According to Marshall, even the temporary villages that they construct, a congregation of "tiny" dome-shaped huts made out of grass, blend into their environment so seamlessly that they are all but invisible to the untrained observer.

For her, encountering the remains of a Ju/'hoan camp site for the first time is, above all else, a moment of visual transformation:

> I once walked right into an empty werf, as their tiny villages are called, and didn't see the little scherms, or huts, hidden in the grass until I noticed a small skin bag dangling in a shadow, which was a doorway. Then I saw the frame of the scherm around it, then the other scherms as well. (8)

The utter strangeness of this memory comes from its peculiar visual logic. To notice one small detail, a piece of leather dangling out of place in the environment, is to notice another and another until a hidden, miniature world suddenly emerges from the emptiness of the desert landscape. This passage introduces readers to unfamiliar, anthropologically-specific terms like

"werf" and "scherm", but even more importantly it re-imagines observation as a way of seeing that can magically reveal unseen aspects of the human experience.

Marshall returns to the transformative visuality of this early experience throughout the story she tells. When two Ju/'hoan men lead her party to their band later in the text, this startling shift from invisibility to sudden transparency is repeated. As in Marshall's first example, domestic space remains illegible until one mark on the landscape reveals the rest of the site:

> At last we noticed on the other side of the tree two shallow depressions scooped in the sand and lined with grass, like the shallow, scooped nests of shore birds on a beach—the homes of the families…except for a small pile of brown, twisted bean shells, no sign would show that people lived there. Later we saw another scooped pit and a stick thrust upright in the ground beside it, right at our feet…the stick was to mark the spot. (39-40)

Even when outsiders are led to the site and shown where to look, they apparently still have trouble seeing "that people lived there". Outsiders are prone to misreading the environment; to the untrained eye, Ju/'hoansi domestic space resembles either something unremarkable, like the indistinct repetitions of desert bush, or something animalistic, like a nesting ground. According to Marshall, the near invisibility of "Bushmen" and their living spaces poses a unique set of practical problems for "European" outsiders who can inadvertently "…trample through a Bushmen's cache, breaking the delicate bone or wooden objects, bending the reed arrows, or crushing eggshell beads…", and she advises "keep[ing] our big boots and bodies away from their delicate, fragile, almost invisible community" (40). In a landscape that is visually deceptive, the uninitiated observer can easily destroy entire villages and endanger potential relationships with native informants simply because they cannot read the visible traces of human life on the environment.

Moments like these literalize the tenuousness of a disappearing hunter-gatherer culture by highlighting the "fragility" and "delicacy" of their domestic spaces. The unseeing foreigner moving through Marshall's Kalahari always poses a threat to authentic native culture, a formulation that recalls the troubling paradox at the heart of anthropology that Claude Lévi-Strauss famously described as the quintessential dilemma of the twentieth-century traveler. Always "hastening in search of a vanished reality," Lévi-Strauss' traveler is a modern subject whose very presence threatens the existence of the authentic primitive he desires to find, for once contact is made the native enters a global economy of cultural exchange (45). Like Lévi-Strauss, Marshall mourns the unintentional destruction of indigenous material culture by outsiders with their big boots and ungainly movements, and her preoccupation with the fragility of primitive objects belies a deeper concern for an indigenous community vulnerable to corruption and destruction by the world outside the Kalahari.

In stark contrast to the unseeing foreigners, Marshall describes the Ju/'hoansi as astute observers of the natural world. After all, the ability to read the fine permutations of the monotonous desert landscape is a skill necessary for survival in the Bush. Marshall clearly admires what she considers a finely-tuned observational eye and supplies her readers with many examples of the Ju/'hoansi's almost superhuman ability to notice the most miniscule traces of animal and plant life in the desert. When hunting, Bushmen can track the footprints of an antelope they have wounded with their poison arrows "over the hardest ground" and recognize the unique characteristics of the footprint so they can discern it from the footprints of the herd; when gathering food, they can tell which dried vines mark edible, water-filled roots below ground (13, 106). Ju/'hoan hunters poison the tips of their arrows with liquid extracted from the pupae of a certain Diamphidia simplex beetle, a process that Marshall writes could only be

discovered by a people "who pay the closest attention to every tiny object and who investigate all its possibilities" (93). For her, a careful observational eye is a characteristic singular to Ju/'hoan culture, a trait that makes it possible for the Ju/'hoansi to effectively exploit the resources of a particularly harsh environment.

What Marshall sets into play here is a strange reversal of typical ethnographic looking relations. Rather than draw her reader's attention to the supposedly "objective" and all-seeing eye of the ethnographic observer, her carefully crafted narrative highlights her own struggle to see clearly in the Kalahari and positions the Ju/'hoansi as the vastly superior observers of the natural world. Yet her travelogue itself is presumably about observing Ju/'hoansi culture and presenting a clear vision of that culture to her reader. Curiously, Marshall asks her readers to accept that a narrator who is so completely bewildered by the deceptive visuality of the Kalahari is capable of rendering an accurate visual account of Ju/'hoan culture.

It is precisely this contradictory tension between the content of the narrative and its contextual frame that resolves the problematic misperceptions that pervade Marshall's writing. By repeatedly showing her readers instances of Ju/'hoan people observing and interpreting natural phenomena, Marshall demonstrates her skills as an astute ethnographic observer of human behavior. Implicit in these conspicuous repetitions is her assertion that while the Ju/'hoansi can see and interpret nature, Marshall can clearly see and interpret culture. After all, this story of life on the Kalahari is not told by a Ju/'hoan narrator and readers are never privy to a Ju/'hoan point of view. Instead, we are asked to look *at* the Ju/'hoansi as they examine animal tracks and carefully discern their hidden meanings. Aligned with the writer, a perpetual outsider, readers can never access anything even approximating Ju/'hoan subjectivity but we can participate in making meaning about the Ju/'hoan hunters who are the objects of our shared gaze.

As a literary device, the peculiar visuality of these looking relations complicates any simplistic notion that that the white, Western, highly educated, and privileged expedition team is superior to the people they set out to observe. Marshall is clearly in awe of the Ju/'hoansi's ability to read a seemingly illegible landscape and the layered series of gazes that she self-consciously constructs undermines the power relations implicit in ethnographic visuality. Perversely, however, placing strong emphasis on her subjects' ability to observe the natural world also implies that such vision is what part of what defines the Ju/'hoansi as "primitives". Although by her own account Marshall cannot see and interpret nature, she emerges as an astute observer of culture, a device that ultimately reinforces her narrative authority to represent her indigenous subjects.

Just as she opens her travelogue with a series of three visual encounters of her "primitive" subjects, each one revealing a bit more about the elusive "Bushmen," she closes her book with three enigmatic final glimpses of the desert landscape and the people who live there. Her last view of Gautsha Pan, the dry lake that fills with water in the rainy season, approximates an experience of the sublime:

> …Europeans and Bushmen alike, held our breath with the majesty of it, its great solitude, the great drama of sunset going on reflected in its water for no eyes to look at; and when the sun was down and the colors of the veld were dull and dark we started in, but that was an impressive last look at a place and the last I ever saw of Gautsha Pan. (260)

This final glimpse of one of the privileged locations in her book is so "majestic" that it awes both "outsiders" and "natives". Strangely, Marshall writes that the dramatic colors of the setting sun are reflected in the water "for no eyes to look at," once again suggesting that even while witnessing a spectacular sunset, somehow the natural world is withheld from her gaze.

After her "last look" at Gautsha, Marshall describes seeing the Ju/'hoansi for the last time. As the trucks of the expedition's convoy pull away from their temporary camp, she notices a single member of /Toma's family band, Lazy Kwi, looking on: **"**Lazy Kwi watched us out of sight. I saw him standing among the thorn trees, smaller and smaller in the distance, and just before he disappeared he waved" (261). Even among all the visual confusing moments in Marshall's travelogue, the looking relations in this scene are remarkably obscured. While the writer tells us that all the Ju/'hoansi are gathered to bid their farewells to the expedition party, she chooses to focus on the one person standing apart from the crowd, a man "standing among the thorn trees" and almost hidden from view. While this sentence makes Lazy Kwi the bearer of the gaze, this detail perversely seems to confirm Marshall's observational prowess as the one who notices his presence. Both subjects in this short passage, Lazy Kwi and Marshall herself, are watching the other "out of sight," a phrase that is part of everyday vernacular yet seems to pinpoint the perplexing visuality at work here. After all, to focus on what is visible up until the point it is rendered invisible is to engage in the strangely self-conscious practices of observation that Marshall dwells on in her travelogue at length.

Fittingly, her final "glimpse" of the Kalahari is not actually a glimpse at all but instead is a visual confirmation of the unearthly sounds of desert creatures at night. While camping underneath a Mangetti tree, the group hears "…a leopard coughing far away, then growling nearer, a rattle, a rumble of a growl" (261). The next morning, Marshall writes, the group gets up at dawn to find "the leopard's footprints which he had left as he walked around us, in two great circles, as though he had cast a spell" (261). In this sentence, the final line of the book, the writer recalls a scenario from the beginning of her narrative in which finding the footprints of Ju/'hoan people scattered around an abandoned camp gives the party vital information about their

whereabouts. Recasting this earlier moment in reverse, Marshall suggests that her transformation as an observer has come full circle. Where in the beginning of her story she almost misses the visual cues offered by tracks left in the dust, in this final moment the leopard's tracks only confirm what she already knows.

Marshall's travelogue is a literary text largely about what it means to be an observing subject. Despite her book's association with an anthropological expedition, it is clear from the outset that her narrative is a personal one. What emerges from her story is a reflection of "primitive" people seen obliquely through the eyes of a young, white American woman, a writer aware of her own privilege and enamored with the idea of seeing "real natives".

SEEING THE JU/'HOANSI ON FILM

John Marshall's 1957 film *The Hunters* was met with critical acclaim and is still regularly hailed as a classic of ethnographic documentary. The year following its release, the film won the Robert J. Flaherty Award for Best Documentary from the British Film Institute and in 2003, it was added to the U.S. National Film Registry by the Library of Congress. Screened regularly in American anthropology and social studies classrooms throughout the 1960's and 1970's, the young director's first film became *the* image of "primitive" hunter gatherers for a generation of American students, defining the Kalahari "Bushmen" as an archetypal primitive subject living in a world unchanged by modern civilization (Martinez 146). Later, Marshall regretted the way his film mythologized the Ju/'hoansi as a "noble savage" and spent the latter part of his career explicitly trying to rewrite this narrative.

The film's opening sequence introduces viewers to a Kalahari that in his voice-over narration Marshall calls a "bitter" land, a place where water holes are "few and precious" and food is scarce. Silent images appear in quick succession: a dry, brown plant waves in the wind; a dun-colored bird, barely visible in the thorny branches of a bush, flutters its wings; a bird of prey perches high atop a leafless tree; a dusty lizard scurries into its den. When human bodies materialize onscreen they are accompanied by the first instance of sound in the film, a simple Ju/'hoan song that slowly intensifies as two men walk through the frame. Wearing nothing but leather thongs and carrying slim, lightweight quivers full of arrows, the men wander somewhat distractedly across the screen; one of them even glances casually at the camera before returning his gaze to the ground. The sequence that follows repeats this pattern, shifting back to a series of silent images of giraffes chewing their cud, a brightly-colored butterfly, and a deer barely visible

in tall grass before returning to a shot of the men examining an animal den in the desert rock as Ju/'hoan music plays, once again fusing sound and image.

Marshall's use of sound in the opening moments of the film carves the Kalahari into two distinct worlds: the silence of animal life and the rich, music-filled experience of human beings. While we do not hear !Kung speech, the combination of voice that we hear in the musical track and gesture that we see onscreen marks the human world as the site of both art and language. Human and animal worlds in the film are not completely discrete here since cross-cutting between images of animals and human beings creates a visual connection, if not conflation, between them. In these first glimpses of "native" life, Marshall plays with ideologically-competing notions about primitive groups, visually linking Ju/'hoan bodies with animal ones while at the same time making an aural distinction between human and animal experience. Ultimately what marks these "primitives" as human is their access to language and music, the stuff of "culture", and Marshall's use of sound underscores this distinction by making the viewer's experience of watching human and animal behavior radically different.

In less than ten shots, the film tells us everything we need to know to understand the story that follows: the Ju/'hoansi are part of the Kalahari and like the other forms of life that thrive there, they have adapted to a particularly harsh environment. Immediately *The Hunters* is framed as a tale of human endurance and survival, thematic territory that recalls one of ethnographic film's earliest predecessors, Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*. This first impression is only reinforced in subsequent shots. When Ju/'hoansi next appear onscreen they are actively engaged in the search for food and water: men track prey, a family shares a drink out of a waterhole, and women dig for edible roots in the hard ground. These visual "facts" powerfully establish a diegetic world of scarcity and privation and provide a narrative motivation for the five-day

giraffe hunt at the heart of the film. There are many ways to glean food from the Kalahari but the film privileges hunting, a task exclusively reserved for men, by suggesting that the meat from large game is the most coveted source of veld food and the most difficult to obtain.

The notion that the Ju/'hoansi are starving is just one of the film's underlying fantasies, but it is the one that has been most heavily critiqued by anthropologists. Since the film was released in 1958, anthropologists studying Ju/'hoan food culture determined that their traditional diet was not only nutritionally sound but rich in proteins and calories and even further, noted that there was no shortage of certain desert foods integral to the Ju/'hoan diet, like the mongongo nut, even in drought years.[37] Marshall himself agreed with that critique. In his 1993 essay *Filming and Learning*, Marshall himself concedes that much of the film's "reality" was a construct. While /Toma did in fact shoot a giraffe with a poisoned arrow, Marshall writes that he actually shot the animal from a moving jeep and speculates that the men in the film "tracked her mainly for me and the movie" because "Ju/'hoansi would probably not have spent that much time and effort after a big animal with a thick skin that might not have been well shot" (36). He also writes candidly about the process of making his first film in this essay, admitting that his cinematographic choices were inflected by his personal interpretation of events, that he edited the film to privilege a forward-moving narrative, and that many of his artistic choices, from the film's vignette structure to his poetic voice-over narration, were strongly influenced by literary fiction writers like Herman Melville and William Faulkner rather than by anthropological facts.

[37] In her book *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* (1981), anthropologist Marjorie Shostak cites Richard Lee's 1968 study of the Ju/'hoan diet. Lee found that the Ju/'hoansi's "average intake of calories and protein exceeded United Nations recommendations for people of their size and stature" and further that their diet, low in sodium, carbohydrates, saturated fats, and sugars, actually "conforms to most contemporary ideas of good nutrition" (15). Shostak notes that Lee's data was collected in a severe drought year; based on this information, she concludes that the Ju/'hoa diet is even more well-rounded in typical years.

Ultimately, Marshall retrospectively described *The Hunters* as "a romantic film by an American kid [that] revealed more about me than about Ju/hoansi" (39).

The director's characterization of his own work is provocative for several reasons. Here, Marshall readily acknowledges that all films, even ethnographic documentaries, are not only inflected by a director's aesthetic choices but that they also reflect the subjectivity of the person behind the camera. While this idea may obvious to current filmmakers and scholars, the notion that ethnographic documentaries are inscribed by the subjectivity of the filmmaker was hotly contested by visual anthropologists like Karl Heider and Jay Ruby throughout the 1980's and '90's who pushed against Bill Nichols' ideological readings of ethnographic documentary by defining anthropological films as fieldwork-based evidence. By calling his film "romantic," Marshall also gives a nod to Nichols' famous critique of his film in which the film scholar compares the problematic romanticism of *The Hunters* to Flaherty's early films.

Mostly, Marshall's description of his earliest film foregrounds his own identity when he made it as a 20-year-old "American kid" on the family's third expedition to the Kalahari in 1952-53. He had become a filmmaker when his father gave him a Bell & Howell 16 millimeter camera and a copy of *Notes and Queries*, the canonical handbook for collecting ethnographic data, and assigned him the task of making a film record of their family's Kalahari trip. Reflecting back on this experience, Marshall recalls that he had no formal training but simply learned as he went. In the beginning, he used a tripod to set up each shot and keep the camera still, a technique that made filming a slow process and required his subjects to stop, reset and repeat actions many times to ensure that Marshall caught events on film to his satisfaction. As he grew more comfortable with the camera, he became more ambitious, shooting from moving vehicles and climbing up Baobab trees to get what he jokingly called an "American kids-eye view" of the

action (Anderson and Benson 140). He also grew particular about capturing an image of a Kalahari "untouched" by the outside world, cleaning the empty cans the Ju/'hoansi used regularly out of the background of shots and avoiding filming any members of the expedition interacting with Ju/'hoan people. Upon his return to Cambridge, Marshall worked in post-production with ethnographic filmmaker Robert Gardner at Harvard to edit his first footage into a film that would be coherent to Western audiences.

Certainly, Marshall's interest in telling a compelling story overruled the dictates of an anthropologically-sound one. The prosaic reality of Ju/'hoan life that Marshall originally recorded did not conform to the conflict/resolution format that drives fiction film, but imposing that schema onto the footage provided one way to organize those disjointed images into a narrative easily understood by Western audiences. Combined with the lyrical, often meditative tone of his voice-over, Marshall's editing attempts to translate the illegible patterns of Ju/'hoan behavior for cultural outsiders while also creating narrative urgency and dramatic appeal. Once he establishes that the Ju/'hoan community needs meat to survive, the hunting scenes that make up the rest of the film gain in intensity, drama, and urgency. Each time a hunter fails to make a kill, the film tells us, is one more day that passes without meat for their hungry families waiting at home. Without this narrative motivation, the film's numerous scenes of hunting might seem to glorify spectacular acts of maiming and killing the same wild animals that Western audiences are used to admiring in the benign setting of the zoo, particularly the grizzly finale in which the hunters surround and kill a wounded giraffe with their spears.

Marshall's voice-over narration makes the people's hunger for meat explicit twelve minutes into the film when he introduces the information that drives the rest of the film's narrative: "One day in early winter when there had been no meat in the werft for a month since

the rains, many people had gone gathering and the werft seemed abandoned in the morning". Following shots of the empty werft, or temporary village, the viewer sees a young woman nursing her infant child, an image that Marshall's voice-over clarifies: "Among the few who remained at home was !U, /Toma's wife, and their new baby. People needed meat. /Toma's wife needed it to keep her breasts full of milk". Although this voice-over is quite brief, it very effectively establishes the seriousness of the film's dilemma. Marshall puts it simply, declaring that "the people needed meat", before subtly shifting attention from "the people" to one person in particular, !U, a young mother whose needs extend beyond herself to her infant. As the most vulnerable member of the small community,!U and /Toma's baby becomes a symbol of the people's need for meat and their fragility without it. Marshall's voice-over continues, reinforcing the connection between the infant and the hunt: "/Toma decided to out hunting that day. The thought of his wife's full breasts with their strong flow of milk and the baby that she had given him made him eager to kill a fat buck".

This moment is the first iteration of what becomes a powerful repetition. In the scene that follows the hunt, meat is distributed to each family group. Marshall somewhat poetically declares that "the meat spread across the werft as the ripple across water…There was enough meat for nine days" and returns to an image of !U breastfeeding her child, looking off into the distance as though she were studiously avoiding meeting the camera's gaze. By repeating a visual association between the baby and the people's need for meat immediately before and after the hunt, the film explicitly links the community's ability to sustain future generations to hunting. In the world of the film, the baby's very existence is proof of /Toma's virile masculinity and so is his ability to make a substantial kill. Counterintuitively, the film manages to bypass !U's maternal breastfeeding and assign the primary task of feeding the baby to the male hunters,

suggesting it is hunting that ultimately ensures the longevity of the Ju/'hoansi. Reflecting the attitudes of a young Marshall fascinated with rites of manhood, the film's logic says that hunting not only satisfies an immediate desire for sustenance but also preserves the culture that the film seeks to document.

The success of visually and aurally imposing this logic onto his footage is debatable. Nichols takes issue with both the film's artificial, formulaic narrative structure and Marshall's highly didactic voice over, arguing that the combination of the film's editing style and its reliance on non-synchronous sound creates a disjunction between the image and sound tracks "render[ing] the images less concrete, less contextually bound to a specific time and place" (261). The specificity of the story that Marshall sets out to tell gets lost in abstractions about human nature, universalizing gestures that invite what Nichols calls "mythopoetic" interpretations. Even more damning, Nichols claims that understanding precisely what happens in the film becomes nearly impossible (260). Marshall edited footage taken of many hunts over a period of seven years to create the illusion of watching one, continuous event (Barbash and Taylor 69). However, it's hard to describe his elliptical editing as seamless: the number of hunters often changes and their exact location in the desert is uncertain. It is possible that Marshall exploits the confused visuality that his sister Elizabeth describes in her travelogue here by assuming that Western audiences would be unable to recognize the individual characteristics of the film's "primitive" subjects or recognize mismatches in the desert landscape, making the possibility of perceiving continuity errors slim to none.[38]

[38] Karl Heider makes a similar observation. He writes that "if audiences could distinguish between individual Bushmen—or even different giraffes—the effect would not be possible" (67). Marshall himself later speculated about this effect, when he wrote "I'm not sure how many people who have seen *The Hunters* noticed the changes in the cast" (37).

Nichols' critique of the film extends far beyond its narrative ambiguity. Above all else, Nichols considers Marshall's film an instructive example of the problems with anthropology's investment in the indexicality and authenticity of the film image. He privileges *The Hunters* as an example of the troubling ethics posed by ethnographic film in his 1981 book *Ideology and the Image*, arguing that *The Hunters* makes an instructive case study for the ideological problems at the heart of anthropological filmmaking's premise. Nichols claims that the film hides its status as a representation, effacing the specificity of its subjects by positioning them as primitive "types" who stand in for humanity's earliest ancestors in a mythic parable about the will to survive. He compares *The Hunters* with other canonical ethnographic documentaries like Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* and anthropologist Robert Gardner's *Dead Birds* (1963), films that he also critiques for their tendency toward abstraction and fantasy.[39]

Nichols is not the first scholar to make the comparison between Marshall and Flaherty and for good reason. Visual anthropologists Jay Ruby, Isla Barbash and Lucien Taylor all note the thematic similarities between *The Hunters* and Flaherty's films, observing that both filmmakers tell archetypal stories about human survival in a hostile environment (11; 29). Heider characterizes Marshall's film as "pure Flaherty" in both theme and style (31). Winning the Robert Flaherty Award from the British Film Institute in 1958 also solidified the film's association with the forefather of documentary.

Marshall's attempts to simulate the effect of watching one continuous hunt out of a fragmented archive of hunting footage certainly and attribute interiority to his subjects through voice-over certainly aligns him stylistically with Flaherty's project. What many scholars have

[39] As Director of the Film Study Center at Harvard, Robert Gardner mentored Marshall and helped him transform his footage into a narrative film. Gardner also obtained the footage for *Dead Birds*, his first film, from a Harvard-Peabody Expedition to New Guinea where he studied the war rituals of the Dani people. Like Marshall, Gardner attributes subjectivity to his subjects solely through voice-over, poetically narrating their thoughts and feelings.

overlooked in their comparison between Flaherty and Marshall, however, is the participatory viewing experience that both filmmakers create for the viewer. While their films are designed to give viewers the impression that they are watching events filmed continuously in "real time," neither filmmaker presents events in the one long take preferred by anthropologists. Instead, they skillfully used editing to lead viewers through an event, ultimately privileging a cinematic experience over an anthropological one. Flaherty was certainly far more concerned with maintaining the effect that spectators were seeing an event in its entirety on screen. His characteristic use of the long take that extended the duration of the image onscreen was designed to replicate the "real" experience of witnessing an event, a stylistic choice that André Bazin famously found so appealing. While the editing in Marshall's film conforms more closely overall to classical Hollywood narrative style, both *Nanook* and *The Hunters* prompt viewers to participate in the event onscreen by making meaning from one shot to the next, a way of seeing that is purely cinematic.

The kind of seeing Marshall constructs in the opening sequence of *The Hunters* is a case in point. Viewers are presented with a highly fragmented version of Ju/'hoan life in the first few moments of the film: here a branch and a bird, there a human being and a giraffe. Moving between shots of disparate images, Marshall prompts viewers to find relationships between them. We might notice consistencies of color scheme (the dusty beiges and browns of the desert) or content (each shot records life in motion). We may also track repetitions, like the multiple shots of winged creatures or the marked shift between short takes of animals and the longer takes of human beings. Looking for patterns between individual shots is an active interpretive process that requires a highly attentive spectator; the editing of this introductory sequence establishes that viewer participation will be crucial to understanding the film's message.

Significantly, there is not one point of view shot in this nearly four-minute sequence. Instead, we are asked simply *to look* at a series of images, flattening the viewer's sense perceptual space. The Kalahari emerges as a chain of images, some of which can easily be identified and some that seem more ambiguous. When the film's human subjects appear onscreen, we watch them slowly walk toward the camera and then leave the frame before the film gives us another image to decipher: a white moth fluttering close to the hard, dry ground. This moment could easily have been an opportunity to align the viewer with a human gaze. Inserting a close-up of one of the hunter's faces before the shot of the moth would have dramatically changed the way viewers read that image and would prompt them to understand each subsequent shot of animal life as aligned with a hunter's perspective. In other words, the spectator would be asked to inhabit the subjectivity of the Ju/'hoan men onscreen and to read the desert landscape along with them. Without assigning the viewer's gaze to a human being, the film encourages us to regard the hunters the same way we regard the animals in Kalahari—as forms of life that will always remain distant and in some way, unknowable to outsiders.

The final shot of the sequence only reinforces this sense of estrangement. Immediately before the film's title appears onscreen /Toma's face is framed in close-up, scanning the distant horizon. Significantly, this first close-up of a human face is not followed by an image but by a non-diegetic title screen, denying the viewer any possibility of experiencing the perceptual subjectivity of the film's subjects in this introductory sequence. Like all films, the opening moments of *The Hunters* establishes the aesthetic sensibility and narrative structure particular to the text. It is here that the film makes plain its status as "ethnographic" and suggests the anthropological scope of Marshall's project. It is made clear that we will be asked to look at

things through the impersonal gaze of the camera, an apparatus that the film positions as unobtrusive, omnipresent, and thoroughly objective.

Implicit in this supposed neutrality, of course, is the notion that the camera objectifies the human subjects of the film, rendering them two-dimensional objects indistinguishable from the other forms of life in the desert that the camera records. Flattening the Kalahari into a series of images, the film prompts spectators to assume the ideal anthropological perspective that Bronislaw Malinowski imagined when he attempted to write a "bird's-eye view" of the Trobriand Islanders in his 1929 ethnography *The Sexual Lives of Savages*. Viewers are prompted to decipher patterns of human behavior onscreen without the messy contradictions and conundrums of day-to-day life in the field.

The success of this effect relies on obscuring what is outside the frame. While viewers may see four men walking through a vast desert landscape, what they do not see is a young John Marshall filming while perched high in a baobab tree to obtain the necessary distance to capture that shot. *The Hunters* positions its subjects as "real primitives" who live in a pristine Kalahari virtually unchanged by history, but to maintain that illusion Marshall remembers "cleaning tin cans out of shots to make the Ju/'hoansi in Nyae Nyae look real" (32). This version of a Kalahari unsullied by the waste of an industrialized world, actively represses the fact that by 1952, neither the Kalahari nor the people who lived there were prehistoric. Historian Robert Gordon writes that the Ju/'hoansi traded ostrich feathers for metal and beads in the nineteenth century and were visited many times by the travelers and hunters who called them "Bushmen" in the early twentieth century (21-22). By the time the Marshalls met them in the 1950's, the Ju/'hoansi were well acquainted with the violent policies and politics of the outside world, from the white farmers and British colonial officials who routinely rounded up and shot "Bushmen

vermin" or forced them to work on their farms to the Herero refugees from the German-Herero War of 1903 who moved into the region and took possession of Ju/'hoan waterholes for their cattle. By obscuring what lies beyond the frame, Marshall's first film represses this violent history in order to produce the fantasy of "first contact" with authentic "natives" that appealed to him as a young, adventurous teenager. Despite his best efforts, *The Hunters* wrestles with its own formal constraints in moments where actors ever so briefly glance at the camera, subtly attesting to the filmmaker's presence on the set.

Despite the academic reception and classification of his films, Marshall claimed that he never considered himself an ethnographic filmmaker. He contrasts his attitude toward his filmmaking with his father's interest in the camera which he characterizes as anthropological. In fact, he claims that his father was never pleased with *The Hunters* precisely because of its epic narrative frame (36). Marshall, on the other hand, seemed to consider his films simply documentaries that transcended their anthropological pretensions. In a 2003 interview, he suggested that his films were never intended to be anthropological: "I know that some academic people seem to think that I make ethnographic films. I have no real idea what that is. What I shoot [in Nyae Nyae] is documentary and it is just exactly the same as I shoot here, except, I would say, for the language" (Jansen). Eliding the distinction between "documentary" and "ethnographic" films could be a response to the fact that most documentary films classified as "ethnographic" focus on indigenous people or minority populations, communities that do not enjoy white privilege and are often the subject of anthropological study. Marshall may have made a name for himself with a film about indigenous subjects, but his career extends beyond the scope of traditionally ethnographic filmmaking projects.

Upon returning to the U.S., Marshall quickly turned the cinematic language he honed in the Kalahari on American cultural institutions in the 1960's, embracing the filmmaking practices of direct cinema that sought to capture the real world as it unfolded in front of the camera without the didactic intrusion of voice-over narration. Over the course of his family's expeditions throughout the 1950's, his camera work had evolved from the slow, fragmented series of shots at varying distances using a tripod to a more holistic practice of using a hand-held camera and filming events in their entirety. Marshall called the footage he procured using this method "sequences" and claimed that the films he made using this technique more accurately captured actual Ju/'hoan experience. Ironically, his notion of "sequence" filming replicated many of the arguments anthropologists would later make for what characteristics qualify a documentary as "ethnographic".

Marshall's closely-held belief that filming reality was possible informed his entire career as a filmmaker. He was particularly drawn to investigations of powerful cultural institutions and made films explicitly intended to be shown in classrooms and community service-learning projects. Marshall became an important figure in America direct cinema, co-directing *Titticut Follies* (1967) with Frederick Wiseman before making the Pittsburgh Police Series (1971-1973), 17 films that were used to illicit discussion about the role of the police in communities in the wake of Civil Rights Era violence.[40] Harnessing what he considered to be the all-seeing eye of direct cinema's camera became a way to enact his politics by revealing the flawed ideologies at the heart of American institutions through the film record. The filmmaker later wrote about the potential of filmmaking as a tool for advocacy and change. For him, the power of documentary was always derived from film's close relationship to the indexical, photographic image. The

[40]According to Jack Ellis and Betsey McLane, after disputes over editing *Titticut Follies*, Marshall's co-directing credit was removed from the film (232). Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz write that he was later credited as cinematographer on that film (44).

camera's ability to testify to historical events made the film record indisputable evidence of "what really happened" in the lives of disenfranchised and oppressed people.

Tracing Marshall's career also means tracing the transformation of American documentary filmmaking and its quest to capture truth on film. Although he became famous for a narrative documentary film that closely mirrored the rhetorical structure that critics so admired in Flaherty's work, he spent most of his career embracing the principles of direct cinema and later made films that very self-consciously critiqued their own representational practices.[41] His 1980 film *N!ai, Story of a !Kung Woman*, for instance, is highly reflexive about the experience of reality that film constructs and his 2002 series *A Kalahari Family* is Marshall's meditation on the acts of filming and editing his fifty-year relationship with the Ju/'hoansi. In both of these films, he incorporates footage from his multiple trips to the Kalahari, showing Ju/'hoan people who are the recurring subjects of his films watching and interpreting footage of themselves**.**

In her afterward to *The Harmless People*, Elizabeth Marshall describes one such occasion in 1972, when John screened his film *Bitter Melons* (1971), made from footage recorded in 1955, to a group of Ju/'hoan people from /Toma's original family band that he located in Botswana, ousted from their land and living in poverty:

> …John set up his screen in the veld to show the film to Gai who sat on his heels in the grass beside the stand of the projector…Gai had never seen a film. John told him more or less what to expect and sat on his heels beside him. The film started. It shows how all the people of Ukwane's group lived in the far reaches of the Kalahari, and shows Ukwane playing the guashi and singing the mood song which is the film's title. There was

[41] Interestingly, Bill Nichols regards *Titticut Follies* as a powerful example of the potential of documentary filmmaking in his book *Ideology and Image* (1981), the same text in which he uses *The Hunters* as an example of the ideological problems at the heart of the ethnographic filmmaking project. He makes no mention of John Marshall's creative involvement with Wiseman's film.

> Tsechewe again, young and beautiful, and little Nhwakewe, and all the other people living together in the old times. There was Gai himself, with his fine healthy body. There was Ukwane singing the old songs. Taken off guard, Gai was overcome. He caught John's hand and began crying. John and Gai held each other's hands and both wept while the film ran. (267-268)

This second-hand account of John Marshall's relationship to the "Kalahari family" he filmed, studied, wrote about, travelled with and advocated for privileges the film image itself as a site of powerful intercultural exchange. In Elizabeth Marshall's formulation, it is not the poverty and illness plaguing Gai and his family that prompts his emotional response, but the *images* of his "fine healthy body" and of his relatives "living together in the old times" that overwhelms him. Despite the fact that these images of "the primitive" are part of a discourse that had devastating consequences for the Ju/'hoansi, the logic behind this narrative displaces any complicity the Marshall's expeditions may have had in efforts to relocate and assimilate the Ju/'hoan people by making the case that John Marshall's films preserved a historical moment that otherwise would have simply been eradicated and forgotten. This logic is strikingly similar to early-twentieth-century anthropology's "salvage imperative" and to the logos of documentary itself. Both practices consider the image to be a kind of artifact and the recorded event on film to contain something of the original's essence, preserved to be watched over and over again. In this account in particular, the film image creates the occasion for communal grieving over the past and has the potential to strengthen a community over a shared experience of mourning.

John Marshall certainly found the notion that filmmaking could function as community-building appealing and consciously set out to use film as a tool for social justice. None of his films, however, can be read purely as image archives that contain the essence of the Ju/'hoansi in

the second half of the twentieth century. What they can show us is the evolution of a specifically cinematic representation of "the primitive Bushmen" and the ways that this cinematic assemblage of the Ju/'hoansi is always intertwined with Marshall himself, a white, American filmmaker who grew up alongside his films and consciously used his camera to intercede in a rapidly changing political landscape between 1950 and 2000 in Southern Africa and the United States.

VISUAL TROUBLE

In retrospect, the Marshall expeditions in the 1950's begin to appear as an almost quaint version of the last vestiges of a way of seeing "natives" that was set to explode. Their family trips turned museum-sponsored studies had all the elements of an earlier mode of exploratory travel established in the nineteenth century: the convoy of vehicles carrying drums of water and supplies and perpetually getting stuck in the mud; the "black boys" serving as a ready staff of cooks, mechanics, and translators; the endless navigation of bureaucratic "red tape" to enter territory; the exchange of gifts of tobacco and salt with "the natives". David Livingstone or British explorer Henry Morgan Stanley would have recognized their experience of travel in Africa, as would later travelers like modernist writer and big-game hunter Ernest Hemmingway or the adventure filmmakers Martin and Osa Johnson. While their good intentions and American liberal politics make them more likable characters than some of their predecessors, the logic behind their investigation of the "harmless people" they claim to have discovered in the desert is not very different from an earlier interest in salvaging the last remainders of "primitive" humanity by recording their culture.

By the 1960's, it would no longer be possible to travel unquestioned and unencumbered through a decolonized Africa, nor would it be possible to see "natives" without some recognition of the violent paternalism inscribed in the gaze. In response to the violence inscribed in the visual discourse of "the primitive," many late-twentieth-century writers, filmmakers, and ethnographers, particularly those who identify as "indigenous" or "native" Others, looked for other ways to represent their cultural identity, history, and experience. The next chapter examines these efforts to shift attention away from the troubling visuality of ethnographic

looking and to embrace “native voice” as a potential site for a more ethnical and authentic representation of culture.

CHAPTER 3: LISTENING TO NATIVES SPEAK: THE SHIFT FROM VISION TO VOICE

In his 1955 meditative travelogue *Tristes Tropiques*, Claude Lévi-Strauss mourned the passing of an age of "real travel" and with it, the loss of authentic "natives" to discover:

> Today the savages of the Amazonian forests are caught, like game-birds, in the trap of our mechanistic civilization…The paradox is irresoluble: the less one culture communicates with another, the less likely they are to be corrupted, one by the other; but one the other hand, the less likely it is, in such conditions, that the emissaries of these cultures will be able to seize the richness and significance of their diversity. The alternative is inescapable: either I am a traveler in ancient times, and faced with a prodigious spectacle which would be almost entirely unintelligible to me and might, indeed, provoke me to mockery and disgust; or I am a traveler of our own day, hastening in search of a vanished reality. (42-45)

Tracing the contours of a dilemma that troubled anthropologists throughout the twentieth century, Lévi-Strauss sees anthropology itself, the very paradigm that makes it possible to "seize the richness and significance" of "savage" cultures, as paradoxically complicit in the "corruption" and subsequent destruction of an authentic primitive subject. In 1955, the eminent anthropologist could see that both "the native" and the ethnographic authority to produce that subject were a "vanished reality".

The promise of discovering and studying primitive human ancestors that had driven the Marshall Expeditions in the 1950's was a visual project thoroughly entrenched in the ideologies of what Lévi-Strauss calls the age of "real travel". By the 1980's, the multi-modal examination of so-called "primitives" and their ritual behaviors was officially in decline. What replaced that project was the rigorous examination of the ideologies that made such methods of observation

and analysis possible. Anthropologists turned a critical eye toward their own discipline, its historical imbrication with colonialism and the ideological underpinnings of ethnographic authority. Film scholar Bill Nichols set out to re-evaluate the documentary claim to realism, arguing that documentary films frame reality rather than simply present events "as they really happened" to viewers. The widely-held belief that absolute truths about the self could be found through the observation of others was rapidly being dismantled.

Central to this wholesale critique of ethnographic authority were the voices of people positioned by ethnographic discourse as "natives". As James Clifford observed in 1988, "after 1950 peoples long spoken for by Western ethnographers, administrators, and missionaries began to speak and act more powerfully for themselves on a global stage [and] it was increasingly hard to keep them in their (traditional) places" (6). It is certainly not the case that so-called "natives" had not expressed themselves or attempted to intervene in ethnographic discourse before these years. Whether it was due to the changed intellectual climate that opened up publishing and exhibition venues for self-identified "native" writers and artists or a result of the changing access to Western discourse and institutions created by the events of the early twentieth century is unclear. What is clear is that the early 1980's witnessed an explosion of "native voices" in anthropology, literature, and film. Fields that had once prioritized looking at "natives" now rejected those acts of seeing, seeking instead to locate, recuperate, circulate, and listen to "native" voices. Further, many of those voices actively sought to upend the authoritative visuality of the ethnographic gaze and reveal the ideological seams that naturalized those looking practices.

By the 1980's, scholars who had privileged a finely wrought image of "primitive" realism in the 1940's and 1950's, found themselves embarking on a new project: uncovering the voices

of marginalized Others.[42] This task required changing both the texts they analyzed and the theoretical vocabularies they brought to bear on those texts. Jacques Derrida's 1976 systematic deconstruction of Levi-Strauss' structuralist anthropology and Edward Said's 1978 interrogation of an "Orientalist" gaze provided scholars across the humanities and social sciences with the analytical tools to disentangle themselves from problematic disciplinary histories and methodologies.[43] In these years, scholars working in a range of fields readily acknowledged the violent inheritance of colonialism embedded in discourse about "the primitive," a history epitomized by the visual archive of ethnographic portraiture, photography, and film. Representations *of* indigenous people by Western travelers, explorers, and scientists were clearly inscribed by the global politics that had produced those encounters and imbued them with meaning, but representations *by* indigenous people still offered the promise of accessing an object most prized by anthropologists and humanists alike: the authentic voice of "the native".

In this chapter, I argue that late twentieth-century ethnographic representation, particularly in its manifestations across anthropology, literary travel writing, and documentary film, shifted from a discourse about vision to a discourse about voice. The preoccupation with voice was produced by two interrelated phenomena that transformed textual analysis in the U.S. and Britain in the 1980's: first, the dynamic political landscape produced by de-colonization and the civil rights movements of the 1960's, events that transformed the context in which knowledge was produced; and second, the proliferation of "posts" in critical theory, including

[42] While I refer to New Critic Cleanth Brooks' comparison of a literary text to a "finely wrought urn" here, the shift from privileging representations of "primitive" subjects to recovering native voices was not a phenomenon isolated to literary criticism. As I argue throughout this chapter, anthropology and documentary film registered a similar shift in subject and grappled with same ideological questions about authority.

[43] Jacques Derrida made these arguments in his book *Of Grammatology* which was first published in 1967, but was not translated into English and published in the United States until 1976. Derrida first advanced his argument against the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss in a paper entitled "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" given at an American conference, the Hopkins Symposium, in 1966. In his study *After the New Criticism*, Frank Lentricchia gives a thorough account of these events (160-163).

post-structuralism, post-modernism, and post-colonialism, that resulted from that historical context. Central to both of these political and epistemic shifts were the voices of oppressed subjects, those people who historically had been spoken *about* and spoken *for*, but had not been considered speaking subjects.

Although each of these shifts attended to questions of voice in the politics of representing others, they addressed this problem in different, and sometimes contradictory, ways. Protest movements in the 1960's rallied around the notion that "speaking truth to power" could grant colonized and marginalized people access to political agency. Post-structuralist criticism, on the other hand, troubled this notion of representation by suggesting that no "real" voice is ever available in the "limitless play" of language and its constant deferral of meaning (Derrida *Grammatology* 50). Suspicious of the turn to locate the "authentic" voices of oppressed people, post-structuralism and post-colonialism shifted the object of critical attention toward deconstructing the authority of Western representations of difference. As a reading practice, deconstruction initially sought *to uncover* the voice of the author who speaks for and authorizes the experiences of others, rather than *to recover* the supposedly authentic voices of marginalized authors themselves.

The flurry of scholarship attending to the question of voice in the 1980's testifies to the pervasiveness and scope of this critical turn. In the voice-over to her 1984 film *Reassemblage*, avant-garde documentary filmmaker and theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha declared that she would "not speak about" her film's subjects, but would instead "just speak nearby," a phrase that announces both a new critical stance and a new procedure for ethnographic representation. Just one year later, in 1985, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak posed the question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in her essay of the same name, advancing the controversial argument that there is no position from

which the voices of those subjects historically represented by white, male authors can be heard. Turning post-structuralism's analytical vocabulary back on itself, Spivak deconstructed the authorizing voice of the Western intellectual, a subject who, she wrote, is "complicit in the persistent constitution of Other as the Self's shadow" (75).[44] If the subaltern subject had once articulated a point of view incomprehensible to the West, Spivak claimed, that voice could not be recuperated by the very discourse that had excised it from an official historical narrative.

Both of these theorists inhabit historically marginalized identities, particularly in relation to the institutionalized production of knowledge, but what unites their arguments is a deep concern with locating and listening to those voices that have been suppressed or erased in the Western traditions of textual representation. By problematizing the analytical vocabularies traditionally brought to bear on those texts, Trinh and Spivak both attempted to think differently about the ways "native" or "primitive" Others had historically been seen but not heard. Significantly, the texts they produced in this moment transformed their respective fields. Taken together, Trinh's three films from the 1980's, *Reassemblage* (1982), *Naked Spaces—Living is Round* (1985), and *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989), as well as her book *Woman, Native, Other* (1989), mounted a powerful critique of visual anthropology's visual conventions and historical imbrication in colonialism. Spivak's 1985 essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" posed a radical critique of post-colonialism as it had been conceptualized under Said's influence and sparked a debate within the field over the methods and goals of post-colonial scholarship. If in our current moment, both Trinh and Spivak remain crucial voices in their fields, it is because their theoretical interventions were central to the transformations in late-twentieth century scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. The ideological and deconstructive reading

[44] Spivak arrived at the question of "subaltern" voice through her reading of Derrida's *On Grammatology*, a book which she translated and wrote a lengthy introduction.

practices that scholars in many fields regularly employ today are the inheritance of that transformation.

In what follows, I close read three texts that exemplify the discursive turn toward native voice. As in previous chapters, I read comparatively between three modes of ethnographic representation: an anthropological text, a literary travelogue, and an ethnographic documentary. The texts I have chosen share some key characteristics: they were each produced by women who inhabit marginalized identities with varying access to power; they all self-consciously address the ethical implications of representing the voices of so-called "native" people; and perhaps most crucially, they all actively critique ethnography's past visual project and shift focus to voice. Individually, they offer very different solutions to the problems of speaking for and speaking about native others circumscribed by their intended audiences, fields, and mode of address. Read together, they reflect a shift toward embracing "native voice" as a potential site of revelation, if not complete transformation, of ethnographic knowledge.

Anthropologist Marjorie Shostak's 1981 book *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* takes perhaps the most straightforward approach to representing "native voice". An account of one woman's life from her point of view as a member of a hunter-gatherer tribe now called the Ju/'hoansi, Shostak's book is a modern iteration of an old ethnographic genre: the life history. Compiling life histories was common practice for anthropologists in the 1920's and 1930's who wanted to understand the "macro" patterns of group culture by examining how they were manifested in the life of a single individual (24-26). By the 1950's, the genre had fallen out of favor as it was considered a literary practice incommensurate with the positivistic goals of the discipline. Feminist anthropologists in the 1980's reinvigorated the genre, embracing the life history's privileging of the particular over the general as a way to highlight women's experience.

Shostak places herself firmly within this Western, feminist context, claiming that she was drawn to the project by the possibility of learning about a universal women's experience.

The anthropologist reports that she compiled Nisa's life history by transcribing and interpreting tape-recorded interviews she conducted in the field with her subject, a "native informant" who willingly shared her story with little intervention from Shostak herself. The stories Nisa tells are intimate, full of bawdy humor and details about her sexual liaisons, and often tragic. Arranged in chronological order from her childhood memories to her old age, Shostak attempts to give readers a complete picture of Ju/'hoan life from the perspective of one, extraordinary woman. Nisa's stories, however, always begin with brief introductions written by the anthropologist herself that provide the anthropological, "factual" context in which to understand the narratives that follow. While she attempts to "speak with" Nisa and to present an authentic "native voice" to her reader, Shostak ultimately "speaks for" her subject.

Trinh T. Minha's 1981film *Reassemblage* is an avant-garde ethnographic documentary about Senegal that uses the technique of "speaking nearby" to comment on the genre's conventions. Although she shot the footage for *Reassemblage* on location while conducting ethnographic fieldwork in West Africa in 1981, the film she produced can hardly be described as a traditional ethnographic documentary. Through a radical disjuncture of sound and image, Trinh subverts the conventions of the ethnographic filmmaking to critique anthropology's representational project.

As a Vietnamese woman working and teaching at an elite American university, Trinh has a complex relationship to the production of ethnographic knowledge and the power that accompanies it. While she identifies as a "Woman, Native, and Other", as the title of her 1989 book suggests, she is also regarded as an important artist and intellectual at the center of post-

colonial and feminist theory in the U.S. academy. More than in her other films, in *Reassemblage* Trinh explicitly addresses the complexities of her relationship to anthropological "truth" and "authenticity". Trinh may self-identify as a "native woman," but she is not a "native" of Senegal. Her work comments on the specificities of her speaking position as a "native" who speaks alongside, or nearby, the "native" body onscreen.

In contrast to the cross-over appeal of Shostak's book that attracted readers inside and outside the bounds of the university, Trinh's film is densely theoretical and highly experimental, intended for a particular audience of ethnographic documentarians, avant-garde filmmakers, and scholars. What puts her film in conversation with Shostak's anthropological writing is her self-conscious experimentation with "native voice" and the ways she attends to the problems of representing indigenous people on film.

Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988) takes a very different approach to representing native voice. In her sardonic rewriting of the tourist travelogue, Kincaid speaks as a native of Antigua, disrupting the conventions that have circumscribed the genre to critique a tourist's point of view of her home country. Conventionally, travelogue writing *speaks about* the silent and acquiescent inhabitants of places that the author visits, rhetorically positioning "natives" as part of the landscape rather than as dynamic subjects. Kincaid's version of the travelogue, on the other hand, employs direct address to *speak to* her reader who is uncomfortably positioned as a white tourist. Angrily interrogating the colonial history and politics of late-capitalism that deny her agency in a discourse of leisure, tourism, and travel, Kincaid demands that her readers acknowledge the politics inscribed in the ethnographic looking she describes.

If Shostak attempts to *speak with* her native subject and Trinh *speaks nearby* natives, Jamaica Kincaid *speaks as* a native, occupying a point of view coveted by anthropologists,

filmmakers, and travel writers for the majority of the twentieth century. That she uses the travelogue to make her critique of tourism poses a particular set of rhetorical problems that she self-consciously addresses. Writing within a literary form circumscribed by a long history of "primitive" discourse, Kincaid attempts to "dismantle the master's house with the master's tools," a project that is doomed to failure in some sense, at least in Audre Lorde's famous formulation (Lorde 110-113). How can a writer positioned as the "native" object of the ethnographic gaze by the travelogue take on a role as speaking subject within the genre? If the travelogue, by its very mode of address, establishes a set of reader-writer relationships that exclude "the native," how can a native writer create a space from which to speak? Kincaid's travelogue is an attempt to answer those questions.

The violent collapse of structures of power around the globe in the 1980's, both politically and epistemologically, called for new reading practices and forms of critique. The interest in "native voices" that resurfaced in this historical moment should be understood as a response to a long and troubling visual history and the violence inscribed in what is now called the ethnographic gaze. Individually, Shostak, Trinh, and Kincaid's texts speak from different subject positions and address different audiences. Reading their work together is my attempt to reanimate a conversation about the very possibility of speaking from a "native" point of view and to re-examine the stakes of that debate.

SPEAKING WITH THE "NATIVE GIRL"

Marjorie Shostak's *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* opens with a curious epigraph from "Nisa" herself, the pseudonym the author chose for her "native" subject, that reads:

> I'll break open the story and
> tell you what it there. Then, like
> the others that have fallen out onto
> the sand, I will finish with it,
> and the wind will take it away.

Arranged on the page like a prose poem, Shostak invites her reader into the story of Nisa's life obliquely by first asking them to decipher what seems to be an opaque metaphor for storytelling. Here, stories are akin to artifacts, objects that can be "broken open" and examined to see "what is there". Not just anyone can interpret these stories though; it takes Nisa herself to "tell what is there" and then to tell us when she is "finished with it," ready for the wind to "take it away".

It seems clear why this poetic description of storytelling would appeal to an anthropologist. Not only does Nisa herself conceptualize stories as objects to be gathered, picked up, and analyzed, a metaphor any ethnographer could easily recognize as a description of fieldwork, but the relationship between storyteller and listener she delineates here closely resembles that between an anthropologist and their "native informant," a role that Nisa seems happy to play. Even further, Nisa envisions storytelling here as a highly ritualistic activity more akin to conjuring magic than recalling memories. Arranging Nisa's words so that they have the appearance of poetry only reinforces this effect. After all, poetry is a performative genre. Transforming Nisa's speech into the carefully selected and stylized language of poetry makes her words seem profound, more like an incantation than a casual observation.

There are other ways to read Nisa's "poem," however, readings that do not paint such a benign image of anthropologists in the field. Nisa could just as easily be talking about the cyclical nature of her relationships with the many anthropologists that she met over her lifetime, outsiders who regularly gave her gifts and sometimes paid her in cash for telling stories. By the time she met Shostak in 1971, she had worked with various anthropologists from the same long-term Harvard research expedition for eight years, "breaking open" her life experiences "into the sand" for ethnographers to examine, record and then "take away".[45] In the introduction to her book, Shostak makes it plain that she chose to work with Nisa because of her exceptional ability to tell a compelling story. Her narratives covered a range of life experiences, were "infused with drama," and were organized chronologically with a beginning, middle, and end (7, 40). While Shostak writes that she discussed the requirements of the interviews with all the women she interviewed, it seems clear that Nisa had already honed her craft by telling stories to the anthropologists who she had worked with in the past and was well aware of the rhetorical and economic structures in which she was operating.[46]

In a 1984 review of Shostak's book, anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano interpreted Nisa's enigmatic metaphors as evidence that Nisa's "life and words" were not so much a retelling of her history as a series of confessions, a critique that calls into question the veracity, and ultimately the anthropological value, of Nisa's account of the "primitive" life she led as a member of the hunter-gatherer people once called "Bushmen", "San", or by the 1980's "!Kung"

[45] Shostak notes she and her husband, anthropologist Melvin Konner, joined the long-term research expedition initiated in 1963 by Harvard anthropologists Irven DeVore and Richard Lee in 1969, as the project was close to its end. Together, they lived in the Dobe area of northwestern Botswana for 20 months.

[46] In his 1988 book *Predicament of Culture*, James Clifford considered *Nisa* a noteworthy example of what he called a recent turn toward a "dialogical mode" of ethnographic writing. By choosing to self-consciously "present the discursive processes of ethnography" in the form of a dialogue between two, "conscious, politically significant subjects", Shostak demonstrates an awareness of ethnography's status as representation, rather than as fact (41-43).

or "Ju/hoansi" (957).[47] In the Foucauldian framework in which Crapanzano explicitly contextualizes his critique, the confession carries a specific set of self-policing and self-fashioning concerns. How, the anthropologist wonders, might the generic conventions of such a particularly Western form have influenced Nisa's life history? Did she deliberately try to shock her listener with the details about her sexuality that made her narrative so fascinating for Shostak and the book's Western readers? What were her motivations for telling her story and how did she understand the conditions in which her "confessions" would be received?

What seems to trouble Crapanzano is the notion that Nisa's account of "primitive" life could quite possibly be false. Whether her stories were contorted by the imposition of Western narrative conventions or she embellished them to satisfy the expectations she perceived of her audience, he suggests that the value of Nisa's oral history as accurate ethnographic data is suspect. Shostak admits that she worried about the same thing when she sat down to draft her manuscript and found that most of Nisa's stories were accounts of her sexual exploits or contained what Shostak deemed "excessive" violence, episodes that did not seem to "represent the mainstream of !Kung life" (350). She even notes that another anthropologist told her that Ju/'hoan people regarded her interest in their sex lives as gratuitous and perverse, regularly impersonating her as "someone who ran up to women, looked them straight in the eye, and said, 'Did you screw your husband last night?'" (350). Even though in her introduction Shostak explicitly states that Nisa should not be considered a representative Ju/'hoan woman, the anthropological value that she wants to claim for her book relies on the notion that readers understand Nisa's life story as a typical Ju/'hoan cultural experience. Ultimately, she mitigates these concerns about her methods and data by suggesting that the "wonderfully bawdy sexual

[47] While Shostak refers to this ethnic group as the !Kung, I refer to the same group as the Ju/'hoansi throughout this chapter. "Ju/hoansi" is the term the people call themselves and literally translates as "the people". I prefer this term because the other terms associated with the same ethnic group have been or still are considered pejorative.

content" of Ju/'hoan jokes showed that while her "prior reputation may have magnified their tendency to make sex a prime topic of conversation …certainly it did not create that tendency" (355).

Crapanzano's critique and Shostak's own anxieties may be born out of a misplaced faith in anthropological "facts," but read together their remarks point provocatively to the problem at the heart of Shostak's project. Despite what she would have us believe, her book does not capture Nisa's "real" voice as much as it invents an "authentically primitive" character who describes the experiences associated with womanhood, a category Shostak imagined as both heteronormative and universal. Complete with episodes of child birth and rearing, marriage, and elaborate discussions of the power dynamics between the sexes, Shostak's "Nisa" is inevitably subordinated to the anthropologist's own voice, the writer who creates her "native" subject's life history. The anthropologist finds herself with the task of representing Nisa in both senses of the term: "re-presenting" her words in the text and "representing" her point of view to a Western reader. Both of these forms of representation carry political and ethical implications.

I consider Shostak's book to be compelling, but for very different reasons than a reader in 1981 might have. What her text illustrates so vividly is the shift in anthropology toward locating "real" native voices and the problems inherent in that project. If Shostak set out to capture a more authentic version of culture told from an insider perspective, what she actually recorded is the uneasy relationship between her own authorizing voice and the voice of her informant. By presenting readers with a selection of recorded, interpreted, and arranged narratives, Shostak's writing shows us the omissions, excesses, and confusions that result from her attempt to transcribe the voice of the "native girl".

Shostak self-consciously addresses how her book intervenes methodologically in anthropological studies of the Ju/hoansi and how it contributes to that archive. In her introduction, she describes what she tried to accomplish:

> I gained an invaluable perspective, participating and watching…Still, I did not feel I knew, except in the most general terms, what these events really meant to the !Kung. I could see, for example, how much they relied on each other and how closely they sat together, but I did not understand how they felt about their relationships and their lives. I needed information that could not be observed; I needed the !Kung to start speaking for themselves. (6-7)

In just a few lines, she identifies the epistemological problems with simply "participating and watching," her shorthand for the singular methodology of ethnographic fieldwork, participant-observation. For her, relying purely on what information she can glean from visual observation leaves out the kind of information she is after: how "the !Kung" feel about their own experiences. In the nomenclature that has become so typical of discourse about marginalized voices, she proposes that that when previously silenced subjects "start speaking for themselves," the problems of misapprehending culture can be resolved.

In retrospect, Shostak's claim may appear somewhat naïve and cliché, but the urgency with which she addresses her reader here reveals something of the intellectual climate in anthropology in 1981. In a moment in which an entire generation of anthropologists had become deeply invested in finding new, more ethnical ways to study cultural Others, Shostak's book offered the possibility of giving indigenous people agency over the representation of their individual identities and cultural experiences. According to the anthropologist, her book was produced through the mutually-beneficial, collaborative relationship she developed with her

informant. She insists, for instance, that Nisa "had a determination to make each interview work and seemed to derive considerable pleasure from the entire process" and tells readers that part of Nisa's process was to review the tape from the previous interview "to see where we had left off and what still needed to be discussed" (40). This strategy signals to Shostak that Nisa provided a complete history of her life. What she proposes in her introduction is no less than a new method to understand culture from a "native" perspective, which is, after all, the point of ethnographic fieldwork; as anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski put it, the ethnographer should always be working to "grasp the native's point of view" (22). Crucially, though, this method will capture the voice of "the native" on tape, rather than the image of "the native" on film.

She also considers her work an intervention in the anthropological archive on the Ju/hoansi. After reading ethnographies of the Ju/hoansi and speaking with anthropologists who had recently returned from the Kalahari before embarking on her own expedition, she writes that she was left with the impression that their observations "seemed to reflect as much the personalities of the individual anthropologists as anything they had learned about the !Kung" (5). Shostak was apparently not the only anthropologist to feel this way. Enough life histories were published in the early 1980's for Crapanzano to call the re-emergence of the genre a trend (953). Aware of the rhetorical trappings of ethnographic writing, Shostak attempts to come up with another way to represent culture. If the questions Shostak was asking about women's lives (questions that she was inspired to ask by the Women's Movement) could not be answered by anthropologists, who better to answer them than Ju/'hoan women themselves. The anthropologist frames her project as filling in the holes in the archive by creating the conditions for a new voice to speak.

Accomplishing this task turned out to be more difficult than Shostak originally anticipated. After confronting the issues with the content of her tape-recorded interviews, she faced the ethical dilemma of representing Nisa's story and profiting monetarily from it, a problem created by the rhetorical disjunction at the heart of the book that she described this way: "It was *my* work, certainly, and she had given what could fairly be called informed consent to it; but it was *her* story" (350). The issue of who is really the author of *Nisa* the text and "Nisa" the person has implications that extend far beyond book contracts and royalties. It is safe to say that in 1981, the woman who Shostak interviewed and called "Nisa" for the sake of the book lived in abject poverty, subject to the relocation plans of the Botswana government that brought wage labor, tuberculosis, and alcoholism to Ju/'hoan communities.[48] Representing that person's voice, in a political sense, to a larger public carried a set of very real, moral responsibilities. Re-presenting "Nisa's" voice to a Western reading public beyond just anthropologists also created numerous rhetorical problems. Ultimately, Shostak gets the final say over how Nisa's words are interpreted, marking her as the authorizing voice of the text.

Still, reconciling the two voices of the text is a formidable challenge, both for Shostak and for her readers. The anthropologist's distinction between her "work" and Nisa's "story" seems to draw a clear line between form and content, a division of labor that at first seems fairly obvious since Shostak edited the narratives that Nisa provided. Upon closer examination though, the tidy distinction between "editor" and "storyteller" becomes harder to maintain. Shostak does not just give her reader "facts" about the Ju/'hoansi; she also tells the story of how she met Nisa,

[48] Shostak does address this issue in her epilogue, indicating that she set aside money for Nisa and donated part of the book's profits to the Kalahari People's Fund, an organization created by anthropologists who had worked with the Ju/'hoansi with the support of the government in Botswana in the 1980's to fund and advocate for Ju/'hoan land rights and economic development (351). Nisa herself recognized the money to be gained from selling the book. According to her, NIsa commented on this directly, saying "…if they do help the two us and buy it and you help me, then I will buy a cow" (371).

how she chose her as an informant, and how their relationship developed over time. She tells the story of her own entrance to the field (a staple of ethnographic writing) and her struggles to learn a Khoisan language and to live in the Bush. Nor does Nisa play solely a storytelling function in the book. According to Shostak's own account, her informant did not just speak into a tape recorder, telling stories spontaneously and at random. She arranged her stories chronologically and with a beginning, middle, and end. She rewound the tape from the previous interview, listened to what was recorded, and decided what changes should be made and what other information should be included.[49] To claim that Nisa simply told stories and that Shostak recorded and edited them reifies the notion that "the native" mindlessly speaks culture while "the anthropologist" has the ability to interpret culture.

It is precisely this issue of narrative authority at the foundation of her project that Shostak attempts to mitigate in the opening pages of her book. The first words readers find following the title page and the table of contents, after all, is the prose poem epigraph that the anthropologist created out of Nisa's recorded words. As I have already shown, the incantatory associations attributed to what very well have been, for Nisa at least, an everyday, idiomatic phrase make even this very first encounter with the book's eponymous subject also an encounter with the anthropologist herself. What comes next, however, seems to be language transcribed directly from Shostak's interviews: "I lay there and felt the pains as they came, over and over again. Then I felt something wet, the beginning of the childbirth. I thought, 'Eh hey, maybe it is the child'" (1). Nisa's story about giving birth continues for two more pages, ending as she nurses her baby for the first time, before Shostak picks up the narrative by contextualizing her subject's

[49] Shostak writes that Nisa once stopped mid-story and changed course, saying, "What am I trying to do? Here, I am, sitting, talking about one story, and another runs right into my head and into my thoughts!" According to Shostak, Nisa herself set out to correct that tendency, "restraining [her ideas] as she might a small child" before announcing "I'll speak about those thoughts after I finish, after the ones I'm talking about are gone" (40).

words: “This story was told to me in the !Kung language by Nisa, an African woman of about fifty years of age, living in a remote corner of Botswana, on the northern fringe of the Kalahari desert” (3). The anthropologist then uses this moment as a point of departure from which to launch into an anthropological account of the Ju/’hoansi and a description of her methodology.

It makes sense that Shostak should begin Nisa’s life history with a story about birth. However, the narrative that Nisa tells is not the story of her own birth but her birth story, an account of her experience giving birth, and like many of the stories that she tells, it is a traumatic memory of pain, confusion, and isolation. Like most Ju/’hoan women at that time, Nisa recounts that when she began to feel the first pangs of labor pain she set off into the bush to give birth alone, away from camp. After giving birth, she stares at her crying newborn infant, not knowing exactly what to do: “I just sat there, looking at her. I thought, ‘Is this my child? Who gave birth to this child?’… ‘A big thing like that? How could it possibly have come out from my genitals?” (2). She remembers leaving her baby in the Bush, planning to return with coals to make a fire to make a fire to warm them both, but when she returns to the village her husband scolds her for abandoning the baby and sends his grandmother, the only other woman in his family, to help retrieve the child.

It would be hard to argue that Shostak does not make some effort to hand over narrative authority to Nisa to some extent. After all, the first words of the entire book are Nisa’s. Before Western readers learn anything substantial about Ju/’hoan history and culture, they encounter a textual reproduction of her voice. With her culturally-specific turns of phrase like “Eh hey” and the astonishing events she describes, Nisa’s narrative voice is unusual and at times, confusing. Shostak obviously believed that this first encounter with Nisa’s speech would be a strange and disorienting experience for readers who would need cultural context in order to understand the

story that Nisa tells. Why else would she have provided no less than 34 pages of clarification before readers are once again presented with Nisa's (transcribed) speech? Yet, instead of introducing her subject to readers initially as a "!Kung woman," she makes the choice to place Nisa's birth story first, giving her the "first say" over her own life history.

The story that Nisa tells, though, is troubling. Birth stories are perhaps the most traumatic and violent of everyday narratives and Nisa's story is no exception Not only does she recall leaving her newborn child defenseless on the ground, an action that seems to resist the anthropologist's professed search for universal womanhood, at least through something like maternal instinct, but she even goes so far as to question her relationship to the infant she has just borne in her narrative. Certainly, the physical trauma of labor certainly explains away her disorientation; it is not uncommon for women to experience this kind of de-familiarization after giving birth. Still, I cannot help but read her birth story as an allegory for the authorial confusion at the heart of Shostak's book itself. In the story she tells, Nisa gives birth to a child but cannot bring her back to the village without the help of an older, wiser woman. Even if Nisa produced the individual stories that make up the majority of the text, the story suggests that she still needs Shostak to translate, transcribe, and arrange them into a life history comprehensible to a Western reader.

In its implication that Nisa and Shostak rely on each other to produce the text, this narrative frames the rest of the stories that both the anthropologist and her subject tell. Organizationally, it is an anomaly; the remaining stories are introduced by Shostak and categorized into chapters with titles like "Earliest Memories" or "Life in the Bush". This first story sets up readers to accept the relationship between the storyteller and her interlocutor as both necessary and natural; it is another iteration of the "anthropologist as hero" myth that

George Stocking claimed informed Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, an ethnography generally considered by anthropologists as an Ur-text. Ultimately, this introductory narrative tells us, Nisa needs Shostak to bring her story out of the local and into the global. Exactly why Nisa would need to tell Western readers her life story and how she would benefit from that speech act is far less clear.

That the anthropologist goes to great lengths to explain Nisa's stories indicates that Shostak wants readers to understand all of these narratives as representative of Ju/hoan "culture". Most of Nisa's stories align with the anthropological facts she gives us, thereby confirming the accuracy of her interpretation of the Ju/hoansi. Nisa describes her childhood trauma of being weaned from nursing in detail, a story that Shostak frames as a typical experience in her introduction to the chapter: "Assuming no serious illness, the first real break from the infant's idyll of comfort and security comes with weaning…" (46). In a chapter entitled "Trial Marriages," Nisa tells a lengthy story about rejecting several men she was partnered with as a young girl. She leaves her first husband because of his sexual liaisons with another woman and leaves her second husband because his back is covered with burn scars, which disgusts her. On both occasions, she returns to her family and is accepted back with little debate. If the notion of "trial marriages" introduced by the title of the chapter did not provide enough of a clue, Shostak explicitly tells readers how to interpret this behavior: "Resistance to marriage is typical of young girls, and is usually interpreted at being directed at marriage itself, rather than at a specific man…If a girl is determined that she will never feel affection for her husband she can insist on ending the marriage" (128-129). Nisa's rejection of her first two husbands, we learn, does not mean that she is bunking the heteronormative system, for instance, or that she is a lesbian. By

labeling Nisa's behavior as "typical," Shostak confirms her own reading of these events and forecloses other interpretive possibilities.

Based on this rhetorical pattern, Nisa does not simply speak directly to readers. Rather, her stories are carefully mediated, transformed from personal experiences to examples that illustrate Shostak's claims about Ju/'hoan culture. Although the anthropologist claims that what she knows about the Ju/'hoansi was learned from Nisa, the organization of her book suggests otherwise. For most of the book, it appears to readers that Shostak is the expert on Ju/'hoan culture and that Nisa's stories show how cultural customs are manifested at the level of the individual. Rhetorically at least, the authentic native voice that Shostak set out to record is thoroughly pacified, rendered legible and predictable by the authorizing voice of the fieldworker herself.

There are, however, moments that break this pattern. At certain points in the text, Shostak and Nisa's accounts do not align so neatly. The anthropologist and her subject do not agree, for instance, on the frequency of extramarital affairs among the Ju/'hoansi. Shostak reports that while jokes and stories about extramarital relationships are commonplace in Ju/'hoan oral history and mythology, due to a lack of privacy "actual extramarital sexual encounters seem to be infrequent" (268). To back up her claims, she cites findings from the Marshall family expeditions in the early 1950's. Nisa, on the other hand, has a quite different take on the matter:

> Marjorie, those people who tell you that when people live in the bush they don't have lovers, or that people only learned about it recently from the blacks, they are deceiving you. They are giving you lies and are trying to fool you with their cleverness. But I, I am like your mother and don't offer you deceit; only the truth is what I give you…Because affairs—one married person making love to another not her husband—is something that

> even people from long ago knew. Even my father's father's father's father knew…I have told you about my lovers, but I haven't finished telling you about all of them, because there are as many as my fingers and toes. (271)

Directly confronting the anthropologist about the issue, Nisa tells Shostak that what she has heard from "those people" is not only wrong but a self-interested "deceit". She appeals to their special relationship to claim that she has no reason to lie. Having affairs is not something new to the Ju/'hoansi, Nisa insists, nor is it a behavior introduced from the outside, "modern" world.[50] Instead, "even people from long ago" took lovers and Nisa, with her many affairs, is no exception.

By not commenting on this discrepancy, Shostak leaves readers to interpret the conflict between the anthropologist's and her subject's accounts. Because Shostak has already established herself as the voice of authority in the text, it is difficult to view Nisa's many affairs as anything other than an exception to a cultural norm. Still, the tension between their views on the matter, emphasized by Nisa's direct challenge to the conventional wisdom of the anthropological narrative about Ju/'hoan culture, leaves an uncomfortable ellipsis in the text. If anthropologists have accepted "lies" about Ju/'hoan customs in the past, who is to say that they can tell the difference between true and false stories now? How can we know that Shostak can tell the difference between fact and fiction in Nisa's stories or anyone else's for that matter? And if readers accept Nisa's suggestion there are many motivations for telling stories, how could they possibly accept any of Shostak's anthropological "facts" at face value?

[50] When Nisa says that extramarital affairs were not introduced to the Ju/'hoansi "by the blacks", she is referring to the anthropological argument that the behavior was the result of influence from Herero and Tswana settlements in Ju/'hoan territories in the twentieth century (267).

While this relatively small contradiction begins to undermine the easy authority of Shostak's narrative voice, it pales in comparison to the major unresolved discrepancy at the center of the book. Many of the stories that Nisa tells are violent, but one of the most troubling tales is about her younger brother's birth. According to her, after her infant brother, Kumsa, was born her mother told her to bring her a digging stick so she could quickly bury the baby before he cried. Even though Nisa protested, her mother insisted, saying she would "…bury him so you can nurse again. You're much too thin" (54). Instead of retrieving the digging stick, Nisa remembers telling her aunt about her mother's plans so that she would intervene. Running back to where her mother and Kumsa lay, Nisa's aunt cuts the umbilical cord and chastises the new mother, saying, "A grown woman with one child following after another so nicely, doesn't behave like this" (55). The episode ends with Nisa taking credit for saving Kumsa's life.

Shostak makes it clear that she does not believe this story. In the introduction, she explicitly addresses the issue, recalling that she was so "puzzled" the first time she heard Nisa recount this memory that she "began to doubt not only it but much of what she had told me before" (31). Even though she acknowledges that infanticide was known to exist in this period, Shostak claims that "a little girl would surely not have been involved, especially after just witnessing the birth," and puts Nisa to the test, asking her to repeat the story more slowly (32). Much to Shostak's chagrin, Nisa repeats the story with the same details, insisting that she was not told about this event after the fact but witnessed it herself. Clearly distressed about what she perceives to be the impossibility of this version of events, the anthropologist assures her readers that there are many ways to interpret this story. Either the episode was a "fantasy" Nisa had created to help her psychologically cope with the jealousy she experienced with the birth of her first sibling or her mother told her daughter that she would kill the baby without ever seriously

intending to carry out the act to convince her to give up nursing, a conflict that had reached a dramatic climax by the end of her pregnancy (32). In either case, Shostak acknowledges that although Nisa believed the story to be true, she is certain that it is not.

Significantly, the closest Shostak comes to resolving this narrative tension is to recognize that she will never comprehend some details of Nisa's stories entirely. Upon hearing the same story with the same disturbing conclusion for the third time, the anthropologist says that "…she accepted it as something I might not understand for awhile. The final interpretation of this story and of some of the others will probably remain subject to speculation. I came to see that as one of the rules of the game" (39). Here, Shostak suggests that one of the problems that accompanies listening to "the native" speak is that sometimes it is impossible to completely understand what she is saying. Perhaps more precisely, what the anthropologist means is that sometimes "natives" say things that white American women from Harvard do not want to hear.

The issue of infanticide was already a vexed topic in Ju/'hoansi anthropology at the time Shostak was writing her book. Lorna Marshall, another female anthropologist affiliated with Harvard who made the study of "Bushmen" culture her life's work, expressed similar sentiments about the practice.[51] As I mentioned in the previous chapter, in her first book about the Ju/'hoansi, Marshall writes that she "didn't have the fortitude" to discuss infanticide in-depth with Ju/'hoan women because of the powerful emotions the subject provoked for her (166). For both of these anthropologists, infanticide is a Western cultural taboo that lies at the very limits of producing knowledge. The unanswered question of "what really happened" in Nisa's childhood reflects a larger absence within the anthropological archive on the Ju/hoansi.

[51] Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod categorizes Shostak's book as part of a distinct "woman's tradition" within ethnography comprised of "popular" books written by semi-professional "untrained wives of anthropologists" (475). Shostak's uncertain standing within the field also links her to Lorna Marshall, a self-taught anthropologist whose work I read as a struggle for authority in Chapter Two.

As a private practice that would only have been recorded in a woman's most personal history, infanticide becomes the most obvious manifestation of the major anthropological dilemma at the heart of Shostak's book: is Nisa telling the truth about her history or is she telling a story? Based on Shostak's premise, for Nisa's story to have anthropological value it must be representative of Ju/'hoan culture. In this formulation, Nisa becomes an "authentic primitive" only if she recounts her true memory of her life experiences. Apparently for Shostak, recording her "primitive" subject's personal history is a rather straightforward process: the anthropologist asks the proper questions and the native informant simply answers them. Albeit sometimes "natives" are given incentives (like gifts or payment) to answer questions, but based on the fantasy underwriting this anthropological scenario, it would never occur to informants to fabricate answers or to tell stories based on the expectations of their audience because such a strategy would mean that the native subject is rhetorically savvy enough to be an active producer of cultural information rather than a passive representative of culture. In short, to inhabit the role of storyteller would mean assuming control of a cultural narrative and participating in a transnational economic exchange of information, troubling the Ju/'hoansi's status as "primitive" subjects or even as "natives" in a global marketplace.

This concern may explain why Shostak goes to some effort in her epilogue to describe Nisa's simplistic understanding of the publishing market in which her book will become a commodity. The anthropologist is emphatic that Nisa gave Shostak permission for "all of her talk" to be published in a book and that she understood that the book could mean financial gain: "…sometimes, people look at a book and leave it on the shelf…but if they do help the two of us and buy it and you help me, then I will buy a cow" (370). Based on this account, not only does Nisa comprehend how book sales could generate income, she also understands that she has to

rely on Shostak to get her share of the proceeds. She mentions her desire for a cow, a detail that is picked up again in the book's sequel *Return to Nisa* (2000) in which the anthropologist reminds readers of her promise and reassures them that Nisa bought five pregnant cows with the money Shostak sent her (*Return* 25). Even while this story makes it clear that Nisa is a willing subject and collaborator in the effort to publish the book, it also suggests that the "native" needs Shostak as both interlocutor and benefactor. Without the anthropologist, it seems that Nisa would never have access to the livestock that can offer her a more sustainable way of life in modern Botswana.

Shostak's efforts to control Nisa's voice, no matter how well intended they may be, blatantly contradicts her professed goal to listen to what "real natives" think about their own experiences. The paternalism that we now recognize so clearly in any attempt to "*let* the native speak" for herself undermines the second-wave feminist impulses underwriting Shostak's project in 1981. Like Lorna Marshall's study of the Ju/'hoansi, Shostak's book can be read for the ways it illustrates the failure of well-meaning liberalism and white, middle-class feminism to speak for all women. Both anthropologists propose that womanhood is a universal experience with the potential to transcend the politics of national, racial, and socio-economic status. Although their individual ethnographies represent very different moments in anthropology's disciplinary history and methodology, both of their texts are an attempt to preserve Ju/'hoan history and protect Ju/'hoan people. Shostak's project, like Marshall's, becomes mired in the unintended consequences of any attempt to locate an "authentic primitive". Her book is a compelling artifact from a time when uncovering the voice of a "real native woman" seemed both possible and desirable.

SPEAKING NEARBY NATIVES

Trinh T. Min-ha's 1982 film *Reassemblage* begins and ends exclusively with sound. The film's opening sequence, in particular, makes Trinh's interest in sound plain. Picking up in medias res, the signature hand drums and rattles of Senegalese Jola music, along with the sounds of people conversing, plays for just over forty seconds before viewers get their first glimpse of Senegal and the people who live there. As the first image appears, the music abruptly cuts off and a disjointed sequence of shots is projected in silence: a man sharpens a knife; a small child looks offscreen; an old man smokes his pipe and glances at something we cannot see outside the frame. Trinh's famously opaque voice-over asserts, "Scarcely twenty years were enough to make two billion people define themselves as underdeveloped," a declarative statement that does little to clarify the first minute and a half of the film. Images proliferate, now in rapid succession: a bushfire burns; women and children walk away from the camera in one shot and then toward the camera in the next. Trinh's next declaration is an explicit critique of the conventions of ethnographic documentary film that she has inherited: "I do not intend to speak about/ just speak nearby". This often-cited statement writes over the longest-take in the sequence of a woman walking toward the camera carrying a basket on her head, a shot that recalls Felix Regnault's 1895 chronophotographs of West African people in motion, particularly his series "Wolof Woman Walking," images that are early ancestors of the ethnographic documentary.

Perhaps it goes without saying that solely *listening* to a film for almost a minute can be a disconcerting experience. At the very least, it is a highly unusual one given that film is an audiovisual medium and that spectators tend to privilege the image track. Clearly, nothing about *Reassemblage* is designed to make audiences comfortable. In fact, audiences at early screenings were so uneasy with the film that they fiercely debated its merit, questioning whether the film

qualified as ethnographic documentary at all (Penley and Ross 87). In a 1990 issue of *Visual Anthropology Review* dedicated to reviewing Trinh's work, feminist anthropologist Henrietta L. Moore reported that watching *Reassemblage* produced feelings of "anxiety and confusion" (70). Alexander Moore defensively proclaimed that the filmmaker had "launched an ill-informed attack upon anthropology, wrapping herself in the banner of privilege by virtue of her sex and her ethnicity" (73). Anthropologists were still bristling a year later, when Jay Ruby dismissed Trinh's films as "uninspired derivatives of 60's U.S. Experimental film" and claimed that her criticism of both documentary film and anthropology was "uninformed by the tradition of self-criticism easily located within both fields" (62).[52] Certainly like many avant-garde and video art films Trinh disentangles sound from image to defamiliarize the cinematic experience, a process that be uncomfortable but is designed to force viewers to become active participants in creating a film's meaning. Experimental aesthetic practices that subvert the conventions of ethnographic fieldwork and documentary are central to her critique of both practices. That visual anthropologists found her work not only disconcerting but threatening testifies to the effectiveness of those strategies.

Despite Trinh's highly unconventional use of sound at the both the film's opening and closing moments, critical readings of *Reassemblage* have remained preoccupied with the film's image track. There is, of course, much to say about the visuality of Trinh's work. With its numerous jump cuts, trick shots in which bodies seem to disappear and reappear, canted angles, and repeated close-ups that fragment the bodies onscreen, Trinh gives spectators a radically

[52] It seems important to note that although Ruby minimizes the relevance of Trinh's critique of anthropology, his essay is an effort to address the filmmaker's very concerns with "voice, authority, and authorship" that he claims have recently become a major concern within his field. Although he does not engage Trinh's writing or films in the body of his essay, his title, "Speaking For, Speaking About, Speaking With, or Speaking Alongside—An Anthropological and Documentary Dilemma," explicitly references her work. See *Visual Anthropology Review*. 7(2): 1991. 50-67. Print.

disjointed view of Senegal. Scholarly discourse on the film, however, goes a step further, insisting that *Reassemblage* is above all else a meditation on the ethnographic gaze. Stephen A. Zacks, for instance, characterizes the film as a "metadiscourse on the act of viewing itself" (77). Catherine Russel argues that while the film "does not 'subvert' the gaze", it works to "deconstruct the apparatus of power that informs the will to knowledge" and "produce tensions between different discourses of looking" (124-125). Adrienne McCormick considers all of Trinh's work an effort to "render *more visible* how the filmic apparatus works to produce meaning [and]… to render *less visible* the contents of documentary films that are usually positioned as fixed, factual, and authoritative" (362). For her, the visuality of Trinh's work, what she refers to as the filmmaker's "veiling practices," is what makes Trinh's films a contribution to the teleology of feminist documentary.

It is impossible to deny that *Reassemblage* rewrites the visual conventions of ethnographic documentary, but the way the film plays with sound is crucial to understanding both its intervention in ethnographic filmmaking practice and its contribution to critical theory. Trinh's use of voice-over, in particular, is the film's most clearly formulated challenge to the conventions within ethnographic writing of "speaking for" or "speaking about" people considered "primitive" others. After all, *Reassemblage* is still remembered as the film that introduced Trinh's iconic phrase "to speak nearby," a concept that has been transformative for scholars working in many fields across the humanities and the social sciences. Rather than explain the image onscreen, Trinh uses voice-over to comment upon her viewer's perceptions of what they see, a strategy that has not lost its potential to open up new ways of thinking about documentary filmmaking practice. Even further, speaking from multiple points of view disrupts audience expectations of the authority typically assumed by a single, expert narrator of the

"voice-of-god" variety. Some of the Trinh's editing practices, like her repeated use of the jump cut or the close-up, have lost their ability to shock audiences with their novelty and remain firmly fixed within the cinematic grammar of American avant-garde video film of the 1980's. Her use of sound, on the other hand, remains as relevant today as it did when the film was released.

Trinh's use of voice-over in the film's introductory sequence immediately establishes her unique take on the narrational style most associated with ethnographic documentary. An intertitle on a black screen identifies that the film takes place in "Senegal, 1981," but other than those bare details of date and location, viewers are left to decipher the sounds and images that follow without much guidance. We may not be certain, for instance, what kind of music we are hearing or what the function of that music might be. Is it celebratory and if so, what is the occasion? Does the music accompany a ritual of some kind? Once images appear on screen, viewers expect voice-over narration to explain the bodies onscreen. What is the man carving? What tools is he using and why? Instead, the very first words that Trinh utters offers commentary on a very different process, one that not only identifies places as "third-world" or "developing nations," but creates the conditions for "two billion people [to] define themselves as underdeveloped" (Trinh 105). Here, voice-over calls the audience's attention to the global, rather than the local. Certainly, the effects of globalization call into question the very existence of a coherent category of "native," for if the man onscreen is part of a community that is defined by outsiders and defines itself using terms imposed by outsiders, how can he still be considered an "authentic native," isolated from the reach of modern influence?

Far from an obtuse abstraction, Trinh first uses of voice-over to make a straightforward observation about the rapid spread and violent effects of the hierarchical ideology of

"development," a notion closely linked to the history of colonialism and its imbrication with early-twentieth-century anthropology. At that time, anthropology still operated on the premise that pristine "primitives" still existed and ethnographers actively worked to collect complete images of folk rituals and processes based on the belief that they could salvage the last vestiges of dying cultures. The opening shots of Trinh's film recall that preoccupation. Henrietta Moore notes, for example, that this process sequence "seems to be exactly the sort of image which is so familiar from hundreds of documentary and ethnographic films" (68). Visually, Trinh displaces the traditional function of such images by offering a disjointed, incomplete view of the process itself and withholding an image of the completed object, a tactic she explicitly described in a 1985 interview with film scholars Constance Penley and Andrew Ross:

> You don't follow an activity from a departure to an ending point. The objects and subjects filmed are purposeless; they are not governed by any single rationale. One example: the shot of the man carving wood is not included in the film to show what kind of sculpture he is making (hence the absence of information on the end product of his work); it merely offers a view of a man carving, while a correspondence may be drawn between his arm movements and the rhythmic music on the sound track. (95)

It is precisely what is not seen that rewrites this image for Trinh, who at once invokes and then denies the image's status as anthropological data. Because viewers are not given the shot of a completed object, they are directed to find other sources of meaning, like the syncopation between movement and music or image and sound.

Voice-over works similarly in this moment to force viewers away from the tendency to affix conventional meanings to this process sequence. While Trinh does not explain the carving that viewers see onscreen, she does reference a larger, more abstract process of globalization.

There is a strong association between the image and sound tracks here, but it is not one that audiences are used to making. Trinh does not describe what is seen in this moment as much as name a process that cannot be seen: how globalization is internalized and creates the very conditions for authoritatively "speaking about" Others that Trinh wants to critique. In a sense, as audiences are confronted with the disjointed shots of carving that open the film, Trinh's voice-over asks us to look away from the literal image and engage in a more metaphorical practice of looking for meaning.

The very next statement Trinh makes in her voice-over becomes the mantra of the film. Her simple declaration, "I do not intend to speak about/ Just speak nearby" is not, however, a random, poetic utterance or a fragment of prescriptive speech, as some criticism implies.[53] Instead, Trinh's "intention" is closely linked to the first moments of the film. Just as she will not "speak about" the images onscreen, she tells us, her film will not contribute to a discourse of "development" that defines some two billion people as "under" those nations considered first-world or "developed". Based on the film's opening moments, it may seem relatively clear what it means to resist speaking authoritatively about Others, but the alternative that Trinh identifies seems more difficult to imagine. After all, what might it mean "to speak nearby" a film's subjects? What forms of speech can pose viable alternatives to the problem of paternalistically "speaking about" or presuming to "speak for" Others? These questions about voice, posed immediately in *Reassemblage*, set the stage for the sustained examination of subjectivity and authenticity that she undertakes in the remainder of the film.

The search for a position from which to speak in relationship to other cultures is the driving force behind Trinh's first film and informs all of her subsequent work. In her reading of

[53] For example, in his scathing critique of Trinh's project, visual anthropologist Alexander Moore considered *Reassemblage* a performance art piece that had little relevance to ethnographic film and called her voice-over commentary "tantalizing," "poetic," and "disjointed" (66-67).

Reassemblage, E. Ann Kaplan has similarly suggested that the film's "major, pioneering concern" is the development of a shifting and liminal authorial voice (198). She reads Trinh's concept of "speaking nearby" as an attempt to navigate intercultural encounters differently by destabilizing any notion of a coherent site from which to accurately or scientifically represent other people and cultures:

> [Trinh's] investigation in *Reassemblage* and following films led to a realization that it was not a matter of one subject interacting with one object, of any unitary "I" trying to know a unitary Other. For Trinh, to put it that way would be to mis-state the problem. Rather, she shows that the problem is that of multiple "I's" coming into contact with multiple "Otherized 'I's'"…Subjectivity is not opposed to objectivity. It has its own range of activity. (198-199)

Kaplan astutely notes that Trinh's authorial persona is not "unitary," nor are the subjects of her film "unitary Others". Rather, the film actively resists a stable site of authority from which to see and understand culture, suggesting that the notion of a coherent "self" from which to examine "Others" is a Western fantasy. These ideas, rooted in deconstruction, are very familiar to current scholars but in the 1980's and '90's they still posed a radical challenge to what Bill Nichols has called "discourses of sobriety" like documentary and anthropology (*Representing* 3). While many documentaries still relied on voice-over to assume a supposedly objective stance in relation to the people and events they recorded, Trinh used her voice-over to pose an alternative to this convention.

Consider the shifts in subject position in this excerpt from the film's sound track, published in a 1985 volume of *Camera Obscura*:

> A man attending a slide show on Africa turns to his wife and says with

guilt in his voice: “I have seen some pornography tonight”

Documentary because reality is organized into an explanation of itself

Every single detail is to be recorded. The man on the screen smiles at us

while the necklace he wears, the design of the cloth he puts on, the stool

he sits on are objectively commented upon

It has no eye it records

“A fine layer of dust covers us from head to toe. When the sandstorm

comes,” says a child, “we lay on our mat with our mother’s headscarf on

our face and wait until it goes away”

The omnipresent eye. Scratching my hair or washing my face become a

very special act

Watching her through the lens. I look at her becoming me becoming mine

Entering into the only reality of signs where I myself am a sign (108)

Trinh’s voice-over script appears to be poetry here, arranged typographically on the page into stanzas with line breaks designed to replicate the moments of emphasis in the filmmaker’s vocal performance in the film. Reading the published version of this script, subtitled “Sketch of a Sound Track,” is a unique experience of Trinh’s voice-over. Aurally, the difference between the various narratorial voices of the film is very subtle. Isolating this fragment of the sound track in print, however, renders visible the radically different subject positions Trinh’s narrator impersonates in the course of just a few minutes.

This sequence begins with what seems like a fragment of a longer story. A man attends a slide show on Africa and afterwards confesses to his wife “I have seen some pornography tonight”. In the course of one sentence, the audience is given a substantial amount of

information. Trinh's audience can glean what the man in this brief story saw by his "guilty" response to it. For those viewers familiar with the history of ethnographic representation, Trinh's reference to a "slide show on Africa" conjures a ready series of images of the Burton Holmes variety: bare-chested women and loin-cloth clad men engaged in a vaguely-defined ritual dance.[54] Nudity is a staple of ethnographic imagery and Trinh's story references that fact as well as the salacious promise of "primitive" sexuality that accounted for the popularity of the traveling slide show and other iterations of the "ethnographic gaze". Further, this story arrives immediately after Trinh's narrator has already made a statement about nudity, namely that it "does not reveal/ the hidden/ It is its absence". Set next to this observation, the one-sentence narrative that Trinh's narrator tells us becomes a deceptively simplistic commentary on the history of sensationalizing and objectifying the bodies of "primitive" Others.

When considered in conjunction with the image track, the story of the man's guilty confession of taking voyeuristic pleasure in the naked bodies of African "Others" becomes far more complex. Bare-chested women proliferate onscreen, sitting on a stoop, holding young children, and pulling water from a well. Close-ups of their breasts strangely fragment their bodies, drawing attention to the preoccupations of the person behind the camera. When juxtaposed with these images, the story of the guilty voyeur comments not only on the history of sensationalizing "primitive" bodies but on Trinh's own preoccupation with images of breasts. As Kaplan suggests, here Trinh "chooses to frame her looking, to declare 'I am looking at these breasts'" (201). Audiences are reminded that it is Trinh's film we are seeing, not the slide show, and these images were recorded and arranged by her.

[54] Burton Holmes is often considered the "father of the travelogue" film. His travelling slide shows of "exotic" locales were a popular entertainment in the nineteenth-century United States. For an extensive online archive of his slide shows and history, see http://www.burtonholmesarchive.com/.

Suddenly, Trinh's voice-over introduces a new topic. A film qualifies as "documentary," she announces, when it organizes reality into an explanation of itself. She continues to pursue this claim, describing a procedure familiar to anyone who has seen a conventional ethnographic documentary: " The man on the screen smiles at us while the necklace he wears, the design of the cloth he puts on, the stool he sits on are objectively commented upon". In this hypothetical scenario, Trinh demonstrates how a human subject becomes objectified as "native", defined by the "artifacts" that denote his primitive status. The camera, she tells us, "has no eye" but can only record images. Through an oblique reference to Dziga Vertov's "kino eye," Trinh refutes a concept that has been highly influential for many directors in the documentary tradition, shifting attention away from the camera itself and to the person behind the camera who records and organizes reality.

Not only does the filmmaker change topics suddenly and without explanation here, but perhaps even more abruptly, she also shifts her mode of address from the descriptive to the declarative. There is, after all, a logical thread connecting the story she has just told to her explanation of documentary. The narrative implies a critique of the history of ethnographic imagery and Trinh's declaration about documentary film makes this critique explicit in the context of the ethnographic documentary. Shifting from storytelling to explaining, however, is particularly jarring for the viewer, forcing them out of the relatively straightforward experience of narrative and into a theoretical discourse about film form. The image track in this moment recalls the film's opening moments, as disjointed shots of a man hammering a molten iron rod both suggest the process sequence so typical of ethnographic documentary and withhold the possibility of understanding that process. Repeated shots of a woman carrying a large basket on her head recall the images of "primitive" porters and baggage-handlers conventionally associated

with nineteenth-century travelogues. Sound and image combine here to prompt viewers to think critically about how ideology is embedded in film form.

As the images onscreen become obscured by dust, the voice-over changes course once again to comment on what we see. Instead of contextualizing, historicizing, or explaining the dust storm, Trinh quotes a child who tells a story about weathering the storm by lying on mat and protecting her face with her mother's headscarf. As an outside observer of culture, the filmmaker presumably collected this fragment of a story from many conversations with the people who are the subjects of her film. Removed from any larger context and simply placed into the voice-over of the film, this brief narrative hardly gives viewers anything close to a complete understanding of the event onscreen. Rather, this very short story suggests that the dust storm does not have meaning aside from the human experience of it. Although the voice we hear recounting this experience in the film is Trinh's, she attributes this story to the voice of an unnamed child, whose particular point of view is added to the chorus of the film's narrators.

In the final shift in narrative voice in this excerpt, Trinh uses the terms of semiotics to self-reflexively comment on her own position in relationship to her film's subjects. Initially, she seems to speak as though she were the woman she is filming, noting ironically that for the documentary filmmaker who records her, "scratching my hair or washing my face become a very special act".[55] In the very next line, however, she speaks from another point of view, now assuming her role as filmmaker and observing her own filmmaking practices: "Watching her through the lens/ I look at her becoming me becoming mine". Rapidly shifting between two subject positions, the woman who is looked at and the woman who looks, Trinh's narrator assumes a third position, entering into a "reality of signs where I myself am a sign". This

[55] I have preserved Trinh's speech directly from the film here and chosen not to change "become" to the grammatically correct "becomes". Much of her voice-over is inflected by her accented English, atypical grammar and inflection.

moment articulates in microcosm the larger project of *Reassemblage*, which Judith Mayne has compellingly described as "a renarrativization of the relationship between she who speaks and she who is spoken about, between she who looks and she who is looked at…" (101). Moving quickly between multiple subject positions, Trinh imaginatively deconstructs the boundary that separates herself as filmmaker from the people she films. Here, she demonstrates perhaps most clearly what it might mean to "speak nearby" the subjects of her film and to create a space in which to comment upon her own representational practices.

If the multiple points of view that Trinh offers on the image track destabilizes any one way of seeing Senegal, the sound track's many narrators thoroughly undermines the notion that there is any one voice that can speak about Senegal and the people who live there. Just as there is no expert experience of a place, Trinh seems to say, there is no "authentic" voice to capture "native" or "local" culture. Instead, Trinh suggests, speech acts are always situated from within an identity positon, whether it be the anthropologist or the native, and contextualized within a discursive framework. In her painstaking reading of Trinh's concept of "speaking nearby," Kaplan discerns four levels of discourse operating in the film's voice-over: an ironic commentary on the various "governing discourses" about "third-world" or "developing countries; Trinh's own subjective commentary on her film project; fragments of African folklore; and a discourse that seeks to deconstruct the subject-object relation at the center of ethnographic documentary's polemics (199-200). The last discourse on Kaplan's list is the most didactic; it is in this voice that Trinh teaches her viewer how to interpret the other three discourses.

By weaving in and out of these speaking positions, Trinh performs a meta-commentary on the representative practices of ethnographic documentary. Ultimately, her voice-over is not about Senegal as much as it is about the impossibility of capturing the true Senegal through any

forms of representation. Perhaps a productive way to think about Trinh's use of voice-over in *Reassemblage* is that it is positioned indirectly in relationship to the film's subjects. Filmmaker An van. Dienderen, who collaborated with Trinh on her 2005 film *Night Passage*, has suggested that "poetical indirectness" is a critical part of Trinh's authorial persona and directorial style. She writes:

> The universe of Trinh T. Minh-ha is inspired by a very precise concept of authorship that breaks away from Western, nineteenth-century romantic individualism. She thinks of the 'author' as a conceptual site, where personal interests and desires are only relevant insofar as they can be politicized…. Authorship is understood as a site for an encounter with and an exploration of a film set, rather than an execution of a plan. (96)

While Dienderen is describing Trinh's approach to *Night Passage* specifically, her comments provide a useful framework for considering how "speaking nearby" works in *Reassemblage*. When authorship is no longer associated with an individual agent, "the author" can become a "conceptual site" or a method for "encounter" and "exploration" of ideas. In a Western rhetorical tradition, an individual author aims for clarity and concision, avoiding contradictions or ambiguous messages. Trinh's poetically indirect, multivalent author, on the other hand, can articulate contradictory statements to create productive juxtapositions between discursive positions. No one subject-position is given authority over the representation of Senegal. Instead, meaning is found in the contrast between points of view.

Trinh's shifting narrators explicitly undermine the authority typically granted to the ethnographic fieldworker, but implicitly her subject position as a Vietnamese woman living and working in the U.S. also destabilizes the conventional subject-object relationship that circumscribes anthropological "looking at" and "speaking about". If the participant-observer

traditionally speaks from an identity presumed "neutral" or unmarked by race and gender (i.e. white and male) about native Others, Trinh's voice thoroughly undermines the relationship between the ethnographer and the natives he represents. As Kaplan suggests, Trinh's "speaking position already decenters whiteness" and consequently, the white spectator that the filmmaker imagines and addresses becomes "aware of being marginalized in this project" (205). Even if the actual spectator of *Reassemblage* is not white and/or male, the film positions all viewers from this point of view, particularly in the way that Trinh plays upon the conventions of ethnographic documentary to surprise and bewilder her audience. In other words, the politics of Trinh's film become legible to a viewer familiar with ethnographic documentary, at least to the extent that they recognize that the film is confounding these conventions. As ethnographic documentaries produce an ethnographic gaze that is both white and male, the audience familiar with those conventions takes on that subject position.

Part of what makes Trinh's voice-over so disruptive is the particular inflections of her voice itself. Filmmaker Bérénice Reynaud writes that *Reassemblage* "embodies its subjective connotations in the *grain* of [Trinh's] voice [which is] unmistakably feminine, unmistakably foreign, hesitant yet resolute, ironical yet poetic" (260). Alluding to Roland Barthes idealization of the physical and material "grain" of the human voice, Reynaud suggests that the qualities that she attributes to Trinh's voice itself reflect the filmmaker's unique subjectivity. Judith Mayne makes a similar observation about the relationship between Trinh's particularly "inflected" English and the image track of her film:

> Something slips in the relationship between image and voice; the narrator uses the awkward phrase "naked breast women" (rather than "naked-breasted" or "women with naked breasts") and pronounces "pornography" with the accent on the wrong syllable

> (por~no~graph'~y, rather than por~no'~graphy~y)…For Trinh's voice is too inflected with an accent to function as the transparent, overarching, "neutral" voice of documentary. (104)

The "awkwardness" of Trinh's phrases and her subtle mispronunciations of English words makes it impossible for viewers to forget the specificity of the narrator's subject position marked by race and gender. For Mayne, these reminders of Trinh's own status as "native woman" come at a particularly crucial moment, in the midst of her commentary about female nudity and the ethnographic gaze. The uncomfortable combination of English words "naked breast women" in Trinh's voice-over parallels the uncomfortable proliferation of breasts on screen. Similarly, her mispronunciation of the significant word "pornography" calls attention to the contrast between her own subject position and the white, male identity of the character in the story she tells who is titillated by the nudity he witnesses in a travel slide show.

Designed consciously to avoid replicating the histories of violence implicit in speaking for marginalized people, Trinh's concept of "speaking nearby" deflects attention away from the traditional object of anthropological analysis, "primitive" experience, replacing it with another point of view: that of the ethnographer herself. The voice who speaks in her films is located somewhere alongside her subjects, not above or beyond them. It refracts multiple, sometimes contradictory, points of view. It is an embodied voice, particular in its pronunciation and intonation. While historically ethnographic filmmakers used the camera to examine the unfamiliar in order to comprehend difference, Trinh uses film to reverse this project. Instead of trying to understand culture, *Reassemblage* revels in culture's incomprehensibility. Rather than try to make viewer's cultural insiders or participants, Trinh's film creates viewers who are perpetual outsiders, who can observe and listen to culture but can never understand what they see

or hear. An outsider can never access an authentic “native voice”, Trinh argues. Instead, she can only listen to a dissonant chorus of speech, trying to discern a pattern in the rising and falling cadence of their rhythms.

SPEAKING AS THE NATIVE

The travelogue is a literary genre that imagines a reader for whom travel is a certainty, not a question. D.H. Lawrence's 1921 travelogue *Sea and Sardinia* opens with the proclamation "Comes over one an absolute necessity to move" (11). The "absolute necessity" of travel propelled the writer out of an England he found dreary and provincial in search of the transformative experiences he imagined could be found in Europe and later in the Americas. In the first line of her 1937 travelogue *Baghdad Sketches*, intrepid English traveler Freya Stark declared "In a very short time a railroad will link Baghdad with Europe," bemoaning the disappearance of a "real" Iraq that such unprecedented access to the country spelled for future travelers (1). Just as it never occurs to Stark to wonder if tourists will eventually flood into Baghdad, bringing modernity and all its trappings with them, Lawrence never questions whether "one" will find it a "necessity to move" or will ignore that impulse and stay home. For travelogue writers, tourism is simply a part of modern experience. *When* the tourist goes to Italy or Iraq, both Lawrence and Stark seems to say, this is what they are likely to see.

The first sentence of Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*, on the other hand, announces a very different perspective: "If you go to Antigua as a tourist, this is what you will see" (3). Framing this opening sentence with the word "if", Kincaid asserts that to travel as a tourist is not an inevitable experience but a hypothetical one. *If* the reader chooses to go to Antigua as a tourist, she suggests, they have also chosen to inhabit a particular point of view. Crucially, Kincaid directly addresses her reader in this sentence, positioning them as the hypothetical tourist-observer whose point of view she subjects to scrutiny and harsh critique in the remainder of the text. From this moment onward, the reader is addressed in the second-person singular "you" and asked to inhabit, however uneasily, the deeply troubling point of view of the tourist.

And what do readers see from that vantage point? From the safe distance of an airplane window seat, we look down at the island nation "where the sun always shines and where the climate is deliciously hot and dry", reveling in the implicit knowledge that our holiday most likely will not be ruined by rain and actively suppressing "the thought of what is might be like for someone who had to live day in, day out in a place that suffers constantly from drought" (4). Travelling by taxi from airport to hotel, we repeatedly misinterpret the strange and incongruous sights along the way: all the taxis are brand-new, luxury cars driven that make terrible noises because they are filled with the wrong type of gasoline; an ugly building "sitting in a sea of dust" that we mistake for a public bathroom is actually, Kincaid informs us, a school; we understand the sign "Repairs are Pending" posted on a decrepit, colonial building as evidence of the quaint backwardness of the natives and their "strange, unusual perception of time" when in fact, Kincaid reminds us, the dilapidated buildings and corrupt government that cannot afford to repair them is the direct result of the sordid history of Western "exploitation, oppression and domination" that we do not want to acknowledge (7,9). Finally, because we are apparently "tired of all this looking", Kincaid leaves us to look out the window of our hotel room at the beautiful beach and the "incredibly unattractive, fat, pastrylike-fleshed" man and woman taking such pleasure in sunning themselves there (13).

Fixing her reader's gaze firmly within the bounded frame of an imagined hotel window, Kincaid suddenly shifts her tourist-observer's attention to a new subject:

> Still standing, looking out the window, you see yourself lying on the beach, enjoying the amazing sun…you see yourself meeting new people (only they are new in a very limited way, for they are people just like you). You see yourself eating some delicious, locally

> grown food. You see yourself, you see yourself… You must not wonder what exactly happened to the contents of your lavatory when you flushed it. (13-14)

In deceptively simple prose, Kincaid describes a very familiar imaginary process as an elaborate ritual of self-deception and rationalization. The tourist can only take pleasure in the experience of Antigua, she claims, if they project a fantasy of leisure and abundance onto the contradictory realities of island life. That there is no plumbing system in Antigua to prevent waste from being dumped into the ocean, for instance, cannot intrude upon a tourist's point of view. Antigua is only a pleasant place, she argues, when "you" see what is not there and ignore what "you" see.

To make her case, Kincaid elaborates a specific set of visual relationships that are crucial to conjuring Antigua as a site of pleasure. By positioning readers from the first sentence as observers, the writer stages tourism itself as a primarily *visual experience* that begins and ends in the realm of imagination. Antigua is revealed to readers through a highly-controlled series of looks, from the aerial perspective of an airplane window to the artificial frame of the window in a hotel. From start to finish, the tourist examines a place already framed, quite literally in this case, by the infrastructure of leisure travel. Moreover, the tourist gaze that Kincaid simulates in these first pages follows a very particular trajectory from examination to introspection. As the reader-tourist goes sightseeing, they must observe a series of other people, ranging from taxi drivers to other "pastryfleshed" white tourists, before they begin to imaginatively project a version of self onto what they see. That the only other tourists the readers see are "incredibly unattractive", repulsive even, forces Kincaid's reader-observer to make an associational shift inward and to project a version of self into an imaginatively framed landscape. Concluding this moment with the conspicuous repetition of the phrase "you see yourself", Kincaid makes it clear to readers that the final stage of a tourist point of view is to shift entirely into the realm of fiction.

The visual evidence of Antigua's colonial history and its legacy that threatens the tourist's visual pleasure from the beginning of this sequence is eventually suppressed entirely because, as Kincaid adamantly and repeatedly asserts, to maintain the illusion that sustains the very possibility of such pleasure, "you must not wonder" about such things.

In a radical reversal of the conventions of the travelogue, Kincaid's tourist-reader looks out the window of their beachfront hotel room and does not see "the real" Antigua but instead sees ugly, white tourists and then, like Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote, sees what is not there: a fictional version of the self. For a genre historically circumscribed by realism, at least in terms of the travelogue's narrative conceit that the writer has actually taken a journey and recorded what they see along the way, Kincaid's explicit focus on artifice announces a startling shift in the genre's point of view. Rather than see the sights of Antigua, Kincaid asks readers to examine the unseen subject of the travelogue—the tourist whose point of view writes the fantasy of "exotic" island life.

Kincaid is not the first writer to subject travelogue writing to critique and revision. Modernist writers self-consciously took up the travelogue, a genre they associated both with nineteenth-century imperialism and with tedious, amateurish storytelling, as a literary tool to investigate a modern, post-war subjectivity and to question realist empiricism. William Carlos Williams' experimental novel *A Voyage to Pagany* (1928), for instance, borrows the form of the travelogue to investigate the psychological minutia of his principle character, an American physician who observes foreign others but cannot understand them. Vita Sackville-West's travelogue *Passenger to Tehran* (1926) is less a record of the writer's journey through the Middle East as it is a highly stylized meditation on the failure of words to adequately convey images. In *Journey Without Maps* (1936), Graham Green writes about his travels through Liberia

as a means of exploring his own role within the British Empire and the often perplexing relations of dominance that such a subject position engenders. In fact, the travelogue that began this reading, D. H. Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), is above all a meditation on the writer's wish for the dissolution of the self in the remote landscape of Sardinia. For each of these writers, the travelogue proved an extremely generative form for experimentation and innovation.

While Kincaid's insistence on the artifice and violence of the tourist gaze is not new, her critical revision of the travelogue is unique for two reasons. First, the subject position from which she makes that critique opens up a fresh set of rhetorical possibilities for the genre. As a self-identified "native" of Antigua, Kincaid very consciously writes back to a literary genre that historically denied her the agency to authorize narrative. In stark contrast to the modernist writers who used the travelogue to comment on the psychic terrain of a system in which they were willing participants, Kincaid rejects the very possibility of tourist travel because as a "native" woman she knows what it is like to be the object of the tourist gaze. For a "native" to write a travelogue at all, a genre in which "the native" conventionally functions as either part of the landscape or as plot device, means reinventing travel writing's authorial personae. Directly addressing her reader as "you" from the first line of the text makes explicit the difference between her own authorial identity (a black, "native" woman) and that of her imagined audience (white, American or European would-be tourists). By positioning herself as a native and her readers as tourists, Kincaid creates the conditions necessary to intervene in a discourse predicated upon and enforced through a particular set of looking relations.

Kincaid's strategic attention to voice also represents a decided shift away from the genre's preoccupation with the visual. Throughout its many incarnations, what has remained absolutely consistent over the course of the travelogue's long history is the way travel writers

privilege the image as a way to represent and interpret the world. The modernist writers who took up the genre may have been more interested in exploring subjectivity and interiority than the landscapes they described, but they still relied on description to set the stage for their experimental investigations of self. Kincaid's writing, on the other hand, works differently, directing her reader to focus on the voice of the narrator, rather than to dwell on long passages of careful description. Provocatively, she forces her readers into an uncomfortable relationship with the "I" who confronts them so abruptly and relentlessly from the first moments of the text. The voice of Kincaid's narrator is bitterly confrontational, reprimanding the reader for their uncritical complicity with tourism and its attendant "isms," including the colonialism that made it possible and the late-capitalism that sustains it. Denying her readers the vicarious pleasures of "armchair tourism," Kincaid deliberately disrupts the visual protocols of travel writing to replace a fantasy of "exotic" Antigua with her explanation of what tourism looks like from a native's point of view.

Her descriptions of tourists are a case in point. From the moment when an "ordinary person" decides that they "must get away," Kincaid asserts that they "make a leap from being that nice blob just sitting like a boob in your amniotic sac of the modern experience to being a person visiting heaps of death and ruin and feeling alive and inspired at the sight of it" (16). In her formulation, even the visual protocols of an imagined tourism are enough to transform the harmless modern subject from a benign "blob" to a person complicit in the "death and ruin" that inspires them. Although tourism would seem to be about locating the beautiful, marvelous, or awe-inspiring in human experience, Kincaid suggests that it creates a subject who is just the opposite:

> An ugly thing, that is what you are when you become a tourist, an ugly, empty thing, a stupid thing, a piece of rubbish pausing here and there to gaze at this and taste that, and it will never occur to you that the people who inhabit the place in which you have just paused cannot stand you, that behind their closed doors they laugh at your strangeness (you do not look the way they look); the physical sight of you does not please them. (17)

Ultimately, the violence inscribed in tourist travel makes tourists repulsive. Physically, they are "ugly, empty thing[s]"; "piece[s] of rubbish"; "incredibly unattractive", "fat", and "pastrylike-fleshed" (or white) (13). As we have already learned, they are North American, "or worse" European (5). They have "bad manners" and "look silly" doing even the simplest things (17). They are the butt of every joke and the object of ridicule for natives who do not like them. For readers who are positioned as sightseers from the first moments of the text, Kincaid's emphatic disdain for tourists is a kind of confrontation with her audience.

That readers continue to be challenged by the tone of Kincaid's authorial persona can be seen in the critical response to *A Small Place*. Keith E. Byerman characterizes Kincaid's writing "deeply hostile" to not only the reader/tourist, who she "can offend without challenge," but to the island of Antigua itself and the "male world of politics, business, and public life" that she "attacks" (91-92). Jane King, who writes that her ambivalent relationship with Kincaid's work is rooted in the fact that, as a black, Caribbean woman writer, she "share[s] too many attributes" with her, takes offense with Kincaid's portrayal of Antigua: "Fine, so [she] does not like the Caribbean much, finds it dull and boring and would rather live in Vermont…but I do not see why Caribbean people should admire her for denigrating our small place in this destructively angry fashion" (899). Rhonda D. Frederick worries about the pedagogical difficulties that Kincaid's "accusatory" tone can produce in a "mainstream" college classroom where student readers who

often identify as "North Americans," "Europeans," or as "whites" can easily reject and dismiss the text and its salient post-colonial critique of tourism along with it (5-6). While Frederick's essay offers a pragmatically useful explanation of how to position *A Small Place* for undergraduate readers, it also rehearses, perhaps unconsciously, the very same anxieties about Kincaid's anger that she attributes to her students.

While all of these scholars admire Kincaid's larger project and seem to agree with at least some or most of her politics, they all express concern to some degree over the tone of her voice. Describing her authorial personae as "destructively angry," "attacking," or "hostile," they all foreground observations about tone in their readings of her work. Despite their training as critical readers who attend to the formal, historical, and ideological implications of literary texts, the emotional intensity of Kincaid' voice seems to present itself as an unresolved problem that disturbs even the most sophisticated of readers.

Even for readers not familiar with the critical history of *A Small Place*, a cursory glance at the back of the book affirms the centrality of voice to the text. The teaser on the back of the 2000 Farrar, Straus and Giroux paperback edition characterizes her voice as "sardonic," "forthright," and "resolute"; novelist Caryl Phillips calls it "urgent and poetic"; and San Francisco Chronicle book reviewer Jeffrey Rodgers declares that Kincaid "continues to write with a unique, compelling voice that cannot be found anywhere else". Kincaid's voice, however disconcerting it may be to readers, is clearly crucial to the experience of reading her text.

Certainly, Kincaid's narrator is deliberately provocative. Consider one of the historical narratives she supplies readers:

> Do you ever wonder why some people blow things up? I can imagine that if my life had taken a certain turn, there would be the Barclays Bank, and there I would be, both of us in

> ashes. Do you ever try to understand why some people like me cannot get over the past, cannot forgive and cannot forget? There is the Barclays Bank. The Barclay brothers are dead. The human beings they traded, the human beings who to them were only commodities, are dead. It should not have been that they came to the same end, and heaven is not enough of a reward for one or hell enough of a punishment for the other. People who think about these things believe that every bad deed, even every bad thought, carries with it its own retribution. So do you see the queer thing about people like me? Sometimes we hold your retribution. (26-27)

Here, Kincaid does not just implicate Barclays Bank in a history of slavery but also positions readers as complicit in that history, even, and perhaps especially, if they do not want to acknowledge it. While the "you" she addresses would rather that "native" people like her "get over the past," Kincaid insists that instead, "natives" are living reminders of past sins capable of meeting the historical violence of the slavery with the promise of future, explosive violence. Rather than simply give readers historical narrative but bookends historiography with her emotional response to it. The "I" who speculates about what the very real possibility of committing violence in the beginning of the passage becomes part of a collective "we" who remains "holding your retribution" in the last sentence.

In other moments, her anger becomes even wider in scope:

> I cannot tell you how angry it makes me to hear people from North America tell me how much they love England…All they see is some frumpy, wrinkled-up person passing by in a carriage waving at a crowd. But what I see is the millions of people, of whom I am just one, made orphans: no motherland, no fatherland, no gods… and worse and most painful of all, no tongue. (For isn't it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this

> crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime? And what can that really mean? For the language of the criminal can contain only the goodness of the criminal's deed. The language of the criminal can explain and express the deed only from the criminal's point of view. (31-32)

It is not only the corrupt histories on which institutions in Antigua, like Barclays Bank, are built that incite Kincaid's fury. In a formulation more than a little reminiscent of poet Audre Lorde's influential 1984 claim "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house," Kincaid directs her anger toward colonialism's epistemic effects (112). Deprived of a "native tongue," the writer laments that the only language she has to "explain" what really happened to her country and to "express" her response to those events is a language incapable of any but the "criminal's point of view". Characteristically, she stages this critique through a metaphor that explicitly addresses point of view. Where the North American anglophile "sees" England's monarchy as a quaint, thoroughly benign, reminder of a time long past, a vision conjured by the "frumpy, wrinkled-up person" waving at the crowd from an anachronistic carriage in an imagined parade, Kincaid sees what remains of a colonial regime she can only describe as "criminal". What Antigua has lost through the violent process of colonization is no less than the fundamental structures of national identity (a "motherland" or "fatherland"), religion, and language.

Certainly, Kincaid's anger denies readers any easy identification with her narrator. That the text firmly positions them in a system in which "tourists" and "natives" can only exist in contentious opposition forecloses any possibility for the tourist/reader to forge a simplistic relationship with the "I" who speaks. Readings that characterize the palpable anger in Kincaid's writerly voice as purely problematic, however, risk replicating the troubling logic that the writer

is actively trying to contest. To claim that Kincaid's critique "attacks" the social order or is "destructive" implies that she is a hysterical black woman, a figure whose anger threatens that social order or even worse, that she is practicing "reverse racism". Ultimately, such readings obscure much of what made Kincaid's writing radical for readers in the 1980's and in the twenty-first century: that she directs her anger at her reader to strategically and purposely provoke an emotional response.

Kincaid's tone only poses a problem if identification is the only way for readers to productively engage with a text. Especially for those of us who teach textual interpretation in a college classroom, it seems relatively easy to imagine other kinds of generative reading practices. In fact, identification often poses more of a pedagogical challenge in the classroom than confusion, discomfort, or even the outright rejection of an authorial voice. Narratives that create distance between narrators and readers most often do so strategically to stage more self-reflexive reading practices. Forcing readers to critically engage with not only the text at hand but with the interpretive framework they bring to a text is a powerful way of prompting meta-discursive readings. Isn't it possible to be positioned as a "bad tourist" in a text and leave the text more critical about the implications of a tourist's point of view? Even further, isn't it probable that being confronted by Kincaid's narrator would produce emotions that readers would be forced to examine at least to some degree, even if that means rejecting and leaving the text?

Directing readers to pay attention to the "I" that addresses them as Other, with all the uncomfortable emotions that such a confrontation produces, would seem to be precisely Kincaid's point. Where conventional tourist travelogues position reading and observing as closely-related pleasures, Kincaid's narrator intentionally disrupts both tourist observation and the reading practice that stages it as a simple, straightforward, and above all, pleasant activity.

Leslie Larkin similarly argues that Kincaid's text "functions quite deliberately as a teacher" who by "point[ing] the finger at its actual readers…deconstruct[s] and reintegrate[s] the tourist reader as critically self-reflexive reader" (194). Calling this process a "deconstructive performative," she links the performative nature of Kincaid's voice, particularly her use of second-person address, to the way she dis-articulates tourist looking. Larkin claims that tourism is not Kincaid's actual target but "*tourist-reading* and the subject it produces" and as a result, recurring scenes of reading are "thematic touchstones" for the writer (194-195). Correcting her reader's perpetual mis-sightings of Antigua, her narrator acts as pedagogue to reveal the ways that "tourist-reading" is not only about mis-understanding, but about ignoring how violent global processes shape the local.

Kincaid's investment in reading and readers is clear from the opening pages, where her narrator shows "you" both the ways tourists see and what their viewing position obscures. This preoccupation becomes even more obvious in part three of the book which is dedicated entirely to describing the condition of the library in Antigua, that dusty, broken building plastered with the sign "Repairs Pending" that readers may recall from their initial "tour" of the island. Kincaid anticipates her reader's exasperation at the return of this symbol when she writes, "Oh, you might be saying to yourself, Why is she so undone at what has become of the library, why does she think that is a good example of corruption, of things gone bad?" (42). The remainder of the section, however, enacts precisely the rhetorical device her imagined reader names, positioning the story of the library's ruin as a kind of instructive parable about colonialism and its effects. If "you" do not understand the problem with the library, her narrator seems to say, "I" will make "you" understand.

What the library means for Kincaid can be found in her childhood memory of the place:

> But if you saw the old library, situated as it was, in a big, old wooden building painted a shade of yellow that is beautiful to people like me, with its wide veranda, its big, always open windows, its rows and rows of shelves filled with books, its beautiful wooden tables and chairs for sitting and reading…the beauty of us sitting there like communicants at an altar, taking in, again and again, the fairy tale of how we met you, your right to do the things you did, how beautiful you were, are, and always will be; if you could see all of that in just one glimpse, you would see why my heart would break at the dung heap that now passes for a library in Antigua. (42-43)

The "beauty" of the library that the narrator describes here is complicated. On the one hand, the old colonial building she remembers is "beautiful" and so is the order of its "rows and rows of shelves" and tables and chairs for "sitting there like communicants" in a religious euphoria of reverence and silence. On the other hand, the library is also a site of encounter with England and its Empire, housed within the books themselves that tell "the fairy tale of how we met you," a fantasy that rationalizes and justifies the colonizers "right to do the things you did". Part of this fairy tale is that the English "were, are and always will be" beautiful. The library both is and is not beautiful for Kincaid, just as reading is an experience at once euphoric and violent.

The library becomes a site where the past and the present intersect, often bringing Kincaid face-to-face with those people invested with colonial authority and what remains of it in modern Antigua. Kincaid's ambivalent relationship to the library is reinforced by her childhood relationship with the head librarian, "the same one from colonial days," who used to "keep a close watch on [her]," who always "seemed imperious and stuck-up" and who was always "suspicious of us" (44-45). That the librarian and Kincaid now share a common cause in her adult life seems strange and disorienting. Similarly, the writer finds herself sharing a political

investment in the old library with the members of the Mill Reef Club, a colonial-era institution "built by some people from North America who wanted to live in Antigua and spend their holidays in Antigua but who seemed not to like Antiguans (black people) at all…" (27). Seeking donations to repair the library, Kincaid goes to see "a woman whose family had helped to establish the Mill Reef Club" and is "notorious for liking Antiguans only if they are her servants" (47). The woman tells her that "she always encouraged her girls and her girls' children to use the library and by her girls she meant grownup Antiguan women (not unlike me)…" (47). Confronted by these unlikely alliances, Kincaid wryly observes: "The people at the Mill Reef Club love the old Antigua. I love the old Antigua. Without question, we don't have the same Antigua in mind" (44). The old library still has the power to create disturbing confrontations with the vestiges of colonial power and its racist hierarchies that it did in Kincaid's childhood. As an important site of reading in the book, it is also a site of encounter.

Ultimately, for Kincaid, reading is a kind of violent encounter with that which is outside the reader. Why then, she seems to ask, should it necessarily be a pleasant experience? Reading the "fairy tales" of a British literature in which "you distorted or erased my history and glorified your own" was a formative experience for Kincaid, one that she re-creates for her readers (36). Confronting her own readers with a voice designed to provoke an emotional response, Kincaid forces them to contend with their own reactions to her writing.

For twenty-first century readers, Kincaid's anti-travelogue has retained its relevance and the urgency of its critique. While Shostak's *Nisa* and Trinh's *Reassemblage* both remain fixed within debates about ethnographic authority in the 1980's and '90's, the confrontation that Kincaid seeks to produce in *A Small Place* can still be freshly experienced by readers. Speaking from a position as "native woman," Kincaid asks her readers to reject tourist travel and the

ethnographic gaze that tourism produces. At the very least, she requires that readers contend with her point of view, one that has been marginalized or obscured for much of literary history.

The texts that I have examined in this chapter all suggest, to varying degrees, that paying attention to voice, rather than image, is a representational tactic with the potential to upend the oppressive power of the gaze. By foregrounding the point of view of the observed "native" turned observing subject, the anthropologist, filmmaker, and writer invest the voice with a transformative power to comment upon, if not correct, the troubling visual practices of the participant-observer.

When examined from a twenty-first century vantage point, the success of their project is debatable. Of the three texts, Shostak's book remains the most popular and easily accessible for American audiences. As late as 2000, the posthumously published *Return to Nisa* signaled that Shostak's writing still has a ready audience. Trinh's experimental films, while highly influential within academic and avant-garde filmmaking circles, still remain opaque for many viewers. Undergraduates watching *Reassemblage* for the first time, for example, often reject the film for many of the same reasons that its early audiences did: its strategic disjunctions of sound and image make it hard to follow and (perhaps ironically) the many images of bare-breasted African women are troubling for twenty-first century audiences. Far from understanding the film as a salient critique of anthropology, many students complain that it replicates the ethnographic gaze. Similarly, readers of *A Small Place* often reject the text because of Kincaid's angry, didactic tone and end up either ignoring or missing her critique of colonialism and tourism entirely.

Shifting the authority to speak about the experiences of marginalized people from the white, male voice of the ethnographer to the voices of subjects who self-identify as "natives"

does not so much solve the problems of ethnographic gazing as it introduces a new set of issues about authenticity. By suggesting that audiences can simply listen to "the native" speak truth to power, this discursive shift implies that truth can only be spoken by an "authentic native" identity. In other words, rather than complicate or overturn the identity category "native" that is the inheritance of nineteenth-century colonialism, privileging voice runs the risk of re-inscribing those identities and reinforcing their relationship to something like "real truth". Where the ethnographic looking I examine in the first and second chapters positioned "natives" as a site where profound truths about human origins could be found, listening to "native voices" often assigns "native" authors the task of either speaking as a representative of their racial and cultural group or fixes "natives" as truth tellers.

It is crucial for twenty-first century readers to remain skeptical of any claims to narrative authority and to consider the shift toward voice as a discursive moment rather than a resolution to the problems posed by ethnographic looking. Point of view is always an artificial construct, one that can be extremely generative, complex, evocative, and compelling. Recognizing how the framer frames their work, to borrow a phrase from Trinh, is part of the pleasure of reading and watching various modes of ethnography, or culture writing. What matters is that we recognize not only how stories are told but what they reveal about the teller.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this dissertation I have moved back and forth between literary writing, ethnography, and cinema in an attempt to demonstrate the ways that these modes of textual production, different as they may be materially and rhetorically, are intimately linked. For me, ethnographic looking does not simply connect disparate representational forms thematically or ideologically, but most crucially through form (what I have strategically termed "protocols" of vision). In other words, Flaherty's *Moana* and Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico* are not just different representations of "native" bodies and cultures. Even though *Moana* is a film and *Mornings in Mexico* is a collection of travel essays, both texts try to recreate a visual experience for their viewer, whether that viewer is a reader who imagines Lawrence's "native herdsmen" bathing in a creek sentence-by-sentence, or whether that viewer is cinematic spectator who watches a "native boy" extract a crab from its rocky den frame-by-frame.

Reading is not often considered a primarily visual experience. Literary studies has theorized reading and its effects in many ways: as a way to uncover the aesthetic principles at work in high art; as a means of creating reading subjects; as an experience of democracy; as a mode of agency; or as a complex act of cognition. For literary studies scholars, reading is a highly artificial activity that is primarily about uncovering historical narratives or ideologies. All of this work attempts to answer the question of what literature does and how it works on readers and whether consciously or not, all of these theories make a case for why literary studies matters.

My claim that reading is a visual process is an attempt to find new ways of interpreting how texts work. Many of the texts that I close read in this dissertation are highly canonical and come already read, inscribed with layers upon layers of critical analysis. By framing reading as a

mode of seeing akin to watching a film frame-by-frame, I have tried to suggest another mode of literary analysis, one that builds upon but does not simply repeat the ideological critiques of ethnographic representation in its many forms. Descriptive writing does not just ask readers to imagine a scene in an ambiguous or abstract way. Instead, description is a carefully orchestrated form of writing that produces specific effects on readers. The bodies and behaviors that readers imagine may not be precisely the same, but by manipulating order and sequence, layering clauses, and playing with duration, descriptive writing directs readers' processes of visualization in a process strikingly similar to cinema.

When scholars attend to ethnographic texts, they routinely pair written and image texts, relating them thematically, historically, or ideologically. Often, image texts are used to illustrate the claims that scholars make about writing. Foucault, Said, and Mudimbe, for example, all use paintings as a point of departure to mount their arguments about how discourse creates subjects. As a scholar who is deeply invested in images, I find the lack of substantial commentary upon these paintings and their rhetorical effects troubling. Isn't it possible that writing and images share more than simply referring to the same subject matter?

If the tidy distinctions between cinematic and literary texts continually collapse under even the slightest pressure, they must share more than an ambiguously defined aesthetic. Concepts like "narration" or "point of view" are central to both literary and film studies. Why then, do many scholars insist on treating these textual forms as only causally or tangentially related? It is quite possible that literary writing is not simply "cinematic" and that that film does not just adapt or respond to literature. Rather than insist, for instance, that the literary experimentation of the modernist avant-garde in the 1920's and 1930's was a reaction to cinema, why not think about literary modernism and cinematic movements like surrealism or Soviet

Montage as co-emergent, related visual languages? Twentieth-century literary and film texts, particularly the ethnographic realism I examine here, were a joint endeavor to organize the increasingly disjointed, fragmentary experience of industrial modernity into a seeable, knowable diegetic world. In this context, the body of the "native" became a site upon which to reconfigure knowledge through a specific set of protocols for seeing and understanding what is seen.

By analyzing written images and actual images together using similar strategies of close reading, I have deliberately tried to be provocative. It is time to take seriously the relationship between words and images. Students know this perhaps better than many scholars. In my classroom, image texts do not function solely as "visual aids" that either supplement (as the term implies) or illustrate ideas situated as coming primarily from literary writing. Instead, I have tried to position literary and film analysis as similar methods of textual interpretation, encouraging my students to apply the facility that they already have about how films make meaning frame-by-frame to literature at the level of the sentence. When it comes to ethnographic travel writing and film in particular, the protocols writers, anthropologists, and filmmakers use to see "native" culture are primarily about organizing fragments of visual information to access a total knowledge of human origins. Deconstructing ethnographic writing and images and thinking about how those fragments work in relationship to the whole is a way of defamiliarizing the ideologies at work in those texts and calling into question the normalizing function of that mode of vision. To read both writing and film as forms of visual language opens up fresh interpretive possibilities for an archive that we already thought we knew.

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