

Sound and Sentiment

*Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song
in Kaluli Expression*

THIRD EDITION



Steven Feld

A THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION

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To the boy who became a *muni* bird
and in memory of Charlie Parker, John Coltrane,
and Charles Mingus,

ane kalu ɔbɛ mise

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Philadelphia
September 1981

INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION

It's been more than thirty-five years since I first set foot in Bosavi, and it has been more than ten since my last visit. How can I now position *Sound and Sentiment* in relation to twenty-five years of research visits and the surrounding before and after? How can I re-introduce a book that was once more new and surprising for the anthropology of Papua New Guinea, for the ethnography of expression and emotion, for experimental representation connecting text to sound and image? The only way to begin is to acknowledge how much has changed since the time of my dissertation (1979), the book's initial publication (1982b), and its second edition (1990a).

The most radical changes are surely the stark local ones. Many of the people you'll encounter in these pages are no longer alive, and many of the beliefs, practices, knowledges, rituals, and experiences described are either considerably muted or are no longer believed, practiced, known, performed, or experienced. To a great extent, you'll be reading about past realities in what has become a considerably more contentious place, a place where the impacts of evangelical missionization and government neglect collided with transnational intrusions to produce varieties of cultural dissonance that were hard to anticipate in the Bosavi I first came to know in the mid-1970s.

That part of the story isn't terribly unique to Bosavi or Papua New Guinea. History has had a way of being particularly punishing in once-small, remote locales that absorbed in the shock of a mere fifty years of world contacts what other indigenous places and peoples absorbed over the longer course of one to five hundred years of colonial and postcolonial experience. But here the story is equally about a place that has truly become more marginal as it has become more globally connected. And, so, responding to trajectories of destabilization that are entangled with the desired benefits of

“development,” Bosavi’s vexed discourses about authority and autonomy can rapidly bounce between new imaginations of local and national citizenship, on the one hand, and, on the other, nostalgias for an “authentic” once-upon-a-time “culture.”

If that weren’t complicated enough, *Sound and Sentiment* is occasionally dragged into the whole affair, variously serving to entice ecotourists, educate bureaucrats, or enhance local feuds over whose version of “tradition” is to prevail. Confusing complicities? For sure. But there is no reason to depict recent history as a simple and unidirectional devolutionary slide, nor to depict Kaluli as once-creative agents who have now been reduced to *tristes tropiques* victims in a two-ring circus of globalization and its local backwaters. No, it is simply and honestly more the challenge to always engage the intensity and significance of how “then” became “now.”

Then and Now

The field research reported in *Sound and Sentiment* dates principally to 1976–77, and the second edition postscript described additional visits in 1982 and 1984. After the second edition was published, I made four additional research trips in the 1990s: three with my linguist colleague Bambi B. Schieffelin, largely to work on a Bosavi dictionary (B. Schieffelin and Feld 1998), and one with my ethnographer colleague Edward L. Schieffelin. *Sound and Sentiment* was, of course, deeply informed by the Schieffelins’ research and publications in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (detailed in the book’s original references section). And that conversation continues through recent republication of their ethnographic monographs (B. B. Schieffelin 2005; E. L. Schieffelin 2005), as well as a stream of publications in the 1990s and 2000s within the fields of ethnohistory, cultural psychology, and performance (E. L. Schieffelin 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2006a, 2006b) and of language change, ideology, and literacy (B. B. Schieffelin 1996, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008a, 2008b).

Additionally, significant research on the history of contact in the Southern Highlands (Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991) is now joined by ethnographic studies of immediately contiguous groups: the Kasua and Kamula to the south (Brunois 2007; Wood 2004); the Onabasulu and Etolo to the north (Ernst 1999; Kelly 1993; Dwyer 1990); the Gebusi, Bedamini, Kubo, and Samo to the southwest (Knauft 2002; Sørum 2003; Minnegal and Dwyer 1999; Shaw 1990); and the Faso and Foi to the northeast (Kurita 1988; Gilberthorpe 2007; Weiner 1991). This research and writing thickens the historical

and cultural texture of the story told in *Sound and Sentiment*, despite the fact that there has been no continuing field research in Bosavi since the new millennium began, and my colleagues and I only maintain contact now through the post and satellite phone.

But to return to “then,” the question I have most often been asked by students reading *Sound and Sentiment* is to locate the most important event that set the tone for life in Bosavi during the years of my first research and since. I have thought about this question often and my answer points to the moment that set into motion the most sustained interaction with outsiders and the most sustained set of changes for Bosavi identity discourses. That moment came in 1964, when missionaries of the Unevangelized Fields Mission (U.F.M., later known as the Asia Pacific Christian Mission, or A.P.C.M.), based in the neighboring Lake Kutubu area, spent six months in the Eastern Bosavi region.

This was the first continuous contact with an outside force, and it was a signal event in Bosavi history. One of the missionaries, the linguist Murray Rule, prepared a first description of the Bosavi language, while another, Dick Donaldson, supervised the initial construction of a bush airstrip at a place called Waiyu. When the missionaries recruited laborers to clear the forest there, some Bosavi men were, coincidentally, in the midst of staging a secret initiation lodge nearby. Fearing that their autonomy and particularly their ritual secrets were now substantially threatened, the Bosavi male elders and initiates abandoned the lodge to work on the airstrip. With this act, the institution of male initiation ended in Bosavi.

Despite sporadic and temporary migration of young men for labor schemes following construction of the airstrip, Bosavi remained distant from the colonial territory of Papua through the rest of the 1960s. This remained true even after the arrival of a resident expatriate missionary family in 1970 and after Papua New Guinea’s independence in 1975. The lack of local roads, of capital infrastructure, of government presence, and of development initiatives all kept Bosavi as physically remote and economically marginal to the new nation as it had previously been to the colony.

During that period, indeed, when I arrived in 1976, one still encountered much in the way of local political and economic autonomy, egalitarianism among adult males, and complementary gender roles in Bosavi. Extensive bonds of friendship, obligation, hospitality, and reciprocity were clearly major factors in the local organization of domestic life, local work, ceremonial activities, hunting and gardening, and bridewealth transactions. In these ways much of social life in Bosavi through the 1960s and well into the 1970s

could still be reasonably described with sociological terms like “classless” and “small-scale.”

But the dramatic changes brought by evangelical missionization rapidly destabilized autonomy in Bosavi. And with it the ethos that once felt more egalitarian, classless, and small-scale. And shocking as it is to read today, Dick Donaldson’s evangelical missive, written in 1964 to call missionaries to come to Bosavi, set the tone for the long-term evangelical encounter that included both indigenous missionizing pastors and then a resident expatriate family. Set in motion by those encounters was a kind of rhetoric that re-primativized and morally othered Bosavi people while promoting divisiveness and hierarchy among them.

Now, what are these primitive people like? Well, to put it plainly, they are half man, half animal. . . . The people resemble the rugged, unfriendly land in which they live, otherwise they could have not survived the centuries. . . . The Bosavis mutilate their bodies savagely, and burn their backs and shoulders with molten resin to make “beauty” weals. They are nature’s children, naive in simplicity one day—moody and treacherous the next. In the primeval isolation, they resemble the labyrinth of jungle in which they live; for if cleared and sown, both yield a wonderful first harvest. This is my reason for writing, to alert you to the unprecedented opportunities that await pioneer missionaries in New Guinea today. . . . What a thrilling adventure! You meet these primitive types first in all their savagery, then in a few short years you are able to sit down with them at the Lord’s Table, “all one in Christ Jesus.” (Donaldson 1964:2–3)

When the Australian missionaries arrived to take residence in 1970, they immediately expressed suspicion and hostility about local practices and rituals. As confident as Donaldson was that the Bosavi forest was filled with satanic spirits, the missionaries hardly bothered to learn any of the local cosmology. Bosavi people were openly berated about the evil imagined to live in their environment, in their hearts, and in their minds. The message was unequivocal: renounce “traditional” ways and prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ, or face the hellfire. Evangelical Christianity thus initiated a local regime of fear, much remembered years afterward for the guilt, chaos, and confusion it instilled.

Two uncanny coincidences led many Bosavi people to believe that the missionaries held a mystically powerful key to the depths of their language and culture. The first of these was the identical initial sound of the Bosavi word for sorcerer, *se*, and the ubiquitous new mission word *satan*. The second

was that a traditional Bosavi story about the world ending in fire resonated clearly with the mission story of hellfire and apocalyptic destruction. Some Bosavi people decided to willingly take mission dogma quite seriously, despite their considerable confusion over the meaning of the bible stories.

The profound character of that confusion, widespread during my initial visit in the 1970s, was brought forth powerfully to me during a return visit in 1984. Quietly, and secretly, Hōnowo, a young man with whom Bambi B. Schieffelin and I were working on the translation of Bosavi stories, asked, “Do you think our Bosavi *malolo to* [stories, literally “told words”] are like the *misini to* [mission stories]?” It was only just then, in the diction, phrasing, intonation, and emphasis of his careful and wondering English question, that I could grasp the missionary power to speak as the voice of literal truth.

In addition to holding Bosavi people as a captive audience for evangelization, the missionaries also wielded considerable specific powers. These included control of air traffic in and out of the region, as well as control over access to education, jobs, and virtually all forms of information, development, and social benefits. This domination took place at a distinct moment in Papua New Guinea’s history, a time when the newly independent government’s main concern was the development of a national political economy. Policing what missionaries were doing in the most out-of-the-way areas of the country was a low national priority, despite widespread reports of cultural destruction or abuse of power by A.P.C.M. missionaries in the Southern Highlands and surrounding areas. Indeed, the continued lack of government presence in Bosavi meant that evangelical rhetoric and mission policy was naturalized as *de facto* law. And this is very much the way it felt on the ground in the 1970s and well into the 1980s, with Bosavi people assuming that any message from the mission represented the desires of the national government.

Of course, the missionaries were also concerned with good works. They introduced a clinic at the airstrip and provided substantial health care. But with this came forms of bodily surveillance and punishment, for example, refusal of aid to those who transgressed mission policies against smoking tobacco or dancing in ceremonies. A similar pattern developed with the mission school, which also introduced substantial benefit. Nonetheless, demands that students spend long periods away from their home community undermined parental authority and disrupted family relations. Additionally, students were indoctrinated and regularly channeled into mission-related work, and they were rarely rewarded or challenged in any independent areas of educational skill. Opportunities disproportionately went to those who

excelled in bible classes. The missionaries placed these students in regional bible schools for one or two years. When the students returned, they became village pastors. With this position came considerable local power and influence, not to mention new access to resources, wealth, and deference. Pastors established mini-fiefdoms, and people feared them, obeyed them, and worked hard to cultivate their favor.

The dramatic “repent or burn” message so relentlessly preached by the missionaries and their local pastors chilled somewhat by the mid- to late 1980s. This was due in part to a new and serious government presence in Bosavi in the form of construction of a more centrally located airstrip, school, and aid post that remained outside of mission control. Missionary authority diminished as well when exploration for oil, gas, mining, and logging began to sweep through the surrounding region in the late 1980s and 1990s. With those developments Bosavi people realized that evangelical Christianity might not be the only route to social change, advantage, or opportunity.

But, in time, explorations came to reveal that there were no substantial or unique deposits of gold, oil, or gas to exploit on Bosavi land. For this reason, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Bosavi people became captivated by the oil project and massive development in the Lake Kutubu area to the northeast and by the clear-cut logging project on the south side of Mt. Bosavi. Occasional infusions of cash and material wealth followed sporadic patterns of migration by young Bosavi men who worked on these projects. Both the material changes and the stories that came back to Bosavi fanned the fires of local desire, and this led to broader bases of conflict around real, perceived, and possible inequities. As outside companies then tried to gain access to the Bosavi forests for industrial logging, residents debated the meaning of “development.” Local politicians emerged, and some were quickly enlisted to work for the logging concerns. Nongovernmental organizations also became involved. They promoted education about the environment and tried to outmaneuver the attempts by foreign operators to convince Bosavi people to sell their forest land. Very rapidly then, local Bosavi affairs were dominated by their connection to regional, national, and world economies.

After twenty years of largely unchallenged authority and control, the expatriate missionaries left at the end of 1990. Some months before going, they told me their news with these words: “Money is God in Bosavi now.” But in a memoir a few years later, mixing tales of quaint adventure and congratulatory conviction, many passages again reprise the voice of Donaldson’s 1964 missive, describing the pleasures of leaving with “former cannibals now truly God’s gentlemen” and the satisfaction that “likeable rogues hugged us

and expressed their gratitude with the same fervour as the finest Christians” (Briggs 1995:195).

Despite the long period of missionary residency, Bosavi people neither received much educational benefit nor were empowered with the practical skills to maneuver as citizens in the new nation. In parallel, lack of consistent government presence and few local possibilities for economic development led Bosavi people to feel increasingly alienated in the 1990s. Life took on a more anxious tone as they waited for something to happen. During my four visits in the 1990s and particularly in the years leading to the millennium, local Christians preached that an impending apocalyptic event of extraordinary proportions was coming. Others believed that a dramatic development project, like some form of logging or mining, would bring extraordinary wealth. Many people simply yearned for opportunities to participate in some kind of cash economy, through small businesses and locally sustainable agriculture projects. Others imagined ecotourism as a way to bring cash, interest, respect, access, and new contacts, particularly when it became clear that the three anthropologists who visited regularly from 1966 to 1999 were no longer coming to stay.

Bosavi Song and the Politics of Expressive Practice after 1990

As desires mounted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a particular nostalgia developed in Bosavi for the expressive practices that were given up under pressure from local pastors and the A.P.C.M. missionaries. Central to the local discourse on loss was debate about the largely abandoned ceremonies and poetic songs that were vibrant in earlier times. Something important happened then, and it is the key sound story neither anticipated nor told in *Sound and Sentiment*.

This is the story of how the children and grandchildren of my closest interlocutors took their poetic inheritance and, after the departure of the expatriate missionaries in 1990, then reworked the waning world of ceremonial weeping and song into a new world of Bosavi song performance. This is the story of “string band,” the generic Papua New Guinea style name, or, as it is locally known in its unique Bosavi form, *gita gisalo* (“guitar ceremonial song”).

Gita gisalo is the music of the first generation of Bosavi people to grow up in an independent Papua New Guinea. It is also the music of the first generation of Bosavi people to grow up with evangelical missionization central

to their everyday lives. It is also the music of a generation largely stripped of the ritual and ceremonial knowledge and practice of previous generations, the first generation to grow up with access to education through sixth grade, and the first generation to deal with the sporadic presence of anthropologists, development workers, politicians, and agents of the Papua New Guinea state. I first met this generation when they were five- to ten-year-olds in the mid-1970s, and I came to know them through their hunger for education and their curiosity for knowledge of the world beyond Bosavi.

String band music retells the main features of Bosavi's recent contact history. Western song forms and vocal harmonies were first introduced through the hymns taught vigorously from the 1970s by both Papuan pastors and the expatriate evangelical missionaries. Guitars and ukuleles began trickling into the Bosavi area soon after, at about the time of Papua New Guinea's independence in 1975. The instruments came with Bosavi men returning from early labor contracts in the Highlands or on the coast, or with the first Papua New Guineans from outside Bosavi coming to work at the airstrip's new mission clinic.

This was also the time when the first portable radio-cassette players appeared in the area, also brought by returning laborers. With these came the first cassettes of the popular music then circulating in Papua New Guinea's towns. Among the few national groups to get a hearing, Bosavi people particularly liked the PNG string band sounds of coastal groups like Paramana Strangers and New Krymus. The few available cassettes were played until they disintegrated; new ones only occasionally appeared with returning workers or with the few salaried mission employees. The combination of a weak signal and poor reception over the mountains from Radio Southern Highlands, sixty miles northeast to Mendi, and few batteries to power the few cassette players meant that Bosavi people heard relatively little of the developing idioms of postindependence PNG popular song circulating in the Highlands or coastal communities.

Despite local interest in the new musical possibilities brought by guitars and Western song forms, string band activities were slow to get started in Bosavi. The key factor was the expatriate missionaries' and local pastors' hostility to secular music. For them, song was simply a vehicle for hymns, and guitars were only tolerated as accompaniment to mass voices in church. For this reason a secular string band movement didn't gain momentum in Bosavi until the opening, in 1985, of the new community school and airstrip built by the national government. This took place at Muluma, in the central or Kaluli area, three hours' walking distance from the Bosavi mission station at Waiyu.

String band performance became a mainstay of school events at Muluma. Like the local sports teams that also emerged there at the same time, each group was identified by its longhouse community of origin. The bands typically consisted of four or five voices, with lead, rhythm, and bass guitars, and ukulele. Some used two-part vocal harmony and octave doubling, and the lead voice often sang in a falsetto. The vocal sound was typically strident, following the missionary model of singing as loudly as possible in church. It took some time for the groups to blend their voices with the softer sound of the guitars.

Beginning in 1986 and continuing into the late 1990s, string bands competed for small cash prizes at Independence Day celebrations held at Muluma. While an intervillage competitive spirit was promoted by these events, the members of these bands taught one another what they knew and shared the few available instruments. Students who went out to provincial high schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought back new skills and instruments, accelerating the learning of those at the local schools.

The bands that formed at the Muluma school and that competed there in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s were the backbone of the Bosavi string band scene I got to know and record throughout the 1990s. During these years several of the men who started these groups got married, and husband-wife teams defined a key trend for the groups. In each case the woman was lead vocalist, and her husband the lead instrumentalist and principal harmony vocalist. Most of the songs were composed by the men; through the 1990s I only knew of one Bosavi woman who was active as a guitar band composer.

Experiences of the PNG world outside Bosavi, including provincial high school and town work, were emerging song topics; lyrics about boy-girl relationships were particularly popular. Lyrics in both Bosavi and Tok Pisin, with occasional bits of English, were also common. Some of the groups and repertoires were initially formed through the experience of singing church hymns, and some songs are modeled on them, either substituting new texts or secularizing existing ones.

But what is most remarkable in this overtly very new kind of musical practice is how the string band songs continue to develop many of the poetic conventions and topics long central to ceremonial and everyday vocal song in Bosavi, the very ones discussed and analyzed in *Sound and Sentiment*. Themes of hunger, hospitality, sharing, loss, and remembrance are expressed through locally familiar metaphors like the ones you'll read about here for women's funerary wailing and men's ceremonial *gisalo*. Unquestionably, the guitar band

movement continued and embellished the Bosavi practice of valuing song for its emotional power and poetic appeal. Indeed, it was not uncommon for me to witness these songs provoke tears, nor was it uncommon for their composers and singers to tell me of their desire to move listeners in precisely this way. So despite sweeping changes in Bosavi expressive and ceremonial culture from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s, the post-*Sound and Sentiment* years of my local research visits were in part taken up with recording and documenting the exciting birth of a new song movement (Feld 2001b:disc 1).

The question this raises, of course, is familiar for contemporary anthropologists. Does modernity produce as much, or more, or less difference than it effaces? The drama in this question is especially familiar in the highly mediated contemporary politics of indigeneity. And in Bosavi this is particularly so because of how the place name has repeatedly signaled a remote unknown. Take, as a recent example, *Lost Land of the Volcano*, from the 2009 season of the British Broadcasting Corporation's "Expedition" series. An international team of scientists joined filmmakers from the BBC Natural History Unit in order to travel into the extinct volcano of Mt. Bosavi. "From the world's smallest parrot to talking beetles, birds of paradise and tree kangaroos they discover some of the strangest creatures on earth. And in just four tough weeks they find over forty species of animals new to science," the DVD box proclaims (BBC One 2009). Even *The Guardian* couldn't resist the BBC's exotica press release, creating this headline: "Lost World of Fanged Frogs and Giant Rats Discovered in Papua New Guinea."

Despite global press coverage for the adventures recounted by the three remarkable films, there was barely any mention of the rain forest-dwelling peoples who live in the foothills all around Mt. Bosavi, and virtually nothing about their well-documented knowledge of regional natural history. In the press Bosavi was simply a "lost" and faraway place synonymous with the triumphant scientific discovery of a giant rat, a citation not much more sophisticated, representationally speaking, than the use of Bosavi in the Hollywood flop *Krippendorf's Tribe* (Holland 1998) as the remote place where a fumbling and failing anthropologist (played by Richard Dreyfuss) is exposed by his archrival (played by Lily Tomlin), who shows up in Port Moresby shouting, in simplified lingua franca, *mi laik go long Bosabi!* ("I want to go to Bosavi!").

I learned a very different lesson about major media potential for indigenous recognition in 1990. Just after the second edition of *Sound and Sentiment* appeared, I spent three months in Bosavi recording the sounds that would be edited into *Voices of the Rainforest*, a CD that condenses a twenty-four-hour day-in-the-life of the forest and Bosavi people into one hour. Pro-

duced by the Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart and the beneficiary of his substantial music industry and sound technology connections, not to mention a world of enthusiastic Deadhead listeners and consumers, *Voices of the Rainforest's* airplay and sales brought attention to the mining, logging, and environmental degradation sweeping through New Guinea's rain forests. The recording's circulation made audible the deep ecology of the rain forest and the everyday musical lives of its inhabitants (Feld 2011b; the first edition of the CD is discussed in Feld 1994).

The CD's marketplace success translated into substantial royalties, and together with the proceeds from *Sound and Sentiment I* established the non-profit Bosavi Peoples Fund (www.bosavipeoplesfund.net). Since its inception in 1991 the Bosavi Peoples Fund has supported a variety of educational and cultural projects meant to advance the standing of the Bosavi community in Papua New Guinea and the world. In recent years a key project has been a Bosavi Digital Archive to preserve the thirty-five years of media materials that have been collected by my colleagues and me. Currently the archive comprises some two hundred hours of audio recordings and six thousand black and white and color photographs. Fieldnotes, transcriptions, and translations, and other documents, as well as a complete digital archive of publications will eventually be compiled.

There is something at once gratifying and unsettling about such a large segment of Bosavi history living its research afterlife on a three-terabyte hard drive. Gratifying because it will ultimately make possible more research, dissemination, and feedback, hopefully some of it of real use in Bosavi and Papua New Guinea. Unsettling because of the potential for exploitative uses of the material in today and tomorrow's digital wild west. It only reminds me, again, that if I've learned anything about "then" and "now," it is that the plot only thickens.

The Acoustic Turn

"What about an anthropology of sound? What about ethnographies that are tape recordings?" Those were the opening sentences of a 1972 graduate seminar paper I wrote in response to the theoretical program of my teacher Alan Merriam's important book *The Anthropology of Music* (1964). Whatever I had in mind, I surely wasn't thinking ahead to a time when those questions, and *Sound and Sentiment*, would position me in the parental or grandparental generation to today's "sound studies" or "sound culture studies."

I've been excited by the proliferation of new social and cultural studies of sound, all the more to witness anthropologists locating sound ever more seriously in transcultural and transdisciplinary research (*Anthropology News* 2010, 2011; Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa, and Porcello 2010; also see Diehl 2002; Fox 2004; Greene and Porcello 2004; Hirschkind 2006; Meintjes 2003; Mora 2005; Novak forthcoming; Panopoulos 2003; Samuels 2004; Solomon 2000; Weisethaunet 1998; Yamada 1997). But I should contextualize my acoustic ancestor status by acknowledging that the intellectual agenda of *Sound and Sentiment* was considerably more specific. As an experimental ethnography of sound, or study of sound as a cultural system, *Sound and Sentiment* tried first to identify and respond to two serious problems with Merriam's anthropology of music paradigm.

The first was to critique Merriam's theoretically and linguistically limited model for the analysis of "song texts." In *Sound and Sentiment* I wanted to underscore the critical importance of engaging the socio-acoustics of expressive forms that were in between language and music, forms that featured complex sonic intersections of verbal art, poesis, and vocalized performance. In the specific empirical and ethnographic case that came to captivate me, this concerned the intertwining of song and crying. And if I was first drawn to how the performance of men's *gisalo* songs displayed complex layers of sung vocalization, poetic texts, and cried accompaniment, I was considerably more challenged by how to understand the performance of women's sung-texted-weeping for Bosavi funerals. In both cases the poetic complexities that entextualized gender in voice pushed me deeply into the sound symbolism of language in music, and the timbral and textural aspects of music in language.

While those dimensions of the anthropology of sound and voice were empirically in line with at least one intellectual legacy, that of Roman Jakobson (1980, 1985; see Feld and Fox 1994; Feld, Fox, Porcello and Samuels 2004), a second concern was neither anticipated by Merriam's anthropology of music program nor by any well-developed paradigm in ethnobiology or evolutionary anthropology. This concerned copresent bio- and socio-acoustics, the interanimation and interarticulation of human and nonhuman sounds in the community setting of a rain forest environment. How to tell a story about crying and singing that is equally a story about "nature" as a cultural construction, about the intertwining of ecology and cosmology?

Whatever I knew about language and music when I went to Bosavi, I surely didn't know nearly enough about bioacoustics, ornithology, or environmental science. It wasn't just that my music school ear training didn't in-

clude bird-call recognition. It was that my imagination of an anthropology of sound was nowhere near complex enough to imagine an emplaced all-species approach to vocalization as an archive of ecological and aesthetic coevolution.

All the same, by the time I went to Bosavi and did the research that became *Sound and Sentiment* my idea of an anthropology of sound had benefited from multiple and not quite ordinary streams of inspiration. As an undergraduate at Hofstra College I studied with Colin Turnbull, read his Mbuti ethnographies (1961b, 1965), listened to his ethnographic LP recordings of the Central African rain forest (1957, 1958, 1961a), and developed my first anthropology papers on sounding social relations under his critical and generous tutelage. I was inspired by how Colin's musicianship influenced his anthropology, and I particularly appreciated his conviction that the auditory acuity of Mbuti in the Ituri forest was equally about perceptual adaptation and the sociality of listening.

Also as a Hofstra undergraduate I studied *musique concrète*, electro-acoustic synthesis, experimental musics, and jazz with the composer Herbert Deutsch, also the coinventor, with Robert Moog, of the Moog synthesizer (Deutsch 1986). I was inspired by Herb's ability to link skill in improvisation to experiments with new musical inventions. And he generously encouraged my first experiments with analysis through synthesis, as I used the Moog synthesizer to explore rhythmic patterns in Central and West African musics.

Additionally, during my undergraduate years I studied media anthropology with Edmund Carpenter at the New School. Erudite about art history and material culture, Carpenter (1973) was also a deep listener with a provocative approach to understanding the interplay of auditory, tactile, and visual senses in the Arctic. His radical text and visual productions (Carpenter and Heyman 1970) inspired my interest in experimental crossings of anthropology and art (e.g., Feld with Ryan 2010; Blau et al. 2010). While studies of anthropology and music with Turnbull and Deutsch convinced me that it was possible to work both as a scholar and as an artist, Carpenter's involvement with sensory media studies equally convinced me to work in sound and visual media simultaneously.

During my graduate school years at Indiana, where I principally studied linguistic anthropology, ethnomusicology, and aesthetics, I took a year off to go to film school, first at the Anthropology Film Center with Carroll Williams, and then at the Musée de l'Homme's Comité du Film Ethnographique with Jean Rouch (2003). Williams and Rouch were both equally engaged with documentary realist and magical nonrealist lineages of cinema

and photography. In complementary ways each inspired me to join rigorous technique to experimental practice.

That was my intellectual and artistic backdrop to arriving in Bosavi in 1976. But equally important to how *Sound and Sentiment* turned out is that both before and after my first fieldwork in Papua New Guinea I was largely supported by sound recording, film, and experimental radio or jazz club gigs until I got an academic job in 1980, at the University of Pennsylvania. It was there and then, teaching film and sound history, theory, and practice at the Annenberg School of Communications (and not teaching either anthropology or music) that I transformed *Sound and Sentiment* from dissertation to book.

Given my eclectic academic background, I've been particularly stimulated by the breadth of contemporary sound studies, even if the literature is more dominated by research on Western technologies, arts, media, inventions, modernism, and avant-garde works than it is by work on sound in/as social theory, or ethnographic studies of sound production and reception in non-Western or West/non-West conjunctural formations. When I look now at what is recently available in sound studies readers (Kruth and Stobart 2000; Bull and Back 2003; Erlmann 2004; Greene and Porcello 2004; Pinch and Bijsterveld 2011; Sterne 2012); in works on sound, engineering, technology, aurality, noise, and hearing (Augoyard and Torgue 2006; Bijsterveld and van Dijck 2009; Erlmann 2010; Schwartz 2011; Smith 2001; Sterne 2003; Taylor 2001; Théberge 1997; Thompson 2003); or in tracts on sound art (Chion 1994; Dyson 2009; Kahn 1999; LaBelle 2010), I am deeply reminded of how rare it was to come across adventurous thinking about sound at the time when I first wrote *Sound and Sentiment* (Ihde 1976 and Schafer 1977 were obvious exceptions).

*From Anthropology of Sound to Acoustemology
and Anthropology in Sound*

Even if *Sound and Sentiment* announced the anthropology of sound, I was restless with the concept by the time the book was published. Teaching in a school of communications from 1980 to 1985, and returning twice then to Bosavi for short and long visits to extend my initial field research, I became deeply engaged with a range of alternatives to the theoretical models I initially employed. Through the 1980s I tried to develop new perspectives on Bosavi's ambient, verbal/vocal, and musical/instrumental sounds in publica-

tions on dialogic editing (Feld 1987), aesthetics as iconicity (Feld 1988), and the vocality of women's weeping (Feld 1990b).

I also tried to expand my phonographic practice beyond an initial emphasis on ethnographic documentary LPs (Feld 1982a, 1985), producing an experimental half-hour radio broadcast titled *Voices in the Forest* (Feld and Sinkler 1983). That project was inspired by Murray Schafer's urging, in *The Tuning of the World* (1977), that research in acoustic ecology be presented musically, as soundscape composition. While I had always wanted my research to be as hearable as it was readable, it was the documentary sound art broadcasts by Schafer and his World Soundscape Project colleagues that took me back to the possibility of ethnography as tape recording, using the mixing techniques of electroacoustic composition.

Four additional periods of Bosavi field research in the 1990s moved my research framework from anthropology of sound to acoustemology. I coined this new term to join acoustics and epistemology, to argue for sound as a capacity to know and as a habit of knowing. I needed a way to talk about sound that was neither a matter of critiquing the anthropology of music or language nor of extending their scope to include environmental ambiances and human-animal sound interactions. I wanted to have a new all-species way to talk about the emplaced copresence and correlations of multiple sounds and sources. I wanted to have a new way to talk about how, within a few seconds, and often in the absence of coordinated visual cues, Bosavi people know quite precisely so many features of the rain forest world, like the time of day, the season, the weather history. I wanted to link this kind of tacit knowledge, as well as active ecoacoustic knowing, to expressive practices, to the way Bosavi listening habits and histories figure in the shaping of poetic, vocal, and instrumental practices.

I tried to theorize acoustemology in a few dense articles about ecological and aesthetic coevolution (Feld 1996a) and about vocality, gender, emplacement, and memory (Feld 1996b, 1998). But I did the deeper work in the audio medium, more directly transforming an anthropology of sound into an anthropology in sound (Feld and Brenneis 2004).

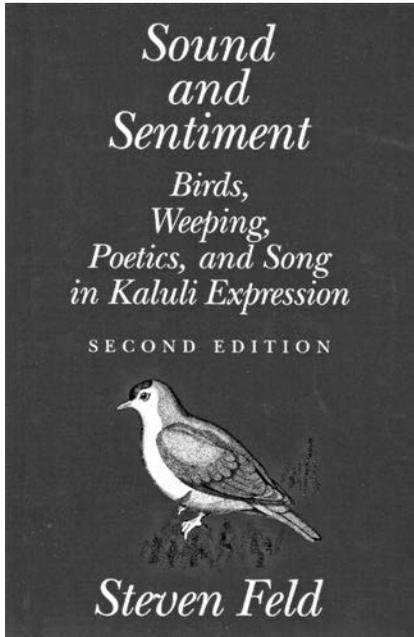
The development of this anthropology in sound work leads to one of the better ways I can answer the inevitable question about how to read *Sound and Sentiment* thirty years later. Quite simply: listen to it. Listen to my history of listening to the rain forest and Bosavi people. Listen to how, on each and every recorded track, you hear different configurations of what Bosavi people call "lift-up-over-sounding," a continual overlapping, alternating, and interlocking sonic figure and ground. Listen to *Voices of the Rainforest* (Feld 2011b)

to hear how knowing the rain forest world animates multiple forms of instrumental and vocal expression. Listen to *Rainforest Soundwalks* (Feld 2001a) to hear the everyday ambient sound environment as acoustic *habitus*. Listen to the three discs in *Bosavi: Rainforest Music from Papua New Guinea* (Feld 2001b) to more intimately and acoustically know the two or three generations of Bosavi people I've known. Listen to the Bosavi world of ritual and ceremony as I first heard it on the wane in the 1970s, including the weeping and song tracks that are transcribed, translated, and analyzed in that book (disc 3). Listen to how the world of ritual is embedded in the everyday ways people work in and sing with the rain forest (disc 2). Listen to Bosavi's new music, the bush-modern guitar band remix of poetic heritage, memorial nostalgia, and youthful yearnings (disc 1). Experiment with the "lift-up-over-sounding" of reading and listening to hear felt sentiments as the embodiment of knowing the world through sound.

If all of that makes you wonder what I have been doing since the Bosavi research, the answer is more of the same, and in sound and video as much as possible. My recent recording work in Southern Europe explores interactions of animal bells, church bells, town bells, carnival bells, and human musicking. Like rain forest birds, village bells habituate local listeners to a sense of place and produce consciousness of space and time. My research questions how bells might stand to a thousand years of European pastoral history as birds stand to thousands more in the Bosavi rain forest (Blau et al. 2002, 2010; Feld 2004–7; Scaldaferrri 2005). The acoustemological triangle that connects sound to ecology and cosmology is also multiply hearable in my work on jazz cosmopolitanism in Accra, Ghana, presented equally in sound, film, and text (Feld 2009, 2012a, 2012b).

Visual Echoes

While I'm excited to see *Sound and Sentiment* emerge with a new cover, I admit to a little nostalgia for the one that graced the earlier editions, and I would like to record the story of its origin. In the late 1960s and early 1970s I became aware of the work of the designer Quentin Fiore, through his classic counterculture collaborations with Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium Is the Massage* and *War and Peace in the Global Village* (1967, 1968), and with Buckminster Fuller, *I Seem to Be a Verb* (1970). Imagine my surprise ten or so years later to find out that Fiore worked freelance for the University of Pennsylvania Press and was assigned to my book!



The previous book cover for *Sound and Sentiment*, designed by Quentin Fiore.

Visiting me at my Annenberg School office, Quentin asked me to tell him a bit about *Sound and Sentiment*. I explained that the book begins with and then unravels a myth, a story of how an abandoned and crying boy turns into a purple-nosed fruit dove. He then asked me if I had a favorite book cover in anthropology that I could describe. “Of course,” I replied, “that would have to be the original French edition of Claude Lévi-Strauss’s *La Pensée Sauvage*” (1962). As I reached to take the book from my shelf, he said, “Oh, yes, of course, the cover with the marvelous French-language pun, just the title and a bunch of wild pansies.” We smiled at each other as I put the book on the desk, confirming that it was exactly the one he knew. “I have an idea now,” he said. And in just a few weeks I saw the *Sound and Sentiment* design with the fruit dove whose nose turns the whole cover purple.

Interestingly, the purple shade that Quentin Fiore chose closely mimicked the cover color of another book that he (correctly) imagined me to be fond of in both substance and title: *Sound and Symbol*, by the phenomenological musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl (1969). Indeed, while some readers and reviewers remarked on the color and title resemblance to the Zuckerkandl book, none mentioned the Lévi-Strauss resonance. In fact, in the moment of early 1980s colorized cultural politics, a more regular query about the

cover was a queer one, some readers wondering if the color purple was the sound of gay sentiment.

While this signification was not my intention, questions about it turned out to have a positive pedagogical effect over many years, often enough in dialogues about critical and liberatory potentials of anthropology, about ethnographies as dream manuals for alternative ways of becoming. So in a deep sense here, it is Quentin Fiore whom I must thank for a cover that incited some wonderful conversations about how myths once read through local ethnography could also be read anew through postmodern identity politics.

I'm similarly grateful to George Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer's *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986), whose discussion of *Sound and Sentiment* animated both conversations about the allegorical power of ethnographic writing and my "Dialogic Editing" essay (Feld 1987), which became the postscript for this book's second edition. But, at least in the classroom, discussions of representation and experiment were more often provoked by the book's visual materiality: the cover, Mary Groff's memorable bird drawings, and, most forcefully, by the book's two color photographs. The substance of many of those conversations has been reprised in two recent anthropological discussions that reprint and discuss those two images: Christopher Pinney's *Photography and Anthropology* (2011:112–15), and Rupert Cox and Christopher Wright's "Blurred Visions: Reflecting Visual Anthropology," a state-of-the-field review for the new *Sage Handbook of Social Anthropology* (2012).

Both discussions focus on the blur in the second photograph and what it might suggest about culture in/as motion, about alternatives to the stability of realism and documentary literalism in anthropological image making. This was, of course, very much my intention, coming at the end of a book whose intense engagement with linguistically mediated meanings yearned, in the last gasps of structuralism and interpretivism, to embrace phenomenology and the senses, to move from text to voice, from symbols to synaesthesia, from indexicality to iconicity, from cognition to bodily knowing. I also wanted the book to end aesthetically, and to do that I chose to switch from exegetic exhaustion to pictorial pleasure, by staging an encounter of relational epistemologies: an experiment in experiencing, evoking, and embracing the blur.

So like new critical readings that listen to the Bosavi CDs in order to re-imagine the text as collaborative listenings to histories of listening, renewed

attention to these images as visual echoes may also incite new ways to read *Sound and Sentiment*. Listening and looking alongside reading, I hope that you can wander along flight paths in a blurry forest of species, ages, and genders. I hope that you can wonder how deeply Bosavi people know and sound the world as water moving through land and voice moving through the body. And I hope that you can join me to wish ethnography a more creative future in the relationships of words, sounds, and images. All the same, after these thirty years, I know that to wander, wonder, and wish with *Sound and Sentiment* is also to worry if it is more readers of this ethnography than today and tomorrow's Bosavi generations who will know the story of a boy who became a *muni* bird.

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