EDMUND CARPENTER
EXPLORATIONS IN MEDIA & ANTHROPOLOGY

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AND

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And how do I know who I am, until I see myself as others see me? "Of course in this you fellows see more than I could see," writes Conrad in The Heart of Darkness. "You see me." (Carpenter 1975:455)

"A fearful thing is knowledge," says Tiresias in Oedipus Rex, "when to know helpeth no end." (Carpenter 1975:455)

We use media to destroy cultures, but we first use media to create a false record of what we are about to destroy. (Carpenter 1972:99)

INTRODUCTION

History is a selective process. We do not, cannot, and need not remember all who contributed to making the past. Most of what really happened will never be documented, and not all that has been recorded is important enough to be passed on. As perspectives change, new questions emerge. Occasionally, historical revisionism restores some unique characters previously neglected. Free souls roaming on the outer edges of the field, or perhaps even straying beyond, they capture our attention and invite a closer look. Such is the case with Edmund Carpenter.

For more than fifty years, Carpenter has explored the borderlands between cultural anthropology, visual media, and tribal art. He ranks among a small cohort of forerunners in the anthropology of visual media. Indeed, he was probably the first professional anthropologist in the world to host a national television program, and one of the first scholars to focus attention on the revolutionary impact of film and photography on traditional tribal peoples. In 1948, he teamed up with Marshall McLuhan for a lifetime collaboration, breaking new ground in our cross-cultural understanding of modern media. He also headed the first anthropology department in which filmmaking formed a central component of the curriculum. And last but not least, he has authored many publications on culture and media and was instrumental in the production of numerous anthropological films (see Carpenter's various publications under References).

Considering Carpenter's accomplishments, it is remarkable how rarely his work is mentioned in academic publications. And although he remains an elusive figure in the professional corridors of the discipline, we have tried to trace out his fascinating life history. This paper, the first publication to deal extensively with his oeuvre, offers a biographical sketch and brief review of his various professional contributions. However, given the scope of this visual anthropology conference, it does not concern his complex role as a collector of tribal art, his deep involvement with ethnographic museum collections, nor his contributions to prehistoric archaeology and tribal art. Instead, we direct our discussion toward an appreciation of his pioneering role in the development of visual anthropology, the anthropology of media, and communications studies.

With this limited objective, we have marked out several key stages in Carpenter's career, beginning with a sketch of his formative period as one of Frank Speck's students specializing in prehistoric archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania (1940-1950). This is fol-

Fig. 1. East Hampton, April, 2000. Edmund Carpenter listening to Harald Prins reading 1963 newspaper story about Valley State's ethnographic film program. Photo: Bruce Broce.

lowed by a section that focuses on a highly stimulating decade at the University of Toronto (1948-1957), when he began exploring the role of visual media in close collaboration with McLuhan. Then comes a brief review of his years at San Fernando Valley State College (1957-1967), later renamed California State University, Northridge, where he directed an experimental program in visual anthropology. Next, we discuss what is perhaps best characterized as a quixotic adventure in Papua New Guinea (1969-1970), where he introduced modern media to remote tribal communities. Finally, after a brief review of Carpenter's role in various ethnographic film productions and a discussion of his ambivalence towards visual anthropology, we conclude with a critical assessment of his tenuous position within the profession.

Some of the information presented in this paper rests on published work by Carpenter and others. Much, however, is based on numerous ongoing personal con-

versations since 1978, and several in-depth formal interviews recorded on tape (McBride 1980; Prins 1998b) and on camera (Prins and Bishop 2000).

FORMATIVE YEARS: FROM ARCHAEOLOGY TO VISUAL MEDIA

The son of an art teacher, Edmund Snow Carpenter's life began in Rochester, New York, 1922. From early on, he was fascinated by prehistoric archaeology. With several cousins and his twin brother, he started digging at Gull Lake, Michigan, where his parents had a summer home. In 1935, the thirteen-year-old "Ted" met Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca anthropologist who directed the Rochester Museum and Science Center. During the Great Depression, Parker initiated some Work Projects Administration excavations and invited the young Car-

Harald Prins is professor of anthropology at Kansas State University. He served as President of the Society for Visual Anthropology (1999-2001) and as the American Anthropologist's Visual Anthropology Review Editor (1998-2002). He has co-produced documentary films such as *Our Lives in Our Hands* (1986) and *Oh, What a Blow that Phantom Gave Me!* (2002), and has published a number of articles and book chapters on visual anthropology, including "Visual Media and the Primitivist Perplex: Colonial Fantasies and Indigenous Imagination in the North America" (2002). See page 16 for John Bishop's bio.

Fig. 2. East Hampton. April, 2000: Edmund Carpenter and Prins. Photo: John Bishop.

penter to spend weekends and summers with archaeo-logical crews digging Iroquoian prehistoric sites prima-rily in the Upper Allegheny Valley (1935-1939).

In 1940, Carpenter met anthropologist Frank Speck and became his student at the University of Pennsylva-nia. The following year, he worked as foreman of a WPA-CCC crew excavating Pennsylvania mounds. Just a few months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the nineteen-year-old sophomore enlisted in the Marine Corps, left Philadelphia, and joined the 25th Marine Regiment in the Pacific Theater. He spent the next four years in the armed forces, and during that time three of his archaeology papers were published as well as several articles on indigenous Pennsylvania folklore and ethnography (Carpenter 1942a, 1942b, 1942c; 1943, 1944, 1946a, 1946b).

During the American counteroffensive against the Japanese, Carpenter's regiment fought its way from New Guinea to the Solomon Islands onwards to the Marianas Islands and Iwo Jima. Promoted to Lieutenant by the time Japan surrendered in 1945, the twenty-two-year-old Marine officer was appointed Judge Advocate, COM-MARIANAS. While assigned to legal work, he found time to find and excavate a local archaeological

site, employing some 500 Japanese prisoners of war in the dig.

By the time of his discharge in 1946, Carpenter had been promoted to Captain. He returned to Penn where he was granted a B.A. degree for service-related courses and experience. Speck appointed him Anthropology Instructor. Over the next few years, he joined Speck on several brief field trips. The two were together when Speck fell critically ill at the Seneca Indian reservation at Allegany, in Western New York. Many years after his mentor's death in 1950, Carpenter disclosed: "He re-mains my guide, my fond companion, my guardian spirit.... He shunned parties, conventions, ceremonies, committees. I doubt if he ever attended a faculty meeting." As if sketching a self-portrait, Carpenter (1991:81, 83) continued: "Great ethnologists do more than record: they reveal.... They entered their subjects emotionally, intellectually, then revealed what they experienced within.... Culture, as [Speck] experienced it, was too rich, too full, to preserve in monographs alone. Nothing, he felt, should be lost. He used both a still camera and a movie camera.... What was needed, he said, was the power of language, harnessed to humanistic ends 'by men who, if such exist, possess both

the scientific mind and the literary touch.'" (1991:78, 80)

In 1948, before completing his doctorate, Carpenter accepted a teaching position at the University of Toronto. No longer a bachelor, he found that his salary was inadequate to support his family, let alone research trips to northern Canada. Despite disapproval from colleagues, he took side jobs digging the Toronto subway and moonlighting in a brewery. To make ends meet, he also wrote book reviews for newspapers and began doing radio and television work for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) (Carpenter 1972:94). Before delving into these early media ventures, however, we will first discuss his shift from prehistoric archaeology to Arctic ethnography.

ARCTIC ETHNOGRAPHY: CHILLING EXPERIENCES

Before 1950 few academic anthropologists were interested in the Arctic, and initially there was little financial support available for research in the area (Carpenter 1973b:94; Harp 1984; Hughes 1984). However, during the early Cold War period, the region became part of the northern hemisphere security area because of its proximity to the Soviet Union. Gradually, funds became available for anthropological and other research (Hughes 1984:24).

In the spring of 1950, having earned his doctorate based on a dissertation on Northeast prehistory, Carpenter left for the Arctic. He returned in the winter of 1951-52, both times living with the Aivilik of Southampton Island. It was a time of famine (see, e.g., Carpenter 2000; Elder 2002).

Profoundly affected by their suffering, Carpenter penned his first ethnographic article on Arctic peoples, "Witch-fear among the Aivilik Eskimos." Published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* (Carpenter 1953), it serves as an early indication of his shift in research focus. It appeared about the time Carpenter joined Marshall McLuhan at the University of Toronto's newly-established Seminar on Culture and Communication. Beyond fieldwork experiences, reading

anthropological studies by Edward Sapir (1921), Benjamin Whorf (1941, 1950), and Dorothy Lee (1950) stirred his interest in the complex cultural dynamics of language and worldview.

In 1955 Carpenter attempted to revisit the Aivilik only to discover that many had died. Instead, he went north to Igloolik and traveled by sled with hunters along the coasts. The famine continued. "I'd never seen anything like that before. I'd gone through the war, the Marine Corps. I certainly saw people die, but I didn't see an entire community die, I didn't see an entire culture die. And so I became very interested in that, and that was essentially the last time I did archaeology as anything more than a hobby" (Prins 1998b; see also Prins and Bishop 2000:207).

Back in Toronto, Carpenter published his first book, *Time/Space Concepts of the Aivilik* (1955). By 1960, he had published two other books on the Inuit—today a preferred term for Canada's Eskimos: *Anerca* (1959) and *Eskimo* (1959)–as well as several articles. Since then, he has authored numerous publications dealing with Arctic peoples and cultures, and the region continues to hold his deep interest to this day. Carpenter's writings from the mid-1950s onwards foreshadow many themes and approaches pursued in current anthropology. His 1959 Eskimo book on the Aivilik, illustrated by Frederick Varley's sketches and paintings, along with

Fig.2. Edmund Carpenter with Father Marcelrio, an oblate missionary and close friend in Arctic Canada, 1951.

Robert Flaherty's photographs, is an early example of his distinctly spare and artful writing style at odds with academic conventions. It hinted at Carpenter's imminent disenchantment with anthropology as an objectifying enterprise and his growing entrancement with surrealism and tribal art (see also Carpenter 1961).

EXPLORATIONS & COLLABORATIONS WITH MARSHALL MCLUHAN

About a year after joining Toronto's anthropology department in 1948, Carpenter became involved in electronic media, initially doing radio shows for CBC. In 1950, the first educational television stations began broadcasting in North America. Soon thereafter, a Joint Committee on Educational Television was formed in the U.S. to coordinate instructional media and audiovisual communications. With the launching of CBC-TV that same year, public television began to take off in Canada as well. Within the next few years, the number of North American households owning a television set jumped from 15,000 to more than four million (McKune 1966; Rice 1983:91, 133-34). While Carpenter continued with radio, he also began "doing odds and ends, fairly frequently" for CBC-TV (Carpenter, personal communication).

Actually working in radio and television, Carpenter became intrigued by some of the ideas and insights being developed by his senior colleagues at the University of Toronto, Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan. Serving as Dean of Graduate Studies, Innis was a political economist who had studied the social history of modern communications technology, in particular the role of the telegraph in the state-formation process. In 1950, two years before his death, he published a major study titled *Empire and Communications* (1950), followed by his seminal study *The Bias of Communication* in 1951.

An English literature professor at the university since 1946, McLuhan was interested in the historical relationship between orality, literacy, and technology. He explored the social and psychological pressures generated by modern media in his 1951 book *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*. McLuhan and Carpenter first met in 1948. Recalling their first meeting at McLuhan's "gloomy" house, Carpenter described this "exceptionally brilliant man" who became a lifelong friend: "It was a remarkable thing to know him. The ideas just poured out. And 40 percent

of them could be right off the wall–I mean some of the things he believed in! And then he would come through and in one phrase, in one sentence, he could summarize a thing in the most dazzling way…. Nothing could stop him…. I tell you, the ideas would just start pouring out. People used to shun him on the campus, because even though he was extremely friendly, when he would capture someone, it would be like a fire hose of the ideas coming out.... Marshall couldn't stop talking. He couldn't stop thinking. I mean, it just went on from one thing after another. You had to skip to keep up with him. And, of course, you can imagine the chaos that created in this conventional faculty in Toronto" (Prins and Bishop 2000).

During their years together in Toronto, McLuhan and Carpenter not only taught a class together, but also co-authored publications. Pursuing their unorthodox academic agenda, the duo relished their dubious reputation. Jokingly, McLuhan referred to them as a pair of "intellectual thugs" (Carpenter, personal communication). As related by McLuhan's biographer Philip Marchand (1987:115-16), they cultivated a reputation as "academic iconoclasts." In Carpenter's class, "the two sometimes engaged in dialogues with a loud tape recording of African war chants as accompaniment…." (Soules n.d.).

From 1950 onwards, Carpenter was doing a series of television programs for CBC. Soon enough, he became intrigued by the surrealism of "the nonsensory spirit world of electronic media" (Carpenter 1972:11). His growing fascination with the "reel world" is illustrated by the following episode he recorded in his 1952 media log: After a friend telephoned to tell him that he could watch himself on television, Carpenter (1972:84-85) switched on his set and discovered "a rerun from last year's series." Although finding it almost painful to look at, he forced himself "to do so this time because the whole show seemed so alien…. While I was watching, the phone rang again. The caller identified himself as a radio ham operator, at that moment on the air with a radio ham in Baffinland. Eskimo friends of mine had traveled to a weather station to talk to me. My conversation with them was all the more remarkable by the visual background on TV."

In the summers of 1953 and 1954, Carpenter began his first experimental documentary film, with grants from the Viking Fund [later renamed Wenner-Gren] and the National Endowment for the Arts. Focusing on

Dorset Eskimo ivory carvings, he took a dynamic approach, bringing the objects to life by moving them and the camera, and adding wild sounds of the Arctic. No artistic whim, his methodology was informed by deep personal experiences in Inuit igloos. In his words: "We wanted these forms to move, and, in fact, Eskimos make these forms move. They'll pass them around, stand them up…imitate cries of birds and different things. And they pass them from hand to hand, and people admire them or ridicule them. They can be tough critics. And then, somehow, the thing just gets lost…it's like a song that's been sung. It's over. The fun was in the carving and releasing the form and welcoming the form back, and passing it around" (Prins and Bishop 2000:208). The inspiration behind this (unfinished) film, he acknowledges, was "an Eskimo named Aninouek [Onainewk], who I was very close to. And I would think that most of the insights–I won't say they came from him, but without him they wouldn't have happened" (Carpenter 1961:207).

Not surprisingly, McLuhan found Carpenter's television experience and ethnographic adventures among the preliterate Inuit of considerable significance. On the other hand, Carpenter recognized that McLuhan's ideas could have theoretical relevance for anthropology. Complementing each other intellectually and otherwise, they teamed up. Carpenter, younger by about ten years, was the junior partner. Brainstorming and working together throughout the 1950s, the duo hatched their core ideas about the agency of media in the process of culture change. As Carpenter explained: "So, then we became interested in this whole question of the relationship between ideas and media, and their impact in history" (Prins and Bishop 2000).

In 1953, McLuhan and Carpenter wrote a grant proposal for an interdisciplinary media research project to the Ford Foundation, which supported electronic media studies and educational broadcasting initiatives. Titled "Changing Patterns: Language and Behavior and the Media of Communications," their proposal referred to the work by Innis, who had died the previous year, suggesting that the new electronic media of radio, movies, and television were reshaping society, creating new languages or art forms (Marchand 1987:117; Soules n.d.). Funded by the Ford Foundation, they established the Seminar on Culture and Communication (1953-1959), which was directed by McLuhan. They used part of their $40,000 Ford grant to found Explorations, a co-

edited periodical which provided an outlet for the Seminar's findings. Examining and comparing forms of media discourse, this innovative journal explored how print, radio, and television affect mass communication and transform human relations and perceptions (Carpenter and McLuhan 1960:ix; Nolden 1969; Theall 2001). McLuhan and Carpenter were especially interested in the dialectical interplay between media technology and the social, psychological, cultural, and finally biological, condition of humanity. Building on Innis' original insight that things made and employed in human affairs were not merely additive, but transformative, they proposed that technological changes in communication "form lead to changes in content, and then changes in content lead to mutations of form" (Onufrijchuck 1993).

Although Explorations had a limited circulation, the eclectic journal was influential in a small but important cross-disciplinary group of scholars. In addition to contributions by anthropologists such as Dorothy Lee (1950), the literary critic Northrop Frye, and various other cutting-edge thinkers, the journal featured articles by Carpenter and McLuhan. Reflecting on their joint publishing adventure, Carpenter explained in a recent interview with the authors: "Nowadays, this material is so basic it has become part of the language. People talk…about linear and non-linear codification, and so forth—that work is Dorothy Lee's [1950]. That was [re]published in Explorations, and Marshall incorporated it into his thinking…I certainly applied it in mine" (Prins and Bishop 2000).

Carpenter's 1955 Arctic journey by dog-sled through Nunavut (Northwest Territories) with the Inuit hunter Amaslak gave him new insights about the power of literacy: "While the dogs pulled & Amaslak dozed, I read Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* [1840]. I was completely overwhelmed by the experience. For months I had read nothing. Now print transported me to another ocean, another century, offering experiences which seemed, at that moment, more real, more vivid, than those surrounding me. No book ever before affected me so strongly. I was returning to literacy after a long absence, but I wonder: does print have this same power over those who first encounter it?" (Carpenter 1972:77).

In their co-authored piece "Acoustic Space," Carpenter and McLuhan discussed how pre-literate tribal societies such as the Inuit primarily rely on speech in their

Fig. 4. Carpenter hosting *Explorations* on CBC-TV 1957.

interactions. Depending upon the harmonious balance of all five senses, such oral cultures exist in "acoustic space." Such space "isn't pictorial, boxed-in, framed: it's resonating, in flux, creating its own dimensions moment by moment. It's a world in which the eye hears, the ear sees, & all the five & country senses join in a concert of interweaving rhythms" (Carpenter 1972:31). When the phonetic alphabet was introduced, this all-enveloping sense of space was breached and a more detached, linear perspective emerged—the eye, as opposed to the ear, became the dominant sensory organ (Zechowski n.d.). Another article they co-authored for Explorations was titled "Classrooms Without Walls" (McLuhan and Carpenter 1957), a subject both men revisited several times over the next decade.

In his 1957 article "The New Languages," Carpenter provided a succinct analysis of modern media based on years of participant observation in broadcasting and publishing: "Each medium, if its bias is properly exploited," he noted, "reveals and communicates a unique aspect of reality, of truth. Each offers a different perspective, a way of seeing an otherwise hidden dimension of reality. It's not a question of one reality

being true, and others distortions. One allows us to see from here, another from there, a third from still another perspective.... New essentials are brought to the fore, including those made invisible by the 'blinders' of the old language.... This is why the preservation of book culture is as important as the development of TV. This is why new languages, instead of destroying old ones, serve as a stimulant to them. Only monopoly is destroyed.... The appearance of a new medium often frees older media for creative effort."

During those years, Carpenter continued doing programs on CBC-TV and ran a weekly television show also titled *Explorations* (Theall 2001). "There was immense freedom at the time," he recalled in a recent interview: "I had a weekly television show…called *Explorations*; it had first been a radio show. And I did some very interesting shows on the radio. Then we converted to the television, and we could choose any subject we wanted. [For instance,] we did a show on human paleontology and the changes in the human physique for the future…. I was also writing...book reviews for a newspaper and different articles, and so forth. And I became aware of the fact that when I tried

to reuse something [in a different medium] things didn't fit. It wasn't simply that they might be the wrong length, the wrong emphasis would be there.... And it became increasingly clear to me that different media would be sympathetic to different ideas..." (Prins and Bishop 2000).

While Carpenter and McLuhan thoroughly enjoyed working together during their decade in Toronto, they never collaborated on the production of visual media. As Carpenter exclaimed:

> No, no, no! Marshall would be the last person on earth to have around... I mean, he was just the most wonderful person, but, oh my god! ... Once, he decided he wanted to make a movie to illustrate some of his ideas. And I told him about competition in the Chicago's World Fair of 1932, in which the [U.S.] Marine drill team competed against the [Radio City] Rockettes for precision marching.... Well, he thought that was perfect! So, he stumbled around, you know, in film libraries. And he finally ended up with a group of troops walking across a pontoon bridge... nobody at the same height, nobody!; all just staggering around.... Amazing! Marshall was not visual (Prins and Bishop 2000; see, e.g., Carpenter 1972:36).

Illustrating that McLuhan was not all that interested in film, Carpenter continued:

> I'll tell you one other story about him. Once, when Laurence Olivier [had] made his [wartime masterpiece] on Henry V [1944]. Films were not permitted on Sunday in Toronto, unless you belonged to a private club.... Anyway, we—the faculty, [and] all the English department—all showed up. The curtains parted and the [newsreel featuring the British] Queen came on. And everyone stood up and sang "God Save the Queen." They then cut to the first scene in the film—not the first scene, just the titles. And McLuhan stood up and said: "Ready to go, Ted?" And he walked out. And I, rather sheepishly, walked out with him.... No, he was not a filmmaker! (Prins and Bishop 2000).

EXPERIMENTAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL FILM PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA (1957-1967)

Carpenter walked away from "Explorations" in 1957 when his CBC-TV program producers suddenly imposed changes he felt took away "the fun, the freedom" (personal communication) . That same year, he accepted an invitation to found an experimental joint program of Anthropology and Art (with a special focus on anthropological film) at San Fernando Valley State. Discovering his own anthropological voice by bundling his ethnographic and electronic media experiences with ideas gained from years of collaboration with McLuhan, he relished the prospect of being unshackled from academic orthodoxy and running his own shop. Without regrets, he turned his back on Toronto's conventional anthropology department and headed west with high hopes.

However, the intellectual climate all across the U.S.A. was conservative at the time, and mainstream academic anthropology had become dedicated to the positivist ideal of value-free scientific research. In contrast, Carpenter advocated a more humanistic anthropology: "the approach I have recommended is generally called 'mystical' or 'subjective' or 'insight without method....That competent fieldwork should be called 'mystical' and incompetent fieldwork called 'scientific' is one of the more remarkable features of our profession" (1961:167). Openly challenging false objectivity claims in his profession, he denied the neutral agency of media. In this, he was far ahead of his time. Margaret Mead (1975:10), for instance, displayed a more naive faith in the objectivity of cameras as observational instruments. Like other pioneering visual anthropologists such as Ray Birdwhistell, Edward Hall, and others, she actively pursued such media use for cross-cultural scientific research (see papers by Martha Davis and Allison Jablonko in this issue).

The audio-visual movement in the U.S. received an unexpected boost when the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik satellite in November 1957. Catching the U.S. military establishment by total surprise, this impressive feat shocked Americans into believing that they were behind in the Cold War arms race. Sharply aware of the need for pre-eminence in science, President Eisenhower urged for a new federal role in American higher education and scientific research. The following year, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act. Under

Title VII of this Act, the government authorized one billion dollars in federal aid to education, including extensive funding for media research and for the dissemination of media research findings. This bill committed the first significant federal spending on educational television research and experimentation to find more effective utilization of television, radio, motion pictures and related media (Reiser 1987; Seaborg 1998).

Since some of California's public universities had already begun exploring the educational uses of television, they played a pioneering role in this federal media initiative (Seaborg 1998). Describing the unique situation presented to him on the new campus at Valley State, Carpenter recalled: "When Governor [Pat] Brown reorganized the entire higher education program in California, they planned to have state colleges, which later became state universities, scattered up and down the coast, and there would be three transmission centers: one in San Francisco, one in San Fernando Valley, and a third in San Diego. And they would install state-of-the-art equipment, and then transmit to all the state colleges, and possibly community colleges, from these production centers. They actually went so far as to put up some of the buildings and bring in [electronic] equipment, and then the plan was discontinued.... So at the time I was hired, there was a plan in San Fernando to create this immense university in time with all this equipment left over. And the Dean, the man who was organizing the whole thing, asked me if I would take over the two departments. And so it was ready-made, we didn't have to fight for it" (Prins 1998b).

As Chair of Valley State's new anthropology department, Carpenter began building an alternative program that combined anthropology's four fields with arts and media, including film: "For every traditional anthropologist [such as Dorothy Lee, Paul Riesman, and Peter Furst] in linguistics, physical, archaeology, and so forth, we appointed someone in the arts. Bess Lomax [Hawes] was there in folk song, and Prince Modupe [from Benin] taught African music. Fred Katz taught jazz, [Robert] Cannon taught animation, [Archer Goodwin cinematography, Alan Lomax guest-taught ethnomusicology], and so forth. And there was no split in this department. The collaboration worked right across; every person was involved in every activity of every other person. It was a remarkable experiment" (Prins 1998b; see also Carpenter 1965:453-54).

During his decade at Valley State, Carpenter experi-

mented with documentary films and collaborated extensively with a range of colleagues. Situated just north of Los Angeles, his program attracted top professionals from the arts and media fields, offering fringe benefits Hollywood did not provide: an office to go to every day when they were not on the set, family health insurance, and a chance to experiment at a time when Hollywood had turned quiescent and conservative. Some of the talent he brought in from the film and entertainment industry had experienced the censorship of anti-Communist crusaders during the McCarthy period. Fred Katz had been blacklisted and others had faced similar challenges. As Carpenter recalls, "Or gone to prison.... And Bess [Lomax] Hawes had been...summoned by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Alan [Lomax] had fled to Europe, to England. He didn't come back for five years I think. And we had refugees from revolutions and from divorces and from, you know, disasters, and it was one hell of a department" (Prins and Bishop 2000:204).

Although Carpenter is unclear about the precise politics that resulted in the state's decision to abandon the plan to create an electronic media network linking its public universities, he remembers that the initiative left Valley State campus with the most "amazing equipment available" (personal communication). A second windfall came soon thereafter with the shutdown of numerous military bases and the auctioning off of equipment. Carpenter recalled this cryptically in a recent e-mail message: "Sister [armed] services: first pick, but little interest. Educational institutions: second pick. Fantastic loot. We got hand-held, wind-up 35mm-movie combat cameras for about $15. Got hundreds. Gave to students. Gave to other filmmakers in trade. We got 16mm film, still good, from fighter planes. I remember one huge viewer for 140mm cameras in a U2 [spy plane] that cost the government [lots of money]: $50. I went [to the auctions] weekly. Art department people used satellite treasures for 'composite' art." In addition to harvesting this visual technology dumped by the government, Carpenter and his colleagues "also went to [Los Angeles] TV stations daily to pick up scores of propaganda films, [both] government [and] commercial.... Often there would be one or two fantastic shots. Students excerpted these, creating montages, etc. Used Scotch tape for splicing." And, he continued: "Then we did another thing. We had a weekly film festival. I think we charged some minimal sum—twenty-five cents, or something. It

was called "Censured Films," but they were not censured in any sexual or political way. They were simply films that commercially had not been given a chance to survive—they were either too long or too short…. You cannot imagine some of the films that we got! And then, we would regularly import commercials, from all over—from Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland…. Marvelous films" (Carpenter, personal communication).

Meanwhile, a new demand for educational films about different cultures had been created by the 1958 National Defense Education Act, which gave the audio-visual instruction movement in the United States a big boost. Mead, having cultivated close ties to the U.S. government, clearly recognized the unique opportunities for the anthropological use of visual media. In her 1960 American Anthropological Association (AAA) presidential address, "Anthropology among the Sciences," she urged her colleagues to more effective use of cameras (Mead 1960, 1975; see also Prins 2002b).

At the time, the number of anthropologists actually producing visual media was exceedingly small. Indeed, with the exception of Carpenter's experimental anthropological film program at Valley State, anthropology students were not trained in the use of visual media. As Robert Gardner told Carpenter in a recent joint interview: "You were one of my mentors in absentia…. It was a moment of great pleasure for me to finally find you and meet you. And then...it was inevitable that we would keep encountering each other. The group was small–it was inevitable that we all knew each other" (Prins and Bishop 2000:207; see also Karl Heider's paper on Gardner in this issue).

Soon after Mead's 1960 address, the Educational Development Center (EDC) was organized at Cambridge, Massachusetts. It used National Science Foundation (NSF) funds "to package multi-media curricula for schools" (Ruby 2000:20). Impressed by John Marshall's recently completed ethnographic film on the Kalahari Bushmen (produced with Gardner's editorial assistance at the Harvard Film Center), the EDC concluded that "the social sciences could best be represented in the primary grades by anthropology, using the exoticism of other cultures to convey basic concepts" (Heider 1976:41). In 1962 the EDC invited Carpenter to direct an Inuit documentary film project. With several books and articles on the Inuit under his belt, plus extensive visual media experience, he seemed an obvious choice. However, not granted full editorial control,

he declined. The EDC then gave the project to Mead's former student Asen Balikci, the Canadian/Bulgarian anthropologist (Balikci and Brown 1966; see Paul Hockings' paper in this issue).

Edmund Carpenter, working closely with a range of colleagues and students in his unconventional department, was actively involved in other film productions, some funded by the NSF. For instance, he played an instrumental role in the 16mm-film *College* (19 mins.) in which he returned to issues he had started to explore at Toronto and articulated in the 1957 article "Classrooms without Walls," co-authored with McLuhan. Based on an original script written by Jacob Bronowski, this award-winning documentary aimed at encouraging high school students to continue with higher education. As Carpenter told a newspaper journalist at the time: "It's currently being shown in high schools from coast to coast. Rather than merely showing standard, humdrum college scenes [such] as library exteriors or drum majorettes, the film...concentrates on ideas. Said Dr. Carpenter, 'The film argues that a college isn't the campus for degrees, but a way of exploring'…. But, one cannot see these films at local movie theaters; they are mainly experimental and are displayed at film festivals or in the classroom. But, it's hoped that they will ultimately have a profound effect on movie making in general'" (Valley Times 1964).

The release of the *College* film more or less coincided with the publication of *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), a book that brought McLuhan global glory. By comparison, Carpenter's claim to fame remained modest. As noted in a 1963 Valley Times article:

The Anthropology Film Unit is the smallest among the four film groups on campus at Northridge [San Fernando Valley State], and the department is heavy with talent; faculty members can collectively boast of six Academy awards and two Peabody awards…. However, most of the credit for artistic innovation comes from the faculty and students. "We put these films together with spit, polish and love," commented Dr. Carpenter, who doubles in brass as producer, director and editor.

With Robert Cannon, a triple Academy Award-winning filmmaker, Carpenter made a film about Kuskokwim masks. These Eskimo masks "were ne-

Fig. 5. *Throw Me Anywhere*. From Georgia Sea Island Singers. Film capture.

glected by Western scholars until discovered by the surrealists Ernst, Breton, Matta, and Donati in 1943. The masks are complex mobiles with extensions & moving parts, like dissected Miros reassembled in three dimensions. No borders freeze, imprison. Instead, each mobile, obedient to an inner impulse, asserts its own identity…" (Carpenter 1972:31). (Note: Some footage is incorporated into the film by Bishop and Prins, 2002). Cannon, who had previously worked for Disney Studios, had also made a few documentaries, including a film based on the 1943 book *The Races of Mankind* by anthropologists Gene Weltfish and Ruth Benedict. Convinced that "films of dignity and integrity...were best attempted outside Hollywood [but deploring] the low technical standards of most anthropological films," his sentiments matched Carpenter's. Moreover, noted Carpenter (1965a:453-54), both of them were also concerned about the apparent futility of typical ethnographic film endeavors: "Endless footage on tribes exists in scattered storage, shot by fieldworkers who abandoned their plans when faced with the task and cost of editing. Most of it consists of useless, conventional mugshots. Bob [Cannon] encouraged fieldworkers to film verbs, not nouns. He loathed narration and insisted that viewers should explore with their own eyes."

Of special significance is Carpenter's documentary film on traditional songs and dances performed by the Gullah (or Geechee, as they are also known), descendants of enslaved Africans who live in small farming and fishing communities on the sea islands of Georgia and South Carolina. Carpenter (1965a:453-54) commented on their unique cultural heritage: "By their isolation, they are the only group in North America, which has preserved actual African dances in relatively pure form." Their music had come to the attention of folk revivalists in the 1960s through recordings made by Alan Lomax in the previous decade. In 1964, Carpenter decided to visually document a St. Simon Island Gullah group known as the *Georgia Sea Island Singers*, who then played the coffee houses in Los Angeles (see also Bishop's article on Lomax in this issue). The filming focused on six songs from their much larger religious repertoire—*Moses; Yonder Come Day; Throw me Anywhere Lord* (*Buzzard Lope*); *Bright Star Shinning in Glory* (*Jesus Been Down in the Mire*); *Adam in the Garden*; and *Before this Time Another Year.* Collaborating with Hawes, Goodwin, Cannon, and others at Valley State, Carpenter produced an artfully photographed and masterfully edited documentary screened and distributed at various times under the titles *Georgia Sea Island Singers; Bright Star Shinning in Glory*; and *Yonder Come Day*.

Recalling this cinematic production, Bess Lomax Hawes (1973a) later wrote that Edmund Carpenter had

"persuaded some friends in the professional film industry to donate their technical services and arranged for us to use a college sound stage and recording equipment." Unable to document these Gullah performances in their proper ethnographic context, he decided "to stage the filming against a plain black curtain. This would enable the cameramen to use angle shots impractical under documentary field conditions, and also permit dissolves and fades in later cutting." According to Carpenter (1965a:453-54), his crew "had top-cameramen on three 35mm cameras for a master-take and five playbacks,

the short documentary *Buck Dancer*, featuring an African-American musician-dancer named Ed Young. Six years earlier, Hawes' older brother, Alan Lomax, had made a sound recording of Young's fife-and-drum band in Mississippi. Now Young played his traditional cane fife with the Georgia Sea Island Singers (who were back in California for the summer). Working with a local educational film company, Carpenter and Hawes made a record of his rendition of a traditional southern "dance of solo male virtuosity engaged in by both black and white frontiersmen" (Hawes 1973b). They shot it, as

Fig. 6. Carpenter and Bess (Lomax) Hawes in the projection room at Valley State, 1963.

thus achieving eighteen synchronized camera shots." One of the cameras "was put in the ceiling, and one was [frontally fixed], and another was hand-held among the dancers..." (Prins 1998b). Assessing this media production, Carpenter (1965: 453-54) justly claimed: "This detailed record of body movement and facial expression is without parallel; it gives some idea how much we have been missing."

In 1965, Carpenter and Hawes worked together on

later Hawes (1973b) noted, on a "murderously hot afternoon at an abandoned ranch in the hills northwest of Los Angeles where the buildings had been used for innumerable western movies." Beyond performance, the ethnographic short also documents the making of a transverse-blown cane fife. (Note: An almost identical sequence was later filmed in Mississippi by Lomax and John Bishop for *The Land Where the Blues Began* [1978].) What is particularly worth noting about these

two documentaries is that Carpenter and his colleagues at Valley State found ways to visually record North America's traditional cultures at a time when there was no support for shooting films in the field. They grappled with issues of representation, cultural accuracy, and translation of one expressive form into another through bold and innovative use of the resources they could muster and the opportunities that came within their orbit.

Marketing such films was particularly difficult at the time. Reflecting on the *Georgia Sea Island Singers* documentary, Carpenter had this to say: "There was no way you could possibly hope for distribution of that film. But, some day, fifty years from now, that film will be shown, that film will be rediscovered...people will announce they found this in a can, forgotten...they finally researched it and discovered who made the film, and why. I promise you, it will become acceptable then" (Prins 1998b). (Note: Selected footage is incorporated in the film on Edmund Carpenter by Bishop and Prins 2002).

In the mid-1960s, visual anthropology began to take nationwide institutional form in the U.S. Newly developed portable synch-sound cameras made it more feasible for anthropologists and filmmakers to meet the growing educational demand for ethnographic films about "exotic" or "primitive peoples" (e.g. Loizos 1993:24; Prins 1997, 2002c). In 1965 the Program in Ethnographic Film (PIEF) was founded at Harvard University's Film Study Center. That same year, the AAA began to regularly include ethnographic film sessions in its annual meeting programs (El Guindi 2000; Prins 2002b; Ruby 2000:19, 25; see also Jay Ruby's paper in this volume). Ironically, two years later the fortunes of Carpenter's experimental ethnographic film program fell. Undergoing institutional academic evaluation in 1967, during the height of the anti-Vietnam protest movement, the interdisciplinary anthropology department at Valley State was deemed too unconventional. Thirteen faculty left and the maverick film program closed (Prins 1998b).

BEYOND ORTHODOXY: CARPENTER AND McLUHAN IN THE SIXTIES

The 1957 article "Classroom without Walls," co-authored by Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan ten years before the collapse of the Valley State anthropological film program, proclaimed the emerging role of audiovisual media in education. At the time, McLuhan's name "was unknown to everyone but his English students at the University of Toronto–and a coterie of academic admirers who followed his abstruse articles in small-circulation quarterlies" (Nolden 1969). And although Carpenter had his own weekly show on national television in the mid-1950s, he agreed: "...Nobody was listening. I mean, you almost had to make a fool out of yourself to get anyone to pay attention to what was being said" (Prins and Bishop 2000).

In 1959, the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) commissioned him to direct a Media Project destined for the U.S. Office of Education. Funded by the 1958 U.S. National Defense Education Act, this project aimed at developing a syllabus for the study of media in the eleventh-grade classroom in order to give students and teachers a "familiarity with the various and often contradictory qualities and effects of media." Building on an idea he owed to Innis ("We change our tools and then our tools change us"), McLuhan was less interested in the content of media than in their "mutational powers" (Onufrijchuk 1993). Accordingly, he focused on the effects of electronic media, in particular television, regardless of informational content, arguing that students needed to understand the electronic media through which they are enculturated (Marchand 1987). In 1960, NAEB published McLuhan's text in mimeographed form as *Report on Project in Understanding New Media*. It did not meet the expectations of education bureaucrats, nor did it fit any established categories of academic writing. Consequently, McLuhan's recommendations and his proposed high school syllabus were simply tabled (Marchand 1987). In time, his friend and former colleague Carpenter would help him revive and revise the manuscript.

After leaving Toronto, Carpenter had stayed in touch with McLuhan and the two collaborated long distance. Among other things, they co-edited an anthology titled Explorations in Communication (1960), based on a selection of 21 articles published earlier in their journal. This book enjoyed six translations, including Japanese, and still brings royalties. A couple of years later, McLuhan published *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. His first claim to fame, this 1962 book built on Innis' original idea that "Application of power to communication industries hastened the consolidation of vernaculars, the rise of nationalism,

revolution, and new outbreaks of savagery in the twentieth century" (McLuhan 1962:258-59). It also contains echoes of Carpenter's research–reference to non-visual or "acoustic space" in non-literate tribal cultures such as the Inuit (Carpenter 1959, Carpenter and McLuhan 1960).

When McLuhan became head of the Center for Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto, he continued working on his poorly-received 1960 NAEB report, sending drafts and redrafts to Carpenter for his input. In addition to editorial feedback, Carpenter provided additional details and selected quotes. In fact, he actually assisted his old friend in rewriting the text. Finally published in 1964 under the title *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* this became McLuhan's seminal work. It moved him into the category of modern media guru, "famous for erecting a whole structure of aesthetic, sociological, and philosophical theory upon the idea that electronic communication is making profound transformations in the human mind and civilization at large" (Nolden 1969). Recently, Carpenter e-mailed us the following terse recapitulation of this book's genesis: "McLuhan first wrote a [manuscript] under Title 7, a Pentagon supported Educational Act (I have a copy). It was not well received. One Congressman denounced the study on the House floor (must exist in some library). Marshall was then in bad shape. This was around [1960]. Fell to kitchen floor, feet pounding. Last rites administered. Gradually got better. Wanted to revise Title 7 ms. We attempted it together, exchanging chapters by mail. I still have those chapters. Slowly I withdrew. I admired Marshall's insights and style, but it simply wasn't me. McGraw-Hill, the publisher of *Understanding Media* [1964], asked me to supply sources, since most quotes came from me. Must sound like a strange collaboration, but it was a happy one." In his recent essay "That-Not-So-Silent Sea," Carpenter (2001:253) summed it up like this: "The final version of *Understanding Media* mixed both our contributions. This partly explains its uneven tone."

In the late 1960s, McLuhan's ideas received widespread critical exposure in France, especially due to a review article by Carpenter's colleague Paul Riesman (1966). This article appeared in *Critique,* an influential journal founded by French ethnographic surrealist Georges Bataille (Genosko 1998).

McLuhan's basic thesis, outlined in various publications (and also broadly underwritten by Carpenter),

was relatively simple: "all media–in and of themselves and regardless of the messages they communicate–exert a compelling influence on man and society. Prehistoric, or tribal, man existed in a harmonious balance of the senses, perceiving the world equally through hearing, smell, touch, sight and taste. But technological innovations are extensions of human abilities and senses that alter this sensory balance–an alteration that, in turn, inexorably reshapes the society that created the technology. According to McLuhan, there have been three basic technological innovations: the invention of the phonetic alphabet, which jolted tribal man out of his sensory balance and gave dominance to the eye; the introduction of movable type in the 16th century, which accelerated this process; and the invention of the telegraph in 1844, which heralded an electronics revolution that will ultimately retribalize man by restoring his sensory balance" (Nolden 1969). Having become a "technological determinist," McLuhan credited electronic media with the ability to exact profound social, cultural, and political influences (Zechowski n.d.). In contrast to earlier changes in communications technology such as typography, he argued, modern electronic media such as radio and television "constitute a total and near-instantaneous transformation of culture, values and attitudes. This upheaval," he maintained, "generates great pain and identity loss, which can be ameliorated only through a conscious awareness of its dynamics. If we understand the revolutionary transformations caused by new media, we can anticipate and control them; but if we continue in our self-induced subliminal trance, we will be their slaves" (Nolden 1969). Viewing his visionary quest as an effort "to understand our technological environment and its psychic and social consequences," McLuhan urged: "Effective study of the media deals not only with the content of the media but with the media themselves and the total cultural environment within which the media function.... [It] is the medium itself that is the message, not the content, and unaware that the medium is also the massage–that, all puns aside, it literally works over and saturates and molds and transforms every sense ratio. The content or message of any particular medium has about as much importance as the stenciling on the casing of an atomic bomb" (Nolden 1969).

While McLuhan reaped fame as "an internationally recognized media guru" (Carpenter 2001), Carpenter faced his 1967 institutional meltdown at Valley State. Already divorced and now closing the door on this

decade-long adventure in visual anthropology, he quit California and went to New York City. McLuhan, a devout Catholic convert, had been offered the Schweitzer Chair at Fordham University, a Jesuit academic institution in the city. He proposed sharing the position with Carpenter, and the two old friends picked up their routine of close collaboration. McLuhan's celebrity peaked that year with the simultaneous release of a paperback and audio recording of *The Medium is the Massage* and an NBC television broadcast that spread his radical ideas about electronic media all across the country.

Within months of his arrival at Fordham, McLuhan became critically ill and underwent surgery to remove a large brain tumor. Among other commitments, he had signed a contract to write the main article for a special McLuhan issue in *Harper's Bazaar*. Unable to meet the deadline, he turned to Carpenter, who agreed to write the piece. Titled "Fashion is Language," it appeared under McLuhan's name and earned a check for $18,000, all of which went to McLuhan "to help cover the operation" (Carpenter, personal communication). A few years later, Carpenter republished this piece under his own name as the 1970 book *They Became What They Beheld*. Commenting on their unusual pattern of linked undertakings, Carpenter simply noted: "We turned out quite a few anonymous things—sometimes we'd sign and sometimes we wouldn't" (Prins and Bishop 2000). After McLuhan's recovery, his journey of international stardom continued. In addition to the documentary *This Is Marshall McLuhan* (1968), he appeared on the covers of journals all across the globe and interviews with him appeared in major popular magazines, including *Playboy* (1969).

In contrast, Carpenter (2001) felt "banned to the bleachers." After a year at Fordham University he left New York to accept the Carnegie Chair in anthropology at University of California, Santa Cruz. In 1969, he left California again, this time for a position as Research Professor at the University of Papua and New Guinea. A photographer, Adelaide de Menil (who later became his wife) joined him. When they first met two years earlier, she had just completed a project on Northwest Coast Indian art. Widely traveled, de Menil had also worked at the American Museum of Natural History, served as staff photographer on an archaeological expedition in Greece, and photographed portraits for Vogue.

MEDIA EXPERIMENTS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA (1969-1970)

Edmund Carpenter's experimental research on the impact of modern media on Stone Age Papua peoples in New Guinea may be viewed as a case study in what is now sometimes coined "media ecology." McLuhan's 1969 *Playboy* interview hints at the value Carpenter's work had for his own. For instance, it shows how McLuhan relied on anthropology's idea of the comparative method to reconstruct the dynamics of evolutionary change from the paleolithic foraging stage to industrial civilization. This method, according to Carpenter, is anthropology's "greatest tool" (McBride 1980:111). Asked how he could be certain that phonetic literacy had triggered "a systemic cultural and physiological transformation" in Western civilization a few thousand years ago, McLuhan suggested that traditional tribes people surviving in isolated pockets of the Third World could be seen in terms of so-called contemporary ancestors: "You don't have to go back 3000 or 4000 years to see this process at work; in Africa today, a single generation of alphabetic literacy is enough to wrench the individual from the tribal web" (McLuhan, quoted in Nolden 1969).

When Carpenter arrived in the capital city of Port Moresby to begin his professorship at the University of Papua & New Guinea, the Territory of Papua and New Guinea was in the process of becoming independent as a sovereign country. Still administered by the Australian government, the large island's cultural and linguistic diversity was enormous and the political challenges formidable. Directly responsible to the Department of Information and Educational Services (DIES), Carpenter had been hired to advise the Australian government on the use of electronic media in modern nation building and to assess the impact of electronic media on the tribal cultures. As he later recalled: "They sought advice on the use of radio, film, even television. They wanted to use these media to reach not only townspeople, but those isolated in swamps & mountain valleys & outer islands" (Carpenter 1972:113).

For Carpenter, his assignment as communications consultant posed unique opportunities to test some of the theories on media and cultural change that he and McLuhan had been exploring for many years. In his words, he accepted the position "because it gave me an unparalleled opportunity to step in & out of 10,000 years

Figs. 7 and 8. Carpenter and de Menil Filming in Papua New Guinea, 1969. Photos: Herbert Loebel.

of media history, observing, probing, testing. I wanted to observe, for example, what happens when a person–for the first time–sees himself in a mirror, in a photograph, on films, hears his voice; sees his name" (Carpenter (1972:113).

Although German colonial explorers had penetrated inland Papua New Guinea as far as the Middle Sepik River back in the mid-1880s, and various anthropologists (including Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead) had frequented stretches of the river from the early 1930s, the Upper Sepik and highlands areas were off limits to outsiders until opened by a United Nations' mandate just before Carpenter's arrival. Aiming to make a filmic record of "Stone Age peoples" during their initial exposure to modern media, Carpenter traveled to these remote areas where the tribes people had "no acquaintance" yet with such media. While he directed the project and recorded sound, his partner Adelaide de Menil handled the Bolex camera (Prins and Bishop 2000:207). Ultimately they shot some 400,000 feet of 16mm film in black and white, as well as color and infrared film. They also took still photographs–Polaroid and 35mm (Prins 1998b).

In a 1998 interview Carpenter recollected his 1969-1970 expeditions with an amazement still vivid after many years: "We went anywhere we wanted.... We would go out on patrol for two months at a time. We would fly to New Ireland or New Britain to work there. We lived in the highlands for some months. We were able to rent boats and have planes. It was really quite astonishing. I had been to New Guinea before, I have been there since, [but] this was a moment of just open house. With the full backing of the government, the ABC [Australian Broadcasting Corp] would broadcast stories about us, interviews with me. So, people would often cooperate along the line–they had been following this on the radio" (Prins 1998b).

Elaborating on his visits to newly contacted communities in far-off regions, Carpenter continued, "It was possible at that time to take an outboard motor and a dugout, and simply go up a river and encounter people who were still using stone axes. It didn't last long. But, for one brief moment you could step into the past; you could be a Captain Cook and encounter 10,000 years of media history. We saw things that, if we hadn't recorded them, there would be no record that they existed" (Prins 1998b). For instance, he added, "we could step in and out of different media worlds, different periods of time

where you could actually see literacy coming in and how it was first handled–people trying to make up their own alphabets, their own glyphs to cover their language. You might be going down a trail and some guy comes racing up and he hands you some note…and he's written this thing out. He's devised it, and he's very proud of it, but you cannot read it" (Prins 1998b).

At Port Moresby, Carpenter was told that he could use the so-called *Cine-Canoe*: "It was the pride of the region.... So I thought, 'okay, I'll get aboard the *Cine-Canoe*, and we'll go around and they'll show movies in villages, and we'll film [peoples' reactions] with infrared.... Well, when I got there, the *Cine-Canoe* was sunk in the mud.... I don't think it had been moved, or had moved for twelve years.... With the help of a carpenter…we finally got it to the point where it could float. And we took off. I remember some of the films that were being shown. There was one film on traffic control in Sydney and another on women flying kites in Tasmania, or something like that. You know, these were all these films that people had dumped" (Prins and Bishop 2000).

Focusing on the impact of new modern media on tribal cultures and experimenting with reflexivity studies, Carpenter filmed Papuas seeing themselves for the first time in photographs or motion film: "It was important to us to film the reactions of people totally innocent of mirrors, cameras, recorders, etc. Such people exist in New Guinea, though they number only a handful & are disappearing like the morning mist…. To this end, we went among the Biami, an isolated group in the Papuan Plateau" (Carpenter 1972:115). Beyond filming peoples' reactions to images of the self, Carpenter's research methodology included "filming them watching the film.... The logistical problems at that time were staggering. We had to send the film all the way back to the States to have it processed, then [have it] sent all the way back [to New Guinea]. Then we would project it. We had to bring in generators and get them covered to kill the sound. And then we would film the people watching the movie..." (Prins 1998b).

Commenting on their reactions to seeing images of themselves, he claimed: "Once they understood that they could see their soul, their image, their identity outside of themselves, they were startled. Invariably, they would cover their mouth, and sometimes stamp their foot, and then turn away. And then [they would] take the image and look at it again, and hide, and so forth" (Prins and Bishop 2000:207). He described "the consis-

Figs. 9-11. Papua viewing themselves on film. Photos: Adelaide de Menil.

tency" of their initial reactions as "amazing," especially given New Guinea's incredible cultural diversity which is "perhaps like no other place in the world. [Going] from one valley to another, you are among tiny pygmies in one area and within walking distance you are among these tall graceful figures....We got consistent reactions [to electronic media] wherever we went, never mind the economy, never mind the physical type: this startled reaction, covering their mouths, stamping a foot, turning away a head in embarrassment.... But, all of that passed within weeks. [Soon] people were walking around with images of themselves on their foreheads. And I don't think there's any return to the initial innocence" (Prins and Bishop 2000:207; Carpenter 1972:129-30).

Discussing the impact such film screenings had on traditional Papua tribespeople, Carpenter remembered, "Well, we did this repeatedly, in different places. The reactions differed, of course. There was one village that was literally an armed camp. In the far distance, you could see smoke, and the smoke came from an enemy village. And then they described these people to me, and it was more mythical than real. It was obvious [they had] never encountered them except at a distance of a spear. Then we filmed them.... And we filmed their enemies. We showed each of the groups [films of each other].... And suddenly there was [mediated] communication, for the first time" (Prins and Bishop 2000:208). Revealing another piece of this experiment, Carpenter noted, "And we then said, 'Well, we're going to visit them.' And we asked them to come along. 'No, no, no, no.' So, finally we insisted, and they visited the place. But, even more interesting, [after] they saw this group on...film...the men became interested in the women as women. Prior to that, there was far more interest in the
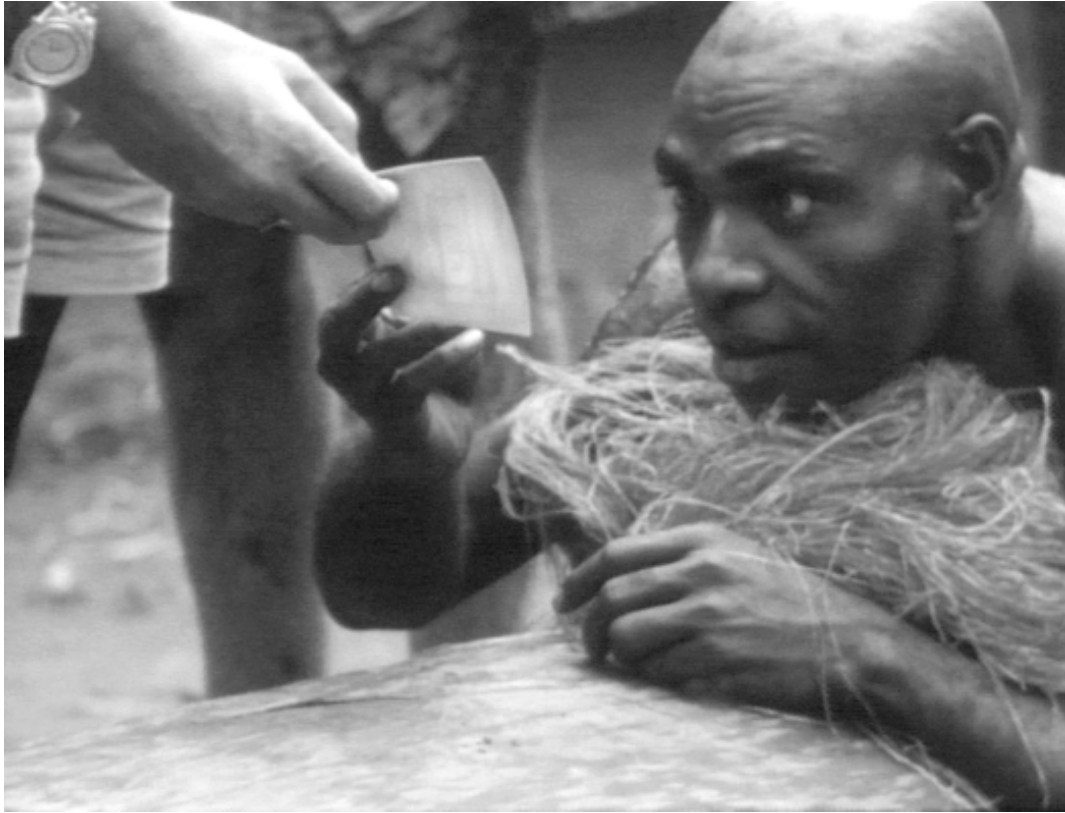
Fig. 12. "The initiates were barely conscious at the end of their ordeal, but they grinned happily when shown Polaroid shots of their scarified backs." Frame from 1969 film footage by Adelaide de Menil.

relationship between men and men. But now, with this detachment that came with film, they responded to [the women] as sex objects. And...we later found out, that some of them returned to these villages to visit and see the women there" (Prins and Bishop 2000:207).

Of special note is the dramatic footage of a male initiation ceremony filmed in the Middle Sepik village of Kandangan. As Carpenter (1972:134-35) reported: "Movies are occasionally shown by the government in certain villages. Without exception, the most popular films are those on New Guinea life. Villagers are aware that cameras can record their daily activities. In Kandangan village the people became co-producers with us in making the film. The initial proposal came from us, but the actual filming of an initiation ceremony became largely their production…. The initiates were barely conscious at the end of their ordeal, but they grinned happily when shown Polaroid shots of their scarified backs. The elders asked to have the sound track played back to them. Then they 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 water drums, the most sacred objects of this ceremony. Film threatened to replace a ceremony hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years old." However, Carpenter (1972:135) was never able to finish the film as promised and, never having been shown to the Kandangan, "involuntary initiations were resumed." (Note: part of this unique footage has now been edited into the film by Bishop and Prins [2002].)

As a DIES communications consultant, Carpenter also examined the transformative impact of radio in tribal New Guinea. Commenting on one of his findings in the area, he said: "The cargo cults seemed to be, to me, a response to radio.... For one thing, they would raise a telegraph pole and they'd have a man down at a desk there, with a little thing that sort of imitated a wireless set, receiving these messages. And then, he would go through different performances and convey this to

others, and so on. I saw radio as the main force there. I don't think it was the appearance of planes. After all, [during] the Second War, they saw more planes than they wanted. No, it was the radio, and radio could be very powerful.... A standard thing [patrol officers] did would be to go into a village and call out the villagers. They'd line up. The chief would line them up as if it were a military thing. And then the patrol officer would dress them down for having failed to dig latrines. And then he would take the chief aside and record his message. And then, two days later, he'd have the villagers assemble and the chief would hold up a radio and the people would hear his voice coming in over the radio, telling them to dig the latrines. And, they'd go out and dig the latrines" (Prins and Bishop 2000:207).

CADMOS REDUX: DODGING THE DRAGON

At some point during his experimental media research project, it dawned on Edmund Carpenter that the Australian government's goals of electronically tying Papua New Guinea's multiple tribal cultures posed some profoundly disturbing ethical problems. Not unlike a latter-day Cadmos, by introducing electronic media into the tribal world of preliterate peoples, he helped set into motion the irreversible process of cultural upheaval. Bit by bit, his exciting adventures on the Upper Sepik began to resemble a journey into the heart of darkness. Cadmos, the Phoenician-born king who had brought "letters" to the barbarians in Greece, killed the dragon that threatened Thebes and then buried its teeth–which turned out to be seeds of angry men fighting among themselves. Carpenter had reason to feel conflicted about his work. After all, both Innis (1950) and McLuhan (1962:63) had referred to the Cadmos myth "to explain in detail the simple truth" of what happened with the introduction of literacy in early civilization. Just before Carpenter's departure for New Guinea, McLuhan had mentioned the myth again in an interview, giving this dire warning: "Whenever the dragon's teeth of technological change are sown, we reap a whirlwind of violence" (McLuhan, quoted in Nolden 1969).

Perhaps this is what Carpenter had in mind when he later confessed, "The dilemma I faced in New Guinea was this: I had been asked to find more effective uses for electronic media, yet I viewed these media with distrust. I had been employed by government administrators, who, however well-intentioned, sought to use these

media for human control. They viewed media as neutral tools & they viewed themselves as men who could be trusted to use them humanely. I saw the problem otherwise. I think media are so powerful they *swallow* cultures...." (Carpenter 1972: 190-91, our emphasis).

Sometime after Carpenter and de Menil had returned to New York in 1970, he touched base again with McLuhan in Toronto. In his 1971 convocation address at the University of Alberta, Canada, McLuhan referred to his old partner's electronic media experiments in Papua New Guinea. Elaborating on his stock subject, namely the dissolution of community in a world environment of electric information, he asked his audience to consider this, If folks in modern industrial society are distressed by the electronic innovations imposed upon them, imagine the profound challenges tribal peoples face: "The Anthropologist, E. S. Carpenter, has performed experiments in New Guinea in which, by the use of photographs and movies made on the spot, he carried people—these very Paleolithic people—through countless centuries of evolutionary cultural development in a few hours. It is not only the academic or scientific specialist who finds himself in a freakish position in a world of instant information" (McLuhan 1971).

Strangely repeating McLuhan's failure to satisfy the U.S. government with his officially commissioned NAEB report on media ten years earlier, Carpenter did not provide the Australian government with the report it expected on applied media research in New Guinea. As he later explained: "Well, I was working for an organization that was not very enthusiastic about what I was doing, and I became convinced that they themselves were part of the problem, and it might help if their budget were cut. So, I realized that any report that I submitted...would have limited distribution. So, when I came back, I wrote [*Oh, What a Blow...*] up as an alternative [to the report]" (Prins 1998b).

As for the visual documentation of his experimental media project, Carpenter had this to say: "I wanted to document in New Guinea what I thought was a misguided effort on the part of the government to create this 'classroom without walls' via the airwaves. My plan was to make a film which would illustrate this" (Prins 1998b). Moreover, he estimated that he and de Menil had shot enough material for "at least two potentially great films"–one the physical reaction tribespeople had to newly-introduced modern media, and one on "the speed with which they could adjust to some of these things...the

initial reaction to a tape recorder–within weeks the children were playing with that tape recorder, experimenting with it" (Prins 1998b).

None of these plans came to fruition. Although Carpenter showed a few small samples of edited footage in New York and Albany, he never followed through on his film plans. As he later explained: "There were objections [by fellow anthropologists, in particular Marvin Harris] on the grounds that we were experimenting with people" (Prins 1998b). Not coincidentally, this critique came about when the AAA was mired in a highly divisive professional ethics debate, brought on by disturbing

Fig. 13. Photo of the Cover of *Oh, What a Blow That Phantom Gave Me!*

revelations of anthropological involvement in covert intelligence operations and counterinsurgency research. Clifford Geertz was among those who accused him of unethical research practices in Papua New Guinea. Carpenter tersely noticed that Geertz himself "never volunteered to tell us who his own backers were in various [CENIS-sponsored Indonesian research] activities" (Prins 1998b; for further information, see, e.g., Nader 1997:114, 118-119; Price 1998: 403-407). Such critiques, probably fueled by Carpenter's own haunted thoughts evoked by the Cadmos myth, had the following results: "I was furious. So I just put the film aside, in storage. It's a record. Someone could finish it" (Prins 1998b). (Note: Not long after the 1998 interview, Carpenter sent a trunk filled with unedited New Guinea footage, part of which the authors have incorporated in their documentary about him [Bishop and Prins 2002].)

WHAT A BLOW THAT QUIXOTIC ANTHROPOLOGY GAVE ME!

Edmund Carpenter's loss of innocence came in an era when Third World decolonization struggles and revolutionary movements were rocking the foundations of anthropology as an academic enterprise. In hindsight, it appears obvious that he found himself mired in the controversies of a profession that began to critically reflect on its own inherent ambiguities (e.g., Asad 1973; Hymes 1972; Nader 1997).

The major tangible outcome of Carpenter's Papua New Guinea media project is his 1972 book *Oh! What a Blow that Phantom Gave Me!* Also translated into German, it remains his best known work (Carpenter 1994). Beyond suggesting what Carpenter thinks about media's impact on preliterate peoples, the title hints at the personal and professional blows his media experiment dealt him. As its dust jacket informs us: "Deftly appropriating his title from Don Quixote, literature's supreme visionary, Edmund Carpenter aims full tilt at our own present-day phantom: the media." Further insight about its meaning can be gleaned from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, where McLuhan quotes Don Quixote as a man who "lives in a fantasy world [and] the first figure in Renaissance literature who seeks by action to bring the world into harmony with his own plans and ideals" (1962: 256). In choosing this medieval romantic hero, he noted, Miguel de Cervantes "established an ambivalence of the utmost use." The irony in this romance, McLuhan pointed out, is that while the impractical visionary battles against the new order in the name of the old, Cervantes actually "attempts to sanc-

tion the new principle.... The dynamics of society have come to demand a continuous and active transformation of reality; the world must be perpetually constructed anew..." (1962:256-57).

Exposing the internal contradictions and paradoxes in McLuhan's theoretical argument about the transformative impact of electronic media, Carpenter's ambivalence about his government-funded media work in New Guinea seems obvious. Not unlike Cervantes' romantically impractical hero, he had challenged the official media policy makers in New Guinea. A clue to his animus can be found in a tellingly titled essay "Misanthropology," the final chapter in *Oh, What a Blow....* Here he vents his profound disillusion with and growing alienation from the academic enterprise: "Anthropology, as an offspring of colonialism, reflects what Levi-Strauss calls 'a state of affairs in which one part of mankind treats the other as object'.... The trend has been toward the manipulation of peoples in the very course of studying them" (Carpenter 1972:189). Critically aware of the disruptive impact of modern media on traditional cultures and suspicious of government-funded applied anthropological research, he concluded his quixotic book: "I therefore decided that both the written report & film I produced would be addressed to no particular audience. Like the cry, 'Fire!' I hoped they would receive the widest possible circulation & not just be heard by arsonists. This meant shunning 'scholarly' publications, which have long since become a means of communication control; it also meant avoiding conventional formats, another means of neutralizing information. Hence the format of this [and future] books" (Carpenter 1972:191).

MISANTHROPOLOGY

After his return from New Guinea in 1970, Edmund Carpenter wrote several articles for Natural History and other periodicals, and published his book *Oh, What a Blow....* Conflicted about his own aborted experiment in applied media anthropology, his already existing misgivings about his profession intensified in the early 1970s. Anxious about the modern electronic "dragons" swallowing tribal cultures, he found himself at odds with the growing academic cohort in visual anthropology, few of whom were on the forefront in the early years of critical self-reflection in the profession (Carpenter 1978, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1989).

Soon after coming back to the U.S., Carpenter was invited to a meeting hosted by the Smithsonian Institution. Funded by the NSF and co-sponsored by PIEF (by then a committee of the AAA), this three-day gathering took place at the Smithsonian's Belmont Conference Center at Elkridge, Maryland, October 29-November 1, 1970. The list of participants reads like a "Who's Who in Visual Anthropology," including not only Carpenter, but also John Adair, Timothy Asch, Asen Balikci, Robert Gardner, Walter Goldschmidt, Karl Heider, Alan Lomax, John Marshall, Margaret Mead, Jay Ruby, Carroll Williams, and Sol Worth, as well as Carleton Gajdusek and Richard Sorensen (NSF Report 1970). This cross-disciplinary group of scholars and practitioners interested in visual media set into motion what has since become known as the National Human Studies Film Center. As an anthropological research film archive, its major function was to preserve scientific research footage "to make studiable records of phenomena not otherwise observable or measurable" (Sorensen 1965:1626).

Doubting anthropological claims of scientific objectivity and awed by the transformative power of visual media in tribal cultures, Carpenter did not share the prevalent, if naive, faith in cameras as neutral research tools (e.g. Loizos 1993:16-17, 45, 64; Ruby 2000:176-80), and left the conference early. A few years later, many of the original Belmont participants, including Carpenter, attended the International Conference on Visual Anthropology held in Chicago in 1973. The major topic of discussion focused on the urgent need for documenting and preserving the cultural heritage of rapidly vanishing tribal peoples (Sorensen 1974; Sorensen and Gay 1979:4). At this venue, Carpenter (1975) presented his now classic paper "The Tribal Terror of Self-Awareness."

During these years, Carpenter resembled a gypsy scholar, teaching primarily as an adjunct professor of anthropology at the New School for Social Research, historically the unorthodox wing of New York academe. He also occasionally taught as a visiting professor at various other institutions, including Adelphi, New York, and Harvard Universities, and spent eight years at the Museum der Kulturen in Basel, Switzerland. On the publishing front, a popular version of his 1959 book *Eskimo* appeared in 1973. Retitled *Eskimo Realities*, it featured new illustrations and an innovative layout.

Employing a method of visual presentation inspired

by the Surrealists, Carpenter used juxtaposition, association, analogy and dislocation to structure the arrangement of ideas in his various books. As he himself described it:

> Organized ignorance can be a great asset when approaching the unfamiliar…. This notebook of juxtaposed images and explorations is organized around correspondences between certain preliterate & post literate experiences. To convey the essence of these experiences to a contemporary audience, in the idiom of our day, I felt it necessary to find literary expressions consonant with the experiences themselves. The rhythms practiced here are heightened, concentrated & frequently more violent than those found in more conventional texts. They belong to the world of icon & music, graffiti and cartoon, and lie closer, I believe, to the original experiences.... There rhythms include interval (with abrupt interface) & repeat /repeat of cliché (with slight variation), a technique made familiar by Andy Warhol and common to much tribal art (Carpenter 1970; Soules n.d.).

Disenchanted by institutionalized anthropology, Carpenter disengaged himself from academic discourse just as other visual anthropologists began to critically question observational cinema's claims of scientific objectivity. And as his colleagues became aware of complex reflexivity issues and started to challenge ethnographic representations as fictions, he switched to the less controversial study of tribal art. By the late 1980s, in addition to numerous other publications, he had completed a 12-volume, 3,500 page cross-cultural study on the researches of Carl Schuster, entitled *Social Symbolism in Ancient & Tribal Art* (Schuster and Carpenter 1986-1988), followed later by a synoptic book entitled *Patterns That Connect* (Schuster and Carpenter 1996; Prins 1998a).

In spite of his misgivings and disappointments, Carpenter continued to play a role in visual anthropology. Although he prefers to stay behind the scenes, he has been instrumental in the production of various important ethnographic films. For instance, in his capacity as vice-president of the Rock Foundation, a philanthropic institution founded by his wife, he steered significant funding toward certain ethnographic documentaries and other significant projects of anthropologi-

cal interest. As such, the Rock Foundation has been discretely involved in film projects by Robert Gardner, John Marshall, John Adair, David MacDougall, Asen Balikci, Timothy Asch, etc. It also provided substantial financial support to The Alaska Native Heritage Film Project for various films directed by Sarah Elder and Leonard Kamerling in the mid-1970s (Elder, personal communication; Prins and Bishop 2000:208).

Among films supported by Carpenter through the Rock Foundation is *Altar of Fire* (1976), a forty-five minute film about an ancient ritual performed by Nambudiris, Brahmin priests (Staal 1976, 1979). He discussed this documentary in a 1998 interview:

> I brought two of my closest friends together: Frits Staal, a Vedic scholar at Berkeley, and Robert Gardner, the filmmaker at Harvard. And the plan was to record a Vedic ritual in Kerala in India.... When the film was finished, we showed it to the priests, the Vedic priests, and they were very upset over the fact that it was a historic record of what had actually occurred. That was not what they wanted. What they wanted was a model for teaching future generations. [And] a big section of the film had to be redone because of that. Here we wanted an historical record of exactly what had happened in the making of that film; they wanted a model which would enable them to transmit the information to future generations. They wanted a flawless model, we wanted a historical one. There was...no way to reconcile those differences." The final result was two films: "one for them and one for us. We simply cut out the mistakes on the one and they were quite happy with it.... We didn't have to re-shoot, because once an error was made, the sacrificer (or whoever the person was) had to then do it from the start again. (Prins 1998b)

Asch and Balikci received funding from the Rock Foundation for *The Sons of Hadji Omar*, their 1978 documentary about the Pashtun nomads of Afghanistan. Several years after the film's release, the BBC bought footage and edited it into news coverage of U.S.-supported Afghan guerillas resisting a pro-Soviet regime supported by Russian troops in the 1980s. As Carpenter recalled:

> Footage shot by Tim Asch in Afghanistan [for *The

Sons of Hadji Omar] was later spliced into political footage in which the most innocent scenes were turned into gun-running. I understand that the lives of these people were not only put in jeopardy, some of them were actually executed. They were totally innocent; family scenes and caravan scenes, and so forth.... So, something entered the whole film that was unexpected. (Prins 1998b)

Sobered yet again by the transformative power of media, Carpenter's already skeptical attitude toward anthropology became even more pessimistic. As he noted in a 1980 interview, "anthropology should be deeply rooted in humanism–and in humility. Modern efforts it has made in the direction of social manipulation and social control under the guise of being scientific–which it has not been–have not benefited anthropologists, and certainly have not benefited mankind" (McBride 1980:109).

PHANTOMS, POWER, AND (DIS)ILLUSIONS

Reviewing Edmund Carpenter's long and fascinating career, it is evident that he reached a dramatic turning point in 1970. Equipped with cameras, he lost his faith and innocence as an anthropologist somewhere in a Papua village on the Upper Sepik. After his return from New Guinea, he expressed his misgivings in that strangely revealing book *Oh, What a Blow That Phantom G ave Me!* Already ambivalent about scholarly claims of scientific objectivity before he left for New Guinea, and indirectly condemning his own participation in state-sponsored media experiments, he now bluntly dismissed the notion that anthropologists can truly present an accurate view of society.

We have a myth, [he declared] when we say an "accurate account of culture," do we mean we simply want to classify that culture and the people in it for manipulation? When a cop takes down your name and takes a photograph of you, he's got you. Is that what we mean? Is that what we want—a control of people? If that is the image they're after, well, I hope they never achieve it....

When I was in New Guinea, I made one recommendation that I've had doubts about ever since. [I was] confronted with a problem that seemed very real to me: there is cannibalism there. One of my sons was a patrol officer there for [eight] years. And although he never talked to me about any of these things, he did give me access to the government records. And there's no question that cannibalism was very serious and by our standards horrendous.... So, I recommended that they fight this, not by banging heads or locking them in jail for six months, which is what they were doing and which didn't work. I recommended they go in and make a census, and make it a great show" (McBride 1980:116-17).

Indeed, it was Carpenter who conceived the cannibal control system also described in his 1972 book (118-19). It is a story he tells often, chewing it over each time:

The patrol box is brought out, with a guard on either side. [And he'd have behind him the Papua police with rifles, which were forbidden otherwise.] The sergeant unlocks all the padlocks, opens the box, takes out this huge census book and puts it on a table [with great ceremony]. The patrol officer gets his chair, opens the book, and calls for the interpreter. Trembling men [accused of cannibalism] are standing in front of him. He gets each man's name, writes it down and shows it to them. And he repeats it–he shows it to them. He closes and reopens the book. There's the name–it's still there. Then he takes a Polaroid shot of each man, develops it, and explains it to them: 'forehead-forehead, nose-nose, that's you!' And he staples each photo into the book with each [man's] name. And he closes the book and he opens it, and he shows he has each name and photo. Then he puts the book back in the box, the guards lock all the padlocks. And then [the patrol officer] says to each man: 'if you ever commit cannibalism again, we have you. We won't need to come looking for you. We have you here, in the book. We have your spirit.' (McBride 1980:116-17; Prins and Bishop 2000:207)

The system worked, but for Carpenter that's not the end of the story: "Now the problem is, what are the side effects that are going to come out of this? Have you destroyed his whole sense of being? I don't know." Asked if he is bothered by the idea that he might have betrayed the human dignity he speaks of, he responds: "Yes, we humbled them by destroying them. Now, if

that's necessary to end these practices of cannibalism, then—but, if you do a thing like that, you must immediately bring in ways of restoring dignity and cultural assets; really honor people" (McBride 1980:116-17).

Indicative of the internal contradictions and paradoxes contained in McLuhan's theoretical arguments about the agency of media, Carpenter suggests that New Guinea's indigenous peoples did not resent, let alone resist the Western encroachments. When he returned to visit the Papuas of the Upper Sepik eight years later, he was astounded by changes brought on by trade and tourism: "In that short period this amazing transformation had taken place... [They were] undergoing, willingly and happily, a total transformation. Later, they are going to think otherwise about it. But, they were the most eager people in the world to take on these media. And that made it all the worse, because they had no protection" (Prins 1998b; Prins and Bishop 2000).

Carpenter's ambivalence about media and anthropology also extends to his skepticism about the educational value of ethnographic film: "There is no shortcut to tolerance and to teaching tolerance. The notion that you can electrify these things–that you can take a cheap production and send it out over the airwaves or through transmitted light–I don't think it works. They tried to do that in New Guinea with radio, and they ended up with riots. They thought they could come up with an inexpensive educational program....We naively thought that these films by Tim Asch and others would find a television audience.… But the dream of Robert Flaherty, that they could use film as a technique to break down racism, I'm not sure that has really worked" (Prins 1998b). "When I think of thirty years ago, the way we imagined that—Tim Asch was bursting with enthusiasm—we would change the whole world with film. And Flaherty was convinced that that would happen. Well, it hasn't happened, and it's not going to happen in our time" (Prins and Bishop 2000:207). "Somehow I thought that whole thing would take off, that it would be accepted on television and find a home there, [that] it would be possible to extend anthropology to a wider audience. I don't think that's happened. It may be that a very sophisticated approach requires a very sophisticated audience.... I think in the back of everyone's mind was the hope that these films would someday find a large audience. In a sense they have. The ideas for them have certainly been taken, often for other ends. John Marshall was the one who [first took] a camera along with the

[Pittsburgh city] police. It's now a standard show. Whether he would approve of it or not, I don't know. His work with the Kalahari Bushmen was then turned into *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, which was really a ghastly reversal of the thing. Some of the films we backed were turned into commercial efforts that we took very real exception to—to the point that we [at the Rock Foundation] began to demand that artists not surrender their artistic control" (Prins 1998b).

Reflecting upon Marshall McLuhan's ideas, captured in popular slogans such as "the medium is the message," Carpenter regrets: "...there were some great ideas there, and they got nowhere in anthropology or any place else. They were taken over and converted to opposite ends. I think this has been true in many areas of anthropology." And he sighs over "the naive notion that we could harness the media for human ends. It hasn't happened.... There may have been brief moments at the beginning with television, and some of these brief moments on line...but, forget it now" (Prins and Bishop 2000). Asked to comment on the thesis that media transform culture, he now wryly responds: "They do, and they're transforming it in their own way; we haven't harnessed them..., we may as well stop the ocean" (Prins and Bishop 2000:207).

<center>CONCLUSION</center>

Edmund Carpenter embarked on an "experimental moment in the human sciences" more than 25 years before George Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986) informed us that its time had come. Distrustful of modern media and false claims of scientific objectivity, he crossed academic boundaries and blurred genres. Like Marshall McLuhan, he clearly anticipated the postmodern formula. Yet, the anthropological canon that introduced postmodernism to the discipline at large all but ignores both (see, e.g., Clifford 1988; Marcus and Fischer 1986a, 1986b). Among the few major visual anthropology texts to make any note of Carpenter is Karl Heider's 1976 book Ethnographic Film. Even this one, however, only briefly refers to his visual media experiment in New Guinea. Not a single reference to Carpenter can be found in *Rethinking Visual Antropology* (Banks and Morphy 1997) and Ruby's most recent book *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Films & Anthropology* all but ignores him.

What explains this embarrassing hush? Like the man

Fig. 14.: Edmund Carpenter with Marshall McLuhan on. Long Island, Summer 1979. Photo: Adelaide de Menil

himself, an answer to this question is complex and difficult to unravel. This paper offers some clues. A maverick anthropologist, Carpenter has long resisted being formatted by imposed institutional conventions. He has openly spurned bureaucratically imposed rules and regulations. Indicative of his ambiguity towards the profession he loves to hate, he once commented:

Anthropology, I'm afraid, has got its share of small minds. You know, Margaret Mead lived with us [on Long Island] in the last few months of her life [1978], and at one point she said to me: 'Ted, you sit down, right here. I want to talk to you.' [laugh] So I sat down and she said, 'You go around saying all these bad things about anthropology. I know anthropology is full of little minds, but the remarkable thing about it is that if you put them in a room together and lock the door, I don't care how small they are,'–and here she listed a whole series of anthropologists—'they would come out with a statement that's valid and human.' Margaret went

on and argued that the method was larger than any of the people. What she was really implying was that anthropology is something like Euclidian geometry, and that you can take a small mind and come up with a competent surveyor. I'm not so sure that's true. I think anthropology is more than a simple method. It's an art—as much an art as a method. And art doesn't come out of committees and out of small minds" (McBride 1980:115).

Not surprisingly, Carpenter's romantic heroes are the "old-time anthropologists" who did fieldwork before the profession became academically institutionalized and reflexively challenged: "Many of them were most remarkable," Carpenter has declared admiringly: "They literally built their own typewriters with phonemic scripts. They got hold of old movie cameras. They filmed. They took stills. They drew. They collected objects. They wrote poems. They did plays" (McBride

1980:110). Similarly versatile and innovative, Carpenter explored and experimented with ideas and practices that were too far out to be taken seriously by his academic peers. Unconventional and unfettered by institutional concerns and constraints, he was repeatedly out-of-step with the rest of his cohort, either ahead or behind his times. Uncompromising, he defiantly refused to conform to the rules of academic discourse. However, he also lacked the professional advantages of having a long-term base at a major graduate school–including a lineage of students who later as professional academics would celebrate his exploits and sing his words. The spotlight eluded him—or vice versa.

As for Carpenter's old partner, with the passing of time McLuhan began to lose his glamour as a media guru. Two years after his cameo performance in Woody Allen's 1977 film *Annie Hall*, he suffered a stroke from which he never recovered. In the summer of 1980, he visited Carpenter at his Long Island home by the ocean. For weeks, they walked together on the beach and enjoyed the waves, but McLuhan could no longer speak. Several months later, on the last day of the year, McLuhan died in his sleep in Toronto.

Almost forgotten in the 1980s and 1990s, McLuhan is now becoming fashionable again. The first to predict the end of the book, his once-strange ideas about electronic media now seem perfectly obvious in light of the Internet. Posthumously tied to the digital technologies of the post-industrial cyberscape, his communications theories are compatible with the postmodernism of the "global village" that owes its name to him (Askew 2002; Genosko 1998, Levinson 1999).

Coinciding with the current McLuhan renaissance, Carpenter is now being claimed as a pioneer in the emerging field of "media ecology" and enjoys a new (albeit limited) recognition as one of the founders of "the Toronto School of Communication" (Kerckhove 1989; Strate 1996; Theall 2001). It appears quite fitting that this trickster who has long played with media has virtually emerged in the ultima Thule of Cyberia (Wesch 2002). Such is its phantom power–it swallows even elusive anthropologists.

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