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Small Country, Long Journeys

Norwegian Expedition Films

Edited by Eirik Frisvold Hanssen
and Maria Fosheim Lund

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NASJONALBIBLIOTEKETS SKRIFTSERIE

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06. Through Central Borneo with Carl Lumholtz: The Visual and Textual Output of a Norwegian Explorer

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Derived from the Latin *expeditio*, the word "expedition" can be traced to fifteenth-century late Middle English, and is defined as "an excursion, journey, or voyage made for some specific purpose, as of war or exploration."[1] Expeditious, derived from the same Latin root, connotes urgency, efficiency, and an imperative not to delay. While expeditions embarked on by scientists or anthropologists in the early twentieth century are clearly different to those undertaken by conquering armies, they share similarities with military or colonial aggressors. Tactical intelligence gathering including geo-cultural knowledge of the region, reconnaissance, surveillance, diplomacy, establishing trade routes, and a measure of cultural sensitivity to mitigate distrust and unrest are features of both endeavors. At the same time, the ethnographic expedition film is similar in

1 The definition is from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/expedition accessed June 25, 2012.

many respects to films made of native peoples from any number of contexts; however, while one could argue that every expedition film representing native peoples is to some extent an ethnographic film, not every ethnographic film is an expedition film, for the simple reason that footage might have been obtained at a North American World's Fair, at a market in Cairo, or by a tourist/adventurer on a family vacation in Japan.

Sketchpads, still cameras, sound recording equipment, and motion picture cameras were employed on expeditions to assist in data collection, chart progress, embellish or even replace traditional written field notes. Photographs, phonographic recordings, and motion pictures provide compelling (if not comprehensive) glimpses of interaction between native peoples and government officials, scientists, ethnographers, and members of the expedition party. Examining Norwegian ethnologist Carl Sofus Lumholtz's 1917 expedition film *In Borneo the Land of the Head-Hunters*,[2] this chapter considers how ethnographic knowledge is constructed differently across Lumholtz's film, his published account of the expedition, *Through Central Borneo* (1920), and his fieldwork diaries.[3]

2 It's worth pointing out that the title shares a close resemblance to Edward S. Curtis' ethnographically rich film *In the Land of the Head-Hunters*, made in 1914. The film has undergone extensive restoration and garnered recognition for being a fascinating fictional account of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples of the Queen Charlotte Strait region of the Central Coast of British Columbia. The reconstruction is now available on Blu-ray and DVD from Milestone and a volume documents the process as well as placing the film within American film history. See Evans and Glass 2014.

3 For an introduction to the expedition film, see Griffiths 2002, 127–70, 283–311; Peterson 2013; Staples 2005, 51–78; Bell, Brown, Gordon 2013; and Bloom 1993.

What were the environmental conditions for image making in the field, and what did Lumholtz have to do to get the shots and footage he needed? And, how did Lumholtz make sense of the reverse ethnography at play when he undoubtedly was as much an object of interest to his Borneo subjects as they were to him? Lumholtz's only foray into expedition filmmaking, the little-known *In Borneo the Land of the Head-Hunters* makes for a rich case study in early expedition filmmaking, in part because of the triangulation across the written, photographic, and moving image accounts and for the remarkable footage of indigenous practices of the tribes of Borneo, the third largest island in the world, covering an area of roughly 287,000 square miles. As a native of Norway, however, Lumholtz's legacy must also be read against the backdrop of the increasing circulation of visual media across the globe. Lumholtz was an inveterate traveler, a globe-trotter if you will, who seized upon the possibilities of using motion pictures to vivify the visual vocabulary of indigenous culture obtained via photographs when he embarked on what would be his third and last major expedition before his death at the age of seventy-one in Saranac, New York in 1921.

"My Wandering Life": Lumholtz Pre-Borneo

Born in Fåberg, near Lillehammer, Norway, in 1851 and a graduate in theology from the University of Christiana (now the University of Oslo), Lumholtz achieved a solid reputation among his peers as an anthropologist, naturalist, and explorer. His journeys to Australia, Mexico, and Borneo over a span of thirty years were sponsored by such prestigious institutions as the American Geographical Society of New York, the Norwegian Geographical Society, the Royal Geographic Society of London, the Royal Dutch Geographic Society, the American Museum of Natural History, as well as the King and Queen of Norway. Lumholtz wrote four books aimed at scholarly and general readers: *Among Cannibals* (1889),[4] recounting his trip to Australia; *Unknown Mexico* (1902); *New Trails in Mexico* (1912); and *Through Central Borneo* (1920) including taking a large number of photographs in all except his expedition to Australia. The decision to publish his research for general readers was not atypical for anthropologists at the time. British anthropologist Walter Baldwin Spencer, who studied Aboriginal Australians at the turn of the last century, supplied articles and photographs to a Melbourne newspaper during his expedition, hoping to whet readers' appetites for a series of lectures he would deliver upon his return from the field.[5] Perhaps mindful of the mainstream status of motion pictures within

4 Lumholtz relied heavily on secondary visual material of Australian Aborigines. See Broyles et al 2014, 1.

5 See Griffiths 2002, 161–66, for more on Spencer's arrangement with the Melbourne press and his subsequent lecture tour.

modern entertainment by the mid-teens, it made perfect sense for Lumholtz to bring along a camera on his expedition to Borneo. To assist in that endeavor, he hired a young Chinese photographer in Singapore called Ah Sewey to assist in developing the plates and film.[6]

The University of Christiana sponsored the 1880–1884 expedition to Australia where Lumholtz was hired to collect animal and bird specimens by Professor of Zoology Robert Collett (1842–1913). Embarking from Gracemere in Australia, Lumholtz traveled in Western Queensland from the Valley of the Lagoons to the Herbert River Valley west of Cardwell, about 175km south of Cairns.[7] The relative shallowness of Lumholtz's Australian research compared to his reports on the subsequent Mexican and Bornean expeditions suggests that his humanism and cultural relativism were bumping up against nineteenth-century racist theories of evolutionary biology. For example, at the same time Lumholtz chides fellow Norwegians in an article on the expedition in the *Journal of the American*

6 In the preface to *Through Central Borneo*, Lumholtz refers to the following individuals being attached to his expedition: an unnamed surveyor from the Topografische Inrichting (Topographical Institute) in Batavia who worked, possibly gratis, on supplying maps; a trained Sarawak Dayak taxidermist; and later in the expedition, a Javanese man. Lumholtz took credit for all of the photographs that appeared in the book with the exception of those credited to Dr. J.C. Koningsberger, President of the Volksraad, Buitenzorg, Java (pictures facing page 26); J.F. Labohm (pictures facing pages 16 and 17); and A.M. Erskine (lower picture facing page 286).

7 Lumholtz's stay among the Australian Aborigines and travels through the region was memorialized in 1994 via the creation of the Lumholtz National Park, which includes the Wallaman Falls. However, the name was changed to Gurringun National Park in 2003 to reflect its indigenous provenance. www.anbg.gov/au/bigoraphy/lumhotz-carl-sofus.html. Accessed May 17, 2012.

Geographical Society of New York for not knowing whether forks and knives were used in Australia—such observers have "no idea of the wealth, the advanced state of civilization and the luxury to be found in the southern part of the continent"—he displays a similar ethnocentrism in the same paragraph when he describes meeting "the lowest and most degraded type of humanity—a people in the most primitive and savage state of life—a people whose highest conception of numbers does not extend beyond 5" (1889, 1–2). East Asian Studies scholar Victor T. King alludes to this tension in his 1991 introduction to the Oxford University Press reissue of *Through Central Borneo,* in which he notes that Lumholtz's Australian ethnographic research reveals "a mix of keen observation and empathy with aboriginal life, along with some condescension, prejudice and even contempt" (vii). Though King attempts to recuperate Lumholtz's position by pointing out that Lumholtz "stayed and traveled with the aborigines [*sic*] alone in an attempt to see the world through their eyes," King's judgment is not shared by Australian anthropologist Christopher Anderson who portrays Lumholtz as paranoid about his personal safety among the Queensland Aborigines while being fascinated, obsessed even, by their otherness (1981, 230). So worried was Lumholtz that he performed a nightly ritual of firing his gun to remind the locals "of my superiority". "Not one word was said. It was like my 'good night' to them", recalled Lumholtz, who also described being "at the zenith of my power", and proud of being "the first, even among admiring savages". Notwithstanding his anxiety, he enjoyed his three months camping with the Australian Aborigines, calling the experience "interesting" and

"fascinating", and took obvious enjoyment from being among the first Europeans to spend extended time with Australia's first peoples (1889, 1–2).

Lumholtz also broke new ground in his ethnographic research on Mexico, since he was the first person to photograph the Tarahumara, Pima, Tepehuan, Tubar, Cora, Huichol, and Tarascan tribes of the country; he also photographed the Tohono Oodham people of southwestern Arizona and northwestern Sonora, the descendants of whom still cherish the only photographs ever taken of their ancestors (Broyles et al. 2014, 3). But it is only by understanding how Lumholtz saw the world through the mindset of a Norwegian national living at the turn of the last century with professional ties to the United States, that we can grasp the significance of *Borneo*. In Lumholtz's fieldwork notebooks, written mostly in English but with some passages in Norwegian, and housed at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo, he compares the Penihings and Long-Glats peoples' belief in a friendly spirit ("antoh") to that of the Norwegian "nøkken" (The Nix) superstition and at another point when he is traveling in a canoe in turbulent waters he is reminded of tobogganing in Norway (Lumholtz 2006, 105, 164).[8] The American author Henry James was struck by the ubiquity of this practice of comparison, unsure of its profit but acutely aware of how frequently travelers indulged in it. James even had a term for this type of inveterate traveler, calling him or her a "cosmopolite", someone "infected

8 Lumholtz's main concern while traveling through the choppy water was for the camera and other image-making equipment and instruments.

with a baleful spirit…that uncomfortable consequence of seeing many lands and feeling at home in none" (James as quoted in Leed 1991, 67).

Lumholtz was a cultural translator in more than one sense, translating his unfamiliar experiences in Borneo into relatable Norwegian referents, and, given his Norwegian mother tongue, translating his recollections and interpretation of the day's events into his English journal. Lumholtz may be perceived as a character in his own narrative of living in Borneo, a character he wants Norwegian readers to identify with. Although retaining his Norwegian citizenship, Lumholtz called New York his home after an 1890 US lecture tour, and despite periodic trips to Norway, he moved in an elite philanthropic circle of such notable men as Andrew Carnegie, J. Pierpont Morgan, and the Vanderbilts. Funding from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the American Geographical Society, and private donations from wealthy New Yorkers made possible four major expeditions to the southwestern US and Mexico between 1890 and 1898, producing a masterful visual account of the peoples of the region.[9]

9 The first expedition took place in 1890–91 and was to Casa Grande, Arizona in the company of a physical geographer, botanist, and zoologist; the second in 1892 to the Tarahumare, Tepehuanes, and Tubares Indians; a third, the longest (three and a half years), most ambitious and sponsored by the AMNH, from 1894–97 where he lived once again with the Tarahumare, Coras, Huichol, Tepecanos, Nahuas, and Tarascos. According to King, he "made very large ethnographic and archaeological collections for the [AMNH] and compiled detailed data on little-known customs, myths, artifacts, vocabularies, melodies, and decorative patterns." His final expedition in 1898 was with Dr. Ales Hrdlicka and involved a relatively brief, four-month return visit to the Tarahumare and Huichol. (King 1991, xiii-ix).

Lumholtz's status as a wide-ranging explorer and Scandinavian transplant living in a cosmopolitan city helped him gain support for his research and may have motivated his decision to compose his field notes in English rather than Norwegian. He sought out potential sponsors for future expeditions within a growing milieu of adventurer-explorers, many of who were members of the Explorer's Club in New York City, including Carl Akeley and Martin and Osa Johnson. Fluent in Norwegian, English, and Spanish, Lumholtz followed a path of cultural migration from Europe to the United States. He was a cosmopolitan transnational, an ethnologist with neither formal training (not uncommon at the time) nor a permanent university appointment. Like other anthropologists of his generation, Lumholtz was part of a growing cohort of cultural collectors who moved from the center to periphery and back again, clustering in hubs such as New York, London, and Mexico City. They operated much like today's global cultural and scientific entrepreneurs, seeking sponsorship for their expeditions from museums, international organizations, and professional societies.

Lumholtz had certainly come a long way since suffering a mental breakdown while studying for his theology exams in 1869; recalling how he felt he wrote, "this strain brought on a nervous breakdown, which, however, unexpectedly turned to my benefit" (1921, 225–226). The episode placed him at a crossroads: that summer he traveled alone to collect specimens from the mountainous region of central Norway and underwent an experience reminiscent of psychologist Abraham Maslowe's (1964) idea of a peak experience, feeling at last free from the "confinements of metaphysics and

scholasticism", overcome, as it were by nature; in his words, "love of nature took stronger and stronger hold of me and one day it occurred to me what a misfortune it would be to die without having seen the whole earth" (Lumholtz 1921, 225–226).

Lumholtz's formative experience as a naturalist occurred while he was recovering from a stressful episode in his life; travelling, collecting, and being alone (which he was, as the only European on a great many of these expeditions) doubtless shaped how he saw the world, an invaluable frame of reference for understanding why he chose to shoot what he did when filming *Borneo* and why he struck out alone on so many of his expeditions.[10] The lure of travel as escape seems to have figured prominently in Lumholtz's life; as Bernard Sellato argues, "in truth it was maybe his contempt for the Westerners that led him to his errant life" (1994, 213).[11] Travel's deep roots in both a medieval notion of suffering, penance, and character testing and more modern notions of pleasure seeking underscore Lumholtz's wanderlust; as theorist Eric Leed explains, the "changes of character effected by travel are not so much the introduction of something new into the personality of the traveler as a revelation of something ineradicably present—perhaps courage, perdurance, the

10 Describing his third, and longest expedition to Mexico between 1894–97, Lumholtz wrote: "As on my former expeditions, I remained for months with different tribes, discharging my companions" (1903, 127).

11 In French: «En réalité, ce fut peut-être son mépris pour les Occidentaux qui le conduisit à sa vie d'errance.» My thanks to Philippe Boulet-Gercourt and Jill Boulet-Gercourt for assistance with translation.

ability to endure pain, the persistence of skills and abilities even in a context of fatigue and danger" (1991, 8).

Lumholtz is the participant observer *par excellence* in Borneo, not only recognizing the strategic value of "going native", in his words "gaining their friendship and their confidence specially by singing their songs and always treating them justly" (1903, 127), but also by being game, defined by the Oxford English dictionary as "full of pluck, spirit, or fight". Reviewing *Unknown Mexico*, British anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon praised the author for being a trained explorer and humanist, someone who could not only "describe the country as he traverses and discourse pleasantly on the interesting animal and plant life…but, from our point of view… [demonstrates] the rarer and more valuable quality of sympathy with his fellow man." It was only by this faculty, Haddon argued, that "insight be gained into the true nature of the people" (1903, 27).[12] And yet Lumholtz's restlessness, his desire to be on the move in Borneo, sacrificed analytical depth for travelogue/generalist gloss, as he conceded in *Through Central Borneo* when he asked his colleagues to cut him some slack: "Circumstances naturally prevented me from making a thorough study of any tribe, but I indulge the hope that the material here presented may prove in some degree acceptable to the specialist as well as the general reader" (2006, n.p.).

12 *Man* was published by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

Through Central Borneo: Intertextuality and the Political Economy of Image Collection

> At times the natives here showed no disinclination to being photographed, but they wanted wang (money) for posing.
> Carl Lumholtz, Borneo, 1914–17

Jointly financed by the King and Queen of Norway, the Norwegian Geographical Society, the Royal Geographic Society of London, and Koninklijk Nederlands Aardrijkskundig Genootschap (Dutch Royal Geographical Society), as well as what Lumholtz called "subscriptions" from Norwegian, American and English friends, Lumholtz nevertheless described the Borneo expedition as a "Norwegian undertaking", and not only hoped to meet up with a Norwegian geologist and botanist in Batavia, but arranged to have collections shipped back to Norway.[13] Lumholtz's fundraising derived from a patchwork of gifts from large state-funded institutions and friends, not that far removed from contemporary filmmakers seeking funding from philanthropic organizations as well as crowdsourced Kickstarter campaigns.

13 Norway almost lost the entire collection, however, and if the AMNH had not procrastinated about securing funds and low-balled the offer made to Lumholz's brother, executor of Carl's estate after his death in 1922, the collection would have stayed in New York rather than go to the Cultural History Museum in Oslo. See correspondence at the AMNH.

Traveling in Borneo differed from his earlier expeditions in the United States, Mexico, and Australia.[14] With European occupation of Borneo complete by 1906 (the Dutch controlled over two-thirds of the island), Lumholtz expressed doubts about finding pristine subjects to study: "Well administered by Europeans as Borneo undoubtedly is, the question may well arise as to whether the natives are not becoming sufficiently civilized to render purposeless expeditions to study them" (2006, 32). In addition to Ah Sewey, Lumholtz also hired J. Demmini, from the well-known Topografische Inrichting (Topographical Institute) in Batavia to be the expedition photographer and an indigenous surveyor, H.P. Loing, who also worked at the same institution (Lumholtz 2006, 109).[15] The colonial context is evoked by frequent shots early in the film of native guards under the command of a Dutch officer patrolling the river, footage of a squad of military police, and a shot of women at the river's edge sifting through gravel for precious stones. The Dutch-owned diamond plantations were leased to the native peoples, and stones were sent to Martapura to be cut by local experts.

14 Lumholtz's initial itinerary was scuttled as a result of war breaking out; he had planned to explore New Guinea but the Governor-General would allow him neither ships nor soldiers for the exploration. After initially visiting Borneo in 1914, he then traveled to India to wait out the war before returning to Borneo in 1915: "Plans were to start from Banjermasin in the south, ascend the Barito River, branching into its northern tributary the Busang, to cross the watershed to the Mahakam or Kutei River." Following this river to its mouth he would reach the east coast near Samarinda (Lumholtz 2006, 109).

15 Demmini left the expedition early due to illness and Lumholtz took over the job of photographing, enlisting the assistance of an unnamed lieutenant to develop the prints. Despite some unsatisfactory initial results, he got the hang of it and the images turned out to be usable (Lumholtz 2006, 175).

Fig. 1 Long shot of the expedition party, Borneo, c. 1916. Courtesy of the Museum of Cultural History, Oslo.

Traveling through territory that had been claimed not only by the Dutch but by the British, and far away from his adopted home in the United States, Lumholtz comes across as a more seasoned and relaxed ethnographer in Borneo than in Australia, comfortable among the thirteen tribes of the large island, and if occasionally frustrated at the extent of Western encroachment, nevertheless impressed by what he saw.[16] In this photograph of members of the expedition party (fig. 1) the landscape nearly absorbs the identities

16 The tribes included the Kayans, Kenyahs, Murungs, Penyahbongs, Saputans, the nomadic Punans and Bukits, Penihings, Oma-Sulings, Long-Glats, Katingans, Duhoi (Ot-Danums), and the Tamoans, Lumholtz, "Preface," Lumholtz, 2006.

of the group members, the giant trees in the foreground dramatically framing the group as it recedes into, and is almost engulfed by the dense jungle. If Lumholtz still ruled by the gun, he gave no hint of feeling threatened in Borneo, eulogizing: "Never have I been among a people so close to nature, strikingly intelligent, friendly, and the most aesthetic on the globe" (2006, 23).

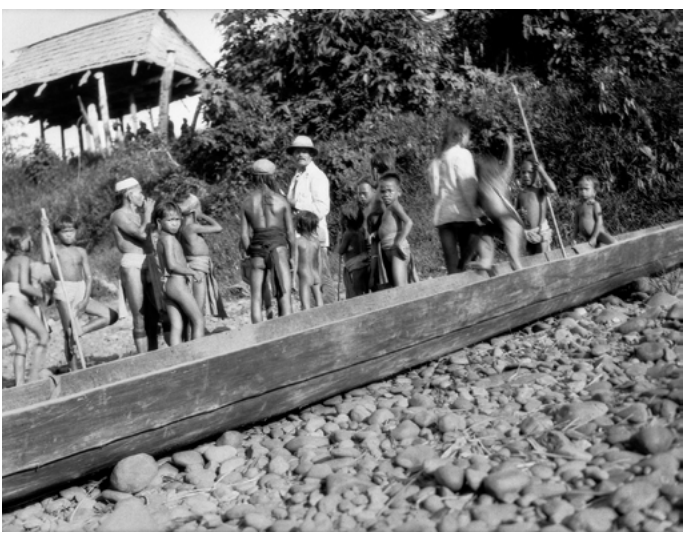

Fig. 2. The only image of the expedition party that includes Carl Lumholtz, Borneo, c. 1916. Courtesy of the Museum of Cultural History, Oslo.

Lumholtz's fieldnotes, photographs and film constitute a goldmine of information on the expedition.[17] Lumholtz is both a sightseer in the touristic sense and a site-seer in a cartographic sense, constructing a visual memory that, as film theorist Giuliana Bruno argues, shores up cinema's legacy as an apparatus that transforms pictures into a geography of lived and living space. Bruno's idea of the spectator as a *voyageur*, a passenger "who traverses a haptic, emotive terrain", is especially relevant in the case of films that constitute autoethnography when the camera is turned on the expedition party, since in these instances, the spectator is invited to identify more explicitly with the ethnographer-filmmaker's subjectivity (Bruno 2002, 16). However, staging scenes for the camera (paying subjects if necessary) and imposing temporal or spatial ellipses remind us that expedition footage is by no means a transparent record of what occurred in the profilmic encounter. And while expedition footage literalizes the idea of virtual travel, the idea of *being there* that Anne Friedberg famously called cinema's "*mobilized, 'virtual' gaze*", the constantly changing spatial cues can make for a discombobulating spectatorial experience, mitigated by the inclusion of intertitles or the contextualizing comments of a lecturer (1993, 2).

Like other anthropologists undertaking fieldwork, Lumholtz at times became the subject of a reverse ethnography, where the anthropologist outsider, rather than the indigenous insider, becomes

17 The Museum of Cultural History in Oslo owns more than 1,400 prints and negatives from Lumholtz's fieldwork in Mexico (1890–1910), Borneo (1914–1917) and India (1914–1915); the AMNH has more than 2,500 5 × 7 nitrate negatives, 300 61/2 × 81/1 negatives, in addition to glass plates (Broyles et al 2014, 4).

Fig. 3 Photograph with original caption from the book *Through Central Borneo* (1920): "Two Murung Women Squatting in Order to Observe the Author". Courtesy of the Museum of Cultural History, Oslo.

the object of the gaze, as illustrated in the caption for this photograph of three women squatting which says "Murung Women Squatting in Order to Observe the Author" (fig. 3). His decision to take the photograph and give it this caption introduces a playfully reflexive and equalizing quality to the visual encounter. Discussing his Mexico expeditions in a 1903 issue of *The Geographical Journal*, Lumholtz discussed becoming the object of suspicion and fear: "Always at first the natives would resist me, and I have in more than one tribe been considered as a man-eater, subsisting on women and children, whom I killed by the camera" (127). Lumholtz often performed his morning "gymnastic exercises" in front of an audience

of boys: "They do not know whether to laugh or not; this is not queerer than many other things they see the white man doing", he recounted in his diary.[18] Lumholtz reported feeling remarkably fit throughout the expedition, especially for someone in his mid-60s, although he did complain about the climate, saying he felt "almost unwell in the depressing atmosphere where the sun's rays have little effect".[19]

Fig. 4 Lumholtz participating in Katingan Dayaks' dance wearing a white pith helmet. Frame enlargement from *In Borneo the Land of the Head Hunters.* Original print held at the British Film Institute.

18 Lumholtz diary entry, May 4, 1914, Vol. III 1914-a2, March 25-May 12. Lumholtz Diary Collection, Museum of Cultural History, Oslo [hereafter abbreviated to LDC-MCH]. The diary is in three volumes; a roman numeral in the abbreviation signifies the volume.

19 Lumholtz diary entry, Jan. 19, 1914, LDCII-MCH

In addition to Lumholtz's presence acknowledged through glances or sustained gazes at the camera, in one sequence he takes center stage, asking his assistant Ah Sewey to shoot footage of Lumholtz participating in a Katingan Dayaks dance, part of a ceremony arranged for Lumholtz at Malay kampong, Maura Topu in the northern part of Borneo. The scene is a memorable example of reverse ethnography in which the anthropologist threatens to steal the limelight once he enters the scene, standing out as he does in his white pith helmet and western garb (fig. 4).[20] The intertitles provide a much-needed context on the ceremony with surprising candor, acknowledging that Lumholtz organized the ceremony and paid for the pig that would be sacrificed (the pig's blood would be offered to Kapatong, guardian of the soul of deceased tribe members). Paying six florins for the pig, the ceremony took place in front of the kapala's house next to a sacred pillar (called a kapatong) that had been erected on the occasion of a death. Lumholtz shot footage of six men dancing around the kapatong; musicians playing drums; the sacrifice of the pig whose blood is caught in a bowl; a man climbing the kapatong with the bowl; and the drinking of rice brandy.[21] Lumholtz enters the scene toward the end, when he is led by a woman to participate in the dance; holding hands in a circle, the dancers perform pliés in a slow rhythmic fashion creating the illusion that the sequence has been filmed in slow motion. Lumholtz

20 For a detailed analysis of this sequences see, Griffiths 2000, 91–110.

21 For a description of Dayak ceremony involving the sacrifice of the pig, see Lumholtz 2006, 115–118.

wants to be memorialized as a participant-observer in this sequence, and since he admits to having joined in the dance "on many previous occasions", this was an opportunity for him to record a cultural practice that was meaningful both for him and the Dayaks. The footage does double duty, therefore, serving both as a record of significant cultural rituals as well as validating Lumholtz's first-person witnessing of the event. No doubt it was added to Lumholtz's inventory of images he had taken (he kept a list of those he still needed to shoot). For example, an entry on May 16, 1914 lists "Dancing, Wrestling, Rice Pounding, Kampong landscape, Paddi ground, Ripping our eyebrows, Cradle, Women bamboo" as obtained, and under the word "Needed" includes fire-making implements and penis piercing.[22]

There's a mise-en-abyme quality to the structure of Lumholtz's diary, photographs, and film, with the diary referentially serving as the center of gravity for the book *Through Central Borneo* and the film's intertitles. Portions of the diary are reproduced verbatim in both the book and in the film's intertitles (written either by Lumholtz or by a professional title writer). Lumholtz's first-person narrative in the intertitles inject authenticity, drama, and a hint of his temperament into the film—in the case of his description of the Tase Nine Day Feast, the written word supersedes the visual, as the titles are noticeably longer than the relatively brief shots—his voice a direct echo of some of the standard tropes of

22 Lumholtz diary entry, May 16, 1914, LDCI-MCH

travel writing. We know from a diary entry about the Tase Nine Day Feast that the filming occurred on or around May 4, 1914; a woman who had been sick for two years had died and Lumholtz recalled listening to the hollowing out of the log to make the coffin in the shape of a rhinoceros. Adjusting the exposure times of the photographs he took of the coffin, Lumholtz returned at 3pm to, as he put it, "kinematograph" the heavy casket being carried aloft by several Dayak men, who apparently had no objection to him filming the proceedings (fig. 5).[23]

Lumholtz's diaries and the film's second intertitle contain references to the environmental challenges of travelling and working in Borneo:[24] "Considering the extremely moist climate, and that clear photography was possible only a few hours of the day we are fortunate in securing many beautiful scenes of the islands and the native tribes". The battle against the humidity was unending: "My cameras were inside of solid steel boxes, provided with rubber bands against the covers, making them water tight. Nevertheless upon opening one that had been closed for three weeks the camera inside was found to be white with mold".[25] Lumholtz's diary contains other clues about what it was like to work under demanding

23 Lumholtz Diary entry, May 4, 1914, LDCIII-MCH

24 My thanks to Øivind Fuglerud for providing information and access to this collection. Lumholtz wrote approximately 30 notebooks, mostly between 1914–1918. His digitized photographs can be found at http://www.unimus.no/foto. For an overview of Lumholtz's entire photographic oeuvre, see Broyles et al. 2014.

25 Lumholtz diary entries, Feb. 1, 1914 (Vol I LDCI-MCH) and Jan 14, 1914 Vol. II Jan. 6-March 24 (Vol. II LDCI-MCH); Lumholtz, 2006, 190.

Fig. 5 Dayak men carrying a coffin. Frame enlargement from *In Borneo the Land of the Head Hunters*.

field conditions, from the effect of the heat and humidity on the body (on May 2, Lumholtz complained that "perspiration falls like rain drops, when I photograph"[26]) to the political economy of image production, the fact that photographs and kinematographs, like all other material objects of value, came at a price. Lumholtz fretted about the rain's effect upon the photographic plates (he admitted in a Feb 1, 1914 diary entry that "I could not help thinking about the photo. [*sic*] plates"), taking advantage of breaks in the rain and fog to shoot.[27] Despite taking precautions, some rolls of film fell into

26 Lumholtz diary entry, May 2, 1914, LDC1-MCH

27 See the diary entry for Feb. 18, 1914, in which Lumholtz refers to hurrying out with this camera, LDC1-MCH.

the water (even finding water cold enough for developing plates was difficult), although despite these problems, Lumholtz established a veritable cottage industry of image making while traveling across the island.

In addition to securing cold water, other hurdles in the labor of image production include poor light as a result of rain and fog, drying film getting eaten by grasshoppers, equipment operation and safety, and sitter fees.[28] Money and commodities were often combined in the deals struck for photographing, filming, or taking anthropometric measurements of various tribes; wrote Lumholtz, "The Saputans were shy about being photographed, but their objections could be overcome by payments of coin. The kapala, always alive to the value of money, set the example by consenting to pose with his family for a consideration of one florin to each" (2006, 160). Regarding the Kenyah people, Lumholtz complained that "women, as usual, were timid about being photographed for it is a universal belief that such an operation prevents women from bearing children. However, by giving money, cloth, sugar, or the like, which would enable them to offer some little sacrifice to protecting spirits, I usually succeeded". If the woman was pregnant or caring for a small child, no inducement succeeded, since it was believed that the child would be plagued with bad luck or disease if exposed to the camera (2006, 70). Lumholtz would often take anthropometric mea-

28 For more on the challenges of procuring footage, see Lumholtz 2006, preface, 40, 45, 70, 114, 142, 151, 171, 179.

surements and photographs in the same sitting, and complained about "gently protesting natives, to whose primitive minds these operations appear weirdly mysterious" (2006, 176). Both anthropometry and photography produced knowledge about the body, but were plagued by inaccuracies, inflated truth-values, and intrusive logistics; Lumholtz tried bribing one kapala with gin when he refused to be photographed because his wife was pregnant (he resisted being measured as well but finally gave in). Lumholtz became something of the bogey-man-with-the-camera for the women and children who feared that every time they saw him he would want to take their likeness (2006, 205, 262).

Other aspects of image production brought additional stress. Despite complaining about having to pay for permission to take certain photographs, Lumholtz suffered from the opposite problem, being inundated with visitors requesting to be photographed and having to "deny myself to all callers regardless of their wishes" (2006, 52). Lumholtz also worried about finding suitable subjects representative of specific cultural practices or indigenous types, and, not surprisingly, making them comply to his staging requests, including making a Sultan man dress in full garb (Lumholtz recorded in his diary that the "black coat troubled [the man] immensely)".[29] This reminds us not only of Mary Louise Pratt's model of the contact zone, but also of the unusual status of the expedition film as a genre with frequently paid social actors. One seldom thinks about the

29 Lumholtz diary entry, March 2, 1914, Vol. II Jan. 6-March 24; LDCII-MCH

subjects of documentary films receiving payment for their appearance, but in many ethnographic films, there's a fair trade policy at work (1991, 34).[30]

Ethnographic filmmaker and visual anthropology theorist David MacDougall's argument that the film viewer is more restrained than a viewer in daily life (2006, 22) is illustrated in an intertitle stating, "you might not think it, but this Saputan swimmer is a man", a title that should more logically read "you might not be able to see it", reminding us that knowledge is always contingent in ethnographic image collection. The intertitles also don't tell us about how concerned Lumholtz was traveling by river: "Quite refreshing to hear their joyous shouts" he wrote as five Trahus and twenty-four Dayak men "eagerly and quickly paddled us up against the stream… One soon assumes a feeling of confidence in these experienced men, as they accord to circumstances, paddled, stalked or dragged us by the long rattan rope which is attached to the bow of the boat, inside".[31] However, as speech acts that skew our interpretation of the moving images surrounding them, intertitles cannot explain the meaning of one of the most enigmatic shots in ethnographic film, the return gaze, a shot whose effects Paula Amad argues are "profoundly ambivalent", analogous to a "handwritten

30 An example can be seen in the fact that Lumholtz is both drawn to and repelled by the native women in Borneo, and finds them to be enigmatic subjects. Describing Kayan women he said: "The women, free and easy in their manners, were ladylike to a surprising degree. In spite of having had ten teeth of the upper jaw filed down and the remainder coloured black by the constant chewing of bretel, they are literally to the manner born", Lumholtz 2006, 53.

31 Lumholtz diary entry, May 1, 1914, LDCI-MCH

note found amid the otherwise printed official record of history [that] seems to stare down the present, demanding a historical showdown of sorts" (2013, 54).

Fig. 6 Sapotan chief getting his ears pierced. Frame enlargement from *In Borneo the Land of the Head Hunters*.

A scene in which a Sapotan chief gets his ears pierced with an empty cartridge so a tiger's corner tooth can be inserted in the ear lobe is fascinating not only for the suspicious glances at the camera of two of the attendants, but for the corporeal squirm experienced by the audience (fig. 6), what Amad describes as a "highly affective response…in the viewer-critic [that] often resembles a sort of shudder (of complicity, disgust, empathy, and/or pleasure)" (54). The attendants' glance at the camera seems to trigger what MacDougall, borrowing Merleau-Ponty's idea of a "postural 'impregnation'",

argues is a corporeal and emotional transference between spectator and subject, a "deeper response than empathy, as if the body had been struck, or had taken on the physical qualities of the other body" (2006, 23). Lumholtz maintains a respectful (and safe) distance throughout this scene in medium long shot; a board is held behind the chief's earlobe to provide traction for the insertion of the cartridge and to mitigate concerns aroused by the release of evil spirits from the shedding of the chief's blood; rice, believed to liberate good spirits, is scattered on the ground. "For a compensation I was permitted to photograph [the] operation", wrote Lumholtz, noting too, that given its importance, it was well worth the expense (2006, 201).

Fig. 7 Rajah warriors holding shields in front of their bodies. Frame enlargement from *In Borneo the Land of the Head Hunters*.

Another return gaze shot with equally visceral power is the warrior demonstration sequence, reminiscent of the 1898 British film *Savage Attack at Southampton* where African men arriving at the British port stand with their shields and spears facing the camera. Lumholtz's warrior scene opens with a long shot in which eight men run rapidly toward the camera, ending up in a tight tableau that showcases their decorative shields (fig. 7). Their return gazes remind us that the shot can be associated with spectacle, visual excess, and many other meanings as the audience becomes a stand-in for the enemy, colonial authorities, neutral bystander, or even family members.

Through Central Borneo and the Enigmatic Expedition Film

> I felt inclined to join the dancers.
> Intertitle, *In Borneo*[32]

Film shot as part of expeditions varies in length, quality, frequency, purpose, style, tone, usefulness, and shelf life, sometimes becoming orphaned or even destroyed because of nitrate damage or combustion. Cultural practices are either staged specifically for the camera with the filmmaker (or sometimes native peoples) making specific

32 This intertitle contextualizes a scene when Lumholtz joins the Katingan Dayaks dance after being led by "the most beautiful maiden of the tribe" into the performance to drink from a rice brandy bowl; the full intertitle reads: "Entering into the spirit of the ceremony, I felt inclined to join the dancers as I have done on many previous occasions".

requests, or the camera records from the point of view of a bystander. When escapologist Harry Houdini became enamored with film in the mid-1910s, he started lugging a motion-picture camera with him and would shoot situations that seemed unusual or uncanny, such as a visit to a cemetery that would always include footage of Houdini posing among the graves (Kellock 1928, 272). A desire to experience a singular phenomenon—such as meeting a famous person—was often in competition with the need to memorialize it on film, a dilemma affecting virtually everyone today with a smartphone: to record or to experience unencumbered by a device.

While the decision to shoot footage for an expedition film is dependent on a range of variables including weather conditions, co-operation of the film's intended subjects, wishes of the sponsor, presence of a professional filmmaker, and intended use value of the footage, the long take often defines the visual vocabulary of the pre-1920 expedition film. The most enigmatic of shots, the long take calls attention to cinema's artifice while simultaneously inviting us to become lost in the time of the shot, as Mary Ann Doane argues:

> [T]he long take is a gaze at an autonomous, unfolding scene whose duration is a function of the duration and potential waywardness of events themselves. Its length situates it as an invitation to chance and unpredictability, an invitation that is abruptly canceled by the cut. The cut is the mechanism whereby temporality becomes a product of the apparatus, repudiating the role of cinema as a record of a time outside itself (2002, 224).

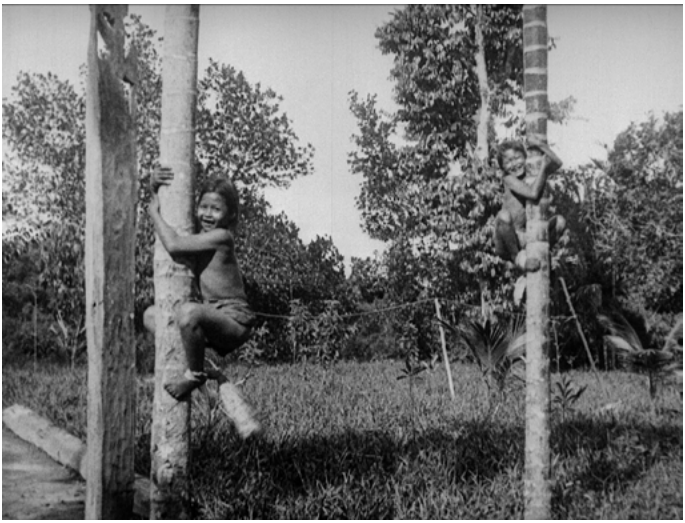

Fig. 8 Boys climbing trees. Frame enlargement from *In Borneo the Land of the Head Hunters*.

A sequence from *In Borneo* in which we witness two boys climb a tree (fig. 8), marvel at their skills, and perhaps entertain the idea of a sudden intrusion into the edges of the frame or slip by the climbers, speaks to another aspect of Doane's analysis of the long take, the likelihood that the source of disruption may come not only from editing but some unintended action, person, or animal entering the frame. Doane's notion of the ineluctable cut slicing into the profilmic is illustrated in a sequence in which women puff nonchalantly on large handmade cigars. Lumholtz referred to the women smoking cigars "just like men" in a journal entry for May 16, 1914, noting that they often smoked while drying bamboo upright in front of a

fire.[33] In this instance the long take is tantamount to staring or gawking, where the novelty value of the observed tempts the observer to stick around and keep looking. The long take's isomorphism with the human stare reminds us that just like looking, there are many factors involved in ending a shot, including running out of film, the safety of the filmmaker, and ethical sensitivity toward the filmed subject, although the camera, unlike a starer, is more likely to take liberties and roll well past the point of approbation.

The expedition genre's logic of forward movement is visually corroborated in the recurring shot of travel by water (an overdetermined sign given it was crucial for developing photographs). The codification of this shot in both travel and expedition film exemplifies Gregory A. Waller's (2012) point about the modular structure of expedition film, its lack of cause and effect, eschewal of chronology, and organization around points of interest; as Jennifer Peterson explains, "In contrast to the narrative-driven lecture that serves as their model, most travelogue films lack even the barest narrative gesture of a journey. The films simply present a series of images joined together by the unifying topic of place" (2013, 146). But if some of the points of interest in *Borneo* seem arbitrary and fragmented, there's a similarly elliptical quality to Lumholtz's prose in the book; across two conjoining sentences he jumps from birth, to burial, to climbing: "At the birth of a child all the men leave the premises, including the husband. The dead are buried in the ground

33 Lumholtz Fieldwork Diary, Vol. I 1914, Jan. 6-April 5, LDCI-MCH.

a metre deep, head toward the rising sun. The Punans climb trees in the same manner as the Kayans and other Dayaks I have seen…" (2006, 50). On the surface, Lumholtz's hopscotching around topics shares little with observational cinema's more leisurely visual dynamic, espoused by film theorist André Bazin, ethnographic film educator Colin Young, and the anthropologist Roger Sandall (who coined the term "observational" for certain documentary film types in 1972), what Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz describe as "the renewed respect for context, a foregrounding of relationships, connections and continuities rather than an isolation of discrete segments or parts" (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2009, 5). And yet Lumholtz's film holds our gaze on many occasions and if viewed in conjunction with the book, promises an experience closer to slow cinema than the moving postcard aesthetic of the early travelogue.[34] While space precludes more in-depth discussion of what cues an elliptical versus sustained engagement with a subject matter, suffice it to say that the presence of both is a signal feature of many ethnographic films made at this time.

34 For more on the aesthetic impulses of the travelogue, see Peterson 2013, 137–74. Slow cinema is a form of art cinema emphasizing the long take, an anti-narrative sensibility, and a strong observational quality. See Luca and Jorge 2015, and Jaffe 2014.

The Governing Logic, Audience, and Legacy of the Expedition Film

By 1930, well over ten years after Lumholtz made *Borneo*, the expedition genre had been popularized by a series of box office hits, including *Nanook of the North* (Robert Flaherty, 1922), *Simba: King of the Beast* (Martin and Osa Johnson, 1928), *Grass: A Nation's Battle for Life* (Merian C. Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack, 1925); *Chang: A Drama of the Wilderness* (Merian C. Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack, 1927); and *Hunting Tigers in India* (James Leo Meehan, 1929). Responding to the box office appeal of these films, a 1930 *Variety* article entitled "Wealthy Killing Time Making Travel Films" noted: "With money and time on their hands, this form of amusement has a particular appeal for the sportsman type among the wealthy. All those who penetrate… far-off places do not always make pictures deliberately intended for public exhibition, but most take along plenty of still cameras and at least one small motion picture camera" (90). Coining the term "rich man expeditions", *Variety* cited several recent examples of Park Avenue financing supporting the costs of the equipment and film, including Robert Flaherty's mentee Varick Frissell, whom with backing from Paramount Pictures, filmed the first Hollywood-style sound film in Canada, but was tragically killed by dynamite when he returned to shoot additional footage of the Labrador ice floes.[35] Had Lumholtz lived that long, he would

35 Frissell established the Newfoundland-Labrador Film Company, which sailed in January 1930 to St. John's to shoot footage of the seal-hunting trade. According to *Variety*, Frissell was responsible for directing both the expedition and the film (Anon 1930, 90).

doubtless have known Frissell, and even though raised in different social contexts, both were infected by wanderlust and a desire to make the farthermost reaches of the globe more accessible to armchair Columbuses back home.

It's interesting to consider what kind of audience is imagined for the expedition film in its most inclusive form. Although *Borneo* was made at the cusp of the first wave of explorer-adventurer films, it was influenced more by the ethnographic travelogue of itinerant lecturers such as Lyman H. Howe, Burton Holmes, and Douglas Mawson than by the romanticized ethnographic reconstructions of Robert Flaherty and Edward Curtis. It's inadvisable, however, to draw hard and fast distinctions across these expedition films, since, as Waller has pointed out, they are all marked by generic inclusiveness (2012). Not all expedition *footage* gets edited into an expedition *film*; unlike travelogues, expedition films are not necessarily expository (although they can be instructional). Footage sometimes remains in modular form, developed in the order it was shipped, and retained as a visual record similar to written fieldnotes.

The expedition film is governed by a "yes…but" structure, suggesting ways in which it conforms to other nonfiction genres of the era, but also the ways in which it is exceptional. It is like the travelogue, but not as slick; like the manners and customs ethnographic film, but with a wandering eye; and finally, like the soon-to-be-coined documentary film, but with less discipline or coherent aesthetic style. Elsewhere I have written that expedition films are barely films at all, insofar as they conform neither to the protocols of the industrialized Hollywood product, the oneiric quality of the

home movie, nor the instructional mandate of the early actuality (Griffiths 2013, 90–108). There's an awkwardness to the expedition film, a result of the camera's subsidiary role in the expedition, the frequent discomfort of both the native peoples and the members of the expedition party in front of the camera, and the "we were here" imperative that puts pressure on the cinematographer to decide when and what to shoot. To be sure, by the early 1910s, virtually every major expedition party heading out either toward the poles, jungle, or desert included a cinematographer with them. Arthur Edwin Krows, author of the multi-part "Motion Pictures—Not For Theatres" published in *Educational Screen* in the late 1930s, traced this influence to Paul Rainey's *African Hunt* (1912) and Herbert Ponting's *90 Degrees South* (1914) about Captain Robert Falcon Scott, films with a powerful bandwagon effect (1938, 325).

Given that expedition films are born out of unique geo-cultural conditions, it behoves us to tread with care when generalizing too much, since for every popularized expedition film that was released to critical acclaim or deemed a box office flop in the 1920s and 1930s, there were films being shot with far less fanfare, on miniscule budgets, and with no clear idea as to who they were being made for other than the sponsoring institution. As for the indigenous peoples who appear on camera, they have every right to claim these films as important historical records of their cultural patrimony as Australian Aborigines did with Haddon's five 1898 films of the Mer islanders off the northeast coast of Australia, which last

approximately four minutes (Griffiths 2002, 127–148).[36] We can but hope that the descendants of the people of Borneo who appear in this film find much in Lumholtz's footage to celebrate; these are, after all, their ancestors, their lives, their cultural patrimony. This may be easier said than done, however, as Jane Anderson and Kim Christen point out in their research on alternatives to traditional copyright for indigenous communities and the cultural materials they steward: "Framed as the 'subjects' of these works, not as their authors and owners, Indigenous peoples and communities have had no legal rights to determine how and when this documentary material should be accessed or by whom" (2013, 106). This is thankfully changing as a result of the Traditional Knowledge (TK) Licenses and Labels initiative, which will be delivered through an accessible educational digital platform.[37] When Lumholtz recorded in his diary the single word "Kinematographed", the verb signified an activity that was not only logistically fraught and unpredictable in terms of the image quality and use value, but was also enmeshed in debates that would only surface decades later as the "complex intellectual property needs of Indigenous peoples, communities, and collectivities wishing to manage, maintain, and preserve their digital cultural heritage" are positioned in relation to multiple sets of rights and stakeholders (Anderson and Christen 2013, 106).

Some expedition footage remains raw forever, consisting of very brief recordings of cultural practices, as was the case with

36 For more on Haddon's 1898 ethnographic filmmaking, see Griffiths 2002, 127–48.

37 http://localcontexts.org/ Accessed August 31, 2017.

Haddon's films. Ironically, in the case of *Borneo: In the Land of the Head-Hunters*, the film may finally find the audience Lumholtz hoped for but never reached, in part due to his sudden death in 1921 and the film's dive into obscurity. There are records of just two screenings, at the London Geographical Society and in Oslo in 1920, and no evidence of a theatrical run or screenings in the United States. The folksy style of the intertitles with reference to prohibition not having reached Borneo is fairly incontrovertible proof that Lumholtz had an American audience in mind when he returned to the US with the footage. Had Lumholtz lived longer, there's no doubt his film would have been screened at the AMNH and at the Explorer's Club in New York and other scientific organizations, although it would have been overshadowed in 1922 by the release of Flaherty's blockbuster *Nanook* that captured the public imagination and led to a contract with Paramount to repeat the success. The modular structure of each film—*Nanook* hews to a more linear narrative in the sequences with his pseudo-family, with memorable scenes of hunting, ceremonial life, dance, travel, and awareness of the camera—is conveniently sized for the elliptical form of contemporary online and social media platforms. Lumholtz's diary entries read in some instances like Facebook or Instagram feeds, and some of the film's scenes could be compared to contemporary Vlogging.

But let us not forget that in addition to being a skilled ethnographer, Lumholtz was a businessman who wanted to exploit the cross-platform appeal of his ethnography (he had presumably made money from sales of his previous books and, perhaps, hoped to make even more money from the Borneo trip in book and film

form). Collectively, the book, diaries, and film help us better grasp Lumholtz's legacy as an early twentieth-century ethnographer, adventurer, and writer who understood the significance of film as a modern recording device. Lumholtz's image-making and books are testimony to the long history of the global circulation of images of native peoples, a history that involves all manner of deft negotiations, transactions, and finagling seldom visible in the image track and intertitles. Lumholtz embodied the modern anthropological commitment to what Anna Grimshaw calls the going to see for yourself principle, rejecting "hearsay" in favor of a multimodal approach to collecting visual and written information (2001, 7). That Lumholtz had no problem moving freely across the various textual forms he produced lends weight to Grimshaw's argument about the "interplay between vision as method and metaphysic," a way of using images to situate oneself in relation to the world as well as to tell stories about that world (2001, 10,7). Lumholtz's world was rapidly changing, as he lamented when he commented on the sociopolitical structure of Borneo, although popular interest in native peoples had by no means softened, as evidenced by the financial success of many commercial ethnographic films of the 1920s. Lumholtz's legacy has been protected through the careful archiving of his photographic collection; his film *Borneo: In the Land of the Head-Hunters* can now be added to this corpus and situated within a broader context of Norwegian expedition films that includes the triumphal polar expedition filmmaking discussed elsewhere in this collection.

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