ARCHIVO PRESS

ARCHIVOPAPERS
JOURNAL OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND VISUAL CULTURE

ISSN (Online) 2184-9218

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To cite this article:
Verbesselt, Joeri. 2023. "This Dying Goat is a School: Indigenous trophy hunting pictures through the eyes of a non-indigenous researcher". *ARCHIVO PAPERS* 3 (1):33-50. http://doi.org/ 10.5281/zenodo.7951222

Published online: 18 May 2023.

ARTICLE

THIS DYING GOAT IS A SCHOOL: INDIGENOUS TROPHY HUNTING PICTURES THROUGH THE EYES OF A NON-INDIGENOUS RESEARCHER

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Abstract

This text traces how my initial idea for researching the practice of Indigenous trophy hunting picture-making transformed into an opportunity for methodological self-reflection regarding the knowledge and representation of indigenous peoples. After an introduction, I will recount how I, as a white non-Indigenous artist and researcher from Belgium, ended up on the island of Taiwan and in Indigenous territories. In section two, I will discuss precedents of other white non-indigenous researchers and artists working in similar Indigenous contexts, and that could be understood through a relational model. Thirdly, I will expand on the methodological boundaries that Indigenous scholars themselves demand of non-indigenous involvement with Indigenous research, a grounded model. In the fourth section, I will elaborate on a proposal for grounded visitation introduced by Indigenous scholars for outsider engagement with Indigenous lifeworlds. And fifth, finally, I will revisit my experience of filming an Indigenous hunter's killing of a mountain goat through a semi-autobiographical short story.

Keywords: Indigenous Research; Non-indigenous; Relational; Grounded; Visitor

At some point during my artistic field research in Indigenous territories,[1] I decided to focus on investigating the practice of Indigenous trophy hunting picture-making. I wanted to understand why I did not feel any moral objections towards the photographs taken by Indigenous hunters while posing with the animals they had just killed, in stark contrast to my sentiments towards the infamous trophy hunting pictures taken by smiling white people with big game animals in Africa. I suspected that trophy pictures made by Indigenous people made me feel different from those taken by white people because of their distinct contexts. The Indigenous hunters that I encountered hunt on their traditional land and ocean, on hunting grounds with which they have an ancestral and reciprocal relationship. In contrast, white neocolonial hunters mostly travel afar to hunt on lands separate from their home country and upon which they, after the decolonization of the African continent in the 1950s and 60s, no longer claim governmental ownership. However, aside from persisting forms of settler colonialism,[2] decolonial theorists such as Aníbal Quijano, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, have argued that colonialism continues through the hegemonic force that aims to universalize the epistemology of Western modernity, Eurocentrism, global capitalism and economies of extractivism.[3] Mindful of this notion of coloniality, I sought to depart my research from the hypothesis that pictures of (Indigenous and non-indigenous) hunters posing with their game are assertions of sovereignty, of who effectively, through the license to kill its living beings, owns the land.

I envisioned my research plan twofold: theoretically engage the academic literature in animality, psychology, photography, and decoloniality that focuses on trophy hunting, and put into practice anthropological and collaborative methodologies, such as photo elicitation. Through photo elicitation, I would interview Indigenous hunters using their hunting photographs to evoke feelings, memories, and other information relevant to my understanding of their picture-making practice.[4] In this way, I would side-step projective pitfalls, such as 'Orientalism'[5] or the trope of the 'ecological Indian,'[6] which outsiders like me possibly bring to places they are not familiar with. To counter outsider interpretation, I needed to uncover and compare how the Indigenous hunters themselves perceived their intentions in taking (or not taking) trophy hunting pictures. In other words, I needed to try and see how they see, *through Indigenous eyes*, and picture how they look through the camera lens that captures their trophy hunting photographs.[7]

And then I started to feel disturbed. Even though this research project seemed feasible and exciting, several self-reflective questions kept me from proceeding: Can I research Indigenous peoples as a white non-indigenous artist and academic? What ethical concerns are involved? How should I position myself between my relations with the Indigenous peoples I encountered and the academia or the art institutions for which I will produce knowledge and art? Are there comparable precedents of praxis among which I can situate my own?

With this paper, I attempt to attest to my process of reflection regarding such questions. To foster accountability, I write from the first person and deploy a politics of citation inspired by what geographers Carrie Mott and Daniel Cockayne term a 'conscientious engagement.' Aware of how the academy facilitates colonial domination, Mott and Cockayne conceptualize citation as a performative technology reproducing sameness and excluding difference.[8] Quoting black feminist and geographer Katherine McKittrick's plea "to work out how different kinds and types of voices *relate to each other*,"[9] they argue for citational practices against quantitative positivism and unethical knowledge hierarchies.[10] Throughout this text, I try to be conscientious of the power dynamics inside academic and artistic research by transparently recounting and citing my relations to the knowledge I decided (not) to reproduce. I aim to present how I navigated through my research, who the gatekeepers of knowledge were, and how I got access to certain places and people.

HOW I ENDED UP IN INDIGENOUS LIFEWORLDS

At the end of 2019, I started a Ph.D. in Arts that mainly dealt with filmmaking and different forms of writing.[11] My topic was the comparative research of imaginaries around ecological issues between Belgium and Taiwan, a place I have had a personal connection with since 2017. I started my Taiwan field research in 2020 in the mountain area of Hualien. I was shocked by watching its scarred and decapitated mountains due to extensive mining projects in Chi Po-lin's landmark documentary *Beyond Beauty: Taiwan from Above* (2013), so I wanted to see those landscapes on the ground. I invited Ting-Chen Liang, a female non-indigenous photographer and cinematographer from Hualien County whom I knew personally and who would help me with filming and translating from Mandarin Chinese to English.[12] We were both unfamiliar with the mountain area, and we chose as our first target a local cement mine, but, quite predictably, we were denied access. Later, and rather coincidently, we ended up in the village of Pratan.[13]

Pratan caught our attention because of the excavation works that were going on in its surrounding riverbeds and which were protested by numerous villagers and environmentalists. We learned that Pratan is mainly inhabited by Indigenous Truku people,[14] and additional research revealed that the abovementioned mine and the Tarako National Park are located on traditional Truku territory.[15] Until today, Truku communities resist the Taiwanese government's and multinational corporations' territorial claims.[16] My encounters in Pratan were my first experiences inside Indigenous contexts and thus urged me to consult additional historical and political science literature.

Seediq legal scholar Awi Mona and Tayal geographer Daya Dakasi recount how Indigenous peoples have lived on Taiwan for millennia and have, in the last four hundred years, endured multiple colonial invasions and regimes by Dutch,

Spanish, Han-Chinese, and Japanese settlers.[17] Today, 16 Indigenous peoples are officially recognized by the settler government of Taiwan, and they make up around 2,5% of its population, which is dominated by Han-Taiwanese peoples.[18] Settler colonialism is a socio-political structure, as historian Patrick Wolfe clarifies, where the settlers' claim to territorial access is realized through the erasure and elimination of Indigenous lifeworlds.[19] In 2016, the president of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, officially apologized "[f]or the four centuries of pain and mistreatment" inflicted upon Indigenous peoples.[20] Cou scholar tibusungu'e vayayana remarks that, compared to the official apologies by settler states Australia and Canada in 2008, Tsai's apology was more elaborate as she included specific mistreatments by each colonial regime. However, vayayana ripostes that the apology neglected the ongoing suffering induced by "the loss of language and culture" due to "assimilationist education."[21]

In Pratan village, I immediately felt that I wanted to understand better the place and what it meant to live in Indigenous lifeworlds. In the end, Ting and I visited the village for more than three months,[22] and over the years, I have returned regularly. I am now more aware of my privileges as a white non-indigenous outsider, financially supported by academia and possessing an EU passport and an artist visa granting territorial access. At the time, though, my approach as an artist and researcher was somewhat naive. My method consisted of simply strolling around the village anticipating chance encounters that instigated conversations. I didn't bring any specific research questions or methodologies; my informal inquiry concerned understanding the relationship between the villagers and that particular environment.[23]

Over time, as Ting and I became more acquainted with several villagers, some allowed us to follow and film them during their daily activities. One of those activities was hunting wild animals, and several hunters exchanged photographs with me in which they posed with killed animals. These photos were sent to me privately, and I didn't ask for consent to share them. Akwan, who identifies as a Truku hunter and with whom I tried to build a more reciprocal relationship,[24] allowed me to use his pictures. He also let me film several hunting trips and their killing of a trapped mountain goat following traditional Truku customs, with his consent casually spoken out while recording. After my stay in Pratan, I also received trophy hunting pictures from Tao ocean-hunters on the island of Pongso no Tao,[25] and I spoke to several 'Amis/Pangcah people who claim that 'Amis/Pangcah hunters don't take pictures of or with the animals they kill.[26]

NON-INDIGENOUS RESEARCHES SEEING THROUGH INDIGENOUS EYES: A RELATIONAL MODEL

Non-indigenous Japanese, Han-Taiwanese, and white Western academics have published extensively on Truku, Tao, and 'Amis/Pangcah lifeworlds. To better

understand how I could position myself, I looked at how other non-indigenous white researchers and artists worked in highly similar contexts as mine.

First, I discuss Canadian anthropologist Scott E. Simon's practice. I consulted Simon through email after my stay in Pratan and I met him in Belgium in the context of a weeklong seminar he gave on Truku culture at UCLouvain (2021). Simon told me he had done research in a Truku village that neighbors Pratan.[27] He has worked on Taiwan studies since 1996,[28] conducting 26 months of fieldwork inside the ethnically related Seediq and Truku communities.[29] In his academic publications, he usually doesn't expand on his specific research relations, consent, or reciprocity. Still, he wrote me that he approached the Seediq and Truku communities by contacting the local Community Development Associations.[30] To my understanding, Indigenous community members founded and run these associations to obtain recognition and financial resources from the settler government for local activities. Academic researchers in Taiwan consider them common gateways to access Indigenous communities.[31]

Scott Simon has published extensively in English, French, and Chinese on Seediq and Truku cultures.[32] Aside from my numerous conversations with Pratan villagers, most of my knowledge regarding Truku lifeworlds is derived from Simon's publications. He publishes Truku Knowledge in his name, except for his collaborations with Awi Mona.[33] Aside from an article that elaborately considers Truku Elder and hunter Huang Chang-hsing's book,[34] Simon's findings are primarily based upon his fieldwork conducted with Truku people and shared in an informed, rigorous, and nuanced way through the scope of Indigenous rights, pleading for Truku sovereignty through state recognition, transnational justice, and reconciliation.[35]

Aside from Scott Simon's practice as an academic researcher, I am also interested in how non-indigenous white artists work in similar Indigenous contexts. Therefore, I consider the American anthropologist and sound artist DJ W. Hatfield's praxis, whose work I could, on one occasion, discuss with him in person. I encountered DJ Hatfield's work in two art exhibitions in Taipei in the form of two mixed media multi-channel sound installations about Indigenous 'Amis/Pangcah communities.[36] His installations explore the rich histories of 'Amis/Pangcah people ranging from migrant communities in Taipei to workers in the far ocean fishing industry. As DJ Hatfield explicates, his works are about the "Indigenous responses to colonialism, and the ethics of locality."[37] The installation rooms of his series *A Different Gravity II* (2022) convey an immersive and realistic material quality, consisting of iconographical objects connected to 'Amis/Pangcah culture, such as rain boots, bottles of Paolyta B and rice wine, betel nuts, and black roof nettings through which the artificially staged moonlight and contours of moving plants are simulated. Inside those spaces, the exhibition visitor is invited to walk around and listen to sound recordings of 'Amis/Pangcah traditional songs, interviews in Mandarin Chinese with 'Amis/Pangcah people, and environmental soundscapes

through portable speakers or headphones.

DJ Hatfield has lived between Taiwan and the US for decades. He is fluent in the 'Amis/Pancah and Mandarin Chinese languages and a long-term guest in several 'Amis/Pangcah communities, some of which he is part of their traditional age set, which requires a particular commitment to the community.[38] As such, his work with 'Amis/Pangcah people accounts to consent and trust, which is also reflected in his academic publications through the detailed descriptions of his relations to people and knowledge.[39]

Both Scott Simon's careful attention to Indigenous sovereignty and DJ Hatfield's deep collaboration and embedding inside Indigenous communities justify their practices as non-indigenous outsiders through what anthropologist and documentary filmmaker P. Kerim Friedman calls a 'relational frame.'[40] Such a relational model aims to counter exploitative forms of 'helicopter' or 'parachute research'[41] by trying to explicitly account for its ethical and political relations.[42] As such, relational accountability would enable an ethical non-indigenous involvement in Indigenous research, as Friedman emphasizes "that each ethnographic encounter requires its own collaborative approach, based on the particular context of that encounter."[43]

Still, this relational model couldn't resolve several questions that kept on challenging my position: Do consent and collaboration achieve an equal relationship of reciprocity? What does research do for the political position of Indigenous peoples? How can I avoid problematic versions of allyship, such as salvage anthropology[44] or the white savior syndrome?[45] And how can I avert an *Avatarian* 'becoming Indigenous' that erases my own contextual background and position of complicity?[46] I realized that I couldn't find answers to these questions within Scott Simon' or DJ Hatfield's practices. I turned to Indigenous scholarship to investigate what Indigenous peoples themselves thought of non-indigenous research inside Indigenous contexts.

INDIGENOUS SCHOLARS LOOKING AT NON-INDIGENOUS RESEARCHERS: A GROUNDED MODEL

When reading Indigenous scholarship, I realized that the links between empire, colonialism, science, and capitalism are widely acknowledged.[47] Feminist scholar Andrea Smith terms the academy, dominated by heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and global capitalism, the 'multicultural academic-industrial complex.'[48] And Tongva and Luiseño scholar Theresa Stewart-Ambo and K. Wayne Yang call out the "institutional complicity with land occupation, resource extraction, and Indigenous dispossession."[49] Due to the colonial and exploitative nature of extracting knowledge, like mineral resources, Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith remarks, "The word itself, 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words

in indigenous world's vocabulary."[50] Smith elaborates how research methods like history, theory, and writing are "a particular realization of the imperial imagination"[51] through which "indigenous voices have been silenced or 'Othered.'"[52]

Regarding my questions about seeing through Indigenous eyes as a non-indigenous white outsider, I found thinking with the interlinked notions of the ethnographic and appropriative gaze helpful. As performance and Jewish studies scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes, "the ethnographic gaze objectifies."[53] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that an object becomes ethnographic by detaching it from its grounded relations and by inscribing it "in books or displayed behind glass, at a remove in space, time, and language from the site described."[54] Such ethnographic fragments are also produced in the form of secondary documents such as field notes, audio recordings, photographs, films, and sketches.[55] As a consequence of its 'poetics of detachment,'[56] the ethnographic fragment is reductive and must essentialize or totalize in order to be communicative.[57] The ethnographic gaze is interlinked with what Cree and Dene media scholar Jarrett Martineau terms 'the appropriative gaze' because the ethnographic object's separation from its grounded relations generates an enclosure, enabling its appropriation and commodification for capitalist accumulation (whether it is inside or outside academia).[58] Since an outsider's research needs the mechanisms of detachment and appropriation, attempting to see through Indigenous eyes then might be another form of what Linda Smith calls looking 'through imperial eyes,' which "'steals' knowledge from others and then uses it to benefit the people who 'stole' it."[59]

Unsurprisingly, Indigenous scholars have increasingly turned away from what Andrea Smith describes as an "ethnographic entrapment within the academy,"[60] which ensnares Indigenous peoples to represent themselves in line with the heteronormative and racist terms of the settler state. As Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains, "collaborative or participatory or community-based methodologies [...] to some degree privileged Western theories, epistemologies, or knowledge systems" that she deems incompatible with Nishnaabeg's ways of knowing.[61] Simpson, elaborating on Dene scholar Glen S. Coulthard's landmark book *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014), challenges the pitfalls of multiculturalist, state recognition, and reconciliation discourses as assimilation-seeking reframings of Indigenous struggles, "a never-ending battle for recognition within that [settler colonial] system, when the academy's primary intention is to use Indigenous peoples and our knowledge systems to legitimize settler colonial authority."[62]

Indigenous scholars welcome Coulthard's concept of 'grounded normativity,' which he defines as "the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time."[63] Against projects like recognition or reconciliation,

Leanne Simpson pleads for a 'Radical Resurgence' for Indigenous peoples, with radical denoting "root, to channel the vitality of my Ancestors to create a present that is recognizable to them because it is fundamentally different than the one settler colonialism creates."[64] To accomplish such a radical resurgence, Simpson proposes a 'politics of generative refusal'[65] towards non-indigenous outsiders: "the Nishnaabeg don't *need* settlers."[66]

I must confess that Leanne Simpson's writing, which I find tremendously valuable in dialogue with my reflective questions, radiates a citational ethics of reciprocity that I am afraid I cannot meet. About engaging with theories that come from beyond her community, she writes:

> The ethical practices within Nishnaabeg grounded normativity [...] require me to engage not just with their theories but with the people and peoples that embody and enact these theories. I think my Nishnaabeg ethical practices demonstrate that I must develop relationships of reciprocity and coresistance with these communities that embody our ethical practices of solidarity. I cannot not just *take* their theories. This process of ethical engagement has the potential to decenter our intellectual study from whiteness and produce productive ethical engagement with our global provocateurs.[67]

Mindful of such politics of citations, I tried to engage personally with the people who work in similar contexts and about whose practices I write. However, it was not realistic or desirable for me to engage with all cited scholars on a personal level. I decided to reproduce fundamental theoretical concepts that I believe these scholars disseminated in academia as critical interventions that set welcome boundaries for non-indigenous engagement with Indigenous realities—I do not aim to appropriate or replicate Indigenous Knowledge. I wish that my writing honors a distance that the cited authors regard as respectful, and I apologize if it doesn't.

As a preliminary answer to my question about non-indigenous research in Indigenous contexts, I believe that Simpson's concept of generative refusal resonates with Māori scholar Russell Bishop's argument for "Maori initiatives which are 'controlled' by Maori."[68] Linda Smith elaborates on Bishop by considering a role for non-indigenous involvement in Indigenous-led research through their incorporation and contribution of specific expertise.[69] I concur with these points, which suggest that ethical and political accountability, as presented in the relational model above, might not suffice for the justification of non-indigenous research in Indigenous lifeworlds. A question that immediately follows is whether such a grounded model leads to ethical paralysis on my side as a non-indigenous white researcher. What, then, can I do in the confrontation with Indigenous lifeworlds?

THE WHITE OUTSIDER RESEARCHER AS A GROUNDED VISITOR

Inspired by gender and race scholar Gloria Wekker, I want to counter ethical paralysis by considering my position as a white outsider as a call for responsibility. Against biological categorization, Wekker reads whiteness as a socio-cultural construct that denotes 'unearned privileges' marked by history and politics.[70] She demonstrates how innocence is about the reluctance of white people to speak in racialized terms and their denial of the existence of discrimination and racism, thereby erasing their complicity and safeguarding white privilege.[71] Wekker's call to address white innocence resonates with the suggestion by settler theorists Elizabeth Strakosch and Alissa Macoun that non-indigenous researchers can counter white supremacy and colonialism by acting from a position of complicity rather than via intellectual transcendence.[72]

In Leanne Simpson's writings, I found a highly fertile model to ground my complicity in the research encounter. From her Nishnaabeg context, Simpson stories the researcher as a visitor whose journey helps "to understand their place in it," who demonstrates "research ethics—consent, reciprocity, respect, renewal, relationship" and whose "methodology is relational."[73] Theresa Stewart-Ambo and K. Wayne Yang similarly discuss the trope of the visitor as a model for non-indigenous engagement with Indigenous realities. In contrast with being an invader or a guest, visitation "implies some complicity in colonialism, in harm inflicted, and also refutes claims to permanence and to proprietorship over Indigenous lands," and "gives Indigenous people a choice rather than obligation."[74]

From Indigenous scholarship, I learned how the grounded normativity of Indigenous sovereignty implies intellectual sovereignty[75] and visual/representational sovereignty[76] and that I must respect Indigenous opacity.[77] As a consequence, I refuse to research the practice of Indigenous trophy hunting picture-making. If I had proceeded with that research project, I would have created my own neocolonial trophy picture, which, as I hypothesized at the beginning of this paper, would be a claim on land that is not mine.

AN EXERCISE IN NON-INDIGENOUS VISITATION: THIS DYING GOAT IS A SCHOOL

The following semi-autobiographical short story is my personal attempt to be accountable for my encounters within Indigenous lifeworlds by positioning and relating my artistic research practice as a grounded visitation. On the one hand, I want to attest to the consensual filming of the killing of a hunted mountain goat by Akwan, who identifies as an Indigenous Truku hunter adhering to the sacred laws of Gaya.[78] In doing so, I aim to respect the intellectual and representational sovereignty of Akwan, and all Truku and Mountain Goat Nations members. On the other hand, I aim to retrace my own complicit subjectivity, grounded within the

political reality of Belgium, a place that is dominated by heteropatriarchy, racism, neoliberalism, and global capitalism. This reality materializes in myriad articulations of violence, not in the least 'slow violence' which environmental scholar Rob Nixon defines as violence that "occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction [...] dispersed across time and space"[79] and, I would add, threatens all the living beings with which we share this Earth.

The title of my exercise is inspired by the poem *The mountain is a school* (1994) by Tayal poet and writer Walis Nokan, and the novel *Hunter school* (2020) by Paiwan novelist Ahronglong Sakinu.

*

THIS DYING GOAT IS A SCHOOL

"When I saw it dying, I didn't want to avert my gaze. I felt it was my duty, my obligation, to share this moment with him and share it with the spectators. I focused my camera-rifle on its convulsing body, gargling face, and fierce eyes. The audience must have felt disgusted by my gesture of streaming it live, but surprisingly, it didn't feel obscene or cruel to me at the time. Rather, it felt hyperempathic."

"I see. Fascinating," says the Interviewer, "I believe we arrived at the right moment to look at what exactly happened. I want to announce a trigger warning for the viewers at home as we are about to re-play one of the program's most disturbing images."

A jungle-like buzz fades in. A scene outdoors, a courtyard, a man, some bystanders, and a moving but restrained animal. Up close, a long knife slides from its wooden sheath and cuts through a mountain goat's thick fur and skin. Dark red blood gushes down the slit throat across the concrete towards the gutter. Akwan's hand holds the shivering animal by its horns. With its paws tied, it is unable to escape. Akwan pats the goat's chest tenderly. "Delicious!" asserts Akwan to the viewers.

Watching the event from the side, Akwan's young children throw small pebbles at the goat. Next to them, their grandfather looks unstirred. One second, the kids chuckle hesitantly; the next, they scream in anguish.

The video fragment freezes, and the screen cuts back to the Interviewer. "Shocking! It must have been difficult to film this, especially since you're still young. You must have a strong stomach!"

"It was gut-wrenching. I stood petrified, and I couldn't help but keep on filming, to keep on looking closely."

"Interestingly, you only turn away your camera-rifle once to reveal the mixed reactions of the little children."

"Somehow, I felt like my experience as an outsider, while the goat was dying, was quite like the children's. If you look at the hunter, at Akwan, he is very

calm. So is his father. The granddad was even providing an explanation, passing on knowledge to the kids right before the killing. But the kids... They didn't know how to react. The experience went straight through their bones, and I believe they were frightened by the intensity of it. That's why they were chuckling or throwing pebbles to release the tension. They were not used to this kind of experience yet. Just like me when I was there. Or the viewers at home."

"Let's move straight to the scene's ending, where the hunter's eight-year-old son, Watan, tells you something in his own language."

The image cuts back to Akwan standing up, and covering the mountain goat's eyes with the black slipper on his foot. Someone calls for his attention off-screen, and Akwan leaves the courtyard as the image remains aimed at the goat's violently convulsing face during its last gasping moments. "Foreigner!" shouts Watan. The animal's eyes are turning white. "The goat," Watan continues, self-assured, "while dying, he saw you!"

The Interviewer glances from the audience, through the studio camera, back to the guest. "Wow, how about that for an ending! What did the kid mean? Did he want to frighten you?"

"Maybe... It resonates with them throwing pebbles at the goat or Akwan covering its eyes during its final moments. Maybe it was to ward off the goat's evil eye, its spirit, that could get released out of its dying body."

"So, you believe in spirits?"

"I think I do."

"Then," the Interviewer responds, "how do you think the goat's spirit thought about its death?"

"Well, technically, a spirit cannot die. But I think the goat would be angry during his ultimate struggle against death. Every human or nonhuman animal that gets killed will fiercely fight until the last breath. So, when Akwan reassures the viewers that the goat's meat will taste delicious, I imagine it riposting 'Delicious? Delicious?! You rotten leaf! You will be delicious when I come for you! I don't care if you did a ceremony to thank your ancestor spirits and ask for their protection... I will haunt the mountain forest and get you! I don't care if my meat is shared or if my blood flows back to the earth... I will find you and push you over a cliff!' And at the same time, I also imagine it endorsing Akwan, turning his attention to me to brag about its delicious meat: 'I bet you'll love it! My tasty wild meat compared to the industrial junk you eat at home. I bet you'll love the delicious taste of the mountains I climbed, the trees I marked, the plants I ate, the rocks I licked, the encounters I had... My scares... My joys... My pleasure... All of it ending up in your little fat belly! I'm delighted to give up my flesh and to become part of the hunter and his descendants to protect these magnificently wild mountain forests against the destructions by outsiders!' But of course, who am I to guess what the mountain goat would say?"

"Industrial junk, you say. Are you suggesting that this goat has knowledge

of our food practices here?"

"I don't know. Again, who am I to know? That's just how I imagine it to be. Maybe, in the spiritual dimension, his spirit can see the bigger picture. Maybe he can hear the piercing cries of those billions and billions of animal spirits that died in captivity and enslavement."

"But a spirit can't die, right?" The Interviewer laughs. "I'm joking... That's cute and admirable, your passion. Now that you have mentioned the animal rights issue, spectators have questioned why you, in that particular scene, rather than filming the animal's suffering, didn't use the gun function of your camera-rifle to put it out of its misery."

"First of all, I was only a visitor. It wouldn't have felt right to interfere in the act of killing. Of course, I understand people's concern with animal suffering. I care about that too, but... It felt more important to me to witness and share the whole moment of dying rather than to get it over with as soon as possible or to have it removed out of sight as we do here. Yes, death is gruesome. And yet death and predation are essential parts of life. There, dying means *something*. I think we can learn from this dying goat. The mountain is a school. The forest is a school. This dying goat is a school. I would have felt bad if I turned away my camera-rifle, as if I didn't grant it his last wish."

"His last wish?"

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1 Capitalized, 'Indigenous' connotes an international allyship and political solidarity of Aboriginal peoples and Nations. See, for example, Garneau, "Can I Get a Witness?" 26. For more on Indigenous writing style: Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style.* I would like to thank my Ph.D. supervisors, Hilde Van Gelder and Wendy Morris, and Nicoletta Grillo, P. Kerim Friedman and the peer reviewers for their generous feedback on previous versions of this text.

2 See infra.

3 Quijano, "COLONIALITY AND MODERNITY/RATIONALITY."; Santos, Epistemologies of the South; Mignolo and Walsh, *On decoloniality: concepts, analytics, praxis.*

4 See, for example, Harper, "Talking about pictures."; Clark-Ibáñez, "Framing the Social World with Photo-Elicitation Interviews."

5 Edward Said defined 'Orientalism' as a fictional and racist discourse through which Westerners inaccurately and stereotypically represent the Eastern world as exaggeratingly different and inferior. Said, *Orientalism.*

6 The trope of the 'ecological Indian' who lives in spiritual harmony with nature, deployed by colonial institutions as a disciplinary tool to restrict Indigenous hunters from hunting on their traditional territories, as this clashes with conservationist agendas. Kim "Makah whaling and the (non)ecological Indian," 51. For more on the 'ecological Indian': Krech, *The Ecological Indian* and Nadasdy, "The Gift in the Animal."

7 A precedent of 'seeing through Indigenous eyes' within visual anthropology: Sprague, "Yoruba Photography."

8 Mott and Cockayne, "Citation matters," 960, 963-964.

9 Original emphasis. McKittrick, "Diachronic Loops/Deadweight Tonnage/Bad Made Measure," 5.

10 Mott and Cockayne, "Citation matters," 956, 962.

11 My Ph.D. is affiliated to the department of Art History and The Lieven Gevaert Research Centre for Photography, Art and Visual Culture at KU Leuven, and the artistic research cluster deep histories fragile memories embedded in Intermedia at LUCA School of Arts, Brussels, and sponsored by a fellowship granted by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO).

12 I already knew Ting personally before the project, and I financially compensated her work.

13 Pratan is the Truku name of the village that Taiwanese people usually call 'Buladan' or 'Sanzhan'.

14 Truku is their own naming, meaning 'people', elsewhere also spelled as 'Taroko'.

15 Chen, "Extractive industry, traditional territory, and the politics of natural resources in Taiwan."

16 See reference above, as well as: Rudolph, *Ritual Performances as Authenticating Practices.*

17 Mona, "Conceptualizing Indigenous Historical Justice Toward a Mutual Recognition with State in Taiwan;" Dakasi, "Multiculturalism and Indigenous peoples;" Dakasi, "Indigenous traditional territory and decolonisation of the settler state."

18 The 16 recognized Indigenous peoples are 'Amis/Pangcah, Tayal, Bunun, Cou, Hla'alua, Kanakanavu, Kavalan, Paiwan, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Tao, Thao, Truku, Sakizaya and Seediq (I choose the names and spellings according to my limited knowledge. Terms have been changing over the years, often due to reassertions by the Indigenous peoples). See also: Silan and Munkejord, "Hmali', rgrgyax and Gaga." Han-Taiwanese, Taiwanese Han, Taiwanese Han Chinese, or Han-Chinese denote the dominant immigrant ethnic population of Taiwanese people of ethnic Han descent.

19 Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," 388; see also Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, "Curriculum, replacement, and settler futurity," 73; Veracini, "Decolonizing settler colonialism," 5. And for the distinction between internal and external colonialism: Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor," 4-5.

20 Office of the President Republic of China (Taiwan), "President Tsai Apologizes to Indigenous Peoples on Behalf of Government."

21 vayayana, "kuba-hosa-hupa," 36.

22 I lived a 30 minutes' drive from the village, and we drove to Pratan almost daily. For a period of two weeks, we also stayed with a villager whom Ting already knew before.

23 I didn't write field notes or record audio or video during those conversations. During the evenings, I wrote in a diary about my experiences.

24 I have frequently visited Akwan and his family. In exchange for his generous knowledge sharing, I have presented him with gifts and helped him as an assistant at cultural events (for example English translations for international tourists or serving food). We have talked on numerous occasions about my research.

25 Pongso no Tao ('island of the people') is the Tao name of the island that is also known as Lanyu or Orchid Island. I lived there for two months. Without a specific research agenda and by living in the community, talking with community members, and diving in the ocean, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of this place.

26 I use the double naming 'Amis/Pangcah. The reasons behind both names are complicated. As far as I have heard, 'Amis denotes communities living in Taitung County (Taiwan), and Pangcah concerns communities of the same ethnicity living in Hualien County. However, most people I talked to identify as both since they have ancestry from both the Hualien and Taitung area.

27 During a personal conversation at UCL.

28 Simon, "Of Boars and Men," 179.

29 Simon, "Hunting rights, justice, and reconciliation," 93.

30 Email conversation with Scott Simon.

31 Hsieh, Chang and Lakaw, "From Collective Consent to Consultation Platform," 78.

32 For a bibliography, see Simon, "Ontologies of Taiwan Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Anthropology."

33 Ibid.

34 Huang, "Hunting Culture of the Eastern Seediq."

35 See, for example, Simon, "Hunting rights, justice, and reconciliation;" In an upcoming book publication, that I couldn't consult before this publication, Simon considers Seediq and Truku lifeworlds through the lens of 'Indigenous Resurgence': Simon, *Truly Human,* 2023.

36 *Taipei Biennial 2020: You and I Don't Live on the Same Planet* (curators Bruno Latour and Martin Guinard, with Eva Lin, TFAM Taipei) and *Unaccounted Travelogue* (curator Chung Shefong, MOCA Taipei, 2022).
37 Exhibition guide: Chung, *Unaccounted Travelogue*, 32; DJ W. Hatfield's website: http://djhatfield.com/home
38 On the social organization of Hatfield's age sets of the 'Atolon community, read: Tsai, "Shuttling between Land and Sea," 10.
39 See, for example, Hatfield, "Good Dances Make Good Guests."
40 Friedman, "Defining ethnographic film," 21-23.
41 Haelewaters, Hofmann and Romero-Olivares, "Ten simple rules for Global North researchers to stop perpetuating helicopter research in the Global South," elaborating on: Minasny and Fiantis, "'Helicopter research.'"
42 Friedman, "Defining," 22. Regarding the politics of accountability, Friedman builds on: Ginsburg, "Decolonizing documentary on-screen and off."
43 Friedman, "Defining," 23. Friedman here references his own article: Friedman, "Collaboration against ethnography."
44 Salvage anthropology refers to the research on presumably declining or disappearing cultures. Read: Redman, *Prophets and Ghosts.*
45 On the white savior, see: Anderson, Knee and Mowatt, "Leisure and the "White-Savior Industrial Complex.""
46 For a postcolonial reading of the Hollywood blockbuster *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009): Thakur, *Postcolonial Theory and Avatar.*
47 See, for example, Goss, *The Routledge Handbook of Science and Empire.*
48 Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies," 63. See also Simpson, *As We Have Always Done,* 52, 159, 164, 171-172.
49 Stewart-Ambo and Yang, "Beyond Land Acknowledgment in Settler Institutions," 31.
50 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies,* 1.
51 Ibid. 23.
52 Ibid. 139.
53 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture,* 55.
54 Ibid. 17-18.
55 Ibid. 30.
56 Ibid. 18.
57 Ibid. 55.
58 Martineau, "Creative Combat," 116.
59 Smith, *Decolonizing*, 58.
60 Ibid. 60.
61 Simpson, *As We,* 13.
62 Ibid. 171. On assimilation: 88.
63 Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks,* 13.
64 Simpson, *As We,* 47-48.
65 Ibid. 244.
66 Original emphasis. Ibid. 245.
67 Original italics. Ibid. 66.
68 Paraphrased in Smith, *Decolonizing,* 184. Original in Bishop, "Initiating Empowering Research?"
69 Ibid. 187.
70 Wekker, *White Innocence,* 38, 77, 119.
71 Wekker elaborates on feminist sociologist Ruth Frankenberg's conceptualization of white as referring to "a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced, and, moreover are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of

domination. Naming 'whiteness' displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance." Ibid. 24; Original: Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters,* 6.

72 Ibid. 521.

73 Simpson, *As We,* 57.

74 Ibid. 34.

75 Read: Warrior, "Intellectual Sovereignty and The Struggle for An American Indian Future."

76 On representational sovereignty, see Martineau, "Creative," 23; for a discussion on visual sovereignty in the context of Taiwan: Siku, "The Making of Indigenous Knowledge in Contemporary Taiwan."

77 On opacity as a media strategy, see Martineau, "Creative," 46-48, 119.

78 To know more about Gaya, ask Akwan, ask Truku people.

79 Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor,* 2.