Spatial Montage and Multimedia Ethnography: Using Computers to Visualise Aspects of Migration and Social Division Among a Displaced Community

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Abstract: This paper discusses how computer-based techniques of spatial montage can be used to visualise aspects of migration and social division among a displaced community. It is based on an ongoing collaboration between the author and the anthropologist, Wendy JAMES. The work is based on a substantial archive of ethnographic photographs, audio, cine and video recordings collected by JAMES in the Sudan/Ethiopian borderlands over four decades. Initially recording the way of life of several minority peoples, she was later able to follow their fortunes during the repeated war displacements and separations they suffered from the 1980s onwards. The recordings document work rhythms, dance, song and storytelling, music and other sensory rich performances alongside spoken memories of past events. The research is developing spatial montage techniques to draw comparisons across time, between multiple points of view, and between recordings of events and spoken memories of these events. It is argued that these techniques can be used to facilitate direct engagement with ethnographic recordings, creating multimedia experiences which can flexibly integrate fieldwork data into academic discourse. In so doing it is proposed that these techniques offer new tools to enhance the analysis and understanding of issues relating to migration and social division.

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1. Introduction

Whilst anthropologists have been using audiovisual recording techniques in their fieldwork since the inception of the discipline in the late 19th century, their use has been largely for research purposes, with the main mode of dissemination of ideas and arguments arising from this research being text-based. This was consolidated in the 1920s by the establishment of written ethnography as the

main means of communicating analysis and discourse arising from fieldwork. Although the sub-discipline of Visual Anthropology remained active through much of the twentieth century, it was dominated by ethnographic film-making as a sub-set of the documentary genre and placed at the margins of the discipline in terms of its contribution to core debates. However, renewed interest in the role of the senses within the discipline, along with new possibilities afforded by digital technologies, offers the opportunity to revisit debates on the role of visual analysis within anthropological discourse. [1]

In his book on "The Corporeal Image" the ethnographic film-maker, David MACDOUGALL (2006), has commented on the way that images have been incorporated into anthropological discourse. He makes the point that images that directly address the senses, such as photography and film, have tended to be used as a product of language or even a language in themselves. In the process they have been treated as adjuncts to formulating knowledge at a higher level of abstraction and the opportunity to embrace knowledge at the level of being has been missed. He argues that in considering our use of images, it is no good simply insisting that we must do a better job of adapting them to the scholarly rules of writing, as this will lead only to bad compromises. His core proposition is that, although images reflect thought and may lead to thought, they create a constant interplay between meaning and being which makes it difficult to cordon off statements about reality from the immediacy of the reality shown. This leads to a discourse of risk and indeterminacy, which can be used productively within the social sciences to enhance knowledge and understanding (MACDOUGALL, 2006, pp.4-6). It is in this spirit that the collaborative project described this paper is proceeding. [2]

Recent interest in corporeality and the role of the senses in anthropological discourse includes a conference on "Sound and Anthropology" at the University of St. Andrews[1], the "Beyond Text" conference at the University of Manchester[2], David HOWES' work on the senses (2003, 2005) and Sarah PINK's work on sensory ethnography (2009). In terms of multimedia ethnography, Peter BIELLA, Napoleon CHAGNON and Gary SEAMAN's "Yanamano Interactive" (1997) stands out as early work in this area, along with Jay RUBY's "Oak Park Stories" (2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b) and Rod COOVER's "Cultures of Web" (2003). Whilst these works combined ethnographic recordings with anthropological analysis, they were developed within the context of the informational point-and-click interfaces that were prevalent at the time, which limited their ability to convey sensory experience. The collaboration described in this paper builds on this work through its application of spatial montage techniques to fluid interfaces. The collaboration began through the "Experience Rich Anthropology" project[3], the aim of which was to enhance the teaching and learning of anthropology by encouraging teachers to

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1   Sound and Anthropology: Body, Environment and Human Sound Making. A collaboration in St Andrews from 19th-21st June 2006 between Social Anthropology, St Andrews University and Sound Arts and Design, London College of Communication. Funded by the AHRC and the British Academy.

2   Beyond Text: Synaesthetic and Sensory Practices in Anthropology. Hosted by the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology (School of Social Sciences) and the Centre for Screen Studies (School of Arts, Histories and Cultures) at the University of Manchester, 27 June – 2 July 2007.

help students to explore the relationships between field data and analysis as reported in monographs and journal articles. The project was specifically looking at the role of the Internet in this process and it was this initiative that became the catalyst for the author's ongoing collaboration with JAMES around the application of ideas about spatial montage to multimedia ethnography. [3]

2. Spatial Montage

The term "spatial montage" is taken from Lev MANOVICH's ideas about interactive cinema and emergent cultural interfaces for the 21st century. In his work on "The Language of New Media", MANOVICH makes a distinction between spatial and temporal montage and states that "whilst twentieth century film practice has elaborated complex techniques of montage with different images replacing each other in time, the possibility of what can be called a 'spatial montage' of simultaneously co-existing images has not been explored as systematically" (2001, p.323). He goes on to suggest that the advent of a computer-based aesthetics appropriate to the user experience of multitasking, along with the multiple windows of graphical user interfaces, offers an opportunity to move away from "a logic of replacement" towards "a logic of addition and co-existence" (p.325). In so doing he argues that the tradition of representing a multitude of separate events within a single space that was prevalent in Western culture prior to the invention of cinema will resurface as a dominant aesthetic form in the twenty first century (p.323)[4]. Whilst the author does not necessarily agree that spatial montage will become the dominant aesthetic form, MANOVICH's ideas are certainly relevant to new ways of thinking about interacting with moving images brought about by the advent of multimedia computing. [4]

The essence of the work described in this paper is to move beyond the application of MANOVICH's ideas to split-screen cinema to create interactive montages in which the user is required to physically interact with moving image clips presented in multiple windows. This creates a completely new way of engaging with moving image clips, in which users become actively engaged in the montage process by being able to cross-cut between simultaneously presented clips and find their own connections between them. These connections can be drawn through watching, through fine-grained analysis on a frame-by-frame basis, or through a combination of these two modes of engagement. In developing these spatially organised arrangements, the aim is to create fluid interfaces through which users can directly engage with ethnographic recordings to explore connections between them across time, place and multiple points of view. In this instance, the discrete clips are presented as unedited fieldwork rushes, mostly shot in the realist style of the single take. The proposition is that

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3   A project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as part of their Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) programme between 1996 and 1999, involving a consortium of UK universities led by the Centre for Social Anthropology and Computing at the University of Kent, see http://www.era.anthropology.ac.uk/.

4   Although Lev MANOVICH's focus is on Western visual culture, it is important to note that in many non-Western cultures, spatial montage remained a dominant aesthetic form through the twentieth century, a good example being that of the iconographic information contained within Tibetan *thangka* paintings.

this type of interaction can be used to create more direct forms of engagement with this type of fieldwork data than has hitherto been possible. These forms of engagement are haptic and experiential, offering new possibilities both for research and for the communication of ideas and arguments arising from this research. In so doing, the work is creating a new approach to montage and is directly addressing the challenge to create beyond text forms of engagement with visual images (MACDOUGALL, 2006). [5]

In terms of technology, the multi-touch graphical user interface pioneered by the Apple i-Pod Touch has recently brought the possibility of these fluid forms of engagement into the mainstream. These interfaces have been taken into larger screen-based environments by projects such as Jeff HAN's (2009) interface-free multi-touch user displays and the Microsoft Surface Table, but these are emergent technologies, which are only just beginning to reach the general public[5]. As yet there has been no direct application of this technology to anthropological discourse and some of the most innovative work in this area is currently being developed within the wider context of the media arts and experimental documentary methods. The on-line work of Jonathan HARRIS is a good example of the application of fluid interfaces to on-line environments, in particular his "Whale Hunt" (2007) and "Sputnik Observatory" (1994-2010) projects and Florian THALHOFER's projects, such as "Forgotten Flags" (THALHOFER & HENRICH, 2007), which use the *Korsokow System*, offer new possibilities for interactive film-making. However, these works do not enable the user to directly interact on a frame-by-frame basis with moving image clips delivered simultaneously in multiple windows, this being the author's specific contribution to the development of new approaches to spatial montage. [6]

3. Multimedia Ethnography

Wendy JAMES has been conducting intermittent fieldwork, mainly with the Uduk-speaking people of the Sudan/Ethiopian borderlands, since the mid-1960s. When she began her fieldwork, the Uduk were living as subsistence farmers in small hamlet communities but, with the outbreak of civil war in the late 1980s, they were forced to leave these hamlets and became subjected to a series of displacements across Ethiopia and the Sudan. Most of the survivors ended up living in a semi-permanent refugee camp just inside Ethiopia, where they remained until 2006, when an official repatriation scheme was initiated following the Sudan Peace Agreement. From the outset, JAMES has used audio-visual recording techniques as an integral part of her fieldwork, initially working with Super-8 film, reel-to-reel audio and photographic slides, moving on to Hi-8 video, audio cassettes and photographic prints, and more recently helping the Uduk themselves to buy their own digital cameras. JAMES' original intention behind making these recordings was for research purposes, with her main means of communicating ideas and arguments arising from this research being the written text. However, more recently, she has become interested in making the materials

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5   At the time of writing this paper, the release to market of the Apple iPad was imminent—a technology which is based on multi-touch.

accessible to others and in using them to complement her written analysis and discourse. It is this interest that has led to the current collaboration. [7]

In spanning a forty-year period, the materials have a strong consistency of style, which enable comparisons to be made across time and place to highlight aspects of continuity and change among the Uduk people and their neighbouring communities. [8]

Through close engagement with the materials the author has found that many of the recordings are highly emotive in nature, combining observational material of everyday life and events, such as dance, music making, work rhythms and children at play, with footage of traumatic events and spoken memories of these events. The observational material embodies a sense of village life and shows continuities and changes that the people have undergone in their journeys between the Sudan and the Ethiopian refugee camps. The transformation of tradition becomes evident, as formerly separated neighbours are thrown together in the refugee camps and children learn to combine older and newer forms of expression. The spoken memories range from serious reflection on traumatic events to humorous accounts of past traumas, conveying a strong sense of resilience in the face of extreme adversity. What becomes evident as one spends time with the materials is the extent to which JAMES has become a situated participant in the community, and that her recordings are framed by the fact that she has gained a good deal of trust among the people that she has been studying. [9]

4. Analysis and Discourse

In her written ethnographies and associated papers about her fieldwork, JAMES has recognised that the personal stories of the handful of people that she knew well, and who helped her in her original research in the 1960s, "weave in and out of the whole tragedy of the Sudanese civil war and the deadly choreography of its entanglements with the struggles in Ethiopia" (JAMES, 1999 [1988], p.xi-xii). She has always tried to write about the events and changes that have occurred as far as possible through the words and experiences of the people themselves and has expressed frustration that "the discussion of emotion, culture and language is greatly hampered by the format of written ethnography alone, and even by the written version of the recorded and translated vernacular" (JAMES, 1997, p.124). In 1993 she was involved in making a film for Granada Television[6], which acted as a catalyst for her current engagement with using digital media to complement her written texts. [10]

The limitations of the medium and delivery context restricted the amount of anthropological analysis that could be applied to the Granada Television, Disappearing World film, particularly in relation to a violent incident that occurred in a refugee transit camp during the making of the film. In response to this, JAMES wrote a paper about the tensions and social divisions between Uduk and Nuer groups within the camp. She argued that, in order to understand the reasons

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6 Orphans of Passage, directed by Bruce MacDonald (1993) and broadcast in Britain as part of Granada Television's Disappearing World series.

behind the incident, it was important to recognise that "the anger which carried the violence through the settlement on that day was the product of a longer term history of feeling shaped by memories of fear and anger that no longer required words" (p.120). Drawing on the work of Elizabeth COLSON (1971), she argued that the incident needed to be contextualized as part of a "historically-shifting field of translatable notions about fear, anger and bravery transmitted through a large repertoire of narratives, idioms, metaphors and other means which give collective shape to experience" (JAMES 1997, p.115). Within the paper, JAMES included some reference to the Disappearing World film as a supplementary "ethnographic source", to highlight the ways in which "film can record the facial and body expression of listeners as well as speakers and the memory of 'fear' can be invoked even when it is not actually named by anybody" (p.124). These references incorporated written transcriptions of filmed interviews to illustrate different ways in which the Uduk spoke about their memories of bodily fear. [11]

5. Experience Rich Anthropology Project

It was these references to the film that formed the initial basis for the author's collaboration with JAMES. As part of the [Experience Rich Anthropology (ERA) Project](), the aim was to explore ways in which the written paper could be transposed into an on-line environment in such a way as to incorporate the actual film-clips into the text-based discourse. However, it soon became apparent that this initial intention would not be practical, due to copyright problems. The digital rights to the Disappearing World films had been sold to an independent multimedia publisher, which had subsequently gone out of business. Without formal clearance, the directors of the ERA Project felt unable to publish and distribute the multimedia version of the article. In the event, this opened up possibilities for a more experimental approach to be taken, using non-broadcast rushes and some of JAMES' own fieldwork recordings to explore alternative ways to communicate core ideas contained within the article. [12]

It was decided that this work would proceed outside of the formal requirements of *Experience Rich Anthropology*, to avoid the constraints imposed by the bandwidth and software limitations of the Internet at the time. There were also concerns about the ethics of distributing politically sensitive materials, which could compromise the safety of people caught up in complex issues of social division through the impact of civil war. This led to the production of a series of experimental prototypes using the authoring tool Macromedia Director for distribution amongst interested colleagues. These included editing the text in the original article to make it more co-dependent with the video clips and using the video clips as a starting point for presenting key ideas and arguments in the original article in an entirely different way. In terms of the focus of this paper and appropriateness for wider dissemination, two key concepts relating to spatial montage and the visualisation of migration and social division came out of this work. The first of these related to the use of juxtaposition to make a specific point about different modes of remembering traumatic events and the second related to the use of juxtaposition to enable user exploration of aspects of continuity and change across time and place. [13]

In the written paper, JAMES described how "the fears of the time are most easily catalogued when later turned by language into stories told variously for plain information, serious reflection or just entertainment". In so doing, she wrote of their "deeply visual idiom of memory, imagination and knowledge" (1997, pp.121-22) and provided several transcripts from filmed interviews to illustrate her point. Drawing on some of the Disappearing World rushes and on her subsequent hi-8 video recordings from later fieldwork visits, it was possible to provide visual examples of these idioms to illustrate these different modes of remembering. The first clip showed Martha Nasim AHMED[7] talking in a very matter of fact way about the recent shooting of her sister's teenage son, the second was of Nathaniel GUREMPA[8] entertaining people with his memories of religious mania that spread in the early 1990s, and the third was of Peke SHIGWAMI[9] reflecting on the fact that her only daughter had been missing for several years. A fluid interface was developed whereby users could move between these clips at their own pace and in an intuitive way, to enable close investigation with the materials in ways that would not be possible within a sequentially-edited film. The different use of language across the three clips, along with the layers of non-verbal communication contained within them, created a much richer description than could be achieved through words alone.
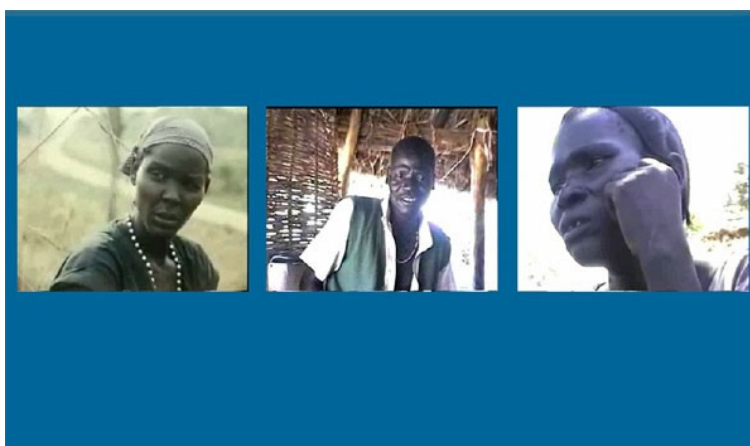
Screenshot 1: Modes of remembering. To see an on-line version of these clips, please open the following link: http://www.voicesfromthebluenile.org/memory_modes/. Roll the mouse over the clips to play them, click once to enlarge a single clip, and click again to return to the three clips. [14]

The second more exploratory approach came from digitising a range of JAMES' materials recorded between the 1960s and the year 2000. In order to view these materials once digitized, a template was created by which recordings from the village hamlets in the 1960s could be viewed alongside more recent recordings from the semi-permanent refugee camp in the 1990s and in 2000. The

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7   One of the key refugee women's leaders, who had some years of schooling before the war. She has subsequently become a member of the Blue Nile state assembly.

8   Like Martha, he was educated at the old mission school and is a staunch member of the church community.

9   Her daughter married a rebel soldier in the first refugee camp. He took her off in a different direction when people suddenly had to flee from a later camp.

juxtaposition of these materials across time enabled comparisons to be made and created a fluid interface for close engagement with the materials. As opposed to creating highly authored interactive montages, designed to communicate discrete points, this approach provided a powerful research tool, which became ever more absorbing to the author as further knowledge was gained about the context behind the materials, through dialogue with JAMES and through close reading of her written materials. As a privileged viewer, the author was gaining direct insights into JAMES' fieldwork and was able to make connections between her fieldwork recordings and her written analysis. From this research, the author created a sequence of juxtapositions to visualise how certain aspects of rural village life were being recreated in the semi-permanent refugee camp. These juxtapositions were based on drawing parallels across time to suggest the kinds of connections that could be made through close engagement with the materials.


Screenshot 2: Comparisons across time. To see an on-line version of these clips, please open the following link: http://www.voicesfromthebluenile.org/then_and_now/. Roll the mouse over the clips to play them, use the down arrow on your keyboard to play them both together, and use the backwards and forwards arrows on your keyboard to move between the sequence of clips. Please be patient, as there are fourteen clips in total, which may take a while to load. You may need to click once on the background screen to activate the arrow keys. [15]

6. Voices From the Blue Nile Website

Building on the insights gained from the *Experience Rich Anthropology Project*, the next stage of the collaboration involved the production of a website. A specifically multiple media approach was taken, in which the website was designed to complement JAMES' most recent book on her fieldwork (2009). Whilst the book provides historical context to the wars in the region and details the experiences of the Uduk people over nearly two decades of repeated displacement, the website focuses more on their resilience and optimism during this time. In so doing, the website visualizes stories of survival and provides examples of music, dancing and children at play, thus avoiding the on-line publication of politically sensitive material which could put peoples' lives at risk. The main content of the website incorporates a series of seven clusters of

thematically organized video clips recorded between 1994 and 2000 in a semi permanent refugee camp in Ethiopia alongside a further cluster of clips of cine footage from the Sudanese village hamlets of the 1960s. These clips were specifically selected to communicate specific points and are between one and five minutes long. They are drawn from carefully chosen segments from JAMES' fieldwork recordings, with minor editing in places to help the user to focus on the resonant points being made.
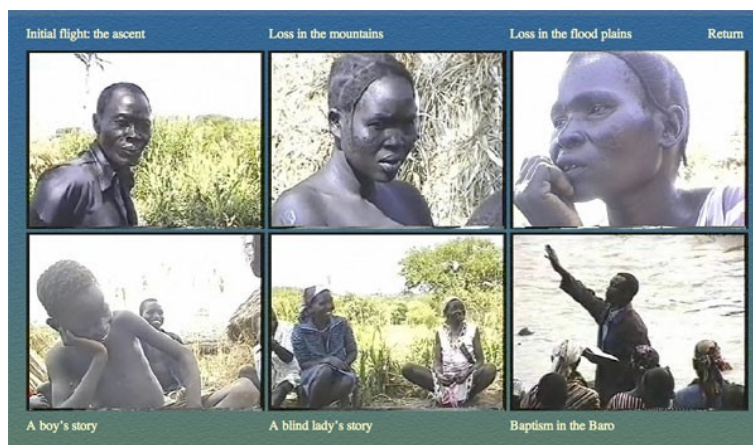
Screenshot 3: Video menu for stories from survivors. To see an on-line version of these clips, please open up the following link:
http://www.voicesfromthebluenile.org/survivors.html. This is a live link from which you can explore the rest of the website as published. [16]

The final section of the book makes direct links to the website through its focus on ways in which a displaced group of people has been able at times to turn their experiences into "art" through fun with dramatic narratives, songs, resurgent dances and music to create deeply impassioned modes of understanding that can help to inform future actions (JAMES, 2009 [2007], p.xv). Whilst JAMES wanted users to read text-based introductions on the website prior to looking at the video clips, the author wanted to give more primacy to the materials themselves by making the text less prominent. In the end a compromise was struck, whereby a text-based introduction to the website was provided, with a view to experimenting with other ways of providing context as part of the ongoing collaboration. Discussion and experimentation over different ways to approach context have subsequently become core to the ongoing collaboration, with the author pushing JAMES not to fall back on using visual images to illustrate text-based arguments and JAMES pushing the author not to lose sight of the context specific nature of the materials. In this sense, the continuing dialogue is drawing on Jon DEWEY's pragmatist theory of art (DEWEY, 1980 [1943]), which places emphasis both on the role of art in enabling people to perceive, manipulate or otherwise grapple with the reality of the world around them (FREELAND, 2001, p.166) and on the importance of context in helping to create artworks which can communicate this process to others (p.66). [17]

7. Ongoing Work

The current endeavour is to develop a flexible database system with a fluid interface for user-led exploration of JAMES' fieldwork recordings, which can be linked to a wider body of materials from the region and to more recent recordings made by the people themselves. Whilst the majority of Uduk have recently been repatriated to the Southern Sudan as part of the 2005 peace settlement, there is also a significant diaspora community mainly in the USA and Canada. The system needs to reflect these changing circumstances, as part of the ongoing narrative, and to be flexible enough to allow for multiple interpretations of the materials and re-use of JAMES' materials in ways that cannot be currently anticipated. This again relates to the question of context. How can the author's close engagement with the materials be made accessible to others in a way that is meaningful without compromising the haptic and experiential quality of the interface? Should context be embedded within the interactive montages themselves or can it be provided in other ways? How can these techniques offer new possibilities both for research and for the communication of ideas and arguments arising from this research? The intention is to create a series of pathways through the database system, with the structural organisation providing implicit context and the pathways providing more explicit context. Such an approach would provide pre-authored readings of the materials whilst also enabling users to create their own alternative readings. [18]

With this approach in mind, the author has begun to explore ways to embed reflexivity within the juxtapositions to make the context behind JAMES' fieldwork and the nature of her research questions more explicit. This has involved recording JAMES speaking about her fieldwork to create montages which juxtapose her memories alongside recordings of the events that she describes. The aim is to include her both as a narrator and as a character within the ongoing "story" of migration and social division. Whilst there are some examples in JAMES' recordings where spoken memories of events from the people themselves correlate directly with recordings of those events, the intention is to incorporate further responses as part of an ongoing process. In recent years, JAMES has begun to do this by recording the response of diaspora communities in North America to her fieldwork materials. For example, she has recorded first generation immigrants watching and responding to a recording of children pretending to be animals in an Ethiopian refugee camp in the 1990s. The user can either watch these clips simultaneously or interact with them, to discover how the Uduk children in America spontaneously begin to copy the actions of those in the refugee camp. The addition of a recording of frogs at dusk from the village hamlets of the 1960s adds to the fun and opens up a further layer of memory.
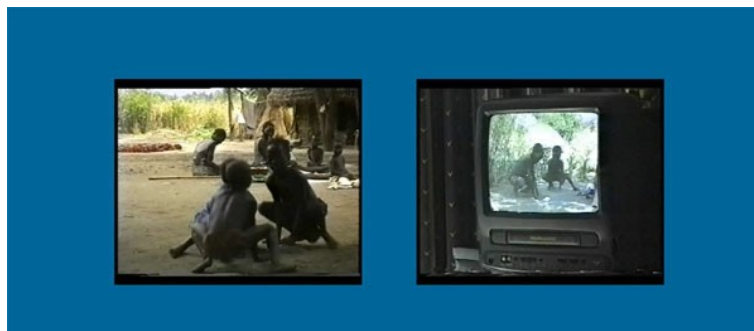
Screenshot 4: Children pretending to be animals. To see an on-line version of these clips, please open the following link: http://www.voicesfromthebluenile.org/frogs. Roll the mouse over the clips to play them and use the down arrow key on your keyboard to play them both together. You may need to click once on the background screen to activate the arrow key. [19]

Another example of non-verbal forms of cultural transmission shows how a period of relative stability in the semi-permanent refugee camp at Bonga enabled work rhythms resonant of the 1960s to be recreated in a playful way. The clips show women syncopating their rhythms as they pound grain and prepare a grinding stone. When the clips are placed alongside each other, the user is able to join in and experience the playfulness of everyday life that is occurring for him/herself. In this example, the potential of interactive montage takes on a new dimension, moving beyond being a tool for making straight comparisons across time and place to enabling the user to engage with a specific concept through the interactive experience itself. This experience offers a new form of visual analysis, which can be linked to wider discourse on memory and the transmission of culture through non-verbal means. To introduce this wider discourse, the author has begun to think about ways to incorporate recordings of JAMES talking about how these rhythms and sounds resonate with her own memories of everyday life in the village hamlets of the 1960s.
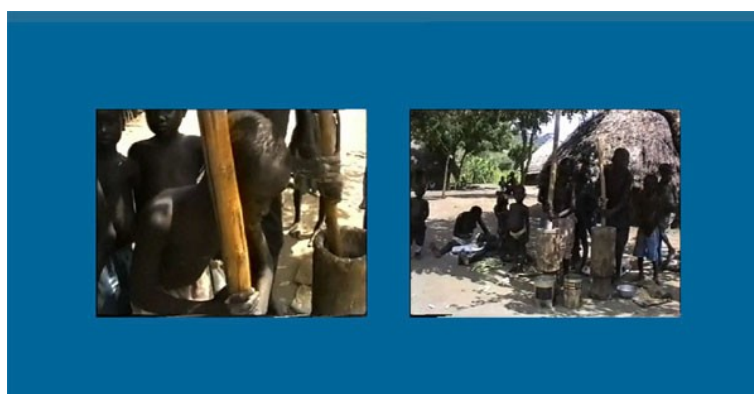
Screenshot 5: Syncopated work rhythms. To see an on-line version of these clips, please open the following link: http://www.voicesfromthebluenile.org/work_rhythms/. Roll the mouse over the clips to play them and use the down arrow key on your keyboard to play them both together. You may need to click once on the background screen to activate the arrow key. [20]

Collating the fieldwork materials in this way, is providing a tool through which to engage with "the visual aspect of facial expression and bodily movement, the aural aspect of pace and breath and tone of voice, and the context of live social interaction" (JAMES, 1997, p.124) across place and time, using various combinations of still photographs, moving image and audio recordings. In order to make this kind of exploration meaningful to others and to facilitate thick description (GEERTZ, 1973) which is visually-led, the author has begun to organize these juxtapositions into themed clusters and to record JAMES' explaining these juxtapositions. Examples of themes include changing musical and dance forms, the changing lives of children, life stories of named individuals, the declining use of rituals and the history of civil war. Work is now underway to consider appropriate semantic tagging methods by which these recordings can be clustered according to these themes, with the same recordings sometimes appearing more than once across the different themes. Through combining and recombining the materials in this way, the aim is to create a flexible and fluid system for narrative exploration, which builds on the "logic of addition and co-existence" that is emerging as a new aesthetic form for multimedia computing (MANOVICH, 2001, pg.325). [21]

8. Conclusion

It is proposed that giving users the ability to interact with ethnographic recordings through the employment of fluid human computer interfaces can offer a very powerful tool for analysis and presentation, which is visual and tactile as opposed to language or number-based. Whereas academics and museum curators tend to separate the analysis of fieldwork recordings into different sub-disciplines, such as the anthropology of photography, ethnographic film-making and the anthropology of sound, these multimedia techniques have enabled an ethnographic archive to be analysed as a coherent whole. For example, cine footage of dancing in the village hamlets of the 1960s can be viewed alongside reel-to-reel audio clips recorded at the time, and these in turn can be juxtaposed alongside video footage of the same dance recorded thirty years later in the different context of a refugee camp. This opens up new possibilities to enhance visual analysis and theoretical understanding of the impact of major world events on a marginal community as documented through a long-term ethnographic study. As has been discussed, this can be applied to the study of migration and social division, to communicate knowledge and understanding in a complementary way to written discourse. [22]

Whilst this work is leading to new possibilities for engagement with human experience, it is also important to recognize that these poetic possibilities cannot be separated from the more political aspects of this work. Issues relating to the on-line distribution of politically sensitive materials need careful consideration, as do issues relating to the politics of representation. The intention is to embed as much context into the work as possible, to facilitate analysis and understanding of the changing nature of JAMES' relationship with the object of study. As both an engaged participant and an independent witness to a wider set of events, the aim is to include JAMES within the work as both a narrator and a character within the

ongoing "story", and to allow the voices of the people themselves to come to the fore wherever possible. The intention is also to create a system that is emergent, to enable other voices and perspectives to be added as the people themselves begin to develop strategies for their own self-representation through modern media. In so doing, a polyphonic approach to multimedia ethnography begins to emerge, which recognizes the "discourse of risk and indeterminacy" which is inherent to photography and film (MACDOUGALL, 2006, p.6) to create links between fieldwork recordings and the ongoing concerns of a displaced community. [23]

Acknowledgements

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