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ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION[1]

Steve Feld

"Home movies are the closest thing to life itself."
Advertisement

"If I went over there, I'd see a bunch of grass and a bunch of trees. You can tell about as much about a country as you can by looking at moving pictures."
Governor George Wallace

"Hey, . . . what ya see ain't what ya get!"
Teenage filmmaker

"Every photographic image is a sign, above all, of someone's investment in the sending of a message."
Allan Sekula

The use of film as a medium of presentation and research in ethnomusicology[2] is an area marked by considerable recent interest, though hardly without some confusion. The interest seems due to the explosive fascination with audio-visual media in both the humanities and the social sciences. The confusion, it seems, is due to several forms of inability to disentangle the manner in which one deals with audio-visual media in a humanistic or social scientific context from the popular roles these media play in our larger cultural milieu.

Our media awareness derives from two daily cultural contexts of involvement. One is "entertainment"–Hollywood feature films, network television, and social moviegoing. The other is "documentation"–news reports, photojournalism, home movies and photographs, educational and instructional media. The interest in media is in part a testimony to their pervasiveness in shaping our communicational settings. On the other hand, failure to examine with some care what judgments and values derive from these variously overlapping contexts (e.g., ideas about film *qua* truth, reality, illusion, fantasy, reporting, showing vs. telling, education, mechanical reproduction, symbolic communication) can easily create a trivializing and unscholarly effect on the use, discussion, and evaluation of film in ethnomusicology.

Given this perception of our state of affairs, the purpose of this paper is to enhance the interest and reduce the confusion. I hope to demonstrate that there are innovative and exciting potentials for film in ethnomusicological work, but that reaching these potentials requires attaining a kind of conceptual clarity that does not, at the moment, totally prevail.

My format will be largely synthetic but also suggestive, and my emphasis

will be conceptual rather than technological.[3] In the first portion of the paper I discuss the situation, trends, problems, and scholarly status of film work in ethnomusicology.[4] In the next part I present a discussion largely drawn from recent work in the anthropology of visual communication. Here I pose some problems and approaches to the social organization surrounding the scholarly uses of film, and argue for the necessity of a certain kind of social organization that is most relevant to studying and sharing ideas and information about human musicality and music making.

I

There are several ways to document the development of ethnomusicological interest in film. A quick look at the publication history of the journal ETHNOMUSICOLOGY provides one starting point. Although the journal had a regular "techniques and devices" column beginning in 1959, its first mention of films appeared in the form of "special bibliographies" of dance films in 1963 (Kurath 1963a, 1963b) continued in 1964 and 1965 (Braun 1964a, 1964b, 1965). These bibliographies (more properly "filmographies") covered the areas of Africa, Afro-America, Asia, and Australia. Also in 1965, the journal carried its first review of visual materials, namely a film for teaching Hawaiian hula, and a filmstrip of Hawaiian musical instruments (Kealiinohomoku 1965). Publication of filmography materials continued with a list of "folk music & folk dance" films (Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress 1967), a list of "documentary films on ethnomusicological subjects" (Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film 1968), and Polynesian Dance films (Miller 1970). Film reviews have been sporadic; after the initial 1965 effort, one appeared in 1968 (Snyder 1968), then not another until January 1973 (Montgomery 1973). Beginning with the May 1973 issue of the journal, William Ferris became the Film Review Editor; from that point through the September 1975 issue, five reviews have appeared (Vignos 1973, Dwyer-Shick 1974, Gillis 1975, Feld 1975a, 1975b).

Looking at other ethnomusicology journals, it is only recently that articles have been published, for instance Kubik's papers (1965, 1972) in *African Music,* and Dauer's (1969) in *The Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council.* Others have appeared, also recently, in anthropology journals (Rouget 1965, 1971) and film journals (Dauer 1966, Lomax, Bartenieff and Paulay 1969, Lomax 1971). Similarly, reviewing the major book length statements on the field and its methodology (Kunst 1959, Nettl 1956, 1964, Merriam 1964, Hood 1971, Lomax 1968) we find an abrupt shift from no statements on film at all, to full blown discussion of film production (Hood 1971, chapter 5) as a *basic* skill, and film analysis (Lomax 1968: chapters 10 and 12, especially pp. 263-264) as a *basic* means for data retrieval. Hood and

Lomax treat the making and analysis of film as a principled and central ethnomusicological concern, like the writing of research monographs or preparation of transcriptions.

The last ten years have also seen a growing concern for adequate cataloging of films. Major filmographies have been prepared for Africa (CIFES 1967), the Pacific (CIFES 1970), and North America (Williams and Bird 1973). In addition to specific catalogues of ethnographic films published by distributors (e.g., Audio-Visual Services, Pennsylvania State University 1972 and 1975-1976 supplement), the Comité du Film Ethnographique in Paris published two general catalogues of ethnographic films (CdFE 1955, 1956), and Karl Heider's *Films for Anthropological Teaching,* sponsored by the American Anthropological Association (first through its Program in Ethnographic Film, and now through its expanded Society for the Anthropology of Visual Communication) has gone through several editions (5th Edition 1972; 6th Edition in preparation; to appear in Fall 1976). This too has been influential. A joint project of the International Folk Music Council and UNESCO produced the first international catalogue of films on "traditional music & dance" (Kennedy 1970); my own filmography of African humanities (1972) covered films on African music.

In addition to articles and bibliographic publications, there are other good indications toward deeper involvement with film. Formal and informal film screenings at the annual meetings of the Society for Ethnomusicology have expanded, and the audiences have become larger and more aware of various kinds of films made and used for different purposes. In 1973, at the Urbana meetings, I led a study session on film and film analysis that was well attended by a lively and enthusiastic group; several people have since written to me to suggest that a non-hardware film workshop be a regular activity at the annual meetings.

Recently, the advertisement pages of the Journal have carried notes from film distributors, and the Newsletter has begun to publish notices of film activity, training opportunities, and the like.

This, of course, is only a small part of the story. Many ethnomusicologists have collaborated with filmmakers or made films for a variety of purposes. To mention just some of the better known and more widely distributed 16mm films: Nicholas England has worked with ethnographic filmmaker John Marshall on some of his many films of the Kalahari Bushmen; *Bitter Melons* and *Num Tchai* are the most widely known by ethnomusicologists. England and Marshall have collaborated more recently in Ghana. Johanna Spector has worked in film for several years in the Middle East, recently directing *The Samaritains: The People of the Sacred Mountain.* John Blacking participated in the production of Derek Lamport's *Murudruni,* a film about circumcision rites and cultural transmission among the Pedi in

South Africa. Robert Garfias is the editor of the University of Washington Press' Ethnic Music and Dance Series, and has himself made several films in the series. Mantle Hood has made *Atumpan,* dealing with talking drums of the Ashanti of Ghana, and promoted the making and distribution of musical performance films at the former Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA. William Ferris has made several films in the Mississippi Delta in collaboration with the Center for Southern Folklore. Gei Zantzinger has collaborated with Andrew Tracey and the International Library of African Music to film dances of South Africa, and most recently, Chopi Mgodo performances. And after several years of work in cantometrics and choreometrics, Alan Lomax and his collaborators have assembled *Dance and Human History.* This work has blossomed in the last ten years.

In France, the work of major ethnomusicologists has been represented in several films published by the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, in conjunction with the Comité du Film Ethnographique of the Musée de l'Homme. Gilbert Rouget has had a keen interest in film since his involvement in the 1946 Ogooué-Congo expedition to Equatorial Africa. On this expedition ethnographers and filmmakers collaborated to produce the first films made in Africa with original soundtracks of musical and ethnographic sophistication (see Rouch 1975:53-54). The best known of the three films made during this mission is *Au Pays des Pygmées.* In the past fifteen years, Rouget has made three important films, each with the participation of Jean Rouch; these are *Sortie de Novices de Sakpata* made in Dahomey, *Batteries Dogon,* made in Mali, and *Danses des Reines à Porto-Novo,* also in Dahomey. During his research in the Solomon Islands on 'Are'Are panpipe music, Hugo Zemp made *Bambous Frappés,* and then in nearby Ontong Java, *Danses Polynésiennes Traditionelles.* Zemp also collaborated with Daniel and Christa deCoppet on *'Are'Are Massina,* and filmed again during his recently completed fieldwork among the Are'Are. In the Central African Republic, Simha Arom made *L'arc musical Ngbaka,* and then, with Geneviève Dournon-Taurelle, among the Gbaya, *Les Enfants de la Danse.* Among the Zarma-Songhay in Niger, Bernard Surugue has made two films, *Godié*, on the construction and playing of the one-stringed bowed lute, and *Goudel,* on possession dances; more recently he has made *Le Balafon,* concerning the construction and performance of the Bambara xylophone. At a meeting of the Département d'ethnomusicologie at the Musée de l'Homme in the Spring of 1974, I had a chance to see the workprint of films in progress by Bernard Lortat-Jacob, one concerning instrument construction, made during fieldwork with the Berbers of North Africa, another, made with Jean-Dominique Lajoux of the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, on traditional vocal and accordion music in a region near the Franco-Italian border. All of this work (with the exception of Rouget's first two films) dates since 1968.

In Germany, the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film in Göttingen established the Encyclopaedia Cinematographica in 1952; this collection is comprised of research films in three areas: Biology, Ethnology, and Technical Sciences. The Institute has published their catalog in English (Wolf 1972, 1974-1975); in 1968 they prepared a special list of their films relating to ethnomusicology (Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film 1968). An overview of the Institute's aims and methods specifically related to music and dance study is found in Dauer (1969). The Institute is also responsible for the publication of the journal *Research Film/Le Film de Recherche/Forschungsfilm.*

Although I have learned that film is being used by ethnomusicologists in Denmark, Romania, Russia, and several other European countries, I am unfortunately ignorant of these activities.

This too, is merely the surface. Photographic and film equipment have become a basic part of the toolkit taken to the field by ethnomusicologists. Many have used visual products to create illustrative material for lectures, books, and records. If we were to conduct a survey of fieldworkers in ethnomusicology, it would most probably show that in the last ten years virtually miles of silent super 8mm and 16mm film have been exposed, and countless slide and print images made. Like many anthropologists, ethnomusicologists have used this material to advantage not in the mass distribution situation, but in their own classrooms (see Goodman 1975), as a valuable resource when contextualized by verbal accounts.

Aside from ethnomusicologists *per se,* ethnographic, documentary, and educational filmmakers have conventionally filmed music and musicians. Music making has been prominent in many of Jean Rouch's films, like *Yenendi de Gangel, Tourov et Bitti,* and the *Sigui* series, to mention but a few of the most recent. Among documentary filmmakers of the American cinéma-vérité ("uncontrolled" documentary) school, one need only think of D. A. Pennebaker's film about Bob Dylan, *Don't Look Back,* and the whole wave of concert films (made in 16 mm and blown up to 35 mm or 70 mm commercial screen format). Mixtures of portrait and performance are also found in the blues films of Les Blank. And as ethnomusicology becomes a larger part of the classroom material of music education, this too is reflected in trends in educational films. The twenty film *Discovering Music* series of BFA Educational Media thus includes titles on African, Amerindian, Japanese, Indian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and American Folk musics, in addition to standard subjects (such as music of the middle ages, renaissance, baroque period) and contemporary ones (such as jazz and electronic music).

In the last few years as well, we are beginning to see films by filmmakers from cultures that have previously only been the object of study; and music and music making are among their concerns. N. Moise Zé's film, *Le*

Mvet (see Feld 1975b) is the first African music film by a professional African filmmaker; Francis Bebey, also of Cameroun, and well known for his guitar music and poetry, as well as his books on African radio (Bebey 1963) and music (Bebey 1969), is also now making films. In North America, American Indian filmmakers Larry Bird and George Burdeau have produced a series of films for KSPS-TV in Spokane, Washington, and National Educational Television; the musical sequences in these films, and overall use of music on the soundtrack, demonstrates an orientation to sound unlike that of documentary filmmakers working in the tradition of European and American film conventions.

Thus, the proliferation of interest in ethnomusicology film is readily documented by increased activities in the last ten years. The interest substantiated, I would like to turn to the nature of the products themselves, and to my second claim, namely that the interest goes hand in hand with a certain confusion about what makes film interesting to begin with. I will thus turn back to discussing some of the literature and films just mentioned, not for purposes of assessing their individual merit or aesthetic qualities, but to focus the discussion conceptually.

Consider the ways that films have been discussed in the journal. Generally there occur three kinds of comments. One is content description, translation of visuals to words. Another concerns the technology of the film. Another is how the film may be used in classrooms.

When we observe the verbal descriptions of visually selected, encoded, and structured images we see an interesting tendency. The images are described as if they were real. But there is a difference between a man playing a drum and pictures of a man playing a drum. The former is a natural event, the latter a mediated symbolic event. The former is once observed and experienced. The latter is a structured selection for the purposes of communicating something of that observed experience (see Worth and Gross 1974). Reviewers seem to not make the difference. We may be told that the film depicts a man playing a drum but we are rarely told what particular kind of selection (spatially, temporally, framing, etc.) we are being shown and how this is purposive. I believe this is a consequence of not approaching film from the point of view of symbolic communication, not being aware of our own cultural categories of spatial and temporal selecting for the purposes of breaking down aspects of real events to make communications about the entirety. When we read a review of a book we are frequently told the point of view, biases, and aims of the writer, and how these are manifest in the particular selection and arrangement of information that the writer has chosen. When we read reviews of films this is not the case. It is what is "in the images" that is stressed, not how the images have been selected, put together, and ordered so that the filmmaker communicates a point of view

and aim. The implicit claim is that the pictures are intrinsically meaningful, that the camera passively records what is real and then the filmmaker simply presents this. That the filmmaker systematically makes selections in every stage of the planning, shooting, and editing, and that these choices constitute the way interpretive communication with the film medium works, seems to be outside of the conscious awareness of many.

There is also a fascination with the technology of film, and it tends to be substituted for discussion of how specific technology articulates with particular aims and selecting by the filmmaker. A recent review tells us what kind of camera the filmmaker used. Why? Does this explain why the images look the way they do? Stressing the technology implicitly stresses tools over and above the articulation of ideas, concepts, and concerns by using the technology in a particular way. As Paul Byers has written, just as pencils and typewriters don't write books, "cameras don't take pictures" (Byers 1966). People take pictures; using a variety of instruments and a variety of imaging conventions and strategies, they attempt to communicate feelings, concerns, stories, and experiences. Without a tie to some relevant dimension of the structure and intent of a particular communication—the way it is shaped—commentary on the type of hardware preferred by a filmmaker is trivial. How a mode and manner of structuring articulates with a problem, idea, or story is not trivial.

Reviews also like to tell us what kind of classroom a film is suited for. This is a carry-over from the audio-visual aids approach to film, a favorite ideology of academic film people, one that is perhaps more suited to the military than to education. It strikes me as peculiar that this is isolated; we are not told what verbal information is required to profitably use a film in an educational setting. Nor are we told to what relevant ethnomusicological issue, to what problem or concern area a discussion or study of the film might be illuminating. It is the content area of the film that is stressed, and how it corresponds to some content area in the curriculum.

I believe that this approach is also trivializing. It is underlied by two of our particularly strong cultural myths—that film is entertainment, and that film is a show and tell item that bears some intrinsic meaning. Throughout my entire experience in schools, films were shown when teachers were sick, out of town at meetings, or used on the last day of classes, or as a "treat" for the class right after an examination. I do not think that my experience is unique; what is more, it was as predictable in graduate school as it was in grade school. Furthermore, I do not ever remember a discussion of a film that dealt with any more than the content, assuming it to be real, nor can I recall ever being asked to read or otherwise prepare for seeing a film.

I think these tendencies are indicative of the confused unscholarly manner we unconsciously choose and use for dealing with film. I have rarely

read a review of an academic film that scrutinizes it the way reviews are expected to scrutinize academic books. This derives, I believe, from the expectation that film is and can be no more than an adjunct, a form of entertainment, that is, in scholarly terms, frivolous, or simply the product of technology that "objectively records" natural events and truths rather than of a complex symbolic communication system.

This level of confusion and ambivalence is also apparent in how we relate film to verbal and print accounts of what the film is about and how it is made. An interesting folkloric theme in our culture is that "a picture is worth a thousand words." Frequently this bit of folklore leads filmmakers and their naive academic counterparts to statements that the film is "total"; that "there is nothing else to say," especially in print. When films are made, and used in an academic context for humanistic or scientific purposes, these folk myths and their manifestations amount to a certain form of stubborn anti-intellectualism which vitiates many purposes of film for communication.

It seems clear that depending upon what one knows, what one wants to know, and how one attempts to use film in this process, a thousand words can not only equal but greatly surpass the information level of the still or moving image.[5] In the context of documentary presentation and study, it seems hardly contestable that there are uses for the printed word. Different kinds of information are handled best in different types of media. To those who argue that accompanying film with print materials destroys the fabric of the film medium, I would reply that it is the use of the soundtrack of the film to make a lecture, thereby cramming an exasperating amount of verbal information onto the film format itself, that virtually ruins the filmic quality more than any printed text ever could.

There are some happy situations where the publication of a monograph fills in and contextualizes the details of an existing film. Surugue, for example, recently (1972) published his monograph on possession music of the Zarma-Songhay. This monograph gives precise ethnographic, acoustical, and organological information on the *gòjé,* thus perfectly complementing his film *Godié*, which documents the techniques of construction, consecration, and performance of this instrument.

The Encyclopaedia Cinematographica has endeavored to provide short descriptive brochures to accompany their distributed films. I have found that the quality of these booklets varies considerably; some are sparse, others thick, some quite superficial, others very informative. These booklets are mailed in the film can, and not published separately. Hence, when ordering a film not used previously there is no precise way to determine what type and quality of information about the film one is to have.

In the field of ethnographic films, Karl Heider has championed the need for and utility of ethnographic companion modules, designed to contextualize

and enhance the value of films for teaching (Heider 1974:3-4). Modules by Heider (1972b) for the film *Dead Birds,* and by Rundstrom, Rundstrom, and Bergum (1973) for the film *The Path,* have appeared, and several others are in preparation. The first ethnomusicological films to be provided with such a modular companion are *1973 Mgodo wa Mbanguzi* and *1974 Mgodo wa Mkandeni.* These represent the important collaborative work of Gei Zantzinger and Andrew Tracey. This module (Zantzinger and Tracey 1976) provides basic ethnographic and musical information (including valuable material on the texts) as well as discussion on the manner in which the films were conceptualized and made. Combined with Hugh Tracey's landmark *Chopi Musicians* (1948) and the International Library of African Music's over twenty recordings of Chopi music, these materials make available a greatly valuable teaching and research resource of tremendous depth.

Most of the publication in ethnomusicology concerning film is in the area of film for research; this is hardly surprising inasmuch as one would not expect those who have used film for illustrative purposes to do much writing about it. Dauer stresses the advantages of using film for making "an uninterrupted synchronous recording of a complete process" (1969:226) such as song, instrumental music, or instrument making. In doing so, the Institute's purpose "is to produce informational content, not beautiful pictures" (ibid: 227) so that the films can be used for comparative research or frame-by-frame analysis.

Kubik's paper (1972) elaborating his work with research film points out that the kind of material necessary to answer preconceived research questions is film of musical events in their entirety, but with a highly selected frame. Kubik used 8mm silent film to record East African xylophone performances; simultaneously the music was recorded on audio tape, and precise measurements of the instrument's tuning were also made on the tape. For transcription, however, only the silent film was used. The transcription was first made in graphic notation, like tablature. The film was viewed frame by frame, and whenever a key was struck a mark was made on the graph. Then a basic pulse unit was determined by calculating the shortest visible point between two entries, and the graphic notation rewritten according to this rhythmic division, with the values for the notes given in Hz. Finally the speed of the music was calculated. As a result of having made many such transcriptions since 1962, Kubik also realizes the problems inherent in doing analysis from film—the possibility that certain levels of description might be an artifact of the technology.[6] He thus cautions:

> The danger exists, in interpreting transcriptions from film, of over or under-estimating the importance of small deviations. By comparing them with the size of the basic pulses and other structural characteristics of the music transcribed we must find out in every case what are *intentional* and what are *accidental* (tolerated) deviations from rhythmic regularity" (Kubik 1972:33).

Thus, Kubik has demonstrated that with inexpensive equipment, a set of research questions (like his own concerning "inherent rhythms" in African music, and the motor organization of four hand xylophone playing), and an analysis method, one can retrieve vitally important levels of data from film. His method is also open to test and verification by independent analysis, as well as to cross-checking through traditional methods of transcription from audio tape recordings.

In France, Gilbert Rouget has taken the use of film for research in another direction by combining the use of cinema to recover basic data with its capacity for presentation of research information. Rouget has written two short informative papers concerning his two recent films (on *Batteries Dogon* see Rouget 1965; on *Danses des Reines à Porto Novo* see Rouget 1971). Each of these papers, and the films, bring out three factors: an ethnomusicological problem, an appropriate technological approach for recovering the data, and a statement on the relation of film to the nature of the problem, the data, and its presentation.

In *Batteries Dogon* the problem involved the organization of motor behaviors in polyrhythmic drumming and percussion (idiophone) music. The technological approach was to use wireless synchronous sound recording methods for sampling sets of ensembles. The method was to film in two ways–first to separate the players and rhythms, then to film the ensemble. Filming was done in the Bandiagara cliffs, the traditional home of the Dogon, where the rhythms were first demonstrated by the striking of stones against larger surfaces of the cliff; latter sequences involve playing slit logs, and drums with hook sticks. A final sequence has the same rhythmic structure successively played on rock, then log drum, and finally on the skin-headed drum. Another sequence presents sections of footage from a funeral which allows us to see drumming in context (ensembles of 5 to 10 drums, and dancers). The film thus presents materials both for analysis and synthesis, by juxtaposing preconceived controlled sequences with naturally occurring ones.

In *Danses des Reines à Porto Novo,* the problem was the synchrony of music and movement. The extremely innovative technological approach was to devise a system for recording and presenting synchronous sound footage where the images were in slow motion and the sound was stretched and kept at pitch, in sync with the picture. This research technique is combined with traditional documentary devices (still photographs, narration) as well as with real time footage of the palace context. There are five dance sequences. The fourth dance is shown twice, the second time using the sequences in synchronous slow motion (at one half their normal speed).

These films are very important both for their subject matter and innovative techniques, and perhaps more because they do not fall into the trap of artificially dichotomizing "research" film and "presentation" film.

Both show that when edited together with purposive interpretive images, analytic footage is interesting to watch and is no less filmic than any other kind of image. Rather than have the analytic materials kept away in an archive for use only by specialists, Rouget has shown us the kind of research data we are capable of obtaining and in addition, how the data fit into a larger picture. While the materials exist for analysis and can be recovered and printed from the entire footage, audiences can also have access to seeing and hearing the fascinating decomposition and synthesis of Dogon polyrhythms, and the delicate and complex synchrony of the Porto Novo court dances.

Although none of the work in cantometrics specifically utilized film, it seems important here to mention the use Alan Lomax and his collaborators in the choreometrics project have made of film for extracting data on world dance movement styles (see particularly Lomax, Bartenieff, and Paulay 1969, and Lomax 1975). Drawing upon the methodologies of students of body motion communication (Birdwhistell 1970, Scheflen 1973, Condon and Ogston 1966) and culture and communication more generally (Bateson and Mead 1942, Hall 1959), Lomax and his colleagues began macro and micro analysis of dance and work movement pattern from a film sample of cultures of the world, developed a coding and rating system, established world style areas, and generated and tested (computationally) hypotheses about the correlation of dance style and other cultural elements. As a byproduct of this work, Lomax has travelled the world tracking down ethnographic films with valuable dance footage, has urged the propriety of extensive ethnographic filming (1973), and has even written some guidelines for filmmakers (1971) aimed at helping to make larger amounts of commercial film footage usable for analytic purposes.

In the major statement to date on the use of film documentation as a field methodology, Hood (1971:269-283) outlines some aspects of motion picture technology for ethnomusicologists. While he stresses that ethnomusicologists should aspire to a professional level of competence in recording and still photography, he notes that due to expense and lack of qualified personnel, film's role in ethnomusicological work is not yet clear. Hood provides his own suggestions based on field experience (making *Atumpan*); these relate to technological alternatives, different styles of ethnomusicological film (narrative, documentary, documentary-narrative), editing, and crews.

Among Hood's most interesting comments to filmmakers and ethnomusicologists are a list of nine "violations" (Hood 1971:208-209) in film which he feels minimize their usefulness to ethnomusicology. I am ambivalent about those "violations." I too have seen and choked over countless insensitive, out-of-context, artificial, insulting films, films ruined by unaware filmmakers, slickness, monotonous lecture style narrations, staged and gimmicked action, theatrical license, unplanned and uninspiring visuals, and arbitrary usage of

musical materials. Yet Hood's chastizing of these is incongruous with his own film and his suggestions for making film. Hood's suggestions for documentary and narrative approaches derive completely from the same pretty picture tradition that has made so many of these awful films. The scripted and directed story telling documentary tradition, with its Hollywood heritage, is precisely the tradition that so many documentary and nontheatrical filmmakers rebelled against in the early 1960's with the development of cinéma-vérité filming in America; the ideological split between observational and scripted documentary cinema helped clarify why the theatrical documentary film was as arbitrary and manipulative as the slick fictional feature films.

On the one hand Hood puts down the "cyclops" approach (fixed cameras) as boring and unvisual; on the other hand he puts down filmmakers for all of the things they have done in their own hostile reaction to "objective" or static means of filmmaking. But *Atumpan* and many other films I have mentioned use both of these poles in filming and then rely on a professional editor to salvage the result. When this happens, the film must fall back on the use of narration to help the bad cuts pass; frequently too it is exactly this type of situation which forces editors to use all of their slick film techniques in order to create the illusion of narrative and causal linear continuity in the film, as the flow of the images does not accomplish this by itself. I think it is the case that many of the procedures and styles that Hood advocates are the very causes of the aspects of film that he finds so appalling.

In sum then, several factors have been singled out. First, there are some exciting thinking and achievement in the area of research film in ethnomusicology and some overall tendencies of note. However, recent examples of suggestions for making documentary illustration film, and recent canons of film criticism in this Journal fall short in coming up to a similar level of sophistication and explicitness. While Hood and others have taken the important step toward deeper and more meaningful ethnomusicological involvement with film, there is a confusion, an element of unawareness of our own cultural predispositions towards film, that is still unresolved.

II

I will now provide a larger context into which we can fit the levels of interest and confusion that have been characterized in ethnomusicological work with film. This is a perspective that has evolved in the areas of "ethnographic film" and "visual anthropology" and now forms part of the "anthropology of visual communication" (see Worth 1974 on the switching of labels). The factors I have noted *qua* ethnomusicology have had a long and persistent history in anthropology, dating to the time of the camera's

invention. The concern is a common one—use of visual methods and means for discovering, exploring, and presenting facets of human being. Hence in using film for ethnomusicological research we need not reinvent the wheel. The anthropology of visual communication has struggled with these ideas scientifically and humanistically, and has provided some conceptual clarity which emerged as a product of critical perspectives on how people of one culture tend to image people of other cultures for research, study, and sharing.

From the time of its inception the camera was used for scholarly concerns. At the same time that academic ethnomusicology was being born (the 1880's) Felix Regnault was using film to study body movement and posture cross-culturally. In the field the camera was used as early as 1898, when Alfred Cort Haddon, zoologist turned anthropologist, filmed during the Cambridge expedition to the Torres Straits. For Regnault the camera was a research tool, capable of creating basic data for analysis; for Haddon, and many anthropologists after him, it was a supplement, an instrument of salvage, a peripheral aid that could be used at random, without the rigor that one need devote to verbal and written collection procedures (for accounts of the history of ethnographic film, see De Brigard 1975, i.p.; on the history of research film, see Michaelis 1955). The tension between the development of research methodology rationales for the use of film, and its use for commercial, educational, and other illustrative purposes, has been upon us ever since.

In the late 1930's, when Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead were using still photographs and 16mm film for personality and child development studies in Bali and New Guinea (Bateson and Mead 1942, and the *Character Formation* films), other famous ethnographers of the day, like Marcel Griaule in France, and Melville Herskovits in the United States, were using film as an adjunct, for either commercial purposes or for the sake of record and posterity. Today when we read *Balinese Character* and watch *Trance and Dance in Bali, Bathing Babies, Childhood Rivalry in Bali and New Guinea, First Days in the Life of a New Guinea Baby, Karba's First Years,* or *A Balinese Family,* we see an extraordinarily provocative and rich demonstration of the lasting value of film when used in an explicit program of research. The questions Bateson and Mead were asking continue to be central to the anthropological study of personality and ethos. The data they gathered with their 22,000 feet of 16mm cine film and 25,000 still photographs, the ways they hypothesized about and interpreted them, and the ways they presented and published them so that others could share and scrutinize the data as well as the mode of analysis, remain a model for the use of still photography and cinema for research about human behavior.

On the other hand, what do we have today when we return to Griaule's

Au Pays Dogon, and *Sous les Masques Noirs*? We have commercial movies, at times embarrassing to watch, and more painful to listen to as we are subjected to their "insensitive editing, Oriental music, and [a] newsreel style commentary more befitting of a sportscast" (Rouch 1974:39). When we compare this to the legacy of Griaule's elegant *Masques Dogon* (1938) or *Dieu d'Eau* (1948) we see that the films give us little more than some picture postcards of the Dogon as they appeared in the 1930's, framed and edited according to the conventions of European commercial cinema at the time. The empathy and affection so clear in Griaule's writings in no way surfaces in the films; the ethnographic temperament and spirit of the author was lost in the translation forever.

The situation is similar with Herskovits. Recently some of his footage was salvaged, transferred to safety film, and viewed publicly. What one sees is virtually incomprehensible. With Herskovits gone, and no notes for us to decipher the contexts of what we are seeing and how we are to look at it, the value of the footage is quite reduced. Again, when we compare this to the enormously rich products of Herskovits' skill at descriptive historical ethnography (such as the volumes on *Dahomey,* 1938) we are left all the more with the realization that sporadic, illustrative, commercial, and other adjunct uses of the camera are not unquestionably important and do not produce unquestionably meaningful documents for present and future generations of viewers (with scholarly or other concerns).

I do not mean to demean Griaule or Herskovits; both were superb anthropologists. While many had used film and thought about its utility before their time, film was looked upon with utter disdain by many academics. Like us all, Griaule and Herskovits suffered from the cultural constraints and cultural notions about such media. Many of their contemporaries damned the camera as the toy of magicians, and damned those whom they found silly enough to use it.

Anthropology was and is a discipline steeped in print. As Margaret Mead has said, visual anthropology has always existed in a discipline of words (Mead 1975). The pity of the footage of many anthropologists of the past years is that in thinking of film as an "other" activity, they were looking at the importance of the medium the way Hollywood filmmakers look upon amateur home movies—something that need not be considered with the seriousness that they gave to the written word. For them, its truth value as realist imagery clearly transcended the need to be explicit—they conceptualized film as intrinsically explicit.

The tendencies apparent at the turn of the century and pre-World War II which I have noted are still partially with us today. Yet there are some differences. Now there is a literature, now there are some sophisticated practitioners, now there is a Society for the Anthropology of Visual Com-

munication (which evolved from the Program in Ethnographic Film of the American Anthropological Association). PIEF had a newsletter, the Society has a journal, *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* which began in the fall of 1974.

Besides scholarly development there are two other important changes. One is in the caring. There is now a National Anthropological Film Center at the Smithsonian Institution charged with the responsibility to develop methodological guidelines for research filming, to encourage the making of a world ethnographic research film sample, to serve as an active collection facility where scholars can deposit and retrieve film information, and most importantly, film information that is annotated and grounded in full ethnographic materials (Sorenson 1975b discusses these facilities; Sorenson 1974 discusses some of the factors that make such a collection so important). Combined with the important work of the Comité International des Films de l'Homme (formerly the Comité International du Film Ethnographique et Sociologique) in Paris and the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film in Göttingen, we are now seeing the beginning of efforts to develop international measures to more adequately film, preserve, and disseminate film materials on the human family. In 1973, at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, held in Chicago, a special conference on visual anthropology adopted a resolution on the urgency of adequately filming the existing varieties of cultural diversity and adaptation on the planet, and, for gathering and preserving existing footage for the benefits of researchers, future generations, and indigenes alike. This resolution was passed by this world congress as but only second in seriousness to the resolution on world population (see Hockings 1975:483-484).

A second change is in the technology itself and in its implementation. Miniaturization in professional quality 16mm rugged noiseless synchronous sound equipment has taken incredible steps since World War II (for a good overall summary of the technological changes as they effect field filming see Rouch 1974). Today we have portable battery driven cameras that weigh 15 pounds and can run noiselessly for 12 full minutes in perfect synchronization with a portable battery operated tape recorder that weighs even less; with quartz crystal controls and radio transmission systems, there need not even be a connection between them and the camera can start and stop the recorder with its own on/off switch. Synchronous sound has also reached the super 8mm format, with the camera and recorder together weighing less than 15 pounds. Film stocks have improved, last longer and have greater latitudes for encoding light, shadow, and color. Portable generator and powering supplies have miniaturized, and solar power generators are developing rapidly. In short, the days of the ritual of theatrical cinema in the field are over. The other part of the equation is that there are now sophisticated and experienced people

teaching the skills needed to do the work. No longer is it the case that social scientists and humanists need turn to theatrical film technicians who have no conception that there are ways other than the Hollywood way, that there are aims and purposes for film other than those of mass commercial entertainment. Now there are places where experts in film who are also serious students of the human sciences do research, teach, consult, and aid people in the technical and methodological skills needed to independently make film for their own research and presentation goals. With this situation, these instruments can be put in the hands of the trained fieldworker, no longer being novel toys but creative and forceful ways to study and share information about the spectrum of human behaviors, whether in dance, music, drama, social organization, religion, personality development, or anything else.

In short, now there are no more excuses for trivializing the doing of anthropology with film. Where trivializing exists, where there is insistence on treating film as a novel, frivolous, or anti-intellectual endeavor, it can no longer be blamed on lack of resources, but is more of an indication of our own cultural dogmatism, our Hollywood Tarzan heritage, shining through at its very worst.

Countless fieldworkers take still and cine cameras, and videotape apparatus to the field. The now customary few pages on photography in standard field methods books in anthropology (e.g., Pelto 1970:142-145, Williams 1967:34-37, Royal Anthropological Institute 1951:353-361) legitimize making pictures as something important "to do." But when we turn to the "whys" of making pictures or films, the legitimizing remarks turn soft. Take still photos for instance; Williams writes:

> The most important function of large numbers of photographs is to allow the observer to check the distortion of his observations because of his own cultural experience. If a large number of photographic sequences of interpersonal behavior are made immediately after entering the field, it is often possible after formulating hypotheses to return to photos made before the hypotheses were articulated. In returning to the pictorial detail of the situation that may have given rise to an insight, the observer can check his inclination to distort cultural data in the direction of his own cultural learning. (1967:35)

What this comment indicates is Williams' own cultural mythology of photographic realism, namely that a photograph is a reality substitute, true, and intrinsically meaningful (see Sekula 1975). What he does not mention is that the *way* the photograph is made–its own structuring and selection–is deeply indicative of the anthropologist's own "cultural experience"; this may also be another order of "distortion of data" due to the anthropologist's own cultural learnings and visual categories. Moreover, this approach dismisses the fact that photographic meaning, interpretation and knowledge are contextually bound; photographs change meaning as knowledge of a situation changes, and,

photographic interpretation strategies change as ethnographic interpretation competence deepens (for discussion see Feld and Ohrn 1975).

Recent work by Ohrn (1975), Ruby (1973), and Scherer (1975), building on the foundations set by Bateson and Mead (1942), Byers (1966), and Collier (1967), adds important clarity to research making, use, and interpretation of still photographs.

Developing a retrieval system and cataloguing scheme for an African Studies slide library consisting of photographs taken by tourists and field workers, Ohrn realized the problems inherent in reducing slides that were imaged and conceptualized in a personal home photograph style to "data" and "reality substitutes." In the transformation between "home-mode" and "data-mode," Ohrn found that the cataloguing and classifying procedures could obscure the real utility of photographs by eliminating the verbal contextual materials, eliminating information about intention, and fragmenting images taken in series. In this case, assumptions about the objective, context-free, intrinsic truth of the photograph was the basis for setting up a system where interpretation of photographs based on the intention and context of the maker was impossible. Ohrn makes valuable suggestions for the development of less reductive data-mode uses of photographs that were made in a home-mode context.

In studying the photographs and photographic interpretation strategies of ethnographers, Ruby attempted to determine just how it might be that these photographs are in fact anthropological at all. He found that anthropologists pretty much take pictures of the same subjects that attract tourists' attention, and that they structure and image these subjects in the same patterned ways. Ruby concluded that these photographs are thus more indicative of the imaging predispositions of our culture than they are of any particular organizing framework derived from anthropological theories, principles, or problems. His work is an important step in the direction of developing interpretive photography based on imaging codes that derive from concerns other than those of "pretty pictures"; it is also valuable for helping photographers see their own cultural biases of imaging.

Researching historical still photographs of American Indians, Scherer found that interpretation and ethnographic research use was limited without documentation about "limitations of early photographic equipment, [a] comprehension of the photographer's biases and goals, and [a] knowledge of the inclinations of the subject being photographed" (1975:67). Scherer found that early photographers used a variety of tricks to get commercial results; these included printing techniques, dressing Indians in out-of-context costumes, posing them in garments that they didn't even own, or in combinations of garments from many tribes. So famous an anthropologist as Major John Wesley Powell was actually involved in such conscious distortions for monetary gain. And Scherer (1975:77) concludes:

> The value of these North American Indian photographs then is primarily that they reveal how American photographers, even anthropologists, distorted the view of Indians for commercial, aesthetic, and other purposes. These distorted photographs obviously cannot in themselves be used indiscriminately by anthropologists in a study of the ethnology of American Indian tribes.

This research is important in documenting the culturally circumscribed nature of photographic communication; photographers, photography, and photographic imaging conventions are the products of cultural milieux; without an understanding of a specific milieu, image interpretation is impeded.

This work is complemented by recent studies in the area of ethnographic film. Jay Ruby's concern with still photography carries over equally to ethnographic film (Ruby 1975b). In asking "Is an ethnographic film a filmic ethnography?" he echoes an important point made by Sol Worth (1972, 1974), that all films about people–whether by Federico Fellini or the social scientist–can be ethnographic, depending on the modes of their use and contextualization, and how they are communicated about and with. Thus, for example, anthropologists interested in Eskimos can use Nicholas Ray's *Savage Innocents* just as anthropologically as they can use Robert Flaherty's classic *Nanook of the North,* or Asen Balikci's fascinating reconstruction films of the Netsilik (see Balikci 1975). Writing historically, Worth notes:

> It becomes clear that merely attaching the term "ethnographic" did not help us to distinguish between films, or between what was or was not ethnographic. However, knowing what anthropologists did with films, how they used them, made them, and analyzed them, did help us to understand not only films, but anthropology, culture, and communication." (1974:1)

Ruby's conclusions about film are much the same as those drawn for photography; he argues from this point that to reach another level of sophistication there need be a switch from making "film about anthropology" to "anthropological film." Ruby draws this distinction by analogy to the ideas of the French Marxist filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard, who (see Henderson 1970-71) distinguishes "film about revolution" from "revolutionary film." The step in each case is one toward deeper interpretation and away from descriptive recording. For Ruby, a filmic ethnography is a film communication deliberately structured in such a way as to convey ethnographic research ideas; he contrasts this with the use of conventional film techniques for describing (theatrically, academically, fictionally) people and their life situations. Like Rouch (1974), Ruby is arguing for a more "authored" approach where ethnographers take intellectual and personal responsibility for making their intentions, biases, and interpretations explicit through the use of film structuring systems that communicate their concepts and feelings.

Recent work in research filming bears out several of these remarks. The rules of the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film (IWF 1959) were

strenuously rejected by De Heusch (1962:21), who argues that these theories add up to a kind of "blindness." By this he means that the concern with neutrality and objectivity has caused them to retreat to a brute empiricism that ignores the basic phenomenological fact of photography: that cameras do not reproduce reality. De Heusch, in the tradition of Flaherty and Rouch, develops a strong position in favor of the "participating" camera approach (also see Rouch 1974), arguing that inasmuch as film objectivity and truth are illusory, the best ethnographic approach is one taking the most advantage of the sophisticated subjectivity of the filmmaker-ethnographer.

Recent work by myself and Carroll Williams at the Anthropology Film Center (Feld and Williams 1975) has also led to critical evaluation of fixed and hidden camera "objective" approaches that supposedly record "total" raw data. We stress the impossibility of "total" raw data; all data are recoded memories, descriptions or transcriptions of what was once experienced, they are thus never total or raw. Since lenses and microphones perform reduced optical and electronic-acoustical imitations of a small portion of human seeing and hearing, the notion that total data is recorded when a subject is entirely within the image and sound is incorrect. We thus argue that the filmer is always collecting samples, and that a more researchable approach to making film is one that starts with maximizing the possibilities of getting more sophisticated samples from the experience of the observer. We also critically discuss how such an approach is impossible when one works in the framework of theatrical conventional film. Our work here goes hand in hand with that of Lajoux (1974), who has discussed the entire problem of temporal condensation in ethnographic films. We end up arguing for a position that stresses film as a qualitative methodology; this means structuring film not on the basis of *a priori* conventions but as a record of the experiential response and intuition of the informed observer in filming naturally occurring phenomena. We thus see (similar to Ruby) a cinema praxis motivated and justified by an anthropological rationale, namely making a communication about the shape of ethnographic observation in a sampling context. We suggest a methodology for bringing film closer to the experience of ethnographic observation. Other work along these lines is represented in the methodology statement by Sorenson and Jablonko (1975), who discuss the interplay of opportunistic, programmed, and digressive sampling strategies in the filming of naturally occurring events. The importance of their approach is that it clarifies the relation between filming by predetermined research plan and filming according to opportunity and intuition exploration.

Tying the making of film back into its uses for analysis in the field, Stephanie Krebs (1975) has worked on the methodology of using film to elicit conceptual categories of culture. Working with Thai dance, she used film to question dancers and audiences about movements, aesthetics, and structural

organization. The relations between still photography and elicitation procedures have been discussed by Collier (1967). In both cases, the materials can be the basis of presentation as well. This methodology was employed by the Rundstroms for *The Path.* They first made still photographs of the Japanese tea ceremony, used the photographs for aesthetic elicitation, and then made a film structured according to the elicitations, utilizing the categories of the respondents rather than the categories of the filmmaker's own culture (see Ruby 1975a). Needless to say, this approach has numerous ramifications for ethnomusicology.

A final note here concerns the ethics and politics of this work. Recently many have been concerned with the responsibilities of visual anthropology vis-a-vis the peoples and cultures who are filmed. Alan Lomax has stressed the need for cultural feedback and renewal.

> The filmmaker, working with feedback, can defend the age old rights of people to the earthly and spiritual terrain they occupy. His function, his reason for filming, is to raise morale. His films will be works of art and history around which nonindustrial cultures can regroup and rally. In this way, ethnographic filmmaking can play a part in social and cultural therapy, by giving not only voice and image, but heart, to flagging cultures. (1973:480)

Lomax cites the comments of several anthropologists and filmmakers on the positive responses they have received when playing back footage and film in the field.

It seems however, that positive responses from native viewers who were previously filmed is not synonymous with the idea that films will stimulate and promote traditional culture. Among the Biami in Papua New Guinea, Edmund Carpenter found that when people confronted their own visual image for the first time, the result could be terrifying and destructive; the photograph and moving image did "steal their souls." Moreover, a situation arose where after a film was made of an initiation, the elders considered abandoning the rite in favor of erecting a sacred enclosure where the film of it could be endlessly shown (1975:457, from material originally in Carpenter 1973). Carpenter (1973:190) also reports that when the much acclaimed film *Dead Birds* (about warfare among the West Irian Dani) was shown at a college in Papua New Guinea, "one student angrily turned off the projector: 'what right does anyone have to record what we choose to forget.' His statement was applauded." Thus Sorenson writes:

> A quick way to unpopularity in New Guinea would be to suggest that these people keep their stone axes or high infant mortality rates and the kind of cultural organization that go with them. The argument that we should make movies for their cultural renewal would be laughable to them and should be to us, for we are not likely to be receptive to the suggestion that we renew ourselves by going back to the conditions of the early industrial revolution, the sixty hour work week, or an agrarian horse-and-buggy way of life. . . . Such cultural renewal is reminiscent of the cultural zoo philosophy. At its

> worst it encourages people to remain in the backwash of history; at its best it gives moments of nostalgia to the old folks. (1975a:465-466)

While Sorenson supports the idea that films may be valuable in teaching people about their heritages, he finds it dubious that their making and playback will lead to reestablishing that heritage.

The issue here is particularly pertinent in the matter of ethnomusicological film. We know that the tape recorder can and has had a role in cultural preservation and teaching, and at times in renewal. What role will the playback of musical performances on film have for the peoples of the world? Will film feedback encourage and/or promulgate traditional music? If we look to the situation with records we see several, sometimes contradictory tendencies. Among North American Indians in the Southwest, for example, recordings of traditional music on labels specifically aimed at an Indian market (as opposed say to a scholarly one) sell substantially. I know that Indian singers use these records to learn songs from other tribal groups and that there is a concern with well recorded traditional music. In Africa, on the other hand, I am told that recordings of traditional music sell nowhere near as well as those of modern popular music, and that there is little indication that recordings of traditional music are forces of cultural-musical continuity. And to take one example from films, Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène, the most widely acclaimed African filmmaker in the world, has recently made quite a bitter filmic statement about the "folklore" of the African nations. In *Xala* he shows African elites engaged in the wholesale peddling of the exotic image of barebreasted dancing to wild drum music and uses this vehicle to express how their African consciousness has been warped to colonialism's patronizing of these forms of "authentic African culture." It is clear that this topic is crucial to an ethnomusicological politics of media. The questions of sharing the airwaves, symbolic domination, and media imperialism have been with us, though less explicitly, in the past; now for the first time, it is impossible to conceive of filming without considering them.

III

What things then do we do in ethnomusicology that we might enhance, do more completely, or communicate more effectively about through the use of film? In the more musicological realm, it seems that film will be of much importance to developments in the theory and method of transcription. In the transcription of African dance drumming for instance, recent work by Serwadda, Ladzekpo, and Pantaleoni has demonstrated a tablature system that encodes the importance of playing techniques as they relate not only to rhythmic organization but to timbre as well (Serwadda and Pantaleoni 1968,

Ladzekpo and Pantaleoni 1970, Pantaleoni 1972a, 1972b, 1972c). Pantaleoni (1972a:3) has mentioned the problems of transcribing in such depth from videotape; it does not have adequate resolution, nor can it be played in slow motion without very expensive equipment. As we move toward less reductive and ethnocentric forms of transcription (i.e., away from Western notation, which has always been so problematic to Africanists because of its implication of stressed beats) we move closer to describing the relations between motor behavior, sound production, and sound itself; this can now profitably be done with the use of Kubik's silent film method as well as with double system synchronous sound, or Rouget's method of slow motion synchronous sound. With these possibilities, as well as Arom's (1973) ingenious audio playback method for transcription of polyrhythmic and polyphonic music, we could be on the frontier of tremendous advances in transcription method and theory.

In the ethnographic and organological study of musical instruments, film is of clear importance in documentation of the entire process of construction and tuning. One can readily look through Merriam's informative field notes on Bala Basongye drum-making (1969) visualizing a film. The work of Zemp, Surugue, Lortat-Jacob, Hood, and filmmakers with the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film provide films in this area upon which further thinking and refinement can be based.

In the broad area of the ethnography of music making there seem to be so many possibilities in the use of film that one does not know where to start mentioning them. In the study of musical performance, film could enhance research enormously in several areas such as music and motion synchrony, the relationships between performers and audiences, the study of musical cueing, and relations between performing, rehearsing, and musical instruction. Turning to the role of music in community life film can enhance our documentation of the social organization surrounding musical occasions, the study of musicians in society, the process of musical socialization, and the place of music in culture change. In conjunction with specific research problems, film can be used in all of these areas to gather basic data for elicitation research and analysis and can be used to communicate more completely the findings and interpretation of such research.

When we read through a musical ethnography, such as Zemp's excellent *Musique Dan* (1971) we can see that nearly every subject heading lends itself to visual research and documentation: instruments and their uses, status, role, functions, beliefs and practices of musicians, and the place of music in the life cycle and in the community cycle. Moreover, through the interpretive uses of verbal materials, animation, and visuals, it would also be possible to use film to present nondirectly observable behaviors such as Zemp's material on the role of music in the non-human world, or myths about the origin of instruments, or ethnoaesthetic musical evaluation.

In sum, doing ethnomusicology with film is part and parcel of doing better ethnomusicology. By using film in planned programs of research we can avail ourselves of better data modes, better methodologies of elicitation, and testable modes of analysis. By publishing films and writing about them, we can share aspects of field experience–both its data and interpretation–at a new level of communication. There are then scholarly and genuine motivations for doing ethnomusicology with film–not just that film turns the students on, increases enrollments and popularity, is something the departmental secretary can schedule when one is sick or out of town, can be pretty and entertaining, or the right thing for "light" moments such as before vacations and after examinations.

IV

At the very opening of *La Maison de Rendez-vous,* Alain Robbe-Grillet (1966) offers the following author's note:

> This novel, cannot, in any way, be considered as a document about life in the British Territory of Hong Kong. Any resemblance to the latter in setting or situations is merely the effect of chance, objective or not.

There the note stops, but it continues on the following page:

> Should any reader familiar with Oriental ports suppose that the places described below are not congruent with reality, the author, who has spent most of his life there, suggests that he return for another, closer look; things change fast in such climes.

This bit of masterfully felicitous insincerity sets the reader up for a book where vividly realistic descriptions and objective reporting suddenly turn to dreams, lies, and fantasies, and vice versa. I think this juxtaposition exactly provokes our ambivalence about film. On the one hand it is clearly not objective or real, but symbolic, the product of authorship. It was once the tool of magicians and today pervades our mass symbolic environment as the tool of the Hollywood shamans, masters of American fantasy (see Powdermaker 1950). It is the soap selling medium, the celluloid dream world, utterly manipulable and manipulating. On the other hand, when compared to other modes of memory, description, and recoding, its objective fascimile and illusion of iconic realism is incredibly strong. In the hands of the documentary and observational shamans it has brought us several magnificent slices of the state of human being, transporting us through thousands of miles, through separate realities, sometimes with brilliant authenticity, sincerity, and understanding. In the hands of researchers it has brought us, at times elegantly and at times dryly, the potential and the actualization of increased knowledge and comprehension of many varieties of human activity.

We are now at a point where a resolution is at hand. Transcending naive claims to hyperobjectivity, truth, reality and unquestionable intrinsic meaningfulness, transcending the collect-it-before-it-dies dinosaur bone approach, and other forms of the objective realist folk myth, we are at a point where the human conceptual equation—that of authored mediated communication—can take over from the "cameras take pictures" technological muddle. Similarly, transcending the pretty picture mentality, the culturally arbitrary story telling conventions, the avoidance of personal and political responsibility through sole allegiance to the high god of ART, the imaging of third world peoples as exotic freak acts for the artistic delights of civilized voyeurs, and other forms of the personal expression and art folk myth, we are at the point where the cinema's subjectivity can be turned into a sensitive, concerned, and intellectually sophisticated means for better mediated communication, to the benefit of all those who care about the potential of visual sharing and visual knowing.

And where is ethnomusicology in all of this? Perhaps it is at the best possible point, because it has the opportunity to tap directly into the foundation being built in the anthropology of visual communication. This requires a non-dogmatic and professional attitude by ethnomusicologists toward film—an openness to deal with film not just as a classroom gimmick, but as a viable scholarly means for the study and sharing of information about human musicality and music making.

NOTES

1. This paper was written while a Research Fellow at the Anthropology Film Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico. My warm thanks go to Carroll and Joan Williams, the Center's co-directors for numerous hours of stimulating talk on topics discussed herein as well as for providing me with a working space for studying ethnomusicology and anthropology of visual communication without compromising either. Thanks too to Diane Bacon for doing the filmography and for feedback. I am also grateful to Gilbert Rouget, Hugo Zemp, Simha Arom, Jean Rouch and particularly to Marielle Delorme for discussion, locating materials, and making films available to me during the semester I spent at the Musée de l'Homme in 1974. Finally, a caveat before beginning: the reader will find that the bulk of my citations are to Africanist materials; I have tried not to exclude other important work but confess far less competence in most other geographical areas.

2. Although it is obviously impossible to neatly separate ethnomusicology film from dance ethnography film, I must exclude discussion of the latter for reasons of both space and competence. It will become apparent, however, that the approach I outline is applicable to both, and I will touch upon the overlaps in the review of some recent work (specifically that of Rouget and of the Choreometrics project).

For those wishing to dive into the large literature of dance and film, I suggest starting with Allegra Fuller Snyder's (1965) discussion of three types of dance film. She distinguishes (1) documentary filming of important dancers/dances for the sake of history of performance/performers, (2) filming records of dance for transcribing, learning, and reconstructing specific dances, and (3) ciné-dance, a combined art form multiplying the visual aspects of movement by the interpretive abilities of the cinema. Other interesting readings are: Dance/Film issues of *Dance Perspectives* (1967), and *Filmmakers' Newsletter*

(1970), Snyder's thesis (1967), Jablonko's dissertation and accompanying film (1968), and articles by Kurath (1963c), Snyder (1969), Bouchard (1951), and Hungerford (1951).

3. As I do not discuss hardware here, the following books are suggested for those wishing a crash course in the nuts and bolts aspects of film and sound: Churchill (1972), Lipton (1972), Malkiewicz (1974), Pincus (1969), and Runstein (1975). These books deal principally with 16mm and 8mm film and ¼″ audio. Despite portability, the marginal visual and audio quality of videotape makes it of reduced value for most ethnomusicological research work; the major exception, of course, is the important use of video for instant playback and elicitation in the field. Video primers are: Video Freex (1973), Marsh (1974), and Murray (1975). The tradeoff between portability and dubious quality is truest of the audio cassette format. Labov (1972:110, footnote 6), discussing linguistic methodology, notes that the frequency response of cassette recorders is not even adequate for the study of everyday speech. This of course is much worse with music. In addition, motor instability common to inexpensive cassette recorders inevitably causes variable speed errors, thus distorting both pitch and tempo in music. The Nagra SNN is the only reliable professional quality miniature recorder that uses cassette size tape (though not on cassettes) and operates at 1-7/8 ips.

4. By "film work in ethnomusicology" I will limit the discussion to the uses of the film medium for ethnomusicological research and presentation. For the present then I am placing aside the other important relation between ethnomusicology and film, namely the cultural/musical study of sound tracks, film scores, and television sound. There are obviously several interesting dimensions to this latter area; one need only think about the ways music has been used in exotic movies, adventure films, and travelogues to realize the wealth of data here. Studying the sound symbolism of films of the *Mondo Cane* genre seems as worthy an ethnomusicological topic as any.

I can think of little relevant work in this area to date. Jean Rouch, calling music "the opium of the cinema" (1974:42) has made several interesting observations on the politics of the uses of music in ethnographic film soundtracks. Nazir Jairazbhoy (1973) presented a very interesting paper on Indian film music at the 1973 SEM meeting. One of my own current projects is a study of the music of the Mickey Mouse Club television show (Feld, ms.). A frequent song on this show was titled "Fun with Music"; the song proclaims that "music is a language we all understand" (Walt Disney's contribution to the semiotics of music!). Each successive chorus is laced with hackneyed stereotypes of various European, Asian, and other musics; I try to show why this sort of sound symbolism constitutes an interesting problem in the ethnography of sound communication.

For perspectives on the cultural analysis of visual and sound media, see Carpenter (1974), Schwartz (1973), and Weakland (1975).

5. For those wishing a demonstration I suggest the marvellously visual verbal *Snapshots* of Alain Robbe-Grillet (1968).

6. On questions of using film for frame-by-frame microanalysis, see the writings of Birdwhistell (1970), Condon and Ogston (1966).

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