

APPENDIX C: DEBATE BETWEEN PERFORMERS, RESEARCHERS AND ARCHIVISTS

Parties to the Debate

Performers represented by: Don Niles, Gert-Matthias Wegner, Endo Suanda.

Fieldwork Researchers represented by: Marialita Tamano Yraola, Alexander Huerta Mercado, Valmont Layne, Lawrence Witzleben, Olavo Alen Rodrigues.

Archivists represented by: S. C. Biswas, Grace Koch, Dietrich Schüller, Ali al-Daw, Maxwell Agyei Maxwell, To Ngoc Thanh.

The second role-playing activity we designed for the participants divided them into three groups: performers, researchers and archivists. It was an especially good-humoured exercise because each person had done all of the things and could identify with the complaints. Also, the group had been together longer and they knew each other better. They often invoked each other's names in their improvised speeches, mentioned the Ford Foundation frequently (it was the granting agency that sponsored the workshop we were all enjoying), and felt no inhibition about interrupting and interacting in the midst of the exercise.

As before, the groups had about 30 minutes to get together and prepare their arguments and the way they would present them. After the first round, they met again for a few minutes and then replied to the criticisms they received the first time, presenting some new ones of their own. While this is presented as if it was a play, it was in fact improvised on the spot. We have only made light edits on what they said and so the paragraphs retain some of the informality and vernacular speech of the original event.

Please note: none of the hypothetical examples were in any way related to actual cases. Nor were any of the participants actually condemning the activities of the others—some of the strongest performers' statements came from researchers and some of the strongest statements of researchers' positions came from archivists. The important thing to notice is that musicians feel they are being ignored by researchers who make recordings and then disappear for long periods of time. Researchers feel that the value of their collections has been ignored by archives that separate the parts of their collections and sometimes crumple photographs, mistype catalogue entries and names and insufficiently respect members of communities they work with who happen to visit the archives. They feel that archivists do not understand the exigencies of fieldwork. Archivists, on the other hand, feel that researchers are not doing a good enough job of documenting their collections, are not getting the kinds of releases from the performers that the archives need to use the materials and expect too much of them.

Performers Address Fieldworkers and Archivists

Don: We are very happy that you fieldworkers have come back to the village after so many years. You spent many years with us. You stayed with us and you became part of my family. I called you my son; you called me father. You used our materials and I think you became quite famous. Every now and then you sent us postcards from different parts of the world. You would say, 'Hello, I am in India, I am in Japan, South America.' You've written some books about our music, made some recordings. Unfortunately, we can't read the language you have written in but we understand that our music is in it.

Now you come after many years, quite famous. You see that we are still pretty much the same as when you were here before. Now that you have come to see us why can't we go to see you?

Gert: I want to live with you for a year and bring my family. I want your address.

Endo: We are quite happy because we understand that when we get recorded we get exposed to the global world which is prestigious for our culture. But in many cases I find that the treatment of artists is not

fair. It is far from fair. I am trained in both traditional music and modern music. When I play with traditional groups I get paid \$35 per day but when I play modern music I get paid three times as much. Why is that?

Gert: The foreigners have taken everything from us and now they try to take our souls and bury us in archives. You are confusing us. Earlier you people wanted us to change our ways and sing those silly hymns and patriotic songs. Now you want our old songs but we have forgotten them.

By the way, we were recorded by Bertolo Bertolucci last year. We were paid US \$500 a day. They gave us all the food we could possibly eat—Italian cuisine, mountains of meat. And now you come here and want to give us only Rs 5 a day. Ridiculous!

Don (to archivists): A few years ago, a researcher came from your archives and went to a neighbouring village and recorded some songs. Well, those songs do not belong to them, they belong to us. So please destroy those recordings in your archives.

Endo: Researchers just destroy our culture. They make our culture powerless. Our Deer Dance was studied by a group from UCLA and now they have performed it in some silly way that makes our art powerless. You publish our sacred materials. When it gets published, it loses its power.

Gert: You can't take pictures. The gods will be very angry with us. So please don't.

Don: I am member of one of the pop dancing groups in the village. I understand you people are from USA. Now that you have recorded us, can you make us popular like Michael Jackson?

Don (to archivists): One of your colleagues made some recordings a few years ago and we would like to get access to those now. But when we went to the archives they told us that we couldn't have access to it because the collector said no. Access is prohibited. But it is our music! Why can't we have copies?

Gert: We wanted to listen to the recordings of other traditions. You didn't let us. So what should we do now?

Endo: You ask us to be very honest, give information as accurately as possible. But I don't think you are very honest with us.

The Fieldwork Researchers Address Performers and Archivists

Marialita (*to performers and musicians*): I am a fieldworker. You ask us for payments for the songs and after you are paid you are still saying you get exploited. You have been singing these songs all your life. Why ask us for so much money this time when you sing them only once?

We are thankful that you have accepted us in your community but you have been pushing us to drink again and again and we have a problem—we cannot record very well when we are drunk. When we take pictures you are always running away, hiding somewhere under the table. Then you ask us, ‘Why am I not in the photograph?’ But you ran away! And when our recorder is not working, you will say, ‘That’s bad. That’s bad.’ Because we are drunk. You push us to drink too much.

You told us that you are the best and most popular singer and the only one who knew this song. But then someone whispered to me, your own relative, that you had a personal quarrel with your uncle who lives in the next house and he is the one who is the acknowledged singer of this particular song in your community. Now you complain to me that what I wrote about your community is wrong. But you are my most important informant and singer. You did not show me who is the best one but said, ‘I know, I know.’ How was I to tell you didn’t know it?

After making the recording you asked to listen to it and of course I could not refuse you. But the problem with you is that you go on listening and playing it back to the whole village, and now I have no batteries left. Tonight there will be a festival. How can I show the world that your music is so wonderful and spiritual? I cannot record it—the batteries are gone because you’ve endlessly listened to your songs!

LARRY: You complained that we don’t have any money to give for your recording but you have to realize we spent three days before we could even get to your village. We had to take the local Minister for Culture for lunch. We had to take out the local Secretary and his family and entertain the nephew of the Ford Foundation. We don’t have enough money for our trip back. And you say we are exploiting you!

MARIALITA: Our beloved friends who are archivists. We had been sending our collection tapes, photographs, even our field notes to your

office. Then my colleague Alex went to your archives. He also deposited his materials in your archive. It was a long way from Peru to your place. He travelled three times yet you did not return his material. You said, 'It is easy, you can take your material back anytime,' but Alex went three times. He has not been able to get his material from you to use in his publication. The book is now cancelled by the publisher.

Alex: I am still waiting.

Marialita: When I turn on the radio, oh! the song of my favourite singer was on the radio, being heard all over the world. I was waiting until after the song to hear the disc jockey say, 'This song is from my beloved donor recorded by Marialita.' Nothing of that sort, not even the name of my institution. How is that? I know you are the one who gave this song to the radio station because when I deposited it, you said that it is the only song of its kind in your collection. Now even the performer is complaining that his name was not mentioned.

We came across a book from your archives that describes the material without crediting the fieldworker who went walking for a hundred days around the villages making the recordings. And it was in our agreement that for the material to be used you would have to inform us first and ask our permission before giving it to the publisher. But we never received a single notice from you. How is that? Why make us sign this contract before we deposit our material with you if you are going to ignore it?

Finally, there is that wonderful photograph. My photograph of the handsome Endo was so beautiful. I loved it and I didn't want to deposit in your archives. But you said I should deposit everything in your archives. Now when I went to see the photograph for some costume details, it was all crumpled. How is that? How did you take care of this photograph? I found it lying in your filing cabinet, not only crumpled but full of staples. Oh my goodness! And you say that you take care of our material!

Valmont: When I started doing my fieldwork I had to save up a lot of money to buy equipment. The area where I was working had a lot of crime and I could not walk around with a big tape recorder. So I bought myself a little MiniDisc recorder. And when I went to your archives with

all my fieldwork you said you couldn't accept MiniDisc recordings. What am I supposed to do? I put all my money into the project, recorded with difficulty and you don't want to accept my MiniDisc.

Larry: I spent so much time documenting all my recordings and writing the performers' names and all that. And when I want to find them, I go to your archives and look for hours and hours. I finally discover why can't I find my recordings—because all my recordings of Sunda are under Sudan.

Valmont: When you were taking my deposit you told me what a wonderful collection it was. But the next time I came to do some research for a journal article, I had to wait in line with everybody else to access my own material. What happened? The first time I came I was wonderful, and the second time I got treated like one of the crowd!

Marialita: We had our centennial celebrations last year and most of the performers were musicians, singers and craftsmen whom I had met during my fieldwork. I could not escort them to visit your archives. They went with a colleague who I suppose was not known to you. Not waiting for the girl to introduce these people with feathers and with spears, you called your security guard and threw them out of the compound. I was so shocked and so ashamed! Other fieldworkers will be in a difficult situation when they go and do research because of what you did. We had a verbal agreement that their songs, their rituals, and their crafts will be taken care of, that their people, including their descendants, could come and at least see the materials. This was less than a year ago and you just threw them out and called your security. So now they don't even want to talk with me.

The Archivists Address Performers and Fieldwork Researchers

Grace: You say that we are taking your music and keeping it away, but we are not doing that. We are making these recordings available for other people to listen to and for your children to learn from. So we are not taking the recordings and putting them away. You should know this.

Gert (*interjecting*): But we don't get access to them and neither do our children!

Ali: Why don't you visit the archives? If you visit our archives, we will show you how we take care of your collection, how we preserve it. We can allow you to listen to our entire collection, your music or other people's music. Just sitting in the village and complaining about us will not help. If you visit us you will find how well we keep your music.

Maxwell: As soon as your recordings are published, we send the royalties to you.

Ali: You should not be hesitant to sign the contract with us. We are trying to put your performances up for sale in recordings because we think you are going to benefit from it. You are going to increase your income from the sale of your cassettes. This will also make you famous all over the world.

Biswas: I know all of us want to get the best results from your performance but the quality of recording has not come out as well as you wanted. The point which I want you to keep in mind is this: please bear with fieldworkers and try to give them full support in technical details, whether in terms of lighting, in terms of recording, environment, the setting and so forth. All these may not matter much to you but from the technical point of view it is very important. The fieldworkers want to get the best recording of your performance so that you too will be happy with it. Please try to cooperate with them and listen to them. And please don't give them too much to drink.

Dietrich: Let me assure you that as far as your performance is concerned, you are the king. But please don't ask for 25 copies for yourself and your children and your grandchildren. (*To the fieldworkers*) Why don't you plan well in advance? If you intend to deposit your collection, please contact the archives well beforehand. It will be good to get to know you well, not a fortnight before you leave for the field!

Maxwell: Include the archives in your grant proposal whenever possible.

Grace: We know that what you are giving us is very important and we want to take the best possible care of it. It helps us to know the owner of the song and who is singing in the background. Once, one of you fieldworkers secretly recorded someone through a window. I remember this because there were women and men singing and they

shouldn't have done this. You gave the recording to us in the archives. We didn't know that you had recorded it in this way and we actually got into some trouble because we allowed someone to hear the recording and they were very upset with us. So please let us know what you record and what the background to it is so that we can list it and we can take the best possible care of it.

Maxwell: Before you embark on any field research you should seek methodological, logistic and technical advice from us archivists.

Dietrich: Let me ask you, in your own interest, to please deposit your originals with the archives and not the copies. The archives will definitely care for them in a much better way than you can look after the tapes on your own shelves. This is the experience we have had for decades. And you will be very happy to find in 10 or 20 years that your recordings have retained their original quality in our archives. But if you give us sloppily made copies, this would be the first deterioration of the material which you have taken so much care and effort to produce. Please also keep this in mind: don't give us MiniDiscs.

The Responses

Performers to Researchers

Don: When you stay with us, we try to do everything to help you and your work. We perform all the things you want to record. We try to make you happy with food. We gave you a house. You marry our young girls. Then you go away. You said that you will give us copies of your recordings, and 10 years later we are still waiting for your copies.

Endo: You told us that we should visit your archives. It is too far away from our place and we don't have money to go there. Why don't you come see us and stay with us and teach us how to write a book or something. You always get the grants for research but it never comes to us.

Don: There is one other thing we are concerned about. We told you secret things and asked you to be very careful about them. Now we understand that you wrote a book that contains all the things you learned. One of the girls from our village went overseas to your country to study and read all the things you wrote in your publication. How can you break our trust like that?

Endo: It has always been always very difficult for us to understand you. You always try to understand us, but when you write a book you write it in your own language. Nobody can understand the language. We want you to do something for us.

Don: We keep hearing about how the Ford Foundation has helped you to come to our village and then you also complain about how difficult it is to come to our village. Can the Ford Foundation give you a Ford truck which you can leave for us, in our village?

You are complaining about how we keep asking you to replay your tapes because we want to hear the performances you have recorded. How many times have you asked us to rerecord the same song because my mother's cousin's daughter was coughing during the recording or you had clumsily dropped the microphone?

Finally, if you have so many complaints about us why do you come?

Researchers Respond

Larry: When I was in the field, you always called me your best friend. But you only invited me to your house one time whereas the other Endo with whom I studied drumming for six months taught me everything. And now you are telling everybody that you treated me like your son and I learnt everything that I know from you. Why are you pretending that you were much more helpful to me than you actually were?

Olavo: You asked, 'Why you don't you come to see us, visit our homes with your family just like we come to you?' We will be most grateful if you do, but will you give us a reason why you should? We had to convince everybody, including the Ford Foundation, to give us money because it was important that I go to you. But why is it important that you come to me? And if you don't have a reason, then why should you get money from the Ford Foundation for doing it?

Valmont: You say that I never came back. But you know that when I first came to you we agreed that once I finished fulfilling my academic obligations, I was going to go back to the place where I come from. We were going to appeal to Folkways Records to produce the CDs with your recordings and we would write the notes on the CD both in your

language and in English so it could be brought back to your village and people could listen. We did make all these agreements but I don't know why you are complaining so much about it now.

Olavo: The last time I made a book using your information I spent two or three years after I left you working on it. I spent much more money in doing that than the money I got from the book when it was published. Could you let me have a little bit of cash? I have receipts to show you how much I spent. I can assure you I got more criticism on the book than good comments so I think you should write some good comments on my book. If it comes from you, the person who gave me this information, it might help me

Gert: Why don't you learn how to write bestsellers?

Olavo: I will do so if you give me information suited to a bestseller. You have to make it very spectacular. But you are not very spectacular.

Researchers Respond to Archivists

Valmont: You archivists can see the kinds of problems we have with performers. Yet you make so many demands of us, like making sure we don't record on MiniDiscs. You ask us hundreds of questions about documentation. Can't you also help us to make our life easier? We are under a lot of pressure. We have to produce our research and make the performers happy. Isn't there some way you can make our life easier instead of making demands?

Marialita: Our archivist friends keep telling us about the quality control over the material we turn over to the archives. But the problem is you are not aware of the realities of fieldwork. We are not always sitting in a good automobile driving on a good road. I was right in the forest. It was raining, and leeches were all over my body sucking the blood from me. And then you ask me for a nice clean tape without insects in it. Insects were everywhere! Then I trekked along a rice field, where I got chased by a bull because I was wearing a red T-shirt. It was a good thing that I fell down in the water, otherwise I wouldn't be here giving you the tape. It was dry when I gave it to you; I wiped the mud off. My photographs were perfect but now they are not. So please help

us in keeping the material we had given you to keep as you have promised and don't expect everything we give you to look as though it were recorded in a laboratory.

Larry: You complain about proper documentation but when I brought the tapes to you, I delivered them by hand. Everything was very carefully documented. But when I see it in your acquisition area, one big box says 'tapes' and one box reads 'folders' and another one says 'notes'. Everything is separated. Now I can't find anything.

Olavo: The ultimate reason why, in my last research, I decided not to deposit my documents in your archives so that someone else can do a good job of working with my notes was that I planned to write a book myself and then give it to your archives. I planned to ask you to write a commentary or something.

Why should I give you the originals? I have emotional ties to the originals from my fieldwork. I feel they are mine, as this shirt is mine—something too personal to give away. I may want to give them to my son in the future. Maybe that would be far better. I think in a very traditional or conventional way. To me, my originals are like a guitar to a guitarist. They are mine!

Larry: Before I went on fieldwork, I had a long talk with your Director. He told me that the recordings should be done on PCM and now I come back and you say, 'Please discontinue that and please go back and make DAT copies.'

Olavo: After listening to you, I checked on the people in the Caribbean—they are still singing and dancing on the beach and they feel very happy without an archives!

Archivists Respond

Ali: Unfortunately we didn't find any contract signed by the fieldworker according to the forms filled in the archives. You fieldworkers didn't do your work. You missed signing the contracts. There is nothing to show on the deposits in the archives.

Alex: We knew nothing. I was new in town.

Maxwell: Concerning your accusation that you are not given preference when consulting the archives immediately and have to join the

queue, you will be interested to know that it is part of our policy not to treat people who have deposited any differently from the people who use the archives. You may also be surprised to learn that the people who were before you in the queue were all depositing their materials in the archives.

Biswas: Taking the cue from Maxwell, you will realize the strangeness of your complaint if you go to the library and not an archives. If an author comes to the library and asks for his own book, he shouldn't expect to be taken straight to the book. He is just a reader and if he wants to consult his own book he is in the same situation as you. You have to be in the queue like in any other place you go.

Maxwell: Concerning Larry's problem, we appreciate the fact that in the field situation you have limited time to give to documentation. But clear handwriting is really essential. Sometimes we couldn't tell if you wrote Sudan or Sunda!

To Performers

Grace: I remember a performer said something about training in recording techniques. We did send a team to your village to help you learn how to take care of your archives and how to take care of your recordings and photographs. But Don, your brother told us that no one was really interested, so we went to the neighbouring village and gave our course to them. Did they tell you anything about that?

I think it was Alex who brought some of his performers with him to visit our archives and was really upset because he said that he couldn't get in with the performers. He said that we were very cruel to you. But Alex, you decided to go in through the fire door and the alarms started ringing. Of course the police came. We didn't know what else to do. Then later you decided to go through another door with Endo carrying his shield and spear and so the alarms went off again! It was a real problem for us. We are sorry for this but these are the security provisions we have in our archives.

Alex: Then I want to come again tomorrow!

Biswas: Well, you artists can understand that because the book has been published or the material collected from the archives has been on

a CD you are becoming famous. Everybody knows about the tradition of music in the village you come from. If somebody wants to listen to your recording in the archives or other people come and want to have copies of our recording, it is good for you. All this is helping you.

Dietrich: We are hearing lot of horror stories about archives breaking their contracts, misusing the recordings and putting things on to disc which shouldn't have been published. I think you are not talking of archives but some other institutions. Be assured that the real archives are ethical, and one of the most important ethical rules is not to break a contract. They are legally liable for that. You should not hesitate to make any cases of broken contracts widely known. This is an encouragement for you.

Further, I would like to tell both performers and fieldworkers that nothing is more impermanent than the audiovisual record. Safeguarding audiovisual recordings is a very costly thing, much more costly than all the endeavours in libraries for centuries. We have already reached the point where to keep the records on an annual basis is more expensive than a just honorarium for your performance, whatever it may be. Please consider this when you justify asking for compensation for your performances or your deposited collections. What we do is keep our records for posterity and this should be also in your interest. So please keep that in mind. This why we ask you for your originals. You may not realize that your son will inherit only slime or dust—not the tapes which are so dear to your heart.