

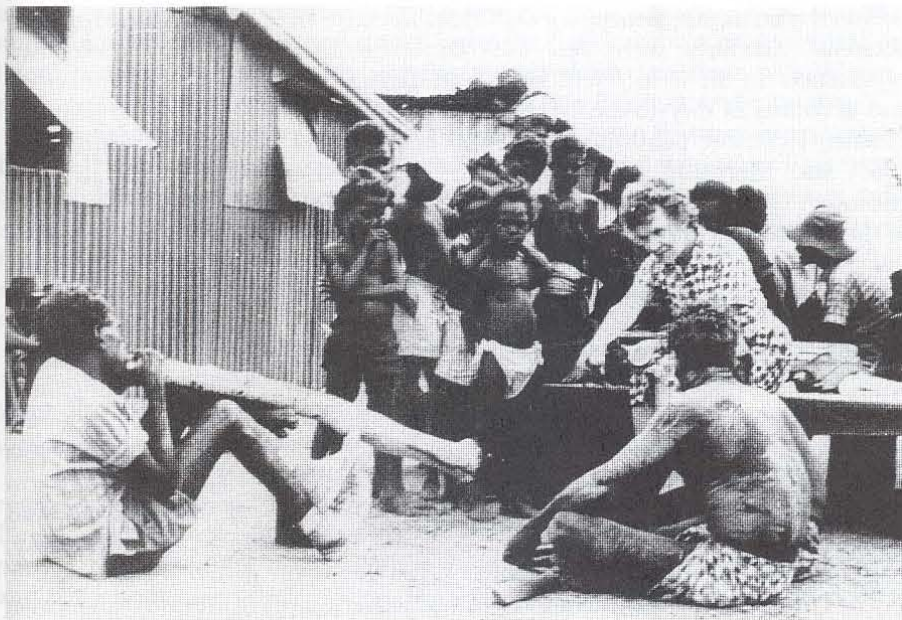
## CHAPTER II

# Fieldwork

HELEN MYERS

### *Introduction*

In fieldwork we unveil the human face of ethnomusicology. Whether we select a remote Indian village, European peasant community, Nigerian town or ethnic neighbourhood in a large city such as Tokyo or Paris, whether we study our family or a foreign tribe, our native country or an exotic land, fieldwork is the most personal task required of the ethnomusicologist. Fieldwork is also the most critical stage of ethnomusicological research – the eyewitness report, the foundation upon which all results rest. This great hurdle of the ethnomusicological endeavour is also its great fascination, and more than a few scholars



1. The Australian ethnomusicologist, Alice Moyle, recording a didjeridu player at Oenpelli, Northwest region, Arnhem Land, Australia, in 1962

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were first attracted to the discipline through the lure and mystique of fieldwork. Its challenges are many, foreseen and unforeseen, mundane and artistic. The strength and weaknesses of our personalities are tested as we adapt to a foreign way of life and document an unfamiliar musical culture. By its very nature fieldwork provides a setting in which we feel awkward and disorientated, a disconcerting reality because fruitful work results from natural, honest, heartfelt and often spontaneous behaviour. Scholars who successfully resolve these dilemmas prove artful fieldworkers, enjoy their research and make lifelong friends.

Fieldwork is a hallmark of many social sciences, including anthropology and ethnomusicology. Gone is acceptance of studies from the 'armchair', in which the musicologist transcribed and analysed material recorded by ethnologists. Today's student is expected to immerse himself or herself in the totality of a foreign culture, usually for a year or more, and experience music first-hand in its diverse settings. During fieldwork the ethnomusicologist assembles primary sources: observations in field notes, recordings of music and interviews, photographs, film and video materials. Unlike the historical musicologist who gleans data from archives and libraries, the ethnomusicologist must collect and document material from living informants. Ethnomusicologists who work in cultures lacking written records must rely on methods designed to investigate oral history. For cultures with written traditions of music theory, the fieldworker must study historical sources, elicit statements about musical practices from informants, and then compare these texts and spoken words with the musical behaviour observed from day to day.

In past decades fieldwork was treated like a rite of passage through which the student had to pass but about which little could be taught. While invoking the name of objectivity, emphasis in fact was placed on insight, intuition, personal charm, happenstance and luck. Because the topic is individual and personal, scholars were reluctant to write candidly about their own experiences in the field. Field notes and diaries, transcriptions of interviews and accounts of day-to-day activities were rarely published (exceptions are Slotkin, 1952; the posthumously published diary of Bronislaw Malinowski, 1967; and Merriam, 1969, 'The Ethnographic Experience'; and an early anthology of personal portraits of informants in Casagrande, 1960). Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, a body of writings on personal fieldwork experiences was published (Powdermaker, 1966; Henry and Saberwal, 1969; Freilich, 1970; Golde, 1970; Spindler, 1970; Anderson, 1971; Wax, 1971 and 1977; Mead, 1972; Blacking, 1973; Jones, 1973; Peltó and Peltó, 1973; Foster and Kemper, 1974; B  teille and Madan, 1975; Clarke, 1975; Geertz, 1976; Honigsmann, 1976; Freilich, 1977; and Dumont, 1978). This movement gained momentum through the 1980s as the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme, and enthusiasts of subjectivity began to argue for psychoanalysis before fieldwork and full confession of the scholar's autobiography (in anthropology, Barley, 1983; Turner and Bruner, 1986; Whitehead and Conaway, 1986; in ethnomusicology, Berliner, 1978; Keil, 1979; and Gourlay, 1978, who appraises the ethnomusicologist's role in the field).

The ethnographic text came to be examined as a piece of literature in its own right, and its form and style, long taken for granted, reconsidered in the light of this new humanism (Bruner, 1986; Clifford and Marcus, 1986). The debate



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led to an epistemological puzzle labelled 'reflexivity', whereby anthropologists struggled to evaluate and measure their impact on the very topic they sought to study. The act of anthropological observation is obtrusive, inevitably altering the behaviour of the observed; this 'anthropological lens' became for some the very object of investigation (Mills, 1973; Peacock, 1986). Ironically, scholars working in the physical sciences have long accepted these anomalies, especially the subjective element inherent in scientific method (many discoveries are made by accident or luck) and the element of personal interaction with the data, including the much feared self-fulfilling prophecy, for example, the geologist who loudly shouts 'avalanche' on a snowy mountain (Kuhn, 1962; Popper, 1959, 1963, 1972; Ryan, 1973; Myers, 1981).

*Definitions: fieldwork, field, informant, performance and recording*

Fieldwork may be defined as 'observation of people *in situ*; finding them where they are, staying with them in some role which, while acceptable to them, will allow both intimate observation of certain parts of their behaviour, and reporting it in ways useful to social science but not harmful to those observed' (Hughes, 1960, p.v).

Where is the field? The scope of ethnomusicological inquiry is as broad and varied as the world of music itself. Early studies focused on national folk forms in oral tradition, the music of foreign peasant societies, and music of peoples then called 'exotic' or 'primitive', that is, who had little contact with Western man. The classical musical systems of the Orient, objects of fascination for centuries, have remained popular subjects in modern ethnomusicology. For the 1990s the field abounds with topics, from studies of remote ethnic groups in interior regions of South America, Africa, South and Southeast Asia to modernization, Westernization, urban musical life, popular music and the music industry. For the ethnomusicologist the field can be a geographical or linguistic area; an ethnic group (possibly scattered over a wide area); a village, town, suburb or city; desert or jungle; tropical rain forest or arctic tundra.

Each field situation is unique, but all projects have features in common. First is the informant – the person who supplies the information. This word has troublesome connotations, and many scholars prefer to speak of colleagues, friends, respondents, participants, interviewees, sources or teachers. For better or worse, informant is the term used most widely in the social sciences for those people in the field who talk to us about their lives and their music.

Secondly, all fieldwork includes performances, both musical performances and cultural performances (rituals and ceremonies of traditional life), as well as performances staged especially for the scholar (informal conversations, interviews and recording sessions).

Third is recording, in the form of written field notes, music recordings, cassettes of interviews, still photographs, 16mm film and video recordings. Items acquired in the field – books, records, musical instruments – also form a part of this collection. A major burden in ethnomusicology is the preservation and documentation of recordings, their transportation in the field, and then from field to home to archive (and often back to the field again for checking and further documentation). During fieldwork, travelling by train or local bus,

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2. Laura Boulton recording Haitian singers c1938

overflowing with villagers and their livestock, pedlars and their wares, mothers feeding tiny babies, toddlers sucking fruits, old men squatting in the aisles and passenger luggage of various descriptions strapped haphazardly to the roof, guarding the ethnomusicological kit becomes quite a nuisance. At airport check-in counters, with ever more stringent rules about hand luggage and stiff excess baggage charges, these fragile items become a very real handicap; once safely home they are our treasures and our joys as well as the source of all our analyses. The professional ethnomusicologist soon becomes an expert at transporting all manner of things from village A to town B to city C to archive D (for copying before departure from the host country) to airport E to airport F (home) to archive G (for copying or deposit in the home country) – hundreds of open-reel tapes and cassettes, unexposed (outbound flight) and exposed (inbound) film, musical instruments, tape recorders, microphones, batteries and battery chargers, and so on. This inescapable part of the job requires presence of mind and masterful organizational skills.

The earliest guides for field method came from anthropology. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), the Anglo-Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) sets out the fundamental issues: the relationship of theory and method; inductive versus deductive research strategies; participant observation; the importance of open-mindedness and self-criticism; the linking of apparently unrelated data; the difference between observation and insight; the distinction between the scholar's observations and ideas expressed by the native informant ('emic' and 'etic' data); the isolation of the anthropological adventure, and the frustration, anxiety and despair of culture



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shock: 'Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village', Malinowski writes, 'while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight' (p.4).

But this very isolation, he argues, is the only proper condition for fieldwork:

cutting oneself off from the company of other white men, and remaining in as close contact with the natives as possible, which really can only be achieved by camping right in their villages . . . to wake up every morning to a day presenting itself . . . more or less as it does to the native (pp.6-7).

As is the custom in the physical sciences, Malinowski recommends a deductive approach to fieldwork, whereby the student's training in theory and method are used to guide but not dominate observation and the systematic collection of data:

The Ethnographer has not only to spread his nets in the right place, and wait for what will fall into them. He must be an active huntsman, and drive his quarry into them and follow it up to its most inaccessible lairs . . . Good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with 'preconceived ideas'. If a man sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless. But the more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work. Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies (pp.8-9).

### *Planning*

**SELECTING A TOPIC** With the whole world as our oyster and our science only in its infancy, with most of the world's music as yet unstudied, selection of a research problem in ethnomusicology should not be difficult. Ironically the staggering variety of topics and global range of research sites may leave the novice bewildered. Here follow several considerations to help in this selection.

First, personal interest: select a topic you like and that will hold your interest and imagination for the duration of the research and beyond. Open-ended topics that lead on to new research are best. I chose my doctoral project on music of Indian immigrants in Trinidad for this potential; inevitably my investigation led to new problems and projects (Myers, 1984). My post-PhD research led me to northeastern India, the ancestral home of my West Indian informants; this research in turn led me to study similar Indian groups in Fiji and Mauritius, where Indians were also taken by the British during the system of indentured labour, 1835-1919. A carefully chosen PhD topic - well defined, sharply focused and nested within a larger theoretical domain - can be the first phase of a life's work. Continuity of a project capitalizes on the researcher's training in language, musical repertory, bibliography; is attractive to funding agencies; and can readily be recast as a team project involving local scholars.

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Most ethnomusicology projects treat a single repertory, either of a village, neighbourhood, urban ethnic group, individual musician or genre. Ethnomusicologists with anthropological inclinations have selected musical cultures that illustrate theoretical issues: the culture area in North American Indian music (Nettl, 1954), structuralism in the society and music of Brazilian Indians (Seeger, 1987), aesthetics among the Navajo (McAllester, 1954) and linguistic models of deep and surface structure in Venda music (Blacking, 1971). Scholars more influenced by musicology have focused on musical structures (Hood's investigation of *paṭet* [mode] in Javanese music, 1954), genres (Wade's survey of North Indian vocal *khyāl*, 1984), instrumental repertories (Berliner's research on the Shona *mbira* [lamellaphone], 1978) or the total repertory of an ethnic group (Capwell's ethnography of the Baul people of Bengal, 1986). Since the 1950s, most studies have been limited to a single culture; cross-cultural studies, the focus of 19th-century German research, are unusual, although senior scholars have written reflective pieces as Nettl's 'Two Cities' (1985), a comparison of musical life in Madras and Teheran. Out of favour is urgent 'survival' ethnomusicology whereby the fieldworker aims to preserve a dying tradition.

Restudies (one scholar retraces the footsteps of another) have borne rich fruit in anthropology, as with the Robert Redfield–Oscar Lewis debate on the village of Tepoztlán in Mexico, Reo Fortune's re-examination of Margaret Mead's data on social roles among the Arapesh of New Guinea, and the Ward Goodenough–John Fisher debate over postmarital residence patterns on a Pacific atoll (Agar, 1980). In ethnomusicology, restudies have the special potential of adding historical depth to understanding oral tradition; they also offer a fresh viewpoint on areas that have come to be associated with the interpretation of a particular scholar (no two observers ever have the same perspective). The role of multiple interpretations is especially critical in the study of expressive culture, but in the small, closely knit society of academic ethnomusicology, the restudy has yet to find its proper place.

**FEASIBILITY** In selecting a topic, the student must consider all aspects of feasibility.

**Scholarly:** Is the topic relevant to current theoretical issues in ethnomusicology? Can its intrinsic importance as a contribution to knowledge be justified? Does your training as researcher in ethnomusicology, anthropology, history and musical repertory qualify you to undertake this work? Do you have access to the relevant literary and musical sources (libraries and archives)? Do you know the local language or have a means of learning it in the field?

**Political:** Can the required visas and research permits be obtained to conduct this work? Steps must be taken to get official permission for the project and enough time allowed for government agencies to clear the proposal. Have you selected a politically sensitive topic or geographical region? Perhaps this project should be postponed for a more suitable moment.

**Physical:** Does the value of the study warrant the incumbent risks to life and limb, expenditure of time and of money involved? Can funds be raised to do the job properly? Have you allowed enough time to complete the project? Are the required personnel available (particularly assistance in the field)?



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**ETHICS** New methods, theories, and topics have introduced new ethical problems. Should the study of a music be conducted by the 'insiders' – experts with native knowledge of language, culture and music – or by 'outsiders' – who claim objectivity and open-mindedness? The avant garde in ethnomusicology is fostering teamwork between insiders and outsiders, and is helping native artists tell their own life stories (e.g., Frisbie and McAllester, eds., *Navajo Blessingway Singer: the Autobiography of Frank Mitchell*, 1978). The accusation of cultural imperialism, often levelled at outside researchers, is being met by such projects as the Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology, Delhi, an organization that assists visiting scholars in depositing copies of their field recordings before leaving India (*Samvādī*, 1984–). Another positive step is dissemination of cultural field materials – recordings and documentation – back to the community of origin, exemplified by the Library of Congress Federal Cylinder Project, through which copies of traditional songs (some collected decades ago and long forgotten) have been returned to Native Americans (Brady and others, 1984–).

Unless you are studying musical life of wealthy people, prepare for the shock of being rich in a poor country. Every scholar must work out individual justification for spending thousands of dollars to study music when the same money could feed the hungry or heal the sick. Knowledge for knowledge's sake has little meaning when you see a dying child; this issue demands reflection before you meet sick and hungry people in the field. I spent valuable weeks in India struggling with the ethics of music study in a poor country, wondering why no teacher or colleague had alerted me to the conflicting emotions I would experience. You may indeed be able to use part of your grant money for humane purposes, and as a newcomer to the culture, you will be tempted to rush in and help. But think carefully and have respect for the complexity of human deprivation. An obvious panacea to conscience is allocating funds for medicine. Only after handing out many aspirin tablets to feverish Indian villagers did I wonder where blame might fall if a patient worsened or died after taking my over-the-counter medicine.

Whether or not you can help the people you plan to study, you must not harm them. The 'Statement on Professional Ethical Responsibilities' (1983) of the Society for Applied Anthropology outlines the major issues, each of which should be considered before drafting a research proposal:

1. To the people we study we owe disclosure of our research goals, methods, and sponsorship. The participation of people in our research activities shall only be on a voluntary and informed basis. We shall provide a means . . . to maintain the confidentiality of those we study . . . [but they] must not be promised a greater degree of confidentiality than can be realistically expected . . .
2. To the communities ultimately affected by our actions we owe respect for their dignity, integrity, and worth . . . We will avoid taking or recommending action on behalf of a sponsor which is harmful to the interests of a community.
3. To our social science colleagues we have the responsibility to not engage in actions that impede their reasonable professional activities. . . not impede the flow of information about research outcomes and professional practice techniques . . . [and] not prejudice communities or agencies against a colleague for reasons of personal gain.
4. To our students, interns, or trainees we owe nondiscriminatory access to our training services . . . Student contributions to our professional activi-

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ties, including both research and publication, should be adequately recognized.

5. To our employers and other sponsors we owe accurate reporting . . . We have the obligation to attempt to prevent distortion or suppression of research results or policy-recommendations by concerned agencies.

6. To society as a whole we owe the benefit of our special knowledge and skills in interpreting sociocultural systems . . .

The issue of confidentiality discussed in paragraph 1 is ambiguous in ethnomusicological research, since the artists we study may seek recognition for their work. Stephen Slawek could hardly have falsified the name of the world-renowned artist, Ravi Shankar, in his study of the Hindustani sitar repertory, or Neil Sorrell that of the great *sārangi* virtuoso, Ram Narayan (Sorrell and Ram Narayan, 1980; Slawek, 1987). Ethnomusicologists are generally free to give the names of the musicians they study. Often they sponsor these artists to visit the West on concert tours. Village musicians are also happy to have their names cited in ethnomusicological writings. However, anonymity is sometimes important; Edward Henry withheld the names of his North Indian village informants, since publication of the evocative wedding *gātī* texts he transcribed might embarrass them (1988). If in doubt, ask. Do the musicians wish to be named? How do they wish to be portrayed? Would they like their photograph to appear in your publication? Will they check direct quotations of their words or transcriptions of their music; will they give their imprimatur for these quotations under their name?

A special problem arises when the ethnomusicologist restudies a village already known in the anthropological literature under a pseudonym. Musicians from that village may be keen to have their real names appear, together with transcriptions of their repertories and photographs of performances, a wish in conflict with the confidentiality of the earlier study. Even more perplexing problems arise as informants from much studied villages visit the West; this issue is one from which we cannot escape. A case in point is 'Karimpur', pseudonym for a North Indian village under investigation since 1925, initially by Charlotte and William Wiser and subsequently by several American anthropologists (Wiser and Wiser, 1930). The Wisers disguised the name of the village and of their informants. In recent years as villagers have travelled to large cities in India and the West, they are puzzled to discover on library visits their photographs displayed in anthropological texts without their names. One informant, who served as assistant to several generations of anthropologists, has lectured in British and American universities about the impact of anthropology on his community; he is writing his autobiography, emphasizing the plight of the villager as a subject of anthropological inquiry. By what name should this writer refer to his village? Should anthropologists with whom he worked be identified? Should he give his own name as author of the book? The issue of confidentiality has no single simple solution.

BACKGROUND Senior ethnomusicologists remember days when PhD candidates were required to read the entire ethnomusicological corpus for their doctoral qualifying exams. This is no longer a reasonable requirement, but the prospective fieldworker must master the literature in his or her area –



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both geographical region and pertinent theoretical studies. This task requires an interdisciplinary search during which the student can compile a full bibliography – from ethnomusicology, anthropology, history, religion, politics and other fields including fiction (novels of V. S. Naipaul are an important source for Trinidad). Precious days in the field should not be wasted reading or annotating bibliography cards. From a systematic search, students will soon identify scholars who have worked before them in the area. Correspondence with these experts, an essential courtesy, may yield advice as well as names of helpful contacts in the field; pleasant professional relationships based on shared research interests begin in this simple way.

**THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL** Whether or not the candidate plans to apply for funding, preparing a formal research proposal is helpful in launching a project. This exercise forces discipline on the programme, particularly in budgeting time, money and energy. Committing idealized plans to paper will focus the topic, delineate salient goals, outline their relevance to ethnomusicology and potential contribution to knowledge. You will be forced to calculate a budget and devise the realistic day-to-day schedule that will bring your project to fruition and realize your ultimate intellectual goals.

Preparation of a research proposal can take many months. Familiarize yourself with agencies that offer funding in your area of interest. Many universities have research offices with computerized systems to assist in locating appropriate funding. Basic reference guides such as *The Grants Register* (1991) are helpful and easy to use. Be prepared to tailor the proposal to requirements of specific agencies. This is usually less of an infringement on academic purity than it might seem, and more likely than not may help the candidate focus and improve the proposal.

Write the proposal in simple clear English. Avoid jargon. Make points directly and in a manner that will easily be understood by professionals from other fields. Take care formulating the title and summary description of the project, for it is through the key words in these that proposals are assigned to review committees and adjudicators. Winning grants is a special skill for which advice is available in standard anthropological texts (Pelto, 1970; Agar, 1980; Jackson, 1987).

### *Participant observation*

The main strategy used in ethnomusicological fieldwork is participant observation; the researcher lives in the community, participates in daily life, especially musical activities, records observations and asks community members to comment on them. The participant observer is a privileged stranger, a 'marginal native', and has access to rich data (Freilich, 1970, 1977). Participant observation enhances validity of the data, strengthens interpretation, lends insight into the culture, and helps the researcher to formulate meaningful questions. Anthropological texts have traditionally identified four gradations of the participant observation method: (1) complete participant (observer activities completely concealed); (2) participant as observer (observer activities 'kept under wraps'); (3) observer as participant (observer activities publicly known); and (4) complete observer (in the

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extreme, observer behind a one-way mirror) (Junker, 1960, pp.35–7). Be careful here as the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare regulations on human subjects' and informants' consent requires disclosure of the details of the project, the intent of the researcher and consent of the informants. Written records of this information are kept on file. Options 1, 2 and 4 are unethical according to DHEW standards. The balance between participation and observation depends on the personality of the researcher, field situation, host culture and nature of the research. For most ethnomusicological research, option 3 is the only choice.

**TRUST** Sensitive participant observers gain access to private domains of daily life as community members come to trust and confide in them, especially during long-term field research. (Raoul Naroll's survey of ethnographies shows that researchers who stayed in the field over a year obtained more data on sensitive issues – politics, sex and witchcraft [1962].) Ethical questions soon arise: the scholar may witness crime, overhear plans to smuggle drugs, learn of illegal immigration. Trust when broken hurts researcher and informant and prejudices the viability of the project; but in maintaining trust, the researcher must not break the law. Broken confidence or legal misdemeanour will damage the reputation of ethnomusicology in the community and the country, place future studies in jeopardy and prevent the scholar's future access to that site. Conscience must guide the use of intimate facts. The thoughtful scholar learns that many poignant moments never find their way to the printed page.

**ROLE** Participant observation is generally credited with reducing 'reactivity' – the degree people alter their behaviour because they are being studied. Ethnomusicologists should not take false comfort in this notion. Disruption is inevitable when one person studies the private life of another. However artful, the fieldworker can never blend without trace into the local scene. Ethics argues against invisible intrusion: through covert recording (the microphone hidden in your bag), or going native. Never let your village friends forget you are studying their music. It is only fair that our equipment – microphones, tape and video recorders, cameras, flashguns – are constant reminders that we have come to study, that we do not belong. Don't people under study deserve the chance to put on their Sunday best? Or do they?

Whatever role the researcher devises, native scrutiny is razor sharp:

In 1967, a group of white, bearded men came out of the north again . . . They walked about with restless eyes, trying to take it all in . . . This was a group to fatten the ranks of the anthropology clan, and they tried out their remarkable and superficial theories on the lives of the people of my country (Salinas, 1975, pp.71–2).

However closely your appearance and behaviour match norms of the community, the social scientist is always an outsider. The ethnomusicologist who believes he or she has gone native never fools the natives. The Sioux author, Vine Deloria Jr, had no difficulty spotting anthropologists in the Dakotas:



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Anthropologists can readily be identified on the reservations. Go into any crowd of people. Pick out a tall gaunt white man wearing Bermuda shorts, a World War II Army Air Force flying jacket, an Australian bush hat, tennis shoes, and packing a large knapsack incorrectly strapped on his back. He will invariably have a thin sexy wife with stringy hair, an IQ of 191, and a vocabulary in which even the prepositions have eleven syllables . . . This creature is an anthropologist (1969, p.79).

Ethnomusicologists are more fortunate than anthropologists and sociologists because the private feelings we study are publicly expressed in musical performance. Cultural barriers evaporate when musicologist meets musician. There is no substitute in ethnomusicological fieldwork for intimacy born of shared musical experiences. Learning to sing, dance, play in the field is good fun and good method. Being an appreciative audience is an especially important form of musical exchange. Savour the joy of being a student again; establishing a close relationship with a master musician is a common and successful approach in ethnomusicology (Zonis, 1973; Berliner, 1978; Koning, 1980; Sorrell and Ram Narayan, 1980; Slawek, 1987). By the 1960s students discovered in the literate cultures of India, Japan, Iran and Indonesia, formal systems for music training (not unlike our Western system) in which they could easily enrol. Bimusicality emphasized participation at the expense of observation, and music lessons from a guru captivated many students. However, the ethnomusicologist who remains detached – the outsider looking in – will never plumb the depth of his subject, music, which by its essential nature is personal, expressive, artistic, emotional, even ecstatic. The successful fieldworker achieves a balance between participation and observation, aiming always for scientific, systematic and sympathetic investigation of the art of music.

**HOME PRACTICE** Participant observation can only be learned in the field, but many component skills can be practised at home. Language competence is the most important. Make every effort to learn the language needed. University courses and self-study kits are available for even the most obscure languages; intensive summer courses can be particularly valuable. Understanding of the culture will increase in tandem with language fluency; as the level of comprehension and expression improves, informants raise their level of discourse, and insight into the culture unfolds spontaneously. (The same is true for fluency in the local musical language.)

Skills of observation, memory and expository writing can also be rehearsed at home. Practise 'explicit awareness', the ability to note and remember details of ordinary life – not as simple as it sounds (Spradley, 1980). An exercise: ask a person who has just checked his watch, 'What time is it?' He will check his watch again because he was not explicitly aware of the absolute time. Anthropological texts offer exercises to improve observation, memory and writing (Agar, 1980; Spradley, 1980; Bernard, 1988). These skills contribute to successful participant observation.

For ethnomusicologists the most essential skills are recording and photography. Be completely familiar with your equipment before you arrive in the field; do not purchase items en route to the village. The cheap camera you pick up in New York may not work (you will miss important pictures waiting to

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have a test roll developed). The bargain cassette recorder you buy in Singapore on the way to wherever may not use available batteries, may not have leads supplied and may not be compatible with your microphones.

Practise with all your equipment at home. Nothing should be taken into the field which has not been tested in a realistic setting inside and then outside your living room. Record a conversation at your supper table. Then take your recording gear for a test run at a stationary event – for example buskers at an underground station or services in a local church. Next, stretch yourself by recording a moving event with the tape recorder slung over your shoulder and hand-held microphones, preferably outdoors on a windy day: a civic parade, marching band or street market (in which case the recordist will be moving, not the sound source). Finally, record in a setting with loud amplified sound – perhaps a local disco. The more problems that you anticipate and solve at home (wind noise, headphone isolation, setting levels etc), the fewer problems you will have in the field.

**ENTERING THE FIELD** Before entering the field pause to assess the personal and cultural biases you bring to the project. There is no purely objective research in ethnomusicology (or any subject). Cultural assumptions and personal idiosyncracies guide our observations and colour our findings. The scholar who accepts these biases, deals with them as a part of methodology and acknowledges their influence produces fine research.

Fieldwork can be divided into predictable stages: entry, culture shock and life shock, data collection, holiday periods alternating with more data collection with exhaustion, and leaving the field. Entering the field is a time of excitement, even euphoria, tempered by frustrations, setbacks and hassles. A few simple rules will help during these early days.

First, choose a receptive community. Fieldwork is fraught with problems; if you are not welcome, select another site.

Secondly, take documentation about yourself and your project, purpose of study, and length of stay from your university or funding body. Documentation should make your affiliation clear and be signed by an academic official. Have copies of your documentation drawn up in the local language. Include with your papers pictures of yourself at home with your family; present your human as well as official self, especially to new friends in the village.

Thirdly, in entering a new community, it may be advisable to work through a chain of introductions, courtesy visits to government officials (even the head of state), through the bureaucratic hierarchy to the ministry of culture. From there you may be taken in a number of directions: state schools of music, Westernized professional musicians, radio and TV broadcasting agencies – all interesting (even if none bear on your research). If your destination is the countryside, you will need further introductions. I was lucky during my first weeks in India to meet Shri Ram Sagar Singh of Banaras Hindu University, who lives in a nearby village where he is a leading singer. Within 24 hours of learning I was interested in *dehātī* ('village') music, he had organized village women to sing for me. If you are not that fortunate, you might select a local person to accompany you on your first visit to the village or community – perhaps a government worker from a nearby town. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages: government officials may intimidate villagers and mark you as



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a government agent; however, an official introduction may lend respect to your work and even serve to protect life and limb.

On arrival it may be wise to start at the top. When entering an Indian village, for example, it is proper to go to the *pradhān* ('head') and ask him to introduce you to musical specialists. I followed this method during my fieldwork in Gorakhpur District, India. In Felicity village, Trinidad, I arrived alone and went directly to the Hindu elementary school; this relaxed informal start, well-suited to the Caribbean venue, set a casual and pleasant style for that field trip. In Southall, London, I simply presented myself at a Hindu temple. Introduction to the community depends on local attitudes; take advice from scholars who have worked in the area and experts on the scene.

Finally, prepare for the inevitable questions: Who are you? What are you doing here? Who pays you? (Are you a spy?) What do you do with the money you earn from selling recordings? Why do people do work like this?

Decide how you will present yourself and abandon any notion of assuming a false role. A pose will quickly wear you out (Jones, 1973). The host society will probably assign a role for you, often a kinship affiliation. Amongst the Mbuti of Ituri forest in Zaïre, Colin Turnbull was categorized as a child (despite his actual age) and assigned to a childless couple. His progress through Mbuti childhood was rapid; on a later visit, he was classed as an unmarried adult male – the resident clown (1986). In Karimpur, North India, Charlotte Wiser, who first visited in 1925, was called *dādī* ('father's mother'); Susan Wadley, who came in 1968, was called *buā* ('father's sister'); when I arrived in 1986, the girls called me *dīdī* ('father's daughter').

Spend early days in the field mapping out the geographical setting; walk around, explore and sketch a map. In urban environments, map the social network. Take care that maps and census do not mark you as a spy or tax collector. (Clip boards and pencils on a string make people uneasy.) Be patient. Relax and enjoy your start on a new venture. Note down all first impressions, bad and good. Ethnomusicologists are more fortunate in every way than anthropologists. Problems of entering the field resolve once the music starts.

**CULTURE SHOCK AND LIFE SHOCK** During the first month, while the fieldworker is establishing a daily routine, 'culture shock' and 'life shock' take their toll. Culture shock is the clash between norms of the native culture and the culture of the researcher. Common sense in the culture of orientation may be nonsense in the native culture. The scholar who tries to integrate his cultural norms with those of the host community is rarely successful, finding himself adrift, without familiar landmarks to guide daily life. Inconveniences of the field – negotiating every hour of every day in a foreign language, adjusting to reduced standards of hygiene, coping with extremes of cold, heat or humidity, and avoiding scorpions, red ants, mosquitos, cobras and other greater or lesser menaces – these liabilities start to irritate. Daily habits of the local people suddenly seem 'backward' and unnecessarily harsh. In India I found myself wincing at the apparently rough treatment of children, the daily tearful scenes of hair combing and beatings for sloppy schoolwork; I felt disheartened with purdah and other 'primitive' methods of suppressing women.

For the novice, 'life shock' is even more distressing. The student may

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encounter for the first time birth and death, malnutrition and serious illness left untreated (while the family quarrel over who should pay for medicine). The newcomer may be repelled by inescapable features of poverty – deprivation in every area of life including food, housing, clothing, hygiene and sanitation. The notion of scholarly objectivity becomes repulsive and the prospect of an extended stay in the field stressful and depressing. Entry problems, culture shock and life shock are well documented in anthropological texts, for example Napoleon Chagnon's first sight of the Yanomamö Indians of Venezuela:

The excitement of meeting my first Indians was almost unbearable as I duck-waddled through the low passage into the village clearing.

I looked up and gasped when I saw a dozen burly, naked, filthy, hideous men staring at us down the shafts of their drawn arrows! Immense wads of green tobacco were stuck between their lower teeth and lips making them look even more hideous, and strands of dark-green slime dripped or hung from their noses . . . My next discovery was that there were a dozen or so vicious, underfed dogs snapping at my legs, circling me as if I were going to be their next meal. I just stood there holding my notebook, helpless and pathetic. Then the stench of the decaying vegetation and filth struck me and I almost got sick. I was horrified (1968, p.5).

This situation was dramatic, but no fieldworker escapes shock. Honigmann describes a 'dreadful seven weeks' among the Slave and Cree Indians with 'loneliness occasioned by separation from my family, claustrophobic fear of isolation brought on by the flooded rivers and . . . interpreter and informant problems' (Freilich, 1970, p.21). Hortense Powdermaker confesses to being 'totally fed up with native life' (1967, p.100). Researchers working in their own culture face equal difficulties, including lack of privacy – an apparently universal fieldwork problem. M. N. Srinivas describes 'social claustrophobia' during fieldwork in rural India:

I was never left alone. I had to fight hard even to get two or three hours absolutely to myself in a week or two. My favourite recreation was walking to the nearby village of Kere where I had some old friends, or to Hogur which had a weekly market. But my friends in Ramapura wanted to accompany me on my walks. They were puzzled by my liking for solitary walks. Why should one walk when one could catch a bus, or ride on bicycles, with friends? I had to plan and plot to give them the slip to go out by myself. On my return home, however, I was certain to be asked why I had not taken them with me. They would have put off their other work and joined me. (They meant it.) I suffered from social claustrophobia as long as I was in the village and sometimes the feeling became so intense that I just had to get out (Srinivas, Shah and Ramaswamy, 1979, p.23).

Luckily these crises often coincide with the first opportunity to record music. During culture shock and life shock, the ethnomusicologist can lean on his professional tools: setting the tape recorder running, labelling the first reel, watching Swiss-watch perfection in motion as the second reel follows the first, soothes physical and psychological distress. Working for a long musical evening under the headphones, monitoring off tape (hearing the split-second delay) introduces a timeless suspension from home and field alike, and thoughts turn more to posterity than the here and now. Study of a



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transcendental medium is our saving grace. When you feel you cannot bear the harshness of native life for another moment, let the music take over; professional equipment (which until then has just been a headache) comes into its own. Nagra or Stellavox, Schoeps or AKG or Sennheiser microphones, Agfa or Ampex or Maxell open-reel tape, all invoke the intellectual goals and professional standards that gave birth to the project.

The sweetness of ethnomusicological fieldwork comes after many days and hundreds of hours of tape recordings, when you and your informants find you are still fascinated with the topic of music. Your village friends will grow accustomed to the intrusion of a live microphone in their homes, temples, schools. In Trinidad and India, I was always more aware than they that a recording was being made, and I soon came to feel that I was living on two planes: the real-now world of people and places and that little-forever world of recorded sound. Before long, culture shock fades and you conduct interviews, construct taxonomies, build theories, tear them down and build them up again. Friendships grow and talk continues late into the night. But in the midst of the many conversations about music, you may find yourself thinking ahead to the playback, the listening-after-the-event, the hours of transcription and analysis to come, the repeated review of those fleeting moments in the field.



3. Geneviève Dournon recording folk musicians in the desert of Rajasthan, 1972

**LENGTH OF STAY** How long you spend in the field depends on the nature of your research. Major projects by beginners, especially PhD research, require a year (or the equivalent in shorter visits spread over several years). Follow-up studies in the same area can be done on shorter visits. A particularly fruitful

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fieldwork programme is the 6- to 12-week 'sprint' – convenient for academic holidays; an acceptable absence for mothers or fathers; short enough to work continuously, early morning to late night; and long enough to collect more data than can be transcribed, analysed and written up in a year. Seasoned fieldworkers can start work in a new area with a series of sprints, spread over several years and rotated to cover different seasons. Purists who argue that the one-year stay is the only valid fieldwork style may spend fewer days in the field, measured over their entire career, than more flexible colleagues, who are ready to dash off for a month or two whenever the opportunity presents. Follow-up studies in the same community are particularly rewarding. The ethnomusicologist indicates his sincerity of purpose by returning, and is greeted as an old friend. As the years pass, the original synchronic study acquires historical depth as with Alan Merriam's research among the Basongye of Zaire and Bruno Nettl's with the Montana Blackfoot (Merriam, 1977; Nettl, 1989).

**INFORMANTS** Selection of teachers and informants involves decisions for which it is difficult to offer guidance. In sociology, random samples of informants are chosen for questionnaire surveys according to complex equations that determine the sample size required for a given population; other equations determine stratified sampling from heterogeneous populations, and probability in proportion to sample size. These statistical operations are rare in ethnomusicology, which usually involves a highly select group of informants, chosen for musical and cultural competence rather than representativeness. Because samples are seldom representative, the statistical validity of our studies may be less precise than in sociology or anthropology.

Ethnomusicologists rely on a few key informants, individuals with special musical knowledge who are willing to share their time. The scholar must decide if their opinions are personal or typical.

Musicians may test the researcher's sincerity before revealing musical secrets. In Zimbabwe, Paul Berliner's reticent Shona *mbira* teacher refused to divulge the secrets of instrumental technique for six years (1978, pp.1–7). Nettl's Blackfoot informant, 'Joe', made him wait: 'Come back and see me next Tuesday, and bring your machine [tape recorder]', he told the naive fieldworker. After several weeks serving as a chauffeur, Nettl was granted an interview and allowed to record a few songs (1983, pp.248–9).

Every ethnomusicologist will need to find ways of thanking and paying informants. Money is not always the best answer (you may be unable to pay), but in some cultures it is appropriate or necessary. Simple gifts, especially from your country, are appreciated, as are copies of field photographs and cassettes. An essential courtesy is returning publications, academic theses, and commercial records or cassettes to the community. Encourage your informants to read your work and comment on it; you will need to supply several copies – one for a local library or archive and others for people in the community who helped with your research. Be prepared to supply more copies as the originals are loaned out, worn out or lost; the next generation will want their own copies.

**INTERVIEWS** There are as many interview styles as there are interviewers, interviewees, topics, and cultures. Much depends on your personality, ability



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to relax and to concentrate, listen and respond with quiet enthusiasm, as well as your genuine interest in the topic and the data you are hoping to collect. Interview types vary according to the control the researcher exercises, from the guided conversation (informal interview) to semi-structured open-ended interviews (informant is encouraged to expand topics) to highly structured formats (interviewer follows a written guide and controls the pace and direction of the conversation). Informal interviewing is especially helpful during early phases of fieldwork. Relaxed conversations build rapport and help the researcher to learn basic facts about community life. They reveal fruitful lines of inquiry and provide a working vocabulary. Informal interviews should be written up in field notes on the same day (not the same as a word-for-word transcription, which takes six to eight hours per hour of recorded material). The researcher can draw up interview guides for structured sessions from the data collected in informal and semi-structured sessions.

The first formal interview questionnaire published in ethnomusicology was David McAllester's in *Enemy Way Music* (1954, pp.91–2; repr. in Nettl, 1964, pp.78–81). McAllester had difficulty phrasing questions because the Navajo have no word for 'music'. He revised original questions such as 'What kinds of musical instruments do you have?' to: 'Some people beat a drum when they sing; what other things are used like that?' I experimented with McAllester's questionnaire with East Indian musicians in Trinidad, inquiring, 'Some people beat a drum when they sing. What other things . . .?' My Hindu informants (for whom 'music' means 'musical instruments') looked puzzled and asked, 'What do you mean? Do you mean instrument? How do you mean "what other thing"? What other music?' A meaningful question for Navajos was foolish for Trinidadians. Interviews must be phrased in culturally expressive terms, taking into account the concepts held in that society using the appropriate words and ways of talking. Highly structured interviews as test instruments cannot be used during the early phases of fieldwork. You will need to record many informal conversations about music and extract from these transcriptions the musical vocabulary, concepts and categories from which to formulate valid interview questions.

A formal interview, however unstructured, is never the same as a simple chat, but artful interviewers aim to make the difference as unobtrusive as possible. The interviewer should act naturally, not contrive a role or a pose; natural behaviour is essential whether you are working with new informants or people who have known you for many years.

Interview technique is best learned through practice; do not wait until you arrive in the field to test your wings. The best way to improve technique is to transcribe your own interviews. Discipline yourself to write down every word you say as well as every word spoken by the subject. Through this tedious process you will discover flaws in your approach – talking too much, interrupting, leading the conversation away from the topics important to the informant. Most novice interviewers feel shy during pauses and jump in quickly, introducing a new topic. Interviews lose depth at these critical junctures; the informant, who perhaps was about to give his or her innermost thoughts, is silenced by your lack of patience and composure. The silent probe encourages your subject to reflect, and offer deeper detailed explanations.

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When silences seem too awkward, repeat the subject's last remark (the neutral probe: 'You were explaining that Holī songs are only performed in spring-time . . .'). Let your informant lead the conversation (you will learn something new). Avoid leading questions; as a substitute Lofland suggests 'What do you think about . . . ?' (rather than 'Don't you think that'; Lofland, 1976). Avoid giving emphasis to a point that you (but perhaps not the interviewee) consider important ('Let me note that point down'). Longer questions usually produce longer responses; depending on the informant, you must decide if longer is better. The phrased assertion or 'baiting' (pretending you know more than you actually do) is a journalistic technique that may produce sensitive information; the ethics of this ploy are dubious (Agar, 1980, p.94; Kirk and Miller, 1986; Bernard, 1988, pp.215-16). Relatives and close friends are usually more difficult to interview than strangers; ironically, people are willing to give information to 'the collector who comes from afar and will disappear again' (Goldstein, 1964, p.64; 'stranger-value' is also discussed in Ives, 1980). Friends in the field may hate to tell us what we may not want to hear, so do not spend all your time with people with whom you have good rapport (Wax, 1960, p.91).

Any interviewee will need encouragement – some indication that he or she is supplying the information you want. Offer this support in a transparent effortless manner. Let your face express understanding of the conversation; if you are following intently, this feedback will flow naturally, and you will glimpse the world through your informant's eyes – the ultimate purpose of an interview.

The best way to preserve an interview is to record it. Cassette recorder and electret microphone are ideal. Always ask permission to record, and explain how the recording will be used. Ask the interviewee if he or she wishes to be credited by name for direct quotations (or prefers to remain anonymous). Cassette recorders are a commonplace all over the world, and there is no reason to feel nervous about asking to record an interview. If you feel embarrassed or shy about taping a session, your subject will sense this uneasiness and start to feel uncomfortable, even suspicious.

The good interviewer must be absolutely confident of his technical skills and sure of his recording equipment. After you have set up recorder and microphones, start the tape, check with headphones that all is well (then put them aside for the interview); explain that the equipment is under control, the tape is running, and the interview can begin. Once you give your informant a reassuring go-ahead, do not distract him by fussing with your recording equipment. Pay full attention to the conversation; even glancing down to check the meter levels or to see if the tape is running can spoil the flow. For reel changes, let the click of your cassette recorder snap you out of your utter concentration on his or her words; do not spend the last five minutes of each tape staring anxiously at the cassette.

*Field records*

Ethnomusicological fieldwork requires orderly record-keeping, accomplished with an imposing list of mechanical aids – audio and video recorders, microphones, typewriters, even lap-top computers. Open-reel and cassette



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tapes provide the audio record; photographs, both still and moving, the visual. The most reliable technical field aids are pencil and paper with which the ethnomusicologist prepares field notes, diary and log. Many hours in the field are spent preparing records, more hours in their ordering, labelling, numbering, logging, coding, and cross-referencing for personal use, for archives and for other scholars. After months in the field, when with bad luck all the professional equipment has broken down, when the backup and the backup to the backup have failed, take comfort that you can fall back on pencil and paper to record your observations in notes. Their importance has always been recognized in anthropology, but in ethnomusicology, where technology occupies so much attention, they are underrated.

Anthropologists suggest dividing field writing into four categories: (i) jottings; (ii) notes; (iii) diary; and (iv) log. Ethnomusicologists may wish to consider whether this system, which purportedly separates observed fact (notes) from feelings about facts (diary), is suitable for the documentation of expressive culture.

**JOTTINGS AND NOTES** During the day make jottings in a small notebook that is always with you (ask permission to write during conversations). Note down as much as possible: proper names, ages, kinship relationships, technical terms, song types, lines of texts, ideas about music, instrument names, tunings and so on. Cultivate the habit of noting information on the spot.

Learn one of the many useful systems for recording, coding, and maintaining anthropological and sociological field notes, and train yourself to write notes daily (you will probably need one or two hours). Anthropologists usually set aside evening time for writing; this programme will not work for ethnomusicologists since musical activities often take place after dark. This may put the ethnomusicologist in the position of writing up yesterday's notes – never a good plan since the human memory is a poor storage medium. Select an open time of day for writing; in many tropical countries, the hot midday hours when the locals are resting may be best. Last thing at night after an exhilarating exhausting recording session is never good for me.

Notes are based on rough field jottings; they will cue your memory and supply technical terms needed to fill out your account. You may write as many as 10,000 words of field notes every week (Bernard, 1988, pp.180–202). With this much material to organize, a system is essential. Select a uniform paper size for all notes (the American 8½" x 11" or the European A4 are practical choices). Plan to use plenty of paper, but short notes are easier to order than long ones. Start each new topic or idea on a fresh page. Do not compose long narrative notes covering many subjects; simple expository descriptions of individual topics are easier to compose and index. Some scholars code each page (along the top edge or right-hand margin) according to the 888 topics listed in the *Outline of Cultural Materials* (Murdock, 1945). For music, Murdock gives: '53: Fine Arts (533 – music, 534 – musical instruments, 535 – dancing, 536 – drama, 537 – oratory); 54: Entertainment (545 – musical and theatrical productions, 547 – night clubs and cabarets, 549 – art and recreational supplies industries)'. The ethnomusicologist will need to devise a more detailed system suited to musicological research.

Hiding notes from the people about whom they are written always creates

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suspicion. In Trinidad and India my informants enjoyed hearing me read from my field notes; naturally enough they wanted to know what I was writing in my room. Their comments from these reading sessions proved especially helpful.

DIARY Anthropologists often keep a diary, a personal document in which are recorded feelings, anxieties, frustrations, and hopes; these comments are kept in a volume separate from field notes. The scholar integrates the subjective data from the diary and the purportedly objective facts from the notes at a later stage, evaluating attitudes and moods during the collection of data and their influence on the research. This method may be helpful for some, but I am dubious about trying to make a formal distinction between objective and subjective, and I dislike writing anything in the field that I cannot read back to my informants, indeed anything I would not want published, as for example the posthumously published field diaries of such an eminent scholar as Bronislaw Malinowski:

Tuesday, 4.24 . . . Last night and this morning looked in vain for fellows for my boat. This drives me to a state of white rage and hatred for bronze-coloured skin, combined with depression, a desire to 'sit down and cry', and a furious longing 'to get out of this'. For all that, I decide to resist and work today – 'business as usual', despite everything (1967, p.261).

LOG The key to systematic fieldwork is a log, a running account of plans for spending time (and money). A fairly large bound book with lined pages is suitable for this. Number and date all the pages in advance, allotting one opening for each day in the field. On the left, list your plans for the day, on the right what you actually did. This simple system encourages you to plan ahead: make appointments for specific activities and enter them under the date. Make appointments to interview a singer, photograph the preparing of drum heads, record a particular wedding song, finish a genealogy and enter them in the log. By comparing the real with the ideal on a daily basis, you will learn to budget time and improve your schedule. At least for the beginning of your trip, you might use the log to note down your daily routine, eating and sleeping times and your menus.

NUMBERING In addition to general logs and diaries, the ethnomusicologist will need to keep separate detailed logs for open-reel tapes, cassettes, video tapes and rolls of photographic film. Label all these items as soon as they have been recorded with a number, date and brief identification of contents. Two small self-adhesive labels affixed to the recording spool, one or two on a film canister and the standard self-adhesive compact cassette labels suffice for this purpose. Number each set of materials separately – tapes, cassettes, photo rolls – beginning with '1', in strict chronological sequence (ordering by topic, genre, musician etc should be done through cross-referencing). A simple system for composite identification numbers is useful, for example, *India 6/89/F/131*: the name of the trip (India 6), the year (1989), the format (F – open-reel *Field* tape), and the number (131st tape); *MAU1/92/CS/39* (Mauritius, trip 1, 1992,



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CaSsette number 39); and so on – PH for photographic roll, VC for video cassette, DAT for digital audio tapes.

*Health in the field*

Give serious consideration to the preservation of personal health in the field, particularly if your field site is away from home, in the tropics or another climatic extreme – arctic, arid, whatever. Make sure your immunizations are current for the area (especially typhoid, cholera, tetanus, yellow fever, polio, hepatitis A; don't forget measles, mumps, rubella [MMR] if you were not immunized in childhood). Many essential immunizations require a course of two or three injections, given over several months. Visit your dentist before departure; take a copy of your eye glasses prescription and a spare pair of glasses (especially important for contact lens wearers).

Be particularly vigilant about malaria, a serious tropical protozoan parasite infection on the increase worldwide (estimated 150 million cases per year with 1 million deaths; Hatt, 1982). If working in a malaria zone (including Africa, Central and South America, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific Islands), get current advice before your departure from a specialist tropical health centre regarding prophylactic tablets including Chloroquine, Fansidar, Doxycycline, and newer medications such as Mefloquine (Lariam). You *must* take one or a combination of these during your stay. Recommendations about type and dose vary from area to area and from year to year (as resistant strains develop), so check before each trip, even to areas you know well. Many malaria prophylactics must be begun a week before departure and continued for six weeks after your return. If your field site is days away from medical facilities seek advice before departing. In any case carry extra Chloroquine tablets and learn to recognize malaria symptoms: vivax malaria is typified by a cold-shivering-hot-sweating cycle (typically 24 hour cycles repeated every 48 hours, but patterns vary); the potentially fatal falciparum malaria starts with deceptively mild flu-like symptoms – fever, headache, possibly vomiting and diarrhoea that persist for two days, changing with treacherous swiftness into an overwhelming disease, with liver, kidney or respiratory failure or coma (cerebral malaria). If you experience such mild symptoms and know you could have falciparum malaria, take four Chloroquine tablets immediately, then two every eight hours for a week. This treatment can save your life, enabling you to reach medical help. Mild symptoms must never be ignored (in the 1980s, one promising young Dutch ethnomusicologist died suddenly in Indonesia from falciparum malaria). Any disease contracted in a malarial zone must be assumed to be malaria until proven otherwise and treated immediately with Chloroquine by mouth, while seeking urgent and skilful medical attention.

The first line of defence against malaria (and some 80 other dread diseases) is to avoid mosquitoes. Repellents with diethyl toluamide are effective, applied to the skin, clothing and bedding. Keep arms and legs covered, especially in the evenings when the anopheline mosquito bites. Wear socks. Avoid hotels near swamps. Local sprays and mosquito coils are successful deterrents for night-time (set up your coil safely so your room does not catch fire if it breaks). Old-fashioned mosquito nets are very helpful. Beware also of red ants,

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scorpions (check your shoes), snakes, and rabies-carrying mammals, especially dogs. If bitten seek immediate medical help. Treat even minor cuts and grazes with sterilized water and antiseptic cream.

Ignore the advice that you can slowly build immunity by drinking small amounts of local contaminated water. Water-borne diseases include polio, guinea-worm, leptospirosis, typhoid, paratyphoid, cholera, bacillary dysentery, amoebic dysentery, infective hepatitis, worms and giardiasis. Drink bottled water or develop a system for water purification using boiling, chlorine purification tablets, and perhaps filters. Boiling is the safest method to sterilize water; a brisk five-minute boil is enough, ten minutes very safe. Remember to sterilize water containers. Chlorine tablets are not as effective as boiling (but much better than no protection); however, try to avoid their use for extended periods. They should be added to water at least ten minutes before drinking, preferably longer. If using tablets in boiled water, wait until the water cools. Water filters can be useful to remove sludge and large particles of grit, but need to be cleaned regularly, or they can harbour organisms. Even very hot water kills many germs, so it is always safer to drink tea and coffee than unboiled water. Bottled fizzy drinks are usually safe as the acidity kills bacteria.

In tropical settings and also at high altitudes force yourself to drink more than you feel you need, especially until your natural thirst mechanism adjusts to the setting. Stay out of the noon-day sun and remember that unquenchable thirst is usually helped fastest by hot tea.

Peel all raw foods. Use chlorinated water to wash any raw vegetables or fruits. Avoid raw greens such as lettuce altogether. Prepared milk and milk products also may not be safe. Small roadside restaurants where you can see food cooked over an open fire may be safer than expensive hotels that warm up yesterday's saucy meat dish. In tropical countries, a diet of well-cooked fresh vegetables is best.

Carry standard over-the-counter remedies for pain, diarrhoea, rash, eye infection and dehydration. Your medical kit should include antiseptic cream, tablets for motion sickness (also helpful for nausea), antihistamines (for rash), bandages, electrolyte powder, a course of broad-spectrum antibiotics (Ciproflaxin is particularly effective for severe intestinal disorders), oil of clove (toothache) and any other medications you regularly use. Label all medicines with name, use and dose.

DEPARTURE As there is an art to entering a community, there is an art to leaving. Don't vanish suddenly. Say goodbye in a manner that is appropriate to the culture – with words and actions. Give fair warning of your departure. Stay in correspondence with friends made in the field; they may be relying on a continued relationship, however simple. You may represent an important and unforgettable episode in their life (Alan Merriam discovered when he returned to the Basongye of Zaire in 1974, after an absence of 14 years, that his earlier visit was considered the most important event in recent musical life; Merriam, 1977).

Umesh Pandey from Karimpur, the village in Western Uttar Pradesh studied by American anthropologists since 1925, explained the feelings of the anthropological subject:



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'We want friendship, they want information; we want life-long relations, they want information; we want to think of them as part of our family, they want information. Anthropologists come and go like a dream. It is difficult to know what to like or to hate. Still, we love them' (1991, p.1).

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