

Session 2

COLONIALISM AND EXHIBITED OTHERS: Difference as Spectacle and Science

Colonialism and Exhibitions

- The colonial world became an exhibition for consumers
- aberrant in relation to Europe
- EXHIBITIONS—spectacle→science
- Anthropologists & ethnographic spectacles

- David MacDougall: “it seemed somehow strange that the person, the object of the anthropologist’s attention, should remain largely invisible to the anthropological audience. An early remedy...was to bring exotic people to museums, lectures and such popular venues as world fairs and colonial exhibitions”

- Franz Boas, Anthropological Hall, World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago
- Ishi, University of California’s Museum of Anthropology, under Alfred Kroeber

- Exhibits of “vanquished races”:
Chicago Columbian Exhibition of 1893,
Omaha Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898,
Buffalo Pan-American Exposition of 1901,
St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in 1904
- Ota Benga, Bronx Zoo
- 1894 Antwerp World’s Fair, reconstructed Congolese village
- museumizing others + bring viewers in colonial mother countries into “strange” worlds

Ethnographic Photography: Making Exhibits Travel



- In 1909-10, 866 million picture postcards posted in Great Britain – photography of indigenous people in native dress (or nakedness)
- Natural science, illustrations for taxonomies
- Spectacles produced for mass audiences around the world

→ Stereoscopic cards



→ creating human models: comparison & classification

→ demonstrate & celebrate European power over others

→ close to nature, without culture

→ photographs of assimilation



→ photographs of servitude

