

*"Le seul conseil que l'on peut donner à des jeunes gens qui veulent faire du cinéma, c'est de faire de l'école buissonnière une règle de vie, mais le faisant très sérieusement."*

**Jean Rouch**

# **ANTHROPOLOGIE VISUELLE**

*Notes de lecture*

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# Présentation

Les pages qui suivent consistent en une compilation de notes de lecture en anthropologie visuelle. Loin d'offrir un panorama complet de cet aspect de notre discipline, ce travail se concentre d'abord et avant tout sur la démarche participative dans la méthode de travail de terrain menant à la réalisation d'oeuvres de *cinéma anthropologique*\*.

Certains thèmes paraîtront récurrents, notamment l'anthropologie partagée telle que pratiquée par Jean Rouch. Les concepts de cinéma vérité et d'ethno-fiction, au coeur de la démarche de Rouch, côtoient les idées et méthodes entourant la place de la subjectivité et de la réflexivité dans les productions audiovisuelles des anthropologues.

En commençant les lectures qui ont mené à ce recueil de citations, je recherchais d'abord des outils méthodologiques et conceptuels pour m'aider à réaliser un terrain au Tchad et produire des documents vidéos pertinents. L'approche participative m'intéressait et j'avais été mis en contact avec certains films de Rouch, sans toutefois en saisir toute l'originalité.

Ce sont les lectures et les références intertextuelles qui m'ont guidé dans cette exploration, rendant parfois nécessaire le visionnement de films classiques pour mieux mettre en perspective les références. Plusieurs autres livres et articles que ceux cités plus loin ont été lus sans toutefois être mis à contribution dans la prise de notes systématique qui a conclu cette démarche.

## À l'usage de...

Ce recueil est surtout construit pour mon usage personnel, comme outil de travail dans la réalisation de documents vidéos et comme complément théorique à mon *Projet de formation pratique*. Mais fidèle à l'idée de partage qui transparait dans les citations, j'espère qu'il saura intéresser et même aider d'autres anthropologues ou étudiants en anthropologie atteints de cette belle folie qui nous pousse à partir sur le terrain encombré de matériel électronique coûteux, fragile et conçu pour fonctionner dans des relations à sens unique, observateur et observé.

Ici, la forme importe peu et les idées importent beaucoup. Il y a eu découpage, bien entendu: la vision de l'anthropologie visuelle qui émane de ce montage n'est pas nécessairement celle des auteurs. Il s'agit d'un point de vue, le mien, construit à partir de la sélection instinctive de plusieurs réalités, idées et points de vue, dont l'essentiel a été laissé hors-champ. Aucune de ces citations ne devrait être recopiée intégralement sans avoir au préalable lu son contexte et visionné les films mentionnés. Attention, l'inspiration vient avec l'usage...

*\*Le choix de l'expression est volontaire et réfléchi.*

# En vrac

"**Ethnographic film** is film which reflects ethnographic understanding... it is more than the simple sum of ethnography plus film."

(Heider, 1976:8) in El Guindi (2004)

**Rouch**: "the **camera** is not confined to the role of a passive recording instrument" but "rather an active agent of investigation and the camera user can become an interrogator of the world"

(Loizos, 1993:46) in El Guindi (2004)

"Methodologically, the only way we can use the full record of the camera is through the projective **interpretation** by the native."

(Collier, 1967:49) in El Guindi (2004)

**Culture reconstruction**: "to partially reconstruct sequences of traditional behavior as part of the routinized social process"

(Balikci, 1995:181) in El Guindi (2004)

"Striking images of weathered faces belonging to tribal elders, proud guardians of a precious heritage, esthetically photographed against a backdrop of beautiful wilderness- standard fare in many films about indigenous peoples. [...] It is based on the European stereotype of the '**noble savage**' as child of nature; a romantic formula that permits instant wrapping of the exotic 'other'. For the audience it seems barely to matter which obscure tribal community is represented in such films"

(Prins, 1997:4) in El Guindi (2004)

"We wanted to tell Sam about our plan to teach the **Navajo** to use motion picture cameras and to enlist his support for the project. When Adair finished [telling Sam the purpose of the visit], Sam thought for a while, and then turned to Worth and asked, "Will making movies do the sheep any harm?" Worth was happy to explain that as far as he knew, there was no chance that making movies would harm the sheep. Sam thought this over and the asked, "Will making movies do the sheep good?" Worth replied that as far as he knew making movies would'nt do the sheep any good. Sam thought this over, then, looking around at us he said, '**Then why make movies ?**'"

(Worth, Adair and Chalfen, 1997:4) in El Guindi (2004)

According to **Rouch**, **feedback** is "an extraordinary technique.. [an] audiovisual counter-gift... [that] has certainly not yet revealed all of its possibilities" To Rouch, the prime **audience** is the person being filmed. He always felt it was necessary to show "the first rushes from beginning to end to the people who were filmed whose participation is essential" "a **participant camera** will pass into the hands of those who were, up to now, always in front of it.

Then the anthropologist will no longer monopolize the observation of things. Instead, both he and his culture will be observed and recorded. In this way ethnographic film will help us share anthropology"

(Rouch, 1995a:98) in El Guindi (2004)

**Rouch**: "The idea of my film is to transform anthropology, the elder daughter of colonialism, a discipline reserved to those with power interrogating people without it. I want to replace it with a **shared** anthropology. That is to say, an anthropological **dialogue** between people belonging to different cultures, which to me is the discipline of human sciences for the future."

(Rouch in Le Monde) in Ruby (2000)

" 'Suppose we go,' said I, 'do you know that you and your men may have to give up making a kill, if it interferes with my film ? Will you remember that it is the picture of you hunting the *ivuik* [walrus] that I want and not their meat ?'

'Yes, yes, the aggie [movie] must come first,' earnestly he assured me. 'Not a man will stir, not a harpoon will be thrown until you give the sign. It is my word.' We shook hands and agreed to start the next day." (Conversation between Robert **Flaherty** and **Nanook**)

*Flaherty's An Early account of the film* in (Ruby, 2000:67)

"During the winter, we compiled a series of motion pictures showing the primitive life, crafts, and modes of hunting and travelling of the islanders -- an improved version of the film we had previously made on the Baffin Island expedition. With a **portable projector** bought for the purpose, we showed the islanders a copy of the Baffin Island film, purposing in this way to inspire them with that spirit of emulation so necessary to the success of our filming. Nor were we disappointed. Enthusiastic **audiences** crowded the hut. Their Ayee's and Ah's at the ways of these their kindred that were strange to them such as none of the strange and wonderful ways of the *kablunak* (white men) called forth. [...] But another reason for developing the film in the north was to project it to the Eskimos so that they would accept and understand what I was doing and work together with me as **partners**." (Flaherty, 1918:433) in (Ruby, 2000:88)

"As soon as he aims the camera, the ethnologist disturbs the life he is recording. In *Moi, un Noir* the actors played their everyday existence in front of the camera. I did **not hide** in order to film them." (Rouch in an interview by Jean Carta) in (Ruby, 2000:195)

"It is this permanent '**ethno-dialogue**' which appears to me to be one of the most interesting angles in the current progress of ethnography. Knowledge is no longer a stolen secret, devoured in the Western temples of knowledge; it is the result of an endless quest where ethnographers and those whom they study meet on a path which some of us now call '**shared anthropology**'." (Rouch, 1971[1978]:7)

"Our anthropological productions are our stories about their stories; we are **interpreting** the people as they are interpreting themselves." (Bruner, 1986:10) in (Ruby, 2000:266)

"Un **film est ethnographique** quand il allie la rigueur de l'enquête scientifique à l'art de l'exposé cinématographique." (Rouch, 1968:432) in (Piault, 2000:158)

"Ce film n'a pas été joué par des **acteurs** mais vécu par des hommes et des femmes qui ont donné des moments de leur vie à une expérience nouvelle de **cinéma-vérité**." (voix off de Rouch au début de *Chroniques d'un été*, 1962) in (Piault, 2000:181)

"Le cinéma, art du **double**, est déjà le passage du monde du réel au monde de l'imaginaire, et l'ethnographie, science des systèmes de la pensée des autres est une traversée permanente d'un univers conceptuel à un autre, gymnastique où perdre pied est le moindre des risques." (Rouch, 1981:31)

"[...] as most good researchers know, it is not unusual to make up the **methods** as you go along. The methods should serve the aims of the research, not research serve the aims of the methods." (McGuigan 1997:2) in (Pink, 2001:4)

"Filmmaking will just never be the window to reality that the social sciences are always hoping for. It is an art of **abstraction** and therefore the bias, temperament, and predilections of the makers need to be made evident if the thing is going to pretend to insight, or at least honest reportage. The real question is what kind of abstraction is relevant, or might contribute to the task of ethnographic film. This task we have defined as: To capture the feeling, the sounds, and the spec of a culture from the intimate ground of those inside it, and to present this culture to others for serious and intelligent evaluation." (McCarty, 1975:5) in (Hockings, 1975)

"I am the '**cine-eye**,' I am the mechanical eye; I am the machine that will show you the world as only the machine can see it. Henceforth, I shall be liberated from human immobility. I am in perpetual motion. I can approach things, back away from them, slide under them, enter inside them; I can move up to the very nose of a race horse, pass through crowds at great speed, lead soldiers into battle, take off with airplanes, turn over on my back, fall down and stand up at the same time as bodies which fall and stand up again..." (Vertov, 1963 [1923]: 34)

"**Cinéma-vérité** is a new sort of art, the art of life itself. The '**cine-eye**' includes: all techniques of filming; all moving pictures; all methods, without exception, which permit one to reach out and record reality; a camera in motion."

(Vertov, 1963 [1923]: 34)

"The second approach in anthropological filmmaking admits right from the beginning that there is no such thing as the **objectivity** of the camera. A film is always a **construction**. Anthropological films are no exception, they are similar to monographs which are selective syntheses of cultural data. The **creative**, constructive contribution of the filmmaker cannot be ignored. This approach gives much freedom to the filmmaker in all phases of production; the anthropological film become and admittedly personal interpretation of the local culture. With this in mind, Flaherty developed a specific method for constructing (and reconstructing) cultures on film."

(Balikci, 1975: 194) in (Hockings, 1975)

"Documentary filmmaking is by nature **collaborative**. Quite simply, it's impossible to make a film about other people completely on your own."

(Barbash and Taylor, 1997:74) in (Pink, 2001:153)

"There is a tribe, known as the **ethnographic film-makers**, who believe they are invisible. They enter a room where a feast is being celebrated, or the sick cured, or the dead mourned, and, though weighted down with odd machines, entangled with wires, imagine they are unnoticed -- or, at most, merely glanced at, quickly ignored, later forgotten.

Outsiders know little of them, for their homes are hidden in the partially uncharted rainforests of the Documentary. Like other Documentarians, they survive by hunting and gathering information. Unlike others of their filmic group, most prefer to consume it raw.

Their culture is unique in that wisdom among them is not passed down from generation to generation; they must discover for themselves what their ancestors knew. They have little communication with the rest of the forest, and are slow to adapt to technical innovations. Their handicrafts are rarely traded, and are used almost exclusively among themselves. Produced in great quantities, the excess must be stored in large archives."

(Weinberger, 1994:3-4) in (Grimshaw, 2001:1)

"The only way to film is to walk about with the **camera**, taking it to wherever it is the most effective, and improvising a ballet in which the camera itself becomes just as much alive as the people it is filming. This would be the first synthesis between the theories of Vertov about the '**cine-eye**' and those of Flaherty about the 'participant camera'. I often compare this dynamic improvisation with that of the bullfighter before the bull. In both cases nothing is given in advance, and the smoothness of a faena (strategy of play) in bullfighting is analogous to the harmony of a traveling shot which is in perfect balance with the movements of the subjects."

(Rouch quoted by Eaton, 1979:57) in (Grimshaw, 2001:81)

"Toute **lecture** d'un événement est questionnement de la réalité, que la 'question' soit consciente ou non, qu'elle vienne de prénotions sociologiques ou d'une stratégie de recherche cohérente. Toute lecture part d'un **point de vue**, tout prise de vues présuppose des choix déterminés par ce point de vue. Cette remarque prend un sens littéral lorsque l'on parle du cinéma ethnographique: le cinéaste ne peut jamais 'tout filmer' et conserver faits et phénomènes dans leur entièreté. À chaque étape, il doit choisir un 'point de vue', c'est à dire un angle, un cadre et une mise au point rejetant des pans entiers de la réalité."

(Émond, 1978: 42)

"Le '**vrai primitif** en pagne devient une rareté que bien peu d'anthropologues peuvent se payer (et nous offrir). Mais comment se fait-il qu'on ne voit qu'eux dans les documentaires ethnographiques ? Comment se fait-il que des ethnocinéastes vont jusqu'à camoufler les manifestations du 'contact culturel': objets, ustensiles, bijoux et comportements euro-américains ? Comment se fait-il que les autres, ceux qui consentent à filmer un chaudron d'aluminium, ne nous montrent pas les modalités d'acquisition de ce chaudron, c'est-à-dire les contacts avec les explorateurs blancs ou de couleur ? Où est l'exploitation, où sont les luttes, où est la **transformation** des sociétés traditionnelles ? [...] De la réalité de l'impérialisme et de l'exploitation capitaliste, du pillage du tiersmonde et de la disparition des modes de vie traditionnels le cinéma ethnographique ne parle pas. On nous

montre des rituels, des 'interactions sociales', des chasses et des procédés technologiques comme si rien n'avait changé. Cela tient à deux séries de raisons: d'abord parce que l'anthropologie, fille de **l'impérialisme**, n'a jamais reconnu sa mère et tente désespérément de garder son objet de recherche [...], ensuite parce que les films de 'vrais **bons sauvages**' constituent une marchandise de choix, **exotique**, vendable et **rentable**. Tout le monde aime voir un bon rituel, bien coloré, rythmé, enlevant, et personne ne veut voir agoniser un enfant qui a bu de la poudre de lait Nestlé diluée dans une eau insalubre, surtout si on dépasse le simple aspect dramatique pour expliquer que c'est le résultat concret, palpable et inéluctable de la présence impérialiste dans les pays de la périphérie."

(Émond, 1978: 76-77)

"Rien ne sert d'avoir des **images** claires si les **idées** sont floues."

Jean-Luc Godard

# Cinéma et anthropologie

De France, Cécile (1982), *Cinéma et anthropologie*, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, 400p.

"Parmi les nombreuses attitudes méthodologiques possibles, deux d'entre elles nous paraissent fondamentales. L'une consiste à utiliser le film comme moyen d'exposition de résultats acquis par d'autres moyens d'investigation que le cinéma (**film d'exposition**); l'autre à l'employer comme moyen d'exploration, c'est-à-dire de découverte sui generis (**film d'exploration**)."  
(De France, 1982:271)

"Des ethnologues et des cinéastes documentaristes ont été, souvent à leur insu, les précurseurs d'une utilisation de l'image animée capable de bouleverser profondément les classiques méthodes d'enquête. Le premier en date fut Robert **Flaherty** lorsque, filmant la vie quotidienne de Nanook l'Eskimo, il lui vint à l'esprit de développer chaque soir dans un laboratoire improvisé les images enregistrées le jour même, de les projeter immédiatement à son héros, puis de recueillir ses appréciations et d'élaborer avec lui les grandes lignes du scénario et du tournage du lendemain. L'idée d'une étroite **collaboration** entre cinéaste et personnes filmées, à partir de l'observation commune de l'image, était née."  
(De France, 1982:305)

"Jean **Rouch** devait, dans les années qui suivirent, tenter l'une des toutes premières expériences **d'observation différée** approfondie, qualifiée par lui **d'anthropologie partagée**, en utilisant les épreuves de *Horendi* (1971) pour obtenir des informations nouvelles auprès des personnes filmées (prêtres et initiés) auxquelles il les projetait, puis compléter l'enregistrement initial en fonction de ces informations."  
(De France, 1982:305-306)

"En résumé, la **phase préliminaire du tournage**, simple période de repérage plus ou moins étendue dans le temps, a pour fonction essentielle de servir de tremplin au futur va-et-vient entre enregistrement et **observation différée**. Elle se caractérise bien plus par la qualité des rapports humains qu'elle engendre entre cinéaste et personnes filmées que par ce qu'elle permet de connaître du procès étudié."  
(De France, 1982:317)

"Les deux activités d'enregistrement et d'examen des images se définissent l'une par l'autre, se conditionnent réciproquement jusqu'à composer les deux aspects complémentaires d'un même procès d'observation. [...] Continuité et répétition des enregistrements, associées à leur examen répété, fondent ensemble ce que nous avons appelé la **méthode des esquisses**."  
(De France, 1982:317-318)

"Le recours aux **esquisses** fondées sur **l'enregistrement continu** a pour autre conséquence importante de dévoiler en grande partie au spectateur les rouages du procès d'observation dont scène et coulisses sont désormais confondues. C'est là un des traits les plus troublants de la démarche **exploratoire**."  
(De France, 1982:322)

"Le caractère tâtonnant de certaines **esquisses** pourrait laisser croire que la démarche **exploratoire** est l'expression d'une recherche désordonnée, gratuite, totalement incontrôlée. Le croire serait confondre le principe de cette démarche avec ses diverses applications. Un film tel que *Architectes ayorou* (Jean **Rouch**) est là pour démontrer le contraire. Ce film peut être considéré comme une forme particulière et partielle d'exploration puisqu'il résulte, non d'esquisses répétées, mais d'un unique tournage entrepris sans observation directe préalable et composé de longues séquences continues."  
(De France, 1982:325)

"Tournant résolument le dos aux modes classiques d'utilisation du film en sciences humaines, la démarche **exploratoire** ouvre de nouvelles perspectives à l'anthropologie filmique. Pour s'en convaincre, il suffit de passer brièvement en revue les principaux traits qui la distinguent de la démarche propre au film d'exposition. L'attitude du cinéaste, de tendance **non-directive**, est l'un de ces traits. Elle s'exprime tout au long de l'enquête, depuis la phase **d'insertion** préalable jusqu'à celle de **l'observation différée**, en passant par l'étape centrale de

l'élaboration proprement dite du film. [...] Lorsque le cinéaste entreprend le tournage, tout reste à découvrir."  
(De France, 1982:347)

"[De l'enregistrement synchrone de l'image et du son] résulte également un **dévoilement**, assumé comme tel, de l'axe d'observation qui relie le cinéaste aux personnes filmées. Car tôt ou tard celles-ci s'adressent au cinéaste, le regardent, le questionnent, lui répondent; et l'enregistrement continu conserve la trace de dialogue gestuel et verbal. Le cinéaste, loin de demeurer extérieur au procès observé, en simple contemplateur, devient lui-même partie de ce procès."  
(De France, 1982:348)

"De ce point de vue également, le film **d'exploration** rompt avec l'une des tendances fondamentales du film d'exposition, consistant à refouler **hors-champ** toute manifestation de **profilmie**, toute **auto-mise en scène** des personnes filmées, parce que considérées comme étrangères au propos du film. Le film d'exposition nous avait en effet habitués à privilégier ce qui a lieu avant le tournage, indépendamment de la présence du cinéaste. L'image filmique recopiait. Le film d'exploration nous convie à regarder avec encore plus d'attention ce qui a lieu en étroite dépendance avec la **présence du cinéaste**, ou en raison même de cette présence."  
(De France, 1982:348-349)

"Effectués en compagnie des personnes filmées, les **examens répétés de l'image** servent de support au développement d'une attitude méthodologique d'étroite **coopération** entre le chercheur et ceux qu'il étudie. Contrairement aux apparences, cette attitude n'est pas incompatible avec la tendance au **non-directivisme**; elle en est même le prolongement naturel. Au lieu de décider seul -- comme l'y avait habitué le film d'exposition -- de la présentation unique d'un film dont le montage est définitif, le commentaire appuyé, le cinéaste corrige, modifie et enrichit indéfiniment son enregistrement. Il est, en cela, guidé par les remarques, suggestions et questions émises par les personnes filmées -- destinataires du film -- au cours du **dialogue** qu'il noue avec elles en présence de l'image de leur propre comportement. Le film est le fruit de ce dialogue improvisé. Tandis que les personnes filmées participent de plus en plus activement au procès d'observation, le cinéaste, de son côté, s'engage de plus en plus profondément dans le procès observé. Ainsi se trouve généralisé et poussé jusqu'à ses extrêmes conséquences le geste audacieux de Flaherty consistant à réaliser un film dont Nanook et lui-même soient également auteurs, grâce à leur commun examen critique des images enregistrées."  
(De France, 1982:349-350)

"*The Ax Fight*, de Timothy **Asch** (1975), illustre bien l'une des toutes premières tentatives de **présentation polytechnique**. [...] Cette expérience de Timothy Asch ne constitue qu'une forme de transition entre l'exposition classique et la **néo-exposition**. [...] Malgré cela, un pas décisif est franchi pour deux raisons essentielles. La première tient au rôle joué par l'examen du premier document filmique, dont l'enregistrement est continu, dans l'élaboration de l'oeuvre finale. [...] La seconde raison tient au **dévoilement** exceptionnel, sur l'image et dans le commentaire, de la démarche qui mena le cinéaste du document initial, de caractère **exploratoire**, au film **démonstratif**."  
(De France, 1982:353-354)

"En d'autres termes, la confrontation de notre propre **regard** avec celui des autres sur eux-mêmes et sur nous, nous paraît être le véritable projet de l'anthropologie filmique, parce qu'il ouvre, sans exclusive, la voie à un échange de regards aux possibilités illimitées. Chacun est l'anthropologue cinéaste de l'autre et de soi. Le double savoir de l'un s'enrichit du double savoir de l'autre."  
(De France, 1982:356)

"Ainsi la question de l'**objectivité** dans un film ethnographique ne se pose-t-elle pas différemment dès l'instant où l'on sait qu'aucune activité filmée -- dont l'agent se sait filmé -- n'échappe aux effets de la présence du cinéaste, en d'autres termes, de la **profilmie**; et qu'un film, même documentaire, est toujours le résultat de l'affrontement de deux **mises en scènes**, celle des personnes filmées (**auto-mise en scène**) et celle du cinéaste (mise en scène) ? Ce que l'on posait en termes d'absence ou de présence d'objectivité doit peut-être, de ce fait, être pensé en termes non seulement de degrés, mais encore **d'intersubjectivité**."  
(De France, 1982:357)

# The Camera and Man

Rouch, Jean (1975), "The Camera and Man" in *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (directed by Paul Hockings), Mouton & Co, Netherlands, 521p.

For Robert **Flaherty**, around 1920, filming the life of the Eskimo of Canada meant filming one particular Eskimo, not an object, but a person. His basic honesty required that he show the subject what he was doing. When Flaherty set up a developing room in a cabin on Hudson Bay and projected his brand new pictures on a screen for his first **spectator**, the Eskimo Nanook, he did not know that with absurdly inadequate means, he had just invented both '**participant observation**' which would be used some thirty years later by sociologists and anthropologists, and '**feedback**' with which we are still so clumsily experimenting." (Rouch, 1975:86)

"The camera became what Luc **de Heusch** has appropriately called 'the **participant camera**'. And, without a doubt, when Flaherty was developing his rushes inside his igloo, he must have realized that he was sounding the death knell for over 90 percent of the filmed documentaries which would be produced later on. We had to wait forty years before people would follow the still current example of the old master of 1921." (Rouch, 1975:86)

[About **cine-trance**] "I do recognize that there are a few rare moments when the filmgoer suddenly understands an unknown language without the help of any subtitles, when he participates in strange ceremonies, when he finds himself walking in towns or across terrain that he has never seen before but that he recognizes perfectly." (Rouch, 1975:89)

"Personally -- unless forced into a special situation -- I am violently opposed to **film crews**. My reasons are several. The sound engineer must fully understand the language of the people he is recording. It is thus indispensable that he belong to the ethnic group being filmed and that he also be trained in the minutiae of his job. Besides, with the present techniques used in direct cinema (synchronic sound), the filmmaker must be the cameraman. And the **ethnologist alone**, in my mind, is the one who knows when, where and how to film, i.e. to do the production. Finally, and this is doubtless the decisive argument, the ethnologist should spend quite a long time in the field before undertaking the least bit of filmmaking." (Rouch, 1975:91)

"Every time a film is shot, **privacy** is violated; but when the filmmaker-ethnologist is alone, when he cannot lean on his group of foreigners (two whites in an African village already form a community, a foreign body which is solid and thus risk rejection), the responsibility for any impurity can only be assumed by this one man. [...] This is why it seems indispensable to me to initiate anthropology students into the techniques of recording both pictures and sound. Even if their films are technically quite inferior to the work of professionals, they will have the irreplaceable quality of **real contact** between the person filming and those being filmed." (Rouch, 1975:92)

"This is the start of what some of us are already calling '**shared anthropology**'. The observer is finally coming down from his ivory tower; his camera, his tape recorder, and his projector have led him -- by way of a strange initiation path -- to the very heart of knowledge and, for the first time, his work is not being judged by a thesis committee but by the very people he came to observe. This extraordinary technique of '**feedback**' (which I translate as '**audiovisual counter-gift**') has certainly not yet revealed all of its possibilities, but we can see already that, thanks to feedback, the anthropologist is no longer an entomologist observing his subject as if it were an insect (putting it down) but rather as if it were a stimulant for **mutual understanding** (hence dignity). This sort of research employing **total participation**, idealistic though it may be, seems to me to be the only morally and scientifically possible anthropological attitude today." (Rouch, 1975:100)

# The Cinematic Griot: The Ethnography of Jean Rouch

Stoller, Paul (1992), *The Cinematic Griot: The Ethnography of Jean Rouch*, The University of Chicago Press, 247p.

"Just as Songhay **griots** share their knowledge with the descendants of the ancestors whose praises they sing, so **Rouch shares** his films with the people he has filmed. In 1954 Rouch shared his *Bataille sur le grand fleuve* with his hippopotamus hunters of Ayoru. Seeing their own images on the screen, they understood Rouch's work as that of a **cinematic griot**, for this film would become a record of the past, a record that could be 'recited' in the future."

(Stoller, 1992:xvii)

"He is one of the most prolific filmmaker in the world, yet only five of the more than one hundred films he has made are distributed in North America. He is a pioneering ethnographer of African societies, yet his ethnographic writings are largely unknown.

Jean **Rouch** is a controversial figure in the histories of anthropology and of film. His films, which are grounded in the ethnographic fieldwork he has conducted in West Africa from 1941 to the present, continue to prompt a torrent of negative commentary. It is said that Rouch's films are **racist**, that they reinforce a pernicious **exoticism**. It is said that Rouch fabricates stories and presents them as facts. Ousmane **Sembène**, a Senegalese author and filmmaker, once suggested that Rouch observed Africans as if they were insects (quoted in Predal, 1982:78). And yet Rouch's work is admired in Europe and Africa. He is a pioneer of **cinéma vérité** and is considered a cinematic innovator whose work influenced the likes of Jean-Luc **Godard** and François **Truffaut**. He has helped train and support many African filmmakers, including Moustafa **Alhassane**, Oumarou **Ganda**, and Inoussa **Ouseini**."

(Stoller, 1992:2-3)

"While his [**Rouch's**] fieldwork is based on scientific principles and intellectual problems, it is also founded on the principle of long-term **friendship** and mutual **respect**. By way of his immersion in things Songhay, Rouch respected 'his others' and earned their respect.

Rouch's field methods are implicated ones in which the investigator **participates** actively -- and over a long period -- in the lives of the people being investigated. [...] The story of Jean Rouch is that of an anthropologist who participates in the lives of the people he portrays, which means that among the Songhay -- just like a griot -- he has foes as well as friends. Rare in anthropology, Rouch's entanglement in Songhay social life -- his long standing friendships -- accounts for the **narrative** force of his oeuvre. Rouch's ethnography carries on the tradition of Pons and Chaussées, the School of Make-Believe in which **art** and **science**, real and imaginary, are fused. Rouch's ethnography also carries on the **griot's** tradition in which the expression of words and the creation of images enable the dead to live again."

(Stoller, 1992:47)

[About *Jaguar*] This sense of play, of *pourquoi pas*, accounts for the joy the film conveys. **Rouch** was replicating the *pourquoi pas* method of his fieldwork in 1947-48. But one problem remained. Rouch shot the film without sound: there were no **synchronous** sound cameras in 1954-55. How could the **commentary** be consistent with the playful, joyful ethos of the images? Rouch pondered this problem for some time. In 1957 a colleague from the Film Unit of Ghana invited him to use a sound studio in Accra. Rouch asked Damoré and Lam to Watch the *Jaguar* footage and talk. Rouch recorded their image-driven talk. In two days he had a sound commentary that worked marvelously well, for the text was as playful as the film itself."

(Stoller, 1992:137-138)

"Such a film [*Jaguar*] defies categorization. It is not a documentary that attempts to 'capture' observed reality. By the same token, it is not a melodrama the filmmakers dreamed up to titillate our emotions. **Rouch** calls his creation '**cine-fiction**'. Other critics have called films like *Jaguar* and *Moi, un noir* '**ethnofiction**'. These films are stories based on laboriously researched and carefully analyzed ethnography. In this way, Rouch uses creative license to 'capture' the texture of an event, the ethos of lived experience. Here again, Rouch defies expectation, throwing a monkey wrench into the carefully considered distinction between **fiction** and **nonfiction**,

**participation and observation, knowledge and sentiment.** In the 1980s scholars in anthropology and cultural studies have deconstructed many of the dualistic distinctions that are fundamental to what they call **logocentrism.** Through the methods, composition, and realization of *Jaguar*, Rouch had already made many of the same arguments -- filmically-- in the 1950s."  
(Stoller, 1992:143)

# Visual Anthropology: Essential Method and Theory

El Guindi, Fadwa (2004), *Visual Anthropology: Essential Method and Theory*, AltaMira Press, États-Unis, 293p.

"As **Rouch** improvised, he discovered; as he filmed, he invented new uses for old equipment; and as he encountered people with his film, he innovated the **method of feedback**. This happened when he showed a film he made on the hippopotamus hunt to villagers in Niger: 'They quickly discovered the flaw in my music during the hippopotamus hunt' (228). The people criticized his film, and he began the idea of **feedback**: showing the film to the people and getting their reaction. Rouch was interested in their response and made changes on the basis of their reaction."

(El Guindi, 2004:106)

"**Filming selves** in the context of this chapter refers to visual anthropological projects in which members of the local population being studied **participate** in the filming of or directly film themselves. The relationship with and the role of the people of observed cultures is a fundamental dimension in the perspective and method of anthropology. [...] There are three kinds of anthropological projects in this genre: 1) the project in which filming by the local population is a methodological means conceptualized by the anthropologist to reconstruct traditional culture and way of life, 2) the experimental project to test premises within a particular anthropological theory, and 3) the campaign by activist anthropologists who seek political self-representation for certain embattled groups who use filming for the purpose of self-empowerment."

(El Guindi, 2004:121)

"Insisting on people's **voice** and **view** characterizes an approach that respects human beings and cultural uniqueness and dignifies diversity while acknowledging a shared and common humanity."

(El Guindi, 2004:139)

About Beryl **Bellman** and Bennette **Jules-Rosette comparative study** (1977), in a traditional rural village on the Liberian-Guinea border and a shantytown compound on the outskirts of Lusaka, Zaire. "Their materials do contain a particular kind of editing process. The informant camerapersons **edited in-camera** by using the techniques of turning the camera on and off, zooming in and out, dollying toward and away from the action, panning horizontally and vertically, tilting, following shots, narrating, and various combinations thereof (Bellman and Jules-Rosette 1977:4,5)"

(El Guindi, 2004:147)

About the **Navajo filming experiment**: "It is a study of how a people, through filming (instead of talking or writing) shape their **view** of the world or structure their reality."

(El Guindi, 2004:142)

"**Research film** is a category associated with a systematic, methodical mode of visual inquiry."

(El Guindi, 2004:154)

"**Rouch's** notion of **participation** seems to refer to the camera's role, a tool that can provide the extraordinary opportunity to communicate with the group under study. He calls it **participant camera**."

(El Guindi, 2004:179)

"**Feedback** is more appropriately a desirable (even ethical) quality of a field filming project. It is about obligation, a counter-gift, a sharing of anthropology. It is equivalent to participation in the fieldwork methodology equation of participant observation. Feedback is closer to the participant part."

(El Guindi, 2004:180)

# Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research

Pink, Sarah (2001), *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research*, Sages Publications, Londres, 196p.

"Instead, I shall define **ethnography** as a methodology (see Crotty 1998:7); as an approach to **experiencing**, **interpreting** and **representing** culture and society that informs and is informed by sets of different disciplinary agendas and theoretical principles. Rather than being a method for the collection of 'data', ethnography is a process of **creating and representing** knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on ethnographers' own experiences. It does not claim to produce an **objective** or 'truthful' account of reality, but should aim to offer **versions** of ethnographers' experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and **intersubjectivities** through which the knowledge was produced. This may entail **reflexive**, **collaborative** or **participatory** methods. It may involve informants in a variety of ways at different points of the research and representational stages of the project."

(Pink, 2001:18)

"Any experience, action, artifact, image or idea is never definitively just one thing but may be redefined differently in different situations, by different individuals and in terms of different discourses. It is impossible to measure the 'ethnographicness' of an image in terms of its form, content or potential as an observational document, visual record or piece of 'data'. Instead, the 'ethnographicness' of any image or representation is contingent on how it is **situated**, **interpreted** and **used** to invoke meanings and knowledge that are of ethnographic interest."

(Pink, 2001:19)

"A **reflexive** approach recognizes the centrality of the **subjectivity** of the researcher to the production and representation of ethnographic knowledge. **Reflexivity** goes beyond the researcher's concern with questions of 'bias' or how ethnographers observe the 'reality' of a society they actually 'distort' through their participation in it."

(Pink, 2001:19)

"Banks divides visual research **methods** into three broad activities: 'making visual representations (studying society by producing images)'; 'examining pre-existing visual representations' (studying images for information about society); **collaborating** with social actors in the production of visual representations'. (Banks 1997:14) These can generally be planned and developed before fieldwork."

(Pink, 2001:30)

"The appropriateness of visual methods should not simply be judged on questions of whether the method suit the objectives of the research question and if they fit well with the local culture in which one is working. Rather, such evaluations should be informed by an ethnographic appreciation of how visual knowledge is **interpreted** in a cross cultural context. Therefore decisions about the particular methodologies and modes of representation to be used should pay attention to intersection between local visual cultures, the ways in which the visual is treated by wider users or audiences of the research and ethnographer's own knowledge, experience and sensitivity. By thinking through the implications of image production and visual representation in this way ethnographers should be able to evaluate how their 'ethnographic' images would be invested with different **meanings** by different political, local and academic discourses."

(Pink, 2001:33)

"Therefore, when selecting and applying for funding for technology it is important to remember that a **camera** will be part of the research context and an element of the ethnographer's identity. It will impinge on the social relationships in which he or she becomes involved and on how informants represent themselves. Different **technologies** impact on these relationships and identities in different ways. In some cases, **image quality** may have to be forsaken to produce images that represent the type of ethnographic knowledge sought."

(Pink, 2001:36)

"If ethnography is seen as a process of **negotiation** and **collaboration** with informants, through which they too stand to achieve their own objectives, rather than as an act of taking information away from them, the ethical

agenda also shifts. By focusing on collaboration and the idea of '**creating something together**', agency becomes **shared** between the researcher and informant. Rather than the researcher being the active party who both extracts data and gives something else back, in this model both researcher and informant invest in, and are rewarded by, the project. Recent work with video and photography shows how these media can be used to develop very successful **collaborative** projects. In some cases, this has **empowered** informants/subjects and can serve to **challenge** existing **power structures** that impinge on the lives of informant and ethnographers." (Pink, 2001:44)

"Engelbrecht's collaborative work with ethnographic film shows how visual work can become a product in which both informants and ethnographer invest. **Engelbrecht** (1996) describes a number of filmmaking projects that involved the **collaboration** of local people in both filmmaking and editing. In some cases, people wanted their traditional festivities or rituals to be documented, and were pleased to work with the filmmakers to achieve these ends. Others realized the commercial potential of their participation in film projects." (Pink, 2001:45)

"Fiedlwork, everyday life and writing up may not necessarily be separated either spatially or temporally in the ethnographer's life and experience. **Ethnographic research** may not entail the researcher going somewhere, taking something away and being morally obliged to 'give something back'. Instead, the ethnography may be part of a researcher's everyday interactions. There may be a **continuous flow** of information and objects between the ethnographer and informants. This might include the **exchange** of images, of ideas, emotional and practical exchanges and support, each of which are valued in different ways." (Pink, 2001:45)

"An ethnographer with a **video camera** is a person with a video camera, the camera becomes part of its user's **identity** and an aspect of the way he or she communicates with others. Moreover, in each situation the camera will impact differently on the relationships researchers develop with other individuals and the **social roles** they play. An individual ethnographer does not have one single and fixed identity as a video maker, but this will be negotiated and redefined in different contexts. To be **reflexive** ethnographic video makers need to be aware of how the camera and video footage become an element of the play between themselves and informants, and how these are interwoven into discourses and practices in the research context." (Pink, 2001:80) Voir Braun's *Passing Girl, Riverside: an Essay on Camera Work* (1998)

"But this question also applies to **research footage**: for whom do we shoot this footage when we collaborate with individuals and groups who also have an interest in the footage ? Such collaboration results in ethnographers working with informants and **participating** in 'their' **video culture**, as well referring to other video cultures." (Pink, 2001:85)

"**Showing video footage** to informants can also become part of a research project. The extent to which this method is formalized varies from project to project. In the examples discussed below, this ranges from a normal video-recorded interview, during which the informant viewed and commented on video footage of an event in which he participated, to much more casual screenings in which informants have become involved out of personal interest rather than by request. Whatever the context, the purpose of this method should not be simply to use video images to elicit responses from informants or to extract information about the images. Rather, viewing video with informants should also be seen as something of a '**media ethnography**'. This combines ethnographers actively discussing video images with informants while also attempting to understand how informants situate themselves as **viewers** of the footage, therefore engaging with questions such as: How do **informants' commentaries** on video footage relate it to other aspects of their video/media culture ? And what discourses do they refer to in their comments and discussions of the footage ?" (Pink, 2001:89)

"Recently, uses of video in ethnographic research have developed in tandem with new technologies, innovations and theoretical perspectives. Shifts from a realist approach to video as 'objective' reality to the idea of video as **representation** shaped by specific **standpoints** of its **producers** and **viewers** have encouraged the development of **collaborative** approaches to the production and **interpretation** of video images. The introduction of digital video and computer-based techniques seems particularly appropriate for the application of these

methods and is likely to form the basis of future development in video research. "  
(Pink, 2001:93)

"Like other items of material culture, visual images have their own biographies (see Appadurai 1986). When they move from one context to another, they are, in a sense, 'transformed'; although their content remains unaltered, in the new context 'the conditions in which they are viewed are different' (Morphy and Banks 1997:16). This also applies to the **biographies of images** that travel through the research process. Photographs and video images are **interpreted** in different ways and by different individuals at different points in ethnographic research, analysis and representation. Images first produced, discussed and made meaningful during fieldwork will be given new significance in academic culture where they are 'separated from the world of action in which they were meaningful and placed in a world in which they will be interrogated and interpreted from a multiplicity of different **perspectives**' (Morphy and Banks 1997:16). Analysis is not a simple matter of interpreting the visual content of photographs and video, but involves examining how different **producers** and **viewers** of images give **subjective meaning** to their content and form."

(Pink, 2001:95)

"Below I suggest a **reflexive** approach that takes advantage of the different ways video, photography and written text can represent ethnographic experience, theory and critique. By **combining different media** for ethnographic representation researchers can juxtapose different types of **knowledge, subjectivity, epistemology** and **voice** in ways that compliment one another."

(Pink, 2001:144)

"I noted above that **reflexivity** has already been incorporated in ethnographic filmmaking practice in films that recognize filmmakers' roles and intentions and the **constructedness** of the reality they represent. Some have also begun to consider how a **self conscious approach to viewing** ethnographic documentary may be developed or guided through novel narrative forms (see Mermin 1997) and this is important reading for aspiring ethnographic filmmakers. Here, however, I am not concerned with ethnographic film **narrative**, but to suggest uses of video in **reflexive ethnographic representations** that may themselves be read reflexively."

(Pink, 2001:147)

# Anthropologie et cinéma

Piault, Marc-Henri (2000), *Anthropologie et cinéma: Passage à l'image, passage par l'image*, Éditions Nathan HER, Paris, 285p.

"L'ancien 'indigène' va saisir les micros et les caméras pour **filmer l'observateur** et exprimer lui-même son propre **point de vue**. Dans ce mouvement, il se dévoile lui-même et exprime peut-être plus que ce que l'on a dit de lui. Il fait penser que nous pourrions être son autre sinon son objet et qu'enfin -- mais dans quelles conditions ? -- nous pourrions également tourner nos caméras sur nous-mêmes, j'allais écrire *contre nous-mêmes* ! Ce changement éclaire la finalité d'une anthropologie visuelle et explique peut-être la difficulté à la faire accepter comme partie intégrante de la discipline."  
(Piault, 2000:160)

"Nous avons assez largement parcouru les rapports de la caméra avec ce qu'elle observe pour comprendre qu'une modification des comportements en sa présence ne met pas en cause l'authenticité de la narration."  
(Piault, 2000:188)

"L'entreprise cinématographique rend compte de la relation élaborée. C'est le premier volet de cette **participation** qui progressivement apparaîtra au centre des préoccupations des ethnocinéastes. La démarche reste encore une initiative ethnologique. Il faudra du temps pour reconnaître le nécessaire aller et retour de cette participation. L'étape intermédiaire sera la **monstration** des images à ceux auprès desquels elles ont été prises: leurs **commentaires** feront naître, avec plus ou moins d'exigence -- et plus ou moins d'acceptation en retour ! -- les demandes d'une autre participation, celle qui passerait par l'initiative accordée à l'**entreprise autochtone**. Ce serait alors une véritable **anthropologie partagée**, celle du renversement des regards, celle qui conduit à une réflexion sur soi-même à la lumière et dans la perspective de l'interrogation des autres."  
(Piault, 2000:188) Référence au film de Luc de Heusch: Rwanda, tableaux d'une féodalité pastorale (1955)

"Jean **Rouch** sera certainement l'un des premiers à 'découvrir' que l'Afrique n'est pas seulement le domaine de sociétés immobiles, pétries de rituels et de sacrifices au fond de brousses mystérieuses où les 'rythmes lancinants du tamtam' agitent régulièrement de 'fiers guerriers' ou des jeunes filles aux seins nus et charmants ! Son influence sera déterminante pour ouvrir les images ethnographiques aux **changements** du monde, même s'il faudra quelque temps pour que cette attitude paraisse si évidente qu'on n'éprouve plus le besoin d'en évoquer la genèse."  
(Piault, 2000:200)

"Certains cinéastes, comme Jean-Luc **Godard**, pensent que Jean **Rouch** a ouvert la voie de la Nouvelle Vague du cinéma français et c'était, bien entendu, parce qu'il tarabustait les règles et inventait une nouvelle façon de filmer. De la même façon, parce que ce cinéaste *parle* l'Afrique comme sa langue maternelle et que ses contes sont naturellement *enchantés*, on se demande presque si l'Afrique n'aurait pas été inventée par Rouch: c'est qu'il est sorti des façons conventionnelles de la considérer. "  
(Piault, 2000:207-208)

"Entre la leçon surréaliste et les voies de la connaissance africaine, il [**Rouch**] trouve la lanterne magique du cinéma: elle fait soudain apparaître ce **double** qui sans cesse nous suit et que nous poursuivons, ce moi en l'autre et cet autre en nous que l'anthropologue essaye de faire dialoguer afin qu'ils se rencontrent mais qu'ils ne se confondent pas, qu'ils ne se dévorent pas."  
(Piault, 2000:208)

"En regardant-filmant, **Rouch** expose sa démarche, à la fois à ceux chez qui il travaille dont il intègre les **commentaires**, remarques et mises en question, et à ceux que nous sommes, **spectateurs**-questionneurs de l'altérité. Ce sera l'élaboration progressive d'une posture, d'une démarche particulièrement originale et féconde et que j'appellerais un **accompagnement phénoménologique**, tentative constamment en cours, toujours à remettre en oeuvre, pour comprendre la différence en s'approchant si près que l'on ressent vivre l'autre."  
(Piault, 2000:211-212)

"Cette '**anthropologie partagée**' maintes fois revendiquée sans toujours être accomplie, ne se réduit pas à une sorte de méthode de la **participation** affective, elle rend compte de l'insurmontable **paradoxe de l'altérité** que l'anthropologie a justement pour fonction d'assumer: comment montrer et saisir la différence sans la rendre irréductible ni la réduire à l'identique, comment la rendre accessible à ce qu'elle n'est pas et acceptable par ce qu'elle ne comprend pas nécessairement."

(Piault, 2000:212)

"**L'autre ethnologisé** n'est plus une curiosité archéologique: il prend le statut d'un **sujet** et il lui arrive d'avoir la possibilité de s'adresser à ceux qui le regardent ! Il faudra même soutenir un dialogue, répondre à des questions et non plus seulement s'arroger le droit prééminent de les poser et d'interpréter les réponses ! Ce sera l'une des plus fortes propositions du film *Moi un Noir*: les acteurs parlent en leur nom propre, disent leur vie et leurs rêves, mais aussi regardent au-delà de l'écran vers le spectateur qui les attend quelque part."

(Piault, 2000:212)

[**Rouch**] "Cet impénitent 'trickster', ce magicien souriant, cet intrigant charmeur, ce chasseur de rêves, ce contrebandier des genres, n'a cessé d'inventer l'Afrique. Ne continuerait-il pas aussi à inventer l'anthropologie en faisant son cinéma ?"

(Piault, 2000:214)

"L'histoire du film [*Chroniques d'un été*] est ainsi l'ordre sous-jacent aux apparences narratives d'un scénario plus ou moins accompli. L'intelligence de **Rouch et Morin** est d'avoir permis au spectateur de suivre les méandres d'implication des acteurs et des réalisateurs les uns avec les autres, proposant ainsi une sorte d'anthropologie dynamique d'un groupe en formation, d'une société émergente où le réalisateur n'est plus démiurge ou savant montreur d'ombres, mais médiateur impliqué par les effets de son entreprise."

(Piault, 2000:215-216)

"Première et double leçon de **l'anthropologie rouchienne**: **proximité** et **continuité** donnent non seulement à voir mais conduisent à explorer et à percevoir le sens de la différence, à échanger les points de vue donc à changer et à décentrer l'analyse. **L'anthropologie partagée** met en perspective l'anthropologue et sa démarche s'inclut dans le questionnement. L'enquêteur et l'enquêté sont englobés dans une situation qui leur échappe à mesure qu'ils la définissent."

(Piault, 2000:216)

"Dans *Bataille sur le Grand Fleuve*(1951), **Rouch** mixe, sur certaines images d'une chasse à l'hippopotame, de la musique; cette musique est authentique, enregistrée sur place et c'est celle qui doit encourager les pêcheurs sorko. Que souhaiter de mieux ? Le film présenté aux acteurs, ceux-ci protestent: il n'y a jamais de musique pendant la chasse car cela ferait fuir le gibier ! Une telle évidence est une leçon d'ethnographie que Rouch accepte immédiatement. Désormais, le son correspondra exactement à l'image et les films deviendront progressivement une production collective à laquelle participent activement ceux qui en sont les **acteurs-sujets** et dont certains deviendront, peu à peu, les **co-auteurs**."

(Piault, 2000:216)

"**Rouch** ne prétend pas -- et ne veut pas -- s'effacer ou faire croire qu'il n'est pas **l'auteur** de ses films: Il revendique la spécificité de son regard, l'orientation d'une compréhension personnelle de ce qu'il montre."

(Piault, 2000:216)

"Par un effet singulier de société, c'est de la base, c'est-à-dire des **étudiants** mêmes, que la pression vient pour faire entrer le cinéma et les virtualités de la représentation dans la pratique des études et l'exercice du terrain. Signe certain de l'efficacité d'une instrumentation reconnue souvent comme nécessaire, et que cependant les institutions de nos disciplines, en France en particulier, hésitent à encourager si ce n'est à des fins qui confinent à une simple publicité des organismes d'enseignement et de recherche. [...] À moins bien sûr, que les **institutions d'enseignement** ne soient, par destination et par excellence, les lieux de sacralisation d'un savoir et donc d'un pouvoir dominant ?"

(Piault, 2000:265)

# The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology

Grimshaw, Anna (2001), *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 222p.

"Attracted initially by what they perceive to be one of the distinctive qualities of the subject, its peoplecentredness, **students** all too often experience the discipline as a series of dry, academic texts in which human presence is rarely glimpsed. The stubborn persistence of a particular literary form, indeed its reification in the current climate of academic auditing, seems increasingly archaic. It offers little by way of an understanding of the contemporary world in which visual media play such a central role. Often impatient working from within the confines of an abstract specialist language, younger anthropologists respond enthusiastically to opportunities for experimentation with visual techniques and technologies. Their use becomes an important means for humanising the discipline, engaging people concretely, for example, within films as **subjects** and **collaborators** or as **audiences** for anthropological work."  
(Grimshaw, 2001: 2-3)

"Images by their very nature establish a different **relationship** between the ethnographer and the world he or she explores. Moreover, image-based technologies mediate different kinds of relationships between **ethnographers**, **subjects** and **audiences** than those associated with the production of literary texts. For instance, students quickly discover that working with a video camera makes them visible, publicly **accountable** and dependent upon forging new kinds of ethnographic **collaborations**. Pursuing such an approach offers interesting challenges to students who are committed to operating in society, rather than in the academy, as anthropologists. At the same time as they explore new ways of **collective** working, students also discover that visual technologies offer scope for individual self expression, something perceived to be virtually impossible within the conventional academic text. Ironically, it is the very marginality of visual anthropology with respect to the mainstream text-based traditions which opens up an important space for experimentation. Here students try out a range of forms in an effort to give anthropological expression to their identity and interests."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:3)

"The relocation of anthropology within the context of art and cinema enables us to identify three distinctive forms of **anthropological visibility**. I call these ways of seeing: *modernist*, *romantic* and *enlightenment*. Each one is underpinned by different epistemological assumptions about the nature of anthropological enquiry -- for example, that ethnographic knowledge is generated by means of the interrogation of conventional ways of understanding the world; that it depends on an **intense visionary experience**; and that it requires the painstaking accumulation of data to be organised into a comparative schema. Vision as metaphysic and technique are intertwined. A modernist way of seeing in anthropology may be linked to a *genealogical* approach; a romantic vision to **experiential techniques**; and finally an enlightenment project is organised around a *classificatory* method."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:9)

"The origins of the term, *cinéma vérité*, have been the subject of much debate. Its adoption, however, as the description of film-making techniques rooted in capturing life as it is lived -- undirected, unscripted, unfolding -- made explicit the connection between the kind of project **Rouch** began to pursue during the 1950s and that of the Russian revolutionary film-maker, Dziga **Vertov** (**kino-pravda** or **cine-truth**). Each figure was committed to plunging the camera into the midst of a world in flux. The spontaneous, improvised quality of their films, emerging from a new **positioning** of film-maker and subject, technology and society, was expressive of the more general condition of fluidity in social and political life. The cinematic challenge to notions of reality, character and narrative which the work of both Vertov and Rouch represented was inseparable, then, from their direct  
(Grimshaw, 2001:81)

"But the conditions under which *cinéma vérité* and **direct cinema** evolved -- namely, colonial independence and civil rights, respectively -- were critical in establishing different concerns at the centre of these two projects. Moreover, each approach was predicated upon a radically different notion of both reality and the form of its representation.

If *cinéma vérité* was located in cinema itself, drawing upon its unique features as an arena for transformation, then direct cinema, as part of broader movement in American journalism, accommodated itself within a different site -- television. The former was weighted down toward a certain kind of **experience**, the latter toward **information**."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:82)

"The distinctive features associated with Robert **Drew's** documentary work were, of course, built upon a set of assumptions about reality and the nature of it's apprehension, In rejecting montage as its basic principle in favour of the *mise-en-scène*, the **direct** film-makers were committed to 'non-preconception', that is, to an investigation o a pre-existent world rather than its creation."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:84)

"Unlike the **MacDougalls'** enlightenment project, a version perhaps of what Martin **Jay** describes as 'Cartesian perspectivalism', where knowledge comes from intense **observation** of a world situated outside the self, **Rouch's** practice unsettles the very divisions upon which such an epistemology is founded. He disrupts the boundaries between the self and the world, mind and body, the mind's eye and the surveying eye. I want to suggest that his anthropological cinema may be considered to be 'the irruption of the night light of Romanticism as the libertarian Other of le siècle des lumières, the century of Lights, the Enlightenment' (Hammond following Octavio Paz, *The Shadow*, p.2). It is at once part of the enlightenment and yet its antithesis, **the shadow around the light.**"  
(Grimshaw, 2001:91)

"I understand **Rouch** to be a modern-day visionary, a *seer*. His anthropological cinema involves moments of **revelation**. The visionary quality of his work, with its origins in European **romanticism** (and one of its twentiethcentury offshoots, **Surrealism**) and African trance and possession, are harnessed to a new, expansive humanism. The qualities that Rouch brings to the task of anthropology, his imagination, his boldness, his playful wit and his subversive, adventurous spirit stand in stark contrast to the scepticism of much contemporary intellectual discourse. Not surprisingly, for younger anthropologists seeking to rediscover human conectedness in a world confined by old forms and ideas, Rouch is a fascinating figure."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:91)

"It is important to acknowledge that the unique quality of **Rouch's** work stems from his unusual personality. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to remain indifferent to the audacity and fiercely **individualistic** spirit which characterises his anthropological cinema. But any assessment of its distinctiveness must also take into account other factors shaping Rouch's ethnographic sensibilities. These include his own background, the intellectual and artistic climate in interwar Paris, and the specific concerns of French anthropology. [...] I will suggest that Rouch's creativity was intimately linked to a **revolutionary** moment in modern society."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:91)

"Thus once we are able to put to one side the powerful, affective qualities of *Les Maîtres Fous*, we may appreciate the film's formal precision. Although **Rouch** prefers to leave the **creative process** deliberately unexamined, rather than self-consciously exposed through critical reflection as in the case of the **MacDougalls**, it is difficult to accept that there is anything random or haphazard about the way in which the film's different components are interwoven. A closer examination reveals that each cinematic element has been carefully positioned in relationship to the others and to the whole; but it is through these contrived juxtapositions that Rouch opens up **areas of interpretative freedom.**"  
(Grimshaw, 2001:95)

"*Les maîtres fous* reveals the sharp contrast between the conception of a **shared** or **participatory** anthropological cinema pursued by the **MacDougalls** and the one practised by **Rouch**. In the case of David and Judith MacDougall, their innovations in **collaborative** practice grew out of **observational** cinema. Building from an initial premise of **respect** and **distance**, they attempted to generate a new kind of **participation** through the notion of conversation, in which voice, rather than vision, is the means for defining and understanding the world. **Rouch's participatory anthropology**, however, is built upon a violation of these qualities. Moreover, it is not built around words as part of rationalist discourse, but involves exploitation of their evocative power, enabling the poet 'to see'.

Unlike the MacDougalls' penetrating light of reason, Rouch is drawn to **the shadow around the light.**"  
(Grimshaw, 2001:101)

"Within the space of five years, **Rouch** opened up a new and distinctive field -- **anthropological cinema**. In bringing together these two different traditions, Rouch was not seeking to express the concerns of traditional ethnographic enquiry through a visual form; rather, he was creating something new. He united the **humanist** impulse of anthropology with the **transformative power** of cinema, and in doing so he transcended the limitations at the heart of each project. Rouch has not only created what he calls '**ethno-fiction**' or 'sciencefiction', thereby subverting the conventional divisions within anthropology between **description** and **imagination**; but also within cinema itself, he found a way of transcending a division which has run deeply from the very beginning -- namely, he found a way of fusing the **realism** of Lumière with the **fantasy** of Méliès."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:118)

"**Rouch** offers different perspectives on a particular moment in modern history; but there is no social whole to be grasped. Conceptualizing his work in this way enables us to understand his particular vision of the world -- contemporary reality exists as a hall of mirrors. Rouch's enterprise is deeply **subversive of intellectual certainties**. It challenges the binary thinking by which anthropologists (and film-makers) have sought to interpret the world. Rouch's films express his refusal to accept the stability of conventional **categories** such as black/white, irrational/rational, village/city, truth/fiction, Africa/Europe. Rouch plays with these oppositions, rejecting an either/or position, always revealing the **coexistence of both parts of the pair.**"  
(Grimshaw, 2001:118)

"The process by which the eye may be cleansed involves a radical disruption of everyday modes of engagement with the world. **Romantic** techniques appeal to sensibility, to the emotions and to the body. In the **Malinowskian** case, this is brought about through the disorienting sensory experience of fieldwork. For **Rouch**, the **camera** acts as a **transformative agent**. Hence it is not humanised. It might become part of the filmmaker's body: but the body is not human when Rouch embarks on his journey, which he calls **ciné-trance**. To quote Andre **Breton**, 'the eye exists in a primitive state.' As such the filmmaker becomes fugitive, elusive, capricious like a spirit. Likewise, in a darkened auditorium, something strange can happen; but only if participants are willing to play game, to become players. For cinema offers itself as a primary site for **disruption and transformation.**"  
(Grimshaw, 2001:119-120)

"The mood of **self-consciousness** which characterises anthropology today suggests possibilities for a reintegration of the visual into the field. Questions about the substance, epistemology, techniques and forms of ethnographic enquiry have been subject to a radical rethinking over the course of the last decade. Ironically, however, this moment of reflection and experimentation has coincided with a period in which anthropology has been subject too unprecedented pressure for bureaucratic **conformity** as a university discipline. The growing puritanism of academic life, accompanied by the narrow specialisation and reification of archaic literary forms, runs counter to the open, eclectic spirit which marked an earlier anthropology. But it is important to remember that much to the exasperation (and admiration) of more established intellectuals, anthropologists have been remarkably resistant to established categories of knowledge and forms of enquiry. A new engagement with the question of vision, and its different forms and manifestations, offers a valuable starting point for the renewal of a project more creatively engaged with the world in which we live."  
(Grimshaw, 2001:173)

# Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film and Anthropology

Ruby, Jay (2000), *Picturing culture*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 339p.

"When the phrase anthropology and film is heard, many people think of the **so-called ethnographic films** about exotic peoples. They are the films seen in classrooms and on U.S public television and the Discovery channel. [...] I argue that ethnographic and documentary film, as commonly practiced, is only marginally related to anthropology and that these film forms are actually an impediment to the development of an anthropological cinema. [...] The result of an inclusive view of ethnographic film is the development of a body of work better described as being documentary films about the cultures of exotic people rather than a **pictorial expression of anthropologically constructed knowledge.**"

(Ruby, 2000:2)

"the majority [of scholars in the 70's] were still trapped in the false dichotomy of the '**science** of anthropology' versus 'the **art** of cinema'.

(Ruby, 2000:4)

"The encouragement of **indigenous media makers** and the accomodation of natively produced work into visual anthropology also became a major concern of visual anthropologists, as witness the work of Eric Michaels (see chapter 9), Terence Turner (1990,1991, 1992), Vincente Carelli (Aufderheide 1995), and particularly Faye Ginsburg (1989, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998)."

(Ruby, 2000:5)

"I propose that the term '**ethnographic**' be confined to those works in wich the maker had formal training in ethnography, intended to produce an ethnography, employed ethnographic field practices, and sought validation among those competent to judge the work as an ethnography." (about both written and pictorial ethnography)

(Ruby, 2000:6)

"Audiences were and still are fascinated with images of the **exotic Other.**" (Ruby, 2000:7)

"**Rouch's** intention was to produce a '**shared anthropology**' in which those in front of the camera **shared** the power with the director. This idea reached an apex with his so called ethnographic science fiction films, such as *Jaguar* (1965), *Petit à Petit* (1968), *Cocorico Monsieur Poulet* (1983), and *Madame l'Eau* (1992). [...] Rouch may be a premature postmodernist, as Stoller contends (1992). However, his work on **multivocality** and **reflexivity** has been ignored by the so-called crisis of representation and writing culture folks. [...] Rouch's attempts at **collaborative filmmaking** are mirrored in a number of other collaborative projects. Most noteworthy is the Native Alaskan Heritage Film Project of Sarah Eleder and Leonard Kamerling. Since the early 1970s, this team has produced more than twenty **community films**, such as *Drums of winter* (1988), in which the people filmed played an active role in the film from conception to realization (Elder 1995)." + reference to Worth & Adair

(Ruby, 2000:13)

"The idea of a **reflexive** ethnography that actively seeks the **participation** of those who are studied and that openly acknowledges the role of the ethnographer in the construction of the culture's image reflects a growing concern voiced by both anthropologists and documentary filmmakers about the ethics and politics of actuality filmmaking. [...] Given the **shift in power** and awareness in a postcolonial and postmodern world, some argue that the only ethnographic films that should be produced in the twenty-first century are those that result from an active **collaboration** and **sharing** of power between ethnofilmmakers and the subjects of their films."

(Ruby, 2000:14)

"The argument I make in this book is that anthropologists interested in ethnographic film need to create an **infrastructure** more suited to their scholarly purposes.[...] Academics do not need to make **money** from publishing activities, whether written or pictorial. They should therefore approach the making of films as a scholarly activity and nothing else"

(Ruby, 2000:18)

"Ethnographies that dealt with people in the United States tended to be called '**community studies**'. 'They' are ethnographic subjects, whereas 'we' are sociological. Curiously enough, few mainstream fiction films are labeled sociological."  
(Ruby, 2000:27)

"**Nichols** is correct that many anthropologists involved with ethnographic film (Paul **Hockings**, Karl **Heider**, and Peter **Loizos**, to name the most prominent) seem oblivious to these ideas [**reflexive** and openly **interpretative** anthropology] and continue to espouse discredited and outmoded notions of **objectivity** and reality and blindly believe in the scientific merit of **realist-documentary** conventions like **observational cinema** and false dichotomies between art and science.[...] For example, why Nichols does not explore the films of Jean **Rouch** is curious. Rouch has been a pioneer in **reflexive** cinema and in the move toward '**shared**' **anthropology** and **indigenous media** (Stoller 1992). These are ideas central to Nichol's argument. [...] Nichols advocates films that are openly **interpretative**, highly **reflexive**, and able to be rationally as being **useful**. [...] Although I concur with the rejection of a positivist social-science paradigm and have argued elsewhere for an openly **interpretative** and **reflexive** anthropology (Ruby1980a; Ruby, ed., 1982;chapter 6), I believe the future of ethnographic film is located in anthropologically grounded theories and anthropologically trained ethnographic filmmakers' taking control of the genre. Nichols is convinced the hope for the future lies with 'individuals more trained in filmmaking than in anthropology' (1994:66) -- specifically with **films made by woman/native/Other**. The emergence of the 'subject' as author is one of the most exciting developments of this era. It represents a significant **shift in power** toward people who were traditionally the subject of ethnography. [...] Films by woman/native/Other and ethnographic films are distinct in two significant ways -- the relationship of the producer to the community and the **purpose of the production**. [...] Once it is acknowledged that no one can speak for or represent a culture but only his or her relationship to it, then a multiplicity of **viewpoints** is possible and welcome -- some from within and others from without and all the marvelously gray areas in between."  
(Ruby, 2000:30-31)

"I have argued elsewhere (1995a;chapter8) that the role of the visual anthropologist as facilitator of **indigenous production** should increase, resulting in ethnographies of native production and reception. The flowering of pictorial representation among people who have traditionally been the subject of the camera's gaze is exciting. It should be encouraged and assisted. Labeling it as an ethnography will not aid; it will only confuse."  
(Ruby, 2000:32)

"Bronislaw **Malinowski** argued that the goal of anthropology should be to see the world through the eyes of the native. If that were the only purpose of anthropology, **Nichols** would be correct. The future of ethnographic films would lie with films by woman/native/Other. I submit that the purpose of anthropology is to allow people to see the native through the eyes of the anthropologist. Films by woman/native/Other, documentaries that are cultural studies, feature fiction films, and ethnographic films all offer distinct ways of **representing** a culture. No one way has an inside track to the truth. All suffer limitations of being from a particular **point of view**. To confuse one with the other inhibits critical discourse about all of them."  
(Ruby, 2000:32)

"I find it ironic that **Nichols**, who writes in such a difficult style that it severely limits his audience to a tiny group of dedicated scholars, should claim that scholarship must have an impact on the world."  
(Ruby, 2000:33)

"The **need to justify** is more commonly experienced by **ethnographers** than **documentary filmmakers** because ethnographers tend to stay in the field for prolonged periods and often wish to return for a restudy. They become temporary members of a community and, as such, assume certain obligations. Ethnographers have become increasingly aware that the people they study will read or see the finished product. This knowledge has to have a profound effect on how ethnographers characterize others. Most documentarians cannot afford to stay in the field very long, infrequently get to know the people they film very well, and almost never return to a site to make another film."  
(Ruby, 2000:33)

"For most anthropologists, their primary **audience** is other academics and then, in descending order of

importance, graduate students, undergraduate students, and finally the educated general public. For documentary/ethnographic film, the **marketplace** generally determines audience in that only certain projects get funded. [...] Everyone seems to be striving to produce something the film industry calls 'a good movie'." (Ruby, 2000:33-34)

"Anthropologists want to make people aware that difference can be appreciated without **ethnocentric** judgments. **Viewers** want to be amused by watching **exotics** doing strange things." (Ruby, 2000:34)

"Few anthropologists before or after Margaret **Mead** have been interested in **communicating** to a mass **audience** or able to do so." (Ruby, 2000:35)

"How can you translate experience into images ? Do images merely illustrates ideas, or are there "pictorial" ideas ? Can you actually explore and discover with a camera, or must you wait until you know in order to film ? When you are dealing with people whose sense of space, place, body movement, and event are different from your own, how do you know what you are looking at and when to turn the camera on or off? It is only possible to explore these questions in the field when the ethnographer is freed from the **economic** restraints of professional filmmaking and the need to produce a **marketable product**." (Ruby, 2000:37-38)

"Having access to the technology throughout the period of their fieldwork, anthropologists will be able to show the images they create to the people portrayed, enabling those depicted to actively engage in the creation of their image. They can develop their own critical relationship to the way in which they are represented, thus adding another layer of **reflexivity** to the work. In situations where people wish to produce their own tapes, it might be possible for **multiple versions** of the same event to appear in the same work, thus raising new questions about **collaboration** and multiple versions of actuality." (Ruby, 2000:38)

"The uncritical acceptance of the conventions of broadcast **journalism** and **mainstream documentary** realism has not succeeded in creating filmed ethnography. Anthropologists incorrectly assumed that some cinematic styles are more '**objective**', more 'scientific' than others." (Ruby, 2000:38)

"**Viewers** will have to be cultivated and taught not to be passive. Their expectations about how a video should 'look' will be violated. They will have to be taught that what they see in these new works is not a mistake or a sign of incompetence but rather the result of an **authorial choice**." (Ruby, 2000:38)

"Film will never be the '**objective**' recorder of reality for which the pioneers in this field had hoped. Like all other **media of communication**, film is a culturally constructed means of making statements about the world. It is neither better nor worse than other means of recording." (Ruby, 2000:65)

"Although **Flaherty** is usually called the father of the documentary (Barnouw 1974), *Nanook* had little direct influence on subsequent documentaries. Similarly, *Nanook* is credited as being the first ethnographic film, and yet, until French anthropologist Jean **Rouch** acknowledged Flaherty's impact on his work in the late 1950s, the anthropological community virtually ignored the film and the man.[...] Nonetheless, it is essential to understand *Nanook of the North* if for no other reason than that it, along with John **Marshall's** *The Hunters* and Robert **Gardner's** *Dead Birds*, constitutes the most widely understood variety of ethnographic film -- an epic-style narrative film that is a humanist portrayal of an **exotic** culture. " (Ruby, 2000:69)

"In many important ways, **Flaherty** not only behaved like an anthropologist, but his field **methods**, his stated **intentions**, and his willingness to be **methodologically explicit** place him more solidly within orthodox

anthropology than do the actions of most of the contemporary self-professed ethnographic filmmakers." (Ruby, 2000:86)

"**Flaherty's** assumption that the people in his film must be actively **involved in the production** also marks him as being ahead of his time. It is clear that Flaherty planned from the very beginning to have the Inuit **participate** in the making of the film.[...] In the 1915-16 expedition, Flaherty began the process of asking the Inuit to be **collaborators** and sought **feedback** from them about his understanding of their way of life. He began revealing his methods as early as 1918, when he described showing footage to the Inuit." (Ruby, 2000:87)

"The Inuit **performed** in front of the camera, **reviewed** and **criticized** their performance, and were able to offer suggestions for additional scenes in the film -- a way of making films that, when tried today, is thought to be 'innovative and original' and confounds the naive assumption that ethnographic films are merely a record of what happens in front of the camera. As a further step in making *Nanook* a **collaborative** undertaking, **Flaherty** trained some Inuit to be technicians." (Ruby, 2000:88-89)

"**Flaherty** began a tradition of **participatory** filmmaking that continues today. The *Netsilik Eskimo* project under the anthropological direction of Asen **Balikci** (Balikci and Brown 1966) and Jean **Rouch's** films *Jaguar*, *Petit à Petit*, and *Cocorico, Monsieur Poulet* are clear examples of films that employ Flaherty's **participatory** method or '**shared anthropology**,' as Rouch (1974) calls it (Stoller 1992). Every time filmmakers show their rushes to the subjects of their films and ask for their comments and approval, every time filmmakers ask people to selfconsciously portray themselves and the events of their lives in front of the camera, every time filmmakers try to mesh their **interpretations** with those of their subjects -- the filmmakers are continuing to build 'big aggie [movie] igloos' for their audiences." (Ruby, 2000:91)

"He [**Flaherty**] was interested in finding a way to **collaborate** with the people he filmed so that his need to tell interesting and dramatic stories that would hold an audience could be interwoven with the image the people had of themselves. [...] Flaherty told stories about real people living out the dramas of their lives." (Ruby, 2000:92)

"*Dead Birds* raises some fundamental **methodological and moral questions** that continue to be raised by **Gardner's** later work. They concern the issue of **consent** and the knowledge the subjects should have about a filmmaker's **intention**. Gardner believes that his work would have been hampered if the subjects had understood what was going on. In other words, he believes that providing the people in his films with sufficient knowledge to enable them to give informed consent would destroy his ability to make the kind of films in which he was interested. 'My job was made easier because no one knew what I was doing' (Gardner in Heider 1971:2-34)." (Ruby, 2000:102)

"The idea that you must **conceal your intentions** from people in order to get useful footage stands in direct opposition to Jean **Rouch's** notion of a **shared anthropology** -- a concept he explored in a number of films prior to Gardner's work with the Dani (for example, *The Human Pyramid* (1958) and *Les Maîtres Fous* (1957). Rouch has said that the idea of a **shared** or **collaborative** anthropology was derived from **Flaherty** in the 1920s, when Flaherty showed *Nanook* the footage he shot in order to obtain his cooperation and collaboration. **Gardner** rejected the idea of a **shared** anthropology in which the participants in a film became **collaborators** with the director. [...] He appears to be more interested in his vision of a culture than that of the people he portrays." (Ruby, 2000:103)

"Advocates of a passive-**observational style** abandoned "voice of God" **narration**. It was replaced by long, narrationless sequences of 'spontaneous activity,' shot in a way that it was hoped would entice viewers to make their own **interpretations** as to the meaning of the behavior portrayed." [about the beginning of **cinéma-vérité** style] (Ruby, 2000:118)

"He [Asch] never subscribed to the orthodoxy of 'no **narration**'. Before many ethnographic filmmakers had even embraced **observational** style, Asch realized that the problem with narrationless observational films about cultural behavior **exotic** to Western audiences was that **viewers** simply lacked the knowledge necessary to understand what they were seeing and, without some assistance, were more likely to employ racist stereotypes. If the observed behavior of the Other was self-evident, why was anthropology even necessary?"  
(Ruby, 2000:119)

"The *Feast* represents two innovations. First, there is the film's **form**. It begins with a series of still frames from the film depicting the 'highlights' of the event, with an explanatory **narration** by **Chagnon**. The second section of the film is an **observational** representation of the feast with only **subtitles**. *The Feast* is an experiment in combining the didactics of **anthropological explanation** with an opportunity for **audiences** to concentrate on the filmmakers's **pictorial representation** of the event."  
(Ruby, 2000:121)

"The *Ax Fight* is a truly remarkable film for a number of reasons. I know of no other nonfiction film that not only displays all of the footage shot but shows three different edited **versions**. [...] The *Ax Fight* accomplishes what the editing-exercise films do, in that it demonstrates how the same footage can be edited into very different **versions** of the same event. But it differs from these films because it deals with non-fiction, a genre popularly assumed not to distort the 'facts' of an event. [...] As **Asch** suggests, because of its **reconstructive nature**, *The Ax Fight* is prematurely **postmodern**."  
(Ruby, 2000:130)

"The time when an image maker could take photographs of strangers, usually poor or in some way removed from the mainstream of America, and justify the action as the inherent right of the artist or the documentarian or the ethnographer is, I believe, ending (Brian Winston in Gross, Katz, and Ruby 1988). [...] People intent on producing National Geographic **voyeuristic pictures** of tribal peoples now find themselves discussing permissions with tribal lawyers."  
(Ruby, 2000:139)

"More and more people understand the technologically produced image as a construction -- as the **interpretative** act of someone who has a culture, an ideology, who comes from a particular socioeconomic class, is identified with a gender, and often has a conscious point of view, all of which causes the image to convey a certain kind of knowledge in a particular way. Image makers display their **view** of the world whether they mean to or not. No matter how much people may feel the need for an objective witness of reality, image producing technologies will not provide it."  
(Ruby, 2000:140)

"The production and use of images involve four separable yet related **moral issues**, which, when combined into a professional activity, become an ethical position:

1. The image maker's personal moral contract to produce an image that is somehow an accurate reflection of his or her **intention** in making the image in the first place -- to use the cliché, it is being true to oneself
2. The producer's moral obligation to his or her subjects
3. The producer's moral obligation to the institutions that provide the funds to do the work -- that is, paying the piper
4. The producer's moral obligation to his or her intended **audience**"

(Ruby, 2000:141)

"To be **reflexive**, in terms of a work of anthropology, is to insist that anthropologists systematically and rigorously **reveal their methods** and themselves as the instrument of data generation and reflect upon how the medium through which they transmit their work predisposes readers/**viewers** to construct the meaning of the work in certain ways."

(Ruby, 2000:152)

"To be more formal, I would argue that being **reflexive** means that the producer deliberately, intentionally reveals to his or her audience the underlying epistemological assumptions that caused him or her to formulate a set of

questions in a particular way, to seek answers to those questions in a particular way, and finally, to present his or her findings in a particular way. The formulation is, of course, an idealized one."  
(Ruby, 2000:156)

"**Ethnography** and the **documentary film** are what the **West** does to the rest of humanity. 'The rest' in this case are frequently the poor, the powerless, the disadvantaged, and the politically and economically suppressed. An anthropology of the rich and the powerful or even the middle class is as sparse as documentary films that deal with that subject. The **exotic** and the **pathological** remain the focus of most social science and documentary film."  
(Ruby, 2000:168)

" [...] the apparent **reflexiveness** of these films [**travelogues**] only serves to perpetuate the myths of the genre. That is, the audience's interest in these films is partially based on the assumed difficulties of production and the heroic acts performed by the makers in the process of getting the footage. These films do not lead an audience to a sophisticated understanding of film as communication but rather cause them to continue to marvel at the **autobiographical** exploits of the intrepid adventurer-filmmakers as 'cinema-stars.'"  
(Ruby, 2000:169)

"Jean **Rouch** (1974) is one of the few visual anthropologists who is overly concerned with creating a cinematic form that is peculiarly suited for anthropological expression. His film *Chronicle of a summer* [...] represents an attempt to give shape to an idea. [...] The distinction between American **direct cinema** films like Ricky **Leacock** and Donn **Pennebaker's** *Salesman* (1966) and **cinéma-vérité** films like *Chronicle of a summer* is the difference between **observational** and **participatory** style, or to use the outmoded terms, **objective** versus **subjective** style.  
(Ruby, 2000:171) Documentaries on Rouch: Rouch's Gang (1990) and Jean Rouch with His Camera in the Heart of Africa (1992).

"There is one interesting attempt that was designed to explore the parameters of filmic **reflexivity** -- a rare instance in fact. Hubert **Smith**, a documentary filmmaker [...] obtained funds from the NEH in the late 1970s to make a series of documentaries for public television on a group of lowland Maya. In the process of making these films, he was to explore the implications of reflexivity to enhance the value of such films. He hired an anthropologist familiar with the area and the Mayan language as a collaborator. He also put together a **panel** of Mayanists and people interested in the development of ethnographic film -- Richard **Sorenson**, Margaret **Mead**, and myself among them. The panelists were to be active **consultants** during the preparation for the fieldwork and were to meet with the film team to look at and discuss some of the early footage at a midpoint in the fieldwork and the again after all of the film/fieldwork was completed. The panelists meetings were filmed and were to be included in the final film. [...] For a number of complicated reasons, the project never realized its potential. In fact, the opposite happened. [...] In a cosmically ironic fashion, a project designed to push the **limits of filmic reflexivity** ended up producing a film in which the historical development of the work is denied through the creation of a **fictive chronology** that gives the **viewer** a false impression."  
(Ruby, 2000:172-173) See Smith's answer on page 174-175.

"As **Smith** [Hubert] states, no ethnographic filmmaker since him has attempted to systematically explore **reflexivity**. In fact, an examination of the majority of the research footage and publicly released films made by or in association with anthropologists reveals a consistent lack of statements of **method** within the films or footage. [...] The **reflexive/methodological** statements that do exist are to be found *outside* the films in written articles [...] or in **study guides** that are supposed to be used in conjunction with a film [...]" (Ruby, 2000:176)

"Based on an examination of the films and written literature available, it would appear that, with the exception of Jean **Rouch**, many filmmakers who purport to be making ethnographic films are naïve empiricists and **positivists**. Like **journalists** and **documentary filmmakers**, they seem concerned with discovering ways of **objectively** recording data, or 'what happens,' free from the distortions of personal bias, **subjectivity**, or theory."  
(Ruby, 2000:176)

"Given those [**positivist** and **objectivist**] assumptions, the camera can record reality through truthful and meaningful images of the world. However, this method of camera use produces the same dilemma as its print

equivalent: it leaves no room for the producer or the process or the **audience in the creation of meaning.**"  
(Ruby, 2000:177)

"**Cooperatively** produced and **subject-generated** films are significant because they represent an approach to documentary and ethnographic films dissimilar to the dominant practice. From an anthropological perspective, they offer the possibility of perceiving the world from the **viewpoint** of people who lead lives that are different from those traditionally in control of the means of imaging the world."  
(Ruby, 2000:196)

"As discussed in chapter 2, Nanook and other Inuit were shown footage in the field and asked to comment on its accuracy as well as assist **Flaherty** in planning for the next day's filming. [...] *Nanook of the North* represents what today would be called a **collaborative** film."  
(Ruby, 2000:197)

"It is generally assumed that films about culture are best made by having **professional** filmmakers employ their technical skills, artistic sensitivity, and insight to reveal the 'reality' of others. The **subjects** seldom have direct input. Image makers who follow the dictates of broadcast **journalism** argue that any personal relationship between the filmmakers and the filmed compromises their **journalistic 'objectivity'**. [...] The assumption is that it is in everyone's best interest to have films made by professionals."  
(Ruby, 2000:198)

"Some people, traditionally film **subjects**, are demanding that filmmakers **share the authority** and, in some cases, relinquish it altogether. These demands call for profound changes in the way in which images are produced as well as the means by which knowledge is presented to the public. The subjects' demand for some control over how they are **represented** can be heard almost everywhere in the world."  
(Ruby, 2000:198)

"Regardless of Lenin's oft quoted statement about the **revolutionary potential** of film, it may not be a costeffective tool for social and political change. More bluntly stated, the argument goes as follows: power is not created with the lens of a camera; it comes from the end of a rifle barrel. Therefore, if you really wish to change the world, put down the camera and pick a gun. This chapter is not the place to critically examine the **romantic** and often naive liberal and leftist politics of the independent film movement."  
(Ruby, 2000:199)

"Models of criticism developed that regarded all communicative forms as '**serious fictions**' -- that is, constructed according to culturally bounded conventions (**Geertz** 1973, 1988). The documentarian's claim to an inside track to the truth and reality of other people was therefore undermined, if not destroyed completely. Ethnographic and other actuality films are now recognized as an articulation of a **point of view** -- not a window onto reality."  
(Ruby, 2000:202)

"As the acknowledged **authors** of a film, **documentarians** assume responsibility for whatever meaning exists in the image and therefore are obligated to discover ways to make people aware of **point of view, ideology, author biography**, and anything else deemed to an understanding of the film -- that is, to become **reflexive**. [...] Ironically, the traditional form of the **journalistic documentary** denied a voice not only to subjects but to the filmmakers as well. '**Objective**' documentaries have no authors, only reporters who present the 'who, what, when, where, and whys' of the 'truth'. So the move toward a **multivocal** documentary form has also involved a renewed and increased role for the filmmaker -- an overt acceptance of **authorial responsibility**."  
(Ruby, 2000:203)

"The advent of portable synchronous-sound film technology associated with **direct cinema** and **cinéma vérité** offered the possibility of **empowerment** to subjects through the use of on-camera interviews. The invention of this technology was the consequence of filmmakers like Michel **Brault**, Jean **Rouch**, and Drew Associates seeking the means to express a new documentary consciousness. **Direct cinema (observational style)** and **cinéma vérité (participatory style)** held the promise that people could have the authority to represent themselves on screen and have their opinions respected. Unfortunately, the promise was seldom realized. Although '**voice of**

**God'** narration was declared déclassé, often it was replaced by the talking-head 'expert witnesses'. The offscreen **voice of authority** simply moved into the frame."  
(Ruby, 2000:203-204)

"Being able to hear people tell their stories and observe their lives instead of being told what they think and the meaning of their behavior clearly offers **subjects** a greater say in the **construction of their image**. It represents a major shift in attitude about where one looks for **authority** and **authenticity**. It recognizes that the experts' **opinions** and the filmmakers's **vision** need to be tempered by the subjects' lived experience and their **view** of themselves. It is 'speaking with' instead of 'speaking for'. However, **editorial control** still remains in the hands of the filmmaker. The **empowerment** of the subject is therefore more illusory than actual. Although new voices are heard, traditional forms of **authorship** have not been significantly altered."  
(Ruby, 2000:204)

"In Jeff **Vaughn** and John **Schott's** 1978 film *Deal*, a documentary about Monte Hall and the television program Let's Make a Deal, the **subjects** were given the right to view all footage and to veto any scenes they felt were inappropriate. [...] John Schott explains their approach: 'Because we have access to such intimate aspects of their lives, we allow our subjects the review of all the uncut raw footage in which their faces and voices appear. Since they know they will be allowed to screen and review this footage, it builds a bond of trust between us. This does two things: it serves a moral purpose, makes **cinéma vérité** fair since in documentary filming there is a certain invasion of privacy [...] and the other thing is that it allows the person to be relatively unguarded, since he knows he can review the material with us and negotiate cuts.' (Schott in Rubenstein 1978:36)"  
(Ruby, 2000:205)

"[About **informed consent**.] People tend to be flattered when asked whether they mind being filmed and do not consider the potential problems on ending up in a distributor's catalog, available to anyone for any purpose. [...] I am not suggesting that filmmakers should stop asking for permission or soliciting subjects' opinions. I am arguing that most people lack the knowledge necessary to exonerate the producer. [...] I am suggesting that even with **cooperatively** produced films, the moral burden of **authorship** still resides with the filmmaker (**Geertz** 1988). Although a **multivocal** approach to the documentary does **empower subjects**, it will not absolve the filmmaker from the ethical and intellectual responsibility for the film."  
(Ruby, 2000:207)

"**Cooperative** ventures turn into **collaborations** when filmmakers and subjects mutually determine the content and shape of the film. Although the idea of a film in which the **authority is shared** might have a certain appeal, there are few documented cases.[...] The Australian film *Two Laws* (1979) is a rare example of a truly **collaborative** effort. According to James **MacBean**, 'the traditional peoples themselves collectively controlled the decision-making processes of what to film and how to film it -- even down to what lens to use on the camera., (1983:31)"  
(Ruby, 2000:208)

"For a production to be truly **collaborative**, the parties involved must be equal in their competencies or achieved an equitable division of labor. Involvement in the decision-making process must occur at all significant junctures. Before a film can be judged as a successful collaboration, the mechanics of the production must be understood. Is the collaboration to be found at all stages of production? Have the filmmakers trained the subjects in technical and artistic production skills, or are the subjects merely 'subject-area specialists' who gauge the accuracy of the information and pass upon the political and moral correctness of the finished work? Who had the idea for the film in the first place? Who raised and controls the funds? Who operates the equipment? Who is professionally concerned with the completion of the film? Who organizes and controls the distribution? Who travels with the film to conferences, festivals and other such events? Because films of **shared authority** represent a fundamental repositioning of the filmer and the filmed, these films must be reflexive if they are to be understood as the radical departure implied in the by the term. I know of no films that meet these requirements of disclosure."  
(Ruby, 2000:208-209)

"Many **so-called collaborative** film productions involve anthropologists, undoubtedly because anthropologists tend to spend long periods of time with their subjects, develop a rapport seldom possible with traditional

documentary methods and seek feedback as a means of verification. Since the 1950s, French anthropologist Jean **Rouch** has been making films with his West African associates, whom he taught to take sound and perform other technical duties in the field. Rouch is also a pioneer in the training of other African filmmakers, such as Mustapha **Alaassane**, Safi **Faye**, Oumarou **Ganda**, and Desire **Ecare**." (Ruby, 2000:211)

"**Rouch** pioneered a reflexive style in *Chronicle of a summer* (1961), in which one sees **subjects actively participating** in the production. Unfortunately, he has never made explicit the extent of his **collaborations**. Instead, **viewers** are left to ponder marvelously complex films like *Jaguar* (1955), in which the participants speak about themselves in the third person." (Ruby, 2000:212)

"**Myerhoff** (1992) proposed that the researcher-filmmaker seek to locate a **third voice** -- an amalgam of the maker's voice and the subject's voice, blended in such a manner as to make it impossible to discern which voice dominates the work -- in other words, films in which outsider and insider visions coalesce into a new perspective." (Ruby, 2000:212)

"If **subjects** become knowledgeable as filmmakers in order to be **collaborators**, why would they need the outsider? Wouldn't they want to make their own films? Without more concrete information, the notion of **sharing authority** remains more of a politically correct fantasy than a field-tested actuality." (Ruby, 2000:212)

"My position should be abundantly clear to anyone who has read this far. **Ethnographic filmmaking** should be the exclusive province of anthropologists interested in making pictorial ethnographies. Although this may appear to be relatively simple, the consequences would be for anthropologists to divorce themselves from the current world of documentary/ethnographic film practice and the traditional supports that have evolved for the making of an anthropological film (that is, the idea that film is a useful teaching aid and/or that the film will reach a large audience) and to produce work that confounds the expectations of its **audience**. To go against received wisdom and to be able to make audiences understand that the choices made were deliberate and not the result of incompetence is no easy task." (Ruby, 2000:239)

"**Rouch's** approach to the making of ethnographic films is to be a provocateur, not a passive observer. Whereas **Turner** wished to observe social dramas, Rouch creates them. [...] Rouch calls these moments '**ciné trance**' and argues that the camera does not record actuality but transforms it in such a way as to be revealing of culture. In fact, Rouch argues that the entire act of filming transforms everyone involved, including the crew (Rouch 1971, 1974)." (Ruby, 2000:247)

"At this point, my formulation of an **ethnographic film** is almost complete. I have argued that these films should be produced by anthropologists as the result of a long-term, intensive field research project concerned with the visible manifestation of culture in performative events that lend themselves to being transformed into filmable scenarios. The film itself would be a **reflexive narrative** in which the anthropologist tells the story of his or her field experiences as a series of observed cultural performances that reveal some aspect of the culture studied. Within this tale, the **methods** employed, the underlying **theoretical assumptions** and relevant components of the **ethnographer's persona** would need to be revealed." (Ruby, 2000:266)

"One need only consider that it is a human being with a **socially constructed reality** and **point of view** peering through the eyepiece of a device that further alters the recorded image as a consequence of the placement of the camera, the type of lens used, and so on, to realize how deficient **film realism** has become. [...] Ethnographic filmmakers must disassociate themselves from this naive realism and produce films that will become viewed as the filmmakers' construction of the social construction of the actuality of the people portrayed -- an interpretation of someone else's interpretation. [...] **Film realism** needs to be reframed for audiences as a social convention that

occurs when the filmmaker's socially constructed version of reality overlaps with the viewers' socially constructed version of reality."

(Ruby, 2000:275-276)

"Ethnographic filmmakers will simply have to accept and accommodate their **audiences'** expectations and frame the **realism** in such a way as to render it useful rather than detrimental. [...] The solution is to create an **ethnographic trompe l'oeil** for film. Filmic codes and conventions must be developed to frame or contextualize the apparent realism of the cinema and cause audiences to understand the images as anthropological articulations. The structure of *Tim Asch's The Ax Fight*, discussed in chapter 4, is perhaps the best example of this idea."

(Ruby, 2000:277)

"Like **Bateson's** notion of a **metacommunication** [...], ethnographic filmmakers need to remind audiences that **'This is a film,'** not substitute actuality. Audiences can have the pleasure of the illusion in which they are participating so long as it is made very clear to them that they are seeing a **representation constructed** because the filmmakers were motivated to present them with a particular **view of the world**. In an ethnographic film, we never see the world through the eyes of the natives, but if we are lucky, we can see the native world through the eyes of the anthropologist. The beginnings of such a cinema can already be found in the films of the French anthropological filmmaker Jean **Rouch**, particularly in his African films -- *Jaguar* (1956), *Petit à Petit* (1970), and *Cocorico, Monsieur Poulet* (1974) -- in which anthropological interpretation is blended with folk explanations and fantasies in a way that defies the labels of fiction and documentary."

(Ruby, 2000:278)

"If ethnographic filmmakers were to produce films that **tell the story** of their field search, and the story of the people they studied, in a **reflexive** manner that permitted audiences to enjoy the cinematic illusion of verisimilitude without causing them to think they were seeing reality, then an **anthropological cinema** would be born."

(Ruby, 2000:278)

"To end, I wish to repeat the fantasy with which I started the book -- a moral tale for anthropologists. It is a fantasy in which an anthropological cinema designed by anthropologists -- not documentaries about 'anthropological' subjects' but **films designed by anthropologists to communicate anthropological insights**. It is a wellarticulated genre distinct from the conceptual limitation of realist documentary and broadcast journalism. It borrows conventions and techniques from the whole of cinema -- fiction, documentary, animation, and experimental. A **multitude of film styles** vie for prominence -- equal to the number of theoretical positions found in the field. There are general-audience films produced for television as well as highly sophisticated works designed for professionals. Although some films intended for a general audience are **collaboratively** made with professional filmmakers, most are produced by **professional anthropologists alone**, who use the medium to convey the results of their ethnographic studies and ethnological knowledge. **University departments** regularly teach the theory, history, practice, and criticism of anthropological communications -- verbal, written, and pictorial -- enabling scholars from senior professors to graduate students to select the most appropriate mode in which to publish their work. There are a variety of venues where these works are displayed regularly and serve as the basis for scholarly discussion. Canons of criticism exist that allow for a critical discourse about the ways in which anthropology is realized pictorially. A low-cost **distribution** system for all these anthropological products is firmly established. Videotapes, CD-ROMs and DVDs are as common as books in the libraries of anthropologists, and the Internet/World Wide Web occupies a place of some prominence as an anthropological resource."

(Ruby, 2000:279)