

window be installed in space capsules. Wolfe describes the action the astronauts took against the scientists:

The seven men pressed on. They were tired of the designation of "capsule" for the Mercury vehicle. The term as much as declared that the man inside was not a pilot but an experimental animal in a pod. . . . As it was now designed, the Mercury capsule had no window, just a small porthole on either side of the astronaut's head. His main way of seeing the outside world would be through a periscope. Now the astronauts insisted on a window. . . . And why? Because pilots had windows in their cockpits and hatches they could open on their own. That was what it was all about: being a pilot as opposed to a guinea pig. (160)

The engineers responded to the astronauts' demands and designed a window. Even if putting a window in rockets could not make astronauts more than passive observers, it would at least elevate them to the position of scientists, given the emphasis on the triumph of the visible within the language of scientific discourse.

By the time men were put into space, exploration of the remote corners of the earth no longer offered the challenges and struggles of an earlier age. Indeed, the contemporary interest up to the present day in *Geographic* polar exploration has reflected a nostalgia for an earlier age when men were real men. It also has allowed for a revisionist history of this earlier period that includes nonwhite male participants that were formerly denied entry into the subject position of exploration narratives. Matthew Henson, the African American man that accompanied Robert Peary to his farthest navigational points, has been the subject of a recent attempt to rewrite the discovery of the North Pole in the pages of *National Geographic*. Despite the so-called egalitarian rhetoric of the *Geographic* during its early days, the "imagined community" constituted by the *Geographic*'s discourse is inflected by distinct representations of gender, race, and class that became peculiar to a U.S. national tradition.

3

White Fade-out? Heroism and the *National Geographic* in the Age of Multiculturalism

Much of *National Geographic*'s history and discourse turns on the question of "whiteness" as an unmarked category. Now, white values still inform the cultural practices and policies of institutions such as the *National Geographic*. Though white power and dominance is hard to grasp, one of the ways it makes itself felt is by the way white institutions pass themselves off as embodied in the normal. According to cultural critic Coco Fusco:

Racial identities are not only black, Latino, Asian, Native American and so on; they are also white. To ignore white ethnicity is to redouble its hegemony by naturalizing it. Without specifically addressing white ethnicity, there can be no critical evaluation of the construction of the other.¹

In his 1988 *Screen* article entitled "White," Richard Dyer inaugurates a shift on the part of white critics by addressing the reorientation of ethnicity that Coco Fusco, among others, calls for.² Dyer shows how elusive white ethnicity is as a representational construct, noting that "whiteness often has been taken to be the norm, that is, what passes itself off as if it is the most natural, inevitable and ordinary."³ Dyer further elaborates on how whiteness is often embedded in an everyday discourse of common sense, thus obscuring its location within a discourse of ethnic difference:

The very terms we use to describe the major ethnic divide presented

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by Western society, "black" and "white," are imported and naturalized by other discourses. Thus it is said (even in liberal texts) that there are inevitable associations of white with light and therefore safety, and black with dark and therefore danger. . . . People point to the Judeo-Christian use of white and black, to symbolize good and evil, as evidenced in such expressions as a "black mark," "white magic," "to blacken the character" and so on. (45)

Dyer observes that whiteness has had an additional appeal as the unmarked category of the "people" in terms of the language of the "nation," which promoted a sense of community and collective identity. Dyer quotes Paul Gilroy, who critiques "the idea of the nation" in the British context as homogeneous:

There is a problem in these plural forms: who do they include, or, more precisely for our purposes, do they help to reproduce blackness and Englishness as mutually exclusive categories? . . . why are contemporary appeals to the "people" in danger of transmitting themselves as appeals to the white people? (45-46)

The rhetoric of the nation, although it permits a wide appeal in terms of "we" and "us," masks whiteness as itself a category. In the context of the *Geographic*, one of the ways we notice that the United States is racially marked as white is by the way social groups that are not American are represented as colored. I will argue that this comparative element seems peculiar to the *Geographic* to this day, as internal ethnic differences continue to be disavowed within the U.S. national imaginary.

The 1988 *National Geographic* video *The Explorers: A Century of Discovery*, which celebrates the National Geographic's one hundredth anniversary, provides an excellent illustration of how the institution narrates the contemporary idea of an imagined United States as being American, white, and male and how this is built on both the circulation of white U.S. explorers in the so-called third world and the circulation of photographs of brown bodies in the first world.⁴ In the *Geographic's* nationalist discourse, external "otherness" provides a unifying model whereby U.S. identity becomes aware of itself as a self by perceiving its difference from non-U.S., nonwhite "others." The video not only constructs a national identity that is white and male through the mass circulation of images of the colonial "other" (brown bodies), but, oddly enough, this identity still

remains unproblematically white even as U.S. women and men of color are now incorporated into its narrative of Western heroism.

This leads me to conclude with an example of how a monocultural organization like the Geographic makes gestures toward adopting a superficially multicultural identity through paying homage during its centennial celebration to a token African American explorer, Matthew Henson. I will argue that though the current rearrangement of the North Pole story in the 1988 and 1990 issues of the *National Geographic* magazine accepts Henson as Peary's "companion" rather than as his "servant," this shift in discourse represents more the ploys of a multicultural policy than a socially conscious institutional engagement.

A Video History

The Explorers: A Century of Discovery is a representative product of the National Geographic television and video series SPECIALS, which presents entertainment films that are also educational, dealing with supposedly serious real-world historical events with all the bravado and dash of Hollywood adventure films.⁵ This particular tape is both a celebration-cum-advertisement of the hundred-year-old institution, as well as a U.S. colonial adventure film, offering the standard narrative pleasures of adventure through the spectator's identification with the various Geographic heroes represented. A sound track that seems to be extracted from the film *Ben-Hur* along with the authoritative voice-over of the narrator E. G. Marshall, provides an account of famous clips that include images of men and women explorers—Robert Peary, Osa and Martin Johnson, Robert Leakey, Jane Goodall, and others—who became household names through their affiliation in part with the National Geographic Society. The ideal viewer, a member of the National Geographic Society (the tape is only available to members), is drawn into the tape's narrative of U.S. nationalism through identification with the changing figures of U.S. heroes, whose adventures and personal growth are occasioned, even made possible, through the process of U.S. outreach to the so-called third world.

The Explorers: A Century of Discovery opens by presenting a recent event commemorating the history of the National Geographic Soci-

ety. Offscreen narration accompanying the visuals describes the scene as follows:

In Washington, D.C., the trustees of the National Geographic Society gather to get a formal portrait taken. The picture will help celebrate the Society's centennial. In 1988 the Geographic completes 100 years of exploration, research, and education.

The voice-over disappears in order for the viewer to overhear the exchange between the photographer and the society's trustees on location in Washington, D.C. This momentary shift in the text's point of view enables the viewer to participate in an institutional event rather than to witness it at a distance. Yet as soon as the photographer pushes down the shutter of his camera, the image shifts from color to black and white and we witness the same event taking place seventy-five years earlier. The voice-over returns to connect the two images:

Here in 1913 a similar photo was taken. Back then the highest mountain had yet to be climbed and no one knew the ocean deep or what fire illuminates the stars. All this lay in the future—the greatest adventure mankind had ever known.

This precredit sequence alludes to the triumphant narrative of technological progress. To fill in briefly the time gap in photographic and scientific progress between the two portraits, the sequence is followed by a series of filmic snapshots from the most memorable events in the hundred-year history of the National Geographic Society. Similar to classic Hollywood-style vignettes used to identify key actors, these clips provide a preview of the *Geographic* heroes and their great deeds, which will be represented later for the viewer in greater length. The sequence culminates with a freeze-frame that isolates the National Geographic Society's logo—a unified global image. The final credits emerge from this unitary image, which serves as an icon for the way the *Geographic* sees itself as the defining world order in terms of a narrative of scientific progress.

After the fade, the viewer meets the society's founding father, Alexander Graham Bell, and his family; Bell's daughter married Gilbert Grosvenor, who later took over the responsibility of editor of the magazine. Our acquaintance with the *Geographic* family leads to an account of the *Geographic's* hundred-year history, which is narrated by the offscreen voice of E. G. Marshall. In the telling of this story, the

narration directs the viewer, explaining the visuals and offering the sense of history, context, or perspective needed. This arrangement is occasionally interrupted, as in the opening scene when the text shifts to a cinema verité style that enables the viewer to overhear directly the characters in the scene. Such instances, in which synchronous dialogue is produced under location conditions, give the viewer the effect of an eyewitness account of events. Though this approach appears more realistic or natural in terms of letting the viewer come to conclusions about the scene without the intervention of commentary, such a strategy is also problematic. Visuals stand as unquestioned real evidence, rather than as highly mediated representations, even though video representations involve just as much artifice as does any other mode of visual representation. Nevertheless, this video offers its images up as in some sense real, embodying a particular kind of truth, and says to the spectator that you need make no effort to understand this. Drawing on the ideology of the visible as evidence, the tape claims to tell it as it is and offers its version of the hundred years of *Geographic* history as a truthful record rather than as a subjective interpretation.

The Heroic Eye

The Explorers: A Century of Discovery includes various scenes in which the shutter of the camera exactly corresponds to the eyes of the explorer looking at a landscape, person, or city. In each case, after a quick flash to the intensely fixed expression of an explorer, the scene dissolves into a long take that documents the remote landscape, the lost city, or the non-Western person never before seen by Western eyes.

The use of cinematic dissolve in this instance performs important work in the video's narrative. The explorer's gaze is the sign of an explorer's genius. Within the narrative it transforms the unknown into a new reality. Often the camera and the eye of the explorer are conflated not only through the use of dissolves but by the voice-over of the narrative itself: "At the turn of the century the eye of the camera was capable of wondrous revelations." The camera serves a significant function, and I would argue that it is the actual hero of the video, as its mediating function serves to make the explorer *capable*

of the act of creation itself. Once legitimized in terms of his particular relation to photographic technology, the explorer can claim complete authoritativeness for his vision. The tape's voice-over tells us that the project of *Geographic* explorers and photographers is to document "the world and all that is in it." Yet the idea that there might be constraints on the explorer's interpretive capacities is never suggested. Instead, the camera as an observation site works as a validating and naturalizing scaffold in the video that confers upon the figure of the explorer an invisibility and all-seeing knowledge that make him or her appear outside of society and history—without nationality, gender, race, or class. The camera, while itself everywhere and nowhere, establishes the videotape's universalist white character and its transcendental white vision.⁶

Race and Gender in the "Geographic Tradition"

One of the more disturbing traditions that the *National Geographic* has always upheld is the objectification of the figure of the third-world woman through her eroticization.⁷ In chapter 2 I have pointed out how images of partially naked native women in the pages of the *National Geographic* were another way that the magazine constituted U.S. national sexual experiences through photographs. Needless to say, the pleasures of this community were enjoyed almost exclusively by a fraternity of white men. The tape's voice-over makes reference to this magazine's policy of representing nakedness, referred to as "a famous *Geographic* tradition." The celebrated 1896 photograph is reproduced in the videotape with the explanation that "Grosvenor stoutly defended the policy of showing people dressed or undressed according to the customs of their land." Native traditions and photographic accuracy are given as a rationale to support a particular definition of nation, ethnicity, and sexuality in which being "American" is being one of "us"—white and male—as opposed to one of "them"—nonwhite and female.

The next part of the tape's narrative focuses on the properly equipped early twentieth-century Western explorer, who is packed with both guns and cameras to remote places on the planet to claim previously unknown sights for Western civilization. Two such figures in the tape "typifying a new breed of showman explorers . . . equally

famous and equally skilled with guns and their many cameras" are a couple, Osa and Martin Johnson, who attempt to "enlighten" U.S. audiences by photographing the "Dark Continent."⁸ In the video we see the original black-and-white footage of an unidentified filmmaker who captured the Johnsons' reencounter with Africa from the air. Naked African men are depicted jumping up and down as the Johnsons descend from their airplane to greet them. Once this initial scene is recorded by the anonymous "eye of the camera," the explorers literally replace the people that they find there. In the narrative Africa is no longer the continent belonging to its indigenous population but, in the words of the tape, "the natural habitat of the great explorers." A Eurocentric paradigm of modernization and progress is projected onto Africa, legitimizing the U.S. presence by showing how savage and underdeveloped its peoples are in comparison with the Americans. In the black-and-white footage Osa and Martin Johnson arrive on the "Dark Continent" by airplane as the voice of Martin Johnson explains:

I decided this time to do the Dark Continent in a real modern way—inside two big airplanes capable of landing on either water or land. Pygmies appeared from behind every tree and tuft of grass. A surging, jumping multitude of tiny savages. The happiest people in the world doing their best to show us how overjoyed they were to find us once more in their country after three years' absence.

Johnson's paternalistic rhetoric suggests a certain kind of invulnerability. His physical distance from the natives and his reliance on modern technologies such as the airplane, the camera, and the gun, however, indicate an underlying insecurity. The anxiety abates at a later point when Martin and Osa Johnson are seen dancing to "modern" jazz with the "boy and girl savages." Johnson comments on the scene:

I said to Osa, let's give the boys and girls some modern jazz. Most savages are greatly puzzled by the phonograph, but the childlike pygmies accept it without curiosity as just another wonder of the white man.

The Johnsons' image of the Africans as childlike and in awe of the white man and his machines (signified by the phonograph and modern music) is an old strategy Westerners have had for interpreting the other as living in a quaint but irrelevant past, actually in need of the

West's intervention to bring them culturally up-to-date.⁹ It is significant that in this segment Osa Johnson, a white woman explorer, is represented as bringing African American music via "white" technology to civilize "savage" Africans.

The figure of the white woman also presents a domestic image and indicates a shift in the project of the *National Geographic*, signaling that wild Africa has now been tamed and is thus safe for white women. The image of Osa Johnson dancing with black African men suggests a different form of inequality that emphasizes gender and is reminiscent of other colonial images of white femininity surrounded by male servants of color. In this allegory of empire, the surface gaiety masks the sober meaning behind the image: the U.S. wife's "duty" to teach the "Africans" for their own good the white culture of the West. The gender difference, however, does not make Osa appear less complicitous than her husband is with the ideology of racism. Indeed, here she is even more shameless than her husband as she freely appropriates other cultural traditions—such as the music of African Americans—and presents them under the guise of a white tradition—white because it is made available through U.S. technology. It must be admitted that this is a strange kind of inadvertent indictment of the white woman as colonizer, one bound up, too, with the *National Geographic's* own sexism.

Yankee Know-how and Scenes of Underdevelopment

In the videotape's more contemporary episodes of *Geographic* history, external otherness continues to bind an ethnically undifferentiated U.S. identity. Throughout the tape the white hero remains the central reference point, but his stature now grows as he appropriates skills from other cultures and uses them as a means to preserve superiority while traveling abroad. Such knowledge, according to the tape, functions as a form of protection in foreign regions of the world that at any moment could prove hostile to a white U.S. presence. This is made very convincing by the example of botanist Joseph Rock, who utilized non-Western skills of survival and is depicted by the video's visuals as performing dazzling escapes in his travels in China and Tibet, where he was often menaced by "bandits and warlords." (In one such episode he is shown ferrying his party across "the rag-

ing Yangtze river" with a raft made by local peasants of inflated goat skins.) The tape's commentary is filled with simplistic yet powerful dualisms that establish a reductivist framework in which we can assume that Rock innocently got himself into situations of rivalry where he had to display his cunning against "bloodthirsty rebels" or evil Tibetan kings offering him deadly delicacies like "ancient yak cheese and mutton crawling with maggots."

The metaphor of innocence is important, especially because Rock's reasons for traveling to China and Tibet are not elaborated upon. Instead, these countries are denied a history and function merely as exotic backdrops for Rock to display his superior humanity over a presence described as alien rather than native to the country where the action takes place. Rock's presence is thus never viewed as strange or unwelcome. Rather, as a representative figure of a "good" colonial society, his innocence is assumed. It is the other that is always at fault for upsetting the smooth run of Rock's caravan. Yet these interruptions are never especially worrisome to Rock, who usually escapes in such an orderly fashion that he is often left with extra time to photograph his enemies as well as his escapes. As viewers, we are made into unwitting bystanders drawn into Rock's drama by the eyewitness account displayed before us, described in one case as follows by the tape's voice-over:

Once Rock was trapped between bloodthirsty rebels on one side and the raging Yangtze river on the other. Local peasants came to help. Supported by inflated goat skins they tried to ferry Rock's party across the Yangtze. Carried a mile downstream, Rock and his caravan escaped unharmed.

The use of documentary film footage presents events as natural and real in a way that is virtually unassailable as a result of the special authority given to documentary representations. This was particularly the case in the 1920s, when filmic images were thought of as being the most transparent and truthful. It is significant that in such early black-and-white newsreels, the whole discourse of white heroism depended upon the silence of nonwhite peoples. Labeled as primitive and savage, those treated as others are shown incapable of participating in the production of representation themselves. Such a rationale can also serve as a justification for their lack of participation in such matters as the authorship of photographic texts.¹⁰

A similar strategy continues to inform the *Geographic's* recent reporting on the so-called third world. This newer version retains the metaphor of innocence but replaces an older narrative of adventure with a more feminizing narrative of medical care in which the figure of the white woman is now authorized to administer scientific aid. Such an example is illustrated in the tape's focus on the "primitive" Hogahai, a group of people living in the remote highlands of Papua New Guinea. The tape's voice-over explains how the colonialist come-and-help-us mentality seems to justify a more feminized U.S. interventionist policy now:

Until a few years ago no outsiders knew of their existence, and they have been so isolated that they have not developed antibodies to protect them against common diseases. Not long ago the Hogahai realized that they were dying out, so they forsook their isolation and sent five men to the outside world to ask for help.

This voice-over is an example of ventriloquism in which the other is made to speak the speech of the colonizer. Thus, indirect discourse is used to present the figure of Carol Jenkins, a medical anthropologist brought in by the *Geographic* as a savior rather than an intrusive presence. The protection of the Hogahai becomes a signifier for the continuation of *Geographic's* imperialist project in the present. Even as the white woman is figured as establishing and maintaining order, she is presented in a feminized role. Placed in the position of a mother protecting her children, she by her presence brings white women to cultural power not as autonomous agents but by virtue of their biological sex. By representing Dr. Jenkins primarily as nursing Hogahai infants, the visuals project into the past the features of the present, replacing a woman's function as doctor with an image of maternal femininity in order to insist that historically produced social roles are timeless and still biologically determined.¹¹

Significantly, this is the only contemporary segment of the tape that focuses strictly on people, rather than on nature or (as in the search for "man's origins" by Dr. Leakey) skeletons. These other areas of scientific interest tend to efface the native inhabitants in order to display uninhabited nature. In segments on the Brazilian tropical rain forest, Brazilian Indians are included only as a means to supply a kind of exotic local color. This forest is not acknowledged as a part of Brazil, but rather as a "natural resource" for Western industrial chemicals,

drugs, and food. A similar perspective is presented in a segment on Dian Fossey, who died in Africa trying to save the mountain gorillas from extinction.¹² Natives of the region are presented only as savage poachers responsible for murdering innocent and wild creatures.

If Western anthropologists and biologists are depicted as heroes and heroines, they no longer have to fight off hostile natives to survive but are now welcomed messengers of Western science. The other major change is that, unlike earlier *Geographic* stories, contemporary white women are now included as active agents of its discourse. *Geographic* heroism remains a white concept, though it is no longer an all-male preserve. Given the *Geographic's* tradition of excluding white women, however, it is understandable that one might be suspicious of the frequency of representations of white women in the more contemporary segments. The *Geographic* might want to distinguish its past from its present by way of using white women in its contemporary segments as transmitters of U.S. science. Also, adding women to exploration enables the society to appear as if it has shifted the paradigm of exploration and science away from the structural sexism of its past.

Whitewashing Colonialism

As time passes in the cinematic narrative, what remains constant is the National Geographic Society's erasure of the relations of violence and domination that provide its historic and its psychic armature. This enables it to whitewash its colonial past to perpetuate a continuous discourse in the present under a more benevolent gaze, either feminine or aesthetic. What also remains constant is the National Geographic Society's excuse that non-Western cultures and territories need the scientific expertise of *Geographic* explorers/scientists/photographers to intercede on their behalf, to save peoples and animals from extinction, and to preserve the beauty of nature and protect it from destructive human demands.

As the "great discoveries" of the last hundred years of *Geographic* explorations unfold in chronological order, the voice-over alerts us to an internal evolution toward the aesthetic operating in the later narrative. The arrival of the art photographer signals an advance over the figure of the explorer at a moment when "there were few places

on Earth that man did not conquer. . . . With the triumph at Mount Everest in 1954 . . . a romantic venture of high adventure had ended”:

This too is an explorer. The man with a camera explores the subtle play of light and emotion as dawn breaks over a remote town in Turkey. Jim Stanfield is a *National Geographic* staff photographer, a job many covet but few could endure.

Stanfield usually works alone. For eight to nine months of the year his home is the world and his eyes belong to the magazine. Stanfield usually works alone not just for convenience but to leave his mind and heart bare—open to his subjects. When an artist of any kind looks at his subjects he looks at them with everything that he is, so his knowledge and his experience enable him to relate to that subject and produce more meaningful and sensitive work.

The filmic images accompanying the voice-over show Jim Stanfield, alone, perched above his object of vision. Relations of dominance and possession are articulated by his possession of the camera, which slants the balance of power in his favor. Like the Johnsons, Stanfield can create aesthetic meaning out of the Turkish peoples' incongruities, asymmetries, and local color. This film clip of Jim Stanfield at work shows us the power of the enlightened Western artist to salvage the beauty of non-Western peoples and to enshrine it in a racially marked discourse of Western creativity and worth. Stanfield's intervention as an “artist of the camera” is crucial to the *Geographic's* current curatorial role in culture, producing and ensuring particular constructions of non-Western culture for the consumption of the West.

By concluding the *Geographic's* canon of great explorers with the figure of the photographer as an artist, the video succeeds in affirming several things. This sequence omits past tensions and controversies, a circumstance that works to recognize retrospectively the *Geographic's* previous explorers as great men who will survive the test of time. This result might not otherwise be certain, as the claims of some of the early explorers were controversial. Such was the case of Robert Peary, the first explorer in this videotape's evolutionary line of *Geographic* heroes. However, the tape's voice-over washes out the more explicit references to colonial exploitation and racism in the early *Geographic* accounts that represent the Inuit peoples and an African American man, Matthew Henson, as “cogs” that were instrumental to the workings of what Peary termed his well-managed “trav-

eling machine.” In this revised version Matthew Henson is no longer a mere cog but “a pioneering black explorer who was Peary's closest associate.” Peary's bald exploitation of the Eskimos also disappears in this account. Instead we learn that “he lived with the Eskimos and became accepted as one of them.”

Reinscribing Peary in the World

The power of this discourse is indicated in Wally Herbert's 1988 article, “Did Peary Reach the Pole?” which effaces the social relations of discovery even as it contests the accuracy of Peary's claims. Herbert's article makes an unsuccessful attempt to shift the norms of white heroism away from deeds to intent, yet this does not lead him to question the race and gender relations of Peary's expedition (see chapter 1). Even though Herbert shows that Peary failed from a scientific perspective, he retells the story of Peary's last expedition as a positive measure of his creativity and worth. Thus it is Peary the pioneer, the hero who “extended” the “bounds of human endeavor,” that Herbert celebrates:

As to whether or not Peary reached the North Pole, the answer, by the nature of the subject elements within it, can never be anything more than a probability. Regardless of the answer, from the higher ground of history Peary stands out as a pioneer who contributed to mankind. Impelled by the energy of his obsession, conquering with his exceptional courage man's fear of the unknown, he extended the bounds of human endeavor. Thus was his mission a success.¹³

Herbert's metaphor of Peary as a seer who conquers man's fear of the unknown perpetuates the illusion that there is such a thing as freedom from the world and nourishes the humanist's notion of freedom of spirit. Such a dogma is itself a determined and determining gesture that conveniently advocates an aestheticization of life outside of the world of brutality and exploitation that Peary lived and participated in. In order to inscribe Peary back into the very text of the world, I will briefly include another perspective on Peary, this time from an elderly man in Siorapaluk, who gave the following account of Peary's encounter with the Inuit people. The following quotation appeared in Kenn Harper's book *Give Me My Father's Body: The Life*

of *Minik, the New York Eskimo*, published in 1986. The quote resulted from an interview Harper had with an Inuit man in 1967:

People were afraid of him . . . really afraid. . . His big ship . . . it made a big impression on us. He was a great leader. You always had the feeling that if you didn't do what he wanted, he would condemn you to death. . . I was very young, but I will never forget how he treated the Inuit. . . His big ship arrives in the bay. He is hardly visible from the shore, but he shouts: "Kiiha Tikequihunga!—I'm arriving, for a fact!" The Inuit go aboard. Peary has a barrel of biscuits brought up on deck. The two or three hunters who have gone out to the ship in their kayaks bend over the barrel and begin to eat with both hands. Later, the barrel is taken ashore, and the contents thrown on the beach. Men, women and children hurl themselves on the biscuits like dogs, which amuses Peary a lot. My heart still turns cold to think of it. That scene tells very well how he considered this people—my people—who were, for all of that, devoted to him.¹⁴

This account of Peary by an Inuit man returns Peary to a world where there is no possible innocent reading of Peary and his "accomplishments." Within Peary's 1909 narrative, the Inuits—Utaaq, Ukkujaaq, Iggianguaq, and Sigluk—are altogether denied a subject position. Matthew Henson, the U.S.-born, educated African American man appears a step above, yet as a man of color his accomplishments are kept clearly distinct from Peary's, and he is thus forbidden to occupy the slot of codiscoverer. When Peary claimed the elusive geographical point of the North Pole in 1909, he wrote, "The Pole was MINE . . . to be credited to me and associated with my name, generations after I ceased to be" (152). At that time he did not intend to share the credit with anyone and thus deliberately prevented any other white man from accompanying him to the pole.

The Social Relations of Discovery: Matthew Henson

Matthew Henson, who had worked for Peary for twenty-one years and had accompanied him on all seven of his Arctic expeditions, wrote about his own accomplishments at the North Pole in his 1912 book *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole: An Autobiographical Report by the Negro who Conquered the Top of the World with Admiral Robert E. Peary*. Henson's achievements earned him relative obscurity,

even though Booker T. Washington, a well-known turn-of-the-century African American reformer and educator, wrote the book's introduction and inscribes Henson in a narrative of national heroism. Washington uses the same terms as Peary, however, but founders on the fact of race, a fact that perhaps is precisely what that narration and its terms omit by virtue of repressing social relations.

According to Washington, Henson was able to speak fluent Inuit (he does not mention that Peary himself was actually never able to learn the Inuit language) and to function in many other capacities, which included blacksmith, carpenter, cook, and navigator. Indeed, in Washington's account, the role of Henson extended beyond the narrowly defined place assigned to him by Peary. He indicates this by emphasizing Henson's ability to use the scientific instruments needed on the expedition—a point that Peary's narrative omits.¹⁵ Despite the support Henson received from Washington and other members of the African American community, he did not attain the recognition from white society that was his due. Peary attained the rank of admiral, died a respected and accomplished man, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Henson received a check for ninety-eight dollars from Peary as payment for a year of work. Then in 1913, Henson's achievement was met with grudging acceptance. An appeal was initiated by African American leaders in New York that resulted in President William Taft awarding Henson with a post as messenger "boy" in the U.S. Customhouse. Before his death in 1955, Henson was living on a pension of \$1,020 a year and working as a parking attendant in Brooklyn.¹⁶

Peary drew criticism from contemporaries for even including an African American man as his sole U.S. companion to accompany him to the pole. Conservative white society refused to believe that a man of color could have the intelligence, physical endurance, motivation, and experience necessary to survive, let alone contribute to, the rigors of such a difficult scientific enterprise. In order to appease the fears of his critics, in his 1909 official account Peary minimized the significance of Henson's talents by emphasizing his role as a handyman capable of performing the tasks of several people: "Henson was part of the traveling machine . . . the taking of Henson was in the interest of economy of weight" (*NP*, 272). To explain why he chose Henson over a white man in the final party, Peary suggested that Henson "lacked as a racial inheritance the ability to lead. . . He would

not find his way back to land and it would be unfair to send him back alone" (NP, 273). Whether these statements were a tactic of Peary's or reflected a fundamental belief is less important than the discursive fact that this was how Peary constructed Henson's role.

Unlike Peary's official account, Henson's 1912 book foregrounds the ways in which the white men were materially and emotionally dependent on his and the Inuits' participation. For example, Henson frequently emphasizes his own position and that of the Inuits. We learn from his account that he saved Peary's life twice and that his own life was saved by one of the Inuit men that accompanied them to the pole. Indeed, Henson's insistence upon the presence of Inuit people is important in its perception and construction of the expedition. Although he concludes by emphasizing Peary's dependence on him and the Inuits, it is clear that it is a white history into which he inserts himself.

Henson's 1912 account is disappointing in the sense that he accepts his racially subordinate position as an appendage of the white man:

Another world's accomplishment was done and finished, and as in the past, from the beginning of history, wherever the world's work was done by a white man, he had been accompanied by a colored man.¹⁷

Yet it is still, in this historical context, much more liberally inclined, particularly in the way it construes blackness as a presence rather than an absence. By insisting on how valuable he was to Peary, Henson sets out to redefine who and what an African American was against already-received racist stereotypes. Thus Henson's text was much more progressive than Peary's official account, which often characterized Henson as a "negro bodyservant" rather than as an African American citizen working for wages. By casting Henson not as a worker but as a "cog," Peary is able to fix Henson into a rigid social order in which differences between people are maintained by an unalterable scientific apparatus.

The representation of Henson's role within a scientific system naturalizes biological differences and sets in check any anxiety attendant on a loosening of a secure colonial economy. Perhaps the major difference between Henson's and Peary's accounts is that Henson's narrative dissociates itself from a colonial discourse of power and

knowledge expressed in the guise of a discourse of science. Not only does his text refuse to promote the racism evidenced in Peary's supposedly scientific text, but it disturbs the equilibrium established by Peary's rationalist discourse that forces African American men and Inuit men to stay in their place. Instead, it reintroduces another version of scientific evolutionism slightly different from Peary's unchanging one, in which there is the idea of a path of progress. According to this position, African Americans need only develop their full cultural potential. By demonstrating their capabilities, they eventually can be accepted as equals to whites, and it is the belief in this possibility that underpins Henson's view. Indeed, Henson's narrative serves such a function. By revealing that he can not only survive but flourish in the dangerous and freezing regions of the Arctic, he establishes his mental and physical capabilities as equivalent to those of any white man, if not greater. Henson writes in his book that it was thanks to his care that Peary was able to return safely. As Henson puts it, "I often think that from the instant when the order to return [from the pole] was given until the land was again sighted, Peary was in a continual daze" (140). According to Henson's account, Peary had lost nine of his toes, and it was an ordeal for him to wear snowshoes. Thus Henson was obliged literally to carry Peary back on his sledge.

In order for Peary's official narrative to realize the generically promised adventure experience, he needs to omit reference to his infirmities and his reliance on Henson and the Eskimos. Henson's 1912 narrative presents another view, in which Peary was less autonomous. Yet both accounts concur in presenting the situation in the Arctic as one in which the moral superiority of values of reason, order, and stability reigned. It is not until 1966, over forty years after Peary was dead, that Henson, in an interview with historian Robert Fowler, upset the rigid binarism of these earlier narratives, with white standing for modernity and reason, and nonwhite standing for backwardness, irrationality, and violence:

He [Peary] told me he wanted me to stop before I got to the pole. "I'll take one of the boys and go on from there," he said. But he had let it slip out what he was thinking.

Shoot, I had been with him up there nearly twenty years. Freezing my hands, I saved his life when a musk ox tried to gore him. I helped amputate his toes. Of course I wanted to be there side by side with him. . . .

I had my igloo built when Peary came in. I said, "I think I've overrun my mark two miles. I think I'm the first man to sit on top of the world."

"What?" he said. Then, "We'll see tomorrow."

Oh, he got hopping mad. No, he didn't say anything, but I could tell. I didn't know what he would do. I took all the cartridges out of my rifle before I went to sleep. Took them out and buried them in the snow. I had the only rifle in the party.

After that he took Iggianguaq [one of the four Eskimos with them] and was gone about one and a half hours, long enough to take observations. He found out we'd overshot the mark.¹⁸

The quotation illustrates Henson's resentment toward what he perceives to be Peary's positioning of him. This led to his fear of being murdered in his sleep, as well as to disagreements, some of them hot-tempered and emotional, between Peary and Henson. Peary's scientific system of distinguishing between discrete roles was not flawless. According to Henson, the situation near the pole evoked in Peary the kind of irrational violence supposedly specific to African Americans. Henson was the one who had to hide the cartridges for the only available gun in order to ensure his own safety from Peary's violent outbursts. Peary's anger was precipitated by Henson's decision to make it to the pole ahead of Peary after learning that Peary had intended to exclude him during the final march to the pole. It was Henson who gauged distances and realized before Peary that he had made it to the pole. Peary lagged behind and thought the pole was still two miles farther. It is this alternative account of events that helped fuel yet another controversy in which Henson presents himself as not only the true discoverer of the North Pole but also cleverer than Peary by showing how he was able to outwit Peary at his own game.

By making it to the pole slightly ahead of Peary, Henson was able momentarily to subvert the codes of order and the rules embodied by white society. Accordingly, his transgressions made him subject to Peary's retaliation, which according to Henson took the following form:

When I got back, he didn't help find me a job or anything. He tried to keep me from making that lecture tour, too. Said he would stop [prevent use of] the pictures. He didn't even shake my hand and say goodbye when we landed at Spuyten Duyvil in New York. I didn't

even have car fare. Some of the newspaper reporters had a hansom carriage. They took me home. One of them gave me five dollars. (51)

Reconstructing the North Pole Myth

In the most recent phase of reconstruction of the North Pole myth one of the leading characters in the story is S. Allen Counter, the director of the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, who studied Henson as part of a project at Harvard University to trace the influence of blacks in world history. Disturbed that in 1909 a white United States refused to recognize an African American man as an equal or to grant him a share of the prize, Counter became determined that Henson would receive both the national and international recognition that he deserved:

That becomes especially significant to me and perhaps to many others of Afro-American background because we live in an era when white heroes are constantly being made for young people. We see so little emphasis on black heroes.¹⁹

Counter was granted permission by the government of Denmark to travel to northwest Greenland in the summer of 1986 in part to "interview some of the Polar Eskimos who were familiar with early American explorations in the areas."²⁰ Counter decided to make the trip after he was told by Swedish colleagues whom he had met some years earlier at the Karolinska Nobel Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, that there were some light- and dark-skinned Inuits in Greenland whom they believed were the descendants of Matthew Henson and Robert Peary. On arrival at Moriussaq, Greenland, Counter had this story confirmed by the Inuit elders and was introduced to the sons of Henson and Peary. One year after this meeting, Counter arranged for the Henson and Peary descendants to come to the United States to meet with some of their North American relatives. Subsidized by Harvard University, whose president, Derek Bok, presented Peary's and Henson's Inuit sons with awards of recognition at the North Pole Family Reunion banquet, the group then toured East Coast places of major significance in their fathers' lives.

Counter's involvement in the North Pole Family Reunion eventually drew the attention of *National Geographic* magazine. For its hun-

hundredth anniversary issue the *Geographic* decided to include two articles on the North Pole Family Reunion, one by Counter and the other by Edward Peary Stafford, the explorer's grandson. Given that the *Geographic* had made no mention whatsoever of Henson's role in the North Pole discovery for seventy-five years, the reinscription of the image of Henson on the occasion of its hundredth anniversary is both a participation in collective amnesia of past entanglements and evidence of the institution's desire to refurbish its image at a moment of crisis.

As I mentioned in earlier chapters, the controversy over Peary's claim had continued, and much of the debate took place in the pages of *National Geographic*. Finally, the question of whether or not he reached the pole was tentatively answered in an exhaustive study conducted for the society by polar explorer Wally Herbert, who announced that Peary had missed the pole by 30 to 60 miles. *National Geographic*, troubled by the findings, decided in the end that the institution must admit that Peary made a mistake, and the magazine let Herbert publish his findings in the September 1988 issue. It was certainly more than a coincidence that this was the same issue in which the two articles appeared on Peary and Henson's Inuit offspring.

If the potential damage of Herbert's disclosure was somewhat minimized by his use of an aestheticizing discourse, as I have already argued, the celebration surrounding the Hensons' family reunion as an "ethnic success story" further diverted attention from Peary's failure. Though this was the first attention the *Geographic* had ever given to Henson, the framing of the reporting puts emphasis on Henson not as codiscoverer (now, neither of them had made it to the pole) but as "loyal and trusted companion" (428):

Henson shared many of [Peary's] most intimate secrets. He knew all about Peary's sexual liaison and the children he fathered with Aleqasina. . . . But Henson never breathed a word of this in public. (428-29)

Counter's emphasis on Henson's ability to keep Peary's secret takes on a lot of weight in his narrative conclusion, for his North Pole story ends with the two men reunited after death. Believing that the "secret" between Peary and Cook helped cement the bond between the two explorers, Counter wrote to President Reagan to ask that he transfer Matthew Henson's remains to a place of honor among other

heroes in Arlington National Cemetery. Counter's request was honored on April 6, 1988, when Henson's grave was moved from Woodlawn Cemetery to Arlington Cemetery. He is now reburied, in Counter's words, "beside the friend and companion with whom, 79 years earlier, he had stood at the top of the world" (429). What is excluded from the *Geographic* account, however, is that the reburial of Henson in Arlington Cemetery was a controversial affair. In 1975, Ruth Jenkins, a writer for the *Black History Week Supplement* of the *Washington Afro-American*, quotes an army official opposed to granting Henson interment rights:

The Army has in the past opposed Mr. Henson's or any particular individual being granted interment rights in national cemeteries because that would discriminate against other civilians who may be equally deserving.²¹

Because Henson is not the only civilian to be buried at Arlington Cemetery, the army's argument that including Henson "would discriminate against other civilians who may be equally deserving" suggests that the request itself is unreasonable and informed solely by reverse discrimination. Indeed, the contrary seems to be the case, as is signified by the army's inability to acknowledge Henson as a national hero. Such resistance to accepting Henson as codiscoverer of the North Pole was typical of the continual rejection Henson received while he was alive from white society for his accomplishments. Even when his "patriotic" contribution was not completely ignored, his awards did not amount to much more than miserly tokenism.

The controversy around Henson's interment rights is excluded in Counter's revisionist account in the *Geographic*, as now the request to move Henson has been granted through presidential intervention. I would like to draw attention, however, to how Counter's narrative hesitates to emphasize race as a factor and instead privileges gender exclusively as a way to formulate Henson's national identity. This move suggests the difficulties in negotiating another discourse, tradition, or place for African Americans. Counter plays down race in favor of Henson's masculinity and his male bonding with Peary to accommodate the middle-class readership of the *Geographic*, and this works to mask the differences between the two men and the unequal power relations involved.

I will quote from Peary's writing in 1898 to explain why Counter's celebration of Henson by revealing the "secret" Arctic pasts of these two men is problematic. This text might enable Counter to claim that there was indeed a special relationship between Peary and Henson, but more significantly it reveals that the rules that made this alliance permissible were predetermined by the demands of the *Geographic*'s race and gender system. This is demonstrated by the following passage written by Peary:

To [the Inuits] such an ordinary thing as a piece of wood was just as unattainable as is the moon to the petulant child that cries for it. Is it to be wondered at that under these circumstances a man offered me . . . his wife and two children for a shining knife; and that a woman offered me everything she had for a needle?²²

According to Peary, Inuit women functioned as objects of exchange readily available to U.S. men in return for such an ordinary object as a piece of wood. This passage makes clear that Peary in his position as colonizer was able to have whatever he desired from these women. According to his 1898 autobiography, he took full advantage of the situation and publicly made it known that he had sexual relations with a very young Inuit girl. His youthful mistress is even photographed nude in his book *Northward over the "Great Ice"* (500). Though he captions the photograph "Mother of the Seals (An Eskimo Legend)," it is the only conventional pinup image in the book in which an odalisque pose is used to indicate sexual availability. In this respect it is different from the other photographs, shot in a more documentary style, in which people are displayed as scientific rather than sexual objects. Also included in this 1898 text are explanations of how difficult it was for him to avoid being placed in provocative situations, such as the following, which he subtitles "An Embarrassing Position":

Lee, Matt and Panikpah got away at 9:30 this morning to endeavor to get a few more deer in the last of the rapidly waning twilight. Their departure puts me in the somewhat embarrassing position of being left alone and unprotected, with five buxom and oleaginous ladies, of a race of naive children of nature, who are hampered by no feelings of false modesty or bashfulness in expressing their tender feelings. (404)



Allakasingwah, Peary's Inuit mistress and mother of his illegitimate son, Karree Peary, as shown in Peary's book *Northward over the "Great Ice"*, 1:500. The original caption, "Mother of the Seals (An Eskimo Legend)," connects her with commonly held beliefs of the period that native peoples occupied an uncertain position between the human and the animal, and as such were surely not to appear as potential threats to the social hierarchy.

Peary considers white women by implication noncompliant, and thus the Inuit woman's lack of "false modesty or bashfulness" provides a rationale for why Peary considered himself under no obligation to resist such temptations. Evidently the Arctic provided a narrative space for the realization of manhood. It tested machismo and provided male readers with erotic suspense. It is significant that the focus of the two articles in the 1988 issue of the *Geographic* article on the Inuit families makes Henson retrospectively acceptable as a participant within this *Geographic* tradition, and, of course, no question arose of "recognizing" children. Counter, who is the author of one of the two *Geographic* articles, is willing to include Henson even on such problematic terms to show Peary and Henson's essential commonality. What is unsettling about this is that Counter relies on the mythos of masculine bonding as a means to define interracial solidarity. This move also works to reinforce an older colonialist discourse that sets up an opposition between the United States and the non-West. The only difference is that now African American men are

asked to share in the responsibility for U.S. colonial violence. Henson is retrospectively seen as an active participant in this tradition.

Much more alarming even than Counter's rewriting of Henson is the *Geographic* article written by Peary's conservative white grandson, Edward Peary Stafford. Focusing on his trip to Greenland, where he met his Inuit kin for the first time, the article reveals that Stafford's acceptance of his "new" family is fraught with contradictions and conflicts symptomatic of his own racism. Stafford uses the language of kinship as a means to claim evidence for the unique qualities of his Eskimo descendants. As Stafford puts it, "Even after four generations the Caucasian genes can still reveal themselves with pronounced effect."²³ For Stafford, his family's white bloodline improved the Inuits' human lineage, and they were thus able to differentiate themselves from the other members of their community:

I realized with pride that these, my relatives, were leaders of their people—their representatives in government, those to whom others came for counsel, the most skillful hunters and sled drivers (still the measure of a man in this high Arctic). And from this I concluded that the blood and the driving, enduring spirit of Robert Edwin Peary, the discoverer of the North Pole, live on in this wild and fiercely beautiful country, his "own domain," to which he devoted so much of his life. (421)

What is most astonishing is how Stafford concludes his narrative by erasing the achievements of his Eskimo kin within their own culture in favor of using their accomplishments to promote his own white family and culture. For Stafford, Caucasian genes play a powerful legitimizing role and provide the means by which he can distinguish his relatives from the alien "other." In this way blood and ancestry provide the illusion of a preexisting sameness and enable Stafford to accept people that under other circumstances he would dismiss as foreign and uncivilized. For here, Greenland and his Inuit relatives function merely as signifiers to demonstrate the continuing hegemony of white patriarchy and the language of kinship and blood to connote position, place, and power.

According to Stafford, Peary's ruling-class stature retains its power in the face of Herbert's claim that Peary failed to reach the pole. According to this logic, in which the figures of elite society must remain

pure, there is continuing anxiety on the part of the *Geographic* to preserve Peary as an untainted hero.

The Geographic's Criterion of Greatness

To maintain the *Geographic's* system of kinship through its pantheon of male heroes, the society commissioned yet another study, one month after the September 1988 issue appeared. This one was spurred by the remarks of Dennis Rawlins, a Baltimore astronomer who, citing Peary's own calculations, told the *Washington Post* that not only did Peary fail to reach the pole, he *knew* that he hadn't made it. Stung by the charge that their man was a fraud as well as a failure, which was printed as front-page headlines in the *Washington Post*, society president Gilbert Grosvenor called on the Navigation Foundation of Rockville, Maryland, to rescrutinize the Peary archives using purely scientific tools. Foundation scientists would reexamine the original expedition photographs, compare ocean depth soundings, and reevaluate Peary's means of navigation. The society promised that the study would leave no "unturned stones."

Significantly, the results published in December 1989 overturn the 1988 admission of Peary's failure and secure Peary's place once again among the *Geographic's* heroes of exploration. The rhetoric of this 230-page report by Thomas Davies, which purportedly claims to be "conclusive" and "unimpeachable" in the words of the present *Geographic* editor, Gilbert Grosvenor, completely dismisses all criticism of Peary for the last seventy-five years.²⁴ As Davies concludes:

We found that remarkably little new information had been introduced into the record by a succession of critical books and articles in the nearly seven decades since Peary's death.²⁵

Using so-called technical proofs and modern technology to confirm the validity of Peary's word, an ideology of science, as signified by new photographic technologies, is used to make Peary an honorable figure once again. The foundation reached the following conclusion:

By applying modern methods of close-range photogrammetry to a number of photographs that Peary identified as taken near the Pole the study determined that the position of the photographer was

essentially where Peary's final celestial observations showed him to be. We also applied this technique to a photograph made by Peary on his 1906 "farthest north" expedition and, as a check on our methodology, to a photograph of the Will Steger polar expedition taken at the Pole in May 1986. (47)

By proving that Peary was close to his asserted position, this report is able to dismiss all disagreements and to return Peary and his purported accomplishments to a state of grace exempt from tensions. Once again science comes to the rescue by establishing the truth and creating the conditions for narrative closure. Peary, the born-again hero, appears as the reasonable and controlled scientist, capable of producing authentic photographic evidence to support his claim, whereas Henson never had the benefit of photography. Thus, this new study, largely based on the evidence of Peary's photographs, remains complicitous with a discourse of empirical science that delineates a fixed set of relations in which an African American man's knowledge and more generally that of other races and nationalities continue to be subordinated to the rational and scientific knowledge of white male Americans. Such ideological preoccupations are hidden under a discourse of science that disguises its bias by having a machine rather than a person legislate the truth.

The camera as the immortal eyewitness also works to maintain a notion of order and continuity particular to the *Geographic*'s own racially marked ideology of masculinity, nationalism, and science. For what is most striking about the final report is how it accepts the original procedures and protocols used on the expedition to secure and reproduce the normative status of the white male explorer, whose superiority was unquestioned in its disguise as scientist/explorer of the unknown. Men of color still remain excluded from the *Geographic*'s criteria of greatness. Counter's attempt to reintroduce Henson falls short in part because he defines him as dependent on Peary, rather than as autonomous. There is no such thing as reciprocal dependency in the *Geographic*'s discourse on heroism, which relies for its image on a single white hero playing the active dominant role. Significantly, the new scientific evidence used to restore Peary as a representative figure of the *Geographic*'s elite culture does not extend to Henson and thus reinforces a unitary notion of U.S. heroism as white and male. For in the recent report, Henson is still not mentioned as the codiscoverer of the North

Pole. Rather, he appears as Peary's "companion," whose account and participation remain of marginal interest to the *Geographic* writer's endorsement and validation of the figure of the white hero and his accomplishments.

tion between social evolutionary thought and the *Geographic's* use of photography. See Jane Collins and Catherine Lutz's analysis on changes in *Geographic* photographic practices in the twentieth century in "Becoming America's Lens on the World: *National Geographic* in the Twentieth Century," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 91, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 161-92. Also see Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, "The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes: The Example of *National Geographic*," *Visual Anthropology Review* 7 (1991): 134-49.

4. C. D. B. Bryan, *The National Geographic Society: 100 Years of Adventure and Discovery* (New York: Abrams, 1987), 65.

5. Alexander Graham Bell, "The National Geographic Society," *National Geographic*, March 1912, 273.

6. See Nathan Reingold, "Definitions and Speculations: The Professionalization of Science in America in the Nineteenth Century," in Alexandra Oleson and Sanborn C. Brown, eds., *The Pursuit of Knowledge in the Early American Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 33-69.

7. For a list of the guiding principles followed in the development of the magazine, see *National Geographic*, March 1915, 318-20.

8. Gilbert Grosvenor, "The National Geographic Society," *National Geographic*, March 1912, 24.

9. "Advertising in the Geographic Magazine is an Exact Science," *National Geographic*, May 1914, no. 25.

10. Bell, "National Geographic Society," 273.

11. Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present Day* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 17.

12. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 39.

13. Bell, "National Geographic Society," 273.

14. "The National Geographic Society's Notable Year," *National Geographic*, April 1920, 345.

15. Jean-Louis Baudry, "The Mask," *Afterimage* (UK), no. 5 (Spring 1974), 27.

16. William H. Taft, "Some Recent Instances of National Altruism: The Efforts of the United States to Aid the Peoples of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines," *National Geographic*, July 1907, 431.

17. C. J. Blanchard, "The Call of the West: Homes Are Being Made for Millions of People in the Arid West," *National Geographic*, May 1909, 403.

18. Mary Mills Patrick, "The Emancipation of Mohammedan Women," *National Geographic*, January 1909, 42ff.

19. Gilbert Grosvenor, "Progress of the National Geographic Society: The Reports for the Year 1912," *National Geographic*, February 1913, 253-55.

20. Phillip Fisher, "Democratic Social Space: Whitman, Melville, and the Promise of American Transparency," *Representations*, no. 24, (Fall 1988): 60.

21. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 30.

22. Grosvenor, "National Geographic Society," 274.

23. "The National Geographic Society and Its Magazine," *National Geographic*, January 1936, 91.

24. Bryan, *100 Years of Adventure*, 37.

25. Tom Buckley, "With the National Geographic on Its Endless Cloudless Voyage," *New York Times Magazine*, September 6, 1970.

26. Ibid.

27. Bryan, *100 Years of Adventure*, 89.

28. Advertisement for the "Santa Fe de-Luxe California Limited," *National Geographic*, October 1911, back cover.

29. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 16.

30. The illustration of the Scott expedition accompanied an article by Joseph Conrad, "Geography and Some Explorers," *National Geographic*, February 1924, 270. The caption reads: "Four days before his death after he had reached the South Pole and returned within 155 miles of his home base, Captain Scott wrote: 'I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. . . . We have been willing to give our lives for this enterprise, which is in honour of our country.'"

31. Matthew Henson, *A Black Explorer at the North Pole: An Autobiographical Report by the Negro Who Conquered the Top of the World with Admiral Robert E. Peary* (New York: Walker, 1969), 140.

32. See photographs from Robert E. Peary, "The Discovery of the North Pole," *National Geographic*, October 1909, 892-916.

33. Richard Evelyn Byrd, "The First Flight to the North Pole," *National Geographic*, September 1926, 358.

34. Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff* (New York: Bantam, 1980), 162.

3. WHITE FADE-OUT?

1. Coco Fusco, "Fantasies of Oppositionality—Reflections on Recent Conferences in Boston and New York," *Screen* 29, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 91.

2. See bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End, 1990); Chela Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: Towards a Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World," *Genders* 10 (Spring 1991): 1-24; Hazel Carby, "White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in Seventies Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 212-35.

3. Richard Dyer, "White," *Screen* 29, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 44. Originally appeared in Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 55-56.

4. It is significant that the National Geographic Society is the largest producer of documentary films in the United States. The 90-minute 1988 video, *The Explorers: A Century of Discovery*, is a National Geographic Centennial Special that aired on PBS. All references in my text are from the script of this videotape.

5. Bill Nichols would link the documentary strategies and modes deployed in this tape (the direct-address style of the Griersonian tradition and its successor, cinema vérité) to an outdated documentary tradition of filmmaking used now for ads, television news, and documentary specials but not for films. See Bill Nichols, "The Voice of Documentary," *Film Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (Spring 1983): 17-30.

6. Attention has shifted in the last ten years to how issues like gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation are part of the discourse of representation. Critical theorists, including the following, reveal how the scientist and photographer are interested agents in the production of knowledge to which they contribute: Victor Burgin, "Seeing Sense," in *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities, 1986), 51-70; Jonathon Crary, "Modernizing Vision," in Hal

Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality: Discussion in Contemporary Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 29-50; Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-36," in *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 26-58; Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (London: Sage, 1979); Allan Sekula, "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)," in *Photography against the Grain* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984).

7. For other critiques of how feminism, critical theory, and postcolonial discourse are aligned with a critique of positivism, see Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India, 1780-1833* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993); Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculation on Widow Sacrifice," in *Wedge*, no. 7/8 (Winter/Spring 1985): 120-30.

8. For further background on Martin and Osa Johnson see Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy," 44-45. See also the art work of Renée Green, especially her installation "VistaVision," which deals with questions of U.S. colonialism in relation to the figures of Martin and Osa Johnson (Pat Hearn Gallery, New York City, May 1991). For more information on this installation, see the following interviews with the artist: Miwon Kwon, *Emerging New Artists*, exhibition catalogue, Sala Mendoza (Caracas, Venezuela, June 1991); Donna Harkavy, *Insights: Renée Green*, exhibition catalogue, Worcester Art Museum, November 1991: 1-7.

9. For a systematic critique of this temporal relationship see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

10. For other studies on Western media and imperialism see Special Issue on Imperialism of Representation, The Representation of Imperialism, *Wedge*, nos. 7/8 (Winter/Spring 1985).

11. For a trenchant critique of the figure of the scientific woman in *National Geographic*, see Donna Haraway, "The Politics of Being Female," in *Primate Visions*, 279-384.

12. Also see Dian Fossey, "Making Friends with Mountain Gorillas," *National Geographic*, January 1970, 48-68; Dian Fossey, "Imperiled Giants of the Forest," *National Geographic*, April 1981, 501-23; Dian Fossey, *Gorillas in the Mist* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1983).

13. Wally Herbert, "Did Peary Reach the Pole?" *National Geographic*, September 1988, 412.

14. Kenn Harper, *Give Me My Father's Body: The Life of Minik, the New York Eskimo* (Frobisher Bay, Canada: Blacklead Books, 1986), 10-11.

15. See Booker T. Washington, "Introduction," in Henson, *Black Explorer*, reprint (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), xiii-xiv.

16. See Russell W. Gibbons, "Matthew Henson: Black Explorer Used and Discarded by Peary," *New York Times*, letter to the editor, June 21, 1987, 2.

17. Henson, *Black Explorer*, 136.

18. Robert Fowler, "The Negro Who Went to the Pole with Peary," *American History Illustrated* 1, no. 2 (May 1966): 49.

19. "Reunion Joins North Pole Families," *Harvard University Gazette*, May 29, 1987, 1ff.

20. S. Allen Counter, "The Henson Family," *National Geographic*, September 1988, 424.

21. Ruth Jenkins, "D.C. Admirer of Henson Visits Grave, North Pole," in *Black History Week Supplement* of the *Washington Afro-American*, February 8, 1975.

22. Robert E. Peary, *Northward over the "Great Ice": A Narrative of Life and Work along the Shores and upon the Interior Ice-Cap of Northern Greenland in the Years 1886 and 1891-9* (London: Methuen, 1898), 1:483.

23. Edward Peary Stafford, "The Peary Family," *National Geographic*, September 1988, 419.

24. Thomas Davies, *Robert E. Peary at the North Pole* (Rockville, Md.: Foundation for the Promotion of the Art of Navigation, 1989).

25. Thomas D. Davies, "New Evidence Places Peary at the Pole," *National Geographic*, January 1990, 47.

4. SCIENCE AND WRITING

1. Surgeon E. L. Atkinson, "The Finding of the Dead," in R. F. Scott, *Scott's Last Expedition: The Personal Journal of Captain R. F. Scott, R.N., C.V.O., on His Last Journey to the South Pole*, biographical introduction by Sir J. M. Barrie (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1923), 467.

2. For critical approaches on masculinities from a feminist viewpoint, see Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936," in *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Susan Jeffords, " 'Things Worth Dying For': Gender and the Ideology of Collectivity in Vietnam Representation," *Cultural Critique*, no. 8 (Winter 1987-88):79-104; Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); and Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

3. R. F. Scott, "Message to the Public," in *Scott's Last Expedition*, 477.

4. Atkinson, "The Finding of the Dead," 469.

5. The following is a partial listing of later editions published under the same title: 1914 (London), 1923 (London, N.Y.), 1957 (Boston), 1964 (London, N.Y.).

6. Roland Huntford, *The Last Place on Earth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979; New York: Atheneum, 1983), 524. Originally published as *Scott and Amundsen*. This work will be cited in the text and notes as *LPE*.

7. Vilhjalmur Stefansson's and other U.S. reactions to Robert Falcon Scott's death can be found in an album of newspaper clippings titled *Expedition to the South Pole 1910-1913* in the collection of the New York Public Library Annex, 521 West 43 Street, New York, N.Y.

8. For an examination of how changes in technology and culture between 1880 and World War I created new modes of understanding time and space, see Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

9. On the history of British polar exploration see Frank Rasky, *Explorers of the North: The North Pole or Bust* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1977), 7-128. On the British historical background see Correlli Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power* (London: Methuen, 1972); Eric Hobsbawm, "Waving Flags: Nations and Nationalism," in *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York: Pantheon, 1987), 142-64; V. G. Kiernan, *The*