

**AN ANALYSIS OF SOME VARIABLES OF IN-CAMERA EDITING OF
ANTHROPOLOGICAL VIDEO: A CASE STUDY**

THESIS

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by

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ABSTRACT

Anthropological film and videomakers use their media for both research and education. In both cases, a formal technique of observational camerawork is required. In this thesis, appropriate continuity methods and a model of decision-making in camerawork are proposed, which are designed to deal with the certainties and uncertainties encountered in the observational type of ethnographic film.

The ethnographic context of the research is the community in the Shixini area of the Transkei, where the author made video-recordings of a number of ritual and everyday events between 1981 and 1984.

The model is tested on the case study of a "small event". There is an extensive amount of video material of a four-day mortuary ritual. The model is examined through a first-person account of the influences on decisions during shooting, and through formal analysis.

Both of these examinations refer in detail to the unedited video material which accompanies the thesis, and assess how the decisions deal with time and space: with regard to the ritual markers and the continuity method.

The thesis concludes that the model of camera work can be used to provide a coherent observation of the small event.

The suitability of the model for editing is then tested. The unedited material of the case study is compared with an edited version. The ritual is represented in a narrative segment within a longer documentary, "Shixini December: Responses to Poverty in the Transkei". The complexity of editing operations is examined in detail by a variety of methods, and refers

closely to the longer documentary. The fit between continuity in the unedited camera work and the edited version is established. A video copy of this documentary also accompanies the thesis.

The unedited observational material is then tested for its use in research. An anthropologist screened the unedited material to ritual participants to elicit their responses, and with the results wrote a dissertation combining interpretation and ethnography.

The detail of the ethnography and the consistency of the interpretation demonstrates the value of an observational video record. It does not conclusively demonstrate its validity for research, because the effect of video on memory needs further exploration. Instead of stimulating memory of off-camera action as may be expected, the video seems to anaesthetise it.

Continuity methods can provide a clear but partial and fragmented observational record. This record has formal characteristics which are a necessary but not sufficient condition for editing into narrative. Continuity methods may provide a video record that is useful for research. If the video is used for reflexive validation, then a possible effect on the memory of off-camera events must be taken into account.

The continuity characteristics of unedited video which result from in-camera editing can, but need not be, evident in subsequent texts based on them.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study proposes a model of decision-making for in-camera editing, which deals with the certainties and uncertainties encountered in observational filmmaking. It applies this model to the results of camera work, to establish the details of decision-making, and relates these decisions to the use of the material in two other contexts: as an edited segment in a longer documentary, and as an elicitation device in fieldwork research interviews. Two videotapes accompany the thesis, containing the unedited material and the longer documentary.

The work is part of a research project on editing, and establishes some findings for yet more edited versions. The project has a secondary purpose, of assessing how university research can be made more accessible on video outside the academic environment.

When I was looking for a body of research on which to base the video editing project, Dr Robin Palmer introduced me by benevolent coincidence to Professor Patick McAllister, both then colleagues in the Department of Anthropology at Rhodes University. As a result, the editing project became concerned with the specific features of ethnographic film, thus conveniently sharpening the issues I hoped to explore.

It was therefore appropriate that Robin Palmer should co-supervise the writing of this thesis, together with Professor Gavin Stewart, Head of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, who gave me generous access to the department's video facilities, mediated funds to acquire specialised references and ethnographic documentaries, and especially allowed me the freedom in teaching video to explore issues relevant to this thesis. Of course, neither bears responsibility for the results written or visual.

Patrick McAllister continues his research in Shixini, and I hope to continue my cooperation with him. His depth of knowledge, patient fieldwork and careful research have been an example for me to follow. Together, Pat McAllister and Robin Palmer showed great patience and wit with my naive enquiries into anthropology. Robin Palmer has also patiently endured the slow emergence of this thesis through many drafts, and his aplomb encouraged me when my own writing did not.

Greg Holbrook as both co-researcher and teacher commented with wit and directness on my crude initial assessment of his dissertation, and I look forward to making revised versions of the ritual with him. I benefitted from watching him endure the writing of his thesis with fortitude and wit, so that the extremities of apparently endless re-writes were not unexpected. Lynette Steenveld identified some crucial gaps in the terminology in early drafts, and kindly provided me with references that would otherwise have taken a lot of time, effort and expense to find.

Oliver Cartwright, Senior Technical Officer in the Department, and his predecessor Gerry Meaker, carefully and cheerfully maintained the video equipment I used in the field and in editing. Appollis Slingers, Technician/ Storeman, made access to the equipment easy with his patience and willing helpfulness. Jane Burnett has helped me in the hour of my greatest need to put the thesis together for printing, under her additional loads of teaching demands and flu. The original field work on which this study is based was funded by generous grants from the Rhodes University Council, and the University also granted me sabbatical leave to do the necessary research and writing.

The staff of the Rhodes University library have provided encouragement, and assisted with

references and film viewing equipment, particularly Sandy Rowoldt, Kate Skinner, Mike Berning and Brian Paterson. Anne Stewart of the University of the Witwatersrand Audio-Visual library was very helpful in providing access to film and video, as was Paulette Coetzee of the Grahamstown branch of the Cape Provincial Library Film Section.

The edit research project has drawn on the generous help of numerous friends, relatives, colleagues and students in the making of the video “Shixini December”, and of transcribing and translating. Other versions which shaped the enquiry of this study were edited by David Isaacson and Laura Cloete. Andrew Timm made complicated graphics and some stock video shots for the documentary “Shixini December”.

Some of the translators were Daniel Sandi, Joseph Sandi, Richard Mthembu and Kenneth Mdana, while colleague Mikki van Zyl, with Derek Hayman and Joshua Hayman, shared the first field trip. Christo Doherty gave me a valuable assessment of the first tentative steps in the analysis.

Kathy Holden has drawn the graphs to her own high standards. More valuable than this, she has with care and patience given me support, love and encouragement, without which the writing process would have been very difficult indeed.

INTRODUCTION¹

A Paucity of Literature, a Fragmented Field

The thesis concerns fields which have not been well-integrated in the literature . A survey of the literature on film theory , anthropology (specifically visual anthropology) and practical techniques used in documentary filmmaking (Chapter One) shows little overlap between them, regarding terminology, analytical frameworks, objects of study and procedures.

An element common to all these fields but not widely acknowledged is the effect of the post-Renaissance formulation of the rules of visual perspective. The distinction between the scientific and the expressive, or between the positivist and the artistic, as separate ways of knowing the world and communicating knowledge about it, has been attributed to this formulation (Romanyshyn 1989). Film theorists have, until recently, been ignored by practical filmmakers, and have in their turn paid little attention to documentary film, questions of the sound track and the technicalities of film production. Two notable exceptions are Nichols (1981) and Guynn (1990), who have also written on anthropological film (also called ethnographic film) as a subset of documentary film. Again, this subset has been considered more often by visual anthropologists (Hockings 1975; Rollwagen 1988; Hockings and Omori 1988) than by film theorists.

1 The purpose of this Introduction is to outline the contents of the thesis. The diverse aspects of the field are not defined, explored, discussed or referenced at any length. The reader is referred to the specific chapters for these.

Anthropologists concentrate mainly on how to use the camera to collect data in their established fieldwork methods. As a result they are concerned chiefly with content. Film theorists concentrate chiefly on editing and its resulting "text": they are concerned with the production of meaning. As a result, gaps are evident.

Several issues bear on anthropological filmmaking. One is the relation between camera and subjects in the field. The American positivist school has attempted to adapt camera methods to its empirical research methods. It has distanced itself from what it perceives as distorting influences. These are the pressures of politics and commerce on the expressive or narrative techniques of feature film, on documentary and other types of television reportage.

These attempts have largely failed, because of the politicisation of issues in the social sciences and of debates about representation in the media²

The barriers to communication between the so-called first, second and third worlds, which could once be treated as distinct cultural, political and economically systems, are disappearing, and debates about the nature and origins of these so-called worlds are diversifying³. One consequence is the politicisation of debates about visual representation of people in the third world to people in the first world (Ruby 1991, 53). Despite this debate, a

2 For discussion, see section "Separation of Positivist from Phenomenological" in Chapter Two.). As a result, anthropology as a discipline is being challenged to transcend both its colonial ancestry and the positivist method. This method is accused of duplicating, in a research framework, the implicit separation of anthropologists and their subjects into distinct political and economic systems.

3 See Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1 in Marcus and Fisher (1986).

detailed theorisation about documentary in general and anthropological film in particular is lacking.

Recent theoretical work on documentary film draws not only on a variety of disciplines, but most recently on theories of realist discourse. Attempts are being made to establish the features common to documentary film and historiography (Gynn 1990, 13) by which these forms claim to represent the real rather than the fictional or illusory. On the one hand, documentary and ethnographic filmmakers insist on the empirical verifiability of the images they produce. On the other, film theorists insist on the mediated but necessary illusion of the photographic image, and dismiss as naive any claims of unmediated realism, whatever the specific tactics of observational filmmaking may be.

Visual and Written Anthropology

The camera is obviously attractive as a research tool for anthropologists whether they use the qualitative research methods of participant observation and detailed description, or quantitative research methods which assume that the camera is a neutral, impersonal recording device. For the quantitative approach, there are problems of validating the results, resulting from the unselective recording capability of the camera.

The pressure of the natural science model on the social sciences, to conduct research which produces reliable, valid results and general conclusions, does not fit well with film. The analytical, abstracting and theorising activity of the quantitative or positivist approach is more easily done in writing (De Heusch 1962). Writing remains the favoured form of academic publishing, and hierarchical distinctions are reflected in labels: "research" film, "ethnographic" film and "anthropological" film.

There is considerable debate about the definitions of ethnographic and anthropological film. The distinction between ethnography (“description pure and simple”) and anthropology (“more elaborate, analytical and theoretical”) is the basis of the distinction made by Marazzi between the two types (1988, 117). The former, he says, should be the basis for the latter. “Ethnographic films” are indeed often defined as being concerned with observation and description of anthropological phenomena, usually with an implicit claim to the authority of explanation and theorisation in written anthropology.

Many positivist anthropologists, however, make a distinction between “ethnographic films” and “research films”. This distinction is made on two grounds. One is that when the camera is controlled in a way suitable for data collecting, the resulting “research film” is not suitable for public viewing (Prost 1975, Schaeffer 1975, Sorenson and Jablonko 1975). The second distinction is based on whether field work is deemed still to be in progress or completed.

Field work is relevant because of the presumed need to be familiar with the event in order to film it successfully. Familiarity means not only with the unfolding of events in space and time, but also with culturally specific markers of significance. This is especially true of ritual and thus relates to the case study considered in Chapter Three.

Balicki lists several characteristics which are typical of his category of “anthropological film” (1988, 33). They are; 1) the finished product is for a lay audience; 2) unscripted and undirected shooting; 3) without acting or re-construction; 4) the participation of anthropologists; 5) a preference for non—western societies; 5) an intention that it be used in an educational setting; 6) a relationship with published forms of anthropological data and 7) a

concern with truth within the limits and possibilities of the medium. All of these may vary from case to case.

The more popular and accessible of these “anthropological” films are often also defined as films of a lower order. While these films are regarded as necessary, they are not considered as the respectable concern of academic anthropologists or film theorists. This is because the differences between observation, description and explanation in written anthropology are usually obscured in the conventional signifying methods of edited documentary (Nichols 1981), and this prevents the popular anthropological film being accorded validity from positivist assumptions. In other words, anthropological film and documentary film collapse into each other. Since the film theorists, concerned mainly with formal issues in fiction film, could not or would not define the signifying processes of documentary in a way useful to anthropologists, the latter seem caught in several traps.

The differences between visual and written anthropology are described in Chapter One, as are the debates concerning ethnographic and anthropological film as special cases of documentary film. The types of validation procedures in written and visual anthropology are discussed in Chapter Two. The techniques of observation and their consequences, for both the research film and the ethnographic film, are discussed in Chapter Three.

History of Documentary and Anthropological Filmmaking

A short history of these fields (including research and ethnographic categories) reveals areas of common concern in subject matter, style and equipment. A long-standing desire is evident among realist filmmakers for lightweight, portable equipment which can record sound synchronously with picture. Debates are identified in Chapter One about how the interests and

origins of the institutions in which documentary is produced have shaped the techniques of production.

When this lightweight equipment arrived on the market in the late 1950's, the techniques associated with it seemed predicated on two distinct notions of realism. The first or observational technique attempted to get as close as possible to the lives of its subjects and to record events in those lives with maximum effacement of its own presence. The second or reflexive technique abandoned trying to efface its own presence, and actively revealed its own process of construction. Sometimes subjects were taken into the process of filmmaking, in ways ranging from interviewees to actors. Observational filmmaking was naturally more attractive to the positivist approach, but raised problems concerning the relation of researchers to subjects because of the nature of the film image (Nichols 1981). These problems are explored in Chapter Two.

Even with this observational method, anthropologists found it difficult to make film conform to the standards of verifiability derived from quantitative research approaches. These standards are based on the commonplace distinction between forms of knowledge based on the scientific, quantitative or empirical, and those based on the qualitative, interpretive or idealist⁴. Specifically, film makers in this school felt obliged to minimise both the possibilities of perceived distortion involved in expressive or narrative types of camera work, and to efface marks of their own presence.

4 See section "Separation of Positivist from Phenomenological" in Chapter Two.

The perceived necessity of excluding the expressive (and hence ambiguous) elements from anthropological film is based on the assumption that audiences will tend to interpret the images in terms of their experience of western representational art. The ethical standards of social science research posed two further problems. These were how the presence of anthropologists affected the people they studied (Young 1975, MacDougall 1975), and how the representations they created would affect the material and political interests of those people (Balicki 1988, Faris 1988).

Anthropological filmmakers are attempting to solve these problems in a variety of ways, some by following the example of Jean Rouch. He abandoned virtually all the above distinctions in his films in the 1950's, by adopting a range of participatory, reflexive and reconstruction techniques. The separation between film theorists and filmmakers was also less strong in France, resulting in among other things, the collapse of the analytical distinction between camera work and editing, in favour of an emphasis on the intentional nature of text-making and the acknowledgment of relations between filmmaker and subject.

Context of Research

The making of "anthropological" film (in the sense of popular documentary indicated above) has been fairly common in South Africa, but has not often been described in the literature. Most such films were made by institutions sympathetic to apartheid policy: SABC-TV and the government's Department of Information. These films promoted the illusion that traditional customs and identity were still widely practised among the majority of the black population in "homeland" areas, and more recently that urban blacks were adopting middle-class values.

Other “anthropological” films in South Africa have misrepresented black, coloured and Indian South African communities by being unaware of the nature of representation on film when using conventional documentary production techniques. These documentaries have also been inaccurate about the customs and beliefs of the communities filmed, and the broader context of the apartheid system (Tomaselli et. al. 1986).

Adherence to conventional (usually observational) techniques, which rely on the realist illusion of film, very easily obscures customs and beliefs as well as context. On the one hand such films do not establish the difference between particular and general, and on the other hand do not adequately explain the culturally specific appearances of a way of life as they relate to the belief system of the communities portrayed.

Films which are both anthropologically and filmically sophisticated (that is, “ethnographic”) are not frequently produced, although some experimentation has been done in the Department of Journalism at Rhodes University⁵. Other documentaries, seen at for instance the annual Weekly Mail Film Festivals, portray South African communities from an anti-apartheid position, but often use the same conventional techniques as pro-apartheid films.

A specifically South African example of the difficulties of dealing with ethnographic film is the work of Tomaselli (1986). This work attempts to relate positivist approaches in ethnographic film to concepts of ideology drawn from a neo-Marxist analysis of apartheid. Tomaselli is concerned with the problem of realism, that is, the surface appearances presented

5 See for instance "Shixini December: Responses to Poverty in the Transkei" (Hayman and McAllister 1984); "Beer Preparation in the Transkei" (Hayman and Cloete, 1988).

by film versus the other possible realities constructed by theory or belief systems (Tomaselli 1986, 18). His study is useful for an examination of the context of filmmaking and viewing (Tomaselli 1986, 37ff). His discussion of editing technique, however, remains vague, although he implies that ideology mediates technique.

Research on Editing

The present work has its roots in a research project on editing which I began in 1981. The goals were firstly, to compare varieties of meaning effected through various editing patterns, and secondly to establish how university research material could best be made accessible to a wider public. A third goal was added later: how analysis of the video material could yield further anthropological data.

The impetus for the original project came partly from my experience as a television producer and researcher at SABC-TV from 1975-78. This experience revealed the apparently arbitrary nature of editing and production techniques in various genres of television . Further impetus came from my experience in teaching courses in video production methods from 1979 onwards. Student productions occasionally revealed editing patterns not seen in professional television or commercial fiction film.

This study is concerned with the problems of editing, and attempts to resolve the apparent conflicts and differences between 1) the research film and the ethnographic or educational film, 2) between the closed text and the open text, 3) between observational, reflexive and participatory filmmaking and 4) between written and visual anthropology.

These conflicts and differences are explored in a way which attempts to refine and reform the visual and written representations of the case study. Firstly, in what way the principles of

continuity can be used to form a coherent and adequate observational record of the “small event” or ritual for research as well as ethnographic film (Chapter Three). Secondly, how the resulting raw material is transformed when edited by continuity principles into an ethnographic film (Chapter Four). Thirdly, how continuity camera techniques can affect a written explication of the same raw material when that material is screened reflexively to the people filmed (Chapter Five). Fourthly, what other techniques of editing can be applied for ethnographic purposes in the light of reflexive interpretations of the unedited film by the people who appear in it (Chapter Six).

The Shixini Involvement

The proposed method for the research project was to record a pool of video material based on academic research. When seeking suitable research, I was introduced to Mr (now Professor) Patrick McAllister, a colleague and anthropologist who had been doing field work since 1976 among the Gcaleka who live in the Shixini area near Willowvale, in southern Transkei. His study of ritual beerdrinks, particularly the “umsindleko” version, confirmed the view that the Gcaleka have consciously clung to the traditional way of life as a way of dealing with the white-dominated economy. This is in contrast to the Christian and urban-oriented way of life of many other black people of South Africa (McAllister 1979).

Patrick McAllister was to become friend, guide and joint videomaker. I accompanied him on four of his regular field trips, between December 1981 and December 1983, to record video material. Some 20 hours of video was shot. This material covered the local economy, the beer-drinks, rituals and associated oratory of the area. During the time spanned by the field trips, McAllister was researching his Ph.D thesis (McAllister 1986) on ritual oratory, and the

likely effects of the implementation of the “Trust” or “betterment” land use system in the area (De Wet and McAllister 1983).

After two of these field trips we were commissioned, as were many other video and film makers, to make a video documentary on poverty for the Second Carnegie Commission on Poverty in South Africa (Cape Town, May 1984). Since only a poor example of the umsindleko beerdrink had been recorded on previous trips, a fourth field trip was made with the specific purpose of shooting this beerdrink, since it illustrated the adaptive behaviour of the Gcaleka both to poverty and to the migrant labour system. No such ritual occurred during these beerdrinks, but a mortuary ritual occurred just before the end of the last field trip, and was successfully shot.

The resulting video documentary “Shixini December: Responses to Poverty in the Transkei” (1984), containing a short section on the mortuary ritual, was screened at the conference, and is part of the case study for the present work. An accompanying paper of the same title was tabled at the conference (McAllister and Hayman 1984). The documentary was subsequently distributed to some South African universities, and used by McAllister in teaching anthropology.

As originally intended, other documentaries were edited from the pool of material. Two versions were edited by graduate students under my supervision . One remained experimental, the other achieved the status of finished documentary (Hayman and Cloete 1988). In addition, some of my material was included in a video documentary (Cloete 1988), made under joint supervision of McAllister and myself.

A fourth version, the subject of this study, is a chronological assembly of unedited material of the mortuary ritual, and forms part of the case study considered here. This material was used as an elicitation device in fieldwork by McAllister's honours student Greg Holbrook, resulting in a dissertation which describes the ritual in detail (Holbrook 1986, unpublished).

The issue of editing was also sharpened by several other documentaries I made, dealing with socio-political conditions in the Eastern Cape (see Filmography), and by the numerous student documentaries on the same subject which I have supervised in practical courses since 1979.

Research Goals and Methods

Chapter Two concerns the nature of small-scale social interaction, the "small event", and how to shoot it either for editing or for research. The literature reveals a lack of clarity on how to define these events and their structures, and hence how to shoot them (See section "Defining the Small Event" in Chapter Three).

Chapter Two also examines the methods common to documentary makers and visual anthropologists, by which they create a coherent record of observation. It assesses specifically observational techniques (continuity methods, as opposed to the wide angle, long-take methods), and how these are applied particularly to small events.

The documentarists shoot this material with the intention of editing. The visual anthropologists usually consider editing as only a secondary aim. As a result, the anthropologists confront several perceived conflicts after shooting. There is a conflict between the nature of their visual material resulting from their "research film" techniques and the perceived need to edit according to narrative continuity. Also, there is a conflict between a

need for extensive commentary to explain the culturally specific appearance of the events they have shot, and a need to let the people who are filmed explain their culture in their own language.

Since there is a common motive between the documentarists and the visual anthropologists, the thesis suggests that a compromise method may be identifiable.

The assumptions and techniques of continuity camera work are outlined. Methods of analysing both documentary and ethnographic film, made with observational techniques and edited with narrative continuity techniques, are examined. These include formal shot to shot articulations, and analysis of larger narrative sequences using Metz's Large Syntagmatic schema (Metz 1974, 146). The inadequacies of these studies are indicated.

The exploratory work of Nichols (1981) on ethnographic film is then examined for solutions to the dilemmas outlined above. He goes beyond questions of specific techniques of camera and editing, and instead considers them as the locus of relationships between the visual anthropologist and the people.

Following the example of Jean Rouch, Nichols (1981) challenges both the observational documentarists and the makers of ethnographic film for their reified notions of realism. He explores the possibilities of the soundtrack as a means of explicating the relationship between subjects, filmmaker and audience, since that is where both the voices of the people may be heard, and explanation via commentary may be carried out. Various characteristics of commentary are discussed.

This approach, suggests Nichols, may solve the problems of both the anthropologist's task of cultural translation and of the audience's tendencies to ethnocentric (mis)interpretations.

While not prescribing other camera techniques, he also does not dismiss either continuity camera techniques or observational filmmaking, as long as the result contains elements of reflexivity which are more than just a refinement of co-opting the people into the research designs of the anthropologist.

Given, then, that a basic observational record of behaviour (particularly ritual behaviour) is a necessary antecedent to such reflexive operations, the case study of the mortuary ritual is then examined as a way of resolving several problems. A case is made for examining the continuity camera technique which is evident in the unedited video. This may expand the limited insights produced by film theorists who look only at the edited text. For the anthropologists, the way continuity technique can portray the small event may resolve the apparent conflict between the research film (concerned with content), and the ethnographic film which is concerned with a communicative form which is suitable for education. The chapter also outlines a model of camera work to describe and explain decisions made by the cameraman when the “small event” is being filmed with observational continuity techniques.

Chapter Three establishes the background assumptions and prior knowledge which informed the shooting of the ritual. The continuity techniques evident in the unedited material are assessed. This is done in two ways: through formal analysis and through a personal, interpretive account based on my experience as cameraman. Conclusions are drawn about the model of camera work.

The possibility of combining the two operations of continuity editing and research is assessed in Chapter Four. This examines a version edited with narrative continuity methods, in order to identify what operations were performed on it as well as the consequent omissions,

inaccuracies and transformations. The edited version is situated in the longer documentary, "Shixini December" (Hayman 1984), of which it forms a part, with regard to editing techniques.

The research possibilities are examined in Chapter Five, which compares the unedited material with the ethnography written as a dissertation by Greg Holbrook (1986). The chapter outlines Holbrook's method of using the video, the kinds of responses it elicited, and the way the video may have shaped these responses. The influences of these three elements on the ethnography are examined. The difficulties and advantages of using video for research in this way are outlined, and a brief comparison regarding the nature of their representations is made between the edited segment from the documentary and the dissertation.

Conclusion

The benefit of this combination of research and continuity camera methods is assessed, as well as particular flaws in the case study. The reflexive elements of the study (screening material to the people filmed, examining own material) are assessed, and related to the possibility of exploiting unused and un-analysed research material which is accumulating in large quantities in ethnographic film archives.

The representations in each of the three parts of the case study are compared for differences and similarities. The relationship between closure and investigation, or product and process, is discussed with specific regard to editing. The framework for assessing unedited material is also discussed, as well as the model of continuity camerawork, with reference to both film theorists and anthropologists. The edit project thus far is assessed, and possible tactics for editing another educational version are examined, in the light of discoveries made in this study.

CHAPTER ONE

Locating The Ethnographic Film

Introduction

This chapter attempts to situate the ethnographic film in several contexts: as a manifestation of western culture, as a specific kind of technology, and as a subset of documentary.

The camera is seen as a specific manifestation of post-Renaissance thought, manifested in both the idealist and materialist approaches to knowledge of the world. This leads to a consideration of the camera in relation to two views of visual technology: whether it is simply a product of, or has comprehensively shaped modern western culture.

A short chronological account of documentary filmmaking emphasises two influences on its practices. These are the institutional context, and technological developments regarding sound.

The omissions of both documentary and the nature and role of sound from film theory are examined. Some applicable concepts from recent work on sound are summarised.

A comparison with printing technology leads to questions of the similarities and differences between visual and written modes of information, bearing on the relation between written and visual anthropology.

Lastly, debates about method in visual anthropology are summarised, from the point of view of the relationship between the subjects of the film, the makers, and the audience.

Separation of Positivist from Phenomenological

While both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in the human or social sciences, quantitative or empirical research methods are usually associated with positivism and the natural sciences. Qualitative methods, as ways of exploring and representing the world in the human sciences, are associated with phenomenology, naturalism or idealism (Williams 1976, 125; (Bryman 1988, 123-126). These distinctions derive from preconceptions about the relationship between theory, methods, subject and data¹.

The quantitative method is often characterised as structured, distanced and objective, yielding statistical, verifiable results, about observable, static phenomena in a sample population, and having a reciprocal relationship with theory. The qualitative method is often characterised as intimate, empathetic and open-ended, a method of establishing the way people understand their own reality through participation and unstructured interviews (Bryman 1988, chs 2 and 3). Debate about documentary film (Guynn 1990, 19-34; Nichols 1981 ch6; Nichols 1985a) refers to assumptions and principles in both fields, as well as to the recently assumed link between these methods and respective philosophical or epistemological principles (Bryman 1988, 1-4). The difference is not only methodological but epistemological.

The debate in documentary as well as social science opposes the reliable and formalised methods of verifiability in the quantitative method with qualitative, longitudinal, non-generalisable

1 The distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods is of course also made in the natural sciences, and is not only methodological but epistemological, with "vast relativist consequences" which flow from Kuhn's abandoning of Popper's "epistemological spectator". This has resulted in great difficulty in finding a common ground of debate about the two approaches. (Doyal and Harris, 1986, 17-19).

methods. The contrasting concepts of objectivity and subjectivity, or materialism and idealism, or positivism and phenomenology, on which these methods are held to rest, permeate the debate about realism in documentary film.

The difference between the quantitative and qualitative approaches is similar to that between respectively etic and emic interpretations of cultures studied by anthropologists.

Emic approaches stress the interpretations “as the natives understand it”. Etic interpretations are those made using “the most appropriate and sophisticated conceptual tools that anthropology has to offer” (Rollwagen 1988a, 296). Rollwagen discusses two versions of this distinction, by Pike (1967) and by Harris (1968), and prefers Harris’ definition as more productive, since it favours an equal relevance of interpretation for scientific observers:

Etic statements are verified when independent observers using similar operations agree that a given event had occurred (Rollwagen op. cit, 297, citing Harris 1968, 575).

The idealist, or emic approach is expressed by some anthropologists who appeal to empathy and intersubjectivity, when describing an alleged “common human experience” which they encounter in the communities they study. It is also found in some accounts of film making. While editing their documentary on an old-age home, Temaner and Quinn observe that:

. . . as you surrender yourselves to the situation, the situation surrenders its meanings to you. You express its expressions (Temaner and Quinn 1975, 62).

These writers oscillate between acknowledging their own role in the construction of the edited film “text”, and projecting that role onto the filmed material. In doing so, they are not distinguishing between their images as images and the original situation. They are treating their

images as unmediated representations of that situation - a claim for an unmediated state of the image.

The empirical or positivist or etic approach to the use of film demands that its claims should be limited to data which can be scientifically verifiable, that its methods should be repeatable by other researchers. This position therefore demands that the presence of the filmmaker does not affect the behaviour being studied. This is patently impossible except with a concealed camera, and not consonant with the usual anthropological method, as De Heusch points out (De Heusch 1962, 22).

Breitrose on the other hand maintains that documentary has claims of empirical validity, and contrasts it with fiction film which he associates with idealism²:

To use the word documentary pre-supposes the existence of a material world in which objects and events exist independent of the observer. . . . This is the fundamental distinction between documentary and fiction, in that while documentary depends on empirical observation of the real world, fiction uses as its subject an ideal world that derives from the imagination (Breitrose 1986, 44).

Structuralist approaches to the nature of discourse claim to resolve this opposition. These approaches (semiotics, marxism, psychoanalysis) maintain that although the relation between a sign and its referent is arbitrary, a language based on this relationship leads to the possibility of

2 In the sense suggested by Williams "...a special kind of consciousness, imaginatively conferring certain properties on an object" (Williams 1976, 125). Although not the "main sense of philosophical idealism, in which an object necessarily derived its properties from consciousness", both of course fit with the ambiguous or paradoxical nature of the image, (particularly encouraged in realist film styles) as described by Nichols (1981, 21-24).

communication via a conventionalised system of codes. This includes therefore the specific codes and conventions of the discourses used in the domains of science, written history, fictional writing or film.

Some film theorists further maintain that the camera is a manifestation of the predominantly visual nature of culture in the 20th century, identifying an “ideology of the visible” or an “hegemony of the eye”. This is dated from Renaissance humanism, which “equates the real with the visible”, the “human eye . . . at the centre of the system of representation” (Comolli 1980, 126, citing Daney 1970, 39). The similarity between camera perspective and the empirical approach to the world should be obvious. Both can be described as creating a single, illusory fixed place of observation, at an experiential or intersubjective distance from the phenomenon observed.

Romanyshyn goes further, and identifies “the invention in 1425 of the technique of linear perspective” as the “cultural vision which shaped our contemporary technological world” (Romanyshyn 1989, 32-35). Drawing on art historians Helen Gardner (De La Croix and Tansey, 1975) and William Ivins (Ivins 1964, 1975), Romanyshyn asserts that:

Linear perspective is . . . the transformation of the eye into a technology and a re-definition of the world to suit the eye, a world of maps and charts, blueprints and diagrams.... (Romanyshyn 1989, 33)

We are therefore always subject to the illusion that the cinematic apparatus gives its audience. We have learned to see the cinema as the ideal world, to see the world ideally, as the camera sees it (Baudry 1985, 531-541).

A contrasting position is described by Morley who maintains that this psycho-technological determinist view of the camera makes no distinction between the specific nature of different films and how viewers react to them, or between the specific historical/experiential influences on viewers (including previous films), which affects how they react to each new film (Morley 1980, 163-165). There is a difference, in other words, between the way things are represented in the making of films and the way audiences understand them. Although there are similarities between films which make them easily understandable, it is also possible that audiences will understand a particular film in a way different to that intended.

If this is true, it does not explain the continued appeals to idealism and empiricism which are made regarding use of the camera, that there are “natural” versus “distorting” ways of using the camera (Gynn 1990, 42; Nichols 1981, 208).

Two Views of Technology

These contradictions are expressed in broad contemporary debates about the nature of technology in general, and particularly communications technology.

This debate poses two positions on communications technology. One is exemplified by the views of camera perspective outlined above, that the technology has unavoidable ideological overtones, deriving from its conceptual or philosophical origins (Comolli 1985; Baudry 1985). This view is commonly labelled the “technologically determinist” view.

The other position holds that the apparatus itself is neutral, and the message that it bears is untrue, distorted, false or ideological at one or more levels of textual construction, and that this results

from the specific way it is used. It thus locates problems in the practices and the institution which houses it, not the technology itself.

The distinctions and variable interrelationships between technology as manifested in hardware, in cultural belief and in its organisational context are neatly outlined by Pacey . His diagram distinguishes between two meanings of technology. The first, restricted meaning indicates “knowledge, skill and technique; tools, machines....resources”. The second, general meaning incorporates two aspects, together constituting technology as practice. The cultural aspect embodies “goals, values, ethical codes, belief in progress, awareness and creativity”. The organisational aspect embodies “economic and industrial activity, professional activity, users and consumers” (Pacey 1983, 6).

The technologically determinist view of printing technology is espoused by Ong, who maintains it influenced

the development of modern capitalism, implemented Western European exploration of the globe. . . made possible the rise of modern sciences, and otherwise altered social and intellectual life (1982, 117; citing Eisenstein 1979).

Social and personal effects which he proposes are a restructuring of human consciousness, including such effects as the concepts of privacy, of plagiarism and the individual possession of words (Ong 1982, 131).

The invention of the clock is also held to be influential. Sorenson notes that much contemporary science is built on the “discovery of consistent ways to measure observed phenomena in relation to a postulated uniform flow of time and space”(1975, 468).

Breitrose distinguishes between real time and experiential time, which is like “cinematic time. . . (which) is about how long things seem to take” (Breitrose 1986, 44).

The logic of arguments which attribute such similar results to very different technologies may easily be questioned. Finnegan contests the technological determinism of these approaches, and points to the obvious flaw in that they rest on a view of technology as autonomous and having effects beyond human intervention or decision making (Finnegan 1988, 8ff). In a discussion of telecommunications, which applies also to film making, Finnegan concludes “. . . it is a social not a technological matter what kind of information is expressed in which medium” (Finnegan 1988, 30-42).

Documentary and Ethnographic Film: Approaches, Trends, Developments

Trends and influences

Several trends which influence the style of anthropological and ethnographic films are noticeable. On the technological front, there was a consistent drive for better means of technical reproduction of sound and image, towards getting those means of reproduction sufficiently portable and flexible to meet people in their own environment with as little disturbance as possible, and for synchronising the sound and picture elements.

The achievement of this synchronisation in 1960 was typical of the naive realists’ “conflation of technology and aesthetics” (Eaton 1979a, 44) which is characteristic of Modernism in the arts⁴.

4 Eaton describes this trend in filmmaking as a “...progression...towards an increasingly unmediated relationship to the reality of the pro-filmic event, (a) ...tale of relentless technological progress towards the ultimate goal of effacement of technology”. Eaton concedes that it is conventional to include Rouch in this trend (Eaton 1979a, 40).

Another stream (in which Eaton includes Rouch on the grounds that he evades the simplistic “conflation”) took experimentation in two directions. The two can be characterised by a concern for “closed” as against “open” texts. This distinction is partly based on an assumed degree of empirical variety or ambiguity in open texts, an avoidance of conclusions or predictive endings derived from idealist or theoretical ⁵ conceptions. One of these directions was concerned with purely textual or formal experiment, which occurred chiefly in narrative films, but also in some documentary. The other included extra-textual factors, maintaining a balance between the product of the text and the process of the relationships between the subjects of the film, the makers and the audience. This balance also occurred in the applied use of film in the social sciences.

In documentary on social issues and specifically ethnographic film, the experiment regarding the relationship with the subjects took two directions. One direction kept a positivist distance between filmmakers and subjects, relying on naive realism or observation. This resulted, for ethnographic film, in several problems: the problem of explanatory commentary to deal with what had been observed, (while still retaining the specific character of film), as well as the political problem of making people aware of the nature and possible consequences of being represented. The other direction, often identified with Rouch, brought the subjects into the filmmaking process, where these problems could be dealt with more openly.

The above processes happened in particular institutional contexts such as academia (De Brigard 1975, 26), broadcasting (Wyver 1989, 163-173), Hollywood and other commercial fiction film

5 “Idealist” and “theoretical” are associated here in the sense of “knowledge which is based on the conscious application of directing principles or ideas, arrived at or controlled by reasoning” which Williams opposes to empiricism: “a knowledge which is based on observation (experience and experiment)”(Williams 1976, 100).

(Wyver 1989, 207; De Brigard 1979, 21-22) education (Marie 1979,37; Jacobs 1979, 277; De Brigard 1975, 20-21) and these also influenced documentary practices. Once the technological possibility of synchronised (or sync) sound had been achieved, the institution became the dominant influence.

A chronology: the parallel paths of empiricism and idealism

A rough periodisation of documentary and ethnographic film begins in the 19th century, when apparatus emerged for creating entertaining visual illusions of reality. This purpose contrasted with the scientific photographic experiments of Muybridge and Marey (Ceram 1965; Wyver 1989, 6-19; Barnouw 1974, 3-6). The scientific trend includes the first ethnographic film, by Felix-Louis Regnault. This film anticipated in its subject, its intention and results the pattern of many subsequent ethnographic films (De Brigard 1975, 15).

A brief period of commercial appeal of documentary, begun with Lumiere, ended with the discovery of editing, and the appearance of narrative. The invention of editing in 1903 resulted in the fiction film, because this joined the resources of theatre and the novel to film (Jacobs 1979, 3). The reciprocal influences of the technical and narrative elements of commercial cinema resulted in standardisation of both by the 1920's, and with the exception of Flaherty's "Nanook of the North", narrative eclipsed documentary.

This film, the first feature length non-fiction film, united the two strands of documentary and drama. It exemplified later tendencies in ethnographic film of long fieldwork, cooperation of the people being filmed and interpretive continuity in its reconstruction. "Discovering the essential

drama within the material itself became the method which created the prototype of documentary film and established its tradition ” (Jacobs 1979, 9).

Documentary thereafter had to rely on other distribution and funding (de Brigard 1975, 23; Jacobs 1979b, 73-74; Guynn 1990, 222). Consequently these films reflect the specific concerns of the institutions which did this.

The result of this standardisation was that cinema’s distribution, form and financial basis was established as theatrical, and meant a relatively autonomous industry of the silent movie (Jacobs 1979a, 4). Because of this autonomy, the adoption of sound which transformed cinema was delayed into the 1930’s. This happened although the sound technologies of records and radio

(oriented for the domestic market) had been simultaneously developing, and had by then established⁷ their institutional form and subject matter (Armes 1988, 11-12).

The second stage of the chronology begins with two experiments. The first was using the bulky, truck-mounted synchronised⁸ sound equipment, developed for feature, for on-location documentary⁹, and the second was the Mead/Bateson academic adaptation of film which continued Regnault's pattern (Guynn 1990, 35, 222) In this research mode, film was not meant for viewing by lay audiences or even editing. By making film subservient to positivist academic principles, they claimed to avoid problems of interpretive leeway and re-construction, and abandoned any pretense at commercial possibilities (De Brigard 1975, 26; Guynn 1990, 36).¹⁰

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- 7 The immediacy of voice in radio, while modified when on tape, later made television documentaries more sensitive to location sound, but also overemphasised the direct address commentary in favour of other sources of sound. Social documentary on tape by, for example Parker, was not favoured in class-inflected British radio (Armes 1988, 77-78, 165).
 - 8 Experimentation in synchronised sound dates from as early as 1901. Synchronised soundtrack for documentary films arrived only in 1927 with the Movietone system for newsreels. This permitted narration, sound effects and music, which continued as the staples of the documentary sound track until the mid-thirties (Wyver, 67-68, 161).
 - 9 The sound-trucks used for feature film in its controlled settings did not suit documentary (Wyver 1989, 166). The cumbersome truck disturbed the "intimacy which the documentalist (sic) tries to create between himself and his subject" (Rotha 1936, 208).
 - 10 This meant total dependency on the academic institution for both finance and practices. Naturally, antagonism between academia and Hollywood sharpened (Guynn 1990, 34; Hockings 1975, 477ff).

These experiments happened within institutional contexts separate from commercial feature film: Grierson's state financed documentary movement¹¹ and big business sponsorship on one hand, and the academic institution on the other. Both are innovations in the modern search for techniques and technology of empirical detail - the "conflation of technology and aesthetics" (Eaton 1979a, 44). Each of these was inflected with the specific project of their institutions.

A quite different strand of documentary was clearly evident in the Russian formalist approach to editing (Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Vertov) although this did not exclude ethnography (De Brigard 1975, 24). A lack of synchronised sound was at least a pre-condition of the Russian formal experiments on editing the silent picture, and the formalists opposed sound for this reason (Eisenstein et. al. 1985).

Western filmmakers who had geared their practice to the expressionist (or idealist¹²) freedom of the silent camera also opposed it, on the grounds that sync sound was a simple realist illusion¹³.

11 Documentaries from this movement's more realist stage, for example "Housing Problems" by Anstey and Elton in 1935, carried the voices of working class people. Leacock's experiments with sync. sound on Flaherty's "Louisiana Story" (made for Standard Oil) anticipated his later sync-sound style (Reynolds 1979, 403; De Brigard 1975, 25).

12 In Williams' (1976, 125) sense associated with fiction, above.

13 Rotha decries the habitual professional pressures in the industry to maintain synchronisation of sound ("Mere description") in favour of an expressive use of non-sync "wild" sound, whether recorded on location or in the studio (Rotha 1936, 201-223). This may have been due to the difficulties in achieving it (Armes 1988, 163; Wyver 1989, 70-71).

This prefigures the work of Rouch and Godard in breaking the sound/picture synchronisation in favour of a creative tension between the two.

The search for the technical constituents of the “lightweight revolution” continued in the 1950s, and the introduction of television provided a market for them. Television’s institutional ancestry in radio meant that the latter’s sound-oriented practices heavily influenced the use of sync sound, specifically commentary and interview¹⁴, in other words the relationship with the subjects. The introduction of sound tape soon after the war provided the technical basis for more flexibility in this.

Most documentary in the 1950s was conditioned by its institutional funding from television, big business and government (Jacobs 1979d, 276). State and corporate funding was essentially a continuation of John Grierson’s method of financing documentary, but without the protection of a specific institution for his liberal ideological project. His influence on the National Film Board of Canada provided the institutional context for an early practice of “cine verite” (Eaton 1979, 37).

The essential features of “cine verite” or in America, Direct Cinema, were dependent on more portable cameras and sound equipment (Monaco 1977, 266). Most important, sound could be recorded synchronously without even the necessity of cable links to the accompanying tape recorder (the portable, battery driven Nagra, widely used for this purpose, was perfected in 1958).

14 The reel-to-reel tape recorder was (like much other technology) perfected as a result of World War Two research, patent takeovers and commercial pressures. This made sound recording and editing much easier, allowing experiment, informality and creativity in the use of sound (Armes 1988, 74ff).

This portable sound capability popularised the 16mm format. Standardised in the 1920's, 16mm cameras now had battery power and hence longer-running magazines (Armes 1988a, 16; De Brigard 1975, 21). Fewer crew were needed and more light-sensitive colour filmstocks were available, thus eliminating slow and expensive lighting systems. Like the pre-war sound experiments, these advances were also driven by an empirical view of the image: the long "take" or shot, with "natural" sound, was held to be more thorough an empirical sample of the reality before the camera. Some of these advances towards the "lightweight revolution" were as a result of wartime technological development, some were the invention of filmmakers themselves¹⁵.

The fact that this technology and style surfaced almost simultaneously in so many countries¹⁶ indicates the broad social rather than institutional search for the possibility. In total, these advances meant that crews could film entirely on location (where previously the sync sound sequences had to be shot in the studio), could become intimately involved with the lives of their subjects, more responsive to the details of small group interactions. It required a new definition of social realism in film and of the social responsibility of the filmmaker.

15 The Maysles used a watch to synchronise tape recorder to camera (Jaffee 1989, 36). Rouch worked with the Eclair factory (Eaton 1979, 14). It is beautifully coincidental testimony to the non-determinist view that Rouch's development of cine verite was based on a camera developed by this company for a military surveillance satellite.

16 The USA (Jaffe 1986, 36-37), France (Rouch 1986, 29), and Germany (Roth 1986, 20).

Experiments in ethnographic film continued sporadically and separately, chiefly from France and the USA. In the American context, Heider identifies the work of Gardner and Marshall of the 1950s and 60s (done before the arrival of sync. sound) as being essentially similar to Flaherty's (Heider 1976, 31ff): that is, idealist¹⁷.

The editing approach of Flaherty and Gardner manufactures a narrative of a purportedly single event from raw material of several events filmed over a long period. For example, Heider describes Gardner's "Rivers of Sand" as an example of how sync sound transforms an ethnographic film style (Heider 1976, 34, 104-105).

The individuals closely associated with the emergence of portable sync sound equipment were either on the fringes of the main institutional influences on film (broadcasting and academia), in the case of Jean Rouch in France and Drew, Leacock, Pennebaker and the Maysles brothers in the USA, or in the encouraging institution of the National Film Board of Canada in the case of McCartney-Filgate and Brault (Marie 1979, 37). Rouch was even more atypical in being an ethnographer first, and only later making documentary in his home country.

The amateur beginnings of Rouch's immediate post-war filmmaking are consonant not only with other ethnographers and the explorer/colonialist model but also the general popularity of amateur filmmaking (De Brigard 1975, 26). Rouch's pre-war exposure to Griaule and Mauss however, took him further than the limitations of most amateurs, and he appeared to lack a strong institutional connection. These developments furthered the paradoxical connection which he exemplifies,

17 De Brigard identifies Gardner's approach as being one of finding the "universal" or idealist human experience in the particular cultural event, and thus using the narrative structure (De Brigard 1975, 35).

between observation with interpretation, interventionist reconstruction, and recording the undisturbed/ undirected event (Reisz & Millar 1973, 322ff). Rouch was also atypical though pivotal, in the academically oriented movement of ethnographic film to organise an institutional basis for itself. This included developing distribution, a written apparatus of description, method and typologies (De Brigard 1975, 28-29). This process is still continuing (Hockings 1988a, 207ff).

The influence of Rouch on French fiction filmmakers, Godard and some others, in the New Wave movement is evident in great changes in the concept and practice of narrative continuity. This happened concurrently with, but not dependent on the “lightweight revolution” and approaches to documentary. Briefly, Godard’s films dislocate the conventional rules of continuity and synchronised sound and are statements primarily about a way of seeing.

By breaking the realist illusion of a continuous flow of action to which the audience was accustomed, New Wave asked how the more conventional films portray this action, and raised the question of conventional perceptions (Reisz and Millar 1973, 298). Gradually, however, the professional filmmaking institution assimilated the new technology into its existing practices and defined its appropriate uses (Baddeley 1975, 119-121). The conservative backlash against cinema verite confirms this (De Brigard 1975, 37).

Stylistic diversity after 1960.

Although the lightweight revolution was seen as a political revolution, it is more complex than this. Rotha’s similarity to Vertov in both leftist political orientation and in prioritising views of editing is similar to Baddeley’s (Rotha in the 1963 Preface to Baddeley 1975). In the post-war

period, Baddeley for instance places less emphasis on editing, but still accords it primacy (1975, 95-96). His approach - shooting according to a pre-formulated editing plan - persists of course, indicating that the lightweight revolution was not a revolution.

In this movement, editing became not only less important, but its nature and place changed within the whole filmmaking process. This kind of filmmaking demands that editing decisions be made largely in camera. This requires a great intuitive tact on the part of the director, so much so that it is virtually necessary for the director, cameraman and editor to be one and the same person (Reisz and Millar 1973, 299).

The film most often held to typify the lightweight revolution, "Chronicle of a Summer", appears to exemplify the application of anthropological method (participant observation as well as intervention by the filmmaker in the form of interviews, the phenomenological approach) to an urban sociological situation. As an experimental "open" text it purposefully included filmmakers in the film, and the responses of the subjects to their own images in the first half of the film. In its conception of relations between camera and subject, it does not conceal purpose behind the technical realism of the portable equipment. The ideology of empirical realism which accompanied the "lightweight revolution" took two forms: "cine verite", a term later abandoned, and direct cinema¹⁸. The American version, better termed observational cinema, avoided an active relationship with the subjects being filmed, and the term is used in this study in this sense.

18 The term "direct" is given opposing meanings by different writers. Wyver for example classes "direct" together with "cine verite" as being observational (Wyver 1989,166). Marie defines "direct" differently as opposed to the observational version, although the Americans adopted the French term, as in Mamber's Cine Verite in America (1974)

The French version, direct (or participatory or reflexive), was purposely interventionist, especially as practised by Rouch and exemplified by “Chronicle of a Summer”. This distinction revealed that the conception and practice of such filmmaking is not determined by the limits of the technology¹⁹.

The first fully sync sound American documentary is regarded as “Primary” (Leacock 1961), manifesting the American observational version of “cine verite”. This notion of “verite” probably derives from the ethic of objectivity of the American press tradition, itself a version of empiricism. Robert Drew, an associate of Leacock, was a journalist (Wyver 1989, 166).

“Primary” does not have the interventionist tactic of the French “direct” version and assumes naive realism (Marie 1979; Mamber 1974, 2-3). While both versions avoid pre-scripting and control, or reconstruction, laying emphasis on the film being a product of its own representation, Rouch’s version includes active provocation (Eaton 1979a, 51). Relations with the subject are therefore the basis of difference.

Heider identifies Gardner’s “Dead Birds” (shot in 1960, released in 1963) as a watershed for ethnographic film for two reasons (Heider 1976, 33-35). It was the last ethnographic film made without sync sound²⁰, and was preceded by very few and succeeded by “literally dozens” of ethnographic films. This was partly due to the increased availability of funds and cheap (sync-sound) equipment. From this point, ethnographic film seems to constitute a separate

19 In other words, "Chronicle of a Summer" is not an empiricist documentary.

20 Note the experience of Jablonko (1988), and Jell-Bahlsen (1988). “The Nuer” (Harris 1970) contains bits of sync. sound (Heider 1976, 35) which Heider attributes to the new equipment.

institution, and is consequently dealt with separately in a later section. Before doing so, however, it is appropriate to examine post-1960 developments in documentary, so that the particular characteristics of the subset (ethnographic film) may be clearer.

The evolution of documentary filmmaking is periodised by Nichols as a developing series of rhetorical devices for achieving the illusion of reality or truth, which implicitly engage the audience more and more in the construction of the text's point of view (Nichols 1985, 259).

These are:

a) the traditional or classic staged documentary, with commentary by an omniscient voice-of-God, uses film as a carrier for knowledge evolved somewhere else. The primary realism of the cinema image is used as a guarantee of the evidence.

The subsequent typologies happen to synchronise to some extent with the "lightweight revolution", and are characterised by various techniques for breaking up the single point of authority, i.e. to make a more open text.

b) the reflexive documentary reveals by various means the central point of authority from which the text is constructed.

c) participatory documentary brings the subjects into the filmmaking process to varying degrees, but may or may not reveal their presence in the film.

d) cine verite/observational documentary avoids various types of staging or reconstruction as far as possible. The "direct" version acknowledges the guiding role of the filmmaker in construction of the text, and thus the authority of the text is assessed against his/her claims/appearance of

credibility. The observational version claims simply to present the evidence without interpretation.

e) the interview documentary: avoids commentary, and juxtaposes interviews with real people. The totality of interviews is the view of the filmmaker. This avoids the obvious dominating central position of the authorial commentary. The credibility of the film depends on how authoritative each interview is perceived to be. This depends partly on the interview technique per se, as Skinninsrud points out (Skinninsrud 1987) ²¹.

Nichols identifies yet another development, in De Antonio's documentaries and the Turkana trilogy by David and Judith MacDougall, as experiments in which evidence is presented with a situating aspect similar to the physical presence of observational cinema - but this time as commentary, as intertitles, or as a playing off of one interview against another, none of them being fully reliable, or having all the facts. The process of textual construction, the author's point of view of the film, is not concealed, but happens before our eyes; claims or accusations that purpose is concealed behind naive realism, are avoided (Nichols 1985).

Advances in video technology now mean cheap cameras with three or more hours of recording time, automatic synchronous sound and editing. More, the longer takes and instantaneous playback of video supposedly increase the notion of empirical realism in the image: instantaneous playback provides instantaneous verification of its empirical powers. This further fragments

21 The interview is a direct and obvious way of getting a response about people from them but there are the possibilities that responses will be limited to the "preconceived ideas and questions of the interviewer", that interviewees will tell only what they want the interviewer to know about them (Skinninsrud 1987, 49), or that interviewees will lie.

idealist claims about reality, since the nature of unedited shots, “takes” or recordings contrasts with the manipulation of this empirical evidence, which is obvious in the editing of shots into any text.

The arrival of portable sync sound film equipment was accompanied by an optimistic version of technological determinism, a promise of liberation from the authoritative documentary of closed texts, via greater empirical evidence in the image (Cubitt 1991, 1). Video technology is also optimistically being proposed as a means towards a democracy of process, openness, a liberation from the pessimistic version of technological determinism i.e. closure and routine in television. (Cubitt 1991, 23-24; Armes 1988, 1-8). Process (or lack of it) is claimed to be mutually reinforcing in politics and in the image.

These opposing conceptions and institutions are now the sites of contestation about image production (in the same way as portable sync sound equipment was the site of contestation), between constructing images around relationships and constructing them around a more distanced, apparently neutral viewpoint.

Before examining how these debates are manifested in visual anthropology, a brief review of the relation between film theory and documentary is necessary.

Film theory and Documentary: a Brief Review of Positions on Realism and Editing

The difficulties of defining documentary in particular and realism in general indicate its contingent nature. Documentary seems to have been more affected than fiction films by historical developments, particularly the technology and the varieties of institution.

Film theorists of the stature of Christian Metz, for example, did not as recently as 1974, either distinguish documentary as a separate type of film²² or, as a result, devote much attention to it. Although the literature on documentary is “extensive”, it is more an “apology” for film practice than analytical (Nichols 1981, 171; Commolli 1969, 225-43; Gynnn 1990, 18, 45).

Early film theory divided approaches to film into editing-based and camera-based theories, or montage and *mise-en-scene*. Godard’s dissolution of the distinction between camera and editing (*mise-en-scene* and montage) in favour of general text-making intention is regarded as one of the “most important steps in film theory” (Monaco 1977, 319). Godard’s work was directed towards creating a psychological reality rather than a physical reality (Monaco 1977, 146). This synthesis therefore appears more relevant to fiction film, where the relations between the two operations, as well as relations with the subjects of the film, are controlled.

Like other Russian formalists, Vertov stressed the importance of editing. His conception of it extended beyond the formal operation to include all stages of film production. His version of montage extends to “the organisation of the visible world”. These include research or familiarisation with the subject (“montage during observation”), formulating a shooting script or *decoupage*, responsiveness to changing conditions during filming (“montage during filming” and “rapid sizing up by eye”), and matching the resulting shots to the shooting script derived from prior research to identify what is missing (“montage after filming”) (Williams 1980, 26).

In other words, Vertov’s version of editing in documentary encompasses a dialectical relation between camera and subjects, in which neither the initial surface appearances of the subjects nor

22 Metz 1974, 94 .

prior intention of the filmmaker has priority. This is therefore similar to the practices of analytic induction or grounded theorisation in qualitative research methods, which attempt to avoid the closure implied by prior theorisation (Bryman 1988, 81-84).

The awareness of the intentionality of text-making, and prioritising of editing, makes Vertov's approach important. It was not typical of early documentarists, and is found only in a few modern documentaries (Nichols 1985, 270).

By contrast, Bazin's development of *mise-en-scene* presumed that in the deep focus travelling shot or long take, the spectator's relation to reality was most nearly imitated (Williams 1980,36). This "surface appearance" conception of reality seems to conflate the image with reality, but elsewhere Bazin points out that "realism in art can only be achieved one way - through artifice" (Williams 1980, 35). But on this point he is vague, enabling Williams to assert that "Meaning for him is always there, waiting to be revealed; it cannot be constructed" (Williams 1980, 35, 42-43, 53). Other critics of Bazin, for example Guynn, maintain that Bazin's denial of intention or awareness of text-making is naive. Realism as a theory fits too neatly with documentary as a technique (Guynn 1990, 18, 29-34).

Contemporary structuralist film theorists such as Guynn are concerned with the rules by which the visual discourse constructs its meaning, rather than a concern with how these discourses evoke the real world origins of the individual images which constitute those discourses: in other words, how it refers us to the real world (Monaco 1977, 325-330). In the structuralist approach, Metz's Large Syntagmatic is regarded as the most comprehensive system for the analysis of

montage (Monaco 1977, 187), but it does not seem often to have been applied to documentary, Guynn (1990) and Nichols (1981, ch7) being the only examples located.

This neglect is not remarkable, since the structuralists' exclusive concern with the text or the production of meaning conflicts with the documentary makers' view of filmmaking as an empirical activity. The exceptions appear to be Rouch and Vertov (Guynn 1977, 40-42).

Although work on analysing the text of the documentary is still exploratory, Nichols points out that a necessary starting point is the apparent realism of the photographic image. His assessment, more sophisticated than Bazin's, starts by pointing out the basic characteristics of the image:

. . . the indexical sign - e.g. a photograph, sundial or medical symptom - enjoys an existential bond between itself and that which to which it refers. In some manner and to some degree its appearance is determined by specific correspondences with its referent as the photographic image is via the physics of lenses and light (Nichols 1981, 239).

Based on this, Nichols summarises the "reality claim" of documentary as twin paradoxes:

- "1) What you see [on the screen before you] is what there was" [when the camera took the picture], and
- 2) "What there is [on the screen before you] is what there would have been" [had the camera not been there].

Nichols notes that this is particularly applicable to the observational film, in which the appeal of the visual is that the presence of the crew had no effect on the behaviour (Nichols 1981, 239-242, 250)

At a formal level (that is, in any kind of filmmaking) editing comprises the articulation of one shot with another, using the notion of decoupage as

. . what results when the succession of spatial fragments excerpted in the shooting process, converge with the temporal fragments whose duration may be roughly determined during the shooting, but whose final duration is determined only on the editing table (Burch 1973, 4).

Burch tabulates the various articulations present when one shot is joined to another into five types of temporal ²³ and three types of spatial ²⁴ articulation. The possible number of combinations is thus fifteen, and Burch points out the enormous number of further “variations” that are possible if camera-subject distance, camera angle, movement in frame and movement of frame are included (Burch 1973, 12).

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- 23 a) Absolute continuity: no break is discernible either via the soundtrack (say, the sound of a person speaking is continuous while the image shows a person looking at the speaker) or the image in a “match cut” where the action is absolutely continuous across the cut.
b) Temporal ellipsis or time abridgement: two types, one measurable, one not measurable. The measurable type is capable of being continuous, the second cannot and is indefinite ellipsis.
- 24 The spatial articulations are
a) Continuous; the same piece of space is seen in succeeding shots (although the time may or may not be continuous);
b) Discontinuous of two subtypes;
- proximate space; eye line and screen direction matched, screen position matched;
- complete spatial discontinuity, as in a shift of location from interior to exterior (Burch 1973, 8-10).

Because Burch's approach is a formal one, it ignores the "syntactical" relation between the contents of shots. What results from the syntactical relation between shots is enormously variable.

This relation between shots can result, for instance, in the narrative diegesis, in a coherent spatio-temporal realm which gives the illusion of how we experience space and time in reality (Nichols 1981, 81), as opposed to a formal or poetic exploration of shapes and movement. Burch indicates how these principles of articulation became formalised into rules of continuity (see below) with the aim of making transitions imperceptible between shots which were spatially continuous or proximate (Burch 1973, 11)²⁵. Some directors were also able to use them for deliberate disorientation of the viewer, "one of the film maker's most valuable tools" (Burch 1973, 10-12).

As a contrast, formal articulations between shots can result in a dialectical (rather than spatio-temporal) relation between their contents, as in Eisenstein's montage theories (Monaco 1977, 313). In this type of editing, the references of the image to the original space and time of the camera become less important than the conceptual result of the juxtaposition of two shots.

25 The formalisation of rules of continuity date from fragmentation of the "proscenium arch" style of shooting. Directors realised that they no longer had to work within an actual space, but with an imaginary space. Despite this, continuity techniques were evolved to help maintain for the viewer "an immediate and constant sense of orientation". Otherwise s/he would lose "that instinctive sense of direction he always has in traditional theatre and believes he has in life" (Burch 1973, 10).

Burch also contrasts the planned nature of the articulations via the rules of continuity with the factor of chance, the “aleatory”, and identifies Lumiere’s station experiment as the start of the tension between chance and the formal, predictable structure of continuity (Burch 1990, 109).²⁶

Sound

The issue of sound requires separate and extensive treatment since both theorists and practitioners indicate that representations of reality via the sound track, especially sync sound, are at the heart of documentary’s claims to refer to the real, its empirical justification.

Sound has up to until recently been omitted from film theory (Levin 1984). As late as 1980, influential figures such as Metz, Baudry and Commolli were claiming that there was no difference between the actual sound and its recorded version (Levin 1984, 56). The new interest in sound, however, still ignores documentary in favour of feature length narrative, and concentrates on films dating before the “lightweight revolution” (Weis and Belton 1985, Preface).

26 Chance is the essential factor of documentary, but is used in a very limited way by the British school. The use of the aleatory in various degrees of control (Burch 1973, Ch. 7) also calls into question the claim of positivist ethnographic film when it uses both continuity and uncontrolled action.

Style and technology

Theorisation about realism must take into account the shifting relation between technology and filmmaking practices, between conventions of realism and innovation.

Altman acknowledges that sync sound in documentary was both a reaction against Hollywood sound mixing and seen as a guarantee of realism. He suggests that this claim of realism is contestable both theoretically and practically, the latter because it ignores the way the human ear selects sound. "A mere technical capability is not sufficient basis on which to erect a principle of filmmaking" (Altman 1985, 49). This is of course correct, but finer distinctions must be made. Explorations in documentary filmmaking do this, film theory does not.

Armes agrees that technology does not determine style, but questions the relevance of theories which are not situated within the technical possibilities of a specific era, since definitions of reality are dependant on both the reigning conventions of representing reality (i.e. realist styles) and the technical possibilities that permit those conventions (Armes 1988, 115-116, 168).

It is useful to distinguish. . . between technological and stylistic evolution, which does not always share a single goal, and to

acknowledge the coexistence of disparate stylistic uses of a single technology (Belton 1985, 69).

Belton further relates these different uses to the “socioeconomic and cultural” context of the particular practice. Theorists working on sound in feature film are still coming to terms with the basic representational characteristics of sound ²⁷, and the technological restraints of sound equipment, although these have been available in the professional manuals for some time. ²⁸

The question is to what degree the sound can be said to be that of the original, and if it is not, how is it perceived. As Armes puts it, the basis of perception is that

media which give us a sense of realism . . . fulfill some (not all) of the conditions of perception, and do not obtrusively call attention to their status as reproductions (Armes 1988, 169).

Several writers call for detailed analyses of sound strategies to find out exactly how we make sense or interpret sounds as representing the real (Levin 1984,56; Bordwell and Thompson 1985,184) .

It is evident from the professional manuals that perception of depth, environment and sounds from various sources require a complex series of technical mediations with the microphone and

27 See for instance Bordwell and Thomson (1985,184) who list the characteristics of sound as “volume, pitch and timbre”. This list ignores additional characteristics which affect our perception of depth, the environment and hence source of sounds: for example reverberation, decay, signal/noise ratio and the selectivity of both the human ear and the various types of microphone (Nisbett 1974a).

28 See for instance Nisbett (1974a), for details of the differences between human hearing and microphones with regard to volume (26), frequency and directionality (34-52), and Nisbett (1974) for professional practices of mixing (Ch 10), sound effects (Ch 8), studios and acoustics (Ch 4) and shaping of sound (Ch 12), with regard to studio television, and Baddeley for sound track construction in documentary (1975, Ch 12).

recording apparatus to be both recognisable and audible to the ear. At the same time, the methods of sound recording and reproduction described in these manuals are saturated with an ideology of constructing the illusion of realism.

Most important of these are the questions of microphone directionality and placement. Both are relevant to the question of the illusion of depth, and on-screen/off-screen sound.

The position of a single microphone relative to the voice or other source indicates the apparent closeness to the listener. It does this by reproducing the loudness of voice in relation to surrounding sound, and therefore the corresponding impression of either closeness or distance (Williams 1980, 59).

The directionality of the microphone is related to the above. Highly directional “gun” microphones select sound pick up sound more strongly from an arc of approximately 60 degrees or less in front of it. Sound pick-up is weaker either directly to the side or to the rear.

Directionality, and the unselective nature of the microphone are related to the professional ideology of preserving the realist illusion of the image through effacing the presence of the crew and equipment. The perspective given by microphone recording also relates to visual perspective of the apparent sound source through the image. Attempts are usually made to give an apparent match of audio and visual perspective, leading to conflicts about the need to keep the microphone out of the frame. The microphone is allowed to appear in shot only in circumscribed situations²⁹.

29 For the conventions of where this could happen in 60’s and 70’s British television, see for example Nisbett (1974a, 78).

One reflexive tactic is to include the microphone in frame, to indicate the constructed nature of the shot, the presence of the crew and the precise position of the microphone in relation to the source(s) of sound.

Solutions to the problems of microphone placement are directional microphones, radio microphones and the fishpole boom, each bringing their own distinctive problems of sound perspective, unwanted operational noise or operator fatigue (Belton 1985, 69; Altman 1985, 49; Nisbett 1974, 60).

Detailed descriptions of microphone placement in observational film are difficult to find, Mamber not mentioning it at all in his extended discussion (Mamber 1974), except to note the introduction of the crystal sync method of synchronising the Nagra tape recorder to camera. The “direct” sound-recording methods of Godard and Straub are similar to those of observational film, but are not well described.³⁰

30 Godard’s use of a “centrally located omnidirectional microphone” implies an avoidance of shaping the sound perspective, as does his avoidance of subsequently editing and mixing the recording (Williams 1985, 337). Straub’s exclusive use of “direct” synchronised location sound appears to rely on finding locations with little environmental sound (Weis and Belton 1985, 152).

Mixed and edited sound

There are opposing points of view about the temporal and spatial nature of sound in the edited film. While Metz described the diegesis as “the fictional space and time dimension” (Armes 1988a, 21), sound came to be seen as paired with picture in a subordinate role. This dominance of the visual is disputed by Armes, on the basis of his examination of the history of sound and picture technologies³¹. He proposes arguments that sound is in fact the dominant element, especially in documentary.

Several writers are in agreement that sound has a greater range of possible articulations than picture, both between sound and sound and between picture and sound (Percheron 1980, 20-23; Nichols 1981, 183, 205-6; Bordwell and Thompson 1985, 197) . While only one coherent picture is presented to the viewer at any one time, and is located in a coherent space bounded by the frame, a number of sounds can be presented, emanating not only from within the screen, but from outside the screen, since we are aware in reality of sounds coming from 360 degrees around us.

These writers have drawn up schemata which attempt to categorise the different syntactical relations between picture and sound. All are based on the visually dominant concept of the diegesis. The question addressed in this section concerns the relation between sounds which are usually found in documentary.

Nichols creates a special category of diegesis to deal with documentary, since Metz’s narrative-based version makes no provision for the expository element of documentary, i.e. in

31 Armes points out that the concept of diegesis, in its original form, did not imply a visual bias but a verbal one, a “recitation of the facts” in some British and ancient Greek judicial usage (Armes 1988a, 21).

commentary. This schema makes spatial (on-screen/off-screen) distinctions about sound source in relation to the screen, not temporal ones (Nichols 1981, 205-6). He further distinguishes between “direct” and “indirect” to indicate whether the voices and images of people appearing acknowledge the viewer or not.

“Indirect address” is classified as typical of observational cinema, in which the people do not speak for the camera and are not interviewed, but may speak to each other. Nor is there a narrating voice. In “direct address”, narrators and social actors speak either on-screen or off-screen or both. Nichols does not distinguish between temporal relationships between sound and picture or between sounds of different sources and types. Nor does he indicate precise relationships between these in a sound mix (Nichols 1981, 183).

A more complex schema, intended to deal with sound in fictional narrative films, in which both temporal and spatial relations are dealt with, is proposed by Bordwell and Thompson (1985, 197). Temporal relations depend on whether the sound is perceived to be occurring before, after or synchronised with the accompanying images.

The spatial relations into which each of these is subdivided by source is done according to the apparent spatial relations with the visual, thus still retaining primacy for the visual.

For example, synchronised dialogue is “simple diegetic”, while the source of other voices are either “displaced diegetic” (example: “character’s vision of the future is heard”) or “nondiegetic” (“narrator in present speaks of events shown as being in past”) (Bordwell and Thompson 1985, 197).

Here the narrator, of course, is usually identified as an imaginary character within the fictional realm itself, and thus makes no claim to narrating actual events. Sound effects and music are included in the simple diegetic category, i.e. the synchronous-with-image present tense.

An even more complex schema is that of Percheron, who acknowledges the primacy of the visual in the diegesis, and also questions its definition. His schema makes relatively finer distinctions with regard to the space from which the sound comes, and makes a temporal distinction only for “voice-over on flashback” (Percheron 1980, 21).

Like Bordwell and Thompson, he too classes commentary separately from other categories of voice-off, because it is not synchronised with events in the image, nor is it diegetic. His greater range of categories also include “voice-over on flashback”, “interior monologue”, and “unmarked voice-off”. Yet he asserts that commentary is similar to the first two of these categories, because they are directly communicated to the viewer, i.e. are not present to or emitting from (other) characters in the visual.

This schema indicates that there is a continuum of distinctions rather than a simple on /off division in various types of voice-off, and hence a more subtle range of relationships to be established. Although these occur rarely in documentary, which keeps a distinct distance between commentary and voices in the diegesis, the quality of the commentary needs to be more thoroughly established to see what tactics it adopts to distinguish it as a realist technique from the near relatives that Percheron identifies.

On the other hand, because it is implicitly concerned with narrative, Percheron’s category of “voice-on” does not allow for the more distinctively non-narrative “direct address” on-screen

narrator (example: TV news presenter or reporter), nor the interview mode where the interviewer is on-screen in a range of positions, ranging from back-to-the-audience to profile, to face-to-camera.

This brings us to formal articulations, or relations between sound and sound, which are established during sound mixing and editing. Articulations are of temporality/sequence (sounds follow one another) and simultaneity (they are both audible at the same point).

Sequential articulations are made by combinations of fade, mix and cut. Simultaneous articulations deal with relative volumes, for example a “foreground” voice will usually be louder than a “background” voice.

The dominant practices of sound mixing and editing in narrative feature film have been outlined by Doane (1980, 50-53). Sounds are placed in a hierarchy, in which the first is voice, followed in turn by music and effects. Just as the rules of continuity are aimed at making picture cuts imperceptible, so sound edits are also made inaudible, and staggered so as not to synchronise with picture cuts and thereby call attention to themselves. Absolute silence is avoided. Perspective is manipulated through volume changes and addition of reverb, and by patching sound track with effects when it appears “empty” in relation to picture.

These practices naturalise the hierarchy of sounds, and are contrasted with the random overlap and mutual obscuring which happens in life. This hierarchy is said to support the illusion of perspective in the image, and conceal the additional expressive elements of this operation. This activity is seen in the same light as the narrative closure which is evident in most feature films - an apparently natural but simplified version of the on-going complexity of reality.

The character of commentary

The usual qualities of commentary which set it off from Percheron's three types of diegetic voice are defined by Doane. Where interior monologue has an inner life, commentary has none. Commentary never has or relates to a body in the diegesis.

As a form of direct address, it speaks without mediation to audience, bypassing the 'characters' and establishing a complicity between itself and the spectator - together they understand and place the image (Doane 1985, 168). It is usually not self-referential, and is outside the frame's space. Because it is disembodied, it has the power of interpretation.

The remarks of Baddeley implicitly reveal the combination of aural perception requirements and ideological assumptions regarding commentary. He outlines the craft rules for writing and placing commentary in relation to picture, to achieve precisely the effects that Doane describes (Baddeley 1975, 215-216).

Experiments with commentary reveal that it can steer the audience into very different interpretations of the picture (Bordwell and Thompson 1985, 182). On the other hand, removing the commentary reveals that the pictures (usually) signify much more broadly on their own (Guynn 1990, 212). Guynn claims that a realist, non-fiction effect takes root in this "dual structure" (1990, 157)³⁵. On the other hand, commentary is integrated with other elements. This happens through the specific character and tone it adopts in each film context, the amount of

35 This does not explain the evolution of documentary style which abandons or severely reduces commentary (Nichols 1985, 260ff), nor the extensive commentaries of Rouch (Eaton 1979, 49).

time it occupies, as well as the amount and nature of additional information it brings. Its perceptual placing depends on its volume relative to other sounds in the track.

In an edited version, maintaining the unities of time and place (referenced by the unities of picture synchronised with sound) is obviously a guarantor of realism.

Sync sound is usually a primary mark of documentary, because its broadly unselective range of sounds (on screen and off), the redundancy of seeing as well as hearing, are regarded as more obviously empirical. More complex articulations of temporality which prioritise the textual relations between sounds and image, rather than their referential relationships, tend to be avoided. Yet the documentary filmmaker can be accused of dishonestly concealing his/her point of view behind the realist illusion, behind continuity editing (Nichols 1985, 261).

Conclusion: sound.

Indicators of realism in sound have obviously now moved away from straight sync sound, since video gives it automatically (Armes 1988, 166). The Bazinian conception of realist sound has now passed. A relational or Eisensteinian concept of sound is now proposed, referring us in two directions: comparison between sync sound and other kinds of sound, and, as Nichols indicates in his discussion, the juxtaposition of different types of sync sound, (dis)articulated with one another, as a way of indicating the process of manufacturing sound and the image (Nichols 1985). Sync sound needs to be compared with other things, be commented on, assessed, re-edited.

Visual and Written Anthropology

Whether we locate the nature and problems of written or filmic anthropology at the level of the technology itself or its practices, an examination of the specific differences and broad similarities between the two media is relevant.

Despite the differences, the definitions of cultures which they take as their subject remain relativist and ethnocentric in nature, and subject to both the academic institution from which they emanate, and to cultural change over time (De Brigard 1975, 30, citing Worth 1969).

The typical differences between written and visual media are that verbal/written discourse has greater conceptual powers and flexibility, while visual evidence provides a more vivid impression of the time and place, duplicating the ambiguity, the multivocality of lived experience and provides the possibility of multiple interpretations. It provides a greater empirical ability (Skinninsrud 1987, 50-51; Hockings 1988, 211ff).

Yet the qualitative rather than quantitative nature of the data are similar in anthropology. Peacock (1986, 71-2) and De Heusch (1962, 27) reveal how the anthropological method differs from positivist sociology. Where sociology often uses empirical survey techniques to gather quantitative data, anthropology usually uses participant observation techniques, more suitable for small scale societies, to obtain qualitative data.³⁶

36 This is not to say that written anthropology does not use quantitative methods. Quantitative techniques are typified by the empirical sampling of acts and events, statistical analysis of the resulting information for abstracting large-scale trends, and written assessment of such results.

The phenomenological nature of anthropological field work suits the ability of the film image and stresses the specific, the qualitative, the case study rather than the sampling of similar cases (De Heusch 1962, 16). It can empirically record surface phenomena so that interrelationships can later be gauged.

Qualitative data includes the phenomenological “thick description” of simultaneous and significant acts, gestures, speech, structures, ornaments and objects and people found in a particular social event, ritual or milieu.

Regarding specific textual methods of conveying the results of fieldwork, the clear distinction between field notes and completed publication does not exist for film. In the conventions of written social science, the raw data are condensed, abstracted and generalised, i. e. concealed. In film of whatever kind, the shots (equivalent to field notes) are incorporated into the edited film (De Heusch 1962, 25). On the other hand, anthropologists’ field notes, corresponding to unedited film, are very rarely published.

Yet the editing function is essentially similar. Morin identifies (Preface, De Heusch 1962, 3) the similarity between the film editing process and writing, and is echoed by Skinninsrud:

. . . editing of a film is not radically different from the selection of observations which occurs in research. A given social theory or hypothesis claims validity only for a limited domain of situations. Editing can be seen as selection with the intent of highlighting a particular interpretation of events (Skinninsrud 1987, 52).

Heider points out that while it is conventionally acceptable in writing for an ethnographer to fabricate a single account from many, it is not acceptable in film (1976, 14-15).³⁷ The broad similarity is explored further by Guynn, who asserts a basic similarity at the textual level between realist discourses (whether written or filmic), because they claim to give access to a pre-existing structure of real events (Guynn 1990; 14-19, 34-40).

Guynn draws other parallels with written forms, adopting the supposition of White (1978) that, first, historiography recently adopted the techniques of science; second, despite this, its strategies are still those of narrative literature (Guynn 1990; 16, 42)³⁸. Guynn then suggests that these apply as well to documentary film as to historiography (1990, 16), in which by implication he includes written ethnography. He too notes the inevitable process of selection and ordering, implying causality. These realist techniques are consciously adopted by the makers to distinguish their efforts from respectively fictional film as well as the novel (Guynn 1990, 41).³⁹

37 Ethnographic filmmakers such as Hockings are more recently asserting that this is acceptable (Hockings 1988, 157).

38 . The problem is posed, first, as to the meaning status of the raw document (the shot); secondly, how this is changed or mediated once it is put into a historical discourse and thirdly the extent to which objectivity is associated with narrative by the audience. (Guynn 1990, 132-33).

39 . Drawing on the work of White (1973, 1978, 1987), Barthes and Levi-Strauss, Guynn maintains that the separation between aesthetic/artistic and the scientific is of relatively recent origin, and heavily conventionalised. Historiographers sought to abandon the highly literary style of 19th C historiography, and achieve a transparent and objective medium of representation. This closely parallels the apparent transparency of the cinematic sign (Guynn 1990, 14).

The essential difference for the reader/viewer between the film image and the written academic discourses of positivist science is experiential. By convention, written discourse in positivist science and much human science eliminates the dimension of affect associated with direct experience, of things or the images of things. This is possible in writing, since language as a sign system is doubly arbitrary (sounds to words, words to things). The film image, on the other hand, always refers us to the original experience of the thing.

The elimination of affect, a direct experimental encounter through observation, is also possible in the image, if the presence of the observer is concealed, and the observer separated from the thing observed. Making images in this way therefore potentially permits the filmmaker, or the writer, to create the illusion of objective facts, whether in the apparent realism of the projected film image, its edited version or in a written piece of research⁴⁰. Thus the relationship between original data and edited text, between the observer and data is regarded as problematic.

An examination of the history of ethnographic film indicates how filmmakers have practically dealt with the problems of working with the two traditions of documentary film and academic discourse.

Ethnographic Film: the Special Case of Documentary

As Nichols notes, the ethnographic filmmakers are more concerned than documentarists with problems of validation (1985, 260), and some of their experiments to this end may be regarded as equivalent to the rhetorical strategies of the "open" text outlined above.

40 This illusion is not of course a determinant that viewers or readers will accept the objectivity or existence of the "facts", the point made by Morley 1980, 163-165.

The strategies of the ethnographic filmmakers with regard to validation are dependent on their relations with the subjects they study, and the method of observation within that relation. Some approaches to validation are now examined.

The tactic of intervention has a long history in methods of re-construction in ethnographic film, dating from Flaherty, as indicated by Balicki (1975). Since they were working within the perceived context of the theatrical or fiction film, these filmmakers adopted techniques of validity which were considered appropriate to these contexts (Hockings 1988a, 218, quoting Young 1988,14) ⁴¹. Balicki's Netsilik Eskimo films are well known examples, and are also noteworthy for their unusual textual tactic of eliminating spoken narration in order to prompt classroom discussion (Balicki 1975, 70). This is yet another version of the "open" text ⁴².

A reaction to the concealment of this reconstruction and its frequent location in "the past", lead to among other things the positivist approach of Mead and Bateson. This approach avoided any attempt at reconstruction, or the possibility of conveying results via the self-contained, publically accessible film. Their film seems to have been an "open" text in the sense that it referred outside itself to other apparatuses of validation in academic research.

The research film then developed, within the academic tradition, a large and highly specialised range of techniques of observation, usually with positivist assumptions. These included attempts

41 . The reconstructive element in ethnographic film must at least partly have been due to the bulky cameras which could not get to where the action was. It was easier to bring the action to the camera.

42 . In an educational context, my "Wheelchair Rally" (1981), about the problems of the disabled, used some principles of an open text. Sections of material already filmed were used as elicitation device for further interviews, also filmed and included.

either to keep some factors constant or to vary them according to a predetermined plan. Having held them constant, the variability of other factors by the subjects could then be more easily studied.

An attempt to match the positivist approach with the needs of film for the general public are evident in Heider's stylistic prescriptions for the ethnographic film (Heider 1976). On one hand, they echo Bazin's discredited theory of *mise-en-scene* (Gynn 1990, 37), but list "distorting" techniques, for instance the use of telephoto shots, close-ups and zooms, and some features of continuity editing. Heider includes directives regarding the inclusion of the ethnographic presence as observer in the film, the ethnographic present tense (avoidance of staging or re-creation of dead rituals).

A further development of this approach is epitomised by Rouch (Eaton 1979), and to an extent Macdougall (1975) and Preloran (1975). Rouch's version of reconstruction or intervention was to intervene, to provoke and simultaneously to reveal his provocation, based not so much on the specific methodological directives of Heider, but rather on an ethically informed relation with his subjects. As a result, the content of Rouch's films reveals their method, but the two aspects (content and method) are not as distinguishable as they are in the conventional discourse and practice of research method in positivist science. An ethical relation is also proposed by Marazzi (1988, 118) among others as a measure of validity. This approach abandons any claim to the objective separation of the filmmaker/ethnographer from their subjects, and indeed of the possibility of an apolitical relationship between filmmaker and subjects (Eaton 1979, 45; Gynn 1990, 40; MacDougall 1975, 118-119). It implies abandoning the assumption that the filmmaker/

ethnographer's own western culture and forms of knowledge are superior to those of the people that they are studying.

In the view of Rollwagen, validation does indeed depend on Western forms of knowledge, specifically anthropological theory. He casts doubt on the observational method, and on any method which is not based on anthropological theory (1988, 193-195). However, The "paradigm shift" in representation which has occurred in both visual and written anthropology has led to claims that the documentary should be reflexive in some way, that is, that the nature of its representation and the assumptions by which it is made should at least be revealed (see for example, Marcus and Fisher 1986; Clifford and Marcus 1986). This includes the nature of its theoretical component and how this is derived⁴³.

An extension of this position is that the process of filmmaking should be participatory rather than authorial. This can mean a range of relationships between filmmakers and subjects. These include educating the subjects about the nature and likely effect of filmmaking on their community before filming begins, an active involvement by the community in the process throughout the filming stage and/or the editing stage, and the assumption of total responsibility by the subject for representing themselves. This last relationship relegates (mainly white) "western" filmmakers to a training or advisory role, about which Ruby is sceptical (Ruby 1991).

43 The problem with theoretically based films is that they are likely to need explanation via the commentary (but not necessarily). This tactic runs the risk of making the subjects of ethnographic films into mere illustrations of theory and of proposing that a theoretical explanation of the picture (in commentary) is the total one, an issue explored in Chapter Two.

Hockings (1988a) routes the problem of validation back to the basic difference between written anthropology and visual anthropology. He asks why visual anthropology has made so little impression on anthropological theory (1988a, 210, 220), why ethnographic films are expected to be total and independent statements as are books (1988a, 216-217), why ethnographic films are accused of lack of objectivity when written ethnographies are not (1988a, 214), whether, in fact, films are by nature phenomenological or etic while written anthropology is deductive/empirical or emic (215, 221).

The basic requirement seems to be, Hockings suggests, that films should be “internally consistent” (1988a, 214) which raises the problem of editing as a means of falsifying consistency. His remarks on editing indicate a reciprocal relation between editing and “other research” (1988b, 156) as a way of avoiding this falsification - a method which is in fact Vertov’s “expanded” sense of editing.

Textual experiments include “!Nai, the Story of a !Kung Woman” (Marshall, 1980), which follows the story of the woman through changing relationships with the filmmakers. An experiment widely noted in the literature is “The Axe Fight” (Chagnon and Asch (1975), which runs the same material several times and explains it different ways. The Worth and Adair experiment with the Navaho is regarded as ahead of its time, until the recent trend to transfer

filmmaking skills rather than merely involve subjects in cooperative film making (Worth and Adair 1975). The problem of the nature of the evidence (the problematic relation between the real and the image) is claimed to be solved by Rouch including his presence in the film, thus acting as guarantor of authenticity (Eaton 1979a, 48) ⁴⁴.

The positivist complaints about the effect on the subjects are solved simply by involving the subjects in the film. This is done in numerous ways ⁴⁵.

This tactic confronts the expectations of the viewers that film will convey a view of culture which appears unmediated, and an acceptance that, as Marshall puts it, a film is a record of an encounter between one culture and another, and the film must be regarded within this larger context (Marshall 1975, 119).

The above tactics assume that the filmmaker must take responsibility for clarifying the communicative context of the image. For those films which do not include information about all their mediations, or if we assume that the viewer has at least some responsibility for assessing the

44 . An approach similar to that of Rouch was applied in "I am Clifford Abrahams and this is Grahamstown", produced by me in 1984. Dealing with the life of a beggar in Grahamstown, South Africa, this included the following techniques: the beggar and I discussed the production method on screen, interview sound was used both on-screen and as voice over, interviewing continued during editing, the sound track carried my first person commentary narrating my reaction to what I found, my relationship with the beggar and the specific South African context.

45 Rouch gets people to act in the film ("Moi, un Noir", Rouch 1957; Eaton 1979, 7-8), uses local people as sound recordists ("Les Maitres Fous", Rouch 1955; Eaton 1979, 5-6), shows the film to the subjects involved (Eaton 1979, 46), uses the responses as commentary (Barnouw 1981, 253), speaks commentary about his own involvement (Eaton 1979, 20).

nature of the information, several possibilities present themselves to the critical researcher/viewer.

As has been done in Flaherty's work, either a more sophisticated textual analysis can be done by anthropologists who are more conversant with filmmaking techniques.

. . . a meticulous analysis of a film's images will permit the re-establishment, to a large degree, of the truth of the data presented and also of the interpretations of that data presented by the filmmaker (Lajoux 1975, 173).

On the other hand, an anthropological "field work of the image" can be done (Messenger 1966, quoted in Balicki 1975, 194; Marshall and De Brigard 1975, 135-6). The latter can take methodological pointers from the scientific method of re-examining the data and repeating the experiment, by examining the unedited footage, interviewing the makers and the subjects. This depends in part on systematic archiving, but Hockings points out a problem here. Archives have amassed mountains of material which are mostly unused, and individual anthropologists do not analyse their own material because they have no method of doing so (Hockings 1988, 208-210).

The recommended separation between methods appropriate for film when used for education, and for film when used purely as data gathering research instrument has meant that problems occur when ethnographic filmmakers attempt to edit their research footage into educational films for wider distribution (Jablonko 1988, Jell-Bahlsen 1988). Since this dual use cuts costs, (Jablonko 1988, 170; Jell-Bahlsen 1988; Klima 1988), a method of shooting for both purposes needs to be evolved. Special approaches to camera work have been used to accommodate these demands (for example, Klima 1988), including the case study presently considered.

A detailed examination of the problems of the various approaches to validation described above are not the subject of this thesis, which is concerned, in the next chapter, to explore validation with regard to three specific aspects which appear in the case study: the small event, shot with observational camera techniques, for the dual purposes of editing and research.

Conclusion

Broad views of the history of western culture concerning the place of the camera trace its relationship to both the rational, scientific elements of the modern world, the empirically verifiable, and to the expressive, imaginative, artistic or idealist elements. Institutional practices have exaggerated one over the other, leading to on-going debates about its social status as cause, effect or both.

Documentary film is caught not only between the fictional/artistic traditions and academic traditions of discourse about the world but also, within the academic world, between the qualitative approach of participant observation and the quantitative, positivist tradition of scientific enquiry, based on empirical data and verifiable statements⁴⁶. This happens not only because it uses visual representation as the microscope and the telescope do, but because of its practices. These practices have not been attended to by film theorists, who have paid more attention to the artistic, the expressive, the overtly fictional film, rather than to the documentary which is expected to eschew artifice.

Documentary film's practices draw on both fictional practices and on observational practices, and were initially retarded by the inability of technology to meet the phenomena it wished to record.

46 In opposing artistic and scientific traditions, Collier (1988, 84) expresses the central position of those who would draw on both, such as Temaner and Quinn (1975).

Its difference of purpose from fictional forms was evident in its more empirical approach to sound. The duality which it straddles, between fictional and empirical, marginalised it both from development as commercial entertainment, and from acceptance as reliable method of representing the world.

The arrival of portable sync sound equipment revealed two different approaches to documentary. One approach, derived from the scientific tradition, showed a relative avoidance of involvement with the subjects of the film. The other assumed that such uninvolvement was politically suspect, because its purpose was both concealed by practices and inevitable in fact. This approach made little or no distinction between observers and observed, and actively entered a relationship during the filmmaking process. This relationship, or avoidance of it, became overtly political when applied to ethnographic film, since it impinged on questions of colonialism and racism.

The current availability and improvement of the facilities of sync. sound equipment in video technology co-occurs with political redefinitions of realism and of technology. Arnes identifies similarities in several relationships in modern media: producer/commodity/consumer, artist/artwork/ public, entertainer/performance/paying audience (Arnes 1988, 94). Although video is itself a commodity, video is being seen as able to break these, as a way of breaking another, similarly active/passive relationship: politician/political process/ voter.

Attempts by the academic institution to coopt film for anthropological practices revealed the constructed nature of scientific knowledge, hitherto limited to and justified in written forms. This happened because, compared to written forms, the unselectively empirical nature of the camera

image required additional conceptual limiting and selecting to make a statement about material diversity, the unstructured ambiguity of reality.

A contingent factor in this was a lack of knowledge about the technology and practices of film-making. Well-established in writing, these practices are continually evolving. The self-concealing and commercial nature of fictional narrative film did not assist in constructing a critical apparatus about its procedures. The result was a segregation between the research or scientific film and the educational film.

The nature of sound as both empirical evidence and as aesthetic element is still unexplored. Some writers (Nichols 1981; Armes 1988a) regard it as the way for documentary to encounter, at a textual level, the contradictions and oppositions which are evident both regarding the image and regarding relationships of politics and culture. This attempt occurs of course within a wider conception of the relationship between filmmakers and subjects, evident in both the act of camera work and post-editing.

CHAPTER TWO

The Neglected Variable: Editing in Ethnographic Filmmaking

Introduction

The central issue of documentary film, and therefore of ethnographic film, may be posed as the problem of realism or, expressed differently, how to validate its claims to represent the real. This difficulty is especially evident in the light of the contemporary purpose of ethnographic film, to represent one culture to another in order to promote understanding¹. Implicit in this aim is the avoidance of the colonial model of written anthropology and also much of its film offspring.

This chapter explores the issue of validation, with special reference to some practical problems of filming. These practical problems concern subject matter, method and purposes. The subject matter is the small event, the particular method is the observational approach, the specific purposes are those of research and editing. The chapter particularly relates validation to the specific theoretical problem of editing, which is considered in both its restricted (or instrumental) sense, and an expanded sense.

In the restricted sense, editing is the formal/practical operation of combining visuals, synchronised sound, music, effects, titles and commentary. The form of this operation is largely determined by a script. In its expanded sense, editing also includes prior research and camera work under the concept of in-camera editing. In this sense, the formal stages of research, camera work and editing are not sequential operations, but alternating or reciprocal stages of progressive

1 This a different purpose to films which may be called ethnographic because they originate from within a culture, or to be a form of cultural self-expression, but which are not concerned primarily with communicating across cultural boundaries.

investigation, directed towards the goal of adequate representation. The expanded sense derives not only from the particular approach of Vertov, but also from similarities in professional documentary filmmaking technique, which integrates the intentions and methods of camera work with methods of editing (Baddeley 1975, 95) ².

The problem in either restricted or expanded sense begins with the problem of surface appearances: both of the representational nature of the photographic image (as a constituent of the film medium) and of another culture. Both have claims of referentiality: the photograph to another past moment, the culture to another belief system (Nicols 1981, 241,276).

In the observational approach, validation is partially dependent on the factor of chance, the aleatory. The perceived presence of this factor in filmed behaviour is likely to be taken as a guarantee of the validity of its representation of “normal” or usual behaviour ³. The rationale of the observational approach to filmmaking is of course to avoid influencing the people and the action while filming, and in this way being responsive to chance (as opposed to staged, directed

2 A prime example of the expanded sense of editing, incorporating both reflexive and participatory elements, is Connor, Asch and Asch's Jero Tapakan: Balinese Healer (1986), which was not available during the writing of this thesis. This book is accompanied by four films, which deal with the work of a Balinese healer. Some of them incorporate the healer's comments on unedited material. Besides summarising Connor's extensive fieldwork, the book comments on the content of the films and explains their aims and process of construction.

3 This depends, of course, on the sophistication of the audience in decoding such signs of chance as “genuine”, rather than staged, since such signs have been fabricated in the past by fiction filmmakers in search of the appearance of realism (Guynn 1990, 15; Ruby 1977, 9).

or controlled) behaviour. There is therefore a tension in the relationship of the film maker to the subjects: s/he must on one hand avoid influencing what is filmed, yet must anticipate what to film⁴.

The anthropologists working from positivist assumptions deal with the dual validation problems of both image and other culture by segregating filmmaking into two types. These are the research and the ethnographic film. Different methods of validation are applied to each, and these are described.

Three case studies of observational documentary by Nichols (1981), Guynn (1990) and Dornfeld (1989), are explored, despite their structuralist assumptions regarding decoding by the audience. The studies approach the issues of validation as an editing question, since it is here that narrative continuity is combined with the chance factors involved in filming an uncontrolled event. These studies deal peripherally with how editing can also, especially in its expanded sense, deal with the relations between the filmmaker and the people s/he films.

These relations are central to a discussion of participatory and reflexive approaches to filmmaking. Various applications of these approaches are identified. The nature, problems and potential of the sound track are explored, as a confirmation of the referentiality of picture, and as the place of language. Various forms of language, particularly dialogue and commentary, are discussed. Dialogue, as the voice of the people being filmed, is compared with the nature of commentary, as the explanatory voice of the filmmaker. The role of commentary in relation to

4 The more knowledge s/he has of the subjects, the better the anticipation will be, but this knowledge and anticipation can never totally eliminate chance factors.

picture, and commentary as explanation and as narrative, are compared. The possibility of using it to mediate the paradox of the image is assessed.

Despite problems identified in the discussion of these issues, it appears that a need exists for a method of making an observational record of cultural forms, and the continuity method of camera work is proposed as a method. Other procedures of validation may be based on this record. A thorough knowledge of continuity methods may also be useful in assessing the validity of existing films. Such analytical exercises are commonly hindered by an approach which treats the edited version as a narrative, rather than as indicating referentiality, specifically to the relations with the people filmed.

The assumptions of this method are described and explored. In this way the instrumental approach to filmmaking as epitomised by Bazin⁵ which relies on naive conceptions of realism, may be avoided. A model of camera work, by which to assess the nature of this decision-making in the continuity method of camera work, is outlined.

Approaches to Validation

The concept of validity in qualitative and quantitative research in the social sciences is a relative one. In quantitative approaches, there is a distinction between reliability⁶ and validity⁷ as variable characteristics of measures of a concept, reliability dealing with consistency and validity

5 "Cinema's historic originality, argues Bazin, is technological" (Gyynn 1990, 31).

6 Reliability is defined by Babbie as "whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time" (Babbie 1983, 121).

7 Validity is defined by Babbie as "the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration" (Babbie 1983, 124).

with accuracy. A certain tension between the two is frequent (Babbie 1983, 125; Bryman 1988, 28-29). At the same time concepts have no ultimately definable meaning in themselves; validity cannot be ultimately proven nor reliability ultimately established (Babbie 1983, pG7,G8). Apart from commonsense assessment of measures of validity, there are several ways in which validity is assessed according to characteristics of either the concept, the measure or an external criterion⁸.

In qualitative approaches, validation varies since this approach encompasses a “package” of methods⁹ (Bryman 1988, 49). Most approaches include description and interpretation. In the case of interpretation, validation then has to do with three aspects:

whether researchers have genuinely put themselves in a strategic position to enter the world view of their subjects [1], whether they have adequately understood that world view [2], and whether their interpretations of actions and events are congruent with their subjects’ understandings [3] (Bryman 1988, 77).

One way is respondent validation, where transcripts of interviews are assessed by informants. This can assist in validating the second but not the third (Bryman 1988, 80). It is similar to the film elicitation technique and some versions of reflexivity, described below.

8 Babbie lists these as respectively “content-related validity”, “construct validity” or “criterion related validity” (Babbie 1983, 124).

9 It incorporates participant observation, interviews, reconstruction of life histories, examining documentary materials such as diaries and autobiographies and running group discussions.

The raw material from which such interpretations are made are rarely available, making alternative interpretations difficult. The only comprehensive option is a re-study¹⁰, or, by doing comparative studies of similar groups, or studies by more than one researcher (Bryman 1988, 77, 88). Bryman also notes that his book, unlike most of the literature, avoids extensive treatment of qualitative research in terms of validity and reliability since it

imposes a cluster of standards upon qualitative research which to a large extent are more relevant to the quantitative tradition, within which such terms were originally developed (Bryman 1988, 126).

The previously accepted validation of interpretation is now falling out of favour, particularly in ethnography, that is, the narrative method of writing itself (Bryman 1988, 80, citing Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

These problems of validation and reliability are related to the problem of appearances, and hence validation, in film. Nichols, for example, poses two problems of validation for the ethnographic filmmaker. The paradoxical status of the documentary image, the transparent window effect¹¹, has become doubled in ethnographic film. Just as the (present) image refers us so strongly to another (absent, historical) time and place, the surface appearance of culturally strange things in ethnographic films refers us to another belief or value system (Nichols 1981, 276).

10 In the few cases where re-studies have been done, great variations occurred (Bryman 1988, 75-78).

11 “1) What you see is what there was [when the camera was there]. 2) What there was is what there would have been” [if the filmmaker had not been there, the actions visible would have occurred anyway] (Nichols 1981, 241).

The camera is reliable in that it will faithfully record what it is pointed at. The problem of validity is whether it has recorded “real” behaviour, or whether it has affected or controlled behaviour in order to record it. In terms of Nichols’ paradox, the image claims that “what there was in front of the camera is what there would have been if it had not been there” (Nichols 1981, 241). The validity of this claim depends on the detectable presence of the factor of chance. The other measure of validation is whether the behaviour in the image can be consistently explained as a coherent feature of that other belief system (Hockings and Omori 1988,214).

Guynn identifies Bazin’s theories as typifying the most intense faith in the existential relationship of the image to reality (Guynn 1990, 37). He contrasts, like Nichols, the arbitrary boundaries of the image with our cultural attitudes to it as idealised evidence of reality (Guynn 1990, 30).

In-camera editing, or sampling is a problem common to both the research film and the educational film produced according to conventions of narrative continuity. The long take, wide angle methods prescribed for filming “whole people in whole acts” by Heider (1976,

82ff, 125) are, as Guynn points out, consonant with Bazin’s idea of realism (Guynn 1990, 37)¹².

Biella’s experiment reveals the absurdity of using this technique as a basic rule (Biella 1988)¹³.

Yet the camera operator must determine, by one or another plan, when to switch the camera on and off, where to place it, when to move it, and where to place the borders of the frame. The conventions of the continuity method are summarised in Appendix D. and are discussed below.

The characteristics and limitations of the various methods evolved by positivist research filmmakers are outlined in the next section.

12 Whether absolute purity is attainable in this approach is debatable. Two films of this type were watched for comparative purposes for this study: “Northern Edo Masquerades” (Morell 1980), and “Songs of the Badius” (Zantzinger 1986). Both use the long take method for apparently uninterrupted recording of dances. Yet in both, music continues uninterrupted at some picture edits. Some of these edits in the long takes are concealed by changes of camera angle and cutaways, while at other edits, jump cuts in picture occur.

13 Biella’s experiment reveals the fallacy of hardline rules about techniques. His still photo films break the jump cut ban, and thus the obsession with spatio-temporal continuity evident in the long-take rules of the observational school. His film is composed of stills (shot with lenses of different angles). Some shots are done with ultra-wide angle. These shots challenge the assumptions of observational filmmaking, that such wide-angle lenses will give more truth or holism. By showing the audience the arbitrariness of the frame line between the two types of lenses (wide with ultra-wide), Biella claims his images challenge the distinction between reflexivity and observational styles (Biella 1988, 61-63).

The separation of method in the positivist approach

The reaction of positivist anthropologists to the problem of filmic representation has been to segregate their methods of filmmaking into those considered appropriate for research and those considered appropriate for the ethnographic film (Prost 1975; Schaeffer 1975; Sorenson and Jablonko 1975; Krebs 1975). This has occurred because they wish to establish criteria for validation of research films which are drawn from the positivist model of academic social research, and to distinguish their methods from those of the makers of ethnographic films for commercial distribution.

Films which are unambiguously for research purposes (e.g. Prost 1975, 339) presume a research design precisely defined for recording pre-determined categories of phenomena. Chance phenomena are not recorded. These films are not the concern of this study for this reason, and because they are not proposed as independent “texts”. They depend for validation on the presence of the filmmaker, his/her accompanying notes, and other apparatus of research such as interviews, surveys and description of method used. They are merely another method of collecting data which is analysed and presented in the written form according to the conventions of academic research. As with other methods in the scientific research approach, validation rests on the acceptance (through descriptions of operationalisation) of the method of using film; in other words, that it reliably collects the data intended.

Schaeffer lists numerous research filming techniques which employ a variety of sampling methods, including random samples (Schaeffer 1975, 269-280). Other than a passing mention of

a “roving cameraman” (Schaeffer 1975, 276), none of them requires interpretive skill to integrate chance factors with moment-to-moment sampling decisions of time or space ¹⁴.

The aim of these approaches is “standardisation of data collection and analytical procedures”. Quantifiable data, rather than the particularities of qualitative data, are regarded as the basis of “reliable comparative research” (Schaeffer 1975, 279) ¹⁵.

The three strategies of Sorenson and Jablonko (1975) are based on needs to diversify methods of sampling phenomena with a camera, to overcome precisely the limiting factors of research pre-conceptions implicit in Schaeffer’s account. Although they acknowledge the value of noting the spatial and temporal referents of camera shots when assessing the phenomena recorded, they do not include a coherent method of locating the camera in time and space relative to action. Also, the distinctions between the three methods all seem to be reducible to a single (inevitably) cognitive framework ¹⁶ and include no details of method which distinguish them.

In Krebs’ research on dance, absolute continuity in recording the entire event was necessary, in a method virtually identical to multi-camera recordings of “live” performance in modern

14 The camera is often in a fixed position, with a fixed lens angle, and remotely or automatically operated.

15 Bryman notes that it often attracts research funding for this reason (Bryman 1988, 13, 85, 152).

16 Opportunistic sampling “relies on the most basic tool of discovery....the human mind”. Programmed sampling is “filming according to a predetermined plan... based on a cognitive framework”. Digressive search “helps to solve the difficulties [of the other two methods] by deliberately intruding into the blank areas”, i.e. those places and events outside our range of recognition or appreciation (Sorenson and Jablonko 1975, 152-155).

television production techniques (1975, 284). The factors of sampling intervals and chance are not present, and the space does not change.

Ethnographic films

Films which use observational methods of camera work, and which are meant to convey the results of research for education, are consigned to a different context of validation, based on the paradoxical realism of the image: a validation of realism assumed to be publicly acceptable.

One strategy for validation is to maintain the strict segregation of aims, methods and validation, and to re-do the camera work for specifically educational purposes, based on research findings established by more traditional methods of anthropology. The explanations and conclusions are imported from that research base into the film via commentary, and the validation of the film rests on acceptance or not of this authorial voice. The method of arriving at the conclusions is hidden. The problem is that the people portrayed in such productions can become illustrations for theoretical conclusions, and this duplicates the colonial model of anthropology. Worse, the filming process may fail to illustrate the conclusions of research, and filmmakers may, because of cost and deadlines, resort to staging of subtle and unsubtle kinds. Also, unexpected phenomena may be discovered by chance during filming, and may be excluded because the completed research does not explain it. The most successful examples of this method are probably some of the Granada Television "Disappearing World" series.

Several problems relevant to validation are identified, the first being that the apparent realism of the image is taken for granted. The second, deriving from this, is found in the understandable attempts by anthropologists who have made research film to maximise use and save costs by

editing this into educational versions. Usually, attempts are made to edit these according to the conventions of narrative continuity. Naturally, a clash is experienced, since the interrelation of camera work and editing is misunderstood.

When anthropologists edit their observational research film into educational (or “ethnographic”) versions, they meet the assumption that conventional continuity is a requirement of editing (Jell-Bahlsen 1988, Jablonko 1988). This is despite their camera work apparently not being done according to continuity methods. A clash between the perceived needs of continuity and the factors of chance (inherent in observational filming, and a potential guarantee of realism or validity) appears inevitable. This clash is described by Burch in two stages.

The first stage is the variety of possible relations between shots when edited, and the controlling method of continuity. Burch lists fifteen possible basic permutations of temporal and spatial factors which are present in articulations between edited shots (Burch 1973, 4-9). These may result in continuity or discontinuity. The rules of continuity camerawork and editing ensure that only those articulations which give the impression of continuity (rather than discontinuity) will be used in editing.

Any match of particular shots will also reveal “an almost infinite number of variations too: the changes in camera angle and camera subject distance...eyeline angle or matching trajectories” (Burch 1973, 12). Rules of continuity also control the “infinite number of permutations”. By definition, observational documentary does not try to control these, but can achieve continuity through anticipating the continuity implications of some articulations or edits.

On a larger scale, Burch asserts that the clash between the predictive and shaping intentions of continuity are by definition at odds with the aleatory or chance factors in uncontrolled material, whether in fiction or documentary (Burch 1973, 105ff). These tensions have been explored in two case studies, which are discussed below.

Narrative as guarantee of realism

Yet another approach to assessing the reality claims of documentary is Guynn's study (1990). This suggests comparisons between documentary film and White's approach to historiography (White 1978, 1987). Both documentary and historiography, suggests Guynn, draw their non-fiction effect from using the same "pregeneric plot structures" as do fictional texts: the story film and the novel (White 1978, 83). These literary plot structures are the socially recognised ways of incorporating historical events within a structure which gives them meaning. The narrative structures of documentary "discourses" should then be similar to those of fictional narrative, i.e. based on continuity. The aim of this analysis is to establish the difference between myth (Guynn uses Barthes' sense of the term, i.e. what is seen as natural) and history (Guynn 1990, 17).

Guynn describes two moments of mediating history, which are the manufacture of the historical document, and the activity of the historian (Guynn 1990, 17). The historian, by selecting facts from available documents and placing them in a chronology, suggests relations of cause and effect. A coherent explanatory relationship is also thus implied.

The documentary maker, by contrast, is active in both stages, making the document (the unedited shots which in this case also constitute a chronology), and later selecting from those to construct a coherent explanatory narrative (Guynn 1990, 17).

This has interesting implications for the relation between edited and unedited material, and suggests the importance of access to unedited material in the same way that historians have access to historical documents. That re-edits are possible is implied by the act of editing itself:

Unless at least two versions of the same set of events can be imagined, there is no reason for the historian to take upon himself the authority of giving the true account of what actually happened...The historical account endows this reality with form and thereby makes it desirable by the imposition upon its processes of the formal coherency that only stories possess (White 1987, 20).

Unfortunately Guynn does not examine the processes of shot making, the “complex processes of mediation”, but only the way these shots are arranged into narrative. He uses Metz’s Large Syntagmatic as a central method to analyse narrative structures in eleven documentaries taken from the “classic” period of cinema, up to 1955 (Guynn 1990, 48)¹⁷. His sample partly explains his concentration on the narrative operations in the text, since it includes only one documentary (“Les Maitres Fous”, Rouch 1955)¹⁸ which could be classified as belonging to the broadly observational movement (Guynn 1990, 48). This movement is of course defined chiefly by its lack of control over chance factors¹⁹, and hence requires an approach which deals with this. Neither Guynn’s sample nor his approach, therefore, confront the relationship between chance and camera work.

17 The Large Syntagmatic of the Image Track was devised by Metz to analyse narrative in fiction film (Metz 1974, 146). It is a code for analysing shots grouped into sequences (syntagmas) which demonstrate temporal relationships of different kinds. It does not take chance factors into account in camera work.

18 Guynn identifies an “anomaly” when analysing “Les Maitres Fous” according to the Large Syntagmatic (Guynn 1990, 50). He expects to be able to break up the image track more frequently, into more varied types than simply the ordinary sequence which finds. He groups it together with “Night Mail” (Wright and Watt 1935), “Battle of Britain” (Capra 1943) and “Fall of the Romanov Dynasty” (Shub 1927) as “classic documentaries”, in which the scenario (i.e. the whole film) shows a chronological progression. Within this group, he identifies different combinations between narrative and non-narrative syntagmas (Guynn 1990, 57-60).

19 Guynn’s sample and approach suggest that shooting with heavy relatively static equipment could not meet people in their own situations without staging (as in “Night Mail”) and thus left gaps which only commentary could suture into a narrative.

Guynn's discussion of sound track, particularly commentary, is also limited by his sample, which does not require him to distinguish as finely between the various forms of speech as Nichols' direct and indirect address formulation, discussed below (Nichols 1981, 183). Guynn's sample of films contains no interviews. In discussing commentary, he draws instead on Genette's (1976) distinction between narrative and discourse (Guynn 1990, 60). Narrative (in the visual plane) is classified as "objective" because of the apparent absence of the narrator or text-making agency ²⁰, while discourse is "subjective" because of, among other things, the presence of the narrator through commentary (Guynn 1990, 60).

Partial continuity in observational film

Case studies by Dornfeld and Nichols which explore relations between the factor of chance in the subject matter, and filmmaker's continuity technique are examined below. They analyse editing in documentaries ("Chronicle of a Summer", Rouch and Morin 1960; "Hospital", Wiseman 1970) which use observational camera techniques edited in a modified continuity fashion, and without the control of actors that the full range of continuity techniques requires.

20 As Nichols' typology of documentary shows, however, the textmaking agency can be concealed through narrative techniques other than visual continuity, the interview film, for example (Nichols, 1985, 264-265).

They reveal the significance of dealing with the text-making operation at the camera stage, particularly with variations in sound/image combinations. Sound, particularly, becomes more significant for continuity in this type of filmmaking, since they are largely language-driven²¹. Thus articulations of continuity are heavily dependent on speech.

Dornfeld's study of "Chronicle of a Summer" reveals how the tension between continuity techniques (in camera and in editing) and chance in the observational approach is resolved. As Dornfeld points out, this imposition of continuity depended on its pioneering status²². Although the film is regarded as as a representative of the "long take" style associated with "cine verite", it is "not the dominant style" (Dornfeld 1989, 330). Dornfeld demonstrates this by identifying six articulations of sound and picture at edit points which are typical of the film. In some of these articulations, continuity is preserved, and the breaks between camera shots are concealed. In others, breaks are imperfectly concealed, and continuity is technically broken, but breaks or discontinuities are detectable only by careful viewing²³.

21 Since the sequence in Wiseman's "Hospital" (1970) analysed by Nichols is so heavily dependent on speech for continuity, the details of speech/image articulation which he describes are less interesting for the case study of this work than the basic measure he uses to judge continuity or ellipsis: shifts in logical (speech content) or analogical nature (tone of voice, volume, background noise) (Nichols 1981, 220).

22 In other words, what audiences were presumed to expect at that time, and in comparison to editing techniques applied in other cine verite films made shortly after, for instance those of Fred Wiseman.

23 Dornfeld identifies jump cuts in picture and sound (Dornfeld 1989, 323).

In yet another articulation, a spatial relationship is implied, not demonstrated²⁴.

Dornfeld's study therefore also illustrates Burch's point that the rules of continuity can (intentionally or otherwise) create disorientation or at least ambiguity, depending on their exact use, and that some continuity articulations can be achieved in observational camera technique without controlling or directing people.

He also notes the distortion of real time in the placement of cutaways as a common practice (Dornfeld 1989, 237). This perhaps confirms the suspicions of the positivist anthropologists, exemplified by Heider, who attempts to avoid the problem by making naive rules about cutaways²⁵, "distorting" space instead of time.

In his study of Wiseman's "Hospital"²⁶, Nichols also shows how continuity articulations can be created from observational material, and that sound/image relations are crucial in doing this (Nichols 1981, 223). Nichols concludes that Wiseman plays so freely with the principles of continuity editing, that the applicability of categories in Metz's *Large Syntagmatic* is dubious and unclear. When assessed by means of Metz's *Large Syntagmatic*, the individual sequences

24 Dornfeld's Structures Two and Three (sound cut before or after picture cut: a "split edit" or "overlapped sound cut") are, he notes, found in other documentaries as well as fiction films. His example (Dornfeld 1989, 325) of a scene-to-scene cut which seems completely spatially discontinuous shows the implication of spatial proximity by the audio track.

25 Heider comes to the same conclusion about cutaways as Dornfeld (Heider 1976, 91), but rules them out of court as false. He does this by ignoring the arbitrary framing of the main shot in the first place. Even his qualification, that the cutaway is allowed if two cameras are used, leads to absurdity, for using these cutaways within the continuous main shot is, according to his truncated discussion, just as arbitrary (Heider 1976, 39).

26 He characterises it as typical of the "modified form of continuity" evident in the films by well-known names of this genre, including Marshall (Nichols 1981, 210).

are of two types, the descriptive and the ordinary sequence, but descriptive sequences blur into the ordinary sequence (Nichols 1981, 212). The descriptive syntagma does not, by definition, show temporal progression: it describes the location in which action will happen.

Narrative continuity in "Hospital" is an "impression" (Nichols 1981, 221-234). Despite this, the sequences in the film which deal with small events in different parts of the hospital, are narrative in nature, despite the frequent discontinuities in both visuals and sound. It is evident that the film shows weaker impositions of continuity articulations than does "Chronicle of a Summer".

Regarding length of shots, Nichols notes that relative to some classic Hollywood films studied by Salt, the shots are long in "Hospital", averaging 30 seconds for a half-hour passage (Nichols 1981, 213).

Also, Wiseman's films are characterised by the prevalence of big closeups. This affects continuity because it obscures the background in some cases. Spatial discontinuities are less easy to detect. On the other hand, temporal ones in sound track (usually bridged by cutaways), are as imperfect and ambiguous as some of those identified by Dornfeld. Some temporal discontinuities are not bridged by cutaways, but are partially concealed or bridged by changes in shot size from mid-shot to close up.

Despite the long-take style, some actions are left incomplete at the end of the shot. Repetition of this, among other things, reduces the sense of temporality and increases the descriptive element, in which the shots "supplement one another" (Nichols 1981, 228-229).

Although Dornfeld is able to conclude that the authenticity and realism an audience senses in “Chronicle of a Summer” is supported by the viewer’s inability to perceive manipulation in the editing of sync sound images - by the illusion of continuity (Dornfeld 1989, 320),

it is evident from Nichols’ analysis that the same cannot be said of “Hospital”. Also, while both condense shots, the way these elisions are bridged in editing differs.

Dornfeld echoes Nichols’ summing up of the use of continuity editing techniques;

“such editing sutures the traces, the cuts or gaps of its own production to conjure up a plausible but imaginary universe. It also requires a skillfull manipulation of sound/image relations .. continuity emerges **ex post facto** as a function of editing” (Dornfeld 1989, 330, quoting Nichols 1981, 218-9).

What is the relevance for validation? We must agree with Dornfeld that conventions of continuity, and hence the need for a plausible “imaginary universe”, change according to what the audience are perceived to accept. Validation is therefore relative. Guynn’s assertion that facts or “documents” must be put into a narrative which explains their relation of cause and effect, of temporal and spatial location, needs to be evaluated in the light of specific films, changing conventions, and audience studies.

It is likely that the question of validity in “Hospital” rests at least partially on the length of takes and the size of close-ups. These are likely to compensate for the breaks in continuity in establishing authenticity. The facial reactions, seen in intimate detail, are likely to be immediately understandable within the American cultural context of viewing the film, and act as guarantors

of the lack of camera consciousness. This exemplifies how observational films rely on the paradoxical referentiality of the image in creating an imaginary access to the real, which functions as counterpoint to editing in creating the imaginary universe.

By omission, therefore, Nichols and Dornfeld demonstrate the value of analysing edited material for signs of camera/subject relations ²⁷. In addition, Nichols makes gestures in the direction of examining unedited material, by quoting the difference between unedited (one and a half hours) and edited length (ten minutes) of one scene (Nichols 1981, 218).

For ethnographic film the question of validation is likely to be different but more crucial. This is because the audience cannot supply explanatory contexts of interpretation, which might bridge gaps in continuity, from the context of the other culture. They will therefore substitute explanatory contexts from their own (Morley 1980, 167). Validity may be granted to camera observation, and the interpretation may be rejected.

The issues of continuity and camera/subject relations are of course methods of encoding and do not determine, as Morley points out, a necessarily equivalent decoding. Continuity is being examined here as a conventionalised form of validation, and camera/subject relations as a less conventionalised form. The larger issues of an audience's decoding and associated variations of ideological understanding are beyond the scope of this study, apart from how they enter into untheorised assumptions of the filmmaker.

27 In analysing sound track breaks covered by cutaways, etc, Nichols notes that, to be consistently accurate about sound edits, "access to (sound) mixing sheets" (Nichols 1981, 220) would be necessary.

If observational film relies chiefly on the long take and the realism of the image, and less on continuity, this refers us to the question of camera/subject relations in the making of that image. Just as continuity sutures gaps between shots, observational film conceals camera/subject relations. Neither Dornfeld or Nichols discuss this²⁸.

As conventions evolve and observational cinema becomes common, these questions are likely to reassert themselves. What was the relation between camera and subject, if the subject appears so accepting of its presence? Was the camera complicit with the situation it seems to criticise? What is the point of view of the maker? Why is his/her voice absent from the soundtrack, from the whole film?

Participatory and reflexive tactics

This study is concerned with approaches which begin with observational filming, and adds reflexive elements later. There are several other approaches to the problem of validity, including the interview film, and variations of what are called participatory and reflexive approaches. The distinctions between these other approaches are summarised before proceeding.

Films constructed entirely of interviews, as a way of avoiding the authorial point of view in commentary are a refinement of this (Nichols 1985, 264-265). The validation problem remains one of the relationship between filmmaker and interviewee, incorporating issues such as context of questions, relationship between questions and answers, abbreviation of answers, and juxtaposition of interview responses.

28 Nichols seems to take this relation for granted in asking “how an imaginary continuity can be constructed in a situation where the filmmaker controls the pro-filmic event so weakly” (Nichols 1981, 219).

Participatory and reflexive models of filmmaking confront the problem of validation by abandoning attempts to efface the presence of the filmmaker, and revealing the relationship between subjects and filmmaker in the film image²⁹. The accounts of Ruby (1977) and Allen (1977) are fairly comprehensive. Both writers note the use of reflexivity in the social sciences, particularly anthropology, and Ruby distinguishes between different kinds of reflexivity, (self-consciousness, autobiographical, reflective) and intended and accidental reflexivity. Accidental reflexivity includes such camera faults as shaky composition, out-of-focus, etc. These can be and are faked, but are often included during editing as a gesture towards realism (Ruby 1977, 9).

Intentionally reflexive films, broadly speaking, assume a link between epistemological assumptions, political structures and filmmaking technique. Reflexive films have two distinguishable motivations. The first is political, with structuralist assumptions that the audience can only decode as the text intends, and therefore that the film should reveal its process of construction in order to avoid mystification³⁰. Vertov's approach is the historical representative of this. Vertov's intention is ideological de-mystification, but does not include participatory elements (Ruby 1977, 7-9).

The other motivation for reflexive film is also described by Allen. It is concerned primarily

29 Two video documentaries made by me illustrate the possibilities, "I am Clifford Abrahams, and this is Grahamstown" (Hayman 1984) and "Wheelchair Rally" (Hayman 1981)

30 Ruby's formal definition is: "Being reflexive means that the producer deliberately and intentionally reveals to his (sic) audience the underlying epistemological assumptions which caused him to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, to seek answers in a particular way, and finally to present his findings in a particular way" (Ruby 1977, 4).

with ethical and epistemological issues, although also concerned with avoiding accusations of concealing the process of construction of texts behind a facade of objectivity (Ruby 1977, 5, 8; Allen 1977, 37-39). This approach to filmmaking is implicitly concerned with the validation of observation and interpretation in representation. Rouch's approach is the historical representative, and includes a more participatory element (Ruby 1977, 10).

Ethnographic films such as Asch's "Axe Fight" (Chagnon and Asch 1971) are not as personal as Rouch's films, which are concerned more purely with validation. "Axe Fight" exemplifies the method that this study is concerned with, i.e. films which begin with observational camera work, and incorporate participation or reflexivity at a later stage. Validation in this category incorporates several possibilities.

One modification of the observational approach uses interviews intercut with observational material. The interviews ostensibly provide confirmatory or additional information³¹. Interviews imply that the interviews and the observational material have the same validity because they proceed from the same spatio-temporal realm in the film.

The relationship between the filmmaker and the subjects can also be made evident through the image and sync sound, or the sound track alone. For instance, observational material can be screened to the subjects of the film, who then comment on the validity of, and/or explicate meanings in, the observational material. The problem of validity in the reflexive section is dealt

31 This is a very common format in film and on television: examples include "The Lau of Malaita" (Woodhead/Granada 1987), "The Wodaabe" (Woodhead/Granada 1988), "!Nai; The Story of a !Kung Woman" (Marshall 1980), "Songs of the Badius" (Zantzinger 1986), and my "Nyaka-Nyaka! Advice is Free" (Hayman 1988).

with by revealing, in camera and editing, how exactly the relationship of filmmaker, subjects and observational material is constituted. This tactic is therefore potentially never-ending, consisting of reflections on reflections.

Advantages and disadvantages of observation

The value of the observational strategy of camera work is that it can provide a coherent record of another cultural context (Nichols 1981, 265). The danger of observation is that it can easily be turned into fetishism and the viewer can see it as “innocence” or “neutrality” of the scientific observer (Nichols 1981, 266.) The text-making tactics of narrative continuity leave us little room for an experiential distance between viewer and image.

Solutions to the problem of the observational film, suggests Nichols³², lie in what he describes as “remove”, usually characterised by language. The quality of remove is to be valued because it leaves the viewer a space for evading the “all or nothing” reaction of belief (or disbelief) to the

32 While Nichols and Guynn may work from the structuralist position, and assume that the way the text is structured determines how the audience will read the text, this study assumes that textmaking strategies should be explored which, as far as possible, avoid the possibility of readings which are based on the appearance of unmediated access to reality. It is in this light that their discussions are followed.

image (Nichols 1981, 241). Via language, a “mediating interaction” and “metacommunication” (between viewer and image) can take place, which doesn’t allow the usual voyeurism or fetishisms, and thus can elevate our (the viewers) relation to events or people in the film³³.

He suggests that it is via explanation (whether verbal or verbal/visual)³⁴, operating as it does at a greater experiential distance from the evidence than observation or description, that this quality of “remove” can be achieved³⁵. Ethnographic films may, in this way, avoid the colonial parochialism of which MacDougall accuses it (MacDougall 1975, 118-119). This requires an examination of the nature of commentary and dialogue, and the extent to which they can provide this quality.

33 Note Hockings’ contrasting assertion, that the camera is not useful in dealing with language in observation and description, and the “extension of observation beyond physical, visible behaviour to embrace mental processes” (Hockings 1988, 211).

34 Explanation, which is necessary to understanding, can occur either through commentary and/or via narrative. If via narrative in a chain of images, the difference between the beginning and the end is explained by the middle.

35 From the transcription of “Les Maitres Fous” in Guynn (1990, 177ff), it seems that a tactic of Rouch’s is to use extensive commentary. Its redundant references to picture, without also pretending to explanation, provoke this remove.

The sound track as validation

Commentary seems to be a typical feature of documentary as well as the ethnographic film. This puts it in the direct address mode typical of “classic” documentary, in which a commentary voice directly addresses the audience³⁶.

In this mode, ethnographic film uses observational camera work, edited into a version of narrative continuity. Breaks in the continuity of the edited image are bridged by commentary: Guynn’s narrative function³⁷.

Commentary also bridges the cross-cultural gap, the referentiality of another belief system. This is what Nichols calls an explanatory function, and Guynn calls an exegetic function³⁸. Rituals,

36 Nichols notes the gradual decline in popularity of this mode, particularly after the arrival of the lightweight revolution because of the “dubious claim that things are as the film presents them” (Nichols 1985, 259, 265).

37 This function of commentary in direct address is “to bridge sequences, to make manifest the logical principle that orders the sequence into large units, segments and a textual whole” (Nichols 1981, 198).

38 Klima (1988) typifies the purely functional, unproblematic view of commentary in the positivist approach, by stressing its role in continuity, explanation, providing context, selecting certain elements for the audience’s attention and convincing them to ignore others (Klima 1988, 233).

particularly, exemplify the problem of referentiality, of things which do not mean what they (visibly) seem.

The problem then concerns what correlation there is between explanation and the visible, on what principles phenomena are selected for explanation, and how the explanation is framed (Nichols 1981, 275). Explanation in direct address³⁹ is frequently a type of “essentialism”⁴⁰: things are what they seem, and surface appearances are obvious. Explanation in indirect address (that is, observational film without commentary) is the opposite, where nothing is fully explainable.

Nichols therefore poses the choice “common in documentary”, as a choice between extremes of either explanation or full indexicality as the dominant feature of the diegesis. Piault, for example, chooses the latter⁴¹. Explanation in the form of narrative is adequate to the film as film; expository explanation is necessary, but leaves out too much, an unexplained “excess” (Nichols 1981, 273).

39 Since direct address breaks the diegesis of the fiction film, he adapts it to categorise the “conceptual universe” of documentary, which includes commentary, narration and interviews (Nichols 1981, 183). This means that visual narrative continuity simply becomes one strategy that the direct address documentary includes in its rhetorical function (Nichols 1981, 184-5). His examination of Huston’s “The Battle of San Pietro” (Huston 1945) exemplifies a documentary where commentary strongly dominates (Nichols 1981, 186-195).

40 A common type of essentialism is the “bullfight syndrome” (Nichols 1981, 275). Ethnographic film in this mode portrays things in terms of crisis, mythopoeic situations, and depictions of (male) individuals as heroes.

41 Piault avoids commentary, because of the desire to promote the realist illusion, to collapse the degree of remove. She prefers statements by her subjects to preserve referentiality. She appears caught between wanting to acknowledge her films as her own constructions, yet to avoid using people as examples to illustrate her argument. She acknowledges on the other hand that avoiding informative captions and commentary may leaves audiences mystified (Piault 1988, 227-281).

The usual function of the unity of visuals and commentary, according to Nichols is regarded as observation, description and explanation (Nichols 1981, 262)⁴², with the visual images being regarded as the observation, and the commentary as description and explanation. These distinctions are accepted ones in the world of science, which is the context of validation of positivist anthropology. The problem is that these distinctions are more a product of the research design than the world out there:

....science as much as any other system constructs its own object.... the world of visual sense impressions does not constitute irrefutable evidence for a given set of statements (Nichols 1981, 262).⁴³

The result of this is that commentary of different types can “explain” the same visuals according to different unspoken assumptions. The inevitable redundancy between visuals and commentary (deriving from the necessary reference of words to picture) promotes the illusion that no other evidence in the visual is relevant and that the picture demonstrates irrefutably the commentary’s assertions (Nichols 1981, 263). The film image observes and describes at the same time.

This leads to larger questions about how much of human behaviour we can expect to be explained, and the arbitrariness of distinctions between observation, description and explanation: all are dependent on a set of theoretical and ethnocentric assumptions (Nichols 1981, 264).

42 These overlap to some extent with Guynn’s description of the aspects of commentary as narrative, exegetic and iterative (Guynn 1990, 174-5). He describes the iterative function as a repetitive function of language that expands the significance of the visual beyond the specific. In this function, words repeat and expand what is visible in the image.

43 It is this problem that Hockings struggles with in his listing of the differences between film and written anthropology: “film is difficult to use in testing social science theory because a film makes no point about that event” (Hockings 1985, 212).

Visual narrative can also offer explanation of a kind, in White's sense, above (Gynn 1990, 17). Nichols cites "The Axe Fight" and sequences in "Hospital" to illustrate this. Visual "facts", as constituted by the camera and or commentary, are arranged in a sequence of narrative continuity which seems to explain their relation and most of the elements within them (Nichols 1981, 264, 273). The problem is that the elements not dealt with by the commentary are then "explained" by the narrative. Because these elements are arranged in their place in the narrative by surface appearances, the simplest and most ethnocentric interpretations can be made by the audience.

The problem for commentary and its relation to picture, then, is to establish the limits of validation (exactly how much can be explained). It should also avoid giving a partial validation which appears to be whole (explaining some things and concealing the rest), and avoid giving a spurious but easily acceptable validation (things are what they seem because the story shows it). It should establish the assumptions on which validation is claimed. The concept of reflexivity as described by Ruby and Allen shares these aims. Allen particularly emphasises the role of commentary and the sound track in her examples (Ruby, 1977; Allen, 1977).

In addition to the lexical meaning of the words, further aspects of meaning (the connotative as opposed to the denotative, in semiotic terms) must be considered: the performative dimensions of tone and style in the speaking voice (Nichols 1981, 199), its volume in relation to the synchronised sound, and its juxtaposition to picture. This aspect of commentary is specifically related to the character of dialogue of people filmed.

Dialogue between people in observational cinema is classed as indirect address. We "overhear" their conversation at an intimate aural distance, but they do not address us. This duplicates

Nichols' paradox of the realist image: what we hear is what we would have heard had the microphone not been there. If the microphone is visible, it serves as a reflexive element, modifying the realist illusion. As outlined in Chapter One, the dialogue of the people being filmed can appear as interviews⁴⁴ between filmmaker and people, (direct address) or as conversation between the people (indirect address).

Conversation in ethnographic film raises the problem of translating dialogue into the language of the intended audience, usually English. This compromise mitigates immediacy or transparency. The compromise includes three aims: to retain the sound of the original, to be accurate, and to maintain the unity and clarity of the image regardless of the sound.

44 Interviews do not appear in our case study of unedited material. Categorised by Nichols as Expository cinema, interviews make the relationship between filmmaker and people obvious, and thus they support the reality claims of the film to a greater extent. As pointed out by Nichols in Chapter One, the interview film is one tactic for concealing or dispersing the filmmaker's point of view, evident in the commentary in other types of film, but also avoiding the concealment of the camera's presence in observational film.

The desire to retain the sound of the original is based on conveying some of the original aural experience of listening to the speaker. The elements include voice texture, accent, expression, volume. The physical, visible location of the speech affects perspective (e.g. reverberation), as does ambient sound (distant children's voices, birds, etc). This choice may require subtitles. Accuracy inevitably involves the usual compromises of translation, and can vary from functional to subtle interpretation ⁴⁵.

The desire to maintain the unity and clarity of the image (by e.g. Piault 1988) over the importance of the sound implies the avoidance of superimposed ⁴⁶ subtitles, and requires a second, translated voice.

45 The compromise is a balance between the immediacy of an idiomatic translation in which idioms in the intended viewers' language are found to represent idioms in the original, and the literalness of a complete accurate translation which might need additional explanation of idioms and allusions. At its best, interpretation includes idiomatic elements, implications, references and allusions. These dimensions would situate the speaker personally and socially in his/her context. The result would inevitably be longer than the original, in the case of a literal translation.

46 This is usually across the speaker's chest. Solid colour may be needed behind the titles to make them legible against high contrast background.

Solutions to these problems have taken various forms. Dubbed translation replaces the original voice with an actor's voice⁴⁷. If in lip-sync, the translation must be manipulated, implying loss of accuracy, but involves less effort by the audience. In a more obvious method, an actor's voice reads the translation, mixed with the still audible original in the background. This compromise neither conceals the translating act, nor requires close lip-sync⁴⁸. Using subtitles assumes an adequate literacy. Translation for subtitles also involves further manipulation to fit the space allowed for titles, to be brief enough to be read at the speed which matches the action. Any subtitling method imposes an additional load on the audience, and mediates the illusion of realism.

Continuity in Observation of the Small Event

Having indicated some problems of the visible and of explanatory language, we can now proceed from Nichols' proposal that:

The construction of a diegetic space that affords the viewer a unified place from which to observe situations and events acts as a necessary but not sufficient condition for an ethnographic film (Nichols 1981, 265).⁴⁹

47 As used by Nash in her film on South American miners (1988, 256). In "8000 Families" (Hayman, 1989) intended for USA distribution, the factor of accent decided my strategy in favour of commentary rather than interviews. The cameraman on "I am Clifford Abrahams and This is Grahamstown", Keyan Tomaselli, reports on the extreme difficulty which non-South Africans have in understanding the accents of second-language English speakers, when he showed the film at Festivals in the USA and France.

48 Lip sync means closeup shots of people speaking in synchronised sound, where the movement of the lips is easily observed to be in sync (or out) with the sound of the voice.

49 Nichols proposes this starting point while acknowledging that the participatory approach of Rouch and the MacDougalls confronts the problems noted here from the start (Nichols 1981, 267). His concern is, like that of this study, to propose ways of adapting the observational approach.

and we can explore the tactic of continuity as a way of constructing this space. Exploring the tactic involves attempting to define the nature of the small event, the nature of decision-making in continuity camera work, and outlining the probable characteristics of the resulting material.

Defining the small event

Definitions of situations and events are based on vague assumptions (Nichols 1981, 265), but are the only guides the ethnographic filmmaker has to decide on for camera operations, for instance, the “duration of a shot” (Nichols 1981, 265).

The problem of camera work in relation to the event has not been adequately theorised (Nichols 1981, 283-4). Both positivist and other ethnographic filmmakers remark on the ethnocentric element in matching their knowledge of the structure of an event, to decisions about their camera technique (Klima 1988, 230-231; Piauxt 1988, 280-283; Collier 1988, 93; Jaffe 1986, 38; Rouch 1975, 93-94; Olson 1988, 263-266; Krebs 1975, 299). Asch maintains that there is a “natural” structure of the sequence for both “named events” (e.g. rituals, as in Morin’s definition of “intensive sociality” (De Heusch 1962, Preface) as well as “a sequence of continuous interaction” (Asch and Asch 1988, 171).⁵⁰

The analytical concept of boundaries is useful, because it may be applied to both the small event and to camera work. Boundaries in the small event of this case study (the ritual) can be identified by quantitative (space and time) or qualitative measures, in the following categories:

- action (marked by beginning and end, or ritual vs non-ritual, active vs passive)

50 Asch maintains field work must be completed before filming starts. But, as his “Axe Fight” demonstrates, this does not solve the problem of anticipating what to film, of knowing beforehand the structure of a small event.

- place (marked by structures and /or by action)
- man-made structures and objects
- speech (marked by beginning and end, to whom addressed, style of delivery)
- songs (as distinct from speech)
- groups (dress, sex, age, number)

Regarding temporality, actions and speech can be cyclical or linear.

The shots of the small event which is analysed in Chapter Three are divided up into segments to enable analysis of camera technique to be done more easily. The markers used to segment the shots into sections for discussion are camera location, type of action and participants. These three markers often overlapped with one another, and some are arbitrarily made in situations where the boundary is ambiguous. Segment divisions may not therefore coincide exactly with any one of these markers or specific combinations.

Camera Location

This was the largest marker, and is defined on two levels.

A. Large shifts

These always indicate the boundary of a new segment. The differences between segments are such that the immediate physical surroundings are noticeably different.

B. Small shifts are changes of position within an area that is recognisably the same, and sometimes, within this space, indicate changes of segment.

Type of Action

This can be divided into categories relevant to the research/continuity polarity.

A. Formal ritual activity

A.1 Solely ritual actions

A.2 Practical actions done in a ritual manner

B. Non-formal activity, which might occur in daily life or in other ritual occasions, for example, general conversation,

Participants

Participants in an event group themselves differently throughout the ritual. The following are sometimes markers of boundaries of groups.

Women, men

Ritual dress

Boys, men

Active, passive

A Model of Decision-making in Continuity Camera Work

This section attempts to describe how the principles of continuity (see Appendix D. for summary) are put into practice in any particular case. This means describing the nature of decision-making carried out by the cameraman. As Baddeley describes them, it is obvious that they are far from being programmatic:

some of the rules and conventions are purely mechanical, some are matters of careful individual judgement, and some of purely artistic appreciation (Baddeley 1975, 96).

Continuity techniques are sometimes justified through an appeal to the processes of the human eye in perceiving place and action. These processes are described by Baddeley. The eye begins with attention to the entire field of view, and gradually picks out objects or areas for closer attention. As the person moves closer into the area, this brings the eye into closer relation with different objects. Continuity camera techniques are based on attempts to duplicate this process (Baddeley 1975, 97).

The formal aspect of the decisions concerns the establishment of boundaries in a dual sense. The boundaries of action (spatial and temporal) must be negotiated by the boundaries of the camera (frame, and shot length).

The decisions regarding boundaries are based on maintaining an apparently single point of view, as is supposed to occur in human perception, so as not to disorient the viewer in time or space. This is done primarily by observing the axis of action rule, regarding the positioning of the camera in relation to the action and any succeeding shots. These decisions are the following types:

1. Identifying the main action/s at any point.
2. Deciding what elements in the surroundings (objects, actions, people) are relevant to understanding the action and how they relate to it. Continuity techniques (cutaways, pans) formalise the spatial boundaries, i.e. relationships of interaction or context.

3. Deciding when an action has ended and/or⁵¹ a new main action has started.

4. Deciding when closer detail from the frame is needed to understand the action.

5. Deciding when to move the camera to give a view with different backgrounds and different angles of the same subject.

In making fictional films, the above decisions can be taken with a degree of certainty, since actions can be controlled. In observational film, the factor of chance or uncertainty enters, mediated by some expectation of the event. In this situation of uncertainty, each decision must be evaluated against previous decisions, as well as against the camera operator's evolving experience of the action or event. The decisions seem to be based on the following binary oppositions:

1. What is known about the event and thus can be anticipated, vs what is unanticipated.

2. The anticipated action vs the techniques of continuity which are appropriate to apply. In other words, anticipated action and conceptions of continuity are continually interacting to produce shots.

51 A second or third strand of action may develop in parallel to the main action.

3. Changing the pattern of decision-making when necessary, due to unanticipated factors, vs articulating this change of pattern. In other words, when the action develops in ways not anticipated, and makes some previous shots redundant, the shots made from that point on must link the new action with shots and action prior to the redundancy⁵².

4. To conserve resources of battery and film/video stock for the anticipated length of the event vs obtaining maximum detail and adequacy of representation.

Continuity Characteristics of Unedited Material

If the above model of camera work decisions is adequate, the marks of the decision-making process should be clearly evident when examining unedited shots, as opposed to concealed in an edited sequence. Where post-editing selects a few shots from a larger body of shots in constructing a coherent diegesis, and sutures together these shots, an examination of the unedited shots should reveal three elements.

52 Decisions about each shot are therefore made with reference to larger wholes: what the camera operator anticipates is still to come, and what has already actually happened. These wholes exist on two planes: the action as s/he remembers it and what shots s/he has made of it. Between these two planes there may exist a close fit, or some tension. This tension may exist for two reasons. S/he has failed to get the shots which chart the action as s/he knows it has developed, or the action is not what he thought it was, and his shots have literally missed the point. In other words the real action was developing out of frame. Out of frame has two planes: out of frame while the camera was running, and out of frame because the camera was switched off. The soundtrack may indicate, and compensate, for the former, since it indicates action out of frame.

1. Those shots which could be edited together with minimal trimming to form a coherent diegesis (commentary might be needed to elucidate further significance).

The proportion of these will indicate the adequacy or otherwise of the camera operator's anticipation of the action, and may constitute an unedited form of Nichols' unified, coherent observation. This space-time diegesis of unedited material is both simpler and more fragmented than edited versions. It is simpler in that it is purely sequential, avoiding flashbacks and forwards⁵³. It is more fragmented in its continuity (there is none of the suturing activity of editing)⁵⁴, and this will be indicated by redundant shots and uncertain matching of camera boundaries to action boundaries.

2. The unedited material will reveal a particular diegesis (space-time continuum) which bears a relatively definable relationship to the real event, apart from the precise articulations from shot to shot.

In other words, the specific point of view from which the shots were made.

3. The material may also form a comprehensible and convincing version of the event to participants.

53 In the case of videotape, this temporal continuity is preserved since tape is not cut in editing, as in film. Marks of re-recording or editing over already-recorded material, which would change this temporal continuity, are easily detectable.

54 At its most basic, this suturing consists of cutting out imperfections of camera work at start and end of shots, faulty or unfocussed shots when the camera accidentally runs.

Taken together, the above elements may determine the usefulness of the video material for subsequent use in either research or editing.

The nature of continuity decisions about boundaries of action and camera can be assessed by Burch's articulations which describe various indicators of continuity or discontinuity. Articulations which give continuity in uncontrolled situations, as modified by Nichols (1981, 219), are summarised in the table below. It should be evident that cutaways and continuous sound are the two chief means of achieving continuity.

The articulation of proximate spatial continuity is also important for continuity techniques in this observational mode of shooting the small event, especially since a progressively more detailed picture of the context (the proximate or off-screen space of each shot) presumably accumulates in the memory of the viewer. Thus, what seems a radical spatial discontinuity at the start may become a proximate spatial discontinuity at a later point.

Applying Metz's Large Syntagmatic to the unedited material may indicate to some extent the camera operator's grasp (at a broader level than just shot articulations) of the chronological vs narrative aspects of the event. In other words, s/he may merely describe the situation at successive points in time or, if significance of the action in the situation is grasped, identify and narrate a continuous action through time.

Chance factors which are evident at boundaries of frame and shot length may indicate different kinds of action. Some parts of the action may not be sufficiently predictable (either

TABLE 1: ARTICULATIONS FOR CONTINUITY.

SPATIAL

1. Continuity (overlapping visual fields).

NATURE OF DISCONTINUITY OR BRIDGE
This results in a temporal discontinuity if Burch's variations are evident.

2. Proximity in which there is no overlap, but actions and/or background in the second shot indicate a space proximate to the first.

This proximity is indicated by shot-reverse-shot; cutaways, etc. This will give a discontinuity in unedited sync sound, unless the sound is perceived to be continuous. In editing, various techniques are applied to make the sound continue across the cut.

3. Discontinuity, in which there is no overlap, no cue of proximity via action.

By definition in the observational approach, this usually means temporal discontinuity as well unless, in editing, sound from the first shot overlaps the visual edit to the second shot. This implies rather than establishes continuity.

TEMPORAL

1. Continuity, in which action appears continuous from one shot to another.

Usually, continuity is given by the sound track, and this depends on the cutaway or point of view, or shot-reverse shot, i.e. spatial proximity.

2. Definite Temporal Ellipsis, which is a measurable time gap.

The degree of ellipsis is judged against the discontinuity between the same movement in two adjoining shots (Burch's variation) which may be spatially continuous or proximate. A cutaway or insert between the two is necessary for continuity.

3. Indefinite Temporal Ellipsis; this often occurs together with spatial discontinuity, in a change of location.

If the shot is spatially continuous with the previous one, temporal discontinuity is evident not only in sound, but in light quality and direction (if exterior), and movement of people.

because it changes fast or because its significance is not immediately apparent) to be fragmented into several shots, in which case it is likely that the boundaries of shots will show more variation in latitude than for other actions (wider lens angle, longer take). In other words, these characteristics of shots may reveal distinctions between research technique (where the action is not predictable, because significance is not obvious) and continuity technique, which relies on anticipation. Chance factors will also reveal the nature of the camera operator's anticipation

Conclusion

The issue of realism in film is closely related to validation in the social sciences. The assumed separation of contexts of validation has led to a separation of methods of camera work considered appropriate for two distinct types of film: research and education. In both, importance is attached to the factors of chance and consistent explanation. The latter is usually a factor of narrative.

This has raised further contradictions in trying to edit observational research material into a narrative for educational or ethnographic purposes. The problems concern both continuity articulations and commentary, as either narrative element or explanation. In some observational documentaries, partial continuity is observed through preserving the chance factor while attenuating narrative.

Participatory and reflexive approaches do not necessarily negate the value of observational film, since it provides a record which can be re-valued in Vertov's expanded sense of editing.

Formal editing usually covers over marks of uncertainty, but can retain them in various proportions. The usual assumption of documentary makers is that editing must cover over uncertainties, and impose a neater narrative, as a way of validating its claims to realism. This view locates validation of ethnographic film in editing in its restricted sense (Temaner and Quinn 1975, 61).

Editing usually carries out its operations with emphasis on the visual. The sound track is usually used to mask gaps in the image, and to confirm the referentiality of the image through redundantly affirming the visual evidence with sync sound. Uniting observational camera work with continuity editing is likely to lead to a fetishism of representation, a concern with the place which images and accompanying sync sound occupy in the edited diegesis (Doane 1980, 56-59). This may obscure the possibility of seeing the image (and sound) as evidence of the relation between the people filmed and the filmmaker.

There seems to be a need for observation as a platform for later operations of editing, whether in its expanded sense or restricted sense. Definitions of the observational method and of the observed phenomenon are required.

Defining the small event for observational camera work raises paradoxical oppositions. The event must be sufficiently predictable to be observed accurately and methodically with a camera, yet the point of observing it is to establish the relationship between chance elements and predictable elements. Chance factors of unanticipated behaviour can easily be influenced in efforts to achieve predictable and coherent observation.

Uncertainty or chance is greater in small events which occur in cultures defined as “other” by ethnographers. For the filmmaker, uncertainty concerns the specific boundaries of time and space which define action within the small event. The model describes how decisions must be made to match or articulate those boundaries with the boundaries of camera work (frame, shot length), to make a coherent record of observation.

Continuity can be one such method, since it has a coherent, elaborated set of rules for making decisions about observation. While these rules for establishing boundaries are based on assumed certainties of social boundary in the filmmaker’s own culture, it may be possible to adapt these rules for the cross cultural uncertainties of ethnographic filmmaking. This possibility can be assessed by examining unedited observational material of a small event: the ritual which is the case study.

The unedited material will reveal the initial processes of decision making, a network of decisions which have not been concealed and naturalised by the articulations of formal editing, in its restricted sense. This will reveal the assumptions of method which are active in making decisions about boundaries. The train of images will include evidence of uncertainty in the form of gaps, elisions and marginally relevant material, since the uncertainties or chance factors have not been closed off and hidden.

Close analysis should be able to identify these uncertainties, and evaluate them against the certainty of the observational evidence contained within the boundaries of the frame and its relation to the sound. This close analysis is attempted in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

Shooting The Isipho Material: Assumptions, Background, Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the way a combination of camera methods for continuity and for research represent a small event. This is assessed via a case study of an isipho mortuary ritual in Transkei, South Africa. The video material of this case study is found on the VHS video tape (No.1) which accompanies this thesis. The shots on this tape have numbers superimposed on them which correlate with numbers in the text, tables, graphs and appendices. Only the shots taken on the first of the four days are transcribed and analysed in detail ¹

The continuity camera methods are assessed with reference to the background assumptions, intended methods and prior knowledge of anthropologist and cameraman, as well as the cooperation between them. The analysis proceeds in two ways. The first is a qualitative, first-person account of my intentions, assumptions and decisions as cameraman, as they interacted with the factors of chance. This description can be validated by comparison with the unedited video material. The second is a more formal analysis, using some descriptive and some quantitative methods.

The motivations for shooting this ritual were that it occurred seldom, that McAllister was at

1 Due to errors in copying from the u-matic originals onto a submaster, and to accidental wiping of tapes, some of the shots on Day Two are third or fourth generation copies, and are in black-and-white because of this.

the time studying formal speech occasions (McAllister 1986) and numerous speeches could be expected at this ritual and that, since the homestead was large, a full observance of all stages of the ritual could be expected.

For myself, the material recorded would be useful in my editing project. Our interests were naturally not mutually exclusive, since making McAllister's research available would be part of my editing project, and his research knowledge would inform my project. More specific goals regarding the ultimate use(s) of the video (for detailed analysis, or editing into finished material) were not discussed ².

The ritual was recorded at the end of my third field trip with McAllister ³, and there was thus no time for interviewing the homestead members after the event about the significance of the actions.

The Isipho Ritual and its Context

The inhabitants of the area known as the Transkei can be roughly classified into two groups; those who maintain traditional beliefs, way of life and subsistence economy, and those who

2 I presumed that in accordance with the video research project, the dual aims were detailed analysis, and editing into finished documentaries. The video was therefore closely related to the areas of McAllister's research. This therefore excluded some other possible research framings in anthropological research. Other aspects of Shixini life have been studied subsequently under the supervision of McAllister.

3 The ritual was recorded in January 1983, while we were still attempting to record an example of umsindleko, the beerdrink ritual on which McAllister had published his research (McAllister 1979, 1981), as well as the wider social/economic context of the area. We had not yet received a brief to produce a version dealing with poverty for the Carnegie Enquiry.

have become Christian, attended formal schooling and enter the wage economy full time (Hunter 1936, Mayer 1961/71, 1980). The Gcaleka of the Shixini area follow the traditional way of life.

In this belief system, the ancestors are believed to have an active role in the well-being or otherwise of the living. Rituals involving the ancestors are undertaken for a variety of reasons (Hammond-Tooke 1981). Mortuary rituals are understandably among the most important of these, and a cycle of four mortuary rituals has been identified, the first three being regarded as obligatory and more common (Kuckertz 1983). The isipho ritual is the last of the four, and is optional (Holbrook 1986).

Published research has revealed several basic truths about the area. Briefly, these are the negative effects of apartheid on availability of land, the resulting economic constraints on self-sufficiency, leading in turn to the need to migrate to work in the cities. The immediate local effect of migrant labour is that men are often absent from their homes. They go to the cities to work on a contract basis, and bring back cash wages which support and supplement the local economy based on cattle and maize (Davenport and Hunt 1974; Houghton 1962). Migrant labour also indirectly supports the belief system, which uses cattle and maize beer as the markers of ritual (McAllister 1981).

Rituals usually involve gatherings in ceremonial dress for formal speeches, informal conversation, and the drinking of maize beer. At the more important rituals involving birth and death, animals are slaughtered and eaten. Both have a dual function of enacting the belief system and re-distributing wealth in the form of food.

The speeches at these rituals discursively spell out the attractions of the local economy and

belief system. Speakers exhort the migrants to be faithful to it, to its ethics and practices of mutual support and to continue the practice of ritual (McAllister 1986).

Shooting Isipho: Intentions and Assumptions

Conditions and prior knowledge

McAllister had previously attended rituals of this type, although they were not the specific focus of his research. Also, on my first field trip with him, I had shot a ritual of this type, but because of inexperience and inappropriate decisions about camera strategies, the results were not satisfactory⁴.

The camera work decisions were therefore based on a combination of the unexpected and the planned, and were further influenced by both research intentions well as continuity editing intentions.

We visited the homestead before the ritual to find out what kind of ritual it would be, and to ask permission to be there and to shoot it. Although the homestead was outside his usual field-work area, McAllister was known by reputation in the area. These factors probably explain our easy access to the ritual. The ritual was initially thought to be an ukubuyisa, the same as that previously recorded, but it was discovered to be the very similar isipho ritual,

4 For instance, although two cameras were used, which enabled close coverage of action in the hut and action in the cattle byre, the camera was too far away, mounted on a tripod on a truck outside the cattle byre. Small details were thus difficult to record. Also, we did not record speeches at this ritual.

during Holbrook's later field work (examined in Chapter Five).

Daily routine of shooting

The length of our presence at the homestead on each day varied, as did the amount of tape shot. This happened according to when we expected the formal aspects of the ritual, in which McAllister was primarily interested, to occur. The longest time spent was on Day One of the four days, when the most important formal activities took place⁵.

The anticipated stages and actions of the formal aspects of the ritual were outlined for me by McAllister, which we anticipated would occur in more detail than we had seen while recording the first example on the previous trip. A close interaction between us occurred throughout the ritual, to establish what visuals should be recorded as the action unfolded.

I assumed I should use an observational style of camerawork, rather than reflexive or

5 On each of the four days of the ritual, we arrived at the homestead at approximately 10.00 a.m, and usually left before four in the afternoon. Most of the informal activity of the ritual took place outside these times, especially singing and dancing in the evening.

participatory. At the same time we both assumed, from previous experience of filming rituals, that our presence would not alter behaviour, nor should we attempt to influence behaviour.

Equipment

Video rather than film was the obvious choice of medium in our circumstances⁶, and has the advantage of not disturbing the people with the slating procedures for each shot in film (Baddeley 1975, 162-163), since sync is automatically on the tape. Because of the likelihood of a large number of people attending, and having to move quickly around the cattle byre and the large homestead, I did not use a tripod during the formal parts of the ritual⁷.

The tripod was used for some shots of the context, enabling zoom lens at extreme settings. I attempted to keep the camera as still as possible when handheld and, apart from the tripod shots, used as little telephoto as possible. This had the additional and desired effect of

6 The reasons derived from the state and cost of available technology. The Department of Journalism already had video camera and editing equipment; our budget was not large enough (for this ritual as well as the entire research project, which we regarded as open-ended) to hire 16mm equipment, and pay stock and lab costs. We assumed the u-matic format would give us adequate distribution quality. I was not an experienced film cameraman or editor, and we did not envisage any possibility of broadcasting. Super-8mm reversal film was not suitable for re-editing in my project. In the long term, this choice was correct. The 16mm film market is virtually dead in South Africa in 1992, and Super-8mm cannot be processed locally.

7 Two cameras were taken to the homestead (single-tube Sony 1640P with auto aperture control). One was permanently mounted on a tripod, to save time in mounting and un-mounting it, and served as a spare. The other was handheld. The VTR was connected to each camera when necessary.

maximising depth of field. The videorecorder was easily portable, and took 20-minute cassettes⁸.

Regarding sound, I assumed that good quality was important particularly for the formal speeches, songs and other statements. A directional microphone with a heavy windshield and bass cut switch was used. These reduced the considerable wind rumble. The microphone was mounted on a handheld “fishpole” boom, and this helped position it. A 5m extension cable was attached, but not used as McAllister and I remained side by side for most of the time. Getting the microphone quickly into the optimum position for good sound took precedence over attempts to keep the microphone out of camera shot, which is professional filmmaking practice but requires careful coordination for microphone placement.

Since we had not practised this, and were in any case interested chiefly in formal rather than informal speech for research purposes, we assumed that such attempts would be likely to

8 The videorecorder, a Sony u-matic low-band model 4800P, featured two-channel sound, built-in camera mic, manual zoom lens with auto/manual aperture control, external mic input, headphone output and auto/manual audio level control. Warning signals were given via headphones (high-pitched beep) and viewfinder (flashing light) when tapes or batteries were nearly finished. I saved battery power by putting the VTR in the stop mode during long gaps between shots. When restarted quickly from this state, the camera warms up slowly, making the start of the shot black, which slowly and unevenly fills in the picture. The VTR was kept in a plastic bag to protect it from dust.

hinder proper framing. The informal comments during other stages of the ritual were so frequent that no attempt was made to position the mic to record individual examples of them. Even if they could have been anticipated, it was unlikely that we could have manipulated the microphone sufficiently close to the mouth of a particular speaker without offending him/her. Thus for large parts of the ritual, visual took precedence over sound.

The voices of the men making formal speeches were fairly loud as we expected, and were typical of rural open air conversation and oratory. They were therefore easy to record at the desired level even at distances not normally considered optimal for recording the human voice in small-group conversation.

Availability of batteries and tapes imposed some limitation⁹, and I paced the shooting of the each day's events, according to tape and batteries, on a "guesstimate" basis. The tape and battery changes are listed in Appendix A. On Day One, the battery ran out before the final speech, and McAllister recorded this on audio cassette. Batteries had to be recharged during the four days of the ritual, and on the second day, a trip to the nearby village to pick up charged ones was necessary. As a result, we called in early at the homestead, shot a little with a battery not previously used and returned later after fetching the other fully charged ones.

Specific strategies for shooting

As cameraman I initiated most of the shots of the non-formal aspects, occasionally discussing

9 Tape stocks were limited since the ritual occurred at the end of this particular field trip. I used five-and-a-half 22-minute tapes, and a 2-minute blank section at the end of one other. In addition, ten minutes was recorded over material recorded on another tape on a previous trip and judged to be not worth keeping.

these with McAllister, who cued me to be ready when a specific formal ritual action or speech occurred. My intention was to incorporate long-take methods for the latter into continuity techniques.

Camera Decisions

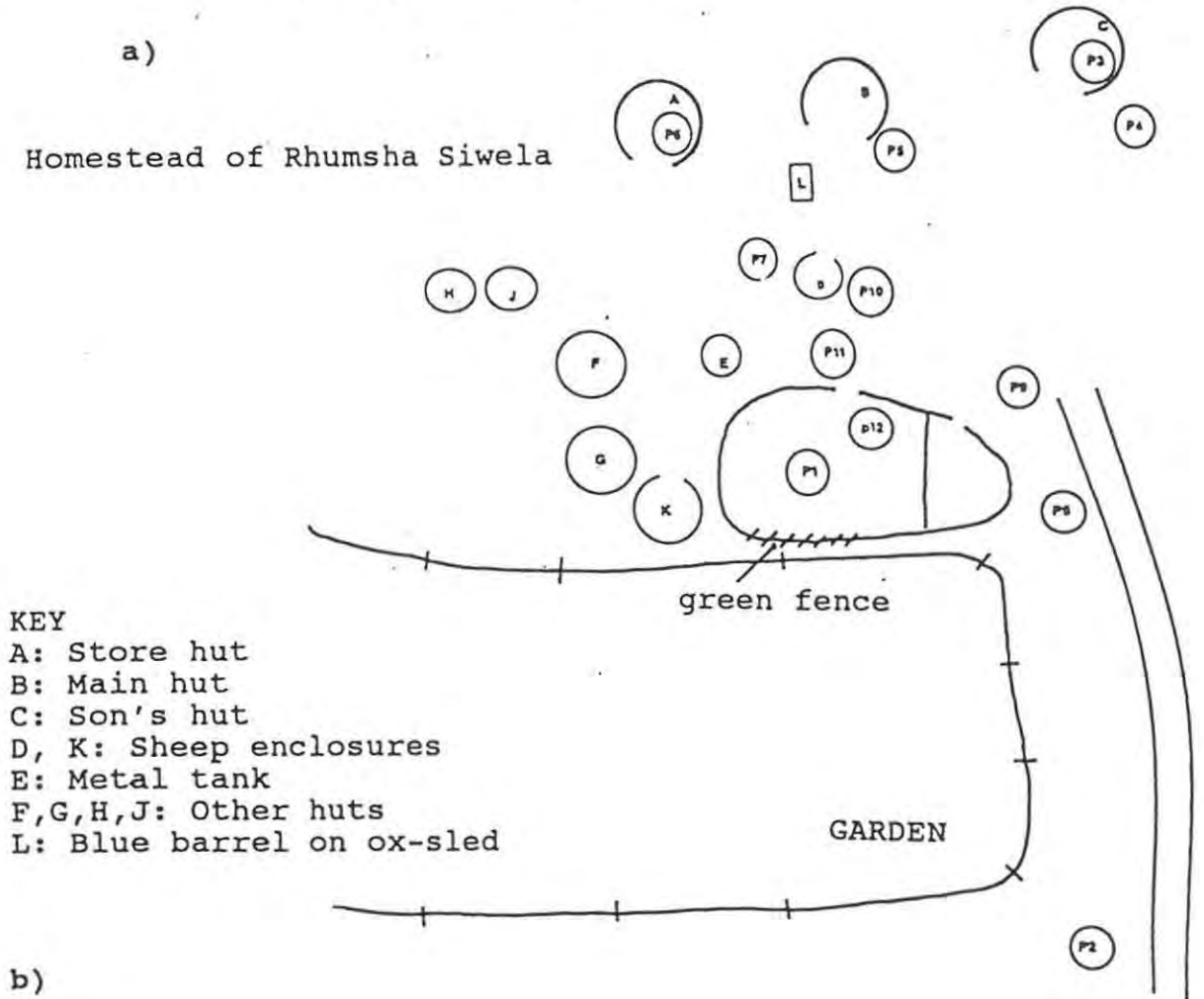
In this section I give an account of my decisions during camera work on Day One of the four days of the ritual, according to the model of continuity camera work. The account is done under the division of shots into segments by the method described in Chapter Two. The terms “jump” and “jump cut” are used in this section to cover both formal articulations of discontinuity as well as Burch’s “variations”, since in practical camera work, these two are little distinguished in decision making.

The present tense has crept into this account, although my actions occurred in 1983. This indicates again Nichol’s paradox about camera representation; “what you see, is what there was”, more forcefully because I occupy that paradoxical space I made, even in explicating the making of it. The shot is present to us as viewers now, but my actions occurred in the past. Which tense do I use as writer, which as cameraman?

See Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 for details of shot numbers, map of camera positions in the homestead and shot lengths which correspond with segment divisions.

FIGURE 1: Segments A. - K.

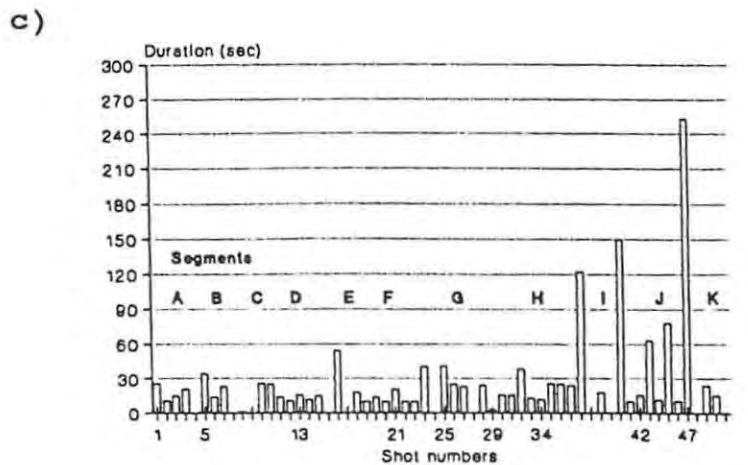
- a) Map of camera positions
- b) Key to shot numbers, and camera positions and segment divisions
- c) Graph showing shot lengths



b)

1.	2.	3.
SGT NO.	CAM	PSN
A.	1	P(1)
	2	
	3	
	4	
B.	5	P(2)
	6	
	7	
C.	8	P(2)
D.	9	P(3)
	10	
	11	
	12	
	13	
	14	
	15	
E.	16	P(4)

1.	2.	3.
SGT NO.	CAM	PSN
F.	17	P(4)
	18	P(5)
	19	
	20	
	21	
	22	
	23	
	24	
G.	25	P(5)
	26	
	27	
H.	28	P(6)
	29	
	30	
	31	
	32	
	33	
	34	
	35	
	36	
	37	
	38	
I.	39	P(7)
J.	40	P(8)
	41	
	42	
	43	
	44	
	45	
	46	
	47	
K.	48	P(9)
	49	P(5)



Segment A: Fixing cattle byre fence 1-4

This segment was shot for continuity purposes, not research, and is defined by the participants. It was the first thing we shot because the men (Rhumsha¹⁰ and his assistant) happened to be busy with it when we arrived. The action is cyclical. It therefore does not have an obvious temporal progression or change. The spatial continuity is implied through physical context.

Although the two men are not seen cooperating in fixing the fence (they do not appear in the same shot, or even acknowledge each other's presence), the similarity of their activity and the background established it. The sunlight also indicates close temporal continuity. Bright sunlight might have established a more precise degree of spatial relationship, through the direction of shadows, but less temporal continuity. The completion of the action is also omitted.

The tripod was fairly distant (approx 15-20m), which explains why neither man acknowledges the camera's presence, and why tight closeups can be held without shake. When Rhumsha walked out of the shot, the tripod was taken closer to where the other man was working (shot 5). Since the tripod allows zoom to do much of the work of close/wide alternation, this single change of position was all that was necessary. Almost all the shots are usable in post editing, and the segment is also easy to condense.

Segment B: Wide shots of homestead 5-7

The wides from the opposite slope are for continuity editing, to establish the context of the

¹⁰ The only person I could identify easily throughout the ritual was Rhumsha.

homestead before the ritual proper started. The wides were shot with a tripod since camera shake would have made them incomprehensible. They are long to carry extensive narration, describing for instance Rhumsha's cattle byre. This is very large, indicating his wealth and social standing.

Because the shots are first wide, then closer, they seem continuous with the previous shots. The homestead is so distant in the wide, the figures so small, the lighting so similar that there is no obvious break in temporal progression.

The slight difference in lighting (seen in the colour of the grass) between shot 5 and 6 both indicates temporal progression, and foreshadows a problem later in the day, when the hazy sky became brighter. When included in the shot, hazy sky closes the auto-aperture, and darkens foreground objects. Hence the inclusion of lots of foreground space in shot 5. The wind on the audio track indicates temporal continuity with the previous shots, and does not indicate any activity behind the camera.

Segment C: shot 8 faulty

A mistaken switch-on. The camera trigger is easily jolted.

Segment D: Women straining beer 9 - 15

Participants, shot lengths, action and location all identify this segment. The beer bubbling over has ritual and practical significance. Ritually it is regarded as a sign by the Gcaleka that the ancestors are "tasting the beer". Practically, it stands as an indicator (requiring both description and explanation by commentary) of the amount of beer prepared, in its turn another indicator of Rhumsha's wealth. Shots 9 and 10 are held for longer than necessary, waiting for the froth to bubble, and to allow any necessary narration to explain the significance as well as the quantity. The women came in while we were there, and the shots of

straining were added also for the purposes of continuity ¹¹.

The continuity techniques are limited here to framing the elements (women, barrels, chickens) in separate shots, partly because there was no movement, and partly because of little space and light inside the hut to allow either wide shots or pans. The sound track (by chance) indicates a progression in time: their voices and shadows indicate their arrival during the shots of the beer, and the straining sounds occur later, only with the corresponding visuals.

Incident light was so poor that framing for silhouette (chickens) and specular reflections (beer froth) are used. This dictated the camera position. As a result, the lighting comes from different directions in adjacent shots, thus reducing continuity by confusing the viewer's orientation in space, although the space is proximately continuous. The camera failed to catch the second woman's arrival, making shot 12 redundant for continuity editing because of the jump cut between shot 12 and 13 (the redundancy is easy to bridge in editing by shots of chickens or beerbarrels). Her arrival required a change of camera position from one side of the hut to the other, so that they could be more easily seen in the window's light.

Again, tripod was used because close-up detail in bad light was needed (shaky camera produces smear), although handheld (which is more convenient in a small hut) was used in the last shot to get a better-lit shot of the froth.

A relatively smooth continuity is present, and condensing is easy because of separate framing of the elements, and repetitive action. The editor can easily condense and omit.

11 The process of beermaking had been extensively recorded on a previous trip.

Segment E: Shot 16 faulty;

Change battery. An unintended switch-on, this time with the lens cap on.

Segment F: Various activity 17—24

This segment is defined by camera location and informal activity. Characteristics of camera work (on the tripod) make it different to any other segment. The intention here was to establish the details of the context of the ritual, and the shots were made to suggest spatial and temporal continuity from the preceding wide shots of the homestead. To make this work, the boundaries of each action are tightly defined by the camera, so that temporal discontinuities (which would result from wider shots, including two or more actions) will not be noticed.

The continuity is tenuous and implied, more descriptive of place than time. Although several people are visible in the shots, all are engaged in separate activities, of which only the cooking is static, repetitive and predictable. The wide shot is too wide (and from the reverse angle) to establish any but the most general spatial continuity between it and these shots. Between the shots, there is little common background against which a definite proximate spatial continuity would be established. Instead, people and cattle connect some partially overlapping backgrounds, and a temporal continuity is evident.

The close telephoto framing isolates objects and people from each other, except by foreground/background relation, e.g. the focus-pull in shot 24¹².

12 A focus-pull occurs where the depth of field is very shallow (caused here by narrow lens angle) and the focus ring of the camera is moved to focus first on background then on foreground objects, or vice versa.

There are also some other indicators of continuity technique: the wide/close-up alternations of the woman and the wood, the walk-out-of-frame by (rather than pan with) the herdboys. The quick zooms are not meant for use in editing. Instead of switching off between wides and closeups (which might mean losing time) the zoom is snapped in or out. Other cutting points are created within shot by quick re-framings left to right.

The barrels on the sled echo the barrels inside the hut, as the grindstone next to the chickens echoes the sound of it. Unfortunately the camera was switched off just as a woman is about to pass through the frame¹³.

People pass back and forth in front of the camera, repeating the indication of bustle from segment A. The cattle were shot in McAllister's knowledge that the sacrificial ox would be among them, and the wood piles are relevant either to the woman cooking, or for research since, as he indicated, wood for the ritual is specially collected.

The microphone was left inside the hut since the strong wind outside prevented recording distant sounds, and the breaks in conversation between shots show temporal discontinuity¹⁴. This is one of the few places (apart from the speeches), where this temporal discontinuity happens within a segment. It usually happens between segments. This is also the only

13 A certain degree of local knowledge would be needed to link the sound of the grindstone with its visual image seen next to the chicken in the previous segment.

14 The nature of a coherent unified representation of space and time is of a different order in the shot itself, since it is split between two places (auditory and visual) in a way which usually happens only in mixed sound.

segment where sound doesn't correlate with picture.

Segment G: men arriving 25-27.

These shots use the same location and telephoto camera technique as the previous, but are in a separate segment because the people are different. The similarity of technique between all three shots establishes a stylistic relationship, which infers either temporal simultaneity or continuity. Excluding wide background assists in this. The arriving men represent the start of the ritual in a context which has already been established.

Within these shots, possibilities of shortening exist. The men are allowed to walk into shots 24 and 25, out of 25. This gives the editor the option of using the empty frame as a spatial metaphor for the homestead. The zoomed wide-close alternation can be used or cut out (to condense time - the break in spatial continuity would be bridged by the difference of lens angle).

Shot 26 belongs here stylistically, but the anticipated man turns out to be a boy, and the dogs walk into shot in a humorous anti-climax to the portentous telephoto technique of shot 26. Not a useable shot, but one which reveals the intention behind this aggregating technique, because applied in haste to an inappropriate subject. Apart from some marks of their

manufacture, the shots form a continuity, in other words they could be joined in their present sequence.

Segment H: tea-drinking 28-38

We were invited to drink tea with the guests. I took shots in anticipation of Rhumsha making a speech about the ritual, although McAllister was doubtful it would happen here ¹⁵.

Temporal continuity between this segment/location and the previous are indicated by one of Burch's variations: the arrival of (not necessarily the same) blanketed men. Spatially, it is radically discontinuous from the previous segment.

The small hut interior provides the obvious boundary for the action, while the camera further divides the space according to the seating of the sexes and the door. Shots of women and new arrivals were made for continuity editing, to bridge the repeated abortive takes anticipating a speech. Here, chance plays a strong part. The variables of each cutaway would determine its useability, and if the speech started, research aims would also be fulfilled. For instance, the

15 The anticipated action is formal speech, the actual action is the two repetitive processes of tea-making, arriving and greeting. The two areas in which this happens are the formal men's and women's areas, to the left and right of the door respectively. When the hut is crowded, then men take up the space near the door, while women move to the back and right. As visitors, we were usually given the courtesy position near the door. This seating pattern would be known only to a local. The very low light made this useful only for research purposes.

cutaways establish the context. If the speech had started in the middle of making a cutaway, I could easily have panned to the speaker. If not, it was a cutaway which was spatially discontinuous with the speaker, and so could be used to bridge speech if necessary. This situation introduced two problems of boundary evident later: temporally, anticipating when an action would begin, and spatially, how to take account of the women who in formal situations sat separately from the men ¹⁶.

I was limited to interpreting cues of action, and volume and tone of voice as I couldn't understand Xhosa and thus adapt my camera work to the flow of conversation. At least some of the shots were due to my mistaken anticipation of the start of a speech by Rhumsha.

Only two shots show men and women crossing the frame/area boundaries, 32 and 35. Closeups of the men against the opposite wall were attempted, but these were too dark. Since I was still having difficulty identifying Rhumsha, this was also a reason for recording more speech than necessary. In shot 38 the speech finally occurs, much tape having been wasted. The speech also was not about the ritual but about our presence (see Appendix J. for translation).

Segment I: Rhumsha going to cattle byre 39

This attempts to establish the relation in space between the hut and the cattle byre, but my lack of anticipation is evident in the shaky, rushed start and my lack of decisiveness in the

16 This is not part of ritual formality, but daily formality. The phenomena of sexual segregation of territory echoes that in the film *Kypseli* (Hoffman), and there the same question arises as here: to what extent is the spatial segregation of the sexes a result of the camera's framing, to what extent an analysis of basic social organisation?

too-soon switch-off. The camera was stopped after Rhumsha's speech rather than paused as usual. As a result, there is no definite end to the shot and it is redundant. In the haste to follow, the windshielded microphone was disconnected, hence the wind rumble from the camera's microphone.

Segment J: speeches beside cattle byre 40-47

Change tape between shots 45 and 46.

This segment is defined by the change of location, although the participants and the action (speeches) are largely the same. Here the conflict between the research, long-take method and the continuity method is most marked.

The speeches, needed for analysis, influenced the length of shots and largely the framing and movement (continuity is attempted for both visual and aural), but again my lack of Xhosa hindered accurate discrimination between speech and conversation. Deciding the start and end of speeches for a non-speaker is difficult but not insurmountable. From past experience I knew that formal speeches sometimes involve two people, the second giving a ritual response to the first after each sentence or two. Speeches are usually louder than informal conversation and more consistent in tone and volume. The marker of the start is not always clear - sometimes the equivalent of "Hey!" The end marker is often a word or phrase meaning "I'm finished", but my ear was not attuned to picking up these markers at the time. The wide-angle framing means that detail is small in the viewfinder. Gestures of the head, the movements of the speaker's mouth are not always obvious.

The camera was positioned in front of the group and close enough for us to hear the speech above the wind. This meant that the line of seated men extended beyond the frame on either

side. Therefore pans were essential for including all men there. Pans also had another purpose: getting from the shot of the main action to the “reverse angle” cutaway while keeping temporal continuity, via the sound track, for research.

I framed in wide angle and stayed there rather than zoom in, even during speeches which seemed quite long. Since my attention was directed to the small black-and-white viewfinder, it was difficult to anticipate impending speech via gesture. Again, much more is recorded than seemed necessary at the time, but later analysis found valuable information¹⁷.

McAllister indicated when the speech started (our voices are audible at the start of shot 40) and shots recorded after this were at my initiative. The speech is repeated at shot 47 for the new arrivals. The redundant shot 46 (a switch-off when no action seems imminent) seems to indicate that one of us at least anticipated another speech, by chance just after the tape change.

Shot 40 shows a misguided attempt to combine the speech (temporal continuity) with the visual context (spatial continuity) via a slow pan to the left and back to the speaker. But the speech ends before the return pan starts, and the camera whips back to find the person giving the expected reply. The camera dip during the second reply was caused by me looking down to check the sound level on the VTR, indicating my belated concern with sound quality, as does the appearance of the microphone in shot. The cutaway of listeners is finally made in shot 43.

Specifically visual continuity technique is also evident in cutaways of arrivals, and their entry

17 For example, the jokes about the hide ropes, the repeat of the ritual information speech and other conversations.

and greeting is recorded at length.

While pans from one part of the group to another create some degree of continuity, by making possible spatially proximate joins between shots, this is undercut by the temporal discontinuities in the sound track ¹⁸: the camera switches on and off in the middle of (informal) sentences or conversations. It is debatable whether a Xhosa-speaking cameraman could have done otherwise, given the aims of collecting speech material and the limitations of tape.

The two groups of arrivals were handled in very similar ways to segment G. The approaching group was framed in wide angle shot (spatially radically discontinuous, but temporally continuous on the soundtrack, for a non-Xhosa speaker) to establish quite clearly the number of figures and the spatial context (respectively the road past the field and the huts, both seen before). The next frame was then established on the edge of the group (frame boundary = group boundary) allowing the arrivals to enter both simultaneously. Once all are seated, the speeches start again, and the camera pans to find the speaker. In shot 45 the camera cuts off their heads to avoid including too much sky.

In shot 44, my finger accidentally points through frame to the right (an example of accidental reflexivity), in response to McAllister's indication where more guests are congregating against the sheep enclosure. Other speeches, redundant false starts and a tape change intervene, but a slow pan to identify it occurs in shot 45, while still containing Rhumsha.

18 Thus supporting Rouch's insistence on the need for a sound-man who understands the local language.

Segment K: Men walking to hut 48-49.

Placed in a separate segment by camera position and action, it shows similar intentions of spatial orientation and techniques to shot 39, although the action is shown more completely at start and finish. Spatial orientation to the context is given via the background: other huts, the sheep enclosure and other visitors next to it. I ran ahead to get shot 49 indicating arrival (lack of anticipation can be occasionally be repaired with energy). Shot 49 on the doorway establishes the proximate space necessary for continuity from shot 48, allows some men to walk into shot, then pans to latecomers, to shorten the time needed to show the number arriving (only one or two at a time appear when framing the door), and show more and different orienting background. The howling wind on the sound track implies temporal continuity, by blotting out conversation and inevitable breaks¹⁹.

Segment L: Dance in hut 50-54

This segment is defined by changes in location, participants, type of action (purely ritual) and noticeably by shot lengths, which were long to establish the cycles of the singing, and to anticipate the speeches. We had recorded this stage at an earlier ritual a few years previously. On that occasion, we were allowed to shoot from inside the hut, but not this time, perhaps because of the emphasis on custom indicated in one of the speeches. McAllister and I thus knew broadly what to expect. The material was recorded for continuity editing. Most of the space and action here was simpler than previously encountered, involving two easily identifiable groups (singers and sitters), and alternating periods of speaking and repetitive dancing/chanting. Despite the action being predictable, the boundaries of the actions are not,

19 The tripod and camera by the door are another example of accidental reflexivity.

and were missed several times.

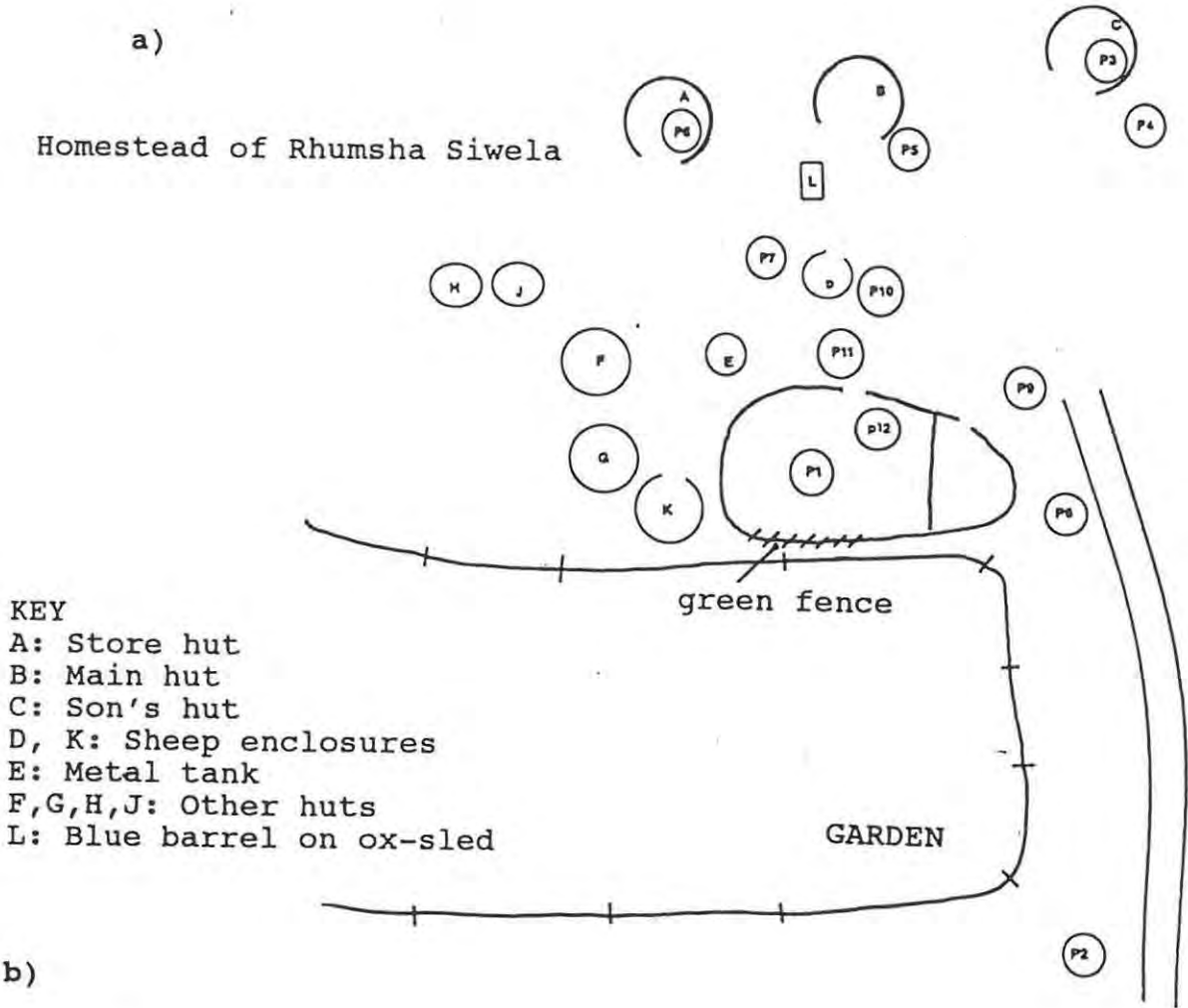
Shot 50 establishes the context of the interior before dancing begins and the formal seating pattern of firstly men then women. The lengthy pause in the middle of the pan between the two allows either a condensing post-edit here, or commentary about the significance of the fire. The first missed boundary was the start of clapping (51), and the camera is kept running during the jerky re-framing of more men standing, to maintain continuous sound track. The repetitive nature of the singing and and clapping would enable easy condensing in post-editing.

Shot 52 was made in anticipation of the speech. It reverses the direction of pan, establishing first women then men. The single man watching is established (53) long enough to be either a separate shot or part of the pan, and is intended for possible use as spatial continuity in post-editing to introduce the sound of the singing.

The indication for the pause for the speech (54) escaped my notice, despite our trying to anticipate it. I never found out what it was, whether a word, a sign or the end of a song cycle. Thus the time gap between the two is unclear, but not between the end of the speech and the continuation of dancing.

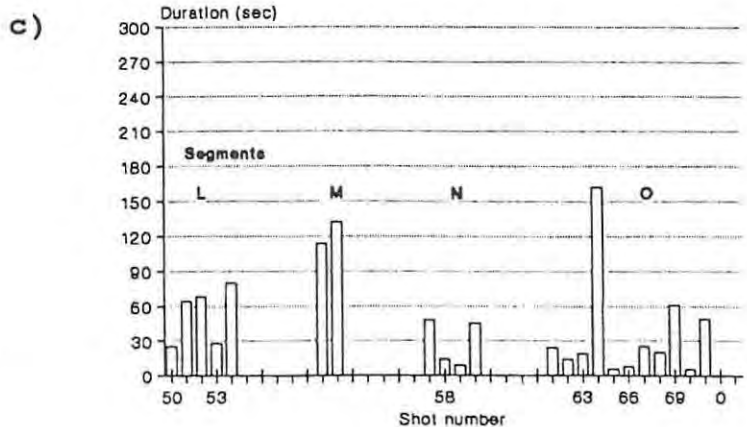
Figure 2: Segments L - O.

- a) Map of camera positions;
- b) Key to shot numbers, camera positions and segment divisions;
- c) Graph showing shot lengths.



b)

1.	2.	3.
SGT NO.	CAM	PSN
L.	50	P(5)
	51	
	52	
	53	
	54	
M.	55	P(10)
	56	
N.	57	P(11)
	58	
	59	
	60	
O.	61	P(12)
	62	
	63	
	64	
	65	
	66	
	67	P(13)
	68	P(12)
	69	
	70	
	71	



Audio and visual continuity are negotiated/created in different ways. For example, the change from shot 52-53 reveals an almost exact continuity of clap rhythm ²⁰.

This occurs by chance, but reveals how easily an appearance of temporal continuity can be made in post editing. At other shot transitions (51-52, 53-54) the audio noticeably changes, or “jumps”, indicating proximate temporal discontinuity. Visual continuity varies. Shots 51-52 show proximate spatial continuity (no jump), whereas shots 53-54 jump by one of Burch’s “variations”, since the women are clapping in 53 and the dancers are standing still in 54.

McAllister thought there was no need to record more than one speech, since from previous experience he knew they would all have broadly the same character. We anticipated the next stage of the ritual, and went outside to await the exit and procession to the cattle byre.

Segment M: group going to homestead 55-56

Despite our preparation, the group left the hut (during which a different song is sung) before the VTR was recording, and I missed another boundary of action. This happened because the sound of the different song, which would have cued me to start, was obscured by the wind. The duller light indicates some degree of time passing since the entry to the hut.

This segment shows another radical spatial re-location of the camera. The panning constitutes editing by movement, and is combined with long takes for the anticipated speech between the hut and the cattle byre (56), and any spontaneous “praises” (a praise is a form of spontaneous oral poetry). When recording the previous mortuary ritual, such a spontaneous praise had occurred, which was unfortunately obscured by bad camera work and microphone

20 Locals would probably spot the elision of words.

placement. Rhumsha does shout exclamations before his speech, and translation of this would reveal whether it is a praise or not. The delay was caused by the cattle being too distant. They are supposed to be kept close to the cattle byre, so that they may be driven in as soon as the host group come out of the hut.

The unavoidable directionality and limited field of view of the camera means that, from our position, shots of the hut and the cattle byre were necessary to establish the anticipated relation of time: the group had to wait for the cattle to enter. These shots were linked by pan (rather than being separate shots) so that the temporal continuity would be preserved. Speeches would not be missed.

The two shots were intended to be made so that they could be joined end to end, maintaining continuity but eliding the wait for the cattle. During shot 55, McAllister told me that the cattle were far away. We would waste tape by running the camera until they arrived. The potential for editing continuity (allow the editor to either use shot 55 to indicate the delay, or omit it) is made by the first pan ending on the host group, while the second shot starts on the cattle. The camera was accidentally switched on for shot 56 before being in position, hence the passing glimpse of McAllister. The sound track's jump shows a proximate temporal discontinuity, again easily sutured in post-editing.

The same panning tactic is used, and again adjustments are made for further delays. The first pan to the group revealed that they were not moving, as I anticipated they would when the cattle arrived. I took this opportunity to check the volume control, and the camera dipped.

To enable further shortening in editing and to keep track of the cattle, I panned back to them, and the two men who have been assisting, walk past. Panning back to the group reveals they

are moving. Once they have stopped, McAllister and the edge of the frame obscure the women, standing a little higher and behind the group. Moving forward and re-framing includes the women, with Rhumsha now in right frame. The glimpse of the women makes sense of Rhumsha's wave of the hand after the invocation, indicating that the woman should leave the group of men to go into the cattle byre alone.

After his speech, the men moved forward, the women disappeared from frame, and I walked while framing them, to the cattle byre. The reverse angle shots (pans) between the people and cattle byre exaggerate this visual relationship as the dominant one.

Segment N: Rhumsha's speech, catching ox 57-60

This segment is defined mainly by a change in the participants, now men only. It contains some action which is purely ritual (the speech) and action which has both practical and ritual aspects (catching the ox). The speech seems to refer back to the procession to the cattle byre, while catching the ox refers forward to the killing of it.

There is obviously a change in the kind of action; the formal group has broken up. This uncertainty indicates a wider uncertainty about the participants' boundaries in the ritual. We stood outside the cattle byre until the ox had been caught.

Despite McAllister's warning about Rhumsha's speech in the cattle byre, I may have missed (57) the first few words of Rhumsha's speech. The boundary of his speech is not clearly contained in the shot, i.e. not preceded by some conversational buzz. Perhaps I was expecting a speech as formal as at the side of the cattle byre, and to be cued by people listening. Although there is proximate spatial continuity, the temporal discontinuity (indicated by the jump between conversational buzz and the immediate start of the speech) makes a jump cut

from shot 56. The spatial discontinuity in the subsequent shots, indicated by both the breaks in sound (the shouted comments and advice are not clearly distinguishable from the previous buzz), and the change in action and positions, cannot be all be bridged by the single cutaway. Some are inevitably redundant.

As with the previous speeches, the camera continues running after the speech to link its boundary with the next action which was (as McAllister pointed out) arranging the hide ropes used to catch the ox. Shot 58 is redundant not only because of bad framing, but because I remembered from the previous ritual how long it takes to catch the ox. Shot 60 runs long to catch the falling of the ox (the ox was caught once before this, but escaped).

Segment O: Killing ox 61-71

Change tape between shots 67 and 68

My fascination with the death of the ox, in addition to uncertainty about the significant aspects after the bellow, informs this segment, as indicated by the number and length of shots. The action is obviously a definer of this segment.

I shot most from just inside the gateway (McAllister said the ox might get up again), and excluded the large number of observers against the fence, until late in the segment. Because the movement is limited, and evolves slowly, the pattern of shots follows a fairly predictable main action/cutaway pattern (except for the first). Most of the shots of the ox are matched by a cutaway, though not in exact alternating order. Most cutaways are separately framed. In other words they show proximate space, not overlapping space, so that figures or action in one will not show discontinuity with the same figures or action in another.

An in-shot closer re-framing of the man crushing the aorta introduces a subsection of

continuity. With this closer framing, two cutaways are made, 65 and 66 (shot 65 being usable in post-editing for the jumpcut between 63 and 64).

The break between shots 62 and 63 is an accidental switch off in the middle of a pan, because a cow bumped into me. The camera was re-started in 63 on Rhumsha, and coincidentally followed him to the ox. The man washing served to bridge 67 and 69. The latter pans to a cutaway of the old men against the fence. The pan itself reveals nothing except spatial continuity. Shot 70, framed very low to avoid the effect of sky on the aperture, appears to relate the cattle byre activity to the women sitting in the distance, but again raises the research question about the role of the women and their relation to the ritual action.

The soundtrack establishes the bellowing's ritual significance through the off-screen cheers of the observers. Except for shot 68, the sound track indicates temporal continuity because the volume and quality of conversation and comments are similarly indistinct from shot to shot, even to a Xhosa speaker. This low buzz indicates perhaps a period of waiting: nothing significant is happening while the ox dies.

After the tape change, the volume seems to increase. This may have been because I took the opportunity to re-set the recording level, or because of the position of the mic adjacent to nearby conversation.

The change in sound track also seems continuous at 70/71, because the comments get louder during the shot of the women, and for a non-Xhosa speaker this makes an apparent temporal bridge to the sound in the shot of the ox struggling.

Preliminary Discussion: Segments P to W

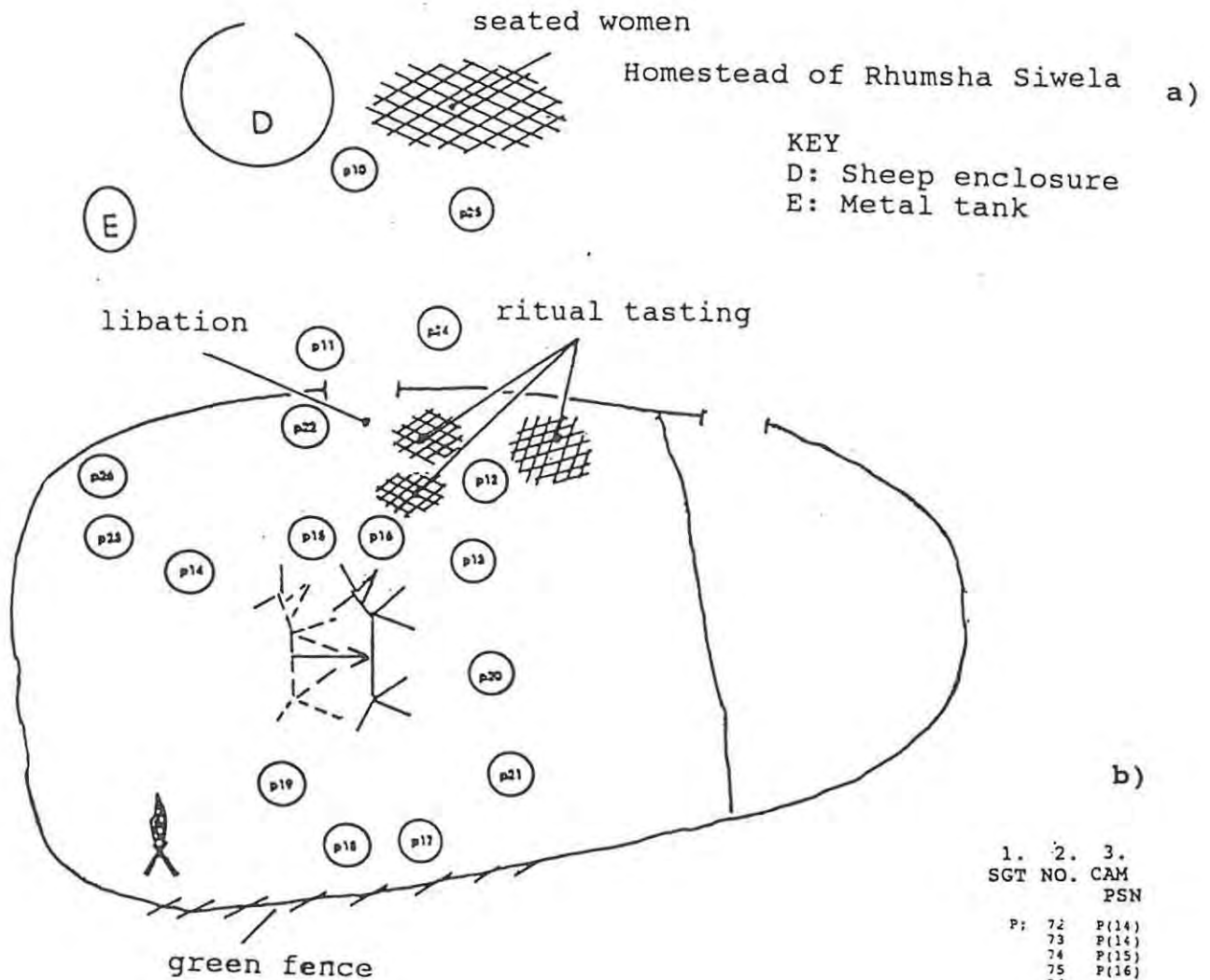
The segment divisions from this point on are by type of action rather than camera location or

participants, since the last two change too frequently for any useful classification.

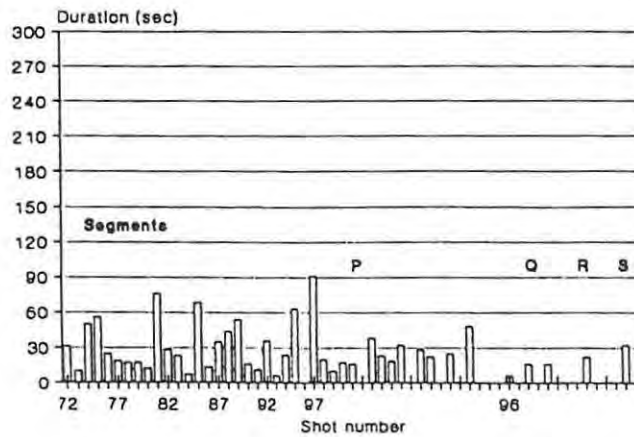
The intermittent shot numbers of these segments from shot 95, indicate several simultaneous strands of action, distinct but interrelated. Except for segment F above, the visible (not the verbal) action was previously more easily definable. The strands of action happen in a small area, and many small shifts of camera position are made. This is done to get an adequate image size without zooming, and for long depth of field.

Figure 3: Segments P. - S.

- a) Map of camera positions;
- b) Key to shot numbers, camera positions and segment divisions;
- c) Graph showing shot lengths.



c)



1. SGT	2. NO.	3. CAM PSN
P:	72	P(14)
	73	P(14)
	74	P(15)
	75	P(16)
	76	
	77	
	78	
	79	
	80	
	81	
	82	
	83	
	84	
	85	
	86	
	87	
	88	
	89	P(17)
	90	P(18)
	91	P(19)
	92	
	93	
	94	P(15)
	95	P(13-20)
	97	P(21)
	98	
	99	P(19)
	100	
	101	
	103	
	104	
	105	
	106	
	112	P(18)
	(113)	
	116	P(19)
	(118)	P(22)
Q:	96	P(13)
	102	P(19)
	108	P(19)
R:	107	P(15-19)
S:	109	P(19-12)

Since the cattle byre is so crowded, the small shifts in position and the many simultaneous actions give framings of quite different subjects. The spatial context of the cattle byre remains the same, and smaller indicators of spatial continuity become more important ²¹.

In this situation, continuity camera technique is based on the assumption of so-called parallel editing, in which sequences of shots showing progress in one strand of action are alternated with shots of another strand of action ²². Eventually, the strands of action culminate in a situation of transition. The result is that continuity is questionable (the temporal progression of action is not clear) and shots are not easily classifiable into segments associated with one action or another. Such shots are listed in more than one segment, and are bracketed [e.g. (118)] to indicate this.

The axis of action joining most of the foci of action is a line roughly from the fire to position P(12) ²³. The shifts in camera position break the continuity rule regarding axis of action ²⁴,

21 These are the position of the carcass, the fire, the gateway, the old men seated against one section of fence, the green branches in the opposite section of fence.

22 The shots of any one particular action do not therefore show independent coherence of continuity as a separate group of shots. Continuity in post-editing depends on parallel editing, if jump cuts are to be avoided and the viewer's orientation in space maintained. A corollary is that the number of possible post-edits for these segments is very large.

23 With hindsight, the best position for the camera seems either P(19) or P(22).

24 Examining shot numbers relative to the camera positions shows that the camera slowly circled the carcass (shots 72-116). This pattern is also evident if the divisions into Segments Q, R and S, up to shot 109, are omitted.

unless the camera shows the movement to the new orientation through a tracking shot²⁵ (the shots of cutting up the carcass are particularly disorienting). The frequent breaking of the axis of action rule and little wide/close alternation means that many shots are made redundant.

Three other factors add to the disorientation and affect continuity. The camera often looks down (therefore not giving orientation via the background), and only occasionally pans from one action to another, thus establishing the proximate space off-screen as continuous. By avoiding background, the camera avoids problems of matching background of other shots in continuity. This seems to be a point on which the interests of continuity and research clash directly, but these occur only at the dismemberment, and such shots are interspersed with others showing background. Also, the sound track is virtually uniform conversational buzz.

My ethnocentric fascination with the process of dismemberment meant less attention to other activities. This is evident in the relatively fewer shots in other segments where there is continuous action (Segments Q,R,S,T; Figure 3 and 4). The result of all the simultaneous action is that some shots are not properly framed, so some shots of movement are started on a pan instead of a static frame (for example shots 98, 102, 115, 123). This is distinct from a moving frame of static action at the start of a shot, where I switched on the camera while still choosing the composition, i.e. shots 97 and 125. These do not affect continuity, comprehension or post-editing where the subsequent framing is steady.

The options in post-editing for these segments are great, because of the opportunities for parallel editing. This applies also to the total length, the number and length of individual

25 Examples of breaking the axis of action rule are in shots 98-99, 120-121.

strands of action shown, the amount of commentary used to explicate certain ritual significances and the standards of acceptability of camera work.

Segment P: shifting, cutting up ox 72-95, 97-101, 103-106, 112, 113, 116, (118)

The large number and length ²⁶ of shots results from my fascination with the process, and from the aim (agreed with McAllister) of recording the specific piece of meat for the first tasting ²⁷. Many shots are therefore redundant, up to the detachment of this intsonyama, since we did not know beforehand exactly which piece of meat this would be ²⁸. Cutaways and closeups from this activity are made but after detaching the intsonyama, they are infrequent ²⁹

A further decrease in the frequency of shots concerning dismemberment is noticeable after shot 106, since it is almost completed, and shots of other strands of action culminating in the

26 The length of shots varies considerably in this segment. Shots 72 and 73 (over 50 secs) occur at the start of the segment.

27 When two considerable chunks of meat had been cut off and put on the branches, I assumed that at least one of them was the intsonyama (shots 85-87).

28 McAllister did not wish to ask while the process was under way.

29 Note the gaps: 89-96 and 98-104). Shots: 77 men sharpening knives, 78 boys watching, assistants (pan, wideshot), 84 boys watching, 85 pan to branches, 86 pan from boys watching, 87 pan to branches and tilt up. At this point I assumed the intsonyama had been removed, and shot 88 is simply a repeat of the pattern of shot 87. Shot 88 shows removal of a similar piece of meat, but from the lefthand side of the carcass. From this point the camera shifts to the other end of the ox, P(17-18-19). This change of position is done with an orienting wideshot, 89 pan with new arrivals, 96 closeup, 97 tilt-up, 98 hanging stomach skin on the fence, 104 cutting off abdomen skin, 113 pan to fire.

ritual tasting are more frequent.

Segment Q: bringing wood, making fire 96,102,108.

Change tape between shots 107 and 108

By coincidence, all shots of bringing wood were from the same side of the axis of action which the bringing of it traces out, viz. from the gate to the fire. Shot 108 is more considered than the other two, and begins with the intention of a linking pan, but stops with a bump probably because I collided with the man in the brown jersey, but also perhaps because McAllister points out the hanging of the heart and lungs on the gateway.

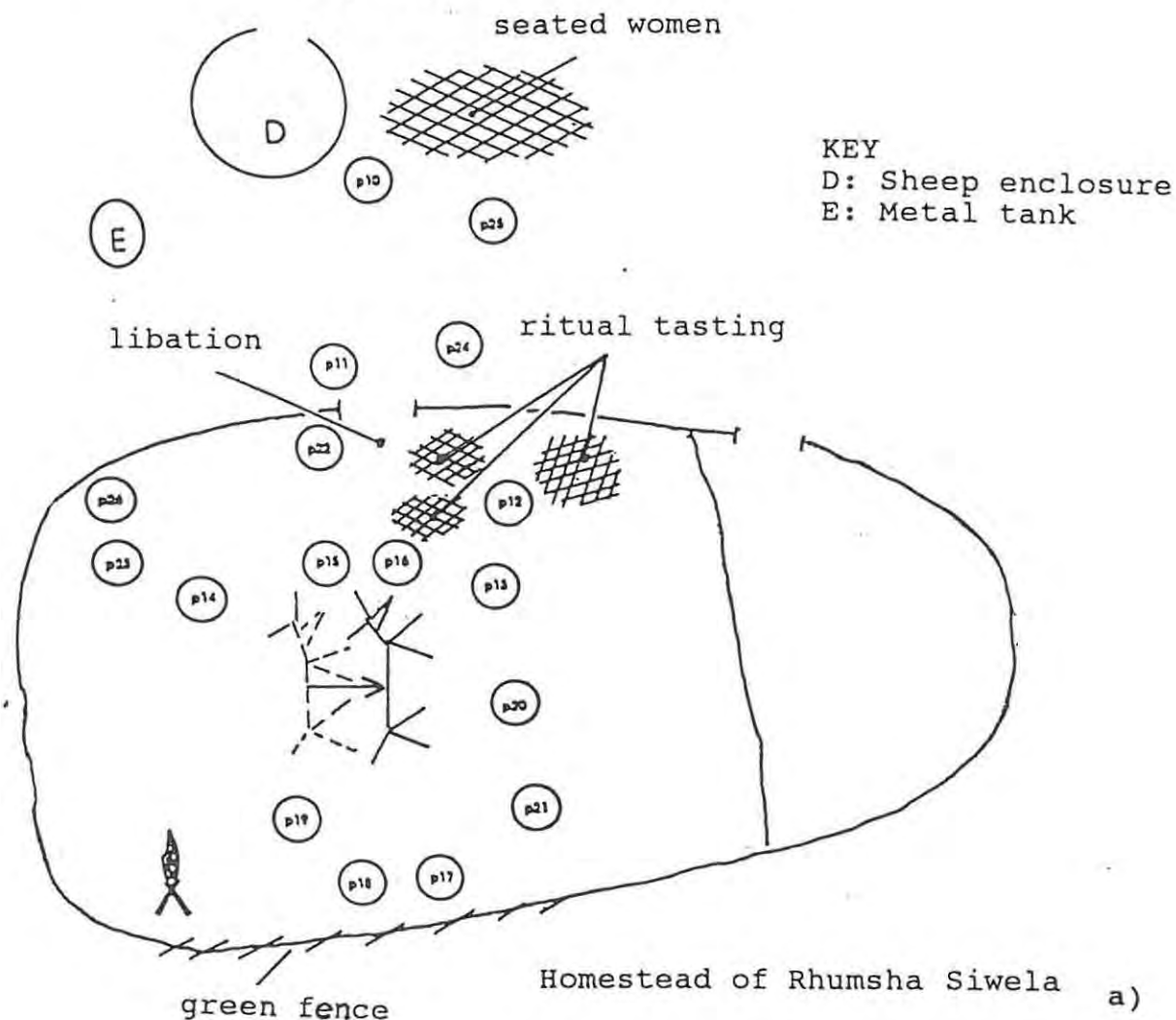
Segment R: Throwing chyme (stomach contents) 107

(Change tape between shots 107 and 108)

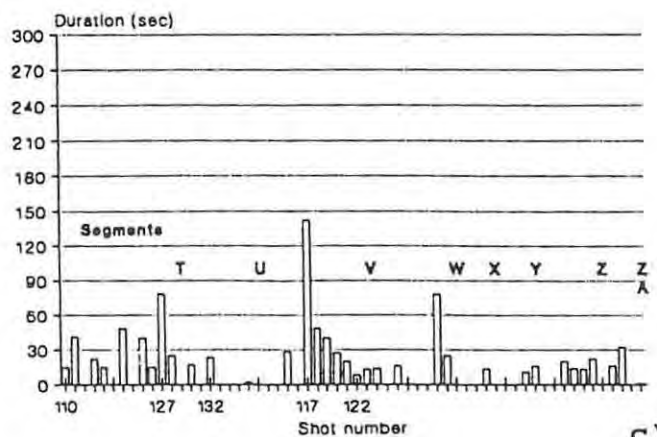
This action is in a different segment because it is clearly action of purely ritual significance. The action reveals no trace of continuity with past or subsequent action (only McAllister's warning prepared me that it was about to occur, hence the black section at the start), although the pan with Rhumsha suggests relevance to the action around the carcass and the background, that is, framing the rest of the stomach's contents being taken out. The length also makes it easy to add commentary in post-editing to explain the significance.

Figure 4: Segments T. - ZA.

- a) Map of camera positions
- b) Key to shot numbers, camera positions and segment divisions
- c) Graph showing shot lengths



1.	2.	3.
SGT NO.	CAM	PSN
T.	110	F(15)
	111	F(14)
	(113)	F(18)
	114	F(18)
	(118)	F(22)
	125	F(14)
	126	
	(127-	F(13)
	128)	
	130	F(23)
	132	
U.	131	F(23)
V.	115	F(19)
	117	F(19-15)
	118	F(22)
	119	F(22-16)
	120	F(22)
	121	F(12)
	122	
	123	
	124	
	129	F(13)
W.	127	F(13)
	128	
X.	133	F(24)
Y.	134	F(25)
	135	F(26)
Z.	136	F(22)
	137	F(15)
	138	F(23)
	139	
	141	
	142	
ZA.	140	F(23)



b)

c)

Segment S: Hanging heart and lungs 109

The action seems to have a ritual significance as well as a practical element. Also, the camera moves towards the action, to identify the meat and to record any comments about it. In moving, it takes the viewer over the apparent axis of action linking most of the activity. The shot was run fairly long (for explanatory commentary), until the process seemed complete. I framed the people in the background in case there was any reaction from them which might indicate its significance.

Segment T: Preparing and cooking meat 110-111, 113, 114, (118), 125, 126, (127-128), 130, 132.

This segment includes two kinds of activity - cooking meat and cutting it up on branches - which occur in different places, and has mixed practical and ritual significance. It unites the separate actions of bringing branches, firewood and cutting up the carcass. Most of it is framed separately from other action, except for pans as in 113, 118 and 125, which are also framed wider. Shots of cutting up next to the carcass are excluded (e.g. 116). Some shots have more ritual significance than others (putting the first meat on the fire, shot 111). Shots 130 and 131 are redundant because of faulty camera technique (the action is repetitive), and 132 is the intended shot.

The orienting pan in Shot 118 links this activity to continuing work on the carcass, and the ritual tasting.

Segment V: Tasting, drinking 115, 117, (118), 119-124, 129.

Shot 115 is classified as the boundary for the start of the ritual tasting; and is not classified with segments of preparing and cooking meat, or cooking and eating. This segment's action is simple, but my indecision about how to shoot it is evident in shot 117. This shot shows indecision concerning boundaries: between close and wide framing, between the arrival of

groups and the start of tasting, and in attempting to establish the boundaries of groups which are not yet formed (some men stand around tasting, others sit in groups).

In attempting to shoot close continuity, I look into the middle of one group to establish the details of the tasting procedure. The action appears cyclical and undifferentiated (eating, talking, drinking) and the ritual aspect seems to consist solely of who was involved: only men wearing white blankets or others as well? People continue to arrive. The haste and bustle makes me rush to capture the action since it seems it may be over soon. I give up the attempt to shoot close continuity, and there are no more closeups to identify the members of groups, or to link them in their interactions. I got lost in the mass of individuals, not seeing the wood for the trees.

My confusion is evident in the lack of a strongly identifiable axis of action in the compositions. The circles of people are inward looking, and there is no individual or centre of interest or a dominant person (although Rhumsha is detectable in shot 119). The apparently random background activity of people not involved in the group tasting contrasts with the focussed activity of the groups.

Once I abandon the idea of short-take continuity shooting, my next tactic was to re-establish boundaries. A long pan (shot 118) relates the activity in the rest of the cattle byre to the tasting, and shows that men also eat separately from the groups. This also established Rhumsha in wide shot, and shot 119 starts closer, framing him centrally. This shot also establishes the boundaries between the three groups, and the eventual formation of men without white blankets in another group behind Rhumsha. The cyclical activities of tasting and drinking are still too distantly framed for any more detailed distinctions of interaction or

process to be made.

Gradually I started to make further distinctions of boundary by different positions and framings. The end of shot 120 picks up the man seen at the start of 118, and orients us to the gate. The composition of groups is shown from a different angle (121), but without clearly distinguishable reference points to orient the viewer. This happens partly because the axis of action has been crossed, and therefore spatial continuity between the camera positions is vague.

Shot 121 shows men leaving these groups and presumably returning to their positions against the fence where we see them continue eating in shot 125 and 126. An accidental switch-off separates the two shots of Rhumsha. Shot 122 shows Rhumsha moving to the gate, and the next, shot 123, picks him up carrying something towards the women's group outside. The switch-off was accidental in the sense that I picked out Rhumsha's movement at the same time as I decided to switch off, and didn't therefore anticipate his movement quickly enough to make this a single shot.

I can see the women, but I'm ignorant of their role, and hence how to incorporate them into the continuity plan. Since some women are also now in the cattle byre eating with the men, the nature of this boundary becomes more complex. The question of visible (fence) and invisible (social) boundaries surfaces again.

The sound track is mostly uniform buzz, with occasionally audible comments, but no break in continuity seems obvious between shots. It is therefore not useable as an indicator of boundary.

The end boundary of the tasting is unclear. Some groups break up, while shot 124 shows the

women still in their group. The men seem to continue eating informally in shots 125-128, and some overlapping with more cooking (125-26), and are grouped in the next segment. The libation (127-128) seems the end boundary, but continuity is made only by the act of pouring out the beer, not by any relation to groups.

Segment W: Libation (127-128)

These shots are useful for editing, but since cued by McAllister primarily for research, are framed differently from the other tasting shots (shot from a different position, and thus isolating Rhumsha), and are segmented separately for this reason³⁰. Shot 127 runs long, waiting for the action to happen. There was no time for a continuity cutaway between 127 and 128 to bridge the break, since the action continued into shot 129 (Rhumsha shooing the women out of the cattle byre), but since I had made so many other shots of parallel action of eating and cooking, it seemed unnecessary.

Shots of cooking (shot 132 from Segment T.) and eating (shots 136-142 from Segment Y.) can function as cutaways for these gaps, although strictly they occur after, not between these shots³¹.

Segment X: Exiting cattle byre 133

While I was en route to get shots of the women outside, I made this shot with the intention of making the spatial and temporal link between the two. It's a spurious link, similar to shot 27 in Segment G as an example of continuity technique mistakenly applied.

30 Although just as strong an argument could be made of considering it part of segment V. (above).

31 Preceding shots show that this action occurs before the shots as well, and so make a case that this is not important, a consideration in making and using any cutaways, or in parallel editing.

Segment Y: Women's circle at huts 134-135

I assumed that the dress of the women, and the branches with meat, link these women by implication with the ritual tasting in the cattle byre, and temporally with Rhumsha's earlier bringing of meat to this group. The cattle byre, hut, barrels and camera on tripod give us the spatial location. It does not establish whether these are the women who came into the cattle byre, because of the intervening shots (which blur our memory), and of the wide angle framing (which does not either here or in the cattle byre identify specific faces). Reviewing 119, 122, 124 shows that the blanket colours seen in the cattle byre are not visible in this group.

The shot/reverse shot pattern of these two indicates another mistaken use of this continuity technique (there is no internal interaction in the group, no clearly identifiable action in progress which continues from one shot to another). The two shots seem to indicate simultaneity rather than progression in relation both to one another and to shots of cattle byre activity.

These shots I did purely on my initiative for post-editing. McAllister implied that these shots didn't relate to the ritual activity in the cattle byre.

Segment Z: Old men eating against fence 136-139, 141-142

Shots 136-138 repeat (rather than continue) the action seen in Segment T., especially shots 123-124. There is no observable continuity from shot to shot, other than the superficial impression of it conveyed by the continuous conversational buzz. They indicate simultaneity rather than progression, and although close attention to the the background of the fence indicates slow progression to the corner of the cattle byre.

Close listening indicates changes of volume (through microphone position) and tone.

McAllister explains the camera to one man (shot 139).

Shots 139 and 140 show more shifts of space, although the difference between 139 (P23) and 141 (P26) is no more than 1-2 meters. While there is apparent simultaneity between these shots, the men in shot 139 are not wearing white blankets, and so we deduce that the eating activity, limited previously to those so clothed, is now extended to everyone, including the boys.

There is no specific continuity which links the action in the previous segment with the action in this segment. There is simultaneity rather than progression, except that the eating here seems informal rather than formal.

Shot 142, accidental reflexivity, includes us in the ritual proceedings. A pan links Rhumsha with Richard Mthembu (McAllister's field assistant, distinctive in brown jacket, who shares meat as per custom) and McAllister, who brings me a piece of meat. The informal eating stage includes us as guests.

Segment ZA: Faulty shot 140

Change battery

Formal Analysis

In this section, the unedited shots are discussed under the headings of the two methods which the project attempted to integrate, i.e. continuity and research. Some preliminary remarks about spatial and temporal aspects of continuity will illuminate the discussion.

Spatial continuity

Continuity in this observational style is evident mainly in combination of proximate spatial articulations and temporal continuity through sound. Since wide angle framing is used for

most of the shots, the particular variable of lens angle (permitting wide/close shots to conceal temporal discontinuity) is not often present³².

Absolute continuity of space usually means a temporal discontinuity, since the action will have changed, and there is little wide/close alternation of framing which can conceal discontinuity. Where these alternations occur, they usually indicate either that a shot is redundant as far as continuity is concerned (although it might be useful for research), unless followed by a cutaway (proximate spatial discontinuity).

Continuity is most often made by tightly framed shots which separate different parts of the action and surroundings. This enables proximate spatial continuity to be more easily established. Spatial and temporal continuity between shots thus framed are mostly suitable for editing, since they don't show discontinuity either by overlapping spaces (the background changes when edited) or action (the peoples' positions change - Burch's variation).

Camera composition is usually done in such a way that the focus of action in the frame is clearly centred, and action is kept clearly either out of frame or in frame, but not on the frame boundary. This makes post editing easier, since action is clearly defined in frame and therefore more easily linked with cutaways and other sequential main action.

Temporal continuity

As Burch, Dornfeld and Nichols point out, temporal continuity is conveyed not by overlapping the action between shots as in fiction, but usually by the combination of the cutaway (proximate spatial discontinuity) with the temporal continuity of the sound track. This

32 Except, for example, the shots of the woman at the pot in Segment F.

cutaway technique (or the parallel editing technique) masks not only temporal elisions in the same action, but also the specific variables of movement in frame, camera movement, etc (as spelled out in Chapter Two).

It is obvious that my continuity decisions are made differently for speeches. The boundaries of formal speeches, needed for research, are contained by the camera shot, and the discontinuities in speech here are only partially provided for by cutaways.

In the case of songs, which are cyclical, the boundaries of camera shots contain at least one cycle. In other situations, involving spontaneous comments and random conversation³³, camera starts and stops cut across the boundaries of this speech. In other words, I ignored sound when making shots for continuity, and based these decisions on visual criteria only. Our microphone technique assumed that speech in these situations was not important, that voices would not be clearly picked up by the microphone, and that many voices would be speaking simultaneously. We did not expect that conversation would be distinguishable.

Although comments often seem to be fragmentary and made simultaneously by several people, a temporal progression (i.e. several exchanges between the same people) is evident in careful listening, even to a non-Xhosa speaker. This undercuts my assumption that sound track could be used to bridge temporal and spatial discontinuities, since conversation would be obscured either by low levels in re-recording during sound-mixing and editing, or by

33 There are few times when coherent conversation is heard: Segment F. (women's off-camera voices in hut), Segment H. (tea drinking in hut) and Segment J. (conversation between speeches beside the cattle byre).

extensive commentary.

Analysis for continuity

The continuity techniques are examined in the various segment markers outlined in Chapter

Two: Camera location, Type of action, Participants, Intentions and assumptions.

a) Camera location

i) large shifts

Radical spatial discontinuity is most often detectable between segments, but only those which are indicated by large camera shifts (segments A-M, outside the cattle byre).

These segments correlate with one camera position in the segment. The camera does not cross any axis of action, and orientation in space is clearer. Continuity is implied by this consistent orientation to context (Segment L), even if not by interaction between the participants (Segment A), or suggested by camera work (Segment M).

Segments where the camera follows the action from one place to another (segments K and M) show the continuity technique of breaking up moving action into sections, based on showing (fairly clearly) the boundaries by which it does this. The shot in Segment I is redundant because it does not show these boundaries.

ii) small shifts

Small shifts occur when the camera is in the middle of the action, seen in segments in the cattle byre after the killing of the ox (Segments P to Y). The camera moves around within the action in order to get detail of small groups and small actions. Observing the axis-of-action rule is thus difficult. Continuity techniques become more complex, and have to

deal with action which has a variety of temporal differences: whether they change quickly or slowly, seem cyclical (i.e. repetitive) or linear.

b) Type of action

i) predictability/unpredictability

As a category this was usually congruent with ii) formal to non-formal activity, and both are discussed under the latter, below.

ii) Formal ritual activity

This was usually shot in a long take with wide angle (e.g. the speeches). Since this activity had significance recognisably beyond my ethocentric assumptions, I therefore had no basis on which to condense via continuity methods. Discontinuities usually occurred between long takes, as well as jerky starts of camera movement and black at the start of shots. Often McAllister cued me when such an action would begin. Exceptions were sections of the ritual I had witnessed before and assumed I could predict, and which McAllister was sufficiently familiar with not to need research material (e.g. dancing and speeches in the hut).

Practical activity which was performed according to ritual methods (ox-killing, serving and tasting meat) showed a mixture of research and continuity methods, depending on whether I felt confident enough to predict how it would unfold.

Non-formal or purely practical everyday activity showed much more evidence of continuity techniques, either because I could predict their unfolding, or because they were of such a nature that we could not penetrate their levels of significance and progression, and were treated as repetitive. These were chiefly conversational buzz and repetitive processes such as straining beer or cutting up meat. The rules of continuity, incorporating the notion of

boundaries, were applied to each of the three types of action (above), by means of the decisions about main action and context, detail, parallel action and shift of location (see Chapter Two).

c) Participants

People were framed either as part of the main action or as relevant surroundings (cutaways). In other words, the camera often established spatial relations between two groups or actions: active from passive, speakers from listeners.

When framed as cutaways or surroundings to the action, they varied from the very closely positioned to the distant. When close, people were directly related to the action, moment to moment, sometimes as participants and sometimes as observers. Distant people were merely part of the larger process of the ritual, with a more long-term change in the nature of the relationships.

d) Intentions and assumptions

Naturally, neither continuity nor research techniques matched my intentions. They were sometimes poorly inappropriately carried out, for instance during the dismemberment of the carcass, or when missing the boundaries of formal ritual action. This variation is so great that generalisation is difficult. Details are evident in the discussion of each segment, above.

Research

This aspect is chiefly manifested by shot length and lens angle. Where lens angle is inadequate for the activity, pans are used (example, shots 40-48, 50-54) Shots are held long to contain both the boundaries of predictable formal action, as well as unpredictable action.

Longer shots are those which:

- wait for a specific activity to occur (often cued by McAllister). Shots run until the action occurs;

- follow action which is changing (i.e. non-cyclical) activity, e.g. speeches, the procession from the hut to the cattle byre;

- shots in which the action crosses boundaries of space.

Shorter shots were made of four types of action: cyclical or repeated action, slowly developing action, shots which establish different stages in parallel action and cutaways of observers for continuity.

Analysis of Length of shots

The total time of all shots on four days = 1 hr 15mins

See the graph in Figure 5. overleaf showing shot lengths on all four days, and the analysis of longer takes on Day One, in Table 2.

FIGURE 5: Graph showing lengths of all unedited shots, days one to four, in sequence

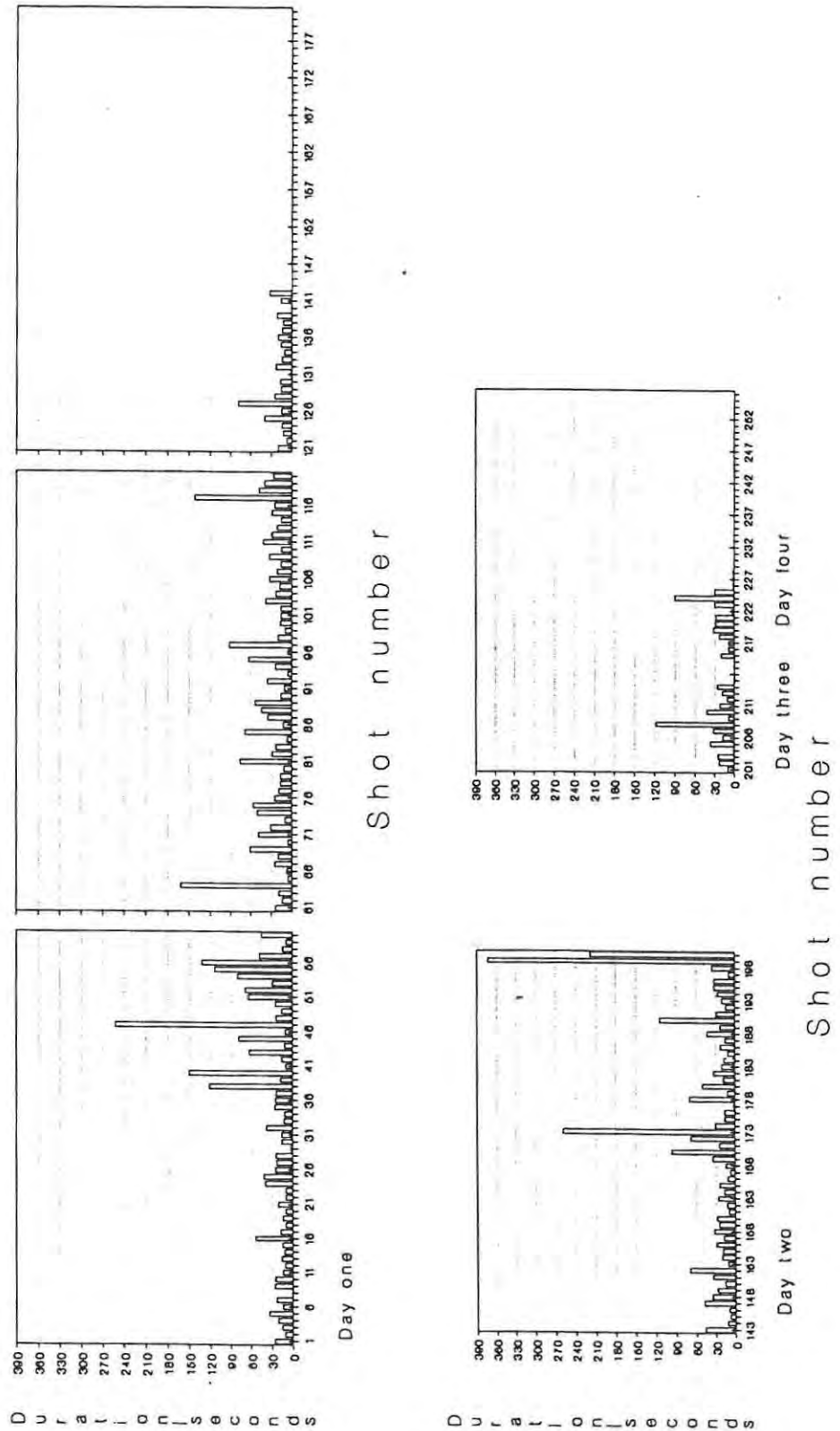


TABLE 2: Analysis of Longer Shots, Day One

Type of Shot	Over 30"	Over 1mn	Over 2mn
1. Composite shot;(pans etc)	9	1	-
2. Waiting for action	1	1	1
3. Speeches	1	2	4
4. Commentary	1	-	-
5. Action chge	6	4	1
6. Cutting ox	3	2	-
7. Accidental run	1	1	-

Key to Categories of shot in Table 2 above;

1. Composite shot; contains multiple camera compositions and movements - pans, zooms, etc.
2. Wtg; camera runs in anticipation of a specific action occurring.
3. Speeches; sub-type of 6. below.
4. Commentary; shot runs long to hold possible commentary.
5. Action chge; the action in the shot changes relatively quickly, and the boundaries of action are uncertain.
6. Cutting ox; deals specifically with shots of cutting up the carcass, and includes one example of 7. Accidental run and some 2. Wtg.
7. Accidental run; camera left on accidentally.

The analysis of shots in Table 2. which are over 30 seconds long reveals the following patterns.

The distribution by length in Table 2. indicates that speeches account for most of the longer shots. There is also a clear distinction between speeches and other action. The categories of 1.Composite shots and 2.Waiting for action reflect uncertainty of boundaries of action for the shorter (over 30 secs) shots³⁴.

In many cases, shots in these categories should have been longer, to include the boundaries of action³⁵.

The research factor is present in all shots, except categories 4. and 7.

From Figure 5. it is evident that, of the 142 shots made on Day One, 103 (or about 70%) are under 30 seconds. The total length of all shots is approximately 1 hour, 15 mins. In terms of tape, this amounts to about three and three-quarter cassettes of 22-minute duration each.

By comparison, the number of shots made on Days Two, Three, and Four is 86, making the total for the four days 228. Two and a quarter tapes were used for Days Two and Three, and about 5,5 minutes (on the unused short ends of other tapes) for Day Four.

34 Shots using composite camera movement, i.e. pans, zooms and walking shots are more frequent than indicated in Table 2, but occur to a lesser extent than those using separate framing.

35 Despite this, it does not seem possible that more tape could have been used to establish the role of the women, given our attention to the formal and therefore necessarily male activities of the ritual, the limited availability of tape and batteries, as well as the lack of another camera operator.

Other days

Although only Day One is examined in detail here, the shots on Days Two and Three do not deal with the same range of action. On Day Two similar ritual activity is apparent. The people gather in the hut, chant and make speeches, and go to the cattle byre, where meat is eaten. Beer is however drunk outside the cattle byre, by more people, where more speeches, of a different character, are made. Since there is no obvious focus of practical action other than these (such as the slaughtering of the ox), more shots of the women are made. There is much more acknowledgement of the presence of the camera by the women particularly. On Day Four, shots are made for continuity only (McAllister thought nothing worthwhile would be obtained), and the very short length of most shots are determined by the small stock of tape and little battery power available. Since the nature of the social event is different (no practical activity, much more informal conversation), the chronological progression is harder to establish, since less visibly obvious, and dependent more on sound.

Discussion

How does continuity match with research? The answer to this can only be answered fully once the explorations of Chapter Four and Five have been done, but some preliminary features seem to stand out.

The style of camera work is clearly observational, but carries signs of our presence. It also carries signs of decisions which in turn indicate factors of chance. The tension between the soundtrack and picture reveal our presence throughout the ritual (Ruby's accidental reflexivity), and flaws in camera work are evident. Regarding the relationship between the participants in the ritual and ourselves, there is direct and obvious contact between the participants of the ritual and ourselves only at the very end of Day One.

Signs of chance or control of chance are evident in both redundant shots and at the start and end of shots (direction or “mugging” for the camera). A few signs of mugging on Days Two to Four are evident in this material³⁶.

This may be due to the nature of the social activity, which may be categorised as Morin’s “intensive sociality” (De Heusch 1962, Preface), or to the formal recognition and announcement of our presence, or a combination of these factors. Our freedom of movement and hence acceptance of our presence by the participants is indicated by several factors: the variety of camera positions, the proximity of the camera to the action and the continuing conversation.

There is a distinct difference of camera technique between formal and informal activities as far as length of shot or specific composition is concerned. The formal activities are not always shot in the long-take style. Continuity techniques are occasionally and inappropriately applied to these activities, as well as to informal activities. On the other hand, continuity techniques are more consistently applied to informal/ practical activity, and clearly establish the spatial and temporal context of the formal elements.

The difference of camera technique between formal and non-formal activities (mainly shot length) is to an extent congruent with the difference between those shots dominated by sound and those dominated by visible action.

36 The shots which show this as well as other acknowledgement of our presence are 144-145, 148, 149, 151, 156, 203, 206, 207. This is probably because of the less formal nature of the action in these shots. Shot 221 on Day Four contains a short interview with Rhumsha about the significance of burning the bones.

There is not much difference of lens angle between shots of formal and informal activity. Very little close/wide variation is evident, and at crucial points when wide shots are necessary for orienting the viewer (at about the time of the ritual tasting), there are too few. The cause of this may be lack of anticipation or preparation, and this can be partly traced to the cooperation between McAllister and myself. We did not discuss in sufficient detail the items of formal activity and how to ensure that we covered them. When many things are happening simultaneously, there seems to be too little time for discussion between camera operator and anthropologist, and the camera would be by an anthropologist trained in camera work, or by a cameraman more familiar with the event.

In shots of speeches, the wide angle framing gives a particular character. There is a distinct difference between auditory and visual perspective, contrary to the conventions of continuity. The voice seems close, but the speaker usually does not visually dominate the frame.

Wide-angle framing also makes it more likely that the microphone intrudes into the shot. This intrusion could be better controlled for continuity purposes. Convention is against having the microphone in shot, in observational camerawork for this type of situation. It is a factor of chance usually associated with non-professional filmmakers.

Burch's distinction between radical and proximate spatial discontinuity raises the question of the cultural definitions of space in this context, since Burch's distinction is dependent on the urban "closed room". In this "open" perspective of the homestead, only in the interior of the huts is the space obviously bounded. This dual notion of spatial continuity also changes during the process of viewing, as the viewer becomes more familiar with the spaces of the homestead. A progressively more detailed awareness of space is built up in the minds of the

audience if the rules of continuity are consistently used. Thus, what seems a radical spatial discontinuity at the start of the event may become a proximate spatial discontinuity at a later point.

Chance factors include decisions taken both by myself and McAllister about what to shoot, our late reaction to or lack of anticipation of new activities, and the length of time taken for certain actions to occur. Some of these chance factors are accommodated by continuity camera methods based on the model.

Conclusion

Continuity camera work can provide a coherent visual record of the formal activity of the ritual, suitable to at least some degree for both research and editing. The specific decisions need to be modified for ethnocentric tendencies, based on close cooperation with the anthropologist, be consistently applied, be adapted to different kinds of social situation, and take more account of speech.

This record, despite omissions and flaws resulting from the chance factors, contextualises the formal and informal activities of the ritual, showing the interrelationships between the two which could not be conveyed in print. Even when the camera records redundant shots of the action - such as those of the women - this indicates an avenue for further research. This coherence in unedited material is relative (rather than having the illusion of coherence in edited material), since redundant shots and marginal phenomena are also evident as a result of the tension between the anticipated and the unexpected.

Comparison between the material of Day One and that of Days Two to Four, when the nature of the social event is different, reveals different camera work, and different relations

with people. The model's applicability to these situations is unclear.

The validity of the model regarding the cooperation with anthropologist is partial, since it does not take adequate account of how to resolve the uncertainty of visual and auditory boundaries in formal ritual action.

The model should therefore include the factor of anticipation, dependent on prior knowledge. These factors should allow for some latitude since, if the boundaries of relevance are established too closely by prior knowledge, then unanticipated behaviour which is valuable for further research may be excluded. For example, instead of reducing the number of shots of women, I should perhaps have increased them, although they appeared to be irrelevant at the time³⁷.

This raises the issue of the tension between a specific action and its context. Continuity principles deal with the tension between the action and context, and the relationships of action to context which change over time. Where uncertainty exists about this relationship, the wide angle long-take method, equivalent to the master shot in continuity, can be used. A more methodical approach to this uncertainty needs to be formulated, possibly from the concept of interval sampling in some research film approaches. This would reduce the chance factors and make a more accurate observational record.

The tension between action and context is also present in the concerns of research, which are primarily manifested in the issues of spatial and temporal continuity: how to form a "unified

37 Different camera positioning, to include this kind of element in the background, may have been useful for this.

place from which to observe” (Nichols 1981, 265). In situations of uncertainty, in-camera editing via pans and tracking shots, rather than separate shots of main action and cutaway, seems more applicable. It is more suitable for the tension or uncertainty regarding the boundaries of unpredictable action, rather than the relation between action and context.

The model of continuity does not take adequate cognizance of the role of sound. This is evident in the difference between shots of speeches and shots of other action. The auditory and visual elements respectively dominate camera decisions in these two kinds of action.

This is especially relevant where speech is not comprehensible to the camera operator. In this case only visual cues can suggest changes in action and the occurrence of boundaries. This problem is eased to some extent by the anticipation of what types of speech will occur in the event.

The severity of this omission is mitigated by the general characteristic of film or video, that it records more than the operator intends or comprehends at the time. A consistent relation between camera and microphone, preferably closely situated in space, assists in maintaining a coherent observation, since auditory and visual perspectives are then similar (given the same degree of selectivity of the microphone).

Whether the shooting style is for continuity or research, a distortion of time is inevitable. Time which elapses between two shots is obscured. The extent to which this obscuring happens depends on the evidence of coherence of the “unified diegetic space” between successive shots (Nichols *op.cit.*, 265). Examining the content of shots for signs of continuity of action between them can indicate the temporal breaks. Some of these signs of continuity of action are to be found in Burch’s list of “variations”, such as movement within frame.

The spatial as well as auditory aspects of continuity camera work need to be reconsidered. This must be done in the light of different cultural definitions of space, and whether the language is intelligible to the camera operator.

The camera's location in space is related to the principle of maintaining a clear axis of action, which implies a separation of observer from observed. The axis of action maintains the spatial coherence of the record of observation for a viewer. The auditory element is related to this, since the relation of speaker to listeners is spatially different to that in the usual urban environment. How to indicate this relationship visually is problematic.

The relationship between real event and visual/auditory representation is determined by the two related intentions of research and continuity, as well as chance factors. The nature of this representation must in turn determine any subsequent analysis of the ritual for research, which is done directly from the video. Chapter Five examines the nature and use of the video in a particular research project which goes beyond textual analysis. The degree of influence on subsequent post-editing is examined in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

“Shixini December”: Transformations in Editing

Introduction

This chapter examines the way in which the unedited shots of the isipho ritual were edited into a short sequence within the longer documentary entitled “Shixini December” (Hayman and McAllister 1984).

A transcription of the segment is in Appendix B, showing commentary, speeches and other sound, with corresponding shot numbers from the unedited material, and shot lengths. A summary of the scenario of “Shixini December” is found in Appendix C. The edited segment with shot numbers appears on the VHS tape (No 2.) which accompanies this thesis, together with the full documentary, “Shixini December”.

To prevent confusion in this comparative exercise, shots from the unedited material are given the prefix “isi”, while shots appearing in the short segment on the ritual in “Shixini December” are prefixed “sd” (for example, sd56 is taken from isi51).

The segment has a particularly narrative character which is different to the other sequences in the documentary, and the segment is first contextualised within the scenario and compared to other signifying strategies. These strategies illustrate some difficulties of portraying written research in visual terms. These difficulties extended to some problems of understanding between McAllister and myself as anthropologist and cameraman, which we encountered when making “Shixini December”. Our common intentions are also outlined.

Various quantitative and qualitative approaches to analysing the segment are adopted, and the

particular relevance of each is noted. Qualitative methods include a brief assessment by means of Metz's Large Syntagmatic. The visuals are also analysed shot by shot for the specific character of their articulations. Quantitative methods include the patterns of shot selection and shortening. Both quantitative and qualitative deal with the unedited material which is excluded from the segment.

The sound track is analysed next, for the way it makes distinctions between speeches and other synchronised sound. The commentary is examined for style of writing, delivery, and juxtaposition with picture. The other types of sound are listed, and the ways in which various types have been edited and mixed is established.

Also relevant to the linguistic aspect is the subtitling of Xhosa speeches, which is discussed regarding the necessary condensing and translating to fit the limitations of this medium.

The entire text is then assessed in terms of the various strategies of narrative continuity. The relative importance of commentary, visuals and sound track in these strategies is examined. Signs of camera/subject relationships are identified, and compared to those signs in the original material, to see how they were either obscured or retained.

It appears from these methods of analysis that a vast range of methods was used in constructing continuity in this segment. These do not completely conceal the construction, and the consequences for validity and camera/subject relations are discussed.

The Context of the Edited Sequence

The edited sequence conveys its meaning not only through the details of its construction. It also signifies by comparison to the scenario ¹ of the larger documentary, and to the other sequences in it. The construction of these sequences, and influences on them, are outlined first. These influences concern firstly the cooperation between McAllister and myself, with regard to intentions and assumptions, and restraints on availability of material.

Cooperation, intentions and assumptions.

The documentary was commissioned by the Second Carnegie Conference on Poverty In South Africa, held in 1984. Our assumption was that it should be as self-validating as possible. At the same time, our assumption was that within the academic context of the conference and its subsequent distribution, a documentary would not be regarded as self-validating. For the academic context it was therefore accompanied by a written paper in two parts which attempted to do this. The paper conveyed additional detail and conceptual argument on which the scenario was based, and briefly explored some signifying processes of the video, in relation to conceptions of ethnographic film and conventional documentary, and placed it as a documentary which shares some features of both (McAllister and Hayman 1984, 12-13).

This validation for the academic context seemed the more important in the light of the competing debates in South Africa at the time, over definitions of ethnicity, culture and economy in the apartheid context. Texts (including documentary) which portrayed local belief

1 Scenario is used here to mean the chronological unfolding of the documentary, incorporating both visual and verbal exposition and narrative sequences.

systems without contextualisation ran the risk of being viewed as apologist for apartheid's ethnically-based segregation.

Another influence on our techniques, with regard to validation for a wider audience who might not read the paper, was the conventions of South African television documentary and news reportage at the time (McAllister and Hayman 1984, 9-10) ².

I assumed that the signifying strategies of "Shixini December" should be similar, if the documentary was not to be discredited for the white section of the audience of South African television by pro-government smears of unprofessional or bad videomaking, or inadequate research which were commonly used against opposing points of view in the media³.

The edit script and commentary were written jointly by McAllister and myself. The commentary is based on the same conceptual terms which informed McAllister's evolving research, as well as other academic sources at the time, i.e. structure and function, and thus assumes that a knowledge of the structure of the society will explain the surface detail.

Scenario and signifying strategies

In brief, "Shixini December" deals with the nature of the local subsistence economy and traditional belief system in Shixini, and its paradoxical encapsulation within larger contexts in

2 I was very familiar with these conventions from my experience of working in television. For the white television channel, programmes which dealt with contentious socio-political issues were very much author-centred, realist texts, with little ambiguity or chance factors. Observational techniques were rare and when used were defined by commentary.

3 Smear tactics were obvious in the coverage of the Carnegie Conference in the pro-government press.

South Africa. The meeting point of the two contexts is experienced in migrant labour, which both sustains and threatens the traditional belief system. The proposed implementation of the “Trust”, a system of rationalised land use, poses a more immediate threat to both economy and value system.

The text sets up a historical cause/effect dimension in a way which mimics the historical process. The “prologue” at the start of the documentary suggests this historical progression in microcosm. The text outlines the local economy and a corresponding belief system before treating the influence of the western industrial economy and its need for migrant labour. At the end of the documentary, it implies that the local belief and economy will be superseded by others more typical of the industrial economy, particularly if the “Trust” is implemented. The text thus takes a broadly chronological approach, implying a “natural” progression of time.

The variety of signifying strategies which are evident in different sequences draw on well established methods of construction in documentary, as well as some techniques dictated by the nature of the subject and the visual material available.

It is a documentary of direct address (Nichols 1981, 182), in which the commentary voice is the organising principle of the text as a whole. As such, it situates, links and complements sequences of narrative, description and interview. Where the signifying strategies of the visual are very varied, and occasionally call into question the status of the image as having a specific meaning, the commentary is uniformly assertive in its interpretations. Typically, it actively addresses the viewer in making its argument. The relations between crew and people include both observational tactics (in which the relationship is concealed) and interviews, in which the relation with the filmmakers is obvious.

A detailed and comprehensive representation of the wider context of the South African economy and society (the broad social/economic processes), requires visuals of urban and industrial areas of South Africa. Since the budget for this production was limited, shooting material elsewhere than in Shixini was precluded. This type of representation was not possible (McAllister and Hayman 1984, 11).

This context is therefore portrayed in other ways. A conceptual/analytical view of it, based on research, is given through expository, non-narrative strategies consisting of commentary, maps and graphics. A weak narrative of the experience of migrancy consists of narrative commentary complemented by stills, titles, non-specific stock or library video material of trains, mines, travel, as well as interviews.

Representing some aspects of the belief system in Shixini was also limited by extraneous factors. Since McAllister's research dealt with the umsindleko beerdrink as a representative of the belief system⁴ and the formal speeches at this and other beerdrinks, we assumed that it was essential to include this in the video. The single example of this beerdrink which occurred and was recorded during our field trips did not (for an unexplained reason) include speeches. These speeches were represented instead by actors reading McAllister's research translations, by stills of speakers at a number of beerdrinks, and by video material of the single beerdrink.

Thus by necessity, there was a combination of the single specific instance with speeches from a number of beerdrinks, and this elevated the role of the beerdrink from the particular to the general, thus more in keeping with the abstract conclusions of McAllister's research

4 This beerdrink is often held to for returning migrants (McAllister 1979).

(McAllister and Hayman 1984, 11). It therefore relies more heavily on commentary, loses its narrative quality and perhaps its audience.

The likely influence of the Trust system was also difficult to represent. The research on the effect of betterment was done in two areas; pre-trust Shixini (by McAllister) and post-trust Chatha (Ciskei) by De Wet (De Wet and McAllister 1983). Budget restrictions and time precluded us from shooting in Chatha. Post-trust conditions established by De Wet's research were therefore conveyed by maps, diagrams and video material of housing and land use patterns from areas adjacent to Shixini.

In addition to the above, other characteristic signifying strategies can be identified; the opposition of black-and-white as opposed to colour, and hand-held camera as opposed to tripod-mounted camera. The black-and-white material was partly enforced because some stills were black-and-white, partly chosen to signify, in conventional manner, archive or documentary material (justified in this context by McAllister's research). Some colour material was used a second time in black and white to "evoke the varieties of meaning in the particular phenomenon portrayed" (McAllister and Hayman 1984, 11).

Hand-held camera was usually used for observational sequences and point-of view shots, while tripod-mounted camera was usually used for expository material such as maps, graphics, charts, landscape shots. Interviews were shot with both.

How to represent the local economy and belief system was at first a point of misunderstanding between us. While the concepts had been established in his research, McAllister had difficulty in suggesting particular instances of actions or objects which could represent them, or their integration.

Two examples may illustrate this. After long discussion in the field to identify single instances that could be shot to illustrate the conceptual relationship between the economy and the value system of Shixini, we reached understanding when McAllister pointed out a grave-site in a distant garden, clearly visible due to the grass growing on it. I suggested it (and McAllister confirmed it) as a possible image to represent an aspect of his abstract conclusions regarding integration⁵.

Also, on re-viewing the edited isipho sequence, McAllister asked why it had to be so long to make a simple point about the relationship between economics and value system. It seemed to him simply for the purposes of having a “good movie”, a spectacular ritual. He wondered whether its length made it specific, rather than a representation of ritual⁶ in general (McAllister, interview).

The problem also refers to a question of editing. To what extent does the editor condense and summarise, to what degree does he establish and maintain a specific convincing visual narrative?

In the light of the above, it seems accurate to conclude that the documentary was structured on

5 This example became the telephoto shot of the distant gardens and graves in shot sd50 of “Shixini December”, the gardens representing an important component of the local economy, and the graves of the previous generation an important component of the belief system which venerates ancestors.

6 Perhaps this question was promoted by several factors typical of such a cooperative venture. McAllister had seen many of these rituals, and in visual anthropology the individual cases persists through to the final edited product. His familiarity with this case had been increased by repeated viewing during editing.

the conceptual framework of the published research, rather than the available visuals ⁷. The text operates at a distance from the data of its research foundation, and compromises itself by not acknowledging this distance. It attempts to validate itself by adopting tactics appropriate to written research, but without all the illustrating evidence to support the conclusions. As a discourse, its lure to the viewer of resolving the contradictions and paradoxes which it initially proposes, is not always maintained. Despite the chronological nature of its construction, exposition of detail occasionally outweighs this, particularly in the section dealing with the Trust system.

The text is in summary an author-centered text, yet places itself in the culture and economy of Shixini, speaking for its inhabitants. This ventriloquism could be regarded as yet another version of the paternalist attitudes which underlie the apartheid control of blacks against which this documentary takes an implicit stand. While the last word of the documentary is an appeal for participation in decision-making by the old man, the documentary contains no participatory elements other than the interviews.

Although narrative sequences are encapsulated ⁸ in the discourse, these are mostly weak narrative. In other words, much of the narrative is carried by the commentary. The isipho sequence is the strongest narrative sequence, relying least on commentary for its diegesis. This strong narrative quality, together with the vividly portrayed ox-slaughter it contains,

7 Some twenty hours of material was available from my four trips to Shixini with McAllister.

8 Guynn notes that in documentary, strongly narrative segments occur in small units. Commentary is what unites them. "Encapsulation of narrative is a general characteristic of the classic documentary film" (Guynn 1990, 53).

makes the isipho sequence the most striking representation of the Shixini value system for urban western viewers of the documentary.

The reaction to the slaughter scene is usually one of shock for white South African urban viewers, according to comments I have had. Students to whom McAllister screened this for teaching missed the point of the ritual because of this (McAllister, interview).

Editing Analysis

This section deals with the huge variety of methods by which I constructed the segment in post-editing. The narrative was formed by selecting, shortening and juxtaposing shots, and integrating aspects of sync sound with commentary and subtitles. The exclusions are noted as much as the inclusions are analysed. It is also evident that the result is an imperfect narrative. Close examination reveals that the narrative illusion of continuity has a simultaneous but less obvious thread of evidence of non-continuity.

This huge variety of methods is what gives visual narratives their rich specific character. Part of this richness derives from the inconsistency with which these methods are applied. The variety and inconsistency of articulations, in short, mimics the chance or aleatory factors in the material and, and thus assists in validating the representation, which seems the less mediated by the act of filming it.

The analysis is dealt with in three sections; Picture, Sound and Subtitles.

Picture

The visuals are examined under several headings, to establish the nature of each method of construction of the narrative. These are both qualitative and quantitative, and move from the general to the particular.

The Large Syntagmatic is a broad, qualitative method usually applied to edited narrative fiction. It is used here to compare the edited segment with some narrative characteristics potentially available in the material. The unedited shots are then examined in the two broad categories of decision which constitute the segment; selection/omission and articulation. Each of these two categories of decision are examined for more specific processes.

The Large Syntagmatic.

As a narrative sequence, the edited isipho segment seems, in terms of Metz's Large Syntagmatic, to be an Ordinary Sequence. An Ordinary Sequence is understood as a narrative, which takes place within one time and place, and yet has obvious breaks in the representation of that time and space. This categorisation lasts up until sd76. Within this Ordinary Sequence, sd52 and sd53 together function as autonomous shots, in particular, displaced diegetic inserts.

This category and the next, as subtypes of the single, "autonomous" shot, are interpreted in different ways by various writers because they are not well-defined (e.g. Guynn 1990). Shot sd57 seems to function as a displaced diegetic insert⁹.

Shot sd77, separated by the punctuation of the fade-to-black, seems to be clearly an autonomous shot, in particular a shot sequence, as it constitutes an identifiably separate progression in time on its own.

On this level of the sequence, it is possible to relate the characteristics of unedited material to possible patterns of editing, in terms of the Large Syntagmatic (Appendix E).

9 Interpreting it in this way depends to some extent on the social/cultural definition of space (urban or Shixini) as noted in the previous chapter.

If individual shots from Segments A. to F. are combined, the result could be regarded as a Descriptive Syntagma (describing the place where subsequent narrative action will take place). To make a narrative syntagma out of these shots would require considerable commentary with specifically temporal organisation and markers, whereas commentary for a Descriptive Syntagma could either be minimal (since the actions have a comprehensible immediacy of practical function), or attempt the significance of appearances for the impending ritual.

If on the other hand each of these segments A to F, and sections of the non-contiguous Segments H, G. and O. are edited using as far as possible the pattern of continuity which is found in the unedited shots as described above, then they may become Ordinary Sequences. In this kind there are breaks in the temporal progression, but these only miss out the unimportant sections of action (Metz 1974, 132).

Both options (Descriptive or Ordinary) are possible with Segments A. to F. because there is marginal evidence of a narrative sequence: the camera avoids following the actions of a single individual.

If the intentions of articulations for continuity in the unedited material are retained, the Ordinary Sequence seems also to be the main possibility for the action from Segment M (the procession to the kraal) to the start of Segment P. After that, an Alternate Syntagma of sorts could be created by combining edited shots of Segments P. to W, which could include two shots of the women. Commentary of a more expository than narrative quality would be necessary.

The edited sequence therefore largely preserves the intentions of narrative continuity which

were present in the unedited material.

The narrative continuity of both edited and unedited material is dependent on visuals, except where (through McAllister as anthropologist) it penetrates the barrier of language in speeches. When the visual continuity of action ceases in the unedited material, (Segments X. and Z. after the libation), the situation in the cattle byre becomes characterised by intimate conversation, and the camera does not record this non-ritual level in detail ¹⁰.

The shots potentially constitute a Descriptive syntagma, and are excluded.

This qualitative analysis, however, does not fully explain how the processes of editing manufactures a strongly realist narrative documentary. Several quantitative analyses are now described which give a more detailed insight into these processes.

Articulations

This section deals with the way the way the original shots are selected from the original, arranged into a chronological order, shortened and joined together. These methods are examined under six heads which are, respectively, 1) Selection, 2) Content, 3) Contiguity, 4) Length, 5) Sequence and 6) Formal and particular articulations. A special case of articulations is examined in greater detail.

1) Selection/Omission of Shots

The large proportion of shots omitted, and the drastic shortening of those selected (discussed under Articulations, below), results from the prior assumption that the ritual is meant to

10 This occurred partly because of the research-defined approach to the more formal aspects, partly because of the language barrier. McAllister understood Xhosa but spoke it slowly.

represent a general case, as indicated by the first section of commentary for this edited segment (see Appendix B). I intended this brevity as a way of reducing the specific identity of the ritual to make it a typical representative of rituals manifesting the belief system and their relation to agricultural practice.

The proportions of used to unused shots establishes empirically the degree of selection;

Total Day One shots = 142

Shots used from Day One = 21

Shots used from Day Two; = 2 (isi169, isi199)

Additional shots used = 1 (sd50)

Total from unedited shots = 24

Number of shots as edited; = 28;

The difference (24 vs 28) results from using several sections from single shots (isi117 and isi56), and a shot (sd50) which was not part of the isipho ritual.

A qualitative examination of selection and omission is examined under Content and Contiguity, below.

Shots seem to be included or omitted on two analytical criteria; content or formal continuity properties. The formal properties decided the articulation with other shots, the content decided the narrative progression. Both of these criteria are related to the concept of boundaries discussed in Chapter Two. Editing re-established these boundaries more closely, by omitting

wasted sections of shot, and establishing new boundaries of inclusion/ exclusion.

Content assessment seems to mean omission of the entire shot, while continuity usually deals with where exactly to articulate the shot once selected for inclusion¹⁴.

Continuity in general, and formal articulations specifically, are dealt with below.

2) *Content*

Regarding content, it seems I preferred shots of actions and objects which were explainable to western viewers in terms of the economic system rather than the belief system (e.g. throwing the chyme, the separation of men and women respectively inside and outside the cattle byre). This both reduces the specific nature of this particular ritual, and implies the two analytical concepts of McAllister's research.

This pattern of selection emerged as a function of this analysis and was not my conscious intention at the time. This indicates perhaps my assumptions about the limits of ethnographic understanding which can be conveyed in a segment of this length.

Also omitted, with a similar effect of generalisation, are most of the contextual shots of the homestead and activities within it (isi1-39, 41,44). This reduces the specific spatial orientation of the kraal, its specific identity.

Content decisions also seem to eliminate shots which do not efficiently indicate developing action which carries the narrative towards the ritual tasting, libation and concluding speech.

14 The reverse applies. If a shot could not be shortened conveniently, it may have been excluded in favour of shots of a similar content which could be shortened.

This includes shots or sections of shots which;

- anticipate the end or goal of an action which occurs in a subsequent shot, i.e. the shot is merely waiting for the final culminating action;
- repeat cyclical activity¹⁵;
- repeat themes in speeches (for example Rhumsha's speech at isi56)¹⁶;
- show action which is repeated more effectively in other shots, perhaps because it is integrated with other action;
- show the context (for example the women's group, or long pans).

3) *Contiguity.*

Omission of shots varies with regard to contiguity in the original material and is outlined below. The variation ranges from absolute maintenance (A) of the contiguity of the original shots, to sporadic omissions (B), to omission of large groups of shots (C). See graph in Figure 6. which indicates contiguity by giving shot numbers of the unedited material on the right-hand side.

While contiguity of shot numbers does not imply a formal articulation of continuity of space

15 This occurs on a small scale with actions such as tasting/drinking, dismemberment of the carcass, carrying meat to the fire, cooking, and on a large scale with actions repeated on successive days such as, on Day Two, the dancing and chanting in the hut, the speeches and the drinking of beer.

16 This speech adds no more detail which is not in either of his announcement speeches (isi40 or isi47), other than how the chosen ox relates to his lineage.

or time between the shots (since the contiguous shots selected are further shortened), it does indicate that the edited segment selects content in a pattern similar to the original.

The variation between absolute contiguity and large separation which is evident in the three categories below, suggests the apparently random selection of shots from the original. This in turn suggests two things. Most obvious is that the notion of redundancy of shots in the model of camera work outlined in Chapter Two and applied in Chapter Three is a very broad one, varying in relation to the perceived need for detail and specificity in any sequence edited from the raw material.

It also seems to support the proposition that the model of continuity camerawork can allow the editor great flexibility, if not complete freedom to shorten and articulate shots at any point (see Rules of Continuity, Appendix D.).

A. In a few cases, original contiguity is maintained;

shots sd56,57,58 from shots isi54,55,56

shots sd70,71 from shots isi111,112.

On two occasions, several sections are used from one single long shot in the original, which are long takes for research purposes, with in-camera editing such as pans and tracking.

sd58,59 from isi56;

sd73,74,75 from isi117.

B. Shots from closely adjacent original shots (separated by 1 or 2 shots) are used in five cases. All omissions are simple condensing of action, while shot isi109 (hanging the

heart and lungs on the gatepost) is concerned purely with ritual¹⁷

C. There are omissions of considerable sections of contiguous shots from original material in five cases¹⁸

These omissions are made on the same basis as Content (above) as well as, for ethnocentric reasons, reducing the number of shots of dismemberment for viewers sensitive to the sight of blood.

The activity on Day Two repeats much of the pattern of Day One activity¹⁹, and the distinctions are too fine to make in a sequence of this intended brevity. Extensive commentary would be required to explain the differences, and length and commentary would both make the ritual more instead of less specific. Most of the shots are omitted.

17 Shots selected from closely adjacent shots;

a) sd 60,61,62,63,64 from isi57,60,61,65,67;

b) sd 65,66, from isi75,77

c) sd 67,68 from isi85,87

d) sd 69,70 from isi108, 111;

e) sd 71,72,73 from isi113, 115,117..

18 Omissions of considerable sections of shots;

a) isi68-74 (total 8)

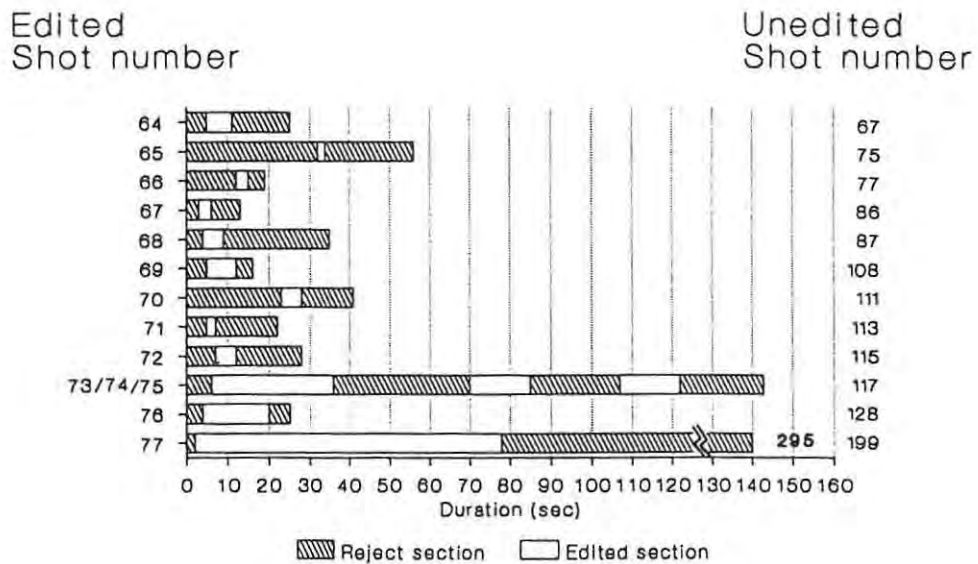
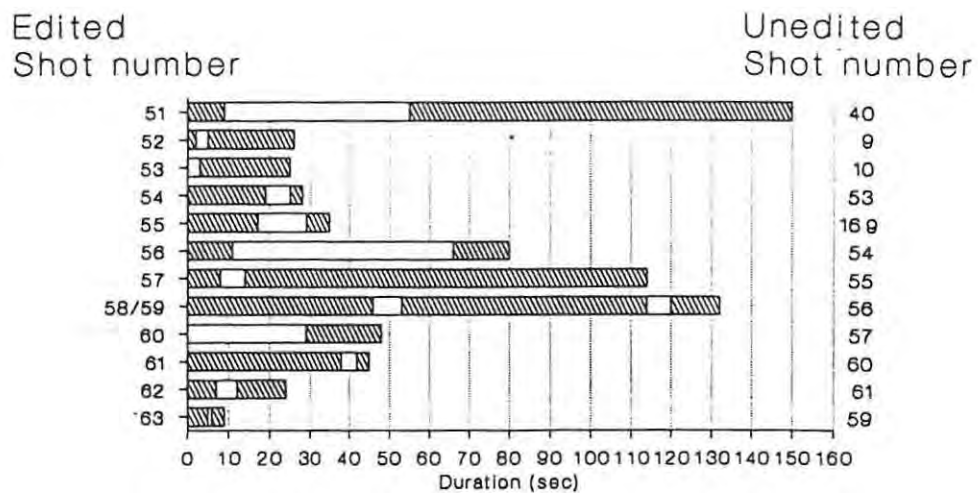
b) isi78-84 (total 7)

c) isi88-107 (total 20)

d) isi118-127 (total 10)

e) isi129-142 (total 14)

Figure 6: Graph Comparing Edited to Unedited Shots, for Selection, Contiguity, Length and Sequence.



4) Length.

This section deals with the quantitative shortening of shots once selected. The ratio of edited to unedited shots is between 9::1 and 11::1, depending on whether it is calculated by the number of shots (see above) or their length. This is about average by comparison to BBC documentary, which range from 3::1 and to 15::1, but higher ratios are not unknown (Baddeley 1975, 36-37).

Total shots selected, Days One to Four; 28

Total shots used (not including multiple use from one shot); 25

Ratio by number; 9::1

Total time of all¹⁷ shots, on four days = 1 hr 15mins

Total time of edited shots = 6 mins 28 secs

Ratio by time; 11::1

This similarity between the two ratios reveals that the ratio of shorter shots to longer shots is fairly consistent between edited and unedited material.

The average lengths¹⁸ of edited shots show distinct tendencies regarding content, and can be grouped into three;

a) shots containing speeches run considerably longer than others. No's sd51,55/56 60,77 = 4

17 The total time of unedited selected shots (excl. sd50) is 25 mins 11 secs.

18 Unless indicated, shots lengths and averages are to nearest second.

Shots sd55/56 are treated as one, because the soundtrack is continuous for the two (see section 6. below).

Average for speech shots = 54 secs

b) Shots showing the ritual tasting (sd 72, 73, 74, 75, 76; = 5) are also longer than other shots.

Average for ritual tasting shots = 16 secs

c) Length of remaining shots (total = 17) (i.e. not containing speeches or ritual tasting)

Average of remainder = 4,3 secs

Average of all shots; (total 27) = 18 secs

There is thus a clear distinction between significance as indicated in speeches, in ritual tasting and in other action. This indicates the different character of editing decisions regarding speeches (see sound, below), and of ritual tasting.

If length of shot is an indicator, then significance appears to be concentrated in speeches and the ritual tasting, while action is more functional, a purposive chronological chain of action directed towards “getting to the point”, that is, the speeches and tasting. This correlates with the pattern established in the discussion of selection/omission of shots, i.e. a reduction of complexity regarding ritual elements vis a vis practical/economic activity¹⁹.

19 Ritual elements which are omitted or condensed, and whose significance is not explained in this segment can be found in Appendix F, a summary of Holbrook (1986).

5) *Sequence*

The sequence of shots in the original is maintained in the edited segment except for three cases (see graph in Figure 6.) Breaking this chronological order of original shooting, a common practice in television and film documentary, is presumably one of the main criticisms that anthropologists make against filmmakers. But like other concerns of naive realism, the consequence of this “distortion” depends for its significance on the context in which it is done, since each shot takes its meaning partly from the sequence within which it appears. These three instances have very different relationships of the original to the edited chronological order, but the significance is uniformly small, because of the level of representation at which the sequence works.

a) Shot sd52-53; (isi9,10 - barrels of beer - appear after isi40).

As indicated above, the shots function as an illustrative type of cutaway, a displaced diegetic insert sub-type of an autonomous shot. There is no temporal or spatial character about them which affects their positioning between the speech and the dancing. Rather, it is the commentary which places the speech, and the speech which places the barrels. The singing and dancing in the background associates them with the ritual. Besides its illustrative function, the shot bridges the spatial continuity gap between the men sitting at the side of the kraal and the subsequent shot of dancing in the hut (see Formal Articulations, below).

In terms of accuracy, as compared to evidence in the unedited material, beer is seen on three days of the ritual. These barrels look much the same as any other.²⁰

b) Shot sd55; (isi169 - exterior crowd from Day Two - appears before isi54).

This shot is strictly a time reversal, a radical temporal ellipsis. It is made to pose here as a typical cutaway. Precise classification of this shot depends on the way space is defined, that is, the shot may be seen as spatially proximate or radically discontinuous. In Metz's terms, it seems a displaced diegetic insert, showing action occurring somewhere else. The soundtrack maintains temporal continuity and could thus indicate spatial proximity. The shot is inserted to bridge other editing manipulations (see below), particularly a sound edit.

It is noticeable to a careful viewer that the light is different, as are the number and dress of people, but the contrast between the dark interior and the exterior are not juxtaposed for direct comparison. The succeeding exterior is also from a different angle and further away, thus partly obscuring the fact that it comes from Day Two material.

This use of such a cutaway is similar to but not as blatant a form of associative spatial continuity as the graves and gardens shot which opens the sequence. It does illustrate the ease with which shots from different cycles of the same action (here, between Day One and Day Two) can be used to give the appearance of a single action. Whether an audience would notice the mismatch is debatable.

20 Other shots which could have filled the same function were the cattle in Segment F, but do not fit the structure of the speech as conveniently to bridge the action to the hut. The shots of barrels on Day Two are better lit, but they are obviously empty.

c) Shot sd63 - isi59 (men watching ox-slaughter) appears after isi61.

This is a case where the repetitive action of the men holding the ox's head spans the separate activities concerned with killing the ox. If the same chronological order of shooting was maintained in editing, it is not likely that it would signify anything different about the process as a whole, when compared to the order in which they are actually edited.

The lack of significance of these chronological deviations depends on acceptance of the level of representation at which the commentary (and other devices) present this sequence. However, it is also possible that audiences would respond to it as McAllister did, i.e. as an instance of "fully accurate" representation, whose realism and specificity is apparently guaranteed by narrative (as Gynnn suggests from White's work on historiography).

6) Formal and Particular Articulations

As described in Chapter Two, formal articulations between shots are the basis of narrative progression in this type of realist filmmaking based on continuity. Besides the formal articulations, which are geared to avoided discontinuities and give the illusion of continuous space and time, the variations described by Burch which affect the specific nature of particular articulations, can also seem to break or to confirm this apparent continuity. These variations (composition in frame, movement of frame, movement in frame, entry and exit from frame) are also known as graphic matches.

The formal articulations (examined in detail in Table 3. below and discussed thereafter) do not necessarily determine the decisions about exactly where to make the cuts in the original material. Once the shot has been selected for inclusion because of its syntactic content (described above) and likely formal articulation (below), other factors such as graphic matches and boundaries of speech or action determine the precise point to make the formal

articulation.

The graphic matches sometimes were not adequate to the intention of continuity, but appear to mimic chance factors in camera-subject relations. Three examples will illustrate. The first is cutting on a pan, between shot sd71/72. This should be distinguished from (our second example) a discontinuity which results from a formal articulation together with a “bad” graphic match, e.g. sd74/75.

The third example is sd59. The edit starts when the tracking shot of Rhumsha’s group is in process, and Rhumsha is clearly visible, centre frame, in the group. The edit ends when Rhumsha walks “out of shot” behind the fencepole, and the camera is virtually static. This is an example of how a graphic match of composition partially conceals a bad graphic match resulting from a moving frame.

If graphic matches were satisfactory, other factors were used. A standard minimum length of three seconds per shot was used, which I assumed to be the minimum needed for the eye to scan the frame properly, especially one which contains unusual, culturally strange environments and activities²¹.

Occasionally, shots are held longer to carry the necessary commentary, or to carry subtitles. Speech shots were started at least one second before and ended at least a second after the speech or the action, where possible²².

21 I learned this professional rule of thumb from one or other film editor while working at SABC-TV.

22 The haste with which I edited this documentary, the lack of frame accuracy on the edit system’s controller, and the difficulty of adjusting edits once made, meant that this rule was not always observed.

When cyclical or repetitive action is important in the shot, one complete cycle determines start and end points, for example, putting meat on the fire in shot sd70. When a single, specific action is important, the edit starts one or two seconds before the action.

The possibility of graphic matches depends partly on anticipation in this type of observational filmmaking, and some of the bad graphic matches are unavoidable because of this lack of anticipation (example; sd72). Note also the avoidable discontinuities at sd69/70, 71/72, 73/74/75.

Preserving this lack of anticipation or chance factor in the edited version may be read by an audience who are used to conventions of observational continuity in documentary as a guarantor of realism, since it indicates a lack of control by the camera operator over the people being filmed. There are however, some articulations where poor matches or non-continuity articulations (sd61/62, sd64/65, sd72/73) could have been bridged by cutaways or otherwise avoided. This means that factors of chance can be mimicked in editing, and if chance is a guarantor of realism, constitutes one way in which an impression of observational realism can be constructed for a fictional or controlled situation, as suggested by Guynn (1990, 15).

In Table 3. below, the formal articulations between shots are examined and discussed in terms of Burch's schema of fifteen combinations.

Discussion of Formal Articulations

The relatively large number of discontinuities (No 1. = 5) indicates the degree to which the chance factor appears to be preserved in editing, in comparison to occurrences of the cutaway figure (No 4. = 14) which conceals it.

The importance of sound is obvious not only for establishing temporal continuity in the cutaway figure, but also for its decisive influence on other combinations (see comments for No's 5, 7, 9). Yet this articulation via sound is also an approximation, since close listening can determine ellipsis in some places (see below). In other places, the commentary obscures possible ellipsis and substitutes its own continuity indicated by (C), not only in sound, but in a verbal sense.

Alternative categorisations marked (x?) show uncertainty about spatial definition²³. Is the space proximate or radically discontinuous between shots sd53/54, sd54/55, sd55/56, sd56/57. In some of them there is also an alternative temporal classification (marked in bold)²⁴.

Some categorisations are doubtful because on closer inspection other elements become evident, and as with other factors of chance, these ambiguities are likely to function as indicators of realism, evidence of chance, i.e. validation.

23 The accuracy of these categorisations is qualified by cultural differences. Concepts of space and time in Shixini are different to those in an urban milieu.

24 This is similar to the uncertainty between a descriptive syntagma and an Ordinary Sequence, in Metz's terms, that Nichols found in Wiseman's "Hospital" (Nichols 1981, 221-231).

* What seem not to be discontinuities between spatially continuous shots are in fact such, because graphic matches obscure it. Examples are shots sd62/63, sd63/64 (the ox's head is visible in all three shots), isi74/75 (people moving obscure the similarity of background).

* Apparent temporal continuity is revealed to be an ellipse on closer listening, in shots sd73/74, sd74/75.

* The spatial articulation in shots sd57/58 (at first seeming radically discontinuous), is read retroactively as proximate when the men walk into the shot of the cattle going into the kraal.

* Does the "Day Two" title between Shots sd76/77 make it a definite temporal ellipsis rather than indefinite?

Some pans are used as continuity articulations, as an alternative to cutaways: sd69/70 both deal with the fire, but the pan at the end of 69 onto the wood pile makes a spatially proximate articulation to bridge the cut to 70.

A Specific example; concealing non-continuity articulations.

Apart from formal articulations, an even smaller level of decision was the particular choice of edit point (In-point and Out-point) in each shot, if other factors regarding formal articulations were met. Some of these involved Burch's variations or graphic matches. Others involved simple rules of thumb about how long the eye takes to scan a picture of all the information. Still others involve decisions about sound track, which helps to conceal the articulation by being continuous when the picture is not.

Some of these factors are illustrated in a short sequence examined in detail. The most

TABLE 3: FORMAL ARTICULATIONS OF THE ISIPHO SEGMENT

Shot number	SPATIAL CONTINUITY				TEMPORAL CONTINUITY	
	Conty. S/1.	Proxte. Cty S/2	Discnty S/3	Conty. T/1	Defnte Ellipse T/2	Indefnte Ellipse T/3
50/51.			X	X(s) C		
51/52.			X			X(p/s)
52/53.	X			X(s)		
53/54.	(x?)		X	X(s)	(x?)	
54/55.		(x?)	X	X(s)		
55/56.		X	(x?)	X(s)		
56/57.		X	(x?)	X(s)		
57/58.		X retro		X(s) C		
58/59.		X		X(s)		
59/60.		X			X	
60/61.		X			X	
61/62.	X				X	
62/63.	x?	X		X(s)		
63/64.	x?	X		X(s)		
64/65.	X			X(s)		
65/66.		X		X(s)		
66/67.		X		X(s) C		
67/68.	X			X(s) C		
68/69.		X		X(s) C		
69/70.		X pan		X(s)		
70/71.		X		X(s)		
71/72.		X		X(s)		
72/73.	X			X(s) C		
73/74.	(x?)	X		X(s)		(x?)
74/75.	X			X(s)		(x?)
75/76.		X		X(s) C		
76/77.			X		(x?) title?	X
Totals	6	16	5	X=22 C=7	X=3	2

Legend: (s); sound track determines articulation.
 (p) picture " "
 C; commentary functions as sync sound.
 (x?) alternative category possible.
 retro; articulation is seen later in the shot.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF FORMAL ARTICULATIONS

No.	Combination	Freq.	Comment
1.	S/1 + T/1	5	Usually visual discontinuity
2.	S/1 + T/2	1	Visual and audio discontinuity
3.	S/1 + T/3	0	Occurs between e.g. Day 1 & 2
4.	S/2 + T/1	14	The cutaway figure
5.	S/2 + T/2	2	Action advances, audio changes
6.	S/2 + T3	0	-
7.	S/3 + T/1	3	Large shifts of camera position
8.	S/3 + T/2	0	-
9.	S/3 + T/3	2	Large shifts of camera not concealed with sound.

complex combination of sound and picture in the sequence is in shots sd51 to sd57, and is best described by the diagram in Figure 5, below. The articulation was complex to meet three needs; to use sound to convey continuity from the kraal scene (sd51) to the dancing, singing and speech in the hut; to conceal a frame distortion in the speech shot (sd56); and to arrange the edits so that shots carried the subtitles of the speech in conveniently readable sections (the general characteristics of sound and subtitles are dealt with more fully in separate sections, below).

There is an unintended edit in the middle of shot sd56, making a slight jump cut. This was done to eliminate a patch of distorted picture in the original tape (isi54). The edit occurs between the words “We thank you Rhumsha - you are a man!” and the words “Zibarhile was worshipped by our fathers”. This edit involved separating the sound from the picture and re-positioning it in relation to the picture after the edit. The shift is not noticeable because the speaker’s face is not visible.

Additional factors bearing on decisions about these edit points can be summarised as follows.

Shot sd54: Hut interior, dance.

In-point: 3-second static composition before pan starts

Out-point: after 3-second static on women after pan.

Shot sd55: Hut exterior, pan across onlookers.

In-point: start of pan.

Out point: The amount of static frame at the end was determined by two factors; to cover the frame distortion in the shot of the hut interior which follows (shot 56), and to make the cut from shot 55 to 56 at a point convenient for superimposing of the

translation of the speech in the hut.

Shot sd56: Speech.

In-point: sound - beginning of speech (coincided with start of shot 55).

picture - determined by out-point of sd55.

Out-point: This is determined by including a sufficient picture fragment of song to indicate continuation of cyclical activity of chanting, clapping and dancing, and to leave sufficient sound for the overlap into the next shot to permit a mix from one song to the other.

From the various ways of examining the segment above analysis and discussion, it should be clear that narrative continuity editing of observational material is provided for primarily by some characteristics of the camera work. Potential, formal articulations are refined by several operations which are based on the specific nature of the shots. The sum of operations, formal and syntactical, both conceal the editing process and propel the narrative forward. The role of sync sound is vital in this operation, and is considered in more detail below.

Sound

The sound track in this segment is composed of two sources; commentary and sync sound. Both are edited and mixed according to the conventions of the realist, direct address documentary. Different types of sound have particular relationships of placement and volume with each other and with picture. These relationships are coherently organised as a hierarchy of importance, which is evident from the placement, integrity and volume of the sounds. This hierarchy consists of (in order of importance), commentary, speeches, singing and other sounds (the background "buzz").

Placement, integrity

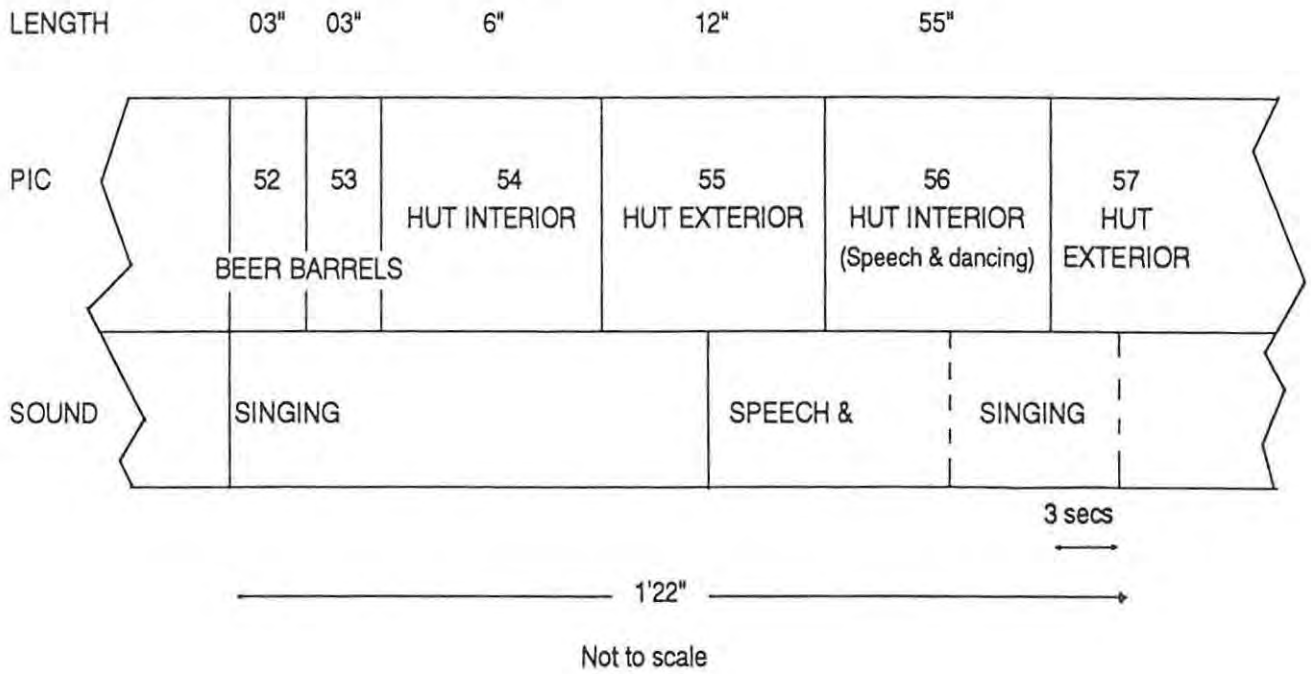
Integrity of sync sound (besides speeches and singing) is not preserved, i.e. edits are made without regard to the sense of conversation or interjections. Cuts, fades and mixes are made without reference to the conversations in progress. Because of the character of this sound, and these manipulations in editing, this is not noticeable without careful listening. Examples are the edits at 60/61, 69/70/71, 74/75, and a fade at sd75. This type of sound is therefore treated as non-significant, as generalised chatter, which never intrudes by sudden changes of quality or placement. It functions rather as a guarantor of temporal continuity.

This continuity is sometimes accomplished by using sound from an adjacent shot, instead of the sync sound of that shot, to avoid harsh discontinuities in sound quality/or level (equivalent to a visual graphic match). For example, the sound of shot sd57 is extended to go with shot sd58. It is also done by maintaining the integrity of easily identifiable sounds, which are audible as such above the average levels. These are not punctuated with edits, and examples are loud interjections, dogs barking, the ox's bellow.

The integrity of speeches and commentary is maintained. Beginnings and ends do not coincide with visual edits, and shots containing speeches are usually edited longer than the speech itself. The length is also affected by the requirements of subtitling. Exceptions are sd60 (the speech starts as soon as the original shot, because of lack of anticipation during shooting), and the speech from Day Two (sd77) is faded out before the end - see below.

The integrity of speeches is also preserved by maintaining sync. In only one instance is another image than the speaker's seen during the speech (sd56), and the purpose of this is to obscure a more serious visual break, i.e. a picture distortion in the original tape.

Figure 7: Editing Shots sd51-57.



The speeches are simplified for easier comprehension in two ways, by length and by translation. The translation aspect is discussed more fully below. Length of speeches is dealt with in the next chapter.

In one case, picture is placed to support commentary and bridge a gap in visual continuity. A weakness of syntactical visual continuity occurs after the speech in shot sd5. There is no link of action between the speech and what follows. The continuity is made by the verbal/visual link between speech (the word “beer” and visual of beerbarrels).

Commentary is usually written and placed so that the words referring to objects and actions precede the visual image by at least half a second. This is done because words take longer to comprehend than picture, and must therefore precede the image, if the desired appearance of unity between commentary and image is to be achieved. On some occasions (the ox-bellow, the speech from Day Two) the image precedes the commentary, if it shows on-going rather than a specific, quick action.

Volume in Sound mix

The same hierarchical relationship is also evident in the levels of sound in relation to one another, when they occur simultaneously in the mixed track²⁵.

Following a well-established convention, fades to silence occur when the picture fades to black (sd76/77), indicating the passage of time. The volume of the sync sound “buzz” appears

25 The difference in sound levels is not as apparent in the VHS copies made for this thesis, since the conventional domestic model VHS machine used has a built-in automatic level control which tends to reduce the dynamic range (or volume difference) of sounds.

to change consistently with the proximity of the camera to the source of sound, and the nature of the source of sound. This illusion is heightened by the frequent appearance of the microphone in shot.

The volume of the formal speeches is at a constant, optimum level throughout, indicating equal importance with commentary in the hierarchy of sound. The buzz of conversation immediately before and after is usually lower. The exception is the last speech (sd77), which fades in at the same rate that the picture fades in from black.

This elevates the importance of the formal speech in relation to its context. Sometimes a fragment of somebody else's speech is included before or after (sd51), indicating it is part of an ongoing exchange.

The singing and clapping inside the hut is at optimum level, and fades in and out before and after the speech. This indicates it is on a lower level of importance than the speeches and commentary. The two different songs, sung inside and outside the hut, are used as temporal continuity devices between their respective sync shots, in a way similar to other sync sound. The semi-mixed transition is less noticeable than a cut. They do not, however, mix into one another as might be conventionally expected. The first fades down, the second then cuts in at low level, and fades up.

Later, combined with shouts and interjections, it fades out as commentary starts (sd57-59), while shouts and interjections are audible. This fade mimics both the end of the singing, and distance implied in the (off-screen) return of the women to the hut in the original shot.

The two levels of volume in sync sound (speeches and singing vs other buzz) which are evident in the original stem partly from microphone placement, and partly from voice

projection by the speakers when making formal speeches. This dual volume level is also evident in the edited version. The correspondence of level between the sound mix and the original (a typically realist technique of sound mixing), promotes the illusion of referentiality and continuity by mimicing the selectivity of the human ear.

The sound level and perspective quality of the commentary contrasts with other sound. It takes precedence (as indicated by volume) over all informal speech, and once over formal speech (sd77). It is always the same volume, has no aural perspective or ambience of its own, yet sync sound of some kind is always present with it. This constant background of sync sound tends to prevent the sound image of the commentary voice from being perceived as too spatially separate from the sync and speeches. It provides an intermediary aural space for commentary, which correlates with its interpretive, explanatory wording (see below), and identifies it with the diegetic evidence of action and speech.

The aural perspective of commentary is one of intimacy. There is no reverberation although it is clearly indoors, and spoken consonants are clear. Consonants are usually audible to the ear from an actual speaker only when the person is at conversational distance in a quiet interior. It is therefore judged to be closer in physical space to the audience (in comparison to all the sync sound from the ritual), and this matches its interpretive stance to the audience. At the same time the placement of commentary and its relation of volume to sync sound aligns it with the diegesis.

Two other aspects of sync sound bear consideration. A deep bass rumble is occasionally evident (sd52, 60, 69, 77). This distortion (wind) is some indication of the realism of the recording, an element indicating (by contrast with commercial documentary) a lack of

professionalism, an adherence to the sound produced in the situation²⁶.

Conversation between McAllister and myself is audible in the background at the start of the speech during shot sd51, but only close listening reveals this.

In general, then, the hierarchy of sound relationships mimics our experience of actual sound. Synchronised sound, assumed to be a guarantee of realism, is maintained unless the larger concerns of assisting visual continuity demand otherwise, in which case sync sound is heard while other visuals are on screen.

Commentary Voice

The commentary elevates the importance of speeches and some pieces of action by verbally directing attention to them, and placing them in an interpretive context.

The delivery is bland and reassuring, without obvious rhetorical inflection. The same is true of the syntax. The words lack emotive elements, imply predictive certainty, commonsense familiarity and analytical insight. The commentary does not refer to itself, and through its predictions and flat assertions, implies both a broad and detailed knowledge of Shixini culture. The commentary also leaves a vast amount of other phenomena in the picture unexplained which, by contrast with what is explained, consigns these to the level of incomprehensibility if not irrelevance.

The commentary functions ambiguously. It is a presence concealed from the ritual participants, with a distanced, impersonal relation to the visual. It is also a concealed voice,

26 Sound track for documentary is usually re-constructed in the sound-mixing studio from sound effects tracks, and the sound recorded during camera-run is rarely used.

knowledgeable and directive, apparently orchestrating the unfolding of the narrative for the viewer.

Commentary occurs at shots sd59, 64, 66, 72, 75, and 77, and each section is placed according to its specific function in relation to diegesis. These functions are described below. (See Appendix D. for full text of commentary).

Commentary text

Shot sd50/51: "In Shixini....rituals such as this one".

This section moves from the wider Shixini context to the ritual, from the conceptual level to the particular representative example. First, it reinforces the categories of economy and belief system, and the linkages between them that we have seen in the documentary until this point. It then introduces a specific example of the link. This is the more emphasised because the visual is then on-screen: the gardens, the larger visual unit, are referred to first. The last sentence then predicts what we will see, defines its status as ritual and as a representation of the general case of traditional belief.

Shot sd59/60: "In the kraal calls to his ancestors"

Visual and verbal information we have already had is summarised. Rhumsha is the homestead head, the ritual is a mortuary one. It prepares us for the translated invocation. It identifies Rhumsha as the homestead head, but without naming him: he is a representative of traditional ritual actors, rather than a specific man. The level of representation is maintained at a relatively general rather than specific level.

Shot sd64: "The bellowing ... shades of the departed".

This section re-interprets the cheers at the bellowing (which a western audience might interpret as a sign of cruelty), substituting the frame of reference of the local belief system for that of western urban (Christian) viewers. It also interprets the "evidence" that the local belief

system “works”. In the bellowing of the ox, the living human ritual has achieved a response from the non-living world.

Shots sd66-69: “The piece of meat ... instead of plates”.

The purpose is interpreted as more than just an eating activity. A specific piece of meat is sought, it has a name, the branches (from a specific tree) have a ritual significance. China plates signifying formal western eating could have been used (note absence of references to other western artefacts). Order, ritual significance and decision are identified from the apparent chaos of the slaughtering of the carcass and other activity in the kraal.

Shots sd72/73: “The intsonyama is at this time”.

The purpose of cutting off the specific piece of meat already seen is defined, further reinforcing the ritual nature of the activities, and their antecedent, the belief system. The arrival of the kin group to taste is then predicted. Beer tasting is also predicted, as well as its placing in the order of events. It is formal rather than ordinary drinking. The synchronising of commentary with the visuals of the preparation for the tasting, and the contiguity of this commentary to the supered translation of the summons by Rhumsha, (“Come forward, amaCirha and kinsmen!”) further emphasize the orderly predictability of the ritual, and therefore its place within a larger, implicitly coherent and stable belief system.

Shots sd75/6: “The last of the beerfor the shades”.

This section is again predictive, and explains the activity by reference to the belief system. Activity which appears purely practical is given significance.

Shot sd77: “The whole community in formal speeches”,

and “The society and economy of Shixini do not constitute a separate world”.”

The strength of the belief system is implied by reference to the whole community, which in turn summarises what the visuals have implied, that a large number of people attending. The

approval which is evident in the following speech is predicted, summed up and therefore rhetorically supported.

The section of commentary after the speech restates the basic paradox of Shixini tradition in a modern context, by moving from the specific ritual to the wider context. Having seen a vividly non-urban ritual, which seems to define the Shixini world as one very different and separate from the urban milieu, the commentary contradicts this and prepares us for the macrolevel, analytical view of Shixini in the map sequence. At this point it seems that the only way in which Shixini and the rest of SA that can be considered together is by means of a political/economic map.

To sum up, the commentary takes an analytical stance at the start of the sequence, but does not maintain this, letting the picture become fully narrative. The temporal dimension of the commentary is always present tense, but the placement in relation to picture makes it predictive at most sections. It introduces almost no new information. The words exhibit a great degree of redundancy in relation to picture information. It selects certain elements to describe in this redundancy, ignoring others. The result of this repetition is to establish the activity as meaningful within a group of kin, within a belief system which is acted out coherently, with continuity and purpose. In this it is similar to the redundancy of the ritual speeches. The commentary functions to assimilate the ritual to the frames of reference of the audience.

Subtitles

The subtitles are properly titles, since they are not placed at the foot of the screen²⁷.

They support to a certain extent the hierarchy of importance between speeches and other sound. Songs, chatter and interjections during formal speeches are not subtitled²⁸

Synchronisation between subtitles and speech varies. In most cases, the subtitling extends beyond the speech that it ostensibly translates, before or after or both (sd51, sd55, sd60, sd73). Xhosa speakers will detect a lack of accurate and synchronous translation, as is the case with most subtitling. Subtitles were designed to fit the time-bound nature of video viewing, in relation to the presumed limits of reading skill in absorbing information²⁹.

An unintended edit in the middle of shot sd51 is made in order to get all the text on the screen³⁰.

27 The titling machine's text was illegible in the smaller font against the multicoloured backgrounds of the image, so text in larger font was spread over the entire screen. Several viewers have noted that this makes both image and text easy to read.

28 Examples where this occurs are Shot sd51 "Cirha", grunts, and a background greeting; Shot sd55 The formal response "Camagu", childrens voices; a few words by another speaker, after the main speaker has finished and before the singing re-starts; Shot sd60 The formal response "Camagu", other background comments; Shot sd77 The formal response "Mbamba" and other interjections.

29 The professional rule of thumb regarding reading time for subtitles is the time it takes to read them aloud slowly, twice.

30 Edits on non-broadcast equipment (without time-code) cannot be made to single-frame accuracy. This means that unintended edits in the middle of shots are likely to result in loss or repeat of frames. This problem was caused by the size of the title unit's memory.

The result is an obvious graphic mismatch just as the camera pans left, between the 4th and 5th titles (between “I haven’t been ill, but now I have decided ..” and “to slaughter an ox for him. There is also beer”).

McAllister translated the speeches, and I then rewrote these as necessary. For example, compare McAllister’s translation of this speech (below) after entering the cattle byre gate (sd60) with the subtitles for this shot on the tape;

Today I sacrifice this to our father, so that he should give me strength. I ask through you that this homestead should prosper and should not bless me alone, but Cirha’s all over (McAllister, script notes, 1984).

The rhetorical flourishes are different, and appear to be minor. Differences between translation (below) and titles (on tape) in shots 55-56 are greater in this speech, perhaps indicating the difference between an oral culture and a written culture;

Listen, you son of Zibharile. We as the Cirha gathered here thank you, as we are formally seated here, we the people you have invited. We thank the great thing you are describing, that today you are thinking about the son of Siwela, the one known as Zibharile, who is always in your soul. What we say to you, Rhumsha, my fellow, we thank you. This is what makes a man. This son of Siwela was worshipped by our fathers. This is the seed of Zibharile. Indeed, Zibharile has reproduced himself; even now he lives (McAllister, script notes, 1984).

Comparison of Unedited Material with Edited Segment

The detailed differences between edited and unedited material are described above. This

section merely summarises the larger trends not already noted.

The realist techniques of editing followed the intentions of observational camera work in attempting to mimic as closely as possible the formal aspects of the original event. This is modified by assumptions of length, and the assumed value of having a continuous, realist diegesis (for example, no freeze frames were used to carry more extensive commentary).

There is no obvious attempt to explore the action outside that which was shot, or the significance beyond translation of speeches. This confirms a lack of further detailed analysis of the unedited material, the explication of significances beyond the surface of the visual, or of events that happened off-screen.

Signs of the presence of McAllister and myself are omitted, where possible. Chance factors in camera work are largely omitted, for instance at the shaky start and end of shots, poor framings, redundancies, inappropriate technique and technical faults. A relatively transparent access to the event is proposed.

Evidence of context is reduced by excluding shots in the initial segments (A. to E, and F. to I. inclusive). Shots showing shifts of location are also excluded (Segment K), in favour of other continuity devices in editing.

Representation of simultaneous, repetitive/ cyclical action was reduced, in favour of emphasising linear continuity, of emphasising simplicity and purpose rather than complex communal interaction. The range of continuity techniques was simplified. Short cutaways were preferred to pans.

Pans are used in several shots (sd51, 54, 55,68,74,75), but longer examples of in-camera

editing involving movement, such as the walk to the kraal (sd57,58,59) are shortened, using the options for such shortening which were made during the original camera work.

Not all the cutaways available were used, even in sections where the edited sequence follows the original fairly closely. For instance, in killing the ox, only one cutaway is used (sd63). In sd64, the closeup rather than the wide is used. Cutaways are not all used at points where they are available. The edit at sd72/73 could have been bridged by the “parallel action ” cutaway (isi116) which falls exactly between the two corresponding original shots (isi115 and isi117).

The discontinuities and graphic mismatches made in the original are sometimes preserved where they contribute to the efficient progress of the narrative (e.g. sd63/64, sd67/68). This is a characteristic of the narrative which mimics chance.

There was a proportional exclusion of formal ritual action in favour of action which had a practical function but was performed according to ritual methods, or action which was purely practical. This was in keeping with the intentional emphasis in the larger documentary on the economy and the belief system.

The translated speeches, supered on screen, represent an extreme example of this. The sections come from speeches which are considerably longer, but the translation is simplified and re-arranged to fit the time-bound and frame-bound mode of presentation. The other speeches are ignored.

Conclusion

The representation of the ritual is conditioned by two main factors. The level of representation is conditioned by its place within the longer documentary. This in turn is determined by the given length, available material and scenario.

The level of representation, resulting from its length and conceptual place in the documentary, occurs at the expense of detail and of the belief system. The concealment of the process of selection/omission of elements for description, and the integration of verbal interpretation with description is a criticism of realist narrative in historiography and documentary. Yet this process appears, in some views, to guarantee its accuracy and reliability (White 1987, 24, cited in Guynn 1990, 133).

The adoption of an observational camera strategy is the other conditioning factor. This strategy, incorporating handheld camera, close camera positioning and continuity techniques, and the use of many of those continuity possibilities in editing, gives it the strongest realist narrative character of all sequences in the documentary. The continuity techniques of editing also exclude much evidence of ourselves and the chance factors in the process of camera work. Signs of the chance factor which are retained are likely to elevate the segment's claims to realism, as a reference to the uncontrolled nature of the action, the adherence to observation without influence.

The style of commentary voice is less obviously a factor of narrative than in other sequences, functioning more as an interpreter of the ritual. Its presence, though, reminds the viewer of and stands in the place of the actual relation of ourselves via camera to the people of the homestead.

As a narrative segment it is more typical as a filmic discourse than the larger documentary. The commentary reveals the intention, on one hand, to represent the strength of traditional belief system in the area. On the other hand, the segment's strongly visual narrative character tend to make it a more specific case than a general representation.

It can be argued that the greater role of the commentary in the diegesis of the rest of the documentary (and especially its conceptual/analytical nature) is likely to counteract this independent narrative quality, by retro-actively placing it within the conceptual frameworks of belief and economy, as well as the Trust system.

The narrative quality of the segment is also different to the other text-making strategies, partly because of my working relationship with McAllister and his established research, partly because this material happened to be available, whereas material on the researched beerdrink was not. The aim of duplicating in the video some of the general conclusions drawn from the data in the written research is thus manifested in a range of different styles of text-making.

It seems that one of my assumptions in making this documentary was that the textual strategy needed to establish its claims of validation in a way comparable to the dominant conventions of documentary at the time in South African television, as well as within an academic context. This was especially so because the documentary's view of ethnic identity and economy, in relation to the wider South African economy, was in opposition to the dominant commonsense view of apartheid (that the "homelands" were economically viable). This assumption seems to be wrong in the light of theory about validation, which points out that the validation claims for film should be of a different order to the positivist approaches of quantitative written research, and make claims of the specific rather than the general. The documentary might have fallen between two stools.

The claim of more experimental strategies of validation in, for instance "I am Clifford Abrahams and This is Grahamstown" (also made for and screened at the Second Carnegie Conference on Poverty), was more likely to be rejected as the basis of generalisable

conclusions, but more likely to be regarded as realist within its own terms as visual text³¹.

Only audience studies can confirm or correct these suppositions.

31 The reaction of audiences to this documentary in three successive Grahamstown Arts Festivals confirms that it has greater lure and emotional effect than “Shixini December”.

CHAPTER FIVE

Using The Unedited Material For Research

Introduction.

In 1986, the unedited video material of the isipho ritual was taken back to the homestead where it occurred by Greg Holbrook, a graduate student supervised by McAllister, and screened as an elicitation device for interviews about the ritual. The result was a dissertation comprising ethnographic description and analysis of the ritual (Holbrook 1986, unpublished). A summary of the dissertation appears in Appendix F.

The aim of this chapter is to explore this dissertation as a manifestation of the research intention I envisaged during the original camerawork. As part of this exploration, the suitability of observational camera work for producing research material is assessed.

As a context within which to situate Holbrook's method, some other methods of using film or video in research are summarised. These can be broadly categorised by their epistemological assumptions as quantitative or qualitative. This distinction is similar to that between the concepts of etic and emic interpretations (as established in Chapter One). These interpretations are respectively, from "outside" the cultural system as opposed to an interpretation from "inside" the cultural system.

The preparations for field work, especially the preparation of tapes is outlined, as well as Holbrook's method in the screening situation.

The chapter identifies Holbrook's particular use of video in research as a qualitative, reflexive one. It then compares the video with the ethnographic elements of the dissertation and from

interviews with him in 1992/3. Several aspects are compared. First, the video is compared to the ethnography to see what qualitative elements are added by it, that is, the interpretations both emic and etic. The second comparison establishes how the ethnography - the description - refers to the video's observational record. The third establishes how the ethnographic description refers to the action not recorded on the video and the fourth, how the participants' responses to the video may have affected the dissertation in terms of both facts and interpretation.

These comparisons are dealt with in the light of the relationships between validity and reliability, on the one hand, and interpretation, observation and description on the other, which were outlined in Chapter Two. Validity (which deals with accuracy) is closely related to reliability (which deals with consistency).

Etic interpretations are relatively easy to validate because the data are identifiably separate from the analytical tools. The problem of the emic approach to interpretation is that it is difficult to validate other than by reference to the ethnography itself. In other words, it cannot be done independently of the text. This is similar to the way some anthropologists treat film. They do not always distinguish between their images as images and the original situation.

The chapter ends with a comparison between the dissertation and the edited segment in "Shixini December", with reference to the similarities and differences in the representations they propose.

The Research Film: Quantitative vs Qualitative Methods

The distinction between research films and educational films was outlined in Chapter Two.

Further distinctions between types of research film can be made. The basic difference is whether the research film is being used to record quantitative or qualitative data.

Collecting quantitative data on film requires specialised camera work to ensure that the data falls within the parameters defined by the research framework. This specialised camera work is one of the bases of validation of results in such research, and needs careful operational definition of camera method ¹

Schaeffer gives a comprehensive account of various methods of camera work for the research film (Schaeffer 1975). The results of such research are clearly etic.

These etic approaches adopt highly sophisticated systems for analysis which are often mathematically based, and include little or no emic information, for instance in studies of body movements and social interaction (see Lomax 1975; Prost 1975; Scherer 1975).

Collecting qualitative data is usually associated with a phenomenological approach to, for instance, anthropological field work, and observational camera techniques are usually used. An appropriate method of observational camera work is harder to define, because the factor of chance is a desirable one. The phenomena to be studied are by definition diverse and unpredictable. The methods and model of continuity camera work proposed and explored in Chapters Two and Three are an attempt to define a method.

On the one hand, the qualitative visual data collected by the observational method shows

1 "Operational definition" is defined by Babbie as "The concrete and specific definition of something in terms of the operations by which observations are to be categorised" (1983, pG5).

more than the camera operator intends, and on the other hand the assumptions and intentions of the camera operator are inevitably at work in structuring it. This influences the nature of the resulting representation, as was discussed in Chapter Two and demonstrated in Chapter Three.

Approaches to interpretation which use both emic and etic methods would not only analyse the film according to conceptual or analytical (etic) categories devised by the anthropologist, but would include screening the film to the people it portrays. This would be done to assess their opinion of how accurate and complete are the observations made by the filmmaker, and to get their (emic) interpretation of that observation. This is also known as the reflexive approach to validation, and is occasionally used in anthropology.

One solution to the problem of validation, both in anthropology in general and in film, is reflexivity. Reflexivity is discussed by Ruby (1977), who proposes that the concept of “Producer-Process-Product” (Ruby 1977, 3, citing Fabian 1971) should also be used to assess visual texts, specifically documentary. The degree to which texts reveal this relationship is proposed as a measure of their validity, since this relationship, when made evident, reveals the basis on which texts are constructed.

It can also be used for validating research film. An example is described by Krebs who used a structured method of interviewing in reflexive validation. Krebs screened film of Thai dances to the participants and interviewed them, as a method of getting detailed and accurate analysis of the meanings of dance movements. The written paper is validated to an extent by the description of the reflexive method (Krebs 1975, 283).

Another version of reflexivity can extend beyond validation of what has been filmed, to an

interactive process between filmmaker and subjects which incorporates the subjects into decision-making about the purpose and method of representation in the film. Examples of such approaches range from the experiments of Collier (1967 p49, cited in Krebs 1975), and Rundstrom (1988) to those of Rouch, for instance "Moi, Un Noir" (1957). More purely emic films are those produced by the Navaho with Worth and Adair (1975).

Even the reflexive method, however, may not be not a complete solution to validating observational film. The problem of using observational film for emic validation derives from the apparent realism of the image.

This apparent realism, I suggest, leads to confusion over whether the visual representation is an observation or an interpretation. Due to the lack of theorisation pointed out in Chapter One, anthropologists among others who use unedited observational film material for reflexive validation are liable to regard the film image as unmediated observation, and assume that the respondents in a reflexive situation will see it the same way. To an extent they will be correct, because useful basic facts can be gleaned from the realistic appearance of the image, and the participants will usually recognise themselves and the situation.

The respondents, in turn, having experienced the event from their own (individual as well as group) point of view, are likely to regard the film record as an outsider's or etic interpretation of themselves.

To an extent they will be correct, for the camera gives the specifically framed spatial and temporal point of view of the individual holding it, as well as the selections evident in shot lengths. Although the camera operator may have been one among many individuals present in the shooting situation, the fact of being an outsider, of being an observer not a participant

(emphasised by the camera), makes it likely that the film record is likely to be seen as an etic interpretation.

Because of this possibility, and the variety of chance phenomena recorded in the film image, the definition of the phenomena to be discussed in the screening situation cannot be taken for granted. As Asch and Asch note:

An ethnographer and a participant may look at a film and see quite different things.....To get at subtle aspects of an interaction it is important that the ethnographer study the film material very carefully and work out a protocol consisting of lines of inquiry that will build on participant responses..... It is not sufficient to show footage to participants and wait for them to respond (Asch and Asch 1988, 177).

Because the film image also excludes off-screen phenomena so completely by contrast to what it does show, there are likely to be differences between the participants' memory of the situation and the way it is represented on screen.

The difference between what people do and what they say they do is usually categorised as, respectively, actual behaviour and normative behaviour. The visual record forces people to acknowledge the fact of what they did, i.e. those parts of the event that are on film. What people say they do, in an oral society, is likely to be more dependent on context than in a literate/visual society which makes so many fixed records. These records are regarded in western society as more authoritative than memory.

When other researchers than the recorder/cameraman use such raw material, for, say a reassessment of the conclusions or analysis of a different set of phenomena in the material,

then the validation question arises more acutely. This is particularly true of archive material. Additional sources of information which contextualise the film may not be available.

In such situations, gaps of memory or individual differences of experience and perception by the participants cannot be checked against the fieldworker's notes or other data. The film is the only record.

This leads to a further set of distinctions in the category of research film; the unedited film per se as the "film record", and the annotated, documented film as the "research film" (Asch and Asch 1988, 166).

Possible Side Effects of the Reflexive Method

The reflexive method can have some effects on the people portrayed. These effects may concern taboos of information², and self perception or self-consciousness.

Carpenter describes the effect of mirrors, photographs and film on New Guinea tribesmen as one of making them self-conscious. From this example, Carpenter questions whether filmed behaviour of any non-western people who have experienced photographs, film and mirrors can be said to be unaware of the camera. The act of watching one's image on, or participating in, a film is likely to promote the kind of detachment from culture and ritual that Carpenter describes. He relates how New Guinea tribesmen allowed an initiation ceremony to be filmed, only to declare, on completion, that the ceremony would not be held again in future (Carpenter 1975, 455ff).

2 The need to control access to film of secret ceremonies is described by Ichioka (1988, 73).

It seems that the effects are more noticeable the less contact people have with western society, specifically in the form of photographs and mirrors and, possibly, literacy (Carpenter 1975, 452).

Preparation for Fieldwork

Holbrook's previous experience of Xhosa mortuary rituals included observing several less complete examples in the Eastern Cape with Cecil Nonqane, a Xhosa-speaking Grahamstown resident who also translated for him at the homestead (Holbrook could speak only a few words of Xhosa at that time - interview).

Preparation for the trip in June 1986, nearly three years after the ritual in December 1983, included Holbrook's prior viewing of the tapes ³, but no consultation with me about the layout of the homestead, methods of shooting or other aspects. Apart from a catalogue of shots, speech transcriptions and translations which I provided, there was no additional detailed information on the methods and context of shooting, since I had not been back to the

3 Holbrook commented that he felt disoriented about the layout of the homestead when he started viewing the video. He "had no idea of where he was" (Holbrook, interview).

homestead since the date of the ritual. Holbrook made his own translations and catalogue of shots. Nor did we discuss possible choices of screening method, or interview technique in relation to the video, as I had not yet begun the present research (Holbrook, interview).

Together we prepared the material for field use by assembling all the shots of the ritual into chronological order⁴

From this, Holbrook copied a second group of 20-minute cassettes to take to the field. Having the material on 20-minute cassettes instead of the longer 30 or 60-minute cassettes was done because the portable player took only the smaller 20 minutes cassette format. A consequence of this is that specific sequences were easier to find, since having shots in 20-minute sections reduces the amount of tape that one has to rewind.

4 We copied the shots of the ritual from the camera originals (20-minute cassettes), onto two 60-minute and one 20-minute cassette. Material was copied in chronological order, with intertitle day markers separating the four days. We included the picture distortion at the start of the shot (usually five seconds) which occurs while the VTR runs up to speed. In this way no picture or sound information was lost, yet separation between shots was clearly marked. This marking did not always occur clearly via picture distortion, since the u-matic recorder made assemble edits between shots, providing a smooth frame-to-frame join. This only happens if the VTR is not put in stop mode between shots (often done to save battery), or bumped so that the tape shifts in relation to the record head.

While copying, we numbered each shot with a title machine. These numbers are not referred to in Holbrook's text. Because errors⁵ slipped into the compilation of material for the field, and because Holbrook omitted shots he considered were not relevant to the structure of the ritual, he took an incomplete copy of the video material with him to the Transkei⁶

It is not possible to say whether these omissions are relevant or not, apart from their possible value as a record of the ritual's context and thus a source of information about the chronology and the participants. See Appendix F. for details.

This assembly permitted easy access, protection of the originals and excision of extraneous material of other rituals in other homesteads which might distract the informants in the interview situation.

5 a) I omitted 8 shots from the start of Day Two: shots 143-150.

b) We put some shots from Day Two in the wrong order, i.e. later in the day. Shots isi176-183, of the interior of the hut on Day Two, were put between the sequence of dancing and singing in the hut and the speeches of thanks, instead of before the women bringing beer to the house.

6 The camera used was not "broadcast quality", but a single tube colour camera recording onto lowband u-matic. The amount of material was not "sixteen hours", but approximately two (Holbrook 1986, 2). About twenty hours was accumulated during four field trips, on other rituals and daily life.

The significance of this assembly is that it partly determined the degree of reflexive participation in the research process that we permitted the people at Rhumsha's homestead. We did not allow them to see other people and rituals in the Shixini area which we had on tape, and thus to situate our visit to them within the larger context of our video of their area as a whole. This excluded the possibility of their comments on our recording process in general. The participatory element was thus limited by this decision.

Holbrook did not use the transcriptions and translations of speeches that I supplied, and prepared his own translations after the field trip⁷

Holbrook and Nonqane were introduced to Rhumsha Siwela, the homestead head, by McAllister in June 1986. The ritual had been held in December 1983, so it is thus possible that some of the men who had been home from migrant labour in December, might not have been available for interviewing. Holbrook does not note this as a significant factor, or make distinctions between individual responses (Holbrook 1986).

7 Holbrook dubbed the speeches onto audio cassettes and worked with Nonqane to re-transcribe and translate them (Holbrook, interview). Asch and Asch advocate that translations are done in the field by someone who can "understand overlapping comments and background conversations and will be familiar with the local argot" (1988, 174). McAllister remarked that these transcriptions (and hence translations) were not verbatim (McAllister, interview, November 1992). The original transcriptions, while also not verbatim, do indicate some interjections and overlapping comments. One of the speeches (by Rhumsha, Speech Six, Day One) was not recorded on video, but by McAllister on audio cassette only.

Holbrook and Nonqane spent ten days in Shixini. Holbrook then wrote his dissertation without any further input from me. We began a series of interviews about his dissertation and field work in 1991 when I started the present research. A reflexive element is present in this, as he has commented in detail on preliminary drafts of this chapter and relevant appendices.

Holbrook's Method

Holbrook took a portable monitor, u-matic VTR and petrol-driven generator with him to the homestead⁸

The screenings were held in a hut in Rhumsha's homestead, a natural auditorium. The screening situation is not described in the dissertation, and does not, from interviews with Holbrook, seem to have been structured in the formal ways described by Krebs (1975), or his questions derived from responses to screening (Asch and Asch 1988, 176). His fieldwork interview technique seems characterised by an interactive relationship with the spontaneous responses of the viewers.

Holbrook held segregated screenings with Rhumsha and his close kin, as well as other informants such as both the male and female injoli⁹

These people talked at these open sessions, and Holbrook clarified matters with them in later, individual screenings for detailed discussion of the ritual. These situations often included repeat viewings and freeze-frames of certain actions and individuals (Holbrook, interview).

8 The portable u-matic showed the picture during fast picture shuttle (forward and back) and showed a freeze frame in the pause mode, thus making it ideal for repeated viewing and detailed discussion.

9 The njoli is responsible for deciding where people sit, and the distribution of beer (Holbrook, interview).

There were also several screenings per day to accommodate the large number of people who came to watch, some from considerable distances. This made it easier to find informants (Holbrook 1986, 2), but the entertainment and novelty factors hindered detailed questioning.

Holbrook and Nonqane also visited other homesteads to assess how common the ritual was in the area since isipho falls outside the mortuary ritual as such ¹⁰ (Holbrook, interview)

No screenings were held at these homesteads.

Comparisons: Video and Dissertation

Comparison 1: The visual record and the ethnographic analysis

The section establishes the nature of the interpretive elements added by the dissertation to the video, that is, both emic and etic.

Nature of the Video

As outlined in Chapter Three, the video is observational, shows a partial view of the ritual process and its context, and has strong elements of narrative continuity in the camera work. It does not fully signify as a text in itself, having breaks between shots. By contrast it has a strong element of continuity, concentrating on the formal or structural phenomena of the ritual. Its character as ethnographic visual material is established in Chapter Two as the dual referentiality of the image, referring to another time and place and to another belief system.

10 Holbrook defined its place in the mortuary cycle as “ancillary to, but dependent on the completion of, the mortuary cycle itself and may be performed more than once”. One aspect of the traditionalism of the Gcaleka of that area is that they do not attend school and are not Christians, but some homesteads in the area are Christian, some are mixed (Holbrook, interview).

The nature of the video record is well summed up by Holbrook;

There is a very definite structure to the ritual, and the camera (in terms of starts and stops, framings) imposed a structure of representation on top of this, which partly duplicated and partly missed the ritual structure (Holbrook, interview).

The dissertation

The 60-page dissertation was written as one of five papers in Holbrook's honours year (1986), and its scope must be seen in this context. It approaches the ritual as a "cultural performance" (Holbrook 1986, 9). The (etic) concepts and analysis are located in the Introduction and Conclusion. The ethnographic description and emic interpretation are in four chapters, one for each day. Background material includes genealogical tables of the major participants, a diagram of the homestead, English translations of fifteen of the speeches. The Appendices show distribution of meat and transcripts of speeches in the original Xhosa.

By these analytical methods the dissertation is able to interpret the ritual significances of the "other belief system" which are portrayed but not interpreted by the unedited video image alone. The interpretation is based on and integrated with description of the actions and objects of the ritual physically situated in both space and time.

The concepts used in the analysis in the Introduction and Conclusion assume that the ritual is a "cultural performance". The main ones are Brink's concept of frame, as a device to set such a performance apart from everyday life (Brink 1978, 383, cited in Holbrook, 9), Hunt's concept of frame as an indicator of how to interpret the performance (Hunt 1977, cited in Holbrook 1986, 9) and Austin's notion of "illocutionary acts" (Austin 1962, cited in Holbrook 1986, 11). See Appendix G. for a summary of types of frame indicators and examples that

Holbrook identifies. These frame indicators are accompanied by examples of each indicator in the ritual.

In the four chapters the interpretation is most obviously indicated by markers such as “I suggest”, references to other writers, or references to the concepts of frame as indicated in the Introduction and Conclusion. These markers separate the (etic) analysis from the description.

The distinction between data and method is thus clear, and the consistency of interpretation seems to indicate reliability. Validity is more a question of accuracy, and concerns the relation between emic interpretation and description.

Comparison Two: the visual record and the ethnographic description

This section compares the descriptive element in the four chapters with the video’s observational record.

This partial quality is also outlined in the Preface (Holbrook 1986, 2).

The difference between the ethnographic description and the video representation occurs in several ways. First, the description in the dissertation imitates the narrative continuity qualities of the unedited video. One example is characteristic. Compare shots isi64-74 with

The process lasted for some time. If the first man was unsuccessful, then others may have a turn. Success at tearing the umxhelo was accompanied by an anguished cry from the ox. When the man’s arm was removed the ox’s gut bulged from the opening in its belly. Its tongue lolled from its mouth and it took some time to die. The ox’s cry was greeted with exclamations of “Heke!” to express approval at eventual success (Holbrook 1986, 23).

It is obvious that the description follows the video very closely, but also includes other elements.

The detail and sequence in this description indicates its debt to the video, but it also is very selective in that detail, omitting for instance the man washing his arm and the men watching and holding the ox. The reference to time is suggested by the length of the two relevant shots in the unedited material, and the shots of other activity which intervene before a man tests eye reflex in isi74.

In other words the description both selects and condenses, and also conceals those two operations. It selects details from within the frame of some shots, and condenses from a succession of shots. These two operations are concealed by the syntax of the sentence. Gory though this description may be to a non-Xhosa reader even in a short piece of text, it in no way conveys the detail that the image does.

Elements which obviously depend on sources other than the picture are also added. These are the interpretation of the exclamations as “approval”, the Xhosa word for the arteries and the assertion that other men may try if the first attempt is unsuccessful.

As this example demonstrates, the description therefore selectively interprets the space, time and action dimensions of the realist and continuity qualities of the video, in its written narrative techniques. Mirroring and adapting Holbrook’s quoted view of the video (above), it can be said that there is a very definite structure to the ethnographic description, and it partly duplicates and partly obscures the nature of the video.

How does this relate to validity? As noted above, validity concerns the relation between emic interpretation and description. To what degree is the interpretation in the dissertation an emic

one, to what degree an etic one? The etic elements are clearly identifiable in the Introduction and Conclusion, and by the markers in Chapters One to Four which set it off from the description, or ethnography.

The impression of an emic interpretation is given by the close fit between description and etic interpretation. The text simultaneously selects and describes only those elements from the video which relate to the etic interpretations. It indicates some interpretations as etic by the markers identified above (“I suggest” and references) and does not indicate others as the above quote illustrates.

These operations are evident if we apply Bryman’s three aspects of validating interpretations discussed previously:

whether researchers have genuinely put themselves in a strategic position to enter the world view of their subjects [1], whether they have adequately understood that world view [2], and whether their interpretations of actions and events are congruent with their subjects’ understandings [3]. (Bryman 1988, 77).

The evidence of the strategic position in [1] above (how Holbrook related to the people at the homestead during fieldwork) is missing: the sole authoritative claim to this is the video and Holbrook does not indicate its presence or character in his description. Nor is the video otherwise described and itself validated as an observation, except (erroneously) in terms of length. The text is written in a single past tense, as though Holbrook’s encounter happened during the ritual, but in the Preface he tells us it didn’t.

The consistent relationship between description and etic analysis appears to fulfill Bryman's second aspect: "whether [Holbrook] has adequately understood that world view".

With regard to Bryman's third aspect, "whether their interpretations of actions and events are congruent with their subjects' understandings", the problem concerns firstly which elements are selected from the video (and according to what principles) for description and then interpretation. Secondly, it concerns how congruent the interpretation is with the participant's understandings.

With regard to the selection of elements for description, there is a conflict between the acknowledgements of the video, in the Preface and once in the text ¹¹, and the style of narrative description in the text. The text conceals both the observational character of the video and in turn Holbrook's own observation of the video. The measures for identifying what elements of the ritual are relevant to the subjects' understanding are absent. This returns us to Bryman's aspect [2], where the description is now in doubt, since the difference between selection principles and description is elided by his narrative technique. Consequently the apparently separate interpretation is thrown into doubt.

As a complement to the relation of duplication-but-concealment between the ethnography and the video, it seems appropriate to note here the qualitative differences, between the vividness of the video's representation, and the analytical interpretation of the dissertation. The obvious

11 "The pattern of drinking in the ukushwama ritual was unfortunately not observed in detail" (Holbrook 1986, 25).

similarity is the strategy of simultaneous observation and description in each. It is partly this which makes possible the neat mirror descriptions of video and ethnography (above).

It is a necessary quibble to throw into doubt the validity of Holbrook's interpretation, since examining the unedited video does reveal the accuracy of its observation: a "strategic position" of the camera is obvious (Bryman's aspect [1], above). The video, however, is not available to all readers. It also seems a quibble because the video employs an observational technique as well, which obscures the difference between description, observation and interpretation. Thus, criticisms levelled at Holbrook's ethnography could, if it had described the shaping role of the video, have been transferred to the video. These criticisms I have applied in Chapter Three.

Comparison Three: the ethnographic description and action not on video.

The third comparison, between ethnographic description and the action not on the video, is done by empirical means. The shots of Day Four (Shots isi215-228) were not taken to the homestead (see Holbrook's exclusions, above), yet the events on this day are described with the same narrative realism as those on other days:

Rhumsha and his helper - Tshandu, a clan nephew who lived in a neighbouring subward and invited to help because his sons were away at work - rekindled the fire in the homestead with the last of the iinkuni zomsebenzi (Holbrook 1986, 41).

Actions **not** on the video of Day Four are also described in the same way. The information can only have been available from Holbrook's fieldwork:

The heart (intliziyo) and some meat left from the ox's shoulder blade (ingxala)

were cooked in a pot. Rhumsha and his family ate this without ceremony. A few close neighbours came to join in the meal (Holbrook 1986, 41)

Comparison with the video therefore throws the text's claims of the other observational video evidence into doubt.

Comparison Four: the responses to video and effect on dissertation

The nature of this response is broadly established by Holbrook's note in the Preface that:

It was difficult for informants to expand on events which had occurred outside the picture.... This was especially true of the role of women in the ritual (Holbrook 1986, 2).

The observational basis of the ethnographic description is the video, as well as what people told Holbrook about sections of the ritual **not** on the video. It is therefore important to establish how the responses affected this second part of the observational base. For this it is necessary to rely on (reflexive) interviews with Holbrook since the fabric of their responses is available only through his experience of the (first) reflexive situation.

Novelty

Responses to the video were varied, although they did not extend to the extreme agitation at seeing their own images described by Carpenter (1975, 452). Holbrook notes that "they weren't exactly placid either" (Holbrook, interview). Some people were quite astonished at the video ¹², particularly women, since they are far less exposed to urban ways (Holbrook,

12 This may have been the reason why they watched several times. It may also indicate deeper effects of the video, possibly akin to the effects that Carpenter describes, of alienation and self-consciousness.

McAllister interviews). The usual laughter occurred at the funny bits, for instance at an old man who couldn't dance, and at speeded up motion in fast forward or rewind mode (Holbrook, interview). People came from far and wide "in the hope of catching themselves on the video screen" (Holbrook 1986, 2).

Rhumsha's reaction to the playback was very calm, as if it was nothing unusual. Nor did most of the men find moving pictures strange, as they had probably seen film and TV when migrating to work, particularly at the mines. Both Rhumsha and his sons had been migrants.

Information

Holbrook establishes a general characteristic of field work: "There is often a difference between what people do and what they say they do" (Holbrook, interview).

He also notes that the video record "enabled people to check and re-check their interpretation" (Holbrook 1986, 2). In other words, it gave the actual structure. At certain points Holbrook

used the rewind and freeze-frame capability of the video to explore precise relationships, for instance the place of the abashana or matrilineal nephews and nieces (Holbrook, interview).

On some occasions Holbrook attempted to get interpretations of actions or objects on the video which seemed to be associated with the ritual. These phenomena included informal comments, odd remarks, interjections during the catching of the ox, an informal speech ¹³ and two speeches about our presence ¹⁴, dress ¹⁵, sharing of meat (isi207,isi117), a man spitting just before Rhumsha speaks (isi56) and the forked log ¹⁶.

The video is rich with these.

When Holbrook enquired about the significance of these, there was no response or an evasion. Significance was implicitly denied. Holbrook assumed that these were not not regarded by participants as part of the ritual (Holbrook, interview).

The role of women was an element of the ritual which was portrayed only partially in the

13 The informal speech (with virtually unintelligible sound quality) at the start of Day Two (isi162-3) was not classified as a formal “speech of information” by Holbrook (interview).

14 Rhumsha explained our presence in two speeches on Day One, and after the second there were joking suggestions that we should pay them for the privilege of shooting video. See Appendix J. for translations.

15 Holbrook attempted to get interpretation of the patterns in the elder men’s knitted caps (Holbrook, interview).

16 The large forked log between the kraal and the main hut (shots isi55, isi174) was not firewood, and was cleaned of bark. Holbrook suspected some significance in connection with diviners. But when asked, people refused interpretation of significance. It appeared to be a non-question (Holbrook, interview).

video. The women could not explain their actions which did not appear on the video or remember what they had done. On the other hand, a considerable part of the normative structure was given by women (Holbrook, interview).

In view of the traditional roles of men and women, I asked whether screening the video (particularly the ox-slaughter and other homestead scenes) to women had crossed any obvious taboo boundaries, but Holbrook said he was not aware of it (Holbrook, interview). On the other hand, the division between the women and men in general is reflected by Holbrook interviewing the male injoli separately from female injoli.

There were also occasions when the respondents contradicted or disagreed with the video evidence, when they said that events on the video “didn’t happen like that” (Holbrook, interview).

The reflexive use of video narrowed the gap between actual and normative structure. The problem is that the gap cannot be established with any degree of accuracy, since Holbrook cannot, after a period of six years, remember which information came from the video and which came from interviews.

This leads to several suppositions. The primary one is that what the video missed of the actual structure could not be remembered, and people fell back on normative structure. The second is that, because the video obviously concentrated on the ritual, people dismissed other aspects of behaviour on the video since, in their perception of normative structure, they considered these to be irrelevant.

It may also be supposed that the extremely realist nature of the image forces the participants to take an accommodative position to the ritual in terms of what they could remember.

Holbrook's comment on my query about how this happened was

Maybe they trust themselves more than they trust video. Maybe they needed to assert that, to them, video is not "truth" - what they remember (and what they agree to remember) is truth. In other words, with respect to video, one thing/person determines reality. With respect to the Gcaleka, reality is negotiated, determined collectively (Holbrook, interview).

These suppositions are necessary because the issue is left unexplored and unexplained in the dissertation. This omission in turn occurs partly because such reflexive validation techniques are not often applied (Asch and Asch 1988, 176), and partly because the video is regarded as a means of neutral access to the event.

Comparison between Edited Versions: Written vs Visual

Through field work and elicitation, the dissertation gets beyond the level of the surface appearance to deeper questions of belief system. By alternating between analysis and description it can deal with the problematic surface appearance of the "other belief system" with a greater degree of complexity than either of the video versions. As discussed in Chapter Two, it is difficult to attach detailed conceptual analysis in the form of commentary to a visual representation.

Textual strategies of the edited video segment

These are detailed in Chapter Four, but are repeated in summary here for the sake of the comparison.

The editing of the segment greatly condenses the raw material, and mimics the ritual structure closely enough to convey the process, but avoids explaining purely ritual actions. The

commentary re-interprets ritual actions in a broadly western frame of reference. Signs of the presence of the filmmakers are cut out, as are other elements such as shots of women, which do not neatly fit into the narrative. The principles of selection made in the observational stage, and the choices made from the resulting unedited material, are not evident, since continuity editing conceals most signs of articulation. Some articulations mimic the chance factor. There is no attempt to explore elements outside those which were shot, or to examine deeper significances of the ritual activities which are retained.

The edited video does not attempt, to remotely the same degree, the specific detailed exploration as the dissertation, but lies on the threshold between the specific, as a visual narrative, and the general, as framed by commentary. The larger documentary contextualises the ritual within other aspects of life in Shixini, and these in turn within the larger context of South Africa.

Dissertation and edited segment

Apart from the far greater analytical depth and sophistication of the dissertation, the narrative qualities are similar. There is a similarity of strategies between edited video segment and written dissertation, although the scale, aims, context and sophistication of each are vastly different. The separation between text and subjects through narrative techniques occurs at the expense of evidence of the relation between writer/camera operator and subjects.

An example of the similarity of narrative techniques is the instance of the death of the ox. The way the description (via words or edited picture) selects and condenses from, respectively, the video or the actual event has been described above and in Chapter Four. The close relation between description and interpretation is also noticeable in both, as well as the similarity of interpretation in the two. Compare the phrasing of the ethnography;

“The ox’s cry was greeted with exclamations of “Heke!” to express approval at eventual success” (Holbrook 1986, 23), with the commentary for the edited segment: “The bellowing of the ox tells them that the living have made contact with the shades of the departed” (Shot sd64).

Both combine description with interpretation. Both reinterpret the significance for the belief system within a frame of reference of a western audience. The dissertation of course deals with the specific reason for this ritual, with the significance of the ox’s place in Rhumsha’s genealogy, and with the ritual action in terms of veneration for the ancestors (the bellow).

Both of the texts thus attempt to validate themselves through similar techniques. These techniques consist of manufacturing a realist narrative which is closely integrated with elements of explanation. This manufacturing happens at the expense of preserving or indicating the relationships between the subjects of the narrative and the observer.

This mistaking the means of validation leads one writer to declare:

...the failure of realist history is not a failure of method, but a failure of the whole visual ideology of referential discourse, with its rhetoric of describing, comparing, classifying and generalising, and its presumption of representational signification. (Tyler 1986, 130).

Tyler is here identifying “visual ideology” as the ideology of the neutral or transparent screen, and questioning writing styles which give apparently neutral access to the subject, through the writing operations that occur between “imperfect, shaky” field notes and “authoritative ethnography” (Marcus and Fisher 1986, 69). This technique of writing is more complex than simply visual metaphors derived from camera. It is described as “The loose set

of genre conventions... collectively labelled ethnographic realism [after] 19th C realist fiction” (Marcus and Fisher 1986, 23).

Gynn (1990) also identifies this “visual ideology” as one of method, which the narrative forms and techniques of written historiography share with those of the documentary, as outlined in Chapter One.

Marcus suggests that this style of writing was a result of pressure from the positivist school, which demanded a neat and tidy “research design” approach to the data collected from “messy” field work. The problem of ethnographic writing is now being raised because of the crisis of positivism in the social sciences in general (Gynn 1990, 22).

Nichols makes the criticism about ethnographic films that, because of the highly referential nature of the cinematic sign, they are always about individuals living their daily lives. In his opinion, apart from the ideological or ethical considerations, this is their weakness. This criticism can be applied to ethnographic writing insofar as it also exemplifies the text-created distance between writer and subjects, that “Individual social actors risk becoming no more than examples, illustrations of ethnographic principles”(Nichols 1981, 238). This happens, it seems, in both of the representations of this ritual examined in this chapter.

Conclusion

Dissertation and unedited material

The role of the unedited video in the writing of the dissertation is ambiguous. On one hand its detailed record, although partial, provided a good basis for reflexive interpretation. On the other hand, this very detail seemed to have a stultifying effect on the memory of the participants. In the text of the dissertation the status of the video as observation, as well as the

responses of the participants to it, is obscured. This can be clarified by textual analysis as well as comparison with the video.

The observational nature of the camera method exaggerates the ambiguity. Similarly to the text of the ethnography, the unedited video acknowledges the presence of the observer at some points, but in general conceals the details of the relationship between camera and people participating in the ritual. By concealing my role as videomaker in making this (etic) observation, Holbrook's ethnography duplicates the tendencies in the unedited material towards the illusion of transparent realism.

I suggest that for the participants of the ritual, its unusually detailed but selective realist nature makes it seem, to them, an etic interpretation. This may be the reason why the participants' memory of events outside the visual record is poor. It may also explain why they occasionally re-interpreted the appearance or significance of actions on video.

Inevitably, any research project must constitute its boundaries, but if there is lack of clarity about the boundaries of one of its principal tools (the video) and second, about the effect of those on the responses to what the video portrays, then the validity of the results are likely to remain clouded.

While the video record in this experiment is a valuable resource, it also emphasises present concerns with the way ethnography is written. This is the nature of its record. Although it observes, just as the human eye and notebook do, a wealth and variety of data, it also reveals, by comparison, the way these are selected and ordered into an ethnography which is based on it. This leads to comparisons with the other representation of the ritual which drew on the unedited video material, i.e. the edited segment in the documentary, *Shixini December*.

Dissertation and edited segment

Both of these texts assume that validation is achieved through the construction of a realist narrative which closely combines observation, description and interpretation. The quality of their respective observations, descriptions and interpretations differs greatly, but the methods of textual construction are similar. These methods conceal the operations of the text-making agency and its relation to the observed data, how some data are selected for description, as well as the descriptive basis of the interpretation.

A complementary relationship

Video enables us to establish what actually happened, since it persists as available data in a way that field notes do not. The partial and structured nature of this observational base needs to be established before it can be used reflexively for such an analysis and interpretation. The dissertation explains itself with regard to its analytical apparatus, but not to its observational base, and the edited segment does neither. The assumption of structuralist writers such as Nichols is that texts should explain themselves. This seems a valuable prescription for film which represent one culture to another, since culturally different contexts and actions are portrayed.

Taken together, the observational basis of the unedited material and the emic interpretations established in the reflexive element of the dissertation provide the raw material for revised representation(s) which may avoid the pitfalls described thus far. Such revision(s) may attempt to combine the methodology of anthropology with the methodology of video, for instance how to integrate the analytical “frames” of the dissertation with the representational frames of the video. Some possibilities for this are suggested in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Documentary film is a manifestation of several conceptual oppositions and practices in western culture. Because it represents elements of both oppositions, the documentary suggests that epistemological certainties may in fact be the product of practices, rather than vice versa. It has been marginalised from theorisation. As a result, its status as representation is not clear.

The arrival of sync sound equipment revealed two distinct approaches to documentary, by enabling choice rather than necessity in the relation of the camera crew to the subjects. These two approaches repeated the contradictions noted above. The less common approach (reflexivity, participation) was defined by an involvement of the filmmakers with the subjects of the film, the more common one (observation) by a certain social distance from them. These approaches became inflected with larger political debates about culture, technology, racism and colonialism, and also propose different versions of realism.

Ethnographic filmmakers who use the camera in the observational mode duplicate the paradox of participant observation in conventional anthropology. This happens because of the paradoxical status of the image, which is present to the viewer here, but evokes the past in another place.

The paradox of participant observation (both in, and not in, the event) exemplifies the nature of camera perspective. It gives an apparently direct access to the event and the people, because of the duplication of specific spatial and temporal relationships, but simultaneously gives a social distance.

The problems of the claim to realism in the ethnographic image are duplicated in the problems

of validation for ethnography which is written in the style of realist narrative. Ethnographic writing which is based on participant observation can transform its fieldwork observations, but ethnographic films cannot. The original evidence of camera observation persists through editing. Because of this, the question of the relation of camera crew to the people persists: to what degree is it participation, to what degree observation. Film or video cannot obscure and blur the distinction, as easily as words. Characteristics of visual and audio perspective are identifiable.

Sound/image relations are proposed by some writers as the particular locus or indicator of relations between filmmakers and subjects. The less common approach to documentary uses the sound track to confirm the nature and reality of the relationships of filmmakers to subjects. The more common one uses the soundtrack to confirm the realism of the image as observational in nature, and the filmmakers as less involved, more distanced, in relation to the subjects.

The thesis acknowledges the work of Rouch and Vertov as characterising the less common approach to documentary, as one which dissolves the contradictions in film which derive from the positivist/idealist opposition. The thesis then enquires further into the nature and possibilities of observational film. In doing so it makes comparisons between conceptions of realism in documentary and validation in the social sciences, particularly anthropology. These two conceptions converge in the ethnographic film, sharply manifesting some contradictions.

In observational film, whether for documentary or ethnographic research, there is a tension between the factors of chance in camera work (observation) and the operation of narrativising, in editing. Concepts of validation and of realism are regarded as dependent on both.

The problems of camera method regarding the relations between subjects and filmmakers extend to the simple case of the small event. There is an apparent need for clarity of observation, but a lack of clarity in how to define the small event and shoot it. The continuity method of camera work is proposed as a coherent method of creating both an observational record for research, and creating material for the construction of narrative for educational purposes. To establish a clear means of measurement for validating the material in research use, a model of decision-making in the continuity method is proposed.

The anticipated results (unedited) of this model of camera work are, firstly, that it gives partial but continuous representation which, secondly, would be recognisable to the participants and reveal, thirdly, evidence of the assumptions and uncertainties of the camera operator through the chance interrelationships between action and camerawork.

This model is assessed in the case study in Chapter Three. This is done by means of a first-person account of continuity camera decisions, as well as a formal quantitative analysis. On the basis of these assessments it is concluded that continuity methods provide a coherent observation whose consistency is partly related to the structuring intentions of continuity, partly to prior knowledge of the ritual, and partly to the factor of the unforeseen, the unknown.

The model clearly describes the intentions and uncertainties of the camera operator. The prior knowledge of the ritual is revealed by the close framing and continuity with which the camera traces the action. Chance factors and occasional uncertainties about the significance and process of actions contrast with this.

The model needs greater clarity in certain respects. The relation with the anthropologist is not

dealt with by the model, and this affects decisions about how to treat unanticipated elements whose significance is not understood. This applies particularly to speech.

Since the model was assessed only in relation to a specific kind of small event, characterised chiefly by “intensive sociality”, conclusions about its relevance to other situations are difficult.

The uncertainty element of camera decisions also concerns space, in relation to the principle of the axis of action in continuity camera work. The model also needs to be more precise about space regarding the participant-but-observational position of the camera.

The model needs to be modified to take account of different cultural definitions of space. Cultural definitions of space need to be related to lens angle, since this affects continuity. The model should also be made more precise about visual/auditory perspective.

Chapter Four reveals that, despite the existence of definite continuity intentions in the camera work, and a coherent observation of the event which results from it, considerable and varied manipulations are required in editing to crystallise the potential of continuity into a convincing illusion of realism in the edited segment. This means that continuity camera work, as proposed by the model, provides a necessary but not sufficient condition for realist documentary narrative. The retention of some chance factors, and the exclusion of others in the edited segment, would seem to confirm this judgement. If correct, it means that other versions, which do not confirm the continuity tendencies of the unedited material, are possible. The representation of the ritual is conditioned by both the observational camerawork, and its place within the longer documentary.

The commentary tends to move the level of representation from the particular ritual to the

general case of ritual, to fit the conceptual framework of the documentary. This tendency is mitigated by the strongly narrative nature of the segment in relation to other sequences.

The change in level of representation which results from editing entails eliminating several elements. The signs of the aleatory or chance are partly omitted (including signs of the presence of McAllister and myself), partly retained. The commentary voice interprets the more accessible aspects of the ritual, and as such represents but obscures the presence of the cameraman.

The scenario of the longer documentary, and its signifying strategies, were conditioned by three factors. The more specific was my working relation with McAllister and the intentionally close fit between his research findings, and the more general were the perceived authority of conventions in documentary for its intended audience at the time, and lack of budget for a comprehensive treatment of the larger South African context.

Chapter Five compares the unedited material with the detailed ethnography written by Greg Holbrook (1986), to establish the research possibilities. The chapter outlines Holbrook's method of using the video, the kinds of responses it elicited, and the way the video may have shaped these responses.

The ethnography explains in great detail and sophistication the significance of the ritual. It outlines and applies a conceptual framework for analysing the ritual. The ritual is described in a similar degree of detail to that on the unedited video.

Holbrook's experiment also tests whether the model of camera work provides a record which is identifiable to the people it portrays.

The experiment tests this in one particular reflexive approach to research, i.e. respondent validation. Holbrook found an ambiguous relation between the video and the ritual participants' responses. Instead of stimulating memory through its observational clarity as we expected, the video seemed to anaesthetise memory.

Although Holbrook's resulting interpretation seems reliable, the validity of his interpretation is not clear. He did not include the qualitative dimensions of responses in his dissertation, or reveal through his writing the distinctions between on-camera and off-camera observation. The dissertation does not conclusively demonstrate whether the model is valid or not but does provoke some speculation leading to a need for further research.

The qualitative and quantitative influences of the video on the participants' memory of the event need to be established. If it is assumed that highly oral culture negotiates the interpretation of social meaning in a more flexible way than western written/visual culture, it may be supposed that the video had the effect of excluding the element of negotiation in defining the significance of the ritual.

This view is supported by both the permanent but partial nature of the video record, and its specific point of view as defined by both camera perspective as well as continuity method.

As measures of validation, the narrative elements outweigh the factors of chance and the relation of the observer to the people, in all three representations. This occurs to differing degrees in each.

Revised versions (written, visual or both) which may be made in future need a combination of participation, description, observation and interpretation. In particular, the linear, practical aspects of the ritual which the edited segment selected, need to be complemented by the

elements which more completely signify the belief system. The communal nature of the ritual should also be made clear. This hinges partly on how to integrate theoretical concepts of interpretation and the video's frames of observation.

If it is assumed that the re-edit should be structured so that its validity for the audience is maximised, then evidence of the participation of Rhumsha in a revised version is important.

The specific variables and general characteristics of material recorded via in-camera editing can, but need not be, evident in subsequent texts based on it.

In-camera editing in this case study was conditioned by a combination of variables categorised as anticipation, chance and intended method. This combination resulted in a representation, in the unedited video, that is arbitrary but accurate, realistic but incomplete.

The two texts derived from this representation seem to show a relation of variable dependence on the original. A reflexive relation between textmaker, unedited material and those represented, constituting editing in its expanded sense, introduced yet more variables whose effect cannot be accurately assessed, but which resulted in sophisticated interpretation in a written text.

A less thorough but more accessible narrative interpretation was made through editing in its restricted sense: the edited video segment.

Despite the operations of these variables, and the more accurate, complete and accessible interpretations to which they may lead, texts remain fixed according to their material nature, and are thus contingent to experiential, performative significance. This may be a necessary condition of their communicative value for a distant audience. The consequences of this

condition may however be mitigated if subsequent versions contain evidence of the elements of process, of chance, of relationships, of the expanded sense of editing: if they are, in other words, open texts. Variable relationships between texts and audiences could possibly, then, be explored more fully.

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Land Without Bread 1932; Dir. Luis Bunuel, Spain S.A. Distr, Documentary Educational Resources. 28 mins, snd, b/w.

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Nanook of the North 1976; Dir. Robert Flaherty. Prod, U.S. International Film Seminars. Distr, Films Inc. 65 mins, snd, b/w.

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The Nuer 1970; Dir. Hilary Harris and George Breidenbach. Prod. Robert Gardner and Hilary Harris, Harvard University Peabody Museum, Film Study Centre. Distr, McGraw-Hill Films. 74 mins snd, col.

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The Wodaabe 1988; Prod. and dir, Leslie Woodhead. Anthropologist, Mette Bovin. Exec prod, Rod Caird. Granada Television International Limited. 51 mins, snd, col.

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With These Hands 1986; New Internationalist, London. 33 mins, snd, col.

Zulu Zion; Part 10 in The Long Search 1977, Dir Mischa Scorer. Prod. Peter Montagnon. BBC-TV. 51 mins, snd, col.

B. Video documentaries: Graham Hayman (as producer, director, cameraman or editor).

8000 Families; 1989. Dir, camera and editing by Graham Hayman for the Human Rights Trust, Port Elizabeth.

Distr; Human Rights Trust; Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University. Low-band u-matic/Betacam SP. 26 mins, snd, col.

Narrates the detention or disappearance of five leading black activists. Profiles of the families, background of socio-economic conditions in the Port Elizabeth area. A fundraising vehicle, it ends with an on-camera appeal from the director of the Trust, Rory Riordan.

Beer Preparation in the Transkei 1988; Prod. and camera, Graham Hayman. Editing, Laura Cloete. Script by Cloete, Hayman and McAllister. Distr; Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University. Low-band u-matic, 18 mins, snd, col.

Describes the process of making traditional beer from maize, for a ritual at a homestead in the Shixini district of Transkei. On-camera narration by Hayman.

I am Clifford Abrahams, and This is Grahamstown; 1984, Prod, Graham Hayman. Camera; Keyan Tomaselli, Graham Hayman; Interviews, Don Pinnock, Graham Hayman; Editing, Graham Hayman. Dept of Journalism. Distr; Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University. Low-band u-matic, snd, col, 55 mins.

Beggar Clifford Abrahams narrates his life, through on-camera encounters, from a childhood of poverty, alcohol, danger, in three race segregated areas of Grahamstown. Made with the reflexive approach which shows crew frequently on camera, interviewing Abrahams and discussing the structure of the video. The sound track carries responses of Hayman to the process of making the video.

Kat River, The End of a Hope 1984; Prod, Jeff Peires. Editing, Graham Hayman. Distr; Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University. Low-band u-matic, 50 mins, snd, col.

Based on research by Peires in the Kat River area of the Eastern Cape, it outlines the history of the so-called "coloured" settlement up to their eviction from the area ceded to the Ciskei black homeland before independence. Includes interviews, commentary, historical re-creation.

Nyaka-Nyaka! Advice is Free 1988; Prod. and edit, Graham Hayman. Albany branch of the Black Sash. Distr; Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University; Black Sash. Low-band u-matic, 30 mins, snd, b/w,

A profile of the work of the Advice Office of the Black Sash. Contains interviews with translators, summarised case studies and observation of the cases dealt with in the Advice Office.

Shixini December; Responses to Poverty in the Transkei 1984; Graham Hayman and Patrick McAllister.

Camera, sound, editing, Graham Hayman. Distr; Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University.

Low band u-matic, 55 mins, snd, col.

Outlines the traditional economy and belief system of the Gcaleka in the Shixini district of Transkei homeland, their ritual responses to labour migration, and the likely effects of land rationalisation ("Betterment") in the area.

Siphila Ngomthandazo; We survive on prayer 1991; Produced by Hilde van Vlaenderen, camera and edit,

Graham Hayman. Rwantana Village Residents Association. Distr; Cory Library for Historical Research,

Rhodes University. 50 mins, VHS, sound, col, Xhosa commentary and interviews.

A guided tour for the camera conducted by the residents and parish priest of Rwantana village, detailing poor socioeconomic conditions and infrastructure.

The Video Letter 1991; Prod, Graham Hayman and Msokoli Leleki, Albany Council of Churches; edited by

Graham Hayman. Distr (restricted); Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University. Low-band

u-matic, 70 mins, snd, col, Xhosa commentary and interviews.

A group communication - interviews, songs - from each of five families to their relatives detained in SA prisons for political activity. Contains narration of some socioeconomic background covering the period of detention.

The Wheelchair Rally 1981; Dir, Camera and edit by Graham Hayman. Prod. Rotary service association. Distr;

Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University. Low-band u-matic, 20 mins, snd, col.

Made in 1981 (Year of the Disabled), it contains observational material of a publicity event: members of Rotary, acting as disabled people, demonstrate the need for architectural modifications for wheelchairs. The evidence of the observational material is reflexively confirmed and elaborated by interviews with actually disabled people watching the observational material.

APPENDIX A

Unedited Isipho shots, Day One with position code (P), shot length (S/L) and Segment, for Figures 1.to 4, Chapter Three.

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
1. P(1). Rhumsha fixing kraal fence, zoom out (VLS)	wind	S/L; 0,26 Sgmt; A.
2. P(1) pan, Rhumsha walking.	wind, voices	S/L; 0,11 Sgmt; A
3. P(1) man fixing fence.	wind, sticks breaking, voices	S/L; 0,15 Sgmt; A
4. P(1) man fixing fence.	wind	S/L; 0,21 Sgmt; A
5. P(2) homestead from opposite slope.	wind	S/L; 0,34 Sgmt; B
6. P(2) homestead from opposite slope;zoom in.	wind	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; B
7. P(2) homestead from slope; various figures.	wind	S/L; 0,23 Sgmt; B
8. Faulty. Accidental switch-on		S/L; 0,01 Sgmt; C
9. P(3) froth on beer barrels, interior		S/L; 0,26 Sgmt; D
10. P(3) beer barrels.	chickens, barrels	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; D
11. P(3) chickens on hut floor.	chickens, barrels	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; D
12. P(3) one woman straining beer.	chickens, beer straining	S/L; 0,11 Sgmt; D
13. P(3) hands of two women straining beer.	strain ing, voices	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; D

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
14. P(3) two women straining.	straining	S/L; 0,12 Sgmt; D
15. P(3) Beer froth.	straining, voices	S/L; 0,15 Sgmt; D
16. P(4) Faulty; Lens cap left on.	wind, our voices about the warning beep, dogs.	S/L; 0,54 Sgmt; E Change battery..
17. P(4) hut & door, distant fields and hills. Quick zoom; piles of firewood.	silent	S/L; 0,18 Sgmt; F
18. P(5) at kraal; woman at pot on fire; distant man.	voices in- side hut, wind.	S/L; 0,10 Sgmt; F
19. P(5) woman at pot	voices in- side hut, wind.	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; F
20. P(5) barrels on sled	voices, wind	S/L; 0,10 Sgmt; F
21. P(5) cattle pass kraal, pan left to woodpile	voices, chickens, grinding;	S/L; 0,21 Sgmt; F
22. P(5) tele; herdboys and cattle, pan left.	voices, chickens	S/L; 0,10 Sgmt; F
23. P(5) tele; pot and kraal fence; herdboys.	voices, chickens, grinding	S/L; 0,10 Sgmt; F
24. P(5) firewood, f/grnd; pull focus to cattle; pan right to road; pan left and zoom out.	voices, chickens, grinding	S/L; 0,40 Sgmt; F
25. P(5) road past garden; man with dogs arrives; zoom out.	grinding chickens, voices	S/L; 0,41 Sgmt; G

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
26. P(5) two men arrive from left (valley).	grinding voices, chickens	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; G
27. P(5) huts, distant fig- ure, dog f/grnd. Zoom out.	grinding voices, chickens	S/L; 0,23 Sgmt; G
28. P(6) Int hut;, men, girl & bowl.	conversation child mut- tering, our voices	S/L; 0,24 Sgmt; H
29. P(6) two men sitting.	conversation	S/L; 0,03 Sgmt; H
31. P(6) in hut; women, tea, etc.	conversation teacups.	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; H
32. P(6) men enter hut and greet. Woman leaves.	conversation child.	S/L; 0,38 Sgmt; H
33. P(6) tea cups, woman.	conversation child	S/L; 0,13 Sgmt; H
34. P(6) woman hands out tea to men.	conversation child	S/L; 0,12 Sgmt; H
35. P(6) people in hut; man drink- ing tea.	conversation	S/L; 0,26 Sgmt; H
36. P(6) man brings tea cup to woman sitting.	conversation teacups	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; H
37. P(6) man sits down, girl ex- its.	conversation child	S/L; 0,24 Sgmt; H
38. P(6) Rhumsha standing; pan to man, speaking. men get up.	conversation	S/L; 2,02 Sgmt; H
39. P(7) Rhumsha leaving hut; fol- low handheld.	wind, very loud and distorted	S/L; 0,18 Sgmt; I

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
40. P(8) group of men sitting at kraal fence (side). pan left, 1st reply, 2nd speech,	speeches, conversation. Our voices	S/L; 2,30 Sgmt; J
41. P(8) fence post, road,dogs; men arriving.	conversation wind	S/L; 0,10 Sgmt; J
42. P(8) group of men; new arrival sits.	conversation wind	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; J
43. P(8) man in brown coat speaks; pan to Rhumsha, reply, pan.	wind; speeches; conversation	S/L; 1,03 Sgmt; J
44. P(8) huts, men arriving.	wind; dis- tant sounds.	S/L; 0,12 Sgmt; J
45. P(8) group of men; new arrivals enter, greet. my finger pointing.	greeting new arrivals, jesting, laughter	S/L; 1,18 Sgmt; J
CHANGE TAPE; NO T-9;		
46. P(8) group; Waiting for the speech to start...	conversation	S/L; 0,11 Sgmt; J
47. P(8) pan to man in brown jersey; replies. Rhumsha speech.Pan to man in brown; reply.Pan to distant other guests	speeches and responses	S/L; 4,13 Sgmt; J
48. P(9) men stand and go up hill.	conversation wind	S/L; 0,24 Sgmt; K
49. P(5) Ext hut; Men enter.	wind	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; K
50. P(5) int main hut; men seated, pan to barrels, fire; pan to women, entering.	voices;	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; L

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
51. P(5) man seated; men getting up, dancing.	clapping, singing;	S/L; 1,04 Sgmt; L
52. P(5) women seated, others dancing; pan to whole group dancing.	singing, clapping, shouts	S/L; 1,08 Sgmt; L
53. P(5) man sitting, pan to men dancing, pan to women sitting.	singing & clapping, shouts	S/L; 0,28 Sgmt; L
54. P(5) group standing still. dance, pan to women.	Speech; singing, clapping continues	S/L; 1,20 Sgmt; L
55. P(10) ext hut; group standing singing and dancing; pan to men standing by kraal; pan back to group sing- ing.	singing, shouts	S/L; 1,54 Sgmt; M
56. P(10) men at kraal fence, cattle approaching. Pan to group. Pan to oxen en- tering kraal, some men following. Pan back to group, nearer; Rhumsha speaks, gestures to women; men go to kraal. Pat standing at gate.	Singing shouts Rhumsha speech, con- versation	S/L; 2,12 Sgmt; M
57. P(11) over fence; Rhumsha speaks; pan to group pre- paring to catch ox.	Rhumsha's invocation; conversation	S/L; 0,48 Sgmt; N
58. P(11) group catches ox's leg.	shouts;	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; N
59. P(11) looking along fence; ob- servers.	shouts;	S/L; 0,09 Sgmt; N

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
60. P(11) ox held by leg and tail; pulled over.	shouts;	S/L; 0,45 Sgmt; N
61. P(12) Rhumsha passes spear be- tween legs, stabs ox.	Bellows, cheers, com- ments	S/L; 0,24 Sgmt; 0
62. P(12) gateway; other cattle driven out; visitors sit- ting watching against fence.	shouts, com- ments	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; 0
63. P(12) gate; enter Rhumsha, pan to ox; Rhumsha grabs foreleg.	shouts, bellows	S/L; 0,19 Sgmt; 0
64. P(12) ox; man cuts hole wider, inserts arm.	bellows, grunts, com- ments	S/L; 2,42 Sgmt; 0
65. P(12) group holding head.	conversation	S/L; 0,06 Sgmt; 0
66. P(12) group holding ox's legs.	conversation	S/L; 0,08 Sgmt; 0
67. P(13) man with arm in ox; with- draws arm.	bellows, shouts;	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; 0
CHANGE TAPE; T-10		
68. P(12) man washing arm in bowl.	conversation	S/L; 0,20 Sgmt; 0
69. P(12) ox trying to get up; pan to people sitting at gate.	conversation	S/L; 1,01 Sgmt; 0
70. P(12) kraal fence, women in distance.	conversation	S/L; 0,06 Sgmt; 0

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
71. P(12) ox crouching, men grab it; struggles again.	shouts	S/L; 0,49 Sgmt; 0
72. P(14) group against fence; men sharpening knives; pan with more arrivals.	conversation	S/L; 0,31 Sgmt; P
73. P(14) ox from rear.	conversation	S/L; 0,10 Sgmt; P
74. P(15) men holding ox; man tests eye reflex. Men drag ox, turn it.	conversation	S/L; 0,50 Sgmt; P
75. P(16) from head; slitting throat.	cutting, conversation	S/L; 0,56 Sgmt; P
76. P(16) cutting, pulling off skin.	cutting, conversation	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; P
77. P(16) two men squatting shar- pening knives; tilt up to old men at fence.	conversation	S/L; 0,19 Sgmt; P
78. P(16) youths watching skinning; pan to carcass.	conversation	S/L; 0,17 Sgmt; P
79. P(16) skinning jaws.	conversation	S/L; 0,17 Sgmt; P
80. P(16) skinning foreleg.	conversation	S/L; 0,12 Sgmt; P
81. P(16) branches brought, fresh meat put on them. Wavy camera, left on, goes back to carcass (black first).	conversation (sound level dips)	S/L; 1,16 Sgmt; P
82. P(16) rolling over ribcage, cutting off neck.	conversation	S/L; 0,28 Sgmt; P

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
83. P(16) cutting off right foreleg.	conversation	S/L; 0,23 Sgmt; P
84. P(16) en bending over carcass, out of shot.	conversation	S/L; 0,07 Sgmt; P
85. P(16) taking off remainder of right leg, pan to bran- ches; leg being put down, pan back to carcass; in- tsonyama cut off?	conversation	S/L; 1,08 Sgmt; P
86. P(16) men watching, tilt to in- tsonyama	conversation	S/L; 0,13 Sgmt; P
87. P(16) pulling off intsonyama and putting it on bran- ches; pan back to car- cass.	conversation	S/L; 0,35 Sgmt; P
88. P(16) cutting below left foreleg, pulling off piece, pucutting on bran- ches.	conversation	S/L; 0,44 Sgmt; P
89. P(17) carcass, gateway and hut in b/grnd; pan with man arriving.	conversation	S/L; 0,54 Sgmt; P
90. P(18) carcass, rear view.	conversation	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; P
91. P(19) carcass, side view.	conversation	S/L; 0,11 Sgmt; P
92. P(19) cutting ribs with ax.	conversation	S/L; 0,36 Sgmt; P
93. P(19) cutting ribs.	conversation	S/L; 0,06 Sgmt; P
94. P(15) cutting ribs.	conversation	S/L; 0,24 Sgmt; P

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
95. P(13) to P(20) pots brought; cutting abdomen.	conversation	S/L; 1,03 Sgmt; P
96. P(13) boys , man with wood.	conversation	S/L; 0,06 Sgmt; Q
97. P(21). cutting abdomen, in- testines; pulling off ribs.	conversation	S/L; 1,31 Sgmt; P
98. P(21) man takes stomach skin to fence, spreads out.	conversation	S/L; 0,20 Sgmt; P
99. P(19) carcass; cutting.	conversation	S/L; 0,10 Sgmt; P
100. P(19) cutting abdomen, from op- posite side.	conversation	S/L; 0,17 Sgmt; P
101. P(19) collecting blood.	conversation	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; P
102. P(19) man & boy bringing bran- ches for fire.	conversation	S/L; 0,06 Sgmt; Q
103. P(19) separating intestines from stomach.	conversation	S/L; 0,38 Sgmt; P
104. P(19) cutting off abdomen skin, shifting stomach.	conversation	S/L; 0,23 Sgmt; P
105. P(19) cutting off stomach appendage (Pat's camera in shot).	conversation	S/L; 0,18 Sgmt; P
106. P(19) opening stomach, tipping out contents	conversation	S/L; 0,32 Sgmt; P

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
107. P(15-19) Rhumsha with stomach contents at gate; throws into gate; pan with Rhumsha to fence (black first).	Rhumsha; Ngena! (Enter!)	S/L; 0,22 Sgmt; R
CHANGE TAPE; T-11		
108. P(19) fire, boys against fence; pan to firewood, to old men.	conversation	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; P
109. P(19-21) approaching men hanging heart and lungs on gatepost.	conversation	S/L; 0,32 Sgmt; S
110. P(15) Man cutting up meat on branches.	conversation	S/L; 0,15 Sgmt; T
111. P(14) fire, young men; Rhumsha & helper put meat on fire.	conversation	S/L; 0,41 Sgmt; T
112. P(18) boys cleaning intestines.	conversation	S/L; 0,28 Sgmt; P
113. P(18) chopping up ribs , pan to fire.	conversation	S/L; 0,22 Sgmt; P, T
114. P(18) old men at fence, man cutting meat on branches.	conversation	S/L; 0,15 Sgmt; T
115. P(19) bringing cooked meat on branches for ukushwama at gate.	conversation	S/L; 0,28 Sgmt; V
116. P(19) cutting up ribs, man bringing branches for pieces.	conversation	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; P

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
117. P(19-15) gate; two men bring beakers, Rhumsha calls kin group; men sit, eat; women arrive.	conversation	S/L; 2,22 Sgmt; V
118. P(22) pan from gate; two men sitting eating, to young men and fire, men cut- ting ribs, kin group.	conversation	S/L; 0,48 Sgmt; T, V
119. P(22-16) kin groups; Rhumsha drinks first.	conversation	S/L; 0,40 Sgmt; V
120. P(22) women's group, pan to man, gate in b/grnd	conversation	S/L; 0,27 Sgmt; V
121. P(12) women's group, pan to men leaving men's group.	conversation	S/L; 0,20 Sgmt; V
122. P(12) Women's group at gate in kraal; men exit gate.	conversation	S/L; 0,08 Sgmt; V
123. P(12) thru fence; Rhumsha at ext women's circle with meat on branches.	conversation	S/L; 0,13 Sgmt; V
124. P(12) women's circle;in kraal, drinking.	conversation	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; V
125. P(14) Rhumsha putting meat on branches;pan to fire, pan to head and carcass.	conversation	S/L; 0,40 Sgmt; T
126. P(14) Putting more meat on branches;old men sitting eating.	conversation	S/L; 0,15 Sgmt; T

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
127. P(13) Rhumsha and mute kinsman drinking last of beer by gate.	conversation	S/L; 1,18 Sgmt; U, W
128. P(13) Rhumsha empties last of beer, takes beakers, chases women out.	conversation	S/L; 0,25 Sgmt; U, W
129. P(13) women leave.	conversation	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; V
130. P(23) man tending fire; man eating, f/grnd.	conversation	S/L; 0,17 Sgmt; T
131. P(23) men sitting eating (v. quick).	conversation	S/L; 0,02 Sgmt; U
132. P(23) stomach skin being put on fire.	conversation	S/L; 0,23 Sgmt; T
133. P(24) looking into kraal through gate, heart/lungs on right.	conversation	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; X
134. P(25) women's circle, meat on branches & sheep kraal.	conversation	S/L; 0,11 Sgmt; Y
135. P(26) women's circle.	conversation	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; Y
136. P(22) row of old men inside kraal fence.	conversation	S/L; 0,20 Sgmt; Z
137. P(15) men sitting eating.	conversation	S/L; 0,14 Sgmt; Z
138. P(23) men against fence, meat.	conversation	S/L; 0,13 Sgmt; Z
139. P(23) Along fence; dogs given meat.	conversation	S/L; 0,22 Sgmt; Z

PICTURE	SOUND	DATA
140. P(23) Faulty shot.	conversation	S/L; 0,01 Sgmt; ZA
141. P(23) Man gives meat to boy off-camera.	conversation	S/L; 0,16 Sgmt; Z
142. P(23) Pat and Richard;gives meat to boy.	conversation	S/L; 0,32 Sgmt; Z

END OF DAY ONE

APPENDIX B

Edited isipho sequence from "Shixini December"

Data; S/L; shot length
isi; original shot number

PICTURE	SYNC SOUND	COMMENTARY & SUBTITLES	DATA
50. gardens against skyline	birds	In Shixini, there is a close relationship between agricultural practice and the value system. In the gardens the green patches indicate the graves of the previous generation. The ancestral shades are worshipped and honoured	S/L;0,15 ----
51. kneeling figure, f/grnd; blanketed fig- ures against fence in b/grnd. Kneeling man leaves; Zoom out, figure walks past	remarks Crew voices off; (Rhumsha speech, and back- ground voices)	in rituals such as this one. I have called the Cirha clan to this house because I have been thinking of my late father. I did nothing about it because I was poor. I haven't been ill, but now I have decided to slaughter an ox for him. There is also beer.	S/L;0,46 isi40.
Pan left to end of group.			
52. int. foam on barrels	singing		S/L; 0,03 isi9
53.as above	as above		S/L; 0,03 isi10
54. int. hut; figures dancing, pan to people sitting, clap- ping	as above		S/L; 0,06 isi53

PICTURE	SYNC SOUND	COMMENTARY & SUBTITLES	DATA
55. ext. hut, people. pan to women seated between hut and kraal.	speech inside hut	(supered tr); Listen, son of Zibar- hile - we the amaCirha	S/L; 0,12 isi169
56. int. hut, people standing listening	speech (glitch edit)	thank you for this great deed. Your father is today in your thoughts and in your spirit. We thank you, Rhumsha - you are a man! Zibarhile was wor- shipped by our fathers - you, Rhumsha, are Zibarhile's seed and son. Truly, Zibarhile lives on!	S/L; 0,55 isi54
	comments singing starts again		
59. singing group in front of huts. Zoom out; mic visible	singing		S/L; 0,06 isi55
58. walking shot; cattle driven into kraal, men in foreground	singing fades out		isipho shot 56
59. as above, but profile; men approaching kraal, incl. Rhumsha. He enters gate.	shouts of men	(comm); In the kraal the man holding the sacrifice for his dead father calls to his ancestors.	S/L; 0,06 isi56

PICTURE	SYNC SOUND	COMMENTARY & SUBTITLES	DATA
60. over kraal fence; Rhumsha, back to camera, speaks. Other men and cattle in kraal. Pan left as he approaches cattle. Camera starts entering kraal	speech	(supered tr): I sacrifice today to my father, that he should strengthen me and let this homestead be prosperous. Do not bless me alone, but the whole Cirha clan.	S/L; 0,12 isi57
	confers with men		
61. thru gate. Ox on knees, held by tail, moved around.	shouts		S/L; 0,04 isi60
62. Rhumsha passes spear, stabs ox	Ox bellows, cheering		S/L; 0,05 isi61
63. men holding Ox's head.	buzz		S/L; 0,01 isi59
64. from gate; man with arm in ox's belly, pulls out arm	buzz	(comm); The bellowing of the ox tells them that the living have made contact with the shades of the departed.	S/L; 0,06 isi67
65. inside kraal, from ox's head; group gathered round, skinning ox	buzz		S/L; 0,02 isi75
66. two men sharpening knives on rock; tilt up to men sitting along kraal fence.	buzz		S/L; 0,03 isi77
67. men cutting up ox.	buzz	(comm); The piece of meat.... called "intsonyama", is cut off the right	S/L; 0,03 isi86
68. pan left; man carries meat away from carcass and puts it on branches.	buzz	foreleg. On this occasion, the branches of the sneezewood tree are used instead of	S/L; 0,05 isi87

PICTURE	SYNC SOUND	COMMENTARY & SUBTITLES	DATA
69. man making fire, men against kraal fence in b/grnd.Pan right.	buzz	plates	S/L; 0,07 isil08
70. MLS as above, different angle; fire burning; Rhumsha and helper put meat on fire.	dogs, shouts, fire.		S/L; 0,05 isil11
71. men hacking carcass	buzz		S/L; 0,02 isil13
72. towards kraal gate; men bring branches with cooked meat.	buzz	(comm); The intsonyama is cooked first, and ritually shared by the close relatives of	S/L; 0,05; isil15
73. kraal gate; another two men bring in four pots of beer.	buzz	the dead man. The first beer is drunk at this time.	S/L; 0,30 isil17
Group gathers round beer and meat.	Speech by Rhumsha, shouting and conversation.	(supered tr); Come forward, amaCirha and kinsmen!	
74. Women enter kraal gate and sit; pan rt over group.	buzz		S/L; 0,15 isil17
75. pan left from men's group to women's group.	buzz		S/L; 0,15 isil17
		(comm); The last of the beer is not drunk,	

PICTURE	SYNC SOUND	COMMENTARY & SUBTITLES	DATA
76. from kraal gate, low angle; men empty dregs of beer from pots onto ground. Rhumsha gathers empty pots.	conver- sation buzz, dogs fades out	but poured onto the ground, for the shades.	S/L; 0,16 isi128
77. Black screen, (supered Title; The second day of the sacrifice); mixing to LS man speaking in front of group sitting against kraal fence; others arrive.	fade in speech fade out speech	(comm); The whole community takes part in the event, and shows its approval in formal speeches (super tr); We want to thank you, Rhumsha, for honouring your father Zibarhile. He used to do..rituals before you. It is the custom to do so...You have kept up tradition. You have sons now...You have set an example for them. This will ensure that your home will prosper.	S/L; 1,16 isi199
		(comm); The society and economy of Shixini do not constitute a separate world.....	

APPENDIX C

Summary of the scenario of "Shixini December"

The scenario opens with vivid evocations of the rural environment and local economy of the coastal Shixini district of Transkei. Stock farming, agriculture, self-reliance constitute a simple economy with very few modern implements. This economy, however, is poised between an earlier, even more primitive hunter/gatherer economy which preceded it in this area, and a modern industrial economy, evident through artifacts. Social change is historically inevitable.

The polarity between local subsistence economy and distant industrial economy is repeated on a macro-level via maps and graphics showing the function of the Transkei as a labour reservoir for the South African industrial economy. Migrant labour is part and parcel of this economy.

The traditional way of life in the area, rooted in concern for the ancestors, is strongly manifested in rituals, which are themselves a specific instance of links between the local economy and belief system.

The alien nature and inevitability of the migrant labour system are outlined, particularly mine labouring. The annual return, coinciding with the summer harvest, is a time of rejoicing, reunion, feasting, and particularly beerdrinks. The communal nature of beermaking is echoed in the customary beerdrink, a formal occasion which unites, in a complex web the social patterns, relationships of kin, neighbours, local area and neighbouring areas.

One such beerdrink celebrates the returning migrant, and encourages him to be prepared to go again. Formal speeches spell out the attractions of the local value system, praise its cooperative and sharing ethic, warn against the dangers of the distant industrial/urban one, and attempt to keep migrants from the pull of urbanisation. The beerdrinks of various types are also the hub of social organisation, for work parties, for regional links, for social relationships. Interviews with locals exemplify the dangers of migrancy.

Furrows in the grass, marking out plots, indicate that the "betterment" land use system or Trust is planned for implementation in the area. This rationalisation scheme involves consolidating housing into clusters of greater concentration, re-allocating gardens and fields, and consolidating grazing lands into fenced camps. These changes are graphically indicated. The local inhabitants are greatly opposed to it, anticipating as a result only poverty, greater migrancy, more culling of stock, and the disappearance of

tradition. The Trust system is likely to result in additional costs for new housing, heavy demands on water and fuel sources, in the need for different hygiene customs.

Since the Trust will re-locate people near the store and the school, there will be greater involvement of the inhabitants in the industrial economy and a western belief system through schooling. The existing partial dependence of locals on some commercial products from the cash economy will increase.

The changed geographical relations of people will make the network of social relations, epitomised in the beerdrink, harder to maintain. These relationships, the basis of the economic interdependence and hence a bulwark of the local economy against the industrial one, will crumble. The process of gradual change, of new ways replacing old ones, as suggested in the prologue, will not only continue but will accelerate. The video ends with an appeal for democracy. Ends and means of economic and social issues should not be decided by remote government fiat, but should be decided, in keeping with the local belief system, by consultation and discussion in the communal manner.

APPENDIX D

Summary of the Rules of Continuity

This summary can give only a basic outline of the assumptions and purposes of continuity methods. Particular techniques vary greatly in particular situations. For the most complete and detailed exposition, see Mascelli (1965).

The aim of these rules is to present to the viewer an apparently natural, logical impression of smoothly developing action, without apparent jumps or omissions in space or in time. The basis of creating a logical development is selection, via camera work, of only the "significant aspects" of the action. Editing these shots together then attempts to persuade the viewer that the action is what the viewers would have seen had they been present. An immediate corollary is that signs of the presence of the camera should be effaced.

A further consideration is to allow the editor the opportunity to condense or maintain screen time in a scene at any point, while at the same time concealing this condensation (Baddeley 1975, 104).

Planning the continuity between camera shots is based on selecting the chief focus of interest (or main action) in any scene or sequence of activity, condensing it by shooting only sections of it.

At each camera switch-off when shooting main action, other complementary shots must be provided. These complementary shots can show

- the surroundings of the main action
- the main action itself, or
- parts of the main action
- other action happening somewhere else, supposedly simultaneously.
- larger or smaller framings of the main action

If these complementary shots are not made (regardless of whether the action continues), a break will be revealed in the apparent logic of space and time when the camera shots are edited together, indicating the break in time between camera shots, and thus the inevitably arbitrary (non-natural) way in which they are constructed.

Baddeley asserts that applying the rules of continuity rests on three types of judgement; "purely mechanical" rules and conventions; "careful individual judgement", and "purely artistic appreciation". The rules and conventions are, he asserts, based on logical progression, based on the way

people perceive a scene (Baddeley 1975, 96-100). A logical view of perception, and hence the "rules" of continuity, depends on an empirical notion of the cause and effect of actions and events (Baddeley 1975, 112; Mascelli 1965, 67).

RULES

1. Provide cutaways or reaction shots to go with the shot of the main action (Baddeley 1975, 111).

A cutaway is defined by Marner (1972, 62) as "... an observer of the main action or some shot related to the main action though not part of it". His inclusion of "an observer" describes also the "reaction" shot (Mascelli 1965, 102, 151; Baddeley 1975, 104).

The editor then has the choice of shortening the screen time of the "main action" shot by cutting a section out of the middle of the shot, and using the cutaway to conceal the join. Or, s/he can maintain the screen time of the main action by not using the cutaway.

2. Make shots of parallel action;

If there is more than one scene of action, and they are (or can be presented as) occurring simultaneously with the main action, these two scenes of action can then be edited in parallel. Sections of the development of each scene are shown alternately, and jumps resulting from this selection are concealed by this alternation. Shortening of one or both is also possible (Baddeley 1975, 112-113; Rabiger 1987, 75).

3. Maintain consistent screen direction and orientation

The aim of this rule is to maintain a consistent spatial orientation of the viewer to the events being shown. The direction of movement of people, vehicles or objects, or the camera, in any particular shot must be consistent with the movement a viewer of the real event would expect in the following and/or preceding shots (Baddeley 1975, 74; Marner 1972, 77ff; Mascelli 1965, 86ff). For instance, if a character is moving from right to left in shot A, s/he must continue in the same direction in shot B.

The techniques for maintaining screen direction depend on identifying an axis of action or imaginary line between the chief foci of interest in a shot.

Examples;

- in a shot of two people, the axis of action joins the two people.
- in a shot of one person, the axis joins the person and the camera (if s/he is standing still) or in the direction of travel (if s/he is moving).

- in a shot of three people, the axis of action shifts according to who is speaking to whom, or who is looking at whom.
- if the camera itself is in motion (forwards, backwards or sideways), the axis of action runs parallel with the direction of movement.

The techniques are then;

- shoot shots of action only from one side of the axis of action or "centre line" (Marner 1972, 77ff).
- deal with changes in the screen direction (or the axis of action), such as movement round corners or reversing direction by
 - :providing shots of neutral movement (Marner 1972, 66; Mascelli 1965, 92), that is, directly towards or away from the camera.
 - :providing reaction shots (inserting a shot of an observer of the action (Rabiger 1987, 75). See also 1. above)
 - :letting the subject exit frame at the end of one shot and re-enter frame near the start of the next shot from the same side as the exit was made.
 - :panning the camera with the moving subject until the change of direction has been completed (Mascelli 1965, 96).
 - :cheating the axis of action (Mascelli 1965, 100), by showing a different background.

The rule of direction also applies to the direction in which characters whether fictional or documentary, look out of screen, since the axis of action follows their look out of screen. Succeeding shots must match this eye-line.

A person's "look" off-screen is also useful because it allows cheating; "If we show a character looking out of screen in one shot, we can follow with a shot, not of what he is actually seeing, but of a scene taken in another place at another time" (Baddeley 1975, 96).

3. Change shot size and camera angle to show detail, context and interactions

Shot size refers to changes in the size of the subject's image in the screen from, for instance, wide or long shot (showing the whole body) to a mid-shot (from the waist up), or from this to a close-up (usually head-and-shoulders). The aim of the rule regarding shot size is to duplicate the supposed ways in which the human eye surveys a scene from a fixed point, i.e. oscillating from a grasp of the whole field of vision, to medium and small areas for examination or attention, and vice-versa (Baddeley 1975, 96, 101). These oscillations are presumed to happen instantaneously, i.e. in real time, without our being aware of any break while our attention is shifting.

Camera angle refers to the position of the camera relative to the subject, e.g directly from the front, to the side or from behind, and shows the imaginary observer (the audience) different points of view in relation to the scene.

The aim of the rule regarding camera angle is to duplicate the same process but, additionally, as the observer might walk around in it (Baddeley 1975, 98). The context, the details and any interactions within the scene would thus all be duplicated.

The same assumption about instantaneous shift of attention applies to changes of size, and in addition;

- if one is changed, the other should be changed (the change in angle is subject to the axis of action rule in 2. above), unless there are cutaways (Mascelli 1977, 55).
- changes in either shot size or angle should not be so little that a jump appears between the two shots, nor so great that the viewer loses spatial orientation. Thirty degrees is usually regarded as the minimum that the camera angle should be changed between shots to avoid an apparent jump (Burch 1973, 16; Baddeley 1975, 100; Reisz & Millar 1973, 220; Mascelli 1965, 57-58). Also, speed of movement in frame should be the same between changes in shot size (long shot and closeups).

Changes in size and angle have a further function, in allowing the editor to choose either to maintain screen time when editing together shots of different angles and/or size, or to condense it by shortening one or both shots. Naturally, the point at which the shots are edited can, especially in fiction, be chosen so as to imply various interactions between the subjects of the shots, or narrative progress from one to another.

APPENDIX E

The Large Syntagmatic of The Image Track
(from; Metz 1974, 146)

1. Autonomous Shot

Non-Chronological Syntagmas

2. Parallel syntagma
3. Bracket syntagma

Chronological syntagmas

4. Descriptive syntagmas

Narrative syntagmas (alternate and linear)

5. Alternate syntagma

Linear syntagmas

6. Scene

Sequences proper

7. Episodic sequence
8. Ordinary sequence

APPENDIX F

Summary; Holbrook (1986)

Background

The honours dissertation is one of five papers taken during the one-year honours degree. Holbrooks' 60-page dissertation (45 pages of text, 15 of bibliography and appendices), although in excess of the recommended length of an Arts Faculty honours dissertation at Rhodes University, is about average for actual dissertations. The dissertation is lodged in the Cory Library for Historical Research, Rhodes University.

Below is a summary of the paper, since it is too long to be reproduced in full. The summary is of course too brief to reveal the textual characteristics for which it is criticised in Chapter Five, but is sufficiently detailed to indicate the adequacy of the interpretation.

Isipho - "a gift to father" at a Gcaleka homestead.

by Greg Holbrook

1986

Preface and Acknowledgements.

The ritual happened in 1983, the fieldwork in 1986, and the video material stems from the cooperation of McAllister and Hayman. Holbrook took Mr B C Nongane as field assistant and interpreter, as well as a portable generator, monitor and video player to the homestead. The video material was popular and was screened many times, and people travelled from far away to see it. Informants were thus easy to find. The value of video in establishing spatial and temporal orientation is great, and the accuracy of its record permits detailed interpretation.

The hindrance of the video was the selectivity of its record. Informants found it difficult to "expand on events which had occurred outside the picture", notably what women did, since the camera had followed mostly the men's actions. Thus the role of women is not discussed in any detail, except where their actions coincided with those of men.

[The usual acknowledgements are included.]

Introduction.

Rhumsha Siwela's homestead is in the Transkei. In Dec. 1984 he conducted an isipho" (also calling it an idini) ritual as a gift to his late father. Other authors (Hammond-Tooke 1985, 55; Kuckertz 1984) call idini a piacular ritual (intended to restore health to the ill), but this ritual, while a sacrifice, was not idini.

Rhumsha's homestead is in the Dadeni subsection of the Mandluhtsha subward of the Shixini ward of the Willowvale district. Rhumsha was an affluent and respected person, a progressive farmer and an acting sub-headman. He could provide more food and drink for the ritual than could most of his neighbours.

Rhumsha's father Bharile, a second son adopted by his father's childless second wife, had started the homestead from scratch, inheriting from his father's second wife's homestead (genealogical table given). Mortuary rituals held for Bharile to date were;

- 1941; at the funeral, a goat slaughter (intlambezandla), without beer.

-1942; ukukhapha; Bharile was accompanied to the ancestors. This lasted 2 days; the speeches were different; the beast slaughtered should have been a bull, but was neutered on white men's advice in a stock improvement scheme.

-1951; ukubuyisa; the shade was brought back to the homestead. Lasted four days; the speeches were different from ukukhapha. The slaughter beast was an ox from his sister's lobola, and had bellowed when killed, indicating a successful ritual return of Bharile's shade to the homestead.

Rhumsha said that isipho was a necessary part of the mortuary cycle of rituals, although Bharile's shade had already been returned to the homestead. There is confusion about this ritual in sources by Bigalke (1969:86, 105-106), Hammond-Tooke (1981:144) and Kuckertz (1983:120, 1984:11), but Rhumsha's isipho does not seem to have been piacular, or resulting from dreams of Bharile.

While being an avowed traditionalist, Rhumsha was also a progressive farmer, using hybrid maize seed and a water-pump for irrigation. He attributed his good fortune and affluence to having performed rituals and otherwise followed custom. The isipho should be seen as a response to the benign influence of the shades, and a request for further help.

Each ritual seems to result in a two-way obligation between living and ancestors. During the ritual I suggest the living

are at one with the ideal world of the ancestors. It should be seen as an articulation between "a symbolically constructed order of meanings" (culture) and a "system of interpersonal relations" (society) (Kligman 1984:169).

I approach the ritual as a "cultural performance" in which homestead and actors are set apart from every-day life (Hammond-Tooke 1981:147), the attention of all is focussed on it by means of symbolic devices (McAllister 1986), and it is framed by a "set of propositions that organise experience in communicative events" (Brink 1978:383).

The frame concept firstly emphasises a communicative event, whether secular or religious (Hunt 1977), and secondly influences the way the performance is interpreted, and is examined in detail. "Frame" is exemplified in the particular way a ritual ox is slaughtered. [This local understanding is contrasted with the reaction of disgust and misunderstanding evident in a quoted description of the slaughter by a 19C British soldier, James Alexander, in Napier 1849: 142-143.]

The notion of ritual as an articulating device is extended to the junction between living and dead, when the live ox was transferred from the land of the living to the land of the ancestors, by "the performance of a set of actions carried out in a specified way in specified places". Although the ox remained with and was consumed by the living, its bellow (a "performative" act - Austin 1962) fused the two. The kraal as frame defined the spatial limits of this relationship (Godelier 1977: chap 7).

Turner's (1969) view of ritual as a process informs how, within isipho and between other mortuary rituals in the cycle, the relationship between living and ancestors changes. In isipho the changes in relationship take place in different frames (the largest being the homestead), each one "cued" (Brink 1978) by symbolic devices, such as Rhumsha's "information" speeches.

The allocation and place of consumption of meat and beer was also significant for distinguishing between men and women, clan and neighbours and age divisions.

The relationship of clan to abatshana (nephews and nieces) was not indicated in meat allocation, since their relation to clan by matriline was ambiguous; both of the clan and not of it. I hope to show that this ambiguity was reflected in uncertainty about participation in the ritual tasting (ukushwama).

Matrilineal links also reflected the choice of slaughter ox. Rhumsha's most precious possession, it was a descendant of Rhumsha's grandmother's cow, whose tail hairs are worn in time of sickness or danger (Hunter 1936/ 1979:235).

Rhumsha informed his kinsmen (agnatic cluster: Hammond-Tooke 1984,1985) of his intention to hold a ritual, and they spread the word in the area.

Day One - Friday

"Imini yokuwa kwenkomo - The day of the falling of the beast"

A. OUTSIDE THE KRAAL

A. (i) Preparation

Wood was collected for a special fire plus fresh branches of specific trees to be used as plates. Clan members arrived, drank tea, donned their ceremonial blankets, bead necklaces and headbands. Rhumsha made an informative speech to tell them of the ritual's purpose. They joined other men next to the kraal (Figure two). Rhumsha made another longer speech (Speech One), recounting the purpose.

These information speeches, short and direct, formal and serious in tone, were delivered at intervals through the ritual, defining the ritual frames.

Speeches defined the relation between living and ancestors, and thus the initial ritual frame. This speech (No. One) established the nature of the ritual; that it was not ukubuyisa, nor piacular. A spatial frame was also indicated by the place, on the edge of the homestead facing away.

A kinsman replied to each information speeches. Mangwamaza's reply (Speech 2), was ambiguous and metaphorical, expressing the conflict between traditional and western values (Mayer 1961/71:chap 2) by urging people to remove their shoes, a sign of western habits. He thus defined the way the ritual was to be done; by custom.

Subsequent speeches were either typically direct, as Rhumsha's, or ambiguous, as Mangwamaza's. Here, I suggest, the combination of speeches and place defined "the frame in which the ritual was to be performed and understood."

Joking conversation continued about the hide ropes needed to catch the ox. Non-clan neighbours were present, but would not join discussions about the ritual. More kinsmen arrived.

Rhumsha lead the men to the main hut for the invocation. A fire was burning on the hearth, with some tobacco.

A(ii) Invocation

The men, abashana (nephews and nieces) and clan women began to dance ukuxhentsa, a "shuffling, stamping step in an

anticlockwise direction", while people made a whooshing sound with their breath. Seated female affines clapped and sang. The activity was cyclical, building to a climax and pausing several times, for speeches.

In one of these speeches (No 3), a kinsman, Nongonyama, thanked Rhumsha but focusses on the agnatic cluster, not Rhumsha the individual (later speeches focus on "neighbours and even distant subwards"). A previous ritual by Bharile is referred to.

After more dancing, the group left the hut (a young man meanwhile herding the cattle towards the kraal) and went on to the inkundla (area between main house and kraal), from which non-clan were now excluded. Singing and dancing continued until Speech 4, by Rhumsha. Holding his father's spear, he addressed all the Cirha clan, living and ancestors. This matches the liminal spatial position, halfway between the hut (the living) and the kraal (ancestors). He and the men went forwards to the kraal, the women returned to the kraal.

B. INSIDE THE KRAAL

B. (i) Dedication - nikela.

Rhumsha entered after the cattle, and stood at the right entrance post, hung with the horns of previous ritual beasts. He delivered Speech 5 attended by his "nephew" (standing in for his absent son) and classificatory "uncle". The speech was addressed to the ancestors, especially his father, and revealed that the ox was an offering in return for which power of a personal kind was expected, for "building up" the homestead and the clan.

The ox was caught and tied with hide ropes, and positioned on its side in the middle of the kraal with its head facing the entrance.

B. (ii) Consecration

With symbolic manouvres of the spear through the legs, Rhumsha consecrated the ox (Kuckertz, Afr. Stud. Part 1:126). He jabbed it in the belly, then stabbed it and it bellowed, to exclamations from the watching men. The remaining cattle were driven from the kraal.

B (iii) Immolation

A man enlarged the small spear-cut with a knife, and inserted his whole arm into the ox. He grasped the two arteries (umxhelo - dorsal aorta and posterior vena cava) just below the backbone and damaged them by tearing (R. Bernard, zoologist, pers. comm.) The ox cried out, indicating success. The men again shouted approval.

The ox took some time to die, and the carcass was then skinned and butchered on the hide. The right foreleg was first cut off, to reveal a strip of meat underneath it (intsonyama), used in the first ritual tasting (ukushwama). A fire was made with special wood. Old men sat against the right fence waiting for the tasting and boys waited for their portions.

B. (iv) Throwing the chyme

Rhumsha took a handful of grass from the rumen, went outside and scattered it into the gateway, exclaiming "Nqena!" (go in!) as he did so. He said this indicated that not all cattle would be killed, and also requested strength to work for more.

The heart and lungs (umphapu) were hung on the gate post. At night they were removed to the main house. This seems to symbolise the sacred nature of the kraal, where the living sat with the ancestors. Other things indicating this were Rhumsha's speeches, the consecration and immolation of the ox, and the eating of the ox (thus consecrated to the ancestors) by the living.

B. (v) The ukushwama ritual tasting.

Rhumsha fetched three beakers of beer, thus summoning the clan to enter the kraal for the ukushwama. The women entered, avoiding the umphapu, and sat in a group inside the gate. The men sat nearby in two groups, young and old. Each group got a beaker of beer. Rhumsha called out for the tasting of meat and beer to begin; "Cirha people, nephews and nieces, come forward!"

B. (vi) The libation

When the tasting and drinking was finished, the little beer remaining was poured onto the manure by Rhumsha and a helper. Kuckertz (1983:310-311) indicates that the beer drinking pattern is reversed in a particular ritual; juniors drink first, elders last, who then offer the libation, thus making the ancestors the last and most senior to receive beer.

Rhumsha said anyone could make the libation. The pattern of drinking was "not observed in detail" [by the camera]. Rhumsha was the first to drink the beer, and his assistant was not a senior clansman. Kuckertz's explanation does not seem to apply.

A more likely explanation is to allow the shades to "taste" the beer, just as they are said to "taste" the meat in the hut at night, or the heart and lungs on the gatepost.

B. (vii) Doing Imibengo

Clansmen were then shown the amount of beer in the hut, and rejoined the rest. All meat (intsonyama and other) is cut into long strips or collops (imibengo) and roasted on the fire. Women do the same on their fire in the outside hearth. Eating continued until sunset.

C. OUTSIDE THE KRAAL

C. (i) The full barrel

After eating, men sat outside to drink beer, since it was customary at the homestead to drink only umshwamo beer inside the kraal.

Rhumsha brought five beakers of beer and made Speech 6, informal and lighthearted in tone, dealing with the allocation of the five beakers; three for visitors and two for clan. This divides the people communicating with the ancestors from those who were not, and the spatial orientation shifts to outside the kraal.

Drinking continued until darkness, when the clan gathered in the main house to drink a full, i.e. untouched barrel (iqcwele). This was distributed by the injoli (one male, one female) to the correct people. The kraal was now closed for the night, and the male injoli roasted the last two formal meat allocations, and served it with boiled maize cooked in the hut.

This ended the formalities of meat and beer, although more eating and drinking, singing and dancing, went on late into the night.

Day Two- Saturday

Imini yezipheko -

"The Day of Cooking"

Women and girls prepared food early, and bring more beer to the main hut. The young men returned the amaphapu to the gatepost, made fire and roasted collops. After eating, the helpers sat outside. Rhumsha brought four beakers named to accompany the meat; one per subward, one for visitors. The clan drank with their subward Dadeni.

The young men boiled meat of various kinds together. The oldest of the clan men tasted one of these, pronounced all meat as cooked, and gave the particular cut to the other men. Rhumsha then invited all men except clan into the kraal.

Drinking and eating on this day shifted focus from clan to neighbours and visitors, and from ancestors to living. On Day One the ancestors gave approval through the ox's bellow, on Day Two the eldest clansman signalled the start of eating. Rhumsha's next speech also indicated this.

The clan gathered again in the main house for ukuxhentsa dancing, then danced outside to the inkundla. Halfway to the kraal, Rhumsha stopped, and this time facing them, made Speech 7.

I suggest that this different orientation seems to indicate that Rhumsha is leaving the world of the living, whereas in Speech 4 he is entering the world of the ancestors. This distinction follows that between the ox and beer. The beer (called the "waters" of the ox) had not been given to the ancestors, unlike the ox. Only the ukushwamo beer had been drunk in the kraal, emphasised Rhumsha.

Clapping and singing continued as the crowd (now much larger than on Day One) approached the kraal. When halfway to the kraal (sic), they stopped and Mpungu, the nephew who had grown up at the homestead, made Speech 8 on behalf of all the abashana, facing the crowd.

The speech is made in a liminal position (midway from house to kraal) suiting Mpungu's liminality as a matrilateral kinsman. His allusive praise of Rhumsha's observance of custom indicates how this has cemented ties with the abashana. A reply was made by Ingonyama, another clansman, from far right of the front row, also referring to abashana.

Mpungu's speech could be seen as having a "crooked" (Rosaldo 1973) reference (it has many) to the ambiguity and importance of abashana in Gcaleka society, and particularly at an important patrilineal event.

As before, men and women then separated. In the kraal, boiled meat was served (on branch plates as before) to visitors sitting in subwards on the left of the gate, to the clan on the right. After eating, the men left to drink outside.

This drum of beer (Ingcwele yaseinkundlini, or pure beer drunk on the inkundla) preceded the thanksgiving speeches. Rhumsha made speech 10 (long and lighthearted) at the drum, while the injoli gathered beakers. A clansman stood with him, but no-one else seemed attentive. From this drum for men, he allocated beakers, six to clanswomen, six to other women. He mentions the large amount of beer.

Some time went by before the speakers were chosen.

The first of the thanks speeches, expected from each subward, came from Maxakathwane, assisted by Tyityi, who punctuated the speech (Speech 11) with the speaker's clan name, Mbamba.

Murmurs of approval ran through the crowd, and Tyityi also spoke. His speech (Speech 12) was punctuated by someone saying his clan name, Tshawe.

From Mali subward, Masebenza of the Ngosini clan spoke (Speech 13). Then Sipho, a close friend of Rhumsha's and an entertaining speaker, delivered Speech 14 quickly, unaccompanied and with gestures.

A number of other subwards made speeches. These are excluded for brevity. The host subwards did not speak. Formal proceedings ended with the distribution of the beer, after which some people went home, and some stayed for more celebration.

Day Three - Sunday

Imini yamangina - The Day of the Hooves"

A kraal fire was made to burn the hair off the hooves and to cook all remaining meat (sic). There was no formal entry to the kraal by the men, who ate, then left the kraal. Considerably fewer people were present.

Meat and beer were allocated on the basis of sex, not clan/non-clan. Men were divided into equal groups, and outside the kraal, the njoli indicated how much beer for each. Rhumsha made his information speech, No 15 (the initial information speeches were made later and later on each successive day). Rhumsha makes it clear the ritual is nearly ended, and refers to the beakers as fists. This metaphor could be applied to the ritual frame in its temporal, spatial and conceptual aspects. A closer metaphor is that the beakers are closed like fists; no more beer can enter them.

Day Four - Monday

Imini yokutshisa amathambo - The Day of Burning the Bones"

People rose late. Rhumsha and his neighbour Tshandu made a fire. Rhumsha said nothing associated with the ritual could leave the homestead, and the bones, branch plates and scraps were burnt, so that dogs would not remove them. The only remains were the horns (placed on the right gatepost), the hide to be made into ropes, and fat for the ropes. The last of the meat, including the heart (site of the "power" of the

ox), was boiled. This was predictably eaten by family. Close neighbours came to join the informal meal, representing the closure of the ritual frame, and the return to normality.

Conclusion

I have tried to show that this isipho is more than a gift, more than merely honouring the gods as in Christian divine service (Hammond-Tooke, 1985:59)

Two major clusters of symbolic devices were used to separate the homestead and participants from normal life. The first distinguishes the homestead from its wider context. Examples are wood for cooking and branches for plates. These, when burnt, also indicated reintegration of the homestead with its context. Various areas within the homestead are also indicated, creating frames within a frame, notably the kraal by the heart and lungs on the gatepost.

The second group of symbols distinguishes ritual participants. Cirha men and their nephews were made both distinctive and uniform by blankets, beads and headbands. Other symbols, e.g. bare feet, operated to ensure uniformity of non-clan.

Distinctiveness and uniformity operated clearly to separate clan from non-clan, but ambiguously for the abashana, nephews and nieces. These groups acted at times singly, at others in combination.

To illustrate this, three performances are examined; the ritual tasting, the speech of the nephews, and the thanks speeches.

Some said the ritual tasting was the most important event. Here clan and nephews combined. The speech of the nephew separates them from clan. The thanks speeches emphasises the difference between clan and nephews, but equal cooperation as well.

Further, speeches 11 to 14 (made by non-clan men, but organised by residential area) stressed that traditional rituals benefitted everyone, and cemented clan and neighbour affiliation. Many participants left at this point, but it seems they must have reflected on their society.

These three performances exemplify the process of moving from particular to general. The inner frames (marked by Rhumsha's speeches) moved from particular (clan) to marginal (abashana) to general (votes of thanks, non-clan and neighbours) or, from structure through marginality to structure.

On other levels, other processes occurred. Spatially, the tasting in the kraal (a significant clan area) happened in a

particular place. The nephew, a person marginal to the clan, was made a speech in a marginal place, the inkundla. The vote of thanks was made to one side of this, i.e. the outside. The audience for these speeches were scattered, compared to the ordered group for the nephews' speech. The thanks speeches also reflected on the society, fitting Turner's (1974: 240) description of the function of liminal situations, i.e. when "society takes cognizance of itself".

Cooking methods best illustrated the ritual process. Meat was roasted (Day One), boiled (Day Three), both roasted and boiled (Day Two).

These show how the ritual moved on spatial, temporal and culinary levels through conventionally defined states, indicating the ritual's "performative" (Gardner 1983) character. The nature of these states can, I suggest, be found on the level of meaning.

The meaning of these states is both unity of clan and unity of all Gcaleka clans and neighbourhoods. The ritual makes these compatible. Via the abatshana (sic) it shows that both individuality and social cohesion are possible. Further, the ethics of sharing, cooperation and economic interdependence (McAllister 1986: 29) vital to survival of homesteads, are given a model in the ritual. Relationships are made comprehensible in synoptic form (Geertz 1973:93) via the groups of clan, non-clan and the ambiguous matrilateral abashana.

The ritual is a model for reality. In this reality, I suggest, there is potential conflict, between the ideal and the reality of generosity. The ritual aims to realise the ideal of generosity. The role of Mpungu as umshana is crucial. He owes much to Rhumsha, having grown up there, but there is a potential conflict over inheritance. Since he (obliquely) refers to this in the ritual context, by approving the choice of ox (Rhumsha was the agnatic descendant of their common grandfather), he gives the ideal more force, making the ritual a model for reality, as well as of it.

APPENDIX G

Summary of Types of Frame Cue
and Examples in Holbrook (1986).

<u>Types</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Space	Kraal, kraal gatepost, hut, <u>in-kundla</u> (area between hut and kraal).
Objects	Spear, firewood, branch plates.
Food	Meat allocations, types of cooking (boiling and roasting), beer allocations.
Tone of speeches	Information/formal, oratorical/less formal).
Social organisation	Sexes, age, wards, clan/non-clan.
Dress	Formal (blankets, beads, headbands), informal (everyday dress); Western/traditional.
Actions	Slaughtering method, throwing the chyme, hanging heart and lungs on the gatepost, ritual tasting (<u>ukushwama</u>), libation, burning bones, branches and scraps.

APPENDIX H

Comparison of speech lengths and translations between Holbrook (1986) and edited segment in "Shixini December".

Speeches in Segment from
"Shixini December"

Speeches in Holbrook

shot sd51:

I have called the Cirha clan to this house because I have been thinking of my late father. I did nothing about it because I was poor. I haven't been ill, but now I have decided to slaughter an ox for him. There is also beer.

(This is the repeat version of Rhumsha's speech)

Speech 1, p15, Holbrook:

"You are wanted by me here as I already told those that came first. I thought that we would already be in the kraal when you arrived, but it happens that you came earlier. So, boMaBudaza (Cirha praise name) I have been thinking of my late father for three years but I couldn't succeed because of the drought. So with the little I got this year I thought it would be good to proceed. last year I thought in vain for a good harvest, so this year I had to force myself. I thought it was good for me to give a gift of an ox to my late father with beer. I have done ukubuyisa already. I have never been ill and this only came into my mind now. Now I am doing it.

shot sd55:

"Listen, son of Zibarhile - we the amaCirha ... (shot sd56) thank you for this great deed. Your father is today in your thoughts and in your spirit. We thank you, Rhumsha - you are a man! Zibarhile was worshipped by our fathers - you, Rhumsha, are Zibarhile's seed and son. Truly, Zibarhile lives on!"

Speech 3, p9, Holbrook:

"Aah Bharile! We thank you as the Cirha people for inviting us. We thank you for remembering the son of Siwela whose name is Bharile and who has always been on your mind. So we thank you Rhumsha, friend and son of Bharile. A man must be like that Siwela was invoked on your behalf so that Bharile could have a son. Because our fathers prayed, here you are. Even saying that you cannot remember properly is not true. We thank you.

shot sd60;
I sacrifice to day to my father, that he should strengthen me and let this homestead be prosperous. Do not bless me alone, but the whole Cirha clan.

Speech 5, p21, Holbrook;
"I am giving it to my father so that he may give me power. I am thinking of you to give me power so that this homestead can be built up and so that the other Cirha people can be built up".

shot sd73:
"Come forward, amaCirha and kinsmen!"

p24, Holbrook:
"Cirha people, nephews and nieces, come forward!"

shot sd77:
We want to thank you, Rhumsha, for honouring your father Zibarhile. He used to do rituals before you. It is the custom to do so. You have kept up tradition. You have sons now. You have set an example for them. This will ensure that your home will prosper.

Speech 11, p34, lines 6-10
(Total length 40 lines):
"Skyscraper, we thank you, we know that you are the son of Bharile and that Bharile was doing these rituals until your time Rhumsha. The charm of the homestead is in doing these rituals. Two or three sons may be born from from a father but we know, Skyscraper, that in your case this was not so. (He alludes to Rhumsha's lack of brothers to help him stage the ritual).

APPENDIX J

Speeches and a reply about our presence at the ritual.

Shot isi38 (Inside Hut)

Translation

Rhumsha;
Eh, thina masibuse ecaleni kothango. Iinkosi ezi zona ziya kusilinda apha endlini. Na phay' ecaleni kothango phofu azinyanyeki nganto.

Rhumsha;
Ah, we must worship by the fence. These people will wait here for us in the hut. They are not excluded [from joining us] even by the fence.

Indawo yesibini emandinixelele ngayo, Ezinkosi nje ngokuba zilapha nje, zingaph' emaCirheni kuMzikazi (). Ndiba lo nyaka ukuba ayingowesihlanu ndikhona ngowesithandathu. Sagqibelana (). Sasihamba apha.

The second thing I must tell you about; these people, as they are here, they live with the Cirha clan, at Mzikazi's homestead. I think this year is the fifth or the sixth that I am here, and we (McAllister and Rhumsha) last met about three years ago, and we were visiting around this area.

Basuk'eRini, Bahamba befota izisusa zesiXhosa nesiphina. Umtshotsho nentlombe nentonjane nomtshilo, yonke into engaba iyenziwa ngabantu.

They are from Grahamstown, they go around filming Xhosa events, any type, the boys dances, everything which is done by the people.

Bebe laph' izolo beze kucela lo mvume, ndathi, Hayi noko andina kunalela kuba le minyaka nilapha cac' ukuba le nto ivumelekile ngokuba ngekudala nichithiwe apha kwa (Donisi) ukuba le nto niyenzayo ayivumelekanga. Inokuba ke isemthethweni. Andi nakukwazi ukuthi mna hayi anifuneki apha andiyazi lo nto.

They were here yesterday, coming to ask that permission. I said, no I can't refuse you; because [of all] these years you have been here, it's clear that this is permitted, because you would have been chased away long ago, here at Donise (?) if what you are doing was not acceptable.

It's possible that it is within the regulations. I am unable to say, no you are not wanted here. I know nothing about that (which you want to do here).

Bathi ke bafuna ukuqaleka komcimbi phay' endlini. Intw' endiyicelileyo kubo zizibane ezi, ndathi kubo hayi aph' endlini sisebenza ngomlilo gha. Banga fot' ukufota oku xa siphumileyo, intw' ebebeyizele yileyo. Ndimile.

They say they want [to film] the beginning of the whole ceremony at the hut. What I have requested from them concerns these lights. I said no, here in the hut, we work with the fire only. They may film when we go out, that's what they came for. That's all for now.

Shot isi47 (Beside kraal)
Rhumsha: Ezinkosi zilapha elwandle kuMzikazi, Phaya - Mandithi ngunyaka wesithandathu (?) soloko zikhona ziphaya emaTshaweni. Zakha zaya nase zintlombeni.

Translation:
Rhumsha: These people are (staying) here by the sea at Mzikazi's place, there.. Let me say, this is the sixth year (?), they have always been there at Tshawe's place. They have been to various boys' dances.

Ke bendilapha izolo ndizokucela ukuba ziphuma eRini, zizokufunda amasiko esiXhosa. Zifota amasiko esiXhosa, izisusa ezinje - iintonjane, umkhwetha otshilayo wonke ke umxhentso, umtshotsho. Konk' into yesixhosa eyenziwayo, zifota yona. Saya kucela ke izolo, ndathi hayi, noko ndiya nazi ukunibona, kudala nilapha niyenza le nto.

So I was here yesterday coming to ask that ... They are from Grahamstown and they have come here to learn Xhosa customs. They film Xhosa customs, events, such as boys dances, initiates dancing, all types of dance, every Xhosa thing done, they film. We went to ask permission yesterday, and I said, no it's OK, at least I know you by sight. You have been here a long time, doing this.

Ukuba ibingeyomvume le nto ngekudala (?) kubonakala ukuba yimvume kuba ubona ndiselapha nje kudala ndinibona phaya ezantsi elwandle.

If it was not permitted, it would have long (?). It appears that it is permitted, because, as true as you see me here, I have seen them regularly down by the sea.

Nditheth' ukuba ke, bathi bakuba lapha namhlanje nangomso I (ofisi) zode ziphele.

What I say is, they say they will be here for today and tomorrow, until (the tasks ?) are finished.

Reply:
Hayi, naxa ndisitsho nje akukho nkcaso kodwa ke ngabo

Reply:
No, even though I say so, there's no objection, but they are the ones who object

<p>aba nenkcaso ukuthi bakugqiba baphinde basichase, babone ukuba thina siya lungisa xa senza lento - asibhatalisi kanti ke thina asibhatalisi kwezi zinto sizenzayo, sizenza ngamandla ethu la sithath' imali kubo. Bafan' ukuthi ke xa bethath' ifoto basinike le mali babon' ukuba he! Aba bantu baya hlupheka nyani. Into nayo abavumi basibone ukuba siya hlipheka. Kaloku senz' amasiko oobawo, ke asizo walahla ngenxa yokuba silambile, kufuneka siwenze.</p>	<p>in that, when they finish, they object again... They see that we are doing this for our forefathers. We don't charge for attending when we do these things, we do them with the money we earned by our own efforts, working for them (white people). Now, when they film they are sup- posed to give us money, be- cause they can see that, Hey! these people are really poor! We are performing the customs of our forefathers, so we are not going to for- sake them because we starve. We have to do them.</p>
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