

sts and anthropologists 'dropped' from the sky.

JOHAN GRIMONPREZ

DE TENTOONSTELLINGEN
VAN HET PALEIS VOOR SCHONE KUNSTEN
BRUSSEL

WE NEVER TELL
EVERYTHING,
WE ALWAYS KEEP
SOMETHING FOR THE
NEXT ANTHROPOLOGIST
(Informant to Mead)



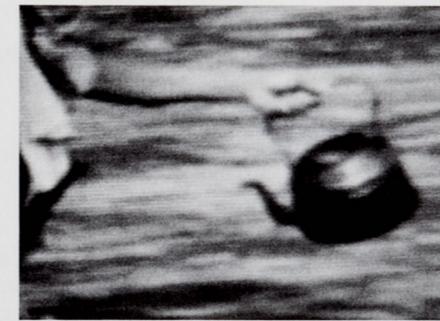
«IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME
DON'T BRING ANY GEAR, EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE ...»

- A LANDSCAPE OF MIMETIC EXCESS

PALEIS VOOR SCHONE KUNSTEN BRUSSEL
APRIL 14 THROUGH JUNE 5 1994
PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BRUXELLES

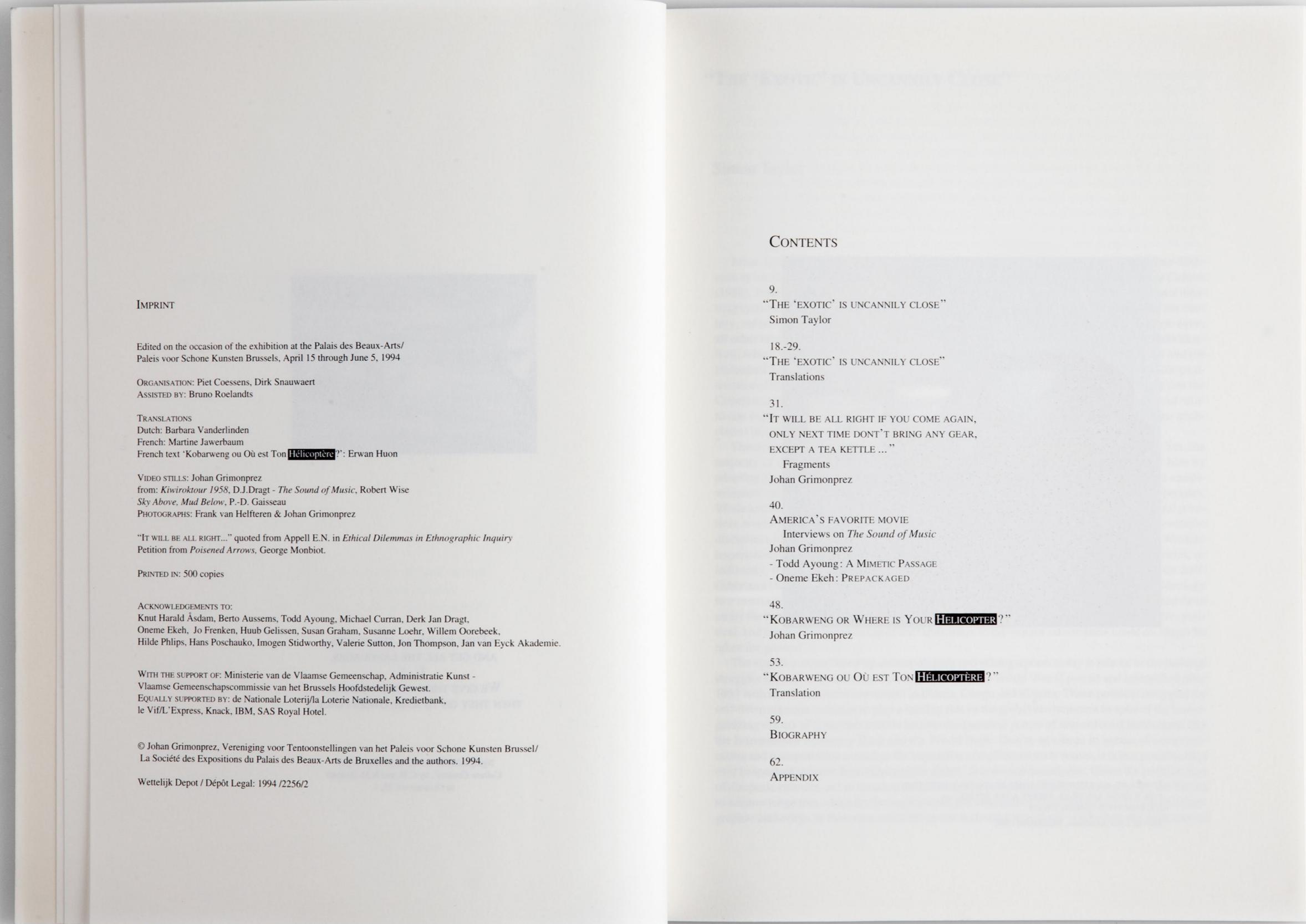
WAT TUM YENO MINDA NMOD-UOU RE-THEDE-LIA BE JLOW T'U
KU-LETTCH KET A DOLCHU, KABO-YUA, ONGE T'NOU
DOLCHU KABO-YUA, ONGE T'NOU

DOLCHU KABO-YUA, ONGE T'NOU
KU-LETTCH KET A DOLCHU, KABO-YUA, ONGE T'NOU



«THEY GO TO ALL THE PLACES
AND GET ALL THE LANGUAGES.
[...]
WE GIVE THEM OUR LANGUAGE;
THEN THEY GO TO SOME OTHER PLACE.»

Ngalgindali in 'An Oenpelli Monologue:
Culture Contact', by C.H. and R.M. BERNDT
in *Oceania* vol 22, 1.



IMPRINT

Edited on the occasion of the exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts/
Paleis voor Schone Kunsten Brussels, April 15 through June 5, 1994

ORGANISATION: Piet Coessens, Dirk Snaauwaert
ASSISTED BY: Bruno Roelands

TRANSLATIONS
Dutch: Barbara Vanderlinden
French: Martine Jawerbaum
French text 'Kobarweng ou Où est Ton Hélicoptère?': Erwan Huon

VIDEO STILLS: Johan Grimonprez
from: *Kiwirotour* 1958, D.J.Dragt - *The Sound of Music*, Robert Wise
Sky Above, Mud Below, P.-D. Gaisseau
PHOTOGRAPHS: Frank van Helfteren & Johan Grimonprez

"IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT..." quoted from Appell E.N. in *Ethical Dilemmas in Ethnographic Inquiry*
Petition from *Poisoned Arrows*, George Monbiot.

PRINTED IN: 500 copies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO:
Knut Harald Åsdam, Berto Aussem, Todd Ayoung, Michael Curran, Derk Jan Dragt,
Oneme Ekeh, Jo Frenken, Huub Gelissen, Susan Graham, Susanne Loehr, Willem Oorebeek,
Hilde Philips, Hans Poschauko, Imogen Stidworthy, Valerie Sutton, Jon Thompson, Jan van Eyck Akademie.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Administratie Kunst -
Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie van het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest.
EQUALLY SUPPORTED BY: de Nationale Loterij/la Loterie Nationale, Kredietbank,
le Vif/L'Express, Knack, IBM, SAS Royal Hotel.

© Johan Grimonprez, Vereniging voor Tentoonstellingen van het Paleis voor Schone Kunsten Brussel/
La Société des Expositions du Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles and the authors. 1994.

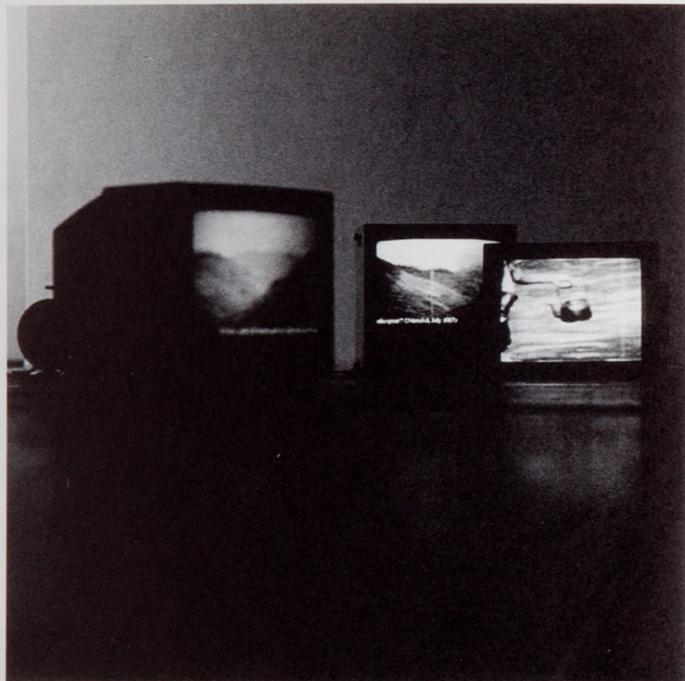
Wettelijk Depot / Dépôt Legal: 1994/2256/2

CONTENTS

- 9.
"THE 'EXOTIC' IS UNCANNILY CLOSE"
Simon Taylor
- 18.-29.
"THE 'EXOTIC' IS UNCANNILY CLOSE"
Translations
- 31.
"IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN,
ONLY NEXT TIME DON'T BRING ANY GEAR,
EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE ..."
Fragments
Johan Grimonprez
- 40.
AMERICA'S FAVORITE MOVIE
Interviews on *The Sound of Music*
Johan Grimonprez
- Todd Ayoung: A MIMETIC PASSAGE
- Oneme Ekeh: PREPACKAGED
- 48.
"KOBARWENG OR WHERE IS YOUR HELICOPTER?"
Johan Grimonprez
- 53.
"KOBARWENG OU OÙ EST TON HÉLICOPTÈRE ?"
Translation
- 59.
BIOGRAPHY
- 62.
APPENDIX

“THE ‘EXOTIC’ IS UNCANNILY CLOSE”

Simon Taylor



«IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME
DON'T BRING ANY GEAR, EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE ...»
-A LANDSCAPE OF MIMETIC EXCESS
Jan van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht, 1994.

Johan Grimonprez's ethnographic video projects address a pervasive condition in late-20th-century society precipitated by increased rootlessness and mobility. In *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), James Clifford identifies this as a «condition of offcenteredness in a world of distinct meaning systems, a state of being in culture while looking at culture.»¹ Until the beginning of our century, writes Clifford, Westerners regarded other cultures through exclusively Eurocentric eyes; all other races and classes were judged according to the normative ideal of bourgeois individualism, which was considered the pinnacle of human civilization. While two World Wars and the Holocaust destroyed any lingering pretense of moral leadership, the revolt against scientific positivism undermined the progressivist logic of the evolutionary worldview. In the same way that the Copernican map of the universe displaced humankind from center to periphery, the *cultural relativism* expressed by the new ethnographic conception of the world implied that Western truth-claims have no legitimate universal application.

Theoretically this meant that Western culture was no more advanced than any other. Yet, the majority of anthropologists in the 20th century continued to demonstrate ethnocentric bias by adopting patronizing attitudes toward «primitives» and «savages», labelling their cultures «undeveloped» and «Third World» even as they claimed to be the advocates of subjugated peoples. While anthropologists assured themselves that their relativist attitudes and allegedly neutral practices would promote an appreciation of non-Western societies and combat racism, the scientific disciplines of anthropology, ethnology, and ethnography were, in fact, complicit with Western imperialism and colonialism—whether directly through the mediation of colonial authorities, or indirectly, through the epistemological constraints of a discipline traditionally based on Self-Other and Us-Them dichotomies. By the 1960's, cultural relativism was exposed as an ideology that reinforced the *status quo*: instead of acknowledging differences, it paradoxically erased them under the banner of pluralism. Ethnography entered a reflexive phase so that the economic, political, and ideological relationship of the fieldworker to his «native informants» could no longer be taken for granted.

The «predicament» faced by anthropologists and ethnographers today is related to the national struggles for self-determination that began in the post-World War II period and intensified after 1957 with the liberationist movement in Ghana, Congo and Algeria. These political struggles for self-determination continue to play a leading role in the global environment in spite of the homogenizing effects of consumer culture and the recuperative power of neo-colonial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Due to advances in means of communication and transportation as well as the expansion of traditional trade routes, it is less possible than ever to speak of independent cultures with clearly demarcated boundaries. Given the proliferation of diasporic cultures, not to mention the influence of deconstructionist philosophy, we are forced to acknowledge that, «Identity is conjunctural, not essential».² The «postcolonial crisis of ethnographic authority» is therefore reflected in the following questions: «Who has the authority to

10 speak for a group's identity or authenticity? What are the essential elements and boundaries of a culture?»³

In a survey of «Ethnographic film and museums,» Asen Balikci, a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Montreal and an ethnographic filmmaker, argues that five criteria «make some films more ethnographic than others».⁴ Noting the wide variety of styles (observational, reflexive, didactic-expositionary, and documentary) used in the genre, Balikci writes that «serious» ethnographic films incorporate the following conventions: 1. a direct filming technique showing spontaneous actions in «natura» settings as they occur over real-time; 2. the participation of a professionally-trained ethnographer; 3. a preference for «exotic» non-Western subjects and locations; 4. pedagogical utility in the classroom; and, lastly, 5. the supporting corroboration of professional research. Balikci recommends straightforward *documentary realism* as the most appropriate style for salvaging cultures through visual representations. For reasons that will soon become apparent, this prescriptive attitude towards ethnographic media is theoretically problematic and politically dubious.

According to Balikci, «the levelling tide of modernity threatens with obliteration a number of traditional cultures and their original lifestyles. Modern audio-visual recording techniques can help preserve in images at least certain of those irreplaceable qualities of vanishing cultures.»⁵ Ethnographic media is here conceived solely in terms of a salvage operation, to record all the remaining «authentic» traces of the traditional culture. The inexorable narrative of cultural decay, familiar to readers of Claude Levi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), is now recognized as something of a racist fiction which denies subalterns any political agency in shaping history. The triumph of the West is thus a *fait accompli* for anthropologists subscribing to the «salvage paradigm.»⁶ In emphasizing cultural decay, and the backwardness and timelessness of an 'exotic' culture, they neglect to draw any conclusions from the positive and constructive histories in other countries.

Balikci credits Margaret Mead (and Gregory Bateson) for being the first to systematically integrate visual recording devices in their ethnographic research, in films about Bali and Papua New Guinea beginning in the late 1930's: «She had an inspiring influence on most cinematographers of the younger generation. The important developments in the United States during the 1960s were directly related to her contagious belief in the methodological validity of ethnographic film.»⁷ While Mead undoubtedly influenced younger anthropologists, the following generation also questioned the «methodological validity» of their ethnographic fieldwork by confronting the history of their discipline and its complicity in Empire-building. The notion of the «return gaze», as articulated in Barbara Holecek's film, *Anthropology on Trial* (1984)—which begins by criticizing Mead's work in Papua New Guinea—has been an important influence on Grimonprez and other individuals engaged in ethnographic media.

Nevertheless, as recently as the 11th Margaret Mead Film Festival, held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York (1987), there was a hegemony of «classic» film documentary: «no video, no fiction, no serious tampering with the authoritative point of view that became the hallmark of the documentary as long ago as 1922, when Robert Flaherty assembled his ethnographic epic *Nanook of the North*. The message of anthropology as it appeared (at the festival) was the humanism and emphasis on everyday life that suffused the ethnography of Margaret Mead.»⁸

The moral and ethical dilemma confronting ethnographers is whether their efforts to represent cultural diversity can be achieved without ethnocentric bias. Given the risks involved, many individuals simply back off and refuse to get involved in the debates. As Faye Ginsburg writes, in her article, *Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?*: «much of the current postmo-

dern theory, while raising important points about the politics of representation, is so critical of all 'gazes' at the so-called 'other' that to follow the program set forth by some, we would all be paralyzed into an alienated universe, with no engagement across the boundaries of difference that for better or worse exist.»⁹ How does one distinguish between, on the one hand, the political refusal to «objectify» the Other and, on the other hand, the disavowal of cultural difference? While much has been written on the «political correctness» of representing other cultures, successful communication always involves the necessity of representation. More pertinent is whether this representation is accompanied by a colonial mindset, or motivated by political solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggles of subjugated peoples.

Three major influences (specific to ethnography) have informed Johan Grimonprez's projects and installations. First, there is the tradition of anthropological filmmakers from Robert Flaherty to Jean Rouch to more recent filmmakers like Dennis O'Rourke. The second influence on Grimonprez has been the development of indigenous media, such as, Terence Turner and the Kayapo, the Hopi filmmaker Victor Mayasesva, Jr., and Francis Juppurrurla of the Walpiri Media Association in Central Australia. Finally, Grimonprez's ethnographic practice can be related to avant-garde film-and video-makers currently working in the United States, including Yvonne Rainer, Leslie Thornton, and Trinh T. Min-ha, Ken Feingold, Su Friedrich among others whose works centre on the encounter with the «Other». In Trinh's films, for example, «documentary 'objectivity'» is revealed to be «more a matter of unacknowledged voyeurism than scientific fact-finding... What we see and hear is a questioning of the anthropological desire to know the Other.»¹⁰ Similar motivations are behind Grimonprez's efforts to undermine and subvert ethnographic authority.

Grimonprez's most widely-screened work, a 25-minute videotape, «*Kobarweng or Where is Your Helicopter?*» (1992) was made after a 1987 trip to the Ok Bon Valley in Irian Jaya, formerly Dutch New Guinea. A montage of found footage, the video is intentionally reflexive in its construction; rather than exoticizing the indigenous people, the tape concerns the ethnography of ethnography through a dialectical-dialogical process. Fraught with ambiguities, lacking any sense of closure that might give a hint of mastery, combining the testimony of indigenous populations with personal history, *Kobarweng* conveys the artist's sense of dislocation and orientation as he finds himself in the predicament of «being in culture while looking at culture.» Incorporating strategies historically associated with Eisenstein's cinema (rapid editing to foreground the formal devices), Brechtian theater (alienation effects), and Surrealism (e.g. Luis Bunuel's parody of the documentary genre in *Land Without Bread*, 1932), Grimonprez rejects the authoritative underpinnings of mimetic realism, as used in traditional documentary practices, in an attempt to subvert Western forms of «Othering». What emerges is a *materialist poetics*, a blending of ethnographic surrealism and «impure cinevideo.»¹¹

According to Hal Foster, two sets of primal scene recur in modernism: the encounter with the primitive and the machine.¹² *Kobarweng* is about the *first contact* between whites and Papuans, and the representation of that encounter. The tape also concerns the arrival of airstrips, airplanes and *helicopters* in a remote part of the world. For an island, these flying machines have special significance since they transgress the island's physical boundaries and undermine the concept of nationhood.¹³ One of the last areas on Earth to be colonized by white people, the island of New Guinea or Papua is situated in the Pacific Ocean, separated from Australia by the Coral Reef. Sighted by the Portuguese in the 16th century, the island was colonized by the Dutch, the British, and the Germans in the 19th century; even earlier, trade was established with Malaysian and Chinese sailors, who eventually called it the island of the «Papuwah» (the fuzzy haired). Under Australian administration since 1949, the Eastern half became the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, while the former Dutch territories became West Irian under Indonesian rule.

In the 1920's, Australians, including gold prospectors and missionaries, colonized the coastal

areas, but nothing was known about the interior of the island, with its tropical jungle and mountain ranges, until the 1930's. Among the earliest explorers of the interior were the Australian Leahy brothers whose gold-prospecting expeditions are documented in the film, *First Contact* (1980), directed by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, and later issued as a book (1987). The first Highland people who met the Leahy brothers imagined that they were supernatural beings or ghosts of their ancestors.¹⁴ During the Pacific War, when the Japanese and Americans invaded the island, Papuans living in even more remote areas had their first exposure to the outside world when low-flying airplanes flew overhead or crashed in the forest. As late as 1958-9, the villagers of Nimadol (now Pepera) encountered Westerners when **helicopters** dropped supplies for a scientific team, including anthropologists, biologists, and geologists associated with the Dutch Starmountains Expedition whose journeys are recorded in the book, *To the Mountains of the Stars* (1962)¹⁵. Nowadays, some areas are increasingly inundated with camera-toting tourists, including Westerners, whose crass exploitation of the indigenous people is documented in the film, *Cannibal Tours* (1987) by Dennis O'Rourke («I'm an exponent of primitive art,» says one). In Irian Jaya, tourism is limited since Indonesians want to hide their military policies against the indigenous people who are dispossessed of their lands by Javanese transmigration projects in a lot of the areas.

Since cultural difference is a negotiated, two-way process, *Kobarweng* explores the element of *dialogical reciprocity* in the encounter between cultural systems. In Sibil language, *Kobarweng* literally means, «the language of the aeroplane or the sound of the airplane.» When Grimonprez visited the Pepera area in 1987 and gathered oral testimonies, one of the «natives», Kaiang Tapior, asked him, «Where is your **helicopter**?» alluding to the arrival of the anthropologists thirty years earlier, hence the full title of the video, «*Kobarweng or Where is Your Helicopter?*» (The question was also highly ironic since Grimonprez had reached Nimadol, exhausted, after a three-day hike over difficult terrain). When the highland people of the island of New Guinea first heard the sounds of airplane engines and propellers, we learn through the video, they were confused, variously identifying them as the cry of a cassowary, a ruru frog, a growling marsupial, floodwaters or an earthquake. Some, thinking that the sounds were coming from the forest floor, started digging to determine their origin. Still others understood the sounds in terms of their spiritual cosmology, attributing the unfamiliar noises to returning dead ancestors.

The soundtrack to *Kobarweng* is scored so that most of the video passes in a loaded silence, punctuated at intervals by the sound of a **helicopter**, roar of airplanes, running water from a tap, a film projector, and other decontextualized noises that appear out of sync, though recontextualized in a displaced (metaphorical) relation to the images on the screen: the film projector versus landscape imagery, the screeching of a cockatoo connected to the image of an airplane or even the abrupt absence of sound precisely there where classically dramatic ambience would be added. One of the themes of the tape is the different emphasis that Westerners and Papuans give to the senses. In the ocularcentric West, as Michel Foucault has shown in several of his books (most notably, *Discipline and Punish*, 1975), vision has a privileged status in the hierarchy of the senses, and other sense organs become atrophied as a consequence. By contrast, the Papuans who live in the tropical rainforest are attuned to a wide variety of sounds; the Kaluli people, for example, are able to clearly differentiate over a hundred species of birds by their sonos rather than their visual appearance. Westerners, on the other hand, have developed ornithological taxonomies organized according to morphological descriptions based on sight.¹⁶

Whereas the film, *First Contact* adopts the conventional techniques of the documentary, and avoids drawing attention to its own framing devices, *Kobarweng* goes in the opposite direction: some of the original location footage, including some «jungle» foliage, was shot in New York. The video begins with a tracking sequence along a hallway, until the camera arrives inside a room of New York's Greystone Hotel, where the artist temporarily resided - the image of the hotel signifying *transience*.¹⁷ As the first contact narratives, oral testimonies, and details of New

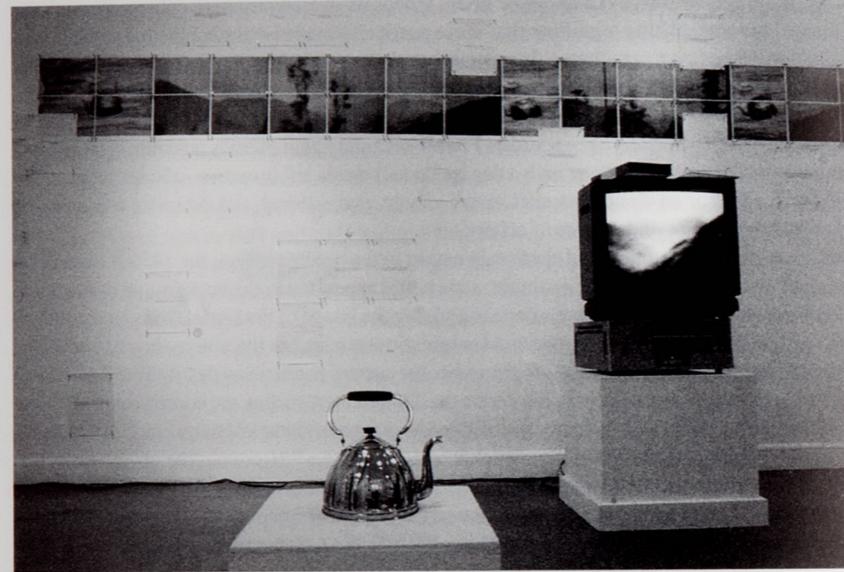
Guinea's colonial past scroll across the monitor, viewers are presented with the choice of focusing on the textual or the visual register. While «TV ethnography» (e.g. Grenada TV's *Disappearing World* series in Britain) remains heavily dependent upon narrative voice-overs, Grimonprez uses text in order to break away from the tradition of ethnographic film as «an evolutionary adaptation of the lecture format.» As Eric Michaels has written, ethnographic documentary films descend from slide lectures and travelogues, in which the omnipresent narrator «acts like a priest, mediating images and reducing the potential richness, complexity and provocative ambiguity of the images [and text] to a linear, doctrinaire message.»¹⁸

The heterogeneous images in *Kobarweng* include visuals appropriated from secondhand sources such as World War II newsreels, television and anthropological film footage attained from the Starmountains expedition members. The preponderance of appropriated imagery from mass media sources—copies without origins—parallels the idea that there is *no essential identity*. Although there are narrative components in the video, its overall structure coheres through the repetition of several shifting signifiers that seem poetically loaded—among them, a kettle, a running tap, aeroplanes and parachutes. Instead of exoticizing tribal artifacts, Grimonprez isolates these taken-for-granted everyday objects and machines, and makes them appear strange, or defamiliarized through a strategy of «mimetic excess». As described by Michael Taussig in *Mimesis and Alterity* (1993): «Mastery is mocked as First World and Other Worlds now mirror, interlock, and rupture each other's alterity to such a degree that all that is left is excess—the self-consciousness as to the need for an identity, sexual, racial, ethnic, and national, and the roller-coastering of violence and enjoyment of this state of affairs.»¹⁹

There is a continuous back-and-forth movement in the video between the 1958-9 expedition footage and restaged footage. For example, a tea kettle appearing in the background of the documentary footage resembled his own; after scrutinizing the image of the kettle, Grimonprez trained the lens on his own kettle, creating the most enigmatic sequences in the video when he shows the kettle lid falling off. At other moments in the video, the camera zooms in on details from the archival footage exposed on a monitor screen located in the TV studio, revealing the constructedness of our perceptions. As in Trinh's films there is «a dangerous potential for aestheticization [...] which can unwittingly romanticize precisely that which it intends not to.»²⁰ However, the charge of formalism is inappropriate since it is precisely the literal bias inherent in realist ethnographic media and the unquestioned conditions within production and reception of imagery and language prevailing in documentary practice that Grimonprez critiques and hopes to subvert. Furthermore, it is important to note that throughout the *Kobarweng* tape, future alternatives to colonialism are posed - the video ends with the statement that, «A secessionist guerrilla war has been going on, hidden away from the outside world.»

Kobarweng has always been screened as an autonomous single-channel videotape; other projects created by the artist have incorporated videos in multiple-channel installations, with several monitors placed directly on the floor, creating a sort of landscape vista. According to John Hanhardt, the precedent for this type of electronic landscape arrangement is Nam June Paik's *TV Garden* (1974-78).²¹ The decision regarding format is dependent upon situational and contextual factors. In the form of an installation, the spectator's experience of the video is perceptually more demanding than watching a single monitor from a fixed vantage point, since it is more architectural and demands the observer to perambulate in the space. Increasing the sense of disorientation, several edited tapes containing different materials may be played on as many as ten or twelve monitors at once, playing out-of-sync to further disrupt linear development. The artist's tea kettle has also been displayed in some installations to parody the display of ethnographic artifacts in museums; instead of exhibiting an exotic trophy collected from another culture, the tea kettle represents the mediating role of the ethnographer.

«It will be all right if you come again, only next time don't bring any gear, except a tea kettle...» A *Landscape of Mimetic Excess;—Nimadol June 1950 - Nimadol July 1987* (1994) is the title of



"IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME DON'T BRING ANY GEAR, EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE..."
— THE PERVERSE DOUBLE.
Longwood Arts Gallery, Bronx Council on the Arts, New York, 1993.

Grimonprez's site-specific installation for the Palais des Beaux-Arts. A multi-channel installation, *A Landscape of Mimetic Excess* further develops the themes of cultural difference and (post-) colonialism using a sequence of landscape footage from the Kobarweng tape intercut with new sequences, including scenes appropriated from the Hollywood musical *The Sound of Music*, starring Julie Andrews. If *Kobarweng* explores cultural difference through the vehicle of flight, *A Landscape of Mimetic Excess* is more directly related to representation *per se* since it concerns the arrival of outdoor cinemas and films, as well as the role of anthropologists and missionaries, in Irian Jaya/ Papua New Guinea; during the Pacific War in August 1944, 200 open-air cinemas descended from the sky (in Hollandia, the previous capital of the province, nowadays named Jayapura).

There is a constant interplay between the strange and the familiar in Grimonprez's video editing, enacting a sense of ethnographic displacement. Midway through a camera pan of the Ok Bon Valley, filmed by Derk Jan Dragt of the Starmountains Expedition, there is an unexpected transition to a similar landscape zoom appropriated from *The Sound of Music*. When Grimonprez visited the Pepera region in 1987, the indigenous locals associated him with the European landscapes and urban environments - as depicted in films - which a missionary had shown them. Having travelled such a long distance with the expectation of encountering the unknown, the irony of being confronted with the most banal example of Western culture, but also with the most familiar images of his childhood (his mother's favorite film), demonstrated to the artist that he, too, was subject to a process of stereotypical objectification.

Is the project overdetermined and Oedipalized as a consequence? Typically, ethnographers censor personal matters from their fieldwork reports, which are meant to be «objective» accounts of individual societies. When Bronislaw Malinowski's intimate Trobriand diaries of 1914-18 were posthumously published as *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967), the contrast between the private journal, in which he often expressed feelings of contempt for the «natives», and his pioneering book, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) sent seismic shock waves through the discipline of anthropology. Whereas most ethnographers followed Malinowski's selfcensorship in writing up their fieldwork, an exception was Michel Leiris whose «self-ethnography—not autobiography but an act of writing his existence in a present of memories, dreams, politics, daily life» can be seen as a precursor of Grimonprez's work in video.²² Aside from autobiographical notes, Grimonprez researched accounts of a number of his friends and associates to relate about *The Sound of Music*, including the Trinidad-born artist Todd Ayoung, who during his childhood, in the condition of never having been exposed to TV nor film before, confused reality with the space in the film, and Onome Ekeh, who saw the film over 300 times while growing up in Nigeria—these interviews form partly textual components of the video.

A recurring image in the video is the anthropologist's writing table, restaged by the artist to signify the discursive nature of fieldwork, since «ethnography is enmeshed in writing.»²³ A great proportion of the text utilized in the video was derived from anthropological sources. We learn of rivalry between villages to acquire an anthropologist, as members of one village loudly complain that their neighbors already have two! (Economically dependent on the anthropologists as a major source of income, the informants now expect something in return for their collaboration and trade local legends as if they were commodities, which they are). One anthropologist is told by an informant that they always save something for the next anthropologist, rendering futile any hopes of achieving a totalizing account of a society, while another anthropologist is surprised and undoubtedly amused when he encounters a native named Malinowski.

Some of the anecdotes told in the video, while disquieting, are also extremely funny. These often involve indigenous peoples mimicking the behaviours that Westerners believe they do «naturally» as a matter of course. When Westerners arrive in a village, the ghettoblasters are

hidden, and the people «go primitive», entertaining the visitors by fingerpainting on tree bark, making fire with bamboo, and chopping wood with a stone axe—all very photogenic activities for the tourist to capture on film. Then, there are stories which relate the exact opposite: how one intrepid anthropologist, for instance, encountered the «wild» mountain-Cuna Indians, only to be greeted by the chief, calling out, in perfect English: «How are you boys? Glad to see you.» The chief, it turned out, had worked on sailing boats for twenty years, and had travelled from one cosmopolitan city to the next.

At certain moments, the gallery space at the Palais des Beaux-Arts appears on the monitors in Grimonprez's installation, producing an effect of displacement on spectators, and foregrounding the institutional context of the work. The Palais des Beaux-Arts is a particularly appropriate setting for Grimonprez's installation given its historical role in financing ethnographic expeditions. Under l'Association pour la Diffusion Artistique et Culturelle (A.D.A.C), the programme, *Exploration du Monde* was started in 1950 at the initiative of Pierre Janlet and continues to this day. *Exploration du Monde* was responsible for arranging expeditions to the Belgian Congo and French, Equatorial Africa, and these trips resulted in a number of conventional documentary films perpetuating precisely the sorts of myths about «primitive» people that Grimonprez is trying to deconstruct.

Grimonprez's project is complicit with the museum, but until there is a radical restructuring of global power-relations, artists must be content to subvert from within the institutions they intend to critique or else face the possibility of political impotence and invisibility.

The fact that indigenous media producers are marginalized in Western institutions remains the most intractable problem facing artists and ethnographers who are engaged in works dealing with cultural difference. While commercial interests generally dictate who occupies airtime on broadcast television, alternative spaces, public access channels and cable television open up new possibilities for video distribution. Grimonprez's videos are part of a larger context of film- and videomakers showing in alternative spaces; together, their efforts to undermine ethnocentricity combine to form a common, collaborative project. The political dimension of his ethnographic work, while it has a consciousness-raising impact, can be located in its effective critique of ethnocentrism by undermining the Western tendency to bifurcate Self and Other and its divide-and-conquer mentality.

NOTES

- ¹ JAMES CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p.9. The title of this essay, «The 'exotic' is uncannily close» also derives from Clifford, p.13
- ² CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture*, p.11.
- ³ CLIFFORD, p.8.
- ⁴ ASEN BALIKCI, «Ethnographic film and museums: a history, a programme», *Museum* (Paris), vol.37, n°.1 (1985), p.17.
- ⁵ BALIKCI, «Ethnographic film and museums...», p.24.
- ⁶ See essays by JAMES CLIFFORD, VIRGINIA DOMINGUEZ, and TRINH T.MINH-HA in a section entitled, «Of Other Peoples: Beyond the 'Salvage Paradigm」, in Hal Foster, ed., *Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, Number 1* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), pp.121-50.
- ⁷ BALIKCI, p.24
- ⁸ EDWARD BALL, «The Margaret Mead Festival», *Afterimage* 15 (November 1987), p.5
- ⁹ FAYE GINSBURG, «Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?» in George E. Marcus, ed., *Rereading Cultural Anthropology* (Duke University Press, 1982), p.367
- ¹⁰ CONSTANCE PENLEY and ANDREW ROSS, «Interview with Trinh T.Minh-ha.»
- ¹¹ ERNEST LARSEN, «For an Impure Cinevideo», *The Independent* (May 1990), pp.24-27
- ¹² HAL FOSTER, a talk presented at the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program during the academic year, 1992-93.
- ¹³ GILLIAN BEER, «The island and the aeroplane: the case of Virginia Woolf», in Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.265-90.
- ¹⁴ BOB CONNOLLY and ROBIN ANDERSON, *First Contact* (New York: Viking, 1987) and EDWARD L.SCHIEFFELIN and ROBERT CRITTENDEN, *Like people You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, c.1991).
- ¹⁵ L.D. BRONGERSMA and G.F. VENEMA, *To the Mountains of the Stars* (New York: Doubleday, 1962).
- ¹⁶ STEVEN FELD, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).
- ¹⁷ JAMES CLIFFORD, «Traveling Cultures», in Lawrence Grossberg et al., ed's., *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.96-116 suggests that the hotel is a «chronotype of modernity» and a nostalgic image.
- ¹⁸ ERIC MICHAELS, «How To Look at Us Looking at the Yanomami Looking at Us.», in Jay Ruby, ed., *A Crack in the Mirror, Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981) pp.133-46.
- ¹⁹ MICHAEL TAUSIG, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.136-37. See also, Homi Bhabha, «Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.», *October* 28 (Spring 1984), pp. 125-33.
- ²⁰ JANE DESMOND, «Ethnography, Orientalism and the Avant-Garde Film», *Visual Anthropology* vol.4 (1991), p.154.
- ²¹ JOHN G. HANHARDT, «The Discourse of Landscape Video Art: From Fluxus to Post-Modernism.», in William D. Judson, et al., *American Landscape Video: The Electronic Grove* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1988), p.62
- ²² CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture*, p.14.
- ²³ CLIFFORD, p.25.

BIO

Simon Taylor is an art historian and critic, living in New York. His writings have appeared in *Art in America* and *Art + Text*. In 1993, he curated *Abject Art* for the Whitney Museum of American Art.

"HET EXOTISCHE IS 'UNHEIMLICH' DICHTBIJ"

Simon Taylor

Johan Grimonprez' etnografische videoprojecten duiden op een maatschappelijke situatie typerend voor de late 20ste eeuw, aangescherpt door een toenemende staat van ontheemding en mobiliteit. In *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) identificeert James Clifford dit als een «condition of offcenterness in a world of distinct meaning systems, a state of being in culture while looking at culture». Tot het begin van deze eeuw, schrijft Clifford, hebben westerlingen andere culturen uitsluitend vanuit een eurocentrisch oogpunt bekeken; alle andere rassen en klassen werden beoordeeld naar het normatieve ideaal van burgerlijk individualisme, dat als de hoogste aspiratie van de menselijke beschaving beschouwd werd. Terwijl de twee Wereldoorlogen en de holocaust elke sluwende aanspraak op morele autoriteit ongedaan maakten, ondermijnde de opstand tegen het wetenschappelijk positivisme de vooruitgangs' logica van het evolutionistisch wereldbeeld. Zoals het Copernicaanse beeld van het universum de mensheid van het centrum naar de periferie verplaatste, impliceert het cultureel relativisme- door de nieuwe etnografische kijk op de wereld tot uitdrukking gebracht - dat de westere waarheidsaanspraken geen geldige universele toepasbaarheid meer bezitten.

Theoretisch betekende dit dat de Westerse cultuur niet meer ontwikkeld was dan om het even welke andere cultuur. Nogtans bleef de meerderheid der antropologen tijdens de 20ste eeuw etnocentrische posities innemen, door een paternalistische houding t.o.v. «primitieve» en «wilden» aan te nemen en hun culturen als «ontwikkeld» en «Derde Wereld» te bestempelen, ook al verkondigden zij onderworpen volkeren te verdedigen. Terwijl antropologen zichzelf ervan overtuigden dat hun relativistische houding en zogenoemd neutrale praktijken de erkenning van niet-westerse maatschappijen zouden begunstigen en het racisme bestrijden, zelfs dan waren de wetenschappelijke disciplines zoals de antropologie, de etnologie en de etnografie in feite medeplichtig aan het westers imperialisme en kolonialisme - hetzij direct door de bemiddeling van koloniale autoriteiten, hetzij indirect door de epistemologische beperkingen van een discipline die traditiegetrouw gebaseerd is op de Zelf-Ander en Wij-Zij dichotomie. Omstreeks 1960 werd het cultureel relativisme geïntroduceerd als een ideologie die de *status quo* bekrachtigde: in plaats van verschillen te erkennen, wiste het deze paradoxaal uit in het teken van pluralisme. Etnografie ving een periode van reflectie aan, waardoor economische, politieke en ideologische relaties van de veldwerker met de «inheemse informant» niet meer als vanzelfsprekend konden worden beschouwd.

De «impasse» waar antropologen en etnografen vandaag mee geconfronteerd worden, vloeit voort uit de nationale strijd om zelfbeschikkingsrecht, die in de periode na de Tweede Wereldoorlog aanving en na 1957 in hevigheid toenam met de bevrijdingsbewegingen in Ghana, Kongo en Algerije.

Deze politieke strijd voor zelfbeschikkingsrecht blijft op mondial vlak een leidende rol spelen, ondanks de homogeneiserende effecten van de consumptiecultuur en de recuperatieve macht van neo-koloniale instellingen zoals het Internationaal Monetair Fonds en de Wereldbank. Door de ontwikkeling van de communicatie- en transportmogelijkheden en de uitbreiding van traditionele handelsroutes, is het moeilijker dan ooit tevoor om van onafhankelijke culturen met duidelijk onderscheiden grenzen te spreken. Gezien ook de algemene verbreiding van culturen-in-diaspora, om nog niet eens te spreken over de invloed van deconstructivistische filosofie, worden we gedwongen in te zien dat «Identiteit conjunctief is, en niet essentieel». De «post-koloniale crisis omvat etnografische autoriteit» vindt zijn weerspiegeling in de volgende vragen: Wie heeft het recht in naam van een culturele identiteit of authenticiteit te spreken? Wat zijn de meest essentiële elementen en de grenzen van een cultuur?»³

In een overzicht over «Etnografische films en museums» stelt Asen Balikci, professor in de antropologie aan de universiteit van Montreal en etnografisch cineast, dat vijf criteria «de ene film etnografischer maakt dan de andere». Balikci vestigt de aandacht op de grote verscheidenheid aan stijlen (waarnemings-, reflectieve, didactisch-verklarende en documentaire) die gebruikt worden binnen het genre, en schrijft dat «serieuze» etnografische films de volgende conventies bevatten: 1. een directe filmtechniek die spontane actie in zijn «natuurlijke omgeving» toont, zoals die in de reële tijd plaatsvinden; 2. de medewerking van een professioneel geschoold etnograaf; 3. een voorkeur voor «exotische» niet-westerse onderwerpen en locaties; 4. pedagogische bruikbaarheid in klaslokalen; en tot slot, 5. de ondersteunende bevestiging door professionele onderzoek. Balikci beveelt duidelijk het rechttoe-rechttaan *documentair realisme* aan als de meest geschikte stijl om culturen door visuele representatie te behoeden van hun ondergang. Uit overwegingen die snel duidelijk zullen worden, is deze normatieve houding tegenover de etnografische media theoretisch gezien problematisch en politiek dubius. Volgens Balikci, «dreigt de nivellerende tendens van het modernisme traditionele culturen en hun oorspronkelijke eigenheid te vernietigen. Moderne audio-visuele opnametechnieken kunnen aan de hand van beeldmateriaal althans sommige van de onvervangerbare kwaliteiten van bedreigde culturen te bewaren». Etnografische media worden hier uitsluitend opgevat als reddingsoperaties, om alle «authentieke» overlijfselen van die traditionele cultuur vast te leggen.

Het onverbiddelijk verhaal van cultureel verval, waar de lezers van Claude Levi-Strauss *Tristes tropiques* (1955) allicht vertrouwd mee zijn, wordt nu algemeen herkend als een racistische leugen die ondergeschikten (subalternen) elke politieke macht ontkent om mee de geschiedenis te bepalen. Voor de antropologen die dit «reddingsmiddel» goedkeuren is de triomf van het Westen dus een *fait accompli*.⁶ Door de klemtoon te leggen op het cultureel verval, het onderontwikkeld zijn en het tijdloze karakter van een exotische cultuur,

verzuimen zij conclusies te trekken uit de positieve en constructieve aspecten van het leven in andere landen.

Het is volgens Balikci de verdienste van Margaret Mead (en Gregory Bateson) de eersten te zijn geweest om systematisch visuele opnametechnieken te integreren in hun etnografisch onderzoek sinds eind jaren '30, zoals in hun films over Bali en Papoea Nieuw-Guinea: «Zij had een inspirerende invloed op de meeste cineasten van de jongere generatie. De voornaamste ontwikkelingen tijdens de jaren '60-'70 in de Verenigde Staten hielden onmiddellijk verband met haar aantrekkelijk geloof in de methodologische geldigheid van de etnografische film». Terwijl Mead ongetwijfeld de jongere antropologen beïnvloedde, stelde de daaropvolgende generatie die «methodologische geldigheid» van hun antropologisch veldwerk in vraag, door aan de hand van de geschiedenis van hun discipline te wijzen op de medeplichtigheid aan imperialistische ontwikkelingen op wereldvlak. Het begrip van de «return gaze» (wederzijdse blik) zoals die gearceerd wordt in Barbara Holecek's film, *Anthropology on Trial* (1984) - die begint met kritiek op het werk van Mead in Papoea Nieuw-Guinea - had een belangrijke invloed op Grimontrez en andere personen die bij de etnografische media betrokken zijn. Toch was, zoals recentelijk nog bleek tijdens het 11de Margaret Mead Film Festival, georganiseerd in het American Museum of Natural History te New York (1987), de hegemonie van «klassieke» documentaire film groot: «geen enkele video, noch fictie, stond geprogrammeerd, nergens was er een serieuze worsteling met het autoritaire observatiepunt, dat het irritante kenmerk van het documentaire genre werd, reeds ver terug in 1922 bij Robert Flaherty in het samenstellen van zijn etnografisch epos *Nanook of the North*. De boodschap van de antropologie zoals die naar voorgebracht werd (op het festival) was de klemtoon op het humanisme typerend voor Margaret Mead's etnografie...»⁸

Het moreel en ethisch dilemma waarmee etnografen geconfronteerd worden, is de vraag naar de realiseerbareheid van hun pogingen om culturele diversiteit te representeren zonder etnocentrische vooringenomenheid. Gezien de aangehaalde risico's, trekken vele individuen zich terug en weigeren zich in het debat te mengen. Zoals Faye Ginsburg schrijft in haar artikel, «Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?»: «Is veel van de huidige postmoderne theorie, terwijl zinvolle opmerkingen worden gemaakt over de politiek van het representeren van andere culturen, is ze zo kritisch over alle 'gazes' (blikken) naar de zogenoemd 'Andere' dat we, indien we het vooropgesteld programma van sommigen volgen zouden, we allen verlaat in een vreemd universum zouden belanden, zonder enige betrekking over de grenzen heen van de culturele verschillen, die sowieso bestaan.»⁹ Hoe maakt men het onderscheid tussen enerzijds de principiële weigering om de Andere te «objectiveren» en anderzijds, het ontkennen van culturele verschillen? Ook al is er reeds veel geschreven over de «political correctness» (politieke integriteit) van de representatie van andere culturen, communi-

catie slaagt slechts door de noodzakelijkheid van representatie. Relevanter is het dan ook om na te gaan of deze voorstellingen uiting geven van een koloniale manier van denken of gemotiveerd worden door politieke solidariteit met het anti-imperialistisch vrijheidsstreven van onderdrukte culturen.

Drie belangrijke invloeden (specifiek voor de etnografie) hebben Johan Grimontrez' videoprojecten en installaties geïnformeerd. Ten eerste is er de traditie van de antropologische cineasten gaande van Robert Flaherty over Jean Rouch tot meer recente cineasten zoals Dennis O'Rourke. De tweede invloed op Grimontrez is de ontwikkeling van «indigenous media» (autochtone media), zoals Terence Turner en de Kayapo, de Hopi cineast Victor Mayasesva, Jr. en Francis Juppurrula van de Walpiri Media Association in Centraal Australië. Tenslotte kan er een verband gelegd worden tussen Grimontrez' etnografische activiteiten en de avant-garde film- en videocineasten die momenteel aan het werk zijn in de Verenigde Staten waaronder Yvonne Rainer, Leslie Thornton, Trinh T. Min-ha, Ken Feingold, Su Friedrich en anderen, wiens werk zich richt op confrontatie met de «Ander». In de films van Trinh wordt bijvoorbeeld de «documentaire objectiviteit» meer als een zaak van onerkend voyeurisme dan als het wetenschappelijk feiten-verzamelen onthuld... Het antropologisch verlangen om het Ander te kennen wordt in vraag gesteld.¹⁰ Soortgelijke motivaties liggen aan de oorsprong van Grimontrez' pogingen om de etnografische autoriteit te ondermijnen en te ontwrichten.

Grimontrez' meest vertoonde werk is een 25 minuten durende videotape, *Kobarweng, or «Where is Your Helicopter?»* (1992) die werd gemaakt na een in 1987 ondernomen reis naar de Ok Bon Valley in Irian Jaya, het voormalige Nederlands Nieuw Guinea. Door de montage van «found footage» (gevonden filmateriaal), is de film opzettelijk reflexief in zijn opbouw: eerder dan de in-heemse bevolking exotisch voor te stellen, behandelt de videoband een etnografie van etnografie via een dialectisch-dialogisch proces. Volgestouwd met ambiguïteiten, elke zin voor besluit ontwikkeld dat op een aanwijzing van superioriteit zou kunnen duiden, de getuigenissen combinerend van de autochtone bevolking met een persoonlijk verhaal, brengt *Kobarweng* de dislocatie en desoriëntatie ingegeven door een impasse van «being in culture while looking at culture». Strategieën toepassend die historisch geassocieerd worden met Eisenstein's cinema (snelle montage om het medium te contextualiseren), Brechtiaans theater (vervreemdingseffecten) en surrealisme (bijv. Luis Bunuel's parodie op het documentaire genre in *Land Without Bread*) (1932), verwerpt Grimontrez de autoritaire onderbouw van het mimetisch realisme overheersend in traditionele documentaires, om zo de westere vorm van «Othering» (Anders-maken) te ondergraven. Wat hier uit voortvloeit is een *materalistische poetica*, een mengsel van etnografisch surrealisme en «onzuivere cine-video».¹¹

Volgens Hal Foster kerent binnen het modernisme twee vormen van «primal scene» (oer-scènes) steeds terug:

de confrontatie met het primitieve en de machine.¹² Kobarweng gaat over het eerste contact tussen blanken en de Papoeas en tevens hoe deze ontmoeting vorm wordt gegeven in de voorstellingswereld. De video-band behandelt ook de aankomst van de landingsbananen, vliegtuigen en **helicopters** in een afgelegen uithoek van de Westerse wereld. Begrepen in het begrip van een eiland hebben deze vliegende machines een bijzondere betekenis, omdat zij de fysische grenzen van het eiland overschrijden en het concept van een natie ondermijnen.¹³ Het eiland Nieuw Guinea's, gesitueerd in de Stille Zuidzee, gescheiden van Australië door het grote koraalrif is één der laatste gebieden op de wereld die door de blanken gekoloniseerd werd. Het eiland werd voor het eerst door westerlingen waargenomen door de Portugezen in de 16de eeuw, en pas later in de 19de eeuw door de Nederlanders, de Britten en de Duitsers gekoloniseerd; voordien dreef men reeds handel met Maleisische en Chinese zeevaarders die het eiland uiteindelijk «Papuwah» (de gekroesde haren) noemden. Onder administratief beheer van Australië sinds 1949, werd het oostelijk gedeelte het Territorium van Oost-Nieuw-Guinea en de voormalige Nederlandse gebieden werden West Irian, onder Indonesisch bewind.

Tijdens de jaren twintig koloniseerden de Australiërs, waaronder goudzoekers en missionarissen, de kuststreken, maar niets was geweten over het binnenland met zijn tropisch woud en bergketens tot in de jaren '30. Onder de vroege verkenners van het binnenland waren de Australische gebroeders Leahy. Hun goudprospectie-expedities zijn gedocumenteerd in de film *First Contact* (1980), geregisseerd door Bob Connolly en Robin Anderson, dat ook in 1987 in boekvorm verscheen. De eersten bergbewoners die de gebroeders Leahy ontmoetten, dachten dat zij goddelijke wezens of de geesten van hun voorouders waren.¹⁴ Tijdens de oorlog in de Pacific, toen Japanners en de Amerikanen de eilanden binnenvielen, kwamen ook de inheemse bevolking in de meest verwijderde gebieden, voor het eerst in aanraking met de buitenwereld, als laagvliegende vliegtuigen overland vlogen of er in het woud neerstortten. Slechts in 1958-9 werden de dorpelingen van Nimadol (nu Pepera) geconfronteerd met westerlingen toen **helicopters** er voorraad dropten voor een wetenschappelijk team, waaronder antropologen, biologen en geologen, deel uitmakend van de Nederlandse Starmountains Expeditie waarvan de reiziger opgetekend staat in het boek, *To the Mountains of the Stars* (1962).¹⁵ Vandaag worden sommige gebieden overspoeld door toeristen, inclusief camera's zeulende westerlingen, wier flagrante uitbuiting van de inheemse bevolking gedocumenteerd staat in de film, *Cannibal Tours* (1987) van O'Rourke («Ik ben een vertegenwoordiger van de primitieve kunst», zegt iemand). In Irian Jaya wordt het toerisme beperkt door de Indoneziërs die hun militaire operaties tegen de autochtone bevolking willen verbergen. In veel streken werd hun land ontheemd terwijl van Javaanse transmigratieprojecten.

Daar culturele verschillen gemedieerd worden via een wederzijds proces, onderzoekt Kobarweng de *dialogische wisselwerking* in de confrontatie tussen cultu-

relen onderling. In de Sibil taal betekent *Kobarweng* letterlijk «de taal van het vliegtuig» of «het geluid van het vliegtuig». Toen Grimonprez in 1987 het Pepera gebied bezocht en er mondelijke getuigenissen verzamelde, vroeg Kaiang Tapior, één van de «autochtonen», «Waar is uw **helicopter**?», verwijzend naar de komst van de antropologen zo'n dertig jaar ervoor; vandaar ook de volledige titel van de video, *Kobarweng or «Where is your Helicopter?»* (De vraag was ook hoogst ironisch, aangezien Grimonprez Nimadol uitgeput had bereikt na een drie dagen lange trektocht over moeilijk terrein.) Wanneer de bergbevolking uit de hooglanden van Nieuw-Guinea voor het eerst het geluid van vliegtuigmotoren en propellers hoorden, waren zij verward, zoals we uit de video vernemen, en afwisselend identificeerden ze deze geluiden met de kreet van een kasuaris, een ruru-kikker, een grommend buideldier, stromend water of een aardbeving. Sommigen, die dachten dat de geluiden uit de bodem van het woud kwamen, begonnen te graven om meer duidelijkheid over de oorsprong ervan te vinden. Anderen legden het verband tussen hun mythologisch wereldbeeld en de ongewone geluiden door hen toe te schrijven aan uit de dood herrezen voorouders.

De geluidsband van *Kobarweng* is op zo'n manier gearrangeerd dat het grootste deel van de video verloopt in een geladen stilte, abrupt hier en daar met intervallen geaccentueerd door het geluid van een **helicopter**, geronk van vliegtuigmotoren, stromend water uit een kraan, een film-projector en andere niet-contextuele geluiden die asynchroon lijken, maar opnieuw-gecontextualiseerd optreden in een verplaatsende (metaforische) verhouding tot de beelden op het scherm: de film-projector tegenover landschap panorama's, het krijsen van de kakatoe verbonden aan het beeld van een vliegtuig of zelfs het abrupte ontbreken van geluid precies daar waar normaal een klassieke dramatische sfeer zou hebben toegevoegd. Eén van de thema's van de video is de onderling verschillende nadruk die westerlingen en Papoeas aan de zintuigen verlenen. In het oculaircentrische Westen, zoals Michel Foucault in verschillende van zijn boeken heeft aangevoond (vooral in, *Discipline et Punition*, 1975) neemt het gezichtsvermogen een bevoorrechte plaats in binnen de hiërarchie van de zintuigen, waardoor andere zintuigen als gevolg daarvan gaan atrofieren. Daarentegen staan de Papoeas die in het tropisch regenwoud leven en afgestemd zijn op een brede waaier van geluiden; de Kaluli-mensen zijn bijvoorbeeld in staat om duidelijk onderscheid te maken tussen meer dan honderd vogelsoorten aan de hand van hun auditieve, eerder dan aan hun visuele kenmerken. Westerlingen daarentegen hebben hun ornithologische taxonomieën georganiseerd volgens morfologische beschrijvingen die op visuele waarneming gebaseerd zijn.¹⁶

Waar de film, *First Contact* de conventionele technieken van de documentaire toepast en vermijdt aandacht te vestigen op zijn eigen voorstellingsmiddelen (kadreringstechnieken), gaat Kobarweng in de tegenovergestelde richting: sommige originele locatieopnames, inclusief een gedeelte van het «junglegebladerte», werden te New York opgenomen. De video begint met een bewegende sequentie, waar de

camera door een gang beweegt tot in een kamer van het New Yorks' Greystone hotel, waar de kunstenaar tijdelijk verblijft - het beeld van de kamer stelt «transience» (het tijdelijke, de vluchtigheid) voor.¹⁷ Wanneer mondelijke getuigenissen en herinneringen aan de eerste confrontaties met de blanken, en details van Nieuw-Guinea's koloniale verleden dwars over de monitor lopen, worden de kijkers voor de keuze gesteld zich op het tekstuile of op het visuele register te concentreren. Terwijl «TV etnografie» (bijv. Granada TV serie *Disappearing World* in Groot-Brittannië) sterk afhankelijk blijft van de narratieve commentaarstem, gebruikt Grimonprez tekst om afstand te nemen van de traditie in de etnografische film, als «een vorm en geëvolueerde adaptatie van de 'lecture format' (lezing)». Zoals Eric Michaels schreef, is de etnografische film voortgekomen uit dia voorstellen en geïllustreerde reisverhalen waarbij de alomtegenwoordige verteller «zich gedraagt als een priester die de potentiële rijkdom, complexiteit en provocerende ambiguïteit van de beelden [en teksten] eindigt met de uitspraak dat, «Er zich een separatisches guerilla-oorlog afspeelt, verborgen voor de buitenwereld.»

Kobarweng wordt steeds vertoond als een autonome video; andere door de kunstenaar gecreëerde projecten bevatten meerdere videobanden in installaties met ver-

schillende monitoren die direct op de grond worden geplaatst, waardoor een landschaps panorama wordt gesuggereerd. Volgens John Hanhardt, is Nam June Paik's *TV Garden* (1974-78) de voorloper van dit soort elektronisch landschaps-arrangement.²¹ De beslissing betreffende het formaat is afhankelijk van de plaats en contextuele omstandigheden. In de vorm van een installatie is de interpretatie van de video voor de toeschouwer perceptueel veeleisender en bij het bekijken van één enkele monitor vanuit een vast waarnemingspunt, omdat het project architectuurale is opgesteld en van de toeschouwer verwacht wordt dat die zich door de ruimte beweegt. Het gevoel van desoriëntatie vergrootend, kunnen verschillende gemonteerde videobanden met divers materiaal, op ± 10 tot 12 monitoren tegelijkertijd, asynchroon afgespeeld worden om de lineaire ontwikkeling nog meer te ontwrichten. Als parodie op het exposeren van artefacten in musea, werd de theeketel van de kunstenaar in sommige installaties ingeprengt; in plaats van de in andere culturen verzaamde exotische trofeeën te exposeren, stelt de theeketel juist de bemiddelende rol van de etnograaf voor.

«It will be all right if you come again, only next time don't bring any gear, except a tea kettle ...» – A Landscape of Mimetic Excess; Nimadol June 1959 - Nimadol July 1987 (1994) is de titel van Grimonprez' site specific installatie voor het Paleis voor Schone Kunsten Brussel. Als «multi-channel» installatie, werkt, *A Landscape of Mimetic Excess* verder de thema's van culturele verschillen en (post) kolonialisme uit door een sequentie met landschapsbeelden te gebruiken uit de Kobarweng-tape, met tussen gemonteerde nieuwe sequenties, inclusief toegevoegde scenes uit de Hollywood musical, *The Sound of Music*, met de vertolking van Julie Andrews in het hoofdpersonage. Als Kobarweng culturele verschillen via het medium van het vliegtuig onderzoekt, dan heeft *A Landscape of Mimetic Excess* rechtstrekker met representatie an sich te maken, omdat het handelt over de aankomst van de openluchtcinema's en films en tegelijkertijd over de medierende rol van antropologen en missionarissen in Irian Jaya / Papua Nieuw-Guinea; tijds de Oorlog in de Pacific werden in augustus 1944 200 openluchtbioscopen uit de lucht gedropt (in Hollandia, de voormalige hoofdstad van de provincie, vandaag Jayapura genoemd).

Er is een constante interactie tussen het vreemde en het vertrouwde in Grimonprez' videomontage, die een gevoel oproept van etnografische dislocatie. Halfweg tijdens de pano-beweging over de Ok Bon Valle, gefilmd door Derk Jan Dragt van de Starmountains Expeditie, is er een onverwachte overgang naar een gelijkaardige landschaps'zoom, toegeëigend uit *The Sound of Music*; Toen Grimonprez in 1987 het Pepergebied bezocht, associeerde de plaatselijke bevolking hem met het Europese landschap en stedelijke omgevingen - zoals ze afgebeeld zijn in films - die hen door een missionaris waren vertoond. Na zo'n lange afstand te hebben gereisd met de verwachting er het onbekende te ontmoeten, was de ironie zich geconfronteerd te zien met het meest banale voorbeeld van Westerse cultuur, maar ook met de meest vertrouwde beelden uit zijn kindertijd (zijn moeders favoriete film), bewezen de kunstenaar dat, ook hij, onderwerp was van een proces van stereotypische objectivering.

Is het project overgedetermineerd en ge-Oedipaliseerd tengevolge daarvan? Typisch is, dat etnografen alle persoonlijke aspecten censureren uit de rapporten over hun veldwerk, die als «objectieve» verslagen over onderscheiden maatschappijen bedoeld zijn. Toen Bronislaw Malinowski's intieme Trobriand-dagboeken van 1914-18 postuum gepubliceerd werden onder de titel *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967), stuurde het contrast tussen het persoonlijke dagboek, waarin hij vaak gevoelens van minachting voor de «inboorlingen» uite, en zijn pionierswerk, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) schokgolven door de antropologische discipline. Hoewel de meeste etnografen Malinowski's zelfcensuur navolgden in het noteren van hun veldwerk, was Michel Leiris een uitzondering. Zijn «zelf-etnografie» - was geen autobiografie maar de daad van het beschrijven van zijn bestaan in een 'heden' van herinneringen, dromen, politiek, dagelijks leven - kan gezien worden als een voorloper van Grimonprez' videowerk.²²

Naast autobiografische noten, verzamelde Grimonprez een aantal verhalen van zijn vrienden en kennissen die in relatie stonden tot *The Sound of Music*, waaronder de in Trinidad geboren kunstenaar Todd Ayoung, die gedurende zijn kindertijd nooit eerder met TV of film was geconfronteerd, en er de realiteit met de ruimte in de film verwarde, of Onome Ekeh, opgegroeid in Nigeria, die de film ongeveer 300 maal zag - deze interviews vormen deels de tekstuele componenten van de video.

Een steeds terugkerend beeld in de video is de schrijftafel van de antropoloog, opnieuw verbeeld door de kunstenaar om op het discursive karakter van het veldwerk te duiden en, aangezien «etnografie ingebied is in het schrijven»,²³

Een groot gedeelte van de tekst in de video is uit antropologische bronnen afkomstig. We leren over dorpsrivaliteiten, over het verkrijgen van een antropoloog, als de leden van één dorp luid hun beklag doen over hun buren die er reeds *twee* hebben.

(Economisch afhankelijk van de antropoloog als een belangrijke bron van inkomsten, verwachten de informantens iets in ruil voor hun medewerking en

verhandelen hun lokale legenden alsof het goederen waren, wat ook zo is.) Een informant vertelde een antropoloog dat zij nooit alles prijs geven en altijd iets bewaren voor de volgende antropoloog, alle hoop de grond inboren om ooit een totaalbeeld van een maatschappij te kunnen geven, terwijl een andere antropoloog verwonderd en ongetwijfeld geamuseerd is wanneer hij een inboorling ontmoet die Malinowski heet.

Sommige van de aangehaalde anekdotes in de video zijn, alhoewel verontrustend, ook bijzonder grappig. Deze betreffen vaak autochtonen die gedragstypes 'mimeren' waarvan westerlingen denken dat zij dat «natuurlijk» en vanzelfsprekend doen. Wanneer westerlingen in een dorp aankomen verstopt men de ghettoblasters, en worden de mensen «primitief» en onderhouden de bezoekers door met hun vingers op boomschors te schilderen, door met bamboe vuur te maken en hout te hakken met een stenenbijl - allemaal zeer fotogenieke activiteiten om op film vastgelegd te worden door de toerist.

En dan zijn er nog de verhalen die exact het tegengestelde vertellen: hoe een dappere antropoloog bijvoorbeeld «de wilde» Cuna indianen uit de bergen ontmoette, en er door het opperhoofd werd begroet, hem in perfect engels toeroepend: «Jongens, hoe gaat het met jullie? Blij jullie te zien.» Zoals nadien bleek had het opperhoofd gedurende 20 jaar op zeilschepen gewerkt en was van de ene kosmopolitische stad naar de andere gereisd.

Op bepaalde ogenblikken verschijnt het kader van de tentoonstellingsruimte in het Paleis voor Schone Kunsten op de monitoren in Grimonprez' installatie; dit veroorzaakt een effect van 'displacement' op de toeschouwer en brengt de institutionele context van het werk naar voor. Het Paleis voor Schone Kunsten is een bijzonder geschikt kader voor Grimonprez' installatie, gezien zijn historische rol in de financiering van etnografische expedities. Onder *l'Association pour la Diffusion Artistique et Culturelle (A.D.A.C.)* werd het programma, *Exploration du Monde* op initiatief van Pierre Janet in 1950 opgestart en het gaat toe op heden ononderbroken door. *Exploration du Monde* was verantwoordelijk voor de organisatie van expedities naar Belgisch Congo en Frans Equatoriaal Afrika. Deze reizen resulteerden in een aantal conventionele documentaire films die precies het soort van mythes over «primitieve» mensen bestendigen welke Grimonprez probeert te deconstrueren.

Grimonprez' project is medeplichtig met het museum, doch zolang er geen radicale hervorming van de globale machtsverhoudingen plaatsvindt, moeten kunstenaars zich tevreden stellen met een ontwrichting vanbinnenin de instellingen die zij wensen te bekritiseren, zonet worden zij gedwongen tot een politieke onmacht en onzichtbaarheid.

Het feit dat autochtone ('indigenous') mediaproducten in westerse instellingen gemarginaliseerd blijven, vormt het hardnekkigste probleem waarmee etnografen en kunstenaars, die zich inlaten met werken die handelen over culturele verschillen, geconfronteerd worden. Terwijl commerciële belangen

grotendeels bepalen wie zendtijd op televisie krijgt, openen alternatieve ruimtes, lokale zenders en kabeltelevisie nieuwe mogelijkheden voor videodistributie. Grimonprez' video's maken deel uit van een ruimere context van film- en videocineasten die in alternatieve ruimten worden vertoond; samen vormen hun inspanningen om etnocentrische voor-

genomenheid te ondermijnen, een gemeenschapselijk project. De politieke dimensie van dit etnografisch werk is, naast zijn sociaal-kritische dimensie, te situeren in zijn effectieve ontkrachting van de westerse tendens om de Zelf en Ander op te splitsen in een verdeel-en-heers mentaliteit.

VOETNOTEN

- 1 JAMES CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p.9. De titel van dit essay, «The 'exotic' is uncannily close» is ook afkomstig uit Clifford, p.13
- 2 CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture*, p.11.
- 3 CLIFFORD, p.8.
- 4 ASEB BALIKCI, «Ethnographic film and museums: a history, a programme» *Museum* (Paris), vol.37, no.1 (1985), p.17.
- 5 BALIKCI, «Ethnographic film and museums...», p.24.
- 6 Zie de essays van JAMES CLIFFORD, VIRGINIA DOMINGUEZ, en TRINH T.MINH-HA in de sectie getiteld, «Of Other Peoples: Beyond the 'Salvage Paradigm」, in Hal Foster, ed., *Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, Number 1* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), pp.121-50.
- 7 BALIKCI, p.24.
- 8 EDWARD BALL, «The Margaret Mead Festival», *Afterimage* 15 (November 1987), p.5
- 9 FAYE GINSBURG, «Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?» in George E. Marcus, ed., *Rereading Cultural Anthropology* (Duke University Press, 1982), p.367
- 10 CONSTANCE PENLEY en ANDREW ROSS, «Interview with Trinh T.Minh-ha.»
- 11 ERNEST LARSEN, «For an Impure Cinevideo», *The Independent* (Mei 1990), p.24-27
- 12 HAL FOSTER, in een lezing gehouden in het Whitney Museum Independent Study Program tijdens het academiejaar, 1992-93, New York.
- 13 GILLIAN BEER, «The island and the aeroplane: the case of Virginia Woolf», in Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.265-90.
- 14 BOB CONNOLLY en ROBIN ANDERSON, *First Contact* (New York: Viking, 1987) en EDWARD L.SCHIEFFELIN en ROBERT CRITTENDEN, *Like people You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, c.1991).
- 15 L.D. BRONGERSMA en G.F. VENEMA, *To the Mountains of the Stars* (New York: Doubleday, 1962).
- 16 STEVEN FELD, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).
- 17 JAMES CLIFFORD, «Traveling Cultures» in Lawrence Grossberg et al., ed's., *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp.96-116 suggerert dat het hotel een «chronotype of modernity» en een nostalgisch beeld is.
- 18 ERIC MICHAELS, «How To Look at Us Looking at the Yanomami Looking at Us», in Jay Ruby, ed., *A Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981) pp.133-46. KEITH TRIBE, «Real Lives and Disappearing Worlds: A Report on a Festival of Ethnographic Film», *Screen* 27 (May/August 1986), pp.149-54, stipt ook aan dat niet het gebruik van een commentaarstem: «some images are relegated to the status of visual background to a lecturing voice.» (p.153).
- 19 MICHAEL TAUSIG, *Mimesis and Alterity: a Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.136-37.
- 20 JANE DESMOND, «Ethnography, Orientalism and the Avant-Garde Film», *Visual Anthropology* vol.4 (1991), p.154.
- 21 JOHN G. HANHARDT, «The Discourse of Landscape Video Art: From Fluxus to Post-Modernism», in William D. Judson, et al., *American Landscape Video: The Electronic Grove* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1988), p.62
- 22 CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture*, p.14.
- 23 CLIFFORD, p.25.

BIO

Simon Taylor is een kunsthistoricus en criticus die leeft en werkt in New York. Zijn teksten verschenen in *Art in America* en *Art + Text*. In 1993 was hij commissaris van de tentoonstelling *Abject Art* voor het Whitney Museum of American Art te New York.

"L'EXOTIQUE' EST D'UNE PROXIMITÉ ETRANGE"

Simon Taylor

Les projets vidéos ethnographiques de Johan Grimonprez traitent un phénomène envahissant la société de la fin du 20ème siècle, que le déracinement et la mobilité croissants précipitent. Dans *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), James Clifford l'identifie comme une «situation de décentrage dans un monde de systèmes de signification distincts, un état consistant à être dans la culture tout en observant la culture.»¹ Jusqu'au début de notre siècle, écrit Clifford, les Occidentaux considéraient les autres cultures d'un point de vue exclusivement eurocentrique; toutes les autres races et classes étaient jugées en fonction de l'idéal normatif de l'individualisme bourgeois, considéré comme le pinacle de la civilisation humaine. Mais en même temps que les deux Guerres Mondiales et l'Holocauste ruinaient toute prétention subsistante à un pouvoir moral, la révolte contre le positivisme scientifique minait la logique progressiviste de la vision évolutionniste du monde. Comme la carte copernicienne, héliocentrique, de l'univers avait déplacé l'humanité du centre à la périphérie, le *relativisme culturel* exprimait par une nouvelle conception ethnographique le fait que les préventions occidentales à la vérité n'ont aucune application universelle légitime. Théoriquement, ceci signifiait que la culture occidentale n'était pas plus avancée que n'importe quelle autre. Cependant, la majorité des anthropologues du 20ème siècle continuèrent à manifester des travers ethnocentriques en adoptant des attitudes paternalistes à l'égard des "primitifs" et des "sauvages", étiquettant leurs cultures comme "sous-développées", "tiers-monde", même lorsqu'ils prétendaient se faire les défenseurs de peuples assujettis. Alors que les anthropologues affirmaient que leur attitude relativiste et leurs pratiques soi-disant neutres allaient promouvoir l'appréciation des cultures non-occidentales et combattre le racisme, les disciplines scientifiques de l'anthropologie, de l'ethnologie et de l'ethnographie demeurèrent en fait complices de l'impérialisme et du colonialisme occidentaux – que ce soit directement, par la médiation des autorités coloniales ou indirectement, par les contraintes épistémologiques d'une discipline traditionnellement fondée sur les dichotomies Même-Autre et Nous-Eux. Dans les années soixante, le relativisme culturel fut dénoncé comme une idéologie raffermissant le *status quo*: au lieu de reconnaître les différences, il les effaçait paradoxalement sous la bannière du pluralisme. L'ethnographie rentrait dans une phase réflexive et la relation économique, politique et idéologique du travailleur de terrain à ces "informateurs indigènes" ne pouvait plus être considérée comme acquise.

L'"impasse" à laquelle les anthropologues et les ethnographes doivent aujourd'hui faire face résulte des combats nationaux pour l'auto-détermination qui ont commencé dans la période de l'après-Seconde Guerre Mondiale et se sont intensifiés après 1957 avec les mouvements de libération du Ghana, du Congo et de l'Algérie. Ces combats politiques pour l'auto-détermi-

nation continuent à jouer une rôle prédominant dans l'environnement global, ceci en dépit des effets homogénéisateurs de la culture de consommation et du pouvoir récupérateur des institutions néo-colonialistes comme le Fonds Monétaire International et la Banque Mondiale. En raison des avancées des moyens de communication et de transport ainsi que de l'expansion des routes commerciales traditionnelles, il est moins possible que jamais de parler de cultures indépendantes aux frontières clairement démarquées. Etant donné la prolifération des cultures diasporiques, sans mentionner l'influence de la philosophie déconstructionniste, nous sommes bien forcés de reconnaître que «l'identité est conjoncturelle, non essentielle». La «crise post-coloniale de l'autorité ethnographique» se reflète dès lors dans les questions suivantes: «Qui a l'autorité de parler de l'identité ou de l'authenticité d'un groupe culturel? Quelles sont les éléments essentiels et les frontières d'une culture?»³

Dans une étude consacrée aux musées et aux films ethnographiques, Asen Balikci, professeur d'anthropologie à l'Université de Montréal et réalisateur de films ethnographiques, soutient que cinq critères «rendent certains films plus ethnographiques que d'autres». Notant la grande diversité des styles utilisés par le genre (observateur, réflexif, didactique-exposé, documentaire), Balikci écrit que les films ethnographiques "sérieux" incorporent les conventions suivantes: 1) une technique de filmage directe, montrant des actions spontanées en décors naturels et comme elles surviennent en temps réel; 2) la participation d'un ethnographe de formation professionnelle; 3) une préférence pour les sujets et les endroits "exotiques" non-occidentaux; 4) une utilité pédagogique dans la classe; et enfin 5) le support corroborant d'une recherche professionnelle. Balikci recommande un *réalisme documentaire* sans détour comme le style le plus approprié au sauvetage de cultures au moyen de représentations visuelles. Pour des raisons qui deviendront bientôt évidentes, cette attitude prescriptive à l'égard des médias ethnographiques est problématique au plan théorique et douteuse au plan politique.

D'après Balikci, «la vague de nivellation de la modernité menace d'oblitération nombre de cultures traditionnelles et leurs modes de vie originaux. Les techniques modernes d'enregistrement audio-visuel peuvent aider à préserver en images au moins certaines des qualités irremplaçables de ces cultures en train de disparaître.»⁵ Les médias ethnographiques ne sont ici exclusivement conçus que sous la catégorie d'une opération de sauvegarde, pour enregistrer toutes les traces "authentiques" restantes de la culture traditionnelle. L'inexorable récit de la décadence culturelle, familier aux lecteurs des *Tristes Tropiques* de Claude Levi-Strauss (1955), est désormais reconnu comme une manière de fiction raciste qui dénie aux subalternes toute possibilité d'intervention politique dans le déroulement de l'histoire. Le triomphe de l'Occident est donc un fait accompli pour les anthropologues qui souscrivent au «paradigme du sauvetage». Soulignant la décadence culturelle, l'arrératation et l'intemporalité d'une culture éloignée, ils négligent de conclure sur les aspects constructifs et positifs de la vie dans d'autres pays.

Balikci crédite Margaret Mead (et Gregory Bateson) d'avoir été la première, dans des films sur Bali et la Papouasie Nouvelle-Guinée dès la fin des années 30, à intégrer systématiquement des dispositifs d'enregistrement visuel à ses recherches ethnographiques: «Elle a influencé et inspiré la plupart des cinéastes de la génération suivante. Les développements importants qui se sont produits aux Etats-Unis au cours des années soixante étaient directement liés à sa croyance contagieuse dans la validité méthodologique du film ethnographique.»⁷ Alors que Mead a sans nul doute influencé des anthropologues plus jeunes, ceux de la génération suivante ont également remis en question la "validité méthodologique" de leur travail ethnographique de terrain en confrontant l'histoire de leur discipline à sa complicité dans la construction des empires. Le concept de "regard en retour" tel qu'il est développé dans le film de Barbara Holecek, *Anthropology on Trial* (1984), qui s'ouvre sur une critique du travail de Mead en Papouasie Nouvelle-Guinée – a été d'une influence marquante pour Grimonprez et d'autres travaillant comme lui dans les médias ethnographiques. Tout récemment cependant, au 11ème Festival du Film Margaret Mead qui s'est tenu au Musée Américain d'Histoire Naturelle à New York en 1987, l'hégémonie du film documentaire "classique" était encore totale: «pas de vidéo, pas de fiction, pas de remise en question sérieuse du point de vue autoritaire qui a marqué le documentaire de son empreinte dès 1922, lorsque Robert Flaherty monta son épique ethnographique *Nanook of the North*. Le message de l'anthropologie qui s'est dégagé [du festival] était celui de l'humanisme et d'un certain accent sur la vie quotidienne dont est baignée toute l'ethnographie de Margaret Mead.»⁸

Le dilemme moral et éthique auxquels sont confrontés les ethnographes est de savoir si leurs efforts pour représenter la diversité culturelle peuvent être accomplis sans travers ethnocentriques. Etant donné les risques encourus, nombreux sont ceux qui préfèrent se retirer et refusent de s'impliquer dans ce débat. Comme l'écrit Faye Ginsburg dans son article «Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?»: «Une grande partie de la théorie post-moderne actuelle, bien qu'elle soulève des points importants sur la politique de la représentation, est si critique de tous les "regards" portés sur le soi-disant "Autre" qu'à suivre le programme fixé par certains, nous nous retrouverions tous paralysés dans un univers aliéné, sans engagements au-delà des frontières de la différence qui, pour le meilleur ou pour le pire, existent.»⁹ Comment faire la part entre le refus politique "d'objectiver" l'Autre et le désaveu de la différence culturelle? Alors qu'on a beaucoup écrit sur la "correction politique" du fait de représenter d'autres cultures, une communication réussie implique toujours la nécessité de la représentation. Il est donc plus pertinent de se demander si la représentation s'accompagne d'une disposition d'esprit colonial ou si elle est motivée par une solidarité politique avec les combats anti-impérialistes de peuples assujettis.

Trois influences principales (propres à l'ethnographie) viennent informer les installations et les vidéos de Johan Grimonprez. Premièrement, il y a la tradition des cinéastes anthropologues, de Robert Flaherty à Jean Rouch, à des réalisateurs plus récents comme Dennis O'Rourke. Vient ensuite le développement des médias indigènes, Terence Turner et les Kayapo par exemple, ou Victor Mayavesva, Jr., le cinéasta Hopi, et Francis Juppurrurla, de la Walpiri Media Association d'Australie Centrale. Enfin, la pratique de Grimonprez peut être mise en relation avec les cinéastes et vidéastes avant-gardistes travaillant à l'heure actuelle aux Etats-Unis comme Yvonne Rainer, Leslie Thornton et Trinh T. Min-ha, Ken Feingold, Su Friedrich entre autres, et dont les œuvres sont centrées sur la rencontre avec "l'Autre". Dans les films de Trinh par exemple, «l'objectivité» documentaire» s'avère être «plus une question de voyeurisme inavoué que de découverte de faits scientifiques... Ce que nous voyons et entendons est un questionnement du désir anthropologique de connaître l'Autre.»¹⁰ Des motivations similaires se retrouvent derrière les efforts de Grimonprez pour miner et subvertir l'autorité ethnographique. Son œuvre la plus largement diffusée, une vidéo ethnographique de 25 minutes, *Kobarweng or Where is your Helicopter?* (1992), a été réalisée après un voyage dans la Ok Bon Valley, en Irian Jaya, l'ancienne Nouvelle-Guinée Néerlandaise, en 1987. Montage de pellicules retrouvées, la vidéo est construite de manière intentionnellement réflexive; plutôt que de rendre les indigènes exotiques, elle envisage l'ethnographie de l'ethnographie au travers d'un processus dialectique-dialogique. Truffée d'ambiguités, dépourvue de tout sens de clôture qui pourrait suggérer un indice de maîtrise, combinant le témoignage des populations indigènes et l'histoire personnelle, *Kobarweng* transmet le sens de la délocalisation et de la désorientation de l'artiste alors qu'il se retrouve dans la situation «d'être dans la culture en tout observant la culture». Incorporant des stratégies historiquement associées au cinéma d'Eisenstein (montage rapide pour contextualiser le médium), au théâtre brechtien (effets d'aliénation) et au surréalisme (p.e. la parodie de Buñuel du genre documentaire dans *Terre sans Pain*, 1932), Grimonprez rejette les étayages autoritaires du réalisme mimétique utilisés dans la pratique documentaire traditionnelle et entreprend de subvertir les formes occidentales "du rendre-Autre". Ce qui émerge est une poétique matérialiste, un mélange de surréalisme ethnographique et de «ciné-vidéo impur».«¹¹

D'après Hal Foster, deux genres de 'scènes primales' surviennent de façon récurrente dans le modernisme: la rencontre du primitif et celle de la machine.¹² *Kobarweng* traite du *premier contact* entre Blancs et Papous, et de la représentation de cette rencontre. La vidéo envisage également l'arrivée des pistes d'atterrissement, des avions et des hélicoptères dans une partie reculée du monde occidental. Pour une île, ces machines volantes ont une signification spéciale puisqu'elles transgressent ses limites physiques et minent le concept de nation.¹³ L'une des dernières régions de la terre à avoir été colonisée par les Blancs, l'île de

Nouvelle-Guinée ou la Papouasie, est située dans l'Océan Pacifique, séparée de l'Australie par la Barrière de Corail. Repérée par les Portugais au 16^e siècle, l'île a été colonisée par les Hollandais, les Britanniques et les Allemands au 19^e siècle. Bien plus tôt des relations commerciales avaient été établies par des marins malais et chinois qui finirent par appeler l'île "Papuwah" (qui a les cheveux crépus). Sous administration australienne depuis 1949, la moitié orientale est devenue le Territoire de Papouasie Nouvelle-Guinée tandis que les anciens territoires néerlandais sont devenus l'Irian Occidental sous domination indonésienne.

Dans les années vingt, des Australiens, prospecteurs d'or et missionnaires, ont colonisé les zones côtières mais, jusque dans les années trente, l'intérieur de l'île avec sa jungle tropicale et ses chaînes de montagnes est demeuré inconnu. Parmi les premiers explorateurs de l'intérieur des terres figuraient les frères australiens Leahy, dont les expéditions de prospection d'or sont documentées dans le film *First Contact* (1980), réalisé par Bob Connolly et Robin Anderson et publié par la suite sous forme de livre (1987). Les premiers habitants des hautes terres qui rencontrent les frères Leahy les prirent pour des êtres surnaturels ou des fantômes de leurs ancêtres.¹⁴ Pendant la Guerre du Pacifique, lorsque les Japonais et les Américains envahirent l'île, même les Papous vivant dans les zones les plus reculées connurent leur première exposition au monde extérieur lorsque des avions volant à basse altitude passèrent au-dessus de leurs têtes ou vinrent s'écraser dans la forêt. Mais ce n'est qu'en 1959 que les villageois de Nimol (aujourd'hui Pepera) rencontrèrent des Occidentaux pour la première fois, lorsque des hélicoptères vinrent larguer l'approvisionnement d'une équipe scientifique d'anthropologues, de biologistes et de géologues associés à l'expédition néerlandaise Starmountains dont les périples sont relatés dans un livre intitulé *To the Mountains of the Stars* (1962).¹⁵

De nos jours, certaines régions sont de plus en plus envahies de touristes porteurs d'appareils photos, notamment Occidentaux, et leur exploitation grossière des indigènes est documentée dans le film *Cannibal Tours* (1987) de Dennis O'Rourke («Je suis un interprète de l'art primitif» dit-on). En Irian Jaya, le tourisme est limité car les Indonésiens veulent cacher leur politique militaire contre les indigènes qui, dans de nombreuses régions, sont dépossédés de leurs terres par des projets de transmigration de Java.

Puisque la différence culturelle est un processus négocié à deux voies, *Kobarweng* explore l'élément de *réciprocité diagonale* dans la rencontre entre systèmes culturels. Dans la langue Sibil, *Kobarweng* signifie littéralement «le bruit de l'avion». Lorsque Grimonprez a visité la région de Pepera en 1987 et rassemblé des témoignages oraux, l'un des indigènes, Kaiang Tapior lui a demandé «Où est ton hélicoptère?», faisant ainsi référence à l'anthropologue arrivé trente années plus tôt – d'où le titre complet de la vidéo, *Kobarweng, or «Where is Your Helicopter?»* (La question est également hautement ironique puisque Grimonprez a atteint Nimol épousé par une marche de trois jours en terrain difficile.) Lorsque les habitants des hautes terres de Papouasie Nouvelle-Guinée ont pour la première

fois entendu les bruits des moteurs et des hélices d'avion, ils étaient – nous apprend la vidéo – complètement troublés, identifiant diversement ce qu'ils entendaient au cri du casoar, à une grenouille rura, à un grognement de marsupial, aux eaux de crue ou à un tremblement de terre. Certains, pensant que les bruits provenaient du sol de la forêt, se mirent à creuser pour déterminer leur origine. Certains autres, interprétant ces bruits en fonction de leur cosmologie spirituelle, attribuèrent les sons inconnus aux ancêtres morts revenant de la tombe.

La bande originale de *Kobarweng* est orchestrée comme une composition musicale. La plus grande partie de la vidéo se déroule dans un silence chargé, ponctué par intervalles par le son d'un hélicoptère, le ronflement d'un avion, de l'eau qui s'écoule d'un robinet, un projecteur de film, et autres bruits décontextualisés surgissant de façon asynchrone bien que recontextualisés dans une relation déplacée (métaphorique) aux images sur l'écran: le projecteur de film sur les images de paysage, les cris perçants d'un caca-tou associés à l'image d'un avion, ou même l'absence abrupte de son précisément là où classiquement l'on s'attendrait à une ambiance dramatique. L'un des thèmes de la vidéo est l'accent différent qu'Occidentaux et Papous mettent sur les sens. Dans l'Occident oculo-centré, ainsi que Michel Foucault l'a montré dans plusieurs de ses livres (et surtout dans *Surveiller et Punir*, 1975), la hiérarchie des sens confère un statut privilégié à la vision et les autres organes des sens se sont atrophiés en conséquence. Par contraste, les Papous qui vivent dans la forêt tropicale perçoivent une grande variété de sons; les Kaluli par exemple sont capables de différencier clairement une centaine d'espèces d'oiseaux par leur chant plutôt que par leur apparence visuelle. Les Occidentaux ont pour leur part développé des taxonomies ornithologiques organisées en fonction de descriptions morphologiques basées sur la vue.¹⁶

Alors que le film *First Contact* adopte les techniques conventionnelles du documentaire et évite d'attirer l'attention sur ses propres dispositifs de cadrage, *Kobarweng* s'oriente dans la direction opposée: tout le métrage original en extérieur, y compris certaines prises du feuillage de la «jungle», a été tourné à New York. La vidéo commence par un travelling dans un corridor, jusqu'à ce que la caméra arrive à l'intérieur d'une chambre de l'hôtel Greystone à New York, où l'artiste résidait temporairement – l'image de l'hôtel rendant l'idée du transitoire.¹⁷ Alors que les récits des premiers contacts, les témoignages oraux et les détails du passé colonial de la Nouvelle-Guinée défilent sur le moniteur, les spectateurs se retrouvent face au choix de se concentrer sur le registre textuel ou visuel. Tandis que «l'ethnographie télévisuelle» (par exemple la série *Disappearing World* de la maison de production britannique Grenada TV) demeure fortement dépendante de la voix off narratrice, Grimonprez utilise le texte afin de rompre avec la tradition du film ethnographique conçu comme «une adaptation évolutive du format de la conférence». Comme l'a écrit Eric Michaels, les films ethnographiques documentaires s'inscrivent dans la lignée des conférences-diapositives et des documentaires de voyage dans lesquels le

narrateur omniprésent «agit comme un prêtre, se fait le médiateur des images et réduit la richesse potentielle, la complexité et l'ambiguité provocatrice des images et du texte à un message linéaire et doctrinaire.»¹⁸

Les images hétérogènes de *Kobarweng* incluent des images puisées dans des sources de deuxième main telles que les bandes d'actualités de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, ou les films télévisuels et anthropologiques des membres de l'expédition Starmountains. La prépondérance d'une imagerie adéquate provenant des mass médias – copies sans origine – peut être mise en parallèle avec l'idée qu'il n'y a pas d'identité essentielle ou d'authenticité. Bien qu'il y ait des éléments narratifs dans la vidéo, sa structure d'ensemble tire sa cohérence de la répétition de plusieurs signifiants variables qui semblent poétiquement chargés – parmi eux, une bouilloire, un robinet qui coule, des avions et des parachutes. Au lieu d'exerciser les objets tribaux façonnés, Grimonprez isole les objets et machines de tous les jours que nous prenons pour acquis et les fait apparaître dans leur étrangeté en les dé familiarisant au moyen d'une stratégie «d'excès mimétique». Comme le décrit Michael Taussig dans *Mimesis and Alterity* (1993), «La maîtrise est ridiculisée en même temps que le Premier Monde et les autres reflètent, entremêlent et rompent leurs altérités respectives à un point tel que tout ce qui demeure est l'excès – la conscience de soi quant au besoin d'identité, sexuelle, raciale, ethnique et nationale; les montagnes russes de la violence et le plaisir dérivé de cet état de faits.»¹⁹

Il y a dans la vidéo un mouvement d'aller-retour continu entre les images de l'expédition d'il y a trente ans et la pellicule remise en scène. Par exemple, une bouilloire à thé apparaissant à l'arrière-plan sur la pellicule documentaire retrouvée ressemble à la sienne; après avoir scruté les images de la bouilloire, Grimonprez braque l'objectif sur sa propre bouilloire et crée ainsi l'une des séquences les plus énigmatiques de la vidéo lorsqu'il montre le couvercle de la bouilloire qui tombe. A d'autres moments, la caméra zoomé sur des détails de la pellicule d'archive montrée sur un écran moniteur situé dans un studio de télévision, révélant ainsi le caractère construit de nos perceptions. Comme dans les films de Trinh, il y a «un dangereux potentiel d'esthétisation [...] qui risque d'involontairement romancer ce qui précisément devait ne pas l'être.»²⁰ Ici, l'attaque du formalisme n'est cependant pas pertinente puisque ce que Grimonprez critique et espère subvertir, c'est précisément la déformation littérale inhérente aux médias ethnographiques réalistes et les conditions non questionnées de production et de réception des images et du langage qui dominent la pratique documentaire. De plus, il est important de remarquer qu'au travers de la bande de *Kobarweng* sont posées des alternatives futures au colonialisme; ainsi la vidéo se termine-t-elle en mentionnant que «une guerre de guérilla sécessionniste se poursuit, cachée au monde extérieur.»

Kobarweng a toujours été projetée seule, comme une bande vidéo autonome; d'autres installations créées par l'artiste incorporent des vidéos projetées sur des dispositifs à canaux multiples, plusieurs moniteurs placés directement sur le sol créant un effet de paysage. D'après John Hanhardt, le précédent de ce genre d'ar-

rangement électronique paysager est le *TV Garden* de Nam June Paik (1974-78).²¹

Le format d'une installation se décide en fonction de facteurs situationnels et contextuels. Sous cette forme, l'expérience que fait le spectateur de la vidéo est plus exigeante sur le plan perceptif que lorsqu'il regarde un seul moniteur d'un point de vue fixe: l'installation est une forme sculpturale qui demande à l'observateur de déambuler dans l'espace. Augmentant son sens de la désorientation, plusieurs bandes montées contenant des matériaux différents peuvent être diffusées jusque sur huit moniteurs en même temps et, en jouant de façon désynchronisée, déranger plus encore le déroulement linéaire. Ainsi la bouilloire de l'artiste a-t-elle également été montrée dans des installations pour parodier l'exposition d'objets ethnographiques dans les musées; au lieu d'un trophée exotique recueilli dans une autre culture, la bouilloire exposée représente le rôle médiateur de l'ethnographe.

«*It will be all right if you come again, only next time don't bring any gear, except a tea kettle...*» *A landscape of Mimetic Excess – Nimol June 1950 – Nimol July 1987* (1994) («Ce sera bien que tu reviennes, mais la prochaine fois n'emmène aucun matériel, sauf une bouilloire.») Un paysage d'*Excès Mimétique* – Nimol juin 1950 – Nimol juillet 1987 est le titre de l'installation que Grimonprez a spécifiquement conçue pour le Palais des Beaux-Arts. Installation à canaux multiples, *A Landscape of Mimetic Excess* pousse encore plus loin le développement des thèmes de la différence culturelle et du (post-)colonialisme en utilisant une séquence de paysage de la vidéo *Kobarweng* entrecoupée par des séquences nouvelles, dont des scènes provenant des comédies musicales hollywoodiennes *The Sound of Music* (La mélodie du bonheur) avec Julie Andrews. Alors que *Kobarweng* explorait la différence culturelle à travers les moyens de transport aériens, *A Landscape of Mimetic Excess* est en relation plus directe avec la représentation *per se* puisque, outre le rôle des anthropologues et des missionnaires, l'installation concerne l'arrivée des cinémas en plein air et des films en Papouasie Nouvelle Guinée: en août 1944, pendant la Guerre du Pacifique, deux cents cinémas en plein air sont descendus du ciel (à Hollandia, l'ancienne capitale de la province, l'actuelle Jayapura).

Par un jeu réciproque constant entre l'étrange et le familier, le montage vidéo de Grimonprez crée un sens de la délocalisation ethnographique. Ainsi assiste-t-on, au beau milieu d'un plan panoramique de la Ok Bon Valley filmé par Derk Jan Dragt de l'expédition Starmountains, à une transition inattendue sur un zoom paysager similaire extrait de *The Sound of Music*. Lorsque Grimonprez a visité la région de Pepera en 1987, les indigènes locaux l'ont associé aux paysages européens et aux environnements urbains décrits dans les films que leur avait montré un missionnaire. Après avoir voyagé aussi loin dans l'espérance de rencontrer l'inconnu, l'ironie de se retrouver confronté à l'exemple le plus banal de la culture occidentale, mais aussi aux images les plus familières de son enfance (le film favori de sa mère), a démontré à l'artiste qu'il était lui aussi l'objet d'un processus d'objectification stéréotypique.

Ce projet est-il surdéterminé et par conséquent, inscrit dans une relation oedipienne? De façon typique, les ethnographes censurent les questions personnelles de leurs rapports de terrain qui sont censés être des comptes-rendus objectifs sur des sociétés individuelles. Lorsque les carnets intimes que Bronislaw Malinowski a tenus à Trobriand de 1914 à 1918 furent publiés après sa mort sous le titre de *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (1967), le contraste entre le journal dans lequel il exprime souvent ses sentiments de mépris pour les indigènes et son livre innovateur *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) a déclenché des ondes de choc sismiques à travers toute la discipline de l'anthropologie. Alors que la plupart des ethnographes ont suivi la voie d'auto-centrisme de Malinowski en écrivant leurs propres rapports de terrain, Michel Leiris a constitué une exception, lui dont «l'auto-ethnographie – pas une auto-biographie mais l'action d'écrire son existence dans un présent de souvenirs, de rêves, de politique, de quotidien» peut être considérée comme précurseur du travail vidéo de Grimonprez.²² En dehors de ses notes auto-biographiques, Grimonprez a recueilli les témoignages de nombre de ses amis et collègues concernant *The Sound of Music*: ainsi Todd Ayuong, artiste né à Trinidad et qui, enfant, alors qu'il n'avait jamais encore été exposé à des films ou à la télévision, confondit l'espace du film avec la réalité, et Onome Ekeh qui, pendant son enfance au Nigeria, vit le film plus de 300 fois – ces interviews formant des composants textuels de la vidéo.

Une image récurrente dans la vidéo est la table d'écriture de l'anthropologue, remise en scène par l'artiste pour signifier la nature discursive du travail de terrain puisque «l'ethnographie est prise dans les filets de l'écriture».²³ Une grande proportion du texte utilisé dans la vidéo dérive de sources anthropologiques. Nous prenons ainsi connaissance de la rivalité entre villages pour obtenir un anthropologue lorsque les membres d'un village se plaignent haut et fort que leurs voisins en ont déjà deux! (Économiquement dépendants des anthropologues comme d'une source importante de revenus, les informateurs attendent maintenant quelque chose en retour pour leur collaboration – à juste titre – et échangent les légendes locales comme s'il s'agissait de marchandises – ce qu'elles sont.) Un informateur explique à un anthropologue que le village garde toujours quelque chose pour l'anthropologue suivant, rendant futile tout espoir d'aboutir à un compte-rendu totalisateur d'une société, alors qu'un autre anthropologue est surpris et sans nul doute amusé lorsqu'il rencontre un indigène nommé Malinowski.

Certaines de ces anecdotes racontées dans la vidéo, quoiqu'inquiétantes, sont extrêmement drôles. Elles impliquent souvent des indigènes mimant les comportements que les Occidentaux s'attendent à les voir observer "naturellement", de façon automatique. Lorsque les Occidentaux arrivent dans un village, les éléments subversifs sont cachés et les gens "redeviennent primitifs", amusant les visiteurs en peignant avec les doigts sur des troncs d'arbre, en faisant du feu avec des bambous et en coupant le bois avec une

hache en pierre – toutes activités très photogéniques pour le touriste amateur d'images. Ensuite, il y a des histoires qui racontent exactement le contraire: comment un anthropologue intrépide a par exemple rencontré les Indiens "sauvages" de la montagne Cuna pour être salué par leur chef dans un anglais parfait: «Comment allez-vous les gars? Content de vous voir!» Le chef, s'est-il avéré par la suite, avait travaillé sur des voiliers pendant vingt ans et voyagé d'une cité cosmopolite à l'autre.

A certains moments, l'espace d'exposition du Palais des Beaux-Arts apparaît sur les moniteurs, provoquant un effet de déplacement sur les spectateurs et mettant au premier plan le contexte institutionnel du travail. Le Palais des Beaux-Arts est un endroit particulièrement approprié pour l'installation de Grimonprez étant donné son rôle historique dans le financement d'expéditions ethnographiques. Dans le cadre de l'Association pour la Diffusion Artistique et Culturelle (ADAC), le programme *Exploration du Monde* a commencé en 1950 à l'initiative de Pierre Janlet et continue à ce jour. *Exploration du Monde* a été responsable de l'organisation d'expéditions au Congo Belge et en Afrique Équatoriale Française, et ces voyages ont débouché sur toute une série de films documentaires conventionnels perpétuant précisément les sortes de mythes sur les "primitifs" que Grimonprez s'efforce de déconstruire. Les tenants de la ligne dure avanceront peut-être que le travail de Grimonprez est d'avance voué à l'échec en raison de sa complicité avec cet appareil d'état idéologique qu'est le musée. Jusqu'à ce qu'intervienne une restructuration radicale des relations globales de pouvoir, les artistes doivent cependant se contenter de subvertir de l'intérieur les institutions qu'ils ont l'intention de critiquer, ou alors être confrontés à la possibilité de l'impuissance politique et de l'invisibilité.

Le fait que les producteurs de médias indigènes soient marginalisés dans les institutions occidentales demeure le problème le plus difficile pour les artistes et les ethnographes engagés dans des travaux traitant de la différence culturelle. Alors que les intérêts commerciaux dictent généralement qui occupera l'antenne sur les chaînes de télévision, les espaces alternatifs, les chaînes d'accès public et la télévision par câble ouvrent de nouvelles possibilités à la distribution vidéo. Les vidéos de Grimonprez s'inscrivent dans le contexte plus large des cinéastes et des vidéastes qui montrent leurs œuvres dans des espaces alternatifs; ensemble, leurs efforts pour miner l'ethnocentrisme se combinent pour former un projet commun. La dimension politique du travail ethnographique de Grimonprez se situe dans la critique effective de l'ethnocentrisme qu'il achève en minant la tendance occidentale à faire bifurquer le Même et l'Autre et la mentalité du diviser-pour-régner qui l'accompagne.

NOTES

¹ JAMES CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 9. Le titre de cet article, «L'exotique» est d'une proximité étrange» provient également de Clifford, p. 13.

² CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture*, p. 11

³ CLIFFORD, p. 8

⁴ ASEN BALIKCI, «Ethnographic film and museums: a history, a programme», *Museum* (Paris), vol. 37, n° 1 (1985), p. 17

⁵ BALIKCI, «Ethnographic film and museums...», p. 25

⁶ Voir les essais de JAMES CLIFFORD, VIRGINIA DOMINGUEZ et TRINH T. MINH-HA dans le chapitre intitulé «Of Other Peoples: Beyond the "Salvage Paradigm"», in: *Dia Art Foundation Discussions in Contemporary Culture, Number 1*, sous la direction de Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), pp. 121-150.

⁷ BALIKCI, p. 24

⁸ EDWARD BALL, «The Margaret Mead Festival», *Afterimage* 15 (Novembre 1987), p. 5

⁹ FAYE GINSBURG, «Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?», in: *Rereading Cultural Anthropology*, sous la direction de George E. Marcus (Duke University Press, 1982), p. 367

¹⁰ CONSTANCE PENLEY et ANDREW ROSS, «Interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha»,

¹¹ ERNEST LARSEN, «For an Impure Cinevideo», *The Independent* (mai 1990), pp. 24-27

¹² HAL FOSTER, exposé présenté au Programme d'Etudes Indépendant du Whitney Museum au cours de l'année académique 1992-93

¹³ GILLIAN BEER, «The island and the aeroplane: the case of Virginia Woolf», in: Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 265-290

¹⁴ BOB CONNOLLY & ROBIN ANDERSON, *First Contact* (New York: Viking, 1987) et EDWARD L. SCHIEFFELIN et ROBERT CRITTENDEN, *Like People You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, c. 1991)

¹⁵ L.D. BRONGERSMA & G.F. VENERA, *To the Mountains of the Stars* (New York: Doubleday, 1962)

¹⁶ STEVEN FELD, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982)

¹⁷ JAMES CLIFFORD, «Travelling Cultures», in: *Cultural Studies*, sous la direction de Lawrence Grossberg et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 96-116 où il est suggéré que l'hôtel est un «chronotype de la modernité» et une image nostalgique.

¹⁸ ERIC MICHAELS, «How to look at Us Looking at the Yanomami Looking at Us», in: *A Crack in the Mirror, Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology*, sous la direction de Jay Ruby (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), pp. 133-146. KEITH TRIBE, «Real Lives and Disappearing Worlds: A Report on a Festival of Ethnographic Film», *Screen* 27 (mai/août 1986), pp. 149-154, où il est noté qu'avec l'emploi des voix off, «certaines images sont reléguées au statut d'arrière-fond visuel à un exposé oral.» (p. 153)

¹⁹ MICHAEL TAUSIG, *Mimesis and Alterity: a Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 136-137. Voir aussi HOMI BHABHA, «Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse», *October* 28 (Spring 1984), pp. 125-133.

²⁰ JANE DESMOND, «Ethnography, Orientalism and the Avant-Garde Film», in: *Visual Anthropology* vol. 4 (1991), p. 154

²¹ JOHN G. HANHARDT, «The Discourse of Landscape Video Art: From Fluxus to Post-Modernism», in William D. Judson et al., *American Landscape Video: The Electronic Grove* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1988), p. 62

²² CLIFFORD, *The Predicament of Culture*, p. 14

²³ CLIFFORD, p. 25

BIO

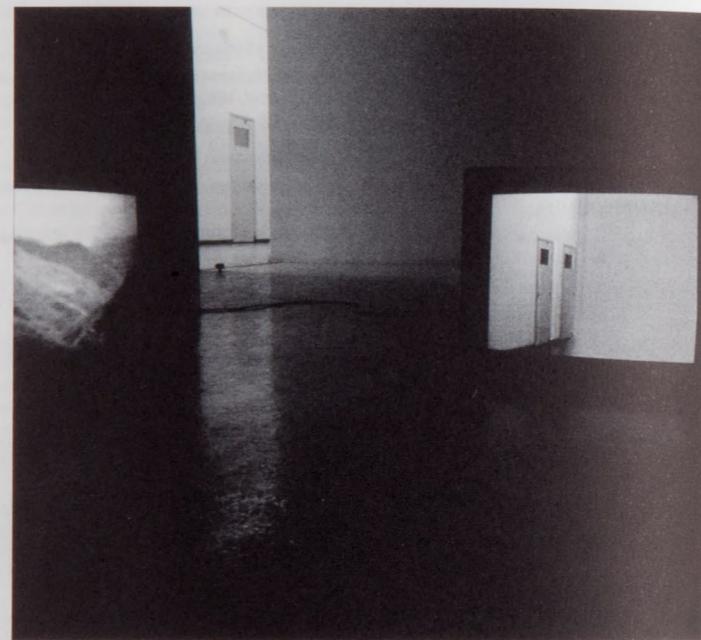
Simon Taylor vit à New York. Il est historien de l'art et critique. Ses écrits ont été publiés dans *Art in America* et dans *Art + Text*. En 1993, il a été le commissaire de *Abject Art* pour le Whitney Museum of American Art de New York.

«IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME
DON'T BRING ANY GEAR, EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE...»

-A LANDSCAPE OF MIMETIC EXCESS

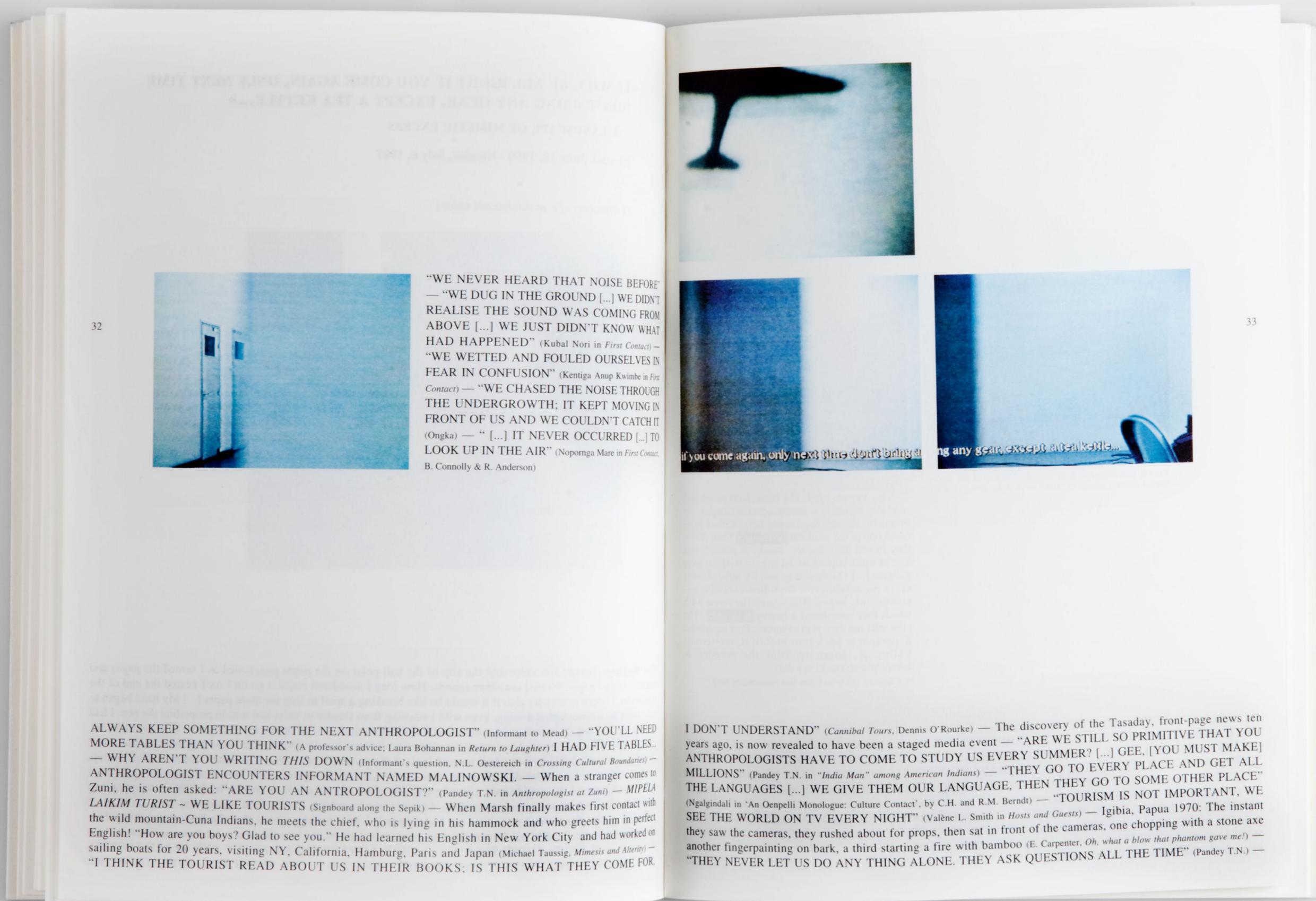
Nimadol, June 18, 1959 - Nimadol, July 6, 1987

(Fragments of a multichannel video)



31

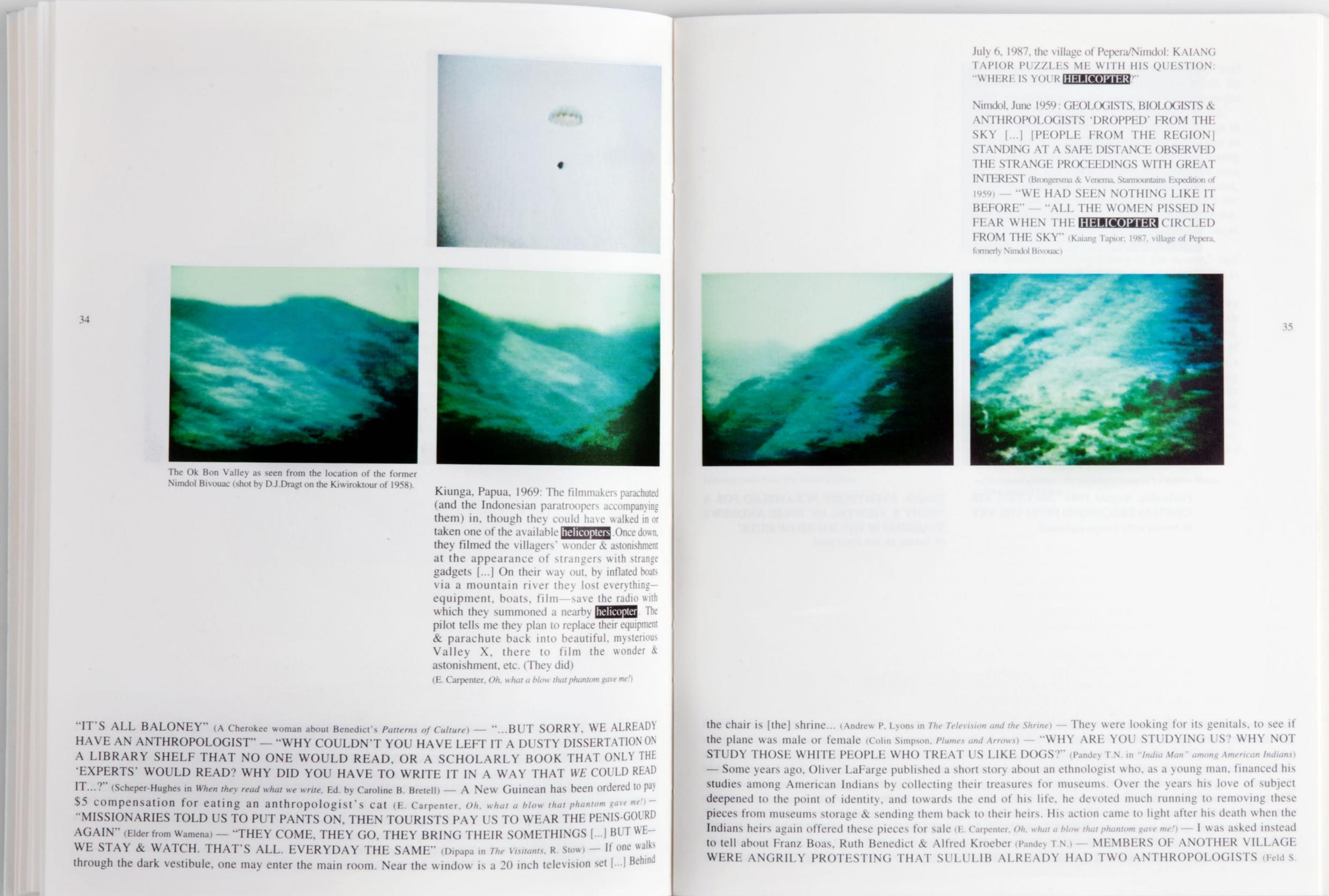
THE WRITING TABLE: His voice and the slip of the ball-point on the paper punctuated as I turned the pages and inserted carbon paper, blotted out other sounds. How long I wondered could it go on? As I neared the end of the notebooks, I began to wonder also if it would be like breaking a spell to stop for more paper [...] My hand began to ache from the uninterrupted writing, even with switching from fingers to wrist-and-arm in propelling the pen. I had to drop my arm and shake it for muscular relief from time to time. At this action the young man appeared to smile, as if he saw in it an acknowledgement of his virtuosity. Perhaps it even spurred him on to greater explicitness and descriptive detail. I finished the last unused leaf of the notebook and now, fascinated and reluctant to stop, continued the notes on the inside back cover, then on the outside. The speaker soon saw what I was doing [...] As I neared the bottom of the outside back cover he stopped to ask if I did not have another book. The interruption had no effect whatever on the young man, and, with the new notebook, there could hardly now be a problem of sufficient paper. We picked up where we had stopped. I now became aware that the light was getting dim. Continuing to write, I called out for the pressure lamp to be lighted and brought over... (J.B. Watson in *Crossing Cultural Boundaries*) — "I KNOW THESE PEOPLE [...] THEY ALWAYS SNEAK ABOUT AND LEARN SECRETS ABOUT PEOPLE AND WRITE FUNNY STORIES" (Pandey T.N.) — "WE NEVER TELL EVERYTHING, WE



but singing will become like breathing again the more often you sing. And then you will begin to feel like breathing like a normal human being again.

ALWAYS KEEP SOMETHING FOR THE NEXT ANTHROPOLOGIST" (Informant to Mead) — "YOU'LL NEED MORE TABLES THAN YOU THINK" (A professor's advice; Laura Bohannan in *Return to Laughter*) I HAD FIVE TABLES... — WHY AREN'T YOU WRITING THIS DOWN (Informant's question, N.L. Oestereich in *Crossing Cultural Boundaries*) — ANTHROPOLOGIST ENCOUNTERS INFORMANT NAMED MALINOWSKI. — When a stranger comes to Zuni, he is often asked: "ARE YOU AN ANTHROPOLOGIST?" (Pandey T.N. in *Anthropologist at Zuni*) — MIPELA LAIKIM TURIST ~ WE LIKE TOURISTS (Signboard along the Sepik) — When Marsh finally makes first contact with the wild mountain-Cuna Indians, he meets the chief, who is lying in his hammock and who greets him in perfect English! "How are you boys? Glad to see you." He had learned his English in New York City and had worked on sailing boats for 20 years, visiting NY, California, Hamburg, Paris and Japan (Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*) — "I THINK THE TOURIST READ ABOUT US IN THEIR BOOKS; IS THIS WHAT THEY COME FOR,

I DON'T UNDERSTAND" (*Cannibal Tours*, Dennis O'Rourke) — The discovery of the Tasaday, front-page news ten years ago, is now revealed to have been a staged media event — "ARE WE STILL SO PRIMITIVE THAT YOU ANTHROPOLOGISTS HAVE TO COME TO STUDY US EVERY SUMMER? [...] GEE, [YOU MUST MAKE] MILLIONS" (Pandey T.N. in "India Man" among American Indians) — "THEY GO TO EVERY PLACE AND GET ALL THE LANGUAGES [...] WE GIVE THEM OUR LANGUAGE, THEN THEY GO TO SOME OTHER PLACE" (Ngalgindali in "An Oenpelli Monologue: Culture Contact", by C.H. and R.M. Berndt) — "TOURISM IS NOT IMPORTANT, WE SEE THE WORLD ON TV EVERY NIGHT" (Valène L. Smith in *Hosts and Guests*) — Igibia, Papua 1970: The instant they saw the cameras, they rushed about for props, then sat in front of the cameras, one chopping with a stone axe another fingerpainting on bark, a third starting a fire with bamboo (E. Carpenter, *Oh, what a blow that phantom gave me!*) — "THEY NEVER LET US DO ANY THING ALONE. THEY ASK QUESTIONS ALL THE TIME" (Pandey T.N.) —



The Ok Bon Valley as seen from the location of the former Nimdol Bivouac (shot by D.J.Dragt on the Kiwirotour of 1958).

34



Kiunga, Papua, 1969: The filmmakers parachuted (and the Indonesian paratroopers accompanying them) in, though they could have walked in or taken one of the available **helicopters**. Once down, they filmed the villagers' wonder & astonishment at the appearance of strangers with strange gadgets [...] On their way out, by inflated boats via a mountain river they lost everything—equipment, boats, film—save the radio with which they summoned a nearby **helicopter**. The pilot tells me they plan to replace their equipment & parachute back into beautiful, mysterious Valley X, there to film the wonder & astonishment, etc. (They did)
(E. Carpenter, *Oh, what a blow that phantom gave me!*)

"IT'S ALL BALONEY" (A Cherokee woman about Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*) — "...BUT SORRY, WE ALREADY HAVE AN ANTHROPOLOGIST" — "WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE LEFT IT A DUSTY DISSERTATION ON A LIBRARY SHELF THAT NO ONE WOULD READ, OR A SCHOLARLY BOOK THAT ONLY THE 'EXPERTS' WOULD READ? WHY DID YOU HAVE TO WRITE IT IN A WAY THAT WE COULD READ IT...?" (Schepers-Hughes in *When they read what we write*, Ed. by Caroline B. Brettell) — A New Guinean has been ordered to pay \$5 compensation for eating an anthropologist's cat (E. Carpenter, *Oh, what a blow that phantom gave me!*) — "MISSIONARIES TOLD US TO PUT PANTS ON, THEN TOURISTS PAY US TO WEAR THE PENIS-GOURD AGAIN" (Elder from Wamena) — "THEY COME, THEY GO, THEY BRING THEIR SOMETHINGS [...] BUT WE—WE STAY & WATCH. THAT'S ALL. EVERYDAY THE SAME" (Dipapa in *The Visitants*, R. Stow) — If one walks through the dark vestibule, one may enter the main room. Near the window is a 20 inch television set [...] Behind

July 6, 1987, the village of Pepera/Nimadol: KAIANG TAPIOR PUZZLES ME WITH HIS QUESTION: "WHERE IS YOUR **HELICOPTER**?"

Nimadol, June 1959: GEOLOGISTS, BIOLOGISTS & ANTHROPOLOGISTS 'DROPPED' FROM THE SKY [...] [PEOPLE FROM THE REGION] STANDING AT A SAFE DISTANCE OBSERVED THE STRANGE PROCEEDINGS WITH GREAT INTEREST (Brongersma & Venema, Starmountains Expedition of 1959) — "WE HAD SEEN NOTHING LIKE IT BEFORE" — "ALL THE WOMEN PISSED IN FEAR WHEN THE **HELICOPTER** CIRCLED FROM THE SKY" (Kaiang Tapior, 1987, village of Pepera, formerly Nimadol Bivouac)

35



36

Hollandia, August 1944: 200 OPEN AIR CINEMAS DESCENDED FROM THE SKY
(P. Worsley in *The Trompet shall sound*)






Opening scene from *The Sound of Music*

37

Tabubil: EVERYBODY SCRAMBLED FOR A NIGHT'S VIEWING OF JULIE ANDREWS STARRING IN *THE SOUND OF MUSIC*
(R. Jackson, *Ok Tedi, Pot of Gold*)

"Filming on the moutaintops was the hardest," said Andrews. "We were miles away from any toilets. So when we had to go, we'd just say, 'I'm going to the woods now.' Everyone understood what you meant." To film what is one of the most famous openings in movie history, a **helicopter** swooped down just as Maria rushed up to her beloved mountain. The timing on that shot had to be perfect. So, to make sure Andrews came up the hill at the moment required, Marc Breaux hid in the bushes nearby. As the **helicopter** ascended, Breaux, using a megaphone, cued Andrews and she rushed up the hill and began singing.

"The funniest memory I have of the movie," said Breaux's wife, Dee Dee Wood, "is of Marc hiding in the bushes yelling 'Go Julie!'"

"The **helicopter** was a jet **helicopter**," Andrews recalled. "The cameraman was strapped onto the side of the **helicopter**, hanging out so he could get the shot, and he came at me sideways. I'd start from the end of the field, and I'd hear Marc yellign 'Go!' from a bullhorn. The **helicopter** would come at me, clanking away, then it would go around me to get back to the beginning to repeat the scene. But when it circled around me, the downcraft from the jets was so strong that it would literally knock me over. I couldn't stay up. They had to do this shot about ten times, and finally I got so angry I yelled, 'That's enough!'"

—*The Sound of Music, the Making of America's Favorite Movie*,
Julia Antopol Hirsch.

in *Sound and Sentiment*) — It was not uncommon for students at the university of PNG to change their names: Flash Gordon attended a class I taught and there was a Joseph Stalin on campus (Robert J. Gordon, anthropologist teaching at Port Moresby) — At the California Academy of Sciences in San Fransisco, members of the audience come to the diorama hall of African mammals, called "African Safari", dressed in appropriate safari costumes, to be photographed in front of a very elaborate diorama of a waterhole in Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania. (Ivan Karp in *Exhibiting Cultures*) — The professional folklore about [...] the American Indian who in response to the ethnographer's question, consults the work of Alfred Kroeber, or the African villager who reaches for his copies of Meyer Fortes (G. Marcus & M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*) — WHEN I ARRIVED IN A JAPANESE COMMUNITY ON ONE RECENT SORTIE, THE LOCALS WONDERED OUT LOUD IF THEY WERE GOING TO BE SUBJECTED TO OLD-FASHIONED RESEARCH BY THIS TECHNOLOGICALLY BACKWARD AMERICAN. I HAD NOT

BROUGHT ALONG A VIDEO CAMERA (David W Plater, *Just like a movie*) — One should add that the natives's response to the first Europeans, insofar as it is recorded, provides evidence of a comparable reaction: one Amerindian, astonished at the French custom of collecting and carrying about mucus in handkerchiefs wryly-declared: thou likest that filth, give me thy handkerchief and I will soon fill it (Quoted in *The Play of the Unmentionable*, J. Kosuth) — After [a screening of] *Chasse ou lion à l'arc*, a couple of English filmmakers reproached me for having left the hunters wearing tennis-shoes (J. Rouch in an interview with E. Fulchignoni) — Makahu villagers (Papua New Guineq) hide their ghettoblasters from tourists in a shelter specifically built for this purpose — Village of Kandangan (PNG): [The elders] asked that the film be brought back & projected, promising to erect another sacred enclosure for the screening. Finally they announced that this was the last involuntary initiation & they offered for sale their ancient waterdrums [...] Postscript: when the film was not finished within the promised time & hence not

"WE CALLED [THE WHITES] SEBRIB, WHICH MEANS 'DIFFERENT SMELL' OR 'SMELL OF SOAP'" (Amusep in Morren E.B.G., *The Big Walk*) — "WE HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH CREATURES [...] THE FIRST THING WE NOTICED WAS THEIR STRANGE SMELL [...] STILL TREMBLING WITH FEAR WE TOOK THEM TO MAISAPALU." (Bolame in *Through Kewa Country*, L. Josephides & M Schiltz in *Like People You see in a Dream*, ed by Schieffelin E.L. & Crittenden R.) — "THAT'S WHEN THEY CAME AND SAW THAT HIS BODY WAS REALLY 'WHITE' [...] HE TRIED TO CRY, AND URINATED IN FEAR WHEN THE

shown in the village, involuntary initiations were resumed (E. Carpenter) — From all available evidence no black man had ever set foot in this tiny Swiss village before I came. I was told before arriving that I would probably be a "sight" for the village; I took this to mean that people of my complexion were rarely seen in Switzerland, and also that city people are always something of a "sight" outside of the city. It did not occur to me [...] that there could be people anywhere who had never seen a Negro. In the village there is no movie house, no bank, no library, no theater; very few radios, one jeep, one station wagon; and, at the moment one typewriter, mine, an invention which the woman next door to me here had never seen. (In *Notes of a Native Son*, James Baldwin in the chapter: Stranger in the village) "I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF PLANES THEY HAVE THERE OR WHAT KIND OF LAND THEY HAVE THERE" (Ongka in *Anthropology on Trial*, B. Holecek) — "IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME DON'T BRING ANY GEAR, EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE..." (in *Ethical Dilemmas in Ethnographic Inquiry*; Appell E.N.)

Wise remembers one amusing incident that happened when they were shooting the "Do-Re-Mi" sequence up on Winkler's Terrace. "We were up high, looking out over the city," he recalled. "The terrace overlooks the whole main part of Salzburg. We had our playback up there with these big speakers. You play these songs very loud so your actors can sing back to it. My wife, Pat, was below, in the city, and she said the music came flooding down from up in the hills, and all the passerby kept looking around, wondering where the music was coming from!"



39

"WHITE" MAN TOUCHED HIS SKIN" (Ngalgindali in 'An Oenelli Monologue: Culture Contact', by C.H. and R.M. Berndt) — "[THE WHITE PEOPLE] SMELT SO DIFFERENTLY [...] WE THOUGHT IT WOULD KILL US, SO WE COVERED OUR NOSES WITH THE LEAVES FROM A SPECIAL BUSH THAT GROWS NEAR CUCUMBERS. IT HAD A PARTICULARLY NICE SMELL AND IT COVERED UP THEIRS" (Gavey Akamo in *First Contact*, B. Connolly & R. Anderson) — "THEIR SKIN MIGHT BE DIFFERENT." THEY SAID, "BUT THEIR SHIT SMELLS BAD LIKE OURS" (Kirupano in *First Contact*, B. Connolly & R. Anderson)

"The rain was awful," Andrews remembered, "and it was freezing cold. I remember running out to sing 'The hills are alive...' and shivering in my boots." [...] But the rain wasn't the only problem. When the company first looked at the meadow on top of the mountain, they were impressed by the high fields of hay and grass. Wise paid the farmer for the use of the field and told him not to mow the hay. Yet when they finally returned to shoot the number, the farmer had cut down the vegetation until there was nothing left but short stalks of grass!

The meadow's young birch trees, which Maria grasps, swinging from trunk to trunk, were all brought in and planted a few days before the shoot, and the crew hung a large piece of canvas over the area to create shade. The crew also created the brook into which Maria throws stones. The crew dug a ditch, lined it with plastic, and filled it with water. But the same farmer who had cut the grass got angry with the company. It seems the longer they stayed, the more their presence interfered with his cows, who suddenly refused to give milk. So he grabbed a pitchfork, stabbed it into the brook, and drained the water!

—*The Sound of Music, the Making of America's Favorite Movie*, Julia Antopol Hirsch.

DAVID CAMPBELL, A DENVER TRUCK DRIVER, WATCHED *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* FROM THE SAME SEAT IN THE SAME THEATER EVERY SUNDAY FOR THREE YEARS AND THEN, WHEN THE THEATER CLOSED DOWN, BOUGHT THE SEAT.

AMERICA'S FAVORITE MOVIE Interviews on *The Sound of Music**

(*Fragments*)

by Johan Grimonprez

Todd Ayoung*: 'A MIMETIC PASSAGE'

— Your first encounter with film was '*The Sound of Music*'; would you remember anything about the circumstances, how it must have been watching a movie for the first time?

The recollections about it got so blurry and vague. I saw *The Sound of Music* when I was about seven years old, in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad) where there was only one big movie-theatre at that time. Films weren't that well distributed, so if a film came around they would keep it as long as possible. I saw it one week and then the next week again... about 7 times. Being brought up in an Asian family, my parents were very protective; if we weren't going to school we (me and my sisters) would be locked up in our little house. It was summer I believe and there was not a whole lot to do, so my uncle would sometimes take us to the movies...

Now, here there is a strange thing—it's hard to figure out in what way this is due to being part of a colonial situation, or more in terms of this being a part of the child's imagination—but I always thought that cinema was something real and that there were people behind the screen.

This is how I came to explain it: one of the movies that showed there was *The Planet of the Apes* and I remember vividly seeing a cage with a bunch of apes driving around Port-of-Spain, because that was the way they advertised it. So I thought: of course, those apes just go behind the screen playing apes and this now ends up on a flat surface, with other kinds of projections going on, but they were real people.

— '*The Sound of Music*' was perceived in the same way?

I didn't think about it in terms of any real filming or what it meant besides a visual spectacle.

— There was no television yet? Any imagery that could relate to cinema?

No, no television. TV came about in the late 60's, somewhere before we came over to the U.S. in '69. We were one of the first families in this area of Port-of-Spain to acquire a TV; I even remember vividly all the neighbours sitting around our doorway watching this image making machine in black and white.

— The landscapes or the architecture presented in the '*The Sound of Music*' must have been very different compared to your everyday environment?

The setting and architecture in the film was nothing like the Trinidad that I know, the old colonial buildings, the savannahs—there's nothing like palmtrees in that film or

The entire interior of the von Trapp villa, including the ornate von Trapp ballroom, was built and shot at the studio. The ballroom was such a beautiful piece of film art that after the picture was completed Fox donated the set to the Hollywood Museum.

* *The Sound of Music*

Starring: Julie Andrews & Christoffer Plummer. Co-starring: Richard Haydn, Eleanor Parker as the baroness. Music by Richard Rodgers. Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II. Screenplay: Ernest Lehman. Based on Rodgers & Hammerstein's Broadwayplay *The Sound of Music*; inspired on the biography of Maria von Trapp. Directed by Robert Wise.

anything that I could relate to. It was completely unreal... At the age of seven I didn't think of it as such a big contrast between my little country and this image of the outside, but more this fascination with something else; it was just the 'outside', an imaginary place of people with a fantastic life, where everything seemed bigger, all that space compared to our little house.

— "Don't they know geography in Hollywood? Salzburg does not border on Switzerland!" — [the real] Maria von Trapp as she watched the final scene in the movie (quoted in *Our Sunday Visitor* in 1967).

42

Also I don't think I ever saw so many white people together before in one place at the same time unless it was on screen; that may also have been a novelty for me at that moment. I might also have made some identification between *The Sound of Music* and what my father used to tell me about the U.S. and my uncle Sam. Uncle Sam was my uncle. Growing up in a Chinese family in Trinidad, anybody older than you became your uncle, and so my father always told us about this uncle which we never saw. I never thought I would actually meet this person.

— *The Sound of Music* came to stand for Uncle Sam, a collapse between the scenery in the film and the geographical place of the U.S. or England, where your uncle lived...

Well, my first confrontation with the 'mothercountry' England, being part of the Commonwealth, was effectively *The Sound of Music*. The film represented England for me, which was just this vast 'outside' where my Uncle Sam lived. I always thought of England as being an appendice to the U.S. in the sense that it was the mother of Uncle Sam. I never knew where these places were geographically. American culture was pretty basic in Trinidad, I didn't really have any signs. I knew it was out there somewhere just as *The Sound of Music* was represented on screen as a physical 'somewhere'. But I never thought of it as something graspable; I never thought I would actually go to these places.

While talking about our uncle Sam, my father would also show us a photograph of an immigrant boat coming into New York City, and there is an Asian looking man up in the front and my father would say: 'Well, this is me, coming over on the boat', but he never said where he came over from. He was born in Trinidad; where could he come from? It sort of predicated our coming to the U.S. in 1969. He had to tell us these things, a way maybe to construct a relationship to his children. Only when I came to the U.S., I realized that this photograph he showed us was by Alfred Stieglitz ('Streerage', 1907). A strange kind of coincidence: I always thought of uncle Sam who I was going to meet and I always thought of my father coming to the U.S. on this boat.

— *'Uncle Sam'* was actually conceived of as an Asian person...
A kind of collapse of images and personal history: in Trinidad you would have this mixing of real time, historical time and an imaginary situation compiled from mythology and superstition; which is perceived as very real to the West Indies, and structures everybody's lives. Colonialism made Trinidad reinvent an imaginary landscape, constructed and hybrid through a degree of memory erasure. *The Sound of Music* conflated with these superstitious ways, just like other films shown there at this theater: *Planet of the Apes*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and what's that other movie... *My Fair Lady*. In a sense it was a Disneyland-version of real history mixed in with all this strange stuff. I had a kind of 'magical realism' involved with daily life, populated with all sorts of spirits: jumbies, duppys... That was our cinema, the stories my father told us. It was told and retold so many times that it condensed into something magical. The same with film: retold, re-edited and passed through certain mediums so that it becomes magical. It makes sense then, with the invention of TV and film, that people identified so dearly with the images, that replaced or mixed with their mythologies, a way to explain life's tragedies—why you were afraid of the dark, all these things. Trinidad wasn't wired up in the sense that you couldn't just turn on the switch light, you had candles. I was brought up always being afraid of something that I couldn't see, so you had a different relationship to space, it was very tight, beyond was always the dark that you couldn't tangibly see.

— Eventually '*The Sound of Music*' projected in the dark would have this magical quality to it as well, a different kind of mythology that would fit in with these stories...

When you see the dark you project your superstition whereas with cinema it would turn in the other way: the dark becomes a kind of projection; your superstition becomes this cinema, a screen for what's lit up. Technology has taken over (intermixed) mythology and superstition in its most literal sense: the ghosts become shadows on the screen. Naturally I would transfer my stories into this medium which existed overseas, embodied in *The Sound of Music* especially. I think in my eventual 'passage', I came to identify with this 'white light' of the screen.

My name also comes from the movies: Michael Todd, the name of a famous British actor at that time (my whole name is actually Todd Michael Ayoung). My parents saw some old movie when they were first married; I was born when my mother was in her 20s, so instead of choosing a name of family history, they chose actor's names for their kids. So I was inscribed into the history of cinema, making my construction of the self an imaginary construction in the literal sense.

— What about the narrative itself contained in '*The Sound of Music*', how differently would you read into it then, at that time in Port-of-Spain, compared to the context of your life in New York now?

At that age it's difficult to recall, I was just absorbing a lot of things. Eventually, the only way I could really relate to it was if I would think about it as some kind of passage to the real context of the U.S., eventually going to England, which was a disappointment for me; the imagination didn't quite fit the reality I encountered:

I haven't seen the film in its entirety since I've been in this country. It's hard for me to look at that film; I've seen bits and pieces of it. Uncle Sam obviously became something else. At one point leaving Trinidad, coming to the U.S. at the age of eleven I found out that Uncle Sam didn't exist and that the image was part of America's cultural imperialism, just like *The Sound of Music*... It was very difficult for us to become part of that melting pot, as it was called at that time. I received racism American style, growing up in a neighborhood (Los Angeles) with poor white 'trash'.

— Julie Andrews would be woven into this whole phantasy as well.

Perfectly, because she represented a white western culture, the first white woman I encountered! Also the largest group of white people I saw at once all together. There was only a small English population in Trinidad—and I never encountered many of them, so to see a whole white family on the screen had something to do with my ventures in the U.S.. My inscription as to what the West was supposed to be and what I desire of the West... I think I had some sense that the British were ruling this small white population who had the money; the Trinidadians are made up of half Blacks and half East Indians, plus a small population of Chinese; most Asian immigrants opened this kind of small shop. I think they left during the black power movement in the 70s. They were the obvious target, not the whites who ran the big businesses.

— Robert Wise, director of *The Sound of Music*.

1965 was a volatile year in the US and throughout the world. Newspapers carried headlines of the war in Vietnam, a cultural revolution was beginning to spread throughout the country, and people needed old-fashioned ideals to hold on to. The movie-going public was ready, possibly even eager, for a film like this. Besides an outstanding score and an excellent cast, it had a heartwarming story, good humor, someone to love and someone to hate and seven adorable children.

In a way *The Sound of Music* was my primer to 'whiteness', which took shape in my fantasy, since it didn't relate to real life in Trinidad—the white family being the epitome of wealth and innocence; the U.S. meant this abundance of naiveness and innocence in white culture. I went through a lot of the psychic trauma I embody; wanting to be white, and so on... If you are 'outside', you look for a way to slip inside. Coming from the Caribbean I didn't know what my natural color would be, because I am part Chinese, part Indian. In California it's tropical, and I would naturally be dark. But every time I saw images of myself over there, all of a sudden this image of myself would become this strange other. In Trinidad I even saw images of myself and yet I never thought of myself as dark or light. But then living in Los Angeles I suddenly became a dark person and my reaction was to try to erase the color, literally erase it. In an installation ('New World Plantation' 1991) I attempted to draw an analogy

43

The only scene left to do was "You Are Sixteen." "They made special dance shoes [for the number]," Carr told the Fox publicist, "and they forgot to put the rubber on the heels so I wouldn't slip. I did a step where I jump up on the bench, turn around and kick, and instead of turning and kicking, my feet slipped and I went right through a windowpane and flopped on the floor.

44

between erasure of ones identity through a kind of self-destruction with the erasure of what the U.S. constructs as their 'other', which happened to be at that time the bombing of Iraq. Doing that piece I realized that only then did I really come to terms with the fact that this is a kind of self-hatred—things are circulating in my head all the time. To come to terms with the stereotypes in the imaginary.

My reverse 'passage' through the retelling of the event of *The Sound of Music* becomes my criticality. In retelling its whiteness as it unfolds on the white screen, I became one with the film, but hybrid in its dissemi-nation: Julie Andrews is African, Indian, Chinese, etc. The film in the colonies became a hybrid space.

Because of the historical erasure within a colonial context it is necessary to go through a mimetic passage to find a reversal in that situation. I had to embody the West to pervade its psychic makeup in how it presented itself. This incorporated camouflage to the extent that I wanted to be white, and since I lacked the tools, I thought maybe I could achieve this by losing my skin color, losing my culture. Often the only way to relate to that dominant culture is by becoming that culture, but this leaves you always as the 'other' within that dominant culture; the criticality slips in at a point where mimesis comes so close in its proximity to the mirror, that it starts to reverse...

— *Parodying that dominant culture could inhere a certain critical reversal?*

What you consider critical may well not be the culture's criticality, because it is very real for this culture; people involved in such a situation are already inscribed in it. To what extent mimesis is authenticity, we don't really know, because it's playing on both...

— *Isn't the West very much a heterogenous construction itself, where its so-called authenticity contains a constant appropriation (and mimesis) of other cultures...*

...even if the West is completely constructed, we don't really know exactly what is constructed. We're able to put it on that level to shift the boundaries, its inscription in nature. Masquerade plays the stereotype out against its representation, because reality is something that slips away, since it's never what it is; that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.

But still, with the blur of memory and 'nostalgia', it is very hard to look at *The Sound of Music* from a critical distance. It was the very first movie I saw and I don't know how pervasive it is within my psyche, despite the critical theory I have at hand. In fact every time I hear the music or see bits of the movie by accident, it's as though I go blank and I go back into my childhood. Fortunately or unfortunately this movie is like the strongest memory of my childhood. Strange...

Memories of my childhood would come through my photographs, but mostly it is inscribed in this movie. Even now I have difficulties talking about it, it was something that was there, that happened to me. Parts of the film play back in my mind constantly: the scene with the puppets, 'Edelweiss'... I remember the film back to back.

— *How did you read into the Nazi-story of 'The Sound of Music' back in Trinidad?* Because I didn't have any relationship to fascism I didn't really know what enemy they were fighting. There were simply the good ones and the bad ones. American Hollywood. I saw it literally in black and white.

— *You mentioned visiting Austria; back in the mountains memories would blur with reality...*

In 1989 I had an exhibition in Linz; it was winter though, so it looked different than the hills in the film which looked green and lush, full of life. It was very snowy. Actually I was on top of a mountain, but I didn't quite get to the point where I would spread my arms and would spin around like a helicopter and start singing 'The hills are alive...' I imagined myself doing that though. Strange... I had always conceived the film in terms of a British-American thing, never of being set in Austria.

— *Hollywood's ethnographic gaze of Austria?*

Eventually my stereotype of Austria would be through the film, Austria would equate

with the only images that were so strongly engrained in my memory. The film would be the first encounter with the imaginary as it is constructed by the colonies about the West and the way the West wanted the colonies to construct the West. I imagined also Austria within those terms, in going to the Austrian mountains my only reference came to be *The Sound of Music*. My first relation to historical fascism would be through this film, what I know of the World War as it's been told in this country about Austria and Germany. I was interested in the fact that Linz was the city where Hitler went to artschool, wanting to make it the capital of Austria.

* Todd Ayoung is an artist living and working in New York City; his most recent project is called "Western Civ., or Balls of History," 1994

45

Onome Ekeh*: 'PREPACKAGED'

— *Well, 'The Sound of Music'...*

I've seen it about more than 300 times, over a period of 10 to 12 years. I saw it almost every other day. At least I wanted to sing like Julie Andrews; the first times I watched it I was humming 'My Favourite Things' all week...

— *Can you still recall the impressions you had seeing the film for the very first time?* 1977. We just had moved to the university-campus in Ibadan (the largest city in Nigeria). There was a staff club where they had these family movies every friday night and it was the first thing I watched there... it was across a pool, there were barbecues and everything. It was one of the most incredible things I had ever seen.

— *You had seen films before?*

Yes, but this one was on an enormous screen, like one of those IMAX screens. You could see the reflection of the pool; sometimes I had the habit of watching the reflection in the pool. I'd squint my eyes, so I would see a double image of that palace in the water. I nearly drowned once in that pool! Chlorine...

— *What about the 300 other times you watched it?*

Then the VCR revolution hit Nigeria; '78/'79 we got our first videomachine. In Nigeria: the very first movie you saw on the VCR was either *The King and I* or *The Sound of Music*. Most of the time *The Sound of Music*, because it was given for free with the electronic equipment as part of the video cassette recorder package. It was The Number 1 movie, all that singing plus all that nice Austrian plushness; very appealing... You could see it everywhere you went. And if you didn't have the film, somebody would definitely give a copied version to you. People would have these big borrowing systems—my cousin had an enormous beehive collection of videos: over 500 titles. They would borrow from you and never return the tape and at the end you had to borrow from them.

Picture this: summer vacation, and there are enough cousins staying over to form a football team, they're playing soccer all morning, come back in about noon—video time. They're watching *Fist of Fury* or some other Kung Fu stuff that our parents didn't approve of. The living room is a big mess and 13 sweaty boys are egging on Bruce Lee, suddenly we hear my mother's car pull into the driveway! The living room is somehow thrown back into place, the boys adopt civilised postures, and the *Sound of Music* is slipped in. My mom comes in about to make a fuss about the mess, but instead she's distracted by 'Edelweiss' and ends up watching the whole thing, again, with

In 1988 Myra Franklin, a 47-year-old widow from Wales, was listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* having seen *The Sound of Music* 940 times.

According to *Billboard* magazine, *Music* has had the longest run as a bestseller in video history! The video has been on *Billboard*'s Top 40 Video Sales chart for more than 250 weeks, longer than *Jane fonda's Workout* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

INTERVIEW WITH JULIE ANDREWS

everybody. We never got tired of it; they probably still love it. You know it's like part of the landscape of my past, my childhood.

I saw an incredible amount of movies growing up in Nigeria, thanks to video-piracy! Hollywood epics, obscure European stuff recorded off TV, Indian movies, Kung Fu flicks... Copyright laws ceased immediately they were on Nigerian soil. At "Video Rentals" you wouldn't rent, what you actually did was take in blank tapes to make recordings from the master.

When Heather Menzies (who played Louisa) appeared in the movies, she wanted to publicize the fact that she was finally breaking away from her *Sound of Music* image and accepting more adult roles. In August 1973, she posed nude for Playboy.

Once I went to my mother's family, one of the many times we were watching it—they were complaining about Julie Andrews's ugly clothes, her brand of blandness, her bad haircut... I was devastated... I was like... saying no no no, she's supposed to be the heroine. The Cinderella. But they just loved the baroness Schreider or Schneider, Schraeder?

— *Why would they be particularly attracted to the baroness instead of the Julie Andrews character; was there any culture-specific reading to it in terms of family life in Nigeria?*

She was rich, she was beautiful, independent, sensual, sophisticated, she realized what she wanted. They totally approved the way she went after the captain! And they understood the fact that she would have to send the children away to the boarding school, because in Nigeria you don't want other people messing up your own share of things. It's this big extended family thing in Nigeria, it has its plus side, but generally there's a lot of pettiness and jealousy going on. No one wants some upstart coming into their homes, some nun or some housegirl like Julie Andrews coming in, taking their man. They completely identified with this baroness.

As I grew older I started to identify with her too, but rather with the schemey-ness of the baroness, she was like a pre-Joan Collins in *Dynasty*, whom I really loved.

Julie Andrews was tricked by family values: the American dream. The captain and the seven children—a perfect pre-packaged family. Doesn't it sound like the Immaculate Conception? She abandons all those females and she achieves a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood—virginity intact. It's quite clearly implied by now that she never has sex with the Captain... too air-brushed; though, for some, she impersonates the ultimate dyke...

That whole *Sound of Music* is like a big Coming-Out story for everybody in that movie. Julie comes out of a convent, a whole single-sex system, the captain is coming out of this all male military thing. The kids are pretty much cloistered. Next they're going out into the Alps towards Switzerland (Italy), because Austria has been invaded that after high school you get married," said Karath, "and we were just too young."

But there was one marriage that began on location of *The Sound of Music* and is still going strong. "Everyone saw Saul and Betty's romance developing" said Pia Arnold. "The whole company saw them fall in love, I think before they even saw it. They were both shy in realizing what was happening to them. But we saw the intensity of their feelings." Saul and Betty spent all their free time in Salzburg together, and four years later they married.

— *After having seen the film so many times, what would you remember as your favourite scene?*

The scene with the pink lemonade always fascinated me, with Baroness von Schraeder and the guy Max, I always loved him, he was a kind of smarmy Clark Gable type of man... and there is Christopher Plummer... you know he hated the movie! He never approved of it...

The pink lemonade! I always thought there was something hidden in the meaning of the lemonade. The too-pinkness of it, the tartness. The sharp and the sweet.

— *How did you relate to the landscape presented in the film, did it look familiar to your everyday environment?*

Well, we travelled a lot. That whole landscape became part of my childhood imagination—kind of grew up with that fantasy landscape.

— *You didn't relate to the film with a sense of your difference towards an all white cast in 'The Sound the Music'?*

Not really, at that time I probably thought I was still white. I was a kid with an American accent, so people in Nigeria always asked me if my mother was (Black) American. I think it had to do with being transplanted from one culture to the other. I was born in the U.S., and went back to Nigeria at the age of seven. So a lot of my mind was pretty much gelled by then, my impressions of the world. I was an American kid who was slowly Nigerianized. In fact I didn't really realize that I was black till I was about 9 years old, when the whole South African thing blew (Apartheid). This had to do with TV. I used to have all these fantasies, even within my dreams I found out that my persona was a white character in my dreams. That I had red hair and green eyes, kind of like Julie Andrews.

As I got older I was constantly reminded of the depth of my skin color... People in Nigeria would tell me I was too dark. During one occasion I had to get sponsors to raise money. With two of my friends I went to this guy who owned an airline company, Flash Airlines, and a football team called Flash United. He liked my friends because they were lighter skinned, but he was pointing at me—"You, you are too black—got out this bleaching cream of his desk (from all places Harrods in London) and he said I should use it with sandpaper. I was horrified, and I thought: 'Keep your loot, moron...' I got hassled a lot because I was darker than most people. Most of the people of my generation having been acquainted with the likes of Janet Jackson; the hacked off ribs, the sawed down nasal cartilage, their ideal is more like...

— *Julie Andrews?*

No, more the baroness Von Schraeder, she's more the glam poster girl... I'm sort of grateful for the whole alienation process of growing up. One fine day I found myself in Nigeria. I thought it was a vacation and I asked my mother when we were going back home: she said *We are home*. Uprooted. Displaced. Besides I had been promised we'd go back to Disneyland for my birthday. My birthday came and went. I was still in Nigeria and we didn't go to Disneyland. For years I could never wholly assimilate into the cultural landscape of Nigeria. I realised I wasn't fully Nigerian. I wasn't really Nigerian so I must be American. I get here and discover I'm not American either. I thought: 'No, Disneyland is not for me, really heartbreaking! Most importantly I realised I didn't have to be one or the other...

— *What about the Nigerian broadcast system; were there any important Nigerian filmmakers at that time?*

There are quite a number of prestigious ones; they were kind of syncretic, meshed together. You had Nigerian sitcoms, which were immensely popular—more so than American ones. The British productions were not half as popular as American ones which were so much more glamourous. No one was really into the British working class thing.... They would identify with Hollywood glitter, the gloss, the plush, ecetera...

— *Making a film yourself now, wouldn't remnants of 'The Sound of Music' slip into the whole thing?*

In a sense. The whole thrust of my work now is iconoclastic, at least concerning the standards I was raised with. There was a shift in my overall sensibility towards the constructed narratives of my childhood; no longer did I identify with the princess in *Sleeping Beauty*, but rather Carabosse—the "bad fairy", excluded from the ceremony because she perpetually wore black. In *Snow White*, my empathies were with the Wicked Witch Queen, who (at least in the Disney version) was reminiscent of Grace Jones... I guess with *The Sound of Music* the sort of connections I'd make now in my work would be the inverse, Maria = Joan of Arc and Herr Capitan = Giles de Rais, who goes down in legend as The Lord Blue Beard...

— *Did you ever rent 'The Sound of Music' again once back here in the U.S.?*

Never. I did once see fragments of it again when a friend bought it for her daughter—the first time since years. I didn't want to watch it. It's frightening: I had watched it too many times. How in the world did I relate! It's like a foreign country now.

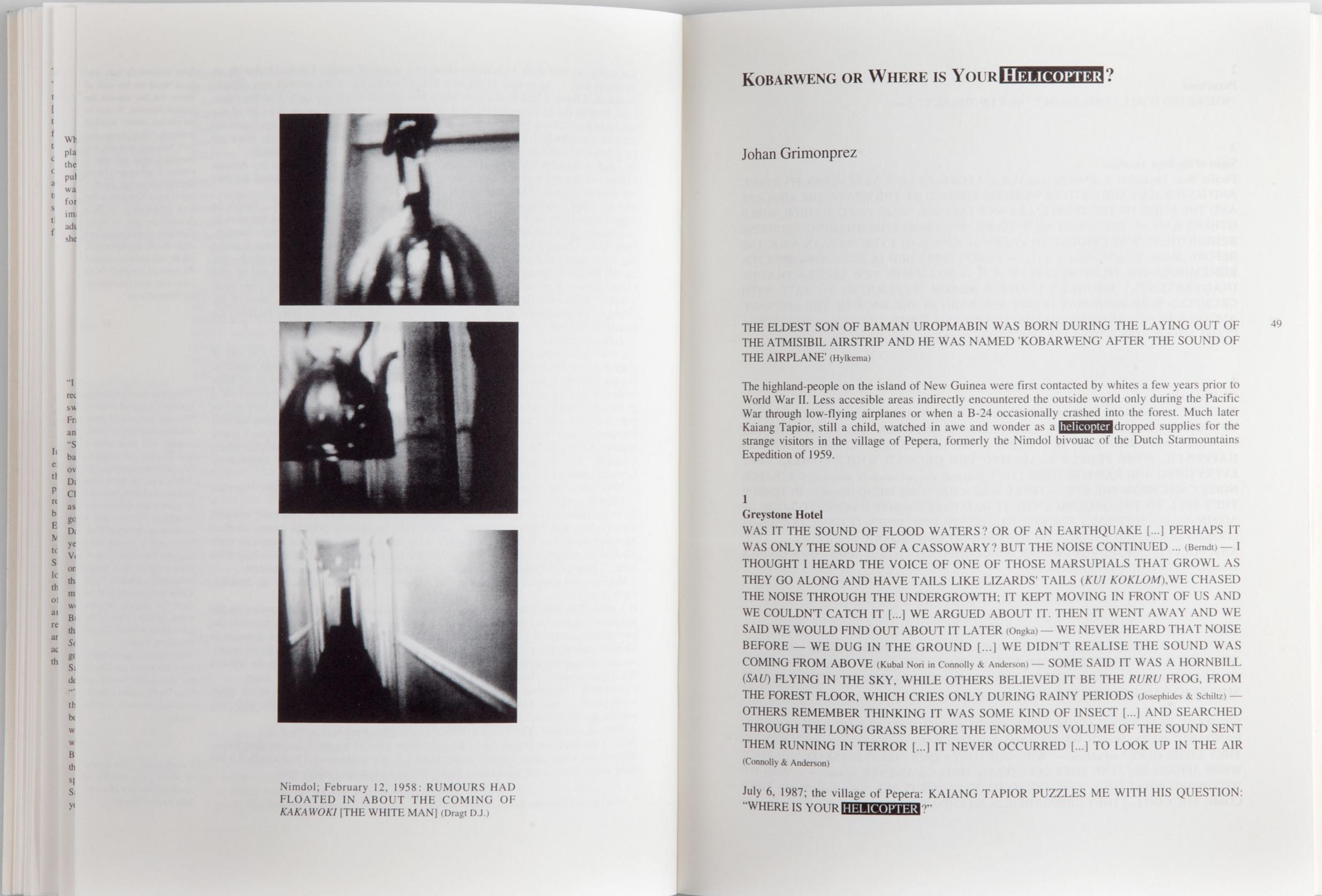
* Oneme Ekeh is a filmmaker living in New York City.

Julie Andrews's hair was dyed blond for her role of Maria, but that was not the original intention. "I came in for the hair tests," recalled Andrews. "They always test your hair and makeup and wardrobe when you start a picture. I had natural blond highlights in my hair, but they said it was a little dark at the back of the neck. So they decided to put in more highlights to give it a blond effect. But the highlights bled, and my hair came out orange! We were all mortified! So to cover it up, they bleached my hair blond all over."

47

"Chris and I were standing very close," explained Andrews. "We were face to face, about an inch away from each other, looking into each other's eyes. We were just getting to the point where we would say 'I love you,' or we'd start kissing... and then those old arc lights would let out a loud 'raspberry'! It was like a comment on our scene! Well, Chris and I would start laughing. We couldn't help it. Then we'd go back to the scene again, and those lights would start groaning at us again! Our giggling got even worse. In fact, it got to the point where we couldn't get through the scene!" After almost a dozen takes, there still wasn't any film of the kiss worth saving, so Wise finally called a break, sending everyone out for lunch.

Excerpts from *The Sound of Music, the Making of America's Favorite Movie* by Julia Antopol Hirsch.



KOBARWENG OR WHERE IS YOUR HELICOPTER?

Johan Grimonprez

THE ELDEST SON OF BAMAN UROPMABIN WAS BORN DURING THE LAYING OUT OF THE ATMISIBIL AIRSTRIP AND HE WAS NAMED 'KOBARWENG' AFTER 'THE SOUND OF THE AIRPLANE' (Hylkema)

49

The highland-people on the island of New Guinea were first contacted by whites a few years prior to World War II. Less accessible areas indirectly encountered the outside world only during the Pacific War through low-flying airplanes or when a B-24 occasionally crashed into the forest. Much later Kaiang Tapior, still a child, watched in awe and wonder as a **helicopter** dropped supplies for the strange visitors in the village of Pepera, formerly the Nimdol bivouac of the Dutch Starmountains Expedition of 1959.

1

Greystone Hotel

WAS IT THE SOUND OF FLOOD WATERS? OR OF AN EARTHQUAKE [...] PERHAPS IT WAS ONLY THE SOUND OF A CASSOWARY? BUT THE NOISE CONTINUED ... (Bennet) — I THOUGHT I HEARD THE VOICE OF ONE OF THOSE MARSUPIALS THAT GROWL AS THEY GO ALONG AND HAVE TAILS LIKE LIZARDS' TAILS (*KUI KOKLOM*), WE CHASED THE NOISE THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH; IT KEPT MOVING IN FRONT OF US AND WE COULDN'T CATCH IT [...] WE ARGUED ABOUT IT. THEN IT WENT AWAY AND WE SAID WE WOULD FIND OUT ABOUT IT LATER (Ongka) — WE NEVER HEARD THAT NOISE BEFORE — WE DUG IN THE GROUND [...] WE DIDN'T REALISE THE SOUND WAS COMING FROM ABOVE (Kubal Nori in Connolly & Anderson) — SOME SAID IT WAS A HORNBILL (*SAU*) FLYING IN THE SKY, WHILE OTHERS BELIEVED IT BE THE *RURU* FROG, FROM THE FOREST FLOOR, WHICH CRIES ONLY DURING RAINY PERIODS (Josephides & Schiltz) — OTHERS REMEMBER THINKING IT WAS SOME KIND OF INSECT [...] AND SEARCHED THROUGH THE LONG GRASS BEFORE THE ENORMOUS VOLUME OF THE SOUND SENT THEM RUNNING IN TERROR [...] IT NEVER OCCURRED [...] TO LOOK UP IN THE AIR (Connolly & Anderson)

July 6, 1987; the village of Pepera: KAIANG TAPIOR PUZZLES ME WITH HIS QUESTION: "WHERE IS YOUR **HELICOPTER**?"

Nimdol; February 12, 1958: RUMOURS HAD FLOATED IN ABOUT THE COMING OF KAKAWOKI [THE WHITE MAN] (Dragt D.J.)

2

Parachute

"WHERE DID IT ALL COME FROM?" "OUT OF THE SKY" (Stow)

Wh
play
the
pub
was
for
ima
adu
she

50

3

Sight of the first Airplane

Pacific War; December 2, 1944; Balem Valley: I FLEW AS LOW AS SEVENTY-FIVE FEET, AND NATURALLY THE NATIVES WERE TERRORIZED BY THE SIZE OF THE AIRPLANE AND THE NOISE OF THE PROPELLERS AND ENGINES. SOME TRIED TO HIDE, WHILE OTHERS RAN AT TOP SPEED AS IF TO ESCAPE FROM THIS ROARING AIRBORNE BEHEMOTH. IT WAS EVIDENT THAT FEW IF ANY HAD EVER SEEN AN AIRPLANE BEFORE (Rhoades, Flying MacArthur to victory) — [THEY] INDULGED IN BUZZ JOBS. SHELTON REMEMBERS ONE PILOT WHO FLEW A B-24 SO LOW IN NEW GUINEA THAT HE INADVERTENTLY BOUNCED IT OFF A BEACH, RETURNING TO BASE WITH CRUMPLED REAR-BOMB-BAY DOORS AND SAND IN THE BACK OF THE AIRCRAFT. ANOTHER PILOT LANDED WITH SHREDS OF PALM FONDS LODGED INSIDE FROM A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A COCONUT TREE (Sheehan)

4

Ok Bon Valley

THEN WE LOOKED UP AND SAW IT WAS IN THE SKY AND WE SAID IT'S A KIND OF WITHCHCRAFT (kum)' [...] SOME SAID IT WAS A THUNDERCLAP GONE MAD AND COME DOWN FROM THE SKY (Ongka) — WE JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED. SOME PEOPLE SEARCHED THE GROUND WHILE OTHERS LEFT EVERYTHING AND RAN FOR THEIR LIVES (Nopornga Mare in Connolly & Anderson) — STRANGE NOISE CAME FROM THE SKY — THERE WAS A BIG SOMETHING (Berndt) — IN TERROR THEY FELL TO THE GROUND UNTIL IT HAD PASSED, NOT DARING TO LOOK UP AGAIN (Berndt) - SUDDENLY IT CAME FASTER LOUDER! WHEN IT CAME CLOSER, IT LOOKED HUGE, AND WE FELL TO THE GROUND AND HID OUR FACES. WE WETTED AND FOULED OURSELVES IN FEAR AND CONFUSION (Kentiga Anup Kwimbe in Connolly & Anderson) — IT COMES, IT GOES (Blackburn)

5

Kettle

THEY [THE WHITE PEOPLE] SMELT SO DIFFERENTLY (Gavey Akamo in Connolly & Anderson) — WE CALLED [THE WHITES] SEBRIK, WHICH MEANS 'DIFFERENT SMELL' OR 'SMELL OF SOAP' (Amusep in Morren) — THEIR SKIN MIGHT BE DIFFERENT, BUT THEIR SHIT SMELLS BAD LIKE OURS [THEY SAID] (Kirupano in Connolly & Anderson)

WE WERE RETURNING FROM THE FOREST, AFTER COLLECTING AND COOKING PANDANUS NUTS, WHEN WE MET WITH THOSE WHITES (Enjap in Sillitoe) — 'WHY DO THEY COME HERE?' (Blackburn) — WHY DID THEY COME? PEOPLE ASKED AND THEY WERE AFRAID BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT FIND AN ANSWER (Berndt) — ... AND WE WONDERED WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO DO IN OUR PLACE (Mokey Wanip Wan) — THEY COME, THEY GO [...] THEY BRING THEIR SOMETHINGS (Dipapa in the Visitants)

6

Greenhouse

OUR ANCESTORS AND THEIR ANCESTORS CAME HERE TOGETHER IN TWO FLYING MACHINES. THEY CRASHED AT ODAKINA (Stow)

THEY WERE VISITORS (Worsley) — 'FIRST THE DUTCH CAME, THEN THE JAPANESE, THEN THE AMERICANS, THEN THE DUTCH RETURNED AND NOW THE INDONESIANS HAVE COME' (Elder from Dosal)

ON JUNE 14 [THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION] KEPT AN ANXIOUS LOOK-OUT, BUT NO HELICOPTER CAME, NOR ON THE 15th — JUNE 17. LOOKING WESTWARD TO SEE THE LONG-AWAITED HELICOPTER (Brongersma & Venema)

Nimadol, June 1959: GEOLOGISTS, BIOLOGISTS & ANTHROPOLOGISTS "DROPPED" FROM THE SKY [...] [PEOPLE FROM THE REGION] HAD HEARD THE NOISE, AND, STANDING AT A SAFE DISTANCE OBSERVED THE STRANGE PROCEEDINGS WITH GREAT INTEREST (Brongersma & Venema, Starmountains Expedition) — June 18, 1959: WE HAD SEEN NOTHING LIKE IT BEFORE — ALL THE WOMEN PISSED IN FEAR WHEN THE HELICOPTER CIRCLED FROM THE SKY (Kaing Tapior; 1987, village of Pepera, formerly Nimadol Bivouac)

51

[THEY ARE] MAKING HOUSES AND TAKING THEM DOWN AGAIN AS THEY COME [...] COME TO SEE US AND GO (Makwes & Waeb in Sillitoe)

WE NEVER TELL EVERYTHING, WE ALWAYS KEEP SOMETHING FOR THE NEXT ANTHROPOLOGIST (Informant to Mead)

7

First Encounter

Nimadol; February 12, 1958: RUMOURS HAD FLOATED IN ABOUT THE COMING OF KAKAWOKI [THE WHITE MAN] [...] MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN RAN OUT TO SEE (Dragt)

MEMBERS OF ANOTHER VILLAGE WERE ANGRILY PROTESTING THAT SULULIB ALREADY HAD TWO ANTHROPOLOGISTS (Feld)

8

Layout of the airstrip and the arrival of the first airstrip

July 10, 1987: HERE I WANT TO LAY OUT THE AIRSTRIP (Kaing Tapior) - Oksibil, 1958: OVER AN AREA OF 600 BY 30 YARDS OF THE SURFACE LAYER OF PEAT WAS DUG OUT (Brongersma & Venema; layout of the expedition airstrip) — Miyanmin area, 1965: [AMUSEP BEGAN HACKING DOWN HUNDREDS OF BIG JUNGLE TREES TO BUILD AN AIRSTRIP. THE RUNWAY WAS DISCOVERED BY ACCIDENT] (Morren)

THE HARD ROAR [...] FILLED THE SKY WITH A STRANGE NEW SOUND (McCarthy) — [...] CROWDS OF PEOPLE GATHERED [...] PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE. AND THERE IT WAS, WAITING FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE A LOOK [...] IT WAS A PRETTY THING AND SHINING (Ndika Rumint in Connolly & Anderson) — THEY ALL LOOKED AT IT. THEY HAD SEEN NOTHING LIKE IT BEFORE (Blackburn)

Goodenough Island, prior to World War II: AN OLD MAN [KUYAUNA] IS SAID TO HAVE SUMMONED ALL KWAIAUDILI PEOPLE TO GALUWATA. HE PROPHESIED THE COMING OF [...] AIRPLANES AND GUNS (Young) — Yabob village, Madang 1942: SO VERY SOON, TAGARAB TAUGHT, KILILOB WAS RETURNING TO DRIVE OUT THE WHITES (Trompf/Lawrence) — WE ARE VERY NEAR. WE MAY COME TOMORROW. WE ARE COMING WITH TRUCKS & SHOTGUNS & BOMBS (Kulua'ibu in Stow) — Biak 1938-1943: JAN RONSUMBRE BUILT [...] AN ENORMOUS LARGE HOUSE IN THE SHAPE OF AN AIRPLANE (Kamma) — Tanna: [NELOIAG] PLANNED THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN AERODROME (Steinbauer) — Madang district: DATES WERE ANNOUNCED, AIRSTRIPS WERE LAID OUT (Lawrence) — PEOPLE LIVED IN DAILY ANTICIPATION OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE CARGO (Worsley)

9

Cargo

... HE MISTOOK THE GROUNDLIGHTS FOR STARS AND ASKED WHY THE AIRPLANE WAS FLYING UPSIDE DOWN (Chatwin)

52

Sambia-Valley, 1979: WHERE HAVE YOU COME FROM? WHERE HAVE YOU COME FROM? HOW HAS HE COME HERE? ... I SAW THE **HELICOPTER** FROM DOWN THERE (Sakulambei in Herdt & Stoller) — THE ANCESTORS FLED (Yamsep Filim; Ok Tedi, June 1985)

Hollandia; Pacific War, August 1944: BULLDOZERS, REFRIGERATORS, 400,000 TROOPS, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF CARGO & 200 OPEN AIR CINEMAS DESCENDED FROM THE SKY - Biak: WHEN THE [...] AIRPLANES CAME GLIDING ALONG LIKE BLACK CLOUDS, NO ONE COULD TAKE IT IN [...] IT BEGAN AT NIGHT, WHEN THE AIRPLANES DROPPED FLARES. THE BRIGHT COLORS FOLLOWED BY HEAVY EXPLOSIONS [...] THE WHOLE ISLAND BECAME ONE BIG WAREHOUSE AND THE BIAK PEOPLE IN THEIR FIRST ASTONISHMENT, SHOUTED THEMSELVES HOARSE (Kamma)

[...] 'IT IS OUR ANCESTORS, IT IS CARGO', THEN THEIR CARGO WENT BANG INTO THEIR FACES (Osana in Stow)

10

Visitors

MY HOUSE IS ECHOING WITH THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE VISITOR; MY HOUSE IS BLEEDING TO DEATH (Osana in Stow)

Shortly after the Dutch expedition left, the Indonesian army annexed the area (1962-65). The village of Nimadol was renamed Pepera, ironically the acronym for "the Determination of the People's Opinion".

President Kennedy feared the Communist leanings of Sukarno, Indonesia's President. Preventing this, he convinced the UN to consign the territory of Western New Guinea under protection of Indonesia. West-Papua was never consulted and represented in the UN. A secessionist guerrilla war has been going on, hidden away from the outside world.

Certain names of the persons & places have been changed to protect the privacy of those concerned.
Based on a research in the village of Pepera, Irian Jaya, Indonesia 1986-87.
Written & researched by Johan Grimonprez.

KOBARWENG OU OÙ EST TON **HÉLICOPTÈRE**?

Johan Grimonprez

LE FILS AÎNÉ DE BAMAN UROPMABIN EST NÉ DURANT LA CONCEPTION DE LA PISTE D'ATERRISSAGE D'ATMISIBIL ET IL A ÉTÉ NOMMÉ "KOBARWENG" d'après "LE BRUIT DE L'AVION" (Hylkema)

53

Les peuples des hautes plaines de l'île de Nouvelle Guinée furent pour la première fois en contact avec l'homme blanc quelques années avant la deuxième guerre mondiale. Les régions les moins accessibles rencontrèrent indirectement le monde extérieur durant la guerre du Pacifique lorsqu'un avion faisait du rase-mottes ou lorsqu'un bombardier B-24 s'écrasait dans la forêt. Bien plus tard Kaiang Tapior, encore enfant, faisait le guet avec crainte et étonnement, lorsqu'un **hélicoptère** déchargea des provisions pour les étranges visiteurs du village de Pepera, anciennement bivouac Nimadol de l'expédition hollandaise Starmountains de 1959.

1

Hôtel Greystone

ÉTAIT-CE LE BRUIT D'UNE INONDATION? OU D'UN TREMBLEMENT DE TERRE [...] PEUT-ÊTRE ÉTAIT-CE SIMPLEMENT LE CRI D'UN CASOAR? POURTANT LE BRUIT CONTINU... (Berndt) — J'AI CRU ENTENDRE LE CRI DE L'UN DE CES MARSUPIAUX QUI GRONDE QUAND IL MARCHE ET QUI A UNE QUEUE COMME UNE QUEUE DE LEZARD (*Kui kuklom*), NOUS AVONS POURCHASSE LE BRUIT A TRAVERS LE SOUS-BOIS ; IL NE CESSAIT DE SE DÉPLACER EN FACE DE NOUS ET NOUS NE POUVIONS L'ATTRAPER [...] NOUS EN AVONS DISCUITÉ. PUIS IL A DISPARU ET NOUS AVONS DIT QUE NOUS PRENDRIIONS DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PLUS TARD (Ongka) — NOUS N'AVIONS JAMAIS ENTENDU CE BRUIT auparavant — NOUS AVONS CREUSÉ LE SOL [...] NOUS N'AVIONS PAS RÉALISÉ QUE LE SON VENAIT D'AU DESSUS DE NOUS (Kubal Nori in Connolly & Anderson) — CERTAINS PRÉTENDIRENT QU'IL S'AGISSAIT D'UN CALAO (*sau*) VOLANT DANS LE CIEL, PENDANT QUE D'AUTRES CROYAIENT QUE C'ÉTAIT LA GRENOUILLE RURU, QUI VIT DANS LA TERRE DE LA FORÊT, ET QUI NE CRIE QUE PENDANT LES PÉRIODES DE PLUIE (Josephides & Schiltz) — D'AUTRES CROYAIENT SE RAPPELER QU'IL S'AGISSAIT D'UNE SORTE D'INSECTE [...] ET CHERCHERENT DANS LES GRANDES HERBES AVANT QUE L'ÉNORME VOLUME SONORE NE LES FASSENT FUIR DE TERREUR [...] PERSONNE NE Pensa [...] À REGARDER VERS LE CIEL (Connolly & Anderson)

6 Juillet 1987; village de Pepera: KAIANG TAPIOR M'INTRIGUA AVEC CETTE QUESTION: "OÙ EST TON **HÉLICOPTÈRE**?"

2

Parachute

"D'OU VENAIT TOUT CELA ?" "TOMBÉ DU CIEL" (Stow)

3

Vue du premier avion

Guerre du Pacifique; 2 Décembre 1944; Vallée Baliem: JE VOLAIS À MOINS DE SOIXANTE-QUINZE PIEDS, ET NATURELLEMENT LES INDIGÈNES ÉTAIENT TERRORISÉS PAR LA TAILLE DE L'AVION, LE BRUIT DES HÉLICES ET DES MACHINES. CERTAINS TENTÈRENT DE SE CACHER, PENDANT QUE D'AUTRES COURRAIENT À TOUTE VITESSE COMME POUR ÉCHAPPER À CE MONSTRE GRONDANT VENU DU CIEL. IL SEMBLAIT ÉVIDENT QUE TRÈS PEU VOIRE AUCUN D'ENTRE EUX N'AVAIT VU UN AVION AUPARAVANT (Rhoades, En volant avec Mac Arthur vers la victoire) — (ILS) VOLAIENT EN RASE MOTTES. SHELTON SE RAPPELLE D'UN PILOTE DE B-24 EN NOUVELLE GUINÉE QUI VOLAIT SI BAS QU'IL PERCUTA PAR INADVERTANCE UNE PLAGE, ET RETOURNA À LA BASE AVEC SA TRAPPE DE BOMBARDEMENT FROISSÉE ET DU SABLE À L'ARRIÈRE DE L'APPAREIL. UN AUTRE PILOTE ATTERRISSA avec DES LAMBEAUX DE PALMES AFFECTUEUSEMENT LOGÉES DANS L'HABITACLE, SOUVENIR D'UNE BRÈVE RENCONTRE AVEC UN PALMIER (Sheehan).

54

55

4

Vallée Ok Bon

ENSUITE NOUS AVONS LEVÉ LES YEUX ET VU QUE CELA (*kum*) VENAIT DU CIEL NOUS AVONS DIT QUE "CELÀ" N'ÉTAIT QU'UNE FORME DE SORCELLERIE. [...] CERTAINS DIRENT QUE C'ÉTAIT UN COUP DE TONNERRE DEVENU FOU QUI DEGRINGOLAIS DU CIEL (Ongka) — NOUS NE SAVIONS SIMPLEMENT PAS CE QUI C'ÉTAIT PASSÉ. CERTAINES PERSONNES FOUILLAIENT LA TERRE PENDANT QUE D'AUTRES AVAIENT TOUT QUITTÉ PRÉCIPITEMMENT ET COURRAIENT POUR SAUVER LEUR VIES. (Nopornga Mare in Connolly & Anderson)

UN BRUIT ÉTRANGE VENAIT DU CIEL- C'ÉTAIT UN GROS QUELQUECHOSE (Berndt) - DE TERREUR ILS SE JETTÈRENT AU SOL UNE FOIS QUE CELA EU PASSÉ, N'OSÈRENT PAS RELEVER LES YEUX AU CIEL (Berndt) — SOUDAIN CELA VENAIT PLUS VITE PLUS FORT! TANDIS QUE CELA SE RAPPROCHAIT CELA SEMBLAIT DE PLUS EN PLUS ÉNORME, NOUS NOUS SOMMES JETTÉS AU SOL ET AVONS CACHÉ NOS VISAGES. NOUS NOUS SOMMES MOUILLÉS ET SOUILLÉS DE PEUR ET DE CONFUSION (Kentiga Anup Kwimbe in Connolly & Anderson) — CELA VENAIT, CELA PARTAIT (Blackburn)

5

Bouilloire

ILS (LES HOMMES BLANCS) SENTAIENT SI DIFFÉREMENT — (Gavey Akamo in Connolly & Anderson) — NOUS LES AVONS APPELÉS (LES BLANCS) SEBRI, CE QUI SIGNIFIE "ODEUR DIFFÉRENTE" OU "ODEUR DE SOUPE" (Amusep in Morren) — [...] MAIS LEUR MERDE SENT COMME LA NOTRE (DISENT-ILS) (Kirupano in Connolly & Anderson) NOUS REVENIONS DE LA FORÊT, APRÈS AVOIR RAMASSÉ ET CUISINÉ DES NOIX PANDANUS, LORSQUE NOUS AVONS RENCONTRÉ CES BLANCS (Enjap in Sillitoe) — "POURQUOI VIENNENT-ILS ICI?" (Blackburn) - POURQUOI SONT-ILS VENUS? LES GENS SE SONT POSÉ LA QUESTION PUIS ILS EURENT PEUR PARCE QU'ILS NE POUVAIENT PAS

W
pl
th
pu
w;
fo
in
ad
sh"I
re
sv
Fr
ar
"S
ba
os
D
C
as
gc
D
ye
V
or
th
m
w
B
th
Se
gc
Si
de
"J
th
be
w
wl
Bu
th
sp
Sa
ye

TROUVER DE RÉPONSE (Berndt) — ... ET NOUS NOUS DEMANDIONS CE QU'ILS FERAIENT À NOTRE PLACE (Moeki Wanip Wan) — ILS VIENNENT, ILS PARTENT [...] ILS EMPORTENT LEURS "QUELQUE CHOSE" (Dipapa in the Visitants)

6

Maison verte

NOS ANCÈTRES ET LEURS ANCÈTRES SONT VENUS ICI ENSEMBLE DANS DEUX MACHINES VOLANTES. ILS SE SONT ÉCRASÉ À ODAKINA (Stow)

ILS ÉTAIENT VISITEURS (Worsley) — "D'ABORD LES HOLLANDAIS SONT VENUS, PUIS LES JAPONAIS, ENSUITE LES AMÉRICAINS, PUIS LES HOLLANDAIS REVIRENT, ET MAINTENANT LES INDONÉSIENS SONT ARRIVÉS (Elder d'après Dosal)

LE 14 JUIN (LES MEMBRES DE L'EXPÉDITION) SCRUTAIENT LE CIEL AVEC ANXIÉTÉ, MAIS AUCUN HÉLICOPTÈRE NE VÎNT, NI LE 14, NI LE 15. LE 17 JUIN ILS REGARDAIENT VERS L'OUEST POUR VOIR ARRIVER L'HÉLICOPTÈRE TANT ATTENDU (Brongersma & Venema)

Nimdol, Juin 1959: GÉOLOGUES, BIOLOGISTES & ANTHROPOLOGUES "TOMBÉS" DU CIEL (Brongersma & Venema Expéditions Starmountains) — 18 Juin 1959: TOUTES LES FEMMES PISSERENT DE TROUILLE LORSQUE L'HÉLICOPTÈRE APPARU DANS LE CIEL (Kaiang Tapior, 1987, village de Pepera, précédemment bivouac Nimdol)

(ILS FONT) DES MAISONS ET LES DÉMOLISSENT COMME ILS SONT VENUS (...) ILS VIENNENT NOUS VOIR ET S'EN VONT (Makwes & Waeb in Silitoe)

NOUS NE DISONS JAMAIS TOUT, NOUS GARDONS TOUJOURS QUELQUE CHOSE POUR LE PROCHAIN ANTHROPOLOGUE (Informateur de Margaret Mead)

7

Première rencontre

NIMDOL, 12 FEVRIER, 1958: LE BRUIT A COURU DE L'ARRIVÉE DE KAKAWOKI (L'HOMME BLANC) [...] LES HOMMES, LES FEMMES, LES ENFANTS ACCOURRÉNT POUR LE VOIR (Dragt)

LES MEMBRES DES AUTRES VILLAGES PROTESTERENT ÉNERGIQUEMENT SULULIB AVAIT DÉJÀ DEUX ANTHROPOLOGUES (Feld)

8

Conception de la piste d'atterrisseage et arrivée du premier avion.

10 juillet 1987: ICI J'AIMERAIS DRESSER LES PLANS DE LA PISTE D'ATTERRISSAGE (Kaiang Tapior) — Oksibil, 1958 SUR UNE SURFACE DE 600 MÈTRES SUR 30 LA TOURBE AVAIT ÉTÉ RETOURNÉE (Brongersma & Venema; Préparation de l'aérodrome de l'expédition) — Région de Miyanmin, 1965: (AMUSEP AVAIT COMMENCÉ A ABATTRE DES CENTAINES DE GRANDS ARBRES DE LA JUNGLE POUR CONSTRUIRE UNE PISTE D'ATTERRISSAGE. LA PERCÉE FUT DÉCOUVERTE PAR ACCIDENT) (Morren)

LE GRONDEMENT SOURD [...] EMPLIT LE CIEL D'UN SON ÉTRANGE ET NOUVEAU (Mc Carthy) — [...] UNE FOULE DE GENS RASSEMBLÉS [...] DES GENS VENANT DE TOUS LES

COINS DE L'ÎLE, ET LA CHOSE ÉTAIT LÀ, ATTENDANT QUE CHACUN VIENNE JETTER UN ŒIL [...] C'ÉTAIT UNE CHOSE JOLIE ET BRILLANTE (Ndika Rumint in Connolly & Anderson) — ILS VINRENT TOUS REGARDER. ILS N'AVAIENT JAMAIS RIEN VU DE SEMBLABLE (Blackburn)

Île Goodenough, peu avant la deuxième guerre mondiale: "UN VIEIL HOMME (KUYAUNA) A DIT-ON CONVOQUÉ TOUS LES KWAIAUDILI À GALUWATA. IL A ANNONCÉ LA VENUE [...] DES AVIONS ET DES ARMES (Young) — Village Yabob, Madang 1942: AINSI TRÈS VITE, TAGARAB PENSA QUE KILIOB ÉTAIT REVENU POUR EXPULSER LES BLANCS (Trompf/Lawrence) — NOUS SOMMES TRÈS PROCHES. NOUS POUVONS VENIR DEMAIN. NOUS ARRIVONS AVEC DES CAMIONS DES FUSILS À RÉPÉTITION ET DES BOMBES (Kulua'ibu in Stow) — Biak 1938-1943: JAN RONSUMBRE A CONSTRUIT [...] UNE MAISON ÉNORMÉMENT GRANDE DE LA FORME D'UN AVION (Kamma) — Tanna: (NELOIAG) A PRÉVU LA CONSTRUCTION D'UN AÉROPORT (Steinbauer) — District de Madang: LES DATES ÉTAIENT ANNONCÉES, LES PISTES D'ATERRISSAGE ÉTAIENT CONCUES (Lawrence) — LES GENS VIVAIENT DANS L'ANTICIPATION QUOTIDIENNE DE L'ARRIVÉE DU CARGO (Worsley)

56

9 Cargo

IL CONFONDIT LES REPÈRES LUMINEUX AU SOL AVEC DES ÉTOILES ET DEMANDA POURQUOI L'AVION VOLAIT À L'ENVERS (Chatwin)

Vallée Sambia, 1979: D'Où ES-TU VENU? D'Où ES-TU VENU? COMMENT EST-IL VENU ICI? ... JE VIS L'**HÉLICOPTÈRE** PAR EN DESSOUS D'ICI (Sakulambei in Herdt & Stoller) — LES ANCÉTRÉS ONT FUIT (Yamsep Film; Ok Tedi; Juin 1985)

Hollandia: Guerre du Pacifique, Août 1944: DES BULLDOZERS, DES RÉFRIGÉRATEURS, 400,000 HOMMES DE TROUPE, DES MILLIONS DE DOLLARS DE CHARGEMENT ET 200 CINEMAS EN PLEIN AIR FURENT DESCENDUS DU CIEL — Biak: LORSQUE LES [...] AVIONS ARRIVÉRENT EN PLANANT COMME DES NUAGES NOIRS, PERSONNE NE PUT LES ACCUEILLIR [...] CA COMMENCA LA NUIT, QUAND LES AVIONS LARGUÈRENT DES BOMBES ÉCLAIRANTES. LES COULEURS VIVES SUIVIES DE VIOLENTES EXPLOSIONS [...] L'ÎLE TOUTE ENTIÈRE DEVINT UNE GROSSE USINE DE GUERRE ET LE PEUPLE BIAK APRÈS LEUR PREMIER ÉTONNEMENT S'ENROUA À FORCE DE CRIER. (Kamma)

[...] "CE SONT NOS ANCÉTRÉS, C'EST LE CARGO" MAIS LEUR CARGO REVINT LEUR CLAQUER À LA FIGURE. (Osana in Stow)

10 Visiteurs

MA MAISON RÉSONNE DU BRUIT DES PAS DU VISITEUR. MA MAISON SAIGNE À MORT (Osana in Stow)

Peu de temps après que l'expédition hollandaise fut partie, l'armée indonésienne annexa la zone (1962-65). Le village de Nimadol fut rebaptisé Pepera, ce qui signifie ironiquement "la détermination de l'opinion du peuple".

Le Président Kennedy était inquiet des penchants communistes du Président indonésien Sukarno. En prévision il convainc les Nations Unies de consigner le territoire de Nouvelle Guinée Occidentale sous protectorat indonésien. La Papouasie Occidentale ne fut jamais consultée ni représentée à l'ONU. Une guérilla sécessionniste a commencé, à l'abri des regards du monde extérieur.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

KOBARWENG OR WHERE IS YOUR **HELICOPTER?**

- ANTI SLAVERY SOCIETY, 'West-Papua, plunder in paradise'
BELSHAW C.S., 'Island administration in the South-West Pacific'
BERNDT R.M., 'A cargo movement in the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea', Oceania 23
BLACKBURN J., 'The white men'
BRONGERSMA L.D. & VENEMA G.F., 'To the mountains of the stars'
BUDIARDJO C. & LIONG L.S., 'West Papua, the obliteration of a people'
CARPENTER E., 'Oh! what a blow that fantom gave me'
CONNOLLY B. & ANDERSON R., 'First contact'
DRAGT D.J., 'Kiwirok-tourneever slag'
FELD S., 'Sound and Sentiment'
GESCH P., 'Cultivation of surprise and excess in the Sepik' in Trompf G.W.
HERDT G. & STOLLER R.J., 'Intimate communications'
HOLECEK B.-G., 'Anthropology on trial'
HYLKEMA S., 'Mannen in het draagnet'
JACKSON R., 'Ok Tedi, the pot of gold'
JORGENSEN D., 'Life on the fringe, history & sociology in Telefolmin' in 'The plight of peripheral people', Gordon R.
JOSEPHIDES L. & SCHILTZ M., 'Through Kewa country' in Schieffelin E.L. & Crittenden R.
KAMMA F.C., 'Koreri'
LAWRENCE P., 'Roád belong cargo'
MAIR L.P., 'Australia in New Guinea'
MAY B., 'Indonesian Tragedy'
MAY R.J., 'Between two nations'
MICHEL T., Interview with Yamsep Film
MONBIOT G., 'Poisoned arrows'
MORREN E.B.G., 'The big walk' in Oceania 52
MORREN E.B.G., 'The Miyanmin'
ONGKA, 'A self-account by a New Guinea big man'
OSBORNE R., 'Indonesia's secret war'
POUWER J., 'Zij en wij', New Guinea Koerier, jrg 1,n°194
RHOADES W.E., 'Flying MacArthur to victory'
RYAN J., 'The Hot Land'
SAULNIER T., 'Sky above, mud below'
SCHIEFFELIN E.L. & CRITTENDEN R., 'Like people you see in a dream'
SHEEHAN S., 'A missing plane'
SILLITOE P., 'From the Waga Furari to the Wen' in Schieffelin E.L. & Crittenden R.
SINCLAIR J., 'Wings of Gold'
STEINBAUER F., 'Melanesian cargo cults'
STOW R., 'The visitors'
STRATHERN A., 'Cargo & inflation in Mount Hagen', Oceania 61
THE TELEGRAPH 3rd June 1978
TROMPF G.W., 'Cargo cults & millenarian movements'
WAIKO J., 'European-Melanesian contact in Melanesian tradition & literature' in 'Priorities in Melanesian Development', May R.
WORSLEY P., 'The trumpet shall sound'
YOUNG M.W. 'Goodenough Island cargo cults' in Oceania 42

57

APPENDIX

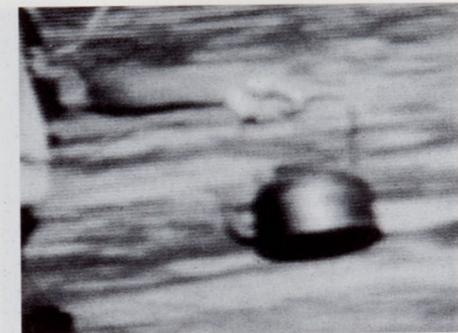
62

We petition the United Nations to ask the countries providing aid to Indonesia to impose humanitarian conditions on the grants and loans they make. The conditions should include the stationing of a team of United Nations observers in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya. The observers should have freedom to travel to all parts of Irian Jaya without a government escort and to investigate allegations of human rights abuses in the province. They should be aware of the destructive effect of continued transmigration to Irian Jaya, of any negligence of the indigenous people's land rights, and efforts to force them to abandon their cultural traditions. They should recognise that the uncompensated removal of land, and the involuntary rehousing of tribal people, the 'acculturation', racial discrimination and forced labour there contravene the United Nations provisions for human rights. They should be alert to the possibility of extra judicial killings of civilians by the police and armed forces, of the removal or destruction of civilian property by government representatives, and of the torture and imprisonment without trial of suspected dissidents. If the United Nations team finds that transmigration or those other inhumane and destructive practices listed above are still, with government backing, continuing in Irian Jaya, it should recommend to Indonesia's foreign sources of financial aid that the money should be terminated or reduced.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

USA; Survival International, 2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington DC 20008.
The Netherlands; Werkgroep Inheemse Volken, Postbus 40988, Amsterdam 1009 AB.



« BUT THE CUPS NEVER
GREW TO BE KETTLES...»

—Waioskosit in a Menominee folktale
in *Native Roots*, Jack Weatherford

MEMBERS OF ANOTHER
VILLAGE WERE ANGRILY
PROTESTING THAT
SULULIB ALREADY HAD
TWO ANTHROPOLOGISTS
(Feld)

LES EXPOSITIONS
DU PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS
DE BRUXELLES



Next in the odyssey is makeup. From the green room the guest is directed into the makeup room, where we confer about eyes and lips and hair. I generally lose these discussions. Television people like lipstick on their guests, something I never wear, but I always give in. I also defer to tradition in my dress. Cameramen do not like you to wear white or black; they say these colors make the camera jump. They do not like busy patterns either. So I always wear a solid-colored silk shirt and earrings that do not shine. I almost never wear a suit—for a different reason. By the time a viewer sees an academic on television, they are already impressed with your credentials. They are fairly well convinced you are obtuse, aloof, and stuffy. I hope to convey that anthropology is useful—and entertaining. So I try not to look “tweedy” or too businesslike.

From 'The Anthropologist as Television Subject', Helen Fisher
in *Media-Anthropology* ed. by Susan L. Allen.

