

BEYOND OBSERVATION

A HISTORY OF AUTHORSHIP IN ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM

Beyond Observation offers a historical analysis of ethnographic film from the birth of cinema in 1895 until 2015. It covers a large number of films made in a broad range of styles, in many different parts of the world, from the Arctic to Africa, from urban China to rural Vermont. It is the first extensive historical account of its kind and will be accessible to students and lecturers in visual anthropology as well as to those previously unfamiliar with ethnographic film.

Among the early genres that Paul Henley discusses are French reportage films, the Soviet *kulturfilm*, the US travelogue and the classic documentaries of Robert Flaherty and Basil Wright, as well as the more academic films of Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. Among the leading film-makers of the post-war period, he discusses Jean Rouch, John Marshall and Robert Gardner, as well as the emergence of Observational Cinema in the 1970s. He also considers 'indigenous media' projects of the 1980s, and the ethnographic films that flourished on British television until the 1990s.

In the final part, Henley examines the recent films of David and Judith MacDougall, the Harvard Sensory Media Lab and a range of films authored in a participatory manner as possible models for the future.

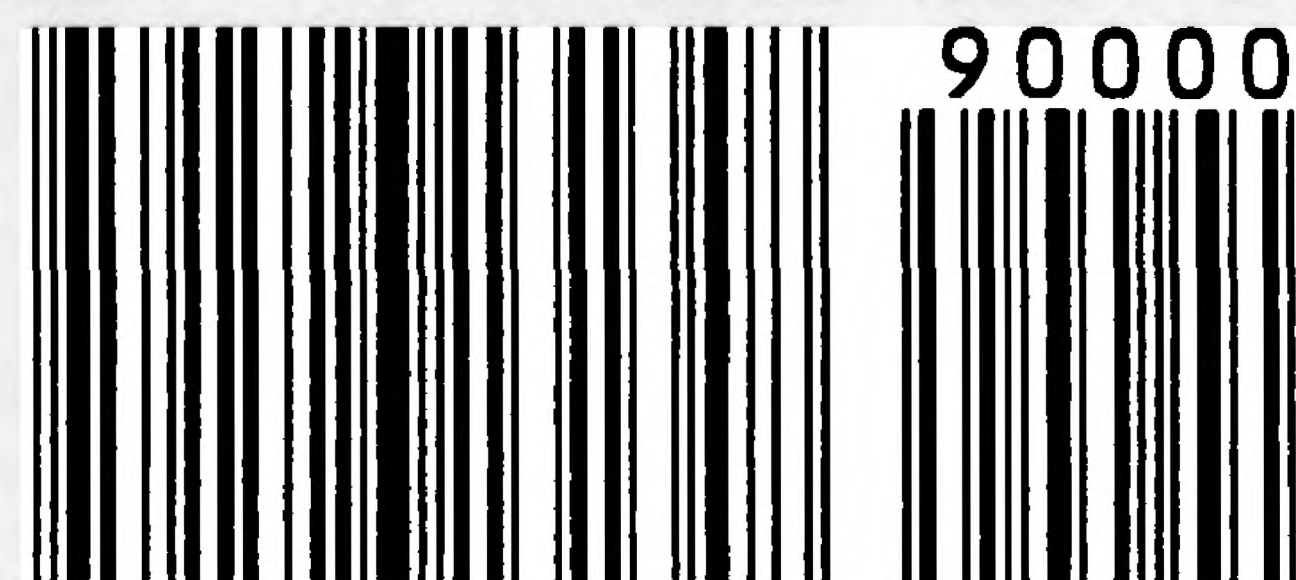
Paul Henley is Professorial Research Fellow at the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology at the University of Manchester and an ethnographic film-maker. He was previously the founding director of the Granada Centre, 1987–2014.

Cover: Chinese opera performer, *Shanghai Vice* (1999), detail.
© Phil Agland, River Films.

MANCHESTER
1824

Manchester University Press

ISBN 978-1-5261-3134-8



9 781526 131348

www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk

| | |
|--|---------|
| List of figures | page ix |
| Acknowledgements | xviii |
| General introduction: authorship, praxis, observation, ethnography | 1 |
| Part I Histories: ethnographic film in the twentieth century | |
| Introduction | 23 |
| 1 The long prehistory of ethnographic film | 28 |
| 2 Travel films, melodrama and the origins of ethnofiction | 77 |
| 3 The invisible author: films of re-enactment in the post-war period | 113 |
| 4 Records, not movies: the early films of John Marshall and Timothy Asch | 131 |
| 5 Reflexivity and participation: the films of David and Judith MacDougall in Africa and Australia | 152 |
| 6 Entangled voices: the complexities of collaborative authorship | 175 |
| 7 The subject as author: indigenous media and the <i>Video nas Aldeias</i> project | 197 |
| Part II Authors: three key figures | |
| Introduction | 223 |
| 8 Jean Rouch: sharing anthropology | 225 |
| 9 Robert Gardner: beyond the burden of the real | 256 |
| 10 Colin Young: the principles of Observational Cinema | 288 |

Part III Television as meta-author: ethnographic film in Britain

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction | 315 |
| 11 Ways of doing ethnographic film on British television | 320 |
| 12 Beyond the 'disappearing world' – and back again | 348 |
| 13 The decline of ethnographic film on British television | 370 |

Part IV Beyond observation: ethnographic film in the twenty-first century

| | |
|--|-----|
| Introduction | 391 |
| 14 The evolution of Observational Cinema: recent films of David and Judith MacDougall | 393 |
| 15 Negative capability and the flux of life: films of the Sensory Ethnography Lab | 421 |
| 16 Participatory perspectives | 453 |
| An epilogue: return to Kiriwina – the ethnographic film-maker as author | 483 |
| Appendix: British television documentaries produced in collaboration with ethnographic researchers | 488 |
| Textual references | 497 |
| Selected film references | 514 |
| Index | 525 |