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# Old World, New Media: Cross-cultural Explorations with Camera and Analytic Text in Cusco, Peru

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**Old World, New Media:**

**Cross-cultural Explorations with Camera and Analytic Text in Cusco, Peru**

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Media, Art and Text at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment	iii
Abstract	v
Chapter One : Search for Authenticity	1
Chapter Two: The Nature of the Media	17
Chapter Three: Camera Consciousness in the Ethnographic Timeline	42
Chapter Four: New Media as a Stimulus Struggle	62
Chapter Five: New Media Post-Literate Culture	73
Bibliography	83
<a href="#">Media online</a>	

## Abstract

### OLD WORLD, NEW MEDIA: CROSS-CULTURAL EXPLORATIONS WITH CAMERA AND ANALYTIC TEXT IN CUSCO, PERU

By Scott DuPre Mills, PhD.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014

Major Director: Dr. Nicholas A Sharp, Assistant Professor, Department of English

This dissertation draws on my field research in Cusco, Peru, documenting Old World methods of making Andean musical instruments. The cross-cultural interactions I engaged in are concretized and documented in the ethnographic film I shot at the time and in my experimentation with original music recorded with these handmade instruments. I have revisited the family that produces these instruments each summer from 2003-2013 and built a relationship that has provided me with an in-depth perspective on the centuries-old tradition of making musical instruments. These instruments afford an exceptionally high quality sound and are created specifically for local professional musicians. My search for an authentic Andean *charango* occasioned complex association with local artisans, enabling me to perform various roles as a participant in this cross-cultural interaction, from musician and documentary filmmaker to teacher in the summer study program in Peru. Both the fact that VCU students and faculty expressed interest in buying these instruments, and our group expenditures in

Peru, enhanced the instrument-making family economically, providing them with the means to expand their production of instruments.

Each year after my return back to the United States, I studied closely the documentary footage I had recorded and found that the camera can function as a writing device. In order to explore further and understand conceptually my intuitions, I researched newer theories about camera consciousness and developed my own concepts that are articulated in this dissertation. In the process, I have drawn interdisciplinary connections between Ethnography, Media theory and Anthropological concepts as they relate to human activities in the area of media, art, text. A central theoretical argument in my dissertation underscores the fact that the new media have altered the definition of literacy. In exploring the elements of (traditional and digital) photography, moving image, audio and written text as they define the new intermediatic context, it became apparent that New Media requires an ability to “read” beyond the medium of the written word. This is relevant also for my study of traditional instrument-making in Peru. Because many of the “Old world” methods of creating instruments and music existed outside of a literary (verbal) account or explanation, these methods often became lost or forgotten as new modes of mass production took over. The type of multimedia approach that I am illustrating in this dissertation, mixing traditional with New Media methodologies, has the potential to reconnect us to “Old World” forms via the visual and audio elements that are not directly present in verbal texts.

A significant portion of my dissertation explores the introduction and development of the New Media and the devices that connect human beings to the digital domain. My

examination foregrounds both the positive and negative implications of the New Media.

The inclusion of an anthropological perspective in this discussion provides a broader view of human behavior in relation to the development of communication technology and multimedia.

## **Chapter One**

### **SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY**

#### Old World, New Media

In May of 2003, I traveled to Peru as an instructor with the Virginia Commonwealth University Summer Study Abroad Program. I had been interested in this program since it was first formed in 1996. The program director, Javier Tapia, Professor of Painting and Printmaking, had been a VCU colleague for many years. I expressed to him my interest in creating Photography and Film courses for the VCU Summer Study Abroad Program in Peru. This program was founded in 1996 by Professor Tapia together with Sculpture Professor Carlton Newton. I was invited to join the program in the fall of 2002 and began to promote the new courses to my Photography and Film students. I also planned to create a documentary film while in Peru which led me to shoot over 30 hours of footage during that first three and a half week visit. I have always been interested in cross-cultural interactions and as a musician and a photographer it was important for me to document cultural lifestyles so that I could study them and enhance my own knowledge.

## Multicultural/Multimedia

Upon arriving, I was immediately impressed with the culture of Peru. The mixture of indigenous Quechua traditions and Spanish Creole presented a unique example of intercultural hybridity. Musically, I found an intriguing blend of [Afro-Peruvian](#) music mixed with Quechuan sounds and blended with Spanish instrumental traditions. My interest in musical fusion led me to further explore Peru's cross-cultural music. A multicultural seed was planted in my mind. I was inspired and motivated by the music I had heard and CI brought Peruvian instruments back with me to the United States. This allowed me to compose my own mixture of world music. In my own personal experience I had modified my musical language to include the sounds of Peru and published it on the internet sharing with the international audience my own hybrid work. During the following trips back to Cusco I found that Sabino and his son, Miguel, enjoyed my recordings. They shared the music with musicians in Peru who found it to be a unique application of traditional Peruvian instruments with a distinctively American approach.

[follow this link to music video of charango,bass and drums](#)

## Crossing Worlds

The “Old World” is the term that I have chosen for this dissertation to specifically relate to the unwritten and undocumented knowledge passed from generation to generation. The interdisciplinary nature of my research has been inspired and made

possible by the MATX program at VCU. It includes documentary film, recordings of my own original hybrid musical compositions, and exploratory theoretical research into how the old world transitions into the modern global village in connection to new media. New technologies like high definition video and multi-track audio recording can serve to promote and document the old world musical instruments of Peru. My related goal has been to create original musical compositions with these instruments; compositions that amalgamate in hybrid cross-cultural forms of traditional and contemporary music.

The new media allow for an amalgamation of the written word, the spoken word, and the auditory and visual arts to create multimedia messages and structures. I intend to use my research to explore the hybrid possibilities that new media can present to the reader or viewer and simultaneously render a contemporized window that enables dissemination of specific elements from an old world source. My theoretical interpretation and analysis of the creative product is informed by the method of non-linear montage and multimedia experimentation. The reader is encouraged to read in a non-linear format. The viewer/listener is provided with the opportunity of selecting images and audio from a non-linear website. Each individual can experience the project in a different sequence. The reader is asked to experiment and interact with the content. I am interested in how and why the new media have generated a nontraditional form of reading and how this new form connects to older pre-print methods of learning.

### Instruments in International Context

During the visit to Peru I was interested in locating an authentic Peruvian ten-string instrument called a [charango](#), but at the beginning of my trip I only encountered made-for-tourist copies of an inferior quality.

My breakthrough came when Alberto, a local resident of Cusco who worked with our VCU group, led me to a workshop just across from the famous 12-sided Inca stone wherein Sabino Huaroman kept a small musical instrument business. In 2003, I purchased a charango and a 16-stringed [bandurria](#) from Sabino. I was impressed with the quality of the instruments as well as the fact that Sabino did not utilize any modern tools when constructing the instruments. He invited me to stay and film him working and I noticed that he appeared to rely mainly on his own ear for musical tones during the constructions. By tapping on selected wood with his knuckles, Sabino is able to discern the potential resonance of the wood and its tonal characteristics. He decides which wood is best for construction and continues to tap and listen to the tone as he carves the charango body from a single piece of wood.



**Figure 1** The hollowed-out body of a charango at Sabino's workshop in Cusco.

For Alberto's visit to Sabino's workshop in 2004, see:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5TrlrFH39w&feature=share&list=UUm5zmjbKYvQauN7TdFM\\_PiA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5TrlrFH39w&feature=share&list=UUm5zmjbKYvQauN7TdFM_PiA)

#### Recordings:

When I returned to the United States I began recording my own original music with the instruments Sabino made along with the Afro-Peruvian box drum called a [Cajon](#) that I had bought south of Lima. I became even further impressed with the quality of the sound of Sabino's instruments. After placing microphones near the sound hole of the instruments, I was surprised by the clarity and precise tones I was hearing in my

headphones. I completed five original recordings mixing some of my American made instruments including Fender Electric Bass, Rickenbacker Electric Guitars, drums and percussion. I used these recordings in the sound track of my first fifty minute edit of "VCU in PERU," the documentary film that featured Javier Tapia and our students and experiences from 2003. The film was screened at the [Diego Quispe Tito](#) Art Institute in Cusco the following summer semester in 2004.

Each year I brought more students to Sabino's workshop. In 2005, we had several musicians on the trip who were amazed at the low costs of such finely crafted instruments. As a group of thirty, we bought numerous instruments which provided Sabino with a substantial increase in his annual income. The following year, in 2006, I conducted a prolonged interview with Sabino to discuss how his business was doing. To my surprise, he informed me that due to VCU students' and my own purchases of his instruments over the years his sons had become interested and began learning how to create instruments. This fact came as a surprise to me initially as Sabino had stated in 2003 that he had learned the craft from his father who had learned it from his own father and Sabino's great grandfather. However, Sabino's sons decided to pursue academic learning since the income from making instruments was insufficient.

I was intrigued not only by the craftsmanship carried down through generations but also by how our interactions across cultures had created such an effect on one another. I began to consider the possibilities inherent in the relationship between the "Old

World" methods of learning with the modern, technological methods inherent in New Media.



**Figure 2. The Workshop of Sabino Huaroman**

### MUSICAL HYBRIDITY IN PERU

The charango is the quintessential Andean/Spanish hybrid instrument. It has origins in the 1500's as a stringed instrument known for its small size, which enabled Quechua musicians, who were not permitted by the colonial laws to possess this

instrument, to quickly hide it under a poncho. I learned this fact from Sabino himself when I asked about the history of the instrument. See my interview with Sabino at:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7GQUbyqd4&feature=share&list=UUm5zmjbKYvQauN7TdFM\\_PiA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7GQUbyqd4&feature=share&list=UUm5zmjbKYvQauN7TdFM_PiA)

The history of the charango is still very much debated today. There is simply not enough information and data to validate any of the theories put forward thus far. Sabino's story of the charango being developed by the [Quechua](#) to be small enough to fit under a poncho in order to hide it from the Spanish government is a popular theory but as of yet unsubstantiated by any archaeological or historical discovery. Considering Sabino's own lineage, this is possibly an oral story passed down through generations. Clearly, the fact that this was a Quechua instrument requires some focus on the essentials of Quechua history.

### Inca and Instruments

The Incan Empire represents an impressive chapter in World History. The first people to come to South America were actually Asian nomads who had travelled across the land bridge between Asia and North America and worked their way south. In the book-length study, [Inca & Spaniard; Pizarro & the Conquest of Peru](#), music is presented as a form without cultural significance except when used to presage the onset of a battle:

**Warriors blew conch-shell trumpets and bone whistles. They shook gourd rattles and beat drums covered with human skin.**

**(Marrin 41)**

These instruments were also used for religious purposes, as evidenced from the following passage in Aztec Inca & Maya:

**The most common instruments in both Mesoamerica and South America were rattles, whistles, trumpets, flutes, copper bells, and shells. String instruments were practically unknown in the Americas. The music in South America was not very varied, and often musical instruments played only one tone. For these civilizations, music and dance were closely linked to religion. (Baquedano 56)**

Based upon these accounts it would appear that the Incan civilization utilized what instruments they had for the purpose of religion or war and not necessarily for their entertainment value. There is also no mention of any type of string instrument within the group.

In yet another source - Cultures of the Past: The Incas- there is a clear statement that guitars and mandolins and other varied stringed instruments were simply not part of Incan life:

**Music has remained important in Andean life through the centuries. European instruments such as guitars are now common,**

**but so are native instruments. These include various kinds of flutes and drums, conch-shell trumpets, and panpipes of all sizes. Traditional Andean music uses a five-note scale and has a haunting, unforgettable quality. (Hinds 67)**

From these varied sources, we can assume that the Incans did not possess a stringed instrument prior to the Spanish invasion. This idea is emphasized in another historical survey, *Cultures of the World: Peru*:

**Peru's music does not fit into one category. The multitude of different regions, histories, ethnicities, and classes has ensured a wide variety of sounds.**

**The most famous Peruvian music is the Andean folk music originally played in the highlands. Sad songs are mixed with whooping, energetic ones, and all are done to a communal and stylized dance.**

**Andean folk music dates back to the ancient civilizations of Peru. Clay panpipes have been found in ancient graveyards on the coast. The Incas used a variety of flutes and panpipes, conch-shell trumpets, and drums made from puma skin. The Spanish introduced string instruments, which the native musicians adapted. (Falconer 94)**

From these three separate accounts, it becomes clear that, prior to the Spanish takeover, the Incas primarily utilized pan flutes, conch shells and drums when making music. However, the charango can still be classified as a purely South American instrument since it is, in fact, a modification from a European stringed instrument. The charango was born from the use of a local armadillo skin to create the sound box with strings stretched over the top. (Falconer 95)

A widely-accepted view today is that the charango originated from the 16th century style Spanish guitar known as the vihuelo (Prescott 737). It is probable that the Quechua were introduced to the vihuelo by the Spanish conquistadors. Without having actual access to the instrument they could have constructed their own version with local resources, i.e. armadillo skin.

I also sought out authentic musical recordings created by Peruvian musicians. The musical styles of Peru offered a genuine diversity, mixing indigenous, Quechuan music of the Andes with the Creole and Afro-Peruvian music of the coastal regions (Bellenger 17). Spanish colonial music is also present in this mix, helping create a distinctive hybrid form.

### Personal Experiments

In my [multi-track](#) musical experiments, my approach was not to emulate or copy musical styles of Peru but to create a hybridization of my North American musical influences such as rock, jazz, classical and folk with my exposure to the music of Peru. During these recording experiments, it was apparent that the quality of the sound

emanating from Huaroman's instruments was exceptional in its tonal qualities. This realization further inspired me to learn more about Sabino and his family traditions and methods.

## INSTRUMENTS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RECORDING: VIDEOGRAPHY AND WRITING

The visual record and the sound components are an invaluable resource for enhancing the month-long experience I have had each year since 2003. 2012 was my 10th year returning to Peru. After my travel back from Peru in 2003, I spent the following eleven months studying my 30 hours of shot footage, looking and listening for highlights and significant elements. I first realized the benefit of all of this footage gathered in 2004 when Javier Tapia asked me how I could remember so many details and facts about Peru. He said that he was surprised with the detailed descriptions of locations and other aspects of Peruvian life I was able to offer my photography and film students. I realized the eleven months spent reviewing and editing footage had taught me through visual memory and repeated viewing far more than I would have remembered a year later without the ability to utilize the camera as an instrument of memory.

## METHODOLOGY

This dissertation is founded on an ethnographic research method that is applied along with a camera-consciousness approach inspired by [Gilles Deleuze](#), allowing also

for a theoretical reflection on the documentary film component and its process of making. The creative element is derived from my improvisational musical recordings and video montage.

The questions to which I sought answers and which required the research found within this dissertation are as follows:

- **Do contemporary new media methods of composition present an amalgamation of past and current methods?**
- **And if so, can they ultimately create an interdisciplinary, hybrid form of presentation resulting in a combination of hypertext, embedded video, audio components?**
- **Do the individual interactions between the Huaroman family and myself have larger global implications?**

To properly answer these questions I shall rely upon a range of research methods, including:

- **11 years of digital footage shot in Peru and documenting the "Old World" lifestyles that can be presented with the use of new media. This footage has been edited with software including FinalCut Pro and digital audio editing with fostex digital8 and garageband.**
- **Comparison between "Old World" learning styles and modern literate techniques, as well as contemporary new media approaches. I will conduct an**

**in-depth study to determine the success of these various learning methods, citing current research in this area.**

- **The original audio recordings created with authentic Peruvian instruments with software including GarageBand and Pro Tools Digital 8.**
- **Building on the work of media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan, Edward Carpenter, and Harold Innis. Also citing documentary and film theorists such as Gilles Deleuze and Sergei Eisenstein as well as the sociologist Desmond Morris.**

Further information concerning the recording technology used in this study:

### **Product Specifications**

#### **Video**

- **Format : HD: MPEG4 AVC/H.264 SD: MPEG2**
- **Video Signal : NTSC color, EIA standards**

#### **Audio**

- **Audio Format : Dolby® Digital 5.1**
- **Microphone : Built-in Zoom Microphone**

#### **Display**

- **LCD Screen : 3.2" wide touch panel Xtra Fine LCD™ display (921k pixels)**
- **Viewfinder : Color Wide 16:9 (123K Pixels)**

#### **Video Features**

- **PhotoTV HD : Yes**

#### **Optics/Lens**

- **Lens Type : Carl Zeiss® Vario-Sonnar® T**

- 35mm Equivalent : 49 - 588mm (4:3 Camera Mode),40 - 480mm (16:9 Camera Mode)
- Aperture : F1.8-3.1
- Digital Zoom : 150x
- Filter Diameter : 37mm
- Focal Distance : 4.9 - 58.8mm
- Focus : Full range auto / Manual
- Progressive Shutter Mode : Yes
- Shutter Speed : Auto, 1/30 - 1/250 (Scene Selection Mode)
- Minimum Illumination : 5 lux (Auto Slow Shutter ON, 1/30 Shutter Speed )
- Optical Zoom : 12x

### **Software**

- Supplied Software : Picture Motion Browser Ver.3.0.00 (Not supported on Mac OS)
- Operating System Compatibility : Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Professional, XP Home, XP Professional, Windows Vista

### **Weights and Measurements**

- Weight (Approx.) : 1 lb 6oz (650g) with Battery
- Dimensions (Approx.) : 3 3/8 x 3 x 5 1/2 inch (83x76x138mm)

## STRUCTURE OF MY DISSERTATION

Following my main lines of argument, I have developed this dissertation into 5 separate chapters. The breakdown and description of each of these chapters is as follows:

- **Chapter One: Introduction and description of research, methodology and foundation for the dissertation as a whole. This chapter will cover the elements of the story which helped create the subsequent research and analysis of information.**
- **Chapter Two: Discussion of New Media theory with a focus upon the debate between literate learning as opposed to oral learning or alternative learning. This chapter will explore in depth various communication and media theories especially as applied to cross- cultural interactions as well as the development of language and communication.**
- **Chapter Three: Description of the research and creation of original musical works. This chapter is intended to be viewed in documentary and audio format but for the text based purposes of the dissertation, descriptions of each of these creative elements are provided.**
- **Chapter Four: Discussion of research results and findings with emphasis on societal implications and education. The focus of this chapter will be upon the influences that Sabino has had on me over the past eleven years as well as the effect of my relationship upon his business, career, and life. I will explore the possible positive and negative effects of our cultural interactions in the present but also attempt to decipher possible ways in which these relationships may be used or affected positively in the future.**

- **Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusion. This chapter will serve as an overall documentation of the preceding events and a further exploration of the theory involved and developed further in the project.**

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Nature of the Media**

[Marshall McLuhan](#) explored theoretical concepts that dealt with creating a new way of analyzing forms of media in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He spoke of a global village in 1964 in *Understanding Media*:

**[S]ocieties have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which we communicate than by the content of the communication.**

**(McLuhan 85)**

The new media shape the global village and the societies of the world that have access to the internet. In 2006 our VCU MATX PhD class had the opportunity to meet [Jimmy Wales](#), a founder of Wikipedia. He spoke of the motivation to provide an online encyclopedia for schools in areas of the world that had fewer resources.



**Figure 3. Cornis-Pope, Wales and Martin at VCU (photo: Mills 2007)**

In our meeting Mr. Wales reacted to the criticism concerning a user generated digital online system. As he argued, the perception that Wikipedia was less accurate than traditional established encyclopedias was unfounded. Mr. Wales emphasized that he had created Wikipedia for areas of the world that did not have access or the funds available for printed volumes. He referred to a particular one-room school in Africa he visited. It had only one computer and he said he had founded Wikipedia for them. He also defended Wikipedia by citing statistics that placed traditional print encyclopedias along side Wikipedia in accuracy. According to him, Wikipedia has enabled knowledge to be accessible for free online and monitored by regional global users and translations in most of the worlds languages. This new media encyclopedia is one example of how the global

village and societies are shaped more by the “**the nature of the media by which we communicate than by the content of the communication.**” (McLuhan 85)

The content of a pre-digital encyclopedia would be updated each year with new information and revisions of pre-existing data. It would be printed and sold for profit to those who could afford it or to libraries that could make it available to users who had access to the library. The internet requires access, however, once available it is a portal to a wide range of media. Part of the “nature” of the medium of the internet is a transformative element that renders traditional mediums into new media. One example is the web site, YouTube, which transforms traditional video or film media into new media by the process of embedding the playable clip into a webpage that is catalogued and indexed under a series of searchable subtopics. Social networking sites such as Facebook create easy modes to post and share embedded video like YouTube as well as other online content. The social networking phenomenon also enhances the online community as a digital component of the global village. Political and social issues are discussed and debated in the myriad of user generated content and users shared content.

McLuhan refers to an old allegory of a man who finds another man working laboriously to fill a well. When told of a machine that could make his work easier, the man replies,

**Whoever uses machines does all his work like a machine. He who does his work like a machine grows a heart like a machine and he who carries the heart of a machine in his breast loses his simplicity. He who has lost his simplicity becomes unsure in the strivings of his soul.**

**Uncertainty in the strivings of the soul is something which does not agree with honest sense. (94)**

The formatting that exists within the traditional mechanized systems of writing and printing has placed linear restrictions upon reading text and other media. By understanding that our own method of reading consists of a mechanical process that is physically a process of scanning with the eye the alphabetic code and converting it into words and words into meaning requires programming of the human brain to function in this way. How it shapes our thinking process should also be considered in the exploration of McLuhan's argument that the nature of the media is the alphabetic code. I witnessed an example of this print-oriented programming at the [Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam](#), Netherlands. As I entered the building as part of a long, winding, line of people. I watched the people who had reached the hanging paintings and noticed that they first would read the printed text on a small sign placed at the bottom corner of the paintings; then a quick glance at the painting and on to the next work. The amount of time spent reading the information was what made the long line move slowly; by contrast, the time spent looking at the painting was a few seconds. The medium of painting and the artist's stature was what lured the tourists into the museum. However, the programming of literacy rendered art secondary to the act of reading the caption under the painting.

It is possible to conceive of new ways to engage with multimedia in a way that would create opportunities to communicate with non-linear forms. The human mind has evolved to undertake multiple tasks simultaneously. From the anthropological point of view, this evolutionary necessity enhanced human survival in pre-historic times. New

media provides the digital information environment for a large number of contemporary human subjects. The pre-historic natural environment is replaced with a new media digital landscape. Some of the complexity found in the nature exists in the form of complex data stored on computer servers in physical locations around the world. For example, a single tree contains many branches and leaves that all emanate from a central trunk rooted in the earth. The metaphorical digital tree offers a taste of the complexity that exists in nature, with the leaves replaced by digital content, For example, video files on YouTube all have a uniform format and the user can rely on this consistency. The user must navigate the content to locate a video that provides stimulus information. This information gathering is not unlike the natural state of pre-historic human behavior. For example, a human looking for ripe fruit on a tree would scan each limb and group of leaves for what looked like ripe fruit. [Desmond Morris](#) states that this trait drives human behavior to be opportunistic and seek out new stimuli. New media provide such stimuli.

### THE DIGITAL TREE

As a newly formed global society, the digital tree has grown out of all the roots and origins that McLuhan discussed in his work and continues to evolve. However, as we may become fixated on the "ripe fruit" we cannot lose sight of the fact that this digital tree has deep roots that are not foreign to the old world. In fact new media has allowed the old world forms of expression to be transformed and translated into a new media language that potentially delivers a richer experience of multi-media than standard

written accounts. It is not that the literary system has been bypassed; the literal accounts are part of the old world that new media is transforming. Its DNA is present in new media; however, what is new about new media is the fluidity in which each individual may observe the content. The method of delivery is what McLuhan argued was the message. The medium of new media is expanding in the 21st century as it deconstructs the linear approach to information dissemination. The restriction placed on human nature by the tradition of linear reading is not unlike that of the development of the railroad and the “one track mind” mentality of start to finish. Academic traditions have resembled the railroad system, bypassing anything not part of the forward line. The old world learning traditions that resembled the metaphorical deep roots and branching outwards were often bypassed in favor of the single track. However, much was lost and left by the wayside. For example, oral storytelling was no longer considered important as the stories could be written and recited when needed or read in silence. However, in this transformation the observation of body language and speaking expression was lost. A talented writer had to find new ways to describe the experiences and sensations that were no longer present in the oral performance of the storyteller. The personal memoirs and impressions of a storyteller contained mannerisms and voice inflections that created a cultural element of uniqueness. New media allows for a sound and visual recording to be made that translates much more of the performative experience than a singular literary account. My argument is not about the differences between the old world culture of print and the new media culture but about the contrast between a linear, monological expression and a multimedia expression. A written account does not offer sufficient information to the

human being to allow for the continued existence of the old world practice of hands-on learning to be translated. The interdisciplinary of Media Art and Text is an example of a University addressing the isolation that exists in singular disciplines. This argument is problematic and it has to be refined. The print medium has problems but it is not entirely linear. In fact, unlike oral culture it allowed a great range of possible interpretations. Already Plato complained that the written text, by contrast to the oral expression, cannot be controlled, producing contradictory meanings. The oral form contains the multi-sensory information that consists of the sound of the voice and the gestures made by the speaker; the in-person presence in contrast to the silent reading of the individual. Reading out loud instantly transforms the written text into the experience of hearing. It is with this in mind that new media emerges as the interdisciplinary platform for written text to merge with the images and sounds. New media is not replacing written text but redefining it. The literate societies excluded the old world pre-literate societies as the illiterate, often assuming a lack of intelligence and inferior cultural development. However, in this rush to obtain literacy something was left behind and perhaps many old world disciplines lost forever. As new media has emerged as the dominate communication format, a new kind of interface has come along with it that requires a digital literacy and a understanding of pages that use hyper text instead of written text. Early 21st century societies are adapting to these developments and are embracing the new media as a platform that offers not only hyper-text but also images, sounds and new forms of collecting and searching for content. Perhaps Plato would see the expansion of new media as producing contradictory meanings into infinite directions, He may also

have watched his lectures on YouTube to see and hear how his speech went over at the university.

## REDEFINING THE OLD WORLD

### WITH NEW MEDIA

It is essential that I define the old world in the context of my theoretical argument. The history of human culture extends in a virtual evolutionary sense to the origins of life, without a starting point that fits into clear linear tradition. The DNA of humans is shared with many forms of life. Those few bits of genetic material that differentiate us from chimpanzees are not necessarily what make us human; it is the culture that humans have developed that defines humanity. The geographical definition of the old world in contrast to the new world is one that I would like to redefine for the purpose of providing clarification in this dissertation.

Knowledge and hands-on practice was traditionally handed down to apprentices who learned the trades from those who had learned from others before them. The natural progression of skills and knowledge could lead to refinements and improvements over time.

Marshall McLuhan's colleague and friend, [Edmund Snow Carpenter](#), was also interested in the effects that modern media can have upon a culture. He sought out an isolated tribe in New Guinea and introduced them to photography and audio recording.

His research centered on what would be the outcome of this introduction to a new technology.

Carpenter observed the ability of the tribal man to employ all of his senses to their full potential while Western man places a superemphasis on the power of visual faculties. However, Western man fails to use sight to its fullest capacity even though it is the preferred sense of choice. As Carpenter argues:

**To depict a whole object on a flat surface, literate man employs three-dimensional perspective: he shows only that surface visible from a single position at a single moment. In short, he fails. In contrast, native artists of British Columbia represented a bear, say, in full face & profile, from back, above & below, from within & without, all simultaneously. By an extraordinary mixture of convention & realism, these butcher-draftsmen skinned & boned, even removed the entrails, to construct a new being, on a flat surface that retained every significant element of the whole creature. (28)**

Picasso's cubist paintings employed a similar conceptual approach and it was considered a new form of modern art by critics. When discussing the replacement of oral storytelling with the written form, Carpenter discusses the fact that though memory is weakened by writing, it frees up space for new information to be absorbed:

**I see loss of memory as a by-product of literacy, specifically literacy's role in shattering sensory orchestration. One great advantage of**

**memory loss is that one isn't burdened with masses of obsolete information: the mind is left free to process new data and get on to still more data. In a complex, changing culture, where the mind must process - not store - data, this is an indispensable asset. But in preliterate cultures, where experience is often limited by geography & limited even more by culture, that culture is presented to its members as clichés, repeated over & over with only slight variation. (58)**

Old world culture still exists in some areas of the world and has been assimilated in some forms and become extinct in other forms, brought back as historical practice in museum settings or as in the state of Virginia's Colonial Williamsburg "living history museum." In my association with Sabino, I became aware of the authenticity of his work and its origins. In my documentation of Sabino and instruments my research is primarily focused on the media I have created of sound and images. My own place as a new media documentarian connects to how I read Carpenter's work and involvement in a particular place and time. Carpenter also shared beliefs with his friend and collaborator, Marshall McLuhan. Both agreed conceptually in regards to modern man's relationship to his media. But rather than being extensions of the human body, Carpenter refers to media as the true clothes that everyone wears:

**Media are really environments, with all the effects geographers & biologists associate with environments. We live inside our media. We are their content. TV images come at us so fast, in such profusion,**

**they engulf us, tattoo us. We're immersed. It's like skin diving. We're surrounded & whatever surrounds, involves. TV doesn't just wash over us & then "go out of mind." It goes into mind, deep into mind. The subconscious is a world in which we store everything, not something, and TV extends the subconscious. (63)**

Carpenter's studies in New Guinea can be the most enlightening when examining the effect of media on a culture. Carpenter introduced photographs and video cameras to the tribe in New Guinea and documented what impact these media had on them. Being curious, the tribe manages to find ways to incorporate the new tools into their daily lives and rituals. Carpenter saw the media as dominators attempting to subjugate and overpower the tribe's identity.

In particular, he comments on the effects that a video camera has on one of the tribe's rituals:

**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.**

**Yet film could never fulfill the ceremony's original function. That function was to test young men for manhood & weld them forever into a closed, sacred society. Now the ceremony, and by an extension the entire society, could be put on a screen before them, detached from**

**them. They could watch themselves. No one who ever comes to know himself with the detachment of an observer is ever the same again.**

**(134-135)**

By replacing the ceremony with a video-taped version of it to be replayed over and over, the tribe had become watchers of themselves. Carpenter makes his most compelling argument for the close examination of media when he returns to the tribe and sees the effects that the new media have had upon the relationships of the people:

**When we returned to Sio, months later, I thought at first we had made a wrong turn in the river network. I didn't recognize the place. Several houses had been rebuilt in a new style. Men wore European clothing. They carried themselves differently. They acted differently. Some had disappeared down river toward a government settlement, "wandering between two worlds/One dead, the other powerless to be born."**

**In one brutal movement they had been torn out of a tribal existence & transformed into detached individuals, lonely, frustrated, no longer at home - anywhere.**

**I fear our visit precipitated this crisis. Not our presence, but the presence of new media. A more isolated people might have been affected far less, perhaps scarcely at all. But the people of Sio were**

**vulnerable. For a decade they had been moving imperceptibly toward Western culture. Our demonstration of media tipped the scales. Hidden changes suddenly coalesced & surfaced.**

**The effect was instant alienation. Their wits & sensibilities, released from tribal restraints, created a new identity: the private individual. For the first time, each man saw himself & his environment clearly and he saw them as separable...**

**(128-131)**

Carpenter, however, may have perceived his introduction of media technology on the tribe as tipping the balance and placed too much emphasis on his previous visits to the tribe and their role in pushing them towards modernization. I, however, consider the interest and movement of humans toward modernization as a desire for convenience and inclusion in the new world. My experiences in Peru with other individuals I have met suggests to a desire of individuals to leave behind the old world and embrace the new world. A 26 year old Peruvian assistant guide on the Inca trail told me of his wish to immigrate to Canada and that he had begun the process and was saving the money he made on the Inca trail for his move and new life in North America. I asked why he would want to leave Peru, a nation that I had come to admire for its many qualities. He asked me a few simple questions: Did I enjoy the nature of Peru, the scenic landscapes, the Inca stone work? I responded with yes to all of these questions and then he asked: What was the first thing I looked forward to doing when reaching the end of my journey and

returning to civilization? I mentioned eating our lunch with the VCU group and sleeping in a bed in the hotel and taking a hot shower. He then said to me that this was why he and many other Peruvians sought another life in another country: they wanted the opportunity to take the hot shower and sleep in a comfortable bed. He told me that in order to understand this I would have to remember that camping was what he and many of his friends did everyday of the year and that leaving behind that life was something he was ready for. I understood clearly for the first time his perspective but at the same time I wondered if the culture of media he would find waiting in his new life abroad would enable him to understand why I found Peru to be a nation of great cultural wealth. I emphasized this point to my students each year: I argued that what the United States offered in the way of infrastructure with modern plumbing, electricity and interstate highways, Peru matched by offering a cultural wealth that was absent in the students' own life experience. Many students described their childhood and teenage years as centered on media: playing video games, watching TV and movies, or listening to music on headphones plugged into ipods. The isolation of these activities is striking. The focus is placed on the media and not on the shared experience of person to person interaction or on group participation, as the kinds of activities that our VCU in Peru Program offered such as hiking the Inca trail and visiting the ruins of [Machu Picchu](#). I found that the VCU students did understand the significance of Peru's cultural wealth in contrast to that of monetary wealth. Class discussions took place on location often allowing students to consider that the environment in which they grew up often had no access to natural areas and that the environment they had spent most time in life was, as Carpenter argues,

surrounded and immersed in media.

The effects of new media on culture are ongoing and media theorists have offered often opposing viewpoints in regards to their origins, influences, and effects on human beings. [Friedrich Kittler's](#) focus is often primarily on the historical origins of prototypes of communication hardware such as the gramophone, film and typewriter and less on the implications associated with the modernized, evolved state of these prototypes or the potential benefits to 21<sup>st</sup> century users. Kittler is interested in media aesthetics and historical lineages. He places a strong emphasis on the autonomy of technology; an approach decisively in opposition to Marshall McLuhan's theories.

[Harold Innis](#) was one of the pioneers in the emerging new field of media theory who brought about a new social sciences perspective that enabled his theoretical arguments to be grounded in observation of the emerging corporate powers that controlled the communication media during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Innis questioned the authoritarian positions afforded communication media and the destructive effects of the technology - particularly in promotion of war. Had he lived to see the 21<sup>st</sup> century new media, would he have seen the user generated content prevalent on social networks and social media sharing sites such as Facebook and YouTube as an extension of corporate ownership? Or possibly would Innis have seen a new dominated media environment in which the corporations could no longer force feed content to the passive user? Kittler rejects McLuhan's notion of media extending the human body. His philosophical approach to the discipline of the humanities separates him from Carpenter and Innis as well. Kittler redirects the position of the human being as a sensory apparatus suggesting

that a separation exists between the human being and the progression of media technology.

Heavily influenced as a student of Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan believed modern media to be extensions of mankind. . He was concerned with the true message of modern media which he believed to be the medium itself. In Understanding Media, he says:

**I am in the position of Louis Pasteur telling doctors that their greatest enemy was quite invisible, and quite unrecognized by them. Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the ‘content’ of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind. The effect of the medium is made strong and intense just because it is given another medium as “content.” (30-31)**

Had I been able to tell the assistant guide on the [Inca trail](#) what McLuhan is able to metaphorically state about media and the medium, I would have. In order to better comprehend the nature of the human race and where it is headed, it is important to research where it came from. Complex issues remain in regards to the presumed origins of man. Desmond Morris compares primates living in natural habitats to those living in a zoo. His knowledge of primates includes the “naked ape” that resides in the “human zoo”. The dilemma that media theorists face when defining communication media as

“alienating” or “disruptive” to the origins of mankind is brought about by a failure to examine and consider all of the pre-existing conditions that gave rise to the desire of human beings to create media in the first place. Zoologist and ethnologist Desmond Morris convincingly traces back in time the opportunistic survival instincts. Human beings require stimulus that favors the development of communication media. The theoretical argument that digital media inevitably alienates human beings from their own traditions fails to take into account the stimulus struggle that evolutionary factors placed into the natural behavior of human beings. It is essential to provide the necessary interdisciplinary perspective when approaching “alienating” or “disruptive” changes in human behavior. The dilemma media theorists will face, due in part to the tendency to overlook zoological methodology, is a loss of a wider perspective. As Morris writes in The Human Zoo:

**So much has happened in the past few thousand years, the urban years, the crowded years of civilized man, that we find it hard to grasp the idea that this is no more than a minute part of the human story. It is so familiar to us that we vaguely imagine we grew into it gradually and that, as a result, we are biologically fully equipped to deal with all the new social hazards. If we force ourselves to be coolly objective about it, we are bound to admit that this is not so. It is only our incredible plasticity, our ingenious adaptability that makes it seem so. The simple tribal hunter is doing his best to wear his new trappings lightly and proudly; but they are complex, cumbersome**

**garments and he keeps tripping over them. However, before we examine the way he trips and so frequently loses his balance, we must first see how he contrived to stitch together his fabulous cloak of civilization. (12-14)**

There are many factors involved in understanding how mankind made its way into the 21st century. Morris also argues that any inhumanness developed in the modern world stems from the unnatural ways in which we live:

**In unfolding our urban tale we have, with ancient Rome, come to a stage where the human community has grown so big and is so densely packed that, zoologically speaking, we have already arrived at the modern condition. It is true that, during the centuries that followed, the plot thickened, but it was essentially the same plot. The crowds became denser, the elite became eliter, the technologies became more technical. The frustrations and stresses of city life became greater. Super-tribal clashes became bloodier. There were too many people and that meant there were people to spare, people to waste. As human relationships, lost in the crowd, became ever more impersonal, so man's inhumanity to man increased to horrible proportions. (p. 20)**

Morris argues that the very nature of how humans became civilized is what alienated the individual relationships of people. Media cannot be the singular culprit of societal disinheritance if the very creation of cities is what led to an alteration of tribal cohesion in

the first place. Morris realized that caged zoo animals acted in surprisingly similar ways to how humans interact in large cities. He observes that individuals have had to learn to move about daily among people they are not familiar with, creating an unnatural atmosphere of tense and odd behavior.

However, it can be argued that new media can have precisely the opposite effect of alienation. By enabling connections with other people around the world and observing and interacting in global relationships via the World Wide Web. The web cam is not part of the theoretical analysis of Deleuze on the camera that I will focus on in chapter three. However, it has become standard practice to use a webcam in Skype and other online face to face communication. As old world cultures transitioned into the literate cultures, the writing of letters mailed to a recipient via the postal system enabled communication to take place between individuals who could read and write or at least knew someone who could read to them the contents of the letter. The response time of written correspondences depending on the distance or remoteness of an area could require several days, weeks or even months to reach an address. The telephone brought instant voice conversations into the 20th century and cell phones have created a mobile device that I have seen in use in rural areas of Peru. Farmers without electricity or running water at home will answer their cell phones out in the field. The desire to have communication between individuals from remote locations is fundamental to the development of new media and other technological communication devices. The web cam uniquely reconnects the old world face to face form of communication with the sound and picture and creates a camera consciousness that the user has of their own self image and that of the other user

that the telephone does not. Email, also a component of the new media internet conduit, allows this literate form to remain part of the amalgamation that is new media and makes the world wide deliver occur in seconds. We may come to the realization that in the physical evolution of human beings and our use of technology we also have the potential to evolve due to the developments that mimic a single cell organism's slow progression towards being part of a larger multi cell organism to that of the animal composed of millions of cells all functioning as one entity. Perhaps new media is playing a role in allowing the single human individual to become part of a larger human global organism composed of billions and connected via the internet that serves as a mechanical nervous system. It is coincidental that the office workers reside in [cubicles](#) not unlike cells in a body with the human as the nucleus?

Morris defines humans as part of a global super-culture. This super-culture can also be related to what McLuhan meant when he spoke of a global village: a world made more accessible and smaller in scope. As this global super-culture expands into and across all languages and societies, it is inevitable that local customs and traditions will be affected. Not all local customs and traditions will be replaced, nor will all survive. What will result is not unlike the evolution of life itself; metaphorically, the genetic DNA of human culture has been spliced and hybridized into new forms of culture containing the dominant and recessive genes of human culture. The global super-culture is creating an amalgamation of world, regional and local culture. Endangered languages, traditions and customs may be lost in the wake of the globalization. However, the very digital media that contribute to the spread of globalization can also be the means of documenting

cultures and preserving elements of their heritage as media contained in an archival record. The documentation of indigenous rituals and customs may provide a lasting record of those cultures in a time of transition. Future generations may rediscover and resurrect past traditions via the media contained in the record. The seemingly inescapable fact is that global culture is the rising tide and the survival of unique, indigenous cultures depends on the strength of local communities but also on international organizations that designate and provide funding for world heritage sites around the planet.

Harold Innis recognized the potential for the communication medium to be used to exploit these cultures. He saw the pervasive changes to cultures having negative results by eroding the customs of the community and replacing it with the "present-mindedness" of a consumer culture. Today, however, some very popular communication media have the potential to relegate the advertisers to the margins. Consider how YouTube and Facebook are free for users and supported by ads that are deliberately moved out of the main viewing space. Advertisers have attempted to find a way to return these sites back into the center of attention but have failed as users reject those overtures. Users are able to abandon one site for another: the success of Myspace did not last as users turned to Facebook. Competition in the new media environment for users is why advertising is placed carefully into pages. Sites such as Google have developed stealth methods of tracking user's habits with transparent means that search data in users' email and searches as well as with website tracking cookies. And the users agree to allow this for the free use of the Google software. Google also has played a role in new media development and acquired sites such as, YouTube, positioning itself to maintain its popularity and not fail

in the way Myspace and other sites have.



Figure 4. Time Magazine Person of the Year

In 2006, Time Magazine chose as Person of the Year “YOU” in honor of the radical networking sites such as YouTube and Facebook which revolutionized the way in which people interact with one another online. They placed a mirror on the cover to showcase that it was not a celebrity or a famous name but the user as an individual who, through voting and visiting these sites, was making the most impact on the world. Time managing Editor Richard Stengel wrote:

**...[T]his new global nervous system is changing the way we perceive the world. And the consequences of it all are both hard to know and impossible to overestimate.**

**There are lots of people in my line of work who believe that this phenomenon is dangerous because it undermines the traditional authority of media institutions like TIME. Some have called it an "amateur hour." And it often is. But America was founded by amateurs. The framers were professional lawyers and military men and bankers, but they were amateur politicians, and that's the way they thought it should be. Thomas Paine was in effect the first blogger, and Ben Franklin was essentially loading his persona into the MySpace of the 18th century, *Poor Richard's Almanack*. The new media age of Web2.0 is threatening only if you believe that an excess of democracy is the road to anarchy. I don't.**

One can talk about a cultural duality of positive and negative effects upon society. Conclusions in regards to the media's absolute effects on humanity are impossible to arrive at. However to attempt to better understand the implications of new media it will require interdisciplinary and multiple perspectives from inside and outside traditional methodological approaches. A predominately positive or negative viewpoint fails to address the evolutionary qualities inherent in the advancement of communication technologies. New media may reconnect components of old world culture in ways that the pre-digital literate account could not. However, in evolutionary transitions many past elements are lost and discarded in favor of the new; and with the newness also comes the unknown, untested, and the potential for unforeseen consequences.

New media has the potential to create in users a dependency and addiction. The access to content is seemingly unlimited and any saturation with one domain of the new

media can be turned into excitement by venturing into another. The online game phenomenon has the potential to hook users into long durations of time spent playing “free” games provided by the advertising sponsors who place their ads in the margins. Time management is turned over to the game and the user must conform to the investment of time in order to achieve the goals of the game, advancing to the next level. Traditional games in human history typically would be socially interactive and last for a few hours or perhaps several days, in the case of a major chess match. When the first chess match between a human and a computer took place it offered a glimpse into what lay ahead for humanity. As I mentioned previously, many of my students have described video and internet game addiction as a never ending quest to get to a higher level in the game. The game does not have an end or resolution; the newer versions released and the variations played by game users prolonging its life. However, it is this very loss of time perception that may be the most addicting element. Inside the virtual world of the game one experiences a different sense of reality. Gamers can play other players online at any time of day or night. The relief from the real world may come with a heavy price, however, as users lose sleep, human interaction and time spent in other more useful ways. My students, as they become awakened to the sensory experiences of Peru, often have interesting observations about the program and the learning they participate in. They find both to be unlike anything they have ever done before due to being in a new environment removed from the electronic emergence that Carpenter refers to as surrounding modern humans in the age of media.



Figure 5. Hypno-toad from [Futurama](#)

The animated television program, "Futurama," has managed to tap into the subliminal understanding that new media can also generate a void in its purely digital domain. As human beings we require real life experiences which the digital world cannot provide. It can only offer a substitute virtual placebo of life. The addiction to this placebo is not unlike the infant who craves the real nipple from its mother but becomes accustomed to the plastic pacifier. Metaphorically new media may be the pacifier that has been substituted by necessity as the old world mother can no longer make in-person appearances or accommodate the billions of requests for a real life encounter. New media offer a reconnection to some aspects of the old world and new connections with both positive and negative connotations. From a Sci-fi point of view, perhaps it is our human destiny to merge with machines, becoming completely "cellular", living like a nucleus at the center of a single cell connected wirelessly to all the other cells. On the other hand,

perhaps new media are both yin and yang, good and evil, and must be dealt with accordingly. The responsibility returns to the individual user and their own judgment of what constitutes that balance between the positive and negative.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Camera Consciousness**

#### **In the**

#### **Ethnographic Timeline**

If Darwin had a high definition camera on his voyage to the Galapagos and a means to charge its batteries, he may have recorded his revelations about evolution onto the hard drive. Perhaps he could have studied the finches by reviewing his footage. The

camera has a strong presence in the research environment both as an object of expression and as a tool for research and documentation. The learning can take place after the event; in the post production of a film, the clips yield sound and motion picture moments in time. What those moments consist of beyond the fundamental elements has a great deal to do with the camera. A talented cinematographer can make a director of a film appear to be far more aware of the image than in most cases he or she is. As movie making evolved to include actors, most directors of cinema came from a background in theater and directing plays. The camera operator was the technical expert on the photographic qualities of the image.

The advent of new technology at an affordable price has enabled filmmakers to create work on home computers, editing with affordable software and outputting high quality productions that pre-21st century independent filmmakers could not afford. The camera is also part of this jump in the ability to produce work that was previously unavailable to the unfunded filmmaker.

### Timelines and Editing

My Masters of Fine Art Degree in Filmmaking was centered on the single person filming and editing; taking complete control and responsibility for every aspect of the filmmaking process. Working with Joan Strommer gave me significant insights into the world of ethnographic film. Her teaching exposed students to films by filmmakers working alone on location and creating montages of cultures depicted in unsynchronized

sound. Her screenings provided me with an in-depth understanding of the origins of the genre.

I have employed the new HD formats of digital filmmaking and digital editing while maintaining an appreciation for the pre-digital documentaries. The popular PBS associated documentary filmmaker [Ken Burns](#) continues to shoot on film and edit on a [flatbed](#); the process is hands-on and always starts at the beginning of the film reel. The digital non-linear approach allows editing to take place anywhere in a timeline and copy and paste sequences easily into any section. As Burns stated, this method confused his way of thinking about his films. Jumping into the middle of a film in the editing process for him was as confusing as walking into a theater with a film in progress. He preferred to watch his film from the start, each time he began a day of editing, for the continuity it provides. I understand his perspective on this and feel my education in film came at a unique time of transition for filmmaking. I, too, began with the manual editing of cutting film. Glue was used to make the actual edits to run thru the projector and a final work print was mailed to a lab for a finished film print. I began in 1997 to learn non linear digital editing on an [AVID](#) system during my MFA program studies. I learned the system and have edited digitally ever since. However, having the experience of the non-linear approach has remained a significant influence in the perception of a film time line from start to end and the reading of film in a traditional presentation. At the same time, new media has allowed me to develop a non-linear method for presentation that has no start to end focus, but instead offers each individual clip as a stand-alone to be seen in any order. Each clip is also part of a group clips. In the online project of clips from Sabino's shop,

each clip has basic information included in the description of the clip as a single YouTube posting. This posting of clips turns over the sequence to be viewed to the user allowing the user to choose what to view or not to view. The traditional method of an audience sitting and viewing the same edit in a screening is not required in new media.

Developing a method in new media requires the presence of a filmmaker, or in my case, of a new media artist (a title I was given as winner of the National Student Film Festival at Hunter College in 1998 for best new media graduate work). I created my new media work in a [3-d studio](#) in VCU Sculpture Chairman Carlton Newton's lab, with output to video tape and editing in the Avid system. In 1998 I had not yet heard of the term new media applied to filmmaking and 3d computer animation was a recent development in film. My filmmaking experience provided me with the key element that was missing from much of the early 3d animated films and that element was an understanding of the camera and its placement. Inside of the virtual 3d computer simulated environment are very real mathematical equations that create the space the objects known as [mesh models](#) occupy. My undergraduate work as a sculpture major prepared me conceptually to work in this virtual space and apply real world dimensions to the objects I created. My filmmaking experience enabled me to adjust the placement of lights and camera to virtually film the objects and position the camera thru the virtual environment. I was praised for my 'vision' at the awards ceremony. My experience with real cameras prior to working in the digital domain of 3d animation had enabled me to “see” the virtual reality of the objects I had created and move the camera through the 3d environment with knowledge of cinematography applied to a [virtual camera](#).

### Camera as Object of Expressivity

New media affects the timeline editing process and in the case of virtual cameras it also has a place in the unreal computer generated environment. However, in my research in Peru and documentation of Sabino's work, I have found that my camera functions on several levels not only as a device for recording picture and sound but also as an object of expressivity. In many instances the camera present in the act of documentary filmmaking causes a reaction from the subjects being filmed. In contrast a hidden camera lacks this presence. What reactions occur due to the camera depend on the context of what is taking place, The [Rodney King](#) beating by L.A police officers was hidden; however, the response to the incident provoked a public uproar. Had the camera been seen by the police, they would likely have taken the camera and destroyed the footage or not continued beating King out of fear of it becoming exposed on TV.

### Deleuze, Objective or Subjective?

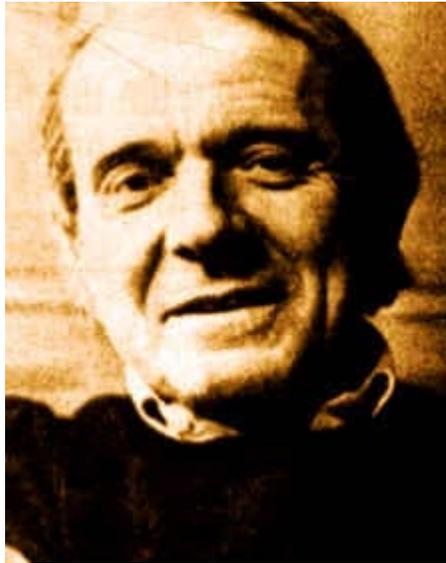


Figure 6. Gilles Deleuze

Gilles Deleuze, a French film theorist explored many possible connections between the camera and the perception humans have when experiencing cinema. His writings have focused on cinema as a phenomenon and offer interesting associations particularly in *Cinema*. He makes several arguments for the use of the camera and the effect it has:

**A character acts on the screen, and is assumed to see the world in a certain way. But simultaneously the camera sees him, and sees his world, from another point of view which thinks, reflects and transforms the viewpoint of the character....But the camera does not simply give us the vision of the character and of his world; it imposes another vision in which the first is transformed and reflected....We will not say that the cinema is always like this – we can see images in the cinema which claim to be objective or subjective-but here**

**something else is at stake: it is a case of going beyond the subjective and the objective towards a pure Form which sets itself up as an autonomous vision of the content. We are no longer faced with subjective or objective images; we are caught in a correlation between a perception-image and a camera-consciousness which transforms it.... (Deleuze 74)**

Many of his ideas based upon the evolution of the motion picture can be attributed to the documentary format as well. As part of this camera-consciousness, the documentary film is very much affected by the role of the camera. Speaking of this camera consciousness, Deleuze argues that the camera, itself, becomes its own character within the film; the silent observer -- but not wholly objective. He claims that its very observance of what occurs influences what it is recording. Rather than simply receiving the character's viewpoint, the camera is manipulating the perspective to add its own personal insight:

**{T}here are not only instantaneous images, that is immobile sections of movement; there are movement-images which are mobile sections of duration; there are, finally, time-images, that is, duration-images, change-images, relation-images, volume-images which are beyond movement itself... (Deleuze 11)**

Deleuze emphasizes that the camera not only tells the story through images but that it constitutes an entire sub-strata of images through which it plays in the human eye and into the mind. The camera utilizes still images, movement-images, relation-images, and other subconscious images. Here is Deleuze again:

**The shot is the movement-image. In so far as it relates movement to a whole which changes, it is the mobile section of a duration....It is only "as if"; for natural perception introduces halts, moorings, fixed points or separated points of view, moving bodies or even distinct vehicles, whilst cinematographic perception works continuously, in a single movement whose very halts are an integral part of it and are only a vibration on to itself...what counts is that the mobile camera is like a general equivalent of all the means of locomotion that it shows or that it makes use of -- aeroplane, car, boat, bicycle, foot, metro....In other words, the essence of the cinematographic movement-image lies in extracting from vehicles or moving bodies the movement which is their common substance, or extracting from movements the mobility which is their essence. (23)**

Perspective is not limited to the location of the camera or the lens but to the person behind the camera. The intent of the cinematographer is transmitted as visual information and understood by the audience as music is understood by listeners: it comes without explanation in a literal translation. The lens of the camera serves as the eye the

cinematographer uses to integrate the visual phenomena in front of the camera into what will become later the projected image on the screen in the movie theatre. The awareness of the film's final stage as a complete work is what provides the cinematographer with motivation and what leads to the development of an approach to the "look" of the film. The camera is the tool that enables the film to be treated frame by frame. Elena Del Rexio, in her essay "*Ararat and the Event of the Mother*", refers to Deleuze's understanding of time as the filmmaker's tool:

**Deleuze identifies the temporal nature of the event with the incorporeal form of time or Aion. As opposed to Chronos, a more objectively measurable form of time, the Aion is a kind of virtual temporal line that never exhausts its own capacity to express the event, as it extends its effects in a potentially infinite number of past and future points. While "Chronos is filled up with states of affairs and the movements of the objects that it measures," the Aion is "an empty and unfolded form of line (which) subdivides ad infinitum that which haunts it without ever inhabiting it." Deleuze further notes that the Aion "disinvests itself from its matter and flees in both directions at once, toward future and toward past." At crucial moments in Ararat, the camera work enhances the continuity and fluidity of space to show how past and future meet at a single affective knot or point. Here the camera's unrestrained mobility produces a form of**

**“continuity editing” that paradoxically disregards the rules of temporal linearity of classical narrative. (Del Rexio 8)**

The notion of Aion is an asset to the filmmaker. It allows the director to continuously return to a scene in the past for further examination and allows for an uninhibited freedom in moving from one time to another without being shackled by the constraints of linear chronology. The idea of Aion is, in particular, important for my project. Since the story to be told takes place over a period of several years, it becomes necessary to move in a non-linear timeline through these years in order to show the correlating parts of the story. The non-linear progression evident in Deleuze’s theory of the Aion can also enhance the understanding of how media introduced to cultures in remote locations can bring about a change in perception. My use of cameras in Peru has often elicited a responsive smile from children and adults who associate the camera with the tourism that has brought some economic prosperity to the region. The smile indicates to me acceptance and also a degree of modesty in knowing they are a subject of the camera.

### Photography

Photography is not part of Deleuze's theoretical explorations in his two titles, *Cinema One* and *Cinema Two*. The camera and the medium of motion picture and still

image, while sharing similar components, have unique associations in the context of media theory and the camera. It may be an affective fallacy to attempt to offer a definitive written explanation of Photography. The image provides its own information visually. However, the context in which the image exists is suitable for a theoretical discourse.

The notion of Affective Fallacy refers to the error in judging a work of art on the basis of its results, especially its emotional effect. In photography this concept does not necessarily apply: for example, photographs are not necessarily works of art unless they are created with an artistic intent. Consider an [x-ray](#) image. It is a photograph taken for reasons that are not artistic, though this is not to say that artists could not utilize the x-ray for an artistic work. It is the science of photography that presents the problematic analytical dilemma for theoretical discourse in a fine art arena.

As Baudrillard writes:

**The miracle of photography, of its so-called objective image, is that it reveals a radically non-objective world. It is a paradox that the lack of objectivity of the world is disclosed by the photographic lens).<sup>2</sup>**

**Analysis and reproduction (resemblance) are of no help in solving this problem. The technique of photography takes us beyond the replica into the domain of the trompe l'oeil. Through its unrealistic play of visual techniques, its slicing of reality, its immobility, its silence, and its phenomenological reduction of movements, photography affirms**

itself as both the purest and the most artificial exposition of the image.” (n.p.)



Figure 7. AP images(left)Young children run away from the site of a napalm attack on a suspected Viet Cong base in 1972.(right)police chief Nguyen Ngoc Loan about to execute Viet Cong officer Nguyen Van Lem on the street in Saigon

I selected the above two photographs which are not silent, artificial, nor immobile. There is no unrealistic play. No problem needs to be solved with these images. The photographs devoid of color and rendered in black and white grayscale, are as clear in their objectivity as seen by the photographer who took them as they were in the reality of the moment. A camera takes a picture, a photographer makes a picture. The

above photographs scream in opposition to silence. They need no explanation but cry out for explanation.

When McLuhan observes the results of photography as a medium he emphasizes its far-reaching effect. He senses the profound possibilities that can be manifested through the medium of photography. The technology alone does not require an artist to make a photograph. However, he includes photography in the newfound implement of “electronic man” residing in the “graphic age.” Just like a microscope or telescope which enables vision to exceed the naked eye, photography enables an image to replace a description. Is the defensiveness [Jean Baudrillard](#) feels towards photography perhaps the attitude of a writer who feels threatened by a photograph that requires no words?

As Baudrillard further argues:

**At the same time, photography transforms the very notion of technique. Technique becomes an opportunity for a double play: it amplifies the concept of illusion and the visual forms. A complicity between the technical device and the world is established. The power of objects and of "objective" techniques converge. The photographic act consists of entering this space of intimate complicity, not to master it, but to play along with it and to demonstrate that nothing has been decided yet. "What cannot be said must be kept silent." But what cannot be said can also be kept silent through a display of images.**

**(n.p.)**

Baudrillard is relegating the “photographic act” to a simple interaction between the technical device, also known as a “camera,” and apparently a person who enters this space of intimate complicity not to master it but to play along with it. An amateur with the camera does not know when to “make” the picture and resorts to “taking pictures.” The pre digital amateur develops “pictures” from a camera shop and finds all of the images have not “turned out”... what cannot be said must be kept silent.

Silence is an absence of speech or expression. True silence exists only in the vacuum of space. I can look at the sheet music of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and “see” music. The music is not silent any more than the voice of your mind reading this sentence is silent. Photographs are not silent in the same manner. Beethoven wrote and conducted his Ninth Symphony when he was deaf. Surely Baudrillard does not consider words typed on the page silent. But he writes of the silence he sees in photography.

[Mitchell](#) is looking for a national representation through photography as he explores the concept, *What do Pictures Want?* He is offering a conceptual perspective that the medium of photography can be a cultural expression unique to the artist working in a specific medium and to his/her nationality. According to his theory, the fact that historically the United States established photography as a fine art tradition lends credibility to the concept. It is best to offer examples of significant photography when illustrating theoretical analysis on the subject. Mitchell is looking at examples to support his statements about a nationalistic American domination of the fine art world of photography. To expand on this subject, I have chosen one photographer whose work I

first saw in 2008 at exhibition in New York.



Figure 8: [\(Untitled - September 2006\)](#)

[Hannah Starkey](#)'s Photography offers visual poetry of the moment, space and time. The Prints are a paradigm of complex interconnectivity of the environment and human sensory awareness. She explores in her compositions her understanding of the inner city architectural interior space in relation to the human beings that inhabit these environments. The manner in which she sees with the camera is evident in all of the work. Starkey's compositions are often reflections on multiple levels of perspective. Light, hue, soft and sharp edges define the images of women in manmade environments. Transformations of the interior spaces occur within the photographs. In the work titled "September 2006," natural elements of light and water penetrate three window openings bringing nature into the interior space that is not fully enclosed. Through the large

windows we see the outside light and the aqua blue hue flow into the indoor pool. Centered and submerged to her waistline is a female figure reclining with an outstretched arm. The woman is pregnant and looks towards the opening and the outside world and light. Starkey's transformation of the interior space is achieved by the point of view that we see from inside the womb of the image. From this place on the other side in the dark blue interior we contemplate the opening and the light. We as the viewers are inside this visual understanding of our place in the photograph with the figure and abstract forms, curved pool edges and black framed windows which resonate in a slow anticipation of the birth of the image.

To quote Baudrillard again:

**The idea is to resist noise, speech, rumors by mobilizing photography's silence; to resist movements, flows, and speed by using its immobility; to resist the explosion of communication and information by brandishing its secrecy; and to resist the moral imperative of meaning by deploying its absence of signification. What above all must be challenged is the automatic overflow of images, their endless succession, which obliterates not only the mark of photography (le trait), the poignant detail of the object (its punctum), but also the very moment of the photo, immediately passed, irreversible, hence always nostalgic. The instantaneity of photography is not to be confused with the simultaneity of real time. The flow of**

**pictures produced and erased in real time is indifferent to the third dimension of the photographic moment. Visual flows only know change. The idea, then, is to replace the triumphant epiphany of meaning with a silent apophany of objects and their appearances. The image is no longer given the time to become an image. To be an image, there has to be a moment of becoming which can only happen when the rowdy proceedings of the world are suspended and dismissed for good. (n.p.)**

His conclusive statement sounds like a move towards the origins of photography or the origins of photographic perception. The “moment of conception,” the moment a photograph is born, is in fact the moment when **“the rowdy proceedings of the world are suspended.”** The photograph does not require permission or recognition to exist. As Baudrillard states: **“The image is no longer given the time to become an image. A photograph does not require any thing to be given to it.”** This is echoed by Mitchell when he asks; **“What do pictures want? A photograph is a child of time not its orphan. The flow of time requires nothing to continue in the same instance once a photograph is conceived it no longer requires time to become an image.”** From a technical standpoint, darkroom techniques and printing techniques are relevant to the process that occurs after the birth. With the innovation of digital photography the image exists at the moment it is created. What makes photography elusive when it comes to defining its properties is its connection to time. Photography has two parents, the

photographer and time. Einstein should be consulted in regards to the speed of light. However, for all of the elusiveness photography exhibits it is right in front of us.

The device of a camera is flexible. Pinhole cameras do not require a lens; only a pinprick through which the light enters and is scattered uniformly across the emulsion creating a uniform depth of field and focus. Light is not always required to produce a photograph. Radio wavelengths render the magnificent images of our galaxy. The photographic properties of astronomy no longer have dependence on visible light and have tapped into photography of presence. Detection of what is present is a primary element of the photographic process. In the same manner what is absent can provide a context to discern an image much in the way a shadow provides information about what it is not.

For many years the curious have sought to photograph death. Mysterious ghostlike figures have appeared in photographs. A former photography student of mine discovered an image of a woman dressed in 18th-century clothing standing amongst the trees in a black-and-white photograph she made at a cemetery. The ghost when pointed out is very recognizable. However, prior to her pointing this out to me I did not see it, only the trees. Some indigenous tribes maintain a belief that to allow a picture to be taken of them may bring the risk of having one's spirit captured.

The term "capturing" is quite suggestive. As I stated before, photographs are not silent; however, if you do not listen with your eyes you may not hear the image. It is interesting to note that there has been photographic research conducted to develop a

conversion of photographic information into a form of Braille. A blind person can feel the light of the sun. A deaf person can feel the rumble of thunder vibrate. These are all sensations; our senses exist in order for us to connect to the world, around. Human evolution has refined our known senses and photography has allowed us to develop an external sense. It can be argued that plants have been practicing photography since the origins of the blue-green algae. [Linus Pauling](#)'s research on photosynthesis proved this theory in some respects. The forces of the natural world, the physics of time and space, the magical component is part of us, not the image.

Expression through photography can create a sensation much in the way music can create a mood. Auteur photography can express an individual's perspective, particularly a way of seeing. Consider another photograph by HANNAH STARKEY:



Figure 9: [\(Untitled -April 2006\)](#)

The woman dressed in black and white faces away from the vantage of the viewer. The highlights of her face are suggested by the sharp contrast of the colors: red hints of the unseen lipstick and black highlighting of the eyelashes, unseen but echoed in the vertical black stripes of the wall panels. A single red chair faces outward to the right towards the unseen audience. The chair is separated by a vertical line of black and white, framing the female figure in a geometric interior space that opens toward the front of the stage. Three red chairs are seen thru the opening towards the “outside” space. They are matched by three microphones mounted on the floor pointing upwards to the woman. Starkey again creates a sense of anticipated time that differs from the pregnant sense of “September 2006.” Here she involves the viewer in three elements of time contemplation, that of the woman and her movement indicated by the motion blur of her upper torso and the “text” of what she holds in her left hand. The single red chair is vacant but suggests a time when it was occupied. Three microphones with the curving line drawing red wires break the uniformity of their linear geometric surroundings and offer to record the moment that we will not witness.

The camera in photography and in film relates to different levels of understanding the end result for images. Both photographers and cinematographers shoot with an awareness of the critical perception of the completed worked exhibited. The relationship they have with the camera is not unlike that of the musician and the instrument, or the writer and the old world version of the pen, or the new media version of word software

and the computer keyboard. The end goal is to render communication to other human beings.

## **Chapter Four**

### **NEW MEDIA AS A STIMULUS STRUGGLE**

**The aspiration of our time for wholeness, empathy and depth of awareness is a natural adjunct of electric technology. The age of mechanical industry that preceded us found vehement assertion of private outlook the natural mode of expression. Every culture and every age has its favorite model of perception and knowledge that it is**

**inclined to prescribe for everybody and everything. The mark of our time is its revulsion against imposed patterns. We are suddenly eager to have things and people declare their beings totally. There is a deep faith to be found in this new attitude - a faith that concerns the ultimate harmony of all being. Such is the faith of our own extended beings in our technologies, seeking the principle of intelligibility in each of them. In the full confidence that it is possible to win an understanding of these forms that will bring them into orderly service, I have looked at them anew, accepting very little of the conventional wisdom concerning them. One can say of media as Robert Theobald has said of economic depressions; there is one additional factor that has helped control depressions, and that is a better understanding of their development. Examination of the origin and development of the individual extensions of man should be preceded by a look at some general aspects of the media, or extensions of man, beginning with the never explained numbness that each extension brings about in the individual and society. (McLuhan 81)**

McLuhan can provide insight into new media by considering its origins and trace elements from the technologies of the old world. The elements are derived from the desire to create the mechanical bride - the mechanized systems that replace the manual human touch with an automated process. The movement towards literacy replaced the

need to remember oral storytelling word for word and introduced the alphabetic code that allows for the reading of text. This mechanized mental process detached old world learning skills from humans by programming them to scan with the eye the code and recreate the meaning of the words in silence. Because this method prevails and is common today it appears to be second nature for human communication.

What then is its first nature? That can be found with children prior to speaking. What defines thought? Without words thoughts could be defined in other forms and certainly as Morris has suggested higher primates understand complex body language and actions. A child does not understand the spoken word and yet can comprehend and understand actions, situations, body language, sound and images. With new media allowing for greater cultural interaction than ever before are we as a civilization becoming more connected to each other or delving further into an isolated society? Modern society has benefitted greatly from the development and spread of new mediatic forms of communication but the negative outcomes of a plugged in village of interconnectivity are still to be determined. In order to grasp the impacts that new media can have on a society it is helpful to begin by attempting to understand what can be considered normal behavior for human beings.

In *The Naked Ape*, and later in *The Human Zoo*, Desmond Morris explores what constitute normal behavior in humans. He also examines the changes in human development from pre-historic to modern times. In particular, *The Human Zoo* claims that our fellow mammals who survive in the wild do not participate in many of the bizarre and destructive activities in which humans do, largely because they are focused upon survival

and do not have the luxury of leisure time to fill the hours of their day with destructive plots.

The availability of leisure activities has increased exponentially in human society. Smart phones allow games to be played and the ability to watch movies while you work. Companies are consistently urging their marketing departments to find ways to convince the consumer to use all of their media devices at the same time. It is not uncommon to have a television playing, a laptop in front of you, and a cellular phone by your side. It is possible to take a picture with your smart phone of a [QR](#) (quick reference) code that can then immediately take you to a website wherein you will be urged to become a member or make a purchase. The immersion into our technological gadgets suggests that rather than satisfying our need to relax or unwind we are becoming more anxious than ever; craving more and more stimulus. Desmond Morris refers to this need to compensate for a lack of life or death situations as the stimulus struggle. But the stimulus struggle is meant to allow us a calmer attitude of mind and not leave us feeling more intensely hyperactive.

Animals in the wild are faced with stress each day. The stress of survival can be daunting but also motivating. The two types of human stress are known as distress and eustress. Eustress allows a person to feel inspired and motivated to solve a problem whereas distress causes a feeling of no control and overwhelming disorientation.

People strive for survival just as animals do but in different forms. We require money to pay for food, housing, and clothes. If it is difficult to earn enough to meet those basic needs, stress then enters into our lives. At the same time, however, more and more

people who are adequately able to satisfy their basic needs are nevertheless becoming more and more stressed.

One known negative effect of our media gadgets is the destruction of our natural light source. This disruption in our circadian sleep cycle actually began with the advent of electrified homes. With the ability to easily light a room, people could stay up later without the normal body responses releasing natural hormones proclaiming that due to the darkness it was time to sleep. This disruption of our natural cycle has been further altered by our devices which have alternating blue screens that affect our body and mind's understanding of when the alert stage of the brain should begin to shut down and rejuvenate for the night. Doctors urge patients to turn off all devices that create artificial light for at least one hour before they are prepared to go to bed. The sleeping medication prescription drug business has been no doubt greatly aided by media but unfortunately it is not a long term fix for individuals and can lead to dangerous side effects and erratic behavior.

Our evolution has been a direct result of our need for protection and safety. We have evolved into mostly civilized societies for this purpose. The question then becomes, once we have attained a measure of that protection, does our psyche still demand some form of danger and threat? Amusement park rides that thrill and frighten roller coaster riders and horror films that depict graphic images of dismemberment and gore may be evidence that the human mind desires the near death stimulus without the risk of death. As Desmond Morris argues,

**[W]e vaguely imagine...we are biologically fully equipped to deal with all the new social hazards. If we force ourselves to be coolly objective about it, we are bound to admit that this is not so. It is only our incredible plasticity, our ingenious adaptability, that makes it seem so.**

**(12)**

The craving of stimulation that would normally come from a fight for survival can be found in a weaker, watered down mediatic version. But it is having more of an alienating effect on us than a positive one. We began as hunter/gatherer tribes and then progressed onward to farming and shepherding. Desmond Morris makes the claim that the true challenge for humanity came about when we began relocating to cities instead of remaining in smaller, close-knit communities:

**He had become a citizen, a super-tribesman, and he no longer knew personally each member of his community. It was this change, the shift from the personal to the impersonal society that was going to cause the human animal its greatest agonies in the millennia ahead. As a species we were not biologically equipped to cope with a mass of strangers masquerading as members of our tribe. It was something we had to learn to do, but it was not easy....As a result of the artificiality of the inflation of human social life to the super-tribal level, it became necessary to introduce more elaborate forms of controls to hold the bulging communities together. The enormous material benefits of super-tribal life had to be paid for in discipline. In the ancient**

**civilizations which began to develop around the Mediterranean, in Egypt, Greece and Rome and elsewhere, administration and law grew heavier and more complex alongside the increasingly flourishing technologies and arts. (33)**

In these highly populated super-tribe societies human behavior has been modified into what Morris compares to the caged primates of a zoo. The unnatural setting of a city removes us from our origins and places humanity into a hive-like living condition. Crowds and traffic congestion at rush hours are seen as part of our “[rat race](#)” bringing to mind the struggles of a rat in a laboratory maze. The human being is adaptable as are many other opportunistic mammals and our evolved need for stimulus becomes altered in the urban environment. The identity of the individual becomes associated with the work they do, the institution they belong to, and the region and nation they live in. The image of the global citizen is enhanced by the new media and the World Wide Web's ability to transmit information and provide language translations. The 21st century online human can entertain a globalized view of humanity.

However, the need to belong to a smaller traditional tribe does not disappear. At VCU we feel proud to have our previously nationally unknown basketball team succeed against other university teams with long histories of success. Belonging to a group is a normal desire for human beings. The unnatural factors of alienation and separation in a crowded and congested urban environment underline Morris' observations on the condition of modern human life in a metropolis that fails to meet the needs of the individual. My emphasis on Peruvian culture in the Quechuan speaking region of the

Andes resonates with my Richmond students during the program abroad. I have made a point of asking my students to observe the way of life of the rural people we encounter as well as the urban people. Students often associate the rural people with appearing to be happy and smiling. The city population, on the other hand, is not much different in behavior from what we are used to in the United States. I ask my students why they think this occurs. And students often suggest that the rural way of life may be less stressful and more natural. Desmond Morris would agree that the life in rural areas is more natural. However the stress of daily existence and struggle for survival in a natural environment is still present, but it is a natural kind of stress that is often associated with the natural weather and farming conditions. Social isolation is not encouraged in the small communities, where each person is needed to participate and the value of the individual is significant. In the large urban cities of the world an individual life has lost value and no uniform social structures exist to include every person. The impersonal system removes the normal state of human existence through membership in a tribe and replaces it with another version of interaction via the media. Watching television and listening to radio broadcasts present a picture of a larger version of humanity. The [mediated](#) society becomes what is associated with normal and represents a version of authority. Advertisements promote products through peer pressure by ridiculing the uncool member of the tribe for drinking the wrong beer, wearing unfashionable clothes, or driving a truck that is not powerful enough to pull a tractor trailer. Advertisers also know that the rat who wishes to escape the race will be drinking their beer as a promise of reaching paradise.

Rituals shape humanity beyond a need for survival and conformity is made into a law by the powers that be. To quote Morris again:

**Their function is to increase the illusion that one belongs to a unified tribe rather than a sprawling, seething super-tribe. If they are criticized because they seem arbitrary or meaningless, the answer comes back that they are traditional and must be obeyed without question. It is as well not to question them because, in themselves, they *are* arbitrary and frequently meaningless. Their value lies in the fact that they are shared by all the members of the community. When they fade, the unity of the community fades a little, too. They take many forms: the elaborate procedures of social ceremonies-marriages, burials, celebrations, parades, festivals and the rest; the intricacies of social etiquette, manners and protocol; the complexities of social costume, uniform decoration, adornment and display [...]they vary from case to case in a thousand tiny details, each of which is scrupulously attended to, as though the very lives of the participants depended upon it. In a sense, of course, their social lives do depend on it, for it is only by their conduct in public places that they can strengthen and support their feelings of social identity, of belonging to a cultural group, and the grander the occasion, the stronger the boost. (Morris 55)**

The formality of language use in academic institutions is also part of a restrictive conformity that I have debated with fellow PhD students. My argument is that if language had been fixed and the rules of its use strictly enforced then no evolution of English would have taken place and our debate today would be in old English that thou shalt not speaketh with thine modern tongue. I also invoked the parallel example of Victorian bathing suits that were as restrictive to swimming as fixed rules can be to the use of language. I further reminded my colleagues that at some point in the evolution of language every word was invented and made up by someone somewhere.

The natural state of children is to use their imagination and make things up as they go. Though to outline one's plan for a project and state that it will be improvised from start to finish invites skepticism, we should not forget that it is natural to all human beings to improvise. As Desmond Morris argues,

**The sobering lesson to be learnt from all this is that the ancient biological need of the human species for a distinct tribal identity is a powerful force that cannot be subdued. As fast as one super-tribal split is invisibly mended, another one appears. Well-meaning authorities talk airily about hopes for a global society. They see clearly the technical possibility of such a development, given the marvels of modern communication, but they stubbornly overlook the biological difficulties. (61).**

The needs of the individual are replaced by the requirement of obedience to the rules and laws of the authorities. The organization of large city environments places increased pressures on individuals, substituting authenticity with conformity. The mass production of objects exemplifies the loss of originality:

**Native folk art has been replaced by cheap reproductions of the great masters; folk music has been replaced by the gramophone record; peasant craftsmanship has been replaced by mass-produced plastic imitations of more expensive goods. Folklore societies have been rapidly formed to bewail and reverse this trend, but the damage has already been done. At best, all they can achieve is to act as folk-culture taxidermists. (67)**

Perhaps the new media can serve to reconnect some of the lost elements of the old world and document those that still exist. I have no doubt that new media has replaced and assimilated other pre-existing media and the process is ongoing. Desmond Morris has provided me with an outside view on media theory, not focused on any particular medium but on the agents that create the media and use it as part of the expanding population's methods of communication. I have found his insightful observations particularly relevant to understanding the interdisciplinary of Media studies and ethnographic theory and my own personal experiences teaching and conducting research for a decade in VCU's summer study in Peru.

## **Chapter Five**

### **NEW MEDIA POST-LITERATE CULTURE**

To conclude my findings for this dissertation, it is apparent that new media require of 21st century human agents a skill set beyond the traditional literate ability to read and write text. By their very name, new media also suggest that human beings have limited experience with understanding fully what new media are and what they may become in the future. What is new about new media beyond their technological development is the unknown effects they are having on human behavior. As part of the ethnographic research carried out by Edmond Snow Carpenter, the introduction of instant Polaroid photography to a tribe of humans living in remote jungles of New Guinea in the early 1960's brought about altered states of perception from people who had never before seen a photograph. The implications of new media's impact on human behavior in the early 21st century can also be examined from an interdisciplinary vantage point. Media theory alone can not provide a broad enough perspective. Human history has shown that significant changes in culture take place with new developments in technology. Anthropology has opened a broader view for my research in this dissertation, including the very essential human behavioral desire to communicate. New media are a

result of this quest to create a platform to communicate with multiple forms of media simultaneously.

Historically new developments in communication technology have brought about both positive and negative changes in behavior. Television brought the moving image into the home providing a source of great potential for learning and advancement of human knowledge. However, it was not long before television also created negative reactions, as the “boob tube” with its sit-com and other passive programming encouraged the “couch potato” syndrome. New media also offers great potential for advancement of our species, but also certain negative associations. And because of the unknown ramifications of its use and wide spread implementation we can only observe new media's effect in real time as it occurs.

In this dissertation I began with my own use of new media as a format to reconnect with the old world in a way that I could not have done with this written text alone. The hands on work that Sabino does to create musical instruments can be described in words and with new media that include visualization with a photographic and video camera. The camera can also work as a writing tool; as a videographer and photographer I compose and later learn from that content of my work. My understanding of Peru has been greatly enhanced through the more than one hundred hours of video I have shot from 2003-2013. The time spent reviewing the footage has allowed a memory process to occur that could not have taken place in the moment of filming.

My theoretical arguments have originated from the connection I have made between selected texts and research conducted during the eleven years I have been teaching Summer Study Abroad in Peru. In Chapter One I experimented with new media and explored how they have generated a nontraditional form of reading and how this new form connects to older pre-print methods of learning. Chapter Two expands into the theoretical and transformative nature of new media. McLuhan's view that societies have been shaped more by the nature of the media than by the content of the communication is a central theme. In Chapter Three I have included a theoretical and conceptual approach to camera consciousness, which originates with Deleuze. I have also provided analyses of cinema and photography. In Chapter Four, I have relied on interdisciplinary anthropology. Foregrounding has been essential in the development of the chapter with a focus on Desmond Morris's perspective on human behavior in modern societies.

All in all, it has been a transformative experience to articulate the visual and auditory senses from real life memories and those recorded moments of video and sound. All of my multi-media research has contributed to my writing method. As a student in the School of the Arts my least developed skills had been in the writing of verbal texts and the fundamental formal use of written English. Having been an active adjunct professor since 1996 my skills as a lecturer have developed naturally. My skills as a writer, however, have required learning how to think and write at the same time. Not unlike playing a guitar or charango, the physical typing on a keyboard can become an experiment with combining sounds and meanings. The way an instrument requires a physical interface, the academic writing process has required the development of new

skill. The most significant part of my dissertation comes from my efforts at composing it. The very theme of my dissertation explores the place of writing in the historical sequence of pre-literate culture, to literate and post-literate culture. In our post literate 21st century culture, language and writing skills remain important to modern societies. However, the birth of the new media technologies encourages a new amalgamation of media, art and text. The new multimedia synergy of verbal, visual, aural and electronic modes of textuality emphasizes a new inter-disciplinary form of media literacy in the 21st century.

Bringing together different forms of discourse and areas of research into one project has provided an unforeseen breakthrough in my understanding of all the mediums of camera, musical recording and original theoretical writing and blended them into a single conceptual work. Composed as a result of extended research and documentation, my dissertation project has yielded a more comprehensive understanding of the media I choose to work with. This work will continue beyond this dissertation as a growing and evolving project. The theoretical understanding that I have gained has been the most significant step towards the development of my own media work. Prior to my MATX PhD studies my methods were primarily intuitive. My use of the camera and my musical compositions developed as separate elements that could be interplayed in a film montage. However, the theoretical concepts I have developed through my dissertation work have had a profound effect on my understanding of my own complex position as a media artist and media theorist.

In terms of the larger implications of my interactions with Sabino, I believe that our relationship reached beyond that of a customer purchasing his instruments or a documentary filmmaker using him as a subject. In terms of its global implications, this relationship can be viewed as a microcosmic model for a larger global capability. Do the individual interactions between the Huaroman family and myself have larger global implications? ...Yes, in some ways my travel to Cusco is part of the larger global transportation my 11th consecutive trip during summer semesters. My interest is to expose my students to Sabino's shop and his instruments both through photography, blogging and videography opportunities and through the opportunity to buy one of his instruments. I have each year told students that buying one of his instruments is as authentic of a purchase of real Peruvian culture as we will encounter during our program. And students have responded enthusiastically. I have made the extra effort to take students back to Sabino's shop on the last day in Cusco as they have considered spending what for a student can be a significant amount of money. Sabino recognizes this and has shown his appreciation with, in recent years, a bag of smaller instruments such as the classic Andean pan flutes he has given us as a gift. I feel, however, that the gift of music that he has given us is more important than anything else.

It is my hope that I can shine a new media spotlight on Sabino and his work. With the on going documentary and the music I have recorded I have created a web presence for Sabino and myself. This web presence is something that could be found in an internet search of his name or mine. The online images, text and sounds are what makes new media reconnect to the old world.

The old world is often associated with a time of illiteracy for the average person; and during the 20th century a global educational popular push demanded that all persons should attain the ability to read and to write. New media require even more know how to search online and interact with online content such as video and sound playback. My argument is that these three periods (preliterate, literate, and post literate) in time have influenced modern human culture in positive and negative ways. The literacy focus inadvertently and deliberately pushed to the side other disciplines. This push also suggested that disciplines such as art and music had less value in a society of practically minded citizens and that this pragmatic, technocratic perspective made old world hands-on workers less educated and less intelligent. What new media have done is to reconnect the old world to the modern 21st century world. And perhaps new media literacy will present 21st century individuals with a new set of issues yet to be determined. There are indications that new media and their manifestations via hand held mobile devices are changing behavior. Perhaps the concept of thinking outside the box has been reversed and the box shaped device has taken the person outside and placed their thinking inside the new media box.



**A day at the beach.**

**Figure 10:** (Uncredited internet image)

Globalization brings about the integration of local culture into a world wide culture. This transformation need not necessarily be a negative one; it can in fact have a powerful and creative impact upon the meeting cultures. It can have the effect of losing one's culture as part of a process of global integration, but it can also contribute its own specific features to that larger culture. The making of traditional Andean musical instruments is a cultural phenomenon of the region formerly Inca and still recognizable by the [Quechua language](#) being spoken there. The historical perception that the Spanish conquered the Inca is supported by a change in government and religion. Spanish and Catholic forces invaded the Andes to gain gold and silver and to convert the local people into Catholics and Spanish speakers. This conquest appears to have altered the Quechan

culture less than historians educated outside of the region would lead a visitor to believe. Families continue to speak the Quechua language at home and to friends in the streets. Many know only limited Spanish.

Global culture seeps in via the language of the motion picture, television programming and internationally popular music and literature. Travelers, both researchers and tourists bring with them money to spend and this is met with enthusiastic merchants ready to learn enough English to enhance the possibility to sell more. Globalization works in the conversion of an original way of life to that of another way, a way to transform ideas and fashion into a modernized self image. The images of people in advertisements are almost always non- indigenous, often blue eyed and fair haired models that showcase the modern imported products such as clothes and cars. The U.S television programs dubbed into Spanish dominate the channels and bring with them cultural references and depictions of lifestyles from a stereotypical Hollywood portrayal of the United States.

Along with that programming, there are also documentary programs that feature historically important locations from around the world and included in these programs are also places in Peru like Machu Picchu and the [Nasca Lines](#). A duality exists in Peruvian cultural perception. On a global level and on a local level, what globalization offers is surrender to the larger mixture of world culture in exchange for recognition of the region's importance. What my documentary emphasizes is a component of the global cinematic language that fundamentally shows and tells the audience why this component is unique. The influence of the moving image and sound as a format for changing cultural

understanding is self evident in the writings of [Eisenstein](#); his focus on the deeper implications of cinema comprehension foregrounds the cultural achievement possible with the medium. However he also points out the potential loss of one's culture in the process, in a manner similar to how foreign filmmakers create, narrate, consult and interview other foreigners as "authorities" on an indigenous culture, skipping over the locals who they deem unqualified to discuss their own culture. As Eisenstein writes:

**...I want to talk about the lack of culture in fundamentally cinematic diction that we may observe on the screen today. In this matter of cinematic diction our cinema has accomplished a great deal for the world's film culture. And this accomplishment has been considerably deeper than mere fashion. ...Fashions pass-culture remains. Occasionally the culture behind the fashion is not noticed. Occasionally a cultural achievement is thrown out with the bath-water of fashion. (Eisenstein 108)**

The typical format of the documentary film on Peru and its culture is that of the popular television show; asking the questions and answering them through investigation when in fact all of the questions are already well documented and readily available online. In a predictable form, a narrator takes charge often skipping over the local perspective. The outsider "discovers" the mysterious unknown and pieces together findings. I found myself asking the same questions of my own involvement: would I create for my own scholarly work this kind of predictable approach? I have made a conscious effort to avoid this tendency of

documentary films that often miss the opportunity for research by focusing on the fashion of documentary style formats where the cultural achievement is thrown out with the bath-water of fashion.

I realized that the approach I was most interested in using alongside my theoretical arguments was the combination of **Media**: my video and photography of Sabino and his old world process of making the instruments. **Art**: my original musical compositions with Sabino made instruments; and **Text**: my theoretical investigation of new media and their connection to how I present the interdisciplinary work I have created.

When I began this project I anticipated learning new conceptual perspectives from the theoretical texts I found most relevant to the dissertation. And I did acquire a far more in-depth understanding of each work cited; however, the most important realization came about during the composition process. During the elaboration of my dissertation, I discovered that new media have arisen from the amalgamation of preexisting separate formats such as moving images, still images, sound playback and text placement and in their combined elements brought about a new kind of literacy. My own interactions with Sabino and the documentation process of recording the sights and sounds of his production process and my improvisational musical compositions with the instruments I have purchased from him have led me to this dissertation. My own stimulus struggle, as Desmond Morris would put it, was to undertake such a project. I am satisfied that within this work I have discovered many interconnected threads that could only be recognized and interwoven as part of an interdisciplinary work in media, art and text.

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