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I would like, in this discussion, to explore a shift in how certain problems in the study of culture have come to be conceptualized. These problems may best be understood by examining how one label, "visual anthropology," led to the creation of another, "the anthropology of visual communication." In order to delineate and examine some of the arguments, problems, and methods involved in this shift it will be helpful for me to cite, and to use as my explanatory fulcrum, the work as well as the persona of Margaret Mead.

I am doing this on an occasion meant to honor her, but am aware that even that act — as so often happens with Dr. Mead — inevitably gets mixed up with a review of the history and problems in communications and anthropology. I should add that I am aware that, even as we try to develop a history in this field, we also are in many ways that same history.

To introduce some of these issues in the history of communications study, let me quote from an informant whose comments and life history may lay the groundwork for certain of the problems I will be talking about. Some of you may still remember a television series of several years ago called *The American Family*. It consisted of 12 one-hour film presentations. One of the major participants of that visual event was Mrs. Patricia Loud, the mother of that "American" family. In a letter to some of her acquaintances which she subsequently made public, Mrs. Loud wrote:

Margaret Mead, bless her friendly voice, has written glowingly that the series constituted some sort of breakthrough, a demonstration of a new tool for use in sociology and anthropology. Having been the object of that tool, I think I am competent to say that it won't work. . . .

Later in her letter she continues:

Like Kafka's prisoner, I am frightened, confused . . . I find myself shrinking in defense, not only from critics and detractors, but from friends, sympathizers and, finally, myself. . . . The truth is starting to dawn on me that we have been ground through the big media machine and are coming out entertainment. The treatment of us as objects and things instead of people has caused us wildly anxious days and nights. But I would do it again if, in fact, I could just be sure that it did what the producer said it was supposed to do. If we failed, was it because of my family, the editing, the publicity, or because public television doesn't educate? If we failed, what role did the limitations of film and TV tape play? Can electronic media really arouse awareness and critical faculties? Did we, family and net-

work alike, serve up great slices of ourselves—irretrievable slices—that only serve to entertain briefly, to titillate, and diminish into nothing?

Margaret Mead did not photograph, edit, or produce this visual event that Pat Loud speaks of. But in ways that I will describe she can be understood to be a major influence in this and other attempts to show a family in the context of television. More importantly, her work over the past fifty years can help us to understand many of the questions that Pat Loud's cry of distress raised for her (Loud 1974).

There are, it seems to me, at least three basic premises which Mrs. Loud's letter forces us to examine. First is our deeply held and largely unexamined notion that all or most photographs and, in particular, motion pictures are a mirror of the people, objects, and events that these media record photochemically. Second is the questionable logic of the jump we make when we say that the resultant photographic image could be, should be, and most often is something called "real," "reality," or "truth." A third concern, which is central to Pat Loud personally, and increasingly to all people studied or observed by cameras for television, whether for science, politics, or art, is the effect of being, as she puts it, "the object of that tool."

When *The American Family* was first shown on American television in 1972, mass media critics, psychoanalysts, sociologists, and historians as well as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The New York Times* felt compelled to comment. Almost all—except Margaret—expressed dismay, upset, and even anger over the series. Many of these strong feelings were no doubt occasioned by the films themselves—by the way they were advertised and presented as well as by the events depicted in them. But much of the upset was also caused, I believe, by the fact that Margaret Mead said publicly, and with approval, that this notion of depicting a family on television was a worthwhile, revolutionary, daring, and possibly fruitful step in the use of the mass media. She even compared the idea of presenting a family on television to the idea of the novel, suggesting that it might, if we learned to use it, have a similar impact upon the culture within which we live.

Interestingly enough, in October 1976 the United Church of Christ, the Public Broadcasting System, and Westinghouse Television will present a series titled *Six Families*, in which the same thing that was tried in the Loud family series will now be done on a comparative basis. It seems that most of the objections of social scientists to the Loud family series were that this use of "real" people on TV was unethical, immoral, and indecent. It made, many people argued, a nation of prurient Peeping Toms out of the American people. It is of course "the church" which in our society can take initiative and argue that an examination of how people live, shown on TV, is not only not Peeping Tom-

Sol Worth (1922–1977) was the founding Editor of *Studies*. This paper was presented at a Symposium honoring the work of Margaret Mead at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in Boston, February 20, 1976.

ism but the most moral kind of act for a mass medium. We will have to see whether social scientists, TV critics, and newspapers will even notice this second instance of an American family.

The problem for those who heard or read what Margaret Mead said about this new use of film—whether they were academics, newspaper people, or even subjects—was that we were just beginning to understand what Bateson and Mead had said in 1942. We were just beginning to accept the idea that photographs could be taken and used seriously, as an artistic as well as a scientific event. We were not ready to acknowledge that we were beyond the point of being excited by the fact that a camera worked at all. It was, after all, understood as early as 1900 that photographs and motion pictures could be more than a record of data and that they were always less than what we saw with our eyes. Let us look at how it started.

The first set of photographs called motion pictures was made by Edward Muybridge in 1877, as scientific evidence of a very serious kind. He invented a process for showing things in motion in order to settle a bet for Governor Leland Stanford of California about whether horses had all four feet off the ground when they ran at a gallop. Our popular myth about cinema and truth started here. If the motion picture camera showed it—everyone seemed to, and wanted to, believe—it had to be so. Edison in the United States and Daguerre in Europe invented more capable machines for taking motion pictures, and, interestingly enough, the first films made with those primitive motion picture cameras between 1895 and 1900 had much of the spirit of what is still called ethnographic filming. They presented what the early filmmakers advertised as “the world as it really was.” Lumière’s first film showed French workers in the Peugeot auto factory outside Paris lining up to punch a time clock. Edison’s first film showed his assistant in the act of sneezing. Both Edison and Lumière went on from there to depict other “real” and “documentary” scenes of people walking in the street, bathing at the beach, eating, embarking on a train, and so on.

The issue of reality in film was already being argued in 1901—not by scientists or artists but by film manufacturers. The Riley Brothers catalog of 1900–1901 states:

The films listed here are the very best quality. They are clean and sharp and full of vigor. They are properly treated in the course of manufacture and do not leave the celluloid. None of the subjects have been “faked.” All are genuine photographs taken without *pre-arrangement* and are consequently most natural.

The notion of a systematically made ethnographic record of the geographic and physical environment of a city—in a style conforming to ideas promulgated by Collier (1967)—was also being advertised and sold in 1901. The Edison catalog for that year states:

New York in a Blizzard. Our camera is revolved from right to left and takes in Madison Square, Madison Square Garden, looks up Broadway from south to north, passes the Fifth Avenue Hotel and ends looking down 23rd Street.

Such a film could have been made with an ethnographic soundtrack on instructions given to modern ethnofilmakers by archivists in the United States and several countries in Western Europe.

We have, it seems, come a long way from the days when just being able to make a picture—moving or still—of strange or familiar people in our own or far-away lands doing exotic things was excuse enough for lugging a camera to the field or to our living rooms. In those earlier times, from 1895 to about 1920, the term “visual anthropology” had not yet been coined. People just took pictures, most often to “prove” that the people and places they were lecturing about or studying actually existed. In some cases, they took pictures so that when they returned to their own homes they could, in greater detail and with more time study what these people and things looked like. Archaeologists quite early—around 1900—began to use this new miracle machine. They found the camera not only quicker than making copy drawings of the artifacts they uncovered, but more accurate—truer to life, or to artifact. I believe that it was from the use to which archaeologists put photographs that cultural anthropology developed its first, and still extremely important, conceptual paradigm about the use of pictures: that the purpose of taking pictures in the field is to show the “truth” about whatever it was the picture purported to be of—an arrowhead, a potsherd, a house, a person, a dance, a ceremony, or any other behavior that people could perform, and cameras record, in the same spatial frame. The subtle shift that took place when we expanded on the role of photography in anthropology and archaeology, from the use of a photo of an arrowhead or a potsherd as evidence of existence to the use of a photograph of people as evidence of human behavior, is a particularly important and unexamined aspect in the history of social science, and especially in that of anthropology.

A conceptual difficulty that we now face is based on the fact that the avowals of truth in photography made in the 1901 film catalogs now seem self-evident to us. In fact, a major problem in thinking about the use of photography in social science today is not that photographs are not true, but that that is not the purpose we use them for. One of the clearest expressions of this dilemma, and one that shaped much of my own think-

ing about the uses of photography in social science, can be found in the appendix to *Growth and Culture* (1951), by Mead and McGregor, based on the photographic work of Bateson and Mead in Bali. Mead writes:

Anthropological field work is based upon the assumption that human behavior is systematic . . . that in such research the principal tool is consciousness of pattern [and] that the anthropologist brings to this work a training in the expectation of form.

Mead then explains how the photographs taken in Bali were used. Of some 25,000 still pictures taken by Bateson, 4,000 were chosen, from which McGregor, Mead, and the Gesell group could find a set of patterns derived from a study of photographs—not from the photographs themselves—which could then be compared with patterns found in the study of American children. It is important to emphasize Mead's subtle but powerful distinction: the patterns of behavior in this case were derived from the study and analysis of the photographs, not from the photographs as a magic mirror of pattern. Mead states quite clearly: "These photographs are designed not to *prove*, but to *illustrate*. . . ."

In effect, what Mead has been trying to teach us is what one of her teachers, Ruth Benedict, taught her: "patterns of culture" are what we are presenting when we do anthropology, and taking photographs, or looking or taking notes are tools for articulating and stating the patterns that we, as anthropologists, wish to show to others. It is that old lesson about culture which we seem not to understand as it affects our use of the photograph. Somehow our myth system about photos helps us to forget that the photo is not the pattern. Somehow we tend to think of a photograph not as something we use—as evidence, to illustrate pattern, to inform ourselves, or to make statements with—but as something we call "truth" or "reality."

One should distinguish between the photo as a record *about* culture and the photo as a record *of* culture. One should also distinguish between using a medium and studying how a medium is used. In terms of the camera, the distinction I want to emphasize is that between the scientists' use of the camera as a tool to collect data about culture and studying how the camera is used by members of a culture. This distinction is, I feel, central to understanding the work done with this medium of communication in the last 80 years. On one level, the photo is an *aide-mémoire* to the scientist, equal to his pencil, notebook, or typewriter. It is not—as we now know, from recent work by Chalfen (1975), Ruby (1975), and others—merely a bunch of

snapshots or home movies made by an anthropologist. In the hands of well-trained observers it has become a tool for recording, not the truth of what is out there but the truth of what is in there, in the anthropologist's mind as a trained observer puts observations of "out there" on record. Photography as a record about culture spans the distance from the casual snapshot, which reminds one of what a house or an informant looked like, to the systematic work of a Mead, a Bateson, or a Birdwhistell. And here I must emphasize that it is not their photography that is important, but their analysis of it. The reason their photographs and films are records is that they were taken in ways which allowed them to be analyzed so as to illustrate patterns observed by scientists who knew what they were looking for.

Let us now turn to the second level of analysis: the analysis of photographs and films as records of culture—as objects and events which can be studied in the context of the culture within which they were used. The photographs and films analyzed in this way are understood to be parts of culture in their own right, just as conversations, novels, plays, and other symbolic behavior have been understood to be. Here I am talking about looking at how someone takes a photograph or puts together an advertisement as well as a movie. One is concerned at this level, for example, with finding patterns of moviemaking by anthropologists, physicists, and Hollywood entrepreneurs, by college students, by "artists," by people using 8-mm cameras in our own culture as well as by Navajo Indians or members of any other group who are making photos or movies for purposes of their own.

Here one looks for patterns dealing with, for example, what can be photographed and what cannot, what content can be displayed, was actually displayed, and how that display was organized and structured. Was it arranged according to how these people tell stories? To how they speak, or to the very language and grammar that they use? Recent work by one of my students, Earl Higgins, seems to indicate that, even among the congenitally deaf, the "grammar" and related patterns of their sign language influence how speakers of American Sign Language structure films that they make.

Here again, although Margaret Mead was not the first to think of examining photography and films in this way, she articulated the ideas and related them to an understanding of culture in a larger and systematic way. Mead, in the study of *Culture at a Distance* (Mead and Metraux 1953, based on work done in the 40s) pulls together the work of a larger group of people who were using symbolic events produced by members of a culture to find patterns of that culture.

"Films," she wrote, "being group products, have proved to be more immediately useful for the analysis of culture than have individual literary works." In this

book she included the first set of systematic analyses of films by a group concerned with looking for cultural forms and the patterns evidenced in them. This work provided a cornerstone on which almost all the content analysis¹ of our current mass media rests. The development of the cultural indicator program (Gerbner 1972, Gerbner and Gross 1976) and the ongoing analysis of mass media and particularly TV content are the fruits, it seems to me, of one direction developed from the notion that the photograph, in still or motion picture form, can be a record of culture in its own right, to be studied for its own patterns within specific cultural contexts.

The term "visual anthropology," coined after World War II, became associated with conceptualizations keyed to using cameras to make records about culture. Visual anthropology did not connote the study of how cameras, and pictures in general, were used within the context of a culture. The term did not seem to connote studies that led us to ask what we could learn about a culture by studying what the members of a society made pictures of, how they made them, and in what contexts they made and looked at them.

The idea of modes of symbolic communication designed to articulate a variety of symbolic worlds is not new to social science. Cassirer, Whorf, and many others discussed the idea that symbols and symbol systems, language, myth, stories, and conversation, as well as poems, sonatas, plays, films, murals, and novels, create a multiplicity of worlds.

Nelson Goodman (1968) addressed himself to this line of speculation at a meeting commemorating the 100th anniversary of Cassirer's birth. He asks a set of questions that I would like to use to discuss some of the current issues we face in an ethnography of visual communication. He asks, "In just what sense are there many worlds? What distinguishes genuine from spurious worlds? What are worlds made of? How are they made, and what roles do symbols play in their making?" I think that it is only recently that we have been able to apply these questions to an endeavor we call anthropology, to a mode I call pictorial-visual, and to a concept that has come to be called communication. It was Margaret Mead who helped, not only by her work but by her teaching and her encouragement of the work of others, to integrate those three concepts: anthropology, communication, and the visual-pictorial mode.

When in 1963 (Worth 1964) I began to point out that films and photographs made by such diverse groups as students in college, people in their homes, or mental patients in hospitals could be looked at as ways in which these different people structured *their* worlds, rather than as "true images" of *the* world, I thought I was merely bringing a truism about drawing and painting up to date. Most people who talked knowledgeably about pictures in 1963 accepted the

fact that Picasso drew the way he did because he meant to structure his pictures that way, not because he could not draw like Norman Rockwell, or even the way he himself drew in other periods. True, Roman Jakobson in 1950 pointed out that most people wanted pictures to look like a Norman Rockwell—what we now call photographic or snapshot realism—and were disturbed by abstract painting. Jakobson ascribed this both to the fact that most people were ignorant about the conventions of painting and to the strength of conventions about pictures—when they were known. He, himself, it seems, tended to believe that the "natural" way to know pictures was to know what they represented; that to draw abstractly, or in nonrepresentational or non-Western patterns, was somehow to act unnaturally. Interestingly, it was the early Russian filmmakers and film theorists—Eisenstein, Dovzhenko, and Pudovkin—who, following the Russian formalist linguistic theories, first pointed out that films structured reality just as speech did; that patterns of images, like patterns of sounds, were worthy of study. But so strong was the myth of photographic reality that even a Roman Jakobson could feel that representation was the natural way to make pictures.

For many leading social scientists today, as well as for our students, visual anthropology means taking photos, photo records, movies, ethnographic movies, and film footage—all for research. These labels carry a descending aura of science about them. Film footage, unorganized but uncut, is considered the most scientific and therefore the truest because it captures "real behavior" presumably untouched by human eye or brain—a pure record. An ethnographic movie or a documentary movie is the least scientific, not only touched but sometimes, it seems, tainted by human consciousness and often damaged as a scientific document by something called "art." As recently as last year, the chairman of the Department of Sociology at Columbia University wrote in *The New York Times*—in shock—that a documentary film about the Yerkes Primate Laboratory expressed the filmmaker's biased view of the subject, still naïvely stating that he expects something called a neutral, unbiased, objective view in a film shown on television. The director of the laboratory—who gave permission to the filmmaker to make a movie to be shown on television—expressed anger that the film did not portray the "truth" about the laboratory. He too evinced shocked dismay that the filmmaker presented his own personal view of what he observed in the laboratory—that the act of making a movie allowed such a "distortion."

There is no point, however, in taking a position that if film is not "objective truth" there is no use to it. Many ethnologists have provided us with stills and motion pictures which they and others have used to articulate some of the most important statements about culture made in recent years. I am arguing that there is

great value in visually recorded data about behavior and culture—so long as we know what it is that we recorded, so long as we are aware of how and by what rules we chose our subject matter, and so long as we are aware of and make explicit how we organized the various units of film from which we will do our analysis.

Let us return to Cassirer and Goodman's concept that symbolic events produce different works and different worlds. Faced with such a concept, and most specifically with the fact that pieces of film—no matter how made—are patterned constructions, structured, at best, by a trained mind, the truth-seeker through film becomes confused, dogmatic, and angry. It is hard enough for some people to believe that an analysis is a construction, a structuring of reality. Most of us simply do not want to face the fact that what we loosely call primary photographic data is also a structured event. A photograph, just as any picture, is constrained both by who made it and how it is made, as well as by what it is a picture of. It should be obvious that, just as pictures are not simple mirrors of what is out there, neither are they artifacts which have no relation whatsoever to what they are pictures of. The ethnographic photographer is free to take a picture of anything his system allows him to photograph, but he is also constrained by the fact that he must point the camera at some objects in the world "out there." These things out there also constrain what the picture will be like. While "out there" does not determine what the photo will look like, it is obviously not irrelevant. In one sense we want as many different worlds as possible, and in another the fact that symbols and signs can best be used to construct different worlds poses almost insoluble scientific problems. In order to distinguish genuine from spurious worlds we slip into the belief that cameras record reality, that reality is true, and that film recordings are therefore "truth."

This fantasy about symbols suffers from the error of imposing logic-like or logical-sounding rules upon a domain that is governed by a set of rules that may not be like those of logic. For example, one basic convention of logic states that a true conclusion cannot be drawn from a false premise. Researchers who want to use film as a record of behavior want it to be the case that from a true premise—a picture or photograph—one cannot draw a false conclusion; that is, that from "true" films one cannot get "false" data. One introductory lecture in logic should be enough to make any student see that this is not the case. Unfortunately, false conclusions can be drawn from anything, and getting the "truth" on film, even if it were possible, will not guarantee the subsequent analysis or the conclusions drawn from it.

Suppose we agree that pictures and films can be used as illustrations of pattern—of how films themselves are structured as well as of how people and their behavior in films are structured. Suppose we

agree that symbolic events produce symbolic worlds, and that these worlds are not (for the moment) to be thought of as either true or false but rather as communicative articulations. Suppose we think of a film, whether it be footage without editing or footage after editing, as the way the maker of the film structures the world that he or she presents to us. Our job as viewers, then, is first to determine what he means by the film he shows us. A mere recording without conscious selection, emphasis, and instruction by the filmmaker is more often confusing than illuminating. The viewer of such a recording "knows" that an inanimate camera did not expose the film and decide what to shoot and how to shoot it. If the film does not instruct us how to interpret it, or if it is not constructed in a way that allows us to use conventional techniques for interpretation in that medium, we most often ignore the film, or treat it as an annoyance. Ray Birdwhistell, with whom I have watched too few films, has often said to me, "I can't stand watching most so-called ethnographic movies. The man who made it won't tell me what he's doing. I'd rather look at behavior as it occurs and not have to spend all my time trying to guess how, when, and for what reasons a filmmaker made a movie of it."

Seven years ago, again led by Margaret Mead, a group of researchers interested in both records about culture and records of culture met and decided that our concerns could best be clarified by founding a new organization, with its own journal. Margaret Mead helped us to set up the Society for the Anthropology of Visual Communication, as part of the American Anthropology Association, and the National Anthropological Film Center at the Smithsonian Institution.

The kinds of problems that our members study include all the ones that I have mentioned, for there are indeed still not enough systematic records about the cultures of the world that can be used to illustrate patterns of culture, as well as the newer ones I will be talking about in a moment.

In developing a history of the shift from visual anthropology to the anthropology of visual communication, and in trying to understand Margaret Mead's role in this development, it is most important to understand that the study of culture is not accomplished by pitting symbolic worlds against one another. Those of us who are involved in using photos and films as new technologies through which we can record cultural artifacts and events, and those of us who are involved in studying how pictures are put together to make statements about this world, are equally concerned with how this particular symbol form—the picture—can be of use in the study of culture. We include scholars such as Richard Sorenson (1976) and Jay Ruby (1975, 1976), who are struggling to delineate theories of the photograph as evidence, as well as those who are following up on the work that John Adair and I

(Worth and Adair 1972) did when we gave movie cameras to Navajo Indians to see how their patterns of structuring differed from or resembled ours. Most recently, *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* devoted a complete issue to a study by Erving Goffman of values and social attitudes about gender that can be derived from an analysis of some 500 advertising photographs (Goffman 1976).

Some of us are arguing that it is as silly to ask whether a film is true or false as it is to ask whether a grammar is true or false. Or whether a performance of a Bach sonata or a Beatles song is true or false. The confusion about the use of pictures, in social science particularly, arises out of the fact that, although symbol systems are designed to articulate many worlds, our way of thinking about such systems allows us, even compels us in certain contexts, to ask, "Are you trying to tell us that all symbolic worlds are equally true, equally correct, equally right in their portrayal of the 'real world'?"

One can indeed ask if a particular grammar is a useful description of how people talk. One can ask whether that sonata was written by Bach or whether that was a Beatles song. If the notion of a grammar is understood to be an articulation, a statement about how people talk, one can ask in what ways it corresponds to how people do talk. But this requires that we conceive of a grammar, a performance, or a film as a statement or a description of and about something. It requires that we understand that the grammar or the film is *not a copy of the world out there but someone's statement about the world*.

Acknowledging this, some of our younger colleagues are beginning to study such things as how home movies are made as a social event, as well as what they mean as a semantic event. We are looking, as Chalfen (1975) has done, into how home movies and photo albums are displayed and exhibited, to whom, and for what social purposes. Ruby has begun to study the patterns apparent in the photos that most anthropologists make in the field. Here he finds that in most cases they are indistinguishable from those made by journalists. That, in fact, while their written ethnographies do in fact differ from journalists' reports or travelers' letters home, their photographs do not. For the most part, anthropologists and (as Howard Becker [1974] has shown) sociologists are professional scientists—verbally only. When it comes to the visual mode of articulation and data-gathering, most produce snapshots, documentary films, good (or bad) home movies, or "artistic" works. It is 40 years since Bate son and Mead took their photographs in Bali and, sad to say, in that 40-year period there have not been many social scientists who have been trained in what they developed.

The framework of the anthropology of visual communication suggests that symbolic worlds are patterned and amenable to being studied in a larger framework than pictures. Primarily, this framework helps us to look at pictures as that aspect of culture called communication. It suggests that we treat pictures as statements, articulated by artists, informants, scientists, housewives, and even movie and TV producers. We can ask what the articulator meant, and then we can ask whether our interpretation of what was meant is good, bad, beautiful, ugly, and so on. But by asking whether our interpretation of what was meant is true, we are, I am afraid, merely asking whether we guessed right. What we should be trying to understand is how and why and in what context a particular articulator structured his particular statement about the world.

Treating film (the camera and celluloid) as a copy of the world, rather than as materials with which to make statements about the world, forces us into the impossible position of asking whether performance is true. Understanding that photos and films are statements rather than copies or reflections enables us to look explicitly, as some of us are now doing, at the various ways we have developed of picturing the world.²

The parameters along which we deal with statements are many. Anthropology is in some sense a set of questions about human behavior. Ethnography is in some sense a method by which certain kinds of questions can be answered. By considering pictures and all behavior in the visual mode as possible communication acts, and by understanding that these acts can produce only statements or assertions about the world rather than copies of it, we are enabled to consider the kinds of anthropology we want to do about the visual pictorial forms that we can and do use. In this kind of anthropology we want to consider both how the photograph and the film can be used as evidence by the scientist and how people actually have used it as evidence, as document, as entertainment, and as art.

It is only within this framework that we are able to return to Pat Loud's questions with which I opened this discussion. Margaret Mead actually did influence that "show," just as she did influence this paper. Craig Gilbert, the producer of *The American Family*, was also the producer of *Margaret Mead's New Guinea Journal*. Gilbert spend a great deal of time talking with Dr. Mead about films and about culture while he accompanied her on her return trip to some of the places she studied in the past. He learned from her that one American family well observed might reveal or, in her words, "illustrate" a pattern about American families. The patterns that he observed and the way they are structured are his and his cameramen's and editors'. The idea of trying to present them on film was learned from Dr. Mead.

Pat Loud said it "didn't work," that when she saw it she felt herself "shrinking in defense." She felt that she had been "ground through the media machine" and "treated as an object." Then she said she would do it again if it did what the producer said it would do. Craig Gilbert had told her that by showing one family he could show a pattern that might be true of many American families.

We know now that it was not the editing that prevented the programs from "working." We have tried to reedit some of that footage. We have invited Mrs. Loud to do it herself. It seems to be the case that it cannot be done so that it does not look as if it were produced as a drama or a soap opera for TV. Because it is on TV. And TV does not present the truth any more than film does, or than film editors do. It presents, we now know, a structured version of what someone saw, presented in a context—television—of drama, soap opera, sporting events, "news," and commercials. We have learned how to interpret what we see on TV. If we were to study that footage in other ways and not show it on television, we might find patterns that would illustrate other structures—other worlds.

Learning how to study something as complex as a 12-hour film put together from 200 hours of film based on 400 hours of observation is part of the study we are now calling the anthropology of visual communication.

There are now heated controversies about whether Mrs. Loud and her family were fooled, whether (leaving television aside) sociologists and anthropologists have the right to photograph real people for their studies. Again, in 1936, and reported as early as the second page of *Growth and Culture*, Dr. Mead faced this question. She wrote, "I have used real names throughout. The people knew we were studying and photographing their children; indeed, they often helped set the stage for an afternoon's photography. Very cautiously, but quite definitely, they gave us permission to live among them and there is no need to blur their contribution by disguise or subterfuge." Adair and I followed this advice in our own work among the Navajo, first getting their permission and then acknowledging their great contribution. They were in their own films and they wanted to be seen. We can tell what would have happened had the press and assembled academics called them primitive, selfish, cruel. As we have described in our book about this project, they themselves did not think of their films as the truth about Navajos. Their films were true about, as one of them put it, "how you tell a story." Those of us interested in the anthropology of visual communication are trying to find ways to study how people can and do depict mankind, oneself, and others in all their diversity.

In 1967, I returned from the field with 12,000 feet, 480,000 single frames of exposed film, and 7 movies made by Navajo Indians. I was looking for patterns, but I was overwhelmed (as so many researchers are when they return from the field) by the masses of observations and possible data I had collected. The patterns were far from clear in my mind. I was tired. Dr. Mead asked me to show some of the films and talk about my research to her class. I did. The next day after breakfast, she quietly set up the projector, pulled up her typewriter, and asked me to start going over the footage with her. I had worked with this material for over a year. Margaret Mead began to teach me how to find patterns in it. When I finally said something like, "I know that, why do we have to keep going over it?," she replied somewhat tartly, "Sol, you begin with intuition, but you can't rest your case upon it. You must build upon it and make clear to others the patterns that seem clear to you."

This paper is my continued attempt to follow that advice. Doing the anthropology of visual communication is an attempt by a large group of students of communication and anthropology to find methods and theories by which they too can make clear the patterns that they discover and create.

Notes

- 1 For a more detailed exposition of the relation of content analysis to the analysis of culture through pictures, see Editor's Introduction to Erving Goffman's "Gender Advertisements" in *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 3(2).
- 2 For a specific study of how advertisements picture the world, see Goffman 1976.

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