Fictional Futures: Ethnofiction in Applied Ethnographic Filmmaking

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Introduction

I have been experimenting with fictional approaches of documentary storytelling since 2007, when I started producing films for research projects and NGOs in Namibia. In order to make these films more interesting and meaningful for the local audiences for whom they were intended, I wanted to try out locally specific forms of self-representation and storytelling. Inspired by the ethnofictional films of Jean Rouch, *Jaguar* (1967) and *Moi un Noir* (1958), I introduced fictional elements of storytelling and supported them when they were brought up by the protagonists themselves. Unlike Rouch’s ethnofiction films that were entirely based on a fictional storyline, the films I made, combined conventional documentary formats such as interviews and observational sequences with scenes that were more consciously performed. The acting often oscillated between “virtual performances” that are common in realist documentaries (Nichols 1993) and “ethnofictional acting” (Sjöberg 2008) within the same sequence. Many of the protagonists came from marginalised backgrounds and used this cinematic space to present themselves in positive or even idealized ways that sharply contrasted their social realities. I will argue that these kinds of self-constructions can be seen as a form of opposition or resistance to the limiting social structures in which the filming took place and to which the performances referred to (Waite and Conn 2011). Interestingly, these self-representations were paralleled (and possibly enabled) by effects that ethnofictional filmmaking had on the relationships within the social arena constituted by the filming itself. I want to argue that fictionalizations necessitate and encourage more mutual interactions compared to the hierarchical relationships between observers and observed that are typical of observational filmmaking. Such processes can be boosted if the participants exercise more authorial control and take part in the practical making of a film, for example by (co-)directing or operating the camera (Gruber 2022). A further destabilization of roles
and hierarchies may be achieved if filmmakers or convenors of film workshops step in front of the camera and become protagonists (Kindon 2003).

This paper first discusses the concept of ethnofictional filmmaking and its genesis. This is followed by the introduction of my own work in the applied context. I will focus on how fictionalizations can be appropriated as a means of self-making and how the fictional framework may affect the dynamics within the filming team. Finally, it will take an outlook on ethnofictional filmmaking and future making. The insights presented here have been discussed in more detail in my practical handbook Sharing the Camera: A Guide to Collaborative Ethnographic Filmmaking (Gruber 2022).

The films discussed in this paper can be viewed here: https://vimeo.com/channels/anthrovision

Ethnofictional Filmmaking

French filmmaker and anthropologist Jean Rouch started his career in the 1940s in colonial West Africa. Rouch regarded his research and filmmaking as processes of mutual exchange and called his approach shared anthropology. Inspired by the work of Robert Flaherty, Rouch screened his rushes and rough cuts to his protagonists during the production of a film in order to discuss the ethnographic content of the footage as well as the consecutive filming with them. Rouch also went back to the communities that had participated in the filmmaking in order to show them the finished films. These screenings were perceived as a Maussian counter-gift ‘given in exchange for the trust that the subjects had shown in allowing him to film’ as well as “a catalyst for the development of mutual understanding” (Henley 2009:316). Moreover, Rouch conceived his filmmaking as a form of storytelling and challenged a rigid differentiation between fiction and documentary. He highlighted elements of improvisation and play:

“So the filmmaker stages this reality like a director, improvising his shots, his movements or his shooting time, a subjective choice whose only key is his personal inspiration. And, no doubt, a masterpiece is achieved when this inspiration of the observer is in unison with the collective inspiration of what he is observing” (Rouch 2003:185f).

Jean Rouch’s shared anthropology was certainly most powerful and innovative in his ethnofictional filmmaking. When conducting ethnographic fieldwork on labour migration in West Africa, Rouch found it “impossible to show the full range of the migrants’ experience within the limitations of a conventional documentary” and hence decided to combine documentary and fictional elements of filmmaking (Henley 2009:73). This resulted in two feature-length films, Jaguar, filmed from 1954 to 1955, and released in 1968 and Moi un Noir, filmed in 1957 and released in 1958. Based on Rouch’s guiding principles of intuition, play, chance and risk, these films combined a “laboriously researched and carefully analysed ethnography” with a fictional framework (Stoller 1992:143).

Jaguar depicts the migration of young men from Niger to the economically prosperous cities of the Gold Coast, as Ghana was called at the time of filming. Constructed as a humorous road movie, the film follows the journey of three young men. After encountering various adventures and obstacles they find work in Accra and Kumasi. When they return home to their village after a few months, with money and gifts, they are celebrated as “heroes of a modern world”, as Rouch calls them in the film’s
voiceover narration (Rouch 1967: 01:18:38). The men’s heroic journey can be interpreted as a rite of passage and as satire on doing ethnography. The film is driven by the wit and humour of its protagonists and is essentially a celebration of human agency (Grimshaw 2001). *Moi un Noir*, on the other hand, is a rather disillusioned portrayal of the lives of migrants and their struggle for work and dignity in the Ivorian port city of Abidjan. The film follows the daily lives of a group of Nigerien migrants, centred around the two main protagonists Oumarou Ganda and Petit Touré: searching for work and trying to make a living by doing informal jobs but also frequenting bars, going to the beach, as well as seeking support in a migrants’ association. *Moi un Noir* has a pessimistic outlook: While the protagonists are portrayed as strong personalities making sense of their difficult situation, they never seem to be able to overcome the limitations of their predicament.

Still from Jean Rouch’s *Moi un Noir*

Both films are based on the protagonists’ everyday experiences, but also on their fantasies and dreams of a better future. Rouch produced his ethnofiction films largely as documentaries, “without a script and with minimal direction, relying primarily on the protagonists to determine the way in which the action of the film would develop” (Henley 2009:259). While the protagonists were responsible for the story and the “kind of knowledge” they considered relevant to the film, Rouch was in charge of the filming (Jørgensen 2007:65). After agreeing with the protagonists about what would happen in a particular scene, Rouch would shoot without direction or interruption. Usually he filmed the sequences in the chronological order of the storyline. This documentary style of filming allowed the “presence of some elements of risk and chance” that Rouch found so important for an “inspired performance” on the part of himself and his protagonists (Henley 2009:254; see also Rouch 2003:186). Johannes Sjöberg highlights
the significance of improvised acting in the generation of anthropological knowledge through filmmaking:

“They performed as if they were themselves, but without any obligation to really be themselves. They alternated between their own experiences and their imaginary worlds. The fictive characters they created were based on their own realities and expressed aspects of their own personalities” (2018:406; italics in the original).

Rouch’s *ethnofiction* films were received overwhelmingly positively at the time of their release. From a contemporary visual anthropological perspective, Paul Henley asserts that *Jaguar* succeeded in “representing its principal subjects not as exotic curiosities, as in previous genres of ethnographic film ... but rather as human beings with idiosyncratic characters and attitudes and ... their own dreams and fantasies” (Henley 2009:79). More generally, anthropologists refer to the self-reflexive, multi-vocal and fictional representational strategies typical of *ethnofiction* when arguing that Rouch had anticipated the literary turn in anthropology by almost thirty years (Stoller 1992:199ff.). Following anthropologist and filmmaker Peter Loizos (1993), I want to emphasize that the ambiguity between fiction and reality is also of crucial importance in the reception of ethnofiction films and especially the way in which the characters are perceived. The viewers can never be sure about the relationship between filmic and pre-filmic reality. It is this constant epistemological uncertainty that makes watching these films such an interesting and joyful experience.

“If we ask the film [Moi un Noir] to deliver us an answer to the black-and-white question, are you a film of fact or a film of fiction, then we get back the answer that it is playing at being fiction in order to reveal facts: men who are actual labour migrants are playing at being labour migrants, creating characters taken from a street-life they have lived themselves” (Loizos 1993:53).

Johannes Sjöberg (2007) drew on Rouch’s *ethnofictional* approach when he made his film *Transfiction* together with transgendered Brazilians. During the filmmaking Sjöberg realized that his two main protagonists interpreted their acting quite differently (2008:238ff.). One of them made almost no distinction between her own identity and the role she was playing, resulting in a *virtual performance*, as Bill Nichols called the style of self-representation common in documentary filmmaking:

“In this mode social actors, people, play themselves. They act as they normally would, and do so in a manner that conveys many of the expressive qualities we have to come to associate with a conventional performance. Though unrehearsed and unscripted, their virtual performance has expressive resonance and emotional power. It may correspond to how they normally conduct themselves in everyday life, but it also corresponds to the conventions of realist acting” (Nichols 1993:224).

The other protagonist chose to play a much more fictive character, who she referred to as a completely distinct person. Following Sjöberg, she played an idealized version of herself in order to both distance and protect herself from the negative feelings connected with her past. Referring to Rouch, Sjöberg (2008:238f) terms this style of performance *ethnofictional* acting: “The extraordinary possibility of playing a role that is oneself, but that one can disavow because it is only an image of oneself” (Rouch cited in Blue 1967:85; emphasis in the original). Following from this, Sjöberg differentiates between the descriptive and expressive functions of improvised acting (Sjöberg 2009:6ff.; 2018:407ff.). Descriptive improvisations may serve to illustrate or demonstrate certain activities or phenomena that might be difficult to represent through other filmic approaches. Expressive improvisations refer to the possibility of revealing the protagonists’ feelings, dreams and fantasies. The anonymity provided by their fictional
More recently, Johannes Sjöberg demonstrated how ethnofictional filmmaking may be used to draw more explicitly on the protagonists’ imaginations in order to elicit visions of the future. In the film “Call me Back”, Sjöberg’s (2020) protagonist James improvises phone conversations with his imagined future self in order to discuss the effects of climate change and his personal development. Sjöberg calls this approach ethno science fiction:

“‘Ethno’ suggests the same methodological rigour as other ethnographic film methods, including extended ethnographic fieldwork informed by anthropological theory. ‘Science’ refers to how fieldwork informants relate to scientific predictions of the future. Scientific progress has allowed researchers to predict changes in the economy, politics, population, health, geography, climate, etc., with increased precision, and ethno science fiction allows fieldwork informants to critically and playfully engage with these predictions through their imaginations. ‘Fiction’ refers to the human necessity to speculate, to fill the blank canvas of uncertainty with imagined utopias and dystopias” (Sjöberg 2017: 174).

Ethnofiction in Applied Ethnographic Filmmaking

I first started experimenting with fictionalizations during the production of a commissioned film about deforestation in Namibia called Wiza Wetu – Our Forest (Pröpper and Gruber 2007). The film was produced in collaboration with anthropologist Michael Pröpper for an international research project investigating biodiversity in Southern Africa. Pröpper, who had conducted anthropological research in the Kavango Region of northern Namibia for several years, came to the conclusion that informal, small-scale logging was one of the main threats to the environment in the area (Pröpper 2009). In order to raise awareness about the environmental damage of these activities and to inform about alternative modes of income through forest resources, Pröpper hired me to produce a film together with him. Aimed at local audiences, the film follows a Namibian project member, Robert Mukuya, inquiring about the informal timber trade and sustainable forms of forest management.

Especially interesting is a sequence depicting the felling of a tree by informal loggers. Since harvesting trees without official permission was against Namibian law and might have led to the protagonists’ prosecution, it would have been impossible to film these activities with a realist documentary approach. Together with our research participants, we therefore decided to re-enact the felling of the tree. We hired three experienced loggers who were familiar with the artisanal timber harvesting but they were only willing to perform the activities for the film if we could get official permission. After some negotiations the regional authorities issued a permit. This gave our protagonists the security to demonstrate their activities without any fear of being sanctioned, even though it was clear that they regularly practised the same activities clandestinely. Inspired by Rouch’s ethnofictional filmmaking, I asked the protagonists to not only demonstrate the manual labour but also to enact the social context of the situation as it would usually take place. The protagonists and other community members explained to the filming team that local entrepreneurs are usually in charge of such activities and provide the tools for those who do the actual logging. We therefore asked a more well-off villager who had been involved in informal logging to
play this role. Together with the protagonists we devised a rough storyline. The filming itself was implemented without story-boarding or rehearsals. The acting combines descriptive improvisations, through which the protagonists provide a detailed illustration of their work, and expressive improvisations in which they talk about the fears and hopes connected to these activities (Sjöberg 2009). The more consciously performed introductory sequence and a conversation during which the protagonists discuss the problems and dangers related to their work, were improvised by the protagonists spontaneously. These scenes are crucial, not only for establishing the protagonists as nuanced personalities representing opposing perspectives on this complex issue, but also for their contextualizing information that illuminates the structural causes of informal logging. When filming these sequences, I realized that the mode of interaction with the protagonists changed remarkably. Compared to my previous work situated between observational and participatory filmmaking (MacDougall 2003), the protagonists exercised a degree of initiative and agency that made our relationship much more mutual. The protagonists attained the role of experts, not only in logging but they also took part in the discussions of how to present it in the film. Through their improvised acting they appropriated the filming further. The protagonists and the production team were united in the common goal of conceiving the film together.

This media file cannot be displayed. Please refer to the online document http://journals.openedition.org/anthrovision/9673

Video Link: https://vimeo.com/974080686

During the production of a film on water issues in the northern Namibian town of Rundu, I experimented further with ethnofictional approaches, together with Namibian co-director Raphael Sinkumba. *Mema Eparu - Water is Life* (Gruber and Sinkumba 2008) was commissioned by the Luxembourgish NGO Lux-Development as part of an awareness campaign surrounding the formalisation of the town's informal settlements. To represent water-related experiences of informal dwellers, who were the film's intended audience, Sinkumba and I proposed to use fictionalizations. In collaboration with community members, we filmed two sequences depicting situations that were inspired by their quotidian experiences with the water service provider. The sketches were improvised by volunteers from the informal settlements. Compared to the re-enactments in the previous film, the two sequences are much more consciously performed and rely much more on humour and irony.

In the first sequence, a girl discovers a leaking water pipe and reports it to her parents, initiating a dispute between them. While the husband wants to go to the leak in order to collect the water for their own use, his wife accuses him of intending to steal water, not only from the municipality but also from the entire community. She scolds him and forbids him to collect any water while she goes to report the leak to the municipality. This improvised conversation is not only a moral discussion addressing individual and collective ownership and responsibility but also a very amusing negotiation of stereotypical gender roles and relations. In the second sequence, a boy and a girl report a leaking water tap to a member of the “Local Development Committee” – a body of elected community representatives. The neighbour follows the children in order to take a look at the problem and they all end up caught in an explosion of water that shoots out of the dysfunctional tap. While the protagonists present themselves as
proud and responsible citizens, this sequence can also be read as an ironic critique of the run-down water infrastructure, implicitly challenging the city’s self-presentation as a well organised and functioning service provider. More generally, these ethnofictional sequences can be interpreted in two ways: First, in presenting dysfunctional public services in an exaggerated and ironic way, the acting can be seen as a form of critique or resistance. Second, in presenting idealized versions of these situations (in which marginalized people play central roles), the performances are implicitly oriented towards the future. They do not document the situations as they are perceived in the present but as they are imagined for the future.

Later, I developed an approach I termed collaborative ethnographic filmmaking (Gruber 2022). I was member of an international research project called The Future Okavango, investigating resource management and climate change in the Okavango River Basin, situated in Angola, Namibia and Botswana. To inquire about the perspectives of those who I assumed were most affected by climate change, I made films together with people from rural communities. It was my aim to enable the research participants to take central roles in the conception and practical making of these films. I therefore implemented film workshops that encompassed camera training, filming exercises and the processes of conceiving and directing each film. The resulting films deal with different activities and discourses connected to natural resource use. Each film consists of different cinematic formats such as interviews, observational material and ethnofictional sequences. While all the films were entirely shot by workshop participants with no previous filming experience, two out of three filming teams also wanted to step in front of the camera to perform some of the activities to be filmed. This acting is inspired by the protagonists’ lived experiences as well as their imaginations and fantasies. The actors draw on local modes of self-presentation and storytelling or what David MacDougall might call their “cultural style” (MacDougall 1992). Some of the performances are inspired by international popular culture and the local media (Sjöberg 2009). The ambiguous space, between fiction and reality, offers the protagonists the opportunity to choose a role and interpret it according to their style.

I have argued above that that fictionalizations already make the relationships within the social arena constituted by the filming more mutual. During the film workshops discussed here, the blurring of roles and hierarchies was taken a step further as the workshop participants took turns between acting, directing and operating the camera (Gruber 2016; 2022). Their constant shifting from behind to in front of the camera also seemed to make the acting more explicit and performative. In The Secret of our Environment (Gruber et al 2013), produced in Botswana, a fictional family decides to go on a fishing and gathering trip in search for food. The improvised acting in this sequence is almost theatrical, making use of exaggeration and self-irony, for example when discussing work ethics and gender roles, as can be seen in the video below:
The deconstruction of the expert filmmaker/researcher through ethnofictional filmmaking climaxed when the Botswanan workshop participants asked me to become an actor for them in an improvised sequence. Produced in an area where many families derive an income from working in the wildlife tourism sector as tour guides or service staff, the workshop participants had decided to portray themselves as knowledgeable experts of their environment through a sequence depicting a typical tourist activity. As almost all of the tourists in that area were foreigners, it was absolutely clear to them that I should play the tourist. After my initial hesitation, I agreed on the condition that I would be joined by some workshop participants who would play Botswanan tourists. In the resulting performance, two local tour guides take a group of three tourists (performed by two Botswanan workshop participants and myself) on a boat trip to an island in the Okavango Delta. In the beginning of the sequence, the improvised acting is slightly ironic, drawing on perceptions of idealized tour guides and stereotypical tourists. The relaxed atmosphere changes sharply, when the conversation within the group shifts to the inequalities inherent in the tourist industry as can be experienced in the clip below.

It had been very important to the workshop participants to include a discussion highlighting the discrepancy between the enormous fees the national and international tour companies receive from their clients and the relatively small wages they pay their local employees. Before the filming, the workshop participants had asked me to raise this issue in our improvised conversation. I want to argue that the discussion was only possible in a fictional framework because it not only highlighted the disparities between villagers and outsiders (tourists and owners of tour companies) but also the inequalities existing within the local community, namely between those who benefited from tourism and those who did not benefit. Beyond the negotiations within the filmic space, this discussion can also be interpreted as a positioning of the workshop participants in opposition to me as an outside researcher. Beyond this positioning, my acting for the participants directing the film had an important effect on the dynamics within the group. It led to a (temporary) reversal of conventional roles and hierarchies between observer and observed or researcher and researched (Kindon 2003). The participants, hence, not only used the filmic space to address various inequalities that shape their everyday lives but also positioned themselves powerfully within the research arena. Personally, I found it to be an enriching experience that allowed me to sense the power dynamics inherent in filmmaking from the other side of the lens.

Another example of this kind of positioning through ethnofictional filmmaking occurred during the filming of *Huchi –Honey* in Angola (Antónia et al. 2013). The participants of this film workshop had also decided to take turns between acting,
directing and operating the camera. In two descriptive sequences, the film follows an experienced beekeeper as he manufactures a traditional beehive and harvests honey. This is followed by three more consciously performed improvisations on the consumption of honey (Antónia et al. 2013: 26:06-36:24). When filming these sequences, the camera was swapped around amongst the participants, sometimes during the shooting, which makes them cinematically messier. One of the sequences depicts two women preparing corn-flour porridge in an open-air kitchen. At the end of the sequence, my Angolan co-worker Miguel and I have a short appearance, tasting the porridge together with the workshop participants and some village kids (Antónia et al. 2013: 30:52-32:30).

Unlike with the aforementioned film on tourism (when the participants asked me before the filming of the sequence if I would participate as an actor) the Angolan participants asked us to step in front of the camera, spontaneously during the shooting. We agreed to be filmed immediately, as I knew from my previous experience that it might be favourable for the group’s dynamics. To our surprise, we only found out during the editing of the film, that the two women had been talking about us on camera long before they asked us to become a part of their play. Moreover, they were talking about us in a rather derogatory manner, as can be followed in the video below. By talking (patronizingly) about us rather than with us the two women were forcefully positioning us as Others. When I realized what had happened, I felt awkward, even betrayed. I had agreed to step in front of the camera as a sign of appreciation and trust – only to be distanced and even ridiculed by the participants. Nevertheless, we decided to integrate the material into the film because we thought it important to be transparent and address internal conflicts as and when they arose. In retrospect, I interpret this situation as an important aspect of collaboration and empowerment. Participants of both films discussed here, used ethnofictional acting to negotiate their position vis-à-vis the workshop convenor(s). While the participants in Botswana raised their desire to include me as an actor prior to the shooting, the Angolan participants improvised us into the story by means of acting. More generally, such experiences made me see conflicts within film workshops as a catalyst and a sign of mutual relationships.

Towards the Future

In this paper I have argued that ethnofictional filmmaking may not only serve as an alternative form of ethnographic inquiry. The fictional framework also provides a cinematic space that may be appropriated by the protagonists to position themselves in opposition to powerful discourses and structures that shape their wider social worlds (Waite and Conn 2011). Moreover, it may destabilize roles and hierarchies within the arena constituted by the filming itself and thereby make the filming a more mutual activity. The workshop convenors acting together with (or on behalf of) workshop participants can be a crucial moment (Kindon 2003). An important step towards more
collaborative ethnofictional filmmaking is the participants’ appropriation of different tasks involved in the filmmaking process, such as operating the camera and directing (Gruber 2022). I want to argue that the different collaborators (including myself) benefited from their experience of filmmaking in different ways. The workshop participants told me that they enjoyed the experience tremendously. They highlighted the skills and the recognition they had acquired through the filmmaking. Many of them told me that it had important effects on the way they saw the world. Moreover, ethnofictional filmmaking gave them the possibility to literally shape how they were seen in their immediate surroundings and beyond.

Johannes Sjöberg’s (2017; 2020) recent work reveals that ethnofictional filmmaking may be especially well suited to enquire about the protagonists’ futures. While the examples presented here did not make many explicit references to the future, I want to argue that aspects of future-making are present in most of the films I discussed. The films were conceived, filmed and enacted by members of marginalized communities and almost all of them deal with the effects of their marginalization. As I have outlined above, most of the ethnofictional sequences depict the social reality in an idealized way – not as it is perceived in the present but as it is imagined for the future. More generally, I want to argue that discussing hardships makes implicit references to imagined futures. The Botswanan tour guides, for example, want their fair share of the fees paid by tourists; the informal dwellers of Rundu want to have access to clean and safe drinking water and the communities in the Kavango Region want to benefit from the sustainable harvesting of communal forest resources. In the films introduced here, a good life and better imagined futures are constantly discussed as sub-texts. The ethnofictional framework therefore provides the creative space.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and articles


Films


NOTES

1. While Rouch himself called this approach ‘ciné-fiction’ or ‘science fiction’, it later became referred to as ethnofiction. The origin of the term is however unclear (Henley 2009: 74f; see also 441).

2. Despite the futuristic visions of a camera that would pass “into the hands of those who, until now, have always been in front of the lens” as Jean Rouch formulated in 1973 (2003:46), he retained a high level of control over his filmmaking and never actually handed his camera over to his protagonists. Various scholars and filmmakers have gone so far as to criticize Rouch’s practices as paternalistic, apolitical, colonialist and even racist (see Henley 2009: 331ff.).

3. In this quote Rouch actually refers to Marceline’s acting in the film *Chronique d’un Été* (Rouch and Morin (1961), which is not entirely ethnofictional but makes use of the approach in some sequences.

4. While the river and its inland delta are called *Okavango* internationally and in Botswana, the same river and the administrative Regions are called *Kavango* in Namibia.

5. The way in which the two Botswanan workshop participants perform their roles is interesting as it represents local perceptions of tourists.

6. This was possible because Miguel and I followed the filming from a distance. Moreover, neither of us was fully fluent in the local language Chokwe in which the conversation took place. During the editing, we worked with an interpreter who told us the exact meaning of the dialogue.

ABSTRACTS

Inspired by the films of Jean Rouch, I have been experimenting with fictionalizations in the documentaries I produce within the field of applied visual anthropology. This paper will argue that ethnofictional filmmaking not only provides an alternative to complement more conventional methods of ethnographic filmmaking and research but also changes the dynamics and hierarchies within the filming team and beyond. Using examples of my work for different research and development projects, I will discuss how the participants of film workshops used the ambiguous space between fiction and realist documentary storytelling to negotiate and enhance their position, both within their social worlds and within the arena constituted by the filmmaking. Explicit or implicit references to imagined futures thereby played an important role.

Inspiré par les films de Jean Rouch, j’ai expérimenté la fictionnalisation dans les documentaires produits dans le domaine de l’anthropologie visuelle appliquée. Cet article soutient que la réalisation de films ethn-no-fictionnels offre non seulement une alternative complémentaire aux méthodes plus conventionnelles de réalisation et de recherche ethnographiques, mais qu’elle modifie également la dynamique et les hiérarchies au sein de l’équipe de tournage et au-delà. En utilisant des exemples tirés de mon travail dans le cadre de différents projets de recherche et de
développement, j’aborde la manière dont les participants aux ateliers cinématographiques ont utilisé l’espace ouvert entre la fiction et le documentaire réaliste pour négocier et améliorer leur position, à la fois dans leurs mondes respectifs ainsi que dans l’arène constituée par la réalisation du film. Les références explicites ou implicites à des futurs imaginés ont ainsi joué un rôle important.

Inspirado por las películas de Jean Rouch, he estado experimentando con ficcionalizaciones en los documentales que produzco dentro del campo de la antropología visual aplicada. En este artículo argumentaré que la realización de películas etnoficcionales no sólo ofrece una alternativa para complementar los métodos más convencionales de filmación e investigación etnográfica, sino que también cambia la dinámica y las jerarquías dentro del equipo de filmación y fuera de él. Utilizando ejemplos de mi trabajo para diferentes proyectos de investigación y desarrollo, discutiré cómo los participantes en los talleres de filmación utilizaron el espacio ambiguo entre la ficción y la narración documental realista para negociar y mejorar su posición, tanto dentro de sus mundos sociales como en el ámbito constituido por la filmación. De este modo, las referencias explícitas o implícitas a futuros imaginados desempeñaron un papel importante.

INDEX

Palabras claves: etnoficción; Jean Rouch; antropología visual aplicada; cine etnográfico; cine etnográfico colaborativo

Keywords: ethnfiction; Jean Rouch; applied visual anthropology; ethnographic film; collaborative ethnographic filmmaking

Mots-clés: ethnofiction, Jean Rouch, anthropologie visuelle appliquée, film ethnographique, film ethnographique collaboratif

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