

## Film Dialogue

### Title:

“When we are laughing like this now, we are also being recorded by them”: *Eliamani's Homestead* and the Complicity of Ethnographic Film

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### Abstract:

*Eliamani's Homestead is an unfiltered presentation of unequal power relations, othering, suspicions, misunderstandings, and the untranslated in an exchange between Indigenous hosts and their guests in a cultural tourism setting. A family of Dutch tourists visits a Maasai homestead in Tanzania, where Eliamani and her child have no food. The tourists take copious pictures of the women and children and haggle over the price of a bracelet—a common scene in cultural tourism encounters the world over. The discomfiting exchange is all the more palpable when Eliamani breaks the fourth wall and reminds the filmmaker and viewer of their complicity. This film dialogue is part review, part conversation with the filmmaker who describes the process of making, editing, and screening the film, including audience and participants' reactions. It situates Eliamani's Homestead within the ambit of ethnographic film, both illustrating visual ethnography's complicity in cultural tourism and revealing its potential to offer its own critique when it maintains a multivocal approach that strives for dialogue with “the other” on both sides of the camera. [ethnographic film, Maasai, reflexivity, stereotyping, tourism encounters, visual methods]*

Vanessa Wijngaarden's debut film *Eliamani's Homestead* (2014) is a 20-minute, single-shot documentary. Awarded Best Documentary Short Film at the Lisbon International Film Festival in 2017, it follows a Dutch family on their visit to a Maasai homestead in a Tanzanian village. The opening on screen statements read that the homestead belongs to Eliamani, a woman who together with her young child is suffering from hunger. Her husband has left for Kenya to find work. Eliamani has not heard from him for some time. Some women from the village are visiting on the day that Eliamani's brother-in-law, Paolo, walks into the homestead

accompanied by the Dutch tourists who have booked this visit via a small, local-run cultural tourism project.

This written account is crafted through stark white text on black screen that fades to the opening scene with the camera positioned behind the father of the tourist group standing near the entrance to a hut as he takes picture after picture of the Maasai women a short distance away. The intrusion of the camera and the tourists is palpable. Greetings are made when the family reaches the women, by which time the father has already taken countless pictures. The women become animated in attempts to locate beadwork to sell to the tourists. The bulk of the film involves their attempt to make a sale (Figure 1 / Clip 1).

A social anthropologist by training, Wijngaarden spent several years in Maasailand, deeply immersed in ethnographic fieldwork. The film, originally recorded for research purposes (Figure 2), forms part of a five-year project exploring images of “the other” as experienced by both tourists and hosts in cultural tourism encounters. Like many ethnographic films before it, *Eliamani's Homestead* is about tourists' demand for performativity and their Indigenous hosts' acquiescence. Like Dennis O'Rourke's *Cannibal Tours* (1988), Wijngaarden follows the tourists from behind, documenting their culpability, the single shot echoing Jean Rouch's *Tourou et Bitti* (1971).

Yet beyond its focus on tourists, *Eliamani's Homestead* makes the viewer uncomfortably aware of their consumptive complicity in viewing the film. Eliamani breaks the fourth wall by looking into Wijngaarden's lens (Figure 3) before turning to the others with the reproach, “Our filmmaker is also busy taking pictures, she is not getting satisfied” (Figure 4). This is a powerful moment in which the host-cum-research-participant offers her own critical review of both cultural tourism and anthropological filmmaking. Eliamani's direct gaze into the camera lens, with her body half-turned away and her brow furrowed, unveils the viewer as voyeur. The fourth wall had been our protection, but in breaking it Eliamani thrusts us into the open. Just as she stands, with little protection from the elements, the viewers are now exposed. :”. In conversation about this specific moment in the film, Wijngaarden reflects how it “illuminates the cinematic tension in which the filmmaker as well as the viewer are at once present and invisible; but also the simultaneous approaches towards film as a ‘plunge into reality’ as well as subjective, authored and conversational”. She expresses that she would have never been able to make the film had Eliamani not expressed her critique openly..

The subsequent film review is undertaken as a conversation between myself, a cultural studies scholar with a long-time research engagement in cultural heritage, tourism, and community development amongst the San, Indigenous first peoples of South Africa, and

Wijngaarden as a filmmaker who describes the making, editing, and subsequent screenings of her film for an international audience at film festivals in Europe and the United States, as well as at the Universidad Nacional de Loja in Ecuador and the University of Johannesburg in South Africa. Approaching a review of this film through dialogue is an opportunity to situate it within the ambit of ethnographic film and in doing so illuminate how ethnographic film participates in the portrayal of cultural tourism. In the process of preparing this film dialogue, the transcript from the conversation that took place on February 15<sup>th</sup> 2019 was shared back and forth between both Wijngaarden and myself and fleshed out with references and secondary sources, and as a result has become a collaborative piece of writing.

### **In Dialogue**

**BARNABAS:** Can you describe the development of the film as it emerged from the larger project?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** The film was extracted from thirty-six hours of footage of Maasai village visits that I filmed in 2012. The wider research project ran from 2010 ‘til 2015 and consisted of systematic observations of twenty-one safaris, more than eighty hours of film, fifty-three mind maps constructed using Q methodology, 133 semi-structured interviews, and nine group discussions with visiting tourists, local Maasai, and, to a lesser extent, local NGO workers, as well as photos, brochures, and archive material. It answered a call to overcome the inherent passivity involved in stereotype reproductions in tourism and beyond (e.g. Kratz and Gordon 2002; Rojek and Urry 1997), and problematize the category of viewers (Bruner 2002; Martinez 1996). It addressed the problematic passivity in approaches that treat the “circle of representation” as a supposedly self-reinforcing process (Bruner 1991; Wels 2002), by describing how image (re-)production is rooted in reflexive agency (Wijngaarden 2016b; Wijngaarden 2016a).

Comparing the perspectives of hosts and guests, the wider research makes visible the cross-culturally shared (re)construction processes behind persistent imagery of “others.” I was fascinated that there are many cross-cultural parallels in how Maasai hosts and Dutch tourists create mental images of each other. However, most puzzling of all was that these images are recreated *despite* contrasting experiences. By this I mean that people on both sides often reflect that their imagery actually does not match their experiences with “the other.” Nevertheless,

they choose to hold on to the image, and dismiss their experiences. I wanted to find out how this process works and why people do that. When I transcribed, translated, and analyzed my video material, the coding for aspects that I had come to find interesting was condensed in a specific twenty-minute sequence. That sequence forms the core of *Eliamani's Homestead*.

**BARNABAS:** The film lacks the stylistic qualities of the documentary mode. It is no[t] [a] slick production with talking heads, voice-overs, and close-up shots where the most intimate of facial expressions are surrendered to the camera. The raw footage is discomforting to watch. The silences, the wind, voices carried on the wind and made almost inaudible by it. [These elements] speak to the starkness of the environment and the stark differences between the two groups. There is no music to soothe us, no taming of the elements to put us at ease. Together with the sometimes shaky camera these features give us the feeling of being there *a la* Rouchian cinéma vérité. Is this film inspired by Jean Rouch?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** Certainly Rouch's vision of reality in film has inspired transparency and reflexivity in ethnographic filmmaking in general. In *Chronicles of a Summer* (Rouch and Morin 1961) Rouch was bold enough to honestly show how he and Morin engaged with the Parisian people by asking questions and influencing events. I do not aim to be as radically present in most of my [visual] ethnographic work, and I am not interested in using reconstructions of events, as some Rouchian inspired cinematographers (e.g. Perrault, Brault, and Carriere 1963). However, what I do find important in ethnographic films, is that even if the filmmakers are never shown, their involvement and influence in the events portrayed is somehow acknowledged.

Moreover, I like efforts towards more symmetrical approaches like in Rouch's *Madame l'Eau* (1992), or Deutsch's *Eye Witnesses in Foreign Countries* (1994). For me, this has roots in the comparative incentives of early anthropologists, and is of interest especially when researchers include their own culture, because then they are not only providing a view of "the other", but also bring into perspective the unconscious daily practices of "the self." I am thinking, for example, of the classic *Bathing Babies in Three Cultures* (Bateson and Mead 1954).

Finally, I am inspired by the way Rouch makes a point of staying with research subjects for a long period of time. For example in *Moi, un Noir* (1958), he follows them with the camera in many of their activities and closely cooperates and debates the footage with them. I aspire

to have a situation where the camera appears to be unobtrusive: a venue through which the way of being of “the other” can become tangible and understood.

**BARNABAS:** The idea for the film came after you shot the footage for research. Did the fact that the footage was not initially shot with an audience in mind change anything about the film?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** Were I there with the idea of making a film, I would have definitely been more concerned with the technical aspects of the shots. Furthermore, I would have been much more focused on telling a story, which means that my camera would probably have been focused on certain people and on certain parts of what is taking place. So the footage might not have had—what some of the reviewers have described as—a “fly-on-the-wall” feeling.

**BARNABAS:** I would say the audience occupies an omniscient perspective. This is perhaps due to the way you use the camera, shooting with a wide angle lens, but also to the subtitles, which allow us access to the different languages - Swahili, Maa, English, and Dutch - spoken in the encounter. As we enter the worlds the languages represent, we are made painfully aware of what remains untranslated between the different groups. The rudimentary filmic techniques seem to signify the rudimentary communication between the parties. At one point you zoom roughly to the ear of one of the Maasai women seemingly to pose a question of (mis)communication and listening.

**WIJNGAARDEN:** The rough camera movements and wide-angle lens are indeed the result of my initial objective to collect data for research purposes. Making films out of research material has been done by anthropologists for a long time. Bateson and Mead’s *Karba’s First Years* (1950), *A Study of Balinese Childhood* (1950), and *Trance and Dance in Bali* (1952) are some of the first to use visual means as an integral part of anthropological research, as well as to communicate findings to an academic and non-academic public, and show the capacity of moving images to bring ethnographic points to life.

I think that films which are cut from anthropological research material have a tendency to be observational in the sense of *Man with a Movie Camera* (Vertov 1929). They often let scenes of “daily life” unfold without active intervention, which however does not mean that intentionality is lost when filming and editing the material in order to tell a story. The absence of voice-over allows participants and situations to speak for themselves, which leads to the rather raw visual documentation typical of direct cinema.

In my research, I was interested in the different stories that unfold during tourism encounters. As a result, some of the focus on and identification with the participants is sacrificed. Yet this gives the viewer the opportunity to engage with a variety of narratives and come to divergent interpretations of what is happening. Different viewers will find different stories, and the same viewer can watch the film several times and be confronted with new aspects and perspectives each time.

The way the film was shot also enables the public to observe the schisms within presumed groups of participants, for example between the Dutch father and mother as well as between them and the children, but also between the Maasai men and women and the Maasai women themselves. The film thus questions the problem of “us versus them” often brought to us by an invisible anthropologist/filmmaker who is presumably not part of the equation.

**BARNABAS:** Can you elaborate on this “us versus them” dichotomy as it relates to your film and ethnographic film in general?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** I would like to move beyond the oft-repeated story of destructive tourism and authenticity lost. There is a lack of double-sided ethnographies in general, and in the anthropology of tourism these have been missing almost entirely (Stronza 2001). Similarly, there are still not enough films that engage with the views of both tourists and local recipients. A reason is probably that the [time] investment necessary to gain rapport with both sides is a challenge (Nuñez 1989).

O'Rourke's *Cannibal Tours* (1988) has laudably drawn attention to a variety of problematics with cultural tourism visits, and included the reflections of the visited on tourists, poignantly illustrating how different worlds can exist in a single space without matching up, and how they at times even clash. This inspired a variety of powerful productions, such as *Innocents Abroad* (Blank 1991), *The Toured* (Wright 1992) and *Framing the Other* (Kok and Timmers 2011). The latter does take a two-sided perspective and the short and repetitive scenes function well to powerfully transfer an important message to the audience. However, in my eyes, these edits also make the encounter between the tourists and the Ethiopian Mursi a showcase of the absurdity of cultural tourism, which leaves the participants remain rather flat - although there are secondary teaching materials available which may help to contextualize their personas.

My main objective is not to point the finger, although the stimulation of reflexive awareness of the global Northern and academic positions is a recurring theme in my work.

Rather, I aim to stimulate feelings of connection, understanding and identification with participants on both sides of the tourism encounter by elucidating their struggles and insecurities when dealing with “the other”, rather than spurring indignant and distant attitudes towards them.

In this regard, my film relates more to films that simultaneously make perspectives from North and South visible, like Jennifer Rodes’s *Trekking on Tradition* (1992), which also deals with the controversial and ironic aspects of cultural tourism encounters and Pegi Vail’s *Gringo Trails* (2013), emerging out of a long and broad research effort. As is done in *Photo Wallahs* (MacDougall, D. and MacDougall, J. 1991), I hope not to simply address an issue, but to open it up, showing the intricate network of relationships and interconnections involved, in order to explore how people create meaning, and give insight in the process of cultural production. Maybe, with regard to *Eliamani’s Homestead* I have only partially succeeded in these efforts, because the audiences have sometimes been quite judgmental of the tourists involved.

**BARNABAS:** I experienced this vehement judgment when I showed the film at a seminar I gave on ethnography. Can you talk more on reactions to the film?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** I welcome the heated reactions, because they prove that the film hits a snare and opens up the space for important discussions. In the screenings on four continents I experienced that especially viewers from the global North express anger after watching the film, and often project their anger upon the tourists. Some express shock as they recognize themselves in the tourists. I think the screenings invite viewers to reflect upon themselves in relation to a global system of inequality. If you feel angry, the question is why is that, and what can you do with that anger?

I screened *Eliamani’s Homestead* and a variety of other similar clips of village visits to people from the respective Maasai community, too. We had many viewings in many different contexts, publicly as well as privately in people’s homes, with men, women, and youngsters engaging sometimes separately and sometimes in groups. Interestingly, no one got upset as a result of the situations presented in the footage. Criticism was, in the first place, not directed at the tourists, but at the Maasai people involved: for example, specifying how the local guide could have informed the tourists better, or how the women could have attempted to communicate more directly by using the guide as a translator.

At festivals, *Eliamani's Homestead* has received positive acknowledgements by juries. Reviewers have referred to the film as “hyperreal” and “some of the most honest minutes of film you might witness this year”. ~~Reviewers have referred to the film as “hyperreal” and “some of the most honest minutes of film you might witness this year”~~ It surprised me that they claimed I pulled the impossible trick of overcoming the “observer paradox,” [which is the claim that observation unwittingly affects the flow of events observed]], because as anthropologists we know that we are always influencing the situation we try to capture. In [a] similar fashion, MacCannell (1976) famously noted that tourists will forever be in search of the authenticity they believe they lost due to modernity, because their very presence destroys it. Certainly the observer paradox, but also the concepts of authenticity, frontstages, and backstages, have value for both anthropology and tourism studies, and anthropologists have deeply criticized and deconstructed these ideas for tourism contexts as well as for their own discipline.

I think many people get the impression a backstage has been entered in *Eliamani's Homestead*, because of the strong stereotypical imagery of Maasai as brave male warriors and proud women heavily bedecked with beads is not repeated in my film. The wider public's imagery of Maasai is primarily based on visual materials such as tourism brochures, coffee table books, and feature films like *The White Massai* (Huntgeburth 2005). Early (amateur) ethnographies and travel accounts have significantly set the tone for this image. However, there is also a considerable influence of visual anthropological work, such as the three part film series on Loita Maasai (Llewelyn-Davies and Curling 1974; Llewelyn-Davies and Curling 1975). Important for its feminist views and laudable for criticizing the approach of social structures as consensus systems, these documentaries did not allow the subjects to speak outside of the analytic, exegetic voice-over comments that establish the authority of the anthropologist. Made for a wide TV audience in the context of the TV documentary series *Disappearing Worlds*, they were produced at least in part with the intention to startle a global Northern audience with the “strange” and “exotic” life of “the other,” for example highlighting spectacular rituals and adultery, as well as contrasting the productivity of women with the presumed laziness of men. I do need to add here that Melissa Llewelyn-Davies actually speaks Maa fluently and in *Diary of a Maasai Village* (1984) her presence is acknowledged in the footage, as she is heard asking questions and engaging in conversations, and although produced for the BBC, this is one of her more ethnographically inspiring works. My study makes clear why the early stereotypes are being reproduced even if they do not reflect the situations and persons that are encountered, because the image of “the other” is not primarily based on “the other” but [rather] on “the self” and the relationship with this “other”.

The idea of being a “fly-on-the-wall” is always an illusion, and what we produce is always relational. I love, for example, how *Lorang’s Way* (MacDougall, D. and MacDougall, J. 1977) sometimes has the quality of eavesdropping on people’s conversations, but does not hide the [some]times indignant gazes with which the Turkana look into the camera. In *A Wife Among Wives* (1981) the MacDougalls are even more visibly present in the field with their cameras, and bravely open up the details of their fieldwork diaries. Reflexivity is so important for anthropology, and part of that reflexive process is sharing insights in your actions and the context of your research. I recognize the MacDougalls’ concerns and the type of conversations they had with the Turkana about what they themselves believe should be filmed, in contrast to what the anthropologists would want to film, as I engaged in similar contemplations and discussions in Maasailand.

**BARNABAS:** I know you only discovered Eliamani’s comment to you when you sat down to analyze the material. You call this a moment of grace. Can you say why?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** Normally, if any of my research participants expresses a problem with me shooting, I shut the camera down, and I do not film again until we have reached agreement. I have always felt that my relationships with my participants are far more important than me filming. Had I noticed Eliamani’s remark whilst filming, I would have not kept the camera rolling. At the same time, I am quite sure I would never have used this unfolding scene to make a short film if Eliamani had not spoken to my camera. Her reaction adds a layer that illuminates the parallels between the production and consumption of ethnographic film and tourism.

A lot of written and visual anthropological work has uncovered and problematized the commodification of ethnicity, through concepts as staged authenticity and post-tourism (e.g, MacCannell 1973; Kok and Timmers 2011; Ritzer and Liska 1997). In addition, the problem of the (tourist) gaze (Urry 2002), especially when aided by visual technology, and the many (disturbing) parallels between tourism and anthropology (e.g. Crick 1995), have long been known, begging the question as to when and whether anthropologists *actually* enter back regions, and what their moral position is and should be.

Films where the filmmaker is present, like *Memories for Sale* (Corral Paredes 2009) and *Uncanny Strangers* (Picard 2009), reveal how anthropologists/filmmakers are often regarded as some kind of tourist (Wijngaarden 2016a; Bruner 1989), and this fact should be reflexively incorporated in the research and filmmaking processes. Anthropologists are very careful to distinguish themselves from tourists, but we should also accept the validity of the

views of our research participants. It is not enough for us to criticize the stereotypical views of (tourist) others. It is important to reflect upon how much we think and behave like those others, and how we contribute to stereotypical views ourselves. Then, as in Sensiper's beautiful visual collage *Films Are Dreams that Wander in the Light of Day* (1989), we can come to produce materials that question not only the discourses and practices that surround us, but also our own perspectives, and make visible how our views contrast and are shared with those of others; an intricate tapestry of how we are connected.

**BARNABAS:** What then, is the teaching potential of the film?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** I think the way the observer paradox plays out in *Eliamani's Homestead* makes it a suitable tool to teach anthropology students about methodological and ethical issues, and to challenge students from a variety of disciplines who are involved in tourism studies by confronting them with their own imagery of "the other" and the complexities of tourism. The book of the wider study (Wijngaarden 2016a) expands on the significance of what happens in the film, providing background regarding the Maasai and tourists, their perspectives of "the other" before and after the encounter, and wider theoretical insights into the (re-)production of "the other," reflexively incorporating anthropology as an encounter that produces an image of "the other," too, cumulating in a vision for a more symmetrical anthropology.

As the approaches to anthropology as well as to teaching have transformed, over the years huge changes have taken place in what we consider suitable teaching materials. Timothy Asch created several films to use in the classroom, and for [a] long [time] Asch and Chagnon's *The Feast* (1970) was seen as a model ethnographic film that was created for teaching purposes. Indeed, it is an early example of how integration of text and film are possible, as it was made to accompany Chapter 4 of Chagnon's ethnography *Yanomamö* (1968), but can also be watched separately from this book. However, anthropologists have become increasingly aware that the apparent objectivity of the old fashioned distanced and authoritative voice-over is a fairy tale. We developed an approach to teaching that challenges students to acquire and expand their own critical and reflexive capacities instead of filling them with information.

However, the attractiveness of combining visual materials with written ethnographies has not diminished, as visual materials can communicate some things in a more dynamic and encompassing way than text, while words remain of value to direct the viewer towards nuanced, not directly visible underlying aspects and theoretical relations. Some examples are *Titicut Follies* (Wiseman 1967) *Jero Tapakan* (Connor, Asch, T., and Asch, P. 1986) and

*Common Roads* (Mendel 2013; Mendel 2015). Heider has complained that too little useful literature is available to accompany ethnographic films, even though “the key to understanding ethnographic film, or gaining information from it, is not just repeated viewings but the availability of written materials that can fill in what the film leaves ambiguous” (Heider 2006 [1976], 119). With the continuation of this project I hope to add to the growing number of studies that combine film and monographs, but maintain the important ambiguities by striving for a multivocal approach that recognizes anthropology as a dialogue with “the other.”

**BARNABAS:** You are still in dialogue with Eliamani and the other Maasai as well as the tourists that feature in the film. What do these long-term engagements mean for the audio-visual output you are producing now?

**WIJNGAARDEN:** The initiative for a follow-up project was born when I visited the tourist family of *Eliamani's Homestead* to show them the film. Even before they had seen any of my footage, the father told me that as he now realized the dire circumstances of their Maasai's hosts, he considered the bartering he engaged in at the time one of the most embarrassing moments of his life (Clip 3). You can imagine that after this statement I was even more nervous to show the film, but although very touched, all family members graciously gave their permission for it to be screened. In the meantime, I have revisited all the tourists and Maasai I filmed in 2012 and showed them the footage they appeared in, including translations of what was said in languages foreign to them, sharing my data as well as my analysis. I filmed their reactions to the scenes, and facilitated for a conversation through video messaging between Tanzania and the Netherlands (Clip 4, Clip 5, Clip 6).

With regard[s] to filming, I feel inspired by classics such as *Nanook of the North* (1922) because I know that Flaherty screened his material while collecting research participants' suggestions. *Viewing Cultures* (Martinez 1989) is also interesting in this regard, because it is one of the only studies to visually document the reception of an ethnographic film, whilst also dealing with the construction of visual stereotypes of the idyllic and exotic “other” in ethnographic film, and the effects of these images. This film is also an inspiration as it documents its own production, thus providing rare reflexive insights. For the Fejos project<sup>1</sup> I have worked with two cameras, and also documented the production process of the main

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<sup>1</sup> The Wenner-Gren Fejos Postdoctoral Fellowship in Ethnographic Film is a prestigious one year grant that supports the completion of ethnographic films which are based on anthropological research already accomplished by the grantee.

documentary, which is partly shot and directed by Maasai participants, thus engaging with their perspectives on the process (Clip 7). I do not know yet if this material will be incorporated in the main documentary, or will become a separate film.

In the resulting production(s), I wish to further dig beyond materialistic concerns of tourism and bring people to life as full personalities who engage in multiple layers of reflection upon “the other” and “the self.” It is meant as a dialogical effort of knowledge production, a space where tourists and Maasai have a conversation with each other and with me as a researcher. The footage is full of contrasts, showing the Dutch as well as the Maasai in their homes, but connects them in terms of the emotion and wisdom with which they express themselves. I hope it will make the lack of resolution in interactions across differences visible and bring alive the mutuality of the gaze in tourism interactions (e.g. Gillespie 2006; Maoz 2006) as well as in research. The goal is to create a reflexive, double-sided and multi-layered film that challenges the dichotomies of “self” and “other,” ethnographer and informant, modern social science and lay knowledge.

**BARNABAS:** It sounds like a process of unveiling vulnerabilities of both yourself as the researcher and the participants together in the encounter.

**WIJNGAARDEN:** In the wider research project I have made efforts to work in close cooperation with local Maasai in the processes of data collection, including filming, transcriptions, translations and parts of the analysis (Figure 5), sharing my results and asking their feedback and views with regard to the outputs and conclusions. In the village in Tanzania where *Eliamani's Homestead* was shot, I stayed for periods up to six months, and having returned dozens of times since my first stay in 2010, I am counted as an official member of the village and one of the families. Where possible, my research participants have also visited me in the Netherlands, Germany, and South Africa where I was living for studies, in order to connect with the other sides of my life. Our opening up to each other has been an exciting process that requires a lot of dedication and courage to trust on both sides.

However, I have not only been blessed incredibly through my Maasai participants' involvement and cooperation, but also through the tourists. I was pleasantly surprised about the great trust and openness with which they have received me, especially because due to my long stays in Maasailand and in the research and filming processes, they become “the other,” too. In Tanzania we often met for only a couple of hours, but this did not prevent some of them to express rather intense feelings of connection, and six years later they all warmly received

me into their homes. Almost all cooked for me and treated me as an old friend, even though the process of watching the footage and reacting to it while being filmed was definitely not easy for most. In retrospect, the tourists often feel ashamed of their captured behaviors and utterances, especially when they become aware of the Maasai points of view. Nevertheless, all agreed for the footage to be used for the research project and screenings, in support of breaking down stereotypes and improving cultural tourism situations.

Wijngaarden's unseen method was her long-time presence in the village, living there for almost a year before introducing her camera. Arguably, her immersion in the field led to subtle subversions of long-held tropes, such as the named explorer visiting the archetypal, indiscriminate, anonymous Indigenous community. Wijngaarden names most of the Maasai hosts and calls the Dutch tourists Tourist man, Tourist lady, Tourist girl, and Tourist boy. Another moment of subversion, is the long-held view of Tourist lady's raised behind as she bends to peruse the beadwork on sale (Figure 6). This almost comical shot is the antithesis of early representations of a highly sexualized Africa with buttocks and breasts on display. The tourists thus become something of a two-dimensional archetype. But this is only momentary as Wijngaarden's camera, positioned at a distance a little further than Tourist boy and Tourist girl, offers a view of the Indigenous hosts from the vantage point of the tourists. We are symbolically the third child of this family and, if we allow it, are just as uncomfortable as our brother and sister seem to be.

Aware of their part as exotic other in this encounter, Sabina encourages the children to be photographed while Eliamani ducks behind her house when Tourist lady laughs at the padlock around her neck and wants to take a photograph of the oddity. Eliamani verbalizes her desire to be paid for the photographs they might take of her. These nuances show that there is not one unified Maasai view of the encounter. Similarly, the visual discomfort of Tourist boy and Tourist girl contrasts their parents' seeming blindness and insensitivity to the abject poverty of their hosts. When her parents haggle over the price of jewelry, Tourist girl says, "Grant these people something." The film thus encourages a discussion of multivocality, offering a kaleidoscopic view of the other. Certainly, the camera begins its journey accompanying the tourists and ends staying behind with the hosts watching the tourists leave, thus offering a shift in position.

Were it not for Eliamani's remark, Wijngaarden would have made a film that, regardless of its philosophy of inclusion, maintains a view of the ex-primitive in relation to the

Western tourist. The hosts' perspectives are offered at the moment of encounter through the "safety" of the Indigenous language unknowable to the tourists. This allows for a level of honesty, which together with Wijngaarden's camera, sparks Eliamani's poignant observations. After her remark about Wijngaarden's unceasing recording of the encounter, Eliamani turns to her co-residents and says, "When we are laughing like this now, we are also being recorded by them," reminding them that while they are engaging with previously shot imagery on the tourist's camera, they are still being filmed. It is thus not the filmmaker but Eliamani herself who destabilises the documenting of the exoticized African "other" by uncovering the various gazes at play..

While the title suggests that this is a film about Indigenous hosts, it shows itself to be a film about the normalization of poverty by the Western gaze, the distress of tourism hosts at being objectified through the camera lenses of their guests, the guests' anxiety to prove themselves as shrewd purchasers of cultural wares, and the parallels of ethnography and tourism. The dance of suspicion and othering draws us in as complicit voyeurs when we watch the film, which leaves us dissatisfied, uncomfortable, and questioning. Eliamani's comments haunt us, reminding us of the spectacle of "the other" and the gaze through which we are complicit. In underlining the parallels between the making and consumption of ethnographic film and tourism, *Eliamani's Homestead* becomes something more than the sum of its parts. It offers its own critique.

### **Multimedia material**

**Clip 1:** Selling beadwork to find food <https://vimeo.com/343687677>

**Clip 2:** Reflexivity: Eliamani breaks the fourth wall <https://vimeo.com/130430332>

**Clip 3:** Bartering that leads to later embarrassment <https://vimeo.com/130430330>

**Clip 4:** Tourists' reactions to videos <https://vimeo.com/343657854>

**Clip 5:** Video message: Chase out the spirit of greed <https://vimeo.com/341748873>

**Clip 6:** Tourists confronted and touched <https://vimeo.com/341749192>

**Clip 7:** Scenes shot by Maasai <https://vimeo.com/341823169>

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