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# Challenges for Issues Concerning the Filming of Visual Sensibilities: The Case of Clinically-Oriented Ethnographic Filming.

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## I. Introduction

This paper concerns the topic of newly focused issues on visual sensibilities in ethnographic films from a new perspective. This includes discussions on certain aspects of the problems of variability in the context of the filming and display of visual anthropological works with special reference to clinically-oriented ethnographic documentary films. By doing so, the paper tries to recontextualize the basic issues discussed in the epoch-making works of Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead.<sup>1</sup> In particular, this paper is situated within the emerging theoretical debate of the logic/sensibility framework — and its evaluation in cultural terms — that has been undergoing a process of trials and errors in ethnographic filmmaking. This new orientation challenges structuralist/poststructuralist models of human mentalities and their collective socio-cultural operations. Whereas analyses based on the latter have been concerned with the criticism against unobserved or unnoticed postcolonialist mindsets on the part of anthropological viewers and filmmakers, the new framework suspends the critique in that it tends to doubt and suppress any visual anthropological attempt as in the “colonial hegemonic eyes” for the exotic in emotion evocative filmic scenes of trance-induced actions, religious

cults etc. To challenge that type of criticism, we seek new filmic possibilities for vividly attaining real or even to some degree surreal/virtual expressions/representations of people's states of mind or psychic processes as they unfold over the sequences of human behavior. This paper tries to elaborate the potentiality of a constructive contribution of this new orientation in visual anthropology by proposing a sub-categorical new denominator for the "filming processes of the human mind." The analytical focus is primarily on filming within the framework of academic research rather than of fiction cinema, although, as will be discussed concisely later, the subject of this paper may be relevant also to the latter for certain reasons that are related to the issue of the inevitability of the inducement of art-form even in the case of objectivity-oriented ethnographic filmmaking.

Critical analyses of the variable features of visual anthropological projects require very complex arguments ranging from natural realism, post-colonial Orientalism, intrusive aspects of "shooting" other people in filming, ethical and political correctness, variation in value orientations

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<sup>1</sup> Bateson, Gregory "Notes on the Photographs and Captions." In Bateson, G & Mead, Margaret *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*. Special publications of the New York Academy of Sciences, v. 2, 1942. Bateson, G. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. Ballantine, 1972. Miyasaka, Keizo "Shashin ni yoru Jikken-teki Minzokushi: Bateson no Shiso," *Gendai Shiso*, Vol.12-12, 1984:230-249. If we review earlier visual anthropological works — such as Hockings, Paul. (Ed.) *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. Mouton, 1975, or Taylor, L.(Ed.) *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R. 1990-1994*. Routledge, 1994 — with the insights of a newer trend in visual anthropology — as is exemplified by Pink, Sarah *Doing Visual Ethnography: images, media and representation in research* London: Sage. Revised and expanded 2nd edition. London: Sage, 2007 — we will be able to grasp the potential epistemological shift of this relatively young area of research. My point here is that we can go deeper to reach a new "root paradigm" latent in this new trend by focusing on clinical settings as one promising arena for visual anthropology and clinical issues that are able to offer an ethically valid space for furthering filmic inquiries of the people's culture from researchers' positions. In line with this interest in visual anthropology and clinically-oriented ethnographic films, some of the ideas in this paper derived from the occasion for displaying some of Bateson's Bali films at Keio University, on June 18, 2009, which I organized as part of a symposium on "Gregory Bateson: An Ecology of Mind and Aesthetic Sensibility." His daughter, the anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson gave her keynote speech as an eloquent informant-researcher on Bateson's seminal works.

and sentiments among subcategories of the population of the people such as those related to gender differences, different perspectives between filmmakers and spectators, reality/the symbolic/fantasy nature of visual images, etc. In order to deal with such new issues on their own terms, I would like to limit these complex phenomena to the range of a few analytically delineated levels and attain a horizon of simplicity or limited complexity. This limitation should supposedly help me to construct a new typological model of the visual sensibilities of human experience, which could be related to certain trends in the neuroscientific research on the embodiment of the human mind via emotions.

## **II. Written Texts versus Visual Images: the Issues on Visual sensibilities**

Ethnographic presentations, in terms of the anthropologist's own language — in the form of written papers and monographs in particular — have been considered to be the ultimate form of cultural understanding with supplementary aids of photographs and audio-visually recorded data. In spite of cultural critiques against the solid basis of ethnographic authority in the pursuit of a supposed realism-form of representation, which overwhelmed the discourses of postcolonial deconstruction of ethnographers' latent hegemonial and objectivity damaging power over native people (their informants) in the 1980s, written ethnographic representation per se seems to remain as the primary and ultimate form for understanding other cultures, world-views and the sentiments of others which may unfold in observed behavioral patterns. As compared to visual materials ranging from fragmentary bits to more or less professionally and consciously edited visual anthropological films, ethnographic writing can clarify the cultural logic of other people at large with reference to the holistic description/analysis of social organizational patterns as well as ecological adaptation processes to the ways of life, or folkways, as embedded in habits and beliefs.

Visual anthropological filmmaking ideally presupposes ordinary ethnographic fieldwork. In other words, visual anthropological filming can validly be started only after the core of the written ethnography is

completed. For, without the aids of oral narration or written short interpretations derived from the written text of ethnography, sequences of visual images that capture people's ways of life in each concrete behavioral sequence — such as a marriage ceremony, for example — may not be able to bear on the cultural logic at issue. At the very least, the anthropologist or anthropological filmmaker has to refer clearly, via narration or captions, to what kind of anthropological theory of culture she/he follows to make a visual anthropological work — such as structural functionalism or feminist cultural theory for multivocality across genders (e.g. “Masai Women,” (BBC, 1974) by an anthropological filmmaker, Melissa Llewelyn-Davies ) — so that the audience can contextualize the sequences of visual images against the background of the supposedly holistic reference to the cultural whole per se. As Ruby specified, what is represented in the whole sequences of filmic images should be put in the context of a given culture as a whole, or at least, constitutes a meaningful part of it. Furthermore, a clarified explication of the anthropological research methods used — especially the visual anthropological method — is needed within the filmic representation. Moreover, relevant anthropological idioms and concepts should be used in explanatory subtitles, besides the clarification of cultural theory through which visual description is constructed and edited.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, filmed behaviors of the people in a given culture can reveal the analogue whole [see footnote (3)] much more vividly than their written counterparts. This vividness often invites emotional involvement on the side of the spectators, who, for instance, may by themselves independently perceive sentiments that appeared in native people's facial expressions. The visual mode of representation is thus directly emotion-laden compared to written representation which tries to induce the reader to reach states of sentiments presupposed by the author through literary metaphoric experience-near devices for orienting emotions not revealed in visual-directness but in reading-indirectness.<sup>3</sup> As Damasio suggests, the former's

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<sup>2</sup> Ruby, Jay “Is an ethnographic film a filmic ethnography?” *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* II (2), 1975: 104-111. Ruby, J. *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film & Anthropology*. University of Chicago Press, 2000.

visual sensibilities interact with thought and action that derive from other senses in a synthetic co-arousal, which may, in an on-going operation of neural networks, constitute the neuroscientific ontology for the embodiment of the human mind. To put it simply, films are more emotion- or sensibility-bound resulting in an embodied reality, whereas texts are more logic-bound at an analytical level retaining the momentum for disembodiment. However, the issue of the different modes of different understanding mechanisms — those of visual image mode versus those of literary mode — is far more complicated and therefore may resist such generalization. To avoid this, we may need to consider what we may call the dimension of the hypermedia, where the textual and the visual come

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<sup>3</sup> In *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*. Basic Books, 1999, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that via linguistic metaphors, especially primary ones, mental images deriving from the human motor-sensory domain can be mounted on subjective experience; neural networks experience which supports the cognitive unconsciousness prepares the ontological basis for the embodiment of the mind, and visually mediated sensibility may consolidate its subjective meaning-centered experience on the viscerally real, embodied mind. This idea is situated within the neuroscientific findings of Damasio, A. R. (*The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*. 2000.) Gregory Bateson's idea of "analogue" could be modified and recontextualized with reference to the above neuroscientific line of inquiry: In this light, the "analog whole" means, first, the world unfolded in front of a person as an actor-viewer via her/his engaged senses in the form of embodied immediate presence; and second, the whole picture of that world when presented in the form of filming rather than its textual interpretations. Following Bateson's ideas, the analogue is the iconic part of information flows — which contains messages/meta-messages implied in mutual facial expressions, ethos or ethonomical emotion-laden mutual actions — as compared to the digital which is information coded by natural language in human communication. The analogue cannot represent negation as such; it has to cite first what it means to negate, and in terms of syntactic placement in a purely iconic sequence of information, it can finally connote a negation of the cited iconic incident. The digital, on the other hand, can directly denote a negation by using a special linguistic category of negation. The existence of the linguistic category of negation tends to accelerate the idealist-fundamentalist-orientation to the extreme end, causing those idealists to perform sacrificial rituals against others in their presence. The digital in this sense may inherently contain some elimination on the part of the analogue whole, a sort of autopsy for partial disembodiment. (Bateson, G. "analogue and digital communication." In Alfred G. Smith (Ed.) *Communication and Culture: Readings in the Codes of Human Interaction*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966: 125-31.)

together. On the other hand, if we limit our concern to one analytical level, such simplification may be justified to a considerable extent. Here, I would like to follow this line of argument by trying to go as far as possible in focusing on this analytical level.

Photographs and filmed scenes contain not only some details of the filmmaker's focused attention but also other details that may be cut off from the perception by the filmmaker, through which an educated audience may be able to reach some alternative understanding at least in part different from that of the filmmaker's own. This is primarily related to the different nature of information processing modalities between the visual and linguistic modes of grasping what is represented, which constitutes a further domain of research at a different analytical level. This level has been scrutinized by experimental psychological investigations recently in conjunction with neuroscience, and exemplified as one area of research at CARLS: i.e. visual modes of representation may be more efficient in promoting swift understanding than textual interpretations. It also may be the case, depending on circumstances and conditions, that the filming of people's behavior sequences can convey the experience-near vivid appeal for empathic understanding of their inner states of mind, such as a painful experience as exemplified in some medical therapies or in the altered states of consciousness in ritual séances for healing illness, etc. The issue here is further relevant to what neuroscience has investigated for the more detailed understanding of the embodiment of the human mind in terms of a synthetic interaction beyond the cognition/emotion divide, because spectators' visual experience largely depends on the unconscious operations of neural networks in order to sustain embodied emotional responses that are bridged to conscious thinking to attain some overall understanding. In this sense, it may be said that the neural networks give ontological bases for what classical theory named mimicry. The mimetic faculty for emphatic incorporation of the human experience is set in motion in the face of others' emotionally expressive behaviors, observed in direct immediate presence or even in the form of filmic visual presence.

This paper underlies a certain orientation towards a possible synthetic integration between phenomenological experiential anthropology and the scopes of the new neurosciences as partly discussed under the rubric of "brain, mind, and culture" in cultural anthropology and critical

neuroscience,<sup>4</sup> but, given the space limitations, the following discussion does not go further towards that horizon. Instead, a different typology of the audience's filmic experience will be discussed in relation to the change of the idea of the human mind elicited by new findings of neuroscience.

### **III. The Deconstructionist Turn in Visual Anthropology and Its Underlying Latent Model of the Human Mind**

The deconstructionists' reexamination of natural realism-oriented ethnography had emerged between the late 1970s to the early 80s by criticizing the essentialist paradigm; this radical challenge also questioned the "authenticity" of ethnographic or ethnographically-oriented documentary films. Major journals in visual anthropology have been replete with visual discourse analyses and visual ethnographic works themselves have often contained reflexive considerations of as well as visual critiques against the "colonialist-hegemonial eyes."<sup>5</sup> It was in this reflexive context that the ethnographically oriented movies — films such as those by Trinh T. Minh-ha, [e.g. "Reassemblage," 1982] — obtained impressive room for their postcolonial "authenticity", just as some surrealistic textual ethnography might be considered to be indicative of a politically correct, less problematic ethnographic representation of others in contrast to classical or modernist ethnographies. Through the deconstructionist turn in sociocultural anthropology and its repercussions

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<sup>4</sup> Reyna, Stephen P. *Connections: Brain, mind, and culture in a social anthropology*. Routledge, 2002. Raz, Amir. Presentation on critical neuroscience at the workshop on Mind, Brain, and Society, held on Sept. 12, 2008, McGill University.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the famous anthropological documentary film, "*Cannibal Tours*," 1987, by Dennis O'Rourke describes Western tourists as consuming a barbaric cannibal fantasy in their tour to the Iatmul in the Sepik River. A large number of critical articles on the issue raised by the movie appeared in anthropology and visual anthropology journals; see for instance, Edward Bruner, "Of Cannibals, Tourists, and Ethnography," *Cultural Anthropology*, 4(4), 1989:438-445. See also, MacCannell, Dean "Cannibal Tours." In Taylor L. (Ed.) op. cit., 99-114.



on visual anthropology in the 1980s and 90s and up to now, different and contradictory meta-discourses have been offered on what should be considered good ethnographic film as well as its desirable social use. The issues of visual documentation/representation, the fact/the factitious/the fictitious centering around different types of ethnographic films thus have cast on us the chaotic states of contradictory consciousness, and the problematic aspects of the fundamental assumptions of ethnographic films have remained unresolved. Furthermore, ethical considerations and requirements for filming people of other cultures become intermingled with these complex problems.

Despite the difficulties raised by the deconstructionist critique, visual anthropological works have extensively been produced with a variety of orientations ranging from those of naïve realism to those of epistemological sophistication. Some of them may move us to a great degree, recalling the prototype of the power of visual sensibilities that enable us to capture people's ways of life very vividly — others may not. However, the difficulties remain the same, and the deconstructionist critique cannot be overcome. Perhaps, in Japan, this difficult situation may have been twisted: This partly derived from a different developmental process of visual anthropological endeavors in Japan. As compared to the history of visual anthropology in Europe and North America, we can point out that the characteristic features of the development of ethnographically-oriented documentary film in this country had consisted in the salience of Japanese TV production crews such as the *Eizo-Kiroku* crew working with NTV, who have from early on been affiliated with Japanese anthropologists such as with the late professor Masao Oka for doing research among the Eskimos (now the Inuit). The socio-economic-cultural factors of this country, in a way, have prevented from “authentic social usage of authentic ethnographic films,” if we take the deconstructionist view. On the one hand, academically-oriented positions have not been influential over mass-media-based documentary filmmakers. On the other, the latter also had as primary motives efforts towards the artistic and poetic capturing of the external documentary reality, with the artists' eyes beyond the camera lenses, rather than using those of a mere faithful recorder.<sup>6</sup> To a not negligible degree, this has caused a shortage of epistemological reflection and serious rethinking of visual anthropological practices, resulting in a

divide between academic critics and actual filmmakers including consequent generations of visual anthropologists who remained few since in the 1950s.

Despite the eloquent importance of the deconstructionist's meta-epistemological standpoint, there have been considerable shortcomings. Critiques have pointed out to all ranges of negative potentialities on the side of the filming agency of the anthropologist who inevitably fails to overcome the problematic hegemonial relationship with others while shooting with his/her cameras. However, the deconstructionist critics seldom have presented alternative positive ways, especially in concrete terms, for attaining politically correct as well as viscerally realistic sequences of visual images. Aside from the ethical considerations, we still need to attempt to capture people's trance state in terms of visual images of an academic kind. The shortcomings may lie in the limitation concerning the latent model of the human mind on the side of the deconstructionist position as well as concerning its primary focus on the viewer/producer. The latent assumption of the human mind in this position is that of the strong cognitivist's one, where reason should overcome irrational emotions since these tend to introduce epistemological biases and noises that damage critical and reflexive standpoints. The human mind there, so to speak, never sits in the visceral state of embodiment. Viewers' faculty for sight — relevant to visual perception — is not connected to other sensory modalities. It only concerns reason of *theoria* without the actual individual body.

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<sup>6</sup> This Japanese situation still has had some unique positive effects for attaining different qualities of anthropology-oriented films. For instance, the concept of "visual image" as was called *eizo* in Japanese might have been unique since its appearance in the Meiji period; for, in response to the introduction to *takie* films in the 1920-30s, the special connotation has been added to the original meaning culminating in the work of the 1960s. This concept may play an important role in the different development of senses-engaged visual anthropology in this country. See Delpi-Adler, F, Maeda, F, & Miysaka, K. "1960 nendai Nihon no 'Eizo' Geijyutsu to Rinri," Newsletter 15, Center for Integrated Research on the Mind, Keio University, Oct. 2006:2-6. I had also a close contact on Mr. Susumu Noro for my interview-sessions, inquiring with him the anthropological nature of his activities for ethnographic filming during his days with NTV as well as those with the group, "*Eizo Kiroku*."

It has been recently scrutinized in certain trends in neuroscience that a purely cognitive approach may not be supported by evidence-based neuroscientific advanced research. The eye-privileged approach of the former overlooks the integrative power of embodiment synthesizing cognition and emotions through corresponding loops of neural networks.<sup>7</sup> A man of sight could be simultaneously a man of emotion and action. Accordingly, if we overcome the above shortcomings of the deconstructionist by criticizing the latent model of the human mind as a one-sided typology of the viewer/audience, and if we can elaborate the alternative model that may compensate for the deconstructionist's assumptions, we may be able to frame a completely new criteria for dealing with the difficulties that have been so far recognized in the enterprise of ethnographic filmmaking.

#### **IV. Clinically-Oriented Ethnographic Film As a Visual Source of Engaged Sensory-Narrative Understanding**

To proceed further along the above-mentioned line of thought, I will specifically focus on clinically-oriented films with an emphasis on the "filming processes of the human mind." By this term, I designate any filmic sequences in which a filmmaker tries to capture inner psychic states of mind in other people that are latent in their behaviors. I am mainly concerned with academic, clinical-medical, and transpsychiatric films.

First, I take up certain issues raised by the critique of the deconstructionist position and elucidate them in the context of clinical interrelationships. By examining particular clinically-oriented films, I refer to such issues as those of the ethically validated processes of establishing reliable relationships between the filmed objects (patients or clients asking for a therapy or healing) and the filming investigator (clinical researcher or medical anthropologist), the aspect of the differences in interpretation

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<sup>7</sup> Sobchack, Vivian *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. University of California Press, 2004. Antonio R. Damasio *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*. Harcourt, 2003. Damasio, A. R. op. cit. . 2000.

among different reviewers and audiences (which makes the problem of political correctness more complicated), and the issue on how to evaluate the significance of fictional presentations of real clinical cases. Second, based on this first set of issues, I highlight the necessity of filming visual sensibilities, focusing on the case of clinically-oriented ethnographic films. For the films of this genre inevitably have to involve the “filming processes of the human mind,” which — along with sensory-narrative sequences — has to engage the senses of the viewer-audience on a more complex level of visual sensibilities in the pursuit of an emphatically embodied understanding.

When we pay attention in particular to clinically-oriented ethnographic films, we are struck by the co-existence of radically different evaluations — including ethical ones — of the same films. This may reveal important factors related to the multiplicity of displaying contexts as well as the various development processes of “clinical-ethnographically sound attitudes” towards filming and representing patients.

Such works may contain elements of reflexive processes of interrelationships between patients and healers in the filmmakers’ own cultures with reference to visual documentation, which may in turn be reflected over the processes of filmmaking of, for instance, healing sessions in other cultures. The following film on Indian healing rituals with reference to a particular family is a very suggestive example for our discussion.<sup>8</sup> The film, titled “*Kusum*,” has been produced by a psychiatrist-anthropologist who first tried to make use of footage of the therapeutic processes with his own patients in his industrialized home country, Finland. His patients were soon accustomed to this type of videotaping circumstance with no apparent complaints, and some of them even reviewed the video-recorded sessions together with the psychiatrist, which worked successfully in improving the therapeutic effects. He said, this

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<sup>8</sup> Pakaslahti, Antti, *Kusum*. 2000. I had an intensive occasion to interview him after a conference in the advanced institute of transcultural psychiatry at McGill, in Montréal in May of 2004. According to Allan Young, he saw this film when he was with David MacDougall in Berlin as a highly recommendable ethnographic film.

videotaping occasionally contributed even to facilitating the disclosure of patients' hidden psychological problems. Gradually, he has become confident in the significance of such video-taping in his clinical sessions not only for the reconstruction and compensation that he might have overlooked (for instance, non-verbal expressions that might be symptomatic of hidden psychological conflicts) but also for facilitating the therapeutic process itself; if only he had not damaged his patients' trust by not obtaining their eventual agreements, the filming and its reviewing would have had a reflexive effect on therapeutic efficacy, according to his later accounts. When a certain TV broadcasting company asked him to produce a film of patients with particular psychiatric and psychological symptoms such as phobia, he succeeded in working with a particular patient to shoot one aspect of her daily life with an arrangement of keeping private settings away from the filming. During that process, he visited an ethnographic and documentary festival, and understood that what he was trying to do would be the very ethnographic filmmaking of the realist kind. He took a course on filmmaking on a part-time basis, and by doing so, he realized the convergence between clinically-oriented filmmaking and that of ethnographic documentation. So, he tried to present his film not only for himself and his patients, but also for TV programs, and for the ethnographic festivals, which confirmed his recognition that his clinical film fell into the same category as ethnographic film. He then became engaged in several years of transcultural psychiatric fieldwork in India, on a short-term basis, eventually focusing on a particular healer and his ritual group. He then encountered a girl who seemed to have severe psychological problems and her family, and he decided to seek an opportunity for filming this family in relation to their contact with the particular healer. He received a grant and located a filming crew, and made two trips, one for a pilot study, the other for the main filming — (such two-fold trips are similar to the production of other documentary films such as the case of the Dutch crew for filming daily life among members in an Indian circus). With two cameras and his professionally trained filming crew, the psychiatrist-anthropologist acted as a producer.

Thus, clinically-oriented ethnographic films have not only been displayed in closed professional circles, but also in some ethnographic documentary film festivals, or in classrooms for teaching medical

anthropology, or museums of art and ethnology for the general public, or even in some TV programs.

The aspects of thickness of visual description and readability in terms of comprehensible cultural backgrounds tend to fluctuate due to the nature of variability of these contexts of representation and display. As for the above film on the Indian family and the healer, when displayed for a group of clinicians, it may be read as lacking certain contexts of clinically relevant background, as it did not mention the possibility of domestic violence and sexual abuse that might have occurred in the family according to the girl's confession disclosed to the psychiatrist-anthropologist. Some transcultural psychiatrists, on the other hand, see the irreversible power relationships between the filmmaker psychiatrist-anthropologist and the indigenous people as problematic. According to such views, the exposure of confidential clinical reality to the general public other than clinicians with the possible negligence of clinical responsibility in the face of patients in need of care is unethical, whereas Indian psychiatrists do not find any problem the former detect, and think that the film is very useful in revealing certain aspects of Indian indigenous healing practice. This film is available in archives of visual anthropology and has been deemed by visual anthropologist David MacDougall as an interesting ethnographic film. So do the range of ethically salient issues, which would become relevant to the evaluation of visual anthropological films for the audience. The same clinically-oriented ethnographic films and photographs, again, will be understood and evaluated quite differently by different types of audience in various displaying contexts.

In this regard, it would be suggestive to discuss films made as theatrical reconstructions of clinical cases, which are usually regarded as factitious or fictitious rather than clinical-ethnographic. One of the contemporary opinion leaders in the field of French ethnopsychiatry, Tobin Nathan, (a student of George Devereux's), makes use of the fiction drama method for reconstructing his real clinical therapeutic sessions. He hires professional actors and actresses to act as patients, their families, and relevant surrounding people, and his therapeutic team, and himself show up in these sorts of reconstructed dramas. These dramas are used to make trainees understand the methods of his ethnopsychiatric therapy and the symbolic processes of anthropologically pronounced indigenous illness cosmologies

of his patients from different immigrational cultural backgrounds who act like some seminar reporters to make their own points rather than as patients awaiting a doctors' diagnosis. Although he generally aims at a faithful reconstruction of certain exemplary clinical cases in the form of play in order to protect patients' privacies (not many clinicians may feel uncomfortable), there are aspects of rewritten and revised syntheses in producing clinical dramas. To make people understand the multiple realities of transcultural therapy, the social use of a fiction-like framework may in certain contexts work positively.<sup>9</sup> Literally, the fictitious may give rise to the essence of the factual.

Thus, we may observe the variability of contexts in displaying clinically-oriented ethnographic films that oscillate between visual documentation/representation and the fact/the factitious/the fictitious depending on viewers' and filmmakers' shifting perspectives. This variability has been growing in our age of increasing influences of globally interacting media. By focusing on this variability, the features of the basic epistemological and methodological issues once discussed in the epoch-making works by Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead can be reformulated against the background of contemporary reflexive perspectives and the changing ethical standards.

Bateson and Mead have discussed the appropriate angle and position of the filming camera in different ways;<sup>10</sup> the former puts emphasis on the anthropological filmmaker's interacting filmic perspective that might result from the coordinated embodiment of his/her embeddedness in the interactional context of the people to be filmed. Mead, on the other hand, stressed the importance of objectively fixed cameras that could shoot from as many different directions and angles as possible to exceed human observational perspectives. Bateson thought the effect of the presence of

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<sup>9</sup> Corin, Ellen, "Playing with Limits: Tobie Nathan's Evolving Paradigm in Ethnopsychiatry." *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 34, Sep., 1997:345-58. Nathan, Tobie *Tasha-no Kyoki* (Japanese Translation). Misuzu-shobo, 2005. Nathan visited Osaka and Tokyo in Dec. in 2003, and showed his film in one of the 3 lectures in Tokyo.

<sup>10</sup> Brand, Steward (Ed.) Bateson, G & Mead, M. "For God's Sake, Margaret: Conversation with Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead." *The Co-Evolution Quarterly*, Summer, 1976:22-44.

the camera as well as the filmmaker soon could be minimized among his Balinese fellows, but, substantially most of those he shot seem to have been selected from those who had a close rapport with him and Mead. They asked the people to perform their ritual in daytime instead of nighttime for the sake of filmmaking. They tried to use the filming as a means of discovering the hidden interactive patterns and filming was at the same time the means of exploration. These issues are fundamental ones for reconsidering our contemporary understanding of ethnographically-oriented filmmaking, particularly the provoking problem of the clinically-oriented ethnographic one. The technological context of filming has advanced considerably since the late 1930s when Bateson and Mead strove to visually grasp Balinese culture. The basic issues they charted in relation to interactional research settings, however, have remained deeply connected with the issues concerning whether visual-sequences of unfolding the analogue whole constitute primarily a representation of discourses bounded by filming/filmed relationships in the Foucauldian sense, or else they constitute the semiosis of visual sensibilities vividly engaging viewer's/audience's senses to the ultimate emphatic visceral reality of the filmed incident. It is within the genre of clinically-oriented ethnographic filming that our discussions on the above issues culminate, given that clinical-medical contextualization of human interaction inevitably comes up in condensed fashion with the salience of both the changeable on-going negotiations of the nature of therapeutic relationships between the patient(s) and a clinician (possibly clinicians) as well as the empathetic sustaining of the relationships if only both sides continue to interact regardless of the asymmetrical power distribution between the two. When the filming person coincides with the clinician himself as was the case with the Finish psychiatrist mentioned above, we will see the intricate issues concerned in this article being manifested in a condensed way. It is suggestive and very likely to be maintained that the filmed clinical sessions might contribute to a reflexive understanding of what would after all be the problematic of the sessions at issue and promote a desirably modified involvement in the subsequent sessions even on the filmed side of the patient(s). Not only audio-recorded parts of the therapeutic processes, but also visually recorded ones enveloped with visual sensibilities are indispensable to promoting the above reflexivity. To put it differently, not



only narrative sequences auditorily recorded, but also facial expressions, body postures, or other mutually responsive movements will be necessary to unfold during narrative sequences, which convey visually elicited sensory-motor reactions on the side of the reviewers. These two parts constitute together what we call sensory-narrative sequences. Both are the indispensable elements within what is called clinically-oriented ethnographic films as is presented in the footage of “*Heart Burst*,” for example.<sup>11</sup> Without them, even if humanism-oriented films are at the core powerless, and with them, even if controversial, they are nevertheless worth watching. New insightful films, such as multi-handicapped documentary ones, or visual narratives for documentary bioethics, have all been successful with the very recognition of such visual sensibilities.<sup>12</sup>

Clinically-oriented ethnographic films most inevitably pursue what we may call the “filming processes of the human mind,” where ethical concerns are part and parcel of the process of the unfolding of visceral reality and embodied states of mind via visual sensibilities. By refiguring

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<sup>11</sup> The film was produced by a French Canadian filmmaker in collaboration with McGill-based medical anthropologist, Danielle Groleau, (English version, 2008), which describes the difficulties of compliance on the part of the patients. She made use of the narrative-based interviews postulated by Allan Young [Groleau, D. Kirmayer, L., & Young A. “The McGill Illness Narrative Interview (MINI).” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 43(4), 2006: 697-717]. Accordingly, the film consists largely of the narrative sequences supported by its visual sensibilities. This film mainly targeted an audience of medical students and trainees aiming at a more reflexive understanding of patients’ illness narratives and their painful experiential realities in the context of therapeutic interventions. The film also has received much appreciation from the patients and their families.

<sup>12</sup> Snyder, Sharon & Mitchell, David “The Visual Foucauldian: Institutional Coercion and Surveillance in Frederick Wiseman’s Multi-handicapped Documentary Series.” *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 24 (3/4), 2003:291-308. Stys, John C. “Documentary Bioethics: Visual Narratives for Generation X and Y,” *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 27(1), 2006:57-66.

<sup>13</sup> Besides neuroscience, critical examinations of the works of Walter Benjamin are also suggestive for our purpose. See for instance, Suvin, Darko “The Arrested Moment in Benjamin’s ‘Theses’: Epistemology vs. Politics, Image vs. Story.” *Neohelicon*, XXV III/I, 2002:177-194.

<sup>14</sup> Pink, S. *The Future of Visual Anthropology: Engaging the Senses*. Routledge, 2006

our understanding of the power of visual images with reference to new findings and theories in neuroscience as well as to classical theoretical discourses,<sup>13</sup> we can carry on with our critical examination of medically oriented films of this kind in order to establish a new set of criteria for consolidating the new trends in visual anthropology as found for instance in the works of Sarah Pink.<sup>14</sup>

## **V. Necessary Features of the New Orientation Towards Visceral Visual Ethnographic Film**

Finally, I would like to try to chart some of the necessary features of a new generation of ethnographic films, which capture the visceral reality of other people's states of mind in their behavioral, relational and sociocultural settings.

First, the external features outside of or prior to those of the film-media specific, so to speak, ontological basis: besides the necessary features of an anthropology-ethnography based edition to keep the necessary parts together to reflect the cultural context, it is necessary for a visual (and clinical) ethnographer to include at least indicative parts of the filming processes and the forming relationship between the filmmaker and her/his subject(s) in the released version of the film itself so that her/his viewer/audience can receive, through the film's visual sensibilities, the meta-messages embodied and given off by the filmed persons. Sequences of narrative interaction should be included at least minimally, which, again, help to attain the quality of visual sensibilities. Besides, essential parts of conflict-laden processes should be included, perhaps, by using Victor Turner's anthropological idea of social drama.

However, the most important are the necessary features ontologically unfolded on the plane of the medium of footages. If so, one may ask what are the ideal conditions and features to produce highly sensible visual experience through ethnographic filming in order to promote the audience's empathic insight and emotional involvement in the events that the film tries to represent.

In this case, it would be important to pay attention to the different

orders of time over the sequences of visual images. As the filming researcher tries to capture the dynamic process of the transforming states of mind with a camera on the side of the people in question, she/he may get involved in the collective cultural phenomena of induced trance. The camera angle trembles back and forth to dynamically follow the trance movement of the native participants in the séance. The audience notices the change of the order of time and this transfiguration into altered states of consciousness simulates the rhythm of possessed mind and bodily movement. In order to vibrate as a participant-filmmaker to every nuanced aspect of this trance-oriented cultural experience rather than to keep some aloof distance from the people in the midst of trance, trembling angles of the camera would turn out to be a very appropriate bodily art for shooting the phenomena in question, i.e. the keying process of transformation of the ordinary mode of experience into that of the extraordinary. At this point, the renunciation of a stable camera angle and its fixed position occurs and despite the fact that such renunciation tends to cause objections from natural realism-oriented visual anthropologists, it would be the remarkably skillful technique to make the audience understand the power of trance and vibrate synchronically with such the overwhelming collective excitement. According to this focal idea, in order to attain the far-reaching quality of highly accelerated states of embodied understanding/participatory empathic involvement, the juxtaposition of and effective shift between the distinguishable orders of time with the differently accelerated rhythm are an indispensable axis of ethnographic filmmaking, though this seems to contradict the framework of natural realism in academically oriented ethnographic films. Thus, this juxtaposition of different orders of time in transitional unfolding via the sudden increase or delay of the velocity of motion speed of strings of scenes — slow motion — should constitute an important aspect for the kind of ethnographic filmic sequences that try to capture the different phases of the states of the human mind as it unfolds on such an occasion as a healing ritual.

To allow ethnographic films to acquire more visual sensibilities that facilitate the audience's emotion-laden experience as the basis for empathic understanding the filmmaker need to attain another — reflexive — condition, that is, the juxtaposition of and oscillation between emotion-laden experience and reflection from distance: the movement of coming

back and forth between subjective involvement and objective distance-taking.

These criteria are to be validated latently in a new alternative model of the human mind that corresponds to current neuroscientific discoveries as well as to the everlasting necessities for communication of human experiential realities across cultures and their social barriers from those who struggle to understand fundamental human conditions. At this pioneering stage, we need to include the question of the research topic, as an indispensable part of inquiry in visual anthropology, concerning how the viewer-audience receives embodied messages through ethnographic films. The answer to this question requires an advanced interdisciplinary approach, including neuroscientific inquiry, in order to understand the interrelationship between visual sensibilities and those of the other senses. In short, we need a new model of the human mind with a particular emphasis on its perceptual manifestation on the screen, which is deeply intertwined with the way visual sensibilities are embedded in the filming process.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> I propose a new project on an anthropological-interdisciplinary study of the history of the “filming processes of the human mind.” The first step of this project would consist of an archival research of old academic anthropological, psychological, and transpsychiatric films such as those that capture trance-induced rituals, various forms of what has been called culture-bound syndromes, etc. [for instance, *Pizzica: La Taranta* (Gianfranco Mingozzi.1962) as compared to the films on Zar cults, or *La Moindre des Choses* (directed by Nicolas Philibert 2003, which includes the scenes of the experimental psychiatric clinic, La Borde) as contrasted with a visual anthropological film on the Bethel House in Urakawa (by Karen Nakamura, 2008)]. Neuroscientific research will be relevant when we try to compare parallel sequences of these films by experimental criteria concerning the multiplicity of the viewer/audience’s differential experience.