

\* Original article

## Shoot, dialogue and edit

**Pedro Gradella**

Cientista social; Assistente de pesquisa do Laces/ICICT/Fiocruz  
pgradella@cict.fiocruz.br

DOI:10.3395/reciis.v5i2.499en

### Abstract

This article approaches the relationship between anthropology and the audiovisual as a medium for its productions. It bethinks upon questionings and changes in the anthropology field and suggests matters to consider when pursuing such relationship. Making films and doing ethnography have their own elements, so we propose a dialogue for a production that shares knowledge of these two fields and which produces together with the social agents, films which will not only bring the matters of the theme approached, but furthermore the form and methods of anthropology.

**Keywords:** visual anthropology; field work; participant observation; shared ethnography

I am convinced that the filmmakers, like the anthropologists, have the ethical, political, aesthetic and scientific duty of being thoughtful and auto critical about their job... Positivism led many scientists and documentarists to hide under the disguise of objectivity. (RUBY, p. 34).

This work will bring thoughts about aspects and particularities of the audiovisual production suggesting proposals that are consistent with the contemporary anthropological questionings. Understanding visual anthropology as a mixed genre between art and science, through which pass issues related to cinema in general, but specially the documentary genre, and scientific matters, specially anthropological, we will get closer, guided by the literature referent to cinema, to documentary forms, their many languages and options in relation to approaching the other, seeking to show agreeing and disagreeing points regarding the anthropological field work, the participant observation and their results.

### Dispersion of the ethnographic authority

The critique of the relationship researcher/researched, observer/observed, anthropologist/informant and the tentative of changing an asymmetric relationship into a symmetric dialogue – issues presented by contemporary anthropology – demand the ethnographic text to bring up the polyphonic character of this construction, in which speak anthropologist, interlocutor, context and the tradition of the discipline, many agents and factors, as well as the moving of the traditional anthropological object.

One of the most marking aspects of the development of anthropological researches in the last 50 years seems to be the progressive moving of its object (...) If until the 40's anthropology could be (...) considered the science of primitive societies, since then what became conventionally known by contrast as complex societies started to attract each day more the anthropologists' attention (...) This did not mean the abandonment of the study of other societies, but a discussion upon the distinctness notion (GOLDMAN, p. 1).

The documentary genre has the particularity and tendency of bringing up the speech of the individuals, be them the filmmakers or most of the time the researched people. If in one aspect this constitutes an advantage, on the other it represents danger, because when we highlight clearly the speeches of the subjects, we gain the register of what was said by the individual, his/her own speech and, with it, his/her manners, verbal and non-verbal expressions delivering other grammars and other speeches. On the other hand there is the risk of losing the dimension of their scenes and auto-fables, the complex character of their social roles, elements which might be hidden in face of the image's light offered to the spectator as truth.

The documentary brings in its genre a strong "aura" of truth, but it is necessary not to lose sight of the idea that what is registered goes through the 'view' of who idealizes, selects and records the sounds and images. We can also notice this in the majority of the productions in the field of visual anthropology.

The 'eidetic' function of the image in the audiovisual narratives in Anthropology can be detected when, in the dimension of the ethnographic work's construction, the anthropologist employs the audiovisual techniques creating them as a specular image of the everyday enunciation, following the premise that it is possible to demonstrate the ordinary life of their characters. That also happens when he/she insists in the construction of the linear sequence for the composition of the ethnographic narrative as a demonstrative function (theorematic) of the "world of things", consequently reducing the formal causality of the symbolic arrangements which give support to the "weaving of the intrigue", to the final order of a material causality according to the effects of anteriority and posteriority (ROCHA, 2004).

It seems to us that the production of an ethnographic film should be aware of the new issues presented by anthropology in a way that emphasizes the construction aspect of the film. It is necessary to reveal the process in which the subject does not speak only for itself, but also for everything that has been said about him/her, as well as reveal to whom he speaks, what, when, where and how. It is necessary to give voice not only to the subject, but also to the anthropologic issues – genre, ethnos, power relations, symbolic construction –, directed at what is said, questioning them.

If giving evidence to the actors highlights who makes the speech, it can, on the other hand, hide the elements which construct the actors' speech. If the ethnographic video is constructed through the characters speech, it then tends to emphasize the individual aspects to the detriment of cultural generalizations, typical of the ethnographic text, as points out Gonçalves in some of his writings.

The explicitness of the context and of the production elements, be it written or shot, is the action capable of marking the reality of this product which is the encounter or clash which happens there. The anthropologist has his view formed and "deformed" by discipline, in which the construction process of this view, far from 'naturalism', is trained (disciplined) to select in the field work the images which contribute to raise matters and interests in the research or which reveal new issues, as points out E. Pritchard:

People used to say – and they still do – that the anthropologist goes to field with pre-conceived ideas about the nature of the primitive societies, and that their observations are guided by their theoretic tendency – as if this was a vice and not a virtue. Everybody goes to a primitive society with pre-conceived ideas, but, as Malinowski used to remind us, the layman's are in the dark, in general biased, while the anthropologist's are scientific, at least in the sense that they are based on a considerable body of knowledge accumulated and meditated. If he/she went to field with no pre-conceived ideas the anthropologist would not know what or how to observe. And it is also obvious that the anthropologist's observations are inflected by his/her theoretical interests – which simply means that he/she is conscious of the many hypotheses allowed by the available knowledge and that, if his/her data allows, he/she will put the hypotheses to test. Could it be any different? Nothing can be studied without a theory (PRITCHARD, 2005).

In visual anthropology the *eye* is changed into camera or the camera into *eye*, in this way beginning the process of capturing and formulating the narrative, process of the view's selection, which continue in the editing, cutting and reconfiguration of the elements captured in field and changed into the final product. As Hall states:

"Objectivity, as well as impartiality, is a fictional operation. Every filmmaking and editing involves manipulation of raw data, noticed, interpreted and given meaning selectively" (HALL, 1973).

The objectivity of an ethnographic film is in the fact of it being an **ethnographic film**, a representation. The redundancy of the sentence highlights the simulacrum power contained in the documentary genre.

Like the written text, the ethnographic film does not become more or less objective due to the degree of naturalism its narrative shows, but, on the contrary, due to the degree of information and analytical power that this symbolic construction can bring to the anthropological theory and field experience, being able to nurture them and being nurtured by them.

## Thoughts about ethnographic text and video

Questionings such as the dispersion of the ethnographic authority and the feature of a symbolic construct of what is real are elements that the anthropologic production seeks to consolidate and bring up in its texts, above all in their more recent productions.

After separating us and others and studying these others, to repeat an expression of Bruno Latour, now it is about constructing a symmetric anthropology which, although refusing this false opposition, does

not reduce society to a homogeneous and figureless group. The questioning presented currently is how to use the knowledge accumulated during one and a half century in the elaboration of other perspectives upon the societies (GOLDMAN).

In spite of these contemporary thoughts, it seems to us that in the majority of the ethnographic films there is little questioning – or even complete ignorance – regarding the matter of the dynamic character of distinctness, assuming an excessively classic position in relation to the treatment given to the object in the process of film production. Of course there are exceptions, but we still notice, frequently, a great gap between what the contemporary texts propose about these discussions and the languages and approaches used in the ethnographic videos.

When they are relocated to the image field, these proposals frequently carry positivist perspectives, thinking and reducing the images to instruments of specular demonstration and fixation of reality, ascertaining, documenting or just illustrating what is told, without recognizing the audiovisual instrument as a narrative language itself.

This positivist objectivity desired in the beginning of anthropology had as allies the techniques of image register, already used in the physical and biological studies in the field of science. It was without doubt extremely tempting to freeze fragments of a fleeting reality, to stop time, for a discipline that fought against a reality that insisted in being dynamic and that often, when it began to be comprehended was already somewhere else. To divide, freeze, measure and produce image registers – conceived as an example form of classifying – gained special value as memory construction of cultural elements of “threatened” peoples. Therefore photography and afterwards filming constituted instruments capable of turning real the ambition of fixation of “reality”.

But the fact is that thinking and defending the production of images as statements of truth causes bewilderment today, comparing with the general use of image as show, as mass media, with many possibilities of production, manipulation, storage and distribution, continuous act, expose them to questioning about their worth as scientific document in the academy which showing, erroneously, a naturalistic perspective, we can open new and promising possibilities of use in the social research.

We can then say that this is a deep issue in the field of visual anthropology.

In visual anthropology, to invest in the merely representative treatment of the technical image is to grant it the role of simulation of the world of things, without apprehending the cognitive operations that have as object the image, operations which constitute changes and not only the reproduction of the states of things (ROCHA, 2004).

## **Ethnographic video and documentary: debates and dialogues about genres, methods and languages**

There are long and recurring debates that compare ethnographic video and documentary, and in them there is always the search to point out the difference that characterizes them. Actually, there is no event in which visual anthropology is discussed or festival of ethnographic video or visual anthropology in which this debate does not happen, be it voluntarily or involuntarily.

About the subject, Jean Rouch detects three types of documentary: a) the great audience one; b) the sensationalist or of “exploration”; and c) the scientific nature one. We believe that the lines cutting these three classifications are thin, allowing the identification in one single film of the presence of two or more of these types with greater or less intensity. In addition to that there is the important issue of the destination viewer, whose interpretation of determined documentaries of scientific nature makes him/her classify them as exploration films.

We will occupy ourselves more intensively in this work analyzing ethnographic videos done by anthropologists or authors who classify themselves as ethnographers and destined to an audience beyond the academy – most of the time not the “great” audience, it is true, but a diversified audience. It is from that point-of-view that we will work our proposals and seek to highlight the importance of the film strategies and the language for this production.

The use of image by anthropology in the production of ethnographic audiovisuals should not have the function of certifying a greater or lesser ‘naturalism’, but bring up the process, the interlocutory, enabling a shared anthropology – as proposed by Jean Rouch and mentioned afterwards – through some ethic and aesthetic methods. In that is the special interest and contribution, although not theirs exclusively, that these methods and audiovisual instruments can bring.

We can find confluence among anthropological debates about field work, the participant observation,

distinctness, authority and the final product of research, and debates about the documentary genre, since the *other*, distant or close, is as a rule, material for both productions.

We will present some of those confluences and specific aspects of the documental language, but before this we will discuss the origin myth shared by documentary and ethnographic video, as well as other milestones already presented in this work.

## Origin Myth

*Nanook of the North* through the lens of Robert Flaherty is frequently mentioned as a starting point in the construction of the documentary genre as well as the ethnographic film. In the case of the ethnographic film this paternity is presented clearly, however, regarding the documentary genre it is one more milestone in the institution of a language constructed in the long social interaction with the characters, being John Grierson considered the true beginner of this genre, with social and pedagogical purposes.

What, in both cases, gives *Nanook* this statute of origin myth is the fact that "*Flaherty goes deep into the subject, lives with it until the story appears and begins to tell itself*" (editorial of *Cinéma* magazine). What is valued here is the staying in the field and the type of observation resulting from it, exposing more strongly the life of the filmed people.

It is interesting to observe that the production of the film *Nanook of the North* and of the text *Os Argonautas do Pacífico Sul* of anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski are contemporary, having occurred around 1922, and both, each in its own way, innovated in their areas making use of the direct experience with their "others" transforming this experience – one at north, and the other at south – in an important instrument to qualify the comprehension of these *others*, becoming a privileged method in the construction of the anthropological knowledge, as well as in the practice of documentary production. To be with, to be *in loco*, becomes the main authority argument for both.

The shooting is not itself a decisive experience during which an opinion is constructed: it is more an experimental application of an elaborated opinion. *In loco*, the documentarist elaborates his/her successive hypotheses. The documentarist builds his/her proposal upon this film-laboratory (WINSTON, 1995).

What I want most to highlight is that what is brought from a field study depends very much on what is *taken to it* ((PRITCHARD, 2005, My highlight).

These two statements, separated by time and by the area of their authors, have something in common, and we would be bold enough to say that what in fact makes them different is "what *is taken to it*" as Pritchard said. The hypotheses, the point-of-view and the questionings that the anthropologist and the documentarist take to field are different, or at least, differently instructed by their formations, consequently, their final products differ. However, as is pointed out in the quote below, there is symmetry between these two means as fields of representation upon the other.

If there are, obviously, important differences between written and image representations/presentations of yourself and the other, in all these dimensions – ethical, aesthetic, political and epistemological – the main point to highlight is that from the moment a symmetry is recognized between written and image representations as ways of knowledge and of presenting the other – be it in ethnographic films or photographic narratives (Achutti, 2004), or even in the written texts that make full use of images (Mitchell, 1994) – it is exactly the moment in which the 'passage to anthropological image' becomes effective (PIAULT, 1995, 2000; GONÇALVES; HEAD, 2009).

This work does not have paternity as object of discussion, however, the fact that they share the origin myth – and the myth is interesting to us because of what it can say about the state of things today – is that we are before a *mixed genre* when we talk about ethnographic film, susceptible to all the questionings regarding the formulation of an ethnographic text, since it is also a discourse, in addition to the issues of the audiovisual medium, its possibilities and limitations. What form should be attributed to this content? What content should be installed in this form? These are the questions the audiovisual process brings us and that can be supported by debates of documentarists and filmmakers, due to the many resemblances they have, but which, without doubt, we can only and maybe we should try to answer in our own way.

## Participant Observation, Intimacy and "Chance"

What calls the documentarists' attention in Flaherty's work is not only the closeness to the filmed people, but also the importance given to chance and the possibility of this chance conducting the

narrative of the film, as expressed in this sentence – “the lack of pre-conception is a pre-condition, a state of spirit” (editorial *Cinemais*). We will not linger on this certain ‘romantic spontaneity’, which is questioned in the area, “chance is fascinating, but not total chance, because then there is no film. Chance happens, but you control it, separating what is good from bad, from useless” (Eduardo Coutinho). The chance issue is interesting to us in what it contributes to research and, in the case of the ethnographic film, in what it contributes to the final product.

The hypotheses of the research put to test in field should, when necessary, be reformulated due to the field itself and the unforeseen circumstances it shows to us, chance is part of the ethnographic making which is material of social life. To be aware of chance broadens the possibilities of comprehension and perception of the own native interpretations, in this way having a new meaning because they appear from a process which proposes itself as interactive and that we could say is creating a process of co-authorship in the final product: the text or ethnographic film.

## Documentary Critics and Language

In the documentary, this importance given to chance, spontaneous creation, to the script which is built during the production appears in the comparing by denial with the fiction cinema and also with a kind of documentary in which the real shot has the function of illustrating and affirming theses previously conceived (in the script), being known as expository method or classic documentary and that includes the sociological style.

In general this kind of classic documentary conveys its script through subtitles and even inter-titles, being also commonly used the narration in *off*, which explicits the argument. When the images are used as illustration or counterpoint of the script, generally having a structure that goes from the particular to the general and conducts to the concepts and generalizations of the text, it is the sociological style, exemplified by Jean-Claude Bernardet in his book *Cineastas e imagens do povo*, by his critic of the documentary *Viramundo*, of Geraldo Sarno:

The sociological type, an abstraction, is covered by the concrete appearances of the raw material taken from people, which results into a dramatic character. Such people are not responsible for the sociological type and dramatic character resulting from the editing. And once more, for this system to work, it is necessary to retain the elements from the person, and only them, that are useful for the type's construction. (...) The type which is handled conditions the individual raw material to be selected. But the singular features of this person (expressivity, gestures, etc.) cover the type with a reality coating that tends to make us accept the dramatic character which plays the sociological type as its own personal expression...But what occurred is that the treatment given to the person showed itself determined by the type to be built, and in it the individual is dissolved. We have the impression of perfect harmony between type and person when the type – abstract and general – is almighty in face of the singular person which he kills (BERNARDET, 2003, p. 24).

In this book of Bernardet the chapter called “Sociological Style; the owner's voice”, emphasizes the author's concern, and of part of his peers, relative to the belonging of the discourse in the field of power relations: to whom it belongs and to whom it should belong.

It should be necessary to bring up the matter of the asymmetric relationship between the parts of a production, the power relations in which they are in, and discuss by means of form and making how to relate to these differences shown, so as to truly comprehend and change this relationship with the *other*.

We can then find correspondence between what is called chance and the critic of submitting reality to a rigid script, and what in the ethnographic practice we give importance to in the field work and in the participant observation.

No matter how much the anthropologists instruct themselves before going to field and formulate hypotheses and previous questionings to be investigated, what these methods of participant observation and field work used in anthropology can bring of different in relation to other methodologies of human study, is the fact that the proximity of the subjects does not allow, or at least does not stimulate, the strictness of these hypotheses in face of the complexity of social life. To keep or try keeping an open way between the two elements of ethnographic research so that the two terms interfere one with the other, hypotheses and concepts belonging to the academic field, on one side and on the other the effective relation between subjectivities in field, broadens the apparatus for the comprehension of the society being studied. We can notice this same position with some documentarists: “Maybe the most important task of a documentary is to explore the ethical and ideological meanings which join experience, knowledge and representation” (ROSENTHAL, 1996).

If the expository way or sociological style of documentary do not attend any more the debates and

necessities of contemporary anthropology, which questions itself about the ethnographic authority, seeking a greater dialogue between researcher and interlocutor, we can search in other documentary ways some languages with which the anthropology debates meet or can be demonstrated in the production and in the product, the ethnographic video.

Therefore the issue is in fact how to present and represent the perception of the other concretely, in other words, how to use the speeches, discourses, interventions, recountals, critics and different points-of-view produced not by an object anymore, but by subjects of our investigation. Now it is not about representing an "object", but representing a relationship between subjects – implying then, being conscious about the field of inter-subjectivity in which the anthropological knowledge is produced – which extends itself equally to the reader or spectator (GONÇALVES; HEAD, 2009, p. 18).

The so called interactive style documentary gets closer to the more contemporary proposals of the ethnographic text, presenting elements from the interview or from the interlocution between makers and social actors. If so, one seeks to assume the subjectivities put there, (and that also happens through editing), expressed in the confrontation or encounter that happens. On the other hand the critical style lets go of an objective representation of reality, seeking to reveal its own construction and representation processes – the crew, their formulations and the production itself, everything being part of the final product which, presented this way, confronts the statute of true document, which a considerable amount of documentaries, because of their language options, assume, and emphasizes the construction feature of the film, in opposition to the sociological style.

Maybe something between these two languages, the interactive and the subjective, can be useful to us when seeking to perform an ethnographic video, what may bring us closer to what anthropology today is seeking in its textual construction.

In this way ethnography turns present the interlocution resulting from the encounter between subjects in a research relationship in which the speeches and native concepts, in the same way as the categories and anthropologic theories, share a new form of producing knowledge that intends to be symmetric in the ethical, political aesthetic and conceptual point-of-view (VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, 2002; LATOUR, 1991) (GONÇALVES; HEAD, 2009, p. 18).

## Rouch and His Shared Anthropology

*"Jean Rouch, the catalan surrealist, the romantic anarchist, the fluttering zazou, one day put cinema in the ethnographic suitcase, which demanded from the cinema non manipulated portraits. Submitting himself to one of the imperatives of science which is to us the camera as a pure view, he transgressed for the marvel of seeing beyond the visible (science is contrary to imagination), of taking a glimpse of the invisible through the cracks of the image, for the subtle transparencies the film creates. With him sacrificed to ethnology, by fate of destiny, the cinema took possession of it, just like the mirror takes hold of the observer, without fear, opened to him the window to the imaginary."* (COSTA, p. 1).

Jean Rouch was an anthropological filmmaker, whose production began in the 50's, fundamental and innovative for the cinema as well as for anthropology. His cinema conception allied with anthropology, which he adopted (before he was an architect), raised deep issues not only for the cinematographic language but also for the anthropology of the time. When people spoke of *Informant* he spoke of *potential friends*, while it was delegated to the ethnologist the ethnographic debate and construction he talked about a shared making. In this threshold between cinema and anthropology one day he was accepted in one area, another criticized in the other area, but without doubt he was in continuous contact with the vanguards of his time and afterwards he became iconic to cinema, to anthropology, and to the making that we call today visual anthropology (cinema as medium for the scientific investigation of anthropology), constantly questioning the limits between science and art, between fiction and truth, anticipating early many contemporary concepts of anthropology, the construction feature of the ethnographic text or film, the attitude of assuming the researcher's interference in the field (in his case the researcher and the camera), also the relationship researcher/informant for a relationship of dialogue and for the aspect of a combined ethnographic construction. The symmetric anthropology, and also the Perspectivism, already shows up in his films in a way or another, but we will be helped here by his own words that point out some of those that we mentioned:

*"To me fiction is as truthful as reality. From the moment I learn the rules of the game, which seem absurd, and [build] practically total improvisation. And I learned this in Africa working with illiterate. I follow oral traditions. And I never wrote a story line unless to ask producers for money.*

*In general, the films I make have nothing to do with the story line that was written. To me, the great moment is the improvisation. And we suddenly notice. (...) The presence of a camera changes everything. We do it in front of a camera even if people don't see it, which normally we wouldn't do. That is one of the keys to freedom. There is an example: one of the first films I made, I made with a small Bel-Howell camera which had to be wound up every 25 seconds, in the film *Jaguar* [shot in 1954]. Three of my African friends were trying to cross the Socapa [illegally] a border, the border of Togo and the future Gana, the Gold Coast without any documents. We didn't find a way. We didn't know what to do. There were spells, there was everything one wanted. I don't know anymore who remembered this, if it was Damoure, if it was me, because we improvised in group. 'And if we shot the policeman in charge of the control? We could pass behind him'. So we shot the policeman and in the image we see people passing behind him. They crossed, in fact, illegally because I was shooting a policeman that was full of pride of being shot. Here is an example of how fiction changes things. After this, as he had seen the camera, he turned. Everything is possible with a camera." (ROUCH,1992 in interview to RIBEIRO, p33)*

We will take as reference of a visual anthropology, in agreement with the contemporary anthropology, Rouch's propositions in his films and in some of his speeches, as for example, "(...) the difference is not a restraint, but an addition" because we consider his proposals still pertinent and they can, together with new technologies, develop rich works with the cinematographic medium for anthropology.

Rouch did not approach "objects", but subjects who, as 'others', assumed with him the making of the film, as in *Jaguar* and in *Moi, un noir*. The speech that appears there, so much criticized as an external and authority speech upon the theme in the sociological style documentary, in these films by Rouch is the creation and work of his lead players who see themselves and represent themselves, through mirroring, producing discourses about themselves and their lives. Therefore, they are social actors who take the lead of their own film representation. They speak for themselves and, together with the director, produce the narrative of their experiences, resulting from a process of acquaintance that is broad, involving director/researcher, natives/producers and audience, who are witnesses of the interaction in the experience and in the making/knowing from which results the film.

In the film *Jaguar* there is an additional layer, the memory, since the narration occurs 10 years after the shooting of the images conducting to a decentralization and distancing, important elements of the anthropologic analysis, shared by means of the technique with the natives.

Criativity and improvisation are fully assumed in this reconstruction, and there is no search for facts, but the search for spontaneity, sensibility and creativity of the social actors in their experiences of migration from the countryside to the city, a migration that was proposed by Rouch as an experiment or, in his words, as an adventure to be shared with him, his eye-camera and his companions Damouré and Ilo. There isn't in this proposal, as occurs in many works, excessive worry regarding the interference of the researcher in the field, on the contrary, it is made evident, by means of Rouch's productions and comments, the provocation as element, as a search for leveling of the relationships in the field. In *Jaguar* the native is not the fragile entity of a static culture to be preserved, but in fact, "a friend in potential" and member of a culture in deep transformation, the post-colonial Africa. And it is this transformation that the film wants to follow, Damouré and Ilo, who would usually be the natives to observe and research, in this proposal they are launched to the category, which they take over together with Rouch, of ethnographers of this new world that appears. They make commentaries about the way of the city and of the English and their language, in a certain passage, they comment upon the different pronunciations of French and English, and even the title of the film *Jaguar*, which comes from a local term, and becomes the focus of a translation effort – in a dialogue, after Damouré explains what is a jaguar, Ilo associates it with a *zazomam*, observing "yes, a jaguar is a *zazomam*, but that's how **they** call it here", natives 'made' explorers, ethnographers of the city. In their return to their society of origin they are stricken, and it does not matter how much of kidding there is in the comment done by them in relation to the difficulty of re-adaptation, stating they forgot their native tongue and speaking known in English, *How are you*, they comment that from now on they would have to remember their original dialect.

Rouch's objectives seem to us evident in this speech of his at the end of the film:

These young people that go home are the heros of the stylern world.  
They did not capture prisoners as their ancestors.  
They carry luggage...  
they carry wonderful stories...  
and carry lies (ROUCH).

In this narrative produced with a distance of ten years what is sought is to embody the desires these adventurers took with them with the adventures and lies they brought in their return.

The camera in this case is not analogous to a microscope that seeks exactness, it is an instrument that searches for fiction, in its original sense of *fictio*, construction, as reminds us C. Geertz in *The Interpretation of the Cultures*, and which in this specific case, wants to be shared. 'Garanteeing' that reinventions, auto-fables, desires and dreams, eminently human material does not constitute noise nor interference in this communication, the result, if not capable of inserting a *truth* that produces laws and broad generalizations, is capable of revealing the universal of creativity, of the dream and desire in the human experience, and through this, produce a road that leads to the comprehension of distinctness.

This anthropologic perspective gives credit to a narrative and creativity produced in a shared way, 'inventive syncretism' that woven in the multifocal relation produces new discourses and comprehension of human kind and its multiplicity.

It is through the formal inversion that Rouch makes, when he re-passes the authority discourse to the natives, keeping his role as an investigator, that we find directions and languages liable to attend the necessities of demonstrating through images the debates that anthropology proposes nowadays, and which also influence the new forms of audiovisual production which, with the digital advance and with the growing knowledge about images, extend to new views the possibilities of image and sound production.

Rouch begins what could be called (...) the overrunning of the classic ethnographic film language to a search of (...) a new image experimental language (Sztutman, 2005:115) which was able to transfer his ethnographic researches and debates to a film. Sztutman (2005) makes an important association between possession and the genesis of Rouch's cinema, from where come many of his concepts about cinema and anthropology. Rouch himself (2003f) made a concept about his film production experience from the possession concepts proposed by the natives and by anthropology in a essay that could be considered today (...) a tentative of making a 'symmetric anthropology' *avant la lettre*, in which the concepts (of anthropology and of the natives) are productively set in relation (GONÇALVES; HEAD, 2008, p. 1).

It is important for the construction of the ethnographic films that we be aware of the image and narrative forms that we choose. They should be – and this is the effort of constructing – intimately connected to the content approached: the greater the bond between form and content, the greater will be the capacity to communicate and put into discussion not only the facts presented, but also the elaboration of the anthropological questionings.

In the process by which we take distance from a dialogic relation between natives/experience, researchers/debate, between speech and discourse, to get closer to a dialectic process, shared, in which the experience is the encounter and belongs to both sides, as well as the debate and auto-fabling are conditions of both and that can and should be stimulated because of the decentralizing and distancing feature enabled by the film production – in this process we get closer to what the use of these methods can bring as contribution not only to our area of knowledge but also to the audience in general.

The ethnographic cinema has the particularity, compared with the ethnographic text, overall in the so called society of images in which we live, of disseminating to a greater number of people and beyond the walls of the academy, the results of an ethnographic research, and what we defend in this work, of exposing anthropology's own making and debate. But for that, it has to be conceived that way, and this goes through the choices of methods and languages. Writing with light, sound, space and movement, has elements that differ from the writing with words, for example, in cinema it is best to demonstrate a situation or impression with images than to explain it through words. On the other hand, in reading we create our own thinking space, we stop reading when we see a passage that brings something, which deserves more attention, or that takes us to other questionings, or that touches us. In cinema this thinking space has to be produced, spaces in the narrative and in the actions that allow the audience to think, before we go on. So different mediums bring up different language questionings and these debates about methods and languages of cinema together with the ones of anthropology can and should be re-fed in a creative way. Rouch's work makes us conscious of that.

The epistemological questionings proposed by Rouch from his film production of the 50's imply, necessarily, a concept about what means the ethnographic making and the film making, which in turn helps to apprehend the meaning of 'film ethnography' and everything that comes from this concept to



anthropology when there is the tentative of doing a 'transposition of the real' to images. In that way Rouch's cinema is inspired by anthropology's concepts, and his anthropology is inspired in his perception of images and cinema... What allowed him to experiment; he saw the difference, narrative languages and techniques putting into connection anthropology and cinema, both conceived as knowledge producers. (GONÇALVES; HEAD, 2008, p. 3).

## Conclusion

In this article we made proposals of debate extensively using the comparison between the cinematographic critic, overall of the documentary styles and languages, and contemporary critics and positions of anthropology, using James Clifford and his concept of *Ethnographic Dispersion* for us to think about the new place of the anthropologist, more precisely the filmmaking anthropologist. We highlighted the unleveling existent between the contemporary debates of anthropology in face of the ethnographic video production, which in a significant number of times still understands the image as a *naturalist* and mirroring certification of reality, understanding the shooting equipment as the *ideal view* upon a reality to be unraveled and demonstrated.

We also showed the differences and similarities between discussions in the documentary area and anthropologic area emphasizing the necessity of bringing the anthropological audiovisual production closer to the new proposals and perceptions of the ethnographic making. And in order to do that it was inevitable the discussion about cinematographic language and its way of relating with the anthropological methods. We brought here analyses of critics about cinema, its several languages and styles in the tentative of understanding better these languages, and seek through form ways for an audiovisual production as medium for the production of anthropological analyses and not films of "anthropological interest".

Without questioning what we presented are just debates, since there is no formula to make an ethnographic film, just like there is no formula to do a field work. A lot of what is done depends on the inter-relationships produced in field, from the anthropological scientific methodological point-of-view as well as from the particular technical and artistic aspects of the audiovisual medium. The form has to connect intimately to the content, as the language domain is fundamental in writing with its particularities, possibilities, and limits, the audiovisual also carry its elements, making it fundamental a dialogue with cinema for the visual anthropology, which becomes a mixed genre. However, we did not only approach the aspects of the cinema language in the anthropological field, but we tried to bring to this work a critic of some forms of making the so called ethnographic films of contemporary production, based on some notions such as the symmetric anthropology, the ethnographic authority's dispersion, so as to affirm an understanding of an anthropology that seeks a shared making, a co-authorship, with a look upon the potentialities of the audiovisual uses as a medium for the ethnographic making. We believe that in the pursuit for the audiovisual medium use, we have a two-way situation where anthropology can contribute to the film making with its long accumulation of methods and debates about the relationship with *others*, and that the cinema freer of scientific chains can contribute with its languages and its own way of making for a production of shared dynamic and a greater communication power of the ethnographic productions.

## References

- BERNARDET, J. C. **Cineastas e imagens do povo**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003.
- CLIFFORD, J. **A experiência etnográfica**. Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 2008.
- FELDMAN-BIANCO, B.; LEITE, M. L. M. (Org.). **Desafios da imagem: fotografia, iconografia e vídeo nas ciências sociais**. Campinas: Papirus, 1998.
- FOCAULT, M. **A verdade e as formas jurídicas**. Rio de Janeiro: Nau Editora, 2002.
- FREIRE, M. Fronteiras imprecisas: documentário antropológico entre a exploração do exótico e a representação do outro. **Revista Famecos**, Porto Alegre, n. 28, dez. 2005.
- GEERTZ, C. **A interpretação das culturas**. [S.l.]: Guanabara Koogan, 1989.
- GEERTZ, C. **Nova luz sobre a antropologia**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2001.
- GOLIOT-LETE, F.; VANYE, A. **Ensaio sobre a análise filmica**. Campinas: Papirus, 2002.
- GONÇALVES, M. A. **Devires imagéticos**. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras, 2009.
- GONÇALVES, M. A. **O real imaginado**. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2008.

HALL, S. **Encoding and decoding in the television discourse**. [S.l.: s.n.], 1973.

JORDAN, P. Primeiros contatos, primeiros olhares. **Cadernos de Antropologia e Imagem, Antropologia e Cinema**: primeiros contatos, Rio de Janeiro: UERJ, 1995.

MALINOWSKI, B. **Os argonautas do Pacífico Sul**. São Paulo: Abril, 1976.

MALYSSE, S. **Entre arte e antropologia**: diálogos e apropriações. 2007. Disponível em: <<http://forumpermanente.incubadora.fapesp.br/portal/.painel/leituras/malysse>>.

MONTE-MOR, P.; PARENTE, J. I. (Org.). **Cinema e antropologia**: horizontes e caminhos da antropologia visual. [S.l.: s.n.], 1994.

OLIVEIRA, Roberto Cardoso de. **Olhar, ouvir, escrever**. O trabalho do antropólogo. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 1998.

PEREIRA, P. P. G. Cinema e antropologia um esboço em três movimentos. **Cadernos de Antropologia e Imagem**, v. 10, n. 1, p. 61-69, 2000.

PIAULT, M. H. A antropologia e sua "passagem a imagem". **Cadernos de Antropologia e Imagem, Antropologia e Cinema**: primeiros contatos, Rio de Janeiro: UERJ, 1995.

PINK, S. Agendas interdisciplinares na pesquisa visual: reposicionando a antropologia visual. **Cadernos de Antropologia Visual, Rio de Janeiro**, v. 21, n. 2, p. 61-85, 2005.

PRITCHARD, E. E. E.; ZAHAR, J. **Bruxaria, oráculos e magia entre os Azande**. Rio de Janeiro: [s.n.], 2005.

RIBEIRO, J. S. Antropologia visual, práticas antigas e novas perspectivas de investigação. **Revista de Antropologia**, São Paulo, v. 48, n. 2 July/Dec. 2005.

RICARDO C. **Jean Rouch**: a outra face do espelho. O "outro". Disponível em: <<http://www.bocc.uff.br/pag/- -.pdf>>. Acesso em: 11 mar. 2000.

ROUCH, J.; RIBEIRO, J. S. Filme etnográfico e antropologia visual. **Doc On-Line**, n. 3, p. 6-64, dez. 2007. Disponível em: <[www.doc.ubi.pt](http://www.doc.ubi.pt)>.

SAMAIN, E. "Ver" e "dizer" na tradição etnográfica: Bronislaw Malinowski e a fotografia. **Horizontes Antropológicos**, n. 2, p. 19-48, 1995.

WINSTON, B. **Claiming the real**: the documentary film revisited, London: British Film Institute Publishing, 1995.

## Notes

1 Flaherty begins his professional life as cartographic explorer and makes some amateur films beginning in 1913. With NANOUK he makes the documentary genre definite, which began with the Lumière Brothers, but was reduced in its importance when started the hegemony of the fiction cinema which follows the consolidation of the cinematographic industry. *"Through cinema I try hard to know a country, as well as the people who live there. I try hard to make them the most interesting possible under their most authentic aspect. I only make use of real characters, people who live in the place shot because, in the end, they really are the best actors. Nobody is more expressive than the Irish, in this domain, incontestable. The black people, so spontaneous, have their own naturality, as well as the Polynesian. But there is a greatness seed in all the peoples and it's up to the film's author to discover it: find the particular incident or even the simple movement that makes it noticeable. I think the drama films will be made this way one day."*

(Robert Flaherty). Filmography:

1920/21 - NANOUK - 70' - EUA

1923/26 - MOANA - 90' - EUA

1925 - THE POTTERY MAKER - 14' - EUA

1926 - THE 24 DOLLARS ISLAND - 20' - EUA

1927/28 - WHITE SHADOWS OF SOUTH SEAS - 90' - EUA

1928/31 - TABOU (com Murnau) - 90' - EUA

1931 - INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN - 21' - ENGLAND

1932-34 - MAN OF ARAN - 76' - ENGLAND

1936/37 - ELEPHANT BOY - 81' - ENGLAND

1939/42 - THE LAND - 43' - EUA

2 Born in Belgium, of a French family, Jean-Claude Bernardet spent his childhood in Paris, and came to Brazil with his family when he was 13 years old, becoming a Brazilian citizen in 1964. He has a degree from *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (Paris) and is a Doctor in Arts by ECA (Communication and Arts school) of USP.

He became interested in cinema from going to cinema clubs, and began to write critics in the *O Estado de São Paulo* newspaper invited by Paulo Emílio Salles Gomes. He became a great interlocutor of the filmmakers of the *Cinema Novo*, and especially of Glauber Rocha, who broke up with him because of the publishing of *Brasil em Tempo de Cinema* (1967). He was one of the creators of the cinema course at UnB university in Brasília, and taught classes of Brazilian Cinema History at ECA, until he retired in 2004.

Besides his importance as a theorist, he is also a fictionist, with four volumes published. He participated in many films, as script writer and direction assistant and eventually as an actor in small roles.

Além de sua importância como teórico, é também ficcionista, com quatro volumes publicados. Participou de vários filmes, como roteirista e assistente de direção, eventualmente como ator em pequenos papéis. In the 90's he directed two poetic essays of medium length: *São Paulo, Sinfonia e Cacofonia* (1994) and *Sobre Anos 60* (1999).

3 English documentarist born in 1933 and writer of books about documentary

4 **Jaguar** (France, 1967).

By Jean Rouch. Documentary in color. Length 72'.

When he started to shoot *Jaguar*, in 1954, the filmmaker and ethnologist Jean Rouch wanted to study the migration of the young people who left Niger to look for work (and also adventure and fortune) in the Gold Coast, now Gana. But "it is very hard to make a documentary about migrations"

he would say in 1981, "so, we decided to do a fiction film". There was no "story line". Rouch just chose the migrants he would shoot and followed them for one year, registering a "travel journal" almost all without sound.

Afterwards, in a studio, he asked them to make comments about what was happening in the screen – and the characters revealed a great talent for improvisation. In his first documentary, Rouch invented a process that confused the frontiers between documentary and fiction. The conventions of the documental language were effectively subverted, giving place to fabulation and construction of a new reality in film.

5 **I, a Black Man** *Moi, un Noir* (France, 1959).

By Jean Rouch. Color. Length 73'.

Young Nigerians leave their homeland to look for work in the Ivory Coast. Out of place among the Stylerna civilization, they finally reach Treichville, worker's neighborhood of Abidjan. The hero, who tells his own story, calls himself Edward G. Robinson, in honor of the American actor. In the same way, his friends choose names destined to give them symbolically, an ideal personality.