

Understanding 'The Other' through Sensory Ethnographic Film

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Abstract

This essay will address the definition, history and current forms of sensory ethnography. I will go into depth about its uniqueness from other forms of cinema and anthropology, and its exploration of truth. As well, I will use my own research and final project as a case study.

Part I: Sensory Ethnography

Definition

Sensory ethnography is the study of a collective through their senses and sensory experiences (Heuson, 2021). In other words, it is a portrait of a people through participant sensation—deep hanging out (Heuson, 2021; Howes, 2019). Rather than just observe the experience of 'the other,' this sensory and filmic form of ethnographic research is heavily based on the participation of the ethnographer in the sensory experiences of their subjects.

The term 'sensory ethnography' emerged from the field of visual anthropology (Nakamura, 2013). Sensory anthropology is the act of documenting and analyzing a culture's way of sensing or its sensory profile—how a culture defines, talks about, or uses senses (Heuson, 2021; Howes, 1991). Put simply, it is the study of how people sense, specifically collective sensing. However, on the part of the scientist, it stops there. Sensory anthropology does not cross the barrier between anthropologist and subject. On the other hand, in sensory ethnographic studies, the ethnographer engages in participant sensation—documenting and analyzing a collective sensation by sensing *with* the subjects. Filming sensory ethnographic practices is not a "poor substitute for serious anthropological study or as mere illustrations of its conclusions" (MacDonald, 2014). It is a means of recording some of the sensory elements of a people and of

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“evoking the complex, multifaceted experience of being present within a culture”—an experience which cannot be found in textual accounts (MacDonald, 2014).

The ethnographic is a method of focusing anthropological research involving the study of a group through deep hanging out with the subjects (Heuson, 2021). While traditional anthropology is a larger research discipline studying people, culture and beings, they do not engage in studying the “collective sensing” and participant engagement (Howes, 2019). Ethnography takes a lot of time to study a deeper culture, or even to examine non-human groups. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defined ethnography as “an attempt to document, describe, and understand all that is meant by the ‘wink of the other’” (Geertz, 1973; Heuson, 2021). In his example, a person “rapidly closing the right eyelid” can be read as a twitch or a wink. This concept (of wink vs twitch) is indistinguishable to a camera (Geertz, 1973). What’s more complex is the symbolic and cultural meaning added onto this physical motion. While closing an eyelid can either be a wink or a twitch, a wink can itself be intentional communication (with a subtext of cultural meaning), a parody/mimicry of previous observation, or even “a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking conspiracy is in motion” (Geertz, 1973). Geertz concludes that an ethnographer's job is to perceive, interpret and understand the “hierarchy of meaningful structures” between winks, twitches, parodies, and mimicries (Geertz, 1973). Contemporary sensory ethnography expands this definition in an attempt to “wink together”—what sensory ethnographer David Howes refers to as “participant sensation” (Howes, 2019).

The sensory ethnographer must also study the senses and understanding how a culture divides the sensorium (Howes, 1991; Martin, 2019). The ethnographer learns to use all the different sensory modalities and interpret how a people’s senses interact with each other before

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they are even processed by the brain (Howes, 1991). Each group studied will deem different senses more important than others. In every culture, a certain sense is emphasized, and by default another emerges repressed (or where one sense is lacking, it is substituted by another)(Howes, 1991; Howes, 2019). In North American society, the visual sense has become dominant while the sense of taste has been repressed. Americans describe a story based on what they saw (“blood is red,” “the McDonald’s logo is a bright yellow M”). However, they hardly describe the taste of McDonald’s food, much less explain it in a story that isn’t explicitly focused on tasting food. Sensory orders develop and change over time—with some sensory expressions being artifacts of earlier sensory orders (Howes, 1991). The contemporary relevance of a given sensory expression can only be determined by relating it to the total sensory dynamic of the culture (Howes, 1991). According to David Howes, the ethnographer’s job is to observe and determine which senses are emphasized and repressed, by what means and to what ends (Howes, 1991).

Sensory ethnography is a methodology to focus anthropological and sensorial research. It is the collection of sensory data (through observation, participation and subsequent interpretation) to make knowledge claims about a collective experience.

Forms

Beyond the tongue-twisting definition, the Sensory Ethnographic film genre is often compared to similar genres such as Sensory Cinema, ethnographic films, and straight documentaries. These other genres, while similar, do not quite encompass the same concept as sensory ethnographic films. In turn, each makes a different kind of film, some focusing more on the sensory, some more on the ethnographic, and some more on the individual subject’s stories.

First, Sensory Cinema is a form of video and filmmaking that ranges from films such as Studio Ghibli works (see Appendix A) to ASMR video content. (ASMR is an autonomous

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sensory meridian response; a form of video making which involves up close whispering or isolated sounds of activities that create a sensation denoted “tingles” or a relaxation of the body (Lopez, 2015)). This form of filmmaking is hyperfocused on the sensorial experience of the viewer, regardless of the ethnographic. These works are often crafted that resist the traditional narrative—offering immersive moments within the narrative. It evokes an atmosphere through the senses; the viewer is completely and sensorially immersed (Heuson, 2021). These films can *render* (more than just *reproduce*) sensorial experiences to be inhabited and felt by audiences (Chion, 2013; Heuson, 2021). There is immense value, and even truth, in the immersion. The sensory experiences are so isolated and focused, this form of filmmaking is almost otherworldly (Heuson, 2021). It is not just a resistance of truth, but a rejection of knowledge and understanding as the appropriate way to think of truth (Sontag, 1966). However, it completely lacks the ethnographic, the group study. While the viewer is sensing *with* the film and its subjects, it does not ask the viewer to understand the culture of a people.

Second, ethnographic films are forms of filming ethnographic studies. Ethnography literally means people writing (Heuson, 2021). It is a way of writing the way people live or the way they exist (Heuson, 2021). The methodology of ethnographic films, such as they are studies, involve detailed participant observation (Heuson, 2021). They focus on decoding the ‘wink to another’ and aim to wink with them (Geertz, 1973; Heuson, 2021; Howes, 2019). In other words, these films seek to observe, collect, interpret, understand and reenact a way of life of a people. In comparison to Sensory Ethnography, ethnographic filmmaking does not craft sensory immersion as part of the overall framework. The *Up* series by Michael Apted (1964) follows the experience of seven year-old kids, but only focuses on their sensory experience for a moment. Instead, it focuses on more ideological concepts of rich vs poor and what that looks like in seven year olds.

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It does not necessarily study the way a people sense, nor how those senses give meaning to the world around them.

Third (and most common), documentary filmmaking is a broad genre that audiences often struggle to distinguish from sensory ethnographic filmmaking. As much as it is common in popular media, the actual definition itself comes under question (Minh-ha, 2015). David Bordwell and Kirstin Thompson, authors of the *Film Art* textbook, define it as a focus on presenting factual information about the world (Milewski, n.d.). Others commend it as an approach to filmmaking, rather than a style, which deals with the concepts of actuality, reality and the nonfiction (Milewski, n.d.). What most can agree on is that documentaries avoid fictional narrative structures and storylines in favor of real stories or events. Documentaries differ greatly from sensory ethnographic films in two ways. 1. Documentaries are not necessarily based on ethnographic modes of research and therefore do not require participant-observation data. 2. Documentaries are often focused on one event or one person's story. Sensory ethnographic films are not concerned with singular events or historical processes, but about environments and objects experienced in daily life (MacDougall, n.d.). Rather than focusing on the idea of 'truth' as an objective fact, sensory ethnographic films are concerned with the collective and subjective experience.

Sensory Ethnography is about moving beyond words and integrating the aesthetics of arts combined with the ethnographic (Nakamura, 2013). The two modern approaches to creating sensory ethnographic work include the aesthetic-sensual and the multisensory-experiential approach (Nakamura, 2013). The aesthetic-sensual approach is very observational and develops mainly the aural and visual senses (Nakamura, 2013). These films observe people's interactions in a single location (Nakamura, 2013). An example would be the 2009 film *Sweetgrass*

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(Castaing-Taylor, 2009) which takes the viewer on an observational journey with shepherders in Montana's Absaroka-Beartooth mountains. While very observational, using only sound and visuals, it still immerses the viewer into this world and senses with the subjects. These films are sometimes considered a return to the roots of observational film (Nakamura, 2013). On the other hand, multisensory-experiential films use the brain's natural synesthesia to trigger touch, smell and sound (Nakamura, 2013). An example would be Lynne Ramsay's *The Swimmer* (2012) which uses visuals and asynchronous sound to create textures of water, grass, and feelings of nostalgia. While these two approaches create different styles of ethnographic filmmaking, they are not oppositional (Heuson, 2021; Ramsay, 2012). Rather, sensory ethnographic films aim to combine both approaches to create a truly sensory ethnographic experience.

While audiences have different expectations for different genres in film, sensory ethnographic film (being so new) has a bit more flexibility. In its simplest form, sensory ethnographic filmmaking is comprised of sensory immersion (whether through straight sensory details such as sound to sound, or using synesthesia such as sound to create a sense of touch) with an ethnographic backing of research (which involves deep hanging out with the subject group and participant sensation). As long as the film incorporates these two concepts in some manner, the exact framework, approach or method is more open to experimentation.

History

Early ethnographic work focuses on capturing reality. Most early works of cinema can in fact be considered ethnographic in that they attempt to understand people through the camera — using the camera as a tool to discover and immerse the viewer into other ways of being and other cultures and people. From Eadward Muybridge's chronophotographs, to George Méliés' illusionist entertainment, to Edward Flaherty's staged reality in *In The Land of the Headhunters*

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(1914) to Dziga Vertov filming “little patches of reality” and introducing the concept of Kinok (“cine-eye”) (Rouche, 1974; Vertov, 1984), early forms of filmmaking were interested in the ethnographic, in the sensorial experience, in discovering, documenting and representing the world in different ways. Thus, contemporary sensory ethnography is not a new concept, but merely a sensual re-turn to early anthropology and filmmaking. Following the development of cinema, the concept of culture becomes a representation (Russell, 1999a). Film is the language of representation for culture in which people participate with different degrees of complicity (Russell, 1999a).

These early works are very much tied to colonialism and salvage ethnography (as with *In The Land of the Headhunters* (Flaherty, 1914)). They aimed at collecting and preserving cultures that were being ‘conquered’ and were thought to disappear (Russell, 1999a). However, these films ended up being more about the filmmakers own assumptions and their own cultures than about the cultures they *pretended* to reveal (MacDonald, 2014). This reflects the wider social values of the time as films were being funded by institutions and watched by audiences that were part of a global system of conquest, colonization, and racism.

Each of these filmmakers found different ways to approach film and approach their representation of people. Three ethnographic frameworks developed over time including Realist, Performative, and Critical (or Formal) approaches (Heuson, 2021). The Realist approach uses the camera as a tool or a window to show the world (Heuson, 2021). Without wanting to disturb or disrupt, this approach did not attempt to explain the happenings of their subject (Heuson, 2021). This includes filmmakers such as Dziga Vertov and the “cine-eye” which aims to capture the world as a mechanical machine captures it (Vertov, 1984). While the filmmaker understands the wink of the other, it attempts to wink back with as little interference as possible. The

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Performative approach is one where the camera is the stage for which the filmmaker or the subjects perform (Heuson, 2021). This includes filmmakers such as Flaherty, who used staged reality to attempt to collect and preserve the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples culture in *In The Land of the Headhunters*. In this instance, the filmmaker is attempting to collect the ideas and symbolism of the wink through reenactment. Finally, the Critical approach to ethnographic filmmaking is one that engages the technological product with its subjects (Heuson, 2021). In a way, it makes the viewer aware of the film as a film itself and reveals the meaning of ‘the wink’ in the greater context of the film merely as a representation. Most early ethnographic films explore both the group of people it is representing and the film medium through one of these three approaches.

Even though this level of experimentation in filmmaking faded into either straight documentary or narrative, the ideas from these early ethnographic filmmakers about how to approach filmmaking has never ceased. Seeing the return to the ethnographic in contemporary cinema is interesting both as it shows the developments in political and social values as well as the devices and cameras.

Truth

While the history of ethnographic film practices was a way to observe and collect knowledge, it was also a way to *own*—closely related to colonial practices of conquest (Heuson, 2021). Often, ethnographies are believed to be absolute truths simply because they use scientific methods of data and research that support their film. However, there is no one truth or facts; there is only interpretation (Minh-ha, 2015; Sontag, 1966). Just because a film is presented as evidence does not mean that it was filmed objectively (if anything can even be objective). Films are composed and in that composition is subjectivity. While the core person or group researched may be true, all that surrounds it is merely interpretation (Levin, 1971; Minh-ha, 2015).

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Interpretation—hardly an absolute value—must be evaluated in terms of cultural history (Sontag, 1966). Simply put, what is presented as truth must be questioned: Which truth? Whose truth? How true? (Minh-ha, 2015). For truth is “produced, induced, and extended according to the regime in power” (Minh-ha, 2015). In the case of ethnographic filmmaking, the power belongs to the ethnographer observing, collecting and interpreting the symbolic subtexts within cultural practices. In response, ideas of collaboration and ethnofiction were born in order to counter the colonizer’s ethnographic domination of representation. Ethnofictions and deconstruction approaches to ethnographic film are a way for those traditionally dominated by anthropology to push back and craft their own reactions and representations. The Cinema of Liberation is a movement of film exploring ethnographic styles that challenge western, white, masculine ways of ‘knowing and being known.’ Jean Rouché’s work on collaborative ethnofictions in Africa came out of this movement. Ethnographic film that is presented as absolute truth sets a value on the intimate observation of a peoples (Minh-ha, 2015).

In nonfiction filmmaking, there are three cameras at play: the technical camera capturing the event, the filmmaker’s mind who chooses what to frame and how to capture their interpretation of it, and the general audience’s expectations (Kluge, 1988; Minh-ha, 2015). While all documentaries are subjective compositions, composition in itself is not necessarily a distortion of reality (or truth) (Minh-ha, 2015). This is largely decided by the audiences who watch it. However, ethnographic practices of filmmaking include a more reflexive way to present “truth.” In this reflexivity is the recognition of the filmmaker as an artist working with the subject to interpret and convey meaning. It is important to remember the subjectivity of interpretation. However, when this subjectivity is acknowledged, the ethnographer’s responsibility is to convey their understanding and their truth of the subject. Otherworldly,

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resistance and deconstruction approaches to ethnographic film are all responses to the presentation of a singular truth in filmmaking.

Truth is not absolute, and sensory ethnographic film should never claim absolute truth. Nevertheless, sensory ethnographic film is an art form about portraying sensorial experience—a sensorial representation of reality of the peoples being studied.

Part II: Case Study

What do you dream about in a boat?

The Field

My field of study is the Rutgers Women’s Novice Rowing Team. I have been on the team since late August 2020, deep hanging out with the team and collecting data. The Novice Team, separate from the Varsity Team, includes girls who have never rowed before. Thus, this year has been a process of simultaneously learning about the sport and how to compete in this sport. It has also been a process of adapting to the constant change in participation, from girls dropping out, new girls joining, and coaches changing. It is not a set group of people, rather a constantly changing portrait. As I collect data on the team, I am reminded of Tom Gunning’s ‘cinema of attractions’ as well as Catherine Russell’s observations on the body as a function of ethnographic discourse in modernity (Russell, 1999b). My ethnographic research focuses on a unique and exciting experience through the human body and its functions individually as well as collectively. (See Appendix B).

Research Question

The research questions investigated in this film are: What does it feel like to travel in a

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boat through time and space while having no conception of it? What are the dreams and doubts that encroach your thoughts while rowing?

From my studies, there are two ways to exist in a boat: first, the rower exists simply to exist, almost in a dreamlike state (until the other senses bring the rower back); second, the pure and unbreakable focus, only seeing the girl in the seat ahead, being in touch with physical sensory information. The first description is almost otherworldly, similar to Lynne Ramsay’s *The Swimmer* (2012). The greater feeling and lostness in sound and sight is captured in this film. Beyond the dream-state, this description also includes doubt. The constant change in teammates that decided they couldn’t continue with it anymore makes the rower wonder why *they* continue. The second description is similar to a combination of *Manakamana* (Spray, 2013) and *Sweetgrass* (Castaing-Taylor, 2009), this type of film was showcased in my previous assignment *45° and low clouds*—being lost in space and time but being part of a collective body.

Many important aspects of this field hinge on the experience of coeval presence—of shared time, space, and *feeling* (rather than seeing). This field has been focused down to the two concepts discussed above which include the two ways of being in the boat: the first being the otherworldly, nightmare and dreamscape unfocused sensing; the second being the timeless and spaceless focused sensing. Thus my research question borders beyond just what it feels like to be part of one body of working rowers. It pushes the question and observation into places about what it feels like to lose conception of space and time and the different ways in which that occurs in the boat. (See Appendix B)

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Has left the group. is a sensory ethnographic film that immerses the viewer in the dreams, doubts and collective experience of rowing in an eight person boat (See Appendix C). I

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approached the field combining Realist and Performative techniques. The Realist approach can be seen in the camera and sound work during which the rower is rowing (especially in the beginning). The Performative approach can be seen during the dream sequence in camera work and during the sound sequence capturing the many messages girls sent before leaving the group.

Much like *45° and low clouds*, *has left* begins as an exploration of time and place. Similar to *Sweetgrass* (Castaing-Taylor, 2009) in perspective and *Manakamana* (Spray, 2013) in synchronic time, *has left* uses the first-person point of view to immerse in the viewer in the space and uses coeval presence to recreate the sense of shared space and time. The stretch of sound without visuals and visual long take without sound emphasizes the disorienting lack of geographic place and duration. Both *Manakamana* and *has left* are set in a place that exists spacelessly. Both films share a set amount of time during which there is no concept of duration. However, while *Manakamana* chooses to look at ‘the other,’ *has left the group*. chooses to immerse the viewer in the ‘I’ such as in *Sweetgrass*.

Beyond just existing in time and space as a body of rowers, *has left the group*. seeks to understand what it looks and feels like to lose conception of time and space—to exist in reality as well as memory and thought. The otherworldly approach to the second half of the piece mimics the effects of *Trypps #3* (Russell, 2007). The dissociative feeling of losing focus while still rowing is clear in the visual and aural tone shifts. From the very first title card, the viewer is introduced to doubt. From the visual transition to the dancers, the viewer is introduced to dreams. Both the dreams and doubts combine to create a sense of “lostness” even as the visuals return to a place once recognized. The textures in sound and sight are similar to *The Swimmer* (Ramsay, 2012), both of which tackle concepts of memory and identity.

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Furthermore, *has left the group*. combines the aesthetic-sensual and multisensory-experiential frameworks. This film begins mainly with sound-only and visual-only sections, focused in a single “location” (the boat). However, it develops into a multisensory-experiential framework as it combines and layers the visual and aural to create the feeling of dissociation and daydreaming; it uses the brain’s synesthesia to create textures and physical sensations. The layering in visuals creates a sense of daydream and spacelessness. The layering in sound creates a sense of anxiety. The constant underlying sounds of rowing and breathing create a sense of suffocation or endless effort. *Has left* combines the reality of the experience of rowing with the accompanying otherworldly sensations. *Has left the group*. uses sensory ethnographic filmmaking to understand the other (the rower), presenting a subjective truth of my experience.

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Appendix A

Studio Ghibli Works

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hO_1bXs3miA 7:33-8:22

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBpqQyLLDiM> 8:52-9:17

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9Ug-3qhrwY>

Appendix B

Rowing Sensory Ethnographic Treatment

What do you dream about in a boat?

1. PROPOSAL + KEY SENSORY QUESTION.

For this project, my field of study will be the Rutgers Women's Novice Rowing Team. I have been on the team since late August 2020 and have been observing and collecting data on the team and rowing since January 2021. The Novice Team, separate from the Varsity Team, includes girls who have never rowed before. Thus, this year has been a process of learning about the sport and how to compete in this sport at the same time. It has also been a process of adapting to the constant change in participation, from girls dropping out, new girls joining, and coaches changing. It is not a set group of people, rather a constantly changing portrait. As I collect data on the team, I am reminded of Tom Gunning's 'cinema of attractions' as well as Catherine Russell's observations on the body as a function of ethnographic discourse in modernity. My ethnographic research focuses on a unique and exciting experience through the human body and its functions individually as well as collectively.

Rowing is a sport that focuses heavily on the senses, specifically tactile, aural, and proprioception. There are some visual indicators, but these are not necessary for the sport. In fact, some of what remains fascinating about this sport is the lack of the use of the visual sense of space. I have taken note of the different senses already in forms of writing thick sensory descriptions, some general, others focused on certain senses; in taking audio recordings and interviews of the rowers discussing their opinions of some of the work we do; I have taken pictures of the effects of touch in the form of blisters; audio recordings of the sounds of the ergs.

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In short, the importance of sound, not only for sound, but to convey feeling and disorientation is what will convey these senses in strictly a film form.

The question I will be investigating through this film is: What does it feel like to be part of one body of eight rowers—that travel through space and time but have no conception of it?

Being in the boat is a very specific kind of feeling, one that strips away your sense of space and time but that gives you a collective goal. It is truly a group experience (no one person can row a boat, but it takes the whole team doing their part to make the boat move). The boat is its own body or entity. In many ways, the only way to truly understand what it is like in the boat is to *be* in the boat. For my research I have kept perspective in mind, studying films such as *Sweetgrass* which take the viewer down to the level and perspective of the sheep they are filming—the only way to understand what it is like to be in a sheep herd is to *be* in a sheep herd. Another part of the focus of my research—similar to the film *Manakamana*—will include the concepts of space and place, and the lack thereof. *Manakamana* takes the viewer on a journey with real people in the cabin—space does not exist outside of it and time can hardly be kept track of. My final focus will be time, which is absent in the boat. There is almost an otherworldly, dreamlike quality in the boat. Laura Kissel, a documentary filmmaker and author of “The Terrain of the Long Take,” discusses the feeling of duration and exploration of space specifically in the long take which has given me a focus in my observations and research.

From my studies, there are two ways to exist in a boat: first, the rower exists simply to exist, almost in a dreamlike state (until the other senses bring the rower back); second, the pure and unbreakable focus, only seeing the girl in the seat ahead, being in touch with physical sensory information. The first description is almost otherworldly, similar to Lynne Ramsay’s *The Swimmer*. It will be important to capture this greater feeling and lostness in sound and sight. The

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second description is similar to a combination of *Manakamana* and *Sweetgrass*, this type of film was showcased in my previous assignment *45° and low clouds*—being lost in space and time but being part of a collective body.

Many important aspects of this field hinge on the experience of coeval presence—of shared time, space, and *feeling* (rather than seeing). I will focus this field down to the two concepts discussed above which include the two ways of being in the boat; the first being the otherworldly, dreamlike unfocused sensing, and the second being the timeless and spaceless focused sensing. Thus my research question borders beyond just what it feels like to be part of one body of working rowers. It pushes the question and observation into places about what it feels like to lose conception of space and time and the different ways in which that occurs in the boat.

2. DESCRIPTIVE TREATMENT.

- In the boat, there is no sense of time. The only marker that time passes is the sun rising higher which is not focused on. What we do feel, however, is the temperature and the weather (rain, sun, 30°s, 40°s vs 50°s, strong winds, flat water). We only have a mild sense of space, aware that we are moving forward (or backwards since we sit backwards in the boat). Certain markers like bridges and signs help. But facing backwards makes us focus less on space/where we are headed and more on what we are doing. Sometimes we feel the pull of the water and the pull of the boat/rowers so much more than we actually see anything. We are supposed to have our eyes glued to the person in front of us to synchronize with them. However, sometimes we watch without really seeing anything. Sometimes the things we see and the movements we do are so automatic that our brains can pull away. These are the moments I want to capture visually in this film.

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- Visually, this film will be a series of long takes from the point of view of a rower in the boat looking at the person in front of them as they row. It will not see left or right of the boat, it will move as the rower moves and will stop as the rower stops. The weather will be present but not the main focus. The largest figure in the frame will be the person sitting in front of the viewer with their back faced to the screen (as it is in the boat we do not see the person's face sitting in front of us).

- Additionally, in the boat, there is a focus on feeling/movement as well as sound. A coxswain and coaches (most times one you cannot even see) call out directions through a speaker (from front, from behind, from our left or our right). We hear our seats rolling beneath us. We hear the sound of the oars feathering and squaring—it is a rhythmic sound, one matched with movement (movement that we do not see, but feel in ourselves). In the erg room we are surrounded by sounds we cannot see: big buzzing sounds from vents above, fans blowing (big ones behind us, smaller ones to our left or right), we hear the sound of voices (coaches calling out instructions, other teammates cheering each other on, girls pushing their bodies and minds to their limits), we hear the internal thoughts (how loud they are! How much they dictate our work, we encourage or discourage ourselves, we are tired or we feel great, we are in pain or we feel sick), and finally we hear the sounds of the fans on the ergs (how hard we pull is directly related to how loud the fan is, sometimes we are instructed to close our eyes and to pull in synch with the girls around us solely based on the sound of the erg fans).

- Aurally in the film, there will be disjunctive sounds. This disjunctive aspect between visual and sound will be used at points to bring the viewer more into the world of the boat and at other points to take the viewer out of it completely. When there are sounds from the 'boat world' the visuals will be black. When there are visuals of the 'boat world,' the sounds will not be from

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the world on the boat. Boat world sounds include: oars feathering and squaring—especially the rhythmic quality of it—as well as the rolling of the seat underneath (very bassy), outdoor sounds. Sounds not from the boat world include: sounds of coaches when we were working on the ergs, sounds of the ergs, but also sounds of whispers and memories, and finally silence. With silence, I want to completely take the viewer out of the world and force the viewer to just see, which at the same time inhibits them from really *seeing*. At moments without sound, I want the viewer to forget details about the environment, which is exactly how it is in the boat.

- In this film, I must disregard many great big moments (the training or the teamwork, the likes or dislikes) in order for me to properly get across the idea of being in the boat. I aim to take the individual experience from this collective. Everyone on this team has questioned why they are on this team. I have found this out through unofficial interviews with teammates. What I have found is that rowing is an individually focused team sport. No one person alone can pull the boat, but each individual must complete their part in order for the sport to be accomplished at all.

- This one person perspective film, with memories and sounds specific to my experience may *feel* individual, but it is actually the most collective experience we all feel: doubt and dreams.

- In this film, I will focus on the smaller things, the things that make it a real daily activity. No grand pressure or anxiety or disappointment or sweat. Visually, the viewer will see the texture of the shirt of the person in the frame. That is all they will remember, but that small detail is all they need to see to really feel what it feels like. Aurally, I will have rhythmic oar sounds become hypnotically long. That is all that is necessary because when sounds drone on time becomes unnecessary. I will have sound crescendo into chaos as it does in each and every rower's brain. But I will also bring it back down to the most minute detail in the oars, or a whisper—a

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wish to be elsewhere. When the sound becomes a dream (whispers), the visuals will disappear because that is what it feels like when in the boat. Sights become nothing when the sounds of your brain take you away to another place. In this moment I will paint a world of sound that is not the boat at all, but somewhere else we all, at some point, wish to be.

- Roughly the order of the film will follow: it will start in the boat with boat sounds; the sounds will become disjunctive and otherworldly; then there will be no visuals and only otherworldly sounds; following, there will be visuals over silence; finally, it will end with boat sounds without visuals.

Appendix B Bibliography

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Appendix C

has left the group. full film youtube link.

<https://youtu.be/LSDbYu7A3aI>