

IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME
DON'T BRING ANY GEAR, EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE ...



air cinemas descended from the sky

Interviews on *The Sound of Music*¹

by Johan Grimonprez

Todd Ayoung²: 'A MIMETIC PASSAGE'

— *Your first encounter with film was 'The Sound of Music'; would you remember anything about the circumstances, how it must have been watching a movie for the first time?*

The recollections about it got so blurry and vague. I saw *The Sound of Music* when I was about seven years old, in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad) where there was only one big movie-theatre at that time. Films weren't that well distributed, so if a film came around they would keep it as long as possible. I saw it one week and then the next week again... about 7 times. Being brought up in an Asian family, my parents were very protective; if we weren't going to school we (me and my sisters) would be locked up in our little house. It was summer I believe and there was not a whole lot to do, so my uncle would sometimes take us to the movies...

Now, here there is a strange thing—it's hard to figure out in what way this is due to being part of a colonial situation, or more in terms of this being a part of the child's imagination—but I always thought that cinema was something real and that there were people behind the screen.

This is how I came to explain it: one of the movies that showed there was *The Planet of the Apes* and I remember vividly seeing a cage with a bunch of apes driving around Port-of-Spain, because that was the way they advertised it. So I thought: of course, those apes just go behind the screen playing apes and this now ends up on a flat surface, with other kinds of projections going on, but they were real people.

— *'The Sound of Music' was perceived in the same way?*

I didn't think about it in terms of any real filming or what it meant besides a visual spectacle.

— *There was no television yet? Any imagery that could relate to cinema?*

No, no television. TV came about in the late 60's, somewhere before we came over to the U.S. in '69. We were one of the first families in this area of Port-of-Spain to acquire a TV; I even remember vividly all the neighbours sitting around our doorway watching this image making machine in black and white.

— *The landscapes or the architecture presented in the 'The Sound of Music' must have been very different compared to your everyday environment?*

The setting and architecture in the film was nothing like the Trinidad that I know, the old colonial buildings, the savannahs—there's nothing like palm trees in that film or anything that I could relate to. It was completely unreal... At the age of seven I didn't think of it as such a big contrast between my little country and this image of the outside, but more this fascination with

The entire interior of the von Trapp villa, including the ornate von Trapp ballroom, was built and shot at the studio. The ballroom was such a beautiful piece of film art that after the picture was completed Fox donated the set to the Hollywood Museum.

something else; it was just the 'outside', an imaginary place of people with a fantastic life, where everything seemed bigger, all that space compared to our little house.

Also I don't think I ever saw so many white people together before in one place at the same time unless it was on screen; that may also have been a novelty for me at that moment. I might also have made some identification between *The Sound of Music* and what my father used to tell me about the U.S. and my uncle Sam. Uncle Sam was my uncle. Growing up in a Chinese family in Trinidad, anybody older than you became your uncle, and so my father always told us about this uncle which we never saw. I never thought I would actually meet this person.

— *'The Sound of Music' came to stand for Uncle Sam, a collapse between the scenery in the film and the geographical place of the U.S. or England, where your uncle lived...*

Well, my first confrontation with the 'mothercountry' England, being part of the Commonwealth, was effectively *The Sound of Music*. The film represented England for me, which was just this vast 'outside' where my Uncle Sam lived.

I always thought of England as being an appendice to the U.S. in the sense that it was the mother of Uncle Sam. I never knew where these places were geographically. American culture was pretty basic in Trinidad, I didn't really have any signs. I knew it was out there somewhere just as *The Sound of Music* was represented on screen as a physical 'somewhere'. But I never thought of it as something graspable; I never thought I would actually go to these places.

While talking about our uncle Sam, my father would also show us a photograph of an immigrant boat coming into New York City, and there is an Asian looking man up in the front and my father would say: 'Well, this is me, coming over on the boat', but he never said where he came over from. He was born in Trinidad; where could he come from? It sort of predated our coming to the U.S. in 1969. He had to tell us these things, a way maybe to construct a relationship to his children. Only when I came to the U.S., I realized that this photograph he showed us was by Alfred Stieglitz ('Streerage', 1907). A strange kind of coincidence: I always thought of uncle Sam who I was going to meet and I always thought of my father coming to the U.S. on this boat.

— *'Uncle Sam' was actually conceived of as an Asian person...*

A kind of collapse of images and personal history: in Trinidad you would have this mixing of real time, historical time and an imaginary situation compiled from mythology and superstition; which is perceived as very real to the West Indies, and structures everybody's lives. Colonialism made Trinidad reinvent an imaginary landscape, constructed and hybrid through a degree of memory erasure. *The Sound of Music* conflated with these superstitious ways, just like other films shown there at this theater: *Planet of the Apes*, *Chity Chity Bang Bang* and what's that other movie...

My Fair Lady. In a sense it was a Disneyland-version of real history mixed in with all this strange stuff. I had a kind of 'magical realism' involved with daily life, populated with all sorts of spirits: jumbies, duppys... That was our cinema, the stories my father told us. It was told and retold so many times that it condensed into something magical. The same with film: retold, re-edited and passed through certain mediums so that it becomes magical. It makes sense then, with the invention of TV and film, that people identified so dearly with the images, that replaced or mixed with their mythologies, a way to explain life's tragedies—why you were afraid of the dark, all these things.

Trinidad wasn't wired up in the sense that you couldn't just turn on the switch light, you had

“Don't they know geography in Hollywood? Salzburg does not border on Switzerland!”—[the real] Maria von Trapp as she watched the final scene in the movie (quoted in *Our Sunday Visitor* in 1967).

candles. I was brought up always being afraid of something that I couldn't see, so you had a different relationship to space, it was very tight, beyond was always the dark that you couldn't tangibly see.

— *Eventually 'The Sound of Music' projected in the dark would have this magical quality to it as well, a different kind of mythology that would fit in with these stories...*

When you see the dark you project your superstition whereas with cinema it would turn in the other way: the dark becomes a kind of projection; your superstition becomes this cinema, a screen for what's lit up. Technology has taken over (intermixed) mythology and superstition in its most literal sense: the ghosts become shadows on the screen. Naturally I would transfer my stories into this medium which existed overseas, embodied in *The Sound of Music* especially. I think in my eventual 'passage', I came to identify with this 'white light' of the screen.

My name also comes from the movies: Michael Todd, the name of a famous British actor at that time (my whole name is actually Todd Michael Ayoung). My parents saw some old movie when they were first married; I was born when my mother was in her 20s, so instead of choosing a name of family history, they chose actor's names for their kids. So I was inscribed into the history of cinema, making my construction of the self an imaginary construction in the literal sense.

— *What about the narrative itself contained in 'The Sound of Music', how differently would you read into it then, at that time in Port-of-Spain, compared to the context of your life in New York now?*

At that age it's difficult to recall, I was just absorbing a lot of things. Eventually, the only way I could really relate to it was if I would think about it as some kind of passage to the real context of the U.S., eventually going to England, which was a disappointment for me; the imagination didn't quite fit the reality I encountered:

I haven't seen the film in its entirety since I've been in this country. It's hard for me to look at that film; I've seen bits and pieces of it. Uncle Sam obviously became something else. At one point leaving Trinidad, coming to the U.S. at the age of eleven I found out that Uncle Sam didn't exist and that the image was part of America's cultural imperialism, just like *The Sound of Music*... It was very difficult for us to become part of that melting pot, as it was called at that time. I received racism American style, growing up in a neighborhood (Los Angeles) with poor white 'trash'.

— *Julie Andrews would be woven into this whole phantasy as well.*

Perfectly, because she represented a white western culture, the first white woman I encountered! Also the largest group of white people I saw at once all together. There was only a small English population in Trinidad—and I never encountered many of them, so to see a whole white family on the screen had something to do with my ventures in the U.S. My inscription as to what the West was supposed to be and what I desire of the West... I think I had some sense that the British were ruling this small white population who had the money; the Trinidadians are made up of half Blacks and half East Indians, plus a small population of Chinese; most Asian immigrants opened this kind of small shop. I think they left during the black power movement in the 70s. They were the obvious target, not the whites who ran the big businesses.

In a way *The Sound of Music* was my primer to 'whiteness', which took shape in my fantasy, since it didn't relate to real life in Trinidad—the white family being the epitome of wealth and

1965 was a volatile year in the US and throughout the world. Newspapers carried headlines of the war in Vietnam, a cultural revolution was beginning to spread throughout the country, and people needed old-fashioned ideals to hold on to. The movie-going public was ready, possibly even eager, for a film like this. Besides an outstanding score and an excellent cast, it had a heartwarming story, good humor, someone to love and someone to hate and seven adorable children.

— **Robert Wise, director of *The Sound of Music*.**

innocence; the U.S. meant this abundance of naiveness and innocence in white culture. I went through a lot of the psychic trauma I embody; wanting to be white, and so on... If you are 'outside', you look for a way to slip inside.

Coming from the Caribbean I didn't know what my natural color would be, because I am part Chinese, part Indian. In California it's tropical, and I would naturally be dark. But every time I saw images of myself over there, all of a sudden this image of myself would become this strange other. In Trinidad I even saw images of myself and yet I never thought of myself as dark or light. But then living in Los Angeles I suddenly became a dark person and my reaction was to try to erase the color, literally erase it.

In an installation (New World Plantation' 1991) I attempted to draw an analogy between erasure of one's identity through a kind of self-destruction with the erasure of what the U.S. constructs as their 'other', which happened to be at that time the bombing of Iraq. Doing that piece I realized that only then did I really come to terms with the fact that this is a kind of self-hatred—things are circulating in my head all the time. To come to terms with the stereotypes in the imaginary.

My reverse 'passage' through the retelling of the event of *The Sound of Music* becomes my criticality. In retelling its whiteness as it unfolds on the white screen, I became one with the film, but hybrid in its dissemination: Julie Andrews is African, Indian, Chinese, etc. The film in the colonies became a hybrid space.

Because of the historical erasure within a colonial context it is necessary to go through a mimetic passage to find a reversal in that situation. I had to embody the West to pervade its psychic makeup in how it presented itself. This incorporated camouflage to the extent that I wanted to be white, and since I lacked the tools, I thought maybe I could achieve this by losing my skin color, losing my culture. Often the only way to relate to that dominant culture is by becoming that culture, but this leaves you always as the 'other' within that dominant culture; the criticality slips in at a point where mimesis comes so close in its proximity to the mirror, that it starts to reverse...

— *Parodying that dominant culture could inhere a certain critical reversal?*

What you consider critical may well not be the culture's criticality, because it is very real for this culture; people involved in such a situation are already inscribed in it. To what extent mimesis is authenticity, we don't really know, because it's playing on both...

— *Isn't the West very much a heterogenous construction itself, where its so-called authenticity contains a constant appropriation (and mimesis) of other cultures...*

... even if the West is completely constructed, we don't really know exactly what is constructed. We're able to put it on that level to shift the boundaries, its inscription in nature. Masquerade plays the stereotype out against its representation, because reality is something that slips away, since it's never what it is; that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.

But still, with the blur of memory and 'nostalgia', it is very hard to look at *The Sound of Music* from a critical distance. It was the very first movie I saw and I don't know how pervasive it is within my psyche, despite the critical theory I have at hand. In fact every time I hear the music or see bits of the movie by accident, it's as though I go blank and I go back into my childhood. Fortunately or unfortunately this movie is like the strongest memory of my childhood. Strange...

The only scene left to do was "You Are Sixteen." "They made special dance shoes [for the number]," Carr told the Fox publicist, "and they forgot to put the rubber on the heels so I wouldn't slip. I did a step where I jump up on the bench, turn around and kick, and instead of turning and kicking, my feet slipped and I went right through a windowpane and flopped on the floor."

In Salzburg the movie ran exactly three days before the theater owners pulled the plug, and it has never been reissued. [...] After the movie became a hit, American Express began the *Sound of Music* tour, which bused tourists all over the city [of Salzburg], showing them locations that were used in the film. There is a *Sound of Music* Dinner Theater and a *Sound of Music* record store. Yet Salzburg and many Austrian citizens actually harbored disdain for the film.

Memories of my childhood would come through my photographs, but mostly it is inscribed in this movie. Even now I have difficulties talking about it, it was something that was there, that happened to me. Parts of the film play back in my mind constantly: the scene with the puppets, 'Edelweiss'... I remember the film back to back.

— *How did you read into the Nazi-story of 'The Sound of Music' back in Trinidad?*

Because I didn't have any relationship to fascism I didn't really know what enemy they were fighting. There were simply the good ones and the bad ones. American Hollywood. I saw it literally in black and white.

— *You mentioned visiting Austria; back in the mountains memories would blur with reality...*

In 1989 I had an exhibition in Linz; it was winter though, so it looked different than the hills in the film which looked green and lush, full of life. It was very snowy. Actually I was on top of a mountain, but I didn't quite get to the point where I would spread my arms and would spin around like a helicopter and start singing 'The hills are alive...' I imagined myself doing that though. Strange... I had always conceived the film in terms of a British-American thing, never of being set in Austria.

— *Hollywood's ethnographic gaze of Austria?*

Eventually my stereotype of Austria would be through the film, Austria would equate with the only images that were so strongly engrained in my memory. The film would be the first encounter with the imaginary as it is constructed by the colonies about the West and the way the West wanted the colonies to construct the West. I imagined also Austria within those terms, in going to the Austrian mountains my only reference came to be *The Sound of Music*. My first relation to historical fascism would be through this film, what I know of the World War as it's been told in this country about Austria and Germany. I was interested in the fact that Linz was the city where Hitler went to artschool, wanting to make it the capital of Austria.

Onome Ekeh³: 'PREPACKAGED'

— *Well, 'The Sound of Music'...*

I've seen it about more than 300 times, over a period of 10 to 12 years. I saw it almost every other day. At least I wanted to sing like Julie Andrews; the first times I watched it I was humming 'My Favourite Things' all week...

— *Can you still recall the impressions you had seeing the film for the very first time?*

1977. We just had moved to the university-campus in Ibadan (the largest city in Nigeria). There was a staff club where they had these family movies every Friday night and it was the first thing I watched there... it was across a pool, there were barbecues and everything. It was one of the most incredible things I had ever seen.

— *You had seen films before?*

Yes, but this one was on an enormous screen, like one of those IMAX screens. You could see the

In 1988 Myra Franklin, a 47-year-old widow from Wales, was listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* having seen *The Sound of Music* 940 times.

According to *Billboard* magazine, *The Sound of Music* has had the longest run as a bestseller in video history! The video has been on *Billboard's* Top 40 Video Sales chart for more than 250 weeks, longer than *Jane Fonda's Workout* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

reflection of the pool; sometimes I had the habit of watching the reflection in the pool. I'd squint my eyes, so I would see a double image of that palace in the water. I nearly drowned once in that pool! Chlorine...

— *What about the 300 other times you watched it?*

Then the VCR revolution hit Nigeria; '78/'79 we got our first videomachine. In Nigeria: the very first movie you saw on the VCR was either *The King and I* or *The Sound of Music*. Most of the time *The Sound of Music*, because it was given for free with the electronic equipment as part of the video cassette recorder package. It was The Number 1 movie, all that singing plus all that nice Austrian plushness; very appealing... You could see it everywhere you went. And if you didn't have the film, somebody would definitely give a copied version to you. People would have these big borrowing systems—my cousin had an enormous beehive collection of videos: over 500 titles. They would borrow from you and never return the tape and at the end you had to borrow from them.

Picture this: summer vacation, and there are enough cousins staying over to form a football team, they're playing soccer all morning, come back in about noon—video time. They're watching *Fist of Fury* or some other Kung Fu stuff that our parents didn't approve of. The living room is a big mess and 13 sweaty boys are egging on Bruce Lee, suddenly we hear my mother's car pull into the driveway! The living room is somehow thrown back into place, the boys adopt civilised postures, and *The Sound of Music* is slipped in. My mom comes in about to make a fuss about the mess, but instead she's distracted by 'Edelweiss' and ends up watching the whole thing, again, with everybody. We never got tired of it; they probably still love it. You know it's like part of the landscape of my past, my childhood.

I saw an incredible amount of movies growing up in Nigeria, thanks to video-piracy! Hollywood epics, obscure European stuff recorded off TV, Indian movies, Kung Fu flicks... Copyright laws ceased immediately they were on Nigerian soil. At "Video Rentals" you wouldn't rent, what you actually did was take in blank tapes to make recordings from the master.

Once I went to my mother's family, one of the many times we were watching it—they were complaining about Julie Andrews's ugly clothes, her brand of blandness, her bad haircut... I was devastated... I was like...saying no no no, she's supposed to be the heroine. The Cinderella. But they just loved the baroness Schreider or Schneider, Schraeder?

— *Why would they be particularly attracted to the baroness instead of the Julie Andrews character; was there any culture-specific reading to it in terms of family life in Nigeria?*

She was rich, she was beautiful, independent, sensual, sophisticated, she realized what she wanted. They totally approved the way she went after the captain! And they understood the fact that she would have to send the children away to the boarding school, because in Nigeria you don't want other people messing up your own share of things. It's this big extended family thing in Nigeria, it has its plus side, but generally there's a lot of pettiness and jealousy going on. No one wants some upstart coming into their homes, some nun or some housegirl like Julie Andrews coming in, taking their man. They completely identified with this baroness.

As I grew older I started to identify with her too, but rather with the schemey-ness of the baroness, she was like a pre-Joan Collins in *Dynasty*, whom I really loved.

When Heather Menzies (who played Louisa) appeared in the movies, she wanted to publicize the fact that she was finally breaking away from her *Sound of Music* image and accepting more adult roles. In August 1973, she posed nude for *Playboy*.

“I met Alan on the plane,” recalled Francie, “and he just swept me off my feet.” Francie Karath was then

21, and Alan Callow was 22.

“Salzburg was in its prime back then, and we went all over.

We double-dated with Dan and Gabriele and with Charmian and an Austrian assistant director she was going out with.” Callow and Darath

were married about a year and a half later in Las Vegas, but the

marriage lasted only a year. “I was brought up that after high school you get married,” said Karath, “and we were just too young.”

But there was one marriage that began on location of *The Sound of Music* and is still going strong.

“Everyone saw Saul and Betty’s romance developing” said Pia

Arnold. “The whole company saw them fall in love, I think before they even saw it. They were both

shy in realizing what was happening to them. But we saw the intensity of their feelings.” Saul and Betty

spent all their free time in Salzburg together, and four years later they married.

Julie Andrews was tricked by family values: the American dream. The captain and the seven children — a perfect pre-packaged family. Doesn’t it sound like the Immaculate Conception? She abandons all those females and she achieves a rite of passage from girlhood to womanhood — virginity intact. It’s quite clearly implied by now that she never has sex with the Captain... too air-brushed; though, for some, she impersonates the ultimate dyke...

That whole *Sound of Music* is like a big Coming-Out story for everybody in that movie. Julie comes out of a convent, a whole single-sex system, the captain is coming out of this all male military thing. The kids are pretty much cloistered. Next they’re going out into the Alps towards Switzerland (Italy), because Austria has been invaded by the Nazi’s...

— *After having seen the film so many times, what would you remember as your favourite scene?*

The scene with the pink lemonade always fascinated me, with Baroness von Schraeder and the guy Max, I always loved him, he was a kind of smarmy Clark Gable type of man ... and there is Christopher Plummer... you know he hated the movie! He never approved of it...

The pink lemonade! I always thought there was something hidden in the meaning of the lemonade. The too-pinkness of it, the tartness. The sharp and the sweet.

— *How did you relate to the landscape presented in the film, did it look familiar to your everyday environment?*

Well, we travelled a lot. That whole landscape became part of my childhood imagination — kind of grew up with that fantasy landscape.

— *You didn’t relate to the film with a sense of your difference towards an all white cast in ‘The Sound the Music’?*

Not really, at that time I probably thought I was still white. I was a kid with an American accent, so people in Nigeria always asked me if my mother was (Black) American. I think it had to do with being transplanted from one culture to the other. I was born in the U.S., and went back to Nigeria at the age of seven. So a lot of my mind was pretty much gelled by then, my impressions of the world. I was an American kid who was slowly Nigerianized. In fact I didn’t really realize that I was black till I was about 9 years old, when the whole South African thing blew (Apartheid).

This had to do with TV. I used to have all these fantasies, even within my dreams I found out that my persona was a white character in my dreams. That I had red hair and green eyes, kind of like Julie Andrews.

As I got older I was constantly reminded of the depth of my skin color... People in Nigeria would tell me I was too dark. During one occasion I had to get sponsors to raise money. With two of my friends I went to this guy who owned an airline company, Flash Airlines, and a football team called Flash United. He liked my friends because they were lighter skinned, but he was pointing at me — ‘You, you are too black — got out this bleaching cream of his desk (from all places Harrods in London) and he said I should use it with sandpaper. I was horrified, and I thought: ‘Keep your loot, moron...’ I got hasselled a lot because I was darker than most people. Most of the people of my generation having been acquainted with the likes of Janet Jackson; the hacked off ribs, the sawed down nasal cartilage, their ideal is more like...

— *Julie Andrews?*

No, more the baroness Von Schraeder, she's more the glam poster girl... I'm sort of grateful for the whole alienation process of growing up. One fine day I found myself in Nigeria. I thought it was a vacation and I asked my mother when we were going back home: she said *We are home*. Uprooted. Displaced. Besides I had been promised we'd go back to Disneyland for my birthday. My birthday came and went. I was still in Nigeria and we didn't go to Disneyland. For years I could never wholly assimilate into the cultural landscape of Nigeria. I realised I wasn't fully Nigerian. I wasn't really Nigerian so I must be American. I get here and discover I'm not American either. I thought: 'No, Disneyland is not for me, really heartbreaking! Most importantly I realised I didn't *have* to be one or the other...

— *What about the Nigerian broadcast system; were there any important Nigerian filmmakers at that time?*

There are quite a number of prestigious ones; they were kind of syncretic, meshed together. You had Nigerian sitcoms, which were immensely popular—more so than American ones. The British productions were not half as popular as American ones which were so much more glamorous. No one was really into the British working class thing.... They would identify with Hollywood glitter, the gloss, the plush, ecetera...

—*Making a film yourself now, wouldn't remnants of 'The Sound of Music' slip into the whole thing?*

In a sense. The whole thrust of my work now is iconoclastic, at least concerning the standards I was raised with. There was a shift in my overall sensibility towards the constructed narratives of my childhood; no longer did I identify with the princess in *Sleeping Beauty*, but rather Carabosse—the “bad fairy”, excluded from the ceremony because she perpetually wore black. In *Snow White*, my empathies were with the Wicked Witch Queen, who (at least in the Disney version) was reminiscent of Grace Jones...

I guess with *The Sound of Music* the sort of connections I'd make now in my work would be the inverse, Maria = Joan of Arc and Herr Capitan = Giles de Rais, who goes down in legend as The Lord Blue Beard...

— *Did you ever rent 'The Sound of Music' again once back here in the U.S.?*

Never. I did once see fragments of it again when a friend bought it for her daughter—the first time since years. I didn't want to watch it. It's frightening: I had watched it too many times. How in the world did I relate! It's like a foreign country now.

¹ *The Sound of Music*

Starring: Julie Andrews & Christoffer Plummer. Co-starring: Richard Haydn. Eleanor Parker as the baroness. Music by Richard Rodgers. Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II. Screenplay: Ernest Lehman. Based on Rodgers & Hammerstein's Broadwayplay *The Sound of Music*; inspired on the biography of Maria von Trapp. Directed by Robert Wise.

² Todd Ayoung is an artist living and working in New York City; his most recent project is called “Western Civ., or Balls of History,” 1994.

³ Oneme Ekeh is a filmmaker living in New York City.

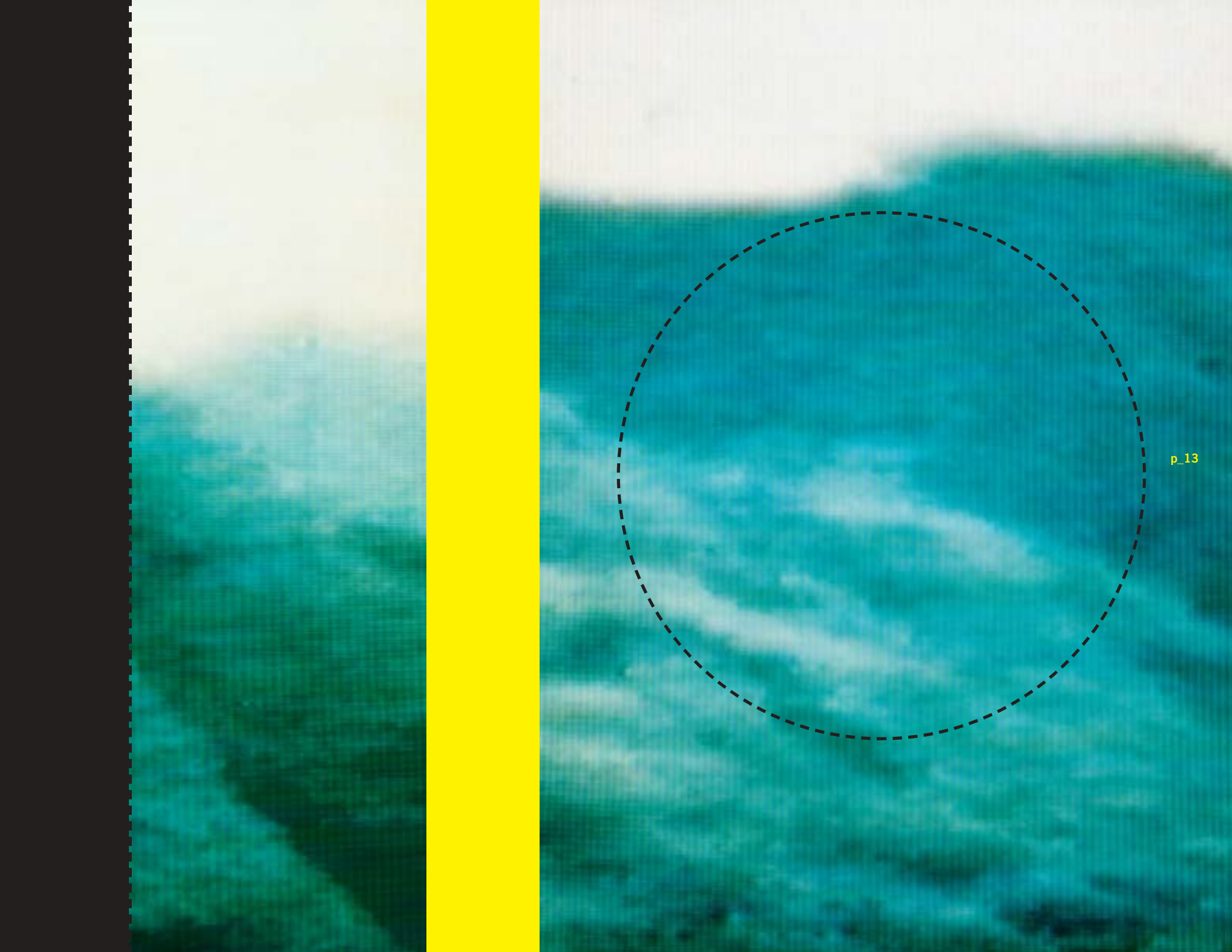
Julie Andrews's hair was dyed blond for her role of Maria, but that was not the original intention. “I came in for the hair tests,” recalled Andrews. “They always test your hair and makeup and wardrobe when you start a picture. I had natural blond highlights in my hair, but they said it was a little dark at the back of the neck. So they decided to put in more highlights to give it a blond effect. But the highlights bled, and my hair came out orange! We were all mortified! So to cover it up, they bleached my hair blond all over.”

“Chris and I were standing very close,” explained Andrews. “We were face to face, about an inch away from each other, looking into each other's eyes. We were just getting to the point where we would say ‘I love you,’ or we'd start kissing... and then those old arc lights would let out a loud ‘raspberry’! It was like a comment on our scene! Well, Chris and I would start laughing. We couldn't help it. Then we'd go back to the scene again, and those lights would start groaning at us again! Our giggling got even worse. In fact, it got to the point where we couldn't get through the scene!” After almost a dozen takes, there still wasn't any film of the kiss worth saving, so Wise finally called a break, sending everyone out for lunch.

**David Campbell,
a Denver truck
driver, watched
*The Sound of
Music* from the
same seat in the
same theater
every Sunday
for three years
and then,
when the theater
closed down,
bought the seat.**



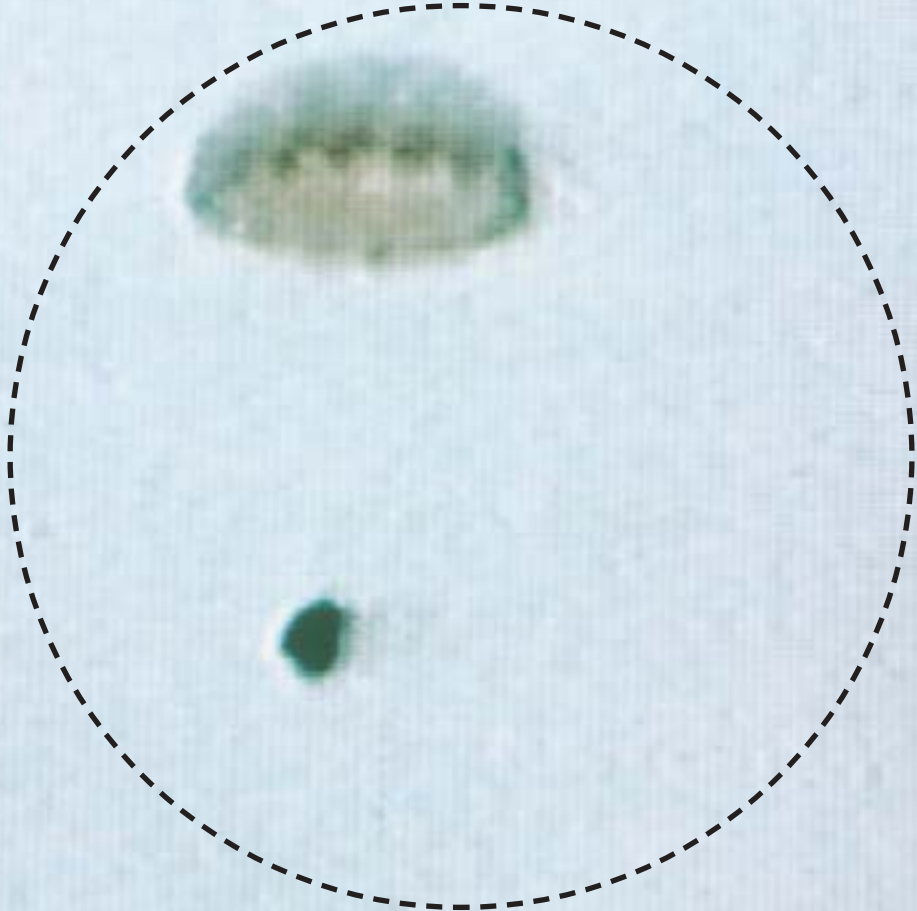
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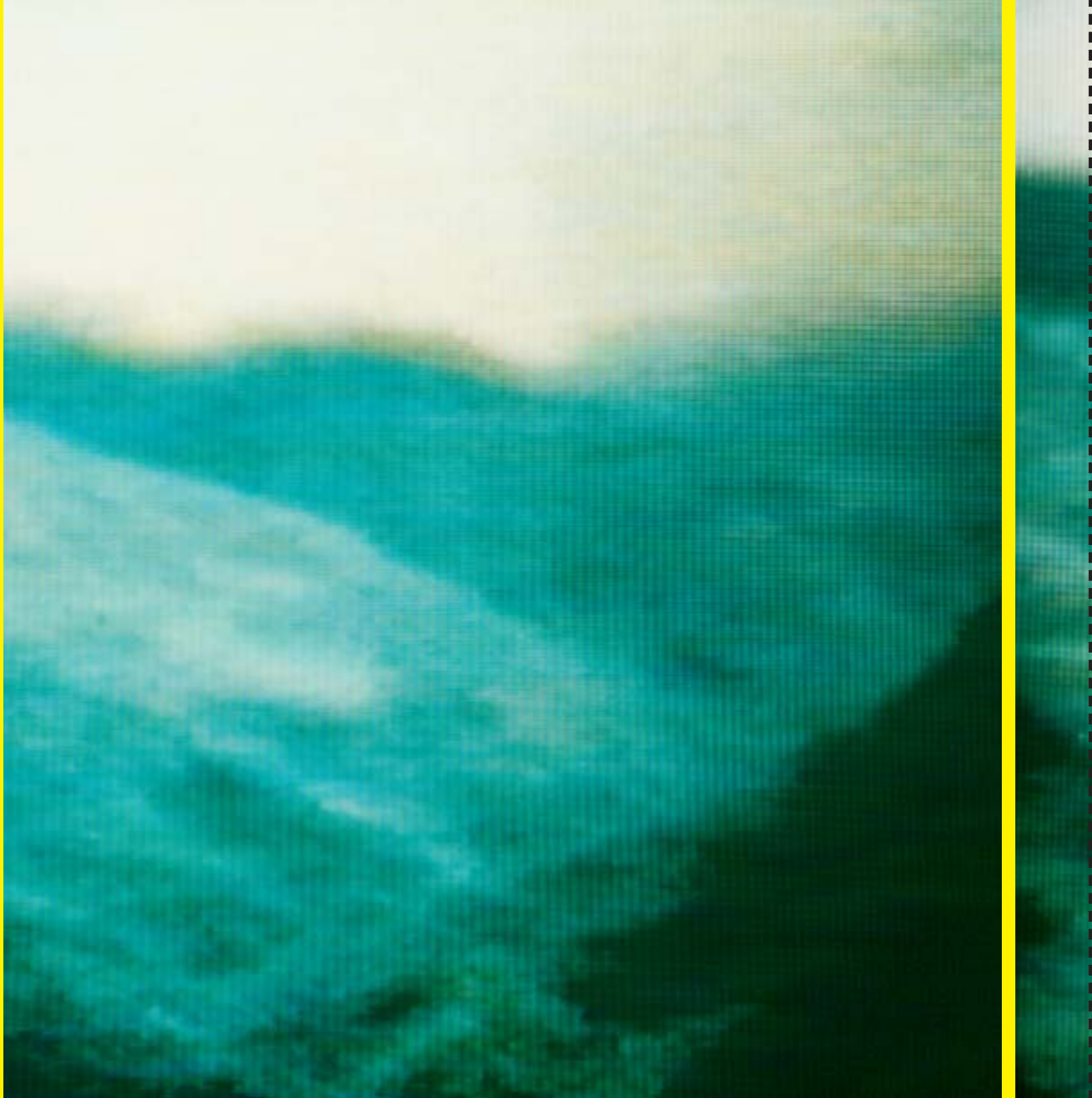


From all available evidence
no black man had ever set
foot in this tiny Swiss
village before I came.
I was told before arriving
that I would probably be
a “sight” for the village;
I took this to mean that
people of my complexion
were rarely seen
in Switzerland,
and also that city people
are always something of a
“sight” outside of the city.
It did not occur to me
—possibly because I am
an American— that there
could be people anywhere
who had never seen
a Negro.

In the village there is no
movie house, no bank,
no library, no theater;
very few radios, one jeep,
one station wagon; and,
at the moment
one typewriter, mine,
an invention which
the woman next door
to me here
had never seen.

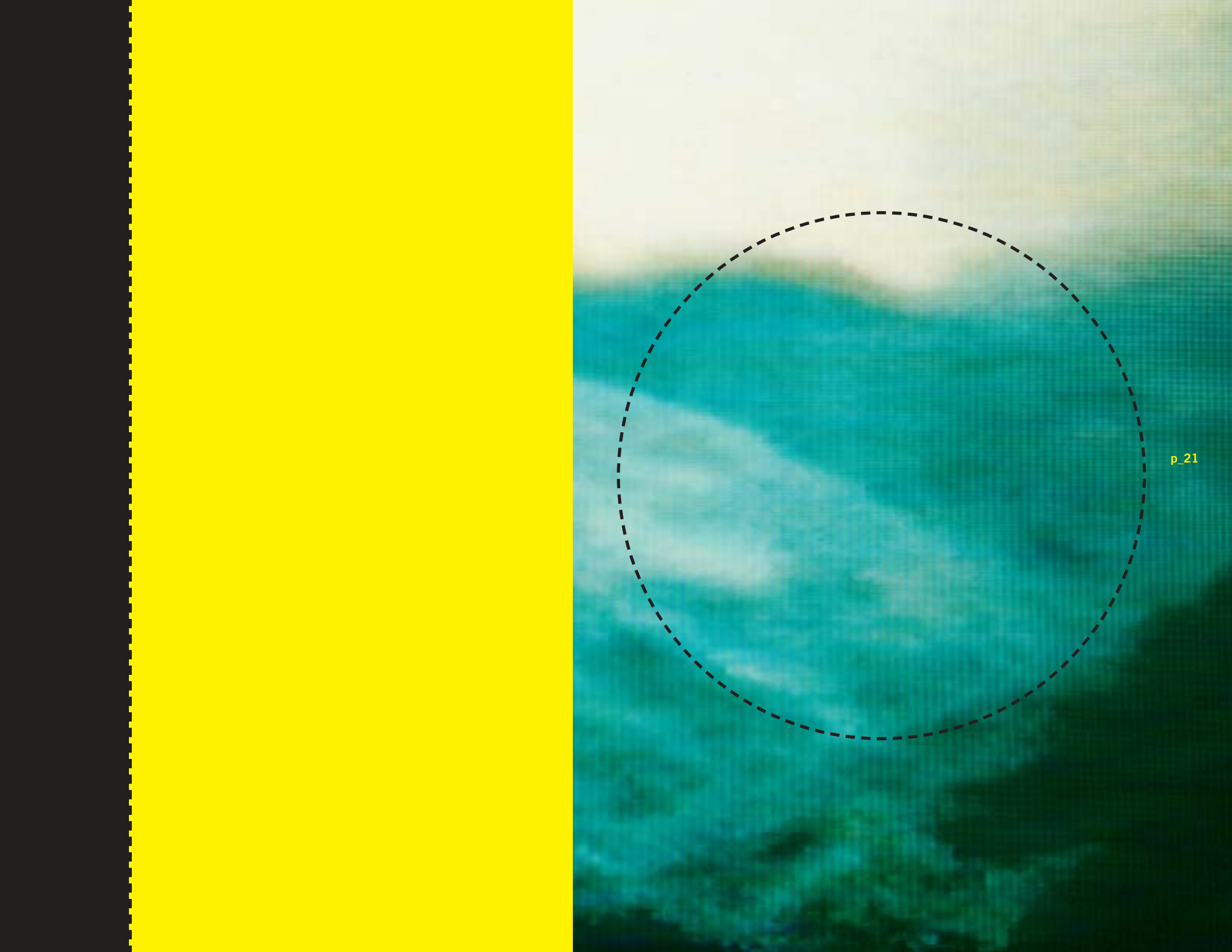
James Baldwin:
Notes of a Native Son,
in the chapter:
Stranger in the village













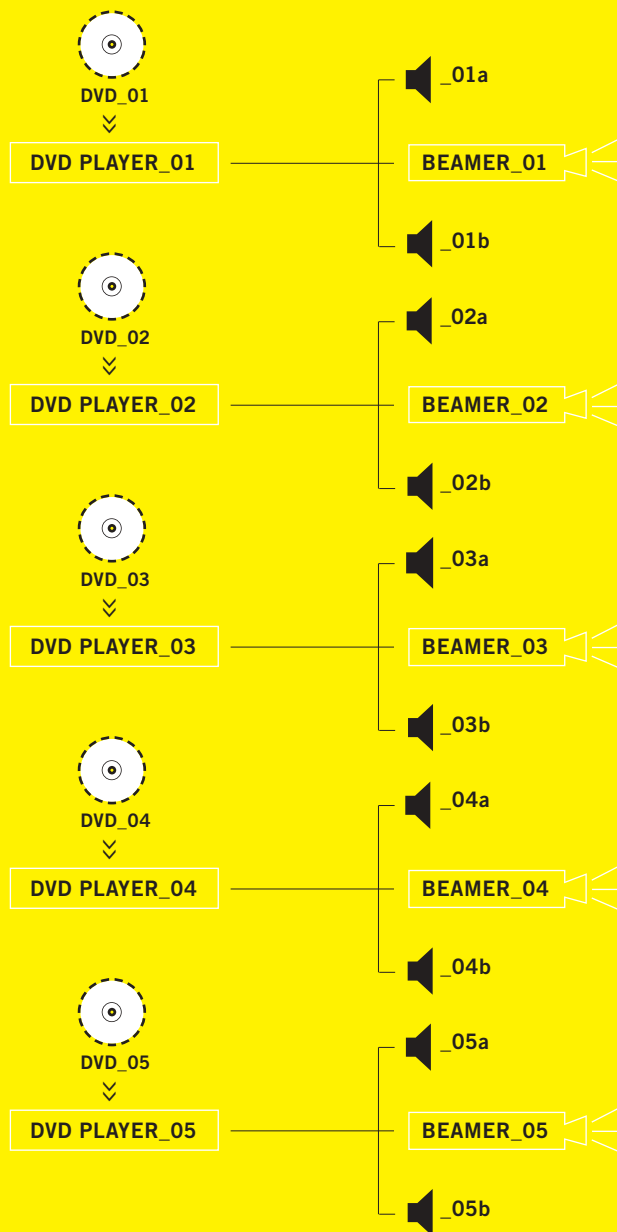
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**IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME
DON'T BRING ANY GEAR EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE ... / Johan Grimonprez**

_PRODUCED BY



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_TEXT CREDITS

pp. _02 – _09: Interviews on THE SOUND OF MUSIC were originally published in the monography IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT IF YOU COME AGAIN, ONLY NEXT TIME DON'T BRING ANY GEAR, EXCEPT A TEA KETTLE ...; (Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1994).
The title is quoted from Appell E. N. in ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN ETNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY.

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pp. _02 – _09: Excerpts from THE SOUND OF MUSIC, the Making of America's Favorite Movie by Julia Antopol Hirsch (Contemporary Books Inc., 1993).

pp. _14: Quote from NOTES OF A NATIVE SON by James Baldwin in the chapter STRANGER IN THE VILLAGE (Beacon Press, 1990).

_IMAGES

KIWIROKTOUR 1958, Derk Jan Dragt

_PHOTOGRAPHY

pp. _22: David Jacobs, Courtesy Yvon Lambert Gallery

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**Everybody
scrambled for
a night's
viewing of
Julie Andrews
starring in
*The Sound
of Music.***

Tabubil, Papua New Guinea

