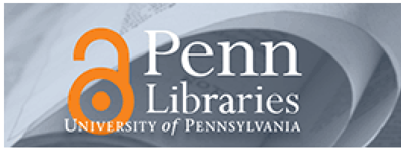


University of Pennsylvania
ScholarlyCommons

Dissertations (ASC) Annenberg School for Communication

1997

Communities Through the Lens: Grassroots Video in Philadelphia as Alternative Communicative Practice

Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations_asc

Part of the Communication Commons

Recommended Citation
Wong, Cindy Hing-Yuk, "Communities Through the Lens: Grassroots Video in Philadelphia as Alternative Communicative Practice" (1997). *Dissertations (ASC)*. 17.
http://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations_asc/17

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations_asc/17
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Communities Through the Lens: Grassroots Video in Philadelphia as Alternative Communicative Practice

Abstract
"SAME BOAT, SAME DESTINATION ... That's what a community is, if you believe that you're in the same predicament and you are going to the same place. It's one thing if you believe that you're in the , same predicament, but you're not going to the same place. I ain't gonna to deal with that, then it isn't your community; if you do, then it is. So Community Vision is articulating what the boat is and what the vision is, where you are going." (Louis Massiah, Founder of Scribe Video Center; interview, July 15th 1996)

Community/grassroots videos, community murals (Barnett 1984), community (or outlaw) short-wave radio (Urla 1995), community theater, neighborhood newspapers, and 4th World indigenous film and videomaking (Michaels 1994; Aufderheide 1995, Elder 1995) all represent communicative practices which offer alternatives to dominant mainstream mass media. In this dissertation, I examine how one of these alternative media -- community video -- takes shape in terms of its organizational processes, its textual creation and its dissemination and readership. This ethnography of community video, its producers, its texts and its audiences allows me to shed light, in turn, on the organizational and symbolic constructions of other media, especially in more heavily-studied fields such as cinema and documentary. Hence, this analysis intends to illuminate both the possibilities and the limits of conceiving and acting upon different visions of society through media.

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Department
Communication

First Advisor
Larry Gross

Subject Categories
Communication

This dissertation is available at ScholarlyCommons: http://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations_asc/17

COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE LENS: GRASSROOTS VIDEO IN PHILADELPHIA AS ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE

Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong

A DISSERTATION

in

Communication

Presented to the Faculties of the Annenberg School for Communication of the University of Pennsyvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1997

Supervisor of Dissertation

Graduate Group Chairperson

Annenberg/P/002/1997/W872

Dissertation:

Author: Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong
Title: “Communities Through the Lens: Grassroots Video in Philadelphia as Alternative Communicative Practice”
Year: 1997

Note:

I. Irregular pagination:
   No pp. vii-viii
   No pp. 35-37
   No pp. 76-81
   No pp. 133-140
   No pp. 191-199
   No pp. 246-252

II. Blank pages:
   pp. 244-245

However, no text appears to be missing from this dissertation.

COPYRIGHT

Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong

1997

Acknowledgments

An ethnographic endeavor over a number of years always demands collaboration and patient help from many sources, and this project has certainly linked me to many communities in the Philadelphia area whose aid I wish to acknowledge. The list must begin with those at Scribe -- Louis Massiah, Hebert Peck and his family, Margie Strosser, Arlene Wooley, and the late Toni Cade Bambara -- who have incorporated me into their community and given generously of time and support.

A special acknowledgment must also go to the teams I have worked with under the aegis of Scribe. In the case of We The People, this includes Joe Cronauer, the late Kirk Dobson and my fellow facilitator, Janet Williams, Phil and others who worked on the project at various points. At Asians American United, I am grateful to Juli Kang, Frank Cardon and my fellow facilitator Carl Lee, and the ten youths, Chhann Chhun, Sotheavy Chhum, Pauline Cheung, Thanh Hang, Ton'e Meas, Reth Sek, Leap Chan, Channu Phoeung, Khom Koung, and Yann Or.

While the project at Prevention Point, Philadelphia, was unsuccessful, I would certainly acknowledge the long term cooperation of many members of that organization, including Julie Parr, Judy Porter, Chelsea Voytek, David Acosta, Jean-Paul Hammer and my fellow facilitator Keith Fulton. I look forward to their future work.

I have also come to know and work with many other splendid community organizations in the course of this research. These include:

Donna Marie Rizolli who worked for WOMEN ORGANIZED AGAINST RAPE, and ANNA CRUSIS

Ramona Washington from WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICES

Eleanor Childs at MONTESSORI GENESIS II

Denise Sneed at WOMEN COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Cindy Bernstein and Teresa Dimitri at KENSINGTON ACTION NOW

John Dodd at PHILADELPHIA UNEMPLOYMENT PROJECT

Rebecca Rathji at YOUTH UNITED FOR CHANGE at WOODROCK

Kendra Wyrnes who produced the JOHN COLTRANE CULTURAL SOCIETY's work

Jesse Lewis at NEXUS, FOUNDATIONS FOR TODAYS ART

Joann Tufo, Delores Donohue, Martha Rozeman CO-MHAR

Laura Hernandez at HISPANIC FAMILY CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

Mary Beth Flynn, Yvonne Coleman, Anna Beale, Bob Nappa, and Cheryl Cutrona at GOOD SHEPHERD NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE MEDIATION PROGRAM,

Dr. Wendy Wenzel of ELDERS RESOURCES

Helen Sherman, Jody Button at ANNA CRUSIS WOMEN CHOIR

William Gibson at RECONSTRUCTION

Brita Hudson-Smith at the PHILADELPHIA BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT

And, of course, my fellow facilitators: Carlton Jones, Maria Rodriguez, Dennis Doyon, Chris Emmanouilides, Diane Pointus, and Gretjen Clausing. Also, I am grateful for help from David Haas at PIVFA, staff at New Liberties, Nicole Torselo at Focus Philadelphia and George Stoney at NYU who first introduced me to Challenge for Change in a class at USC, and who has continued to support my work both in community media and in production.

In addition to my work in the field, this dissertation has also drawn on my academic formation before and during my doctoral training at Annenberg. The Program in Visual Anthropology at USC prepared me as a videographer to assume my roles in Scribe video. Michael Renov became an early mentor and friend in documentary. Annenberg's support through Teaching Assistantships and a Dissertation Research Fellowship then allowed me to develop my interests in a new and wider framework. At

Annenberg, Roberta Pearson, as my advisor for two years, encouraged me to think in many ways about film and its possibilities. Larry Gross suggested that I focus on Scribe as a dissertation project in my first-term proseminar, and later took on responsibilities for advising the project. Oscar Gandy forced me to think in more rigorous ways about the structure and political economics of communication in which this thesis is contextualized. Charlie Wright graciously agreed to serve on the prelim committee with short notice, and Laura Grindstaff also graciously agreed to join a work in progress and to offer supportive and useful comments. Susan Williamson, and other librarians, who have always pointed me to the right resources, also deserve special thanks.

One also must acknowledge personal debts over years of fieldwork and writing. Ramona Lyons and Mika Emori have formed a wonderful network whether in the classroom, on the town or over e-mail. My parents, Wong Yuen Ching and Leung Chit Ming, have valued both my education and my independence in ways that make them very special among Hong Kong families, and my brother Jacob Wong Hing-Cheung and his companion Wong Yuen-ling have kept up a lively dialogue about film and communication while I wrote this up in Hong Kong. Here, they have been joined by my colleagues at Hong Kong Baptist University, including George Chan Lok Yee, and Ernest Martin.

Finally, Larissa Jiit-Wai McDonogh Wong arrived in the middle of the WTP project and has grown up with Annenberg as "Mommy's school" and the dissertation as "Mommy's work." But she has also made these years a special delight, where her joys and demands added just the right perspective. And Gary set rigid deadlines for all the chapters, forced me to read books that I at first found superfluous, interrupted our cooking to talk about ideas, accompanied me to some field sites when feeling paternalistic (only those that the mainstream media labeled dangerous), took the child away to see the Buddha in Lantau Island so Mommy could finish her conclusion, and cleaned up the final copy of most

of its Chinglish influences. Without all his support and love, this dissertation would not have materialized.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

ABSTRACT vii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ix

LIST OF TABLES xii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS xiii

CHAPTER I: GRASSROOTS VIDEO AS A QUESTION FOR COMMUNICATION STUDIES 1

Mass Media and Grassroots Video: Matters of Perspective 4

The Theoretical Context: Community, Text and Audience 15

Methods: Looking for Community 26

Models and Organization 35

CHAPTER II: CHOOSING COMMUNITY: ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA 40

Scribe Video Center as a Community Organization 42

Philadelphia Stories: The Socio-Cultural Context 52

Discovering Communities: The Selection Process 60

Organizations Redefining Community: An Overview Of Community Vision Selection 71

Conclusions 79

CHAPTER III: PRODUCTION AS PROCESS 82

Initiating the Process: From Proposal Through Production 84

Facilitators: Between Scribe and Grassroots Community 94

Community Formation in Production: An Overview 101

Order and Disorder: Community in Production 113

Remembering Discord: Community, Production and Schism 134

Conclusions: Production and Community 139

CHAPTER IV: COMMUNITY AS TEXT 141

Community and Text: New Faces of AIDS 145

Rocking Video: An MTV Generation Takes Charge 153

Communities on Screen: Modes, Texts and Analysis 162

Interviews as Social Relations and Textual Elements 167

Narration and Community Structure 180

Content, Symbolism and the Creation of Authenticity 185

Place and People 187

Heroes and Redemption: Key scenarios 190

The Symbolism of the Real 193

Conclusions: Texts and Contexts 198

CHAPTER V: AUDIENCES AND USERS 200

The Question of Audience 202

Imagined Audiences: Reading from Funders, Producers And Texts 208

Audiences: Producers and Funders 209

Text and Audience: Professionals and Others 215

Screenings, Using and Abandoning: Community and Audience 223

Use and Redefinition of Audience and Text: Two Case Studies 231

From Use to Empowerment 246

Conclusion 250

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS 253

Defining Communities and Videos as Interlocking Processes 257

The Cultural Studies and Ethnographic Model 271

A Few Closing Questions 278

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY VISION VIDEO SUMMARIES 281

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL FILMOGRAPHY 293

BIBLIOGRAPHY 297

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Community Vision Groups and Productions 63

Table 2: Sample Budget 86

Table 3: Documentary Modes of Representation 163

Table 4: Relations Among Production, Text and Reception 270

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: A Basic Cultural Studies Model 21

Figure 2: A Flow-Chart Model for Community Visions 36, 258

CHAPTER I: GRASSROOTS VIDEO

AS A QUESTION FOR COMMUNICATION STUDIES

> "SAME BOAT, SAME DESTINATION...That's what a community is, if you believe that you're in the same predicament and you are going to the same place. It's one thing if you believe that you're in the same predicament, but you're not going to the same place. I ain't gonna to deal with that, then it isn't your community; if you do, then it is. So Community Vision is articulating what the boat is and what the vision is, where you are going. " (Louis Massiah, Founder of Scribe Video Center; interview, July 15th 1996)

Community/grassroots videos, community murals (Barnett 1984), community (or outlaw) short-wave radio (Urla 1995), community theater, neighborhood newspapers, and 4th World indigenous film and videomaking (Michaels 1994; Aufderheide 1995, Elder 1995) all represent communicative practices which offer alternatives to dominant mainstream mass media. In this dissertation, I examine how one of these alternative media -- community video -- takes shape in terms of its organizational processes, its textual creation and its dissemination and readership. This ethnography of community video, its producers, its texts and its audiences allows me to shed light, in turn, on the organizational and symbolic constructions of other media, especially in more heavily-studied fields such as cinema and documentary. Hence, this analysis intends to illuminate both the possibilities and the limits of conceiving and acting upon different visions of society through media.

My primary case studies encompass the twenty short videos produced under the aegis of Community Vision program (CV) of the Scribe Video Center in Philadelphia in the past seven years and, through them, certain aspects of the organizational life of the city. These videos have been made by non-professional videographers from grassroots associations, dealing with subjects of their choice. Supported by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Pew Foundation and other agencies, Scribe solicited its first local CV participants in 1990. The groups subsequently involved have included Nexus, a collective of handicapped artists; Manos Unidas, a sweat-equity housing group, We The People (WTP), an activist HIV+ group and Asian Americans United, who allowed high school students to create a statement about Anti-Asian prejudice.

In my study, I have worked with Scribe regularly in a number of capacities in the selection and training of these groups from 1993 to 1996 while I learned to situate all these organizations within Philadelphia's urban complexity. I also have analyzed all the Community Visions videos, which are available through Scribe, and have spoken with representatives from every participant organization through 1996. Scribe's directors also have given me access to their archives as well as facilitating interviews which have allowed me to follow the process of text and community formation in individual projects. [1]

The features that most sharply distinguish Community Vision projects and similar grassroots efforts from other media products are the complex overlying relationships among producers, subjects, users, and readers of these videos, which Scribe director Louis Massiah evokes in the quotation which inaugurates this chapter. Similarly, Carol Saalfield, speaking about independent AIDS videos, highlights the "'amongness' between the producers and the audience" to express this special quality (Juhasz 1995:7). All these media roles are not necessarily performed by the same person, but they are shared among people who have intimate relationships with one another. The subjects are, most of the time, the producers (who may, nonetheless, be representatives or delegates within a larger subject organization: the "active" community). The audiences are oftentimes envisioned as people whom the producers know or with whom they wish to consolidate a relationship: their group or those in its immediate context (an organizational community) or those who share similar conditions and

---

1. I will refer to these organizations by name in the dissertation as well as using the names of those at Scribe who have given me on the record interviews. People who appear in the videos will be referred to in the manners by which they are distinguished in these public texts. Generally, however, I maintain anonymity in talking about individual participants, in accordance with general practices of ethnographic research and writing. However, I have also learned from my previous fieldwork that some of these informants will wish to be named, and I will honor those express requests as well.

Appendix A includes a brief description of all CV videos.

concerns -- an imagined community. These readers, finally, may know those who make and appear in the video in multiple off screen roles as well as their textual characterizations. Thus, they share more than the identifications cinema scholars seek for the Hollywood screen.

In this dissertation, building on the ethnographic examination of the interlocking processes of community video production, textuality, use, and reading, I explore three major themes. First and foremost, I investigate how realizations of "community" itself are mediated through the video-making process. This is not a simple relationship of organization and text, but one challenged and recreated through crises of production and emergent patterns of use of the video product. As a corollary, I analyze the relationship between video technology and community expression with relationship to documentary debates over technology, authenticity and empowerment.

Second, I explore the importance of an holistic media analysis, and suggest how ethnographic methods, within a more general cultural studies model which looks at production, text and readership, illuminate central questions of media studies. In particular, I will underscore how this inquiry offers insight into questions of text and readership of great contemporary import in documentary/cinema studies:that is, how the alternative illuminates mass/global communication.

Last, by studying the relationship between these grassroots organization and the video process, I add an advocacy dimension to this dissertation by clarifying relationships between community and production in order to help organizations identify their strengths and weaknesses in embarking on this or related endeavors. This cannot be a simple formula for "success" since so many factors impinge on how a video is made and used. Indeed, "success" itself is variable, since videography may involve learning about community as well as representing it: the product and process are equally valuable. Nonetheless, through my analysis, recurrent patterns of participation, process and use have

become clear which are of use to Scribe and other grassroots projects.

This introduction presents a general statement of the issues I think are central to the importance of small-scale or narrowcast media within communications studies. From there, I elucidate both my theoretical foundations and methodological practices in gathering data for the dissertation. The introduction closes with the presentation of a flow chart model for the dissertation which leads allows me to set forth the structure of the argument that follows in the major data chapters and conclusions.

Mass Media and Grassroots Video: Matters of Perspective

Community media are small-scale, grassroots products distinct from the mass media organizations which communication studies have often examined even while they often illuminate the same fundamental relations of communication and society. These differences often strike outsiders first. While most mainstream media have rationalized institutional structures, for example, community media have more fluid constituent elements and boundaries. The New York Times, NBC, SONY, and Broadway demand intense capital investment, and are deeply enmeshed in the market place, including the consolidation of media empires like Time-Warner and Disney-ABC (Miller 1995). Neighborhood newsletters, group videos, and street theater, meanwhile, are low-cost efforts, which often face a day-to-day struggle to balance their books but may make few or no monetary demands on audiences as consumers.

In terms of production personnel, mainstream media, despite their large scale, are generally closed to novices without the requisite credentials. By contrast, grassroots media may embrace those who are interested, but neither fully qualified nor fully committed to professional careers in media. In fact, they often rely on volunteer and part-time workers rather than paid staff. Ultimately, the public generally contrasts the products of mainstream and community media by a simple dichotomy of professional versus amateurish. Hollywood movies

are star-studded, glossy, spectacular and expertly-crafted. While "independent" video may range from polished artistic or documentary works to shoestring productions, they also tend to concentrate on form and aesthetics as well as message. By contrast, grassroots productions are about people and message, and generally appear modest, cheap and even slipshod. Hence, community media are often regarded as well-intentioned, but ultimately insignificant.

Yet I am interested in studying videos that are made by local grassroots organizations who have primary control of production and distribution because of the very intimacy and creativity of technology and action. This distinguishes them from mass media products while raising cross-cutting issues.

Many of these videos, for example fall into the category of documentary -- a highly contested film/video category which generally refers to works that are based on "real" events or people. Yet they differ in production, text and use from Hollywood products or corporate TV programs created as market commodities like The Civil War or "reality" shows. Hence, they raise questions of truth, power, and authenticity which have dogged documentaries for decades. However, they situate these questions within a distinctive social milieu that allows us to respond differently.

Grassroots videos also differ from independent film and video productions which serve to further the film/ video maker's career. While Barbara Kopple, for example, was committed to Kentucky miners and their families in making Harlan County, USA, this was also a stage in a career that took her on to other causes, films and locales. She was a visitor, albeit a welcome and involved one, within her subject community and its struggles. Yet she was not a miner, nor family to one, anymore that she would become a meatpacker for her subsequent powerful film. This does not deny that community videos are made, very often, with the help of professionals, who have expertise in videography and, at times, in

stimulating community expression. In fact, independent professionals almost always provide the initial impetus for communities to explore this medium. The roles of media professionals as consultants and facilitators (that is, my own role at Scribe) cannot be overlooked in the questions they pose about the democratization of technology and activism. Yet in the end, they are merely advisors to a team of producers recruited and trained within an ongoing social milieu.

Despite professional assistance, the subjects of the grassroots videos I am examining remain the video makers themselves, exploring their own perspectives on community concerns. This identity of producer and subject poses interesting questions by comparison to the subjects of other documentary videos, who sometimes cannot control their own representation and otherwise become reduced to objects within mass media products (See Elder 1995, Aufderheide 1995). Community video evokes issues of self-representation and the local formation of symbols reminiscent of folklore studies of community construction through craft and artifact.

Grassroots production also raises specific issues of technology and change. The advent of cheap and relatively accessible video technologies since the late 1960s has allowed an even broader public to participate in the production of videos, facilitating the growth of community video (Boyle 1990; Juhasz 1995). This also coalesced with movements towards recognition of and expression of diverse identities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class within American life. For example, Alexandra Juhasz cites Roger House on a recently restored community access series of 1968, Inside Bedford-Stuyvesant, characterized by:

> a belief in local control and a conviction that the community could use the medium to define itself and explore issues of concern in its own words,'a concerted promotion plan that brought news of the show to 'churches, schools and the like,' an explicitly political content in the programming which reflected this 'unique time in black political, economic, and psychological development,' and a raw and rudimentary style. The ability for blacks to shoot

> and see their own neighborhood, their own political candidates, their own artists and neighbors and anger, was integrally related to the politics of black power (41).

Since the 1960s, camcorders, cable and now digital production have expanded the potential development of expressions ranging from highly experimental video art to more collective projects representing issues of identity and community.

While it would be naive to think that a lone individual can produce "professional-quality" videos, broadcast them, and reach many segments of the population, more and more individuals have an everyday experience of home video production and viewing as an individually-tailored activity (as Chalfen predicted in 1976; see Zimmerman 1995). At a more professional level, it also has proven increasingly possible for trained individuals and groups to produce highly-involved works for a limited audience, whether for self-representation, for social activism (both from the right and the left), for dissemination of information, or for other community affairs (Michaels 1994, Juhasz 1995; see Rossler 1995 on video art). These features of familiarity, flexibility and empowerment, as well as the processes through which technology and products redefines community, underscore community video's interest as a subject for communications.

But technology alone has not determined the course of grassroots video. Most CV works become, in some degree, activist videos because they concentrate on messages that rally active participation on social issues. Grassroots video's collaboration between the video maker(s), the subjects and the audience thus tend to avoid technological or artistic experimentation with form and expression of other documentarians. Grassroots texts, for example, are not aimed at radical questioning of the documentary form, as in Trinh T. Minh-Ha's Surname Viet, Given Name Nam (1992), or the dramatic and technically sophisticated illuminations of big-screen projects like Errol Morris' the Thin Blue Line (1987) or Berlinger and Sinofsky in their HBO-

production of Paradise Lost (1995). Direct communication, although neither transparent nor simple, tends to shape techniques of shooting, editing and sound in grassroots video. Community video, therefore, in its social and symbolic meanings responds to elements of both MTV and the patchwork quilt, products of a confluence of technology and community amid processes of social reproduction.

Were I to focus on the origins of grassroots video, I could trace practices that influence CV from the works of The Canadian Film Board, who carried out projects under the rubric Challenge for Change in the late sixties.[2] These projects aimed at helping communities to consolidate themselves, using video as a catalyst for community change and as an advocate for their course. Challenge for Change served as a model for many U. S. experiments from the 1970s onwards, which were as diverse as large metropolitan creative centers and the small-scale advocacy of Appalshop in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky.[3] Published videos and texts from the Canadian Film Board continue to offer important suggestions on how to develop such projects (Moscovitch 1993; see Nichols 1992, Renov 1995).

Eric Michael's work on Australian aboriginal video-making and the relations of power among Australian communities (1994) also has proven especially important in allowing me to envision bridges from a specific

---

2. George Stoney, who is now teaching Film Production at New York University, was the director of the Canadian Film Board at the time when Challenge for Change was implemented. I first learned about the program through his classes at USC cinema school.

3. Some of the other groups active in the 1970s include Alternate Media Center, People's Video Theater, and Downtown Community Television Center (New York), Portable Channel (Rochester, NY), Urban Planning Aid (Boston), Marin Community Video (California), Broadside TV (Johnson City, TN), Headwaters TV (Whitesburg, KY), University Community Video (Minneapolis), LA Public Access, People's Video (Madison, WI), Washington (D.C.) Community Video Center, Videopolis (Chicago), and New Orleans Video Access Center, projects which I will not elaborate, but are manifestations of other activist community media. There are other projects in Philadelphia on a smaller scale, including the older New Liberties (which has now moved to independent production) and Focus Philadelphia, which works primarily with high school students in the area.

case to general issues of communication and representation as well as linking this work to issues of public access and broadcast which I will not develop here.[4] More recently, Alex Juhasz has also published her study of independent AIDS productions (1995) which share some of the features of community video production and texts as well.

All these videos, nonetheless, as texts form part of the material culture of the smaller groups and class fragments which constitute a heterogeneous modern culture as described in Stuart Hall's and Jefferson's Resistance Through Rituals (1976) and subsequent works in British cultural studies. They also participate in the formation of community movements and identity, whether seen from Clifford Geertz' (1975) or Victor Turner's (1967) cultural perspectives, or situated within Manuel Castell's Marxist models of community action (1983).

Because of its closed-circuit distribution, in fact, community video serves as an excellent site to explore contemporary theories on textuality, reading strategies, and intertextuality in the vein of British cultural studies. Indeed, the community videos as text raise fundamental epistemological questions for communication and society. Watching Scribe Video's and W.O.A.R.'s project Women Against Rape, for example, I realized that I personally believe the women who appear on screen, that they "come across as real." Community video, as both a form and process that stresses its activist nature, includes many

---

4. In the course of my dissertation research, I have considered Community Vision in the context of other forms of self-representation which have been noted in the literature but which go much too far afield to develop within this study. These range from the success of TV shows like America's Funniest Home Videos, to MTV, to other projects carried out in Brazil, Canada, and Australia, all of which point to more general issues of documentary and "reality-based media" (Nichols 1992, Renov 1995). Another area of potential future reference lies in the institution of public access community television, organization like L.A. Freewaves, Deep Dish TV, Paper Tiger, and the Manhattan Neighborhood network. I have talked with some of these groups, but decided against developing a comparative project, again because of cogency and limitations of space as well as scant published resources. Finally, right wing grassroots video organizations, such as those affiliated with the Militia movement, may also offer telling comparisons for this study.

elements that varied audiences may read as "real," from the imperfection of the finished text to the extratextual relations which audience members bring to those of their community who appear on screen. These elements refer to a basic question of representation that pervades contemporary discussion of non-fiction films and videos; namely, the search for authenticity.

Community video responds to this dilemma for documentary film makers with a sense of witness; the people in these tapes say "We are people with disabilities who have constructed satisfying and creative lives together" or "We are HIV+ and supporting each other as caring community." Meanwhile, they may represent others in a group, position themselves within a universe of social problems and policies, or reach out to unknown viewers who share their experience. This collapsing of subject and subjectivity warrants further investigation while posing explicit contrasts to the issues of "reality" raised in other media.

Yet self-representation is not a simple, direct route to authenticity. The people on the screen in community videos often seem extremely self-conscious of their responsibilities, of their roles as symbols and selves. This sometimes results in a careful, "positive" or, at times, self-congratulatory representation. At the same time, within the audience watching such videos, we know that these witnesses are also characters chosen and participating to illustrate or support arguments within a narrative. They may be people we know, people we like, or people we identify as types. All of these will influence our interpretation and use of the text among multiple representations jostling each other in a crowded public sphere.

While many academics, critics, film-makers and readers have disputed any possibility of an "accurate" representation in any medium, there are those who for political, social and formal reasons continue to try to find alternatives to this dilemma. Accuracy is generally defined by reference to objective, external and somehow replicable criteria,

which are also hallmarks of a dominant representation. A different sense of truth in representation has been proposed by those who focus on authenticity, that is, on the rights and privilege of witness. This approach turns away from documentary truth or holistic visions to questions of voice and honesty epitomized in self-representation, whether this mean Navajos with movie cameras (Worth and Adair 1973) or bell hooks writing "prophetic" essays from a black woman's viewpoint (1992). Yet while the equation of self with authenticity produces a certain aura of authority and empathy in this genre, I argue that self-representation should not be seen as an alternative truth so much as a formal and political strategy which must be situated, like other problematic forms of representation, within a framework of production, text, readership and social incorporation.[5]

Yet here, too, crucial questions of form and content must be reconsidered in the process of reproduction of community through use. Although community video is a narrow cast medium, these videos are also part of the public sphere, where diverse voices find their spaces of articulation in counterpoint to the claims of viewpoint or neutrality of other mass media. Are the people making them, in them and watching themselves, actors in process of recreating past events -- or even sharing memories of them? How do editing and other techniques influence

---

5. In self-representation, where the subject is taken to be the maker or controller of representation, our questions must echo those which have been raised classically about autobiography as a genre (See Pascal 1960, Olney 1980). First, who is the self? Does a person represent herself as subject or does she exist within a web of other affiliations with which she identifies (or is identified by someone else)? The question gets more complex in so far as the self is an organization whose demands override individuals who nonetheless represent the group. Second, what are the processes of "authenticating" self-representation? What are the implicit canons of honesty, knowledge, or expression -- autobiographical fictions or reliable testimony -- which are concealed and revealed by the sheer presence of the witness, who again proves especially vivid as a device in non-fiction films? Third, what is the relationship between self-representation and other potentially intersecting forms of representation: documentary, narrative, and fiction? Last, in the self-representation of subjects of different races, classes, physical abilities and age, what is the process of representation of self as others?

reading and authority? Elizabeth Bruss, for example, notes that

> "Film upsets each of the parameters --'truth-value,' 'act-value,' and 'identity-value -- that we commonly associate with the autobiographical act to such an extent that even deliberate attempts to re-create the genre in cinematic terms are subtly subverted. As a result, the autobiographical self begins to seem less like an independent being and more like an abstract 'position; that appears when a number of key conventions converge -- and vanishes when those conventional supports are removed (1980:301).

How much knowledge of the end product and the audience, in fact do community-based producers need to know to make their choices more "authentic?" And, indeed, what canons of inauthenticity have they picked up as consumers from Hollywood and television which must be challenged or discussed in this process as well? Authenticity and community also take on meanings within larger issues of mechanical reproduction and dissemination in (as well as definition of) a public sphere in which communities live and communicate.

In all these areas, community video should not be viewed as an absolutely different form of communication, since all media products are intertwined with their specific production and distribution processes. While not romanticizing grassroots media, to discard them as merely socially committed practices of little impact or significance beyond their own community members is myopic. Although community media come in many forms, and their organizational underpinnings may be flexible, chaotic or short-lived, as well as enduring, community media have their own structure, conflicts and compromises reflecting many of the same issues as mass media. Moreover, community videos represent their respective communities (including their quests for empowerment) while they provide a key to understanding these communities themselves through their practices of video making and viewing. Rather than manufacturing assembly-line products for a mass audience (or alternatively, acting in isolation from knowledge of mass media models), community media utilize models and distribution systems that reach a smaller, yet targeted and familiar audience, reconstituting networks through dissemination and

readings. As such, they provide perspectives on the alternate construction of "mass" and "popular" media and the "public" sphere.

Community videos, their production and use thus can be seen to distill a wide-ranging and important set of issues in communication studies as a whole. Yet they have not been well-studied either as textual or social phenomena in communications and other social sciences, although works by Sean Cubitt (1991), Arlene Moscovitch (1993), Eric Michaels (1994), Susan Ossman (1994), Holly Wardlow (1995), Alex Juhasz (1995), Ron Burnett (1995) and Jeffrey Himpele (1995) all suggest how such a study might proceed. Hence, through very concrete case studies and observations, this dissertation is intended to respond to broad issues as well as documenting a more localized, although nonetheless significant, process and product.

The Theoretical Context: Community, Text and Audience

The theoretical models which I have found most useful in understanding the images and meanings of community and video production here emerge from my backgrounds in both anthropology and communication. These also underpin a set of methods used in this work, which include traditions of participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork, various forms of textual analysis, and communication models to explore audience response and use.

Indeed, it is evident in all of these that I cannot take the word or structure of "community" for granted. Community as part of the title of Scribe's Community Vision project plays off a sense of positive American values of sharing, knowledge and unity which pervade many areas of contemporary policy and social criticism. This can be exemplified in contemporary urban policy, where "Community Development Corporations," for example, are now used to refer to almost any collective urban project in order to convey a sense of grassroots support. Meanwhile, Peter Katz' The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community (1994), discusses a new generation of planners promoting

the idea that good design facilitates a satisfying social life. Yet as critic Clara Greed has pointed out, these positive overtones may convey an implicit set of limits: "'Community' is a fascinating word wheeled out when the planning of the working class, ethnic minorities, women, single-parent families and other 'problems' are under consideration: a zone perceived as marginal to the public realm of the real world of the male majority" (1994:46).

For the social framework of my analysis, I take community not only as a group of people with shared goals and interactions but also as a social process that is intrinsically dynamic: constantly constructing symbolic representations and meanings for itself as well as its diverse members who themselves are also constructing their own identities and relations. Community must be distinguished from neighborhood, ethnicity, gender, generation or other categories of social diversity anchored in place, perceptions of heritage or age. Instead, community is defined by interactions which are fluid and contradictory; it incorporates or excludes different members at different times with malleable rationales and memories (See Sahlins 1982). Community may form in a situation of stress or resistance -- a convergence between cultural studies and studies of social movements like those studied by Manuel Castells (1983) -- although finding a label, cause or organization in itself does not constitute community. Indeed, the title "community" often proves problematic rather than neutral or descriptive, especially if it mingles active participants in some project with a wider potential group that exists primarily in the minds of activists or in social labels.

The concept of community, nonetheless, has a long history in anthropological and sociological discourse. Structural-functionalists like A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1952) and E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1940) neglected change and history to model communities as stable homeostatic entities, neglecting change and history. Later, the Chicago School

anthropologist Robert Redfield lamented a "loss of community" which accompanied urbanization and modernization, seeing face to face interaction as the only path to community formation, a romantic idea against which he measured urban society (1958). In general, this model of community shaped a widespread and positive but generally undefined use in a range of social sciences literature (See Goodman and Goodman 1960; Baltzell 1968).

Other readings of community are more challenging and useful. Victor Turner, for example, saw community as achieving a mystical experience in the ritual status of communitas, but was acutely aware of contradictions and divergent levels of meaning and interpretation in his interpretation of rituals (1967). Contradictions as well as strategies to overcome them emerge again and again from the ethnography of community organizations. Clifford Geertz linked community to culture as webs and layers of meaning, although he, too, was attracted methodologically by points of crisis (1975). Many modern theorists, like Cohen (1985), have argued against simple representations of community which exclude power and change. Others have also linked this model of stable community to the needs and power of a dominant regime (See Asad 1982). At the same time, Marshall Sahlins' study of the intricacies of myth and the reproduction of society in Hawaii (1981) shapes my sense of historical process, as does the work of Pierre Bourdieu on habitus as structure of action and expectation as well as a locus of conflict (1977). The communities I discuss are neither idyllic nor unchanging -- which is why their video production as a process of clarification and reproduction of identity proves so interesting.

From all these readings, it is equally apparent that a social and cultural analysis of community must integrate myth and ideology -- the moral, emotive and idealistic dimensions associated with the term -- with praxis. Community as a social process exists in tension with an ideological construction of community as a public good, especially in

the United States. As such, it has come under new scrutiny in anthropology, whose 1995 national meetings took the theme "New Forms of Community and Communication." But its ambiguities are equally compelling: as an anthropologist friend working with Catholics in the South noted, "Community is a key word. No one ever objects to it, because it doesn't really mean anything" (Jon Anderson, personal communication 1992). Another anthropologist goes so far as to suggest that community poses a particular danger to policy in that it becomes an easy label to cover everything from segregation to avoidance of conflict (Gary McDonogh, personal communication, 1994). Starting from this recognition that "community" is a constructed, amorphous and ambiguous public goal, I would insist that community video is interesting because of what it actually realizes in terms of interaction and identity on a much more concrete and creative level. I can, in fact, look at community in an active social sense though the examination of community videos as products, texts and distributed commodity.

The "communities" that I will examine have marked boundaries because they are civic organizations; all of them are registered non-profit groups. Yet the legal label is just one of their definitions. These communities must be viewed as multi-layered, with staff, active groups, clienteles, and potential clienteles, each of whom may claim to speak or act for "community." All of them are situated within a larger "community" of Greater Philadelphia and its sociocultural traditions. The identification of community -- and the realization of concrete tokens like videos -- allows people to maintain an image of continuity and connection even as personal and power relationships change. In this, I take Benedict Anderson's observations on imagined community to a much more grassroots level, while recognizing its obvious applicability to the media questions I am dealing with as well (Anderson 1983).

Even as we take community video as only one of the many representations of community as process, it proves especially compelling

in that video technology only has a short history, somewhat less than thirty years. As this technology of representation and reproduction has become more accessible both economically and technically, social actors have begun to appropriate it for their own ends. [6] However, community videos are not communities. They are artifacts/texts through which people find meaning by producing, participating, viewing, and interpreting the text. In other words, community videos are symbolic sites for varied definition of community. It is in this regard that models from cultural studies have proven especially illuminating for me.

British cultural studies scholars like Raymond Williams in Culture and Society (1958), for example, suggested how we must understand the relationship between cultural products and cultural relations. Williams, in The Long Revolution (1961) insisted on the need for seeing cultural process as a whole, so that the textual analysis of media products should be conducted in relation to an analysis of the institutions and social structure producing them (G. Turner 1990:57) Through these and related insights, I have framed my work around three broad moments: production, text and use and reception, as schematized two decades ago in Richard Johnson's Cultural Studies model (modified somewhat here):

Figure 1: A Basic Cultural Studies Model (from Johnson 1979)

TEXT

PRODUCTION READERSHIP

---

6. This suggests some interesting comparisons once again beyond the scope of this dissertation, as well, with work on early uses and changes in cinema (Uricchio and Pearson 1994) or with Carolyn Marvin's work on the appropriation of the telephone (1988).

LIVED COMMUNITY

What was most striking about this model, on reading it, was the realization how all the meanings associated with texts fitted into multiple ethnographic frameworks, which also impinged upon each other. Texts should not be seen as simple reflections of a mode of production, a vulgar reductionism, but within a dialectic between consumption and production, which was also shaped by the interpretation of active and diverse agents. Moreover, readers are not merely visions of the critic facing the text, but real people in concrete living situations whose views and uses of texts demand ethnographic sensitivities. This basic model is clearly reflected in my chapter organization.

Analyzing the production processes of these videos, therefore, allows me to read the text and the idea of community from different vantages. Community video producers generally do not control the means of mass media production, yet they may incorporate narrative technique learnt from consuming mass media texts. Their texts are also likely to be different because of the difference in technology as well as the producers' approach to and relationship with the subjects. I also have scrutinized codes and conventions in community video texts, to understand if these texts are indeed different from or oppositional to the more conventional form of representation in documentary.

Texts are social formations not just because they all have a production history, but also because they have audiences. Audience studies have long been a major components of mass communication studies although the scale and some presuppositions of early studies make them difficult to apply to grassroots video. Many of these studies also relied on simple (and sometimes highly-loaded) models of reading and a stress on laboratory-like situations for the collection of data. The scholars of the Frankfurt School, for example, warned of the negative

influence of mass media on the "mass audience." Their "Hypodermic Model" envisioned (without research) repressive ideology injected into a passive audience by media messages. Later, Merton (1949) and Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), developed the idea of "influentials" and "reference groups" which moved away from the simple analysis of messages toward social structures of how audiences were affected by the message and other means of interpersonal communication (See Morley 1992).

This led to a more active characterization of the audience as agent through discussion of "two-step flow" and the concept of the opinion leaders. Though still anonymous, audiences were conceived as groups with socio-economic characteristics (hence a bridge to grassroots research). They could be analyzed by surveys and interviews, producing quantifiable, predictive models (Norden and Wolfson 1986). These models were important to film producers as well as academic analysts, since they shape production and marketing of films and return on investments.

Functionalists developed effects research to explore how the audiences use the media via individual contents and general, institutional relations. A functionalist interpretation of uses and gratifications theory posited audiences who use media selectively, for different reasons: to be informed, to reinforce personal identity, to integrate with society, and to relax and be entertained. Most of this research was quantitative, relying on survey and/or experimental methods (Ang 1991, Morley 1992).

In my work, I have followed more closely trends pioneered by David Morley's ethnographic studies on the Nationwide audience (1980), which investigated how audiences of different socio-economic and racial backgrounds interpret that popular BBC TV program. Through these and subsequent studies, audiences have come to be perceived as differentiated by race, gender, age, education, and other social and interpersonal features. Moreover, we have seen that they must be treated as active consumers of media texts. While an active audience is not a

'free' audience, as John Fisk (1987) tried to promote in early American Cultural Studies, audiences, nevertheless, construct meanings for texts which are themselves social formations, embedded in the political economics and ideology of the texts' producers and their institutions.

Again, audience is not merely a theoretical discussion or an academic byproduct. Target audiences are part of media, whether advertising products or marketing movies. Indeed, studies such as Michael Baits work on the production of the category of "foreign, art films" and the marketing of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari reminds us that filmmakers were aware of these differences and their impact long before academics began to study them (1992). This must be recognized in grassroots study as well.

Another vision of audience derives from uses and gratification theory and follows an interpretative paradigm, where audience members are valued for their ability to read mass media content differently. Here, analysts stress the openness of the message, and use more ethnographic methods, exemplified in Henry Jenkins' Textual Poachers (1992) and Camille Bacon-Smith's Enterprising Women (1994), which valorize the creativity of Star Trek fans. Yet this kind of research often obscures the sociological and economic nature of the media, and relies heavily on psychological abstraction which centers on individual mental states and neglects the political economic context. That is, these studies refuse to acknowledge that Star Trek is produced by major capitalist corporations who conceive of the audience as numbers to be sold to advertisers. Nor do researchers note those who respond negatively to Star Trek (e.g. foreign viewers noting its continual American bias or those who reject its "naturalized" inequalities of race, class and gender underneath its fashionable liberalism.)

These studies, while recognizing the contradictory nature of popular TV texts, fail to recognize the power of a dominant cultural code rooted in political economic history. As Stuart Hall argues, texts

are polysemic, but they are not unlimited: "there remains a dominant cultural order, though it is neither univocal or uncontested" (in Morley 1992:52).[7] Both are warnings for grassroots research which have already been evoked in the influence of intertextual models, like MTV, which permeated the creative efforts of Community Visions.

Hence I have tended to draw most heavily on cultural studies and ethnographic approaches. For example, Stuart Hall, in "Encoding/Decoding" (1987) argues that there are three hypothetical reading positions: preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings. Different audience can have the varied positions. Following Angela McRobbie's idea of the social uses of text, I look at text as a site in which people can appropriate to make meaning for themselves. By looking at distribution and readership, I will explore how different viewers can transform the text, and provide new insights into the relationship between the text and the community. These approaches from communication and cultural studies have provided another bridge to ethnography in an area anthropological studies have scarcely touched upon (See Dickey 1993 for a partial exception).

This exploration of reading and reality is also an area in which cinema and documentary studies have provided important insights. Bill Nichols asserts that "documentary is a fiction unlike any other precisely because the images direct us toward the historical world, but if that world is unfamiliar to us, our direction will just as likely be toward a fiction like any other" (1992:160). The audience's intertextual frame delimits one's own framework of interpretation even when that framework is "realism" where "documentary realism ... testifies to presence" (184). These are important themes in both the production and reading of community video, where reality, witness and

---

7. These approaches have approved more sensitive to context in other areas such as those dealing with the social constitution of gender and audience (See Pribram 1991). The danger of creating an overly heroic audience, however, demands special caution.

arguments of the text are "closer to hand" for both producers and viewers. As I suggested in the previous section, these will also facilitate comparisons between community and mass media, drawing on works by Rosenthal (1988), Nichols (1976, 1981, 1991, 1994), Renov (1993, 1995), Winston (1988, 1995) and others.

Thus, my theoretical models synthesize anthropology, cultural studies, and communication. Together, these outline the ways in which symbols are produced and used as well as the contradictions which they may embody. They also demand an equally eclectic yet synthetic set of methods by which to study text, process and impact.

Methods: Looking for Community

As in my theoretical framework, my field investigation has entailed a synthesis of ethnographic and analytic models, in which the two primary methods were participant observation and visual-textual analysis. The ethnographic methods I have used differ from classic anthropological participant observation because I am not studying a fixed group per se. In fact, I began from a category of objects -- community videos -- through which I entered the processes that are related to the production, distribution, and exhibition of these objects. In a way, I am doing an ethnography of this artifact. Being a facilitator, nevertheless, I clearly participate as well as observe in the production of the artifact and through these know many of the groups described here quite well in many aspects. But there is no community with whom I share their intimate life, in the classical sense of Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) or even modern investigations like Geertz (1975), Sahlins (1982), Dickey (1993) or McDonogh (1993), among others.

Instead of the immersion of participant observation in classic anthropological vein, I have conducted interviews with key personnel, including producers of the video and members of all Community Vision organizations. This encompasses, at times, quite divergent perspectives within organizational history and memory. I also have observed

selective "community video process," especially the production process, including scripting, shooting, and editing. Community events also entail exhibition, with screenings of different sorts, from premieres at the International House, to screening at outreach programs, to group discussions using the video as a stimulus.

My sense of how one does participant observation, as in the case of many anthropologists, remains somewhat inchoate: practical rather than theoretical. It has been formed from reading and discussion of texts from Malinowski (1922) to Michael Agar's The Professional Stranger (1980) or reflexive discourses stimulated by the essays in Clifford and Marcus' Writing Cultures (1986). In addition, it has been learned by apprenticeship, by doing, in my first field work among Chinese in Sarasota (Wong 1991), my M.A. thesis and video in Los Angeles (Wong 1989, 1990) and cooperative research with Gary McDonogh in Spain, the American South and Hong Kong (McDonogh and Wong 1992; McDonogh 1993). It entails an open participation in events -- here, especially production processes -- with a careful recording of observations, interviews and reflections that can be tested against informants' responses and logics.

In the field research I conducted on Community Video, I have played various roles as circumstances dictated. I began as a facilitator for a Community Vision project in spring of 1993; thus, I was an integral part of the production process of these videos. My access came from my technical know-how; my role demanded that I provided suggestions concerning all aspects of the production process. While I was a participant in a fuller sense than many ethnographic monographs convey, I was reflective about the dual demands of my role as facilitator and analyst. In a sense, I found it easier to be aware of the reciprocal need for my skills as I gathered information, giving as well as taking. But relations with informants had not actually proved to be a problem in previous fieldwork nor was it particularly remarked upon by those with whom I worked in this project.

Positive feelings about the Community Visions project and about community organizations and action also supported me in production as well as in later, more reflexive stages. People often had "learned" of me before I actually contacted them, and their reception was bolstered by my association with Scribe and its key figures, Louis Massiah and Hebert Peck. My most intensive interactions -- with We The People, Prevention Point of Philadelphia, and Asian Americans United in production and text and with Good Shepherd and CO-MHAR in reception -- also developed over many months, even years. Finally, since this fieldwork was also local, groups and actors intersected with my own patterns of family and citizenship. My daughter was born during the production of the WTP video and played with the students involved at AAU. My husband, as an urbanist, was also familiar with many groups and social questions and eventually joined the board of PPP. Such cross-cutting experiences and relations continually diffused the boundaries of between analyst and object.

One can never, of course, claim to speak for informants -- most of all, in the tricky are of how they feel about the researcher. Yet my previous experiences of empathetic fieldwork, (which have continued in social ties over decades), the extensive cooperation of many groups in this work over three years, and the webs of reciprocal and cross-cutting ties which permeate this work all reinforce for me, at least, a sense of successful participant observation.

Through ethnographic research on production, I elucidate how the communities want to represent themselves through the videos, in another word, the social intention of the producers. I have worked as a facilitator with four different groups. Among the four projects, two are successes, and two failed. We The People finished New Faces of AIDS in 1994. The second group, Asian American Youth, wanted to make a video with more top down control from someone outside the community and failed to work out a comparable agreement with Scribe. Prevention Point of

Philadelphia (PPP) started its project back in 1994, but due to a lack of consistent personnel, the constituents' unwillingness to be taped, and organizational instability, the project finally failed. Lastly, I worked with Asian Americans United (AAU), who recruited and trained youth in a project on Asian-American culture in 1995 and 1996. Their tape, Face to Face: It's Not What You Think premiered in September, 1996. From my personal experience, the four groups approached Community Vision from different routes, attesting to the need to understand the diverse concerns of different community organization in their attempt to appropriate this technology. More importantly, the complex relationship among the community organizers, their members, the facilitators, and Scribe have played important roles in the success of these projects.

I have conducted interviews with roughly thirty other members from different CV community organizations. The interviews with community video makers did not simply help me understand the production process, they are the main sources of information on the use and reception of the videos. They described the distribution patterns and readings to me as well as reflecting on the process and changes they would make. I am also able to trace changes in group dynamics, including abandon videos.

Although community video is a narrowcast medium, to follow all products closely has proven nearly impossible. Organizations that made their videos quite some time ago, for example, do not use them often. It has proven difficult to attend screening of these video because of a lack of regular schedule. Some are closed to outsider because of sensitive issues. However, I was able to develop more ethnographic depth by attending multiple screenings of CO-MHAR's tape, We Are All In It Together, and Good Shepherd Mediation Group's work, Untangling the Knot (which are discussed in Chapter V). Participants from both groups also shared extensive reflections on these patterns and events of use.

I also have interviewed eight other facilitators, the manager and director of Scribe and the organizers from Focus Philadelphia and New

Liberties, other video projects and video production groups based in Philadelphia. Interviews with other facilitators and personnel at Scribe -- the shadow community that comprises the video professionals who are, in part, the initiators of these projects -- have provides fresh perspectives to the CV process. Many facilitators have been affiliated with Scribe for a long time, like the late Toni Cade Bambara, and many are independent producers themselves. More and more new facilitators are Temple University Cinema program graduates, who may also see facilitating as one of the many steps in their career trajectory. But given their modest stipends, many facilitators have been doing their jobs because they believe in the mission of Community Vision, in the possibility of developing an alternative grassroots video culture. Their situation and values influence the product and process as well and help me to appreciate CV process from different vantages.

Finally, in early 1996, I sent questionnaires to all organizations who have participated in Community Vision, but I only received six responses; these can only be used as references but have not supported a quantitative analysis.

As both a participant and a researcher at Scribe Video Center, I went to the video center at least twice a week in addition to my interviews and participation in the AAU and PPP projects in 1995 to 1996. Video workers of Community Vision use the center for many different reasons, from picking up equipment, editing and meeting, to simply viewing tapes. Interviews with the director and manager, and listening to people at Scribe allowed me to understand their organizational structure as well as their philosophy. I have also examined why certain groups had been excluded from Community Vision; I learned even more by serving on the 1995 selection committee for Community Vision. This process of participant observation has allowed me to understand how Scribe prescribes parameters for its projects, which serves as an "umbrella definition" of Community Vision, a subject I will

pursue in greater details in Chapter Two.

Scribe itself also forms a community in terms of interaction, structure and ideology, and its meanings of community are part of the selection and production process. In a larger framework of participant observation, I am also part of Scribe, and shape that structure. This dissertation will be shared with them, perhaps to refine or criticize the processes of selection and use of community videos.

Finally, I have developed comparative frameworks on organizations like Scribe in order to understand more about relationships between film/video makers and their subjects in autobiographical works (See Katz & Katz 1988) as well as works that are done by certain ethnic or minority groups for themselves as forms of self-imaging and the practice of indigenous film/video making (Michaels 1994; Elder 1995, Turner 1995, etc). I also attended a 1996 conference on Community Access programming which allowed me to meet more people involved in these processes nationwide. This establishes an important bridge between community/grassroots production and a range of films and videos agglomerated under the rubric "Independent."

My ethnographic research has been balanced for this work with analyses of the videos themselves. Community videos are basically texts, and thorough textual analysis provides the complementary primary method that will allow me to examine the texts as complex expressions of the community. Textual analysis also guides me to the understanding of the social and political contexts of the texts' production and reception. In addition, I have employed more traditional views of content analysis to establish the kinds of subject matter used, and what kind of textual strategies are in place.

Textual analysis in cinema has been attacked by many as contextless, in so far as its sole object of study lies in the text itself. Following a long tradition in film analysis in the Screen tradition, or Laura Mulvey's ovular work on the male gaze in Classical

Hollywood Cinema (1975), this divorced from any social and historical contexts. It also refuses to look at texts as polysemic, providing a very elitist reading based on Lacanian psycho-analysis.

However, I have looked at these community video texts as social formations, using Stuart Hall's more nuanced theory of encoding and decoding. And I approach the original composition of the message through intertextual analysis, as developed by Richard Dyer in his study of stars (1986, 1992), and Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott in their study of James Bond (1988).

It is also useful to consider models from the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1964, Chalfen 1976) in order to provide a more systematic framework within which to link production and text. I prefer the more fluid vision of a cultural studies model like Johnson (1979) and could not, in any case, simply transpose Chalfen's Socio-Vidistics grid because it argues for rather rigid and controlled correlations between filming, events and components. Nonetheless, in the final section of the dissertation, I will explore a grid that provides a useful, albeit abstracted, explanatory tool for ordering these features without necessarily seeking the same quantified relations. This is especially important in developing predictive models related to organizational advocacy.

Ultimately, all texts are polysemic and ambiguous: "Textuality is merely a methodological proposition, a strategy to enable analysis, not an attempt to claim privileged status for a range of cultural production" (G. Turner 1992:123). A tape may be taken to stand for community or serve to "set" in stone a particular phase of community history. It may also be used for recruitment or policy action. But it must be read within its social formations.

In order to contextualize my readings, I have investigated in particular how meaning is generated through the interaction of texts and social practices. Through the study of audience/ participants in the

production of meaning, I highlight how texts are read, with in a dominant, negotiated, or oppositional way in relation to the audience socially produced positions. Just as I treat text as social formation, I also investigate reading formations of these videos to understand how reading strategies are adopted, what kind of extratextual sources are found clustering around a reading activity.

Audience studies take on a different ethnographic dimension. as I observe these texts as they are used, with an awareness of multiple contexts (private, social, formal and informal screenings) and to talk with audiences about what they are getting out of them. This ethnographic study allows me to situate these videos in the "lives" of the community organizations as well as their members.

At the same time, I have explored contrastive readings which move beyond the shared and constructed intertexts of grassroots distribution. Showing of We the People: New Faces of AIDS in classes at Bryn Mawr College or To School or Not to School in the academic setting of Muhlenberg College, for example, elicited distinctive visions of the texts "themselves." The combination of intended and "unexpected" audience illuminates the multiple and trans-intentional relationship of text and contexts.

All these methods, like the theoretical developments sustaining and guiding them, will also become clearer in practice, as developed by the analyses and presentations in the chapters that follow.

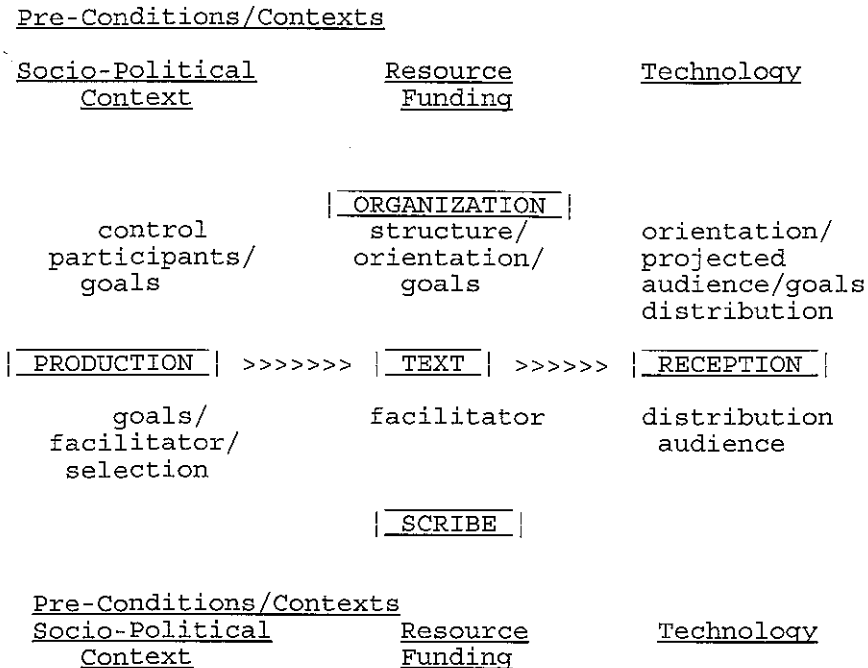
Models and Organization:

With these explanations of the framework of my investigation, then, the rest of the dissertation will present concrete analyses concerning community organization, production, text and readership. Their organization follows an overall flow-chart model, based on Johnson (1979) which has shaped the organization of data for this dissertation (Figure 2).

The center of the model is the flow of production through text to

reception. At each stage, however, these are influenced by "community" as embedded in organizations which influence production as well. In production, the link is through an active community of participants, who may be more or less controlled by a larger organizational community or

Figure 2: A Flow-Chart Model for Community Visions



power structure. The overarching theme is the relation between the goals of the organization and the goals of the video, which are brought even more sharply into focus by the text.

At the stage of reception, an imagined community is involved. This is both imagined by the community organization and created by its negotiated readings (as well as the preferred readings of the organizational community). This may also lead to either reproduction/extension of the organization as community, empowerment of the organization or some members as videographers. Both goals (of Scribe) may be met. In some cases, neither are realized. The double arrows throughout indicate the constant feedback of stages in video making and between this process and the identities of community groups.

Scribe as an organization is placed on the opposite side of the production flow, which is appropriate since Scribe interacts with community organizations primarily through these stages rather than in inter-organizational meetings (although there may be individual links

within a Philadelphia community activist network). Generally, these linkages are mediated by the facilitator who shepherds along each project, although Scribe expresses its goals and philosophies particularly in the selection process. To a lesser extent, all post-production issues also involve Scribe, or its leadership, in personal contact with organizational leaders.

Finally, as in Johnson's model, this chart presupposes that this process of media production is framed by its social, political and economic environment. These pre-conditions/contexts (here repeated in the absence of a three-dimensional circuit) include the socio-political context, resources and technology which shape both Scribe as a community organizer and the community organizations it deals with. The socio-political context, in the case of Philadelphia, includes both urban problems and the habitus of privatism which shapes and responds to them, as elaborated in the next chapter. Resources include funding and manpower, while technology recognizes the special input of video to this entire process.

This refinement does not, for example, eliminate the circular reference of Johnson's model although it recognizes a more continual feedback rather than a final transformation/impact on production. In a sense, this also recognizes the relative newness of grassroots video and the CV program, whose impacts only emerge in individual or group decisions after the first production process is completed.

The organization of the thesis elaborates on this model as well as Johnson's more abstract schema. In the next chapter, I will introduce the community organizations I have worked with, looking at both Scribe in some detail and at the groups it works with in their Greater Philadelphia settings. This serves as an anthropological mise-en-scene for the dissertation as a whole as well as introducing the actors who will recur throughout the work. In all chapters, I seek to balance an overview of CV cases with specific detailed studies, here represented by

the introduction of Scribe itself as a community organization.

Chapter Three focusses on the processes of production in the Community Visions project. Here, I first discuss a general framework of production and then comment on some of the features which emerge in a comparative analysis of all projects as yielding different kinds of production strategy and success. I also deal with the facilitator as a special role linking Scribe and production. To refocus on interlocking relationships of community (organization), production and text, I end the chapter with two extended case studies, based on my fieldwork with Asian Americans United and on a series of interviews with those who participated in the production of a video for Anna Crusis Women's Choir. The presentation of two case studies from distinct vantages allows us a better sense of the sheer complexities of individual productions and the perception that community members may have of their roles within them.

A similar format is followed in Chapter Four, which focusses on text. The multiple products of the CV program allow us to pose general formal questions as well as more epistemological dilemmas of authenticity and truth which are found in all documentaries. In this chapter, I have drawn on many models from contemporary cinema studies but have also suggested how they might, in fact, be expanded by an awareness of narrowcast textuality. Here, I also rely on the balance of a detailed ethnographic study based on my work with We The People and Asian Americans United with generalizations about form and content.

Chapter Five, then, turns to reception and audience. After looking at models for audience study, I review the basic model once again as I explore the constitution of audiences as imagined viewers among producers and funders as well as in readings drawn from the text in unexpected contexts. From this, I turn to a broad-based survey of how CV videos are read -- or indeed, if they are read at all, as use itself emerges as an important feature of socially-based reception. Once again, the richest portrait of the many social relationships of

production and community which shape reading is best realized by ethnographic portraits, drawn here from my work with Good Shepherd Mediation Center and CO-MHAR.

Finally, in Chapter Six I review the findings of this investigation in both the general terms raised in this introduction and in specific understandings of how community video might be valued and even improved as a tool for expression and understanding. This also finally feeds my work back into the loop of concrete community organization and advocacy to be shared with Scribe and its constituent organizations in the future.

CHAPTER II:

CHOOSING "COMMUNITY": ORGANIZATION AND NETWORKS IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA

> "Movement toward a Neighborhoods First approach has been building for some years in Philadelphia. Sensitivity to the grass roots is flourishing in settlement houses, in community development corporations, in the new Philadelphia Plan of corporate commitment to city neighborhoods.
>
> But for neighborhoods really to come first, society at large has to accept a fundamental change in how it views and treats residents of troubled communities"
>
> "The Pierce Report" Philadelphia Inquirer March 26, 1995:H2

In my introduction, I noted the multiple and divergent abstract constructions of "community" that permeate everyday use, organization and academic research. As in the much-vaunted Pierce Report of 1995 (Philadelphia Inquirer March 26, 1995), which proposed a reinvention of Greater Philadelphia through the cooperation of a number of rather nebulous "communities," the pragmatic questions become where do we find the concrete associations and actors who will do the work and who takes responsibility for planning and action? In practice, the first feature which shapes the meaning of community for Scribe and others within the Community Visions (CV) project is definition on the basis of organization and, to some extent, praxis. In the Community Visions program, Scribe as a Philadelphia "community organization" defines "community" through its selection of other organizations, whether they themselves are focussed on problem-solving, client-oriented services, neighborhood concerns or group activities defined by gender, sexuality, race, age or disability. In this chapter, then, to understand concrete meanings of community, I first need to explore how Scribe defines itself and operates as an organization within the context of contemporary Greater Philadelphia. While this in no sense claims a holistic analysis of this complex metropolitan region, I will rely on published overviews of Philadelphia and my own knowledge as a regional citizen to suggest particular social, historical and cultural features which make Scribe a part of this setting. Through this approach, I will also show how community takes shape as a concrete experience of the local within

wider metropolitan, national and global contexts.

On this basis, I then will explore how Scribe defines other organizations as appropriate community representatives to carry out its CV projects, paying special attention to the selection process. This close reading, in turn, will allow me to present the entire set of organizations which have worked with Scribe on Community Visions. My purpose will be less to introduce them individually than to discuss general and recurrent characteristics which reflect on both Scribe and its Philadelphia context. Systematic comparisons among groups will also help the reader to understand better the production histories, texts and audience appropriations of the videos from various groups analyzed in subsequent chapters

One of the dangers in analyzing community through organization, which I also wish to guard against, is the problem of reification through forms and associations. We the People the people does not represent or speak for all HIV+ persons in the Philadelphia area as a cohesive unit any more than Asians Americans United represents some ideal and self-conscious "Asian" community here. Most organizations, in fact, are divided between a functional "active" community of clients and staff and a wider, "imagined" community of those whom they might attract or serve but do not actually know. In some cases, it is also useful to distinguish an organizational community contiguous with the group roster -- We The People, for example -- made copies of its CV video available to all members. This multiple vision of community permeates the video process.

Moreover, different organizations understand and create community in different ways -- a service orientation is very different from a memorial project (like the John Coltrane Cultural Society). While I have generally categorized this by goals, there may also be additional ramifications. The John Coltrane project, for example, is the work of a single person trying to stimulate a project rather than a variegated

group and this has had clear consequences in terms of its audiences.

In the end, all organizations are challenged by the process of video making, as I will show in subsequent chapters, precisely because their members often entertain divergent views about what community is and how their group or video should relate to this. In the initial selection process, in fact, organizations probably tend to overstate their strength, cohesion and purpose. Hence these choices must be nuanced by recognition of the tensions over organization and community that these groups which I will elaborate on in case studies throughout the dissertation. This includes the complexities of formal structure and informal networks of associations, beliefs and goals that constitute Scribe itself as an organization and "community."

Scribe Video Center as a Community Organization

There are many ways in which community might be mobilized, organized or represented among Philadelphia's complex interest groups, neighborhoods and organizations. In its quarterly pamphlets, Scribe describes its own mission as that of using "video/film to express and document contemporary ideas and concerns. We provide an opportunity for all members of the community to produce videotapes under professional instruction. Videotapes on social issues and community concerns are of particular interest." The dual use of "community" in this passage already illustrates Scribe's key principles: a commitment to wide democracy ("all members of a community") and a sense of being a facilitator in social issues/social change ("community concerns"). As an organization itself, Scribe was founded less on the basis of shared professional interests or association than around the idea of providing services, including teaching video skills and offering technical support for a larger, vaguer public. It functions as a non-governmental, non-profit media agency rather than acting as a representative or facility for any single group. Hence Scribe relies on funding raised from local and national philanthropic agencies, ranging from the Pew Foundation to

the National Endowment for the Arts. It also depends a great deal of volunteer and underpaid participation. And it has creates a service center rather than one which facilitates individual advancement or some established civic institution, government, corporate or educational agenda. Nonetheless, a Scribe community has ultimately evolved socially from the confluence of views among media and community activists as well as the dense interconnections shaped by repeated projects, screenings and friendships over time. Scribe, in fact, uses this de facto community in negotiating relations with other groups in Philadelphia.

Throughout Scribe's fifteen year history, its leaders and participants also have avoided creating a professional organization for video as either art or career, an artistic cooperative or a technical institute. While volunteers may bring professional goals to it, like the facilitators or teachers building their resume for future advancement, they still are expected to subscribe to Scribe's goals of using media as tools, and video as a "democratic" means of expression that can be acquired by all, demystifying the boundaries created by professionalism, the artist mystique. Gretjen Clausing, who worked as an early CV facilitator before becoming a coordinator of International House's Neighborhood Film/Video Project, reiterated the point: "Scribe is putting cameras in the hands of people who've been traditionally excluded from mainstream media" (Philadelphia Inquirer Feb 8, 1993 C1).

As this comment suggests (and the proposal cited above also affirm) Scribe participants generally define community in opposition to "the mainstream" of white, middle-class urban and suburbanites or the media that are perceived to serve them. Hence, another Scribe document also explains that its "central commitment ... is to focus our efforts on projects that involve poor people and people of color as participants, and to work collaboratively with organizations based in such communities" (Community Visions document, Organizational Purpose and Goals, Scribe Files). Hence community can come to be identified with

marginality, even as Scribe serves a balancing function in order to promote more egalitarian public democracy. It seeks to foster democracy within communities as well. In so doing it also makes choices about those it will not serve.

This oppositional definition was present from Scribe's inception although it also has evolved over time. Louis Massiah, a film maker and native of North Philadelphia, founded Scribe in Philadelphia in 1982; it was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1986. Initially Scribe ran workshops in various fields of video productions, including script writing, lighting and camera, sound recording and editing. All these classes were -- and continue to be -- taught by Greater Philadelphia media professionals who contribute their talents on a semi-volunteer (low paying) basis.

As a formal organization, Scribe is still run by two people -- Massiah as Executive Director and its center manager, currently Hebert Peck -- assisted by a part-time accountant and a part-time community outreach coordinator. Massiah and Peck supervise the center's day-to-day operations and coordinate the many media professionals who work on different Scribe projects. The organization is at once highly centralized and personalized in this two-man command <u>and</u> highly flexible and diffuse in its involvement with individual projects as well as its incorporation of new people in activities such as project selection.

As a non-profit organization, Scribe also functions with a supervisory Board which includes leaders such as Massiah's sister Frederica Massiah-Jackson, a local judge. David Haas, another Board member, heads the Philadelphia Independent Video and Film Association (PIVFA), a local independent videographers network which provides small grants, workshops and screening facilities; his wife worked as a facilitator for Scribe. Other board members as of 1995 were Michael Days, Mindy Kitei, Barbara Grant, Reginald Ingram, Tamara Robinson and Martha Wallner.

In addition to his dedication to Scribe, Louis Massiah also is an award-winning film maker in his own right and the 1996 recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship. He has long been engaged in activist video/film making. His works include The Bombing of Osage Avenue (1986), about the Philadelphia's response to the MOVE crisis and Eyes on the Prize, Part 2 (1990), the nationally distributed PBS follow-up series on the Civil Rights movement. Most recently, he devoted years to a massive video biography of African-American intellectual/statesman W.E.B. DuBois.

In the early years of Scribe, Massiah recalls that he worked as a producer at WHYY, the major PBS station in the city, in the daytime, and ran Scribe at night. He borrowed equipment after 5:00 from professional houses which he would return the following morning. He worked out of shared space at the Brandywine Community Center. Eventually, as more workshops were held, more equipment was donated and purchased and a full-time center manager was hired (Interview, 1996).

In 1989, Scribe moved to its present Cypress Street address in Center City, Philadelphia, a small rowhouse tucked into a residential and commercial neighborhood. Downstairs, a large converted garage space functions as a studio and classroom. 3/4-inch editing equipment is also there, where the DuBois group used it frequently in their work during my years with Scribe. Offices, files and sensitive editing equipment are crowded into the small rooms on the second floor. Scribe now hosts eight workshops per year at a nominal cost to participants ($100-300 dollars, depending upon equipment and individual attention), involving a total of 64 participants in intensive, hands-on instruction.

As the executive director, Massiah today no longer teaches workshops, but he instead oversees many aspects of Scribe's work, including funding development, recruiting instructors and facilitators for CV, and developing new projects. He also continues to help emerging videographers to get projects started by offering advice on funding, production, distribution, letting Scribe serve as fiscal sponsor to

video projects. In the past three years, as he worked with the large but underfunded group of collaborators on the DuBois project, he noted that he has spent less time at Scribe. Now that the project is finished, he sees himself returning to more active involvement while continuing his links to other local activist and video networks (interview, 1996).

Hebert Peck, Scribe's current manager, works at the video center and oversees the schedule of equipment use (since equipment remains limited and often needs repairs), and acts as liaison to answer questions from the public and interested videographers. While Louis has the final say on most matters, Scribe is run as a very open organization with little structure with intense communication between Louis and Hebert as well as with other instructors and facilitators. Hebert, a former social worker, also has produced his own videos, including Little Hebert (1994) which explores the personal meanings he derived from the discovery of his son's Down Syndrome. He currently is working on other proposals, including one on soccer and its implication on American diverse community, in terms of class and ethnicity. Like Louis, Hebert brings both professional networks and interests and wider cultural connections to Scribe as a workplace (interview with H. Peck, 1996).

Since Scribe never has exceeded 2.5 full time staff members, it relies instead on a project-oriented network of independent associates who are "hired" to conduct workshops, to conduct surveys, or to work as facilitators for CV. This core articulates an even larger network that includes community activists and media workers who serve as resources for Scribe as well as their colleagues in terms of information and multiple connections. They may even constitute a social group on special occasions like CV screenings or the party to celebrate Louis' MacArthur, where facilitators, organizers and activists contributed food, gifts and testimonials.

One of Scribe's regular contributors, for example, was the African-American author Toni Cade Bambara, who died in 1996. She long had been a friend and colleague of Massiah, starting with their collaboration on Bombing on Osage Avenue (1986), for which she wrote the script. A social activist, film critic and film-maker in her own rights, she led many workshops at Scribe and acted as facilitators for two CV projects. Massiah told me in our interview that Toni captured the spirit of Scribe, in the sense that she saw teaching a workshop as social activism, not training for new artists. When she was conducting the script writing workshop, for example, she would tell the "Hollywood wannabes," "I don't see how you would get a Hollywood film out of this workshop. Look at this room, look at these walls. Let's look at some tapes. What would possess a sane person to say that Hollywood work is going to come out of this settings?" Those who had grandiose aspirations would either back off or change gear (Massiah, interview 1996).

During her memorial service at the Painted Bride Arts Center in Philadelphia, in early 1996 (for which Scribe provided video documentation), friends from all over the world, including Toni Morrison, Amari Baraka, Wole Soyinka, and Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, and numerous others came to remember her. They mingled their comments and recollections of her art with local people, especially black women, who knew her through workshops, friendships, or advice on how to handle difficult boyfriends. Through her, and even through this moving event, then, Scribe and its people were in turn embedded in larger networks, including a global diasporic African intelligentsia as well as everyday and very local experiences of sisterhood.

Other regular instructors come from the independent film/video community in the Greater Philadelphia area, although many have wider connections in both professional film and community action. Barbara O, for example, played the role of Yellow Mary in Julie Dash's Daughters

of the Dust. Ayoka Chenzira directed Alma's Rainbow, while Chris Emmanouilides, another instructor and facilitator, directed Seulto. He had worked in the past with a similar program based in Northern Liberties. Lisa Yasui became one of the producers for The Gate of Heavenly Peace, while Maria Rodriguez served in a similar role for Morning Tide. Rodriguez has subsequently become the curator and programmer for WYBE's Through the Lens, a major screening outlet for the work of local independent film and video makers, adding a node to the Scribe distributional network. Many of these instructors have also been facilitator for the CV projects. One might note as well their connections with minority populations and issues towards whom Scribe has dedicated its special mission, again intensifying network and community.

Scribe also has represented a place for videomaking, acting as sponsor and as a center for equipment which may be vital to emergent or independent producers. Hence, many independent works has been produced through Scribe. These are primarily "socially relevant" works, which reinforce the orientation of the organization as a whole. They include Frankford Stories (Martha Kearns, 9 minutes, 1988), about an old and close-knit working class community in Philadelphia and Intermarriage: Latina's Perspectives (Priscilla Cintron, 10 minutes) which reveals the personal experiences, views and challenges of four Puerto Rican women who have married outside their culture. Not Seen or Known (Antonio Da Motta Leal, 5.5 minutes, 1990) deals with the experience of young homosexual men in their sexual development, coming out amidst the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Silence Broken (Aishah Shahidah Simmons, 7 minutes, 1993), discusses an African American lesbian's refusal to be silent about racism, sexism and homophobia, and Solicited Response (Margaret Graham, 7 minutes, 1989) examines the problem of panhandlers both from the point of view of those who solicit and those being solicited. Most of these works respond to social ills and can be labeled as leftist, developing the Scribe ethos in individual statements. Some of the works

were screen at the International House and WHYY or WYBE, another PBS station in the area. In 1995, Scribe also brought together multiple videographers to make cameos of AIDS activists as part of the World Day of Art against AIDS.

The interlocking careers and networks which Scribe creates beyond central figures like Massiah, Peck and Bambara are evident in its production roles in Rape Stories (Margie Strosser, 25 minutes, 1989), an intimate and disturbing monologue about the video maker's own devastating experience. Strosser, in addition, was a facilitator for the Community Vision project of Women Organized Against Rape, and was also a staff member of Scribe from 1992 to 1993. In our interview, she noted how these projects could come together in a more profound way, since "making video actually involve processes of self-discovery, creating a chance to question power, hierarchy, and one's mission" (I will return to this issue again in Chapter V). Scribe, similarly, in its many roles, participates in expanding both video and community through opening alternative ways of seeing to people, a video social activism.

This overlapping network around the formal organization (in which I participated as facilitator, independent videographer and researcher) reinforces Scribe's functions as an organization and resource center in encouraging the widest people use of video to express a range of civic concerns. However, Louis Massiah, in the late 1980s, already worried that most people who came to Scribe were already "in the circuit" -- that is, a professional community rather than a civic one. The CV project emerged from his search for ways to attract people who would make videos which are more relevant to the various social and community issues in the area. Rather than para-professionals, CV has sought committed citizens who would use media as a democratic process. Massiah acknowledged in our interview that going downtown to take a video class remains a kind of luxury; nevertheless, he wanted to see some people use the workshops, not as a hobby, but as work. This work, in turn, would

benefit their own communities, which would acquire video skills that would make the organizational work better.

Hence, in Scribe's proposal for funding for CV (1990), Massiah reinforced the themes of community as alternative that had emerged in Scribe's practice, as I have sketched them out:

> "...With some notable exceptions, video producers remain predominantly white and almost exclusively college-educated. It has been our repeated experience at the Scribe Video Center that students who participate in our training programs are already in some measure video-literate. For the most part, grassroots organizations based in poor communities of color are not yet taking advantage of video.
> ... By assertively engaging grassroots organizations in video production projects, we can take our skills to them rather than waiting for them to come to us."

This proposal, in fact, suggests more than simple outreach. It focuses on changing control of technologies as well as developing sites for democracy. Yet to understand the impetus for this action as well as its impact, we must look for a moment beyond scribe at the urban social and historical context of modern Greater Philadelphia.

Philadelphia Stories: The Socio-Cultural Context

Philadelphia, as a setting for community action has an impact beyond how Scribe chooses and shapes the organizations which can benefit from the Community Vision process. Philadelphia, situated between New York and Washington D.C. on the Eastern seaboard, has a long tradition of weak urban government unable to deal with pressing urban problems and strong non-governmental associations which try to fill this void. Like many other older American industrial centers, Philadelphia has been characterized by Sam Bass Warner (1987) by its traditions of "privatism" -- liberal capitalism in a public domain. As Warner has elegantly argued, the impact of this tradition on planning and service, and on the very conception of a public domain, underpins a contemporary crisis which demands rethinking of the city:

> Privatism is a cultural consensus whose meanings have followed the growth of the city from the years of sailors, slaves, laborers, servants, shopkeepers, and merchants to the present times of machine operators, salesmen, attendants, nurses, corporate

> executives, and government administrators. During the nineteenth century the great thrust of private and public effort was to organize an atomized city into reliable and effective social units: the private manufacturing corporation, the labor union, the political machine, and the railroad were its achievements.

Yet the heritage of privatism has been disturbing:

> Now that the metropolis has been reconstructed as a region of networks of closely interacting institutions the task for the future has shifted. Ways must be found to admit the vast army of Philadelphia's poor citizens into these organizations and their prosperous economy. At the same time for the benefit of those already inside, and for the health of the region as a whole, ways must be found to release the power and creativity of the many who are trapped within those organizations which are unjust, ill-managed or ossified" (1987:xii-xiii).

Or, as former Democratic mayor Joseph Clark put it in blunter terms, "two hundred and sixty-eight years of laissez-faire economics had left the city in a hell of a mess" (Cited in Warner 1987: xi). Even while Warner's thesis presents a somewhat reductionist view of urban society, one cannot help being struck by its continuing explanatory force in local political and planning issues.

Over time, this pattern in Philadelphia's history can be evoked in three central themes which are crucial to Scribe's definition and activities. These are (1) the fragmentation of the city and its populations; (2) the historical dominance of a civic and organizational as opposed to governmental responses to this fragmentation; and (3) the dire circumstances of a once-great industrial center in a post-industrial world. While I recognize that these are to be found in other American and even foreign metropoles, their impact on Philadelphia and on both community activism and video merit special attention here.

First, we must recognize that contemporary Philadelphia is -- and long has been -- a deeply divided city. Even opportunities to change its image, like the 1976 Bicentennial foundered on tense division of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and religion. Group divisions have often been embodied in the social spaces of neighborhoods, which have become pitted in turn against other neighborhoods or intrusive individuals. On a larger scale, these are replicated in internecine

divisions between the city and its region. Hence the 1995 "Pierce Report" demanded a new way of conceiving the region in order to plan for growth ahead -- yet it, too, seems to have met general silence.

This fragmentation has its historical foundations in the growth and division of labor in the city. This made areas like South Philadelphia or the turn-of-the-century Northeast (including Frankford and Port Richmond) enclosed units often isolated from each other and from downtown dominance:

> .... the presence of large numbers of mill workers' houses, set near factories, gave the district the look, and something of the internal organization, of the mill town. Far from being a place of a mass of isolated and alienated metropolitan workers, the residents of the northeast had more habits of organized activity than those of any other district. Northeast Philadelphia was the home of benefit associations, craft unions, fraternal orders and ethnic clubs. It also enjoyed some of the street life and neighboring qualities generally associated with lower-class immigrant districts like parts of south Philadelphia (Warner 1987:179)

These local communities are still marked by nuclei of factories, warehouses, churches and satellite "downtowns" which dot the Greater Philadelphia cityscape. Not all such divisions could be portrayed so affirmatively, however. Irish workers faced frequent conflicts with the previously-established populations around the urban center throughout the 19th century. Other networks -- Italian, Polish or Jewish -- were marked by the convergence of race and class, with fights erupting along boundaries. Even as descendants of these groups have fled the city for suburban isolation, Hispanics and Asians have been caught in new conflicts with both whites and blacks.

Indeed, Blacks were already segregated targets of mob violence in the antebellum city (See Warner 1987:125-157). By 1899, W.E.B. DuBois wrote of the city's black population that

> Here is a large group of people --perhaps forty-five thousand, a city within a city -- who do not form an integral part of the larger social group. This is itself not altogether unusual; there are other unassimilated groups: Jews, Italians, even Americans; and yet in the case of the negroes the segregation is more conspicuous, more patent to the eye, and so intertwined with a long historic evolution, with peculiarly pressing social problems of poverty, ignorance, crime and labor, that the Negro problem far

> surpasses in scientific interest and social gravity most of the other race or class questions (1996:3).

DuBois' solutions ironically also evoke Warner's privatism hypothesis. That is, he not only called upon White citizens to change their views and system, but also told Blacks to not expect salvation from "schools and reformatories, and relief and preventive agencies" for "the bulk of the work of raising the Negro must be done by the Negro himself" (Ibid:389-90). This included the strong tradition of racial/social organizations that Philadelphia hosted from churches to schools to neighborhood groups. It also stressed the role of the local black middle class, from which Massiah has emerged.

This conflictive and uneven development of industrial Philadelphia as a city precluded, in Warner's view, effective response to urban public concerns like education, health planning or economic cooperation with other cities. Even the local political machine spent more time maintaining its rule and serving limited needs of divided clients than in developing the city as a whole. Partial solutions, nonetheless, emerged in a rich organizational life, chronicled in the recent Atwater Kent Museum project, Invisible Philadelphia (Toll and Gillam 1994). Here the heritage of early Quaker visionaries and private legacies like those of Stephen Girard are juxtaposed to religious, ethnic, racial and other associations which actively engage in the construction of "communities" across the city, a longstanding grassroots response to privatism and its omissions. The complexities of cultural intersections in Germantown as met by a Catholic church converted into a mediation center, the intersections of Chinatown, new immigrants and suburban Chinese which underpins Asian Americans United, the efforts of We the People to meet needs of HIV+ citizens not met by government health agencies and the gentrification of Northern Liberties and the reactions of Kensington Action Now to a sense of abandonment all shape the field within which Scribe operates and the organizations with whom they work.

As a corollary, one might also note that Scribe relies as well on

the institutional ambience created by Greater Philadelphia's multiple colleges and universities. Temple University's film production program provides a ready supply of trained technicians and maintains an active videography community centered here, while the International House, with strong connection to the University of Pennsylvania hosts the Neighborhood/Film Video project. Staff and board members of various organizations also have contacts with these educational centers throughout the region and recruit new participants.

Yet these very organizational responses to weak central control and planning may also become negative and divisive with regard to images of larger communities, of a "public good," especially when caught in the downward spiral of the region since the 1950s. While other older Rustbelt cities were hard hit by shifting production and global competition, Philadelphia and its older industrial neighborhoods were especially devastated. After a few years of stabilization, concerned citizens like urbanist Theodore Hershberg have sought new solutions in a project to reinvent the region, sponsored once again by private institutions like the University of Pennsylvania, the William Penn Foundation and the Philadelphia Inquirer. Hershberg's portrait is grim:

> Despite these heroic efforts, Philadelphia and other American cities are on greased skids. As Mayor Rendell says, what distinguishes one form the other is the angle of decline. Philadelphia's tax base has eroded precipitously, losing 10 percent of its jobs in the last four years. One family in five is mired in poverty, and unemployment, particularly for nonwhites, remains high. AIDS, homelessness and drugs have emerged as new and costly social problems. Public education and public housing are in desperate need of reform... (Philadelphia Inquirer September 11, 1994)

This litany of urban crises, ironically, almost sounds like a catalog of Scribe projects since 1990.

The meanings of decline are not unrelated to political hegemony, the organization of capital and its fragmented resistances in the industrial city. As Carolyn Adams and her team from Temple note in their perceptive analysis, Philadelphia: Neighborhoods, Division and

Conflict in a Post-Industrial City,

> The transformation of the region's economy after World War II has produced an uneven pattern of decay and redevelopment, widening the gaps between income groups and generating competition and conflict between races at the lower end of the income scale. There is a kind of circular relationship between the changing economic reality and Philadelphia's political disintegration. We have portrayed the growing inequalities among groups and neighborhoods as one factor that has weakened the majority political cohesion. And once weakened, the city's political institutions can do little to mediate the conflicts that inevitably arise from those inequalities (1991: 153)

The decline of Philadelphia from a world industrial capital to a post-industrial problem also has focussed mainstream media attention on the city, although not always in a constructive or responsive fashion. The Philadelphia Inquirer, for example, was involved in the urban reconstruction discussion in conjunction with Hershberg and the Pierce report, but it also presents lurid images of urban decay and insecurity to suburbanites almost every day. Television has proven even more intense in its broadcasts of crime, decay and misery, as the Pierce Report laments:

> There's real danger, for example, that the press, while pleading neutrality, could gut a Neighborhoods First approach before its eve launched. They could do it by neglect (as the Inquirer ignored many vital details of the empowerment zone for Philadelphia-Camden). Or reporters might suffocate optimism about Neighborhoods First by focussing on the failures of past initiatives, instead of the potential of new plans.

Nonetheless, this report it does not include alternative visual media among its solutions, but relies on established channels:

> In other cities across the county, a new breed of 'civic' or 'public' journalism is emerging. It focuses on potential solutions to tough social problems and criticizes the media habit of casting every issue in confrontational terms..." (Philadelphia Inquirer March 26, 1995: H2)

Philadelphia has even appeared twice as a case study on ABC's Night Line within the last three years as a kind of model dystopia. One two-part program in 1995 looked at the so-called Badlands of Third and Indiana (the area in which CV participant Prevention Point and Reconstruction operate), drawing on the expertise and commentary of Inquirer columnist and novelist Steve Lopez (See Lopez 1995); obviously

mainstream media have their own networks of experts as well. Another program, in 1996, used slurs directed against a newly-arrived African-American woman in the Frankford neighborhood to stimulate discussion of problems of discrimination in the U.S. as a whole (which had been raised in Frankford Stories). Both programs referred to the post-industrial decline of North by Northeast Philadelphiaia[1]

Again, this is not to say that similar portrayals -- and responses like those of the Community Visions series -- are not found in other areas of the United States. Indeed, this dissertation is premised on Philadelphia as an example of communicative processes going on from Canada to Hong Kong to the Third World. In this way, through production, readings and use, citizens assert their face to face communities in the context of increasingly central, even global media (cf. Willis 1990; Juhasz 1994; Miller 1996; etc). Yet here, too, the structure of response reminds us of the impact of privatism on the city. Philadelphia's Cable agreement with Comcast, the major local cable access provider, for example, was negotiated without any provision for more general cable access which has facilitated community projects like Manhattan Neighborhood Network in New York or independent production series like Paper Tiger TV.

While Philadelphia (and national) television and newspapers may invite responses from local inhabitants and organizations, these people may not be literate in media techniques nor have access to production: the power Scribe provides. Yet Scribe, with Focus Philadelphia, WYBE and WHYY represent small, underfunded partial media responses within a fragmented city. Hence Scribe cannot respond to the city as a whole, but must choose to target groups and communities as voices within this

---

1. One of the surprising features of both presentations was the lack of reaction to them in the press or in city government, in so far as I could ascertain. One of the local weekly papers later did a follow-up on the men interviewed by Nightline but there seemed to be no effort to present a less biased, more diverse sense of the city and region in response.

city. Here, the selection process underscores the organization and ideology of community and organization through which Scribe reproduces grassroots media and reshapes communities.

Discovering Communities: The Selection Process

Scribe begins the Community Visions process each year by actively contacting and soliciting groups. Scribe's public materials offer to help any organization "create your own videotape--about an important concern in your neighborhood, an innovative approach to change, or an aspect of your community's cultural life" (Solicitation letter, March 19, 1990). The Community Visions project is presented in terms of neighborhood culture, social change, and community expression, and the rights for all to tell their stories. Yet simply making the offer is not enough.

Unlike cable access centers like the Manhattan Neighborhood Network where any individual, groups of individuals, and organization can use its production facilities and exhibition resource, Community Vision only invites pre-existing groups to participate. Rather than trying to form a more general and heterogeneous community through the video production process, Scribe concentrates its effort in helping established organizations to use video for self-expression. Scribe convinces community organizations of the value of learning a new skill to further their respective missions. In other words, Community Vision's ideal is not the production of videos per se, but rather to provide organizations with a tool to further their cause through the video making process or through understanding media in their varied usage. That is, Scribe strives to give the organizations a hands-on experience to acquire video literacy in its many manifestations.[2]

Some groups may know about or contact Scribe through personal

---

2. Here, one must underscore the contrast with the Canadian Film Board and other projects which make videos about community problems for others, even though their thematic interests in marginality and oppression often coincide with those of Scribe's participants. See Moscovitch 1993.

knowledge of what other organizations have done with them or through the knowledge of individual members. But Scribe actively has sought people outside the "video beltway," organizations who see Community Vision not as a rather luxurious accessory, but as an intrinsic part of advancing the goals of their organization. Hence, from the inception of the program in 1990, Scribe has hired a community organizer who knows Philadelphia and South Jersey well to look for possible organizations that might be interested in making a video. This organizer later evaluates the organizations to understand if they are the kinds of groups that Scribe wants to support. The organizations then submit a 3-page proposal to Scribe that includes materials on the group and its purpose, the nature of the video they would like to make, how they intend to complete it and how they will use it. Specific application questions underscore Scribe's particular vision of community.

Under "The Purpose of Your Group", for example, Scribe asks (i) What do you do?; (ii) How long you have been in existence? and (iii) Who is your constituency? One of the concerns evident here (and recurring through Scribe's discussions of organizations in the selection process) is a search for "authentic" community organizations rather than video projects presented in the guise of organizational programs.

The group is also asked what kind of video it wants to make, i.e. "What is it about?" and "What message do you want to deliver?" The forms allow only a few lines to answer, and no one is pinned down too closely on a medium they are not really presumed to understand, although totally vague projects will be questioned.

A third set of questions addresses staffing and commitment, asking for the names of a leader and team members. As I will suggest in the discussion of production, this often points to one of the most critical features in success or failure of a Community Vision project -- not the breadth and depth of support but the leadership to see it through.

Finally, the group is asked to speculate on the purpose of and use

of the video: (i) How will it be used to reach and motivate your constituency? and (ii) How will you distribute it? Again, the process cannot assume high media literacy (the form asks, in fact, if the group/community have video screening equipment?) Some are able to respond to Scribe's requests for "letters of interest from people or groups who would use your video," although these may not actually reflect the end utility of the project so much as the solicitation and network of those filling out the forms.

Table 1 lists all the organizations who have so far participated in Community Visions projects as of the current selections from 1996-7 whom I have not worked with. It also includes their film title and year of completion, if any. The first group of organizations selected was ambitious, although only two completed according to the envisioned schedule: Women Organized against Rape and a cooperative arrangement between Community Legal Services and Women Organized Against Rape. These constituted the initial public screening and are referred to in the organization as the first group. Later projects were nonetheless completed by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, Montessori Genesis II (in West Philadelphia), the Women's Community Revitalization Project (WCRP) and Kensington Action Now (KAN).

One also can see an intense overlap in location and themes already emerging in their networks and interests. In fact, by 1993, Scribe had found itself working primarily with groups in Kensington, a North Philadelphia industrial and ethnic neighborhood which has decayed to "poverty", and problematic status. Some of the groups in Kensington included Kensington Action Now (KAN) and WCRP in the second round, augmented by COMHAR (Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation), Woodrock, United Hands Land Trust in 1993. At this point, more than half of all the groups Scribe had ever worked with were based there. This situation came not only because of the areas's real problems, but also because Kensington, in terms of social activism, also was better

organized than other areas of Philadelphia. Moreover, these groups knew and worked with each other, and hence were able to build on their

Table 1: Community Vision Groups and Productions (by year of application and completion)

1990-91 (premiere 1991)
WOAR (Women Organized Against Rape) From Victim to Survivor
Community Legal Service, Women Against Abuse Legal Center
Peace at Home: How to Get a Restraining Order in Pennsylvania

Kensington Action Now, We Hope the Message is Getting Through
Philadelphia Unemployment Project, First Things First
Women's Community Revitalization Project, Women Housing Women
Montessori Genesis II, Montessori Genesis II: a Family Thing

1992-3
Woodrock, To School or Not to School
CO-MHAR (Community Mental Health, Mental Retardation Services) We Are all in This together
United Hands Community Land Trust, More than Property
The Philadelphia Black Women's Health Project, Herstory: the Philadelphia Black Women's Health Project

1993-94
We The People, The New Faces of AIDS
John W. Coltrane Cultural Society, Giant Steps
Nexus-Foundation for Today's Art, Bodyworks
Hispanic Family Centers of Southern New Jersey, Se Habla Aqui

1994-95
Good Shepherd Neighborhood House Mediation Program, Mediation: Untangling the Knot
Jewish Community Center for Greater Philadelphia, That Sounds Like Me: Seniors Reading Aloud Together
Reconstruction, Reconstruction (1996)
Anna Crusis Women's Choir When Speech Flows to Music
Triangle Interest, The Currency of Community (1996)
Prevention Point Philadelphia (no video; in process again 1997)
Asian American Youth Association (no video)
Project Home (no video)

1995-1996
Asian Americans United Face to Face: It's Not What You Think
Philadelphia City Sail, (no video)
United American Indians of Delaware Valley, Inc. (no video)
Camden Advocate Program (no video)

1996-1997 (in process)
St. Gabriel After School Program
Habitats for Humanity of West Philadelphia
Chester Youthbound
Books Through Bars
Source: Scribe Archives

colleague's experiences.[3] This shows that Community Vision definitely

---

3. In a 1996 talk at Prevention Point, representatives of Kensington Welfare Rights Organization noted that they had worked with other documentary film makers as well in order to make a video of their story, scheduled for completion in 1997. Break the Media Blackout Video also went to the 1995 tent city to screen activist videos for the homeless there.

worked within Philadelphia social activist network.

In response, however, Scribe actively started to diversify its effort all over the Delaware Valley in terms of location as well as interests: in 1994, its selections included We the People, the Coltrane Society, Nexus-Foundation for Today's Art, which works with handicapped artists from its Old City location and the Hispanic Family Center of Camden. The next year saw further diversification with work with women's groups like the Anna Crusis Women's Choir and Triangle Interest, without fixed "territories," as well as the Asian American Youth Association in Southwest Philadelphia, Good Shepherd Neighborhood House in Germantown and the Jewish Community Center, based in Center City.

In 1995, African-American social activist Arlene Wooley was hired to scout for new groups. Her career exemplifies what Scribe is looking for in a "community organizer." She previously had directed the United Hands Land Trust in Kensington and had worked on their video with Scribe in 1993. Through her efforts, nine groups from West, South, and North Philadelphia, Center City as well as Camden NJ applied for the four available slots. She then asked me to be on the selection committee.

After Scribe receives completed proposals, a committee is constituted to select the groups which goes beyond the formal organization of Scribe itself. It includes Louis and Hebert as two members from Scribe as well as the community liaison, two from other community groups who may or may not have worked with Scribe and two media professionals (including me in this case). The community organizer (only one actually appeared in the deliberation) knew the Scribe people personally as part of a more general activist network, although the other media professional in 1995 was not currently active as a facilitator.

The major selection criteria recorded in the internal survey sheet we worked with are:

1. Importance of project to designated constituency
2. Does this project address an under-served community?

3. Potential for successful completion of project
4. Distribution/Utility of finished tape
5. Evidence of true collaboration with support of organization's management.
6. Need for training and resources in this group
7. General Feeling about the project

Arlene, like others, also told me later in an interview that a major consideration is that the group has to have limited resources in producing video. Hence, the Environmental Air Force was excluded from Community Vision because Scribe felt that "[W]ith their airplanes and pilots, they can easily get funding from other environmental agencies" (Hebert Peck, 10/25/94). Medical projects affiliated with local universities and hospitals also have been seen as well-enough endowed to complete the project on their own.

Apart from this redistributive feature, from my participation in the selection process and conversation with past panelists, the other criteria seem to be distilled into two primary areas of concern which shift the emphasis of the original applications somewhat. First, the organization has to be "democratic" and its mission must be considered by the panelists, who have always been liberal activists of one kind or another, to be "socially relevant" (akin to Barnett's findings in the study of community murals, 1984). In fact, in most proposals, the bulk of the application focuses on the history, philosophy, and directions of the organization rather than any visual project allowing the notion of the underserved community rather than a particular approach or topic to dominate discussion.

Second, the group has to give the panelists the impression that they can finish their projects. No matter how noble the panelists consider a group's mission, the groups must convince the selection committee that they know what they want to say. This entails writing clear proposals, not only in terms of how to put the video together, but in choosing a focused theme. Furthermore, the group has to show that they have enough resources -- translated into time, commitment and personnel -- to finish the projects. Finally, they must give some

indications how they will use it.

In fact, as noted, the proposals are all quite vague on the form and content of the videos themselves (the second question on the original application). Since Scribe is looking for people/organizations that are not "in the circuit," this is to be expected and does not concern panelists.

This weighting of the elements of production clarifies distinctions between community videos and other documentary proposals for funding from foundations or other art councils. In the latter, whether mainstream or activist videography, the expertise of the personnel, as exemplified in their resumes, and the ability to write a detailed proposal that can explain their project is fundamental. Scribe is looking for worthwhile causes and dedication, but not expertise. As Peck once said "It just takes will and an idea." (Interview 2/8/93).

Among all groups reviewed, only the Women Against Abuse proposal (1991) showed professional expertise in terms of production. In fact, the application took the form of letter from a video professional, Lisa Yasui, who has known and worked for Scribe, and who could lay out the steps needed for the video production process. Yet even as a professional she concentrated on the social construction of the video as much as formal elements: "... each [participant] would be recruited according to skills...in this way some would act as producers...; some as tech people; some as scriptwriters; and some as production coordinators and community liaisons... "

Another, later, project, by Nexus-Foundation for Today's Art, actually presented a 4-part, scene-by-scene treatment of the video, as well as a production schedule and an equipment list. Nexus, however, stressed: "If this is to be a work of art as opposed to a documentary, the story must be told predominantly with images, text and music and not with traditionally didactic methods." The fact that they want to produce art actually diverged from the spirit of Community Vision and led to

some later problems. Overall, while community organization developed its own forte and professional skills, most groups knew little about video before they started the projects.

At the selection Committee Meeting in April, 1995, Asian Americans United was selected by a unanimous vote because every member believed that AAU's cause of combating racism and immigration restrictions and supporting workers' rights clearly warranted support. It also explained itself in a very cogent proposal:

> "We want to make a video about the current government's attacks on welfare and immigrant rights. It will be educational in that it will contain facts and statistics that refute the myths surrounding welfare and immigration. But more importantly, it will contain stories from the people with whom AAU works. We will show shots of the various neighborhoods where Asians in Philadelphia live, such as South Philadelphia's 7th and Snider and Logan, include interviews with Asian people who need public assistance to survive. We also want to show that Asian Americans are working in coalition with other progressive groups to form a united front against the attacks on people who aren't rich...." (AAU Proposal 3/30/1995)

Furthermore, AAU's track record of community projects, including a mural project, and a dance project with the Painted Bride (another community performance space in Philadelphia which intersects with Scribe), testified to its ability to complete projects. In subsequent chapters, I will trace this project as well from my perspective as facilitator and researcher. The other projects chosen for the 1995-1996 group were Philadelphia City Sail, United Indians of Delaware Valley, and the Youth Advocate Program of Camden, which proposed to document "a day in the life of a Youth Advocate program ... an intimate portrait of youth and families in their community" (Camden Advocate Program Proposal, March 15, 1995).

However, in this same deliberation, another proposal was turned down because the committee had questions about the issues of informed consent in dealing with psychiatric patients. Still another organization, which offers after-school programs with meals and other training and educational programs, was turned down because their proposal was too vague. In discussing the purpose of the video, for

example, it noted only that it

> "Will be used to more successfully make those living within the community aware of our programs and the benefits of getting involved, motivate and encourage other community groups and organizations by offering our proven plan available to them as a model. Through education, training and participation the community at large will improve." (3/29/95)

One notes the rapid, shifting use of community as local network, organizational strategy and valued global audience.

In the case of the groups whose proposals have been rejected, Arlene returned to each organization and explained why they had been rejected. She also offered alternatives and suggestions. She encouraged a rejected group, for example, to reapply again next year with a more focussed project. She also went to another group that has not been chosen to suggest to them that educating women about pre-natal care would be more effective in personal counseling, and that they should contact other groups like Mom's Mobile in West Philadelphia.[4] Selection, then, is not the only path to community reinforcement and coordination that Scribe deals with.

In this way, the community function of Scribe as an overseer who makes a selection among organizations still promotes harmony and tries to facilitate further media action even for those who are not part of the CV process. Through this selection process, the values Scribe's organizers and participants share with regard to "community" are more clearly inscribed on the Philadelphia landscape, even if only a fraction of Philadelphia's thousands of community groups are even approached. Apart from the individual cases, some of which will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, we can get a clearer sense of what this delineation of community means by looking at ideological, constitutive and organizational characteristics shared among the CV groups.

Organizations Redefining Community: An Overview of CV Selections

---

4. Here, I have continued to use the names of organizations which will probably be funded, but have omitted those who were rejected.

Since 1990, Scribe has accepted thirty proposals for community vision, with twenty completed, six others in production as of Fall 1996 (this includes four groups chosen in November 1996) and four others which have never reached completion. All groups serve constituencies that can be socially defined as "disadvantaged," including prisoners, women who have experienced abuse or discrimination, people with inadequate housing, those with physical or mental challenges, the elderly, ethnic minorities, the unemployed and inner city youths and children. This range hardly seem surprising since Scribe sees CV as a major resource in its mission to work with poor people and people of color who account for many service agencies and constituent targets in Greater Philadelphia. Yet a systematic examination of the list in Table 1 also underscores less obvious and nonetheless important patterns that elucidate other features of Community Vision's shaping of community.

I have already noted the early geographic distribution of these groups. Overall, every organization, except for two in Southern New Jersey and a 1996 selection in nearby Delaware County, is based in Philadelphia. The addition of sites outside Philadelphia every year since 1994 suggests an increasing definition of the scope of community which coincides with other stresses on regional identity. Several other less territorially-bounded organizations also reaffirm this wider scope, including Anna Crusis, We the People and the United American Indians of Delaware Valley.

Within Philadelphia, most groups are either based in or serve people in poorer neighborhoods. Nonetheless, repetition of the early concentration on Kensington has been avoided subsequently apart from the involvement of Prevention Point there. West Philadelphia seems a recurrent location, although problems have arisen there concerning organizational affiliation with the University of Pennsylvania, which is perceived to be able to fund its own projects. Two projects based in part in activities begun by the Roman Catholic church, Good Shepherd and

St. Gabriel's, underscore the transitions of European ethnic neighborhoods like Germantown to more complicated problem areas.

Of the twenty organizations which have completed production, six exclusively serve women members -- WOAR, Women Against Abuse, WCRP, Philadelphia Black Women's Health Project, Anna Crusis Women's Choir, and Triangle Interest (an organization that promotes lesbian financial independence). While this reflects Scribe's response to a more general gender inequality in American society (and certainly in control of public media), this may also speak to the roles of women in non-governmental organizations outside the city's government and economic leadership. Several other organizations have been led by women -- AAU, the JCC project, Good Shepherd, and the South Jersey Hispanic organization. This is also reflected in female-dominated production.

Perhaps equally striking in the overall list is the presence of groups oriented to and incorporating youths -- Woodrock, Asian American Youth (an unsuccessful project), AAU, Delaware Sail and Youthbuild, as well as the younger Montessori and St. Gabriel's projects. This may also reflect a general interventionist model of social work and education as a theme. In the case of Woodrock and AAU at least, the time and interests of youth in video-making were important elements of the completion of the project. One other project was directed at a distinctive minority of age -- the JCC Elderly reading project.

No group that I have reviewed has exclusively white members. Groups run by and serving ethnic minorities and/or immigrants are instead repeatedly represented at CV, including African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics (United hands/Manos Unidas as well as the Hispanic Family Center produced bilingual tapes). African-Americans are among the most frequent constituents. Even Native Americans, a minuscule population in Greater Philadelphia, have been recognized. So far there is no video representing Eastern European immigrants or the descendants of earlier Italian and Irish populations although none of

these groups have in fact applied. This may also speak to the networks of community organizers as well as alternate traditions of localism in Philadelphia's changing ethnic neighborhoods.

Class and race also coincide in the definition of groups and their memberships/clientele. We The People, for example, welcomes all HIV+ people to join them; however, 90% of their members are African Americans. They also noted in their proposal that they served poor people on Medicaid (80%, with the uninsured at 15%), people with a history of substance abuse (75%), the homeless (50%), and those whom they defined as a sexual minority (70%) (WTP CV Proposal 1993). The constituents of CV organizations are disadvantaged because they fit multiple and socially-labeled categories of the "oppressed" in terms of race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, and disability. These overlap with location, too: most are based in poor neighborhoods.

Even those groups which are predominantly middle class in terms of constituent origins, like Anna Crusis, highlight their racial, ethnic and sexual diversity in their proposals. This has raised issues of balance as well in the case of Nexus, which involves many artists of middle-class training and background united by their disabilities. Their video, as noted below, highlights a black former drug addict among the life stories woven together.

This diversity also highlights a continuing definition of "Gay" issues and community. Only Triangle Interest defines itself primarily by sexuality. Yet gay associations are present (and dealt with textually and organizationally) in the case of both Anna Crusis and groups working around the AIDS crisis.

Certain issues recur as well within and across organizations. Women's groups have dealt with rape and abuse as well as the establishment of financial and psychological autonomy, while youth groups have focussed on problems of schools. Racial, cultural and sexual equality have been raised as issues within videos that represent

special constituencies. Housing is also important as a recurrent issue among neighborhood as well as interest groups, reflecting both the ongoing crisis of Philadelphia housing and homelessness. This also draws on a long history of activism and mass media attention; the squatter organization ACORN was already the subject of a documentary, Anyplace but Here (1986), in addition to the activities of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. Medical issues and service delivery are also prominent, especially if we include projects which have been shifted toward alternate funding. Again, these speak to issues of what community should provide -- as well as what Greater Philadelphia is perceived to have failed to provide for its citizens.

Finally, these groups share organizational features which will impinge even more directly on the production issues discussed in the next chapter. All the collaborators that Scribe has sought to reach in its Community Visions proposal have been defined as grassroots organizations. However, "grassroots" does not imply a lack of structure; each of these organizations has hierarchies of decision making and complex social structures. They also have organizational cultures and their own evolution, histories and memories. Yet while grassroots communities are perceived by Scribe to benefit from the production of a community video, the whole community video production process is not suited to every grassroots organization, nor to every moment in the life history of each organization.

One perhaps obvious feature that should be noted is that besides serving disadvantaged or "under-represented" populations, the CV groups are also activist and see themselves as advocating rights for their members. Video then is seen as a tool to further their respective advocacies. This again brings Scribe and the CV organizations into a vague larger metropolitan community of social activism, sharing a network of the city grassroots actions through which members of different CV organizations know each other and recruit future projects.

All the organizations including Scribe are non-governmental, bottom-up organizations that foster constituent involvement. WTP, for example, is run mostly by HIV+ people. According to their statements, they serve members, not clients: "As members, people with HIV/AIDS who participate in our program or request our assistance are given certain rights and privileges beyond what might be normally expected for a "client": they have the power to elect our Board of Directors and participate in the development of general organizational policy as well as specific policies regarding the day-to-day operation of the Life Center" (WTP proposal, January 1993). WCRP, Anna Crusis, and Good Shepherd Mediation Program all work on consensus models which give everyone a say in activities and thus incorporate new members/clients quickly and which influence both production and use, as I will show in future chapters. Triangle Interest also stated in its proposal that "A notion of out organization is that our efforts are to be completed according to a feminist model which dictates that our committee reach consensus to arrive at decisions. As a result, we will not have a leader as such, because all of the women who have made a commitment to this project will be equally responsible for it."

Even organizations with a more strict hierarchy, like CO-MHAR, also involve parents of their clients in certain organizational decision making. All in all, these organizations show a high degree of respect to their constituents, and always identify themselves as different from government agencies that serve a similar group of clients.

Furthermore, with the exception of CO-MHAR, which has a staff of 400, all CV groups are small. Some groups are actually run by only one person, although Scribe tries to weed these out. Woodrock, for example, has many branches, but Youth United for Change, the branch that made the video was only run by one person, Rebecca Rathje. Other groups (and their projects) are as well also have been one woman shows. These one-person run projects call into question the meaning of community, and

have led to failures in two cases.

One organizational feature which many share (and which proves to be important in the production process) is in fact a headquarters and a concrete sense of place to meet and work. While this denotes a certain solidity and history, the absence of a particular venue has also been overcome in the case of Anna Crusis (which may again reflect their more middle class resources). Some of these centers are in fact focal points in the video, whether visually or in terms of expression of programs and services. In the case of Prevention Point, which did not complete its original proposal on its street outreach programs, the establishment of a drop-in center in 1995 gave a new focus to group efforts and planning.

Yet one should recognize that these small, activist organizations but also can prove over-extended. With limited staff, many of them rely on volunteer help. Even those like WOAR, with a solid staff, also depend heavily on volunteer efforts. This means that the production team must often drawn on the active community even if successful in recruiting other volunteers from the members at large. The Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey, for example, was able to use its own staff, volunteering extra time on their own to make its video. This reliance on volunteers is related to the tight fiscal situations of the groups (and the crisis of both Philadelphia and national welfare guarantees in the 1990s). Most also rely on soft money from government agencies and grants from both private and public foundations. This aspect of the organization again reflect Scribe's ideal of low resource communities in terms of both personnel and funding, but it also has real impacts on production and video democracy.

Perhaps the least interesting feature of groups at this preliminary selection stage is their sense of the video itself. In their proposals, groups offer various goals. Some want to make videos that explain who they are, like CO-MHAR or the John Coltrane project. Most organizations have asked to make a video about how they have

affected people, rather than the organization themselves. This was the case with We the People, and Montessori Genesis II. A few have opted to make videos about specific issues within a wider range of issues that they work with like Woodrock on school drop-outs, AAU on immigration and welfare (a project it later altered) or Nexus on handicapped artists. Proposals for instructional tapes are rarer, although Women Against Abuse wanted to make an educational tape that informs women of their legal rights and introduce them to take steps to protect themselves within the system. (Good Shepherd's parable of community mediation has also subsequently been used in an instructional vein).

The underlying theme that runs through all the proposed tapes is empowering people who are perceived as disenfranchised in one capacity or another. This goal matches the organizations' profiles and Scribe's self-developed vision of the needing community in Philadelphia as well as the goal of creative community for the future.

Yet there are also limits on content imposed within this selection process. While all of these organizations depend on government and private foundation money to survive, Scribe discouraged them from making a specific fundraising tape. At this stage, other uses are quite vague in proposals. Some organizations planned to use the tape to increase exposure and recruit new constituents, some merely wanted to raise consciousness on social issues. Within this general sense of empowerment, different organizations therefore choose to express themselves through different channels, as we will see. Some more educationally-oriented organizations viewed the video making process as one of the most important features of the whole experience. For Woodrock, for example, the process of carrying out a project from beginning to end seen as was an invaluable experience, therefore, it was more important that the video team chose a topic that is youth oriented -- dropping out of school, -- and expressed that concern from the point of view of the youth, rather than adults. On the other hand, CO-MHAR

saw itself as an organization that had grown to a point that it needed a polished, sophisticated piece to tell others who they are. So it proposed to make a tape that was about the organization, to orient viewer to understand the organization, its missions and its services. WCRP, which helps to provide housing for poor women, decide to talk about women's organizations as well as housing. Despite Scribe's hand in shaping community, then, diverse organizations have envisioned very different kinds of communities in their proposals, videos and uses. These, in turn, become more clearly differentiated in practice-- in the matrices of production, text and usage I will discuss in future chapters.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have focussed on the first mechanics of the definitions of community which emerge in Scribe's organization as well as its ideology. This has demanded an understanding of how and why Scribe works, in relation to its Philadelphia setting. By highlighting how it selects among organizations and the patterns which emerge from this process, I have also highlighted how Scribe intersects with a habitus of Philadelphia organization as well as active networks of interests and organizers. Through the confluence of all these, a concrete practice of community emerges thatgoes beyond the abstract ideologies of community video to embody them in creative ways.

While Scribe has, in effect, been the only community organization which I have presented in any ethnographic detail so far, both its organizational networks and anchorage and the communities it chooses to work with raise important themes for the dissertation as a whole. In some ways, it is obvious that Scribe as other organizations exists within multiple communities, real and imagined, organized and called into being by a specific event which celebrates communitas (often ritual settings like the Bambara funeral or Louis Massiah's MacArthur celebration). The tensions in these definitions and experiences of

community will underpin some of the dilemmas of production, text and readership we will review in more detail with concrete organizations in subsequent chapters. In particular, the division between active community -- those who do the work -- and the "virtual" or "imagined" community which might be reached by communicative media pose questions here quite different from those of mass media production.

Yet this difference also underscores a critical feature of community and place that permeates Scribe's activities as well as those of many of the groups with which it works -- a sense of localism. While CNN may have videographers on distant battlefields and even independent documentaries like The Thin Blue Line (1987) or Cannibal Tours (1988) may be shown around the globe to a variety of spectators, CV groups think, work and aim at a more much reduced scale -- taking the technology and even the issues of the global on a much more local scale.

In the following chapter, I will follow these groups and issues through their reproduction of community -- warts and all -- in video production. In this process, in fact, community as experience and practice is redefined by personalities, structures and actions.

CHAPTER III:

PRODUCTION AS PROCESS

Among the angelic orders, films are made by purple butterflies with cameras screwed into their gossamer wings, catching every iridescent jagger and flicker. For me, film is tug, pull, conflict, process -- documentary filmmaker Emile de Antonio (1988), in Zheutlin, Barbara, "The Politics of Documentary: A Symposium" (Rosenthal:230)

This chapter examines the production process within grassroots/community video in order to ground our understanding of community organizations and their videographic communication in day to day practice. However, unlike the issues already raised in organizational structure/selection in the last chapter or the more common filmic discussions of texts which will be discussed in the following chapter, the production process does not exist as a public document. Hence I have relied more exclusively on ethnographic fieldwork -- especially my three years as a facilitator with We the People, Prevention Point, Asian American Youth and Asians Americans United -- to document how these videos are produced, over a period which normally ranges from nine months to two years. I have used reflective interviews with facilitators and community participants to explore other projects as well. Through these perspectives, I explain further how the concept of "community" becomes entwined with production itself, and hence how new visions (and limitations) emerge in process.

These methods and goals largely coincide with those proposed by Eric Michaels in his discussion of policies for Australian aboriginal cinema. Indeed, I am developing precisely the implications that he put forth in his groundbreaking work:

> I prefer to suggest that the issues that arise around the practice of Aboriginal media will eventually inform the construction of diverse mass-mediated images from documentary resources, the raw material of people's lives, and lived experiences. By putting it this way, I am rejecting a generic definition of documentary as a particular expository convention that presumes some privileged relationship to the real (a definition still useful in much textual analysis) because it is assumed there is a transparency of opposition between truth and fiction (actuality and imagination) which, I think, obscures the significant issues for theory and practice.
>
> I am proposing a more utilitarian, 'processual' definition,

> geared more to media practitioners, subjects and viewers. Such a definition would be based not on the properties of the text but on the conditions of production and use. (1993: 21-2)

To situate the reader with regard to the special demands of grassroots production I will first sketch out an "ideal" model for the community video production process, as envisioned by Scribe and conveyed to groups, at a more individual level, by the facilitators. One of the central features of CV production process is the relationship between the organizations and Scribe, mediated primarily through the Scribe facilitator. This makes analysis of that mentor-producer role especially important here. Production is also the site in which two sets of expertise, social activism and videography, merge to produce a product that tries to express some notion of community. Yet, as I have noted already, "community" may be variable and even conflictive. Hence production also becomes the site at which organization problems manifest themselves. This allows me to elucidate some of the features with specific impacts on completion and use of CV projects.

I will return to ethnography in this overview through specific examples of how organizational structures affect the production process and, in turn, influence definitions of "community" and "reality." Hence, I focus on two extended case studies of CV production processes. The first draws on my own participant-observation fieldwork with Asian Americans United. As a facilitator to the AAU project from its inception in 1995 to final production in the summer of 1996, I gained first hand experience on how Face to Face: It's Not What You Think came into being. Members of the group were aware of my ongoing dissertation project, in fact, and helped me to try to understand how AAU wanted itself and its constituents to be represented. I was not personally involved with the second case, that of the women's choir Anna Crusis (When Speech Flows to Music, production process in 1994-95). Nonetheless, I have interviewed three primary participants: Anna's ex-manager, DonnaMarie, who was on the video team, and who had previously

worked on the WOAR tape; one of the tape's editors, Helen, who is presently representing Anna Crusis with regard the video, and the tape's facilitator, Diane Pointus. These three have very different views on how the production process worked, reflecting once again difficulties in the construction of community.

Initiating the Process: From Proposal through Production

After an organization has been selected for a CV project, Scribe holds a preliminary meeting with the facilitators and the group leaders. In order to carry out this nine-month process, each community organization is expected to delegate responsibility. It should form a video team -- a condensed active community -- which will coordinate with other members of the group in themes, participation, and message. Most video teams and their members have no previous production experience at all; therefore, few have begun the process with a realistic awareness of how difficult and time-consuming it will be, as I will discuss below.

At this first meeting, Louis and Hebert distribute background materials on Community Visions which explain Scribe's philosophy and establish a project timeline. In the meeting, Louis generally explains the history of CV and outlines the steps involved in making a CV video, drawing the group into the formal goals and organization of Scribe itself. A budget is also handed out (Table 2), although there is little discussion and this step has even been omitted in some groups. Few organizations actually need or follow this model.

In 1994 and 1995, Louis also invited both facilitators and previous video team members to attend and to share their experience with the new groups as well as new facilitators. This ensured a continuity within the overall process. It also situated the whole CV process in human terms within Scribe itself as a visionary community embracing multiple issues and participants, both professional and activist.

CV production begins with the formal training of group members

themselves in all aspects of scripting, video production and editing. [1] Scribe offers general public classes on script writing, video camera production, and off-line editing which CV team members are expected to attend. Facilitators will reinforce this later and may even teach/reteach some specific aspects or members on their own. While Scribe as an organization also offers classes on making fiction films, and directing actors/actresses, the core classes that Scribe asks the CV video teams to take are exclusively related to documentary video making. This is later reflected in the videos' texts; except for some scenes of reenactment, all CV tapes are actuality documentaries.

1. Only the highly technical final on-line editing is handled by professionals, still working closely with a community member.

Table 2: Sample Budget
(from Scribe handout, 1993)

Item			
Out of Pocket Expenses:			
Instruction/Planning:			
Tape rentals			40
Screening Monitor		80	
Instruction Books/Text (8 x $8.00)		64	
Subtotal Planning	184		
Equipment Rental and Supplies (Assumes 8 Shoot Days)			
Tape Stock - Production (Hi8 x 16 hours)	192		
Tape Stock - Off-Line (VHS x 32 hours)		136	
Tape Stock - On-Line (3/4"SP x 1 hour)		32	
Auxiliary Lighting Rental		100	
Auxiliary Audio Rental		75	
Subtotal Rental/Supplies		535	
Production Services:			
Car/Van Rental (1 day)		55	
Travel (SEPTA)			26
Entertainment/Food			30
Parking			15
Photographer			120
Misc. (props, location fees, photocopying)		50	
Subtotal Services			296
On-Line Editing:			
10 hours x $75			750
Character Generator			75
Tape Duplication		85	
Subtotal Editing		910	
Audio/Sound Post Production:			
Music Composition/Fees		125	
Sound Studio			95
Subtotal Audio			220
PROJECT TOTAL		2125	

This emphasis on documentary production (as well as form) can be explained by three convergent interests. First, documentary is more economical because it does not involve set-up, props, actors or elaborate scripting. As a second, corollary feature, producing documentaries generally requires less time, technological knowhow and preparation than fictional films. This is critical when the team is neither composed of nor working with video professionals.

Finally, documentaries have long been associated with politically or socially-charged events and topics. While other forms of fictional narrative, visual essay and parable also have achieved dramatic social ends, the power and use of Triumph of the Will (1934), Harvest of Shame (1960), Titicut Follies (1967), An American Family (1972), The Thin Blue Line (1987), Who Killed Vincent Chin? (1987), Gate of Heavenly Peace (1994) and many others affirm Bill Nichol's statement that "'Documentary' suggests fullness and completion, knowledge and fact, explanations of the social world and its motivating mechanisms" (1993:174). The demand for socially relevant authenticity which pervades the entire CV project fits the long established intertextual expectations of the documentary form, as we will examine in the next chapter. Yet the complexities of CV's social contexts also intersects with Nichols' subsequent reflections on this definition: " More recently, though, documentary has come to suggest incompleteness and uncertainty, recollection and impression, images of personal worlds and their subjective construction. Documentary has its troubles and opportunities" (Ibid: 174).

Given these issues of contemporary discussions of the documentary form, with which Scribe producers and facilitators deal in their professional lives as well, the training of community participants sometimes also includes showing other independent video works which offer them alternative forms of expression. This proves especially

important since Scribe often works with people who have little exposure to other forms of moving images beyond those of Classical Hollywood Narrative and mainstream television (including reality shows like "Cops" as well as news and documentaries). MTV also has its own influence, especially with younger videographers. Through training and discussion, members of the group are expected to learn how to envision their projects as well as to master the skills and techniques to make them. This learning reinforces Scribe as a center as well as their own community development through the acquisition of new tools.

As documentary techniques are learned -- although not all participants can attend the classes and not all will profit in the same way -- planning can begin. Three discrete steps are essential in video production: pre-production, production, and post-production, which more generally entail scripting, shooting and editing. Again, community members learn a model imparted by Scribe from which their own practice generally departs. In fact, this neat model is scarcely real in the experience of Scribe's independent producer/bricoleurs, either.

While pre-production focusses on scripting, it also demands selection of locations and elements for the video, agreement on a shooting schedule and other logistical concerns. Scripting also proves an early stumbling-block: while many groups have an idea of what story they want to tell in the video, few actually know how to do so. Even if they have produced verbal materials, which not all have beyond the proposal, the demands of a visualized narrative are new to them. Most neophytes also dissociate reality from scripting or pre-planning, relating instead to the immediacy of "news" and "reality shows."

Even among professional documentarians, in fact, one notes wariness in referring to a script which belies the careful preparation necessary for any endeavor. These ambiguities surface in Jon Else's reflections on making The Day after Trinity:

> Trinity was not scripted. We did several years of research, an extensive story outline (not of the film, but of the history

> involved) and most importantly, a 'toy movie' which David W. Peoples wrote and which was a hypothetical full-blown screen play for a finished film. We never intended to actually produce the toy movie, but it was the foundation for getting at most of our story. In the end, the film was shaped about 50 percent before shooting and 50 percent during editing, and it would have been shaped 85 percent before shooting had we not cut it down from four hours to forty minutes during the last month of postproduction (in Zheutlin 1988:233).

Even while belittling the script, it remains evident that pre- and post-production dominate the concerns and efforts of the film makers. In addition, Else puts remarkably little stress on shooting/ production, which community organizations often presume to be the heart of the entire process. This misperception leads leading to errant schedules and some disillusionment as the process drags on.

Scribe expects the group to come up with a first draft of the script within one month of the initial meeting, and a final script one month after. This involves choices about content, since the group needs to decide what they want to show and how to show it within a 10 to 15 minutes long video. Here, other dilemmas can also emerge. Prevention Point of Philadelphia, for example, wanted to show "the public" that they are providing an invaluable service by preventing habitual drug users from contacting HIV through shared needles, and helping sex workers to practice safe sex by distributing condoms. PPP also wanted to show that habitual drug users are humans who merit such concerns. However, scenes at the exchange sites conveyed one image of community while interviews with volunteers, police, and neighborhood leaders offered a different, "respectable" perspective that seemed to hide the clientele. And some interviewers added their own questions, on issues like drug legalization, which deviated from PPP interests.

Not only the balance between scenes but the content and context of materials needs to be clarified in advance. Interviewees can respond in many different ways to many different questions. Responsiveness differs according to settings as well, which PPP found out when it first tried to shoot footage during a weekend needle exchange. It was forced to move

from the exchange site, where many people did not wish to be included in the public record of a video frame. Other issues of setting also may also arise, such as whether the script should include only scenes of the groups' neighborhoods or draw contrasts with more wealthy areas.

Time is also an element in planning, not only in the shooting schedule but in the incorporation of specific events. These range from repeated "community" situations (needle exchange, meetings, classrooms) to special concerts, celebrations or seasonal activities like Chinese and Cambodian New Years for AAU, which occur only once during the film year. While Scribe does not expect a shot-by-shot script, their idea of a treatment presupposes a scene-by-scene description of what is to be expected on the tape both visually and aurally. It allows for flexibility but does not envision a post-hoc ordering of footage.

Many groups, as Prevention Point ultimately did, find it difficult to understand one of the primary realizations of contemporary documentary theory:: "that all discursive forms -- documentary included -- are, if not fictional at least <u>fictive</u>, this by virtue of their tropic character" (Renov 1993:7). Thus, the shift from "just wanting to show the truth" to learning how to construct an argument in video precipitates a crisis in which what the community wishes to say, who speaks for it and even how it speaks are all called into question.

By the end of pre=production, the group and the facilitator should have arranged a schedule which states how many days of shooting are needed, the locations, the subjects, and any additional technical support needed. Scribe calculates three months for production. During this time, it wants the CV groups to do only six to eight shoots, which, with careful planning and full, consistent participation, is adequate for a short video.

Actual shooting (production), however, needs a great deal of coordination beyond the predetermined schedule. Ideally, a video team should have a production manager to make sure that everything is in

place -- crew, equipment, subject. In a well-prepared shoot, the camera and sound person should know what they are expected to shoot and record before getting to the site. If it is an interview, the interviewer should be prepared to ask the kinds of question s/he wants to ask (which will relate to the construction of the argument in the script). Besides these more creative features, shooting also means getting every single piece of equipment in order -- the cables, the microphone, the different batteries, the tripod, the lights, and the tape -- and coordinating all the human power necessary to use them. All this must generally be done on weekends and off-hours when participants lack other obligations.

Other elements outside the production team also impinge upon schedules. Interviewees, for example, have to be present at the right place with both time and interesting responses. Even the weather has to cooperate. Oftentimes, especially as the team moves beyond its organizational networks, they may find they cannot get the cooperation of a specific interviewee. Woodrock, for example, had wanted to interview Constance Clayton, the Chair of the Board of Education in Philadelphia, but after a six month effort, their request was turned down (which was incorporated in an interesting way into the video, as I will discuss in the next chapter). They also failed to interview Asian students, which remains a gap in the final video. In other words, in production, preliminary concepts and actual implementation again diverge, which affects the textual outcome.

After the footage is assembled, post-production should take roughly another three months. In practice, production and post-production tend to overlap conceptually and technically. After the group shoots a tape, it brings the original Hi-8 tape to Scribe to have it time-coded: that is, putting electronic markers on the tape to locate different segments of the tape for editing. The HI-8 tape is then transferred to 1/2 inch VHS tape with a window-dub of the time code; the Hi-8 tape will not be touched until final editing. In the meantime,

group members must log the tape, writing down what precisely has been shot, how long the shots are, what are they about, and if they are usable or not (e.g. if the sound is good, etc). Here, these crucial details seem "more like work" and often lead to diminished commitment as the project seems to drag on. Production teams dwindle in numbers and works seems further away from the immediate consciousness of those interviewed or even more loosely involved in the initial excitement of the project.

Off-line editing is where the group makes all the editing decisions, using the window dub's time-code number to write down all editing decisions. This may also make it clear that more footage is needed to meet specific gaps in the emergent narrative, reviving production demands. Off-line editing is done in Scribe's offices with a relatively unsophisticated machine which occasionally slips a frame or two. This is normally the most pain-staking part of the production process. These hours of detailed and tedious commitment also constitute the part of the process production which teams are least prepared for.

As in all film and visual productions, many different cuts need to be envisioned to see if the edits look right. The groups, acting as directors, also have to decide what kind of sound and visual effects are necessary. These range from simple techniques like fading in and out or putting on titles to more sophisticated digital effects like strobing or changing the speed of the tape. All may blend into the final cut. Decisions on musical backgrounds, if desired, must also be made.

Finally, the combination of all these effects with the actual editing decisions and the construction of a soundtrack will be done on-line through various production houses with which Scribe has negotiated on an individual commercial basis. Given the expense of on-line editing (up to a few thousand dollars per day) Scribe has only budgeted one day for each group. Again, this demands a final intensive coordination of materials, members, and professional personnel.

This model, while based on Scribe's vision of community production, does not differ that much from expectations for any documentary video. Yet as in other documentary videos, the model imparted in classes and texts undergoes many alterations in practice. Here the facilitators, as constant links and mediators between the community organization and Scribe as well as the world of professional videography, prove crucial. Their roles must be examined before we move into the experiences of production and its relationship to ideas/activities of community.

Facilitators: Between Scribe and Grassroots Community

All through these three productions stages, Louis and Hebert are available for any kind of assistance in terms of ideas, evaluation, booking of equipment and editing facilities, and even obtaining tape stock. In 1992, Scribe also hired Maggie Strosser, a former facilitator to the WOAR project, to work specifically as the CV coordinator. She was able to devote time to following every group's development. She left in 1993 and Louis was unable to find someone to fill her post until 1996-1997. This gap in organizational structure has meant that overall coordination occurred only through direct communication among groups, facilitators and office personnel. This has proven difficult in several cases, where demands for continual follow-up or "push" for lagging projects slip between the cracks of other activities. Yet it remains central to Scribe's philosophy and the community organization with which it works with that Scribe does not do the videos or even run the process.

Nonetheless, Scribe needs a continual liaison for the groups to provide technical skills as well as coordination. This emerges through one of the more flexible features of Scribe's own community organization, its use of facilitators. Facilitators are video professionals whom Scribe recruits from the area who have the skills and experience to directly oversee and promote completion of the video

projects. Most of the facilitators are independent media workers who believe in the principles of grassroots production. They work with Scribe primarily as volunteers, receiving a minimal stipend which may not even cover their expenses of transportation and other outlays during the process. Partly because of the time commitment involved, few facilitators have worked on more than two projects at different times. Nevertheless, they tend to constitute recurrent figures within the inner organizational circles of Scribe -- hence Margie Strosser moved from facilitator to staff with ease, while others teach classes or rely on Scribe for professional support in their own career efforts.

Early Scribe projects built on the commitments of established professionals with whom they had previous connections, such as Toni Cade Bambara and Lisa Yasui. Scribe has since found that it is more difficult to find the ideal facilitator who has both enough experience and enough time to give to CV projects. In recent years, more and more facilitators have been relatively new videographers from the Temple University cinema and television production programs who are much less associated with the original "Scribe" community. In my own case, for example, I responded to their classified advertisement for facilitators in the national-circulation professional journal The Independent by submitting my resume before moving to Philadelphia. When they did not contact me, I reinitiated contact via Margie Strosser in late 1992 and gave her a copy of my earlier video after the fall CV screenings. I was recruited for the WTP project within a few weeks, and subsequently was pulled into more and more projects as I came to know Hebert, Louis and other facilitators socially as well as professionally.

Scribe offers no specific training for facilitators, although many of them know Scribe and other facilitators through their professional associations and shared interests. Hence they do not represent an organizational "line" so much as they reinforce Scribe as a center of resources and networks. Facilitators thus also have very different

individual styles. While Scribe wants its facilitator to act just as a mentor, some are more hands-on than others who focus on training and coordinating. Ultimately, the facilitator is an outsider to the organization that is making the video (although subsequent associations may grow out of nine months of intensely shared work). She must gain entry and work with their needs rather than dominate the process. In some cases, she may even be seen as intrusive, defining community boundaries in a different way.

Nonetheless, Scribe tries to place facilitators who are more familiar with the organizational agenda on the team. Both Carl and I, who facilitated on the AAU project are "Asian-American," although in neither case did our experiences of that identity coincide with those of Cambodian refugees growing up in North, South, and West Philadelphia. Another Asian also worked with me in the failed AAY project. In other cases, black facilitators -- Toni Cade Bambara and Carlton Jones -- were chosen to work with the John Coltrane society, while women facilitators have primarily been recruited to work with women's organizations like WOAR, Anna Crusis, and WCRP. The presence of black and minority facilitators may reflect a dual drive on the part of Scribe to support both women's and minority groups in Greater Philadelphia and to encourage women and blacks among professional videographers. Women have predominated among Scribes facilitators and numbers overall are about equally divided between Whites and Blacks, with three Asian-American facilitators.[2] Certainly, these numbers do not reflect the composition of professional filmmaking or videography as a whole.

Yet, there is not a simple equation of interests or "group": I initially worked with WTP with whom I did not have any immediate

---

2. It is not possible to give exact numbers of facilitators over time because of the fluidity of their volunteer status. In the first projects in particular, there were many facilitators who moved in and out. Since 1993, Scribe has tried to provide stable pairs of facilitators, but this has not always been possible because of conflicting demands of school, family and career.

affiliation. My colleague Carl, and a German immigrant, Dorothea, both Temple students, worked with a primarily-African-American group in the Camden Advocate Program for youth parolees. Louis and Hebert pair groups with facilitators whom they know as people and whom they hope will be more sympathetic to the cause of the organization. But divisions of professional and cultural capital are often present and facilitators must be chosen more on the basis of professional commitments and availability than ideal (essentialist?) matches. Moreover, their community memberships, interests and activism should remain subordinate to those of the organization itself.

Facilitators are nonetheless as vital to the project's success as any organizational energy or commitment. Since few organizations are video literate, the facilitator has to help technically from beginning to end as well as keeping in mind the overall framework of production which she knows from her professional experience. Often, this entails meeting with the group once a week for at least two hours and even longer commitments for the major shoots. If the organization needs a lot of prodding or becomes divided on points of theme or strategy, the facilitator has to initiate meetings, and to get/keep the video team together. In taking on a more active role the facilitator becomes a community organizer or animator. This is especially true in post-production when the team becomes decimated and the facilitator must provide consistency and structure toward completion. In the final week of post-production for We the People, for example, Janet Williams, Keith Fulton (the on-line editor for that year's project and also a facilitator) and I alternated at Scribe every evening to support Joe Cronauer, the only team member to see the project through.

While it is hard to qualify in social scientific terms, facilitators also need to find a "chemistry" vis-a-vis their group: a sense of communication and shared interests that underpins a collective working relationship. Some selection has already taken place in terms

of the commitment that draws people to Scribe. Other projects, however, have developed tensions in production which have forced meetings among teams, facilitators and Louis or Hebert in order to move on, although no facilitator has ever been removed or forced out of a project. Some have left for other reasons, however, and others have felt frustration during their work.

Yet the best efforts of an experienced facilitator and organizational intervention can still not guarantee success. Dennis Doyon, for example, helped Good Shepherd finished their tape on schedule, and produced a very good product that pleases both the organization and Scribe (see Chapter Five). When he becomes the facilitator with a Native American group the following year, however, he found that he had to struggle even to hold a preliminary planning meeting. Even with all his initiative, the project failed because the organization could not find enough members really interested to make a video.

Finally, facilitators, like community organizers, have lives outside the production nexus of CV and Scribe. The demand of consistent but voluntary commitment thus forces some facilitators to drop out when they have faced conflicts with other responsibilities. My first co-facilitator, for example, went to Columbia University one month after we started the WTP project. A later co-facilitator on the AAY project left for the American Film Institute in Los Angeles before the project started. Meanwhile, another facilitator who had started working with Triangle Interest could not continue to devote her time to the group, who took two years to finish their tape. Louis asked me to help with that group in the later stages of their production. I tried to contact the group two or three times, but was never able to put a meeting together. In spite of that, the tape was finished without a consistent facilitator, by working directly with Louis and Hebert.

Nevertheless, all the facilitators whom I interviewed found their

experience with Community Vision worthwhile. They themselves reinforced Scribe as an organization by their own belief in the project, and commitment to seeing these projects as changing people's lives. Margie Strosser, for example, found it important that two women with whom she had worked at WOAR had gone in to make more videos. Furthermore, many facilitators see this opportunity as one of personal social activism, an opportunity to use their skills in a direct and productive fashion. They become involved with the organizational culture of the group itself, at least for the duration of the project (and, at times, beyond that). And they take proprietary interests in the final video, even while sometimes distancing themselves from its level of professional "polish."

Yet professionalism and polish remain issues for Scribe's sense of community participation. Facilitators, after all, are only one critical coordinating aspect of the production of a community video. They are also professionals outside the CV commitment, and must bracket their aesthetics as well as their opinions in evaluation of the final work as the product of someone else. Even though Scribe eschews aesthetics as a goal, Louis and Hebert concur in wanting the organizations to produce near-professional quality products. Not every group succeeds in producing a video that is well crafted and socially significant, as might be expected. And Louis and Hebert, like the facilitators, also understand that videos that are poorly made will not have the same impact as one that touches the audience. I will elaborate on the implications of these aesthetic issues in the next chapter.

With the recurrent role of the facilitator in the creation of production community more clearly defined, it is possible to move to more general points about the relationship between organizational structure and production process. Through an initial overview, we can comment on how the examinations of these processes invite fresh perspectives to look into the meaning of community before developing

specific case studies.

Community Formation in Production: An Overview

Through investigation and systematic analysis of data on multiple groups with whom Scribe has worked, several organizational features have emerged which seem to have a strong impact on production and difference and which, in turn, redefine community through production. These include (1) the organizations' composition and staffing, (2) their resources in material and participants, and (3) their internal dynamics -- whether democratic or hierarchical and organized or disorganized -- and (4) the relationship of the organization's core with their constituents. All these interrelated features focus on what an organization conceives community to be and how they think it should work in theory and practice. Organizations constitute different teams whose production will relate in divergent ways to the organization, its leadership or its perception of goals. As I reconstruct variations on these processed through interviews, I will use a few organizations to illustrate how these attributes affect the production process despite the different qualities of each individual experience.

One primary intersection of community and production emerges from how the make-up of the team is affected by the working composition of the organization itself, the "active community" as I have called it. Whether the team is staff by senior staff, junior staff, part-time staff, volunteers, or constituents has a strong effect on many aspects of the video making process. Margie Strosser (interview on October 18, 1994), for example, noted that volunteers rather than paid staff members dominated the WOAR video. In another group, CO-MHAR, the video team comprised staff of the community organization acting as mediators to clients with the explicit support of CO-MHAR's director. These two groups, in approaching the process in diverse way, thus created different definitions of communities.

WOAR has both a large staff and a large group of volunteers whose

commitment varies from working the hotline once a week or month to more consistent service. In an interview, Donnamarie, who was a team member as well as the educational director of WOAR at the time, felt that the important point is that people who go to WOAR are looking for some kind of community, and WOAR is able to provide that to its volunteers. While some staff joined the project, they were not senior or authoritarian managers.

In this regard, Donnamarie found the production process to be extremely empowering. The women got together in one or another's house at night, and came up with a video that was built collectively. Even though only two members did the editing, other members supported them throughout, with exchanges all along the process. In a way, the active community that initially had been made possible for volunteers of various backgrounds and commitments by WOAR forged a even more intense community within this video production process. The group disbanded after the video was finished.

The senior staff, however, was expecting a somewhat different video, and was not too happy with the outcome. I was unable to get concrete explanations why, but judging from indirect sources, it appears that the video may be too personal and too open from the organizational viewpoint. Moreover, it does not say much about the organization itself. In other words, the video production empowered the video team and conveyed this in its text, but did not necessarily do so for the organizational leadership or its goals. Nevertheless, it was intensely used for some time, as discussed in Chapter Five.

A larger size and tighter structure shaped the production of CO-MHAR (Community Organization for Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services), with 400 staff members and a fairly well-structured chain of command relying on some help from volunteers. Since its clients are mentally-challenged individuals whom they are trying to help into the local mainstream, there is generally more of an organizational division

between staff and those whom they serve. Nonetheless, at least one of the staff members who worked on the video was the mother of a client. CO-MHAR clients and their families participated actively in the video.

CO-MHAR as an organization works through committees: if a staff member has a project, a committee will be formed to carry out that project. Its video team was formed in this way and consisted entirely of staff from different departments of the organization. Before this CV project, two enthusiastic staff members had started doing some small videos for the organization. They sought equipment from CO-MHAR's late executive director. He, in turn, supported their ideas and allowed his employees staff time to work on the videos. He also built a small video studio and founded a division call CoPro -- CO-MHAR Productions.

Hence, before CV, CO-MHAR already wanted to make a video to represent the organization. They initially approached different advertising agencies, but found their fees were too high. In order to polish their skills, the two staff members started taking classes at Scribe and learnt about the CV program. CO-MHAR thus brought a pre-conceived idea and "community" production model to CV. They were very clear about what kind of video they wanted to made even before applying.

The production that followed was intensive, but very methodical. In the interview, JoAnn Tufo, staffer and a core member of the video team, told me that everything that is on tape was on paper first. This tape was produced with a clear division of labor depending on which member was more adapted to which particular skills. The video team worked at the project all along, recruiting others as necessary. One might not call a committee within an organization a community of its own, but these six people worked together for nine months on a project to "represent" the larger organization they work for and the product is used by that organization to this day. CO-MHAR's production process was completed by staff who know and respect the organization and its mission. In fact, all members of the video team, except one who has

moved to Florida, are still working at CO-MHAR, which contrasts with the fragility of less-structured groups. The continuity in the CO-MHAR project also influences the later use of the videotape as a reinforcement of community.

Furthermore, because of their preparedness, CO-MHAR's production experience is known among facilitators as one that was trouble-free. On the other hand, Sharon Maloney, the facilitator, noted that Scribe felt there was little input from the constituents, except as subjects in the video. The mentally ill and mentally retarded, and their families who appear on screen may not have the commitment that the CO-MHAR team had who saw the production as part of their work, working under the same structure they did with any other CO-MHAR projects. Yet my conversations with some who appear in the film, whom I spoke to in the context of the monthly meeting for parents of clients, convinced me that they are also proud of the video as a community product. It was, in addition, screened at the dedication of the new CO-MHAR building in 1996. These issues of production lead directly to audience/reading in Chapter Five.

The production of a video very often tests how well an organization upholds it principles. Another group, Good Shepherd Mediation Program, also constituted a team primarily with staff members but with a distinctive philosophy of community. Good Shepherd works with a consensus model, so every member has to agree on the same idea for the video. Even though they knew that they were going to make a video introducing the mediation process, they had to look for a case of conflict to present the process. There were divergent possibilities. The executive director brought up a scenario between an African-American customer and a Korean-American grocer. Other members of the video team favored a script involving arguments over a neighborhood parking space between a Caucasian and an African American. The team finally decided on the parking conflict because race would not be the focus, which they perceived as distracting and potentially overshadowing the mediation

process. The executive director told me, "since we worked on a consensus model, I let go of my idea, and left the project. But this is how consensus works, knowing when to leave." Without any bitterness, she jokingly added, "I still think my idea is better." Good Shepherd seems to really know how to live with consensus on an everyday basis.

These organizational features already speak to resources of personnel as a second key feature. This does not rule out small organizations per se. The Community Women's Redevelopment Project or the Philadelphia Black Women's Health Project both have a very small staff, and the executive directors were part of the video team in both cases. In interviews, each organization confirmed that it was happy with the product, but neither wanted to make a video again, because it took too much time. While the involvement of top staff in the video production process lends the project more support (and may place the tape more firmly afterward as a community asset), others end up "burned out" by the process, if they felt the effort did not justify the time. This may turn them away from video production in the long run. Material resources also play a part in production despite Scribe's assistance. AAU had an extra camera and gained access to an yet another video camera as well as professional assistance in teaching, so it was easier for them to schedule shots. They also received state of the art assistance in editing, which excited interest in the team. Costs of transportation to and from shots, meals and related support or planning materials may become questions for other groups. Others lack even a functioning headquarters in which to meet, which made coordination extremely difficult.

The examples of WOAR, CO-MHAR and Good Shepherd illustrate the possibility of success with a variety of organizational styles. Yet all were intensely organized. Differences in practices of community, on the whole, become most apparent when the organization itself faces a crisis in leadership, resources or relations to clients and context.

Prevention Point Philadelphia, for example, suffered severely from its lack of an coherent organizational structure and staff at the time of the video. PPP was run by only two over-committed full time staff members and many volunteers of varying commitments and reliability, but internal divisions were growing at this time, especially among those with different philosophies of drug use and service provision. It operated primarily out of homes and meetings around its mobile service site, a ramshackle van. Although some PPP members had previously made a video, it was a rambling one-hour tape which was not used by the organization and never figured in production (today, no one in PPP even knows where a copy is).

The PPP video team included the head of the organization, one board member/staff members, one board member/ volunteer, and two needle exchangers. This is not simply a result of democracy and integration: board members were workers at PPP too, because of a commitment to community empowerment as well as limited resources for staffing. However, there were never enough people to attend the classes, the training session, the planning meeting, nor the shoots. The video team was also inconsistent: members might come at one session, but not the next. During production, participants arrived at shoots with no idea what to ask or disagreement about the nature and goals of the tape. Since the organization was in disarray, there was little concerted efforts to organize video production. Furthermore, as noted above, PPP did not grapple with the difficulties of clients and their lives as parts of its proposed shoots, including work in high-crime areas and filming of people who were uncomfortable about appearing on camera.

But the crisis in staffing and other resources overwhelmed even these dilemmas. Although Scribe envisioned that CV would augment community organization, at PPP, distributing needles always took priority over videotaping. Often, they could not even find enough volunteers to staff the needle exchange site; for the few times when

shoots were scheduled, I, as facilitator, often ended up distributing condoms rather than helping them shoot. When an organization is under so much stress already, a video project cannot help build community, but only strains the limited resources that they have to build community around the services they provide.

PPP never made this video, and only approached the issue again after convulsive reorganization at all levels of board and staff in subsequent months. No one from its original video team -- apart from exchangers -- works there anymore. The new PPP, with a totally new staff and board and a drop-in center to work from, once again applied for and recieved CV support in 1996-97.

Finally, relations to clients/organizational community also create critical conditions of production, as the PPP case suggests. However, it was hard to pull the alumni from the party into the classroom for interviews, and once they were gone, it was nearly impossible to get them back for further interviews. Celebrations, while textually important, pose special problems for the video team -- the intensely active community --as both organization members and videographers at the same time.

The sheer ability to contact and tape subjects also becomes an important factor in production. While it was impossible to set up shoots with many of the PPP exchangers, setting and availability of interviewes proved much easier to work with among those in half-way houses (CO-MHAR), home-equity owners, elderly people in social services centers or homes, students bound to school schedules or even those who are coming regularly to a service provision site (WTP or South Jersey Hispanic Center). This access to subjects helps explain why That Sounds Like Me: Senior Reading Aloud Together was made on schedule even with a limited production team. Although the video was made through the Jewish Community Center Senior Adult Services as stated in the proposal, it was actually made by a single instructor, Dr. Elizabeth Wenzel, of

the Senior Adult Department, who directs Elder Resources, a one-person organization that runs programs on participatory elderly literary groups. Since Dr. Wenzel was the only person at Adult Resources, even working with older readers, she had total control of the production process in collaboration with the facilitator. Furthermore, given the ready accessibility of those who appear in the video and her personal resources in terms of time and coordination of personnel, the tape was finished on schedule. Here, however, it became clear to everyone involved that tape was less made by a community than about one.

Generally, an organization that has more resources, both in terms of people and money, more stability of staff and constituents, -- a stronger practice of community -- tends to find the production process easier. Not surprisingly, any schisms in leadership, vision and service tend to become magnified as well, both in the production process and in the patterns of use and distribution that follow.

The factors shaping production in these cases suggest that while there are many ways of developing production within community organizations, a potential contradiction also can emerge between Scribe's ideals of helping those with limited resources and the demands of the production process itself. Since production is time-consuming, groups with scant resources oftentimes lack human power and time to take on this extra responsibility. Furthermore, not everybody can make a video; few mentally retarded people could master the skills, for example, in the case of CO-MHAR. Similarly, PPP found that despite shared ideals, poor, habitual drug users had difficulty with a long-term commitment given the overbearing demands of drugs and poverty.

By contrast, some groups have finished before the deadline. Of the six groups that started the 1994 round, for example, Anna Crusis, Good Shepherd, and Jewish Community Center (Elderly Reading) all finished their tapes long before Reconstruction and Triangle Interest, while PPP became one of Scribe's few failures. The first three groups,

while differing in size, philosophy and goals, all had relatively stable frameworks and participants. They also are among the more middle-class groups with whom Scribe has worked. This stability also translates into other organizational advantages: since these three groups finished more or less on schedule, they became less demanding on the facilitators. All had only one facilitator throughout the whole process. On the other hand, Scribe's organization and demands as well as outside factors may also affect the project and its completion.

Reconstruction, by contrast, took a long time to finish because of changes within the prison system, beyond their organizational structure or Scribe's. The organizers were expecting a group of prisoners to be paroled at a certain date, but the court somehow postponed that date, and production was halted accordingly. Such constant and pressing "real-world" demands, that stimulated social action in the first place, also constantly return to shape grassroots video beyond face-to-face community construction.

While systematic variations in approaching the production process as community manifestation are thus evident, this is also an area in which clear comparisons should be draw with other forms of media production. It seems almost impossible to compare the roughly $2500 budgeted for CV with the scale of Hollywood productions, where thousands of people and hundreds of millions of dollars may be involved in even a failure like Waterworld (1995). Even a "low-budget" feature entails many times the cost, time and salaried workers that a CV asks -- and must make these back, in turn, in the market place.

Independent productions (despite the apparent interest evident in the 1997 Oscars) generally are made on a much smaller scale. In fact, they may depened on a single videographer's resources, network of family and friends, limited grant funding and creative access to materials (through universities, friends or organizations like Scribe). Again, a direct comparison with the Scribe budget presented earlier. Even a

student video like my M.A. thesis at USC, the 45-minute Leaving Home: Two Vietnamese Buddhist Lives (1991) probably cost ten times as much to make as a CV production were we to calculate the actual costs of equipment, facilities, and expertise traded off among student professionals (in sound, lighting, editing). Other documentaries with which I raise comparison are even larger in terms of budget, time and teams which they have amassed: budgets may run well into the millions. Moreover, not only the structure of production but also the professional goals of the finished project distinguish it even more from the community efforts of CV even while it may overlap in theme and some elements of style with these grassroots productions.

In these comparisons, though, we should not overlook the fact that every Community Vision group also wants to make a "good" video. Most CV groups are not happy with the mainstream media's portrayal of their group or their cause. Hence they cme to Scribe because they want a tape of their own that serves their needs, whatever these might be perceived to be . Their models for such presentation, as I will show, are nonetheless based on the smoothness, polish, form and impact of those mainstream videos (generally mass market rather than independent). Furthermore, since the aims of the CV teams and their larger organizations are not to attract a mass audience or advertisers, or to build a professional career, they can invest more energy for a short time into the message they want. More importantly, they are making a

tape where they are the owners of the tape. My case studies provide concrete illustrations of how these social and cultural themes also feed into production and community.

Order and Disorder: Asian-American Community in Production

AAU was formed in Philadelphia in the mid-1980s and thus existed for a decade as a community activist group before applying for CV. The 1980s were also a period in which Asian populations -- Chinese, Korean, Southeast Asian and South Asians -- grew consistently in the city and nation along with incidents of racial and class difference (Good Shepherd's interest in Black-Korean conflicts may have reflected earlier incidents in Olney (Lamphere 1992; Schneider and Goode 1995).

AAU's activities, according to its CV application, included playing

> roles in raising awareness of anti-Asian violence, diffusing tensions between Asian American groups and individuals and their neighbors, advocating and organizing parents around educational rights for Limited English Proficiency Asian students and monitoring government agencies to be more sensitive and responsive to needs of our communities

Its 700 members also participated in youth programs, cultural awareness activities and community organizing including coordination of anti-welfare reform issues with other groups known to Scribe. Yet AAU generally has employed no more than five full-time staff members at different times.

Their proposal grew out of concerns with racism and welfare. Again, to quote the original document from the last chapter, there were multiple aims and techniques: It will be educational in that it will contain facts and statistics that refute myths surrounding welfare and immigration. But more importantly, it will contain stories from the people with whom AAU works. We will show shots of various neighborhoods where Asians in Philadelphia live, such as South Philadelphia's 7th and Snyder and Logan." Both national Asian-American interests (immigration and welfare) and local places and peoples appear. The proposal also

included some notes about goals and audiences: "The message of the video will be to dispel myths and to inspire people to organize and get involved to stop the cuts to public assistance and other cuts aimed at legal immigrants."

Its attack on myths, in particular, imagine a community outside of AAU membership: "The myths to be dispelled: that all Asians are rich and middle class, that immigrants just suck the blood out of the 'real' America, and that all people on welfare are people of color...." It is striking that AAU did not choose to talk about the organization so much as client issues and a relatively political stance. This is an unusual textual strategy for CV, only adopted by a few groups such as Woodrock, WOAR and the Philadelphia Unemployment Project. It also placed unusual demands on organization and participation.

Eleven volunteers were listed on the application, drawn from those already familiar with production through AAU's show on WYBE. An experienced videographer was listed as coordinator while Juli Kang, Arts Program Director, was to be administrative associate. The target audiences envisioned at this stage included AAU members and those reached by the organization's weekly WYBE broadcast as well as other local Asian-American organizations, the Philadelphia Folklore Project, and the American Friends Service committee. National distribution was also discussed through organizational networks and Third World Newsreel or NAATA, the National Asian American Telecommunications Association. This frame also indicates a more sophisticated familiarity with the world of production and distribution. Overall, the proposal touches on manifold definitions of imagined community based on ethnic grounds, around organizational and political concerns (welfare) and even other professional categories (NAATA). The project in its final form was submitted on March 30, 1995, the day the selection committee met and approved it unanimously. Shortly thereafter, Carl Lee and I were asked to be facilitators.

Before we actually met with them to begin production, however, AAU changed its project. In July 1995, its five staff-members decided to focus on Asian youths, partly because AAU wanted to develop more participation and community among scattered city-wide Asian adolescents. More importantly, AAU wanted the CV project to become a regular AAU program, administered by a staff member, rather than relying totally on volunteer efforts, which AAU perceived as problematic. Scribe agreed to the change with adjustments to the original schedule. The resulting video is therefore totally different from the proposed project, stressing the integration of process and product in community and video.

In approaching the community visions project, at the outset, Asian Americans United developed an extremely-organized strategy based on their previous experiences with art programs and community empowerment. The CV project was run as a class that recruited participants from outside the organization. One staff coordinator, Juli Kang and two volunteer members, Gayle Isa and Lisa Yau, constituted a Video Curriculum committee who completed their production training with Scribe in the summer. This was a highly educated and committed core group, with strong professional organizational skills. The leader, Juli, was a Wellesley-educated Korean-American, who had written the proposal. Gayle was a Swarthmore graduate active in the local Asian American art scene, and Lisa worked at the Museum of American Art on Broad Street. Carl Lee, a Harvard educated Korean-American doing his masters at Temple University was my co-facilitator. In addition, Frank Garcon, a local Columbian-American youth videomakers, whom Juli had met through the local youth-services network, also helped. He had previously worked on a video, Teen Dreams, which had recruited local youths. Frank had access to his own professional facilities as well. With this core group constituted, we met a few times over the summer to plan.

In the fall, Juli, and Frank assembled a group of ten high school students -- six females and four males -- most of whom had previous

involvements with the organization, either through their siblings or through other AAU projects they participated before. Only two girls were recruited through their school's counselor. These included two Chinese-Americans and eight Cambodian-American; their ages ranged from fourteen to seventeen. They were all in high school, and their participation in the video project counted for community service requirements there. All these teens had immigrant parents who speak little or no English. Some were born in the United States; others came when they were very young. They were generally on the borderline between working class and middle class, living in homes throughout the city.

All the teens also went to public high schools in the city; there they encountered a range of students and problems. Some lived in areas with few Asians: one Chinese girl said she had no Asian-American friends at her school in Northern Philadelphia. Leap, a vivacious Cambodian girl who lived in South Philadelphia, said she had more African-American friends than Asian-Americans friends. In part, they came to AAU to meet other Asians as well as to learn about the identity they were often identified with.

At the first meeting, Juli asked everybody what they wanted to get out of this video project and what they wanted to show. Answers from the youth ranged from letting their parents know that they are not bad kids, to looking into the problems of drugs and gangs, to letting others "know why we are here, that we are not different from them." Some also wanted to learn a new skills-- video -- so as to have Asian speak their own voice, rather than letting others make judgment about them. These both expanded on and contrasted with Juli's desire to use the video to fight for Asian American rights and poor people's rights. Most youths wanted to use this experience to express something more personal, or to learn a life skill. Juli wanted a more politically-charged statement for a wider community. Over time, discussion revived on these different, yet not incompatible, demands on the video.

The AAU project, though consistently administered by Juli, strived very hard to be a collective work by the ten youths. The first meeting was not held until their school schedules permitted, in late October 1995 (AAU already was ignoring the Scribe calendar which expected completion within a year). Furthermore, except for one section run by each of the other two volunteers, Juli assumed sole responsibility for the weekly Saturday sections which ran from 10 AM to 4 PM at the organization's headquarters on Arch Street, near Chinatown (outside of organizational operations). Carl and I also met with this group nearly every Saturday as well as participating in their special events. Frank showed up more at the beginning and loaned AAU his equipment.

Juli set up a syllabus for the students for them to get to know one another and to help them think about issues of identity. The idea was to proceed with community and citizenship building so that they would eventually learn the tools to express themselves. The youths were trained in videography by Carl and me, while all three of us introduced them to wider visual critical techniques as well as discussion on Asian American youth culture and identity. Since AAU saw the CV production process as an educational one, a great deal of time was devoted to issues of Asians in America. This included attending and discussing Asian American film events at International House and showing them other Asian American works on video to explore different styles of expression. The AAU project was probably unusual in the intensity with which it focussed on reflections on a community beyond the organization.

Yet this was also related to production issues and learning techniques. We wanted to expose them to alternative video productions, since most had all their visual education from either ethnic TV or mainstream Hollywood. Specific exercises focussed on expression were given even before the final project began. AAU, for example, provided each student with a disposable camera through which they were to assemble their own portfolios and learn to express different ideas, like

family, loneness, neighborhood, conflict, etc.; these were discussed in a Saturday morning session. One participant chose to focus on guns, while others did family portraits. Many drew on their home environs.

The youth were also asked to make a video diary over Christmas which we viewed and discussed as a group. This discussion focussed on both content and technique. It actually established some patterns and pieces for the final video: not only did some very original works emerge from this exercise, but Juli thinks that they actually were some of the best works the youths produced. Again most centered on families.

Throughout the initial production process, then, AAU asked the youths to address broad questions of identity and imagined community -- who are they in American society. Indeed, looking at this from the vantage point of community building, it is clear that AAU, an organization built around empowering ethnic minorities, views teaching its members to assert themselves as the underlying theme in many of its educational programs. Yet this also responded to the position of these teens as members and clients who were sorting out the worlds they often lived between. However, it did not advance the project at the schedule Scribe had anticipated.

The teens attended the meetings regularly at the beginning, even when it proved quite a challenge to keep 10 teens "amused" for six hours each Saturday. We -- facilitators and advisors -- also needed to keep them motivated in the context of competing school and family demands for this free time. There were always warm-up games of one type or another and we sometimes provided lunch from nearby Chinatown. The youths also developed very good rapport among themselves. Two young Cambodian men, one from West Philadelphia and one from South Philadelphia, for example, had heard of each other before they joined the video project. They did not know one another because they were not comfortable going into each other's neighborhood; the project created a space to become friends.

In the AAU project, nonetheless, obstacles emerged from too many

issues, without a clear focus. The youths knew that they wanted to make a video about Asian-American youth culture, but they were at a loss as to what, exactly, they sought to say. They talked about problems with their parents who did not understand that they were not living in Cambodia or China anymore, about how whites and blacks pick on them in schools, and about how other Americans did not understand why they came. For the Cambodian youths, the war remained vivid in their minds. They also talked about gangs, about stereotypes, and about their dreams and aspirations. The scripting stage of this process took at least four months instead of the two Scribe prescribed since they were encouraged to air these ideas and then, ultimately, forced by the adult administrators to choose among them as possibilities.

The group also discussed who their audiences would be. Should the audience be Asian youths like them, to show them that they are not alone in their struggle, or non-Asian Americans who either know nothing about Asian-Americans or only have stereotypical views about them? Carl and I, with our professional experience, tried to ask them to pinpoint their audience, since they could not cover so many topics in fifteen minutes. Yet we left audience aside eventually, since the youths could not develop a clear concept. They just knew that they wanted to make some kind of a statement.

As the months passed, the youths grew restless about weekly confinement in a stuffy room for six hours. They finally started production/shooting before finishing the script and without a great deal of other planning. In part they wanted to get out and shoot, but this also reflected the impasse they had reached in finding a clear structure for the tape. While exacerbated by adolescence, this rush to "real filming" is not atypical of CV projects and reflects the general difficulty of weighing pre-production, production and post-production as elements of a completed work. It also can cause problems.

One mid-December day, for example, I went with the boys to shoot

some footage in an area in South Philly around Tasker and Fourth, which is now identified as a Cambodian neighborhood. They shot scenes of the game arcade, and talked to other Asians on the street, including gang members. Tone, the youth from West Philly, was clearly uncomfortable, but he went along with us; the others knew their environment/ neighborhood very well. They could easily interview the boss of the game arcade who said kids of all colors came in, and that so long as they behaved, he was okay with them. In the arcade, they ran into another video team member among other friends. Some of them were gang members, and our team did some quick interviews with their friends, asking them about gangs and requesting that they show hand signs for the camera. When they were walking on the street with their camera, they also noticed Asian girls looking out at the windows of the second or third floor. The boys started chatting with them, while another team member shot the conversation, with little regard as to the sound quality. Yet they ended up without any of this footage because they somehow forgot to push the Record button. To be fair, accidents happen in all documentary productions and change the end product. Yet this sequence underscores the problems of working with neophytes.

In the meantime, Carl went with the girls to North Philadelphia, where they taped some Asian storefronts. The footage proved technically unorganized and looked amateurish: the shots were too short and unsteady, and some had the wrong color temperature. Yet despite these technical imperfections, the intimacy, familiarity and immediacy of some footage did capture a certain spirit of the youths, their neighborhood, and their friends, even for professional eyes more critical than the videographers themselves. It also seemed more alive than many later interviews. Hence, they used some of these shots for the final video.

With this early footage, Carl and I tried to teach them about editing. We went to Scribe at different times, each section with two to three youths, and discussed basic skills. We explained the properties of

the videotape, how information is stored on the tape, how to lay a control track, and how this relates to the time code. In terms of editing styles, we taught them about spatial temporal continuity [3], while also telling them that once they had mastered the skills, they could break the rules. Again, we sought to bring professionalism into skill formation and teenage social life, acting as intermediaries between Scribe and the street. Yet not all youths showed up for the sections, and they were generally unenthusiastic. Only two members showed some interest in editing, but they did not really spend time on it. In fact, at that point, there was little material to work with, and learning editing without some more definite goals proves frustrating.

In the mean time, on Saturdays, the group continued to try to narrow down the topics covered. The sections they finally selected included schools, police harassment, gang, and dreams and aspiration. They chose not to concentrate on their relationships with their parents, although this was a topic that I personally found more interesting. The youths were worried that they might make a video that their parents would not like, and they also found it difficult to express their relationship. Most respect their parents, and appreciate what they have done for them, yet many find it very hard to communicate with older generations. Furthermore, some said that their parents would not talk to them on camera. Here, the real social structures of community outside the organization, especially the Confucian and Buddhist heritages of these participants as well as their immigrant experience, clearly impinged upon production decisions. My sense is that they also found the other issues, especially racism, to be more pressing, and hoped to reach a wider audience of their peers through these themes.

---

3. This is the editing style of realist Classical Hollywood Cinema where different cuts are put together in one scene, or one action while minimizing the visibility of the edits by matching directions, perspectives, lights, eye line, etc..

Yet not everybody was comfortable with the gang section, especially those who did not have any experience with youth gangs and believed that gang lives did not represent them. They might be sympathetic to gangs, understanding that they sometimes served as surrogate families to their members, yet they argued for other choices. However, recognizing that the gang problem did exist for many, these group members did really fight to remove the segment from the video.

All of them, however, agreed that racism was a grave issue. They related story after story of racism against them in schools and in their neighborhoods. Yet they still did not have the skills to put a coherent section together. One of the stories that they wanted to tell, for example, happened in a magnet girls high school in Philadelphia. The teens told me that the principle suspended two Asian girls after they got into a fight, and also tried to search cars parked around campus that contained any Asians, while similar incidents that involved other ethnic groups did not get the same treatment. I taught them how to do a treatment, by identifying the questions, by getting the people to tell a clear story, and by shooting the school environment to put the dispute in context. I also helped them choose the kinds of people they wanted to interview and the questions they wanted to ask. But just giving instruction did not work. They still did not know how to interview, their shots again proved too shaky and unusable, and sound was bad. They would come back with interviews that lacked complete sentences, or without the pieces needed to build a coherent story, so it would be impossible to cut the shots into an comprehensible argument. On the other hand, some isolated interviews were better conducted, partly because the teens did not need to construct sequences of events.

It became apparent that skills are a real issues for CV: however democratizing, video making is a craft that demands a great deal of care and planning. When the video teams have no previous experience, with little time, and are always distracted by other commitments, they have

found it very hard to accomplish what they initially envisioned. Juli, in an interview done in August, at the end stage of editing, told me in retrospect that if she were to do this project again, she would let the youth start shooting right away, capturing whatever they wanted, and spend more time discussing the footage. Through those discussions, we could have refined their skills although it would have put a tremendous burden on post-production.

One interesting difference that was clear from my other experience with WTP, discussed in the next chapter, was the students' relation to the camera itself. Members in WTP, generally older, never broached the idea of acting for the video. The youths at AAU liked to act. This is similar to Chalfen's finding that the poorer African-American youths he worked with liked to be in front of the camera. Still I think it represents a familiarity of a generation with MTV and other forms of expression more than a class or cultural issue. On a few Saturdays in the early months, for example, Juli asked them to act out scenes that expressed issues like the lack of understanding between the two generations, or the racism that they encountered. It took them little time to construct a skit, testifying to how familiar they are with these situations. Those sections generated a lot of laughs, and the youths were very comfortable with one another. They then started writing scenes where they could act out different manifestations of Asian stereotypes. The youths scheduled shoots for some segments but they were not developed for the final video.

One Saturday afternoon, for example, after dinner at a Chinese restaurant, we went to Chhann's house in South Philadelphia to shoot a scene involving a subservient Asian woman. However, the teens were not prepared and had little idea what acting out a scene for movies entailed. They had no "costumes;" all of them were in large shirts and baggy pants, hardly the look of a stereotypical Asian wife. They had not choreographed the shot nor written the lines. They had to go the

Chhann's sister's closet and choose more conservative dresses, work out placement of actors and props, and finally try out a few lines.

They ended up designing a shot where the wife is sweeping the floor with her head down. Then, the audience would hear a man's voice saying, "Newspaper?" She walks over to get the paper, and hands it to her husband (of whom the audience would only see the feet on the top of the stairs). The first few takes brought a lot of laughs, but took a long time and failed to develop technically. They tried to light the scene, for example, but proved quite difficult to eliminate shadows. By the time I asked them to try to shoot the same thing from different angles so we could cut different shots together later, some had started to find the process tiresome. Moreover, while all ten youths were present, only two got to act. One or two more set up the lights, and one or two worked behind the camera, while another acted as production manager. But others had nothing to do; they became bored and made a lot of noise. After they finished the scene, the boys were kicking and playing kung-fu stuff, and yet another youth picked up the camera and shot the kung-fu scene with built-in camera effect of strobing. At the end of the session, which took about three hours, Carl, Juli and I told them that it took this long to get about 15 seconds of useful footage. They then were more or less persuaded by these "parental" figures that they should stick to documentary, which involved little staging and much less preparation. Eventually, they abandoned the idea of acting, and these scenes were never used. A few strobing kung-fu shots, however were kept for the final credits.

This session did not end their exploration of techniques. In the first few months of 1996, the youths recorded many interviews, mainly with people they know personally -- a brother of one of the youths who was an eye-witness to a racial harassment case that ended with a death, friends at schools, and fellow gang members. The team members themselves were taped in various settings talking about schools, gangs, and Asian

American identity. They also did segments on schools, by bringing the camera to school and interviewing fellow students of different heritages about racism in the schools. They also tried to interview policemen on their views about Asian gangs, but the policemen only allowed them to record their voices, but not their faces. Frank also helped by driving the youth around town to capture some additional street scenes.

Juli then asked the youths to transcribe the tape, and everyone did their share. Personal testimonies seemed to be the major form that AAU finally adopted and these dominate the final text, broken by inserts of Asian places and faces in Philadelphia. At this stage, judging from the footage even more than a preliminary cut, we all felt that there were too many talking heads. Carl and I asked them to go out to specifically shoot Asian "scenes" in the city. This included more storefronts, Asians at Roosevelt Park (an area where many Southeast Asians gather on weekends}, other places in Chinatown, Indian shops in West Philadelphia, and those of Koreans in West and North Philadelphia. Nonetheless, the final tape consisted mainly of talk.

The fact that no one ever questioned the necessity or presence of interviews is telling. First, interviews are easy, cheap and accessible for people who all had other commitments. Second, for all the makers of the video, the interview was what one sees in documentary everywhere, an established practice/intertext for filmmakers as well as a general expectation of an average audience. Third, although they may be dry, interviews are good avenues for providing the information the group wanted to convey. Finally, and most importantly, interviews allow one to link the information to the person, the faces. Listening to someone speak not only allows you to learn about what she says, but who she is, too. Even though the youths did not get to act, they were still on camera to be themselves, and to represent Asian youths. I will return to this question of the interview as a textual feature in Chapter V.

Very often, in this as in the other CV productions I have

explored, more ideas emerged than proved possible to execute because of various reasons: ranging from a lack of training, as in the Girl's High segment to sheer fatigue on the project after a few months. This led us to miss visual opportunities as well. We did shoot Chinese New Year footage early in the process, for example. But in April, when Cambodian New Year arrived, Juli asked if I could go with her and the youths to some temples to record the festivities. However, she could not get any teens involved, and gave up the shoot. Juli started to feel discouraged, because she wanted the youths to take the responsibility to make their own tapes. She did not want to do the work because she felt that the tape was theirs, not hers. On the other hand, the "organizational" reality was that the youths were not very interested any more, and someone had to finish it.

As April approached, Carl and I started to urge Juli and the youth to start editing. Although editing critically shapes the final video few people can realize this without previous experience. Nor, as I noted, are they prepared for how time-consuming and tedious it seems, <u>after</u> the excitement of shooting and scripting which they have seen as their primary responsibility. At AAU, the youths at this point all lost interest, and Juli herself planned to leave AAU at the end of May. Small groups would arrange to go to Scribe, but they would not be prepared, and nothing would get done. Sometimes, I used this opportunity to reteach them editing techniques which few had retained from previous sessions. We also told them that they needed to look at the footage at home or at AAU first, and do paper cuts before they went to Scribe, because they did not have unlimited access to Scribe editing facilitie that are shared by other groups. But this was rarely successful. We as facilitators, in fact, became concerned about replicating patterns of authority (and responses) associated with parents and schools.

Here, the lure of newer technology helped completion. Frank, who

was working at a production company, offered the youth use of the up-to-date Avid system there. With his help, the youths cut an opening scene in one day. Afterward, all of us looked at the scene, which was done as a fast piece with rapid cuts that went along with a very percussive soundtrack. It offered a very urban, harsh, youth-oriented MTV style. While it dealt with Philadelphia neighborhoods, it was not particularly Asian, except for the final cuts which were shot in Chinatown. Suggestions were made by most to put more Asian scenes into this opening sequence, but all of them liked the tempo of the piece.

Divisions of personality and interest also interfered with the later stages of work. All through the production process, even when the teens were discouraged, most would show up at AAU on Saturdays. However, those who were bored distracted the others who were working on specific features of the final tape. Mostly, these sessions involved talking about how to cut, how to connect one scene to another, or how to do the face shots. Juli believed in participation from all ten teens, but it took an effort to get words out of their months. I finally convinced her that she should ask those who were not interested to stop coming on Saturdays, and give them tasks like transcribing to do at home. So the group gradually shrank to half its original size.

Juli saw the end of the school year in June as the time for the completion of the video, as fewer and fewer youths came to the Saturday meetings. At one point, she herself wanted to end the project within two weeks, regardless of the outcome. I told her that the tape, at that point, was only a piece of uncooked marinated pork: in two weeks, it would at best be seared, but not cooked through; thus it could not be eaten (the example itself suggests that we shared other presuppositions and experiences as Asians). I asked Carl and Juli to my house to talk about the tape and to convince her to move on.

Eventually, Juli thought things out for herself, and decided to stay to finish the video project after her resignation, working as an

AAU volunteer rather than a staff member. In the interim, one of the teenagers, Leap, took on more and more responsibilities, and went to many editing session. She also wrote a poem which became a part of the video, and helped Juli with the editing.

We also asked Juli to turn back to Scribe at this point for support in completion. Carl and I as facilitators asked Louis to look at the rough cut and provide some suggestions. He thought that there should be a segment on identity since all interviewees talked about identity in one form or another. Louis also found that each segment was a bit too short; he felt that he would get a taste of what was to come, and suddenly be cut off. Overall, Juli felt that he was very encouraging and that he gave them constructive criticisms. Two more interviews were done with the team members, asking more questions about identity, and these were inserted into the rough cut. By the time the tape was done, a project started with sixteen people finished with two.

During this time, however, the newfound strength of the youths as community was tested by personal tragedy. Although many had abandoned the Saturday meetings in May they responded strongly when one of the teens' sisters was killed. The incident began when a young teen was bumped from playing a video machine, in a mixed African-American and Asian-American section of South Philly. His brother came back and shot the Asian-American woman who was minding the store. All of us had seen this young woman in the teens' video diaries, and she also performed with other teens at Cambodian functions which were recorded on tape. Most of the teens showed up for the funeral, and all wanted to include her in the video as a memorial.[4] This shocking reminder of the racial tensions in the neighborhood reminded us why the video should be made.

All through the production process, in fact, the teens got along

4. These dedication of the video provides an additional link of community and memory. This also occurred in WTP, who dedicated its video to a team member who died during the production. The Women's Legal Services video was dedicated to a judge who had helped their cause who died around the time of the production.

very well as a community of peers. Some of them knew each other before the project started, but a few knew no one else. For those who did not know their fellow video team members before, it took some time for them to warm up, but all in all, there was no competition of any kind, and every one did get along. Near the end of the production period, AAU gave me the money to invite the youths to my home for a picnic. Seven came to the unfamiliar Main Line; they went to the nearby playground, watched some videos, and ate, renewing group cohesion. In many ways, the whole process not only taught the youths to express themselves in a new medium but also allowed them to get together away from parents and school with peers who shared similar experiences.

Obviously they formed a relatively tangible community which is indeed a primary goal of AAU whatever the result of the video production itself. This intimate, face-to-face association did not represent the organization or even its established membership, much less the imagined community of Asian-Americans in Philadelphia, although this should not diminish its significance. Still, the video was only part of a single program for AAU and by the time of its completion both the arts director in charge and the adult volunteers had left. Neither Carl nor I, although Asian-American, were involved with the Association beyond this project and it is too early to tell whether these students will continue.

Without being explicit, choices also had been made in terms of outreach and audience. Not all Asian American youths in Philadelphia are represented in this tape: there are no South Asian- or Japanese-Americans, and no elite Asian-American youths. Yet AAU's focus on poorer Southeast Asian youths explains the fit between the video and AAU's mission. A more nuanced look at community should always be more fluid and expect incompleteness. This does not limit its appeal to other Asians (or minorities) who may not have experienced gangs or prejudice in the same way. It may be illustrative that my experience of family

and immigration attuned me to issues of parenting as a theme which the students were unable to express. But stereotyping is also a part of my experience, as that of other Asian/Asian-American academics. After the whole process was over, Juli, said the same in her interview:

> Asian American is such an elusive kind of title. There really is no definition to it; the way I saw this video is like contributing to this definition, and because I thought, many Asian-American media products are geared towards yuppies, like A magazine or Go. I wanted people to have some kind of connection between different kinds of Asian Americans. My idea of Asian American is not necessary what the youths think of Asian American."

When I asked Juli if she were given the chance to do the video again what would she change, she said that she would be less ambitious in the sense that the video should not try to cover too many issues. More importantly, she added

> "I see the video as kind of "diluted". It is not completely their [the youths] vision. The ideas were drawn from the discussion, and our discussion is confined to these things we talked about as adults.... A more radical way of doing it, is for the youth to go out, shoot stuff, and bring the stuff back, and the adult will be there to keep all the things together, and make it interesting."

This takes us back to the discussions of different Asian American concerns. Juli believed that if she had let the youths an even freer hand, the video would be even more grassroots, and would truly be a youth-centered video. In a way, she believed that her push for higher political awareness of Asian American lives might have stifled the youths' visions of what their concerns are. On the other hand, she also saw the grassroots approach as more pedagogically effective, to let the youths learn through their own ideas and works.

Overall, AAU was not making a tape that represented the organization as a whole. There was no contest in how to represent the organization; instead, the AAU team saw itself as only accountable to a vague larger community of Asian Americans, not a organization that has definite forms and structures. They were also influenced by their perceptions of scripts about Asian-Americans which demanded response -- an inter textual question to be dealt with in the next chapter. While

there were divergences within the group, overall the teens, through their contributions in different forms, made the video together and formed a new solidarity among themselves and perhaps with AAU. They did feel proud ownership of the work as evident at the screening at the International House in September 1996 which I will discuss in the reception chapter. This lengthy exposition of the production process and results, however, can be contrasted with the more divisive experience of community action recalled by those involved in When Speech Flows to Music.

Remembering Discord: Community, Production and Schism

The Anna Crusis Women Choir (Anna), in its proposal, noted that it wanted to make a video about the history of the organization and to celebrate its 20th anniversary season. The video project then required more negotiation on how to represent that history, and who could speak for that history, all of which pointed to potential fissures within a loose organizational structure.

Anna Crusis was founded in 1975, and is the oldest feminist choir in the United States. The choir "seeks to integrate its feminist vision and artistic vision through the creative expression of struggle and triumph" (Anna Proposal to CV, 1994). Except for the musical director and the half time manager, all 40+ choir members contributed time and money to the organization. Since the choir has no social service orientation, or external clientele (apart from music enthusiasts), most members tend to be middle class women who might dedicate free time to spend with the choir.

Eileen, the member who initiated Anna's video project and who was listed as the team leader in the proposal, was a relatively new participant of the choir. After Anna received the grant from Scribe, it was announced at a concert, and about ten other people volunteered to join. Of the three people I interviewed, Helen Sherman asserted that all members were aware of their responsibilities when they joined. Yet

both Donnamarie, and Diane, the facilitator, suggested that there were many changeovers of team members throughout the production process. Strictly speaking, no one person saw the project through from beginning to end. These changes relate both to the complexities of women's lives and participation in the choir and to Anna's own self-professed feminist ideologies of community and organization.

Anna stresses relentlessly that it worked on a feminist, i.e. egalitarian, model; there is a long history of distrust on authority and arbitrary leadership. After the video team was formed, tasks were delegated to different people: some were to do archival work since they were making a tape about the history of the choir, some to organize a meeting with older members who were no longer with the group, while some worked on production and others on scripting. Authority could even be challenged in relation to Scribe: only a few members sporadically attended Scribe video workshops. Diane claimed that they thought the instructors disorganized, and she ended up teaching production skills.

Diane herself was a teacher who had become a videographer; this was her only project with Scribe, with whom she has not continued. Her own authority role, moreover, could be seen as intrusive and problematic, even if she saw herself as providing and coordinating skills necessary to completion. While Donnamarie perceived Diane as coming into a very difficult situation, and carrying the project through, Helen Sherman, in her reply to my survey, cautioned that "she [Diane] proved to have her own agenda, Louis Massiah mediated with us and her to get us back on track. The Scribe organization should be very clear in recruiting facilitators as to their role." Here, a clear divergence between models of community and a model of efficient or coherent production grew.

Moreover, while comprehensiveness was stressed throughout, there were divisions among members in terms of continuity, commitment and desires for the choir. Surveys were handed out asking members about

their backgrounds, and a later survey sought their opinions about songs to be selected for the tape. Yet in practice, some older members tended to have more power in the choir than younger ones if only in their ability to galvanize group opinion or to share information about its history. All three interviewees agreed that feelings were hurt during the selection process, but each, in turn, had different approaches to understanding these schisms. Helen seemed to see the disagreement as unavoidable, but constructive, while Donnamarie said some members were left with a bitter taste. Diane, being the outsider/professional, was more analytical, pointing out a fundamental contradiction: the medium, in this case, video, is selective rather than holistic. Therefore it cannot record the environment objectively, but only pieces of it, seen from a particular angle. Still, given the egalitarian ideology and shared decision-making of the group in its music, it proved very easy for some of Anna's members to feel that their concerns were ignored, or that their space had been intruded upon.

Yet these perceptions could become cumbersome and dangerous to everyday group unity. Donnamarie recalled later that

> the success of a committee that is coming together to make a video is really dependent on the relationships of the people in the committee, and in that reflective of the organization as a whole. Anna was at a point at which committees in general were not functioning well.... the group didn't gel, and as is typical at Anna, there was a power vacuum, and relationships, people were not treating each other real well, so that meetings would not feel productive.

Both Donnamarie and Diane thought that variations in depth and strength of commitment clearly led to division. They agreed that Eileen, being a relatively new member, found it difficult to become an effective leader for the video project. Moreover, for Eileen to run a project about the history of a choir she had recently joined was incongruous to others. According to Diane, Eileen finally left the video project and the choir as a whole after the team excluded a segment she had initiated and worked on. A light-hearted song about waitresses and harassment, "Three Chickens," had been chosen to be taped; the

segment was done with a generally playful music video style. Helen Sherman told me that the song was dropped because it did not fit the rest of the video which is more serious and solemn in tone. Editorial or scripting decisions always entail either compromises or power; in this case, it showed Eileen that she was not in charge.

By post-production, with Eileen gone, Helen Sherman and Jeanne became the editors of the tape, and formed its final shape. Diane also claimed that Helen and Jeanne sometimes did not agree with one another, and one person would simply leave the room and let the other cut. Diane also claimed that the choir placed great demands on its members with rehearsals, performances, and other activities, so only those who were really interested in video editing as skills were left to finish the project. This, as noted from AAU and WTP as well as other interviews, seems to be the final process for all videos. Yet it raised different questions for the feminist ethos of shared responsibility and decision making espoused by the choir.

While I did not witness the production process of Anna, from these interviews with participants with different vantages on the organization at different times, it is apparent that the process of finding a definition for the Anna community -- on video as in practice -- was not easy. The lack of a consistent video production team, the departure of Eileen, and problems of subsequent usage attest to the struggle for community definition. Donnamarie, who no longer works at Anna contrasted this with her experience at WOAR. She worried about

> a lot people who had not felt empowered by the process, who would not feel the possibilities inherent in it, because of the organizational pieces in such disarray. You may talk to other people, who may say that we got the skills, all the better for the next one. But I also know other people who walked away feeling that this hurts, this personally hurts by having made an investment.

Conclusions: Production and Community

Responding to the legacy of Eric Michaels with critical questions for community videographers, Keyan Tomaselli and Jean Prinsloo note that

> Production is not necessarily the prime purpose of community video. It facilitates a process of community organisation, of conscientisation of both the producers (if external to the community) and the participating community itself. This ideal often becomes diluted in the doing because of apprehensions about the safety of equipment in unskilled hands, naive assumptions about the subject-community's internal dynamics and relation to class issues and uncritical acceptance of forms" (1990:136).

While Scribe does not seem to have been troubled by equipment security, both the positive and negative points of this evaluation have emerged in this ethnography of the grassroots video production process. Every CV participant who responded to my questionnaire, as well as those whom I interviewed, agreed that the production process entails a great deal of work. None were prepared for the task, even if by the completion of the project, **ALL** felt that their efforts had not been wasted. All those interviewed claimed that they had learned a new appreciation of film and video; now they watch films and videos with a new light, both more understanding and more critical. They all learned a new skill, about a new technology, which they may or may not use in the future.

Furthermore, they learned about their organization: the video team needs to be analytical, and production forces them to define a vision of their organization. Some learned again how to reach consensus, as in the case of Good Shepherd. Other groups learned how to reconstruct history as in Anna Crusis, by doing surveys, and agreeing on the form and tone of the final video. All must learn to make selections about what they want to say and who they trust to say it. In so doing, many had to think more clearly about how their organization fits into other wider and imagined communities. None, though, has found videography effective as a strategy to bring a divided organization together.

Sometimes, the production process forces the group to tackle its inherent contradictions. For example, AAU found out that their "enlightened" political agenda may not be that of "the grassroots" after all, since it was in a way imposed on teens by the adults who ran the program. Nonetheless, their teen participants discovered different

meanings of community and identity that AAU has also sought to impart within a general commitment to empowerment. And contradictions exist beyond the limited realm of organization as community: when the youths at Woodrock learned that the President of Philadelphia's Board of Education did not really want to talk to them, they perhaps ended up better understanding the problem of high school drop outs.

At the end of the production process, after a year of work, the video team and organization again bring grassroots videography into the public gaze in the presence and presentation of a concrete text. Informed by the analysis of the production process, we can now turn to a more nuanced understanding of the texts of the Community Visions videos and the issues they raise of genre, form, message and community. These, in turn will be reintegrated into realms both public and private as we return in Chapter Five issues of reception, individual and collective, within the organization and outside of it.

CHAPTER IV: COMMUNITY AS TEXT

> The vortex of cliches orbiting the word video is myriad. It is ugly, it is cheap (a type of degraded film for ingrates impatient with the craft of filmmaking). The tracing of the raster scan will hypnotize you. It is the medium of the thirty-second spot. Its only righteous subject matter is Television, its practitioners devout children of the box. The flip side of this litany clings to identification of video's permanent malleability, what Sean Cubitt calls 'time-shifting,' which makes video a revolutionary tool, as we throw off our couch potato passivity and reorganize received information ad infinitum to create our own programming. This fascination with video's 'difference' contributes to its categorization as either fundamentally blank or so compactly layered that it can serve to illustrate everything" (Suderburg 1996:103)

The videos produced by the Community Visions project pose significant questions about their multiple and contradictory meaning as texts, even beyond those swirling in the "vortex of cliches" about video that Erica Suderburg bemoans. These videos would normally be classified as documentaries or non-fiction films. They rely on the same textual elements -- interviews, narration, establishing shots (which provide the setting), cutaways, "actuality" footage -- with which most documentaries are constructed. Still, CV videos differ markedly in form and content from more mainstream documentaries as commonly represented by television newscasts, the Arts & Entertainment channel's Biographies, or more stylized PBS documentaries like The Civil War (1990). At first sight, to many viewers, grassroots videos may simply look like inferior counterparts of mainstream documentaries, especially when sharing similar subject matter (AIDS, dropouts, housing, etc.). Hence, they might simply be taken as artifacts of different conditions of production and professionalism, like those discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, however, I will underscore other complexities which must be read from both text and context.

The arguments of CV works, for example, diverge from mainstream works that try to present themselves as "complete" or "un-biased", highly problematic terms in their own right. CV videos present very clear polemic positions. Formally, moreover, community videos are neither "mainstream" nor "experimental". Instead, these texts prove

quite open to different forms of expressions, and tend to mix different genres of video making and visual argument.

Ultimately, issues of both form and content bring us back to the major social and contextual feature that sets these texts apart: they are made by community groups for other audiences who know that these texts represent group efforts. The continual intertwining of subject, producer and audience is inseparable from the text. Even if one were to see them in isolation one would pick up cues of grassroots action that transform the meaning of textual elements and the weight of arguments. This realization, however, also reminds us that we use other contextual knowledge to read other documentaries as well as fictional films.[1]

Therefore, it is necessary to frame consideration of CV documentary as text with concerns raised by Eric Michaels in the citation with which I began the previous chapter. His call for a processual analysis included conditions of production and use:

> These may or may not be identifiable in that text itself, especially if we are not trained to look for them. This requires that we expand the critical analysis to consider evidence of the conditions of making, transmitting, and viewing, and to acknowledge that texts come into existence, and must be described, in terms of social relations between institutionally situated audiences and producers, and that meanings arise in these relationships between text and context in ways that require a precise documentation in each case (1994: 22).

Such an approach, however, does not necessarily diverge from classical analyses of the documentary even as it recasts their terms. Bill Nichols argues, for example, in Representing Reality that "documentary realism negotiates the compact we strike between text and historical referent, minimizing resistance or hesitation to the claims of transparency and authenticity.... realism is the set of conventions and norms for visual representation which virtually every documentary

---

1. One might allow for ironic versions of CV which parody its conventions -- as This is Spinal Tap (1988) did for rock documentaries or Bob Roberts (1990) did for campaign films. However, the scale of grassroots cinema makes it an unlikely target for mass media development. And both of the parody films listed cue us in presentation materials, that they are not serious in the way that A Man from Hope (1992) attempted to be.

text addresses, be it through adoption, modification, or contestation" (1991:165). Hence, as noted in the introduction, "Documentary realism ... testifies to presence" (Ibid: 184).

What does this testimony mean? Broadly speaking, documentary uses "realism" to assert its authority and to indicate its more direct relationship to its particular historical world sets it apart from narrative film and its fictional universe. To do so, documentary relies heavily on the audience's intertextual frame of the real world, in order to make sense of the text. This can be seen as claims of "truth" vis-a-vis the research on an A & E biography or the status of a transgressive film like Oliver Stone's JFK (1991) and Nixon (1995), which appear to some to violate the expectations of fiction and non-fiction. Documentaries may also entail claims of "real" access, as in Berlinger and Sinofsky's Paradise Lost (1996) or may include the filmmaker's attempt to reflect on their own presence, which characterizes the work of Trinh T. Min-Ha or Dennis O'Rourke. Similar claims, constructed at a more intimate scale, prove vital in the exploration of authenticity and self-representation in community video. The history and presence of a real world is more restricted than those associated with documentaries that address a much larger audience but perhaps even more intense.

Having introduced a broad set of issues of text -- including the choice of documentary over fictional forms -- in my examination of production, this chapter integrates this knowledge and those processes with my reading of grassroots texts. To do so, I have analyzed all twenty CV tapes produced as of 1996 as a corpus, drawing on models established by Bill Nichols, Brian Austin, Michael Renov, Eric Michaels and other students of documentary as well as a wide range of examples.

I begin with a close reading of three CV videos. While these are not "typical" in any sociological sense, they introduce the range of forms and arguments that I will be referring to later and establish, for the reader, a clearer sense of textual questions in the transformation

of a genre we often take as a straightforward argument or even a backdrop. In one, New Faces of AIDS (1993), which illustrates the general pattern of many other tapes, I draw upon my participant-observation as a facilitator with We The People in 1992-1993. In a shorter corollary exposition I use interviews, textual materials and fieldwork to compare two youth products, To School or Not to School (Woodrock 1993) and Face to Face: It's Not What You Think (AAU, 1996). These last two videos differ significantly from most of the others in the CV series but they allow me to delineate a youth-oriented imagined community by which I may explore intertextual knowledge and choices.

From this I move to a synthetic analysis of formal elements. This turns CV projects back to the documentary as a genre. It is important to see that these texts and projects interrogate not only the meaning of community but also the meaning of documentary. This can be explored through the analysis of the alternative implications of foundational elements of the documentary -- modes of address, the "talking head" interview itself and the role of narration.

Finally, I return to content -- which sometimes overlaps with form. Important elements here include key symbols and key scenarios (Ortner 1976) as well as techniques which structure different arguments across the CV projects. Content, ultimately, also relates to the notion of authenticity and community formation/ identity. Again, my reading expands on close textual analysis by contextualizing codes and conventions and elucidating connections among the different texts.

Community and Text: New Faces of AIDS

> "We the people means to me ... my new way of livin'. My world is around We the people. I'm there every day. I mean, I can go there, I can be down, and somebody will lift me up. I mean I can go there and I can be sad and somebody will wipe my tear away. I just love that place. The place is like, the place is a haven "

New Faces of AIDS begins with an unidentified black woman, against

a relatively innocuous background, talking about her relation to a vague "place" -- We the People. Neither the organization nor her relationship to it are initially explained. Her referents contain both individual experiences and Biblical cadences ("wipe my tear away" recalls The Book of Revelations or gospel music; McDonogh personal communication 1995). From this highly personal note with its overtones of pain and redemption, the video cuts to the celebration of a birthday party in which the same woman appears within a crowd.

At this point, I suspect that most audiences already would have identified this tape as non-professional. Its haphazard localization, incomplete data and rather unpolished shots, with scenes not totally in focus and an overall grainy quality, all convey information to the audience: namely, that this is a small scale, local product. These cues also reinforce a sense of authenticity, of "real people's products."[2]

The more expository scene that follows sets WTP in its urban Philadelphia context by a long-shot of City Hall that zooms out to an extreme long-shot and then cuts to the street signs at Broad and Lombard, before focussing on the WTP office on Broad Street. A voice-over now adds information on AIDS and polemically states the organization's commitment to People With AIDS -- "We The People does not believe in disposable people."

These shots, which are relatively well-done and well-joined, derive from a varied history. Veronica, the woman interviewed, was taped by community participants who also chose the birthday party scene. The Philadelphia set-up shot was something I did late in the production process to situate the organization more clearly. Initially, a pan had

---

2. These qualities may provide metaphors of authenticity in more professional productions as well, such as Panama Deception (1992), where the quality of footage underscores the difficulties in revealing U.S. government concealments. However, these interpretations are open to manipulation as well, as in Abolfazi Jalili's A True Story (1995), where the apparently reflexive image of the filmmaker shooting video footage and even the "sounds" of the camera are mingled with reenactments and constructed scenes.

been planned, but it did not look good and more complex technical shots could not be completed; hence, we relied on a cut-away. The agreed intent was to show "where we are," as spatial evidence, but the process took shape in a manner different from the text with which it is interwoven (although this is commonplace in even more experienced productions). For the production crew, this assembly could be interpreted as a community experience as well. Yet the process is all lost or hidden in the editing of the text itself.

In addition, these initial scenes exist as texts at other levels. In one sense, they provide a straightforward introduction, an invitation into the humanity and the space of an organization, while a serious voice-over provides factual data. In another sense, they represent choices of people as characters, of statements of the human cost of an epidemic and of place which defined the ethos and location of WTP.[3]

Other scenes follow according to a narrative argument rather than chronology, asserting the video's special relationship to the historical world -- as if to say "this is a contemporary reality all around you, not a story." Interviews predominate, as person after person describes their life before and after WTP. The relevant subtext, soon apparent is that this transformation is tied to the discovery of their HIV+ status.

In fact, WTP's production group had decided to ask interviewees four basic questions: (1) What was life like before you came to WTP?; (2) What were your first impressions, experiences at WTP?; (3) What made you come back?; and (4) How do you feel that society treats people with AIDS? These questions elicit brief life histories with some additional views on social context. Through juxtaposition of these voices without explanatory guidelines, the video establishes that it is

---

3. Philadelphia as setting for community action was ironically echoed in the movie Philadelphia which actually premiered while we did our final editing. Joe Cronauer, WTP director and primary agent on the video was given special premiere tickets to the Hollywood vision of the city and the syndrome -- with its much smoother depictions of downtown -- as a PWA representative.

not trying to explain what the organization does, but how it has affected its members. The questions are basic, not intrusive, and not confrontational. And they were based, as well, in decisions which members had already made in coming to WTP, within social settings at the center, among friends, and in basic support group procedures.

The first three speakers are women of color. One, Varee, complains that she was only 19 when she was diagnosed as HIV+. We also see the first speaker, Veronica, in a new guise, as she recalls how she dealt with her diagnosis. A new audience response is negotiated as viewers must rethink her as a PWA. Her participation in the video also grows through her visible awareness of the camera/audience which has already been suggested by her comfortable posture and tone. Now it is marked by her statement, "Excuse me" after she uses the word shit. She moves her eyes as well, asking the cameraperson if she had erred, and appears reassured. This was not done as a "realist device" in shooting but records an unconscious moment of documentation. In the editing process, we all agreed that we liked the shit part. I did not ask why Joe liked it, but I might have suggested to him not to worry about it because our video is different from more mainstream polite pieces which censor speech. And the shit made her appear even more human. Her eye contact with the cameraperson also helps to make the production process explicit. I was conscious of what we were trying to accomplish and how this scene might fit but also respectful of collaborators rather than suggesting or rehearsing this scene.

The first man appears at this point in the film, talking about his suicidal experience of drugs, before the video segues into a communal lunch and another brief voice-over explanation of the organization which interrupts his narrative. None of the speakers are explicitly identified, although they become more and more familiar as they reappear as characters and share their emotions and responses in subsequent interviews. Joe Cronauer, for example, who was the primary

producer and editor as well as an association organizer, is the third man to speak; his experience and narrative are marked neither as typical nor as dominant. Although Veronica's Shit squarely located her as having a relationship with the person behind the camera, the rest of the text does not insist on reflexive exploration of the relationship between the interviewees and the interviewers. The tape is about the community, neither about celebrities nor film and video theory.

These talking heads convey information about the organization, but generally in terms of their lives rather than actual programs, which are catalogued in the voice-over (against an impersonal inspirational graffiti background). The voice-over does not engage in dialogue or conversation with the human narratives of the video. Nor do interviewees generally interact with each other. This collage is not, as I know, a conscious filmic reference, but a residue of how the video was planned and executed with individual testimonies which could then be intercut with transitions that inform the audience about the organization.

The message of individual witnesses remains surprising to many viewers who have seen it in non-WTP settings: "I'm not gonna sit up here and tell you that I'm glad that I'm HIV+," Varee notes, but she talks about how much better her life has become. Veronica adds with some irony and yet belief that "HIV has been a blessing to me." As the voice-over talks about the importance of self-empowerment, we realize that this is being conveyed in the interviews as well, one after another. "We, the People means Life. That's how I see it, LIFE. When I say my name, I say that I am Greg, I'm an addict, and that I'm a person living -LIVING -- with the HIV virus." During editing Joe and others agreed that Greg was overly dramatic. We all laughed, but Joe decided to leave the segment in because of Greg's air of conviction. And Joe said, "this is how Greg talks." In fact, the variations among individual performances affirms the lack of a master narrative or authoritative voice even to those viewers who complain that they seem "too happy."

The crescendo comes with Varee and Willie talking again, as the editing and content guide the video toward their wedding, which is incorporated via home footage. Home video adds another note of reality, intruding into the only slightly more polished reality of the CV video. Its impromptu and untrained qualities are easily read as "real" but they merge with the rest of the video rather than being recast as "artifacts" as they might be in the context of more polished settings like television's America's Funniest Home Videos or the documentary Atomic Cafe (1992).[4]

The form of the video, its images and structure, prove straightforward -- statements of place and fact interlaced with talking heads and a few events. This is typical of many Scribe videos; yet this patterning is neither forced (pre-scripted) nor inauthentic, as I know from participation in this and other productions. The video gives cues to "real" identities of the talking heads by their casual presence and the nondescript backgrounds by which interviews are framed. They testify for themselves as witnesses rather than experts or subjects.

On reflection, the interviewees actually provide other information by their visual presence. African-Americans dominate WTP membership; however, WTP wanted to convey the message that anyone can be HIV+. We facilitators also raised questions: the initial video group of four, for example, had no women and we consciously pushed them to include women in the production team, and to have a racially diverse group of interviewees of both men and women. Therefore, a more diverse group of interviewees were sought, with four women, (3 African American and 1 Filipina), and three men (2 African-American and 1 white).

Moreover, all participants appear relatively healthy and positive about life, which proves another striking point to audiences unfamiliar

---

4. There are interesting overlaps to explore in the future between these videos and the tone and expressions of autobiographical documentaries like Marlon Rigg's Ethnic Notions (1987) and Tongues Untied (1989).

with AIDS, especially in an age in which PWAs were more commonly portrayed as dying figures (e.g. the denouement of Philadelphia or The Band Played On). Even at this stage, an awareness of how the tape would be read, and who the audience might be, influenced interview decisions. But one also must consider power relationship amongst producers and those depicted, and the subjects' rights to choose their own visages.

New Faces Of AIDS generally does not include the interviewer onscreen (who often doubled as camera person, producer, or facilitator). Pre-interviews as well as on-camera interviews were all done by co-members of WTP, a process that this project took for granted. Again, editing reflects the fact that all participants shared responsibilities and values in the video, and that it was made for common goals advanced by WTP rather than focussing on the interview per se.

This practice and its result departs from how most documentary or news stories are filmed/taped, where the subject/object relationship pervades both the production process and the text. In general, the WTP producers were making what Nichols has discussed as the pseudo-monologue (1991:54ff), where the interviewee and oftentimes the questions were off-stage. Yet the social experience of production also controverts any simple "absence of the interviewer from the arena of the historical present" (55). The text itself stresses the fact that all participants belong to WTP by testimonies which chronicle their shared experience in multiple settings and which converge in the wedding as a celebration of a larger community of HIV+ people.

The final voice-over closes with a sober message about AIDS and the role of WTP as a community organization in dealing with it. The dedication to Kirk Dobson -- a private symbol and the only allusion to death -- leads to public credits in which participants are named for the first time.

The format of this videos, then, is hardly innovative. Community

Vision videos rely on a shared intertextual frame between the producer and the audience as well as the personal contacts which will shape readings (as discussed in Chapter V). The video gives cues to the reality of the talking heads and through them, to the reality of the place/organization and its message to a "real" historical context of AIDS in Philadelphia. These human elements, in turn, reinforce readings for future similar texts whether by Scribe or other community-based groups. Before I knew any individuals involved in Manos Unidas, for example, or the neighborhood which is itself a character in the video, I shared the expectation, reinforced by WTP, that I could know them, that they exist outside the video and are reinforced by the video in turn. I will return later to the much more complex questions of how this is embodied and read in a text.

Rocking Video: An MTV Generations Take Charge

The videos which most readily violate the admittedly informal "canons" of Scribe are those made by and about kids from local high schools. The blaring music, jump cuts and profuse effects evoke a distinctive, intertextual MTV community of videographers and their presumed audiences, not PBS. In To School or Not to School youths (and some adults) in community work depict the problems of school drop-outs. In Face to Face, racism takes center stage. Both share similarities as texts despite their differences in production and themes.

To School presents a clearly partisan argument, challenging Philadelphia School authorities to deal with a serious youth problem. The student-producers' awareness and skills at interviews were honed by a professional newswoman/facilitator. But they also faced limits imposed by time, experience and context. Above all, potential subjects (like the absent Asian American students previously noted) had control of the project by not talking, although the text may never yield this explanation without knowledge of some specific production context.

Unlike WTP, this video varies settings and moods of talking heads:

empathetic discussions with dropouts, more informational yet distant interviews with professionals and man-on-the-street chances for kids to "tell something to the superintendent." This inversion of classic power dilemmas of the documentary -- not controlling but inviting voices -- opposed an in-group (youth) to an out-group, epitomized in the visual and vocal non-interview with school superintendent Constance Clayton. [5]

To School or Not to School looks and sounds like an MTV production, although obviously of lesser technical quality. The tape is scored with driving contemporary rock, with unsteady strobing electronic images and young people acting for the camera, playfully and even ironically. Rapid editing flows with the tempo of the background music as in many music videos the producers and their audiences would know. In this sense, in its awareness of and imitation of mass media intertexts, the tape introduces a different element of interaction and reflexivity. Through form as well as content, the tape conveys an overriding message that "we are young and need to take charge and do something now."

The tape intercuts many testimonies, seemingly at random, with students in school and in the streets. Some show the interviewer, others do not. More traditional expertise is provided by interviews with a principle and a teacher, conducted by students (here present as interviewers) in adult offices. Photographs of newspaper clippings on "the problem of dropouts" provide a generally accepted source of external validation. Another segment, however, provides an obviously inauthentic reenactment of a drug deal in a poor-looking neighborhood. This potpourri of styles thus incorporates television street actuality, expert opinion, reality shows reenactments and conversational soundbites. Their juxtaposition mingles irony with serious politics.

The main character/interviews rely on three dropouts: two girls

---

5. This proves an unpremeditated yet effective echo of the manipulative use of the non-interview in the problematic Roger and Me.

and one boy. One of the girls is clearly white, and one appears to be Hispanic, while the boy, Frankie, may be Hispanic or African American. Diversity is again stressed to validate the extensiveness of the problem, but it is not handled with the same insistence that I know from WTP. All give critical and self-explanatory opinions, with or without the interviewer's presence. Again, this informality evokes other media intertexts, whether MTV interviews or other "hip" celebrity reports.

The tape does not rely on authority or "expert" explanation in the way that WTP does in its voice-overs. Videographers do not even solicit any opinion from the parents. Moreover, with the principle and the teacher interviewed are obviously more sympathetic to the students and call for school reforms.

Authority is specifically challenged in a key segment to which I have already alluded. This segment, backed by rhythmic bass music, starts with a fortress-like, low-angle shot of the Board of Education building with a fence in front. This is followed by rapid answers to the question, "What do you want to say to Constance Clayton? (the then School Superintendent)" addressed to different youths in varied settings. Finally, the video cuts back to a simple long shot of the entrance of the School Broad with people walking out of the front door, while the sound track presents a different scenario:

> "I am calling for Jose Gonzales, This is -- from the school district office of communications. Mr. Gonzales, I'm sorry to say we are unable to fulfill in the foreseeable future a compatible time to schedule your interview with Dr. Clayton/ compatible time to schedule your interview with Dr. Clayton/ compatible time to schedule your interview with Dr. Clayton"

The edited announcement, an audio jump cut, becomes a sarcastic condemnation of the unresponsiveness of Dr. Clayton to the needs of the students. It reflects on the form of the documentation in interaction with a youth musical culture in which rhythmic repetition and mixing take on different meanings.

The teenagers seem to make a video that expresses their point of view, not that of a more traditional authority which is treated with a

caustic sarcasm absent from the other films which I have seen (except for AAU). It is striking as well that the teens did not present Woodrock as a youth organization at all; no information is given about the group itself. Still, while the tape incorporates many mass media styles, it also refused to be a mass media product. The balanced perspective that news shows purport to uphold is absent: "This is our tape, and we are only interested in talking to our people and to Dr. Clayton." It makes no claim to objectivity, but rather claims to be the "authentic witnesses" of the youth who do not have much chance to have their voices heard (or listened to).

More history of this group also affirms, though, how a reading of this imagined community solely from text can be misleading. While watching it, I formed the impression that one of the most articulate dropout interviewees, Frankie, was a member of the group. However, I learned in a subsequent discussion that he was not a member. Instead, the teenage producers ran into him in the street while doing some shooting. Frankie was a school drop-out who wanted to express his view. He showed up for the scheduled interview, but the producers never reconnected with him. The text never makes Frankie's identity explicit. If a spectator thinks that he is part of the organization, his views would be identified with Woodrock's; if the spectator knows that he has no connection with Woodrock, she may look at him as a school drop-out expressing his view -- the problem for Woodrock, not the solution.

In these interviews and their uses the filmmakers are further removed from the subject than Joe was from WTP. Even though Frankie actively sought to be in the video and have his voice heard, he has also voluntarily abdicated his control of his image by leaving no tracks for correspondence. He seems to trust Woodrock to use his image accordingly, however, suggesting in the absence of possible confirmation that he shares in the values and experiences of the youths creating the film and interview. Would he talk this way to Maria Shriver (or even

get the chance)? Overall, there seems to emerge a presumption of youths as imagined community, in the sense of Benedict Anderson (1983), which transcends the formal group yet still strives for equality and incorporation. It parallels rather than intersects with the construction of a "world" which WTP has undertaken.

Ironically this video is not used today to prevent dropping out or to change school policy. Instead, it is seen by group members as a catalyst in schools to foster Teen Empowerment, to show how teens can do community projects and to promote the organization. Although I have not worked with such a meeting, other screenings have elicited positive responses among college student audiences who relate to the style, rhythm and humor of the interviews -- and through this to its content --quite differently from those of WTP.

Face to Face differs from the Woodrock tape in that it does not focus on one single issue. As noted in its production history in the last chapter, the tape falls into multiple sections with a prologue addressing issues of identity, and a poetic epilogue that defies stereotypes and presents a positive and playful image of Asian American youth culture. To avoid redundancy, I will only highlight some aspects that seem especially important within the corpus of CV works.

The tape starts with a youth walking towards the camera in a park, interrupted with rapid cuts of close-ups of Asian faces; the sound track carries a string of (constructed) racist slurs. The scene ends with the youth screaming at the camera, interrupting conservative frames for documentary by both the vividness and the emotional power of this act. A rapid collage of Philadelphia street scenes follows, gradually moving to Asian establishments in the city. At this point, the tape has established its theme and place -- Philadelphia Asian-American youths and their problems -- by showing faces, place, and its parody of racial slurs. It has also established a hip, defiant tone. Three interviews on being Asian-American close the prologue. Their voices convey to the

audience that Asian-American identities are sometimes invisible to other Americans where race, oftentimes, means only Black and White. Meanwhile Asian-Americans can see themselves as truly bi-cultural.

The four primary sections deal with Schools (a shared concern with Woodrock), Stereotypes, Police Harassment, and Gangs, of which I will only mentions some scenes in stereotypes and gangs. In Stereotypes, film clips depicting Asian Americans stereotypes from Suzie Wong (i.e. the World of Suzie Wong 1960) to the Asian Nerd (an alternative reading of the myth of the model minority) to slanted eyes, are juxtaposed with statements of how these stereotypes feel. While argumentative, the tape also indicates that some Asians internalize racism. Hanyin, for example, tells the camera that there are Asian Clubs in schools which put on fashion shows. But Hanyin does not like the fashion shows' emphasis on traditional costumes, because Asian youths wear baggy jeans and sneakers. These words reverberate against images of youths hanging out in jeans and sneakers.

The Gang section starts with gang members making hand signs in different locales. Unidentified gang members are interviewed, and claim that gangs are an imposed category: any group of people hanging out together can be labelled a gang. They assert that in "real" gangs, people treat one another as families and support each other. A young woman talks about why her brother joined a gang because he could not meet the family expectations of getting straight As. The tape does not provide a simplistic defense however. Another gang member poignantly confesses that he is tired of being in a gang, and he wants to get out, deciding that "hurting your own brothers is stupid." Still another agrees that there are Asians killing Asians, Blacks killing Blacks, but argues the biggest gang is the one in "suits and ties, the president." No alternate voices of "expertise" are called in to support or deny these claims (which respond to the offscreen presence nonetheless of myriad television and newspaper stories).

These two sections use a very conventional documentary technique where different levels of information are put against each other to authenticate the claim. Stock footage of Asian stereotypes are rebuked by statements to the contrary. Yet the video also poses complicated interpretations without a narrative resolution, a documentary "point." The video argues against stereotypes, but acknowledges that some Asian youths sometimes internalize these stereotypes of the exotic Orient. In the gang section, many opinions about gangs are crammed into three minutes of tape. Most portray a sympathetic attitude towards gangs, but the section provides neither endorsement nor rebuke. So these sections, while posing images of stereotypes and gangs oppositional to mainstream American culture, allow space to contest a one-dimensional positive or negative image <u>within</u> the Asian youths community.

The most interesting aspect of this video is how it textually presents itself as an ensemble piece. Without being formally reflexive, making us aware of the filmmakers, the camera, or other production apparatus, the tape is able to give the audience the impression that the youths who are the subjects of the video also made the tape. This is conveyed by many instances of direct eye contact between the subject and the camera, and thus the audience. The relaxed attitude of the subjects in front of the camera, as in WTP, further negotiates an inclusive empathy encompassing audience and creators/speakers.

This sense of ensemble also arises from a focus on character (in multiple settings) rather than data or organizational presentation. The constant reappearance of the same people in different places, or dealing with different topics, gives the sense that many people have been associated with all aspects of the production of the tape for a long time, an implicit sense of mutual dialogue.

Finally, the closing poem, which lasts for about two and one-half minutes, weaves producers and themes together. Leap recites her poem standing against a red wall (outside Scribe), but the recitation is

entwined with more short clips of Asian faces that the audience has glimpsed earlier in the video, often now in family settings. This stresses the human complexity of the roles and identities they have spoken about on camera. These footages also show the same youths performing in front of the camera, waving hands, imitating kung-fu, and making faces. Unlike actuality footage, these performance invites dialogue between the subjects and the audience, with the statement, "Look at all that I am as I am talking to you." While these textual strategies can be achieved by fiction film production, other evidence (including the credits and multiple intertexts of stardom and criticism) preclude this assumption in most viewing contexts.

Not all manifestations of collectivity need be seen as so textually empowering. The lack of a strong stylistic coherence may also attest to the collective nature of the tape. Overall, the tape only touches superficially on many issues. In fact, itnever really asks what Asian-American culture is or who Asian Americans are. Still, the teens were more than happy with their work. Juli says she hope to see this film as contributing to an ever changing, diverse, yet inclusive definition of Asian-American. Even this sense of a work in dialogue sets it apart from some other documentaries.

These two youth-oriented CV texts obviously differ in style and substance from New Faces of AIDS. Yet like this tape -- and all the others within the CV project -- it is clear that text is shaped by and conveying multiple, intersecting definitions and demands of "community." One might elaborate this in terms of other thematic clusters noted in previous chapters -- a series of tapes dealing with housing issues, for example -- or by related organizations, such as the Kensington network or the concerns raised in a long series of texts made by women's groups. Rather than adding on more details, though, it seems appropriate instead to stand back and ask about more general textual issues CV projects suggest. Here, I begin with the textual devices and techniques and

follow with a shorter analysis of themes (so as not to repeat organizational descriptions from Chapter II).

Communities on the Screen: Modes, Texts and Analysis.

After analyzing the set of twenty tapes in terms of formal elements which I have referred to in these vignettes, it is possible to underscore both commonalities and differences among the films. Elaborations of textual forms and difference must include both formal and content elements. Modes of representation, interviews and narration as techniques situate CV documentaries within a wider genre of documentary and to use them in order to understand how these documentaries in fact construct and convey "truths."

Modes of Representation

In Representing Reality, Bill Nichols identifies four primary modes of representation in documentary which I summarize in Table 3:

Table 3: Documentary Modes of Representation

(from Nichols 1991:32-5

1. Expository (examples: Grierson, Flaherty 1922) with voice-of-God commentary and poetic perspectives.

2. Observational (Leacock-Pennebaker, Wiseman 1967, 1968) which allows film maker to record unobtrusively what people did when they were not explicitly addressing the camera.

3. Interactive (Rouch 1960, de Antonio 1969), with filmmakers who want to engage with individuals more directly, with filmmakers' participation.

4. Reflexive (Vertov 1929, Trinh 1992), which tries to make the conventions of representation themselves more apparent and challenge the impression of reality.

Nichols concentrates on the relationship between filmmakers and their subject matter based on textual evidence, the "normal" limits of documentary analysis. His categorization is far from exhaustive, nor are the four modes mutually exclusive, yet these terms are useful as

reference to the shifting position of some of the community videos, and how each video uses different modes to further their claim to authenticity, and authority. Moreover, these categories allow me to pursue the dialectic between these grassroots texts and other documentaries.

Community videos generally fall into the categories of expository and interactive works because of their explanatory nature and their unique relationship between videomakers and subjects. But this classification raises other questions of form, subject and voice. While being expository, for example, CV tapes avoid voice-of-God narration -- they explain through people rather than texts read over visuals, transforming this mode into something perhaps better conceived of as expository-interactive. This influences, in turn, their use of interviews and narration.

This classification also raises some interesting issues of modes not chosen. None of the CV videos are "Observational;" the producers of CV videos are never simply detached. They are subjects and they interact with other subjects. This is interesting given the many examples of observational documentary which permeate mass media -- from television news to more fictionalized documentary "styles" -- whether Cops or NYPD Blue.

I would also hesitate to categorize most CV videos as "Reflexive." Nichols sees this mode as one that challenges other formal conventions in realist representation. Yet as I mentioned before, CV producers (apart from the more academic/ professional facilitators) generally are preoccupied with managing the basic formal elements in their videos, and the subject matter of CV videos rarely touch on the politics of video representations. Nonetheless, some of the features which appear in these videos resemble formal features of reflexive texts. These producers also do not strive for a realism that is seamless. Most adopt a casual attitude on hiding the apparatus of production; often, one sees

microphone on screen, or eye contact between the subject and the camera person.

In so far as reflexivity implies rethinking the relationship of the filmmaker to subject, text and audience, the community ties which stretch across these videos mean that CV projects must be "socially reflexive" even if not consciously and artistically so. On the other hand, for these same reasons, most of the CV tapes are, in their own ways, "Interactive" even beyond the way Nichols use it. As I have shown in both New Faces of AIDS and the youth-oriented videos, throughout the production process and the video text there are recurrent interactions with a presumed audience beyond the camera. The producers participate in the events of the video, and interact with the subjects freely, and all know that they will, in turn become viewers among others in real and imagined communities.

Even in labelling CV videos as "Expository-interactive," finer distinctions can be drawn as well. For example, some videos are highly partisan, adopting and developing a political position in the broad sense of the word (which also raises questions about Nichol's classifications). The two youth-produced tapes fit this category as do many of the videos produced early in Scribe's program through interlocking Kensington organizations and the highly charged issues of the Philadelphia Unemployment Project.

Hence, the tape made by Reconstruction also argues that violent offenders should be given a second chance in life, and shows how the programs offered by Reconstruction addressing this concern. Audiences see prisoners and parolees talking about their situation, with a director of the prison, and a social worker endorsing the program, as well as the director of Reconstruction explaining what the program is all about. These interviews, and group meetings are juxtaposed with images of the bombing at Osage Avenue, exterior of prisons, dilapidated row houses, and street protests as powerful visions of alternative

realities and extra-filmic circumstances.

Some other videos are instructional, one of the classic forms of Expository Video known to most people through classroom materials. This category includes Women Against Abuse/Women's Legal Service's document on how to get a restraining order, and Good Shepherd's tape on the value of mediation. As I will suggest, these pose special problems about the creation of human connections without an authoritarian tone. Both, in fact, rely on the use of reenactments, a rarity in CV projects. Still, both rely less on narration than on representations of interaction, defining an inclusive instruction which carries over into their use, as seen in the next chapter.

Some other videos are quite distinctive in their mode of address. The Anna Crasis project was generally seen as a synthetic history and statement of presence. This choice is exemplified by the WTP text as well as Nexus and several other groups. Nevertheless, a "statement of presence and history" may also be used in instruction, as is the case with CO-MAR. Finally, the John Coltrane Memorial Society tape is really a plea for help in a project, a non-partisan invitation to form community unique among CV projects which may reflect its peculiar one-person production as well.

Such variation in voice should not necessarily surprise us given the range of documentaries as a genre. The choices which are made -- favoring interactive exposition, avoiding neutral, authoritarian or reflexive styles -- nonetheless give us insights into how the mission of community influences texts as well as incongruities which might preclude our reading of community from a text with a voice-over by Hal Holbrook or Mayor Ed Rendell. These general formal classifications become even more provocative, however, if we follow the implications of two establishing devices of the documentary text -- interviews and narrations --and how they are treated in CV projects as well as other documentaries. Such a reversed intertextual reading, moreover,

ultimately deconstructs the tacit premises of formal neutrality within which many documentaries are viewed.

Interviews as Social Relations and Textual Elements

Whether the interview as communicative exchange entails power relations that control the voice of the other (as in many traditional documentaries as well as in TV journalism), a search for a shared meta-narrative of communication (as in the films of Jean Rouch, the McDougalls, or Dennis O'Rourke or the sociolinguistic paradigm of Charles Briggs, 1986) or some representation which calls into question the encounter itself (Trinh T. Minh-Ha 1989; Michaels 1994), contemporary documentarians already have grappled seriously with the interview itself as tool and form (See Nichols 1991, 1994; Crawford and Turton 1992, Renov 1993, etc; interviews with filmmakers in Zheutlin 1988 are also illuminating). Under such scrutiny, the interview, however problematic, nonetheless remains a fundamental tool of non-fiction film. This proves equally true in the texts and contexts of community-produced videos, whose group members are not caught up in this reflexive debate. As the techniques of production and distribution of these groups continually seek to collapse the dichotomy of subject and object, identifying "others" and "selves," their activities and works reinterpret the interview within the videos and their wider contexts.

Interviews can be used by the film maker for different purposes in non-fiction works (See Briggs 1986 for a general review of the speech event itself as well as Nichols 1991 and 1994, Renov 1993 and other sources for more comments on filmic form). While interviews are often taken as the least <u>visually</u> interesting components in documentary, they also provide cogent information, both explicitly and implicitly. Moreover, the interviewee, often being an eye-witness of some kind, provides authority to the statements s/he makes and authenticates the work as a whole. Furthermore, "facts" conveyed through "real" people

also carry emotional weight that a third-person narrative lacks. The visual, corporeal witness of real people bolsters the authority of the overall documentary, allowing the film maker not only to convey the information, but also selectively to frame a "human" profile of authenticity and impact. As noted earlier, interviews are also economical in time as well as money; they also capture, in a sense, inaccessible or past events or even ongoing events that simply do not allow the presence of a camera. Film maker Josh Honig summarizes all these qualities by describing interviews as seeking "'the common wisdom' in normal nonanalytical people -- the simple truth" (Zheutlin 1988:236). Jon Else, who made The Day after Trinity, adds "We sought out people, not for their views but for their credibility as characters, their storytelling charm and their depth of knowledge. I preinterviewed about seventy-five people and filmed sixteen." (Ibid.)

Within all these parameters, interviews differ structurally from actuality footage in that they are initiated by the film/videomakers. While so-called actualities are affected by the filming process, interviews stand out as events carried out solely for the documentary. And, like actuality footage, they may be edited or transformed in many ways. As Bill Nichols points out in "The Voice of Documentary" (1988), while the voice of the interviewing subjects speaks from their own historical and social circumstances, the placement and selection of that interviewing voice is controlled by the overall documentary voice.

Building on the presumed but manipulated authenticity of the interview, a revisionist approach has been used to give the others voices to express themselves exemplified in the conversations of Cannibal Tours (1989) or Lorang's Way (1980; See Loizos 1992, Crawford and Turton 1992). Documentarians have even been played with interviews to expose the premises of non-fiction film itself, as in Trinh's Surname Viet, Given Name Nam (1991). However, even in this case, the creative, controlling role of the film maker dominates the voices of the subject.

Documentary subjects have little control of the interview beyond their refusal to answer questions. Once anyone signs a release form, the film maker can rearrange every word s/he utters.

In TV news, a cutaway more or less means a cut in the interview. Rouch and O'Rourke let the audience know what the question is, and portray the interview more as a dialogue. Still they do not necessarily explore the intentions of expectations of the non-film maker who participates in it. As Briggs notes, "Even though fieldworkers may define the situation as a focus on the explicit transformation of data, respondents may see the process as entertainment, pedagogy, obtaining cash income, protecting her or his neighbors from outside scrutiny, and so forth" (1986:49).

Trinh, by contrast, tells her audience point blank that all her interviews are constructed (although certain interesting sociolinguistic features are left silent, such as the difference in accent and register that divides the language of her Vietnamese interviews in Surname Viet). All still are premised on the fact that the film maker and subjects are different people and the texts play to mass audiences who need not be familiar with either. Yet these personalities may also become intertwined as documentarian Dav Davis notes:

> I often do preinterviews to select people for a film. Usually one character or speaker in the film will not represent the filmmaker exactly, but partially. A part of the truth, as I see it, when combined with many other parts, creates the whole of the film which does represent my perception of what was going on at the time, as I saw it at the time -- all of this is very subjective of course (in Zheutlin 1988:236).

Except for rare works like Emile de Antonio's In the Year of the Pig (1969) where the documentary voice constructs an argument/point of view from distinct interviews, most works that rely heavily on interviews blur the line between the filmmaker's voice and that of his interviewees. Often, they also present an apparently unexamined view of the interviewees -- even though the audience is not blind to cues of race, gender or class.

CV videos very often are less ambiguous, setting forth a shared position and hoping to convince the audience of the validity of that particular position. Furthermore, since the subjects of the CV "are' the filmmakers, the subject voice actually dominates the documentary voice. And who the subjects are is important and even known to one of the presumed audiences -- who are here the subjects themselves.

Since most community video makers have little prior knowledge of the craft, they incorporate narrative techniques learnt from consuming mass media texts, although these are likely to be formally distinct because of generally lower production values. As I noted in my ethnography of AAU production, facilitators may even feel a need to teach against these models, to open up video as a technology. Still, grassroots videographers' interviewees are friends, family, consociates with whom video-makers share a project and a life thereafter. Documentaries that are made by a about B entail relationships very different from those made by B about B (or B'). In the former, the film maker uses/gains information from the object; in the latter, the subject makes statements about herself or a community in which she participates. Textually, these interviews share formal similarities, but the former documentary entails more explorations, with little control by the object, while the latter may turn out to be auto-biography or a self-promoting exposition. I do not want to attribute any idyllic quality to community videos which may incorporate power struggles within organizations as well as becoming visual info-mercials. Yet this social difference reshapes textual devices.

Formally, CV interviews rarely challenge the dominant non-fiction forms with which CV workers are familiar, as in TV newscasts. Yet their intertexts may be utterly different. What does this mean? First, the subjects and organizations are not those of mainstream media. Given the processes of organizational selection under which Scribe operates as well as the dynamics of the organizations themselves, many

of the CV subjects who are interviewed and the words that they utter are "marginal." Their visual presence, their viewpoints and even their manner of expression lack the polish of a commentator-pundit. Neither do they adopt the breathless urgency of an on-the-spot witness either. The image of a calm, collected young Hispanic woman, perhaps with her children beside her in her living room, struggling to express herself about housing equity in heavily accented English is neither McNeil-Lehrer nor "Yeah we saw the whole thing" but a more challenging witness from outside these frameworks, demanding her hearing.

Alex Juhasz echoes this point in her work on AIDS videos, as she analyzes the importance of recognizing different levels of mimesis (1995:75-112). While mainstream media record and present a particular reality -- most of the time one which is constructed as "natural" or "to be taken for granted" -- AIDS videos insist on a different reality that challenges this hegemonic "nature." CV texts, like activist AIDS videos, often use traditional realist forms to present contents that challenge the assumptions and practices of mainstream media.[6]

In the AAU tape, for example, an Asian-American youth recalls how he and his friends were harassed by the police one night on their way home: "'Put your hands on the wall, you mother-fucker!' We put our hands up on the wall without hesitation; like, we know the routine but they're still cussing at us." The speaker violates speech "norms" for documentary, even though (significantly) he is repeating the speech of a civil servant. Police harassment on Asian-Americans and anti-Asian

---

6. Of course there are documentaries that interview "ordinary" people in a more respectful fashion, from Chronicle of a Summer (1960) and Harlan County, USA (1976) to recent works like B & S Brother's Keeper (1992) and the disturbing Paradise Lost: The Story of the Robin Hood Hills Child Murders (1996) or Vachani's documentary about a transnational maid, When Mother comes Home for Christmas (1996). But these are still seen by small audiences in comparison to televised documentaries. Moreover, the distance between speakers raises disturbing questions -- in Paradise Lost the vengeful testimonies of the parents of murdered children sometimes evoke feelings quite different from what one would expect their intent to be, and many quite intimate moments force us to ask "why would they let this be filmed at all?"

racism directed against poor Asian-Americans also has received scant coverage in major media enamored of the myth of the model minority. Nor are oppositional voices usually presented except as response to an authoritative voice or as fodder for another analyst or broadcaster. Here, the combination of a new subject and an interviewee recognized for the truth of his experience and reflection change the speech act's meaning. Repetition indicts authority rather than responding to it.

More importantly, within CV interviews as well as through the juxtaposition of these interviews with the models from which videographers may well have learned, it is apparent that not all interviews are the same in terms of a range of seemingly minor features which I have already evoked. Both technical features such as framing, camera movement, background, eye contact and the personal features of the interviewee -- who the subjects are, their language and or dialect, their articulateness, their clothes, postures, their comfort with the camera or formality, even their identification on the screen -- influence our reading. Talking heads are more than voices.

The most common form of mass media interview actually controls for these features, creating a false neutrality (which Trinh, for example, comes close to parodying in Surname Viet). Reporters, selected for "average beauty" interview public figure whether in a formal studio setting or in some other place of neutral power -- a briefing room, a library, an office, etc. The background conveys the status and image management of the person interviewed: one thinks of the flags, busts of past presidents and pictures of family which accompany White House "chats." The reporter and the subject generally face each other, looking at each other rather than the camera, although this may be diluted in the frenzy of a press briefing or related interrogational event. Otherwise, both have equal mikes, both are well groomed and both are evenly framed by either a fixed camera or alternating cuts. Famous people are generally expected to speak "unaccented" standard English

(Southernisms may be permitted although they also may be ridiculed) or to be translated in such terms. And they, as well as readers, expect to be presented as articulate -- one recalls the scandal of Ted Kennedy's famous 60 Minutes interview in which failure to clean up his prose was almost labeled a dirty campaign trick. Famous people can also be interviewed in movement, where trajectories and urgency redefine their celebrity -- leaving a White House briefing or an award ceremony, observing a disaster, etc.

These contrast with "color" exterior interviews which ask the "man in the street" for comment (even if this form was already parodied by Steve Allen in 1950s television). Here, clothes are more casual (this should not seem an anticipated event), words convey surprise or inarticulate stumbling toward a response and people may be identified by impersonal features -- "Peter Sanchez, Devon" or "Agnes Cheung, Doctor." These interviews underscore spontaneity through the use of hand-held cameras and shotgun microphones, with gaze shifting between the reporter and the camera, although in an MTV age, many subjects prove more interactive and comfortable with the moving camera. In another paradigm of interview/context (especially relevant for the Woodrock and AAU videos) teen chic, fluid posture and parody may add other framing features which nonetheless add up to a "typical teenager." These types of mass media interviews could be exemplified by a Barbara Walters interview (formal), the questions fielded by Johnnie Cochrane outside the OJ Simpson hearing (moving celebrity), local news interviews about sports or politics (man on the Street) and MTV pseudo-surveys. All are known to CV filmmakers and are reinforced by images of media action like Murphy Brown (both Murphy's formal profiles and the populist techniques of Frank and Corky).

Obviously, then, CV videographers like other audiences can easily identify the different styles of interviews and interpret different impressions of the subject and content. Similarly, an MTV moving camera

interview with Pat Robertson or Barbara Walters peering soulfully into the eyes of a drunken Manchester United fan proves incongruous because of cultural expectations as well as market forces -- Barbara Walters now costs too much to waste on local color. All interviews, therefore, provide a great deal more information than the spoken word even when they are produced so as to conceal this information or at least embed it in the background rather than the foreground. Here again Community Vision interviews comment on power relations inside the lens as well as vis-a-vis the audience in enlightening ways.

Face to Face, for example, which I presented in some detail above can be reread in terms of these devices for new information about its statements and "created" readership, the sense that is very youthful and very urban. Here, all youths on camera (as well as off) dressed in casual conformity in jeans, t-shirts, polo-shirts and sneakers. While they generally begin to talk while seated in different poses, most of the time they simply do not stay still. They move their bodies as they are being interviewed, physically interacting with the camera. Pauline, for example, when complaining about Western stereotypes of "Asian" slanted eyes moves her body forward toward the camera and uses her fingers to pull up the corners of her eyes.

The physical backgrounds of these interviews reinforce a message of movement, vitality, and casualness which, perhaps paradoxically, reinforces the authenticity of witness about the serious issues discussed. Some interviews took place in parks or on Independence Mall, sitting on the grass. Others took place indoors, standing in offices obviously in use, with computers on and papers strewn about. Framing is also fluid: the kids tilted the camera, played with reflections or shot from below. Shots are quite short: only two or three sentences long.

Many of the youths interviewed speak with heavy accents or incorrect grammar. Together with their Asian faces (and American attire) this reasserts that Americanness comes in many forms and voices.

Furthermore, single, double and group interviews are intercut -- the shorter cuts and multiple interviewees give the piece an "ensemble" feel which restates their central message: not a single Asian American culture but a heterogeneous collective, a common diversity more complicated than exterior visions whether of model minorities or youth problems. As Leap says, "I've been teased a lot. You're a black wannabe or you're a white wannabe. You know, I'm Asian. I am ASIAN, not a black wannabe or a white wannabe. This is what I am." The meanings of these very words takes on an added dimension as Leap appears on the left side of the frame and her mirroring video image is seen on the monitor to the right, a powerful statement of divided selves and identities. This was an image which emerged in group experimentation. Like others, the group felt that the form and content of the interviews conveyed their defiance, a portrait of young people who have to face odds but who are willing to even poke fun at those who oppress them.

Two other CV projects made by women's groups -- The Currency of Community (Triangle Interests) and From Victim to Survivor (WOAR) -- illustrate different yet community-based readings which emerge from interviews. Triangle Interests' interviewees are primarily working, professional women, and WOAR's interviewees are all survivors of sexual abuse. Neither of the latter two groups include any Asian-Americans or males, although both include white and African-American women. Triangle Interests' interviews all deal with lesbian community and financial security while those of WOAR stress trauma and recovery. The subject matters of both tapes are closely linked to decisions of interview presentation and cues conveyed beyond mere voices.

Triangle Interest created a "middle-class-looking" piece about a credit union for lesbians. Most of the women interviewed are middle-aged, well-groomed and attired and speak professionally, clearly and articulately without any accent. All are shown alone seated in "comfortable" indoor settings -- home, office or retreat house. One,

for example, is seated on the couch in her home with a large bookshelf behind her. Another is well-dressed, in a coordinated business suit, sitting calmly in a nice chair under a painting. They do not move around like the Asian-American youths; the fixed camera respects this stability. At the retreat, women form a more casual group, but the interviewee is seated in a chair rather than on the ground.

The content of the interviews covers many definitions of lesbian community and how financial institutions fail to protect lesbians like heterosexual couples and families. The tape wants to introduce the audience to their lesbian credit union as a participatory community. Their issues of credit unions, mortgages, and providing for loved ones are given the same aura of stability as the financial institutions (which might actually appear in serious mass-media interviews); this "is" MacNeil-Lehrer in a new guise. The complete interview is framed to reinforce this stability. Tilted angles, rapid cuts, and slouching respondents would be jarring here where they prove apt for Face to Face.

The WOAR interviewees, again interviewed separately, appear with little background information at all. All interviews are done indoors with tight head shots, made even tighter by a color frame around the edge. Their English is also relatively unmarked as they tell stories which they have obviously thought about a great deal. By technically subtracting the additional information conveyed in the interviews of other projects, the video forces the audience to focus on the face and the story as a personal testimony. The lack of noise of any kind (again, the opposite of Face to Face's fidgety sound), reinforces a sense of personal, intimate space which "fits" the nature of the stories of sexual abuse which are being shared.

Donnamarie reflected on this with regard to her work at WOAR:

> the intent of that video is to produce something that can be used for educational and to some extent getting word out to the public about WOAR services. The bigger purpose was to have a tool to raise awareness within the educational settings, so there will be some dialogue so that people will not just walk away. It was really developed to be very emotionally charged and hard-hitting,

> and not to skirt around the issues, but really dealt into the experience of surviving from and healing from sexual assaults, to a message of hope within it as well."

To her, this purpose was clearly linked to formal choices vis-a-vis interview framing as well as subjects:"The images were very tight head shots, in-your-face, kind of you-can't-run-from-the issue and at the same time, it is appealing and inspiring."

These tapes, like others in the CV corpus, use distinctive meanings of interviews quite successfully and inventively. Words convey information to reinforce their message, but people, sound, background, form and oppositional knowledge do so as well. The tapes are crafted in a way so as to mesh form and content; every single element of the text may convey multiple convictions within the argument. While CV videos rely heavily on words, the words are packaged in ways that develop the agenda. As such they underscore the non-neutrality or hidden agenda in more objective forms of non-fiction video even when, as in Triangle Interest, they may copy them to evoke their "stability."[7]

From an ethnographic perspective, we can read more about CV interviews than a casual observer might bring to these or to more mainstream and public documentaries. But this reading also points to complexities of the interview form beyond grassroots documentary: elements of class, for example, are hidden by the apparently neutral diction, clothes and settings of official interviews (or, alternatively, marked without comment in works like Paradise Lost (1996) or even Harlan County, USA (1976) which at least takes class struggle as a central focus) With this discussion, we also can reconsider the polysemy of documentary text in terms of another element that often attempts to

---

7. There are also incongruous choices among the videos as well. In Women Housing Women, for example, many viewers have commented on the differences in appearance, style and articulateness between the white middle class organizers of the group and the women of color for whom it was founded who have been drawn in as participants. Obviously, it is not inaccurate to show that some are slim and blonde and others are larger women of color, but these images convey meanings of cultural capital differences that challenge the text's (and organization's) proclaimed unity of purpose.

guide a reading of the finished work: narration.

Narration and Community Structure

Another formal element which CV projects share with many other documentaries is the role of narration and the narrator. The image of omniscient voice-over proves powerful in the common perception and construction of documentary. Josh Honig, co-director of Men's Lives and Song of the Canary, notes

> Our documentary ancestors used narration as an integral part of their films. It was considered an art; people such as Archibald MacLeish utilized it with great effectiveness. Our generation seems to shy away from it. It is more mysterious and artful not to use it. Certainly the mass audience is used to it and accepts it all the time on TV documentaries. They, in fact, feel comfortable with it, to be guided along through the film, so to speak. If you have a strong storyline, and don't need it, why use it? But if you want to get across information and be analytical, it can be both effective and unobtrusive in the feel of the film -- it can, in fact, enhance it.
>
> On both films, we tried to avoid it, but in the cutting realized it was too complicated to tell the story without it. I like to think it was because the films were so complex. (In Zheutlin 1988: 231).

While many documentarians have raised questions about the tone and voice of narration, many have also explored its possibilities, even reluctantly, as they hone the message conveyed by their film/video. The utility as well as social relations of the narrative voice becomes apparent in the alternative position espoused in simple form by Alexandra Juhasz:

> Interestingly enough, the absence of a narrator is almost a universal feature of alternative AIDS media. For alternative videomakers this becomes a realist convention in its own right. Thus tapes go to great ends to structure their arguments without the controlling, authoritative (but formally expeditious) presence of a narrator. Alternative tapes will use title cards to express information which is unclear from the footage alone .... sometimes the maker will picture herself, when necessary, to explain what the tape is about .... A most common structural stand-in for the narrator is a video organized around one well-spoken interviewee who articulates the transitions and themes of the tape through carefully and thematically edited but unscripted talking-head interviews .... It is only the hybrid alternative tapes (high-end educational documentaries sponsored by wealthy nonprofit organizations which have a stake in traditional mores of authority) which use an authoritative and absent narrator (1995:94).

Even these alternatives to a narrator reverberate with CV projects.

Jon Else, by contrast, summarizes narration as an issue of content rather than a simple equation of form and power:

> I get terribly frustrated by the feeling among filmmakers, particularly on the left, that narration is, per se, a bad thing. Bad narration is a bad thing, and we grew up, for the most part, on bad narration. There are, however, as many kinds of narration as there are films, and a well-written, evocative ten seconds of narration can often do a better job than two minutes of tortured film." (Ibid).

None of the CV videos uses extensive voiceover for more than momentary staging; certainly none expects the narrator to carry the weight of the message even though imposition of a post hoc narration is a common means to deal with problems of documentary production. Indeed, nowhere in my work with WTP, PPP or AAU was the idea of a scripted narration brought up. The absence of the narrator also can be attributed to the stress of democratic structures in CV projects, both in terms of productions and of texts. Many Community Visions videomakers actually equate the narrator with an authority figure who cannot represent the people/communities that they serve. Furthermore, most facilitators, coming out of the alternative art world or academic environments also distrust the presence of a narrator in documentary works (feeding reflexive debates like Nichols and Trinh into the grassroots).

The CV works that see themselves as primarily instructional do employ limited narration, often to set the stage. In <u>Untangling the Knot</u>, for example, the tape starts with narration and blue titles on a black screen explaining the mediation process. <u>Peace at Home</u> presents a Philadelphia street scene as narration lists statistics on domestic abuse and asserts that domestic abuse is a crime for which the tape offers help, explaining how to get a protection order without the help of a lawyer. <u>New Faces of AIDS</u> also includes moments of narration that explain AIDS in Greater Philadelphia and what the organization does in helping P.W.As.

Sometimes, CV narration may also be called upon to supply historical information as in Montessori Genesis II:

> In 1976, we faced a dilemma. Our children had completed three years of a very positive experience at the Early Learning Center at a Montessori School of the Mantua community in West Philadelphia. We wanted our children to flourish intellectually and emotionally. However, we were not convinced that this would occur at our neighborhood schools. TO solve this dilemma, we created our own school, Montessori Genesis II. The enrollment has increased from 16 to over 75, aged from three to ten. The school is still located in Mantua.

The visual images accompanying this narrative includes shots of the neighborhood, children at school and parents bringing children to school. It also produces a certain disjunction: everyone on the tape is African-American although this is not mentioned in the voiceover. This narration locates the school physically and distinguishes it from public school systems. By stating that their children would not be well-served by Philadelphia Public Schools the videographers have covered the major issue in the justification of a private low-cost Montessori School before the central presentation of activities actually begins, before the community takes center stage.

In CV works, then, as in Juhasz' AIDS videos, narration is used to present factual information but not to shape the text as a whole. It is obviously not neutral -- WTP's statements are presented as powerful and dispassionate facts -- but it does not claim authority over the rest of the piece in the way the guiding voice acts in A & E biography or an Encyclopedia Britannica film. Narration introduces an organization or a problem but it does not control the argument or the tape: there NO first person narration of this kind in any of the tapes. Since these are works "done by the community" a single authoritative narrator voice would defeat the purpose and image of joint participation.

In lieu of voiceover narration, some CV works do use titles to convey information. One might argue that titles appear even more "factual" and "objective" than human voices but these, too, function differently from a master narration. In From Victims to Survivors, for

example, less than ten per cent of the tape is taken up by titles which provide an evocative structure of colors and associations. Five sets of different color titles introduce talking heads framed by that same color: purple for TELLING SECRETS; blue, for FINDING WORDS; magenta, for VOICING ANGER and green for HEALING PAINS and MOVING ON. These unique vivid titles bring in a range of cultural and emotional responses while structuring the tape -- inviting rather than telling.

Other titles also serve to convey information. In the WOAR tape organizational services are highlighted by titles and minimal black and white footage separating sections --i.e. "WOAR has a 24-hour hot line is put against a shot of the back of someone answering the phone with the audio intrusion of a ringing phone. Another WOAR service title quarters the screen. The upper left-hand box states that "WOAR supports survivors in the Emergency room" next to a shot, discreetly framed from behind, of two women walking in a hospital corridor in the upper right hand corner. In a lower frame, a black and white picture of an empty chair at the witness stand is put next to the title, "and in the court." The third title says WOAR educates the community, visually reinforced by a blackboard with domestic abuse scrawled across it. Finally, a scene of counseling underscores that "WOAR provides individual and group counseling." These titles together give a sense of the range of services and a reinforcement of female community, intimacy and concern.

These textual elements are important because they show recurrent tools through which community groups learn to express themselves in video which allow us to understand the important links among organization, production, text and audience. They are not generally made explicit: community video does not generally include a professional commitment to formal reflection. Few community video producers are interested in exploring the power dynamics of particular documentary forms. Their product is ultimately bound to the general health of their network or organization rather than to a career in videography.

But the community participants well recognize that they control their own representation. Despite limited formal distribution, the video provides them with a channel in which they can voice their opinion in their own way. As such, these videos cast into relief the other choices made by documentaries which may speak, on the right or the left, for community or society without necessarily speaking from or within it.

Content, Symbolism and the Creation of Authenticity

As I suggested earlier, the issues of content within CV texts are, on the whole, less interesting than form. This is a logical extension of the process of selection, which chooses organizations which already have at least vague goals for what they want to say, who then must explore the potential of the video text. Many central elements of content, therefore, already have been discussed in terms of the organizational participation that Scribe has solicited over the years. The videos tend to deal with those who are considered "marginal," on the basis of race, class, physical ability, gender and sexuality. The speakers as well as events portrayed emphasize these themes of community or organizational self-definition. Their concerns are those associated with marginal communities -- discrimination, rights to housing, medical care and work and a somewhat more spiritual sense of redemption and reconciliation. In scripting or production, Scribe brings its concerns with community more into focus -- as I discussed with regard to gender representation on the WTP team as well as in the resultant video.

Similarly, most of the videos speak "about" the organizations since that is what Scribe has set up the CV program to encourage. New Faces of AIDS exemplifies this reproduction of organization as theme. There is some variation between an emphasis on programs (Hispanic Family Center, Women Housing Women, etc) and organizations themselves (Anna Crasis), which reflect differences between outward-oriented, client-service organizations and inward-oriented or self-sufficient groups. Face to Face, in which the organization delegated the video to a

subgroup built around the training itself, remains an exception.

Yet this does not mean that content issues should be neglected; in the example videos with which I began this chapter, it was necessary to explain issues of both content and form in order to bring out the messages these videos conveyed. And some elements might well be classified as both form and content -- if interviewees are, after all, posed in informal settings in casual clothes or if interviews are all Asian-American teenagers, this is a choice of content as well as a commentary on the interview.

Moreover, more general issues of content pervade all CV projects. These include a symbolic representation of place and a vocabulary of community embodied in recurrent images of multiple films, such as the use of family portraits or life cycle events. These are not tricks of the trade that Scribe passes on so much as parts of a much wider set of images of community, as much a part of mass media as home snapshots, which are incorporated into texts.

Another area which deserves mention in these videos is that of key scenarios (Ortner 1976) which order data. Most often, these videos deal with characters meeting problems, struggles and resolution through community which is not so far away from the narrative structure of Classical Hollywood Cinema. Unlike many of the most powerful documentaries of the non-fiction canon -- from Nanook of the North (1922) and Berlin: Symphony of a City (1927) through Titicut Follies (1968), Surname Viet, Given Name Nam (1992), and Gate of Heavenly Peace (1994) Community Visions is a cinema of happy endings, of organizations that work.

Finally, content and form merge in the CV texts' response to the fundamental question of the documentary which was posed earlier in this chapter in the words of Bill Nichols, namely, negotiating "the compact we strike between the text and the historical referent." If these videos "feel real," in any examination of the relationship of texts and

grassroots community, we must try to understand that empathetic feeling.

Place and People

Throughout all the videos, symbolic statements include important representations of place, both Philadelphia and neighborhood. Some videos focus on a particular locale like that aimed at saving the John Coltrane home or bringing people to the Hispanic Family Center or WTP. Nexus and Jewish Community Center Senior Reading project videos also focus on activities that take place in particular centers while Manos Unidas shows many scenes of the neighborhood in which it works. Face to Face, by comparison, establishes the wider locations of Asian-Americans in Philadelphia through its movement through many neighborhoods and events. In most tapes, street scenes of Philadelphia are used to ground the video in a space, since most are very localized organizations. Indeed, one might suggest that this localization is intrinsic to the definition of community by organization as well as an opposition between local identity and global or mass media consumption.

Another organizational feature frequently translated into content is the use of group shots, photographic images of "community" which I have described for AAU. In the CO-MAR tape, for example, shots of people putting their hands together in front of the organization building are put at the end of the tape with the lyric " We're all in it together." Anna Crasis interviews alternate with visions of the group as a choir and a social group in various places of the tape. The Good Shepherd tape, perhaps the most metaphoric of all, shows people linked together by the formation and disentanglement of a 20-person human knot. Collectivity is a common goal in CV projects and texts illustrate it to underscore their verbal arguments. In contrast, individual differences within the community are seldom presented in CV projects, however present they may be in production.

Other subgroups may be important features of the texts, conveying messages of solidarity. While Triangle Interest tends toward serious single interviews, as noted earlier, the image of a Black and White woman kissing early in the tape also identifies the group as a lesbian organization (and underscores an interracial element much less apparent in the rest of the tape). Women Housing Women and Reconstruction, among other tapes, show group meetings where decisions are made.

Families are also important elements in many tapes. The housing tapes frequently pose families in their new homes -- the Manos Unidas shows the old and new home and interviews individual members of the family about what they like best, whether kitchen or bedroom. In the Reconstruction tape, an African-American parolee says that "I live my life for my kids, you know, for my daughters .... I live my life for them. As far as going to jail, I don't see it." This calm reflection is hardly the common representation of black, second-time violent offenders.[8] The absence of family may also be telling, as in the AAU decision that working with parents on tape would be too personal and too stressful. Both of the youth films, nonetheless, have frequent images of peer group solidarity.

Finally, life cycle rituals, events where people and place converge in celebration, tend to stress this idea of community as well, as Clifford Geertz (1975) and Victor Turner (1967) have noted. WTP, for example, includes both a birthday party and a wedding -- life affirmations in contrast to the offstage deaths most commonly associated with AIDS. The Manos Unidas video includes a meal in a new kitchen and a baseball game on a newly reclaimed lot. Anna Crusis' concerts and

---

8. Again, this provides an interesting counterpoint to the tender paternalism of white fathers toward their daughters in 1996 Hollywood productions (Dead Man Walking (1996, The Rock(1996) and even the documentary exposition of Paradise Lost where the vignettes of convicted murderer Damien Echols with his newborn child also shift us emotionally towards a belief in his innocence. By contrast, Samuel Jackson's character in a Time to Kill (1996) is "driven insane" by his daughter's rape and points out to the white jurors that they would feel the same thing in his place.

Face to Face's family parties continue these themes. The CO-MHAR tape, finally, celebrates going to a dance as a life passage previously denied to its clients. By bringing individuals together physically, these videos also provides a celebration on which the video can end happily.

Perhaps none of these elements are surprising; certainly, as I have noted, many coincide with Hollywood images of togetherness and happiness. This does not make them less real as events or metaphors, but it underscores the multiple and interlocking readings which we must bring to these texts, especially as we imagine them through the eyes of an organizational community who participated in these parties, games or dances -- or an imagined community which might join them in the future in ways completely different from how spectators watch and feel about the wedding scene of The Sound of Music (1965) or Rick's cafe crowd singing the Marseillaise in Casablanca (1943).

Heroes and Redemption: Key Scenarios

Videos, like studio films, can also be read in terms of key scenarios. Often this is a very "American" story of overcoming the odds, as familiar from historical myths (Abraham Lincoln) and Hollywood canons. Again, Scribe has selected organizations for the problems they are confronting so it is not surprising to see this struggle become a central focus of the tape. This becomes embodied, for instance, in the grueling struggles even to appear as witnesses that characterizes Bodywork's depiction of what handicapped artists can do. The idea that community is a source of strength to overcome hardship -- a very American myth -- underpins the narrative of many videos and brings them back to the organization. In WTP, when people talk of finding family, of happiness in the center, they are echoing the American Dream amid the nightmares of AIDS. This is not only a video by community but a video about community and individual discovery of and participation in it.

While individuals in CV may be hailed as heros they do not take on

the protagonism of Hollywood or even of many documentaries. First there generally are many of them in each video; second, they are not individuals who live outside of social, political, or class contexts but illustrations which the video brings to life. Oftentimes, individuals in CV videos are in their particular predicament not because of their own fault, but through mistakes that society has made, be it society's neglect of the poor, or its prejudices about gender, ethnicity or age. In such cases, though, it is clear that these are not devices to cloak their star quality, like Tom Hanks as a PWA in Philadelphia.

Individuals, then, become able to cope with adversities through their relationship to an organization and its campaigns and support. Hence, even with the protagonists living happily ever after, we must distinguish CV videos from Classical Hollywood Cinema and television (including the personalization of reportage, as in the Presidential campaigns). There the hero, oftentimes he rather than she, is victimized, but through his own initiatives and efforts, either redeems himself or gets himself out of the difficult situation. Dr. Richard Kimbell in The Fugitive (1993), without help from anyone or any organization, rescues himself from incredible danger, finds the murderer of his wife and clears his name. By contrast, Varee is HIV-Positive, but it is not her fault; she overcomes the stigma of the disease, not only because she is strong, but also because she is involved with We the People. Or a family had to leave their home because of crime and decay, but they are too poor to buy a house. Through Manos Unidas, they are able to make a new home for themselves. This also differs from the non-fiction story of The Thin Blue Line (1987) or the reflexive heroism of Roger and Me (1989) or Sherman's March (1985).

Except for the two youth-made videos that do not mention the organizations to which they are attached, most video stress that it is (only?) through an organization or a community of people that individuals who participate in them gain their rights to basic needs,

like shelter, education, mental health care, freedom from all kinds of prejudices, and harassment. Even the youths in To School or Not to School can be perceived to gain their strength though a larger community of youths. Likewise, the Asian-American youths are able to face prejudice because there is a community of people who share their predicament who are fighting for their rights together.

Struggle, finally, also presumes an enemy. This sometimes is presented as the economic conditions of neighborhood or the spread of AIDS (while noting how little has been done to deal with PWAS). Nonetheless, the organizations chosen by Scribe are NGOS who have often emerged in response to the failure of mainstream remedies; no banks, or government offices have applied for the CV project nor would they be selected.[9] Women Housing Women, in fact, begins with a brief reenactment of an older white, male banker turning down the women's request for a loan. Government agencies are also frequent enemies even in complex problems: First Things First, from the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, so vehemently attacked government policies in the early 1990s that its members find the video dated by subsequent changes. Woodrock demanded more responsiveness of the School Board, and Face to Face tackles police harassment. The identification of such powerful antagonists also reaffirms the real world connections and righteous actions of the community. This leads us back, in turn to the central issues of authenticity.

The Symbolism of the Real

The content elements listed above, like those developed in my introductory presentations are both symbolic and true features of texts. That is, families or weddings involve real people events but also are

---

9. One surprising omission is that of churches, which have often been dynamic protagonists in struggles of African-American and ethnic communities. This was brought out in a conversation with Louis Massiah, who has now considered soliciting them for future rounds (which may be represented in the choice of the St. Gabriel's After School program).

used to convey even wider meanings about the construction of community. In this, we see the greatest tension of the community video text: how does it shape a "truth" in such a way that it feels "real?" This complex theme can be introduced by looking at CV projects in which fiction is actually used.

Out of the twenty works analyzed, three -- Peace at Home, Untangling the Knot, and Herstory -- construct a number of scenes to tell their story, while To School or Not to School, and Women Housing Women both have one scene of fictional material. In many ways, the first three tapes are also among the most instructional. Peace at Home, for example, teaches the audience how to obtain a restraining order from domestic abuse while Untangling the Knot shows the audience what is mediation and what the process is like.

These tapes include interviews with survivors of domestic abuse and people in the street about conflict. Yet the main bodies of the videos entail reenactments. Peace at Home shows a simulated domestic abuse workshop where the instructor shows a videotape of how to get a restraining order to the participants, a re-enactment within a re-enactment. Good Shepherd scripted a reenactment of a conflict and its final resolution with the help of a mediation session.

For these producers, re-enactment was used because of the problem of confidentiality. Victims of domestic abuse and parties in conflict seeking mediation all have rights to privacy. Hence, the use of fiction identifies the superiority but inaccessibility of the "real" -- and these tapes clearly identify the fictional elements as such, by contrast to reality interviews. Moreover, this choice grew from a particular sense of audience and use -- to situate these tapes as instructional tools, which require a step by step explication of the processes, reenactment become a logical alternative.

Examples of re-enactment in other tapes include situations where actuality footage is hard to obtain, like a drug sale on the street, or

the bank rejection. The reenactments are done in Classical Hollywood Cinema style with all its conventions of realism, including continuity editing, a linear construction, and a narrative flow with a distinct beginning and an end, albeit with lower production value. Nonetheless, they are clearly different from the backgrounds, editing and tone of other portions of the tape. Hence to authenticate these fictional footage, both tapes put in interviews with "real" people to highlight the problems that these processes address and would help solve. This recognition once again that "real is better" may explain why CV videos do not choose to present themselves as purely fictional works.

But why are the Women against Abuse speakers so real? It seems facile to say because they are. Yet all the cues that draw attention to community organization and action also substantiate the real presence of participants. Moreover, as CV uses and transforms the conventions of the documentary, the videos claim their place within a heritage of trust -- we do not expect Oprah Winfrey to interview John F. Kennedy, Jr. look-alikes (at least, not without identifying the show as such). The old parody of advertisements -- "I am not a doctor, I just play one on TV" also evokes a different trust we give to non-fiction genres.

Nichols' negotiation might be expanded by Solanas and Getino, who in their discussion of the aesthetics of imperfectness, identify certain formal features (shaky camera, blurred focus stressing the presence of the camera) and a general lack of seamlessness with guerilla film and resistance to Hollywood. The same kind of low production values and non-professional look persists in all CV products, with evidence of focusing in action (from blurry to sharp on a person in the beginning of a sound bit), fish pole and microphones creeping into the frame, wrong color temperature, tilted, uneven angle, or a road sign blocking the focus of attention. These traces of amateurism could have been cut in editing, but somehow they are linked to process and to a reality beyond the text. It may mean that they did not have the resources to reshoot, or that the

contents that the imperfect tape captured were too good, or that making a perfect picture would compromise a certain spontaneous quality of the tape. An examination of the production context and audience reaction sheds more light on how this cinema of imperfection works in community video, but the very sense that we ask these questions focusses on how these are not anonymous providers of information and entertainment.

Again, while the CV producers are not reading Marxist film criticism or Frankfurt School essays, I think that this "homemade" quality is important in that it serves to distinguish the video from a mass-produced text, documentary or fictional. These features of the text convey that these videos are not after all actors reading lines or even Hollywood directors working out community service sentences. They are not hegemonic claims of policy or even the natural order of CHC. Instead, they are "authentic", a witness and an oppositional presence, in both form and content.

Community Visions texts thus ultimately construct a complex symbolism of reality which also constitutes/reaffirms the genre. Community Videos should not be "glossy" but "real." Indeed, the early analysis of Getino and Solanas must be expanded to realize how guerilla techniques and imperfection have been mainstreamed. Certainly, as I have noted a documentary like the Panama Deception (1994) emphasizes its political resistance by the grainy, rough footage which underscores the process of getting at the truth. However, when such movement also becomes part of ER or Cops the political claims are altered, as are our relations to documentary or pseudo-documentary realities. People do not confuse ER with news, but Cops may be a more ambiguous intertext. In CV, nonetheless, both content and organizations outside the text, as sponsors, producers and readers remain intrinsically linked to interpretation. These videos "seem" real because they "are."

The ritualization of the imperfect real in form, in turn, relates to the symbolization of self. The people in the tape say " We are

people with disabilities or with problems " who represent others in a group or a universe of problems. These people become extremely conscious of their "responsibilities," their weight as symbols. At the same time, characters have been chosen to illustrate or support arguments. This is evident in the dilemma of WTP in its over-inclusion of women and people of color as main, "knowable" figures. As Joe noted, the purpose of the video was to be inclusive and to move away from an image of AIDS as a gay (white) male disease. Yet to do so, race, women and drugs may have been overly stressed.

While The New Faces of Aids has only included positive voices and success stories, To School or not to School and Face to Face, which are not "about" their respective organizations, allow space for more open discussion. Obviously defeats, death and suffering come through the doors of WTP, Woodrock, and WOAR. After all, these organizations exist to address social ills of one kind or another. But videos like The New Faces of Aids serve as a representation of the group as a future/goal-oriented community, one not interested in emphasizing the negative aspect of AIDS. All the tapes are very sympathetic to their constituents whose opinions are rarely valued by the mainstream media.

Having worked with and interviewed many CV participants, I would not claim this symbolic construction of "authenticity" and "self" to be an explicit argument in their intentions, execution or discussion of their texts. Yet as these videos have emerged, shot by shot, group by group, edit by edit and video by video, each project has made decisions about what is "right" -- when the video says what they want to say in the way they want it to look. Face to Face does not say the same thing or look the same way as the products of WOAR, Anna Crasis or We the People. Yet in so far as all groups are relatively satisfied with the texts they have negotiated their own documentary presence from which I can derive these more general theories.

Conclusions: Texts and Contexts

The overviews as well as individual textual studies of this chapter only illustrate the complexities of texts as a focus within the larger cultural studies model of community productions, texts and distributions/readings which I am using here. In fact, one might wish to glance at those texts which never emerged (like PPP) to underscore the unity of these processes. Another group wanted a documentary so tightly scripted (to the point of needing mass recruitment of actors) that Scribe felt it to be an auteur project rather than a community based one. Here, the director in charge later produced a text which differed significantly in controlling voice and stereotypes of characters which actually struck me as offensive rather than responsive.

In all these cases, as in the completed video texts I have concentrated on, given the potential and realized identity of producer and subject, the meaning of the text itself is negotiated from the first moment of proposal through the final and changing moments of distribution. This recognition invokes relations which completely challenge the formal and intertextual meanings of community video itself within a wider range of documentaries. Perhaps, in fact, they offer a way in which we might reevaluate other genres of non-fiction films, following, for example, Wilton Martinez' observations that audience for ethnographic films sometimes remember the distance that separates them from "the Other" much more than the anthropological intention of showing respect to cultural wholes (1992).

Yet, paradoxically, in reading CV videos as texts, I bring to them an insider's and an outsider's knowledge of compromises (when it was too cold to reshoot exteriors) as well as surprises --the ways in which weddings and deaths were real community events which changed the shape of the video. This reads production into the text in a manner which would agonize film or literary critics, yet this is precisely the element of community formation as ritual which is most central to the text in my argument. It is also one which I will pursue in the next

chapter as I ask how text is read and incorporated into community.

CHAPTER V: AUDIENCES AND USERS

-- REPRODUCING COMMUNITY THROUGH VIDEO

> Boyle goes on to talk about the three components of video activism as they have coalesced in the nineties: 'To be a tool, a weapon and a witness' (Boyle 78). These three categories are as an examination of the literature and research produced in relation to video reveals very little with regard to empowerment as a process. Terms like democratization and control by the community appear over and over again, but these are assumed from within the activities of portable video use. There is very little about audience or the ways video images work as devices of communication, if at all, or questions that relate representational issues to empowerment, etc."
>
> Burnett, Cultures of Vision (1994):272-273

Many critics of film and other media have pronounced the death of a single reading of the text. In so doing, some have paid lip service to audience studies, or at least come to include a concept of the audience within more holistic studies of the text. Nonetheless, in media and cinema studies, texts have maintained a privileged analytic position, which any glance at current journals reaffirms.

In this chapter, however, I grapple with two very basic processes of communication: (1) no text takes on meaning unless it is read, and (2) text is presented and read in different contexts by different readers which influence the reception of text. Hence I will investigate how the reading and use of texts in Community Vision videos can help us not just to understand the whole CV process, but also to explore the reframing of relationships among production, text, audience and uses in general questions of media studies.

In order to set up the differences between my project and other current cinematic analyses, I first provide a brief overview of contemporary paradigms of media readership, building on the longer history in the introduction. Here, I suggest how cultural studies/ethnographic approaches to audience can inform our understanding of grassroots video with its smaller scale and closed-circuit distribution. I also explore the polysemic (but not completely open) meanings of texts and intertexts which greatly influence reading strategies as they are differentiated in terms of the audience's knowledge of a particular environment and subject.

After reviewing theories, I turn to the more concrete analysis of CV and readership in practice. As in previous chapters, I begin with a general overview, examining how "imagined audiences" for "grassroots videos" are constructed by producers/video makers and by funders. I balance these visions of audience from the standpoint production (as in the flow chart in Chapter I) with a concrete examination of text and audiences, including both intertextuality and readings from "unintended" albeit not mass audiences which shed light on shared meanings. Through these, I argue that the presumed identity of producers, text, and audience changes the ways in which we must read spectatorship and even the frameworks of our analysis.

Hence I move to the ethnography of use, which reframes audience studies in terms of both viewing and context which incorporate processes of community organization itself. To develop this, I begin with data on actual use -- and abandonment -- with regard to the CV products so far produced. On this basis, I present more detailed participant observation data surrounding two CV works -- CO-MHAR's We are all in This Together and Good Shepherd's Untangling the Knot. These analyses affirm the importance of going beyond simple paradigms of an audience's search for meaning or empathy as well as the additional complexities such an in situ reading opens up for us.

I conclude the chapter by returning to the issues that Burnett raises in the initial quotation which frames this chapter. From my readings on ethnographic, documentary and community-based productions, I can agree with his judgment that "there is very little about audience or the ways video images work as devices of communication, if at all, or questions that relate representational issues to empowerment." Having examined these themes in the CV case, it is important to return to issues of technology, community and empowerment, and the relationship between community and video literacy which will lead to my more general conclusions in the final chapter.

The Question of Audience

Graeme Turner, summarizing John Hartley's article "Invisible Fictions: Television Audience, Paedocracy, Pleasure," underscores Hartley's assertion that the category of audience is an invention. Audiences do not constitute social groups as scholars often think of them; an audience watches ER at 10 o'clock Thursday, but each spectator may also be a reader, a commuter, and a QVC viewer. She may also be a knitter or a parent playing with a child or someone who walks out during commercials. Some may be taping the show for an academic analysis that night while others epitomize Benjamin's distracted spectators of mass culture: "an examiner but an absent-minded one" (1955:241).

Moreover, audience members practice these many different roles without ever necessarily intersecting as a collective (even in the sense of a single movie theater showing). While groups may form around media events -- Trekkies and their conventions, or Dynasty or Melrose Place parties, there is rarely a presumption that this is a primary social identity or one that includes all viewers and viewings. For Hartley, instead, three major bodies create the audience: "the critical institutions (academics, journalists, and pressure groups), the television industry (networks, stations, producers), and the regulatory bodies within the political/legal system" (Turner 1990:162). In working with community video, we must also understand that these parameters are modified as well by looking at other institutional/ organizational forces. Critical, mass media and regulatory conerns become marginal as community projects create special audiences and events both conceptually and socially in ways which reflect the structure of the video-making organization itself. These organizations may use the videos to evoke preferred, negotiated or oppositional readings which all differ from mass media texts and contexts. All the while we must be aware of the complexities and pitfalls of studying readership on any scale as a collective event, listening to voices and understanding

actions which constitute reception.

Such a contextual ethnographic approach can be exemplified by scholars who have raised questions of gender in relation to film and media. Diedre Pribram's 1988 collection, Female Spectators , for example, brought together many theories of readership. These range from the reinterpretation of psychoanalytic models which look for a more abstract spectator to essayists like Jacqueline Bobo and Black film-maker Alile Larkin who see relations of production and audience shaped by shared experiences of race, class and gender. As Larkin writes,

> As independent Black women film-makers, we actively create new definitions of ourselves within every genre, redefining damaging stereotypes. As we examine the films of Black women we find rooted and aware characters who live in the real world. We create with an understanding that our humanity is not a given in this society. A primary struggle in our work is to recapture our humanity.
> And so it is a vicious circle. We hope that with our films we can help create a new world by speaking in our own voice and defining ourselves. We hope to do this one film at a time, one screening at a time, to change minds, widen perspective and destroy the fear of difference (172).

Here, what is significant is how Larkin weighs overlapping roles shared by people which cross "through" the text as it were -- the unity of Black women as producers and readers which adds another dimension to expectations and readings of a text. Even so, Larkin's audiences often represent vague, politicized demands apart from her own readings.

Bobo, sorting out the various critical debates over The Color Purple which divided academics and popular audiences, Whites and Blacks and Black men and Black women, also interviewed Black women about their readings and responses to the film. She cites one woman's testimony:

> 'When I went to the movie, I thought, here I am. I grew up looking at Elvis Presley kissing all those white girls. I grew up listening to 'Tammy, Tammy, Tammy.' [She sings the song that Debbie Reynolds sang in the movie of the same name]. And it wasn't that I had anything projected before me on the screen to really give me something that I could grow up to be like. Or even wanted to be. Because I knew I wasn't Goldilocks, you know,and I had heard these stories all my life. So when I got to the movie, the first thing I said was, "God, this is good acting." I felt a lot of pride in my Black brothers and sisters. By the end of the movie I was totally emotionally drained... (1988:102)

Here much more than identification or interpretation is involved; reading is negotiated at first from a position of opposition moving toward one of shared community, meshing the text with society in important ways.[1]

This cultural studies approach overlaps in theory and methods with another ethnographic analysis of audience conducted by Wilton Martinez (1992), which used questionnaires, narratives and participant observation among USC students to see how they read (often unexpectedly) the messages of anthropological films. Martinez found that the audience defines itself by the social distance they construct from the subject; he asserts that students became more distrustful to people of very different cultures, like the Amazonian Yanamamo, after seeing films like The Ax Fight (1971) or Magical Death (1974). [2] Seen by the relatively untrained eyes of American college students, these carefully-crafted ethnographic studies reverberate with other images of the barbaric savages who are scantily clothed, fight all the time, and take strange drugs that produces green mucus. I will return to this as it allows us to understand intertexts in community-based and other readings.

David Morley, in his recent research, has tried to bridge diverse paradigms and definitions of audience. While recognizing the audience as active and creative, he sees that differential interpretations are linked to "the socio-economic structure of society, showing how members of different groups and classes, sharing different 'cultural codes', will interpret a given message differently, not just at the personal, idiosyncratic level, but in a way systematically related to their socio-economic position" (1992:54) More importantly, Morley sees the

---

1. This approach is also evident in the BFI collection focussed on Women Viewing Violence (Schlesinger 1992) and in Ann Gray's analysis of the use of video in the home, Video Playtime (1992). Another relevant study in this vein is Sara Dickey's work on the production, texts and reading of Tamil films in South India (1993) which ranges from the industry to the reconstruction of Tamil actors as political leaders.

2. The former portrays a ritual fight, the second the taking of drugs to communicate with the dead.

interaction between text and audience as one of reading formation which take into consideration historical conditions and institutional space. Ultimately, to understand a text, he argues that we must examine its production and consumption. Burnett's Cultures of Visions and the work of Eric Michaels's in the quite distinctive context of Australian aboriginal video and television, which I already have introduced, also embody this more complex approach to text and audience as intertwined historical, social and cultural products. I have also used other reviews of audience including Willis and Winnan (1990) and Ang (1991, 1995). Together, these provide the frame which I have mapped out for Community Visions projects.

Yet these issues are also "put in their place" by my data themselves. Early in my notes, after the completion of the WTP video, for example, I recorded this interaction:

> Karen, "I like it (the video)."
> Cindy, "Why?"
> Karen, "It's about us, everyday people."

This response, from one participant in The New Faces of Aids, made my efforts as facilitator feel worthwhile but complicated my task as an analyst of readership. Karen seems genuinely happy about the video, her video, a video made by people she trusts. Yet this was all she wanted to say about it, a recurrent problem when I ask people to elaborate on what they feel about the videos their organization has made, that they have seen. In an important sense for producers and the social meaning of the text, such assent -- "yes, that's us; that's real" is enough, but it hardly gives us the richly elaborated data to explore readership equivalent to that provided by Bobo's middle class Black women.

Bill Nichols, explaining how home movies have strong historical recognition and authenticity, once again poses a paradox of time and distance with which I must grapple in terms of defining authenticity in these cases:

Such material, often close to raw footage in its lack of

> expository or narrative structure, has clear documentary value for those of whom it offers evidence. Usually this is a family or a small circle of friends. [1] More broadly, it can be viewed as ethnographic evidence of the kind of events deemed filmworthy and the modes of self-presentation regarded as normal (for commemoration before a camera) within a given culture. But in order to take on evidentiary value, the footage must be recognized for its historical specificity. The viewer who says, 'Ah, that's me eight years ago!' has a radically different rapport with the footage that the viewer who has no inkling of who this figure in the image is (But were the viewer who only recognizes a human figure to recognize, subsequently, that this is a friend, to see not only general resemblance but and indexical bond stretching across eight years of time, the effect of discovery would be equivalent (1991 :160).

Community video's audiences are not "masses" in the first place or even as quantifiable as Martinez'classroom groups. This genre is generally a narrow-cast medium with targeted audiences; we assume that community video's audiences are of similar backgrounds and share similar intertextual frames, tending toward a generalized preferred reading in Stuart Hall's sense. Hence, audience studies done in this context offer invaluable opportunities to examine the relationship between text and society when the two share closer relationships than that between mass media products and their consumers. Yet this does not mean that audiences should be simplified. Since the producers, the text, and audience constitute the same communities, they may share the same divisions as well as the same concerns: negotiations emerge as well. Or the audiences are groups/individuals that the producer wants to win over in one way or another (and, if failing to do so, yield an oppositional reading). I will elaborate on these possibilities through the relationship of Community Vision audiences to two earlier moments in the process we have so far reviewed: production and text.

Imagined Audiences: Reading from Funders, Producers and Texts

In my earlier chapters, it has already been necessary to foreshadow the fate of some CV tapes. In the initial selection process, Scribe asks organizations to discuss their potential audience; answers, as I noted, are generally vague. This audience is somewhat more concrete in the viewpoint of Scribe and its supporting funders, whose

ideology of community as audience underpins the entire CV project. This model spurs but does not determine the audiences producers themselves imagine and how this influences the video, which I have also touched upon in previous chapters. Here, then, I begin with a rapid review of conceptual audiences which may also relate to the successful -- or failed -- creation of actual readers.

In discussing the panorama of audiences and readerships within community video, we also must recognize the values of textual studiess. Despite the intimacy of textual readings in, by and for community which I will discuss in the latter half of this chapter, completed CV texts are available for other screenings, under the professional eye of Scribe, WYBE or film festivals or in situations of classroom use from Greater Philadelphia to Hong Kong. I include brief examples of these readings especially as they highlight the concept of intertext and what is in fact shared or not shared within community groups' creations of their audiences <u>in practice.</u>

Audiences: Producers and Funders

Grassroots video "producers" manage multiple roles, corresponding to both funding and organizing/ production in Hollywood media. In both, the role of the producers as "textmakers" requires them to construct audiences as persons linked to the product; structurally, the so-called real audience, the people who eventually see the products, does not yet exist as a group sharing the experience of spectatorship when the producers start making the video. Instead, producers seek to elaborate intended audiences -- "imagined communities," to play with Benedict Anderson's idea -- by which to gauge and shape the work. Inverting social science models, producers construct texts from their vision of audiences. The process seems similar to Larkin's stance as a self-consciously political black woman filmmaker.

Unlike mass media producers, however, grassroots video producers

do not work within well-defined institutions, such as studios and Hollywood production houses. They also often take on additional roles including actors, editors and audience. Moreover, the relationship between a Hollywood producer and her audience is primarily one of the marketplace (although constructed following myriad grids of institutional and cultural constraints). The grassroots video producers in my research instead aim videos at dialogue between their organization and the potential audience: the market of the video is the relationship.

As I noted in the earlier discussion of Scribe's selection process both in relationship to organizational structures and goals and as I observed in the projects with which I worked, determining the intended audience precedes and shapes discussion of what the video is about in a much less formal fashion. In March 1996, the youths at Asian American United debated whether they should make a video about racism for a general Asian-American audience or to a non-Asian American audience. If the intended audience was to be Asian American, the tape would show the audience their experience of discrimination is not unique, and that there are ways to combat racism. If non-Asian Americans were to be the audience, the video would aim to show that all Asian-Americans are not Bruce Lee, geniuses or welfare cases, that they come from different places and cultural backgrounds, and that they are Americans who contribute to the country richness precisely because of their diversity. In the end, their video aimed more toward the latter, while trying to include other Asian-American youths as participants in the process of communicating this message. They sought to balance a knowledgeable experiential audience with an unknowing one beside them, all sharing the experience of youth.

CV producers seem to impose heavy responsibility on a participatory audience of social actors who share similar concerns. They consider their mission a failure if this intended audience does not grasp the intended message of the video, or provides an aberrant reading

of the text (much less rejecting it).[3] Indeed, the desire for this identification with the organization they represent often makes it hard to evoke an elaborated reading. They are aiming for people to say "Yes, that's what we meant" rather than saying "the jump cuts were an effective device for me in communicating the fragmentation of ethnic identity I feel in the post-modern world" or "I want to grow up and have a wedding like Willie and Varee." They seek assent, not deconstruction.

The grassroots frame also includes intentions of how producers want the work to influence the audience, or how the audience should use the work in society. Once again, though, these are not isolated points in a process: the videographers and organization conceived of uses before beginning productions and while these may evolve, they presuppose a continuing intimacy of production, text and use. This leads to interesting patterns of audience and use, as Eric Michaels points out in his work on Australia Aboriginal video practices. For example, the video The Fire Ceremony was produced for present and future generation of Australian Aboriginals, to ensure cultural reproduction for traditional oral societies. The producers -- the Warlpiri at Yuendumu in Northern Australia -- wanted to make a tape of a seldom-performed rite to ensure the reproduction of the ceremony among an imagined audience of Warlpiri who have little recollection of the ritual. Other Aboriginals constituted a further intended audiences in which cultural patterns of distribution meant the nearby Willowra community received this tape as a medium of exchange (118).

Since grassroots videos are narrow-cast media, the producers also create concrete situations in which they can meet the actual audience, trying to exert control over the effects of their work. After the Fire Ceremony was given to the Willowra, the Warlpiri found out that one

3. It is striking, for example, that the producers of Kensington Action Now's tape, which has fallen into disuse, claimed on their questionnaire that it focussed on drug abuse rather than recreation issues as I had read it. This may have accounted for some difficulties in using the text as well.

sacred object was shown which violates the law of avoidance: "Runners went out to intercept the Willowra mob and to replace their copy with one that had the offending section blanked out" (Michaels: 119). In this case, the producers indeed had control over the actual audience through the text. As I will show later in this chapter with regard to CO-MHAR and Good Shepherd, planning for events and teaching are intrinsic to "success" in using CV projects as well.

Yet these events can also be both creative and reflexive. Peace at Home, according to the organization, is never shown without someone from Women's Legal Services presen to answer questions. To School or Not to School (1993) is now used by the producers as empowerment tool for inner-city youths, the original intended audience, in face-to-face group sessions. Interaction does not focus on the problem of dropouts per se, but on what students as filmmakers and organizers can do (i.e. making this video) to deal with problems around them. Again, the producers, by witnessing a match between the intended and actual audiences, can use the video to built relationships among a larger community of producers and audiences.

The original intentions of community organizers mesh in interesting ways in production with audience envisioned by Scribe itslef and its supporters. In fact, funders of grassroots video seldom come into contact with the actual audience except as an abstract quantity. In mass media, a Hollywood producer constructs her audience as ticket buyers. These market audiences are tracked, surveyed, and their behaviors gauged, and their studied preference determine the content of the Hollywood product. The question of the producer, then, is part of funding as well as the political economy of mass media. However, different levels of concern and knowledge emerge among funders of grassroots video. On the whole, they tend to choose the projects rather than the audience -- which often exists only as a vague and shadowy public good.

Scribe Video Center Community Vision is funded partially by the John D. and Catherine MacArthur Foundation, the NEH, the William Penn Foundation and the Samuel S. Fels Fund. Among these, the stated purpose of the Penn Foundation is "[T]o improve the quality of life in the Delaware Valley." Its grant interests also include maintaining Fairmount Park, preventing teenage pregnancy, and supporting the arts.

The Fels Fund was created in 1936 "to initiate and/or assist any activities or projects of a scientific, educational, or charitable nature which tend to improve human daily life and to bring to the average person greater health, happiness, and a fuller understanding and the meaning and purposes of life." The Fund has supported museums, arts programs, schools, as well as racial and community programs (Toll and Gillam, 1995: 1258-1262). These foundations seem to construct their audience as a general mass of citizens who would benefit from an array of community based cultural/arts programs. In a way, the relationship between the funders and their constructed audience is one of a "positive hypodermic". [4] The unknown audience is an imagined community not in terms of potential but of vague limits and experience, constituting a group perceived to benefit from social programs.

In the Community Vision Project, Scribe acts as intermediary funder for community groups. At this level, Scribe has identified its audience as "underserved communities," as noted in their solicitation letter, as well as the selection process. Scribe exerts its own control over the potential audience by excluding organizations that run counter to the social goal vaguely identified as participatory democracy

4. This model also characterized funding of Philadelphia's Community Murals under the Environmental Arts Program, funded by the Department of Urban Outreach at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (with NEA and Philadelphia Museum Corporation), which again sought urban improvement without specific target audiences or research (Barnett 1984).

and equality and better-funded organizations with their own resources.[5] On the whole, though, it does less in helping groups to find and expand audiences, bridging gaps between limited interests and Scribe's vision of community concerns. Organizations are brought together for premiere public screenings of 3-4 new CV products each year at International House, but there is no attempt to build on this coalition in visual or organizational terms.

The relations among multiple constructions of audience in grassroots videos are once again clarified by contrast to the wider literature on mass media. Here, producers (funders), product makers and social scientists have existed in symbiosis. While media uses of these resources has been heavily criticized, the overall definition of the audience as consumer has relied on social sciences to determine content, distribution and other relevant features of the market. Indeed, market research preceded social science examination and remains better-funded than independent research. Mass media are businesses, while grassroots videos are not.

While all producers and funders relate to grassroots video audience and reading, their relations are loose, like their vague imagined communities of audiences, and they often overlap or intersect, as in the multiple roles of producers. As I have noted in working with Scribe, for example, no one has kept formal records on showings, reactions, uses, etc -- hence, neither have funding organizations demanded them. My work, in fact, takes on an applied character as I help them to think concretely about audience, but it grows out of my own analytic interests.

The relation between funding and videography which mediates grassroots audience also seems to be vague in so far as supporters tend

5. As an intermediary, Scribe also acts as an audience -- its participants see other videos and Scribe facilitators as directors establish and are members of the premiere audience. I will discuss this role below.

to talk about "public goods" rather than concrete spectatorship. This looseness allows dilemmas like those of Aboriginal television to emerge in production. Similar questions may also be explored with relationship to the text as artifact of community which may also exist independently of that context.

Text and Audience: Professionals and Others

Martinez' readings underscore the importance of the concept of intertextuality, where texts are related to other texts, as an important tool in understanding audience. Intertexts comprise the repertoire of texts retained in different people that help them to create or to read other texts. On a simple level, recent feature movies like Forget Paris (1996) and French Kiss (1996) rely on the intertextuality of Paris and France for its connotation of love and romance. Both the producers and the audience are expected to see things French and link them to romance from their exposure of other texts that present Paris as romantic whether travel brochures, novels or other movies like Casablanca (1943) or Enfants du Paradis (1945).

Intertext can be stylistic as well. Classical Hollywood Cinema, with its hermeneutic code, psychologically credible characters, and its reliance on spatial-temporal continuity, also constitutes an intertext for the majority of the world population who have been exposed to Hollywood since their childhood. MTV also has popularized a particular style with fast cuts, abrupt camera movements, uneven angles, and cutting with audio beats, and movies like Natural Born Killers (1994) can be seen as having a MTV intertext just as To School or Not to School does. Intertexts can also be cultural and historical: audiencea of the 1950s in America probably read Donna Reed with the intertextual frame of the representation of an "ideal," "healthy" white nuclear families, while audiences of the 90s, American and foreign, read Married With Children with the intertextual frames of varied and dysfunctional

families from newspaper, government statistics, and other mass media products. Finally, especially in the framework of community video, intertexts can be personal. In grassroots situations we presume audience shares similar predicaments and or beliefs with the subjects in the tapes (and presumably the producers/ organization behind them). In fact, they know them, literally and figuratively in addition to sharing other frames of mass culture.

Everybody's intertextual frame is different based on her different experience and exposure to different texts. This becomes especially evident when frames of understanding break down. The subjects of Martinez' studies, USC undergraduates, read the Yanomamo through the intertextuality of the "uncivilized" primitive from Indiana Jones (1984), tourist shows, the Africans in Disney's It's a Small World, and publications like the National Geographic. If these ethnographic films were shown to the Yanamamo themselves, obviously this audience would be seeing a much more mundane occurrence in their lives.[6] CV videos, being closed-circuit media products, posit fundamental links among producers and audience in shared everyday intertextual frames of experience as well as style, culture and texts. Although not phrased in such academic terms, this awareness may even be a key to the imagination of community which guides distribution beyond the original organization. While WTP uses its tape to broaden its constituents, for example, the tape's intended audience are PWAs and their friends and families whom the producers hope would readily understand the situation of the interviewees of the tape, sharing similar dilemmas. The three youth-oriented videos, made by Kensington Action Now, Woodrock, and AAU, all include MTV-style scenes, rap songs, and editing on the beat of hip hop. Again these producers have learned the MTV style from mass media aiming at youths. They then reproduce this style because they feel that they

---

6. The Amazonian Indians are no longer novices to video production. Many have changed from subjects of ethnographic films to producers of such documents. See Terence Turner 1994.

can express themselves. In turn, they expect their targeted audience, youths like themselves, to share their reaction to this style of presentation whether or not they are inner-city or Asian. Mass media texts, especially mainstream Hollywood products, however, tend to create stories that lure the audience to stay, and characters with whom the audience can identify (within a CHC intertextual world). Community Vision videos do not have to actively solicit audience but most of the producers expect a somewhat interested audience which does not have to put a special effort into identifying (with) characters in the tapes. The intertextual conjunction of the text, the selected audience, the screening context, together, provide a reading environment that produces Hall's "preferred" reading.

Besides the intended audience, however, there are other audiences of CV videos, including the facilitators and Scribe staff who actually constitute the first -- and professionally critical -- audiences of the tapes. Here, in addition to the shared experience of projects and community other intertexts of classic documentary form and aesthetics come into play.

Most facilitators are favorable to the result of their assisted projects, but they are also critics of the work both before and after the completion of the tape. A few facilitators, including myself, would like to see the tapes "done better." This includes the sense that themes could be developed more, editing could be tighter, issues generally might be better related to the "qualities" of the tape. These mark our shared professional intertext of what a video is. However, most also recognize that CV tapes are not independent works like the ones the facilitators produce themselves within their professional careers. We/they, in turn, read the experience of production and community into the text.

Scribe itself also acts as organizational critic. Generally Scribe is very supportive of all the CV programs. Louis and Hebert

again act more as critics before the final completion of the product, giving primarily technical but also stylistic advice. In an interview, Louis told me that he thought the best used tape would probably be Peace at Home because the tape has a very clear and focussed function. He also believes that the tape made by United Hands Land Trust is one of the best in terms of craftsmanship; however, since it does not have a very clear target audience its use has been limited.

As mentioned earlier, Scribe has certain expectations on CV videos, e.g. that they be diverse and present fair representation of its constituents. Hence, Louis has been concerned by potential readings of the tape made by Nexus, and its representation of a African American artist. While all the other artists portrayed in the tape are white and suffer disabilities due to illnesses and accidents, the African American artist's handicap comes from his past addiction to drugs which caused him to suffer a crippling accident. While the artist himself has no qualms about telling the audience of his conditions, Louis finds it objectionable that the only person of color portrayed in the tape is one who fits the destructive stereotype of a drugged African American man.

Yet since the tapes are independent artifacts, they can also move beyond these expected audiences (as when they are broadcast on public television). To explore readings which break intertextual expectations, I and my husband, Gary, have shown these tapes in classes at institutions at which we taught. He showed the tape in an introductory urban studies class at Bryn Mawr College (an elite, Main Line Philadelphia women's institution) and solicited the students' reactions to the tape in terms of message, use, symbolic structures and responses. I did the same at Muhlenberg College, a Lutheran institution in suburban Allentown (We explained in both cases that the results were to be used for this research).

New audiences, I found in reading these reports, produce or

imagine "communities" not present in the videographers' intentions or in WTP organization. More than one Bryn Mawr student responded with words which expressed personal bonds and awareness:

> I was most struck by the woman who said she'd been diagnosed at age 19, because I'm 19 and it made me realize how it would effect me or someone my age to be diagnosed with AIDS now. I think her story made me react on an emotional and rational level. The others elicited emotion in me but not a true understanding of what they might be going through.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> The thing that really hit me was the woman who said she found out she had HIV at 19. I thought it was so <u>great</u> that she could turn her life into something positive. I can't imagine what I would do or how I could be as positive as she is.

These readings suggest that some of the message which WTP thought of as being part of its group formation can move beyond the bounds of its imagined communities. Certainly, age was not a consciously noted point in taping or editing, nor is it information anyone else provides, any more than they might say where they were born, or what they do or what religion they are, all of which evoke potential linkages to other spectators.

Other Bryn Mawr readers remarked less about specifics of WTP than about the representation of community that the video conveyed and their position vis-a-vis that experience:

> The phrase "disposable people" stuck in my mind, and made me think about how we treat all sorts of people in our society, including homeless, criminals, elderly and people with AIDS.
>
> * * * * *
>
> It made me feel that I am one of the fortunate people but need to learn from these people that I need to be stronger and more positive about my life. They seem to be more "alive" than me.
>
> * * * *
>
> I related to the sense of community. The sense of belonging that the people in the group had.
>
> * * * *
>
> I relate to the idea of having a place where I'm accepted.

Of course, other conclusions could also be more skeptical, especially among students trained to be critical readers and who lacked a shared intertextual frame. In the latter case, they tried to imagine or impose one (as Martinez might predict):

> Although I was touched by some of the statements, it was patently obvious that they were selected and prompted in an effort to sell

> the organization.
>
> * * * * *
>
> I was surprised (?) that no one talked about impending death. Did they do this because this video was supposed to be happy (don't disturb audience)?

These students represent a relatively multi-cultural and international mix, although less diverse in terms of class, who had also spent a semester discussing social and ethical concerns with the city (an option for which they had already self-selected by taking the course). By contrast, I received different <u>kinds</u> of reactions when I showed <u>To School or Not To School</u> to students at Muhlenberg College. The students are all white and come from a predominantly middle class suburban background; their responses toward the subject proved generally negative:

> Heather (left the strongest impression) because she tells her story and blames the school system for being <u>boring</u>. She said she <u>wants</u> an education, but she really doesn't want to put forth the effort of even going to class.
>
> * * * *
>
> Frankie -- he's so uneducated -- he'll never amount to anything.
>
> * * * *
>
> Frankie is the typical lower class middle-city [sic] kid who has no family structure or any guidance. He doesn't know the value of an education and becomes too aware of illegal jobs in the cities at too young an age.

These students told me that they could not relate to the kids in the video because they were not high school drop-outs. The response in general can be looked upon as a representation of oppositional reading, but reverses the power relationship explained by Hall. In this instance, an alternative text was given an oppositional yet ultimately mainstream reading. Instead of gaining understanding about high school drop-outs, emphasizing the inadequacy and unresponsiveness of the school system, some Muhlenberg students seemed to read the victims as agents, responsible for their own dilemma (echoing the rhetoric of the contemporary Right wing).

Furthermore, the context of viewing affects audience perception of the text. The Bryn Mawr students, though a somewhat "artificial", "non-intended" audience, were cued by Gary as to what the video was: that it

was a community product, made by local community activists. The Muhlenberg students were similarly prompted, but they saw less value in community video as a whole.

These outside readings are chiefly of interest in framing the more expected and local readings I will now turn to, although one should by no means dismiss either wider circulation of videos or the expectations of organizers, Scribe and funders from the process. Community video reinforces and recreates community in a successful project. Yet in addition to unsuccessful projects or longterm loss of context, I recognize that videos as distributed texts can create -- or stimulate imagination of -- other forms of community as well as division. Some of these students -- and perhaps PWAs in Philadelphia who have been exposed to the video in planned settings -- find elements of age or acceptance which links them to WTP in a different kind of communitas rather than face to face interaction. Others impose distance or doubt which makes WTP a concrete but suspect organization "out there" -- a categorization as community or opposes their lives to failures, drawing conclusions quite distinct from the organizations' original intents. Such screenings and readings, however abstracted from a grassroots milieu into one generally artificially created for this dissertation have introduced students to Scribe and led them to think about the possibilities of video either in terms of organizations with which they work or in terms of their own search for expression. The more compelling approach to audience in this case, nonetheless, emerges from a shift from spectatorship as a constructed category to the ethnography of use in which multiple readings are created within the processes of community life.

Screenings, Using and Abandoning: Community and Audience

One of our first questions must actually be who sees the text. All CV tapes have their formal premiere at the International House in Philadelphia. This is a free screening on a theater-size screen, open

to the public. Many members attend from each of the three to four videos screened, yielding a relatively full and enthused house of several hundred people, an experience of communitas which is taken as an end rather than a platform to build upon. Usually only the facilitator and the immediate production team comes forward to introduced the tapes and answer questions afterwards. It seems be a very moving experience for the participants as I myself found in participating with Joe and others from WTP in 1994 (alongside Nexus, the Hispanic Center and the John Coltrane Society).

I did not attend the AAU screening on September 20th, 1996, since I was in Hong Kong. Yet I wrote Juli and she replied with illuminating details, beginning with the presentation:

> "So in their speech, Leap and Pauline talked about how we came to make this video and then called all ten of the youth down to stand in front of the auditorium together. You should have seen, when they stood up there, they looked so proud and happy while the audience clapped so hard for them. The Community Visions audience really know how to make people feel supported and valued. I think the youth felt like it was all worth it. Seeing them up there beaning their proud smiles made me feel damn proud myself. So Cindy, you should be proud too. After the audience clapped for them, Leap thanked you, Carl, Frank, me, AAU, Scribe, Hebert, and she forgot Louis' name so she said "um that man, you know," and the whole audience laughed and said, "Louis!" (Personal correspondence 16 Oct 1996)

As a producer and an audience member, watching the video can be nerve-racking. Juli continues, "The video came on, and I was on the edge of my seat because I wanted people to understand it and like it instantly. .... For me, each moment on the screen lasted longer than the hundreds of times I'd seen it before. It was like watching your alter ego acting out a story on stage...." She later reflected:

> "Cindy, I think you were right when you said that it's hard to go in-depth into all of the issues we wanted to talk about. From an objective viewpoint, out video is kind of small in scale and in depth, but if you take into consideration that it's short, that it was made by kids, and that it's only the beginning, I think that the shallowness of it can be pardoned, if audience will be generous enough."

Juli told me that the audience liked the tape and clapped a lot. "How

could you not? All of the youth were there, and I think they really stole the show."   After all the tapes were shown, participants went answered questions. Reth, one of the youth producers "explained that the dedication at the end of the video was for Knom's sister who was his friend, an important member of our community and someone that many people in the video project cared about deeply." Juli also wrote, "Aisha and Nadinne (two facilitators) ... said how these images are some of the only positive images of ourselves that we have, and that in itself is an important message of these videos.... Sam, an AAU member, commented that it was great to see a youth-made video and to know there was a place where their opinions and voice were valued and heard."

The International House screening is one of public celebration with an audience including the organization. It also seems to give closure to the projects. But it would be wrong to consider positive comments made, like those recounted by Juli, as merely self-congratulatory, or as insiders patting each other's back. They represent assent: each group has a message to communicate and the audience tells them that this has been done. Judging from the euphoric tone of Juli's letter, these screenings also meant a great deal for all those involved. These people ARE empowered by the action and reception in which they participate.

After the screening, distributions of the tapes are the responsibilities of the organizations, which proves variable. Some organizations try for a wide distribution. They may enter their tape in different festivals: Juli, for example, has submitted the tape to the National Asian American Telecommunications Association; Dr. Wenzel entered Seniors Reading Aloud to other geriatric video contests. The WOAR tape appeared on public access television through Paper Tiger TV. Many CV works also are shown locally at WHYY and WYBE, the two PBS stations. Entry into festivals and broadcasting are not the most important or the favored means of distribution, however, partly because

these distribution channels do not allow contact between the producers and the audience.

Instead, the immediate goal of most groups is to bring the tape back to the organization. Some organizations may have general screenings (which the premiere also encompasses). Others will file it in an archive from which it may only be pulled as a reference or curiousity or to incorporate into specific tasks. Here, the short life-span of Community Visions itself (seven years) makes it hard to talk about longterm uses.

Generally speaking, the organizational community of CV works include people beyond the active administrators and videographers who have the potential to work with the organizations or their missions in one form or another. Hence, tapes are shown with an introduction and a follow-up Question and Answer session with someone from the organization. The video is used to build relationships, as the organization tries to enlist interested readers.

Use also creates outreach audiences which reflect the goals and structure of the organization. Peace at Home, for example, was used a great deal by Women Legal Services, where it served to lessen the workload of its already harried staff. Meanwhile, Donnamarie told me the WOAR tape served well in an educational setting with those who have experienced sexual abuse:

> I at that point was the education program at WOAR, and so I would use it to take to particular programs that are educational but targeted to survivors being present in the programs. Sometimes it would go to schools or a community group, but what really seems to have the greatest impact is when I go to support groups, to drug and alcohol rehab centers, to psychiatric facilities, to different places when there would be groups of women who would be coming together especially for sexual assault or part of the general issue, sort of women's issues to deal with. And of course, then the commonality of the experience will be present, and it really tap into that, and I just found that the video is an incredibly useful tool. It helped get past some of the defenses that people will carry around with them, and be able to feel comfortable to say that this happened to me and open a dialogue about the stages of healing, the effects of assault and hook people to resources. So it was very very effective in that setting."

In this instance, sharing and recognizing an intertextual frame is very important. The audience, the producers, and the subjects in the tape all have either undergone or are knowledgeable about the particular experience. The tape is a catalyst that allows them to comment and build upon that implicit relationship. At one point, there were over 100 copies of the tape at WOAR.

Ironically, the tape is no longer used, because one woman in the tape does not want it to be shown anymore. The non-use in this instance represents yet another feature of CV: the subject of the WOAR tape remains present in the audience and organization. Thus she still has say about the use of her image long after the tape is finished. This, however, is also a unique case of withdrawal of a successful video from active use by an organization.

In the case of WTP, by contrast, Joe reported that they used the tape for their Positive Voice meetings, which he told me reached 4,000 people a month. He made 600 copies -- another advantage of video technology -- which were sent to any members who wished to have them and to other HIV organizations in Philadelphia. Nonetheless, in 1996, he also told me that he wanted to get the video out in time before they become dated because the tape is more about what people get out of WTP rather than about the services offered by the center.

Content also has a real impact on use, especially over time. Philadelphia Unemployment Project made a very political tape made in 1991 which covers issues like extended unemployment benefits, increased health insurance, and equalizing pay between inner city Philadelphia McDonald's worker and those in the suburbs. While most of the issues were timely in terms of the organizational agenda at that time and their recruitment in a wider realm, most of the issues subsequently have become dated. By 1996, it proved awkward to use the tape for either organizational or external audiences. While one interviewee/protester warns President Bush about loosing his vote, for example, by 1996,

President Bush has already lost, long ago. Kensington Action Now also made a tape around a specific campaign to increase government spending on recreational space, but the campaign was over before the tape was finished. Similarly, Hispanic Community Service chose to focus its video on one particular program, its English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. However, due to state budgetary cuts, the funding of the programs vanished and some of the staff were laid off. Political messages, even though central to an organization, can face difficulty in sustaining currency and hence audience inside or outside the audience (apart from some vague future historian).

Nevertheless, the content even in these cases is only one factor that hinders the tapes' dissemination; organizational structures also have an impact. The producers of the first two tapes, and some producers of the Hispanic tape left the organizations not long after their completion. This means the tapes lost their prime "advocate", in the sense that producers are the people who know the tapes best.

Other reasons why certain tapes remain unused or unusable are also important in understanding precisely how grassroots audience differs from that of mass media (where even limited audience, in the case of a movie like Waterworld did not foreclose, continuing attempts to entice viewers, promote internatinal sales and develop residual video rentals).

The major reason for a lack of screenings, in fact, is a lack of resources. Distribution requires a great deal of effort. Simply showing the tape in a room in an organization requires, scheduling the event, booking the room, and notifying/selling audience, to having real audience show up. For organizations of strained resources and multiple demands, this can prove paralyzing, especially when Scribe provides few guidelines or monitors for use of the orgnaization's "property."

The John Coltrane Cultural Center, by contrast, had few human or monetary resources to distribute its tape. The organization was also

not ready to do much, nor does it have a venue to show the work. The video also was made like a fund-raising tape, so their target constituents would then not be the most interested or readily-accessible viewers. Finally, the tape was made by Kendra, a friend of the organization, but not really a member of any kind. Again, there was little continuity between the producer, the organization, and the distribution of the tape. The tape has been sent to a few funders for grants' applications; otherwise, it hardly has been used.

Other non-uses reflect organizational dilemmas already underscored. Anna Crusis, for example, failed to clear its music copyrights issues when the tape was finished (they had rights for the songs for live performance, but not for video distribution). In response to my questionnaire, Helen Sherman stated that she would like to have received more advice on copyrights from Scribe than they did. Diane, in her interview, told me that Anna has been very careful on issues of copyrights and is very careful not to violate rights and ownerships of songs. Some of the songs chosen for the tapes are folk songs, and it was not difficult to arrange their rights; however, one Gershwin song was taped at the request of an AIDS patient in the tape, and it proved difficult to clear rights for that song. The rights were finally cleared one year after the tape was completed, after Anna hired a new manager who actively pursued this copyright issue. The new manager also works at WYBE, the alternative PBS station in Philadelphia, and the tape finally was broadcast there in the Through the Lens series. As of 1996, she had plans to distribute the tape more widely.

In these cases of both use and disuse, the impact of the organization on the audience through the text is clear. Moreover, the text meshes with both, most vividly as embodied in the WOAR case where a woman involved in production and apparent in the text now has the right in relation to the organization to stop distribution and audience. Use and non-use confirm the strong and theoretically significant identity of

producer and audience which is constitutive of CV. Cases of continuing use, however, allow us to explore more features of shared intertext as well as suggesting features which promote successful incorporation of the video into community.

Use and the Redefinition of Audience and Text: Two Case Studies

CO-MHAR and Good Shepherd made their CV tapes for very different reasons and audiences. CO-MHAR, a Kensington-based Mental Health and Retardation organization whose structure and production already have been introduced in Chapter III, wanted to use their tape to present themselves to others, who they are and what they do. Good Shepherd, by contrast, made a tape to explain to its audience what a mediation process is, so they can understand the concept of mediation and the steps needed to accomplish a process. I have interviewed and observed the screening of the two tapes in different settings, and find the field work invaluable in helping me understand the relationship between organizations, their representation, the use of the tape as a symbol of the organization and outreach, and community reproduction.

C-OMHAR's tape We are All in It Together explains what the group is by showing a few of their programs, from the establishment of houses for the mentally retarded to early intervention programs to a factory where mentally retarded people work. In many ways, it resembles an "industrial" video, a video that is made for companies to promote their images. Yet obviously CO-MHAR is not trying to sell anything, but to offer their services to those who need it as well as explaining this to those who might be reluctant to use a community-based facility in their neighborhood. The tape was made in 1993 but was still shown regularly in 1996 when I did my fieldwork. They indicated then that they planned to keep using it.

The initial judgements that the producers made of audience effectiveness were once again expressed in blunt emotional terms. Joann Tufo, a staffer and member of the video team, simply told me that

audience responded to the video very well. She said, "We wanted to make people cry, as soon as we see a tear, we know it works, we saw a lot, a lot of emotional effect."

CO-MHAR has used the tape in various ways. Members of the staff, for example, take the video with them to present at different meetings and conferences. The tape then is a symbolic representation of the organization. Joann also told me that the tape "give credibility to the organization." When CO-MHAR was raising funds to build its new building, the tape was sent to the bank, to help the bank better understand the organization and to decide whether to approve the loan or not. The tape was therefore not used for fundraising per se, but act more like an audio visual pamphlet: "It is part of the package that we presented as the agency."

The tape also is shown to new employees for orientation. Joann elaborated on this usage to me:

> "As soon as our staff comes in, I think they see the image of an agency that truly cares, that puts people first. Different from a tape that tells you about your benefits, this tape allows people to sit back and realize the tremendous responsibility that they have in providing services. The staff get to know a couple of the families [with whom they will still work] they get to see people cutting up wood, believe me, mentally retarded people are not perceived to be able to do that."

With its 400 strong staff, CO-MHAR has indeed made this tape a repeated, living feature of its organizational culture.

Besides using the tape for self-presentation, CO-MHAR also uses the tape to reach its potential clients, including them in an imagined community of shared experience and making that into an actual organizational community. Here, its impact with one set of parents dealing with mental retardation provides a springboard to show to parents who are considering using the agency. Joann told me that "generally people are afraid to open themselves for professional help, but if they see the tape, if the parents see how Joey and Antonio have done in the video, and say if Antonio's mom can open herself up, we can

do it, if she is open enough to tell her story, we can do it also."

The tape was screened ceremonially as well at the opening ceremony of CO-MHAR's new building in May 1996. Despite its familiarity, it received very good response partly because the occasion was one that celebrated the accomplishments of CO-MHAR, and most audience members were active supporters of the organization. Here, there was no new information conveyed: most people had already seen the tape and some had even worked on it. The tape, per se, as a symbol of the organization again took on a ritual function of recognition and remembrance which was appropriate to the inauguration of a permanent headquarters that spoke to the organization's past and future. "Readings" as well were not elaborate so much as ceremonial -- the tape was there as a monument rather than demanding a reading.

In order to understand how the text is used in everyday settings however, I must elaborate on another screening experience. I was invited to a June 21, 1996 bi-monthly meeting of the parents of CO-MHAR clients in a CO-MHAR plant in North Philadelphia where many clients do contract work for outside firms. The meeting was held on the second floor in a fairly plain large room. Being the end of the half-year cycle, lunch was also served. There were about 30 parents presented, including the mother of Joey, who was featured prominently in the video, a few members of the CO-MHAR staff, and two of the original video team members, Joann, and another staffer who also is the parent of a COMHAR client. The event is part of CO-MHAR's regular program where, from time to time, they screen the video. This time, the video also was shown partly because I would be present, and Joann wanted me to see the parents' reactions to it. It was also the birthday of Dolores, one of the original producers and mother of a CO-MHAR client. She now acts as parent-staff liaison.

Most people knew one another, and the meeting got underway with many greetings and lots of warm wishes. I talked to the Joey's mother

since I recognized her. She told me that she is proud of the video even though for her it is very hard to watch. She explained that every time she sees it, she has to once again remember Joey's hard experience at Pennhurst before he moved to CO-MHAR. In the video, she tells the audience that Joey stopped growing intellectually after he moved into Pennhurst; he actually regressed. In conversation, she also told me that she did not have another child after Joey, worrying that the next child would also be mentally retarded. Obviously, this information was not directly related to the video or the screening, but it conveys her personal readership, the emotions and memories which are evoked by seeing the film, remembering and relating to the human events it portrays.

After everybody obtained their food, the video was shown on a TV screen. After the screening, Joann presented a brief history of the tape, and asked if people have any responses. The audience gave very vague remarks: noting that it is very good, or that it is very moving. Joann then introduced me to the audience, saying that I was doing research, and that I am affiliated with Scribe. I again asked for their general response. Then, it was mostly staff who spoke giving responses which reflect the thoughts I have already shared from Joann's interview.

Yet there were other dimensions of the screening event I observed which were not articulated in any public discourse. While I was watching the tape, I was sitting directly across from Joey's mother, which made it a difficult viewing experience for me. The room grew quiet, because the video is quite serious in tone. I cry easily at movies even knowing that I am manipulated, so seeing Joey's mother once again shedding tears in relation to her experience on tape evoked a very strong response on my part. Her experience of helplessness when she had to send Joey to Pennhurst, his transfer to a CO-MHAR-run home, her regret at years wasted and her heartfelt feelings towards Joey's first prom -- an event

organized by COMHAR which provides a celebratory note to the video -- are materials chosen to move the audience. However, unlike a dramatic piece that was scripted, these events and memories are indeed real and she was there, reliving it and relating to it. I did not know the other parents assembled there as well, but many had their own sons and daughters in similar situations: they are not just identifying with a filmic vision but living it. As a new staffer at COMHAR commented, "It is so real, what you see there is what you feel and what you can see now, and it is not going to go away."

One common experience in CV viewing situations is that the subjects shown on tape can easily be in the audience as well; if not, there are still intimates social and historical relationships among video makers, subjects, and audience. In situations like this, this viewing context is not dissimilar to a home video viewing environment. This means that the tape is also embedded in real histories which continue to evolve within the audience. Joey's mother has new stories to share and participates in the experiences of other new and old members of the group. Another staff member in the audience said, "The baby in the tape is really doing well. The early intervention program works." Unlike Classical Hollywood narrative which fades out at the happily ever after, or even documentary which may leave us pending information yet to come -- what happened to Nanook in later winters, or has Harlan County become a better place to live twenty years later -- this history is immediate, embodied in the same organization which made the video. Hence it also reproduces and continues that organization.

More of the content of the tape also was discussed. Joann mentioned that the staffer at the home scene was also the grandmother of the mentally retarded child and reaffirmer how CO-MHAR works like a family. She then mentioned the toy library, and how it is invaluable to kids who cannot afford toys. But a parent actually corrected her by telling her that the toy library no longer existed: toys now are

redistributed, rotated, and recycled. Again, a screening of this nature can update the the tape, including dated and "incorrect information."

Parents and staff also reminisced about the day when they shot the prom scene. Eerybody was very excited. I have discussed scenes like Willie and Varee's wedding in the WTP video or the concert in Anna Crusis as textual scenarios that recur through films, that create an image of community and convey it to the audience. This emotional surge reminded me that these were also real community events to the audience. For them, the video is only a selection, a "home movie" in Nichol's terms, an evocation of more complete memories rather than a diegetic construction.

Yet another staffer suggest that it would be great to update the video. She suggested that even though things have not changed much, it would be great to see how the clients have developed since the tape was shot in 1993. Joann, however, believes that CO-MHAR simply does not have the time to do another tape. She thinks it a good idea, but cannot find anyone who can work on it.

Joann once again stressed that the organization is parents, people and staff. If people have forgotten that the video exists, showing it would get more requests. Her many comments suggest to me that Joann used the screening to promote the ethos of the organization -- to insist that it is about people. Her role as a spectator and guide was to facilitate the organization for the future as well as recalling its past. Yet this role was no less sincere than the tears of Joey's mother; both speak to us of the complexity of audience as subject and subject as audience that characterizes CV. In fact, as the staff member cited above noted "what you see there is what you feel": an authenticity which is conveyed by the text even to other audiences, often making these into especially powerful texts.

Untangling the Knot, made by Good Shepherd Mediation Program, is primarily an instructional video rather than an expository one. Good

Shepherd is mentioned in the video, but the tape does not talk about the organization itself. Instead, it explains and exemplifies the mediation process. In the questionnaire I sent out to Good Shepherd, I asked them what is the video's role in their organization. Their response was

> "We use it as a way of introducing people to the concept of mediation. We use it as a training tool for mediators to engage with the process. We use it for experienced mediators as an example of a mediation style to critique. We use it for community groups to introduce ourselves and the work that we do."

This group was very clear from the beginning on the direction of the use for the video and they have elaborated on it creatively since 1995.

In order to understand what this means in terms of audience and readership, I conducted a group interview with three major members of the video team, Mary Beth, Yvonne, and Bob. I also attended three half-day sessions of mediation training workshop in summer 1996; the video was shown in two of the three sessions. The workshop, labelled Violence Prevention Initiative Training, is designed for juvenile justice workers. In the interview, Mary Beth told me that initially the group thought that once the video was made, their job was done; however, showing and using the video began a whole new process.

Good Shepherd members noted that despite their careful planning, they actually needed to learn how to use the tape. After the premiere of the tape at the International House, the staff at Good Shepherd showed the tape at a mediation training session. To their surprise, it proved a major disappointment. The tape was shown in the afternoon after a long day of mediation training. The participants/audience were not interested, and no one asked a question. Yvonne told me, in fact, that they were discouraged, thinking that all the time and effort spent on the tape had been wasted.

After discussion among the staff, they realized that the tape could not stand on its own without some guidance. It could not be a discreet part of a training session, but needed to be integrated into the training. The group then wrote a set of guidelines in how to use

the video.

The guidelines state that "Mediation: Untangling the Knot is a 19 minute video that demonstrates a lively neighborhood dispute that finds its way to mediation." The booklet goes on to explain what the video is about and that it is an "entertaining look at the basic mediation process." The guidelines then suggest a few preliminary questions on conflict and resolution to stimulate discussion. Following these are precise instructions, asking the trainer to pause the video at specific scenes to discuss different points. For example, "Pause the video just after the first verbal conflict at the parking space. Ask the audience what each disputant did that escalated the conflict? (both verbally and nonverbally)." Or "Pause the video when the boys on the porch start talking about interests and positions. Ask the participants what they think the disputants' interests might be."

Good Shepherd found it necessary to interrupt the text, to reshape the viewing experience associated with cinema in order to achieve its purposes (although ironically echoing the way academics often read and teach film as cultural products). The text is neither sacred nor an end in itself; instead, they demand a great deal of instruction on how to read the video or how to think through its issues.

The writers of the guidelines also perceived different audiences for this training tape, devising distinctive "Debriefing Questions" for "Experienced mediators, Mediator trainees, or for any groups." The questions for the experienced mediators veer more towards the "mediators' styles: directive; facilitative; transformative; and the discussion of nonverbal cues." For the novice, questions are more basic: who is the initiating and responding party in the video? What are their positions and interests? Answers are also provided.

The debriefing questions with "any group" provide significant information on how Good Shepherd wants its audience to learn from the tape. The questions include several that ask audiences to begin to

think about mediation as a process:

> - Discuss the title: i.e., conflict resolution compared untangling a knot.
> - What might have happened if this case didn't go to mediation?
> - What could the parties have done independent of mediation to resolve this dispute?
> - What conflict management style did Mr. Pelucci (Confrontative; aggressive) exhibit? What about Mr. Jones? (Avoider; passive)

Another striking feature of the guidelines is the way in which the text is treated as an artifact which needs to be related to a real world setting. Here, the reality is not the same as a parent sharing the experiences and feelings of Joey's mother; nonetheless, these guidelines insist on breaking the frame of the movie to relate it to the "real world"

> - Obviously, this session was abbreviated for demonstration purposes. How long do you think this mediation would have taken in real life?
> - Discuss the fact that the kids referred the adults to mediation.
> - What are the legal ramifications of the agreement between the parties (i.e., transforming a front lawn into a parking space) if this happened in your community? (e.g., zoning requirements, permits, etc.) As a mediator, what reality testing questions might you have asked....?

Finally, another set of questions asks the audience to think about the materials of the video and use it. Here, the fictional reenactment which occupies most of the video is reproduced not in another video or in readings but in audience's being asked to recreate their own play:

> - What did you like about the mediator's style?
> - Select several people (or break into groups of three) to roleplay the mediation in front of the group.

If all these questions are indeed asked in a training session, the trainers have a great deal of control on the meaning and interpretation of the text. While an unguided audience may miss a point, "misinterpret" a point, the guidelines and the trainers could then "correct" the oversights and the misinterpretation. [7]

---

7. The Canadian Film Board has come to a similar realization about their products, now providing both contextual videos and a text, <u>Constructing Reality: exploring Media Issues in Documentary</u>, to help people understand principles of documentary, techniques, politics and

My participation in the actual training sessions allowed me to understand how Good Shepherd indeed use the tape in practice. The workshop I attended, held at the Mediation Center om Chew Street in the Germantown section in Philadelphia had 12 to 14 participants. They all worked with troubled youth in Pennsylvania, but they are not trained mediators. Some participants were colleagues working at the same institutions, some came alone. The training lasted for two days, although separated by a two week interval. The first day has both morning and afternoon session, and the second day only has a morning session. The video was shown in the afternoon of the first day.

The workshop was run by two experienced mediators, and they took turns in talking to the group. This type of session introduces the participants to different skills needed in mediation, including understanding what conflict is, how to distinguish between position and interest, perception and attitude, and skills in active listening, etc. Sometimes the participants are divided into groups for different role play, like the reenactment of a conflict. Then the rest of the participants try to understand the root of the conflict, and to find ways to approach a solution. Thus, they are being pre-trained on how to see the video by these activities as their skills are honed.

After the morning session, lunch was provided by Good Shepherd, and people mingled and chatted mostly about their work.
The afternoon session, then started with the video. Yvonne and Anna explained that the tape was made by Good Shepherd members themselves and that it illustrated a conflict and a mediation process. Most people paid close attention to the tape (only one person dozed off). The

---

voices. Each chapter in the text includes synopses, interviews and guides for discussion, e.g "What is this film about? As a group, document some of the issues raised. (There should be no judgments passed -- by the teacher or by students -- during this process)...How do you react to the interviewer's laugh? Why? Why do you think Ann Marie Fleming kept the laugh in the film? .... Why does the interviewer mention there are only 10 seconds left? What does New Shoes say about the way in which mass media -- and news in particular -- package events and experiences, particularly those including violence against women?

audience laughed at funny lines and actions in the script, such as when an interviewee talks about resolving a conflict through a punch, or when a folding chair "parked" in the parking space which becomes the root of the conflict is tossed into the air. Yvonne also pointed at the scene in which Anna, whom the participants had now met, plays a stereotypical fortune teller, and got quite a laugh.

The tape first introduces the audience to what conflict is, via the development of a parking space conflict between Mr. Pelucci and Mr. Jones. After the scene where the two men sit down at the mediation session and explain their position, Yvonne stopped the tape. She asked participants about the two parties' positions and interests and how they would resolve this.

The first question has nothing to do with mediation. A participant asked how Yvonne managed to lose so much weight from the time the tape was shot. Everybody broke out laughing, and Yvonne said that she had not lost any weight, only that the camera simply adds 20 pounds for everybody. Even in this controlled setting, it reminded me that the producers cannot really control an audience's reading.

Yvonne then moved the conversation back to mediation. She asked if the trainees felt that both parties wanted to salvage something. Some participants seemed confused. Yvonne then asked if the characters want to be friends again. A few participants did not think that Mr. Jones wants to be a friend with Mr. Pelucci again. At that point, Anna cut in and said that it was the intention of the filmmaker to portray the two as missing their old friendship, so even if the trainees did not see this element in the tape, they might want to think of them in that way. This way, the presenter of the tape then had the opportunity to insert interpretations that have escaped the audience, either because the original group could not convey it successfully in the tape, or because the readers in particular settings failed to grasp that particular point.

Everybody participated quite freely in trying to find solutions. They produced answers of different types, ranging from allocating the parking space to different parties on different days, to getting another parking space in the neighborhood, to getting rid of one of the cars. Then the trainers asked the participants to cross out the unrealistic options. They then reassured the participants that there can be a solution if both parties worked hard on it. Finally, Yvonne asked if the trainees wanted to see the rest of the tape (in which a solution is arrived at), and everybody agreed.

She put on the tape again. On the tape, the mediator was shown giving advice to the two parties. Here, one participant asked if Yvonne could stop the tape. He wanted to know if the mediator should indeed give personal advice. Anna and Yvonne were happy with the question and also obviously familiar with it. Yvonne said, "this has been one of the criticism we received when we bring this tape to professional conferences, that the mediator should be a neutral third party, and she is not doing the right thing." Anna explained that it might good that the tape was not perfect.

People then watched the tape till the end without any further commentary. The rest of the session was devoted to another role-playing exercise and the participants left to return in two weeks for the final morning session. The third session mainly entailed repetition and rehearsal of the first two, making sure that the trainees have not forgotten the many concepts of mediation. The tape was not used nor brought up in discussion. At the end the participants received a certificate certifying their expertise.

The whole process of screening the tape has become an integral part of the training session. Yet the process, which meets the ends of the organization, radically alters our expectations of text and readership. While the tape has a beginning and an end, and logical development along the way no one sees it as a coherent whole. In fact,

in another session I attend, the ending of the tape was simply not shown because the class was running out of time. The tape became a tool for teaching, subordinate to specific pedagogical readings.

The image of Good Shepherd shown on the tape and received by the audience is indeed positive, but the tape does not belabor the point that Good Shepherd is doing a great job in the way the Comhar tape does. The audience was impressed because they saw the people who are working at Good Shepherd in the tape, and admired their efforts in putting the tape together. They were also taught how to use the tape as they were taught mediation.

In presenting these ethnographies of use, I have purposefully avoided giving priority to text by first introducing it scene by scene and commenting on it as I did in the last chapter. In fact, I spoke briefly there of Good Shepherd's use of reenactment, but CO-MHAR's tape has been left more deliberately unstated. For it is clear here in both cases that spectators, beyond the premier showing at International House, do not read these as self-contained visual narratives. In Good Shepherd, in fact, the setting and interruption of the tape by guides fragment it and may even leave out pieces which would normally be considered critical, like the end. Or the tape may be reenvisioned verbally via explanation. CO-MHAR shows the tape as a whole, although on a TV set which changes the intertexts of viewing and within the context of organizational processes. Yet CO-MHAR invites a reading through the text rather than of it. People know the text; in the sessions in which I encountered its use at the inauguration and the parental meeting, most people (including me) had seen it already more than once. Joey's mother didn't cry again because of the text but because of the reality which it reminded her of. And I was affected in turn by her presence at that viewing, as perhaps were others who brought their own stories to it as well. In this sense, audience and use transcended and recreated the text. Yet it is not enough to stop there,

with emotional or educational impacts, if we are to complete the linkages through which text, in turn, changes and reproduces community.

From Use to Empowerment

That both Good Shepherd and CO-MHAR have incorporated their tapes into everyday practice still relies on a continuity of subject and audience that is very concrete. Video makers and participants are still active members of the community: people see themselves and their friends on screen. The relatively brief historical depth of the Community Visions project -- and of such video technology itself -- means that it is hard to talk more about any historical evolution for the organization or its use of the video or to ask, with Burnett, if they are really empowered.

Indeed, there are factors of use beyond immediate community dynamics which emerge over longer times. My MA video on a Vietnamese Chinese Buddhist monk, for example, was nearly unused in the community in which I left in 1990 although my parents and I maintained close ties there. It was after all, my video, not theirs, and it did not meet the needs of an ongoing temple. The death of the monk in 1996 threw the organization into even greater turmoil and I now have no clear indication of where the video even is.[8]

For many in media studies, this longer historical dynamic is the framework in which to answer the question of empowerment and reproduction. In the range of organizations Scribe has worked with, we can find many concepts or audience or spectatorship, and many different attempts to develop or control these, both successfully and

8. By contrast, Gary was filmed as part of an historical video which he had scripted in part for a Savannah Catholic community in which he had worked in 1986. In 1992, he was inadvertently offered the tape by a subsequent parish priest as a document which might be of interest to him as an outsider. By 1997, the tape is clearly an historical record, in which even our reading is tinged with the meaning of participants who have subsequently died. Community knowledge, power and boundaries can change rapidly and unexpectedly, changing the artifacts which continue to constitute symbolic tokens of identity as well.

unsuccessfully. Yet these observations cannot take audience as an end in and of itself that does not respond to Burnett's initial concerns or to the project which Scribe has envisioned in which video-making becomes a continuing tool of community-building within these organizations.

Here, the initial data seem negative. No organization, except Hispanic Family Center, has made another video. Only one case in over 20 and ironically, this is from an organization that could not use its original CV video. Even though the ESL tape was no longer viable, some producers of the original ESL tape who had undergone Scribe training have been training Hispanic youths to make their own videos.

These youths, in turn, made tapes on issues like drugs and AIDS. Unlike most Scribe projects, these tapes are fictional. The executive director told me that the youths tend to like the dramatic styles better, and thought that they can convey their specific messages more effectively. These tapes are then shown in neighborhood meetings, or in people's houses. Afterwards, those attending talk about the tapes in a very domestic environment. So even though the Hispanic center tape does not really have a audience anymore, the method of CV has been reproduced.

While this kind of reproduction is Scribe's primary stated goal in doing Community Vision work, only an organization with organized educational program and a strong outward orientation would duplicate the CV process. Producing videos is simply a very labor intensive and time consuming task. Most grassroots organizations, always working with a very tight budget, simply cannot afford a video division. It is not so much learning the craft of video making, or a problem of literacy then, or techniques but questions of time, personnel (and perhaps money) -- the fundamental concerns which had brought them to Scribe in the first place. However, organizations like AAU that organize educational programs may very well do another video project, because it fits their mentorship goals and teaching video, or dance, or doing a mural do not

seem that different.

Yet this example also suggests that one might also read empowerment in less collective terms. Some individuals, in fact, have been inspired to go on in video. Donnamarie, who worked on both the WOAR and the Anna projects, is now a producer at a consulting company where she hires videographers to make works for her clients. She told me that she definitely has a preference for the documentary style, "having real people tell real stories" and would always push her producers to work on projects using "real" elements.

Other CV video participants have also become professional film or video people. Two of those from the WOAR projects are now videographers; Cindy Bernstein at KAN has recently finished a MA degree in media studies at Rutgers, and Joann at CO-MHAR has worked on other projects with her co-producer Diane Cupchak. Diane also has produced another tape, "Wild Hearts: Adventures for Women" whose footage shows up in the Triangle Interest project. Juli Kang, after AAU, is exploring the possibilities of pursuing a career in video in California.

But empowerment need not only be defined in terms of doing more. Good Shepherd teaches a process that is replicated via the tape, even if the tape per se has not been repeated. Within the goals of the organization that is a more significant form of empowerment than another video would be. Similarly, Louis Massiah included in his evaluation of the Women's Legal Services tape the important result that some women had been spared domestic brutality by what they had learned from it.

We must not overlook the moment of screening to the public and the home organization itself as an experience of empowerment. If, in explaining grassroots texts, I underscored that the text relied on the symbolization of reality, here it is the completed text as symbol that is itself empowering to the real. The videographers, their associates and their organization see themselves on a big screen at a public event. Individual emotional responses and memories are poignant and perhaps

sustaining in a variety of ways difficult to document within readership paradigms.

Finally, empowerment also means literacy -- not just making but reading in new ways. This returns us to Karen's statement above --"It's about us, everyday people." those who come in contact with the video learn how complex simple statements are, and can understand the selections evident in TV or mass media news. But even those more distant can understand that everyday people can be seen and heard, and that there absence reflects a choice, not a "natural" way of life. Whether the person on screen is a friend, an unknown person sharing values or experience or someone whom they relate to only more distantly via a recognition of "ordinariness," CV projects have shown that these people can and do have rights to the screen as well. As such, the existence of alternatives represents, in its own way, an empowerment process on which others may build.

Conclusions

In a recent article, critics Ella Shohat and Robert Stam have noted that

> "Any comprehensive ethnography of spectatorship must distinguish multiple registers of spectatorship: (1) the spectator as fashioned by the text itself (through focalization, point-of-view conventions, narrative structuring, mise-en-scene); (2) the spectator as fashioned by the (diverse and evolving) technical apparatuses (movie theatre, domestic VCR); (3) the spectator as fashioned by the institutional contexts of spectatorship (social ritual of moviegoing, classroom analysis, cinematheque); (4) the spectator as fashioned by ambient discourses and ideologies; (5) the actual spectator as embodied, raced, gendered, and geographically and historically situated (1996:314).

In this dissertation and even this chapter, I began with a more theoretical approach to audience and moved, slowly and ethnographically, through other experiences of audience and use which define the wider ranges of spectatorship Shohat and Stam insist we must consider. To do so, however, is not simply an academic exercise. From the beginning of any production (or even prior stages of funding and selection), reaching an audience for assent and other impacts is intrinsic to a video or

other project itself. In the case of community video, audience is not only conceived by the group but is also conceived to overlap in membership, experience or intertext with the group. This means not only a shift in how reading/recognition greets the product, but also a change in emphasis in reading from market or interpretation to use. To omit or reduce audience, then, would be to falsify the whole project; instead, we must learn to read spectatorship in different ways as social formations demand.

This complex and interrelated program should not be limited to the special circumstances of grassroots media alone. There are and always have been multiple connections between producers of mass media and their multiple audiences, from the intersection of Americanizing immigrants behind and in front of the screen to Larkin and Bobo's comments on Black representation to Arnold Schwarzenegger's proclamation that he wants to make movies "he can take his kids to." If they are more intimate and intense here, this nonetheless might stimulate more creative approaches to audience as an integrated component of work in other forms of communication.

Moreover, use is an area in which it remains possible to consider further the elements of context and application which define audience beyond the box-office. Movies differ depending on whether seen in a segregated movie theater, or home video, or a screen in business class. Some elements of use have been examined in early cinema, but they are often quite broad: an ethnography of cinema (as in Dickey 1992) seems a logical extension of this ethnography of video use (Gray 1992 and Willis 1990 raise some of these questions for home video as well).

CV, then is not an isolated case in audience, text or production, but one which allows us to clarify crucial and general relations among all of these processes and human agents. These, then are the themes which I will develop in more general terms in the conclusions.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS

> The politics of identity call for the "self-representation" of marginalized communities, for "speaking for oneself." And while poststructuralist feminist, gay/lesbian, and postcolonial theories have often rejected essentialist articulations of identity and biologistic and transhistorical determinations of gender, race and sexual orientation, they have at the same time supported 'affirmative action' politics implicitly premised on the very categories elsewhere rejected as essentialist. Theory and practice, then, seem to pull in apparently opposite directions .... How can scholarly, curatorial, artistic and pedagogical work 'deal' with multiculturalism without defining it simply as a space where only Latinos can speak about Latinos, African-Americans about African-Americans, and so forth, with every group a prisoner of its own reified existence? (Shohat and Stam 1994:342-3).

In Unthinking Eurocentrism, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam noted that multi-cultural "self-representation" entails a paradox if, instead of opening expression it reifies and isolates communities and voices. Their solution is to seek dialogue, communication which explores "mutual and reciprocal relativization" (359). Here, they evoke the broad issues of communication and the ongoing construction of communities -- whether narrowcast and grassroots-based or situated in some mass or public sphere -- which led me to this study in the first place. As this dissertation has shown, media forms and practices are embedded in layers of social, political economic and cultural relationships which media both reproduce and challenge. Through an analysis of the complexities of practices of self-representation and reading, what can we in fact say to the questions of theory and use which confront us? This study of Community Vision has been primarily a study of practice, of how many of these "marginalized communities" use video to "speak for themselves", to themselves, and to others they imagine to be "potentially" like themselves. In their own way, Community Visions videos challenge dominant ideologies -- be they patriarchy, racism, heterosexism, classism, ablism, or agism -- and their channels of power. Community video producers confront widely held assumptions by persuading their audience as well as themselves of their rights to liberty, justice and respect, by opening dialogues. However, it is not only through the texts they assert their rights; their ability to shape production and

distribution processes allows them even more control of their messages and negotiation with their audiences. While they may not reach the viewership numbers of Jackie Chan, Emma Thompson or Steven Spielberg, they have complex impacts which teach us, in turn, about other media.

In researching and working with these different organizations over the years, I learned to understand and to deeply appreciate their efforts. Yes, some tapes go overboard or become too rushed in final editing, some production processes have been mired with conflicts, and some exhibition events have been too didactic. Yet when these tapes are so tightly intertwined with social and political processes, where the playing fields between the powerful and the powerless are so unbalanced, I do not see my job as sitting back and pointing out the weaknesses of their work so much as working to understand and to value this cultural phenomenon. Hence, I need to grapple with what CV tells us about both theory and practice, and, perhaps, to eventually bring something back to the communities with whom I have worked.

In this conclusion, I will address three primary issues set forth in the introduction. Two points are, in a sense, intertwined. First, how is the definition of community mediated through the process of community video? While this dissertation is not a study of community per se, it has investigated the many meanings of community through a careful examination of practice, of community making and remaking as processes which emerge through video making. This particular process also results in the production of a community artifact, the video text itself. This text becomes one representation of the community, meanwhile redefining that community.

As a corollary, I have asked what role does video technology play in this process. These community videos are also products of a relatively new technology. Video has been explained as many things, ranging from a lesser, cheaper sibling to film to a medium killing moviegoing as a leisure activity. At the same time, many have hailed

the advent of video technology as finally putting a powerful technology into the hands of the people. Jay Ruby quotes filmmaker/ ethnographer Jean Rouch in the 1970s: "And tomorrow? Tomorrow will be the time of color video portapacks, video editing, of instant replay ('instant feedback').... At that point, anthropologists will no longer control the monopoly on observations; their culture and they themselves will be observed and recorded" (1991:57). However, as this paper and other related studies have shown, technology itself does not liberate; people do by manipulating certain technology. Video does not "improve" or "degrade" these communities per se; it is a tool.

This is already apparent from the range of stories which Scribe's histories represent. The noblest motives or cause cannot guarantee a better product nor its creative use nor its audience impact. Technology must be understood as a process of relations as much as community.

This video technology, nevertheless, demands a special sets of procedures to work. It requires production skills, and also has it own parameters for distribution. These, too, intersect with community organizations in distinctive fashions My second point springs from an initial choice made in pursuing this work. In the study of community video, I have avoided a tendency in cinema studies to give immediate primacy to the text. Here, I have argued that it is only through a holistic study of both the production and use of these video texts that we understand the complex relationships amongst community, video, self expression, empowerment, and community activism. As a second major point, then, it is worth standing back and asking how a cultural studies/ ethnographic model facilitates understanding of this medium.

The adoption of this cultural studies/ethnographic model, with its stress on holism, participant observation, process and multiple voices, allows me to understand relationships between different concepts of community, and how members of particular communities use these concept to produce visions of their communities through the CV process. While

this limited study does not aim to provide clear causal relationships between certain organizational features with the video process, I am able to make certain qualified generalizations about organizations and activist video production, text, and use. Thus I hope that this dissertation will be theoretical and provide pragmatic guidelines.

This also allows me to move back from the microscopic perspective of community video to review the questions this dissertation raises for mass communication/cinema studies (apart from that of holistic methods). This includes questions of text and authenticity in the documentary and the definition of multiple audiences/readings as well as general ideas of the relationship of technology and society.

Finally, in my introduction, I spoke of the need for advocacy and commitment, in the sense of bringing something back to Scribe and community organizations to enhance their work. After writing about the complexities of audience, I feel somewhat overwhelmed by balancing that audience against an academic readership. I also know from years of exposure to anthropologists how rarely academic works are appropriated generally and how different readings and impacts may be from my expectations. As Gary McDonogh noted from his book on the Barcelona elite (1986), the first thing people read there was not his critical arguments on historical formation and ideology, but the index which showed whether their family had been mentioned, validated as members of that elite (personal communication). Moreover, CV remains in a formative stage where promises are taking shape without clear track records of evaluation. Yet Larry Gross warns "History offers too many precedents of new technologies which do not live up to their advance billing; which ended up being part of the problem rather than part of the solution" (1988: 201).

By recognizing, participating in and systematically analyzing CV I hope I have begun to make some recompense. This is not a separate appendix, however: the analytic features of the first section

especially, which go beyond the data chapters in some ways as well, are also attempts to bring my ideas back to those with whom I have worked.

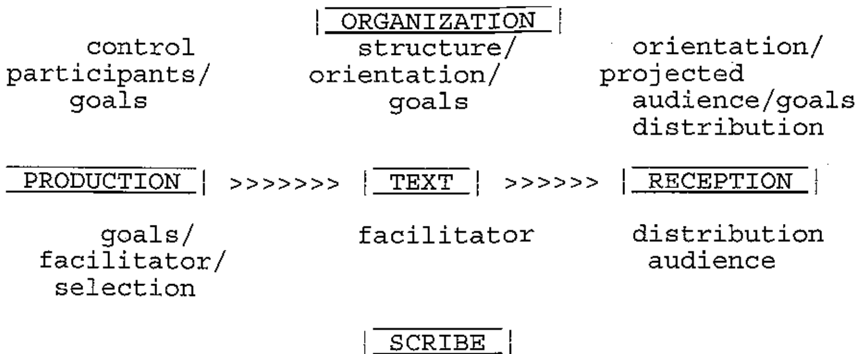
Defining Communities and Videos as Interlocking Processes

In Chapter I, I introduced a flow chart model, based on Richard Johnson's early schema for cultural studies, which has remained implicit through the subsequent chapters. Here, it is appropriate to return to that model and elaborate on its pieces in order to structure the conclusions I have reached. While some pieces are by now self-evident, others point to new realizations about community, video and change.

Figure 2: A Flow-Chart Model for Community Visions

Pre-Conditions/Contexts

Socio-Political Context	Resource Funding	Technology



Pre-Conditions/Contexts

Socio-Political Context	Resource Funding	Technology

The first issue that confronts me when reflecting on the relationship between organizational features and the community video process is one that "escapes" this chart: namely, how Scribe and community organizations are constituted in their milieu and get together. These are related questions, since, as I suggested in Chapter II, Scribe itself is a community organization that has emerged from the same context of Philadelphia privatism, decline and fragmentation

(exacerbated by federal aid cutbacks) which have spurred the actions of many of the groups it works with. Yet even if they occupy the same social space (which a two-dimensional chart cannot show) and Scribe actively selects groups, more is going on.

The organizations involved in Community Visions already constitute a self-selected group. All are social service organizations in an urban center of growing problems and divisions and a nation less and less committed to resolving these through any direct intervention (as the recent Philadelphia summit affirmed). To exist at all, they must have a vision of community as something which can be good and made better -- an old American dream. Moreover, they have been able to organize for specific and general goals and to act, even before encountering Scribe. But in this, they also recapitulate the context which Scribe emerged.

These organizations, again, are also small and underfunded, not rich national or multi-national corporations. They do not directly belong to the market place because they generally do not sell products for a profit. They lack the financial resource of large social or governmental organizations which can buy all the talents they want on Madison Avenue to promote their message. Hence, these organizations see CV and its technology as a chance to put forth their ideas. What CV allows them to say is, "look at what we do, we are doing the right thing, we are addressing the ills of society, and we are making a difference." Given their practical limits, organizations are attracted to the CV project because video is another channel, a new technology to promote their agenda. Scribe itself is the heart of that technological innovation (hence it belongs on top of the chart as well as at the bottom). It also underscores the shared commitment/vision beyond the chart that communities must make for this process to exist at all.

Despite this shared vision, the cases that I have analyzed show that this medium can be utilized successfully by some organizations and not by others. While all organizations are different, some loose

criteria have emerged as the study proceeded.

First, as noted in the introduction, it is necessary to be critical of the term "community" organization as it functions in this chart or in our thought and planning. Throughout my study, I have found that the meanings of community varied from organization to organization, as well as at different time periods in organizational development. Furthermore, different people within organizations also compete over specific meanings of community and identity.

There are also basic structural patterns which must be understood. In terms of people involved, each organization which has participated in CV has certain members of different capacities which constitute what I called the "active" community. This includes the organizers of the proposal, the administrators and the actual participants. They may not coincide, although they must coordinate if the project is to succeed.

There is also an organizational community, a membership, which provides these active players as well as reserves (replacements, interviews, etc) within the video. This organization is also called into existence in so far as it attends video screenings or takes the video as part of its history and culture. It can also be renewed by this video process, whether in direct empowerment or in some less tangible sense of "having done it."

Finally, one envisions "imagined" communities of people with whom participants believe they share their experiences and values. This constitutes the future audience, for Scribe and its funders as well as the proposals and texts produced. This is also an unstable community because of its vague and fictional dimensions, on which many projects falter. There is a large gap between learning to represent self/community and learning to speak effectively to others.

Most often, these multiple facets of community mingle in everyday life as well as organizational activities. However, the video process demands disentanglement if all phases of production, text and use are to

be coherent. This can happen in several ways.

Tightly-run organizations like CO-MHAR or Good Shepherd had fairly trouble free production process, and their texts also proved more cogent. These organizations were also able to use the tapes effectively, with multiple screenings. They shaped effective use of the tape by providing further materials or specific contexts to guide desirable readings. Both text and audience, then, flowed from effective planning and implementation over time.

Tightness need not be dogmatic but should be coordinated. Organizations which produced videos within the Scribe timetable have relied on committees, on consensus or on strongly organized monitoring of independent agents (like AAU). In each, though, the organizational center has coordinated participants and goals through the project. In the strongest cases, like CO-MHAR and Good Shepherd, this planning (and adaptation of outcomes) has continued even after production into creative and intensive use of the video.

On the other hand, organizations that are divided have found it difficult to get the production team together, and taken longer to finish and find uses for the tape. Anna Crusis, which faced a conflict between different active elements, nonetheless finished. Yet this came at a cost to their sense of community and use of the product thereafter; Anna Crusis took a year's time to clear rights to use its music. Similarly, the United Hands land Trust tape was well-made, but it lacks a clear focus of what it wants to accomplish: participants could not agree. Therefore, it has not been used much.

With organizations like Prevention Point Philadelphia, which was under intense stress, no tape was even made (although this was corrected after reorganization). This is also a problem in one-person projects, like John Coltrane, which, despite centralization of control, have little support in crises or in later use.

This suggests that better identification of and more work with the

active community, on Scribe's part might profitably begin even during the selection process. Participants are listed by name in the proposal (although this may change rapidly, as in AAU) and perhaps should be met with even before evaluation in order to understand how they function within a larger picture (<u>and</u> to explain the commitment they are making).

Scribe's own organization intersects here as well. It is evident that it relies heavily on facilitators, although Louis and Hebert always are ready to help. Yet it is striking that Scribe has a reduced, often heavily-burdened active community itself. It draws on its network for new contacts and facilitators but it might still consider an expanded, rationalized structure. Especially important is the role of a coordinator who watches over projects and talks with organizations throughout the process, rather than meeting only in the process. This might be done through the central office or at the level of each production team, working with facilitators or in designation of a specific role in the community team (as renewed in 1996-7).

The nexus of technology and text, surprisingly, seems to generate few problems independent of organizational dynamics. As Dorothy Henaut asserted after her community film work in Newfoundland, technology just needs to be learned:

> We discovered that everybody was quite diffident about the equipment and when it was left in the office, nobody used it. But when various members of the group started taking it to their homes and videotaping their children, they discovered how simple it was. As the members said, we had 'tamed' or 'domesticated' the video (1991:87)

My study has suggested, in fact, that video technology as a whole is not easy to appropriate, especially for those who have limited resources, unless one stops at simply gathering footage. While it is not difficult to learn and master the basic craft, both video editing and distribution remain time-consuming responsibilities.

But texts should not be seen as mere derivatives of technology or organization. If texts are voices of self-representation, a great variety might be expected. This has certainly been apparent in the CV

projects so far produced. Moreover, since video texts also are public documents, we can note and comment on recurrent patterns which make sense of new technologies.

This is especially evident in choices and developments of CV "genres." The most focused videos are the educational ones which have very targeted audience the community wants to recruit, to help, and to educate: outward-oriented organizational strategies. These range from how to obtain a restraining order for the potential community of battered women, to how to use the mediation process for a large community of people in conflicts.

Another commonly seen community video text is the informational tape on the organization itself (this seems to be the more common sense of self-representation in community based projects; see G. Turner 1991). A tape says, for example, we are Reconstruction, "we believe that prisoners should be given a second chance because of the faulty penal system, as well as the prevailing racism in this country." Or "we are a private Montessori School, and we do not believe that the city public school system would take care of poor children. We have successfully run a school for children in the city, and our alums can attest to our success." These tapes obviously target different communities -- the former, prison inmates, their friends, families, and neighbors, -- and the latter to parents who want to explore the possibilities of sending their children to a quality institution that is affordable. Both texts introduce the audience to the "active" community/ organization, and invite other to join that community. Yet they demand different structures of distribution/ use and run risks of timeliness.

A third type of tape scarcely mentions the organizations involved in making the video, but concentrates on particular problems relevant to the organization. Woodrock and AAU show the audience the problem of teenage truancy and Asian American youth cultures respectively. The tapes are made by youths for youths, and rally support to build a

larger, imagined community to face these problems which are not only relevant to Philadelphia, but also all over the country for their peers. We need to follow their use and impact even more carefully, especially as youths themselves see this as a channel of empowerment through learning new skills.

All of these are clearly related to orientations of the original organizations, and have been included in Figure 3 below as relational features. However, they do not differentiate patterns of production and use so much as distinguishing subgenres. And they cannot preclude multiple uses and orientations: CO-MHAR's outward-oriented tape also serves as a monument to the organization itself and a reminder of its empowerment to act.

Still, this study suggests how thinking about technology and texts more might be formalized in this phase of production. The teaching of video literacy and models of media are already present in Scribe practice (although again it seems primarily located within the actions of facilitators). Scribe also proscribes choices between fiction and non-fiction which might be discussed in terms of literacy and production, although there are very practical reasons for favoring non-fiction forms, as my AAU experience made clear.

One might, in fact, suggest that Scribe teach about itself even more, analytically as well as practically. The organization now has a history and a variety of products which are still distributed erratically even among its network (Louis, Hebert and I may be the only people who have seen all the tapes). Here, the results of my study may point to themes which could be addressed in pre-production as potential models and their implications for future audiences.

The themes from Table 2 that remain most difficult to clarify are those of audience -- hardly surprising amid the discussions of who audiences are and how to understand them that rage through mass media studies (Pribram 1988, Press 1992, Willis and Winnan 1990; Morley 1992,

1995; Ang 1996). In part, this reflects the complexity of modelling audience in general where limited research beyond marketing and statistical values has been done (and none by Scribe itself). While ethnographic and cultural studies models have been suggested by various authors, they have rarely been developed in a systematic fashion.

Audience represents a dilemma throughout the Community Visions process. Proposals are vague. Without training and exposure to elements of media literacy, communities cannot conceive of audience or what technology allows them to do with regard to unknown viewers. Again, a tight and reflexive initial organizational structure helps to incorporate new knowledge throughout the production and even dissemination phase.

Scribe as master of technology and experience could also follow implications of readership and use more clearly, feeding into planning and text more insistently. This could entail more technical input as well, beyond the critique of the facilitator: it remains striking that Kensington Action Now defined the point of their video as one I simply never saw as primary -- the war on drugs. These issues, I believe, can be clarified from a position of expertise without blunting community voices by recognizing the implications of technology "beyond the box."

It may be especially important for Scribe to intervene after production and beyond the premiere screening, when the text exists not only as an organizational artifact but as a shared bond. Scribe's "network" facilitates some active distribution, as in Through the Lens. Yet I also hope that study and records such as this dissertation will be useful in making suggestions to organizations (were Scribe to have the staff to do this). This is, after all, Scribe's area of community action and expertise.

Concerns of audience need not strait-jacket CV products, however. Different CV texts all speak to diverse imagined communities which organizations also help bring into reality. And as the late Timothy

Asch noted after decades of work with the Yanomamo: "It is time for them to tell their own stories in their own way. And it is important for us to listen. It may be harder for us to listen to their versions than to our versions of the story. What they choose to tell us about themselves may not be as interesting to concerned as we are with our own problems, as what we would choose to tell the world about them" (1991: 106).

This goes beyond texts, once again. Exhibitions, for example, are oftentimes semi-public events where the people who are not personally involve with the organization got introduced to the organization. Yet through the interaction between producers and audience, oftentimes, members from this imagined community will become one of the "active" community in terms of memberships, working together on projects, and other features which reproduce the community. Hence, appreciation and study of the use of the video texts adds yet another layer to the many definitions of community.

Since most CV videos are narrow-cast, relationships are built during these screenings, either in the form of new memberships, or winning or loosing potential support for the imagined communities. In this age of advanced capitalism when actions are often characterized as some kind of promotion towards consumption, one can look upon these videos as advertisement for the organization. But the important difference between these CV videos and commercials is that CV videos sell concerns that are deemed necessary because somehow society has overlooked the needs of these potential "clients." These organizations are not selling a product to make money, or to invest in their stocks, they are hoping to enlarge their community to reach out to those in need[1] and improve their society as a whole. The currency of the transaction, moreover, is beliefs, values and action.

Finally, there remains the nagging question of empowerment which

---

2. Obviously, these organizations need funding to survive, and oftentimes, more members can mean more funding, but this is different for the accumulation of wealth for the sake of making more wealth.

has haunted community and indigenous film and video making since Sol Worth's work with the Navajo (Worth and Adair 1972). While there are many different vantage points from which to define community in these processes of community video, it still seems clear -- although perhaps surprising -- that video technology itself has not changed any CV community in any dramatic fashion. No organization has really made another tape, except for the Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey. Therefore one major objectives of Scribe, that of providing the organization with a new tool of expression, has not really been realized. The low cost, portability, and relatively simple operation of video has allowed a broader segment of the population to participate in moving image making. Yet, to many CV organizations, video is simply another means to put forth their message, not that different from printing a newsletter, doing a mural, or a theater production.

To make it work on a long term basis, moreover, in constant production and exhibition, would require some form of specialization, not so much in skills, which can be mastered through practice, but commitment. An organization would have to become Scribe, in part. For the organizations I have dealt with, this would demand a shift in priority. This partly explains why few CV groups have pursued video as an integral part of their organizations. This does not mean, however, that individuals have not learned more about production or reading through this experience. And we have yet to see what emerges from projects which include training youth, like AAU.

Nonetheless, the availability of video technology has opened up a potential space which we might continue to explore. Videos can be used by Hollywood to make more money, a cult to spread its message of better life ahead in the galaxy. These CV projects show that videos can also be used by the less powerful to express their point of view and participate in the public sphere. Yet the lesson from Scribe's participants is that the technology does not do it by itself, but that people must do so with

a real commitment of time and effort.

It is also possible to schematize these relations of organization, production, text and audience in a different way, borrowing from Chalfen's 1976 sociovidistic models, in order to highlight predictive relationships which may be of interest in future grassroots planning.

Table 4: Relations among Production, Text and Reception

	PRODUCTION	TEXT	USE/AUDIENCE
STRUCTURE	VIDEO TEAM EFFICIENCY	VARIED	
TIGHT	FASTER	CLEARER FOCUS	FREQUENT
LOOSE	SLOWER	LOOSER FOCUS	SELDOM
ORIENTATION			
OUTWARD		EDUCATIONAL	MORE PUBLIC SCREENING
INWARD			SMALL GROUP
RESOURCES			
HIGH	SMOOTHER		MORE USE
LOW	DIFFICULT		LESS USE
CONSTITUENTS			
PART OF ORG.	MORE INVOLVED		
CLIENTS	LESS INVOLVEMENT		
GOALS	PROCESS AS GOAL PROJECT END IN ITSELF		HIGH USE CONTEXTUAL
EDUCATIONAL		INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUE ORIENTED	
SERVICE		ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION	LOW ERRATIC USE; HISTORICALLY LIMITED

Here, the chart should be read in terms of relations rather than a neat left to right flow: in some cases, there are themes of audience/use that are more closely related to production than text, for example. One must also avoid the temptation to make this overly deterministic, filling in all boxes in the grid simply because they exist.

This table does point to the fact that the CV process is not suitable for all grassroots organizations and may be useful in different ways to those who pursue it. Most importantly, those that are under

stress, in terms of organization, resource, or personnel, should not attempt to engage in the CV process which would only strain the organization even more. And clarity of planning produces best results.

Yet success cannot be measured by product alone. Failure at Scribe was part of the dynamics of problems for PPP that led to its reorganization and brought it back to Scribe. Other groups have been forced to ask about priorities because of the demands of the Community Vision program. Still others, like AAU or Woodrock, have defined the production process alone as success, without worrying about later results. It is important that my evaluation and Scribe's be open to these changes, interpretations and values of communities themselves.

The Cultural Studies and Ethnographic Model

It is difficult, even in conclusions, to evaluate the importance and value of a model which should, one hopes, already have become apparent in the reading. The most important contribution Cultural Studies has made to the study of video as a visual medium, as I have developed this study and compared it with other work in cinema and video, is to move away from textual studies that are atemporal, ahistorical, acultural and "acontextual". Two features of the cultural studies model, processual analysis and reflexive ethnographic methods, have proven to be especially invaluable. Processual studies have been further enhanced through Richard Johnsons' feedback model (Figure 1) which takes into consideration the issue of reproduction, allowing the analyst to explore each step, understanding each is linked to others.

In order to understand this dynamic process, doing ethnography has allowed me to gain access to the people involved in different stages, to understand the daily intricacies of the video process. This brings me back to the question about theory and practice at the beginning of this chapter.

To do ethnography is to make a study of practice. It is through the day to day practice of different groups that I learn to understand

how each group define community and how each has appropriated the video technology to its own end. Furthermore, it is through ethnographic description that I was able to bring real people to the pages of this dissertation. However selected and edited, this conveys, I hope, some of the spirit and construction of grassroots videos themselves.

Certainly, this is not a CV project nor has it been done like one, despite the intense and supportive collaboration of Scribe and many other groups. Yet, cultural studies approaches "share a view of culture as a political, historical process, constructing everyday life..." (G. Turner: 30). To study culture is then to understand its everyday communities and through this to read texts, and the processes by which they are produced and shared, the everyday process of negotiation by different members of various communities.

My experience of working within these models and methods tends to argue that holism is intellectually necessary as well. Returning to the Table 2 flow chart, this study started by looking at the history and background of Philadelphia, to understand how a space has been created for grassroots movements, putting CV in a wider historical and social structures. The investigation of Scribe sheds light onto the first defining meaning of community within Community Visions. The production process, textual analysis, audience and use help me to interpret the social relations embedded in each process, and how they in turn affect the others.

Contexts also allow me to make complex sense of the texts which formal analysis might easily dismiss. Only though an examination of the production contexts, understanding the dynamics involved in making the videos, can one glimpse the different power relationship among "subjects" and "objects" created in the video. Only when distribution and exhibition are taken into consideration can we understand how the meanings of the text changes through these myriad mediations in the mind of the audience. Here we see the significance of the texts as well

as their creative force in a way that isolated study cannot justify. Indeed, this holistic viewpoint supports the importance of community video as a whole.

When I turn from grassroots to cinema studies, in fact it is now striking to me how fragmented the latter seem by contrast. Text, production, audience and context have been separated despite pleas from leading scholars and one suspects that this lies behind some of the contemporary crises within the field. What to do with audience remains a daily debate on my list-serve, as scholars bemoan laughter at inappropriate scenes in Clockwork Orange or students' rejection of Westerns. But this anguish often seems to derive in part from how they themselves have isolated the screen -- created the "Western" as an artifact of intrinsic value -- without seeing that intertexts operate in the classroom. If students are not prepared for Westerns they will not read them any more empathetically than my Muhlenberg students read To School or Not to School. With planning and awareness of audience as a constantly changing community construct, however, To School can prove illuminating as a text not only on dropouts but also on community activism and media even among in Hong Kong undergraduates.

This does not mean that we can make simple leaps among media. In many ways, community videos and their examination still remain far distant from mass media with whom I compared them in Chapter I. Except for some technological necessities, Community Vision's production process, textual strategies, and means of distributions are all distinct. Grassroots media are, in many ways, voices of legitimation which aim to help the marginalized to fight back, while mass media are made-for- profit products that are also embedded in cultural codes whose primary aim is to keep the audience entertained.

Community media are alternatives: they pursue subjects and more importantly, styles that Hollywood rejects. The ability for poor ethnic minorities to build their own home is not a "sexy" subject, nor would a

Hollywood producer choose to make a story about old people reading. In this sense they provide voices where none are heard, or even spoken.

Nonetheless, at times, it would seem that both Disney-ABC and CV compete to deal with the same area and subject. Ted Kopple came to Philadelphia to look for "the Badlands," where he highlighted the desperation of the inhabitants there. On the other hand, Reconstruction works in a similar neighborhood, although their tape talks about how many of these often labelled "hopeless" people try to get their lives together. While the mainstream media concentrate on the plight of the inner city, CV looks for success stories in places, people, and communities that are undergoing hardship, but yet manage to find solutions to some of their problems. Not only voices but also meanings and contexts prove distinctive and teach us significantly about mass media assumptions.

In fact, the fragmentation of frames to which I opposed cultural studies has allowed cinema and mass media scholars to erroneously ignore grassroots alternatives, labelling production as small-scale, its products, "amateurish" and its audience, limited. As components, none compares with the scale of national cinemas or even independent auteurs. Yet together, they speak to the processes that constituted even Hollywood and relations which remain present even at a mass scale within contemporary cinema. Knowing that small audiences need to learn to read and yet will identify with people sharing their concerns might pose a lesson for apolitical spectacular in today's Hollywood and Hong Kong.

I would also suggest that both cases require the same method of study to understand the full impact of these text. One does not want to adopt a vulgar Marxist approach to say since Rupert Murdoch owns Fox, the network only wants to pursue global economic and cultural domination along his philosophies (which Johnson 1979 and Turner 1992 specifically warn against in British cultural studies). Yet we must be aware of how production and texts shift at Fox or at <u>Nightline</u>'s ABC-Disney, and what

this does to reconstitute the reader -- or evoke new responses from this active spectator. As one studies how shows are being selected, promoted, and eventually read, looking out from Face to Face one can gain a better understanding what the Simpsons, Beverly Hills 90210, Nightline and NYPD Blue mean to different parties concerned -- especially as both have expanded beyond the frontiers of the U.S.

We must also examine differences among media. In many ways, CV works are closer to independent media and more interest may be generated from comparing these overlapping versions of voice, text and audience. Formally, there are important linkages between community videos and other kinds of social conscious documentary. A conscientious filmmaker making a film about an "other," who has taken the time to understand and create dialogue with her subjects, can produce a work that incorporates interviews which express a genuine exchange of the two; as Briggs notes one can, in the end, learn how to ask.

Structurally, nonetheless, there will always been power imbalance when a "first world" film/ videomaker makes a work about the "third world" (or a Yale cinema student makes a film about a Harlem transvestite ballroom as in Paris is Burning (1990). One wonders to what extent such a filmmaker will continue to make any group or dialogue the primary focus of both professional and personal identity for the future, although we must remember John Marshall's highly reflexive and longterm involvement in !Nai (1980) (See Turner 1991 and Ruby 1991). Furthermore, what does this relationship says in turn about the reflexive documentary as social metaphor? Again, the answer seems to lie in an holistic analysis, including production, text and use.

These contrasts should not, however, idealize CV. A community video can offer a product that only highlights one aspect of a divided organization, or obscures others by concentrating on one particular point of view. Some "communities" selected by Scribe never complete their projects. Some videos may be bland. Even so, in the absence of a

dynamic community video, the community continues to exist in ways which also beg comparison with the subjects of mass and independent non-fiction -- and fiction? -- video.

Finally, some epistemological questions for all media recur throughout the dissertation. All in all, the one feature that CV want to assert about their works is that "these stories are real". Non-fiction media can never be all-inclusive, completely balanced, authentic or objective. Throughout the development of documentary film, varied techniques and uses of interviews and narration have tried to make these claims. These have included using and not using Voice-of-God narration, interviewing diverse people to show balance, claiming to let real people talk, and obscuring the selection and editing process in the personal and effective pseudo-monologue.

CV works have also tried to represent authenticity without, however, developing it as a formal theory. No tape ever used a consistent narrator, and <u>Face to Face</u> has more than 10 interviewees. These devices were used because only through these voices and devices, can these communities tell their stories, people "believe" and "represent" that they are simply, telling stories about themselves in their communities. Authenticity also has meanings that cross the screen, as it were. Communities are built on rituals and transgressions. In these, it is apparent that ritual acts, from weddings, to communal meals, to group shots serve as unifying and real elements in many films. Similarly, screening itself takes on ritual features. Yet there are other elements of authenticity -- Veronica's <u>Shit</u> (described in Chapter III) -- which transgress formal and ritual elements and transpose community video into another realm still defined by boundaries. Here, though, we are still invited to participate with her in a community within which that fault will still be acceptable.

These multiple and divergent readings and use of CV videos are features of the small scale of community. Most watch community videos in

small familiar settings. CV works are not very pretty. These are the elements of aesthetics and readings which audiences have to negotiate. Yet most watch these videos to become informed of some particular issue. The readings of Bryn Mawr and Muhlenberg students may seem distant, yet they, too, refer to identities of community shaped by distribution channels which they themselves partake of, through old techniques like those of the classroom as well as new technologies like public access cable and distribution systems. These, too, could be addressed to mass media studies and to forms of communication like the dissertation.

A Few Closing Questions

While I have by now extensively reviewed my cases and data, their interpretations and implications, this study has also made it apparent how many more questions remain to guide future research. Some may be my own as I continue this work and association with Scribe and greater Philadelphia. Others, I hope, will find suggestions and linkages here.

Some key questions must be addressed still to the data. In talking of reproduction, for example, how can we avoid reification and talk of groups which change and fissure -- a theme which the recency of the Scribe video projects may make difficult to document? And what, indeed of the reinforcement of community or its reconstruction over longer time periods? Native Americans have turned to anthropological documents to reconstruct lost community rituals: how will videos like CV be used in decades ahead? Again, it is too soon to say, given Scribe's brief lifespan, but we must continue to watch and learn over time.

Literacy is another area of results which I have not yet explored. Do those in the active community of videographers think of other media differently after their experiences? Do those outside this community who see themselves on screen think differently about their absence in other media? Through this, one might also consider empowerment at a broader scale in terms of changes among organizational cultures of Greater Philadelphia over time as well. Kensington Welfare Rights Organization

is only one group to turn more to video and film in education and activism. Again, development may demand even more such as reconsideration of Philadelphia's public access question.

These questions must be tempered by knowledge from other cases beyond Scribe and Greater Philadelphia. In fact, my bibliographic searches have turned up many organizations and some films, but few studies beyond Michaels and Juhasz or the symposium in Visual Anthropology (1991). And even these studies are short in crucial data, especially with regard to audience. Nonetheless, in a year in Hong Kong I have interviewed and otherwise learned about similar projects there, in Taiwan and in other Asian centers. The richness of the Scribe case suggests a wider potential for analysis, but this actually also depends on the framing that can emerge from more comparative data as well.

Other questions remain for other media and communication as a field. After this research, I remain especially concerned about how we may study audiences What are the units and meanings? I have responded to this question in different way to Hong Kong cinema by tracing cassettes as artifacts in transnational flows (Forthcoming). Meanwhile, I have begun to look at movie houses as a local places of experience where global products are consumed that are changed by social development as well. Indeed, all the questions raised here in academic terms are also linked for me to my career in production with Scribe and in other realms of self-expression as well as dialogue between peoples.

In the end, this study of grassroots video asserts once again the power of imagination in communities, communication and visions. This chapter began with a quotation from academics about thinking beyond divisions of representation, theory and practice; it seems appropriate to end with another community-based filmmaker, Canadian Sylvia Hamilton, who made a 1989 film about the Black heritage of Nova Scotia:

> After screenings of Black Mother, Black Daughter, so many people would comment on how grateful they were to have been given images of themselves, and so many white people were amazed to learn about this history they had known nothing about. So I've seen how film

> can open doors, point out to people things they never thought of before.
>
> For me, film can be both a mirror and a hammer: it can show us what is as well as a vision of what can be... (In Moscovitch 1993:236).

Extending this powerful metaphor, community video as well can be both mirror and hammer, theory and practice, reflection and warning. If this study is a beginning, I would hope it has also made evident how much more there is to learn from Scribe, CV, the organizations involved, their videos and projects like them around the world.

Similarly, screening itself takes on ritual features. Yet there are other elements of authenticity -- Veronica's Shit (described in Chapter III) -- which transgress formal and ritual elements and transpose community video into another realm still defined by boundaries. Here, though, we are still invited to participate with her in a community within which that fault will still be acceptable.

These multiple and divergent readings and use of CV videos are features of the small scale of community. Most watch community videos in small familiar settings. CV works are not very pretty. These are the elements of aesthetics and readings which audiences have to negotiate. Yet most watch these videos to become informed of some particular issue. The readings of Bryn Mawr and Muhlenberg students may seem distant, yet they, too, refer to identities of community shaped by distribution channels which they themselves partake of, through old techniques like those of the classroom as well as new technologies like public access cable and distribution systems. These, too, could be addressed to mass media studies and to forms of communication like the dissertation.

A Few Closing Questions

While I have by now extensively reviewed my cases and data, their interpretations and implications, this study has also made it apparent how many more questions remain to guide future research. Some may be my own as I continue this work and association with Scribe and greater Philadelphia. Others, I hope, will find suggestions and linkages here.

Some key questions must be addressed still to the data. In talking of reproduction, for example, how can we avoid reification and talk of groups which change and fissure -- a theme which the recency of

the Scribe video projects may make difficult to document? And what, indeed of the reinforcement of community or its reconstruction over longer time periods? Native Americans have turned to anthropological documents to reconstruct lost community rituals: how will videos like CV be used in decades ahead? Again, it is too soon to say, given Scribe's brief lifespan, but we must continue to watch and learn over time.

Literacy is another area of results which I have not yet explored. Do those in the active community of videographers think of other media differently after their experiences? Do those outside this community who see themselves on screen think differently about their absence in other media? Through this, one might also consider empowerment at a broader scale in terms of changes among organizational cultures of Greater Philadelphia over time as well. Kensington Welfare Rights Organization is only one group to turn more to video and film in education and activism. Again, development may demand even more such as reconsideration of Philadelphia's public access question.

These questions must be tempered by knowledge from other cases beyond Scribe and Greater Philadelphia. In fact, my bibliographic searches have turned up many organizations and some films, but few studies beyond Michaels and Juhasz or the symposium in Visual Anthropology (1991). And even these studies are short in crucial data, especially with regard to audience. Nonetheless, in a year in Hong Kong I have interviewed and otherwise learned about similar projects there, in Taiwan and in other Asian centers. The richness of the Scribe case suggests a wider potential for analysis, but this actually also depends on the framing that can emerge from more comparative data as well.

Other questions remain for other media and communication as a field. After this research, I remain especially concerned about how we may study audiences What are the units and meanings? I have responded to this question in different way to Hong Kong cinema by tracing cassettes as artifacts in transnational flows (Forthcoming). Meanwhile, I have begun to look at movie houses as a local places of experience where global products are consumed that are changed by social development as well. Indeed, all the questions raised here in academic terms are also linked for me to my career in production with Scribe and in other realms of self-expression as well as dialogue between peoples.

In the end, this study of grassroots video asserts once again the power of imagination in communities, communication and visions. This chapter began with a quotation from academics about thinking beyond divisions of representation, theory and practice; it seems appropriate to end with another community-based filmmaker, Canadian Sylvia Hamilton, who made a 1989 film about the Black heritage of Nova Scotia:

> After screenings of Black Mother, Black Daughter, so many people would comment on how grateful they were to have been given images of themselves, and so many white people were amazed to learn about this history they had known nothing about. So I've seen how film can open doors, point out to people things they never thought of before.
>
> For me, film can be both a mirror and a hammer: it can show us what is as well as a vision of what can be...
>
> (In Moscovitch 1993:236).

Extending this powerful metaphor, community video as well can be both mirror and hammer, theory and practice, reflection and warning. If this study is a beginning, I would hope it has also made evident how much more there is to learn from Scribe, CV, the organizations involved, their videos and projects like them around the world.

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY VISIONS PROJECTS

(derived from Scribe descriptions with added technical and evaluational notes).

1. PEACE AT HOME: GETTING A PROTECTION ORDER IN PENNSYLVANIA produced by Women Against Abuse (WAA) / Community Legal Services (24 minutes, 1991)

Facilitator: Lisa Yasui

Both WAA and CLS work closely in the area of domestic violence, and provide legal representation to the overwhelming majority of Philadelphia women who go through the court system to seek protection from abuse. When a new law in 1991 allowed women to file for protection orders without the help of an attorney, WAA and CLS produced an educational, self-help video to provide women with the information they will need to successfully petition for, and enforce, protection orders.

Women of different backgrounds are interviewed, telling the audience about their experiences, asking them to recognize that domestic abuse has to be addressed, and that they can get out of abusive relationships. The video also uses reenactments of a workshop introducing the restraining order, and a woman going through the process of obtaining such order. It is a straightforward instructional tape which also address and explain what constitute abuses from a partner.

2. FROM VICTIM TO SURVIVOR

produced by Women Organized Against Rape/Scribe Video

(17:30 minutes, 1991)

Facilitator: Margie Strosser; with assistance from: Jennifer Key Baker

Women Organized Against Rape (WOAR) offers service to women who have experience of sexual abuse, through counseling, education, and legal aids. FROM VICTIM TO SURVIVOR depicts the ability of victims of sexual assault to become survivors and shows the way W.O.A.R.'s services empower survivors to heal. The tape is primarily made up of survivors telling their personal stories. The interviews are separated into five sessions -- TELLING SECRETS, FINDING WORDS, VOICING ANGER, HEALING

PAINS, and MOVING ON. They are done with tight head shots, separated by visuals and titles that explain services WOAR provides.

3. WE HOPE THIS MESSAGE IS GETTING THROUGH

produced by Kensington Action Now / Kensington Area Revitalization Project/Scribe Video

(16 minutes, 1991)

Facilitator: Gretjen Clausing

Kensington Action Now (KAN), a neighborhood organization founded in 1978, was involved in a two year struggle to increase the funding for public recreational facilities. This video documents the efforts surrounding this issue which has united both young and old. The video also contains a rap song sung by youths of the area on the problem of drugs. This is identified by a later questionnaire as a more central theme of the text, although viewers may find it at times quite conservative as well.

4. FIRST THINGS FIRST

produced by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project/Scribe Video

(14 minutes, 1991)

Facilitators: Bryn Clark, Sande Smith; Consulting Editor: Pam Amos; with assistance from: Louis Massiah

PUP represents a group of unemployed and low-income workers who organize around issues affecting the poor, including campaigns for a fair minimum wage and the expansion of health care access to the uninsured. This videotape profiles some of the past and present struggles they have been involved with, including extending unemployment payment, increase health coverage for workers, equal wage for McDonald's workers in the city as well as the suburbs. The tape also touches on some of the philosophies and strategies that guide their work, including their beliefs in workers' rights, and an activist protest culture. It is

an extremely political tape.

5. MONTESSORI GENESIS II: A FAMILY THING

produced by Montessori Genesis School/Scribe Video Center

(8:24 minutes, 1991)

Facilitator: Nadine Patterson

In September, 1976 in the midst of a teacher's strike, sixteen low-income African American families chose to shun the Philadelphia school system and start their own elementary school based on their children's successful Montessori pre-school experiences. Celebrating that school's 15th anniversary, this video documents the school's history and is being used to attract more parents to this unique educational experience. The tape interviews some alum and teachers of the school who testify to the success of the program.

6. WOMEN HOUSING WOMEN

produced by the Women's Community Revitalization Project/Scribe Video

(15 minutes, 1991)

Facilitator: Gretjen Clausing, Consulting Editor: Pam Amos

In this intimate portrait of the women of Women's Community Revitalization project (WCRP), a culturally and economically diverse group of tenants, staff and board members talk of their successes in the development of affordable housing for low-income and formerly homeless women. They demystify the process by showing that women can succeed in this previously male-dominated field.

The tape opens with a re-enactment of a white male banker rejecting a housing loan application. It then mixes home video footage of large and diverse board meetings with interview footage of women who have obtain shelter from WCRP, and those who are about to move into their new homes, and interviews with the two executive directors on setting up a women organized and run agency for housing women.

7. WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Produced by Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services/Scribe Video Center

(15 minutes, 1993)

Facilitator: Sharon Mullally; with assistance from: Carlton Jones and Hébert Peck Jr

In the United States 1 in 5 people suffer from mental illness at one point in their life and 7 1/2 million people are mentally retarded. Until the 1970's these people were provided for by government institutions, but today many find their homes primarily in the streets. For over 17 years, CO-MHAR has provided services to these individuals in one section of Philadelphia. In this tape, four CO-MHAR clients and their families tell of their experiences and how their lives have been changed by this community mental health program.

8. MORE THAN PROPERTY

Produced by The United Hands Community Land Trust/Scribe Video Center

(13 minutes, 1993)

Facilitators: Toni Cade Bambara, Chris Emmanouilides

The United Hands Community Land Trust is a multi-racial home ownership organization in the Kensington section of Philadelphia committed to insuring permanent, affordable, quality housing for primarily low-income people of color.

This video examines the hostile environment in which people become isolated within this urban devastation. It shows how transformation takes place when people make their own opportunities through participation in the shaping of a vision and having a home to call their own. The tape follows a family who used their sweat equity to build their own home as well as showing scenes of reclaimed neighborhood activities, such as a baseball game in a newly-reclaimed park. Dialogue is in Spanish and English.

9. HERSTORY: THE PHILADELPHIA BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT

Produced by the Philadelphia Black Women's Health Project/Scribe Video Center (12 minutes, 1993)

Facilitators: Lillian Leak, Nadine Patterson

The PBWHP offers educations, advocacy and self-help to the African-American community. The goal of this video is to increase awareness in the Black community of diseases that affect Black women. Through the clever mixture of dramatic segments and interviews with women from the project, the video successfully introduces many areas for discussion about particular health concerns to the Black community. Some of the concerns discussed are breast cancer, pre-natal care, stress and cardiovascular disease.

10. TO SCHOOL OR NOT TO SCHOOL

Produced by Youth United for Change of Woodrock/Scribe Video Center (13 minutes, 1993.)

Facilitator: John Knapich

Woodrock is a non-profit youth agency committed to eliminating inter-racial tension and hostility through programs for youth ages 9 - 18. A group from the Youth Organizing Project uses video to explore and document the high rate of school drop-outs among their peers.

Adopting a youthful MTV style, the youths produced a video that speaks to their peers. Through conversations with three young drop-outs and other young people attending Edison High School and other youths on the street. They found that peer pressure, the desire to earn fast cash, lack of parental involvement, teenage pregnancy and lack of teacher effectiveness are issues of daily concern to these Philadelphia teenagers. The tape also addresses the unresponsiveness of the Philadelphia Board of Education to this serious problem.

11. BODYWORKS

Produced by Nexus/BodyWorks and Scribe Video Center

(13:34 minutes, 1994)

Facilitator: Andres Nicolini

Nexus is a two year, multi-faceted art and education project highlighting the work of artists with varied physical disabilities. They produced a video documenting the struggle of artists working with different medium and perceptions, to design this project. It also stresses the importance of the integrity of someone's art over the fact that the given artist has a disability

Various artists are interviewed at their work sites. The tape documents how art is created by these outstanding individuals, interweaving their voices, their studios, the process of creation, and their works.

12. THE NEW FACES OF AIDS

Produced by We the People Living with Aids of the Delaware Valley/Scribe Video Center

(14:56 minutes, 1994)

Facilitators: Janet Williams and Cindy Wong

We The People, an organization run by, and for people with HIV retrovirus, produced a tape documenting the organization's empowerment of individual members, and the struggle to survive with HIV.

The tape testifies to the strength of People With AIDS by interviewing members at WTP. These individuals tell the audience of their experience from the first diagnosis of their being HIV+, their first experience at WTP, their identification with the organization, and their of their future. A voice over narration also introduces the audience to the shocking statistics of AIDS, and the services WTP provides.

13. GIANT STEPS

Produced by The John W .Coltrane Cultural Society/Scribe Video Center (10:43 minutes, 1994)

Facilitators: Toni Cade Bambara and Carlton Jones

The Society is an organization committed to the preservation and perpetuation the late jazz great's musical legacy. Through the testimonies of Cousin Mary, the director of the Coltrane Society, and a cousin of John Coltrane, their video focuses on Coltrane as a role model for young people, the Society's out-reach work with children and adults, and their desire to find a permanent home for the organization next to Coltrane's home in North Philadelphia.

14. SE HABLE AQUI

Produced by Hispanic Family Centers of Southern New Jersey/Scribe Video Center (13:05 minutes, 1994)

Facilitator: David Kluft

Hispanic Family Centers, a multi-service agency located in Southern New-Jersey, provides a variety of support services, to Hispanic and low-income families in Camden. The video, using both English and Spanish, documents their work in the community, concentrating on their program on English as a Second Language (ESL). The center deemed ESL as an important program because it would help new immigrants to adapt to American life, and to find employment. Unfortunately, not long after the tape was finished, the State of New Jersey took away the funding for ESL, and classes now run on a much smaller scale, primarily with volunteer efforts.

15. THAT SOUNDS LIKE ME: SENIORS READ ALOUD TOGETHER

Produced by the Jewish Community Centers of Greater Philadelphia. (15:17 mins, 1995)

Facilitator: Maria Rodriguez

The tape highlights the senior adult department's use of literature with small groups of elders as a catalyst for meaningful social interaction. The tape is tied together by different literary allusion to feet. Through interviews with Dr. Wendy Wenzel, the founder of Senior Resources, the audience sees how seniors of varying abilities in different centers use group reading to communicate with one another.

16. AS SPEECH FLOWS TO MUSIC

Produced by Anna Crusis Women's Choir (15:21 mins, 1995)

Facilitator: Diane Pointus

Anna Crusis Women's Choir, a Philadelphia based vocal ensemble, explores their 20 year history, their role in the women's community and how they have used music as a tool for community empowerment.

The video contains interviews with Anna's founder and some original members, as well as its current music director and members, to give a sense of how the choir has evolved over the years. Performances at their annual June concert, as well as their singing at am AIDS hospice allow their music to speak directly to their audience.

17. MEDIATION: UNTANGLING THE KNOT

Produced by Good Shepherd Neighborhood Mediation Program (19:15 mins, 1995)

Facilitator: Dennis Doyon

Good Shepherd Neighborhood Mediation Program, is designed to alert community resident to peaceful alternatives to violence by advocating for constructive conflict resolution. The tape interweaves on the street interview with an reenactment of how a neighborhood parking conflict is finally resolved using the mediation program.

The video uses humor to draw the audience into a clearer understand of the nature of mediation, and the process involved. The tape also use the creation and final untanglement of a human knot to

reflect on the mediation process.

18. FACE TO FACE: IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK

Produced by Asian American United (20 mins, 1996)

Facilitator: Carl Lee and Cindy Wong

AAU is an organization that fights for equal rights for Asian Americans in the Philadelphia region. Its target constituents are Asian youths and Asian Americans from South East Asia, even though all people are welcome to join. It has run other successful art programs for Asian youths, like a mural and a dance project.

With a youthful tempo, the tape explores the many aspects of Asian American youth culture in Philadelphia, from school, stereotypes, police harassment, to gang problem, and conclude the tape with a poem that probes into the identity of Asian American youth, with their dreams and aspirations.

19. THE CURRENCY OF COMMUNITY

Produced by Triangle Interest (15 mins, 1996)

Facilitator: Wendy Weinberg

The tape first questions the meaning of community, to ascertain the many varied bonds that bind the lesbian community. Different women then explore how society does not provide financial safety nets for lesbians who cannot be married legally, and few have children of their own. This explains the establishment of Triangle Interest Credit Union where lesbians come together, and pull in their resources, to look after their own well being.

20. RECONSTRUCTION

Produced by Reconstruction (20 mins, 1996)

Facilitator: Charlene Gilbert, Aishah Simmons, Nadine Stanley

Reconstruction is an organization that facilitates reintegration

of second time violent offender into society. The tape introduces the audience to the programs of Reconstruction, where the first stage involve having meetings with the inmates in prison, and the second stage involves the running of a half way house for the parolees. The tape documents the struggle of Reconstruction in convincing the neighbor of the value of helping these parolees by setting up a home for them. The many interviews with the parolees, prison officials, social workers, intercut with images of violence in urban African American lives, like the bombing of the Move Headquarter in Philadelphia, suggest that many of the inmates in American prisons are not simply criminals, but also victims that deserve a second chance.

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL FILMOGRAPHY

Alma's Rainbow (1988) Ayoka Chenzira

An American Family (1972) Craig Gilbert, 12 hours

The Atomic Cafe (1982) Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, Pierce Rafferty, 92 min.

Anyplace but Here (1986) 45 min.

The Ax Fight (1971) Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon, 30 min.

Battle of China (1944) Frank Capra and Anatole Litvak.,67 min.

Berlin: Symphony of a Great City (1927), Walter Ruttman, 53 min.

Bob Roberts (1992) Tim Robbins, 101 min.

Bombing on Osage Avenue (1986) Louis Massiah.

Brother's Keeper Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, 150 min.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1929) Robert Weinne, 102 min.

Cannibal Tours (1988) Dennis O'Rourke, 88 min.

Casablanca (1943) Michael Curtiz, 102 min.

The Civil War (1990) Ken Burns. Approx 12 hours.

Chronique d'une Ete (Chronicle of a Summer)(1960) Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, 90 min.

The Day After Trinity: J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Atomic Bomb (1981) John Else. 88 min.

Daughters of the Dust (1991) Julie Dash, 114 min.

Dead Man Walking (1996) Tim Robbins, 120 min

Enfants du Paradis (Children of Paradise) (1945) Marcel Carne, 195m.

Ethnic Notions (1987) Marlon Riggs, 58 min.

Eyes on the Prize, Part II (1988) Louis Massiah, multiple episodes.

Frankford Stories (1988) Martha Kearns, 9 min.

French Kiss (1996) Lawrence Kasdan, 100 min.

Forget Paris (1996) Billy Crystal, 100 min

The Fugitive (1993) Andrew Davis, 127 min.

Gate of Heavenly Peace (1995) Carmen Hinton, Richard Gordon, 140 min.

Good Woman of Bangkok (1992) Dennis O'Rourke.

Handsworth Songs (1986) John Akonfrah, 52 min.

Harlan County, USA (1976) Barbara Kopple, 103 min.

High School (1968) Frederick Wiseman, 1968, 75 min.

Homeless (1996) Zhang keee-Chui, 48 min.

The Hunters (1956) John Marshall, 73 min.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984) George Lucas, 127 min.

In the Year of the Pig (1969) Emile de Antonio, 101 min.

Intermarriage: A Latina's Perspective (1989) Priscilla Cintron, 10 min.

JFK (1991) Oliver Stone, 188 min.

Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter (1980), Connie Field. 80 min.

Little Hebert (1994) Hebert Peck, 20 min.

Lorang's Way (1980) David and Judith McDougall, 70 min.

Magical Death (1974) Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon, 28 min

A Man From Hope (1992).

Man with a Movie Camera (1929) Dziga Vertov, 103 min.

Memories of Underdevelopment (Memorias de subdesarrollo) (1973) Tomas Gutierrez Alea, 97 min.

Morning Tide

N!ai: Story of a !Kung Woman (1980) John Marshall, 58 min.

Naked Spaces: Living is Round (1985) Trinh T. Min-Ha, 135 min.

Nanook of the North (1922) Robert Flaherty, 55 min.

Natural Born Killers (1994) Oliver Stone

Nixon (1995) Oliver Stone, 183 min.

Not Seen or Known (1990) A. DaMotta Leal, 5.5 min.

Panama Deception (1992) Barbara Trent, 91 min.

Paris is Burning (1990) Jennie Livingstone, 78 min.

Paradise Lost: The Robin Hood Hills Child Murders (1996) Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, 150 min.

Philadelphia (1993), Jonathan Demme, 126 min.

Rape Stories (1989) Margie Strosser.

The Rock (1996) Michael Bay, 130 min,

Roger and Me (1989) Michael Moore, 87 min.

Seulto (1990) Chris Emmanouilides.

Sherman's March (1985) Ross McElwee, 155 min.

Silence Broken (1993) Aishah Shahida Simmons, 7 min.

Solicited Response (1989) Margaret Graham, 7 min.

Sound of Music (1965) Robert Wise, 174 min.

Surname Viet, Given Name Nam (1989) Trinh T. Min-Ha, 108 min.

Thin Blue Line (1987) Errol Morris, 115 min.

This is Spinal Tap (1989) Rob Reiner.

Titicut Follies (1967) Frederick Wiseman, 89 min.

Time to Kill (1996)Michael Rock, 144 min.

Tonques Untied (1989) Marlon Riggs, 45 min.

Triumph of the Will (1934) Leni Riefenstahl, 107 min.

A True Story (Yek dastan-e vaqhe'i) (1996) Abolfazi Jalili, 140 min.

Waterworld (1995) Kevin Costner.

W.E.B. Dubois (1995) Louis Massiah, 4 hours

When Mother Comes Home for Christmas (1995) Niliita Vachani, 109 min.

Who Killed Vincent Chin? (1988) Renee Tajima and Christine Choy, 87 mi

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrash, Barbara and Catherine Egan, eds. (1992) Mediating History: The MAP Guide to Independent Video New York: New York University Press.

Adams, Carolyn, David Bartelt, David Elesh, Ira Goldstein, Nancy Kleniewski, and William Yancey (1991) Philadelphia Neighborhoods, Division, and Conflict in a Postindustrial City. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Agar, Michael. (1980) The Professional Stranger An Informal Introduction to Ethnography. Orlando: Academic Press.

Anderson, Benedict (1983) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism London: Verso.

Ang, Ien (1991) Desperately Seeking Audience. London: Routledge

----- (1995) Living Room Wars: Rethinking Mass Audience for a Post-Modern World. London:Routledge.

Armes, Roy (1987) Third World Filmmaking and the West Berkeley: University of California Press.

Asad, Talal (1973) Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter. New York: Humanities Press.

Asch, Timothy "The Story We Want to Hear is Not Ours to Tell--Relinquishing Our Control over Representation: Toward Sharing Visual Communication Skills with the Yanomamo" Visual Anthropology VII:2 (Fall): 102-106.

Bacon-Smith, Camille (1994) Enterprising Women. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Baltzell, E. Digby, ed. (1968) The Search for Community in Modern America. New York: Harper & Row.

Barnett, Charles (1984) Community Murals. California.

Benjamin, Walter (1969) "The Work of Art in the Age of mechanical Reproduction". From Illuminations, translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken.

Bennett, Tony and Janet Woollacott, (1988) Bond and Beyond: The

Political Career of a Popular Hero. London: Macmillan.

Bobo, Jacqueline (1988) "The Color Purple: Black Women as Cultural Viewers in Pribram, D. Ed. The Female Spectator. London:BFI.

Bordwell, David and Noel Caroll, eds. Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

Boyle, Deirdre (1990) "A Brief History of American Documentary Video" in Illuminating Video, edited by Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer. San Francisco: Aperture/BAVC: 51-70.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1977) Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge University Press.

Briggs, Charles (1986) Learning How to Ask. Cambridge University Press.

Bruss, Elizabeth (1980) "Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography in Film," in Olney, J. ed. Autobiography: 296-320.

Buckingham, David (1987) Public Secrets: East-Enders and its Audience. London: British Film Institute.

Budd, Michael (1992) The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. New Brunswick: Rutgers.

Burton, Julianne, ed. (1986) Cinema and Social Change in Latin America: Conversations with Filmmakers. Austin: University of Texas.

----- ed. (1990) The Social Documentary in Latin America Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press.

Burnett, Ron (1993) Cultures of Vision: Image, Media and the Imaginary. Bloomington: Indian University Press.

Castells, Manuel (1983) The City and the Grassroots Berkeley: University of California.

Chalfen, Richard (1976) Film as Visual Communication, A Sociovidistic Study in Filmmaking. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania.

Clifford, James and George Marcus, eds., (1986) Writing Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of

California Press.

Cohen, Anthony (1985) The Symbolic Construction of Community. Chichester: Ellis Horwood.

Crawford, Peter Ian and David Turton, eds. (1992) Film as Ethnography. Manchester University Press.

Cubitt, Sean (1991) Timeshift: on Video Culture London, Routledge.

Devereaux, Leslie and Hillman, Roger, eds. (1995) Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology and Photography Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dickey, Sara (1993) Cinema and Society in South India. Cambridge: at the University Press.

Dowmunt, Tony, ed. (1993) Channel of Resistance: Global Television and Local Empowerment London: British Film Institute.

Downing, John D.H., ed. (1987) Film & Politics in the Third World. New York: Praeger.

DuBois, W.E.B. (19)The Philadelphia Negro Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Dyer, Richard (1986) Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society. New York: St. Martin Press.

Eco, Umberto (1976) A Theory of Semiotics. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Eitzen, Dirk (1995) "When is a Documentary? Documentary as a Mode of Reception" Cinema Journal 35, 1, Fall 1995: 81-101.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. (1940) Nuer. Oxford: At the University Press.

Feitosa, Monica (1991) "The Other's Vision: From the Ivory Tower to the Barricades" Visual Anthropology VII: 2 (Fall): 48-9.

Fischer, Robert(1993) "Grassroots Organizing Worldwide: Common Ground, Historical Roots, and the Tension Between Democracy and the State" in Mobilizing the Community: Local Politics in the Era of the Global City. ed. by R. Fischer and J. Kling, Newbury Park: SAGE (Urban

Affairs Annual Review, 41): 2-27.

Fischer, Robert and Joseph Kling (1993) Mobilizing the Community: Local Politics in the Era of the Global City. Newbury Park: SAGE (Urban Affairs Annual Review, 41).

Franco, Debra. (1990)Alternative Visions: Distributing Independent Media in a Home Video World. Los Angeles: AFI.

Freire, Paulo (1982) Pedagogy of the Oppressed New York: Continuum.

Gabriel, Teshome H. (1982) Third Cinema in the Third World: the Aesthetics of Liberation Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press.

Geertz, Clifford (1975) The Interpretation of Culture New York: Basic Books.

Gillespie, Marie (1995) Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change. London: Routledge.

Gledhill, Christine (1988) "Pleasurable Negotiations" In Pribram, D. Ed, Female Spectators. London: BFI.

Goodman, Paul and Percival Goodman (1960) Communitas.

Greed, Clara (1994) Women and Planning. London: Routledge.

Gross, Larry, John Stuart Katz, and Jay Ruby, eds. (1988) Image Ethics: the Moral Rights of Subjects in Photographs, Film, and Television. New York: Oxford University Press.

----- (1988) "The Ethics of (Mis) Representation" in Image Ethics: the Moral Rights of Subjects in Photographs, Film, and Television, Gross, Katz and Ruby, eds. New York: Oxford University Press.

----- (1989) "Out of the Mainstream: Sexual Minorities and the Mass Media " in Remote Control, Ellen Seiter, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner and Eva-Maria Worth, eds. London: Routledge. Pp. 130-149

Grossberg, Lawrence, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler, eds. (1992) Cultural Studies. New York: Routledge.

Gurevitch, Michael, Tony Bennett, James Curran, and Janet Woollacott, eds. (1992) Culture, Society and the Media. London:

Routledge.

Guynn, William (1990) A Cinema of Nonfiction Cranbury: Associated University Presses.

Hall, Doug and Sally Jo Fifer, eds. (1990) Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art. San Francisco: Aperture. The Bay Area Video Coalition.

Hall, Stuart (1987) "Encoding/decoding" in Hall, Stuart, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis, eds. (1987) Culture, Media, Language. London: Hutchinson: 128-138.

----- Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis, eds. (1987) Culture, Media, Language. London: Hutchinson.

------ and Tony Jefferson, eds. (1976) Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain. London: Hutchinson.

Halleck, DeeDee 1993 "Deep Dish TV: Community Video from Geostationary Orbit" in Leonardo no5:415-20

Hammond, Joyce D (1989) "Representation in a Collaborative Video Project" in Visual Sociology Review 4,1, Spring:8-15.

Hanhardt, John, ed. (1986) Video Culture: A Critical Investigation. Princeton: Visual Studies Workshop Press.

Hansen, Miriam (1993) "Early Cinema, late Cinema: Permutations of the Public Sphere." Screen 34(3):197-210.

Henaut, Dorothy Todd (1991) "Video Stories from the Dawn of Time" Visual Anthropology VII: 2 (Fall): 85-101.

Himpele, Jeffrey D. "Film Distribution as Media: Difference and Discourse in the Cinemascape," Visual Anthropology XXII (1) (Spring 1996): 47-66.

hooks, bell. (1994) Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations. New York: Routledge.

Hyatt, Kenton S. (1992), "Documentary Images: Visual Information Made to order" in Visual Sociology 1992, 7, 1, Spring, 68-79.

Issari, M. Ali and Paul, Doris A. (1979) What is Cinema verite?

Metuchen: Scarecrow Press.

Jenkins, Henry (1992) Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture. London: Routledge

Johnson, Richard (1987) "What is Cultural Studies Anyway?" in Social Text Vol. 17 Fall: 39-81.

Jones, D.B. (1988) "The Canadian Film Board: Unit B" in New Challenges for Documentary ed. Alan Rosenthal. Berkeley: University of California Press: 133-147.

Juhasz, Alexandra (1995) AIDS TV: Identity, community and Alternative Video. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Katz, Elihu and Paul Lazarsfeld (1955) Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication. New York: Free Press.

Katz, Peter (1994) The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community. New York: McGraw Hill.

Katz, John Stuart and Judith Milstein Katz (1988) Ethics and the Perception of Ethics in Autobiographical Film" in Image Ethics Larry Gross, John Katz and Jay Ruby, eds. New York: Oxford university Press.

Kleymeyer, Charles David (1994) ed. Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development: Cases From Latin America and the Caribbean. Boulder: Lynne Reiner, Publishers.

Larkin, Alile (1988) "Black Women Film-Makers Defining Ourselves: Feminism in Our Own Voice" In Pribram, D. Ed Female Spectators. London: BFI: 157-174.

Leuthold, Steven Michael (1992) "Telling our own Story: the Aesthetics Expression of Collective Identity in Native American Documentary (Visual Art, Performance Art, Film, Video) Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania.

Lewis, Peter M. (ed.) (1984) Media for People in Cities a Study of Community Media in the Urban Context. United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Litwin, Howard (1978) "On New Neighborhoods, Community Work and Video Tape" in Centro Sociale 25:139-141, Jan-Jun:235-244.

----- (1984) "Video Work in Community Organization: Boon or Boondoggle" in Community development Journal 19,3, Jul:134-141.

Loizos, Peter (1993) Innovation in Ethnographic Film From Innocence to Self-Consciousness 1955-1985 Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lopez, Steve (1995) Third and Indiana. New York.

Lull, James (1990) Inside Family Viewing: Ethnographic Research on TV's Audience. London: Routledge.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. (1922) Argonauts of the Western Pacific. New York: Dutton.

Marcus, George and Michael Fischer, (1986) Anthropology as Cultural Critique An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Margolis, Eric (1982) "Videoethnography: Toward a Reflexive Paradigm for Community Studies" American Sociological Association paper.

Martinez, Wilton (1992) "Who constructs anthropological knowledge? Toward a theory of ethnographic film spectatorship?" in Film as Ethnography. Peter Crawford and Ian Turton, eds. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 131-164.

Marvin, Carolyn (1988) When Old Technologies were New: Thinking About Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McDonogh, Gary (1986) Good Families of Barcelona. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

----- (1993) Black and Catholic in Savannah, Georgia. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

----- and Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong "Religion and Representation in the Filmic South" in Images of the South, ed. Karl Heider. Athens:

University of Georgia Press: 25-54.

McLuhan, Marshall and Bruce Powers, (1989) The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century, New York: Oxford University Press.

McRobbie, Angela, ed. (1997) Back to Reality? Social Experience and Cultural Studies. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Metz, Christian (1974) Film Language. New York, Oxford University Press.

Michaels, Eric (1987) For a Cultural Future Francis Jupurrurla Makes TV at Yuendumu. Melbourne, Attspace.

------(1994) Bad Aboriginal Art. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

Morley, David (1992) Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies. London: Routledge.

----- (1995) "Theories of Consumption in Media" in Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies, ed. Daniel Miller. London: Routledge. Pp. 296-328.

---- and Kevin Robins (1995) Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries. London: Routledge.

Moscovitch, Arlene (1993) Constructing Reality: Exploring Media Issues in Documentary. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada.

Mulvey, Laura (1975) "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Screen 16, No. 3 (Autumn) 6-18.

Murdock, Graham (1992) "Citizens, consumers and public cultures" in Scovnand, Michael and Kim Christian Schroder, eds. Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media. London: Routledge:17-41.

----- (1997) "Cultural Studies at the Crossroads" in back to reality? Social experience and Cultural Studies, ed. Angela McRobbie. Manchester: Manchester University Press;58-73.

Naficy, Hamid (1993) The Making of Exile Culture: Iranian Television in Los Angeles Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

----- and Teshome H. Gabriel, eds. (1993) Otherness and the Media: Ethnography of the Imagined and the Imaged. Longhorn: Hanwood.

Next, Oscar and Alexander Kluge (1993) The Public Sphere and Experience. Translated by Peter Libyan, Jamie Daniel and Essence Oksiloff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nichols, Bill (ed). (1976) Movies and Methods. Berkeley: University of California Press.

----- (1981) Ideology and the Image. Bloomington: Indian University Press.

------ (1988) "The Voice of Documentary" in New Challenges for Documentary. ed. Alan Rosenthal. Berkeley: University of California Press: 48-63.

------ (1991) Representing Reality. Berkeley: University of California Press.

------ (1994) Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

O'Regan, Tom, ed. (1990) Communication and Tradition: Essays after Eric Michaels. Special issue of Continuum (III:2).

Olney, James, ed. (1980) Autobiography. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ortner, Sherry (1976) "On Key Symbols" American Anthropologist.

Orvell, Miles (1989) The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Ossman, Susan (1994) Picturing Casablanca Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pascal, Roy (1960) Design and Truth in Autobiography. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Pierce, Neil (1995) "The Pierce Report" Philadelphia: Philadelphia Inquirer.

Planinga, Carl (1996) "Moving Pictures and the Rhetoric of Non-

Fiction Film" in Post-Theory, ed. David Bordwell and Noel Carroll:307-28.

Press, Andrea (1991) Women Watching Television: Gender, Class and Generation in the American Television Experience. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Pribram, Deidre, ed. (1988) Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television. London: Routledge.

Rabinowitz, Paula (1994) They Must be Represented: The Politics of Documentary London: Verso.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (1952) Structure and Function in Primitive Society. London: Cohen & West.

Redfield, Robert (1958) The Little Community: Viewpoint for the Study of a Human Whole. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Renov, Michael, ed. (1993) Theorizing Documentary. New York: Routledge.

----- and Erika Suderburg eds. (1995) Resolutions: Contemporary Video Practices. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rossler, Martha (1996) "Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment" in The Block Reader in Visual Culture (no editor. London: Routledge, pp. 258-278 (Originally published in Issue 11, 1986).

Rosenthal, Alan, ed. (1988) New Challenges for Documentary. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ruby, Jay (1991) "Speaking for, Speaking About, Speaking With and Speaking Alongside: An Anthropological And Documentary Dilemma" Visual Anthropology VII:2, Fall: 50-67.

Rushton Dave, ed. (1993) Citizen Television: a Local Dimension to Public Service Broadcasting. London: John Libbey & Co.

Ryan, Michael and Douglas Kellner (1988) Camera Politica. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Sahlins, Marshal (1982) Historical Metaphors and Mythical Reality. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Schneider, Cynthis and Brian Wallis, ed. (1988) Global Television, New York: Wedge Press.

Scovnand, Michael and Kim Christian Schroder, eds. (1992) Media Cultures: Reappraising Transnational Media. London: Routledge.

Seaman, William R. (1992) "Active Audience Theory: Pointless Populism," in Media, Culture, and Society, vol 14 no.2 April 1992, pp.301-11.

Seiter, Ellen, Hans Borcher, Gabriele Kreutzner, and Eva-Maria Worth, eds. 91989) Remote Control: Television, Audiences and Cultural Power. London: Routledge

Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam (1994) Unthinking Eurocentrism. London: Routledge.

------ (1996) "From the Imperial Family to the Transnational Imaginary: Media Spectatorship in the Age of Globalization" in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, ed. Global/Local Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary. Durham: Duke University Press.

Soja, Edward (1996) "Exploring the Spaces that Difference Makes: Notes on the Margin" Thirdspace. Berkeley: University of California Press?? 83-105.

Solanas, Fernando and Octavio Getino (1971) "Towards a Third Cinema" Afterimage, No. 3.

Taylor, Lucien, ed. (1993) Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from VAR 1990-1993 New York: Routledge.

Toll, Jean Barth and Mildred S. Gillam, eds (1994) Invisible Philadelphia. Philadelphia: Atwater Kent.

Tomaselli, Keyann and Jeanne Prinsloo (1990)"Video Realism and Class Struggle: Theoretical Lacunae and the Problem of Power" in Communication and Tradition, ed. T. O'Regan: 140-159.

Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1992) Framer Framed. New York: Routledge.

----- (1989) Woman Native Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Turner, Graeme (1990 British Cultural Studies: An Introduction. Boston: Unwin and Hyman

----- (1993) Film as Social Practice. New York: Routledge.

Turner, Terence (1991) "The Social Dynamics of Video Media in an Indigenous Society: The Cultural Meaning and Personal Politics of Video-Making in Kayapo Communities" Visual Anthropology VII (2; Fall): 68-76.

Turner, Victor, (1967) The Forest of Symbols Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Uricchio, William and Roberta Pearson (1993) Reframing Culture. Princeton.

Vanderbilt, Tom (1995) "Mickey Goes to Town (s)," The Nation 261 (6): August 28/September 4: 197-200.

Wardlow, Holly (1996) "Bobby teardrops: A Turkish Video in Papua New Guinea" Visual Anthropology Review. XII, 1 (Spring 1996):30-46.

Warner, Sam Bass (1968) The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,

Warren, Charles (1996) Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.

Williams, Raymond (1958) Culture and Society, 1780-1950. London: Chatto and Windus.

----- (1961) The Long Revolution. London: Chatto and Windus.

Willis, Janet and Tana Willen, eds. (1990) The Neglected Audience. London: British Film Institute

Willis, Paul. (1990) Common Culture Boulder: Westview.

----- (1977) Learning to Labor how Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs New York: Columbia University Press.

Winston, Brian (1988) "The Tradition of the Victim in Griersonian Documentary" in New Challenges for Documentary. ed. Alan Rosenthal. Berkeley: University of California Press: 21-33.

----- (1995) Claiming the Real: the Griersonian Documentary and its Legitimations. London: BFI.

Wong, Cindy Hing-Yuk (1989) "Doing Fieldwork on Chinese Vietnamese in America" Amerasia 15:2.

------ (1990) Leaving Home Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Program in Visual Anthropology, University of Southern California.

------ (1991a) "Chinese Outside Chinatown" Chinese America.

------ (1991b) "Ritual Revisited" in Moving the Image, ed. Russell Leung. Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Institute

----- (1996)"Through Many lenses: History and Theory in Visual Anthropology" Anthropological Quarterly, LXIX (2):90-6.

----- Forthcoming "Cities, Cultures and Cassettes: Hong Kong Cinemas and the Identification of Transnational Audiences" in Ng Chun Bong and Cheuk Pak Tong, eds. Chinese Cinema.

---- and Gary McDonogh (1997) "How to Go to a Movie in Hong Kong: Consuming Cinema." Manuscript.

Worth, Sol and John Adair, (1973) Through Navajo Eyes: An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Worth, Sol and Larry Gross, (1974) "Symbolic Strategies." Journal of Communication 24:27-39.

Zheutlin, Barbara (1988) "The Politics of Documentary: A Symposium" in New Challenges for Documentary. ed. Alan Rosenthal. Berkeley: University of California Press: 227-244.